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General Introduction

The present volume, comprising twenty-five selections, attempts to provide a panoramic, many-sided vision of the volcanic struggles in agrarian India since independence.

In a sense, it is a sequel to and continues the story of struggles portrayed in my earlier volume, *Peasant Struggles in India* which was about the British period.

The choice of the title 'Agrarian Struggles' instead of 'Peasant Struggles' for this volume has been made for reasons which will be made clear subsequently.

The struggles developing in the agrarian areas of the Indian Union, do exhibit certain features which are similar to those which prevailed during the British period. However, there are certain features which differentiate them and set them aside. They are fought for different objectives, for different demands and within different classes and against different types of State machinery. For instance, certain types of struggles which were prominent during the British rule, like those which took place in the princely states or in the areas which have been absorbed in the State of Pakistan and the State of Bangladesh, have ceased to exist as a consequence of the merger of princely states and the Partition of the country.

I have analysed the similarities and differences between the struggles in agrarian areas during the two periods in my earlier work mentioned above as well as in the sectional introductions of the present volume.

Briefly stated, the agrarian struggles during the British Period had the following characteristics:

1. They included struggles carried on in areas which are now outside the present Indian Union and are part of the State of Pakistan and the State of Bangladesh.
2. With the merger of nearly six hundred princely states, small and large, into either the State of Pakistan or the State of the Indian Union, the category of agrarian struggles in and against the

princely regimes no longer exists in its original form in the Indian Union.

3. In the ryotwari areas of the then British territory, the agrarian struggles took the form of the struggles of the entire peasantry including rich and middle peasants against the policies of the British rulers. In zamindari areas, the struggles took the shape of the movements of various categories of tenants and a chain of sub-tenants, which in some areas added up to a bizzare level of fifty intermediaries between the zamindar and the actual cultivator of the land.

4. In the tribal zones of various categories, the struggles took various forms of resistance. They ranged from struggles against forest laws, which entailed the uprooting of trees from their territories to those against enforced indentured migrant labour either outside the country or in the plantations started by the British and based on capitalist norms.

Some of the struggles were directed against the growing penetration of monetization of the economy with its market mechanism as well as the legal and politico-administrative norms and measures which uprooted their ethnic, cultural and social identity. In the north-eastern mountains and other politically strategic terrains these struggles often took the form of sharp politico-military confrontations.

Withdrawal of the British rule had many far-reaching consequences for the Indian society as a whole, but specially for its agrarian areas. It resulted in many basic changes in the character and content of the agrarian struggles in the Indian Union. Unfortunately, these changes are not adequately recognized even by many traditional Marxists. We will briefly indicate some of them to point out how they brought about significant changes in the nature of class configuration and the content of the agrarian struggles in India.

The Partition of India which followed the withdrawal of the British rule resulted in the emergence of two sovereign States, the State of the Indian Union and the State of Pakistan, the latter splitting further into the State of Pakistan and the State of Bangladesh.

It also ended the existence of about six hundred princely states. As the overwhelming majority of them were within the territorial ambit of the newly formed Indian Union, the loss of territory and

population incurred during the Partition of the country was amply compensated for.

The Indian Union, which emerged after the Partition, became politically and administratively more cohesive and uniform for the following reasons:

1. The adult population inhabiting the territory of the Indian Union became citizens, with the right to vote. This was a unique experience and happened for the first time in the long history of the people inhabiting this sub-continent.

2. The framing and passing of the Constitution, which became the fundamental law of the land, created the basic parameters of normative and legal framework within which the citizens and the State apparatus were to operate. The Constitution also outlined the main structure of the State apparatus and governmental machinery, which were to maintain law and order in the country and stimulate a specific type of development.

3. The political cohesion and uniformity of the Indian Union was achieved by establishing a uniform public law and an all India administrative, military-police and legal framework. It was enhanced by the creation of an all India network of mass-communication as well as educational, postal and transport systems. A uniform system of currency, weights and measures was established throughout the Union.

4. The political cohesion and uniformity of the Indian Union was also established by clearly accepting capitalist norms and the legal premises pertaining to it, as the core of the developmental gestalt, wherein the State was to play a very active, positive role and undertake many vital economic and other functions to pursue development on a bourgeois path.

