FBI Turns Over 725 Pages of Files On Rosenbergs to History Professor

Post 8/30/75

Associated Press

The FBI has made public the first of its secret files on the espionage investigation of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, a batch of 725 pages turned over to a history professor who is researching the case.

The action Thursday was the first time the FBI has disclosed any material from the probe, which led to the conviction and 1953 execution of the Rosenbergs for slipping atomic bomb secrets to Soviet agents.

The documents include progress reports on the investigation, lists of items found in a search of the Rosenbergs' New York apartment, and summaries of interviews with Rosenberg and with confessed spy David Greenglass, brother of Ethel Rosenberg and the principal witness against the Rosenbergs.

The FBI turned over the documents to Allen Weinstein, a Smith College professor who petitioned for them three years ago and subsequently filed suit under the Freedom of Information Act.

The Rosenbergs' sons, Robert and Michael Meeropol, also have brought suit to obtain the 48,000-page FBI file. The sons use the name of the couple who adopted them after their parents' execution.

A federal court has ordered disclosure of most documents by Nov. 15, and Deputy Attorney General Harold R. Tyler has pressed the FBI for "maximum possible disclosure" quickly.

The documents delivered to Weinstein also are to be mailed to the Meeropols, who have claimed that full disclosure of the files would prove that their parents were innocent.

The FBI also gave Weinstein 350 pages on the investigation of Alger Hiss, convicted of perjury in 1950 for denying to a grand jury that he gave State Department documents to confessed spy Whitaker Chambers.

In an interview, Weinstein said the disclosure "is an encouraging first step forward, and I hope it foreshadows the imminent release of all the papers." He urged the public to suspend judgment on the merits of the charges against the Rosenbergs until the full FBI record is made public and analyzed.

One document, a summary of an FBI interview with Rosenberg on June 16, 1950, said: "Rosenberg claimed that he and David did not discuss the atom bomb from the technical standpoint, either before or after the restrictions were lifted."