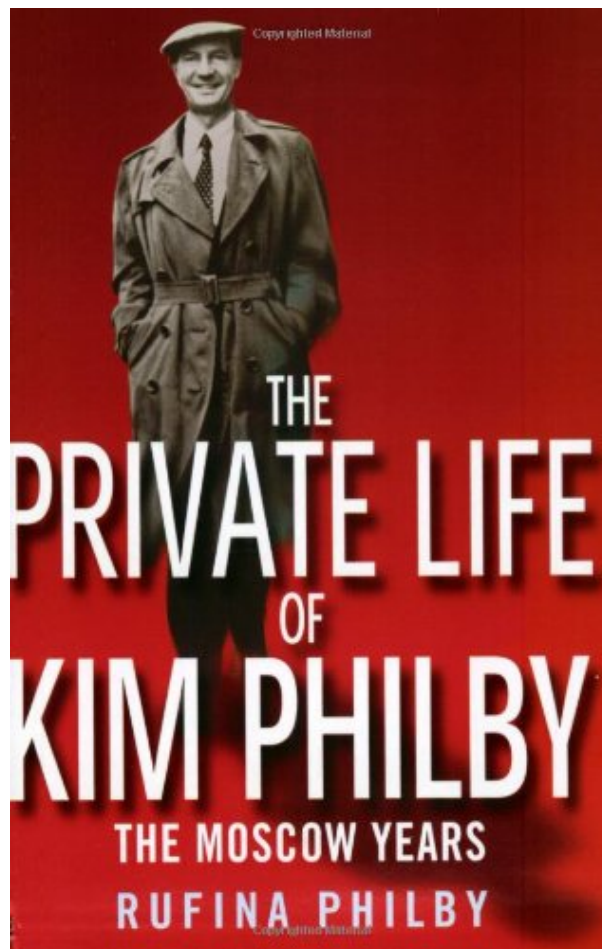
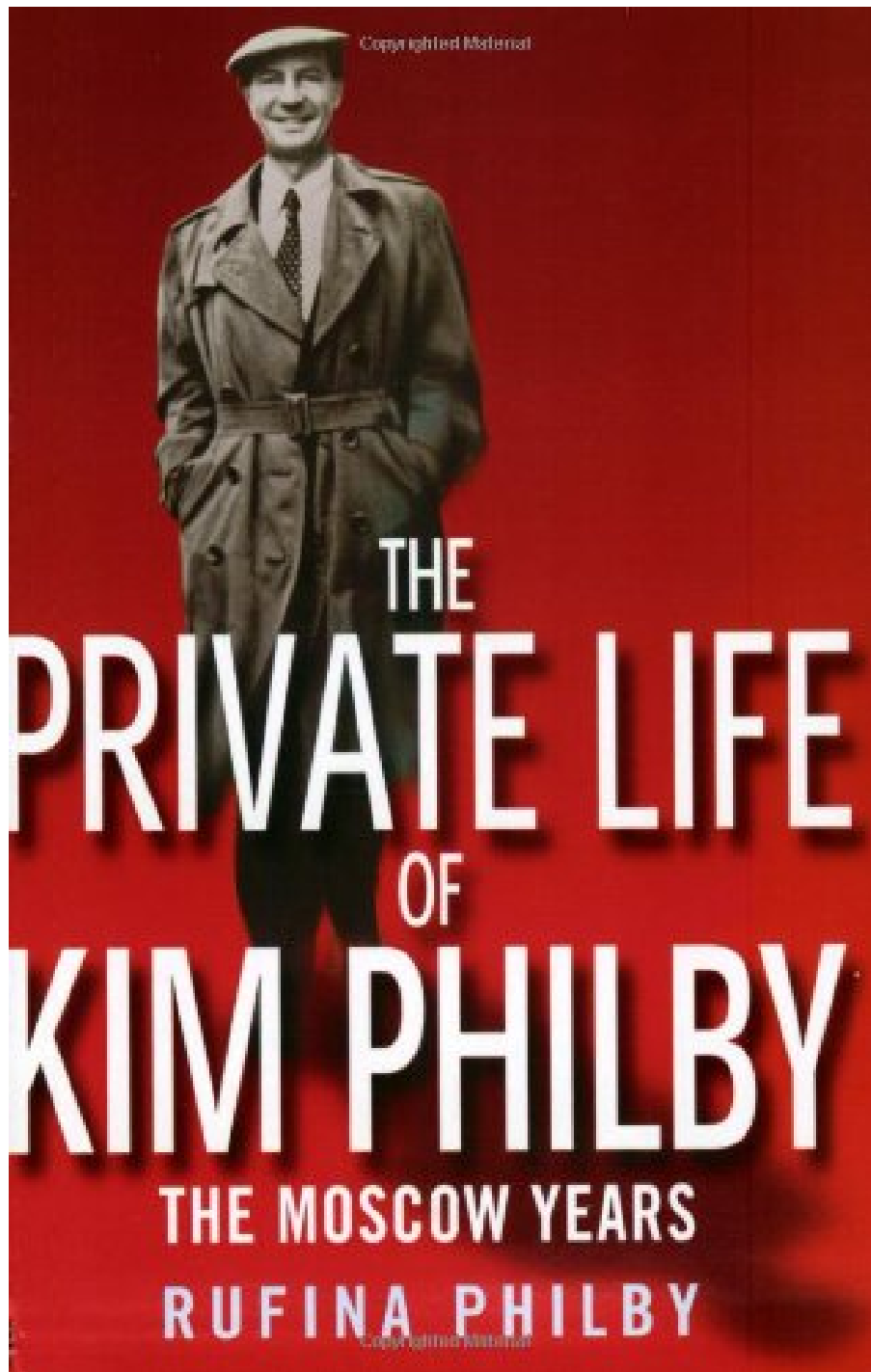


