

## TRAITORS: PHILBY, MCLEAN AND OTHERS

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*augmented by my own research*

**Kim Philby, Guy Burgess, Anthony Blunt and Donald Maclean, “the Cambridge Four”** – were Cambridge University graduates who spied for the USSR. They sold out very important British secrets to Stalin’s Russia. In terms of mass murder that regime was comparable to Hitler’s. Why did they sell out in that way? Presumably they felt that, ultimately, the ideology was worth sacrificing individuals for. It “promised” that society would be fair and everybody would have enough. They felt that the governments of Britain and America were not dealing with the greed of the bankers and the downward economic spiral. The information handed to the USSR by Philby and other members of the ‘Cambridge Four’ did great damage to British intelligence during the Cold War of the 1940’s and 1950’s and it is thought that what Philby provided may have encouraged Stalin to initiate the Berlin Blockade of 1948.

**Kim Philby** (cryptonym: Stanley)    **Donald Duart Maclean** (Homer)    **Guy Burgess** (Hicks)    **Anthony Blunt** (Johnson)

**Harold ‘Kim’ Philby** was born in 1912 in India. His father, St. John Philby, was an Army officer and diplomat.

Philby junior had a privileged upbringing and attended Westminster School in London.



He went on from there to Trinity College, Cambridge.

While at Trinity College, Philby became fascinated by communism and by the time he graduated in 1933 (with a second class degree) he was a fervent supporter.

After graduating, Philby went to Vienna where he met Litz Friedman, a member of the Austrian Communist Party. He helped Communist refugees from Germany and with the growth of Nazism in Germany and Austria, Friedman was in personal danger. She married Philby and they both left Austria for England.

Shortly after this, Philby became a Soviet agent. To cover himself, he followed the example of Guy Burgess by openly stating that his dalliance with communism had been a mistake and he joined the Anglo-German Fellowship – a group favourable to the Nazi Party. Philby became a reporter for ‘The Times’ and reported on the Spanish Civil War.

He wrote favourable articles about Franco and the Nationalist movement – so much so that Franco awarded him the Red Cross of Military Merit in 1938. Philby’s pretence was so convincing that in 1939 he was recruited to MI6’s Section D training school for propaganda.

MI5 gave Philby security clearance.

In 1939 a KGB officer defected to the UK – Walter Krivitsky. When interrogated by MI5 he stated that there were 61 British KGB agents in the UK but he did not know their names. He described one agent as a journalist who had covered the Spanish Civil War. However, MI5 were not convinced about the reliability of Krivitsky and his information was never followed up. Philby could have been caught at an early stage of his treachery, but was not and this failure by British Intelligence was to have far reaching consequences in later years.

Philby impressed his seniors during WWII. He worked with the Special Operations Executive (SOE) but by 1944 had transferred to MI6 after impressing its director-general Major General Stewart Menzies. He placed Philby in charge of MI6’s Section IX (Soviet Affairs). This was a major coup for Soviet intelligence as it gave Philby access to highly sensitive documents.

At the start of the Cold War, Philby was in charge of monitoring Soviet espionage. In this position he was able to protect Blunt, Burgess and Maclean. Philby also informed his handlers that a Soviet diplomat, Constantin Volkov, was informing London about Soviet spies working in the Foreign Office. Volkov was arrested by the KGB and returned to Moscow where he was interrogated and then executed.

In September 1945 a worker at the USSR legation defected to the West. He was called Igor Gouzenko. He claimed that Soviet spies had infiltrated MI5 and MI6. His case was passed to Philby. He in turn handed the case over to Roger Hollis.

Gouzenko's evidence led to the arrest of 22 spies in the UK and 15 in Canada. However, MI5 and MI6 were barely investigated and nothing came out of Gouzenko's claim that MI5 had a spy within it who held a senior position.

In 1949 Philby became MI6 liaison officer in Washington DC. Here he had access to highly sensitive information, which was directed to Moscow. He knew of a plan to topple the Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha. With such knowledge the KGB and Albanian security forces were able to arrest those involved before the attempted coup could start. Those arrested were either executed or sentenced to long terms in prison.

