

Setting the East Ablaze

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SETTING THE EAST ABLAZE

Lenin's Dream
of an Empire in Asia

PETER HOPKIRK

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'Our mission is to set the East ablaze'
inscription over the Bolshevik First Army H.Q. at Ashkhabad

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Contents

List of Illustrations	vii
Acknowledgements	ix
Prologue	I
1 'An Absolutely First-Class Man . . .'	7
2 The Strange Adventures of a Butterfly Collector	17
3 Bailey Vanishes	30
4 The Executioner	46
5 Hunted	58
6 Bailey Joins the Soviet Secret Service	76
7 'To Set the East Ablaze'	95
8 'The Army of God'	108
9 The Bloody Baron	123
10 'An Avenue of Gallows'	137
11 The Last Stand of Enver Pasha	152
12 Curzon's Ultimatum	167
13 'Squeezed Out Like a Lemon'	176
14 Skulduggery on the Silk Road	185
15 A Lady Vanishes	194
16 The Last of the Central Asian Dreamers	209
17 The New Bogy-Men of the East	226
18 The East Fails to Ignite	238

Bibliography of Principal Sources	243
Index	247

Illustrations

- 1 Colonel Bailey wearing a beard and disguised as a Bolshevik
- 2 Colonel Bailey, minus beard, at Bokhara with the two Indian Army NCOs he met there
- 3 Captain Brun, the Danish officer arrested by the Tashkent Bolsheviks
- 4 Paul Nazaroff, the White Russian counter-revolutionary leader
- 5 Colonel Percy Etherton, British Consul-General at Kashgar
- 6 M.N. Roy, Indian revolutionary and Comintern strategist
- 7 Mikhail Borodin, top Soviet Comintern agent
- 8 Baron Ungern-Sternberg
- 9 Enver Pasha
- 10 Governor Yang of Urumchi
- 11 Governor Chin
- 12 Governor Sheng
- 13 'General' Ma, the leader of the Chinese Muslim uprising
- 14 Old Bokhara before it fell into Soviet hands
- 15 British Consulate-General at Kashgar in Chinese Central Asia
- 16 Typical Central Asian scene on the Chinese-Russian frontier
- 17 Bolshevik troops on frontier patrol in Soviet Central Asia
- 18 Tungans flocking to Ma's banner in Chinese Central Asia

MAPS between pp. 14 and 15

- 1 Russia, India, China and adjacent areas
- 2 Central Asia after the Russian Revolution

SOURCES OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Nos 1 and 2 by courtesy of the Royal Geographical Society; No 3 from *Troublous Times* by Captain A.H. Brun, published by Constable, 1931; No 4 from *Hunted Through Central Asia* by P.S. Nazaroff, published by Blackwood, 1932; No 5 from *Across the Roof of the World* by Lt. P.T. Etherton, published by Constable, 1911; No 6 from *Memoirs* by M.N. Roy, published by Allied Publishers, Bombay, 1964; No 7 from *Borodin* by Dan Jacobs, published by Harvard, 1981; No 8 from *The Modern History of Mongolia* by C.R. Bawden, published by Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968; Nos 9, 14 and 17 from *Alone Through the Forbidden Land* by Gustav Krist, published by Faber, 1938; Nos 10, 13 and 18 from *Big Horse's Flight* by Sven Hedin, published by Macmillan, 1936; No 11 from *Karavan* by Nils Ambolt, published by Blackie, 1939; Nos 12 and 16 from *Journey to Turkistan* by Sir Eric Teichman, published by Hodder and Stoughton, 1937; No 15 by courtesy of Eric Macartney, Esq.



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'Peter Hopkirk's narrative is irresistible, his style lucid, and, as current events in Afghanistan show, his theme is ominously topical.'

E. C. Hodgkin

'Let us turn our faces towards Asia', exhorted Lenin when the long-awaited revolution in Europe failed to materialize. 'The East will help us to conquer the West.'

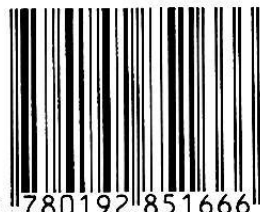
Peter Hopkirk's book – the last in his trilogy set in Central Asia – tells for the first time the story of the Bolshevik attempt between the wars to set the East ablaze with the new gospel of Marxism. Lenin's dream was to liberate the whole of Asia, but his starting-point was British India.

A shadowy, undeclared war followed, in which the British and their allies were determined to wreck Moscow's plans.

Among the players in this new Great Game were British Indian intelligence officers and the professional revolutionaries of the Communist International. There were also Muslim visionaries and Chinese war-lords – as well as a White Russian baron who roasted his Bolshevik captives alive.

Pieced together from the intelligence reports of the day, and the long-forgotten memoirs of eye-witnesses, here is an extraordinary tale of intrigue and treachery, barbarism and civil war, whose echoes continue to be heard in Afghanistan and elsewhere today.

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