HISTORY
The Cambridge Spies
Edward Towne MA MSt PGCE
Study morning 10am – 1pm
Saturday 2 December
Course code: 17TON302 Course fee: £25

We look at five spies so far unmasked: Kim Philby, Guy Burgess, Donald Maclean, Anthony Blunt and James Cairncross. All studied at Cambridge, and all were recruited to spy for the USSR. We need to examine their motives, the possible damage caused and whether lessons can be learned from this episode.

This group of spies, known as the Cambridge Spies, all shared an English upper middle class and public school background (except for Cairncross), and all attended Cambridge University in the 1930s and 1940s – most of them at the same college, Trinity. Two of them (Blunt and Burgess) belonged to the ‘Apostles’, an all-male intellectual discussion group, tinged by both homosexuality and left-wing politics. This was against the background of the Great Depression following the 1929 Wall Street Crash, massive unemployment emphasised by the Jarrow March and the growing appeal of the political extremes of either Fascism or Communism.

The five men, attracted by the lure of Marxist Communism showcased in the Soviet Union, were recruited into Soviet service in various ways: through entry into the BBC (Burgess), journalism (Philby), diplomacy (MacLean), the Intelligence Service (MI5) and Bletchley Park (Cairncross). Gradually the group was exposed: Burgess and Maclean defected to the USSR in 1951; Philby was cleared in 1963 and appeared in Russia in 1963; Blunt confessed in 1964 and was publicly unmasked in 1979 following his exposure by Andrew Boyle; Cairncross was dismissed from his Treasury post in 1952. All had submitted industrial quantities of classified documents to the Soviet authorities. Three concluding issues remain: why did these privileged intellectuals choose to spy for Stalin, what damage did they do and what lessons can be learned from the whole episode?

Suggested reading
Additional information

This study morning is suitable for those with no prior knowledge of the subject, and is also suitable for those interested in studying history at any level.

This course allows you to spend time exploring a subject for interest, among like-minded people, without formal assessment.

There may be optional discussion participation during the course.

Intended learning outcomes

- To understand the intellectual climate of the 1930s – especially the appeal of communism.
- To assess the damage to the UK and its allies caused by British officials’ espionage.
- To ask whether lessons can be learned from this episode.

About the tutor

Edward Towne graduated in European Studies from the University of East Anglia, and later achieved a PGCE from Cambridge, an MA in Early Modern English History from the University of London, and MSt in Twentieth Century British History from the University of Oxford. His professional career was spent teaching History in state and independent Secondary Schools, finally as Head of the History Department. Currently, Edward lectures independently to adults in a variety of organisations, and acts as a reviewer and tour leader on historical topics.
Short Course Programme
General information, terms & conditions

How to book a place
These courses are usually very popular so you are advised to apply as soon as possible. Places cannot be held without payment of the course fee.
- **Online Booking is preferred:** Please visit www.kent.ac.uk/tonbridge
- **By post** to us at the address below, using the application form in the programme booklet. Please note that you will not receive an acknowledgment of your paper application; your payment will usually be processed when the course becomes financially viable, otherwise we will notify you of cancellation approximately seven days prior to the course. A paper application affirms acceptance of our terms & conditions.

Course cancellation
As these short courses are self-financing, each course can only proceed if there are sufficient enrolments. Therefore, if a course is cancelled due to insufficient enrolments we aim to notify applicants approximately one week before the course start date; if there is no suitable alternative course, we will refund the appropriate course fee in full. The University of Kent reserves the right to cancel a course for this or any other reason in which case the relevant course fee will be refunded in full.

If you find it necessary to cancel your place on a course, please let us know as soon as possible. Refund requests, including the reason, should be made by email or in writing to us at the address below. We reserve the right to retain all or part of the course fee if you request a refund after 14 days of your online booking being made or paper application being received. Discretionary, partial refunds may be made, after the deduction of an administrative handling fee as follows:
- a course fee of up to and including £42 will incur an administrative handling fee of £10.00
- a course fee of £43 and over will incur an administrative handling fee of £12.50.

The University reserves the right to:
- exclude any student if the student’s presence is making it difficult for the class to function properly
- cancel or amend the length of any course if the circumstances so warrant.

Neither the University of Kent, nor its staff, can be held responsible for any damage, loss or injury, however sustained, suffered by participants attending courses. Insurance is the student’s responsibility.

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- Parking. There is plenty of public pay and display car parking locally, but please note that only selected car parks permit parking in excess of four hours; detailed information is available from www.tmbc.gov.uk. No parking is available here on site.
- Refreshments are not provided; food and drink can be purchased from any of the nearby café outlets - we are closely situated to the High Street and town centre. A hot drink vending machine is usually available on the ground floor of this building.

Mailing List and data protection
Those attending our courses are automatically added to our database and kept informed about new courses. This information is not released to outside organisations. Please write to us if you do not wish your details to be kept on our database.

*Please contact us if you have any queries or would like to register your email address to receive our course information updates. We look forward to welcoming you here soon.*

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