Such trust was shown in Philby's ability that, in 1950, it was discussed whether he might become the next Director General of MI6! MI5 was asked to provide a security check on Philby. It was only now that the evidence of Volkhov and Gouzenko was studied in detail along with the seeming speed of his rejection of communism and adoption of right wing beliefs.

Philby went from being considered for the Director General's position at MI6 to being targeted as a potential Soviet spy.

In 1951 Guy Burgess and Donald Maclean defected to the USSR. Philby became the chief suspect as the man who tipped them off about their impending arrest. Philby was interrogated by MI6 but cleared of any wrongdoing. However, pressure from Washington meant that he was brought back to London from America. In September 1951, Philby resigned from MI6 but continued to work for them on a part-time basis.

In October 1955 the 'New York Sunday News' claimed that Philby had acted as a Soviet spy. Harold McMillan, the British Foreign Secretary, dismissed this claim and stated:

***"He (Philby) carried out his duties ably and conscientiously, and I have no reason to conclude that Mr Philby has at any time betrayed the interests of his country."***

In a press conference Philby publicly denied he was a Soviet spy. His British accusers withdrew their claim and Philby seemed to be in the clear.

Philby then worked as a journalist in the Middle East. However, he continued to work part-time for MI6.

December 1961, a KGB agent – Anatoli Golitsin – defected to the West. He provided evidence that Philby has been part of a spy ring that included Burgess and Maclean. MI5 sent an agent to Beirut to question Philby. Under questioning, he admitted that he had been a Soviet spy but with the exception of Burgess and Maclean, he refused to name names.

23<sup>rd</sup> January 1963, Philby, fearing he would be abducted, returned to London and then fled to the USSR. While there, he admitted that he'd been a Soviet spy for over 30 years. When in Moscow he found that he had not been promoted to colonel in the KGB as he had been told but was a 'foot soldier'. Though this angered him, there was little he could do. Philby could not return to England, though he wrote a book about his experiences. Philby became more and more reliant on alcohol and in the later years of his life, a senior KGB officer who bumped into him described him as an "alcoholic wreck".

Kim Philby died in 1988.

**Anthony Frederick Blunt** was born in Bournemouth, the son of a Vicar, in 1907 – he was not from a rich background.



His father had taken a post as padre in France and the position gave Anthony a love of French. When they returned they settled near Marlborough and Blunt went to Marlborough College. He developed a great passion as an art historian – became one of the most distinguished in the country.

The Security Service recognised Blunt's communist sympathies while he was at Cambridge University. He had gone to Trinity College in 1926 with a reputation for being a brilliant mathematician. In 1932, he was made a Fellow of Trinity but by then had already been recruited to spy for the Soviet Union. In particular, Blunt was charged with finding other potential recruits at Cambridge University. The driving force behind Blunt was Guy Burgess who was a double agent ostensibly working for MI6 while actually working for the KGB. Burgess himself had been recruited by Kim Philby who, with Donald Maclean, was to do serious damage to the British intelligence machine along with Burgess and Philby, who worked for British intelligence.

In 1939, Blunt joined the British Army and a year later was recruited by MI5. Blunt was known to be a communist sympathiser but he was never seen as a real threat as it was felt his energy would be targeted against Nazi Germany and that his dalliance with communism was merely fashionable.

Blunt ended the war with the rank of major. However, during his time in MI5 he had started to be suspected by some. Their suspicions were correct, as Blunt had passed on secrets from Enigma to the KGB. In his mind, as the USSR was an ally in the crusade against Nazism, helping them to Enigma secrets was simply helping an ally and therefore the war effort.

However, the major change in European power politics following the defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945 saw a change in the way British intelligence viewed Blunt. With Eastern Europe dominated by the USSR and with the attempts by Stalin to undermine West European governments, the post-war USSR was a far more formidable opponent than it had been deemed pre-war.

