

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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IN RE PETITION OF NATIONAL SECURITY)
ARCHIVE, AMERICAN HISTORICAL)
ASSOCIATION, AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LEGAL) Miscellaneous Action
HISTORY, ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN)
HISTORIANS, SOCIETY OF AMERICAN)
ARCHIVISTS, AND SAM ROBERTS)
FOR ORDER DIRECTING RELEASE OF)
GRAND JURY MINUTES)
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DECLARATION OF STEVEN USDIN

I, Steven Usdin, hereby state as follows:

1. I am a Washington, D.C.-based journalist and serve as the senior editor for *BioCentury* --- a publication that reports on events relating to the biotechnology industry. I am also an historian, focusing on Soviet espionage efforts relating to U.S. military technology. I have recently written *ENGINEERING COMMUNISM: HOW TWO AMERICANS SPIED FOR STALIN AND FOUNDED THE SOVIET SILICON VALLEY* (Yale Univ. Press 2005). The book tells the story of Joel Barr and Alfred Sarant, dedicated Communists and members of the Rosenberg spy ring, who stole information from the United States during World War II that proved crucial to building advanced weapons systems in the Soviet Union during and after World War II. On the brink of arrest, they escaped with the KGB's help and eluded American intelligence for decades. The book explains why Barr and Sarant became spies, how they were recruited to spy for the Soviets by Julius Rosenberg, how they obtained military secrets, and how FBI blunders led to their escape. The book chronicles their pioneering role in the Soviet computer industry, including their

success in convincing Nikita Khrushchev to build a secret Silicon Valley and their success in designing weapons systems that were in use throughout the Cold War.

2. I fully support the petition to unseal the grand jury records relating to the prosecution of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg and Morton Sobell. In my view, much of the untold story of the Rosenberg case is the success of the Rosenberg spy ring in engaging in espionage activities relating to non-atomic military technology. The key to understanding the significance of the Rosenberg case is that Julius not only spied for the Soviet Union, but more important, he recruited and ran a network of engineers who had access to detailed information about advanced military technology. Julius Rosenberg's information was valuable – he personally gave the Soviet Union blueprints for, and a working copy of the proximity fuse – but his most significant contribution to the USSR was as a recruiter and handler of agents. Among the important information the Rosenberg ring transmitted to the Soviets were detailed specifications and manufacturing instructions for critical Soviet military technologies of the early Cold War, including: the proximity fuse, which the Soviets first used on May 1, 1960 to shoot down an American U2 spy plane piloted by Francis Gary Powers; powerful land-based and airborne radars; automated anti-aircraft weapons; jet engine and airframe technology; and many others. The Rosenberg ring's espionage did not end with World War II. Joel Barr leaked details to the USSR on radar technology used to guide intercontinental ballistic missiles as late as the summer of 1948. Just weeks before David Greenglass was arrested in June 1950, he and Julius Rosenberg were collaborating on plans to purloin technology for stabilizing tank guns from Greenglass's employer. As I wrote in *Engineering Communism*, “Rosenberg's band of amateur spies turned over detailed information on a wide range of

technologies and weapons systems that hastened the Red Army's march to Berlin, jump-started its postwar development of nuclear weapons and delivery systems, and later helped Communist troops in North Korea fight the American military to a standoff.”

3. The Rosenberg espionage trial focused on the Rosenbergs' transmittal of information relating to the Atomic bomb to the Soviets. But the majority of witnesses before the grand jury did not testify at trial. It is therefore likely that some, if not a good deal, of the information provided by the grand jury witnesses related to other espionage activities of Julius Rosenberg and his espionage ring, and that it can be correlated with other information, such as decrypted Soviet intelligence cables, declassified documents from both sides of the Iron Curtain, and other sources to build up a more complete picture of the group's activities. Learning the details of this testimony would be an invaluable tool to historians and researchers who are still trying to determine the full extent of Soviet industrial espionage in the United States.

4. The Venona decrypts include several codenames for members of the Rosenberg ring who have not been identified. The grand jury transcripts include testimony from and about individuals who historians suspect may have been members of the ring. The transcripts may include details that can help corroborate or refute these suspicions.

5. Despite his assistance -- the case against Julius and Ethel Rosenberg would have been impossible without him -- the prosecution sought and obtained a harsh sentence for David Greenglass. The grand jury testimony may shed some light on why prosecutors sought to impose such a heavy sentence on Greenglass notwithstanding his assistance.

6. One of the most compelling reasons for studying the Rosenberg case is to gain an understanding of the motives of Americans who spied for the Soviet Union. My book, *ENGINEERING COMMUNISM*, is an effort to tell part of that story. The grand jury testimony may help historians gain a better understanding of the individuals who participated in the Rosenberg ring and those who were close to it.

7. The Rosenberg case also represents a major failure of U.S. counterintelligence. The grand jury transcripts could provide some additional information on the systemic failures that prevented the FBI from detecting a group of amateurs who managed to photograph tens of thousands of pages of classified documents *after* Julius Rosenberg. Joel Barr and Alfred Sarant had been fired from government jobs because they were judged to be security threats.

8. Last, but by no means least, the grand jury records may shed additional light on the role that Ethel Rosenberg played in the Rosenberg espionage ring. In my view, Ethel was not an unwitting innocent bystander. The Rosenbergs lived in a small apartment with their two children; Julius used the apartment to microfilm documents and to meet with members of his ring. Ethel could not have been oblivious to these activities. She shared Julius's passion for the Communist cause, she recruited her brother to join the ring, and she was present when Julius met with Soviet intelligence officers. The available evidence suggests that Ethel played a minor role in Julius's espionage activities, and that her brother, David Greenglass, exaggerated the extent of her actual involvement in court. The grand jury records may help us better understand the role she played, and whether the federal government intentionally misled the grand jury as part of an effort to pressure the Rosenbergs to confess. It might also help illuminate the government's

reasons for seeking the death penalty against her, which in my view, was unwarranted, as it was for Julius.

I hereby declare under the penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed this 21 day of December 2007, in Washington, D.C.



Steven Usdin