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Remembering Partition: Violence, Nationalism and History in India (Contemporary South Asia)

Gyanendra Pandey

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Through an investigation of the violence that marked the partition of British India in 1947, this book analyses questions of history and memory, the nationalisation of populations and their pasts, and the ways in which violent events are remembered (or forgotten) in order to ensure the unity of the collective subject - community or nation. Stressing the continuous entanglement of 'event' and 'interpretation', the author emphasises both the enormity of the violence of 1947 and its shifting meanings and contours. The book provides a sustained critique of the procedures of history-writing and nationalist myth-making on the question of violence, and examines how local forms of sociality are constituted and reconstituted, by the experience and representation of violent events. It concludes with a comment on the different kinds of political community that may still be imagined even in the wake of Partition and events like it.

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