



Photo source: German Federal Archives

Dr. Richard Sorge.



A Master
of Spycraft

Codename:
Ramsay

“In my whole life, I have never met anyone as great as he was.” - said Mitsusada Yoshikawa, Chief Prosecutor in the Sorge trials who obtained Sorge's death sentence.¹ There are only a handful of spies throughout the entire history of espionage who managed to gather and leak the type of valuable information to the key addressees which did both: directed the course of history and designated the dimensions of the world we live in today. Dr. Richard Sorge was, unquestionably, one of them. The circle of secret service agents that Sorge constellated was described as “one of the greatest spy rings in modern history” by Allan Welsh Dulles who was an American diplomat, lawyer and director of CIA.² The Russian historian Dr. Viacheslav Kondrashov described him saying: “This was a unique and polymathically developed person.”³ As General Charles Willoughby, American Chief of Intelligence, put it: “The group that was led by the bright and innovative Richard Sorge performed true miracles.”³

This article contributes to historical material in the way that it brings light on the first-ever psychographic biography of Dr. Richard Sorge. Unlike many other articles about his past this article focuses more on him and his mind than on his works. Despite the access to advanced tools, it is still a rather delicate mission to profile the inner-world of a mastermind of this kind. It is no easy operation to channel one of the greatest secret service agents in world history. There is no doubt that an agent of his caliber invests enough to learn from other disciplines and fields but what could others, say, scholars, brand strategists, researchers, business intelligence analysts, advisors, reputation managers or spy fiction novelists learn from him?

Purification from Disinformation.

An ordinary historian or biographer won't be able to handle the task of writing about an agent of this kind. Let alone the general information but when even the most official documents can be fabricated in a technically efficient way especially when it comes to an extraordinary agent like Dr. Richard Sorge. Perhaps only the highly specialized (whilst also acquainted with the various branches of the tree of knowledge) and well-connected scholar that has reached the advanced phase of their craft would be able to come near the task of revealing what actually happened and who Sorge actually was in the deeper sense because as the historian Sir F.W. Deakin and British Japanologist G.R. Storry wrote: “The life of a spy is by definition undocumented.”²

There is still a large amount of disinformation produced from various partisan sources when it comes to revealing the biographical data on Dr. Richard Sorge. It is especially evident in magazine, newspaper and web articles, so-called historical documentaries and books. The actors appointed to give their opinions about the developments in the life of Sorge, are simply either unqualified persons sharing fake views or pseudo-experts with higher ranks in society misinterpreting data.

As it was so in many of the precedents in the history of spycraft the simplified and comprehensive way of explaining this process' sequence using systems thinking is the following: A proto-source that has a reason sufficient to motivate it to make a deal with an inside source by giving it partial information, advice or myth (with a small m) which then is delegated to the relevant department of the source (i.e. analytical division of a secret service agency)

service agency) which, after being framed and planned appropriately, is revealed to an organization that is connected to several front organizations such as those in academia, media, lobbying groups or among think tanks which then, openly, if not widely, communicate to the public the semi-information of lowest quality or indirect disinformation that is blended with proper information about Sorge's character and activities in world history.

All of these stages, on a structural level, create misleading implications and indicators, form layers of information upon layers and layers of more information and make it exceedingly challenging to trace it to the actual source of the source merely to decide if what is communicated is coming from a credible and qualified source, worthy of listening, let alone, true at all.

Nevertheless cutting through these layers to profile the source and access the truth is not impossible. A higher rank, title or position of the source may look legitimate on paper but it doesn't necessarily mean what it communicates is reliable and trustworthy. In other words, not every Professor of a prestigious university is pedagogically self-actualized and enlightened enough to be a true enlightener. This is why it's known how science itself is objective but not all the scientists are necessarily so. The same goes for the so-called experts. Similarly, not every person who is a President of a country or CEO of a corporation is automatically an authentic leader and not all royalty has historically been equal for the reason that illuminated royalty has always been superior to ordinary royalty when it comes having access to valuable knowledge to then transmit it to descendants for decision-making. The advantage of the analytical measurement tools of the High Psychographics methodology is that it provides the

most exact profiling possible in order to not only trace to and profile the very initial source, who expressed a message but also to trace and profile the innermost sources of the thought expressed externally by that source. After all, agreeing with Arthur Schopenhauer, one can think and say what

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one wants but not everyone, especially not the unenlightened, can want what they want.

In relation to breaking through the layers of information, having studied media effects analysis in the College of Communications of Penn State University and having been trained in the industry, I have always had the privilege of using the professional eye in discerning the significant communication processes in a society (history, education, literature, media etc.) and, considering the indicators, I am convinced that distinguishing, deciphering, segmenting and evaluating information in regards to time and space will continue being an important forte. The truth that goes beyond the mere word play of relativity and symbolic logic, despite of all the machinations, is inevitably required to exist for hierarchical and panhuman reasons. The higher one goes within societies' various institutions the clearer data about Dr. Sorge's life begins to come to surface. Regardless of the partially falsified information about his life, all sides agree on the fact he was an agent who easily is in the top five of the most masterful razor-sharp agents in the entire history of the craft.



