

Man” in the Kim Philby spy ring, is any more accurate than the Operation RYAN story.

It may very well be that John Cairncross was, as Oleg Gordievsky reports, recruited as a Soviet spy by Guy Burgess, while the widely traveled British government senior official was an undergraduate at Cambridge. Cairncross, now in his eighties and living in retirement in France, was not, however, the last of the Philbyite recruits. By offering up the authoritative identification of Cairncross as the “Fifth Man,” Gordievsky with equal “authority” cleared such top British figures as Lord Victor Rothschild and former MI-5 head Roger Hollis of long-held suspicions that they too were working for Moscow as part of the Philbyite cell. Gordievsky’s unequivocal statement that the KGB had no agents inside British intelligence or anywhere else in the British government bureaucracy during his entire time in London base, defies credibility.

Whether the readers of this review decide to plow through the 700-plus pages of this fictionalized account of the KGB and its Chekist antecedents or not, they will be well advised to take note of Gordievsky.

He claims the dubious distinction of having advised both Margaret Thatcher and Mikhail Gorbachov on each other’s pécadillos prior to their first fateful meeting in December 1984, on the eve of Gorbachov’s coming to power in Moscow. British intelligence has by no means worn out this tool, and we will be no doubt hearing from Oleg Gordievsky again.

## When ‘family’ comes before country

by Pamela Lowry

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### **The Lees of Virginia: Seven Generations of an American Family**

by Paul C. Nagel  
Oxford University Press, New York, 1990  
332 pages, hardcover, \$24.95

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There are moments, in the midst of burgeoning personal details provided about scores of members of Virginia’s Lee family, over hundreds of years, when the reader is prompted to ask: “What is the point of all this?” Although the Lees were major figures in many of the nation’s crucial events,

the author states in his foreword, “The family’s public experiences . . . must serve mainly as a backdrop since my emphasis is on what the Lees meant to one another.” Ironically, with all the sometimes tedious detail, what keeps this book from being just another interesting family story is that the author, in focusing on the Lees’ overriding concern with family and family aggrandizement, gives us a valuable clue as to why a well-meaning and talented family suffered what they themselves viewed as devastating reverses.

The Lees, although now regarded as one of the “first families” of Virginia, were not always so, and it was their very success at emulating some of the less-endearing characteristics of the leading British oligarchical families of the colonial period that led to many of their subsequent problems.

The Lees of 17th-century Virginia were fairly successful planters who rightfully opposed, along with George Washington’s ancestor John, the 1676 rebellion of Nathaniel Bacon. Bacon, under the cover of attacking Royal Governor Berkeley, burned Jamestown and tried to wipe out the friendly Indians who served as a screen to protect the colony’s frontiers. Bacon’s supposedly local rebellion was actually run from London, which feared the expansion of the American colonies from a looting ground to an actual productive nation. The fight for agricultural and industrial development instead of British looting policies runs as a major theme throughout the history of Virginia. Arrayed against any development but raw materials production, were the “great” feudal families of the Carters, Byrds and Ludwells. Royal decrees allowed them to own hundreds of thousands of acres, and they paid no taxes as long as the lands were left fallow (rather like the way wealthy people in Virginia utilize use valuation taxes today).

### **Pro-Independence movement**

On the other side were Gov. Alexander Spotswood and his faction, which included the Washingtons and Lees, and which formed the core of the future Virginia pro-Independence movement. The Spotswood group, against fierce opposition, was able to transform the colony of Virginia from a sluggish, single-crop backwater hugging the coast, to an optimistic westward-looking territory that fostered iron production, agricultural expansion, and the building of towns and cities.

In 1747, Lawrence Washington, George Washington’s older half-brother and close collaborator of Governor Spotswood, laid the basis for the founding of the Ohio Company. A third-generation Lee, Thomas, served as its first president, but not, as the author says, as its founder. The efforts of the Ohio Company to colonize and farm the Ohio Valley led to the establishment of Pittsburgh and the subsequent expansion of American development to the Great Lakes and Mississippi River.

