

आधुनिक भारत के निर्माता BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA आधुनिक

ভারতের স্রষ্টা আধুনিক ভারতৰ নিৰ্মাতা আধুনিক ৰাৱতনা ধৰুৱেয়া অধুনিক

ಭಾರತದ ನಿರ್ಮಾಪಕರು आधुनिक भारतचे शिल्पकार आधुनिक ॠरतॠ

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BUILDERS OF MODERN INDIA

Lajpat Rai

Life and Work

Feroz Chand

नवपा रत्नं सृष्टीकर्तृकं नवभारत निर्माता

নব ভারত নিৰ্মাতা جدید ہندوستان کے معمار

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PUBLICATIONS DIVISION



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LAJPAT RAI: LIFE AND WORK

FEROZ CHAND



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GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

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ABOUT THE SERIES

The object of this series is to record, for the present and future generations, the story of the struggles and achievements of the eminent sons and daughters of India who have been mainly instrumental in our national renaissance and the attainment of independence. Except in a few cases, such authoritative biographies have not been available.

The biographies are planned as handy volumes written by knowledgeable people and giving a brief account, in simple words, of the life and activities of the eminent leaders and of their times. They are not intended either to be comprehensive studies or to replace the more elaborate biographies.

PREFACE

“You somehow must snatch time for a volume of memoirs time and again I pressed this suggestion on my chief, particularly when I found him reminiscing, offering bits out of a rich storehouse. I fancy many others made a like request. What reply the others got I do not know. To me it used to be-”Let that be your care” or words to that effect. Now and then, though (and at times without the suggestion being made to him), after narrating an interesting reminiscence he would add-”I’d include this in my memoirs.”

The request I made in all earnestness. The reply I never took seriously-neither his No, nor the alternative proposed.

Had I taken it seriously I would naturally have sought his guidance as to how to go about it, where to look for my material and how to collect it, which sources were to be tapped. And which persons to be requested for information or letters, etc. And, of course, as the prime source for the needed material I would ply him with volley after volley of questions-and at times make him lose patience with me-all which I never did. Nothing of the kind ever crossed my mind. His customary reply I took as convenient terse formula just to put me off.

The guidance from the prime source one day became unavailable and the loconic reply had to be taken seriously. What had seemed an evasive formula began to assume the aspect of a testament and a command. Well aware that the life story of Lajpat Rai was an epic theme, I was aware equally of my own very limited capability. I had never done

any biographical writing even in a small way, but what is more I regularly felt that something in my temperament disqualified me for venturing here-that biography was not just my cup of tea-except as a reader.

Still the epic theme beckoned. It persisted, and so did hesitancy for I had not done even the minimum that had rested just with myself-jotting down my own recollections and, for the future keeping some sort of a journal nothing down therein whatever seemed worthwhile.

Particularly dear to Lalaji, C.F. Andrews had kept very close to him since his return from the war-time exile, and, besides had taken the keenest interest in our weekly. *The people*, from its very birth and, therefore, had full opportunity to assess my capability. He was best fitted to measure it against the epic theme. He offered to guide me, to help me with counsel at every stage, to go through the MS, to sponsor it, to place it with a good publishing house.

The credit for the launching surely goes to his generous offer and insistence; but after a preliminary pre-launching, discussion it was agreed between us that a more fruitful session must wait till a substantial part of the first draft was ready and by that time that noble soul had departed.

The story of a succession of delays may be a tedious narrative and a futility. In such a situation it is much simpler for an author to accept the entire blame leaving the rest to the reader.

The partition damage, however, has to be mentioned not to absolve the writer of any portion of blame, but for a different reason - to warn the reader that the bulk of valuable papers was irretrievably lost, including Lalaji's own correspondence files and clippings albums. Many of the other sources that had to be tapped became either useless or inaccessible. It is

under this severe handicap that the project-uprooted by partition and transplanted-has had to be completed. In retrospect it looks providential that the first draft that had somehow been salvaged contained copious excerpts from many of the papers no longer available after the '47 tragedy.

