

More on 'Lucy'

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Notes and Comments

The article "The Rote Drei: Getting Behind the Lucy Myth"* is an admirable contribution to the literature of an important case. However, it is unlikely that its readers will feel that they have been taken very far behind the myth; instead, the article's effect is to perpetuate it. Even the author seems to entertain doubts, since a sentence on his penultimate page would tend to dismiss much of his previous argument. (I will return to this sentence later.)

Part of the article's argument, and symptoms of its weakness, are to be found in three phrases:

(1) "The record clearly shows that Lucy had four important sources." (P. 63).

The author is, of course, referring to the record of the transmissions from Switzerland, which however bulky is still inadequate for any such conclusion. There is no record of the transmissions from Germany to Switzerland, which would offer a more solid base from which to speculate on the identity of the sources. Any material received from Germany — in whatever form — could have been edited in Switzerland, perhaps partly to hide the identity of the source or sources.

(2) "Rudolf Roessler *did* divulge the identity of his sources ... to a trusted

friend." (P. 64).

In addition to the author's apparent assumption that the four "divulged" by Roessler are identical with the four "clearly shown by the record," other assumptions underlie this phrase, some of them perhaps naive:

- the assumption that (Roessler) had sources,
- the assumption that he knew their identities, and
- the assumption that he divulged them truthfully.

Note the coincidence that those "divulged" were, with one (unidentified) exception, well-known resistance figures who had been the subject of guesswork concerning "Lucy's sources," probably for years before Roessler revealed their identities to his intimate friend. Even without this coincidence, one should be more skeptical than the author about Roessler's own statements. Roessler's postwar silence and relative obscurity are well known; the motives for his silence, which stands out oddly in an era of memoirs and revelations about the very network with which he worked, must have been strong ones; such motives might have led him to throw out red herrings.

(3) "... the characteristics of the Lucy messages and of their transmission from Germany to Switzerland suggest that Werther and the others probably had Abwehr communications channels at their disposal. There seems to be no plausible alternative theory." (P. 67).

One searches the article in vain for any substantiation of this theory. It would seem to be more guesswork, although one must admit that it is at least more acceptable than the inference, in some published books, that the refugee Roessler and his sources must individually have operated agent transmitters and receivers. There seems to be equally little justification for attributing as much as the article does to Gisevius' travels (and why would Gisevius' information go to the refugee Roessler?).

I would suggest that we examine, as the article does not despite its title, the possibility that "Lucy" really was a myth, and a purposeful one. This might help explain why the secret of his sources has never been nosed

out despite a generation of publicity and journalistic curiosity, and might also lead us to the "plausible alternative theory" which the article denies on page 67.

I refer to a possibility alluded to (in passing, surprisingly) on page 88, the penultimate page of the article: "Only the Swiss know today whether the vital information coming from Germany went first to Lucy — and then, via Haussmann, to Masson, or whether the Swiss received the bulk of the information from their sources in Germany and passed it to Sedlacek for relay to the British and to Lucy for relay to the Russians." The article also allows, on the preceding page, that Bureau Ha might have been created to free the operation from the shackles of neutrality.

More of the truth about "Lucy," I think, lies in these two sentences than in all the rest of this long article. If so, much of the rest of the article loses its pertinence.

The following would seem more plausible, professionally:

- That the "Lucy" sources were reporting to Swiss intelligence in Berlin, not to Roessler in Switzerland.

- That there is no compelling reason, given the large number of dissident, anti-Hitler officers in Berlin, to believe that the "Lucy" sources were involved in known resistance groups such as Oster's.

- That the information was transmitted from Berlin to Switzerland not by agent transmitters or agent couriers (nor by Abwehr communications) but by Swiss staff communications channels.

- That Roessler was nothing more than a front man "created" along with Bureau Ha by Swiss Intelligence as a mechanism to pass the information to the Allies while preserving Swiss neutrality.

- That Roessler neither had sources of his own (at least not the key sources in Berlin) nor knew their identity nor controlled their comms.

- And that Roessler was inclined or compelled to hide these facts. (I believe he was paid again for his silence by the light punishment he received for his later espionage in 1953, to which the article does not pay enough attention.)

Even the opening words of the sentence on p. 88, which I cite above, is probably misleading: one cannot assume that "only the Swiss know." The Soviets might also know: they got all the messages, and with their

capture of Berlin and informed interrogations of key individuals, they could have identified the sources.

Switzerland's continued interest in preserving a neutral history, and the well proven discipline of its people, do not offer much hope for disclosures. But I agree with the article's contention that our continued interest in this case goes beyond our duty to Clio. Among other reasons, we should try to identify the Lucy sources because if the Soviets did, they may have been able, by pressure, to gain, assets who might have provided later access to sensitive levels in postwar West Germany. The version above might offer new and promising lines of investigation. (For example, who were the Swiss MA's, in prewar and wartime Berlin? Who were their closest German friends?) But the Lucy *myth* will only lead us into dead ends.

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Footnote

* *Studies*. Vol. 13, no. 3, 1969.

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