

Harry Gold Held Neurotic In F.B.I. Rosenberg Files

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 5—Harry Gold was described as a neurotic and hostile personality with traits adding up to "imbalance" in a court-ordered psychiatric report six months before his testimony in the trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.

The testimony of Mr. Gold, a conferred atomic-spy courier for the Soviet Union, helped bring about 1951 death sentences for the Rosenbergs and a 30-year prison term for Morton Sobell for conspiracy to commit espionage.

A summer of the psychiatric report turned up today among 29,000 pages of Federal Bureau of Investigation files released on petition of Michael and Robert Meeropol, the Rosenbergs' sons, who hope to demonstrate their parents' innocence.

Mr. Gold testified in March 1951 that he had obtained atomic information from David Greenglass, another major prosecution witness, but he was never cross-examined by defense counsel.

Psychiatric reports had been ordered in Philadelphia by Federal Judge James P. McCraney before he sentenced Mr. Gold Dec. 9, 1950, to 30 years in prison as a spy conspirator with Dr. Klaus Fuchs, the British atomic scientist.

A 1966 effort by Mr. Sobell to challenge Mr. Gold's credibility in a bid by Mr. Sobell for a new trial led the Federal Bureau of Investigation in New York to ask whether Mr. Gold has ever undergone psychiatric examination, and an F.B.I. reply from Philadelphia dated July 8, 1966, noted two 1950 tests.

Summary of Findings

They were reported in the file of the Federal court probation officer in Philadelphia.

One, by a five-member team, concluded that "Gold showed no latent or potential psychopathic tendencies," the Philadelphia agents said.

The other summarized the findings of Dr. Samuel Leopold, director of the Neuropsychiatric Division of the Philadelphia Municipal Court, as follows:

"The report indicated the Gold has above-normal mentality. He is not insane but shows a neurotic personality characterized by extreme orderlines and compulsions. He has poor relationship to the world, dominated by resentful ideas and with immature psychosexual development.

"This personality is present in the mystic, the fanatic and

the revolutionary with exaggerated ego and oversensitivity, reversed hostility.

"His early history with economic difficulties and racial prejudices, poor religious influence and a mother with early radical political ideas—all have added to his imbalance.

"His fanatic drive when he thought he was right made him totally oblivious of everything."

Other documents showed repeated but unsuccessful efforts by the F.B.I. in the early years of Mr. Sobell's imprisonment—he served nearly 18 years—to induce him to give up his protestations of innocence.

Unlike the Rosenbergs, Mr. Sobell did not testify at his trial. He would have faced problems explaining an alleged "flight to Mexico," which he said in a recent autobiography had been motivated in part by a hope to avoid possible perjury charges for a false anti-Communist oath as a defense engineer.

A July 1, 1952, New York memorandum quoted a confidential prison informant as asserting that Mr. Sobell told him:

"I was the fall guy in this whole thing. I am innocent. I was around when a lot of things happened and a lot of people were involved in it. I've got a story to tell—a good story to tell, and they'll listen to me!"

But the memorandum went on:

"During recent conversation [name blanked out] had with [apparently the informant] and the reading of the letters of Mrs. Sobell to her husband, it has become quite evident that Sobell would like to cooperate with the Government but is being prevented from doing so because of the influence his wife exercises over any decision in this matter."

'Arrogant' and 'Stubborn'

By March 30, 1954, another F.B.I. document said, "Sobell is arrogant, stubborn, proud, self-centered and egotistical," although the agency went on with at least four interviews with him in Alcatraz Penitentiary during the year.

An F.B.I. response from New York on April 24, 1951, to a request for an appraisal of Mr. Sobell's appersonality, shortly after his sentence, said, "Sobell lives in a world of electricity and electronics," with classical music and photography his only diversion diversions.