



From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt Against the West and the Remaking of Asia

Pankaj Mishra

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"What gives *From the Ruins of Empire* its charm and richness of texture is that its main focus is not on major players such as Gandhi and Mao, but on two little-known and seemingly ineffectual intellectuals whose writings would inspire later generations. . . . It gives a voice to characters often ignored by western historians and makes an eloquent contribution to the 'west versus the rest' debate." *The Guardian* (UK)

The Victorian period, viewed in the West as a time of self-confident progress, was experienced by Asians as a catastrophe. As the British gunned down the last heirs to the Mughal Empire, burned down the Summer Palace in Beijing, or humiliated the bankrupt rulers of the Ottoman Empire, it was clear that for Asia to recover, a vast intellectual effort would be required.

Mishra's fascinating book tells the story of a remarkable group of men from across the continent who met the challenge of the West. Incessantly travelling, questioning and agonizing, they both hated the West and recognised that an Asian renaissance needed to be fuelled in part by engagement with the enemy. Through many setbacks and wrong turns, a powerful, contradictory and ultimately unstoppable series of ideas were created that now lie behind everything from the Chinese Communist Party to Al Qaeda, from Indian nationalism to the Muslim Brotherhood.

Mishra allows the reader to see the events of two centuries anew, through the eyes of the journalists, poets, radicals and charismatics who criss-crossed Europe and Asia and created the ideas which lie behind the powerful Asian nations of the twenty-first century.

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