5. The State of the Indian Union, by accepting capitalist postulates as the axis of economic development and modernization, elaborated industrial, agrarian and other policies, whose central object was to create, strengthen and expand the industrial, commercial and agrarian proprietary classes, who could produce for market and profit. The policies generated infrastructural as well as other facilities to provide stimulus to these classes and curbed or eliminated those classes, strata and forces which obstructed the endeavour to develop on the capitalist path. The State also utilized old traditional forces to the extent that they helped the path of development and prevented the forces and classes which would

strive to overthrow the emerging capitalist economic and political framework which was being constructed actively by the State of the Indian Union. For this purpose, in addition to the adoption of other measures, it also elaborated a planning mechanism, which assisted the government to work out allocative priorities and disbursement of resources for developmental pursuits. The State also elaborated a vast body of legal, institutional, financial, and cultural devices which have been shaping the social history of Indian society for the last thirty-five years.

I have described in detail the overall impact of various governmental measures to modernize and develop Indian society on capitalist lines, in my published studies, *Recent Trends in Indian Nationalism*, *State and Society in India*, and *India's Path of Development—A Marxist Approach*. The changes that are being brought about in the agrarian areas are discussed in detail in my works *Rural India in Transition*, *Rural Sociology in India*, *Peasant Struggles in India* and in the section dealing with the impact of the capitalist path pursued by the State on agrarian society in my book, *India's Path of Development*.

The changes that have been brought about in agrarian economy, agrarian class and caste configurations, as well as in the social and cultural milieu as consequences of the various measures adopted by the State have been narrated in my sectional Introductions to the present volume and in the article entitled 'Changing Profile of Rural Society in India'.

I will indicate here only a few salient measures which have affected the nature and type of agrarian struggles directly and which make them different from those carried on during the British period.

By creating a quasi-federal State at the Centre, wherein the Centre is empowered to reconstruct, reforge or even construct new state units in the Indian Union and further by dividing the various spheres into Central, Concurrent and State lists, and frequently reorganizing the state units, the rulers have created a peculiar ferment in various areas of the country which has affected the agrarian society in a big way.

By the device created in the form of Central, Concurrent and State lists, the rulers of India permitted considerable diversity, delay and complications in the implementation of a number of measures affecting vital aspects of social life in different states.

We will illustrate how this has happened by discussing a measure viz. land reforms, which is relevant for our present volume on agrarian struggles in India.

The overall thrust of the agrarian policy of the rulers has been to eliminate parasitic, absentee intermediaries in the form of various categories of zamindars, and absentee landlords and create in their place classes of agricultural capitalists, rich farmers and viable middle peasant proprietors directly linked to the State. It is well known that the overwhelming majority of the absentee zamindars and intermediaries were not directly interested in improving agricultural production. They were not interested in improving the lands, using improved seeds and fertilizers or making use of improved and more efficient tools and implements. They were also not interested on the whole to develop irrigation, major or minor so essential for augmenting production. Nor were they keen to make vast tracts of land at their command into economically viable operational units for optimum production. They simply used the vast surpluses pumped out from their tenants or subtenants for conspicuous consumption or other uses. They did not plough back the surpluses into making agriculture more efficient. By the end of the British rule, they had become a brake on agrarian production. Indian society needed a breakthrough from this stagnation in agriculture even if it had to develop on capitalist lines. The first important step taken in this direction by the rulers of the independent Indian Union, was to usher in a series of measures connected with land reforms, which would eliminate these intermediary classes of absentee landlords.

The new rulers of the Indian Union were also aware of the gigantic ferment and discontent which prevailed among various sections of the agrarian population in the ryotwari, zamindari and tribal areas as well as among those people who stayed in the princely states, with regard to the British agrarian policies and the exploitation and oppression by the parasitic landowning classes. The Indian National Congress, the classic party of the Indian bourgeoisie and nascent capitalist landlords, rich farmers, viable middle peasants and sections of substantial tenants and subtenants, had launched a number of peaceful struggles in the form of Satyagrahas in different parts of the countryside. It was also aware that the process of tenantization, pauperization, and proletarianization, with mounting indebtedness and resultant debt and

slavery, had generated a situation which not only put a brake on agrarian production as a whole, but had also generated anger resulting in movements among these aggrieved and affected strata of agrarian India, which upset the programme imposed by the Indian National Congress and other parties wedded to the capitalist path of development. The Indian National Congress, was apprehensive of this oppressed strata, which being engaged in fighting the British could break the bourgeois limits, and confiscate without compensation the lands of the landlords and zamindars making a bid for a socialist revolution which would then usher in a non-capitalist path of development. This fear was not unfounded. The struggles in Russia, China and some other countries, which proceeded on non-capitalist, socialist path of development amply demonstrated the feasibility of such a turn in India, if proper leadership emerged.