After World War Two, King George VI also appointed Blunt Surveyor of the King's Art in 1945. Blunt also became director of the Courtauld Institute of Art. He turned the Institute into a highly renowned organisation with a worldwide reputation. Blunt was also interviewed eleven times by MI5 officers during this time during "Operation Post Report" but on no occasion could they break him. Whether George VI knew of MI5's suspicions regarding Blunt's loyalty is unknown but it is thought – though not proven – that MI5 believed that Blunt would be a Soviet sympathiser if the Soviets invaded the UK.

Blunt's elevated position in society remained throughout the 1950's and into the early 1960's. This all changed on April 23<sup>rd</sup> 1964. On this day an intelligence officer called Arthur Martin went to Blunt's apartment near Oxford Street and told him that MI5 now had the proof they needed that he was indeed the 'Fourth Man'. They had received information from American Michael Straight which pointed to Blunt's espionage; the two had known each other at Cambridge some 30 years before, and Blunt had tried to recruit Straight as a spy; Straight, who initially agreed, changed his mind a while afterwards.

Blunt, now Sir Anthony Blunt (he had been knighted in 1956) initially denied all Martin's charges. However, when Martin told Blunt that he had immunity from prosecution, Blunt confessed with the simple statement: "It's true".

His confession was kept secret. Blunt kept his knighthood and continued to have access to the Royal Family even after the Queen had been briefed about his treachery. Outwardly, he kept his place in society and his reputation as an art expert continued to grow.

However, his world fell apart in November 1979 when Margaret Thatcher, when answering a question, admitted to the House of Commons that Blunt had confessed, in 1964, to being a Soviet spy. As he had not had access to classified information, he had secretly been granted formal immunity by the Attorney General in exchange for revealing everything he knew. He provided a considerable amount of information, and preventing the Soviets from discovering his confession increased the value of his information. Many in MI5 privately applauded the Prime Minister's openness as they had loathed the fact that a traitor had seemingly got away with treason. Blunt resigned his knighthood in fear that he might have faced the indignity of having it stripped from him. He also resigned from his gentlemen's clubs and from the numerous academic posts he held.

Blunt became a recluse. Outwardly he remained calm and dignified. This ended one day when he went to the cinema in Notting Hill by himself incognito. He was recognised by another cinemagoer, who loudly announced his presence. The whole cinema turned on him and he left amidst a crescendo of booing. After this experience, Blunt became a withdrawn figure. He died in 1983.

*In July 2009, Blunt's memoirs were released. These had been held unopened for 25 years having been handed to the British Library in 1984. Prior to their release some feared that Blunt would name even more to the 'Cambridge Five' – those who had escaped detection. There were even fears that he would name those who had effectively covered for him while he worked for the Queen. In fact, for many the memoirs of Blunt were a disappointment. Blunt referred to his treachery as his "greatest mistake" but Professor Anthony Glees, as an example, believes that the memoirs are nothing more than a sham – that Blunt was only truly sorry that he had been found out and that he had lost his privileged position in society.*

*The memoirs also fail to solve the question as to how Blunt escaped prosecution after admitting his treason in 1964. Blunt was not prosecuted having been given immunity from this – but the memoirs throw no light as to how this happened in the sense of who authorised it and who managed to launder Blunt from 1964 until 1979 when Margaret Thatcher exposed him.*

**Guy Burgess** was born in 1911 in Devonport, Devon. His father was a Commander in the Royal Navy and Burgess had a



classic middle class education – Eton, Dartmouth Naval College and Trinity College, Cambridge. Poor eyesight ended the possibility of a career in the Royal Navy.

At Trinity, Burgess studied Modern History and after graduating in 1933, he held a two-year postgraduate teaching position. Burgess joined the Cambridge Apostles at Trinity, an elite debating society, one of whose members of this society was Anthony Blunt. Blunt had already been recruited by the KGB to identify like-minded people at Cambridge and Burgess clearly fitted the bill.

In 1934, Burgess openly renounced communism. However, this was done as a cover to hide his real support for Moscow. He built on this deception by joining the Anglo-German Fellowship, a pro-Nazi group that probably represented everything that Burgess actually detested.

