

## P R E F A C E

The project has now ended. And I should like to avail myself of this opportunity of putting on record my gratefulness to and thanking most sincerely all those friends and well wishers who have contributed toward making the project complete and a success.

I do thank my friend, Dr Kalyan Chaudhuri for introducing me to my Supervisor, Dr Pabitra Kumar Roy of the University of North Bengal. But for his unfailing endeavours the project would not have been completed.

Ever since my days in the Presidency College, Calcutta I have been fascinated by the philosophical issues involved in the study of history. As a teacher of history I have come to be convinced of the truth of the idea that history after all is the study of men in time in relation to his ideals and aspirations, his constructions and creativity. History perhaps cannot be studied in a vacuum. Historical events gain their significance against the backdrop of culture. Accordingly I have endeavoured in my humble ways to consider conceptual as well as cultural contexts, which no historiography can ignore. My study revolves round Indian history, of course as it should be.

The thesis opens by laying down my belief that history is the study of man, and the project is divided into three parts. The first part is conceptual. It deals with the such issues as the pre-suppositions of the philosophy of history, the concept of time in history, and the role of imagination in history. There are three chapters.

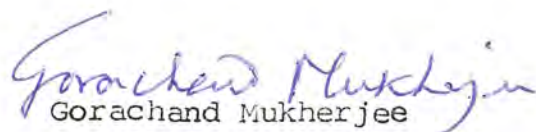
The second part proposes to consider the possibility of history in the context of Indian culture, and discovering a pattern of Indian history. Two chapters are devoted towards ascertaining the relationship of history and Indian culture.

The third part is a study of two recent Indian thinkers, Rabindranath Tagore and Sri Aurobindo. Tagore has been a critic of nationalism, and his vision of Indian history is a landmark in the way of searching for the principle — unity in diversity — for the study of Indian history. Tagore's Nationalism is still worth studying in view of the recent evaluation of the creed. Sri Aurobindo's ideas concerning the roles of the subjective and the objective are rich enough to engage a historian's attention.

The last chapter contains points of methodological interest, particularly, the problem of truth in history. The problem of truth is crucial for any historian in assessing

the value of his data and evidences. If it is a fact that history gives us knowledge, then it must have its own criteria of validity. History is a science with a difference. Natural sciences usually go by the correspondence theory of truth. Historical evidences belong to the past, and as such do not always available for correspondence. Hence, I have argued that the historian's concept of truth should be ascertained in terms of coherence of evidences.

I must be failing in my duty if I do not thank Sri M. Chakraborty for a speedy and neat typing of the manuscript.

  
Gorachand Mukherjee

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