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PHILBY AND MACLEAN: THE YEARS OF DAMAGE



Kim Philby, recruited into Soviet intelligence in 1933, was ready by 1944 to exploit his 11 years of deception. The West was about to enter the crucial years of the cold war and Philby the Soviet spy was the head of the Soviet section of the British Secret Intelligence Service. And Donald Maclean, three years after Philby's breakthrough, had penetrated to the heart of America's secret atomic programme.



Maclean (right) at the Washington Embassy. His stoney good looks made him ideal for a tabloid. He is seen at work. In the foreground, the Minister, shows him a paper. Others: 'Nikko' Henderson, second secretary (left), and John Allen, Head of Communications.

INSIGHT

FEELINGS about Kim Philby, some 300 men in armed parties, very sharply among his old colleagues across the Iron Curtain, are more than a little bitter. Some are still bitter because they were deceived into serving a degree of deception, and, best of all, the feasibility of breaking the Communist control of Eastern Europe by subversion: the story of the Russians. Some are bitter because they were deceived into serving a degree of deception, and, best of all, the feasibility of breaking the Communist control of Eastern Europe by subversion: the story of the Russians.

that was available to him. The... would explain the fact—confirmed to us independently by ex-CIA man Robert Amery and verified by a State Department official—that in 1950 the CIA and SIS were working on plans to snatch Maclean back from Moscow. As he has never been interrogated in the West, even such questions as the nature of his contacts must remain largely a mystery.

tion of Britain's other main secret department, M15, it was taken as virtually conclusive evidence that Philby was working for the Russians. Early in August 1945 an unexpected visitor with a heavy Russian accent called at the British consulate in the Beşiktaş district of Istanbul in Turkey. The man, whom Philby had known since the 1930s, had been a Soviet agent in the Far East.

was speaking to, and not typed. There was a Russian agent operating in the British Embassy in Turkey, he said, so he could not risk anyone typing copies of this material. Secondly, there must be a decision within twenty-one days. If he had not heard by the evening of the twenty-first, he would resign the post.

Many writing... Philby's immediate career... anti-Soviet operations... Philby's immediate career... anti-Soviet operations... Philby's immediate career... anti-Soviet operations...

Intelligence Service. Some preserve a degree of affection, and reminisce upon the misplaced idealism which led him to work for the Russians. Some are his former targets and a touch of loathing. He was an agent who really lived his cover. They are others have a more impassioned view, like the man who said to me: "Phibby was a competent bastard, and he killed a lot of people."

Espionage and counter-espionage are seen so much like civilized office games that the blood can get forgotten. But in this account of Phibby's career from 1945 to 1961 there are two crucial episodes which hardly eliminate the realities of the game.

The first case is a man alone: a Soviet intelligence officer caught in the act of trying to defect to the West. That story ends with a hand-to-hand struggle being hustled toward a Russian plane in Istanbul.

In the second case, there are

man Robert Amory and verified in 1959 the CIA and SIS were working on plans to snatch Maclean back from Moscow. As he has never been interrogated in the West, even such questions as the nature of his contacts must still be mysterious.

What can be closely mapped in this article is the shadow of Kim Phibby—the Soviet penetration agent at the heart of the Secret Intelligence Service, the man whose loyalty went unquestioned for so long. Indeed, it might never have been questioned, but for the fact that Phibby was caught up in the complex aftermath of Donald Maclean's espionage for the Russians.

Maclean's own espionage work was essentially different in character and its precise effect can only be presumed. The Western intelligence community probably still does not know exactly how much information Maclean actually got through to the Russians out of the material

operating in the British embassy in Turkey, he said, so he could not risk anyone typing copies of his material. Secondly, there must be a decision within twenty-one days. If he had not heard by the evening of the twenty-first day, he would assume the deal was off. He departed after making complex arrangements for getting in touch.

The British diplomat spent a long night preparing a handwritten brief addressed to the SIS in London, and it went away with the courier next day. After a week, there had been no response, and a cable was sent from the Embassy in Turkey asking for a reply. After another week, there was still no reply; and on the twentieth day the diplomat who had interviewed Volkov had still heard nothing, and was almost frantic.

