

Johnny: A Spy's Life

R. S. Rose, Gordon D. Scott

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Johann Heinrich Amadeus de Graaf, known as Johnny all his life, was born on May 11, 1894, in Nordenham, near Bremerhaven in northwest Germany. He died at age eighty-six on December 2, 1980, in Brockville, Ontario, where he and his wife ran a tourist lodge. That he lived as long as he did is miraculous, considering that he had spent many years acting as a double agent—pretending to work for Soviet intelligence while really functioning as an operative for Britain's MI6.

His life had many twists and turns, and murder, treachery, intrigue, and violence were never far from his doorstep. Eventually joining the Spartacus Bund (which evolved into the German Communist Party) in 1919, he later became a staunch anti-Communist and played a key role in undermining the efforts of Communists in Brazil to oust the government of Getúlio Vargas in 1935. After retiring from MI6, he even volunteered his services to the FBI's J. Edgar Hoover in 1950.

Based on documents from multiple government archives as well as many interviews, the most important of which was a series that Gordon Scott conducted with Johnny in 1975–76, this story of the life of a spy who hid behind sixty-nine different aliases during the course of his colorful career is a gripping tale of espionage and counterespionage during a critical period of the political history of the twentieth century.



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