
The Round Tablette

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Welcome to the November edition of the Harold C. Deutsch World War II Roundtable. Tonight is the annual Dr. Harold Deutsch lecture and features Dr. Donald Goldstein from the University of Pittsburgh and one of the author's of *Target Tokyo: The Story of the Sorge Spy Ring* which he will be speaking on this evening.

The Dr. Harold C. Deutsch Lecture For those of you who are unfamiliar with this annual event, a word of explanation. It was the custom of Dr. Deutsch to speak on a topic of his choosing at the November meeting. These lectures were always well attended due to the reputation of Dr. Deutsch. His knowledge on virtually any World War II topic was second to none. Many of his former students from the University of Minnesota came to this lecture. With his death, it was decided to remember him through, not only this Roundtable, but also a lecture series named after him. This is an academic lecture for the most part without a panel of veterans.

Much like the fictional British spy, James Bond, Richard Sorge was a womanizer, drinker, and fearless in his

duties. Born to a German father and a Russian mother in what is today Azerbaijan, Richard Sorge became one of the most successful spies in history. Sorge's father was a German petroleum engineer working for the Caucasian Oil Company and when young Richard was eleven the family moved back to Germany.

Sorge fought for the German army in World War I and was wounded twice in battle first on the Western front and then even more severely against the Russian army on the Eastern front. While recovering from his wounds he was introduced to communist ideas and shortly after the war joined the German communist party. Taking various posts throughout Germany to enhance the communist party's position, Sorge came into contact with a Soviet delegation visiting Frankfurt and was invited to move to Moscow to become develop and expand the Comintern's Intelligence Division. As part of the intelligence division Sorge traveled to Scandinavia, Germany, and England to assist the local organizations and gather intelligence. Bored with the political aspects of his position Sorge asked to focus on intelligence work, and cut his ties entirely from the Comintern and the party cells and became part of the Secret Department of the Soviet Communist Party Central Executive Committee and put in touch with the Red Army's Fourth Department which focused on intelligence.

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Given the choice to stay in Europe or Asia, Sorge chose the latter, and after establishing German press credentials sailed for Shanghai. China, at the time, was in torment between the ruling Nationalist government and the growing Communist movement. While in China, Sorge would recruit and work with people who became part of his spy ring in Japan, especially Hotzumi Ozaki a Japanese journalist. When fighting broke out between Japanese marines and Chinese army forces in Shanghai in January 1932, Ozaki was recalled to Japan, but Sorge remained until December and then was recalled to Moscow.

Sorge's handlers decided that they wanted him to establish a spy ring in Tokyo and he was sent to Berlin where he became a member of the Nazi party and a reporter for several German newspapers. With several letters of introductions in his pocket, Sorge was able to become a fixture at the German Embassy in Tokyo gained access to high level information. Very quickly in 1933, Sorge established his spy ring with his previous friends from China and those sent from the Soviet Union, and he estimated that sixty percent of his information came from the German embassy. Sorge's spy ring warned the Soviet Red Army of the Anti-Comintern Pact between Germany and Japan in 1936. Throughout May of 1941, Sorge warned his Moscow handlers of the impending German attack on the Soviet Union with *Operation Barbarossa*, which were ignored. But in September 1941 he sent

information that the Japanese Army was not going to attack the Soviet Union from the east which freed up divisions in the war against Germany. Of interest to Americans, Sorge supposedly predicted the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, but this has been open to interpretation for years.

All spies only have a certain amount of luck and Sorge's ran out in October of 1941, when he was arrested by Japanese officials. He and his Japanese cohort Hotzumi Ozaki were executed on November 7, 1941. As with most spy stories even Sorge's demise is somewhat mysterious, since some believe he was really secretly returned to the Soviet Union for a Japanese spy, but there is a headstone with Sorge's name on in Tokyo.

More Readings on Tonight's Topic:

Gordon W. Prange, Donald M. Goldstein, & Katherine Dillon *Target Tokyo: The Story of the Sorge Spy Ring* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1985).

Chalmers Johnson, *An Instance of Treason: Ozaki Hotsumi and the Sorge Spy Ring* (Stanford University Press, 1990).

Charles Willoughby, *Shanghai Conspiracy, the Sorge Spy Ring*. (Western Islands, 1965).

Robert Whynant, *Stalin's Spy: Richard Sorge and the Tokyo Espionage Ring* (London: I.B. Taurua, 2007).

F.W. Deakin & G.R Storry *The case of Richard Sorge*. London: Chatto & Windus 1966).

Next two Roundtables:

10 December 09 82nd AB Div. in Battle of the Bulge

14 January 10 Russian Military Leadership