Then, at last, on the morning of the twenty-first day, an agent arrived from London and announced he had come to take personal charge of the Volkov affair. He was a calm, unburdened figure wearing a cutaway collar with a flowing Byronic cravat. It was Kim Phibby.

The diplomat who had interviewed Volkov, with nervous understandingly taut, pointed out that the delay had probably ruined the whole deal—and asked why the hell couldn't someone have come out sooner. Phibby produced, casually, an almost incredible excuse. "Sorry, old man," he said, "it would have interfered with leave arrangements."

They tried to contact Volkov, but he was out of the country. Nothing happened. In the end they sent men out to look for "Consul Volkov," but he could not be found. Throughout the afternoon, the interviewing officer could get no further explanation of the delay from Phibby. "I finally made up my mind," he told friends later, "that either Phibby was criminally incompetent or he was a Soviet agent himself."

When it was clear that Volkov was not coming, Phibby returned to London. And a few days later, something occurred which freed the whole unhappy affair in the mind of the interviewing officer. A Russian military airman made an unexplained and quite irregular landing at Istanbul airport.

The British official went straight to the control tower where a bandaged figure on a stretcher was lifted from the car and put into the aircraft—which immediately took off.

It seemed to be an urgent Russian removal in the brouhaha style which was more common then although still to be seen on occasion. And it seemed a fair assumption that the man being removed was the unfortunate Volkov on which the interviewing officer decided to pass on his doubts about Kim Phibby to someone else.

He contacted a British SIS officer, and reported his version of the Volkov incident. But nothing seems to have happened. If there was an inquiry, it was kept strictly inside the SIS family circle. And clearly the incident, although later thought

rise from London directorship of anti-Soviet operations, through an important field command to the position of CIA liaison in Washington.

Phibby survives an inspection

SINCE THE disclosure that Kim Phibby became a Soviet penetration agent in 1953, several attempts have been made to pretend that Phibby was some kind of wartime underdog, who was accidentally left behind in the peacetime SIS. This argument is badly weakened by the fact that there was a vigorous shakeout of the SIS in 1946, which was intended precisely to remove any unsuitable people who had slipped in during the confused days of the war.

As a result of this it is not quite clear whether the operation was a part of the general inspection of the Foreign Office carried out that year under the present Lord Caccia—that inspection did touch on SIS and M13—or whether it was really a separate affair. What is quite clear is that Phibby survived it.

The year 1946 began on a good note for him, because he received in OBE in the New Year's honours the list gave no specific reason for the award and merely said he was employed in a department of the Foreign Office. Phibby's colleagues and superiors thought it was well deserved; he was an immensely hard-working officer—more often than not the last man in the office at night and the one who looked on the chore of locking-up.

The only thing which seemed even slightly likely to impede his rise to the top of the Service was a slight defect of the security clearances of departmental level.

Continued on next page

Volkov: agents for sale

THE LAST days of the second world war, and the first days of the peace, were marked by urgent discussions among young Englishmen who had been caught up in the military machine on how to re-assemble their broken careers. Most had one urgent impulse, to do something which had nothing to do with their war work. It was an impulse from which Kim Phibby seemed to be immune.

He showed no desire to revive his excellent pre-war prospects in journalism. To friends who did not know what his wartime "civil service" job had been, he said: "I've decided to join the bureaucracy. The future belongs to them." The future belongs to them, he said, to war-weary colleagues in the Secret Intelligence Service, like Malcolm Muggeridge, who evinced a willingness to work on a simple Russian instead of German antagonist which they found simply baffling.

Muggeridge recalls a drunken evening in Paris in 1945, when at Phibby's insistence, the two of them lurching round to take a look at the Russian Embassy. Phibby marched up and down, shaking his fist at the silent buildings, and demanding to know where we were going to penetrate them.

Phibby's zeal, of course, is highly explicable retrospectively. He had succeeded in early 1944 in becoming head of the British counter-Soviet espionage operation would hardly be ready to get out of the business. His war was just beginning, and the coveting outside the Russian Embassy was no more of an interdiction than the action of a racing-driver who cuts one corner extra-close to reveal in his control.

