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Nehru: The Invention of India

By Shashi Tharoor

Penguin, New Delhi, India, 2007. Paperback. Book Condition: New. Dust Jacket Condition: New. First Edition. This short biography examines a great figure of twentieth-century nationalism from the vantage point of the beginning of the twenty-first. Deftly weaving personal facets with historical happenings, it tells the fascinating story of Jawaharlal Nehru's life. Finely portrayed is the unremarkable youth who found his calling in politics and followed Gandhi into British jails; the aristocrat born to privilege who was moved by the plight of peasants because of his socialist convictions; the cosmopolitan who became the hero of the nationalist youth; the die-hard secularist who confronted Hindu mobs, trying to stop the Partition violence; and the Prime Minister who desired to educate the poor, illiterate and idolizing Indian masses in democracy by his own personal example. The book also analyses the principal pillars of Nehru's legacy to India: democratic institution building, staunch pan-Indian secularism, socialist economics at home and a foreign policy of non-alignment. Tharoor sees the first two as having been indispensable to the survival of our pluralism, and non-alignment to preserving our self-respect, though socialist economics, he believes, was disastrous, boosting poverty, stagnation and widespread corruption. All of these, however, were integral to...



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