



## The Legend Of Napoleon

Sudhir Hazareesingh

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'God was bored with Napoleon' wrote Victor Hugo and as is well-known, the Emperor was duly defeated at Waterloo in 1815 and exiled to St Helena, where he died an agonising and horrifying death. The Emperor's real legacy is the modernising and beautifying of Paris, the official promotion of religious tolerance, the current French legal and educational systems, and the European Union, to name but a few Napolenic initiatives. And of course, the legend lives on. Drawing on new archival research, Hazareesingh traces not only the emergence of the Napoleonic myth and how it developed into a potent political culture, but also the amazing tenacity of popular affection for the emperor, manifest in countless busts and portraits in ordinary citizens' homes, grass-roots political activism, miraculous apparitions reported after his death, and the memories kept alive by thousands of imperial war veterans. With a new wave of Napoleonic commemorations due in 2004 to mark the bi-centenary of the proclamation of the First Empire, this book is a timely study of why the fascination with Napoleon has endured for two centuries.



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