Both these considerations, forced the capitalist rulers of independent India to take to land reforms on certain specific assumptions. The elimination of the intermediaries in the form of absentee landlords and zamindars was one major plank.

The assumptions underlying the measures adopted for this task need to be grasped very carefully to understand why certain types of agrarian struggles emerged in independent India.

In the quasi-federal Constitution, certain broad principles were laid down for land reforms. According to these land would not be confiscated without compensation. It would be acquired by a payment as compensation to those whose property rights were to be transferred to the tenants. It was also laid down that only certain categories of tenants could acquire property rights over the land. The entire land of the former landowners was not to be transferred to those who were entitled to purchase. The former landowner was permitted to keep a certain amount of the land under his ownership on the assumption and hope that he would take a personal interest in agricultural production in the new setting being created by the State measures. An idea of some ceiling on the amount of land which could be owned, was also enunciated.

Similarly in the quasi-federal Constitution, it was laid down that land reform was not to be a Central subject but a state subject, leaving the states to lay down specific rules and policies with regard to it. As a consequence, the definition of who should be called the 'tiller of the land', how much land could be kept with

the original landlord, the amount of compensation to be paid to him, as well as who should be entitled to purchase the land and acquire ownership rights, varied from state to state. A similar situation emerged with regard to the mode of transfer of ownership rights, rigour in preparing the register and recording and transferring the names of the owner in official documents. All these matters being left to the discretion of states varied greatly as different states adopted different criteria and level of rigour in the implementation of measures to effect land reforms.

In zamindari areas, additional problems of a very special type were created. For instance, the problem as to which categories of tenants should be recognized as eligible for becoming proprietors became a very thorny and legally disputable problem. It also raised the question of rights and statuses of those tenants and sub-tenants who possessed some occupancy rights, or had secured some other rights and securities in the form of tenancy rights by forcing the government to pass tenancy legislations through many struggles. Further this problem acquired a peculiar gravity because these strata could not purchase proprietary rights over land, according to the condition laid down in the land legislation.

Similar complex situations with regard to various categories of non-owning sections arose in the ryotwari and tribal areas as well as in the princely states.

Different definitions of the tillers, diverse rules about the compensation to be paid and the amount of land to be kept by the original landlords, confusion about who among the various categories of tenants could acquire ownership rights and uncertainty about the security and status of those who could not become the proprietors of the land, led to a novel type of situation which generated profound, far-reaching, highly complex and complicated types of ferments, which were distinctly post-British being the offspring of the policies adopted both by the Central and the state governments.

It should however, be recognized that by the end of the fifties, land reform measures to eliminate intermediaries, created a broad based proprietary class who took active interest in augmenting agrarian production. The state created infrastructural facilities, made provisions for a variety of inputs, gave concessions including even the undertaking to buy a considerable amount of agricultural products through various public sector corporations such as the

Food Corporation, at a price which would ensure a reasonable profit base to it.

It should be clearly borne in mind that the way in which land reforms were introduced had two contradictory impacts on the agrarian population. While they did broaden the base of the proprietary class who could take to improved agricultural practices, they also at the same time made the condition of the overwhelming majority of the agrarian population consisting of various categories of tenants, sub-tenants, agrarian proletariat and semi-bonded tillers more insecure and uncertain. Further, in the context of the overall economic development on capitalist lines, agrarian production which was being transformed into market oriented, cash based and profit chasing occupation, resulted in the deterioration of the conditions of these strata at an accelerated rate as they were increasingly being deprived of even the few crumbs which they used to get in kind earlier as customary traditional payments.

In fact, as a result of the introduction of the land reforms, vast segments of tenants of various categories, were legally reduced to the status of insecure cultivators, bataidars, and non-occupancy back-door tenants, having lost their earlier security. In reality they were proletarianized.

