

BROOKLYN PETITION FOR FRANK PARDON

Sponsors Plan to Make State- wide Appeal Here to Georgia Governor.

COMMITTEES TO BE NAMED

W. S. Well Tells of Inquiry in At- lanta That Convinced Him of Prisoner's Innocence.

People of Brooklyn who believe in the innocence of Leo M. Frank, under sentence of death in Atlanta for the murder of Mary Phagan, are planning to have a State-wide appeal made from New York to the Governor of Georgia for a pardon. Already a petition is in circulation in Brooklyn, and those who have issued it say that it is being signed by thousands of persons who think Frank guiltless or at least feel that he was not convicted fairly. A committee of citizens, headed by Joseph Goldstein, a lawyer, of 16 Court Street prepared the petition.

Mr. Goldstein said last night that 5,000 signatures had been obtained. It was planned, he said, to organize committees in various parts of the State to carry on the work. He expected in a few days to announce the names of fifty members of the Brooklyn committee. The petition follows:

Believing that all government must, of necessity, be founded on truth, justice, and liberty, and that no State or country can long endure which will set that trinity at defiance, we, the undersigned, citizens of the State of New York, do hereby petition your excellency, in the exercise of a wise discretion, to grant to Leo M. Frank, now under sentence of death in the city of Atlanta in the State of Georgia, the benefit of the doubt which seems to have arisen in the minds of almost all the right-thinking people the world over, as to the defendant's guilt.

We are impelled to this action, because all the facts reported about this case bear all the ear-marks that technicality of law bars with a hand of steel the influx of the light of reason. While we believe in the forms of law, yet we are not ready to sacrifice truth and justice to its iron-bound decrees. If Leo M. Frank be, in fact, innocent, then forms of law should not be permitted to rear its giant frame to prevent substantial justice being done.

Passion, prejudice, and bigotry, we fondly believed, had been relegated to the oblivion of the mediaeval ages. The whole world stands aghast at the spectacle of a man being tried for his life in a court of law with an enraged, unreasoning, passion-flamed, prejudiced mob shouting and execrating against the prisoner; intimidating the Judge and jury, and filling the entire atmosphere of the trial court with the most implacable feeling of blind hatred against the accused.

In the name of justice, common sense, and humanity, we join in the prayer that you, as the Governor of the State of Georgia, will grant to Leo M. Frank a full and free pardon.

Walter S. Well, a Brooklyn manufacturer, who frequently makes business trips to the Southern States, told of a personal investigation he made while in Atlanta of certain of the circumstances surrounding the murder. His inquiry convinced him of the innocence of Frank. Mr. Well's visit to Atlanta was on business for his firm, shoe manufacturers, of 379 De Kalb Avenue. He saw Frank in jail, and was impressed favorably by the young man.

"As to the personal impression Mr. Frank made upon me, I can but say that any statements made before in his favor were not overestimates. He is a man of intelligence and refinement, and it seems almost impossible that one of his calibre could have committed this deed.

"Through him I met a Mr. Schiff, who conducted me through the pencil works, the scene of the crime. I was shown through the plant on a Saturday after the hands had stopped work. Having read C. P. Connolly's report of his investigation for Collier's Weekly in THE NEW YORK TIMES of last Monday, I would like to emphasize what to my mind seems the strongest point in favor of Mr. Frank. Mr. Connolly brings out the very point which struck me most forcibly during that visit, namely, the fact that the murderer wrote in the murder notes an exact description of the manner in which the Phagan girl was first attacked. 'A tall, sleek, black negro shove me down this hole.' is to my mind the key to the entire situation.

"The negro, Conley, admits that on the morning of the murder he was hidden behind a lot of empty packing cases in the hallway of the pencil works. He named everybody who entered the factory that morning, including the Phagan girl, excepting that he failed to mention a man who entered two or three minutes after Mr. Frank said the Phagan girl had left. Yet Conley says he was watching there during the time the girl was being murdered. Where was he during this interval? The answer seems to be this:

"When Mary Phagan came down the stairs on her way to the street, from his hiding place behind the packing boxes Conley sprang and pushed her down the elevator shaft. That fact was uppermost in his mind when he wrote the notes, yet the police accepted his statement that he carried the girl down on the elevator at Frank's direction.

"As before stated, I visited the plant after operations for the day had ceased and all was quiet. One of the employes of the factory started the motor which runs the elevator. The noise of the elevator running could be heard in any part of the building. The vibration was so great that it could be felt throughout the plant.

"At the time the murder was committed three of the employes were working on the floor above, and all three swore that they did not hear the elevator run that day. Yet these employes were at work within a few feet of the elevator shaft.

"Could the jury but have visited the scene of the crime, I doubt that even the howlings of the frenzied mob outside the trial room would have affected the verdict, which is bound to be changed in time, as affecting Mr. Frank, to 'not guilty.'"