

# GEORGIANS HERE APPEAL FOR FRANK

**They Will Petition Gov. Slaton  
to Pardon Him or Com-  
mute His Sentence.**

## TWO PLANS ARE PROPOSED

**Those Who Favor Commutation  
Think in Time He Will Be Able  
to Prove His Innocence.**

Georgians who live in this city and have followed closely proceedings in the case of Leo M. Frank, sentenced in Atlanta on Wednesday to be hanged on Friday, Jan. 22, 1915, for the murder of Mary Phagan, a factory girl, are preparing to make a united appeal to Gov. John M. Slaton of Georgia, with a view to securing a pardon or a commutation of sentence for the condemned man. Frank's lawyers have exhausted all means to bring about a vindication for their client, who stoutly maintains his innocence, through the courts. The final decision now rests with the Chief Executive of the Commonwealth of Georgia.

The Frank case was discussed at an informal conference held last night by some members of the Georgia Society, with the result that the society will be asked at a meeting to be held shortly to take formal action on behalf of Frank. Some of those present at the conference were John Hart Gress, President of the Georgia Society, William Harman Black, who was Commissioner of Accounts under the McClellan administration, and who is Chairman of the Tammany Hall General Committee; Fire Commissioner Robert Adamson, former Fire Commissioner Joseph Johnson, Jr.; Powell Crichton, and Percy C. Magnus.

The conference was called by Mr. Gress as a result of a letter he received yesterday from Mr. Black, who is a former President of the Georgia Society. Mr. Black wrote:

New York, Dec. 10, 1914.  
J. Hart Gress, Esq., President Georgia Society, New York City:

Dear Gress—It has been suggested by a number of our members that we take some action in attempting to secure the pardon of Leo Frank, whose last legal effort has failed.

If you agree with me, telephone me when we can get together, and decide just what to do.

I have talked it over with some Georgia lawyers whose opinion I value very highly, who do not believe he should have been convicted, and I have always believed the Governor would pardon him, owing to the peculiar circumstances of the case. I am, very truly your friend.

WILLIAM HARMAN BLACK.

### Two Plans Considered.

As a result of last night's meeting two plans are under consideration. One contemplates the sending of a petition asking mercy for Mr. Frank to Gov. Slaton, which not only members of the society but other Georgians residing in this city would be asked to sign. The other plan had in view the sending of personal letters and telegrams to the Chief Executive of Georgia urging either a pardon or a commutation of Frank's sentence. Many members of the Georgia Society believe that Frank is innocent and should be pardoned outright, while others believe that the ends of justice would be met if the condemned man were saved from the gallows so that he may be alive to receive the benefit of the vindication which his friends surely believe will come to him in time.

"I have no doubt that the Georgia Society will act as a body in the behalf of the unfortunate man," said President Gress last night. "I personally do not think Frank is guilty. Even if he is, I think he should have a new trial. I talked to Gov. Slaton when he was in this city a few days ago, and the Frank case was brought up incidentally. While the Governor naturally could not venture an opinion as to the guilt or innocence of Frank, I feel convinced from my talk with him that he will consider the case carefully, and that he will not let Frank go to the gallows."

"I have talked to quite a number of Georgians in this city. They all feel as I do, that Frank is not guilty. We feel that the honor of the State of Georgia is involved in this case, and that it will reflect on every Georgian wherever he may happen to live if Frank should be made to pay the death penalty as the result of a conviction brought about by such flimsy, insufficient, and questionable testimony."

"I do not undertake to pass on the question of whether Mr. Frank got a fair trial or not," said William Harman Black. "I know that a good many people think that he did not and believe him to be innocent. My brother in Atlanta, Eugene R. Black, was formerly Public Prosecutor of the City Court of Atlanta. He does not believe Frank is guilty. I am willing to accept his opinion."

### Favors Commutation.

Former Fire Commissioner Joseph Johnson, made this statement:

"I have talked to several fellow Georgians this morning about the Frank case, and they have agreed with me that the solution of the matter might lie in requesting Gov. Slaton to commute Frank's sentence to life imprisonment. I have been a newspaper man in Georgia, and have reported many trials in the courts there. I am not one of those who now believe that there has been a miscarriage of justice. While there may have been a 'mob' spirit around the trial, neither the judges nor juries in Georgia are cowards, and I am inclined to think the verdict would have been the same had the 'mob' desired it otherwise. One cannot help be moved, however, at the eloquent plea made by the condemned man in his own behalf; and, despite everything, it has raised a doubt in the minds of many whether it can be called a legal or reasonable doubt or not."

There are about 300 members of the Georgia Society in this city. Several of the members yesterday expressed themselves in terms of the highest praise regarding Gov. Slaton whom they pronounced a man far too strong to be swerved by an outburst of impassioned public sentiment.

## PRESS ON FRANK CASE.

**Comment Showing the Views of  
Widely Separated Communities.**

The press of the country continues to comment on the case of Leo M. Frank, resented to death for the murder of Mary Phagan. Excerpts from editorial articles follow:

### State May Do Murder.

From The Indianapolis News.

Only Executive clemency can save Leo M. Frank from execution. The Frank case is one of the most amazing—and may prove to be one of the most lamentable—that has developed within recent years.

Frank stands under sentence of death, yet the trial Judge and a Justice of the Federal Supreme Court have seen the possibility of a miscarriage of justice—not a technical miscarriage, but an actual miscarriage involving life and death. One thing is clear, Frank has not been proved guilty beyond all shadow of doubt. There is danger of murder being committed by the State of Georgia.

### Law's Spirit Violated.

From The Philadelphia Public Ledger.

No doubt the technicality of the law has been vindicated by the action of the United States Supreme Court in denying a motion for a review of the Frank case.

The law, like every other human institution, is bound to work imperfectly. It may be that the very technicalities which have brought about this apparent perversion of justice are in the main essential to the due protection of so-

ciety from the criminal. Yet such a conspicuous example of the way in which the letter can defeat the spirit of the law is to be deplored on every ground.

### A "Monstrous" Possibility.

From The Kansas City Times.

In Atlanta, Ga., Leo M. Frank is under sentence of death for the murder of a girl, Mary Phagan. Frank's attorneys have exhausted every means to obtain a new trial. The case was carried to the Supreme Court of the United States, but without avail. No constitutional point was involved. The final decision was announced yesterday.

Meanwhile the case has attracted attention all over the country. The possibility of the law's inflicting the death penalty on an innocent man is so monstrous that it has shocked the public. Technicalities repeatedly have been invoked to save guilty men. It is curious that no way has been found to give a new trial to a man whose guilt is under reasonable doubt.

### Urges Executive Clemency.

From The Buffalo Times.

The case of Leo M. Frank of Atlanta is evidently a proper one for clemency. It is a reasonable conclusion that a man should not be hanged when so widespread a belief in his innocence exists in the public mind.