Thus in the context of the emerging environment of commercialization, monetization and production oriented to market and profit (characterized as progressive (?) transformation), the land reforms, in fact deprived the vast majority of peasants of their land and transformed them into an army of agrarian proletariat. Their number grew with the passage of time at an exponential rate. The position of these pauperized and proletarianized sections of the rural poor constituting an overwhelming majority of the rural population, increasingly became more and more desperate. In the emerging capitalist framework more and more of these millions were becoming redundant and were being viewed as a drag on the economy. In fact, their demand for some work to secure the purchasing power to survive, was being felt as a burden to the State and the proprietary classes who were considered to be the progressive agents of development. Further, their demands were also considered to be a brake and an obstacle to the efficient use of the scarce resources of the Indian Union, with a third world developing economy. In fact the growing demands of the rural

poor began to be viewed as dangerous, needing a harder and harsher approach by the State and the proprietary classes.

I have taken the land reforms, as an instance to point out how the various measures adopted by the State after independence, based on certain postulates of development have brought about the reshuffling of the agrarian classes, shaping agrarian struggles of various types.

Though these struggles appear to be kaleidoscopic, it is my considered opinion that in the context of the policies adopted by the government of India, based on the choice of a specific type of development, they can broadly be classified into two distinct categories. The movements launched by the newly emerged proprietary classes comprised rich farmers, viable sections of the middle peasant proprietors and the streamlined landlords and the movements launched by various sections of the agrarian poor in which the agrarian proletariat have been acquiring central importance.

The movements launched by the newly emerged proprietary class against the government are basically aimed at securing more and more concessions, facilities and assistance from the political authorities. They are more in the nature of pressurizing the State to give them a greater slice of resources and benefits rather than to the non-agrarian, predominantly industrial, and commercial urban proprietary classes. These movements are more like those of pressure groups, involving competition among various sections of the proprietary classes, benefitting from the specific type of development taking place in the country.

It should however, be noted that the newly emerged agrarian proprietary classes, are one with the non-agrarian proprietary classes, when it comes to their attitude towards non-proprietary poorer classes and the impoverished strata of the population. The newly emerged agrarian proprietary classes, want to intensify the exploitation and oppression of the rural poor. They want the collaboration and the support of the State for this purpose. They are not only organizing varieties of organizations for pursuing this end, but are slowly organizing various types of *senas* or semi-military armed bands. Not satisfied with that, they want active assistance and participation from the State apparatus to crush the movements of the rural poor to terrorize them, thereby intensifying their exploitation and oppression. These movements,

may take on many different appearances, such as those based on caste, linguistic, religious and many other forms. They may adopt different methods in different parts of the country, but basically they have the central objective of securing a greater share of the fruits of development and increasing the exploitation of the rural poor.

The second category of movements launched by the various sections of the rural poor, are developing increasingly against all the proprietary classes who are the beneficiaries of development. This is because an overwhelming majority of the rural poor are being reduced, due to the kind of development being pursued by the rulers, to the status of an abject agrarian proletariat.

These movements are developing around numerous and diverse issues, prominent among which are, security of employment, minimum wages payable, rights over a certain share of the produce, dispossession of, and ejection from, the land 'grabbed' from the landowners—illegally owned, securing of surplus lands, reduction and liquidation of debts, denial of facilities, and services, otherwise legally permitted. Other issues are the violation of legally acquired rights and the subtle and overt humiliations and exploitations carried on by the upper and intermediate castes, turned into upper-middle landowning classes in rural India. Movements are also launched against sexual discrimination, humiliation and sexual violence perpetrated on women predominantly by upper-caste and upper class men and public officials. In short, these movements are being organized against a growing and intensifying economic exploitation, social, sexual and cultural oppression and increasing political repression, terror and violence, let loose by the newly emerging proprietors and the State, which considers these very proprietary classes, to be the agents of development.

It should be recognized that the struggles of the rural poor, belonging to the second category, are qualitatively different from the movements belonging to the first category. They question the function and morality of the socio-economic framework which has been emerging in the country and its ability to solve their elementary problems. They expose and clearly lay bare the inability of the current developmental policies to create a framework within which the conditions of the poor might improve. They pose the question of the desirability of radical change in the

social order and the transfer of power from the proprietary classes to the propertyless proletariat, backed by other sections of the toiling poor.