At different stages of this long-drawn project. I have been helped by many in my family and my circle of friends in various ways. On the literary side gratitude is due first and foremost to the late Mr. Arthur Moore. He had come in contact with Lala Lajpat Rai as a fellow member of the Legislative Assembly. My personal-contact with him began in Delhi when Lahore had ceased to be part of this country. He had already retired from the editorship of *The Statesman*. We planned a journalistic venture in which we were to collaborate. That collaboration did not materialise but the planning had fostered friendly contacts resting on mutual esteem. He read through the MS. with great care purely as a labour of love, and I even began to feel that he had in a way given me much of what I might have sought from C.F. Andrews. Like Andrews he was interested not merely in literary improvement but also in publication; he strongly commended the MS. to the editor of a leading daily paper, suggesting its serialisation. I had never sought such help from him, and he never let me know (or suspect) what he was doing in this behalf. I heard about his having initiated the move only after he had finally gone back to England. The move resulted in a substantial part of the MS. being serialised simultaneously in three leading dailies in English, and in one leading daily each in a good many of our own language, Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, Telugu, Oriya. The series ran into more than a dozen longish instalments (of about 5000 words each). The *Lajpat Rai* series became thus an outstanding national release of that period. The planning of a release on such a scale was largely due to the keen interest

of my friend, the late Shri K. Iswar Dutt, then of *The Hindustan Times*.

I must mention also that the late Prof. Madan Gopal Singh (Registrar of the Panjab University), my teacher in my college days (who kept up affectionate interest in his pupil, and was, besides, very keenly interested in the theme being handled by him), had gone through the first draft of the early chapters and made valuable suggestions. He could not complete what he had offered to do as he was murdered in the 47 orgy of bloodshed.

Friends of the Servants of the People Society have naturally shown keen interest in the project. The late Shri Mohan Lal urged my laying aside other work to complete the biography project-and in this he was clearly the spokesman of all his colleagues. I feel sad that the delay made so dear a friend lose faith in me for certain things even though he was too indulgent towards me ever to say so plainly.

II

To record only what I had myself seen, or to attempt a sketch of the personage I had been privileged to come in close contact with might seem easier, but that is not what was required of me. I had seen but the last eight years, and even in this period, strictly, my first-hand knowledge would be confined almost to the days he was in Lahore and in our midst. The early formative period, and three decades of public life prior to my coming to him, the fact that the relevant material lay scattered over three continents- these problems called for resources, industry and talent and had created the initial hesitancy. But the helpful thing was that Lalaji had been a writing man from his early days, and had so continued all through. Even for my own days though I had never kept a diary or notes of his doings or sayings, at least from the middle of 1925 till the end the files of *The People* could be of

immense help. About the earlier period it was not easy to get such a handy record, but what was available, some published, some unpublished, could provide ample material-perhaps as much as, in the absence of large-scale organisation, I could tackle without getting lost.

With a word of apology I would here attempt to give in a few paragraphs the essential outline of the portrait engraved on memory. Details of happenings fade with time; the graven image stands bright as ever. Whether my narrative effectively transmits such an image to the reader is a different matter. Laying to claim either to talent or to technique required for such transmission through the narrative, I am attempting this outline in the Preface.

A backward glance over those eight years (in the twenties) has invariably filled me with wonder over one thing-my having been so little (if at all) aware at the time of the vast gap that in any normal human reckoning separated a mere college student (and, at that, one without the laurels that could be won in a college career), from a celebrity and at that one who combining his great natural gifts with not only industry but dedication and sacrifice attained rather precociously to the giddy heights of fame, and for several decades had received from his people a homage due to a great leader and hero. The first encounter would surely be an awe-inspiring experience for the youthful non-entity, and if a prolonged association developed the awe might wear off, but the gap would be there expressing itself through a protocol of reverence and homage.

Yes, the context had been precisely as visualised above; and yet the initial encounter as also the eight-year association that followed was experience of a very different type. The celebrity greeted the youth with a benign (but not a condescending) smile, and though a scrutinising stare was

there of the sort that would take in the stranger and size him up, this too came from radiant smiling eyes. From the moment you were face to face with him awe was completely dispelled. From the moment he accosted you he put you at your ease. you were no longer a stranger, but perfectly at home so that almost straightaway, and without an circumlocutory preliminaries a discussion of business could start as between two colleagues who had worked together for years; the celebrity was not only without a reverence-exacting halo, but what is more, definitely radiated an opposite kind of influence that made for an atmosphere of equality. 'Democracy' in his presene was no mere political creed, but the very breath of life.