After his time at Trinity, Burgess was employed by the 'Times' and the BBC. He also spent some time in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. In 1938, Burgess joined Section D as a propaganda expert and during World War Two he worked in the press department at the Foreign Office. In 1945 he became secretary to the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hector McNeil. In this position, Burgess had access to highly sensitive information that he took home before his work ended so that it could be photographed by his handler and then returned to the Foreign Office the following morning before anyone realised any documents had gone missing.

To the Soviet Union Burgess was a very useful asset. However, he had set in place his own self-destruction. Burgess was an alcoholic and his behaviour could be very unpredictable. In 1950, the diplomat Harold Nicholson wrote:

"I dined with Guy Burgess. Oh my dear, what a sad, sad thing this constant drinking is. Guy used to have one of the most rapid and acute minds I knew. Now he is just an imitation of what he once was."

While serving at the British Embassy in Washington DC, he openly insulted the wife of a high-ranking CIA official. In an era when it was illegal in the UK to be a homosexual, Burgess was very indiscreet about his private activities. Guy Burgess was someone who was either loved or hated – morally corrupt, given to outrageous rudeness – and yet he could be charming. He was a predatory homosexual and Blunt was an early lover.

In October 1951, Kim Philby warned Burgess that MI5 was investigating his activities. In fact, MI5 was concentrating its investigation on Donald Maclean but Burgess believed that he had been brought into this investigation.

A KGB controller, Yuri Modin, arranged for both men to defect to the USSR. Burgess resurfaced in 1956 in Moscow.

Burgess never took to the life he faced in the USSR. He never bothered to learn Russian and his alcoholism got out of control. Burgess died from alcohol related illnesses in 1963 aged 52.

**Fifth Man** On the basis of the information provided by Golitsyn, speculation raged for many years as to the identity of "the Fifth Man". The journalistic popularity of this phrase owes something to the unrelated novels, *The Third Man* and *The Tenth Man*, by Graham Greene who, coincidentally, knew the Cambridge spies. It is now widely accepted that the spy ring probably had more than five members, possibly many more, since three other persons are known to have confessed, several more were nominated in a confession, and strong circumstantial cases have been made against others. The extent to which the following suspects can be regarded as members of "the Ring", or merely a list of Soviet spies, depends on the degree to which they knew and cooperated with one another. The degree of this cooperation remains largely unknown; even Philby, Burgess, and Maclean operated largely on an individual basis.

- **John Cairncross** (1913–1995), confessed 1951; publicly revealed in 1990 - also accused in Anthony Blunt's 1964 confession.
- **Sir Roger Hollis** (1905-1973), (at the time Director of MI5) accused by Arthur S. Martin (head of MI5's Soviet counter-intelligence section at the time), Peter Wright (MI5 officer assigned to investigate Hollis), and Chapman Pincher (investigative journalist who produced several exposés of failures in British counter-intelligence).
- **Guy Liddell** (1892–1958), close friend of Burgess and Goronwy Rees, was accused of being a spy by an anonymous informer in 1949. This was eventually written off as Soviet disinformation, but it permanently harmed his career. He was accused specifically of being a member of the Cambridge Spy Ring in the death-bed confession of Goronwy Rees in 1979.
- **Goronwy Rees** (1909–1979), a close friend of Burgess & Liddell, admitted under interrogation in 1951 that he'd known Burgess was a spy; made a death-bed confession of being one himself in 1979, also accusing Guy Liddell.
- **Victor Rothschild**, 3rd Baron Rothschild (1910–1990) accused by Roland Perry in his book, *The Fifth Man* (London: Pan Books, 1994). Rothschild was a member, along with Blunt and Burgess, of the Cambridge Apostles. Espionage allegations against him were never proven, and are generally dismissed.
- **Ludwig Wittgenstein** (1889-1951), in Kimberley Cornish's controversial book *The Jew of Linz*, the author argues that as a Trinity College don, Wittgenstein recruited the Trinity College spies Burgess, Philby and Blunt (and Maclean, from nearby Trinity Hall) for the Soviet Union.
- **Peter Ashby**, & **Brian Symon** accused by Anthony Blunt during his confession in 1964.
- **Leo Long** (later an intelligence officer), accused by Anthony Blunt during his confession in 1964.
- **Lewis Daly**, a research fellow of Anthropology at Wolfson College, accused by Anthony Blunt during his confession in 1964.

