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## The Man from Moscow

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He was a plump, balding, kindly looking little man. He seemed dumfounded one day last October to find reporters outside his \$35-a-month apartment in Queens. Was he Gerhart Eisler? Yes, yes, he was. Well—he had just been accused of being the No. 1 U.S. Communist, the Brain, the big tap on the wire to Moscow. How about it?

Eisler acted as though he did not understand. Who had said this? A man who knew him—Louis Francis Budenz, ex-managing editor of Manhattan's Daily Worker. Eisler peered through his hornrimmed spectacles with a gentle smile and asked the gentlemen in.

Gerhart Eisler had nothing to hide. Budenz, he said, as if the explanation were unnecessary to people of intelligence, was obviously mistaken. It was true that he had once been a Communist in Germany but that had been many years ago. He had come to the U.S. in 1941, a poor refugee, hounded by the Nazis. Did he look like a spy? All he wanted to do was go back to Germany, but the U.S. State Department would not allow it.

Indignation. Last week, when Gerhart Eisler was brought to Washington to be questioned by the House Committee on Un-American Activities, he was a changed man. He rose before the committee pale with anger. "I am not a spy," he sputtered. "I am not the boss of all the Reds. . . ."

When the committee chairman, New Jersey's Congressman J. Parnell Thomas, directed him to desist and be sworn, he refused. Thomas warned: "Remember, you are a guest of the country." This was too much. Eisler began beating on the table and yelling, "I am an antiFascist. I am not a guest of the country. I am a political prisoner."

But after two burly Department of Justice agents had led him from the room, a different picture of Gerhart Eisler began to take shape. He had indeed been a top

Soviet agent, a "C.I. Rep." as U.S. comrades call the obscure and mysterious representatives of the Communist International. As "a man from Moscow" he had lived in a world where honor, friendship, even family ties meant nothing. One of the witnesses who denounced him was his sister, sharp-chinned, black-haired ex-German Communist Ruth Fischer, the person who hates him most.

Ambition. In the beginning, as children of a poverty-stricken Viennese scholar, they had adored each other. Ruth, the older, became a Communist first. Gerhart, who won five decorations as an

officer of the Austrian Army in World War I, joined the party in the fevered days of 1918. They worked together. When Ruth, then a bundle of sex appeal and intellectual fire, went to Berlin, Gerhart followed. She became a leader of the German Communist Party, and a member of the Reichstag. But Gerhart took a different ideological tack, began to covet power for himself. He applauded when Ruth was banished from the party by the Stalinist clique. Then he tried to undermine Ernst Thaelmann, Stalin's favorite in Germany. He failed, was summoned to Moscow. He escaped liquidation by denouncing friends who were out of favor.

He turned up in China, charged with purging the party of spies and dissidents, sent so many men to their deaths that he was known as "The Executioner." He first came to the U.S., according to the FBI, in 1933, as chief liaison man between the party and the Comintern. An obscure figure known only as Edwards, he was seldom seen by the party rank & file. He moved in & out of the country freely. (The House Committee held a passport application which demonstrated how the trick was turned. It was dated Aug. 31, 1934, bore the name of a Communist writer, Samuel Liptzen. It was filled out in the handwriting of a left-wing lawyer, one Leon Josephson. Clipped to it was Eisler's photograph.)

Eisler appeared in Moscow to attend a Comintern school, in Spain as commissar of German Loyalist troops. In 1939, during the days of the Russo-German pact, he was in France. He was thrown into a concentration camp, kept there until 1941. Released, he assumed the role of a harmless refugee, headed for the U.S. again.

Abnegation. In many ways, Gerhart Eisler's life as a Queens apartment dweller was as quiet as he indicated. Although he had a Viennese wife—his second—in Stockholm, he settled down comfortably with a slim Polish girl named Brunhilda, who had accompanied him across the Atlantic. (Eisler maintains that he got a Mexican divorce from his Stockholm wife in 1942, married Brunhilda in Norwalk, Conn, the same year.) He became an airraid warden, contributed to a blood bank, nodded pleasantly to his neighbors.

But he had other names and other activities. As Hans Berger he wrote articles for the Daily Worker. As Julius Eisman he made frequent visits to the Manhattan offices of the Joint Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee—a Communist front organization which had duped Bennett Cerf, Charles BOyer, Sir Cedric Hardwicke and many another big name into becoming its sponsors. The Anti-Fascist Refugee Committee gave him monthly checks for \$150. By means of the party grapevine, he was in touch with Samuel Kogan, alias Carr, a member of Canada's Communist atomic spy ring.

After listening to all this, the House Committee charged him with conspiracy to overthrow the Government, contempt of Congress, perjury, income-tax evasion and passport falsification. It ordered him sent back to Ellis Island and asked the Justice Department to act in a hurry.