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MOSCOW YEARS BY RUFINA PHILBY,
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Masterspy Kim Philby's secret life is far stronger than any spy fiction. Recruited by the Soviet KGB at Cambridge in the 1930s, he made his way into the British Secret Intelligence Service where he became head of its anti-Soviet section, then liaison officer in Washington with the CIA and FBI—revealing everything he learned to his Moscow bosses. He was in the running to become chief of the British service, but following the defection of two of his fellow spies in 1951, Philby found himself under a persistent cloud of suspicion and he eventually fled himself in 1963. Before he died in Moscow in 1988, Philby had become a symbol in the West of Soviet-inspired treachery—an Englishman from a privileged background who had betrayed the entire free world. With interviews by Hayden Peake and an introduction by Michael Lyubimov, Rufina Philby's memoir of her notorious husband provides a portrait of the masterspy that reveals how much he had previously managed to conceal.

- Sales Rank: #2173610 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Little, Brown Book Group
- Published on: 2003-05-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 1.22" h x 5.00" w x 7.74" l, .86 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 450 pages

Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

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A Final Word on the Life of a Spy

By F. S. L'hoir

This book represents an important contribution to the scholarship on Harold Adrian Russell Philby for various reasons, one of the most important being that it consists of several books in one.

First, there is his widow Rufina's account, which gives us a loving (but never maudlin) glimpse into their Moscow life and travels around the Soviet Union during the last twenty years of his life. Rufina does not hide the fact that they were under constant surveillance by the KGB; nor is she reticent about the difficulties of daily life in the Soviet Union.

Next, there are two unpublished chapters from Philby's autobiography, which not only recount his childhood but also provide insight into his recruitment, including his relationship with his first Soviet mentors "Otto" and "Theo" and his early association in espionage not only with Burgess but also with Maclean (It is often claimed that Philby was not really acquainted with Maclean at Cambridge). Philby also relates how Burgess "badgered" his way into Soviet espionage, because he did not like to be left out of anything that his friends were doing [p. 230]. These unpublished chapters are especially important because the editor has included in parentheses Kim Philby's original words, which he then emended, in the typescript. The reader can therefore follow his processes of thought and revisions as he wrote his manuscript.

There is also a series of fascinating photos: of Philby at his portable typewriter; of his comfortable book-lined Moscow apartment, complete with Burgess' wing-back armchair and Tommy Harris' antique Spanish table. One also sees the Piranese engraving of the Antonine column in Rome, sent to him anonymously by Anthony Blunt in the 1970s (the subject providing a clue to the name of the sender). In one photo, which shows Philby in his last years, drinking tea next to a samovar, he has lost that hunted and haunted look that marks his photo-portraits during the Beirut years. A final photo, which shows Kim Philby in his coffin, prompts one to wonder whether he had any idea that the system for which he had devoted thirty years of his life would outlive him by only three years.

Finally, there is ex-CIA officer Hayden Peake's insightful commentary on the literature written about Kim Philby and Peake's annotated bibliography, which has 157 entries. His chronology of the spy's life from his birth in 1912 to his death in 1988 is outstanding.