**Donald Maclean** was born in 1913. He was privately educated at Gresham's School and from there went to Trinity College,



Cambridge in 1931. His father was a Liberal Cabinet Minister.

While at Cambridge, Maclean met Anthony Blunt, Kim Philby and Guy Burgess. All of them went on to betray their country and Maclean was almost certainly recruited to the KGB by Blunt while at Cambridge.

After leaving Cambridge, Maclean joined the diplomatic service and in 1938 he was appointed Third Secretary at the British Embassy in Paris.

His work could have been stopped early. In 1939, a KGB agent called Walter Krivitsky defected to the West and informed MI5 that he knew of 61 agents in the UK who were working for the KGB.

Though he did not know the names, he gave detailed descriptions of those he knew to be working for the KGB. One description clearly fitted the privileged background of Donald Maclean. However, MI5 doubted the integrity of Krivitsky and his testimony was never followed up.

In May 1940, Nazi Germany attacked Western Europe. The imminent fall of France led to the recall of all diplomatic staff in Paris and this included Maclean. In 1944, Maclean was posted to Washington DC. While working at the British Embassy he had access to highly sensitive nuclear secrets. These secrets were sent to Moscow by Maclean. While Maclean never had access to any technical detail, he did report to Moscow about progress and development. Armed with this information, the KGB could estimate the amount of uranium the USA had access to. From this it could also estimate with some accuracy the number of bombs the USA was able to build. Some historians believe that Stalin decided to initiate the Berlin Blockade (1948) and his support of North Korea during the Korean War because he knew, via the information sent to Moscow by Maclean, that America was not as powerful as it tried to make out was in terms of nuclear weapons.

After World War Two, Maclean worked in London before joining the diplomatic corps in Egypt. In 1950, he was sent back to London as a result of what was described as his "wild behaviour". This was a euphemism for Maclean's involvement in drunken orgies – behaviour that put him at great risk of blackmail.

Despite his less than successful progress in the diplomatic service, Maclean was appointed Head of the American Department at the Foreign Office.

However, his behaviour had attracted the attention of MI5. In 1950, Maclean, along with Guy Burgess, was warned that MI5 was about to interrogate them about their activities. Both men were spirited away to the USSR by a KGB handler called Yuri Modin.

Maclean, unlike Burgess, assimilated into the Soviet Union and became a respected citizen, learning Russian and serving as a specialist on the economic policy of the West and British foreign affairs. He worked for the Soviet Foreign Ministry and the Institute of World Economics and International Relations. Maclean was awarded the Order of the Red Banner of Labour and the Order of Combat. His Soviet name was **Mark Petrovich**. The KGB rewarded his work by making him an honorary colonel in the KGB.

While living in Moscow, he spoke up for Soviet dissidents, and gave money to the families of some of those imprisoned.

His American-born wife, Melinda, joined him in Russia with their children, but they separated and she moved in with Kim Philby in 1966. However, Philby was still married to his third wife, Eleanor, although separated from her, and the affair did not last.

After it broke down, Melinda Maclean and the children returned to the United States.

In May 1970 Hodder & Stoughton published his book "British Foreign Policy since Suez" which Maclean had written for a British audience. Maclean told journalists that he set out to analyse the subject rather than to attack it, but criticised British diplomatic support for the United States in the Vietnam war. He stated that he would donate the English royalties to the British Committee for Medical Aid to Vietnam.

Maclean was reported seriously ill with pneumonia in December 1982, and was housebound after his recovery.

He died of a heart attack in 1983, at the age of sixty-nine. He was cremated and some of his ashes were scattered on his parents' grave in the churchyard of Holy Trinity Church, Penn, Buckinghamshire, United Kingdom.