The struggles of the second category are becoming more widespread, and are becoming more and more militant. They are acquiring many forms and are manifesting themselves in protean shapes under different regional caste, gender, religious and other contexts mentioned earlier. These struggles are bound to increase as they are rooted in a situation which is being created in the country, wherein the poorer toiling classes and strata both in urban and rural areas, constituting an overwhelming majority of the population, are being confronted with the option either to become redundant and perish or struggle and revolt for bare survival. The rural poor comprised pauperized peasants and the rapidly rising agrarian proletariat, coming from despised castes, and varied ethnic, linguistic and religious faiths. They also comprise a vast section of women. The rural poor do not want to perish. They no longer want to live a passive bestial existence. They are awakening, rising in revolt, and are deepening and widening their struggles. These struggles manifest a newly awakened consciousness of their human dignity. They do not want to passively suffer humiliations and indignities. They show readiness to sacrifice, undergo conscious suffering and willingness to fight against their deteriorating situation and grope for establishing a social order wherein they can live and mould their environment as conscious dignified human beings.

The struggles of the rural poor, are thus at the core, radical struggles because they are striving to establish a radically different and qualitatively new type of society, where all human beings can at least be assured a decent, dignified existence to enable them to contribute creatively to the environment within which they live and die.

The present volume primarily focusses on the agrarian struggles of the rural poor.

The term 'agrarian' represents a larger category of humanity than the term 'peasant' and since this book is about this wider category of people, I have called it 'Agrarian Struggle' rather than 'Peasant struggle'.

The selections presented in the volume help us to get a glimpse of the astounding heroism, the capacity of the various sections of

the rural poor to undergo immense sufferings and make sacrifices, in conducting their struggles. They also reveal the resourcefulness, initiative and leadership qualities exhibited by them. They make us realize how the rural poor face unimaginable and subtle forms of exploitation and oppression and have to confront cunning and cruel devices adopted by the rural rich and the State to terrorize and repress them. They also disclose the magnanimity, organizing capacity and the ability of these people to unite and defend their fellow fighters and sympathizers. The selections also disclose the strengths and weaknesses of the various parties, voluntary action groups and organizations which are endeavouring to guide their movements. They also point out how these movements are spreading in various parts of the country, and inspite of being suppressed in some places are re-emerging with added strength and are widening their bases. They explode the myth that the rural poor are passive, ignorant, traditional and incapable of launching movements.

It is unfortunate that a systematic and comprehensive account of these heroic struggles developing all over the country in hundreds and thousands of places is still not available. And that too in a country where there is a vast academic establishment comprising more than a hundred universities, thousands of colleges, dozens of research institutes, and scores of specialized professional, academic and welfare centres.

It is also equally sad that such a comprehensive account is not available inspite of the existence of various political parties, including the traditional communist parties, some of which have even been ruling in some of the states. A number of these parties have been working in rural areas, through their peasant organizations, kisan sabhas and khet mazdoor sanghs. Inspite of working with and leading their struggles, these parties and organizations have not systematically documented or published a comprehensive all-India account of the evolution of the struggles of the rural poor, portraying and analysing them dialectically in the context of the type of development taking place in Indian society, during the post independence period.

Inspite of this, the situation is not so discouraging. Considerable amount of information is available though scattered at many places throughout the country. They need systematic documentation.

It is heartening to note that during the last decade and a half a few sensitive scholars, researchers, as well as certain special research and study centres have started collecting information about these movements. The National Labour Institute, in collaboration with ICSSR, conducted a number of surveys of agrarian movements by engaging very concerned and sensitive scholars and investigators. A few fairly comprehensive reports on Bihar, Punjab, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and others have been prepared, awaiting publication. The all-India conferences of CPI, CPM and other left parties, their kisan-sabhas and newly started khet majdur (agricultural labourers) organizations, also contain records of the struggles conducted by these organizations during certain specific periods. The official organs and specialized journals of these parties give us some valuable information regarding such movements. The seminars organized by a few university departments and research centres focussing on agrarian problems and agrarian movements have also generated papers and discussion reports which embody valuable information regarding these movements. Some important journals also contain records of specific struggles conducted in some areas. The various CPI(ML) parties and groups popularly known as Naxalites, should be credited with elevating the movements of the rural poor from being bogged down in pure economism and reformism to a new heightened political level (whether one agrees with them over their overall perspective and strategy or not). Through their journals, reports and a variety of documents, they have generated a sizeable material on the struggles launched by the rural poor, particularly those in which they have played very active, leading and heroic roles. The flowering of hundreds of voluntary action-groups, consisting of fine sensitive young men and women, many of whom were partly disillusioned with the bureaucratic operations of left parties and their reformist policies, and were searching for radical alternatives by fusing themselves with some segments of the oppressed rural poor, is a noteworthy feature from the mid-sixties in the country. These groups have collected considerable information about the movements of the agrarian poor. Similarly a number of reports of the fact finding committees organized by the various civil liberties and democratic rights organizations, have also brought to light the nature, type and methods of struggles carried on by various

