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THE WEARY GENERATIONS

Abdullah Hussein

Fiction

RIGHTS AVAILABLE: WORLD TRANSLATION (x Norway, Turkey)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE MASS-MARKET PAPERBACK (x India)

Link to Peter Owen website <http://www.peterowen.com/pages/fiction/weary.htm>

'This powerful, subtle novel is packed with explosions of violence . . . The novel's meaning, and what makes it as fresh now as it must have been 36 years ago, lies in the complex intransigence of its protagonist and his inability to settle in to any role. History itself provides a savagely unsettling and still unsettled ending.' – *Sunday Times*

Published ahead of Paul Scott's Raj Quartet and long before *Midnight's Children*, Abdullah Hussein's ambitious saga of social struggle *The Weary Generations* was a bestseller in Urdu. Published in 1963 and now beyond its 40th edition, IT HAS NEVER BEEN OUT OF PRINT. A vivid depiction of the widespread disillusionment and seismic upheavals of the Partition era that lead to the creation of Pakistan and Bangladesh, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A MORE OPPORTUNE TIME to discover one of the most important writings about the post-colonial trauma in the region.

Although it has appeared in translation in several Indian languages as well as Chinese, it wasn't until 1999 that it first appeared in English, when the author's translation was published in hardback in the UK by Peter Owen to major critical acclaim, and subsequently by HarperCollins in India.

Beginning with the struggle of the people of India against the British Raj, this is the story of love and marriage between two people of totally different social backgrounds which crumbles almost as soon as it takes place, mirroring the uneasy 'marriage' between the British and their Indian Empire – both unions ultimately ending in a parting of the ways.

Naim, son of a peasant, marries Azra, the daughter of a rich landowner. Fighting for the British during the First World War he loses an arm. Invalided home, he becomes angered at the subjugation of his countrymen under the Raj and aligns himself with the opposition. His ideals are swept away after Independence in 1947 when he realises that, as Muslims, his family is no longer safe in their Indian home and that they must migrate to the newly created Pakistan.

This paperback edition has never been more timely and its significance more apparent. Regarded as one of the half-dozen most influential novels dealing with Partition or post-colonial malaise, it is an immensely powerful novel in its own right and is ESSENTIAL READING for English language readers seeking to comprehend the historical origins of the tensions in the Indian sub-continent.

For further information contact Simon Smith at Peter Owen

'Hussein is a wonderful storyteller . . . the narrative moves at an exciting pace, with its brief, unusual lives of the socially insignificant. These vignettes also evoke the volatility and violence of the last days of British India . . . the novel is a grim reminder that little has changed in the Indian sub-continent: tyranny continues to prevail and Naim's struggle is repeated, generation after generation, by the weary generations, by the inheritors of British India's troubled legacy.'

– *Literary Review*

'His decision to recast himself in English may be an attempt to create a new work, relevant to our times, which universal in its particularity, forces us to look back and remember. The First World war in which Naim loses an arm is powerfully evoked . . . Hussein's strength lies in the rich, sombre depiction of war, nationalist upheaval and exodus. The author has the ability to remind us, by turning this century's raw and agonizing events into moments of collective epiphany, that history and story are in many languages the same thing.' – *TLS*

'Well worth a read by anyone interested in what life under the Raj was like for the vast majority of Indians . . . The couple's marital quarrels symbolise the contradictions, disillusionment and cynicism underlying the Indian fight for freedom and, by inference, the future failure of Pakistan.' – *The Times*

'A sort of *Doctor Zhivago* for Islamic India.' – *Scotsman*

'Altogether a brilliant work: one of the great fictional portrayals of the Raj and a sobering, very moving human document.' – *Kirkus Reviews, USA*

'Should be read by every Indian . . . It is a grave reflection on the coming of age of two nations, India and Pakistan, and the violent ripping apart of a syncretic culture. This is not the kind of novel to breeze through in a day or two: it needs to be savoured and thought about.' – *Outlook, New Delhi*

'Retains its uniqueness . . . The pain, yearning and weariness of desperate generations of Indians who survived partition are brilliantly showcased in a novel that shimmers with life and hope in the face of utter anguish.' – *Observer of Business and Politics, New Delhi*

'The religious frenzy post-Partition, not long after Cyril Radcliffe brandished his pencil to carve out two nations from the sub-continent, came like the flood waters, leaving over a million people dead in its wake – the scars of which we still carry 50 years hence. Abdullah Hussein found his muse in Partition and created an evocative first novel . . . It is not without reason that Hussein's novel, an instant bestseller way back in 1963 has never been out of print.' – *The Indian Express*

'Dexterously translated by the author, bringing out the tapestry quality of the 1963 original . . . Very little seems to have changed since the time of Hussein's novel. There is a languid quality to the whole book which gives a tragic tone to the entire story. One must also give credit to the author's translation which readily brings the many emotions, narratives and historical landscapes to life.' – *The Asian Age*

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