Petitioners Seek FBI Records in Rosenberg Case

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A committee of persons who believe Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were framed in their 1950 spy trial petitioned the Justice Department yesterday to release secret FBI records of the case.

The Rosenbergs were executed as atomic spies for the Soviet Union Their sons, Michael and Robert Meeropol, have obtained 30,000 government documents under the Freedom of Information Act in an effort to clear their parents' names but claim crucial papers have been withheld.

Robert Meeropol and member of the National Committee to Reopen the Rosenberg case called a sidewalk news conference while their attorney, Marshall Perlin, sought to present a petition said to bear more than 16,000 names to Attorney General Edward H. Levi.

"We the undersigned demand that the U.S. government immediately release all files in the Rosenberg-Sobell case as required by the Freedom of Information Act," the petition began. Morton Sobell received a 30-year sentence in the case.

"We demand an end to secrecy in government and a end to coverups of illegal and unconstitutional acts . . . We have the right to know the truth in the Rosenberg-Sobell case."

Committee members claimed they gathered the petition signatures in France and West Germany and on college campuses across the United States.

Committee leaders said that, although the Meeropols have received a large volume of documents from the FBI, Central Intelligence Agency and other agencies, they are being denied crucial documents that government officials claim are exempted from release by law.