In these exciting events, the Lees were sympathetic sup-

porters, but were primarily concerned with expanding their own land holdings and functioning, as the author says, as a “well-knit family power bloc.”

This outlook led some Lees into land-acruing marriages with families from the feudalist faction—the Ludwells and Carters, for example. Richard Henry Lee and Francis Lightfoot Lee (for whom Leesburg is named) were both delegates to the Continental Congress and signers of the Declaration of Independence. In fact, it was Richard Henry who introduced the motion in Congress for American independence.

Yet, when their brothers William and Arthur were recalled from service in Europe when they accused Silas Deane of being a British agent, Richard Henry and Francis resigned from the Continental Congress. They did so because of the “affront” to the Lee family, but what they perceived as a family insult was actually a conscious British gambit to split the American delegation in Paris, and create factions on this side of the Atlantic.

Instead of saying, “The world seems crazy” and retiring to his home, it would have better befitted the talented Francis Lightfoot Lee to have stayed in Congress and continued the battle for American sovereignty.

Richard Henry, fortunately, did return to Congress later and became its president, presiding over the passage of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. The settlement of the Midwest had been planned by George Washington and his officers of the Continental Army during the long winters at Valley Forge, Morristown, and Newburgh, and was concretized when Revolutionary War veterans formed the Ohio Company of Massachusetts. When news of the passage of the Northwest Ordinance reached the Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia, with the immediate prospect of a group of organized settlers leaving for Ohio, the deadlock which had paralyzed the Convention was broken, and the Constitution was swiftly passed.

### Reverses and scandals

After the Revolution, the Lees suffered a series of reverses and scandals which greatly saddened the family. The brilliant but erratic military commander, “Light-horse Harry” Lee, plunged his estate into ruin through wild speculation, and brought down with him his brother Richard Bland Lee, who lost his large Sully Plantation to pay off his creditors. Then Light-horse Harry’s son Henry seduced his ward, who was also his sister-in-law, and squandered her fortune. Henry’s half-brother, son of Light-horse Harry’s second wife, Ann Carter, was Robert E. Lee.

Although Robert grew up in comparative poverty, due to his father’s speculative mania, he maintained the Lee tradition of paramount devotion to family and perhaps, judging from his stated intention of purchasing Stratford, the family’s ancestral mansion, a longing for the “good old days.”

But having served with distinction in the U.S. Army

and as Superintendent of West Point, Robert was actually opposed to secession. When he was asked to assume command of the Union forces and turned it down, Robert E. Lee must have known that even if the Confederacy were victorious its dependency on raw materials production would make it a client state of the British Empire, and a base for further operations against the diminished United States.

Although some Lees did stay with the Union, Robert declared that he could not fight against his family and friends, and turned his back on the American development policies for which generations of Lees had battled the British. This does raise the question of what family Robert was fighting for—the patriot Lees or the feudal Ludwells and Carters—as commander of “the Army of Northern Virginia.”

In the book’s last chapter, the author adds an interesting insight about the growth of the myth of Robert E. Lee. Although Lee was much admired in the South after the Civil War, the North had basically ignored him until the 1905-07 period, when two admirers of the British Empire, Henry James and Charles Francis Adams II, began eulogizing him as a paragon of patient and noble suffering, worthy of national emulation.

Considering the suffering and subversion that the Teddy Roosevelt administration had already begun to unleash on behalf of British looting operations worldwide, it is not surprising that America’s enduring enemy would cynically choose a tragic figure as a model for what they hoped would be a “kinder, gentler” and more submissive America.

## The dream of decent black education

by Denise Henderson

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### Initiative, Paternalism, and Race Relations: Charleston’s Avery Normal Institute

by Edmund L. Drago

University of Georgia Press, Athens, 1990  
402 pages, hardbound, \$45

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Dr. Edmund Drago’s history of the Avery Normal Institute, a secondary school for African-Americans established in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1865, begins in a promising manner. Dr. Drago quotes the racist secessionist John C.