If such is the picture of the first encounter, no wonder the eight years that followed were a perfect corollary thereto. His wisdom, his greatness were of course there all the time, but this in no way upset the protocol of equality, nor disturb the course of free and frank discussion. He did not lay down the law-not merely tolerated or permitted dissent, but seemed definitely to encourage or invite it. Even when the novice was palpably in the wrong he preferred that the younger colleague should through reasoning or through experience himself realise his mistake and shed his illusions instead of accepting a judgment merely because it came with the senior's authority. He was forthright in speech and did not mince matters. The young men who collected around him as life members of the Servants of the People Society that he founded early in the twenties, so caught the contagion from him that in our discussions we would be quite as forthright in differing from and criticising him; no disrespect was intended nor any taken as implied.

Our relationship and the respective rights and duties were of course formally defined in our very brief memorandum that designated the founder as Director for life, and the young

men started as members under training. He was to direct our training. Our Founder always gave the pioneer's credit to Gokhale, for conceiving a life order of wholetime missionaries in the social and political fields but he used the Poona prototype with considerable modification. A deviation that has often seemed puzzling to the present-day members of our Society was that the Founder was the first member of the order and when told that he was not a member they are simply incredulous; how could he administer the vows to other without first taking vows himself and enforcing on himself the dedication that he demanded of those whom he initiated? Did not Gokhale first have to take the vows and dedicate himself?

The thing is that Lalaji did not attach the same value to vows and undertakings as Gokhale did and in his pattern these things had (compared with the Poona prototype) a very minor place. As for his own dedication it had been made many years earlier-through a firm resolve that he announced from the Lahore Arya Samaj platform. According to this, public work was for him to have priority over professional work, and out of the earnings that he still made after an honest enforcement of the priority, he was to give away to public work all the surplus left after meeting his earnings had amount to sixty thousand out of which quite fifty thousand he gave away as surplus! To this pattern he adhered till the end. Not long after that announcement he had totally to withdraw from the profession, and, therefore, the earnings had dwindled. But that pattern in its essentials he never discarded. He devoted his entire time to public work and the earnings were but a by-product of this (royalty on books or fees received for writings in the press), or an easy product of leisure (like the Director's fees from Lakshmi and the Punjab National); and after meeting his own rather frugal expenses he gave away the surplus.

His own living had been never a charge on the public funds that he administered, though some of these might have been placed by friends completely at his discretion. That resolve made in the early years of the century had determined his life's pattern in the subsequent decades. This had become completely a part of his life-and without any vows, etc. The enforcement of his resolve had ever been his own concern, and of no external authority to whom he might be accountable.

Who could demand a "dedication" of such a person? Gokhale had served in the Deccan Education Society in a missionary spirit and on the same pattern he later founded the Servants of India Society for work in a different and extended field. He was continuing his old Fregusson College pattern in the Society he started, Lajpat Rai continued his own pattern of dedication which had been somewhat different from Gokhale's even when he founded a society in certain ways modelled after Gokhale's creation. He gave most generously to the Society what he could, and he would not use any part of its funds for his own subsistence; so, he had to continue to earn his bread. This he could manage without in any way letting his public work suffer, and if what he thus got from the Lakshmi or the Punjab National or the Assembly when he became an Assemblyman or by writing for the press, was more than enough for his frugal living the surplus was of course given away to the Society or to other kindred projects. e.g. the Gulabdevi Hospital Trust.

The normal worldly ambitions he had left behind a long way off. He could very truly be said to have "renounced" the world. Yet, paradoxically, "renunciation" was to him anathema. The Sanyasi whom in his youth he had chosen his guru-Dayananda Saraswati, the founder of Arya Samaj-had reserved some of his most vigorous denunciations for the neo-Vedantists who taught that the world was unreal (*Mithya*), as mere illusion and whose teaching he believed had had a most

demoralising effect on the people. In the post-Sankara Indian thought “renunciation” had got too much identified with that school. Even when Lajpat Rai had lost all interest in a sectarian opposition to such a school of thought he was vehemently opposed to talk of “renunciation”, which he thought was a stumbling block in the path that lay to India’s fulfilment in the modern context.

