


The Nation
and Its
Fragments



Colonial and
Postcolonial
Histories



PARTHA CHATTERJEE

PRINCETON STUDIES IN CULTURE/POWER/HISTORY

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PARTHA CHATTERJEE

In this book, the prominent theorist Partha Chatterjee looks at the creative and powerful results of the nationalist imagination in Asia and Africa that are posited not on identity but on difference with the nationalism propagated by the West. Arguing that scholars have been mistaken in equating political nationalism with nationalism as such, he shows how anticolonialist nationalists in India produced their own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before beginning their political battle with the imperial power. These nationalists divided their culture into material and spiritual domains, and staked an early claim to the spiritual sphere, represented by religion, caste, women and the family, and peasants. Chatterjee shows how middle-class elites first imagined the nation into being in this spiritual dimension and then readied it for political contest, all the while “normalizing” the aspirations of the various marginal groups that typify the spiritual sphere.

“The Nation and Its Fragments is an original and powerful analysis of the emergence of anticolonial nationalism and the postcolonial state. . . . This is not merely a book on nationalism in India with some ‘comparative’ implications. Instead, it presents the historical case of colonial nationalism to challenge the Eurocentricity of certain basic categories—the nation-state, modernity, and indeed history itself.”

—Gyan Prakash, *Princeton University*

One of the leading members of the well-known *Subaltern Studies* collective of scholars, Partha Chatterjee is Professor of Political Science at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences in Calcutta. His other works include *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World* (Zed/Minnesota).

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