Around this time, however, Phibby was involved in a serious and peculiar incident in the way it was handled raises strange questions about the philosophy on which the Secret Intelligence Service was working in those days. It only became when the

man Robert Amory and verified in 1959 the CIA and SIS were working on plans to snatch Maclean back from Moscow. As he has never been interrogated in the West, even such questions as the nature of his contacts must still be mysterious.

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Mount Ararat, the double-humped mountain on the Turkish-Soviet border above on the Turkish side, below from the Soviet side. Philby emphatically kept a copy of the Soviet reward for war work picture as a souvenir. Which side was he on?



Allen, Philby's second wife



Washington Embassy detail from the staff group picture, October, 1945. First Secretary, Donald Maclean, 5 foot 4 inches tall, towers in the back row



Melinda Maclean and son

Continued from previous page

At that time, the SIS was devoted enough to the idea of togetherness to maintain a country house, with swimming pool, for the week-end entertainment of the staff. (The philosophy, perhaps more typical of the CIA these days, was to keep the secret world as self-sufficient as possible, even at the risk of inbreeding.) Philby, though, did not spend much time with his colleagues after hours; seemingly, he preferred to spend the time with his second wife Allen and his growing family.

A good reason for Philby to limit the time spent with his colleagues would have been the fact that it would lessen the strain of perpetually dissembling his political feelings. Most of the people in the SIS at this time seem to have held right-wing views, sometimes extremely pronounced.

One woman who worked in Philby's department recalls an occasion when she was discussing the forthcoming 1948 General Election with another woman colleague. "I was just saying: 'Wouldn't it be awful if the dreadful Socialists got in, when I got that feeling one day that there was someone standing behind me. I looked round and there was Mr Philby giving me a look of such malvolence.'"

But no harsh words accompanied this baleful look. And in fact Philby seems to have got through his career as an SIS executive with scarcely a harsh word to anyone, whether about politics or simple office inefficiency. It was one of the major reasons, naturally, for his success; he was not for his heavy stammer and his even, controlled temperance.

Malcolm Muggeridge, however, claims to have detected in Philby at this time a quality of "suppressed violence"

which he worked for the Soviet authorities before 1946 (our emphasis). But when Philby arrived, with a wife and four children, he looked exactly like a perfectly ordinary diplomat. Sir Michael Cresswell, a pre-war acquaintance of Philby's (recently Ambassador in Argentina) called in on Philby and found it hard to believe he was in intelligence work. "It didn't seem like his line."

Istanbul had been an important neutral centre in the war against Germany. Now, the East-West confrontation gave it even greater importance. It was at the centre of a cold war which seemed likely to go hot at the drop of an ultimatum. Turkey has a long border with the Soviet Union, and another border with Communist Bulgaria. In the forties, Stalin was loudly claiming a big slice of Eastern Turkey, plus the right to put Russian bases on the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. The Turks, in reply, were clamouring for Greece, which looked as though it could easily go Communist also.

The city of Istanbul has numerous advantages for direct links to their home communities behind the Curtain. And in the dark, wind-swept alleys of old Stamboul, there are innumerable bars and coffee-houses where clandestine meetings are easy.

Philby worked from the British Consulate-General, a vast barracks-like building standing in a walled compound in Beyogh, "new" part of the city. He established the family in a

department, even to do a field job, even in such a crucial area as Turkey? In this context, it is worth mentioning the only reference to Philby which seems to occur in Turkish intelligence files: a reference to his meetings with a group of Bulgarian and other East European "students" whom the Turks were inclined to think were spies. Such contacts seem humble work for a man who had just been a departmental head.

The more one investigates the nature of Philby's work in Turkey, the more curious it looks. In the middle of the period, he was brought back to England for a "James Bond" course at a spy-school near Gosport; shooting, unarmed combat, sabotage. A fellow-student says that Philby topped the course.

He spent a good deal of time in Turkey, travelling around the Lake Van district, close to the Soviet border. He kept a curious souvenir of the period, which some of them displayed in his Beirut apartment: a large photograph of Mount Ararat, which stands on the Turkish-Soviet border. Most people who were in the double-humped shape of Ararat would puzzle over that picture, and when some of them asked whether the negative was reversed, it used to amuse Philby enormously.

