

F. B. I. Yields Rosenberg Files in Bid by Sons to Prove Parents Were Innocent

By PETER KIHSS

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 3—A quarter century after Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were arrested as atomic spies, the Federal Bureau of Investigation today released 29,000 pages of investigative reports and other files that the Rosenbergs' sons hope may reveal that their parents were innocent.

Neither son, Michael or Robert Meeropol, nor their representatives appeared here. But inspection of some of the papers clipped together in 70 clumps showed, among other things, the following:

A poignant appeal from the star witness, David Greenglass, brother of Mrs. Rosenberg, against the death sentences for her and his brother-in-law was made three months before their electrocution June 19, 1953. Mr. Greenglass wrote that they were guilty, but that imprisonment might make them confess and "if these two die, I shall live the rest of my life with a very dark shadow on my conscience."

Mr. Greenglass admitted about the same time, March 23, 1953, that he had stolen a two-or three-ounce hemispherical of uranium-238 from the Los Alamos bomb laboratory, an action he denied in a 1950 interrogation. His wife, Ruth, said he had kept it in "an old sock" as a souvenir. Mr.

Greenglass said he threw it into the East River after his first denial of the theft.

QDr. Rudolph Peierls, head of the British mission to Los Alamos, expressed doubt that a confessed spy-scientist, Klaus Fuchs, ever transmitted information on atomic research to the Soviet Union and said that in his opinion Dr. Fuchs "surrendered himself and created the story of his espionage activities" in 1950 to induce declassification of the secrets.

The British leader's suggestion was derided as "a lot of baloney" by his American opposite, Dr. J. Robert Oppenheimer. An F.B.I. memo on March 24 and 27, 1950, quotes him as saying, "The atomic bomb exploded by the Russians was so like the American atomic bomb" that Dr. Fuchs's confession let him "logically understand why."

Opening of the files resulted from a Federal court suit by the Meeropol brother under the Freedom of Information Act. The bureau said that the files were available first to the petitioners and some researchers who had already filed requests, but that other would-be perusers could telephone or write to the F.B.I. to ask for an appointment to read the files

The first scrutiny by newsmen—seven of them—started today under the watchful eyes of Deputy Attorney General Quintan Shea and Edward Goodenham, an agent from the bureau's press section, and continued with agents on hand to see that the documents remained intact.

15-Year Sentence

Mr. Greenglass was sentenced to 15 years on the charges of conspiracy to commit espionage, charges that led to the Rosenbergs' deaths and to a 30-year sentence for Morton Sobell. Mr. Greenglass was an Army machinist at Los Alamos in 1945. He testified that he had given information on the bomb project to Mr. Rosenberg—information Mrs. Rosenberg then typed, he said—and that he had given similar "data" to Harry Gold, another prosecution witness.

In a letter his attorney, O. John Rogge, sent to President Eisenhower urging that the death sentences be commuted, Mr. Greenglass wrote that his own testimony had been an "act of contrition for the wrong I had done my country, my family and myself."

"Here I had to take the choice of hurting someone dear to me," he wrote, "and I took it deliberately. I could not believe that this would be the outcome. May God in His mercy change that awful sentence."

The documents showed efforts by Mrs. Rosenberg's mother, Tessie Greenglass and another brother of Mrs. Rosenberg, Samuel, in 1950 pretrial visit to her in prison in New York to convince her to cooperate with the bureau. One memorandum said that the mother had suggested that Mrs. Rosenberg "divorce Julius" and that Mrs. Rosenberg had declared that she and her husband were innocent and had then "told her mother never to return" to visit her.

A memorandum on a Sept. 12, 1950, F.B.I. interview with Samuel Greenglass said he had asserted that between 1932 and 1935, "both Julius Rosenberg and Ethel Rosenberg became violent Communists, and since that time have maintained that nothing is more important than the Communist cause."

Samuel Greenglass was quoted as saying, he "became so concerned over the Communist influence of Julius Rosenberg and Ethel Greenglass over David Greenglass that he offered to pay their transportation to Russia if they would agree to stay there" but that "they declined."

After the death sentences, the mother and another brother, Bernard, visited Mrs. Rosenberg in Sing Sing Prison March 14, 1953. A memorandum said she "yelled and raved" that they were "trying America" to free him.

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A May 18, 1951, post-trial memorandum from the F.B.I. office in New York responded to a request by J. Edgar Hoover, director of the bureau, for personality data on the Rosenbergs.

F. B. I. View of Rosenberg

"Rosenberg," the memorandum said, "believes that he is brilliant both as an engineer and as an espionage agent and feels that he is a martyr to the cause," resolving that he will not reveal his associates in espionage and relying on the advent of a "sovietized America" to free him.



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Ethel and Julius Rosenberg at time of trial in 1951