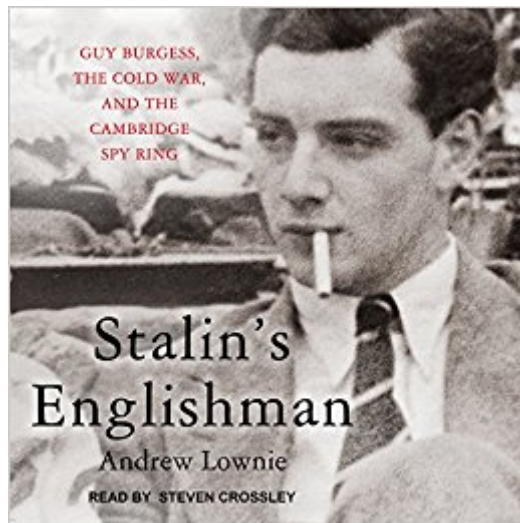




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Stalin's Englishman: Guy Burgess, The Cold War, And The Cambridge Spy Ring



Synopsis

Guy Burgess was the most important, complex, and fascinating of "The Cambridge Spies"-Maclean, Philby, Blunt-brilliant young men recruited in the 1930s to betray their country to the Soviet Union. An engaging and charming companion to many, an unappealing, utterly ruthless manipulator to others, Burgess rose through academia, the BBC, the Foreign Office, MI5 and MI6, gaining access to thousands of highly sensitive secret documents which he passed to his Russian handlers. In this first full biography, Andrew Lownie shows us how even Burgess's chaotic personal life did nothing to stop his penetration and betrayal of the British Intelligence Service. Even when he was under suspicion, the fabled charm which had enabled many close personal relationships with influential Establishment figures (including Winston Churchill) prevented his exposure as a spy for many years. Through interviews with more than a hundred people who knew Burgess personally, many of whom have never spoken about him before, and the discovery of hitherto secret files, Stalin's Englishman brilliantly unravels the many lives of Guy Burgess in all their intriguing, chilling, colorful, tragi-comic wonder.

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Customer Reviews

"Lownie brilliantly succeeds in painting a very complete picture of this British spy." ---Library Journal

After graduating from Cambridge University, where he won the Dunster Prize for History, Andrew Lownie went on to earn a postgraduate degree in history at Edinburgh University. He is now a

successful literary agent, and has written or edited several books, including an acclaimed biography of John Buchan. Steven Crossley has recorded over two hundred audiobooks and has won multiple AudioFile Earphones Awards. A graduate of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, his audiobook performances cover an eclectic range of subjects in both fiction and nonfiction.

This was an excellent biography of a very repellent man. As someone who once had a security clearance himself, it completely amazes me that a drunken reprobate like Guy Burgess was ever even hired by the British government, much less allowed access to some of its most classified, secret material. I have read a biography of Kim Philby previously and this was an excellent complement.

GB was always the most interesting, and fundamentally, the most astute of the Cambridge Spy Ring. In fact, he reveled in the role of ringleader. But his innate fears, including the wounds made on his sensitive soul from slights and rejections of his peers, led his rather overblown ego into a world he could not have understood. 20 years of study and perhaps, obsession, led the author to refrain from the opinions I just espoused. Burgess was a product of his time, says the author. And he really means a particular time in English schoolboy history. Born a few years earlier and Burgess would have joined his much heralded father in the Royal Navy. Born just a few years later, and the intellectual Etonian would have overcome his sense of rebellion to defend the world from Hitler's tyranny in a more fundamental way. Instead, the time of Burgess and his tribe of sophisticates, was an age of doubt and deep mistrust of the English colonialist order, and its storied most distinctive class structure. From an early age, Burgess looked to betray his class, never really understanding the damage done. Nor does the author, or any of us readers truly know the extent of the damage done by Burgess, a man who succeeded in bringing his inner revulsion into the highest order of treason. Historians should continue to condemn his actions, those more of a modern day spinmeister than of a Latter Day Saint.

The whole Cambridge spy saga is fascinating and this adds quite a bit to a full understanding. Much has been written about Kim Philby but Burgess is less well known. He is certainly a complicated piece of work. Particularly interesting is the ease with which he moved from one British security agency to another despite suspicions and a personal life that strains the imagination. This is a good read to get a better perspective on the whole story and an entertaining picture of a real character. Well written. Appears to be meticulous and comprehensive research.

England during wartime, and beyond. Cambridge University as a hotbed (no pun) of gay sex, intellectual hedonism, and high treason. Privileged youth betraying the people and institutions from whence they arose. Rough trade indeed, as Burgess's later years attest. The book is instructive history as it presents the entire life of a major spy, as well as insights into the tactics of his Soviet handlers.

I was living through this in London, England and was too disgusted with these ???? to want to learn any thing about them until this book was recommended to me. Thank you Andrew. It was like reading a great spy novel...but...It was true!...It was true!....

well written.

Loved it!! Great story...writing flowed.

Very informative

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