



This Deception, by Hede Massing, © 1951
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INTRODUCTION

Hede Massing came to wide public attention when she testified in the trial of Alger Hiss. She was married to Gerhart Eisler when she was seventeen, then became an actress in Berlin. Later she was an “apparatchik” for the Soviets in Europe, and after 1933, in the United States. In 1937, she left the Communist party. I imagine she is one of the few Communists who was sent for to go to Moscow to be purged and nevertheless got out alive.

Morris L. Ernst

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...I was quite relieved when one day my telephone rang. Ika Sorge, at the other end of the wire, said, “Hede, what are you up to?” This was to become his usual, unmistakable greeting to me. I was very glad to hear his voice. I had met him and his wife several years before at a Marxist student gathering in Thuringen, and we had kept friendly, if distant, relations. Dr. Sorge was, as far as I knew, working as a research assistant at the Marx-Engels Institute in Moscow, as was his wife, Christiane. They had belonged to the initial circle of students at the Institute of Social Research in Frankfurt.
Ika Sorge took me to dinner that evening.

p. 68-82 Book II. Chapter 5 titled: Dr. Richard Sorge

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Richard Sorge was one of the most resourceful Russian agents. In August, 1941, he obtained for them a top-secret survey of Japan’s petroleum

resources. **He tipped off the Russians, and the United States, in turn, on the impending attack on Pearl Harbor sixty days before it happened. I believe him to be the only Russian agent who can be considered heroic by Americans.**

He was an extraordinary man. Even his enemies could not help but realize it. This is how the Japanese described him:

Physically, Sorge was a big man, tall and handsome, brown hair. His brow was creased and furrowed and his face lined. From a glance at his face you could tell that he had lived a hard and rough life. There was no arrogance or cruelty to the set of his eyes and the lines of his mouth.

...He must have become a Russian party member soon after he had gone to Moscow on the staff of the Marx-Engels Institute, also not a common procedure. By 1929, he must have learned so much about Intelligence that he opposed the close connection of Red Army and Comintern political actions abroad. They were separated at his suggestion, adding another feather to his cap.

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He was executed by the Japanese. None of the newspaper accounts that appeared in this country did him justice. True, he was a spy. But he believed in what he did and he was a remarkable man, both proud and modest. And if he was ruthless - as some of the papers said - that, certainly, the Russians were responsible for. He had started out a kind man and a good man.

...He did not fit the general pattern of the German Communist, neither did Christiane. They displayed better taste and more gusto than was customary in Communist circles. I liked them very much. We visited a few times until they suddenly departed for Moscow to work at the Marx-Engels Institute under Riazanov, as researchers. There was a great exodus of German Communists with academic training to the Marx-Engels Institute. ...The story of the Marx-Engels Institute would easily fill a heavy tome and read like a detective story. How many hopes it had fostered, how many famous and outstanding scholars had crossed its threshold, eager to help, eager to add their share so that Marxism might be put on the map as the greatest, all-

embracing science yet. How much tragedy, disillusionment, heartache, and pain it has seen within its walls!

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When George Orwell in his *1984* described the falsification of history, it sounded exactly like the stories the German researchers would tell in Moscow when they had a little vodka and were relaxed; and even then they would tell only in a whisper of what they were asked to commit or to “rearrange” in order to fit the “line.” The purges took their toll early at the Marx-Engels Institute and those on the staff soon realized that their assumption that Riazanov’s position was unshakable was poppycock. Many of my friends who worked there were dragged off, never to be heard from again. Gerhart Eisler’s first love, Anne Bernfeld, then the wife of Schmuelke, committed suicide when she was arrested in the presence of her husband and little son. I wonder often how Gerhart rationalizes the death of so many of his friends. Whether he is not afraid of death, or whether he thinks that there is no better way to die than in a Russian prison or from a Russian bullet!

What Richard and Christiane Sorge’s experiences at the institute might have been is not hard to guess; and that they must have been easy prey for whomever it was that was assigned to incorporate them into the apparatus is easily believed. Of Christiane’s activities, I know nothing except that she was stationed in England for many years and did “research” for the institute; and that early in the game she did not like the Russians.

Ika’s first assignment was to some Nordic country (he never said which) where he lived “high in the mountains,” and where his company were “sheep, mostly.” He would ramble on about the human qualities of sheep once one got to know them. He took to conspiracy like a fish to water. He would flash an amused smile at you, his eyebrows raised in disdain for being unable to tell you where it was that he had spent his last year. Once, in our Moscow apartment on Brjussowsky Pereulok, he devoted the entire evening to a description of camels; he threw a few rugs in merely for good measure, but it was obviously patronizingly – for subject variation. Of people he rarely spoke, and not a word did he mention

of his work. At the same time one felt that he was courageous, honest, and concerned with the Communist idea and ideal. He was the first *apparatchik* I knew. I respected and admired him. I did not have the slightest doubt that what he did was of the utmost importance. So indoctrinated was I with Communist behavior that it seemed absolutely proper and right for me not to know and never to ask what he did, where he went, and for how long. Throughout the years that I knew him, he would turn up, call me and say, "What are you up to?"

