Q

co - Mr. Belmont
Mr. Lee

Assistant Attorney General (Orig. & 1) January 10, 1956
William F. Tompkins

Director, FBI

MORTON SOBELL, with aliases
ESPIONAGE - R

There is enclosed a Photostat of an article which appeared in the "Daily Worker" for January 3, 1956, which reports an interview with Mrs. Helen Sobell, wife of the subject. It is noted Mrs. Sobell stated a motion for a new trial for the subject would be filed within a month. By memorandum of December 27, 1955, you were furnished with a Photostat of an article which appeared in "The Worker" for December 18, 1955, which reported an interview with Mrs. Rose Sobell, mother of the subject. In that interview, she stated attorneys were preparing legal motions to be presented in court in an effort to obtain a new trial for her son.

No information has been obtained concerning the filing of such a motion and if information is received, you will be promptly advised.

101-2483

Enclosure

cc - 1 - 100-387835 (National Committee to Secure Justice in the Rosenberg Case.)

1 ENCL. 38

JPL:nlh
(6)

RECORDED-38
EX-126

101-2483-1198

JAN 11 1956

100-387835

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0-19 (7-8-55)

'To File for New Trial' Says Mrs. Sobell in Interview

By VIRGINIA GARDNER

VISITORS at the Greenwich Village apartment of Mrs. Helen Sobell on New Year's Day found a calmly confident young mother who spoke cheerfully of her last visit to her husband in Alcatraz, and looked forward to 1956 as a very different year from all others since 1950.

"I can now definitely say that a motion for a new trial for Mort will be filed by his attorneys in the Federal District court here within a month," said the wife of Morton Sobell, convicted in 1951 with Ethel and Julius Rosenberg and sentenced to 30 years by the judge who blamed the Korean war on the young Lower East Side couple.

With quiet conviction, and a firm thurst of the jaw, Mrs. Sobell, carefully choosing words, said: "The motion will charge the knowing use of perjured testimony by the prosecution. It will be supported by documents and affidavits.

"It will have a most explosive issue."

Asked if new evidence not contained in the book, "The Judgment of Ethel and Julius Rosenberg," by John Wexley, which revealed many new facets of the case, would be presented, she replied:

"There will be new evidence, as yet completely unrevealed to the public."

IT WAS THIS news of the expected date of the forthcoming motion which buoyed up Sobell when she visited him, she said. He had consulted with his counsel in the 3,000-mile-distant fortress of Alcatraz, but it was not until his wife's visits in November and December that he was made aware of the approaching date.

She saw him in all [illegible] allowed because she had not been able to avail herself [illegible] allotment of one visit [illegible] most six months. The last [illegible] recent visit was on [illegible] ing Day, the fourth [illegible] arrival at the [illegible]

HELEN SOBELL

MORTON SOBELL

She was thus able to bring him, she said, "the heartening news of the atmosphere at the West Coast meetings—the hopefulness and responsiveness of the people, the electric effect on them when they heard we would be going into the courts soon—though then I didn't know just how soon."

Her engineer husband, who has maintained his innocence from the outset as did the Rosenbergs, is now working in a laundry folding sheets [illegible] hours a day, she said. He is locked in his cell [illegible] hours a day. Once a week [illegible] permitted to read the Wexley book and the [illegible]

"It made him angry all over again," she said. "He spoke especially of the way Ethel was tortured during the trial by repeated references to her use of the Fifth Amendment.

"By the time I saw him he had been through the Wexley book twice, in spite of the special rules set up for the reading of those two books. He thinks it a great book, written with painstaking accuracy and care."

Mr. Tolson
Mr. Boardman
Mr. Nichols
Mr. Belmont
Mr. Harbo
Mr. Mohr
Mr. Parsons
Mr. Rosen
Mr. Tamm
Mr. Sizoo
Mr. Winterrowd
Tele. Room
Mr. Holloman
Miss Gandy

file 101-2483

Branigan

Wash. Post and Times Herald
Wash. News
Wash. Star
N. Y. Herald Tribune
N. Y. Mirror
Daily Worker 4
The Worker
New Leader

Date JAN 3 1956

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
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enclosure

Rot to New York
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ENCLOSURE

101-2483-1198

0-19 (7-8-55)

Mr. Tolson ______
Mr. Boardman ______
Mr. Nichols ______
Mr. Belmont ______
Mr. Harbo ______
Mr. Mohr ______
Mr. Parsons ______
Mr. Rosen ______
Mr. Tamm ______
Mr. Sizoo ______
Mr. Winterrowd ______
Tele. Room ______
Mr. Holloman ______
Miss Gandy ______

She paused, then continued: "It isn't as if Mort wasn't there, hearing all that was said during the trial. We both were." She stopped again, to praise her six-year-old Mark's handiwork, a drawing, then went on:

"Mort has said many times, of course, that although it might not have made any difference in the outcome of the trial if he had taken the stand—at least he wouldn't feel that he had gone down without striking a single blow in his defense.

"His attorneys advised him not to take the stand because there was no case against him. While they thought this was for the best, looking back we can see how much their attitude was influenced by the fear and hysteria of the times.