A somewhat akin Lajpat Rai trait most also be mentioned here-allergy to “holiness”. He may have shed all selfish worldly pursuit and ambition-as only the holy ones are supposed to do; but he had a dread of holiness-for one thing I believe because this negated the “democratic” approach which he so perfectly embodied in his person, the “holy” ones constituting a hierarchy apart from the mass, above the “unholy” who would prostrate themselves before the hierarchy; for another “holiness” was too often associated with “renunciation”, with the other-worldliness that made for the neglect of this world. One world at a time-as Thoreau is said to have replied when asked about the other world! To no church or creed he professed allegiance, rarely mentioned god and did not pray. But he did not ask or expect those around him to follow his way-a magnet with a tremendous pull, and yet, strange as it seemed, never liked needles adhering to him! With maturity the doctrinal Arya Samaj seemed to have faded out of his life-though it may have made its contribution in the unswerving dedication of his life and in his moral sensitiveness in public life.

We remained unaware of his birthday, nor thought of any other occasion for homage-and when he was no more, none of us gave a thought to ‘relics’. He liked things on a “mere human” plane, human frailty could have its own charm, and obiter dicta delivered with zest made no pretence of inerrancy. The bonds of affection and loyalty acquired peculiar charm and strength from such human traits-as also from his

being moody and at times liable to be upset over trifles. Invariably, short temper or an unkind word was followed by generous over compensation a short while later?

III

In my narrative I have naturally drawn upon personal knowledge-inside knowledge regarding my chief's doings, his beliefs and opinions and attitudes. It may not be amiss therefore to indicate the extent of my "living" contact with him. Close contact started with the birth of the Servants of the People Society, and in no time the contact developed and ripened so that the small band of young men-the founding members were amongst Lajpat Rai's trusted lieutenants for assignments of responsibility, and so to, say, an important part of his inner circle. But he seldom stayed at the headquarters for a stretch of several weeks. One could be with him for several weeks together only when one accompanied him on his travels-or, when he had been elected to the legislature one stayed with him during the legislative session. My work for the weekly paper tied me down at Lahore. That paper started in July 1925 and before that I had had just one fine opportunity-some time after Lalaji's release when his doctors suggested the seaside in the interest of his health. In December 1923 I stayed with Lalaji at Karachi and from there accompanied him on his tour of the early months of 1924.

Another occasion which though not of comparable duration, but of considerable importance, was my being with Lalaji at the Belgaum session of the Congress (1924-end). I was then serving my apprenticeship on the *Bombay Chronicle*, and joined Lalaji at Belgaum itself-not accompanying him on the journeys to and from Belgaum.

After starting the weekly only one comparable opportunity came my way when towards the close of 1927, Lalaji took me

away to Calcutta so that the *Unhappy India* MS. might be speedily completed. Apart from these two or three occasions the "living contact" was possible only during Lalaji's rather brief halts at headquarters (sometimes including short visits to nearby Punjab towns), or once in a way, during the Assembly sessions, in brief visits to Delhi. *The People* effectively prevented me from wandering about with Lalaji, but at the same time it assured a continued and fruitful contact all the time; for wherever he went he regularly kept up writing for the paper-this meant writing to me every week, and discussing current affairs with me, when we met, more thoroughly than might otherwise have been necessary.

By way of supplementing what is said in my narrative I would like to record here just a few things connected with the special occasions I have mentioned above.

Of these "special" occasions that beginning towards the end of 1923 was the most important because of its duration (about 3 months), its educative value for me in my formative period, and as I realise now because of its unique value for my narrative; from the living contact. I was able to understand the background of Lalaji's thinking and his doings in that period of crucial importance far better than would have been possible otherwise. It was a period of stock taking and of reorientation. The communal unity forged under the Mahatma's leadership had proved not well-founded and stable. Though somewhat earlier Lalaji had used the strongest language against "communal" bodies-especially addressing the Hindus-he now found a re-thinking called for. "Untouchables" gave the rethinking peculiar urgency. The reorientation meant that a Hindu platform was necessary for support in solving a Hindu problem like that of the untouchables, and also for use in certain unfortunate situations. The many informal consultations and exchanges of views with the national leaders

in Sind, Bombay, Mharashtra, Bengal and U.P., resulted shortly afterwards in a reorientation of the Hindu Mahasabha in what to my mind was the most glorious phase in that body's career, the phase in which its policies and programmes were shaped by Malaviya and Lajpat Rai in a way that served the Hindu community best and did so without compromising national interests or advanced policial programmes.

