

# PEOPLE'S WORLD

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## Happy fifth birthday, Dodd-Frank Act

By Daniel Sankey



**F**ive years ago, in the wake of the worst economic crisis in U.S. history since the Great Depression, President Obama signed the Dodd-Frank act into law.

The Act's purpose was simple: prevent the likes of the 2008 financial crisis from ever happening again.

The implementation of the act, however, is far more complicated.

Complaints can be heard from conservatives who say that these regulations stifle growth without adding any actual protections and liberals who say the law does not go far enough in preventing Wall Street from engaging in reckless risk-taking.

The act is immense and features regulations designed to limit banks from engaging in risky investments, protect consumers from predatory business practices, and force banks to remain financially sound with surplus funds available.

What it has not done is limit executive pay and reform it in such a way that they are not rewarded for engaging in risky behavior.

While I applaud the Act as an instance of government working to protect its citizens from the rampant greed of Wall Street, I share liberal politicians concerns regarding the Act not going far enough.

Jamie Dimon, the CEO of JP Morgan Chase,

has been extremely critical of the Act and is one of the voices that claim it stifles economic growth.

Since 2008, Chase has paid \$36 billion dollars in fines ranging from knowingly hiding Bernard Madoff's ponzi scheme to rigging foreign exchange rates.

HSBC, to give another example, recently paid out \$28 million in fines for knowingly doing business with organized crime.

These were not high-risk investments made

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recklessly. These were criminal acts knowingly engaged in for profit. Yet, since the implementation of Dodd-Frank, Chase's stock price has risen 43 percent. So much for limiting growth.

Dodd-Frank rests on the naive belief that, due to a lack of regulation and oversight, banks

**The banks were acting irresponsibly and colluding with criminals.**

engaged in risky, profit-driven behavior which resulted in economic disaster for the U.S.

The banks did make mistakes and Acts like Dodd-Frank must prevent these mistakes from happening again.

Yet, opening bank accounts for Madoff or rigging currency exchanges are not bad decisions or “mistakes” but criminal acts that were known to be illegal at the time.

The banks were not just acting irresponsibly but were profiting by colluding with criminals.

Banks, like most for-profit industries, will attempt to get away with as much profit-making behavior as they are allowed, whether it's hiding millions of dollars in criminal proceeds (HSBC) or selling toxic mortgages as investments (Chase).

Moreover, there are numerous examples of banks being fined far less than the profits that their illegal acts produced or being allowed to claim fines as deductions on their taxes.

Fines become the cost of doing business rather than deterrents or punishments.

So punishing the banks with fines is like suing your car thief's employer; it blames the insitu-

tion rather than the persons running it.

To be truly effective, legislation must be implemented that causes criminal acts, like the ones Chase engaged in, to be punished with jail time and censure that prevents the guilty parties from being employed in the financial services industry.

As a nation, our moral outrage is so severely provoked by acts like murder that we often demand the life imprisonment or even execution of the guilty party.

Yet those who caused the loss of life savings and homes through collusion with criminals and predatory loans are not held personally responsible.

The Dodd-Frank Act is to be praised as an attempt to protect Main Street from the limitless profiteering of Wall Street.

But let's not rest on our laurels; there is still much work to be done to prevent the likes of another 2008.



Daniel Sankey is an activist in the Bay area.

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## Government's case against Rosenbergs gutted by release of key testimony

By Robert Meeropol

I applaud the release by the National Security Archives of the Grand Jury testimony of David Greenglass and Max Elitcher. I want to thank attorneys David C. Vladeck and Debra L. Raskin for advocating for the release of this testimony and federal District Court Judge Alvin Hellerstein for granting our petition. They have done a service by bringing this testimony to the public. My family and others want the Rosenberg Case in 1973, to be reopened so that the public knows every bit of information that exists about the case. Today we have a more complete picture of my parents' case than ever before.