"I know they continue to be most disturbed at the entire case," she said, alluding to Sobell's former lawyers, "and will want to help in every way they can when the new trial motion is filed."

MRS. SOBELL spoke of the warm welcome extended her in western Canada. In Calgary a commercial radio station taped an hour-long interview with her. In four cities, Vancouver, Calgary, Regina and Winnipeg, newspapers [illegible]

She was impressed with the large number of men, many of them farmers, who attended the meetings. In Regina, heart of the great wheat-producing Saskatchewan, which has a predominantly Canadian Commonwealth Federation government, she shared the platform with a deputy minister of health, Dr. Murray S. Acker, and a department of labor research director, H. S. Elkin.

"Four cabinet ministers attended the meeting," she said, "and sponsors included six trade-union leaders, a newspaper writer and prominent professional men and women.

"As I was speaking I noticed a man from the floor nodding encouragement to me. He was dressed plainly and I assumed he was a farmer. I found out later he was a cabinet minister. Later, at a reception in Dr. Acker's home, it was so crowded that some of the ministers were seated on the floor. They don't stand on ceremony there—they represent the farmers and workers and [illegible]

stop attacks on it such as were started after I left."

SHE ALLUDED to the controversy begun when Alex Cameron, an opposition member of the legislative assembly in Saskatchewan, demanded the firing of Elkin and Acker for their part in the Sobell meeting. Premier T. C. Douglas was among those who countered with a vigorous defense of the right of the government officials as well as others to speak their minds in suggesting a new Sobell trial.

"Many of the farmers who saw the ads in the papers and drove long distances to get to the meetings, said it was enough for them that Roy Cohn, Sen. Joseph McCarthy's former staff aide, had been one of the prosecutors. That made them want to hear my side of the story — that and my husband's repeated declarations of innocence."

Asked if any questioners separated the Sobell case from that of the Rosenbergs, she said: [illegible]

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FEBRUARY 14, 1956

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SAC'S NEW YORK
WASHINGTON FIELD (DCS)

EX-121

b1

MORTON SOBELL, WAS., ESP-R. [redacted]

CHECK INFORMANTS AND SOURCES FOR INFORMATION AND IMMEDIATELY ADVISE OF ANY INFORMATION YOUR OFFICE CONCERNING SUCH TRIP PLANNED BY SUBJECT'S WIFE. WFO CHECK RECORDS, PASSPORT DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF STATE, AND ASCERTAIN IF PASSPORT ISSUED HELEN SOBELL, BORN HELEN LEVITOV, WASHINGTON, D.C., MARCH THIRTEEN NINETEEN EIGHTEEN, PREVIOUSLY MARRIED TO CLARENCE GUREWITZ. LATEST ADDRESS FIVE ZERO SIX WEST ONE THIRTY FIFTH STREET, NYC. SUTEL IMMEDIATELY.

HOOVER

[redacted]

101-2483

2 - Washington Field (DCS)

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Declassify on: OADR
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NOTE: Morton Sobell was convicted of conspiracy to commit espionage along with Julius and Ethel Rosenberg and was sentenced to 30 years in 1951. Wife, Helen, is employed by Natl Committee to Secure Justice in the Rosenberg Case and has been making speeches in U.S. and Canada protesting her husband's innocence. Bufiles negative re this trip.

CC 100-387835 (Natl Comm. to Secure Justice in Rosenberg Case)

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Nichols
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FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
COMMUNICATIONS SECTION

FEB 16 1956

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Mr. Tolson
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Mr. Winterrowd
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Miss Gandy

MR. BRANIGAN

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MORTON SOBELL, WAS, ESP-R. REBUTEL FEB FOURTEEN LAST. CONFIDENTIAL INFORMANTS ANS SOURCES CONTACTED. ADVISE NO KNOWLEDGE OF TRIP TO ENGLAND CONTEMPLATED BY HELEN SOBELL WEEK OF FEB TWENTY. PRETEXT CALL TO NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO SECURE JUSTICE IN THE ROSENBERG CASE, HER EMPLOYER, ELICITED INFO THAT HELEN SCHEDULED TO MAKE SPEECHES IN US WEEK OF FEB TWENTY, THAT SHE MADE VISITS TO CANADA IN DEC FIFTYFIVE, BUT HAS NO PRESENT PLANS TO TRAVEL ABROAD. BUREAU WILL BE IMMEDIATELY ADVISED ON RECEIPT OF ANY INFO PERTAINING TO THIS MATTER. 2483-1200

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KELLY

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Mr. Belmont

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MEMORANDUM [redacted] S (orig & 2)

February 20, 1956

MORTON SOBELL, with aliases
(ESPIONAGE - R)

EX. - 1

[redacted] b1

S

A check of the records of the Passport Office, Department of State, fails to reflect a current passport application for Helen Sobell, wife of the subject. These files contain no application for a United States passport for any individual named Helen Sobell.

Information obtained from the National Committee to Secure Justice in the Rosenberg Case, employer of subject's wife, indicates she is scheduled to make speeches in the United States during the week of February 20, 1956, and has no plans for travel abroad.

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4/21/87

2 - London Sent 2-20-56

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CC-Foreign Liaison Unit

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