Through the Eyes of Dr. Sorge.

Prior to even making an attempt to see through this historical figure in question, we need to first have at least some idea of the processes, components, and systems inside the secretive realm of global espionage. It doesn't take to be an agent of the level of Dr. Sorge to realize that if even the official documents (that can serve as factual data for a historian) about certain individuals can be fabricated and if any cinematography or mise en scène insider with all the facilities and capabilities of Hollywood-level production can orchestrate an event in a theatrical manner then the spheres of fiction and reality are way more reciprocal, if not more interchangeable, than they seem at first sight. This might be the indirect reason why Sorge had a particular interest only to two subjects during his school years: literature and history. Since it has become a habit to hold the belief that literary fiction is more far-fetched than historical reality we tend to forget

that reality can be way stranger than fiction. In fact as Victor Frank wrote, the case of Richard Sorge is "far more fantastic than anything Fleming or Le Carré could think of."²

In the words of John le Carré, the novelist who once worked for MI6, said: "If you are a novelist struggling to explore a nation's psyche, its Secret Service is not an unreasonable place to look."⁴

A Psychographic Profile.

Richard was born in Baku, Azerbaijan on October 4, 1895 to a rather crowded family of nine children. He was the youngest in the family, which, naturally, left a particular mark in the gradual formation of his character. At the time, Baku was a city known, among other qualities, as the world's hub attracting foreign oil barons, entrepreneurs, investors and industrialists as the Nobels, the Rothschilds and local ones as Zeynalabdin Tagiyev, Shamsi Asadullayev etc. (Even the first-ever oil tanker in history, named 'Zoroaster', was invented here in Baku.) During this Oil Boom era, Sorge's father was a mining engineer working for an oil company associated with Swedish Nobel interests. According to cognitive scientists the learning processes of a child in his first three years can be disproportionately stronger and faster than those of decades later. So the influence of the Bakuvian milieu during early childhood might have reflected on part of his personality in the future too. Today there is even a notable work of installation art that pays homage to this monumental figure in Baku. The centers of his eyes (as shown in the photo) are lit from inside out in the darkness of the night communicating the hypnotic sharpness of his gaze at viewer. There is a park, a street and a school there named after him too.

Due to the very lethal nature of his occupation and lack of strategic acumen among Soviet-Bolshevik decision-makers his life ended tragically however the contribution he did to humanity, international relations and spycraft are worthy of paying homage to. Regardless of him being widely labeled as a 'Soviet spy', psychographic analysis reveals that an agent of his degree was strongly motivated by a higher purpose as i.e. serving the human race rather than just working for Stalin. The Soviet ideological leanings of his were nothing but a long-term external façade masking his real agenda within. In addition to that he was traumatized from what he witnessed during WWI. So at the innermost level, he was energized by civil and universal values rather than by mere partisan interests and contrary to the common beliefs he accomplished his missions not because he was a pro-Soviet spy but because he was the resourceful adversary of Fascism. It also explains why the tributes and praises for him came from all sides (American, Azerbaijani, English, German, Japanese and Russian). In addition to that, the fact that the Bolsheviks underappreciated and underestimated Dr. Sorge as a source when he was alive indicates how his prowess was not an outcome of the Soviet school but of his own predilections derived from the German cultural unconscious.

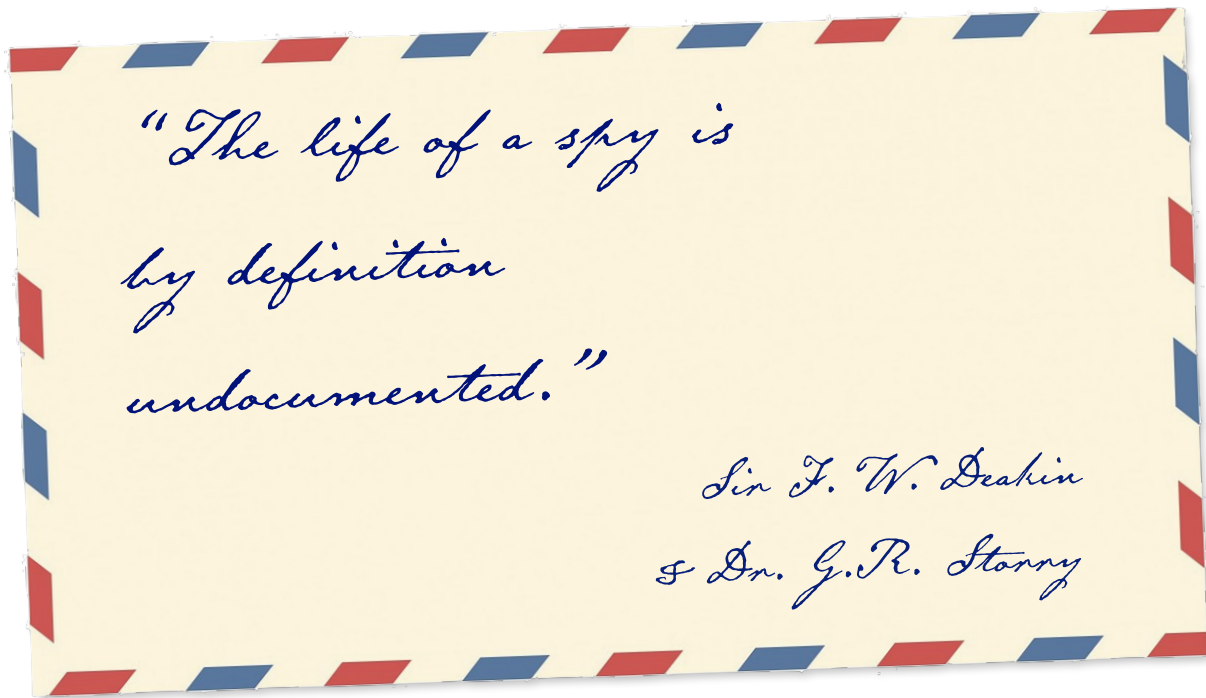
According to the findings of a recent study living abroad helps one develop a clearer sense of self and it is not about the breadth but the depth of living abroad experiences that matter most. Living abroad (in Japan and Russia) for a long-time gave him a clearer sense of self-identity making him even more German and even more Sorge.⁵

