

407. Jefferson Ave
Elizabeth N.J.
December 31, 1942

Honorable Franklin D. Roosevelt
President of the United States of America
Washin-gton D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

I know that you Mr. President are very busy in a time like this with the most important task for the country; the winning of the war. But I really do not know any other way than write to you as the last resort in this case.

So I beg your Pardon and I hope you still spare a few minutes and read this letter and may help me and my family.

I am a German Alien (Enemy alien now) 29 years old and came in Nov. 1935 in this country. In February 1939 I married in Westfield N.J. the former Emmy Rehm, 23 years of age, who came in Nov. 1937 in this country from her native Germany. We both resided in the USA. continuously since our entry. We came here with the intention to make a better living and later on become U.S. Citizens.

In May 1937 I took out my first papers here in Elizabeth N.J. But since this country became involved in the second World-war about a year ago, the situation for us as German Aliens became tougher. Me and the wife complied with all the new laws and regulations. We did not miss any registrations.

We have 3 children now: (all boys) Werner is 3, Gunther $1\frac{1}{2}$ years and Theodor jr. is 4 weeks old.

Since March 1937 I work as a Toolmaker in The International Nickel Co. Research Laboratory Bayonne N.J. Before that I worked as a Toolmaker in the Garwood N.J. Plant of the Aluminum Co. of America.

As to my knowledge my present employer has Government or defence contracts that I am working on.

We always did our duty and had never trouble with the law or anybody. We never were arrested in our life until we came in contact with the F.B.I.

I paid always my taxes and my bills and wanted to raise my children the best christian way. I want to give them a better youth of life and education than our parents could afford to give us.

On April 10th this year a F.B.I. Agent or rather a local detective visited me in my working place in Bayonne N.J.

It was noontime and I was questioned for about $\frac{1}{2}$ hour in the directors office. Questions about my personality, my financial status, the names and addresses of mine and the wives closest relatives in Germany

Other questions were, if I would argue with people about the war, what I never do. At the end the inspector told me: do not worry about anything you have an excellent record here with the Co.

Later on I learned that this trouble came from my former landlord where I lived for about $1\frac{1}{2}$ years in Bayonne. They immigrated in this country from Poland or Ukraine and after the German troops marched into these countrys, the landlord and his wife got different feelings toward us.

We never talked about war or anything things like that. We always had to worry enough about ourselves and the children and minded our own bussines.

Now for a minor reason about the little boy the lady got mad and we received a registered letter from the landlord in which he notified us of a raise in our rent from \$34.- to \$45.- monthly. Well we moved out on Nov. 15th 1941 and went back to Elizabeth N.J. to our present residents We lived in Elizabeth before.

Now on Sept. 9th 1942 6:30 PM. came one F.B.I. and two policeman and searched our apartment. I had no contraband in my possession.

I belong to German sick and death benefit society and a German Singing Society both here in Elizabeth N.J.

Well the F.B.I. Agents came back again on Sept. 24th 1942 9:30 PM and arrested me and the wife and wanted to take us to the policeheadquarter

I wanted to know the reasons for that, but they could not give me any others than for being an enemy alien. I told the agents that I have two little children, which we could not leave all alone.

Therefore we did not have to go to jail in the night time, but the next morning we went to policeheadquarter, to get fingerprinted and our pictures taken. We were released under parole in custody of the F.B.I.

Well my wife was about 5 months pregnant with her 3rd baby and she received quite a shock that time and she did not feel well ever since.

The F.B.I. agent told us we will get a ~~hearing~~ hearing before a Alien-Hearing Board in Newark N.J. but instead we had first on Oct. 16th 1942 to go to Ellis-Island Immigrations Headquarter. There we had to fill out a 26 page Questionnaire about our personal history and had to sign a statement what we would like to choose in case we would get interned for the duration of the war.

I am sorry Mr. President, but neither me nor the wife did come into this country with any intention of any kind to sabotage or work against the government.

I do not see any sense in things like that. So in case we would get interned, I choose to be sent back to Germany with all my family, because me and the wife do not feel guilty of any crime and for being German-born that is not our fault. Then nobody can choose his own father or the country where he would like to be born.

On Nov. 16th 1942 finally we had the opportunity to present ourselves before the Alien-Hearingboard in Newark N.J. We had 2 witnesses with us, which are citizens of USA and resided in this country since 1895 and 1907 continuously. Both Gentlemen know us since we are in this country.

Dear Mr. President! I was brought up the christian way where they taught me; you shall not kill your father, mother or brother.

What answer could I give to the question:

Would you fight against Germany?

I am willing to defend my home and this country against any attacker on this continent.

I am sure, you understand my position I could just as well have said easily yes to that question.

Mr. President, if I would be a man like the F.B.I. fears, I can assure you I would not be here in this country, I would be on the other side and fight. And I would not work on defence work either.

All this I have told the Gentlemen of the Hearingboard in Newark N.J.

And I wanted to explain to these gentlemen how this trouble arose, but they told me that I was excused.

They examined me and the wife separately and they asked the wife the question; do you have the same idea as your husband? My wife did not know the questions asked me or the answers given. Therefore how was she to answer?

And Mr. President, every criminal or gangster has a right to

court or

hear the decision of the Hearing-Board. Are not we as human beings entitled too to know the decision of the Hearing-Board in our case?

All we did get as an answer was : you can go home now.

My wife did bear the child all that time, and she came home from these Hearings everytime sick to death from all the excitements. And all this was not beneficial to my wife, who was in a pregnant ~~maxixian~~ condition.

She did feel sick mostly times since the F.B.I. came around first in the night to arrest us.

So on Dec. 2nd in the morning the wife started to get real pains. She was home all alone with the 2 children. She called up her doctor who fortunately had time enough to run around in the neighborhood and look for somebody to take care of the 2 children until I came home.

Between 5 and 6 PM the wife gave birth to a premature Baby-Boy which is a cripple and probably will be a cripple for the rest of his life, if he survives. The baby has an open space in his backbone and is half lame.

With all the trouble we had and all the sickness my dear wife had already, that is all we could need: a crippled child in the family.

Now the wife and I were get slowly over that shock. Then on Saturday Dec. 26th the day after christmas in the morning came the F.B.I. again and told my wife: you pack up your things and get ready to go to Ellis Island to wait there with the other bunch to go to camp. We are going down to Bayonne and get your husband.

But when they learned of the new born baby and his condition, they told us they come back in two weeks and see if the Baby is all right to travel. If not, they check up in two more weeks and continue ~~xx~~ that.

Mr. President, we know everybody has to carry a burden in these days, but do we have to have all that trouble all the time?

And why take me away from my job when the country needs all skilled labor and I am willing to help?

And furthermore these continuous excitements will soon drive me and my family crazy.

The first aim this country fights for in this war is to preserve humanity and christianity, I believe in these ideals too.

Mr. President, my 3 children are born here and I feel that they should at least have the right to grow up free and enjoy having a father and mother with them.

Mr. President, I hope, and wish you have time enough to read this letter and study our case and I am sure that you will help us, and I would appreciate very much a speedy reply.

Please make the coming year more happier for us. We always will remember it and remain very thankfully

and respectfully yours

Theodor Graber and family