

# ROSENBERGS DIE FOR SPYING

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# ROSENBERGS DIE FOR SPYING

## BOTH CALMLY GO TO CHAIR AT SING SING

### Neither Makes a Final Statement

(Pictures on back page)

Ossining, N. Y., June 19 (AP)—Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, silent and without emotion, died in the Sing Sing electric chair tonight for betraying atomic bomb secrets to Russia. Neither made a final statement.

Rosenberg, walking firmly and unsupported by guards, entered to death chamber first as a chaplain intoned the 23d psalm by his side. He was strapped into the chair at 7:04 p. m. [Chicago time]. Two minutes later he was pronounced dead.

His wife was then led in, at 7:11, and she was dead at 7:16, just 15 minutes before the start of the Hebrew sabbath.

#### Court Voids Douglas' Stay

The spy couple's execution ended a frenzied day of dramatic legal moves after the Supreme court had voided a stay of execution previously granted by Associate Justice William O. Douglas.

The Rosenbergs were the first civilians in American history to die for espionage.

As their trial opened more than 27 months ago, the then United States attorney, Irving H. Saypol, told the jury they had conspired to steal and deliver to the soviet "the one weapon that might well hold the key to survival of this nation and the peace of the world—the atom bomb."

The day's legal efforts to save the Rosenbergs were climaxed as President Eisenhower rejected a plea for clemency with the sharply worded statement:

"I can only say that by immeasurably increasing the chances of atomic war, the Rosenbergs may have condemned to death tens of millions of innocent people all over the world."

#### Mrs. Rosenberg Kisses Matron

Altho their last day had been filled with stormy excitement outside for their supporters, there was only a single, small moment of drama within the prison involving the Rosenbergs, who had displayed stoical calm since their conviction.

As Mrs. Rosenberg, a short, plumpish woman of 37, stood before the electric chair in a shapeless green patterned dress and slippers, her small mouth seemed twisted, no one could say if it was a smile or sneer.

She took one step, then turned suddenly toward Mrs. Helen Evans, prison matron who had walked to the chamber with her. Mrs. Rosenberg pulled Mrs. Evans to her and they kissed.

Visibly affected, the matron quickly left the room with Mrs. Lucy Many, a telephone operator

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# ROSENBERGS DIE IN CHAIR FOR BETRAYING U. S.

## Pay Supreme Penalty as Atomic Spies

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who had also accompanied Mrs. Rosenberg.

Mrs. Rosenberg sat down calmly and her arms dropped limply on the chair sides. She winced slightly as the electrode helmet was attached to her clipped head and the restraining thongs were fitted in place. The other electrode was connected to her bare right leg.

### Switch Thrown Five Times

The execution switch was thrown. Her hands clenched and her body surged against the straps as three jolts were sent thru her.

Two physicians examined her in murmured consultation. They signalled, and again Joseph Francell, the executioner, threw the switch a fourth and fifth time.

It was all over.

Mrs. Rosenberg probably did not know that her husband was the first to go. His execution came first so that she would not have to see him in the pre-execution cell to which he had been taken earlier in the day.

Rosenberg, his eyes staring, was apparently oblivious to the 10 official witnesses in the tiny room.

He sat quietly as all the deadly gear was fixed in place.

### Body Wheeled from Room

After three jolts, the first three seconds long, and then two of 57 seconds each, the physicians approached him, tore the undershirt that covered his chest and applied their stethoscopes.

The doctors pronounced him dead and the body was placed on a white medical cot and wheeled from the room.

As each died, Rabbi Irving Koslowe, Jewish prison chaplain, stood beside the chair, murmuring prayers in hushed whispers. To Ethel Rosenberg, he intoned the 15th and 31st psalms.

### Last Words Unknown

What Mrs. Rosenberg's last possible words may have been were Mrs. Evans' secret. For after they had embraced, the matron spoke to the doomed prisoner, and Mrs. Rosenberg seemed to reply. But the words they spoke were indistinguishable to those watching.

The executions were scheduled three hours before the customary Sing Sing hour of 10 p. m. [Chicago time] so that the work would be finished before 7:31 p. m. when the Hebrew sabbath began.

Twice during their final day the Rosenbergs were permitted to see each other. During the morning they talked for 90 minutes thru the wire mesh screen of the death house visitors' room.

Prison officials allowed them to spend the afternoon together

## Pulled Switch



[AP Wirephoto. Copyright: 1953. By the New York Daily News]

Joseph Francell, official executioner at Sing Sing prison, where atom spies died last night.

until 6:20—40 minutes before the execution hour.

Then they were separated and prepared for the chair.

### Given No Special Dinner

The two did not get the special final dinner traditionally allowed those about to die because the rapid sequence of developments thru the day prevented this one detail of the machine-like precision of prison routine.