In his attitude, he had that German scientific agency which helped him reduce complexity when



mapping his directions. He once even said: "If I had lived in a peaceful society and in a peaceful political environment, I would most likely have become a scientist." No wonder then that his intelligence reports and analyses on international relations and policies were known for their accuracy. As the Azerbaijani journalist Rovshan Didavari wrote: "He strictly observed the rules of conspiracy and insisted that others observe them too. He carefully verified information through numerous channels before sending it to the centre. One of the members of the Ramsay ring, Hotsumi Ozaki, gained Japanese Prime Minister Fumimaro Konoe's trust. The first-hand information received on the development of Japanese-German relations was highly accurate."⁶

There are different divisions of secret service intelligence work and the kind of work that Dr. Sorge was responsible for is at the utmost heights of risk, threat and danger. The field operations he was involved with were of the most difficult kind for any agent to be able to handle. One really hesitates describing it as secret service intelligence because its very nature is more in the lines of wartime military intelligence in which the possibility of getting caught, becoming a hostage and finally get killed is ostensibly high.



This is exactly where the phenomenology of the historic case of Sorge presides. Considering the exceeding difficulty and severe danger of the mission ahead, why did he still take such a route? Because, one may reason, he was intuitively in the know of either the fact that he is too good at this kind of work or the fact that nobody in this mortal world can possibly do this work better than him. This would allow him to make the kind of impact that will turn him into a historical figure who will continue to live in the minds even after death.

By way of camouflage, agents like Dr. Sorge are interdisciplinary due to the nature of the various professions they simultaneously take up. This could be such professions as, say, an archaeologist, a scholar, a journalist, an economic attaché etc. Such agents never really pretend to be, say, a teacher but actually be that person with sufficient professionalism.

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In addition to the didactic processes throughout their paths they gain substantial advantage with the auto-didactic development. This aroused intellectual curiosity, in time, leads to strengthening of decisive convictions. Sorge, especially when he was young, was someone who could see the advantages of seeking and finding new circles of like-minded thinkers. He had



Photo source: Russian Federation Ministry of Defence

networks in several spheres and levels. Later in his life having been influenced firstly by Prof. Kurt Gerlach from Kiel University, Sorge discovered that he too is actually a gifted instructor with a demonic charisma, which was going to be an essential skill to have in organizing the secret meetings to train cadres and plan activities.

The most delicate phase of his mission began only after he had built the necessary reputation. In the eyes of the Japanese, Dr. Richard Sorge had a solid reputation as a specialist on Chinese affairs and a journalist well connected with German diplomats. In the words of Sir F.W. Deakin and G.R. Storry: "Impeccably established as the correspondent of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* he approached his professional work with a thoroughness which won the respect of his journalist colleagues, and he rapidly acquired an enviable reputation as an expert on the subtle and alien world of Japanese politics. (...) Richard Sorge was quite a figure in the Tokyo world. If his bohemian exhibitionism, his arrogance and intolerance, particularly when drunk, which happened frequently, shocked some of his compatriots, he was generally regarded as a serious and a talented character with a natural charm, especially for women."²

For an agent as Ramsay, the purpose of information, in its original form or when it is equal to intelligence, is to significantly reduce, minimize or to eliminate uncertainty. Throughout his life he had invested significant amount of his time into writing whether this was editing or contributing to a newspaper as a journalist, composing propaganda copy, publishing a book, writing correspondence letters, or field reporting. The underlying urge that moved him was about how the reality of an idea, information, will, theory, myth or, in a word, of the immaterial can shape the material world. All in all, what intrigued him in political science and political philosophy then wasn't actually based on petty politics but on a telekinetic strategy. Mens agitat molem,

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