

***Rebels Against the Raj: Western Fighters for India's Freedom*
by Ramachandra Guha**

wins

**the Elizabeth Longford Prize for Historical Biography 2023,
Judged by Professor Roy Foster (Chair), Antonia Fraser (Chair Emerita),
Flora Fraser, Richard Davenport-Hines and Professor Rana Mitter.**

The Judges are all well-known historical biographers and historians. Antonia and Flora Fraser are also, respectively, daughter and granddaughter of Elizabeth Longford, the distinguished historical biographer and author of *Victoria: RI*, of *Wellington: Years of the Sword* and of *Wellington: Pillar of State* who died at the age of 96 in 2002.

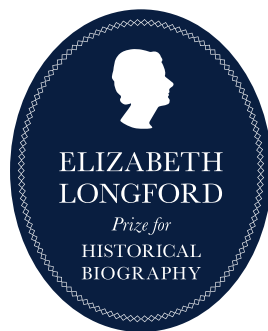
Founded in 2003 by Flora Fraser and Peter Soros (Patron) to commemorate Elizabeth Longford's name, the Prize, which celebrates its 20th anniversary this year, rewards annually a historical biography which, like those she wrote, combines scholarship and narrative drive. Previous winners include David Gilmour's *The Long Recessional: The Imperial Life of Rudyard Kipling*, Frances Wilson's *How to Survive the Titanic: The Sinking of J. Bruce Ismay*, Charles Moore's *Margaret Thatcher: The Authorized Biography, Volume 1: Not for Turning* and Julian Jackson's *A Certain Idea of France: The Life of Charles de Gaulle*.

Writers and historians, Judges, previous winners of the Prize, Longford and Fraser family members and the ELHB 2023 shortlistees gathered earlier tonight at the home of Flora Fraser to hear Chair of Judges, Roy Foster, announce that *Rebels Against the Raj: Western Fighters for India's Freedom* had won the ELHB 2023 Prize. Flora Fraser, Chair of the Prize, presented winning author Ramachandra Guha with a cheque for £5,000 and a bound copy of Elizabeth Longford's memoir, *The Pebbled Shore*.

Ramachandra Guha is currently Distinguished University Professor at Krea University and has previously taught at Yale, Stanford, and the London School of Economics. His many books include an authoritative biography of Mahatma Gandhi.

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Roy Foster on Ramachandra Guha's winning biography, *Rebels Against the Raj: Western Fighters for India's Freedom* (William Collins):

'From an immensely strong field the judges have chosen a book where the author's deep empathy and impressive scholarship are lit up by a passionate regard for his subjects. Ramachandra Guha's *Rebels Against the Raj: Western Fighters for India's Freedom* profiles seven people, from Britain, America, and Ireland, who adopted India's struggle for independence and in doing so found their own destinies. The experience of India changed their ideologies, their spirituality, and often their names. In tracing their relationships revolving around the magnetic figure of Gandhi, Guha adds a new perspective to the Mahatma's life, on which he has already focused so rewardingly in his multi-volume biography. Alert to his subjects' disappointments and occasional delusions, he salutes their commitment to a new way of life and their prescience about the needs of a post-colonial world and India's place in it. *Rebels Against the Raj* shows how historical biography can illuminate the temper of the times through immersion in individual lives. As Guha points out, oppression does not disappear with the ending of colonial rule, and the ideas and priorities incisively drawn out in this book deserve urgent attention in today's India.'

The Chair of Judges also announced an Anniversary Citation to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Elizabeth Longford Prize for Historical Biography and nominated Michael Broers for his biography of Napoleon. The third and final volume, *Napoleon: The Decline and Fall of an Empire, 1811-1821* (Pegasus) was shortlisted for the 2023 Prize, and a message of thanks from Professor Broers was read aloud tonight.

Roy Foster on the anniversary citation:

'To mark the twentieth year of the Elizabeth Longford Historical Biography Prize, the Judges decided to award a special Citation to a work which fulfils the spirit and achievement of historical biography as epitomised by Elizabeth Longford, notably in her canonical lives of Wellington and Victoria. We have enthusiastically nominated Michael Broers for his prodigious biography of Napoleon, published in three volumes as *Soldier of Destiny, 1769-1805* (2014), *The Spirit of the Age 1805-1810* (2018) and *The Decline and Fall of an Empire 1811-1821* (2022). While steeped in scholarship and making accomplished use of Napoleon's recently-released personal documents and correspondence, Broers writes with such style, pace and intimacy that the excitement of his subject's breathtaking career is made new all over again. Napoleon's complex personality, the centrality of his tumultuous family relationships and both his marriages, the mystique of his attachment to his army comrades, and theirs to him: all are patterned against a masterly survey of Europe in its revolutionary era, the rise of romanticism, and the imprint which Napoleonic energies left on the structures of French government and national life, still so evident today. Broers's original research illuminates a titanic figure, delineated with finely-tuned judgement and consistent readability. This is historical biography at its very best, perpetuating the qualities which Elizabeth Longford brought to the genre and which this Prize exists to celebrate.'

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