

fraud, all the tyranny of India are embodied, disciplined and arrayed.' The charges were manifold. The accused had 'taken away the lands of orphans.' He had alienated the fortunes of widows,' 'wasted the country, and destroyed the inhabitants after cruelly harassing and distressing them.' Burke charged Hastings with 'having tortured their persons, and dishonored their religion through his wicked agents, who were at the bottom and root of his villainy.' He had 'gorged his ravenous maw,' 'feeding on the indigent, the dying and the ruined' like the 'ravenous vulture who destroys and incapacitates nature in the destruction of its object while devouring the carcasses of the dead.' Hastings, Burke revealed, was a man of pretense, 'a swindling Maecenas.' And all was a part with his origin, which was 'low, obscure, and vulgar.' "

This notwithstanding, the final vote, in 1795, was for acquittal.

### The etiquette of plunder

Having shepherded the reader through the byzantine intricacies of this infighting amongst the most eminent scoundrels of the day, Edwardes allows himself the last few pages of the book, in the midst of eulogizing Hastings, to set forth some of his own views on how a truly civilized empire ought to practice colonialism—a sort of etiquette of plunder, if you will:

"Among the hard-headed, single-minded men of trade and profit, one nabob, at least, towers above the commonplace. Warren Hastings did not spend all his time in India amassing a fortune or fighting his own people and Indian rulers. Among all the diversions he made the effort to understand India, the country, the people, and their civilization. In doing so, he made a lasting contribution to the general culture of mankind.

". . . Hastings' enthusiastic patronage of oriental scholarship had a practical as well as an intellectual base. He believed that India should be ruled in traditional ways and that those British set in authority should speak Indian languages, understand Indian laws and customs. Such knowledge would contribute to the facility, as well as the stability, of British rule, just as his horticultural and agricultural experiments would result in new commercial products, and the expeditions to Tibet in an increase in external trade.

". . . Indians would understand and accept British rule if they realized that their rulers respected and admired their religion, their laws and their institutions."

This appreciation of Hastings by Mr. Edwardes prefigures the essentials of modern colonial practice, where one can avoid the expense of undue bloodshed simply by sending in a few anthropologists, followed by a swarm of non-governmental organizations, and by giving the Nobel Peace Prize to Rigoberta Menchú. Of course, it is always prudent to keep a few Blue Helmets on hand; there will always be a handful of ingrates, who fail to appreciate the blessings of subjugation.

## A World War I fairy tale from the 'Great Game' historian

by Mark Burdman

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### Like Hidden Fire: The Plot to Bring Down the British Empire

by Peter Hopkirk

Kodansha America, New York, 1994

431 pages, hardbound, \$25

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August 3, 1994 will be the 80th anniversary of the British and Belgian declaration of war on Germany and the formal beginning of the First World War. Many conferences and events are taking place over the spring and summer bringing together historians and experts from many countries to discuss the origins of that war. One such conference took place in Moscow in late May.

Peter Hopkirk's *Like Hidden Fire* (published in Britain as *On Secret Service East of Constantinople*) is a salvo fired by the British for this occasion. The bulk of the book is an account, written from an obvious partisan British standpoint and based on archival material and other documents, of the unsuccessful attempts by Kaiser Wilhelm's Germany, acting in alliance with the Ottoman Empire's Enver Pasha after World War I had begun, to unleash a "holy war" in the Islamic areas of the Near and Middle East and in Central Asia, with the ultimate aim, thereby, of destroying the British grip over India. Hopkirk is a capable and talented writer who knows how to draw the reader into his story line. But he is very economical with the truth, and he has concocted a British intelligence fairy tale.

As he admits, he is doing this for geopolitical purposes, to feed into the British campaign to portray a united Germany as the new "Fourth Reich" threat to Europe. His war history attempts to build the case not only that Germany was unilaterally responsible for the First World War, but that the war's deeper origins lay in Germany's ambitions, dating from the first half of the 19th century, to be a locomotive force for industrial development in Europe. Hopkirk roots such "provocative" German projects as the famous Berlin-to-Baghdad railway network in the 1840s work of Friedrich List, whom he labels "the first German imperialist."

He writes, in his first chapter: "In 1846, the political economist Friedrich List wrote that the lower reaches of the

Danube, the western shores of the Black Sea and the northern half of Turkey 'offer German colonists an abundance of unoccupied and naturally fertile land.' He . . . called for building of a railway which would run from Berlin to Baghdad. All this, he argued, could be achieved through 'peaceful penetration,' and would be part of a larger, worldwide Teutonic expansion, spearheaded by explorers, doctors, diplomats and businessmen. List's views on Teutonic expansionism were later to earn him the title of 'the first German imperialist.' "

Hopkirk doesn't have the minimal integrity to identify the source of this last epithet (the book has no footnotes, just a long bibliography). The first section of the book is entitled, in typical British fashion, "Drang nach Osten."

