



Alger Hiss: Why He Chose Treason

Christina Shelton

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In 1948, former U.S. State Department official Alger Hiss was accused of being a Soviet spy. Because the statute of limitations on espionage had run out, he was convicted only of perjury. Decades later—after the Hiss trial had been long forgotten by most—archival evidence surfaced confirming the accusations: a public servant with access to classified documents had indeed passed crucial information to the Soviets for more than a decade.

Yet many on the American left still consider Hiss an iconic figure—an innocent victim accused of unsubstantiated crimes. They prefer to focus on the collectivist ideals Hiss stood for, rather than confront the reality of a man who systemically and methodically betrayed his country.

Former U.S. Intelligence analyst Christina Shelton employs an in-depth knowledge of Soviet intelligence affairs as well as recently released Hungarian and KGB archival material to shine a fresh light on one of the most famous U.S. espionage cases. The story is dramatic, but Shelton's analysis goes beyond sensationalism as she explores both the ideological motivation behind Hiss's behavior and the lasting influence it has had on U.S. foreign policy.

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