Presenting people with this tangible evidence of his own duplicity gave him a perverse thrill. He would usually imply that he had taken the picture himself though another version of the story suggests it was really the work of a brilliant Armenian named "Bill" Ekserdjian, reputed to have been one of Philby's most effective agents.

The picture seems to have been a ironic symbol of Philby's enigmatic status. Clearly, throughout his

career, he pretended to them that he was a British agent willing to work for them; which, unknown to London, was exactly what he was.

It would explain several puzzling points, most importantly, it would explain the passionate defence of Philby by his colleagues in the SIS when the security officers in 1953 were convinced that he was a traitor. The actions of a man in Philby's job can be virtually undistinguishable from treachery. Unless his friends stand by him, he has no defence when something goes wrong. Very shortly after the Turkish tour, things began to go wrong for Philby, and when they did the SIS stood by him with an extraordinary, apparently inexplicable determination.

Maclean learns atom secrets

MEANWHILE, Donald Maclean's diplomatic and espionage careers had been developing in Washington, where he stayed as a First Secretary until September, 1948. He had arrived there in Spring 1944, a golden boy of the foreign service, and at 31 still unusually young for his rank.

Behind him were four successful wartime years in London, where he had displayed his talent for swift, meticulous disposal of paperwork. His efficiency was made only more palatable by his casual doze of manner.

The war years in fact were the best of his diplomatic life. An eminent colleague of the time says that they were the peak of the moment which guaranteed Maclean's subsequent problems, over the face of an obviously glib

the only man in this picture of the rising young diplomat was on the social side. Melinda was an unenthusiastic hostess, and Maclean had a strong distaste for the after-hours obligations of Embassy life. On the cocktail circuit, the couple were noted principally for the extraordinary solemnity of persistently standing apart, holding hands.

As a common First Secretary is doubtful how much information of real value Maclean would ever have been in a position to supply through his tour in Washington, he got a job of greater significance. The new ambassador, Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr (Lord Inverchapel), himself a FO standard-bearer, found in Maclean an especially appealing subordinate. When the post of British Secretary to the United States, Britain and Canada, his main function was to control the exchange of atomic information between the three Governments.

Maclean became secretary in February, 1947, six months after the passage of the MacMahon Act which severely restricted U.S. participation in this exchange. At first sight this appears to indicate that Maclean can have had access to nothing significant—yet he was sedulously conveyed in all British Government statements from the moment Maclean's defection.

But starting new evidence has now come to light which entirely contradicts this view. It consists of the only known documentary assessment of the matter made by either the British or American Govern-

ment, a letter written by the Union Minister du Haut Katanga, the Russians would have valued anything Maclean could tell them about where the West was buying uranium in what quantities and at what price.

Para 10 goes on to illustrate how little the MacMahon Act had in practice cut off. It took until January 1948 to negotiate a *modus vivendi* for the exchange of scientific information relating to the estimates made at that time of one supply available to the three governments, requirement of uranium for the atomic energy programmes of the period from 1948 to 1952, and the definition of scientific areas in which the three governments deemed technical cooperation could be accomplished with mutual benefit.

Apart from this final reference to what amounts to the entire early blueprint for the peacetime atomic energy supply and reduce the cost of uranium, the man designated to fill it.

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Cairo—the strain is too much

BY NOW, however, there were signs of Maclean's incipient crack-up. He never found success an easy matter, his successes seem to have borne heavily on him. He had begun to drink more freely, life with Melinda was becoming more difficult.

These dormant traumas came vividly into the open in his next year. Cairo

the guards' record showed that Maclean was a frequent visitor in the evenings and could talk them about where the West was buying uranium in what quantities and at what price.

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...the same...
 ...of the...
 ...naturally for his success he...
 ...was noted for his heavy...
 ...planner and his even con-...
 ...trolled temperament.

The strange role in Turkey

IN EARLY summer 1946, Phibbs relinquished his London appointment, and took up an important new post in the Middle East. He went to Turkey. He was a "double agent" in the eyes of the British Government, but a "loyalist" in the eyes of the Turkish Government. He was now working for the British Government in Turkey.

