confident, speak for the South. They speak only for a willful but vocal minority. This group is not the South. I believe that voices like those of Miss Lillian E. Smith of Georgia, Mr. Harry Ashmore of Arkansas, and the ever growing list of white Christian ministers such as the group that recently issued a statement in Atlanta, Georgia—these voices represent the true and basic sentiments of Millions of Southerners, whose voices are yet unheard, whose course is yet unclear and whose courageous acts are yet unseen.

In the name of God, in the interest of human dignity and for the cause of democracy, I appeal to these millions to gird their courage, to speak out and to act on their basic convictions. In their hearts the white Southerners know the loyalty, the courage and the democratic responsibility of the Negro people. Beyond this, they know that we are dedicated to non-violence. Just as I have urged Negroes to face the calculated risk involved in resisting injustice non-violently, I implore the white Southerner of goodwill to face the calculated risk that working openly for justice and freedom demand.

We Southerners, Negro and white, must no longer permit our nation and our heritage to be dishonored before the world. And the South should know that the effort of Negroes to vote is not merely a matter of exercising rights guaranteed by the United States constitution. The question is beyond rights. We have a duty to perform. We have a moral obligation to carry out. We have the duty to remove from political domination a small minority that cripples the economic and social institutions of our nation and thereby degrades and impoverishes everyone.

But beyond this, it is our duty to struggle by non-violence for justice, because we are opposed to all injustices, wherever it exists, first of all, in ourselves.

TD. MLKP-MBU: Box 2.

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5. Samuel Marvin Griffin was elected governor of Georgia in 1954. Just prior to the launching of the Crusade, Griffin released a letter claiming that SCLC’s plans to register black voters would place the state “under complete domination of the NAACP and those fuzzy-headed liberals who are out to completely destroy the Georgia way of life.” Griffin proposed the introduction of a poll tax and recommended that voter registration records be purged every two years “to keep from adding thousands of ineligible Negroes each year” (“Does This Man Speak for the South?” Liberation 3 [March 1958]: 14).

6. Georgia author Lillian Smith was active in the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and the Southern Conference for Human Welfare. Harry S. Ashmore was editor of the Arkansas Gazette and won a Pulitzer Prize for his editorials on the Little Rock desegregation crisis. In November 1957 eighty white Protestant ministers from Atlanta issued what became known as the “Ministers’ Manifesto,” a statement on race relations that called for obedience to the law and the extension of “full privileges of first class citizenship” to black people (“Text of Ministers’ Racial Statement,” Atlanta Journal Constitution, 3 November 1957).
Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt
211 East 62nd Street
New York 21, New York

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

On returning to the office, after being out for several weeks I found your letter of January 16. I was more than happy to know that you will be giving a reception in honor of Aubrey Williams on Wednesday, February 26, in New York City. I was deeply honored to receive an invitation to attend this reception. Unfortunately, however, my calendar reveals that I have a long standing commitment in California at that time. In the light of this it will be impossible for me to accept your gracious invitation. Please know that I regret this very deeply. I can assure you that I am deeply in accord with this reception in honor of Aubrey Williams. I feel that he is a great personality, and his work as President of the Southern Conference Educational Fund is very helpful and very much needed in this period of transition. He is a personal friend of mine, and I have assured him that he has my wholehearted support.

I have admired you and your work for a long, long time. I hope it will be possible for me to meet you personally in the not too distant future.

Very sincerely yours,
Martin Luther King, Jr.
Minister

MLK:mlb
Dictated, but not personally signed by Dr. King.

Tlc. MLKP-MBU: Box 64.

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1. At the reception Roosevelt lauded Williams's anti-discrimination work and urged the ninety people in attendance to "support these organizations and these people who are doing the work that we in the North are not able to do." Alabama activists E. D. Nixon and C. G. Gomillion also spoke at the event, which raised $13,000 for SCEF ("Mrs. Roosevelt Assists SCEF," *Southern Patriot*, April 1958, pp. 1, 4).

2. On 25 February King began a three-day visit to the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, sponsored by the University YMCA.