A Bombay reminiscence of that tour was for me an experience unique in my eight years with Lalaji, and may be briefly put down here. The moment we emerged from Savarkar's house and got into our car to drive back to our host's place, Lalaji seemed totally absorbed in thought, and soon a soliloquy started. He was not talking to me-and there was no other companion: he even seemed unaware whether anyone accompanied him, and he talked of things about many of which I had never heard a word from him. The soliloquizing ran on a pattern like this: This we tried... also this ... also this ... no stone left unturned ... spared ourselves in no way ... and yet would nothing ever succeed? Deep despair was one of the ingredients, a despair of which I had never caught even a faint glimpse in his talks. And the inventory mentioned doings in Nepal, and other things with which I could not have associated him. The meeting with Vinayak Savarkar had induced a mood that I had never witnessed before, not noticed ever after on any occasion. I sat silent, dumb-founded and never dared be inquisitive enough to ask him later about that soliloquy.

The reverie-soliloquy afforded a glimpse, however imperfect, of a profile that looked unfamiliar, and suggested the possibility or more having remained hidden from the view we got. Later when I read through his autobiographical fragment for posthumous publication I came across some laconic but suggestive references—the talk he had with Nivedita in Calcutta, or that with the Gaekwad when after the other guests were gone only Shyamji and Lalaji had been

deliberately detained by that prince. Or, when in his papers I came across those pertaining to his having joined a class for Spanish—a puzzle the key to which I found in his unpublished fragments in which he had spoken of his repeatedly urging on the Ghadrīte friends to divert some of their funds towards setting up a colony in South America where Indian patriots might find asylum when necessary. Obviously he did not rule out the possibility of his finding himself in that situation.

A surprise of a different kind awaited me in Wedgwood's letter wherein Lalaji was sounded as to whether he would be willing to go to Persia on behalf of the British Government. Of course, such an assignment could not materialise—perhaps Wedgwood at that stage did not fully comprehend the obstacles. We had never heard Lalaji refer to that rather naive proposal—but I immediately recalled what I had heard from him about the Aga Khan's keenness on getting the Persian assignment. Obviously Lalaji had some inside knowledge—though he stayed at that time not in London, but in New York. Kalinath Ray, editor of *The Tribune*, Lahore, was surprised over my surprise on hearing from him that Sir John Maynard had sounded Lalaji if he would accept a ministership. It was Lalaji who first proposed the boycott of legislatures as a non-co-operation item, and in doing so he had expressed a strong sentimental aversion towards the officials who had been responsible for Punjab's agony and humiliation. Lalaji could not possibly accept office, but my point here is that though we came in contact with him shortly after, he never let drop a word about this.

IV

Belgaum provided the solitary occasion for me to be with Lalaji at a Congress session. The new orientation work mentioned above continued, and an incident that stands out in memory was his discussing things with Srinivasa Iyengar and getting (in effect) the reply! “Yes, I share your views but

would not so commit myself publicly. Leave me alone for a year and I am with you." This agreeing in private was by no means peculiar to Srinivasa Iyengar-Though, perhaps he may have had a special reasons for a discreet *non possumus* he still awaited elevation to (Congress) presidentship.

Lalaji did not quarrel with people who took up such an attitude but no doubt it added to his unhappiness in politics.

In retrospect, the Belgaum happenings reveal a divergence in the outlook and ways of Pandit Motilal and of Lalaji. The Congress session accepted the "spinning franchise" to please the Mahatma. Lalaji opposed and ridiculed the franchise resolution. He considered the proposal unsound, and the Swarajist endorsement insincere. His opposition arose from moral even more than political considerations. It was such moral sensitiveness which could not accept insincere temporizing that so largely went to isolate him. Within a few months Gandhiji was able to see the hollowness of his Belgaum achievement and himself put an end to that "franchise".

V

Belgaum gave me a glimpse of the "isolation" phase-of Achilles sulking in his tent - confirmation of which came insubsequent months in many strolls in Lahore, by the canal bank, when I heard him, quite often, humming to himself Tagore's *Ekla chalo*.

Ekla Chalo was particularly noticeable after what I have called the Episode Obeidullah (in the chapter entitled "Communalist"?) I have dwelt on that episode at some length because from living contact I knew at first hand how deeply he had been affected by the top leaders' casualness seen in granting affiliation to the sinister anomaly of a branch in Kabul, and to their giving him nothing but a deaf ear-and cynicism - when he so earnestly solicited their attention. In

an article written on the occasion of the Lajpat centenary and published in *The Hindustan Times* I had recalled what I had heard from Lalaji more than once that he let himself be drawn into what he considered petty communal wrangling merely because he visualised the ultimate upshot in a demand for "secession". The Obeidullah episode had greatly enhanced his misgivings. So far as I know, no other Congress leader had then foreseen "secession". Lalaji had not only foreseen it but also resolved (Lincoln like) to resist it at all costs.