While it is true that List was a conceptual architect of many railway and other infrastructure projects, including the Berlin-to-Baghdad project, the characterization of him as the "first German imperialist" is utter nonsense. List was the renowned proponent of the "American System" of economics, and was, rigorously speaking, a passionately republican *anti*-imperialist, who polemicized repeatedly against the "free trade" economics of the British Empire. It is an act of pure falsification for Hopkirk not to mention that much of List's most productive work was done not in Germany but in the United States, where he became an ally and co-thinker of the American Whigs and the father and son duo of Mathew and Henry Carey. His ideas provided much inspiration for the industrial policies of Abraham Lincoln that won the war for the Union forces against the British-sponsored Confederacy's secessionists. This is another reason why the British hate List.

### **'Fears of a resurgent Russia and Germany'**

The broader reality, about who and what was responsible for World War I, is the exact opposite of what Hopkirk asserts. The "Great War" ultimately resulted from the fanatical British desire to stop what Friedrich List represented and promoted. It is completely immoral, although not atypical of British mythmakers, to make a hit-and-run attack on List, without mentioning that the British had already mobilized intensively in the 1840s to counter his influence. Lord John Bowring and the British Museum's David Urquhart coordinated such efforts, including sponsoring the work of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, both of whom polemicized against List's conception of "national economy" and in favor of the British "free trade" system.

The reader needs to be trained to see through Hopkirk's patent intellectual dishonesty, but thankfully Hopkirk leaves some hints about what really bothers him. He writes in the prologue, explaining his "story" about the German "Holy War" plans: "Pieced together from the long-forgotten memoirs of the participants, from diaries, and from the secret intelligence reports of the day, it is . . . a highly topical [story], in view of what is now going on in this volatile area where the Great Game never really ceased. To some, fears

of a resurgent Russia and Germany may give it an additional significance."

This reference to Russia would seem to be gratuitous, since Hopkirk's nominal purpose is to recount the story of German actions in World War I, not Russian, and to emphasize how Germany replaced Russia as Britain's main "Great Game" competitor in Central Asia. Notwithstanding, he is implicitly pointing to the influence List had on Russia, and the historical British fear that Germany would cooperate with Russia, as well as like France in Europe and China in Asia, to develop a Eurasian complex of infrastructural and related projects. Russian government minister Count Sergei Witte was an avid reader and was fully committed to List's railroad-building projects for the development of Russia.

### **Why the British provoked World War I**

The reader could get so swept up in Hopkirk's storytelling that he or she might lose sight of the underlying "cathexis" in the whole exercise. Hopkirk is the popular historian of the "Great Game" fight between Britain and Russia and/or Germany for control of Asia: His argument is that World War I was fought in order to *save the British Empire*, pure and simple.

There is little doubt that Kaiser Wilhelm was an abomination, surrounded by all sorts of geopoliticians and opportunists, perhaps in many cases British agents, or at least proponents of the same Venice-derived oligarchical world view that ruled in London. Even were Hopkirk's defamation of the Germans to be discounted, it is clear that something was rotten in Kaiser Wilhelm's Berlin, and that the emperor was a fool, or worse, for getting sucked into British geopolitical, balance-of-power manipulations. Hopkirk does, indeed, make one allusion to a source for this manipulation, by reporting that the British oligarch Houston Stewart Chamberlain made a profound impact on Wilhelm, with his Teutonic-racialist propaganda, but the British manipulation of the circles around Richard Wagner, Friedrich Nietzsche, and other pre-Nazi "pan-German" Romantic irrationalists, is never alluded to.

The deeper historical issue is that the British Empire, and the world system as desired by the British, was being mortally threatened throughout the later 19th century by the growth of industrial republics. A sane Britain, acting in the true self-interest of the British population, would never have perceived List, Witte, et al. as their enemies. It was only oligarchical fanatics, committed to the geopolitical view of the Eurasian continent as the world's "heartland" in eternal battle with the "rim power" Britain, and obsessed in a nearly mystical way with the magic of the British Raj, who would have thought that a world war and the deaths of countless millions, would be necessary to preserve the British Empire as the self-perceived "new Rome."

So, it is not a matter of taking sides, but of exposing the whole World War I project as an atrocious and unnecessary event in history, rather than a crusade for "freedom and de-

mocracy" as the victors' history of the past 80 years has tried to brainwash us into believing.

