

12/1/16 Statement by Ethel Rosenberg's Sons Michael and Robert Meeropol

Welcome, and thank you for being here.

More than 63 years ago we came here to Washington D.C. as boys, aged six and ten, and asked President Eisenhower to spare our parents. He didn't. As a result Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were executed, we grew up without the warmth and love of our mother and father, and a shameful event stained our national history.

Since that day, evidence from the U.S. government, KGB files, and end-of-life admissions has added up to a large body of proof that our father was not engaged in passing atomic secrets, and that our mother was not engaged in spying at all. Furthermore, none of the spies who actually *were* guilty of passing U.S. atomic secrets were executed.

This isn't just our opinion. Examine the objective third-party sources, or watch a recent episode of *60 Minutes*, and you will see that this is true.

There is now no question that the U.S. government—fueled by the hysteria of McCarthyism—encouraged false testimony and wrongly killed our parents. Even Roy Cohn, the red-baiting McCarthy aid and former mentor to President-elect Trump, admitted this.

We've been fighting this fight for over four decades. We're not young men anymore, and we would like to see the cloud that the government cast over our family finally lifted, so that we, our children, and our grandchildren can spend our days in peace.

We don't want reparations, such as were given to the Japanese-American victims of internment. We don't want a pardon, because that would imply that our mother committed a crime. We just want President Obama to issue a statement, exonerating Ethel Rosenberg.

Some might ask: Why should the President bother or the American people care?

Because there will be more times of mass hysteria and hatred in this country like the McCarthy era. Many fear that we're embarking on one right now.

Because all of us want the United States to be a country that does not fake evidence to kill its own citizens.

Because all of us want the United States to be a fair and honest country that has the courage to admit its mistakes.

Because as we teach our children, admitting our transgressions is the first step in understanding them, and thus ensuring that we don't make the same transgressions again.

We therefore call on President Obama to examine the package of information we've delivered to him, and read the editorials, articles, letters from elected officials, and petition with over forty thousand signatures.

We ask the President to think about his own words, in June of 2016, referring to anti-Muslim hate speech. "We've gone through moments in our history when we acted out of fear, and we came to regret it," he said. "We've seen our government mistreat our fellow citizens. And it has been a shameful part of our history." We ask him, while he still has the power, to address this shameful moment in American history and exonerate Ethel Rosenberg.

We also ask the American people to keep calling, writing, and signing the petition at RFC.org. We have to keep working until this wrong is fixed, and then work some more. Because justice for our mother is just one small step in proving that justice will continue to flourish in this country for all of us.

Thank you.

- Robert & Michael Meeropol