I may mention here that I met obeidullah (when he was nearing seventy, and looked even older) in Lahore in 1940 and had a long discussion with him in which he tried to explain away the 'misunderstanding' created in Lalaji's mind by "British agents"-but could get no light as to why the Congress should have been interested in setting up a branch in Kabul.

VI

Yet, such was his keenness on "unity" that till the end he continued his efforts for an agreed settlement. His frequent discussions with Jinnah, which continued till the last, provided ample evidence of this. In retrospect I have often felt that after Lalaji's days the Congress leaders' style in dealing with Jinnah changed altogether, and created avoidable difficulties. Some time after the League's first formulation of Pakistan in its Lahore session (1940), I met Mr. Jinnah and had a longish discussion with him in one of his short visits to Lahore; when I recalled the cordial and informal way in which things used to be discussed between him and Lajpat Rai, so that even when difference could not be resolved the earnest endeavour continued. Mr. Jinnah's reply was; "I am the same as you used to see then, but today I am being treated differently. Ghulam Hussain Hidayatullah who all his life has stood for nothing but himself is today deemed a patriot, whilst I am considered a traitor."

It might seem flippant to imply that Pakistan was born just out of the Congress leaders' changed attitude towards Jinnah, but the change was unfortunate and certainly made its own contribution. At any rate, mentioning this is pertinent to assessing Lajpat Rai's earnest efforts for unity.

Jinnah's complaint got heavily underlined in my mind very shortly after that interview. I wrote to Rajaji giving him a gist of the talk and my impression of Jinnah's attitude. Rajaji was my deliberate choice because I considered him supple and realistic in his political attitudes, and yet to my disappointment he reacted on this occasion quite differently. No talks with Jinnah, he laid down, "till his offence was purged-the offence being his having dubbed Azad (then President of the Congress; as Congress showboy.

VII

Verily for me a sucking journalist my chief was the mother who suckled me for all the needed sustenance for growth and development, and Yet, if I were to speak in the more prosaic terms of the concrete "lessons" that I received I can recall hardly anything beyond a succinct two-word formula "likho, pharo" (write, tear up) which he was apt to repeat every now and then, at times adding-"that's what I used to do. " In this two-word course of lessons concealed the master keys: patience and fastidious self-criticism. The twin master-keys were handy in other fields too-versatile tools with a universal application. Elsewhere "likho, pharo" was translatable as trial and error. It was on this touchstone of experience that he essayed all political programmes-refusing to be swayed merely by the lure of "ideology". the force of logic or the hypnotic spell of personality. Through this sovereign recipe he achieved a rare mystery in the journalistic sphere so that C.F. Andrews, a highly competent judge of these things and one who had watched the performance of his friend Lajpat most carefully, implored him in all earnestness to withdraw from all other

activity and concentrate on just one thing: to give India a daily paper that would do for Indian public opinion. what C.P. Scott's *Manchester Guardian* did for British public opinion. This he thought could in due course be ample compensation for Lajpat's withdrawal from many fields. Andrews felt sure Lajpat could produce this daily after his heart, and he saw no one else in Indian journalism capable of this. (Having had life-long opportunities of watching Indian journalists and their performance I feel no hesitation in endorsing Andrews' assessment.)

Though deprived by poverty of the benefit of a university education he was perhaps in his day India's most knowledgeable publicist, and though not strictly in the profession, perhaps the topmost figure (as Andrews discovered) for the highest type of journalism. This attainment in journalism he owed to the universal master-key that he had ever depended on in his principal field of activity: *Pragma* I might say is a one-word keynote to Lajpat Rai's doings and to his thinking in the political sphere. The essentials, the abiding values, and the goal remained intact, but programmes and policies were to be kept continually under review in the light of experience. We may call this "dynamic pragmatism". He was bound by no particular ideology but in a broad sense he was undoubtedly socialist. In fact he announced a fairly comprehensive socialist programme, whilst still in the States, making it the most vital part of an appeal addressed to the Indian student community there with the title 'A call to Young India'. "we do not fly the socialist flag," he declares and then enumerates a dozen demands which give the socialist objectives in a very matter-of-fact way. The prefatory declaration could have only one purpose-not prematurely to scare away people, for even amongst the intelligentsia many were still at that time-just after the Russian revolution-afraid of socialism and in India even trade unionism on a national scale had yet to come into being.