segments of the rural poor. Valuable information about the struggles and movements of the agrarian poor, particularly those of the rural women, and their participation in various struggles is provided by journals, papers and articles published or mimeographed by various academic and activist feminist groups. Similarly there is another important source, which requires systematic exploration for the collection and dissemination of news of such struggles. This is embodied in the growing body of writings in the various regional languages of the country.

In short, considerable material on the growing struggles of the rural poor is now available. It is still scattered in different parts of the country and embodied in pamphlets, papers, articles and reports, printed and mimeographed.

It is high time that a systematic presentation of this growing body of material was made available to the public.

The present volume sketching a wide variety of struggles involving different categories of the agrarian poor is an endeavour to fill this gap. It is hoped that it will be able to provide an all-India matrix, a dialectical, deeper and richer insight into the heroic struggles carried on by the rural poor of the largest and most populous third world country, modernizing on capitalist lines. It will hopefully, help to hearten the brave fighters in various parts of the country who will realize that they are not isolated in their endeavours, and will help them to draw lessons to elevate, unify and deepen their struggles. The volume, it is hoped, will also assist the theoreticians and activists emerging in other third world countries to draw strategic and tactical lessons by acquainting themselves with the rich reservoir of struggles of the millions of the rural poor in the Indian Union, who constitute the single largest contingent of such people in the world.

With the publication of this volume, my desire to place information about agrarian struggles in the post-independence period will be partly realized. The publication of the two volumes (*Peasant struggles*, 1979 and the present one), will serve the purposes indicated in my general and sectional introductions. The inadequacies of the present collection, like those of the earlier volume, will be more than compensated, if it serves to stimulate the publication of more competent and more comprehensive studies. The historically crucial role of the Indian revolution should not be seen in the limited context of ending the

emerging exploitative backward capitalist social order consciously created by the ruling class in India. Its role has to be appreciated in terms of its far-reaching impact on world-wide struggles to end putrified world capitalist system itself.

The study of the agrarian struggles of the rural poor and the crucial role of the proletariat, acquires a new, global significance, when seen from the above perspective.

The preparation and publication of a volume of such dimension is not possible without warm, active co-operation and help from a large number of individuals and organizations.

At the outset I must express my thanks to all those who permitted me to publish their valuable works. I am deeply gratified and express my feeling of gratefulness to a number of scholars and activists, who took pains to prepare special articles for this volume amidst their many preoccupations. I am expressing my sense of obligation to my young friends, Sunil Dighe, Shridhar Shrinivasan, Jagdish Parikh and a number of other researchers and activist comrades who helped me in preparing this volume. I am also conscious of my debt to young Professor Chundavat of the Department of Sociology, M. S. University of Baroda and Shri Chandra Sen Momaya for taking enormous pains to help me in the arduous task of preparing the index.

In the process of preparing this volume, I was richly rewarded in terms of making enduring friendships with a number of researchers and activists who made special efforts inspite of their many pressing commitments, to place at my disposal numerous papers, reports and other material otherwise not easily accessible. Due to limitations of space and copyright constraints, I had to forego, with deep pain, some very valuable material which would have considerably enriched the volume. I am nevertheless thankful and apologize for my inability to include them.

I am deeply sorry about the sad demise of Shri R. N. Maharaj, a dynamic, sensitive activist researcher who has contributed to the volume.

During the process of my research on the subject, the ICSSR honoured me by awarding its National Fellowship. This helped me considerably in finalizing this volume and sending it for publication. I thank the authorities of the ICSSR for extending such assistance and co-operation.

The credit for publishing this work in its present elegant form

goes to my friends at the Oxford University Press. Some articles might detract from uniformity of style and familiarity of expression. This has been allowed to preserve the grass-root authenticity of the articles, at the request of the volume editor.

The stimulating and affectionate atmosphere provided by my family members has been a constant source of encouragement to enthusiastically pursue such researches and writings.

A. R. Desai

PART I
Agrarian India after Independence
and Panorama of Agrarian
Struggle—All India Landscape