The reader who is looking for the sensational revelations that the words "Private Life" of the title might suggest will be severely disappointed. For the serious reader, who is interested in the history of the twentieth century, this book is treasure trove.

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful.

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5 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE

By DAVID BRYSON

Everywhere is someone's country; and that simple and obvious thought should put patriotism into some kind of perspective. Attachment to one's own native land is usually part-emotional and part plain practicality - we need it to maintain some order in our lives. Emotional loyalty can lead many to find supereminent virtues in their own country, and in the nature of the case some of these virtues may have good rational backing. However it is not the rational bit that usually comes first, but the basic sense of identity.

Now suppose someone does not so identify but feels that his loyalty ought to be given elsewhere? Cases like this are likely to come from some rational conviction (whatever one thinks of the reasoning). Basic rationality then also says that either such a person can go somewhere more to his taste, or if he chooses not to he can hardly expect freedom to act in effective opposition to his own country's perceived interests - things just could not work that way. What seems to me pointless and silly is to try to inflate such differences of opinion into thought-crimes. Treason, as we call it, can often be very interesting and instructive, which is more than can be said for some of the comment it receives, and this is a very instructive and interesting study of the super-traitor Kim Philby.

I had already read his memoir *My Silent War*, and it whetted my appetite for more, provided it was the right kind of more and not just ooh-ah-spies material. What this book offers us is basically in four sections - 1) a personal memoir by Rufina, the last in his series of wives, of the last 18 years of Philby's life: 2) some more stuff straight from the horse's mouth so to speak: 3) an essay on Philby by Mikhail Lyubimov; and lastly a survey of the Philby literature up to 1999 by the former American intelligence officer Hayden Peake. This last is frankly unsatisfactory and it could do with better organisation instead of chasing every hare it starts in every which direction. However if your patience is up to it you will find a great many interesting observations, and I don't want to withhold the fifth star from the rest of the book. Whatever may be mysterious, it is quite clear that Philby could inspire loyalty and devotion in this wife at least, and I would dare use the 4-letter 1-word for his own feelings for her, going further than just emotional dependency. Kim himself gives us some more narrative, intended for a sequel to *My Silent War* and including the story of his initial recruitment into the KGB. Oh if there had been more of this, but let's be grateful for what we can get,

and he is one beautiful stylist. Over and above this we have the texts of a lecture to the KGB and an article concerned with whether agents should confess when under pressure. Significantly, while he is adamant that they should not, he says nothing about why he did just that when they caught up with him in 1963. Perhaps best of all is the piece by Lyubimov. I came to it fresh from trying to educate myself in quantum physics, and I had taken heart from the statement by the professors I had been reading that underneath the mind-boggling complexity there is an underlying simplicity to creation. Compare and contrast the constant response to any request from one of Philby's more boneheaded case officers that 'It's not that simple.' Big-time espionage is not what I would choose if asked for a model of clarity, but too much can be made of it, and while I would not just take Lyubimov or anyone else entirely at face-value I was impressed by the sense of proportion and common sense he brings to questions that have been flogged to death elsewhere. It's perhaps a little simpler than they sometimes let on.

Did Philby never feel even a twinge of doubt? His references to Stalin's atrocities, both here and in *My Silent War*, are, as it were, mumbled and passed over hastily. He never discussed his work with Rufina, not that she wanted to know, so there is no clarification from that quarter. The nearest we get to any kind of clear statement comes in his meetings with Graham Greene, and a comparison of their respective attitudes is illuminating despite the paucity of the evidence. Philby praises Greene's marvellous *Monsignor Quixote*, and in case you want to know so do I. This is a study in contrasted faith as represented by Catholicism and Communism, and Greene makes his own attitude perfectly clear, it seems to me. He needed a Faith as a prop, and if Catholicism failed he would have to look elsewhere. Greene also contributed a preface to *My Silent War*, and in that he noted that given the bloody history of Catholicism he was not about to find fault with Philby's limpet-like adherence to Communism. This preface doubtless deserved Professor Trevor-Roper's derision, but Greene still has a point. In any case if you are recruited by the KGB at age 20 and immersed thereafter in secret operations just try extricating yourself, just try.

This book was published in 1999, but the Philby literature goes marching on. It can be no more than a hunch, but something tells me that it is going to be a parade of opinions and attitudes because such important facts as we are ever likely to find have probably been unearthed in all their incompleteness already. With respect to the researchers and commentators, I am grateful for their work so far, but the person whose opinions interest me is Philby.

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