My special association with my chief as one of his first Servants of the People and as his understudy (and successor) in the conduct of the weekly paper justified a fuller account of these two institutions, but a recent decision of the Servants of the People Society to prepare a history of the Society makes me curtail my narrative.

VIII

Early in my association with my chief I learnt that merely leaving college as non-co-operators and plunging into propaganda against the alien Government was not enough. The freedom really worthwhile called for a fight on many fronts, and required efficient intellectual equipment and study with a vast range. Through hard work he had equipped himself marvellously well with no academic or professional ambition, but merely to understand the problems of the people and to be able to serve them intelligently and efficiently. The intellect must be kept in good trim, not to indulge its own caprice, but to give satisfactory service to the real matter, the heart. Study and intellectual equipment were necessary, but of course they could be no substitute for selfless devotion and for the other essential qualities of character that came from the heart.

I liken the Lajpat Rai approach to India's problems to the Triveni Sangam—the mainstream being the Ganga, the bestower of liberation, which must be joined by the Yamuna of social and economic justice and of adaptation to the modern context. Nor may the invisible Saraswati be ignored. Even though the Saraswati be no longer seen flowing oceanwards, it is a force beneath the soil, or a part of the soil you might say. India's hoary tradition which continues very much as a living force rules out her finding ready made solutions offered in modern text-books or formulated inisms. Acquaintance with modern socio-economic thought was necessary, but a thorough grounding in India's long history and an acquaintance

through living contact with the ways and psychology of the Indian masses was the very first requisite. The Saraswati is the holy stream of the initial Arya Samaj phase in Lajpat Rai's life-till the celestial liberation-promising waters of the Ganga arrive to constitute the mainstream. The Lajpat Rai story can fittingly be studied as that of the three streams in his life, of their commingling and the triune *Sangam*-of course not ignoring the wayward Saraswati's vanishing and its occasional fugitive glimpses.

IX

The Last for which the First Was Made' is not meant to signify that the fight for India's liberation was crowned with success in Lajpat Rai's life-time. It can refer only to the crowning of his own career. He had renounced the normal ambitions of worldly men, and equally renounced all other-worldly aspirations-and had wholly dedicated himself to the cause that he had espoused. To be wounded in the forefront of the battle-line, and to be remembered by his people as a martyr in India's cause-this to him was the very summit of ambition. His end secured him the crown he coveted.

And the youthful martyr of the Epilogue?

I had occasion to watch him from his college days, and ample opportunity to see him at close range in his later career. His party's secret planning of course could not be shared, but it was not necessary to ply into these to realise what stuff he was made of and what influences had worked on him, or to understand developments in his political thinking and outlook. The Epilogue's image of Bhagat Singh derives not merely from the happenings, but, far more it springs out of intimate glimpses of his urges and yearnings, that found vent therein. My contact with him did not cease after the happenings, for as Secretary of the Committee setup to arrange defence for the accused in the Conspiracy Case I

had to keep in close touch with Bhagat Singh and his colleagues throughout the protracted court proceedings. And even when the authorities had set a price on his head, and to elude detection he had himself given it a new rig-a felt hat replacing long hair and turban and a shaven chin, I ran into him just outside a newspaper office in Delhi. In the month-and a-half *Epilogue* period, from the lathi blows to the repayment through revolver shots. I saw quite a good bit of Bhagat Singh; and the powerful impact of Basanti Devi's challenging statement addressed to India's youth is given in the *Epilogue* as no intelligent surmise, but from direct observation.

I must record my appreciation of the co-operation I have received from the Publications Division, especially through its Joint Director, Shri Madan Gopal, and through Shri R.M. Bhatt who took great pains over the MS. and made many valuable suggestions.

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Feroz Chand

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The Seed, The Soil

Seed and Soil

BARELY TEN DAYS to the opening event of the season of Christmas festivity, and of a sudden, Sir Hugh Gough, the British Commander-in-Chief, cancels his grand ball fixed well in advance for the eleventh evening of December.

