

Investigative Journalism Game

Student Name _____ Date _____

The New Deal and the Anti-lynching Bill Description and Instructions

You have just been magically transported back to 1939. Once you reorient yourself, you realize you are a member of an editorial board of a major magazine or newspaper. Although the Roosevelt Administration is facing numerous problems at home and abroad, such as a coalition of Republicans and Southern Democrats blocking his New Deal initiatives in Congress and Nazi aggression in Europe, your colleagues have decided to publish a retrospective piece about the NAACP's unsuccessful attempts to get Congress to enact anti-lynching legislation during the New Deal. As a member of the editorial board, your job is to determine how your publication wants to portray the participants in this campaign and evaluate the merits of the proposed bill.

In order to do this, you and your colleagues will have to analyze a packet of primary documents gathered by your investigative reporters. Luckily, this has already been compiled by your editor-in-chief and will be distributed at the beginning of your first meeting. Once you have had the opportunity to examine the documents, your board will need to agree upon its editorial policy regarding the anti-lynching campaign. After you do this, individual board members will be responsible for using the document packet to prepare a brief entry (3-4 paragraphs) that will be published as part of this retrospective. Please remember that the information presented in the article must conform to the editorial policy of your paper or magazine. For example, it would be highly unlikely for a paper in favor of the anti-lynching bill to portray the Senate filibuster in a positive manner. Conversely, those opposed to the bill might find merit in the arguments presented during the filibuster and question the motives of the NAACP. These brief articles will be due at the beginning of class, _____ . The various papers and magazines will present their proposed retrospectives to their editorial boards (i.e. the rest of the class) on _____ .

Paper or Magazine Editorial Boards:

1. *The New York Times*
2. *The Chicago Tribune*
3. *The Macon Telegraph*
4. *The Crisis*

Topics for the Retrospective:

1. What was the NAACP's role in the anti-lynching campaign?
2. Were Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt supportive of the anti-lynching campaign?
3. Why did Southern Democrats and some Republicans oppose the anti-lynching bill?
4. What does the failure of the anti-lynching bill tell us about the extent of reform in the New Deal?
5. Why were the supporters of the anti-lynching bill unable to get it enacted?

After you hear these presentations, you will be magically transported back to the present. You are now a textbook author who wants to include a balanced account of the anti-lynching campaign of the 1930s in the New Deal chapter of his/her forthcoming American history textbook. You should use your document packet and class notes to do this. This textbook entry, which will take the form of a three page paper (typed, double-spaced) will be due on _____ .