I would cry out with joy and ask, "But how did you find me?" And he would laugh. And I was pleased. It is he who instilled in me the feeling that there was simply nothing an *apparatchik* could not find out or do if he wanted to or had to. It was he who told me how lonely and ascetic the life of an *apparatchik* must be, with not attachments, no strings, no sentimentalities. I saw him as the hero of the revolution, the real hero, the quiet one, about whom nobody knew... To me he was the man of whom Rilke spoke in his poetry, "*Ich bin der Eine...*"

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I had also seen Gerhart Eisler and my sister Elli in Moscow. Elli, I saw only briefly when she, with precaution and mystery surrounding her, was whisked through the Russian capital on her way to China to join her husband. She seemed unchanged, mainly interested in clothes, cynical. And I saw both of them when they had come back from China. Gerhart was sent to China as a punishment. He was involved in the Wittdorf affair, a political maneuver to dethrone Ernst Thaelman, who was supported by Stalin.

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This certainty of finding influential friends anywhere in the world gives active Communists a wonderful sense of belonging to a great secret order.

Because of his subsequent notoriety, I must mention a meeting in Berlin, around 1932, with a dark, unimpressive little man whom Ludwig and Felik treated with great deference at the Kahlbaumstube of the Tauentzienstrasse. Many years later, when his break with the Soviets became a world sensation, I realized that it was General Walter Krivitsky, head of all red Army Intelligence networks in Western Europe. I

gathered that he was looking me over for some special assignment. Evidently I did not pass muster, since the matter was not mentioned again.

I think that there is much more to Krivitsky's story than he told in his book *In Stalin's Secret Service*. I believe that if ever Noel Field is able and ready to tell his story, the tragic dual role of Krivitsky will be understood much better.

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So much has been said and written about **the responsibility which the Soviets must take for Hitler's rise to power**, that this is not the place to repeat it. (our bold) For the individual who lived through it, it was an unbelievable, fantastic succession of events, a nebulous, horrid period of destruction, an upheaval like an earthquake *maneuvered by human hands* (our italics and bold).

On the night of January 30, 1933, Hitler was made Chancellor of the Reich. On February 27, the Reichstag burned.

The city of Berlin changed its face. Comrades stayed away from the streets and from each other. Though they said, "We are not beaten. We are retreating for just a little time. *This will be our steppingstone! Out of Hitler's misdeeds will grow the Communist revolution!*" (our italics and bold) – we were finished, all right, and we knew it.

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Valentine Markin was, in fact, the head of all GPU activities in the United States, nominated for the post by Vyacheslav Molotov himself, according to Walter Krivitsky. He had maneuvered himself into this position by going home to Russia and waging a fight against General Berzin and all his lieutenants in the Military Intelligence... Markin was successful. He won the battle. He got authority to transfer the whole military intelligence organization in America to the espionage machine of the GPU under Yagoda. He made a great many enemies and he knew it. Later, in Paris, when I mentioned the fact that he was my superior to Ludwig (Ignace Reiss) and Felik, and that I had direct dealings with him, they tried to caution me against him as best they could without committing themselves. When we were alone, Ludwig even went as far

as to say that I should stay away from Valentine Markin as much as I could.

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Once a person... had fully identified with the apparatus, he would justify anything, even criminal acts, according to the law which he no longer recognized. It is an intricate process. To describe it, its fiber, the elation derived, the self-denial, and often the self-abasement involved, would take the pen of a great writer.

Many of my friends and acquaintances learned of my past activities for the first time during my testimony at the Hiss trial. "I had no idea that you were doing such things!" and "I would never have thought of you as a spy!" and "You could have knocked me over with a feather when I hear your testimony!" That, of course, applies for each one of us. Had my friends known what I was doing, I would not have been of any use to the apparatus. Had Hiss's friends known, he would have been of no value.

For the intellectual with a conscience, it is easy to become a "trusted soldier of the revolution." Once he is incorporated and a functionary of the quasi-religious brotherhood, he lives in what seemed to be an elevated world. The rules are strict. It takes a long time to be detached enough to see whom you are serving. And then it takes more courage to break than it takes to join. The step to renounce the brotherhood of men that believed they are working for a better life for all, to divorce yourself from the pioneering of mankind, from the fighters for a great cause, is very difficult. To leave the warmth, the safety and friendship that have been given you is a tragedy. You have been imbued with the Communist spirit to such an extent that for a long time you see yourself as a traitor, as do the comrades you have left. How you dislike yourself! You go into loneliness, you hide. Slowly you recover, as from an illness. Once you have recovered, you know that you must expose the Communist conspiracy. You shrink because you do not want to expose the friends you have loved most! Chambers goes to warn Hiss, and I go to warn Field and Duggan. Ignace Reiss warns all the people who have been his responsibility and his friends. You have lost your first set of friends when you leave the fold. Then, when your battle of conscience has been fought and won, and you go

out into the open, you have lost your second set of friends. Now you are alone.