Corrections

THE TO an incorrect identification of the Anglo-Germans...
 ...the British Government...
 ...the Turkish Government...
 ...loyalist...
 ...other Dukes of Arghil, past or present.

other version of the story...
 ...suggests it was really the...
 ...of a brilliant Armenian...
 ...remained to have been one of...
 ...Phibbs's most effective agents...
 ...The picture seems to have...
 ...been a tragic symbol of...
 ...Phibbs's espionage status...
 ...in London, know this. But like...
 ...a detective, a counter-...
 ...espionage agent in the field...
 ...can only get results by mix-...
 ...ing with the "criminals," he...
 ...is trying to catch.

ved in all British Govern-
 ...ment statements from the...
 ...moment Maclean defected.
 ...The war years in fact were...
 ...the best of his diplomatic life...
 ...an eminent colleague of the...
 ...point of the momentum which...
 ...guaranteed Maclean's subse-...
 ...quent promotions, even in the...
 ...face of an obviously declining...
 ...performance.

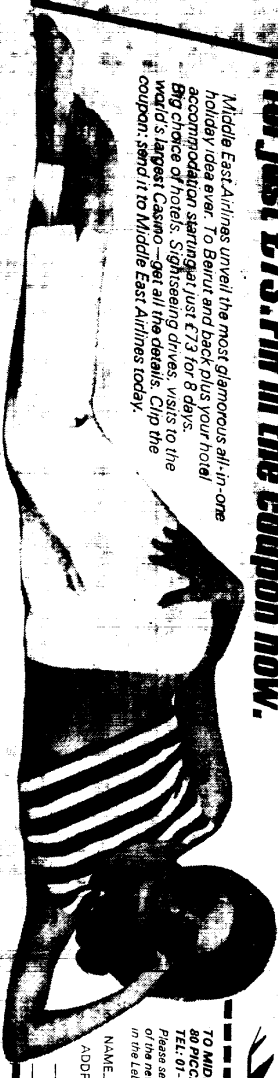
her...
 ...the second...
 ...American who fell...
 ...over and cracked his skull. An...
 ...had begun to be attacked...
 ...the party with his ancient rifle...
 ...Maclean disarmed him and...
 ...started to swing the gun...
 ...round his head. A fellow...
 ...member of the Embassy tried...
 ...to stop him, but he was...
 ...knocked down by the...
 ...four of Maclean on top of him...
 ...He finished up with a broken...
 ...leg.

...The vital question is how...
 ...Phibbs's superiors had...
 ...been falling on Paris, had...
 ...tempered the gregarious, im-...
 ...personable youth of the...
 ...Middleton, later head of the...
 ...F.O. Personnel Department...
 ...The two also developed a...
 ...mixture of water and...
 ...cigarette butts to keep in the...
 ...burned summers.

...In Donald, the change...
 ...brought out all his latent...
 ...greyness. His occasional...
 ...over anti-Americanism had...
 ...aroused little concern in...
 ...Washington. It was shared...
 ...by many of his em-...
 ...ployees, but not by the...
 ...Cairo he soon made himself...
 ...unpopular for...
 ...vipers. He found the corrupt...
 ...French regime handsome and...
 ...the unshakable British...
 ...policy of obstinately doing...
 ...nothing about it even more...
 ...so.

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...Instead of getting drunk...
 ...like a gentleman, he...
 ...embarked on a series of epic...
 ...Dyarsque binges. He was...
 ...arrested by the Egyptian...
 ...police, dead-drunk and with...
 ...reached his...
 ...he was often absent from the...
 ...office. Eventually the Embass...
 ...Security Officer, Major...
 ...Samsom, took...
 ...notice.

...He was a brilliant chap...
 ...but a highly unreliable...
 ...Samsom. He reported...
 ...his drinks. Caught by the...
 ...Head of Security in the...
 ...direct via the diplomatic...
 ...bag. Normally such reports...
 ...would have passed through...
 ...Maclean, but as...
 ...Maclean was Head of...
 ...Security he would have had...
 ...to Samsom first.

