

Setting the East Ablaze

Peter Hopkirk

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'A gripping account of the terrible, confused struggle for mastery of Central Asia that followed the Russian Revolution' *Daily Telegraph*

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Lenin's Dream of an Empire in Asia

Peter Hopkirk



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Peter Hopkirk : Setting the East Ablaze before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Setting the East Ablaze:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Central Asia saturation, with a Balkan detour By Borrowed Blue Peter Hopkirk's books on Central Asia are very good. Begin with The Great Game, go on to On Secret Service East of Constantinople, and follow with Setting the East Ablaze. Hopkirk was apparently inspired by Fitzroy MacLean's Eastern Approaches, to do much research and write his own books set in Central Asia. MacLean, after his

diplomatic service in Moscow, with accompanying forays into 'Central Asia,' went to join The Phantom Major (David Stirling) in North Africa, before being sent by Churchill to 'Yugoslavia' to discover which resistance group was the strongest, and the one most likely to help drive the Germans and Italians out of the Balkans -- this group, then, Britain would send supplies to. MacLean and Churchill recognized that they would be choosing to help a Communist resistance group (The Partisans), and that there would be 'problems' related to the choice at the end of the war. [Read Nikolai Tolstoy's books *The Minister and the Massacres* and *The Secret Betrayal: 1944-1947*. Also, Nicholas Bethell's *The Last Secret*.] For fans of John Buchan's novels, Hopkirk says that *On Secret Service East of Constantinople* is the "true story" which lies behind Buchan's novel *Greenmantle*. Readers of *On Secret Service East of Constantinople* may want to read next, *The Spy Who Disappeared*, by Reginald Teague-Jones...along with Hopkirk's *Setting the East Ablaze*. These writers give a reader so many "ends of golden strings," that to follow them all, would take many months, and the reading of a good many books! Hopkirk is a good writer, whatever he is writing about.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Did the Great Game ever end? Not in terms of its consequences for the modern Near East and Central Asia. By R. Moore With the East truly ablaze these days I am grateful to British historical fiction author Antoine Vanner ("*Britannia's Reach*," "*Britannia's Wolf*") for introducing me to the works of Peter Hopkirk. While not written in chronological order, this book could be considered the third of a trilogy of works by Hopkirk that provide a very thorough, historically sound, yet highly readable introduction to the "Great Game" of territorial rivalry between Britain (ever concerned for the future of India, the jewel in the crown of the British empire) and Imperial and later Soviet Russia over influence in central Asia. One cannot hope to understand current events and passions in this region without at least an introduction to this history of Western intervention in the region.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. *The Great Game between the World Wars* By E. A. Kinzel This is another of Peter Hopkirk's wonderful books about Central Asia, mostly dealing with players in the Great Game. This volume takes up the story after World War One, when the Bolsheviks decided they would attempt to keep the provinces of Tsarist Russia intact and part of the Soviet Union, all in the name of anti-imperialism. There were also various Chinese, Turkic, and British forces at work in the power void which resulted in Central Asia after the collapse of the Russian Empire. Like other Hopkirk books, this is not dry history, but a series of compelling portraits of individual players in the intrigues of the time. These include the "Mad Baron", von Ungern-Sternberg, a White Russian who thought he was the reincarnation of Genghis Khan, and attempted to recreate the latter's Empire in an orgy of murder and destruction. There is also the British super-spy Bailey, who survived for months behind Bolshevik lines as they actively pursued him. At one point he assumed the disguise of an Albanian (correctly assuming that there would likely be no one in Central Asia to check his linguistic bona fides), became a Soviet agent, and was given as one of his tasks gathering information about the British spy Bailey. Another character was Enver Pasha, the cosmopolitan former Ottoman leader, who tried to create a pan-Turkic state in central Asia, to stretch from Anatolia to Chinese Turkestan. An excellent book.

'Let us turn our faces towards Asia', exhorted Lenin when the long-awaited revolution in Europe failed to materialize. 'The East will help us conquer the West.' Peter Hopkirk's book tells for the first time the story of the Bolshevik attempt to set the East ablaze with the heady new gospel of Marxism. Lenin's dream was to liberate the whole of Asia, but his starting point was British India. A shadowy undeclared war followed. Among the players in this new Great Game were British spies, Communist revolutionaries, Muslim visionaries and Chinese warlords - as well as a White Russian baron who roasted his Bolshevik captives alive. Here is an extraordinary tale of intrigue and treachery, barbarism and civil war, whose violent repercussions continue to be felt in Central Asia today.

.com Amid the sand and rock of Central Asia, Russia and England spent much of the 19th century playing what historians have come to call the Great Game: the struggle for control over transcontinental routes from Europe to the Far East. When the Bolsheviks came to power in 1917, Lenin continued to press Russian--now Soviet--claims to faraway, fabled places such as Samarkand and Hotan. The intrigues of his agents and their British counterparts, swashbucklers all, could come from a modern spy novel, and they make for fascinating reading in Peter Hopkirk's vivid account. From Publishers Weekly A real-life tale of espionage and adventure, Hopkirk's latest concerns Soviet attempts to sponsor communist revolution in Asia and the British secret agent who opposed them. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. 'A classic example of truth outpacing fiction'?Times Literary Supplement 'The stuff of a dozen adventure movies . . . everything a ripping good yarn should be'?New York Times