FOREWORD

The present volume covering the period A.D. 300-985 was edited by Dr. R. C. Majumdar, who passed away in February 1980. The Publication Committee of the Comprehensive History of India pays its humble homage of respect and gratitude to Dr. Majumdar, who played a major role in planning the present publication project and, despite his old age and indifferent health, edited Volume III. On this occasion the Committee also pays its tribute to the memory of Dr. Bisheshwar Prasad, who served as Editorial Secretary with zeal and devotion till his death.

Since Volume III covers a long and eventful period, it has naturally become bulky. It has been therefore split into two parts. The present book forms Part I of the Volume, and deals with political history and organization. An exception has been made in the case of the Gupta Age, and its civilization has been treated for the sake of completeness. Although a list of abbreviations has been provided, the present work lacks bibliography, illustrations, index, etc., which will be included in Part II. Meanwhile we have great pleasure in releasing Part I.

Notwithstanding a reaction against political history in our country during the last two decades or so the importance of this branch of historical studies remains undiminished. The study of social, economic, literary, artistic and religious developments is inconceivable without a background of the political history of the various regions of the subcontinent in Gupta and post-Gupta times. Some of the problems such as the origins of the Guptas, Pallavas, Châlukyas, various groups of Rajputs, etc., present not only the difficulties of political and geographical identification but also of social and religious validation, not to speak of the tribal background of several ruling dynasties. The Râma-Gupta question also carries social implications. The contributors to this volume have dealt with such thorny problems including those of the extent of the kingdoms of the important dynasties. In many cases the opposing points of view are given to enable the reader to form his own judgement. The contributors have tried to avoid regionalistic approach and present, as far as possible, a source-
based account of wars and conquests. At the end of the chapters dealing with major dynasties, lists of relevant inscriptions have been provided for ready reference and further research.

It has taken us a long time in getting the chapters printed with the result that some latest publications have not been used. But it is hoped that the volume will provide a good sample of the ripe scholarship of our contributors, who have not only given us the fruits of their own research but have also incorporated the significant finds of other scholars. We are sorry to note that several of them are not alive to see their pieces in print. We take this opportunity of sincerely thanking all our writers who have enabled this cooperative work to materialise. Our thanks are further due to Dr. K. K. Dasgupta, who jointly edited the volume along with Dr. Majumdar. We also thank Shri V. K. Jain for preparing a list of abbreviations.

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of A Comprehensive History of India