

ABRAHAM CRONBACH  
3098 Riddle View Lane  
Cincinnati 20, O.

October 15, 1952.

Hon. Harry S. Truman,  
The White House,  
Washington, D.C.

*Return this letter  
to Abraham Cronbach*

Dear Mr. President:-

Though I have passed my seventieth birthday, this is the first time in my life that I address a president of the United States of my own initiative. Hitherto I have, on rare occasions, written to the president because requested by some organization to do so. This time I am actuated entirely by my own Heart's promptings.

The people in whose behalf I implore your compassion are people whom I have never seen or met, with whom I have never corresponded and of whom I had never heard previous to their present calamity. I refer to Julius and Ethel Rosenberg who, convicted of conspiracy to betray atomic secrets to Russia, have been condemned to death.

I fully realize that considerations of mercy must be balanced against considerations of our national security. My plea is that our national security would, in no wise, be impaired if the sentence of the Rosenbergs were commuted from that of death to that of imprisonment. Imprisonment, combined with what that unfortunate man and woman have already suffered, can not but act as a deterrent upon others--assuming that there can be any deterrent except feelings of loyalty to our country.

According to the charge upon which they have been convicted, the Rosenbergs committed their misdeed at a time when the United States and Russia were not foes but allies. To be sure, the law does not distinguish between a friendly power and a hostile power. The law forbids the betrayal of such secrets to any foreign power. But, while the distinction would lack pertinence in a law court, need it be ignored in a plea for executive clemency?

At the period when, according to the charge, the Rosenbergs committed their crime, no one except a few highly trained experts knew anything about the atomic bomb. The period alleged in the charge antedated Hiroshima. After Hiroshima, all of us knew about the atomic bomb. Prior to Hiroshima, none of us knew. One of the witnesses on whose testimony the Rosenbergs were convicted stated in court that, previous to the first explosion at Alamogordo, the townsfolk at Los Alamos regarded the atomic scientists "as a sort of boondoggling outfit." The Rosenbergs could hardly have realized what they were doing. Would not this also justify clemency?

*more.*

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The case of the Rosenbergs is so unique that executive clemency for the Rosenbergs can not possibly create a precedent against the death sentence for infractions in the future, should it be judged that our national well-being necessitates that punishment.

Mr. President, you are well conversant with the teaching: "Blessed are the merciful." You subscribe to that teaching. The only impediment to the application of that teaching is concern for our national defense. Will you not, Mr. President, consider carefully whether our national defense actually requires that the Rosenbergs be executed? As one thoroughly convinced that the answer is "No," I beseech you: Have mercy.

Loyally Yours,



# COLOR AND DEMOCRACY COLONIES AND PEACE

W. E. B. DU BOIS  
23 WEST 26TH STREET  
NEW YORK 10, N. Y.

VICE-CHAIRMAN  
COUNCIL ON AFRICAN AFFAIRS

October 21, 1952

Rabbi Abraham Cronbach  
Hebrew Union College  
Clifton Avenue  
Cincinnati, Ohio

Dear Rabbi Cronbach:

I believe that you must be, as I am, deeply shocked at the refusal of the Supreme Court to review the Rosenberg Case.

On next Tuesday, October 28, a second appeal to the Supreme Court to hear the case will be filed. In support of that appeal I am joining in a petition which will be filed as a "Friends of the Court" brief. This petition will be submitted on behalf of approximately 50,000 persons who have authorized inclusion of their names.

A copy of that petition is enclosed. I ask that you give it your careful consideration. I hope that after you have done so, you will join with me in signing it.

The time is short. The petition must go to the printers no later than Friday of this week in order to be ready for filing next Tuesday. May I, therefore, ask that you wire or phone your reply to me care of the Rosenberg Committee, 1050 Sixth Avenue, New York, BRyant 9-9694, at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,



~~W. E. B. DuBois~~