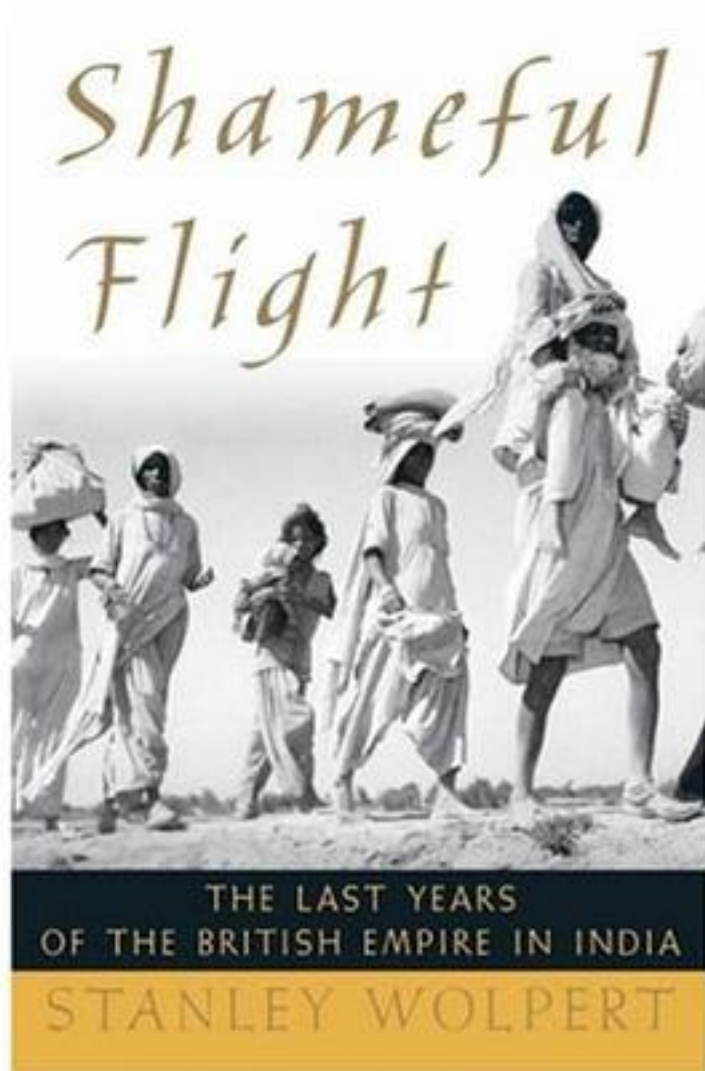


# Shameful Flight



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The last years of the British Raj and the partition of India and Pakistan were defining events in twentieth century world history, the ethnic, religious, political, and military consequences of which have continued to shape today's newspaper headlines. Standard historical interpretations have, on one hand, been shaped by interviews with Lord Mountbatten, the last viceroy, and the British who were involved in the events; on the other hand, there has been a rise in new scholarship by Indians and Pakistanis that has largely corrected the "great man" interpretations that have looked exclusively at Gandhi, Nehru, and Jinnah. In this work, Stanley Wolpert narrates the last half century of the British in India, framed by the surrender of Singapore in February 1942, the partition of South Asia in 1947, and the assassination of Gandhi in January 1948. Great Britain's mid-August transfer of power to new-born Dominions of India and Pakistan was immediately followed by the withdrawal of all British forces from India. As the shield of Imperial British troops collapsed, more than ten million terrified Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, fled from one side to the other of two new borders, ineptly drawn through the heartlands of multi-cultural Punjab and Bengal. Some one million refugees never reached their destinations. The most bitterly hard-fought legacy of Partition has been the Indo-Pak conflict over Kashmir, which has triggered at least three South Asian wars over the last half century. Wolpert's thesis is apparent from his title, drawn from Winston Churchill's judgment on Indian partition. While Wolpert does not believe the British could have ruled India indefinitely he argues that the disaster of partition was largely due to Lord Mountbatten's misguided decision to get Britain out of India as quickly as possible. This popular account of the last years of the Raj is accessible and features all the leading figures, including Winston Churchill, PM Clement Atlee, Lord Mountbatten and other viceroys, Gandhi, Nehru, Franklin Roosevelt, members of the Congress and Muslim League, as well as Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims. This account of events will be controversial, especially among those who respect Mountbatten's actions, and among Indians and Pakistanis.

作者介绍:

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