There had been some speculation that the doomed pair might at the last moment save themselves by confessing whatever they might know concerning the espionage for which they were convicted.

Thruout the trial and in all the subsequent months, however, they contended they were the innocent victims of a frame-up.

It was understood that a special telephone line had been kept open from the prison to the justice department in Washington so that if either of the Rosenbergs chose to talk, a last minute Presidential reprieve would be possible.

Other than talking to each other and being visited by the chaplain, the Rosenbergs saw only prison officials on their last day.

### Brother Arrives Too Late

No visitors approached Sing Sing to see them until, two hours before the executions, Rosenberg's brother, David, arrived at

the gates. He was passed thru the cordon of state troopers who had been detailed to form an inner defense against possible demonstration. Local police manned barricades set up four blocks away.

It was too late, however, for David to be allowed into the death house and after a few minutes, red eyed and lips trembling, he came out and was driven off in a police car.

### Hit Area of Hysteria

Shortly after the electrocutions, the "National Committee to Secure Justice in the Rosenberg case" issued this statement:

"The very memory of them will one day cause America to look back with shame on the era of hysteria under which they were tortured and put to death.

"Our nation's security is not greater for it. . . . Our nation's conscience is not more serene. . . . our nation's light does not shine brighter. . . ."

The committee said it would fight to clear the Rosenbergs' name for the sake of the surviving sons and "so that it cannot happen here again."

The committee's sponsors include some persons prominent in groups cited as subversive by the United States attorney general.

### Cries "Shame on America"

In Washington tonight, Emanuel Bloch, one of the Rosenbergs' defense lawyers, and three of his associates heard news of the electrocution over the radio.

"Shame on America," Bloch cried out to reporters. "American democracy died with the Rosenbergs."

He said a "brutal and barbaric act" had been committed and President Eisenhower will "go down ingloriously in history as a President who countenanced deaths."

## WAY CLEARED BY IKE

BY PHILIP DODD

[Chicago Tribune Press Service]

Washington, June 19—Atom Spies Julius and Ethel Rosenberg died in Sing Sing's electric chair tonight after President Eisenhower had cleared the way by refusing them clemency in the wake of the Supreme court's ac-

tion in setting aside the stay of execution granted them Wednesday by Justice Douglas.

The legal finale of the espionage case required a few minutes more than two hours and these developments followed in rapid succession:

1. The Supreme court convened at noon and Chief Justice Vinson immediately read the decision, supported by six justices, setting aside the Douglas stay of execution, Justices Douglas and Black read dissenting opinions. Justice Frankfurter also dissented.

### Counsel Asks Stay

2. Emanuel H. Bloch, chief counsel for the Rosenbergs, moved for a stay of execution to permit the clemency plea to be presented at the White House, and Fyke Farmer, independent counsel, moved for a reconsideration of the court's action. The court retired for a conference on the motions at 12:30.

3. At 1:37 the justices returned to the bench, Vinson announced the Bloch and Farmer motions were denied, and at 1:41 the marshal, at a nod from Vinson, declared, "The special term is now adjourned."

4. At 2:10 p. m. the White House announced the President had rejected the appeal that he spare the life of the husband and wife spy team.

5. Defense lawyers spent the afternoon frantically trying to get individual justices to grant stays of execution but were turned down in succession by Justices Black, Burton, Jackson, and Frankfurter.

### Bloch Turned Back

After his unsuccessful attempts to get individual justices to grant stays, Bloch vainly stormed the gates of the White House, but was turned back by White House Police Corp. William J. McCarthy.

Bloch's appearance at the White House gate precipitated an angry demonstration. McCarthy, refusing to let the lawyer in because he did not have an appointment, referred him to a nearby public telephone to make an appointment.

Counter pickets, carrying placards demanding death for the Rosenbergs, prevented Bloch from entering a nearby drug store. They shouted "throw the bum out" and other epithets.

### Defense Lawyer Retreats

Police stationed near the White House advised Bloch to go back toward the White House, or away from the counter-pickets. The lawyer retreated to the gate and gave a sheaf of papers to McCarthy. After greeting some of the Rosenberg pickets, he left.

Earlier, Bloch had shown reporters a letter which he said Mrs. Ethel Rosenberg had written the President from Sing Sing urging him to "take counsel

with your good wife. . . . her heart must plead my cause with grace and felicity."

The letter said the "great democratic United States is proposing the savage destruction of a small Jewish family, whose guilt is seriously doubted thru-out the length and breadth of the civilized world."

Shortly before the Rosenbergs were executed the White House announced the President had read Mrs. Rosenberg's letter asking clemency and concluded it added "nothing to the issues."