...But even during Maclean's...
 ...Cairo crack-up, the occasions...
 ...for treason seem not to have...
 ...cluded him. For in July 1948...
 ...Maclean left Washington...
 ...of maximum interest to...
 ...Soviet intelligence had been...
 ...opened to him. This was...
 ...the top secret negotiation of...
 ...the North Atlantic Pact, the...
 ...of the Western initiative in...
 ...the Middle East. Maclean...
 ...proximity to this is more...
 ...than a hypothesis. The State...
 ...Department letter, in one of...
 ...its most pointed passages...
 ...states categorically that...
 ...Maclean is known to have...
 ...had know-how in these...
 ...exchanges. But more than...
 ...this, the letter suggests that...
 ...he was familiar with every-...
 ...thing which "led up to"
 ...signature of the Pact in...
 ...April, 1949.

INSIGHT



MEN AND DOGS: Philby (above) at home with mongrel Tessa. Guy Burgess (right), booted out of Moscow after his detection.

This gives a fresh perspective to the British Government's consistent insinuations that Maclean's postings after Washington provided him with no espionage leads.

The death of a secret army

WHILE MACLEAN was still in Cairo, Philby had moved into a new job in Washington. He arrived there in October, 1951, and was given the most savagely destructive phase of his career.

The subject, he virtually set up the CIA's anti-Soviet espionage operation. The damage Philby did during his two years in Washington is almost impossible to assess without considerably more than any newspaper relation that any newspaper have pieced together.

In 1945 had been a casualty of surgery, swift and casual. The Albanian debate five years later was altogether a more considered and a bloodier affair.

Washington, must have seemed to Philby to be his redemption after the purgatory of Istanbul. He went to America as liaison man between Britain and the American part of western intelligence—at a time when, as a top CIA man of the period said, "relations were closer than they have been between any two services at any time."



Russians just seemed to know they were coming, was brisk and bloody. Within a month 130 or so guerrillas—about half the total force—were either killed or captured.

idea, could Albania nationalism be harnessed to overthrow Russian influence? Perhaps the process of disaffection might even be helped along a bit.

Ernest Bevin, the Foreign Secretary, had been opposed to the idea. But the Foreign Office continued a vocal faction in favour of establishing "resistance movements" in virtually every country of occupied eastern Europe.

In 1949, the weakest sector of the Russian empire was the Balkans. The Communist rebels in Greece were on the point of collapse. Yugoslavia was Communist but had not been taken over. The CIA's anti-Soviet operations were, therefore, concentrated on the Balkans. The Communist anti-subversion operations for co-ordinating the British and American halves of the joint operation was, naturally, the Turkish station—the biggest and the most active in that part of the world—made his advice on clandestine operations particularly valuable.

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around the summer of 1949 a "Committee of Free Albanians" based in Italy, and apparently a front organization for recruiting guerrillas. In the spring of 1950, the First in small groups, then in larger bands, they slipped up into the mountains and over the border into Albania. The plan is said to have been that the groups were to make for the mountains if they were to slip up trouble there—taking to the mountains if things got too hot.

It was a disaster. The Russians just seemed to know they were coming, was brisk and bloody. Within a month 130 or so guerrillas—about half the total force—were either killed or captured.

ON MAY 11, 1950, Maclean boarded a plane from Farnok field to cope with him, had gone to the ambassador, Sir Ronald Campbell, pleading for him to be sent home from Egypt. It was a disaster. The Russians just seemed to know they were coming, was brisk and bloody.

After a medical board, the Foreign Office gave him six months leave in London on condition that he undergo a psychiatric course. They were pointed to Philby, they thought. But in Britain the CIA's anti-Soviet operations were, therefore, concentrated on the Balkans.

But neither these well-known escapades, nor the Cairo debacle, were enough for the Foreign Office to jettison him. By the end of his six months, he was passed fit for promotion, for employment not merely for employment, but for promotion, as if his career had never been interrupted. He had become Head of the American Department.

Maclean cracks—and is promoted

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But in the previous year, 1951, he had been heavily investigated. He caught the 3,139 from the Communist Party in the United States. He was working for Uncle Joe.

Later he added that every Communist Party member should report this conversation, but decided that Maclean was probably just a spy. He was, he thought, if there was any way, to get out of it.

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