

## Khrushchev Leaves Behind Revelations on Rosenbergs

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### Description

Excerpts of a new book about the reminiscences of Nikita Khrushchev, reveal an admission by the Soviet leader that he worked with the Rosenbergs to develop the atomic bomb.

### Keywords

Cold War, Ethel, Julius, Rosenberg, Khrushchev, Soviet Union, Espionage, Spying, Atomic Bomb, New Documents, Trial, Communism, Witch Hunt, Spies, Execution, Treason

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## CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE

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## Transcript

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TOM BROKAW, anchor:

There is dramatic new evidence tonight that may once and for all resolve questions about the guilt of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg. They were the New York couple arrested in 1949, charged with treason and executed for passing American atomic-bomb secrets to the Soviets. More from NBC's Fred Briggs.

FRED BRIGGS reporting:

Their trial took place in the early 1950s, a time of fear about communists and government. Many felt it was a witch-hunt, and when both received a death sentence, there were protests in most major cities. The Rosenbergs would be the first civilians ever executed for treason. But the Supreme Court turned down their appeal; the White House refused to grant clemency.

JOHN CAMERON SWAYZE (Camel News Caravan): They will be executed tonight--probably within the next half hour.

Mr. LOUIS NIZER (Lawyer): The evidence was overwhelming of their guilt, and the jury had a right, at least, to say so, but I think that punishment was totally unwarranted.

BRIGGS: Yet, there were then--and still are--some doubts of their guilt. Today, *Time* magazine published an excerpt from a book of the taped reminiscences of Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet premier in the '50s.

In the book, Khrushchev refers to what he calls "some good people who helped us produce our first atomic bomb." He said, "They were not agents or spies, but they were people sympathetic with our ideals." He goes on to say, "I was part of Stalin's circle when he mentioned the Rosenbergs with warmth. I cannot specifically say what kind of help they gave us, but I heard from both Stalin and Molotov, then minister of foreign affairs, that the Rosenbergs provided very significant help in accelerating the production of our atom bomb. Let this be a worthy tribute to the memory of those people."

The Rosenberg's children, who visited their parents in prison right up until they were executed 37 years ago, live in Massachusetts now, having taken the name of their adopted parents. Today's news was yet another shock.

Mr. MICHAEL MEEROPOL: The first shock: when I was seven years old, listening to the Lone Ranger,

and the FBI arrested my father.

BRIGGS: They believe their parents' innocence--still do--and wonder if Khrushchev really said what was quoted. If he was still alive...

MEEROPOL: I'd want to ask him the simple question: Did he always believe what Stalin told him?

BRIGGS: Today, the son of Nikita Khrushchev visited his father's grave. He believes Russian scientists made the bomb without any help from the Rosenbergs.

Mr. SERGEI KRUSHCHEV: ...from wh--when you take the secrets from abroad by intelligence. No, you must understand how to do it by your hand.

BRIGGS: Yet his father claims the Rosenbergs were helping hands. Fred Briggs, NBC News.