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NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF COLORED PEOPLE

69 FIFTH AVENUE, NEW YORK

TELEPHONE ALGONQUIN 4-3551

Official Organ: The Crisis



February
18th
1938

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Dear Mac:

Will you do me the favor of placing
this letter in the President's hands at the
earliest possible moment, as it may require
action prior to the convening of the Senate on
Monday, February 21st?

Cordially,
Walter
Secretary.

Mr. Marvin H. McIntyre
Secretary to President Roosevelt
Hyde Park,
New York.

Carbon copy to Mr. McIntyre
at the White House,
Washington, D. C.

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Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt
 President of the United States
 Hyde Park,
 New York.

My dear President Roosevelt:

What may conceivably be the final crisis on the anti-lynching bill will arise when the Senate convenes on Monday, February 21st. Because all the efforts that have been put forth are about to go for naught unless you intervene, this appeal is addressed to you.

In a conference yesterday with Senator Barkley, Mr. Charles H. Houston, of our staff, and I presented to Senator Barkley the proposal that instead of letting the relief bill^x displace the anti-lynching bill, Senator Wagner be permitted to move to suspend debate on the anti-lynching bill in order to permit taking up the relief bill, and to set a day certain for some date in April to resume debate on the anti-lynching bill.

Our reasons for asking this are as follows:

1. If the anti-lynching bill is displaced as the unfinished business, it will be practically certain that it cannot be taken up again in the Seventy-fifth Congress, which will mean the death of the bill.

2. Since January 6th when the filibuster began, no less than five lynchings, one of them of a white man, have been prevented because of the pendency of the bill as the unfinished business of the Senate and the conviction that a lynching would insure passage of an anti-lynching bill. If mobs which have been held in restraint are given to understand that the anti-lynching bill is dead, we predict an outburst of lynching and perhaps an increased number of lynchings.

3. Displacement of the bill and its virtual death

ENDORSED BY THE NATIONAL INFORMATION BUREAU, 215 FOURTH AVENUE, NEW YORK
 29th ANNUAL CONFERENCE, COLUMBUS, OHIO, June 28th - July 3rd, 1938

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would be a disheartening blow to many millions of Americans, white and Negro, North and South, who have worked so hard, so long and so faithfully for the bill. As far as twelve million American Negroes are concerned, it would say to them in effect that certain of the states cannot protect them and the Federal Government refuses to do so.

4. Abandonment of the bill will be an open invitation to various movements to propagandize among Negroes that they can expect no protection from the American form of government. The speeches which Senators Bilbo, Ellender and other Southern Senators have made in their vicious attacks on the Negro have beyond all doubt done more to destroy hope of American Negroes for protection from mobs under the American Government than all the speeches and all the literature of the so-called radicals and subversive influences put together which have been directing their appeals to the Negro.

5. Death of the bill would leave Negroes and the country generally with the impression that the filibusterers speak for, or at least dominate the United States Senate and the Administration so far as this issue is concerned.

6. If the forces of reaction and bigotry which are about to deliver the death blow to the anti-lynching bill succeed, then these and other forces of reaction will be heartened to use precisely the same methods in defeating other legislation, such as the wages-hours bills, government reorganization, and any other liberal legislation in this and succeeding Congresses. The issue, therefore, transcends that of race and of the crime of lynching, as was pointed out Tuesday in a Coast-to-Coast broadcast by Congressman Raymond J. Cannon of Wisconsin.

7. Postponement to a day certain would permit those interested in the anti-lynching bill to go to the country to explain the basic issues involved to the people who in turn have a right to express themselves to their individual Senators. We hope that you and the enlightened Democratic members of the Senate will not permit yourselves to be disheartened by the present dark outlook. A great wave of public opinion may conceivably change the attitude of some members of the Senate on the matter of cloture.

We once again pay tribute to the courage and determination of Senators Barkley and Wagner. We are fully aware of the responsibilities with regard to other legislation which Senator Barkley faces as Majority Leader. But if this course is followed, business of the Senate and of the country will not in the meantime be held up. Faith and hope in you as the great liberal leader of the country, and of your party, will not be lessened or destroyed if such a course is followed. We respectfully ask, therefore, that you communicate with Senator Barkley prior to the convening of the Senate on Monday to the end that he may know that setting over the anti-lynching bill to a day certain has your full approval and support, and that you do

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#3 - Hon. Franklin D. Roosevelt

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whatever else in your judgment may be necessary or appropriate.

Respectfully,


Secretary.

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