David Greenglass' statements to the Grand Jury echo those of his wife, Ruth Greenglass. Her testimony, released in 2008, did not mention my mother Ethel typing notes from the Greenglasses' alleged September 25th, 1945 espionage meeting with Ethel and Julius - a supposed meeting that was the key trial testimony to doom my mother.

At that meeting, the Greenglasses claimed, David gave a sketch of the cross-section of the

atomic bomb to my father, and my mother typed David's accompanying hand-written notes. At trial, the prosecutor claimed this drawing gave away the most important secret known to mankind - the so-called secret of the atomic bomb - and in summarizing the case against Ethel, dramatically stated that as Ethel, “hit the keys, she struck blow upon blow against her country.” In pronouncing the death sentence, Judge Kaufman blamed my parents for the Korean War.

More than 60 years after my parents' execution, it is long past time for the government to admit that Ethel Rosenberg was not a spy and that Julius was not an atomic spy. I call for the record to be set straight once and for all:

1. My father engaged in non-atomic military espionage for the Soviet Union. He did not pass the secret of the atomic bomb to anyone.

2. My mother did not conspire to commit espionage. The government knew this; colluded with the Greenglasses to convict her; and executed her anyway.

**They have done a service by bringing this testimony to the public.**

# Brave activists who broke into FBI office in '71 remembered



By Tim Wheeler

The PBS documentary program on “Independent Lens” last May 18 was a film by Johanna Hamilton titled “1971.” It told the story of a brave band of peace activists in Pennsylvania who broke into the FBI office in Media, Pennsylvania, the night of Mar. 8, 1971.

The burglars “liberated” thousands of top secret FBI documents exposing the surveillance of tens of thousands of law-abiding people who were exercising their constitutionally protected right to protest the war in Vietnam, and many other injustices. Among the most dangerous projects exposed were documents that laid bare FBI Director, J. Edgar Hoover’s COINTELPRO spy program, aimed initially at the Communist Party, USA but expanded to target senators, representatives, the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. and millions of other advocates of peaceful, non-violent change.

I was the Washington correspondent of the Daily World (predecessor of the Peoples World) and received a packet in the mail of those stolen dossiers. Naively, I telephoned the FBI to ask for a comment. “Those documents are classified. You must return them immediately,” the FBI spokesman said in an officious voice. “We’re sending an agent over to your office to pick them up now.” In a panic, I called Carl Winter, Editor-in-Chief of the Daily World. “Carl,” I said. “I have about 200 top secret FBI files here.

I called the FBI for a comment and the agent told me they are sending someone over right now to pick them up. What should I do?” “Get the hell out of there,” Carl shouted over the phone line. “And don’t forget to take the files with you.” I grabbed up the documents and hastened out of my office and up the stairwell of the National Press Club where I hid for an hour or so. As far as I know, the FBI never sent anybody. Finally I crept back to my office and wrote my story.

I never knew the names of the heroes who sent me that envelope until the release of “The Burglary: The Discovery of J. Edgar Hoover’s Secret FBI” by Betty Medsgar in 2014.

Like me, Medsgar, a reporter for the Washington Post, received a packet of the stolen documents. The FBI never caught the burglars despite Hoover’s assigning 200 agents to search for them.

In recent years, Medsgar convinced several to break their silence. They include Keith Forsyth, John and Judy Raines, and Bob Williamson.

Like Edward Snowden who “liberated” all those digitized National Security Agency files, exposing NSA spying on law abiding people, the Media, PA burglars should be honored for their courage in defending the right of dissent protected by our Bill of Rights.

**The burglars exposed the surveillance of thousands of people who were exercising their right.**

## Clinton, Sanders meet top union leaders

By Mark Gruenberg

**T**he two leading Democratic presidential contenders - at least in public polls - met behind closed doors July 13 and 14 with top union leaders to talk positions and strategy. Unionists met separately with former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and with Sen. Bernie Sanders, Ind.-Vt. The meetings occurred just after Clinton unveiled her economic blueprint, including pro-worker planks, in a New York speech.