### Second Denial by Ike

Mr. Eisenhower's action marked the second time he has denied clemency to the Rosenbergs, found guilty March 29, 1951, of conspiracy to transmit atom secrets to soviet Russia. His first refusal was Feb. 11, shortly after he took office. President Truman had taken no action on the appeal.

In a statement announcing his refusal, the President said he was convinced that the only conclusion to be drawn from the history of the case is that the Rosenbergs have received the

benefit of every safeguard which American justice can provide.

Justice Douglas had granted the stay of execution, after the high court four-times had refused to review the Rosenberg conviction, on the ground there was a question whether the Rosenbergs were properly sentenced to death under the 1917 espionage act.

### Legal Merit Lacking

He said the courts should pass on the question of whether the case should have been brought under the atomic energy act of 1946 which permits imposition of the death sentence only on recommendation of the jury. The jury had made no recommendation in the New York trial of the Rosenbergs.

Dissenting from the majority view, Douglas said that "no man or woman should go to death under an unlawful sentence."

Vinson, in his opinion, said the court did not consider the legal point on which Douglas based his action to have sufficient merit to warrant a stay.

The chief justice said the gov-

ernment agreed, "and we do not doubt," that Douglas had the power to issue the stay, but he said there also was no dispute that a stay can be issued only if there is a "substantial question" yet to be decided in the courts. The question raised was not considered "substantial," he said.

### More Time Advocated

Vinson announced that Douglas and Black dissented and that Justice Frankfurter thought the legal questions were "complicated and novel" and that time should be allowed for arguments and deliberation by the court. The court yesterday heard three hours of argument on the subject, met for three hours late yesterday, and an hour and a half this morning in closed session.

The Vinson announcement indicated the vote on setting aside Douglas' stay was 6 to 2 with Frankfurter "dubitante"—a legal term meaning doubtful. Those voting with Vinson were Justices Reed, Burton, Jackson, Minton, and Clark.

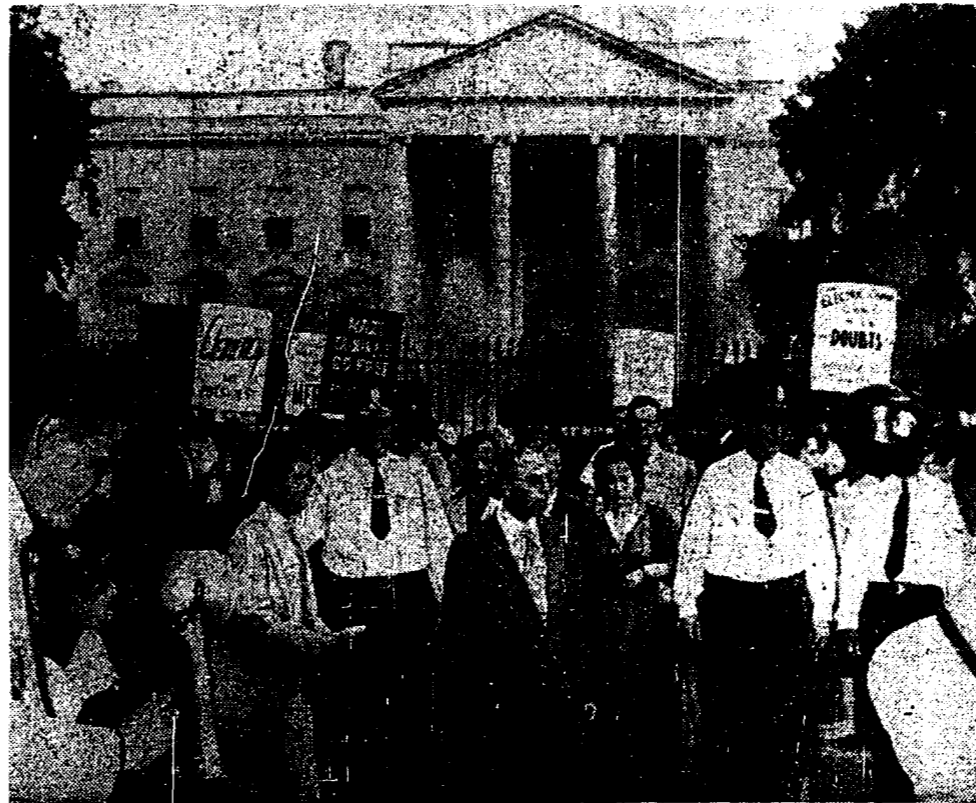
# Execute Rosenberg Couple as Atom Spy Traitors—Chicago Area Swelters in 101 Degree Heat



[New York News Photo]

Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, atom spies, who went to their deaths in electric chair at Sing Sing prison last night after all avenues of reprieve had been closed.

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[Associated Press Wirephoto]

Pickets joined Emanuel Bloch (center) yesterday when chief lawyer for Rosenbergs went to White House to make clemency plea, denied by President.