### The John Buchan legacy

Hopkirk puffs his book as the "true story," a documented version of the novel *Greenmantle*, by the late John Buchan, which Hopkirk calls the "immortal secret service thriller" about the "colossal conspiracy" of the Germans and Ottoman Turks. This was one of the most widely read books during the war. As Hopkirk notes, "Buchan was himself closely involved in intelligence work at this time, and had ready access to secret reports on what the Germans were up to in the East. As T.E. Lawrence [Lawrence of Arabia], a friend of Buchan's, observed after the war: *Greenmantle* has more than a flavor of truth."

Hopkirk coyly does not report that Buchan, a.k.a. Lord

Tweedsmuir, was a key figure in Lord Alfred Milner's "Kinderergarten," the group associated with the British "Round Tables" that assumed power in 1917, and replaced the relatively inept Asquith government with the more oligarchically "efficient" Lloyd George regime.

Buchan was a member of Lord Beaverbrook's Ministry of Information and Propaganda, and therefore a figure essential to the British war propaganda effort in the later months of World War I, including in the manipulations to bring the United States into the war on the side of the British. Hopkirk, in mimicking Buchan as an intelligence specialist, liberally disinform the reader about the nature of British war operations, including in Turkey's capital, Constantinople.

Buchan's ghost is alive and well today, in Hopkirk's efforts to keep alive the British-spawned mythology about the Fourth Reich threat of a "resurgent Germany."

## Books Received

**Mexico in the Age of Democratic Revolutions 1750-1850**, edited by Jaime E. Rodríguez O., Lynne Rienner, Boulder, Colo., 1994, 330 pages, hardbound, \$35

**Bolivia and Coca**, by James Painter, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, Colo., 1993, 194 pages, hardbound, \$25

**South of the Border: Mexico in the American Imagination, 1914-1947**, by James Oles, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, D.C., 1993, 352 pages, hardbound, \$75; paperbound, 29.95

**Cortés, The Great Adventurer and the Fate of Aztec Mexico**, by Richard Lee Marks, Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1993, 347 pages, hardbound, \$27.50

**The Best Last Hope of Earth: Abraham Lincoln and the Promise of America**, by Mark E. Neely, Jr., Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1993, 214 pages, hardbound, \$24.95

**W.E.B. Du Bois, Biography of a Race**, by David Levering Lewis, Henry Holt, New York, 1993, 735 pages, hardbound, \$35

**Gen. James Longstreet: The Confederacy's Most Controversial General—A Biography**, by Jeffrey D. West, Simon and Schuster, New York, hardbound, \$27.50

**The Reckoning: The Murder of Christopher Marlowe**, by Charles Nicholl, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, New York, 1994, 413 pages, hardbound, \$24.95

**Paul Revere's Ride**, by David Hackett Fischer, Oxford University Press, 445 pages, hardbound, \$27.50

**Origins of the British Israelites: The Lost Tribes**, by O. Michael Friedman, Edwin Mellen Press, Lewiston, N.Y., 1993, 171 pages, hardbound, \$79.95

**Leni Riefenstahl: A Memoir**, by Leni Riefenstahl, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1993, 669 pages, hardbound, \$35

**A Question of Rites: Friar Domingo Navarrete and the Jesuits in China**, by J.S. Cummins, Ashgate Publishing, Brookfield, Vt., 1993, 349 pages, hardbound, \$67.95

**The Forgotten Christians of Hangzhou**, by D.E. Mungello, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu, 1994, 248 pages, hardbound, \$26

**China's Far West: Four Decades of Change**, by L. Doak Barnett, Westview Press, Boulder, Colo., 1993, 688 pages, hardbound, \$39.95

**Black Hand of Beijing: Lives of Defiance in China's Democracy Movement**, by George Black and Robin Munro, John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1993, 390 pages, hardbound, \$24.95

**The Fullerenes: New Horizon for the Chemistry, Physics and Astrophysics of Carbon**, edited by H.W. Kroto and D.R.M. Walton, Cambridge University Press, New York, 1994, 154 pages, paperbound, \$24.95

**Venice, Austria and the Turks in the Seventeenth Century**, by Kenneth M. Setton, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 1993, 501 pages, hardbound, \$35

**Soap Opera: The Inside Story of Procter & Gamble**, by Alecia Swasy, Times Books/Random House, New York, 1993, 378 pages, hardbound, \$24

**Chester Bowles: New Dealer in the Cold War**, by Howard B. Shaffes, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1993, 432 pages, hardbound, \$29.95

**Behind the Throne: Servants to Imperial Presidents 1898-1968**, edited by Thomas J. McCormick and Walter LaFeber, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Wisc., 1993, 271 pages, hardbound, \$45