And the meetings with Sanders at Postal Workers headquarters and at Clinton's campaign manager's D.C. house contrasted with the anti-worker anti-union bombast marking the formal presidential campaign debut of right wing Gov. Scott Walker, R-Wis.

Walker opened his drive on July 13 by glorifying his efforts at trashing Wisconsin's public workers unions, and after signing a state budget that weakened tenure protections for state universities' professors and that cut the university system's budget by \$250 million.

Workers' support is important to all presidential hopefuls, but especially to Democrats Clinton, Sanders, former Govs. Martin O'Malley (Md.) and Lincoln Chafee (R.I.) and former Sen. Jim Webb (Va.). That's because unionists and their families not only turn out to vote, especially in presidential years, but they provide effective ground troops for campaigns.

Clinton is addressing many of the same issues. Her closed-door session with the leaders was one day after her major economic speech in New York, where she declared "we have to build a growth and fairness economy."

## Un hito en la historia de los EE.UU.

Tiempo Argentino

**T**ratar de estimar el legado de la presidencia de Barack Obama cuando aún no ha finalizado revela una cierta necesidad de la sociedad en el presente, ya que cualquier análisis probablemente diferirá del que los historiadores ofrezcan dentro de 15, 25 ó 50 años. Sin embargo, con certeza podemos establecer que, en al menos un aspecto, el gobierno de Obama sí ha marcado un hito en la historia de EE UU.

Mucho ha sucedido en siete años, a pesar de haber representado, en gran medida, una continuidad de políticas pasadas. Por un lado, la economía pareció recuperarse de la crisis en que la Administración Bush la sumió, un logro que probablemente sea juzgado más significativo en el futuro, amén de lo mediocre de la misma y de su incapacidad para reducir los niveles de pobreza y desigualdad. Por otro, se destaca la sanción de las reformas de salud y migratoria, reformas a medias que han sido combatidas desde la derecha y criticadas por la izquierda.

Lo más relevante pareció suceder en política exterior: el asesinato del terrorista más buscado desde 2001, Osama bin Laden, vino de la mano del "surgimiento del Estado Islámico", un producto de las mismas políticas de EE UU en las regiones donde pretende combatir al terrorismo. El "retiro" de las tropas de Irak fue en realidad su reubicación en Afganistán. La presencia militar estadounidense en el exterior no aumentó, pero sí lo hizo a nivel doméstico, con la exponencial militarización de las fuerzas policiales y sus violentas consecuencias que ya se dejan ver, sumado al brutal

crecimiento del complejo industrial-carcelario.

En el último año vimos a Obama "patear el tablero" al firmar un convenio bilateral sobre cambio climático con China; restablecer, luego de 54 años, relaciones diplomáticas con Cuba, y firmar un resonante acuerdo nuclear con Irán. Quedará en manos del próximo gobierno solucionar el tema del aún perdurable y más significativo bloqueo económico a la isla, y cuidar que el tratado con Irán no pierda relevancia o se convierta en el detonante de una guerra regional bajo acusaciones de incumplimiento con lo acordado.

En 2008, los estadounidenses eligieron al primer presidente negro de su historia. Dos períodos presidenciales después, y a 50 años de la sanción de la Ley Electoral que estableció la universalidad del voto más allá de cuestiones de raza, credo u origen nacional, y a la luz de los cotidianos episodios de violencia y terrorismo raciales en lugares como Florida, Ferguson, Missouri, New York, Baltimore y Carolina del Sur, sin lugar a dudas el principal legado de la presidencia de Obama radica en el impacto simbólico de haberse convertido en el primer presidente negro de un país con una muy pesada historia de esclavitud, segregación, racismo, discriminación, opresión y subyugación hacia minorías raciales y étnicas como la afro-estadounidense. Lo irónico es que políticas que aborden, discutan o lidien con temas raciales ha sido el área más descuidada de su presidencia.

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