

# Document 78

## Papers as President: President's Personal Files

### NATIONAL G

PRESIDENT  
J. E. SPINGARN

VICE-PRESIDENTS  
HON. ARTHUR CAPPER  
BISHOP JOHN A. GREGG  
REV. JOHN HAYNES HOLMES  
JAMES WELDON JOHNSON  
ARTHUR B. SPINGARN  
OSWALD GARRISON VILLARD

TREASURER  
MARY WHITE OVINGTON

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*Baltimore*  
Carl Murphy

*Boston*  
Joseph Prince Loud  
Charleston, W. Va.  
T. G. Nutter

*Chicago*  
Jane Addams  
Clarence Darrow

*Cleveland*  
Hon. Harry E. Davis

*Detroit*  
Hon. Ira W. Jayne  
Hon. Frank Murphy

*Emporia, Kas.*  
William Allen White

*New York*  
Lillian A. Alexander  
Rev. Hutchens C. Bishop  
Marion Cuthbert  
Hubert T. Delany  
Rachel Davis Du Bois  
Lewis S. Gannett  
Rev. John Haynes Holmes  
James Weldon Johnson  
Hon. Herbert H. Lehman  
James Marshall  
Lucy R. Mason  
Mary White Ovington  
Rev. A. Clayton Powell  
Arthur B. Spingarn  
J. E. Spingarn  
Charles H. Studin  
William English Walling  
Dr. Louis T. Wright

*Northampton, Mass.*  
Dr. William Allan Neilson

*Orange, N. J.*  
Dr. Vernon F. Bunce

*Philadelphia*  
Isadore Martin

*Richmond*  
Maggie L. Walker

*Topeka*  
Hon. Arthur Capper

*Washington*  
Sterling A. Brown  
Nannie H. Burroughs  
Hon. James A. Cobb  
Abram L. Harris  
Charles Edward Russell

### NATIONAL LEGAL COMMITTEE

*Chairman*  
Arthur B. Spingarn

*Chicago*  
Clarence Darrow  
Edward H. Morris

*Cambridge, Mass.*  
Felix Frankfurter

*Charleston, W. Va.*  
T. G. Nutter

*Columbia, S. C.*  
N. J. Frederick

*New York*  
Morris L. Ernst  
Arthur Garfield Hays  
James Marshall  
Herbert K. Stockton  
Charles H. Studin

*Pittsburgh, Pa.*  
Homer S. Brown

*Toledo, Ohio*  
Jesse S. Healy

*Washington, D. C.*  
William H. Hastie  
Charles H. Houston

*Wilmington, Del.*  
Louis L. Redding

## NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE

69 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

TELEPHONE: ALGONQUIN 4-6548

Official Organ: *The Crisis*



### EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

WALTER WHITE SECRETARY  
ROY WILKINS ASSISTANT SECRETARY  
WILLIAM PICKENS FIELD SECRETARY  
DAISY E. LAMPKIN REGIONAL FIELD SECRETARY

December 19, 1934

My dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

On thinking over my request of you of December 15 that you arrange an appointment with the President ~~for me~~, it occurs to me that I should have told you the purpose for my request. It deals, of course, with the matter of lynching and the Costigan-Wagner bill.

In order to strengthen public sentiment behind the bill and to give greater support to the President's unequivocal position against lynching and for the enactment of adequate legislation, we have, among other things, circulated a memorial which we have asked governors, the mayors of about two hundred cities, a select list of university and college presidents, editors, churchmen, jurists and organization heads to sign.

The response to requests for signatures has been truly remarkable. We have had signatures even from the mayors of southern cities and among the university presidents who have affixed their signatures are Presidents Angell of Yale, Ames of Johns Hopkins, Tigert of the University of Florida, Clothier of Rutgers, Comstock of Radcliffe, Gray of American, McCracken of Vassar, McConnell of North Texas Teachers College, Neilson of Smith, Pendleton of Wellesley, Snavely of Birmingham Southern, Woolley of Mount Holyoke, Williams of the University of Missouri, and many others.

I wish you would advise me as to whether or not it would be an imposition upon the President - busy as he is now - to receive a select delegation of not more than five persons on Friday, December 28 or Saturday, December 29, at which time this memorial may be presented to him. It is necessary that it be presented to him prior to the opening of Congress, as you will note from the way in which it is phrased. I enclose copy of the memorial. The outstanding character of the signers would give popular support, we believe, to whatever the President sees fit to recommend to Congress. Would you be good enough to advise me frankly on this as the time is quite short for getting the delegation together. We plan asking one distinguished churchman, one educator, one distinguished woman,

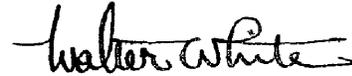
*How do your Senators and Congressmen stand on the Costigan-Wagner Anti-Lynching Bill?*

ENDORSED BY THE NATIONAL INFORMATION BUREAU, 215 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt - #2.

and, if possible, one outstanding southerner to make up the delegation.

Ever sincerely,



Secretary

P. S.

The committee which has tentatively been selected to present the memorial to the President is as follows: 1. Mrs. Frederick Scott, member of the National Board of the Y.W.C.A., president, Richmond, Virginia Y.W.C.A., convener for the southern region, National Board, Y.W.C.A., and leader of southern opinion; 2. Dr. Samuel McCrea Cavert, secretary of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, or Bishop James Edward Freeman of Washington; 3. Dr. J. S. Ames, President, Johns Hopkins University and signer of the memorial; 4. James Weldon Johnson, professor, Creative Literature, Fisk University; special lecturer, New York University; author, "Along This Way", "Negro Americans, What Now?"; etc.; 5. Dean Charles H. Houston of Howard University.

None of these has as yet been asked as we wished to withhold invitations until we know first if the President will be able to receive the delegation, and the date and hour when the delegation will be received. If the President has no objection, I should like also to be present. I do hope very much that you will be able to be present.

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

W. W.

WW:LB

MEMORIAL TO PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT:

The killing and burning alive of human beings by mobs in the United States is a reproach upon our nation throughout the civilized world. The recent shameless abduction of a prisoner, and transportation across the State line from Alabama to Florida to be lynched, with the crime advertised throughout the nation twelve hours in advance, is a notorious example of the complete breakdown of the machinery of justice which has grown out of the lynching evil. Since 1882, 5,068 human beings have been lynched in the United States, with less than a dozen convictions; in each of these cases only nominal prison terms were given the lynchers.

During 1934 the total of lynchings has already reached the alarming number of 18. While the Costigan-Wagner Anti-Lynching Bill was pending in the Congress there was a complete cessation of lynching for a period of six months but since June, when Congress adjourned without voting on the Costigan-Wagner bill, 16 mob murders have taken place.

We, the undersigned, urge respectfully that you as President of the United States in your opening address to the Congress place the Costigan-Wagner Anti-Lynching Bill on your "must" program. Only unequivocal action by yourself as the leader of American opinion can overcome the objections even to a vote on the measure by a small group in the Senate who prevented a vote during the last session of Congress. In behalf of the good name of America we respectfully urge immediate action upon the convening of Congress to the end that the Federal Government may give aid, as it has in the case of kidnapping, to the State in stamping out this notorious American crime.