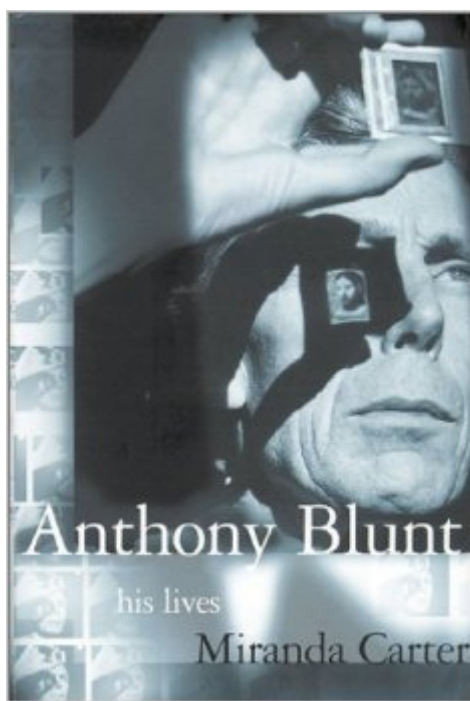


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Anthony Blunt: His Lives



Synopsis

The first full biography of the notorious spy and an X-ray of the British ruling class that produced him. Once an untouchable member of England's establishment—a world-famous art historian and a man knighted by the Queen of England—in a single stroke Anthony Blunt became an object of universal hatred when, in 1979, Margaret Thatcher exposed him as a Soviet spy. In *Anthony Blunt: His Lives*, Miranda Carter shows how one man lived out opposing trends of his century—first as a rebel against his class, then as its epitome—and yet embodied a deeper paradox. In the 1920s, Blunt was a member of the Bloomsbury circle; in the 1930s he was a left-wing intellectual; in the 50s and 60s he became a camouflaged member of the Establishment. Until his treachery was made public, Blunt was a world-famous art historian, recognized for his ground-breaking work on Poussin, Italian art, and old master drawings; at the Courtauld Institute he trained a whole generation of academics and curators. And yet even as he ascended from rebellion into outward conformity, he was a homosexual when homosexuality was a crime, and a traitor when the penalty was death. How could one man contain so many contradictions? The layers of secrecy upon which Blunt's life depended are here stripped away for the first time, using testimony from those who knew Blunt well but have until now kept silent and documents from sealed Russian archives, including a secret autobiography Blunt wrote for his controllers. Miranda Carter's *Anthony Blunt* is the first full biography of the mythical Cold War warrior, and is at once an astonishing history of one of the century's greatest deceits and a deeply nuanced account of fifty years in the British power elite, as experienced by one deep inside who wished to bring it down.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The individuals who comprised The Cambridge Five have been extensively documented as individuals as well as a group. Miranda Carter's book is worthwhile for it not only brings truly new information to this man's duplicity; she also spends a great deal of time on the man himself. This is a thorough autobiography and not just a spy novel barely elevated to the non-fiction category. Some readers may find the book too long on the man and too brief on his activities as a spy. Anthony Blunt was a traitor, but to limit his long life to that one word is to greatly minimize who this man was. The wide-ranging life he led together with the positions of influence he held outside of intelligence agencies, makes him an even more fascinating character. None of his actions diminish or justify his perfidious conduct; they do make him much more than a one-dimensional traitor to his country. Most of the spies that are exposed today have often become extremely wealthy for betraying their country. When Blunt was first recruited it was during a time when the Oxford Union Society within the college carried the debate with the motion, "that this house declines to fight for King or Country". In October of 1933 the Labor Party on, "no issue but the pacifist one", according to Stanley Baldwin replaced the Conservatives. And Europe in general was not interested much less enthusiastic about a second world war less than a generation after the first finally ended. Persons notable not only for their fame but also for their gullibility marketed Communism with success including their tours and subsequent spreading of nonsense regarding Potemkin Villages. These folks were believers; they were not making a living.

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