

## **Republican Perspective**

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### **New York Values?**

The dispute between Donald Trump and Ted Cruz over “New York values” has played a part in this year’s Republican primary electioneering. Cruz’s use of the term drew applause in rural, conservative, religious states. Trump’s counter-attack likely figured into the trouncing he gave Cruz in the New York primary.

Here’s a story which may shed some light on the difference between New York values and those of fly-over country.

New York City residents Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were traitors. They stole atomic bomb secrets and transmitted them to the Soviet Union. They were convicted of treason and espionage and were executed in 1953.

The evidence against the Rosenbergs was overwhelming. And more recently their guilt has been reinforced by such sources as Nikita Krushchev’s memoirs and the declassified communications of Aleksandr Feklisov, the Rosenbergs’ Soviet handler.

In addition to nuclear secrets, the Rosenbergs supplied the Soviets with stolen technology which, according to historian Ron Radosh, facilitated the shoot-down of Francis Gary Powers’ U-2 spy plane and allowed the Soviet-built MiG fighter to achieve near-parity in Korea. They stole and passed on other critical secrets giving the Soviets an advantage in developing aircraft and radar technology. Radosh asserts that American lives were lost in Korea and Vietnam because of the Rosenbergs’ espionage.

In denying clemency for these traitors and thus ensuring the Rosenbergs’ appointment with Old Sparky, then-President Eisenhower said: “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. The execution of two human beings is a grave matter. But even graver is the thought of the millions of dead...directly attributable to what these spies have done.”

Fast-forward to September 2015. New York’s City Council issued a proclamation honoring Ethel Rosenberg for “demonstrating great bravery.” She had led a 1935 strike against a packing company where she was employed. Presumably she had led bravely.

Perhaps even a traitor and spy can perform some act---unrelated to her

treason---which could be worthy of commendation. But doesn't it seem that good judgment and common sense---especially when considering the relative weight of the good and bad acts---would say skip the commendation? For example, John Wilkes Booth was a passable actor before he assassinated President Lincoln; would it be appropriate to honor him with a posthumous theatre award? It doesn't pass the common sense test. In fact, many would think it obscene.

Well, the New York City Council was not content to commit bad judgment and leave it at that. Their proclamation went on to say that poor Ethel was "wrongly executed." One Councilman explained it this way: "A lot of hysteria was created around anti-communism and how we had to defend our country, and these two people were traitors and we rushed to judgment and they were executed."

So it was because of the "Red Scare" that Ethel was executed---despite the evidence at her trial and despite the corroborating evidence later revealed in Krushchev's and Feklisov's papers.

Honoring the achievement of a person convicted of treason and espionage, and denouncing the conviction as wrongful-----New York values?