

SMITH COLLEGE
NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION AND BIBLICAL LITERATURE

March 24th, 1933.

Governor Miller,
The Capitol of Alabama,
Birmingham, Alabama.

My dear Governor Miller;

When Chief Justice Anderson made his heroic report in the Scottsboro case, a host of American citizens felt that Alabama might be saved from a stigma which centuries cannot wipe out.

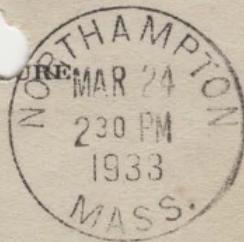
Unfortunately it looks now as though the spirit of race prejudice and mob law will again flood into the court room and a legal lynching take place. The reports of the statements made by the prosecution make countless American men and women, who feel deep sympathy for that heroic band of Southern white men and women who have been struggling to establish justice in place of injustice in the Southern courts, seriously afraid that the spirit in which this trial is about to be conducted is not one in which calm judgment will be present, but, rather, hot and cruel blind emotion.

Had the trial been held in Birmingham I feel that there might have been hope. Decatur has a record already stained with mob violence. Its population is composed of the rural element, uneducated and obsessed with a prejudice for which they are not to blame for they drank it with their mother's milk. Having lived in the South, counting many of your outstanding leaders both of the white and Negro race, among my friends, I know of what I write. But, you, Sir, and the men of your class, know these things too, and the real responsibility lies not with the poor and ignorant farmer and cotton grower, but with the educated and enlightened men and women who hold high positions of authority. If there is mob violence and the mob spirit in the court room at Decatur the guilt lies with men like yourself, who, for fear or favor, suffer such things to be.

Already in the minds of countless of your fellow citizens and a larger hosts in the great nations outside our land the state of Alabama has suffered great and lasting shame. The treatment of the boys during these long months of imprisonment has caused those of us who know to blush for America. The Nazi treatment of the Jew is less harsh and cruel than what is being endured in many any American prison camp and on many a chain gang. To the men who have the courage and the fairness to help right these great wrongs may not come popular acclaim among their own community, but men and women who love justice will acclaim them and the future will enshrine their names as pioneers of the better day.

Respectfully yours,
S. Ralph Harlow
S. Ralph Harlow
Professor, Smith College

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Governor Miller,
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