

INTRODUCTION

Many books have appeared on Kim Philby, including the chief character's own account.¹ Much of the story has been laid bare. But from my long friendship with him I believed that, although I had no startling revelations to make, I could fill a few gaps in the published record and perhaps correct one or two misconceptions, as I saw them, and having now retired from government service I would like to contribute my recollections.

This is not a researched book. I have no documents or letters, and no access to unpublished material. It is many years since I had anything to do with intelligence work. I write from memory, jogged here and there by books and articles already published, though there must be many I have not read. On several points of wartime detail where my recollection differed from existing accounts I consulted former intelligence colleagues, long retired.

The original *Sunday Times* articles of 1967 published for the first time many of the basic facts about Philby's career. Although these articles caused some publicity difficulties for me at the time, I thought the *Sunday Times* helped to establish a valuable point of principle, which I fully support: provided its current and future work is not seriously handicapped, a secret service has no right to permanent immunity from public scrutiny and

criticism; it cannot expect that faults and errors should be hushed up indefinitely.

In my own book, the first nine chapters (excluding Chapter 4, which is largely autobiographical) describe chronologically my acquaintance with Kim Philby from our first meeting in 1925 to our last in 1961. I have tried as far as possible not to duplicate what others have written, but to rely on my personal recollections. However, there were several periods of his life of which I knew little at first hand, notably Cambridge, the Spanish Civil War, Washington and Beirut; to the small extent I have touched on these I have usually drawn on other accounts. But for the most part I have described things as I saw them at the time, with occasional passages of hindsight. The period 1941–45 and the Iberian subsection of Section V of the Secret Service, in which he and I worked, are treated in some detail. I have freely discussed wartime intelligence matters, as have many others; but post-war intelligence, for the most part, is mentioned only in passing. Chapter 12, without pretending to be a deep analysis of Kim Philby, man and spy, offers some thoughts on his motives and personality.

I do not agree with several writers who have stated that Philby was essentially an ordinary man in an extraordinary situation; rather, I would say, he was an unusual man who sought and found an unusual situation. Nor, from what I saw of Kim and St John Philby, do I believe the theory of the domineering or dominant father.

I have tried to avoid either condemning or condoning what Kim did. This is not because I have no strong views, but because I am trying to write a factual account of what I knew of him. It would only confuse things if I were to hold a moral indignation

meeting every few paragraphs. If the personal picture I have presented is friendlier than several others that have appeared, well, that is how I saw him.

Tim Milne

Author's note

The Soviet organisation which Philby joined in the 1930s had many titles before settling down in 1954 as the KGB. I have not attempted to follow these changes, which would merely confuse the reader, not to mention the author. Where the context requires, the term KGB should be considered to include its predecessors, and the term NKVD its successors; the intervening titles have not been used.

I have referred throughout to SIS, not MI6; and to MI5, not the Security Service.