In the cold season of 1845 things looked pretty grim. The grand ball had to be sacrificed because the British at Ambala got the news that the Sikh army was on the march eastwards and had crossed the Sutlej—the waters that the British had ever insisted must separate Ranjit Singh's domain from theirs. West of Ambala and the Sutlej, Ranjit Singh's successors still ruled, though the British held isolated outposts at Ludhiana and Ferozepore.

Much was at stake for both parties. The Governor-General himself, Henry Hardinge, came down to share the work and worry of the Commander-in-Chief. In the campaign that followed, he would often be seen sitting down to his despatch-boxes under no other canopy than that of a tree, for urgent papers must be dealt with before his camp paraphernalia arrived.

Battle was joined on December 18 at Mudki. Henry Hardinge, himself a tried soldier, directed a part of the British forces, not from a remote and sheltered headquarters but by galloping into the field the moment heavy cannonade was heard.

Some remonstrated with him for his thus exposing himself, but to no effect. Could he be thinking of the great Macedonian who had once fought on the neighbouring sold and paid scant regard to like remonstrance? Hardinge was a tried soldier, and he was aware of large the stakes were.

On the Sikh side, as a writer of history remarks, "hearts to dare and hands to execute were numerous, but there was no mind to guide and animate the whole". The unlettered but extremely shrewd Ranjit Singh, Lion of the Punjab, had already been dead more than six years, Ranjit Singh had left behind a splendid army, but no worthy successors to put it to good use and to steer the ship of State.

Not more than 48 km from the field of battle, at Jagraon, the same fateful day in December 1845 saw the birth of Radha Kishan, father of the child who grew up to revive the old title, Lion of the Punjab.

At Mudki the Sikhs lost. The war had begun well for the British. A few more battles of the neighbouring fields, and all was up, in the month's time at Jagraon itself, the Ferozepore force joined that from Ludhiana. In two months the war had ended. The British denounced the treaty they had to keenly pressed on Ranjit Singh. They had cleared the Upper Sutlej finally. In the next four years the beyond-Sutlej Punjab too was theirs.

When British raj came to the Punjab, the particular branch of Agarwals with which we are here concerned had for generations been living in Malerkotla and the neighbouring territory. Like all Agrawals elsewhere they were a trading and money-lending community, but here they gained additional prestige by filling important administrative offices. In particular they had supplied for generations the *khazanchis* or custodians of the exchequer to the Muslim rulers of Malerkotla, a small state in the south-eastern part of the Punjab.

Malerkotla town is by train some 45km from Ludhiana, to the south, and has a population of more than 20,000 souls. Originally Maler and Kotla were two distinct townships. The beautiful Moti Bazar connecting the two is a 20th-Century addition. The Agarwals of our story were more in evidence at Maler, the bigger of the twins. History tells us of a local disturbance in the turbulent Sikh days which put the clan on the trek, though not for long. In fact, some of them sought shelter

next door, not three furlongs away, in Kotla (Literally, the “walled” township). The others were scattered in the Ludhiana and Ferozepore districts, but continued to be known as Malerys.

As part of this trek Lajpat Rai’s ancestors arrived at Jagraon, a township in the Ludhiana district but not far from Feroszepore. The ancestral house is still there, So also is the school named after their father by Radha Kishan’s sons, during his life-time and since then elevated to college status.

Radha Kishan’ father had been an employee of the new rulers, a patwari-the time-honoured village officer who keeps the land records-in a village not far from Jagraon, He was short of stature and, on his grandson’s showing, “very painstaking and courageous... very intelligent and wise and sociable”. He had all the virtues and failings of the shopkeeper, that is of his ancestors through the centuries. In keeping with the code of that class, he was fond of making money in all possible ways. Triditionally a patwari being an ill-paid but indispensable village functionary-one might almost call him a dignitary suffers form no inconvenient scruples, especially as the law connives at and custom insists on providing many simple ways to extra cash or amenities. His salary is recognised merely as a retainer or, say, as a supplement to his “extras”. To this day when ‘anti-corruption’. campaigns started by those in high authority are advertised so loudly, a patwari without these ‘extras” is nearly as common as a white crow. Truly speaking, a large part of the petty fees exacted by a patwari is what would properly be called appreciative “tips” rather than outright bribes. All patwaris collect these tips; the banya patwari may merely have asked for them with greater zest. With this hereditary love of money he combined the adaptability of his stock. A trading community could not be very long-lived when political upheavals were common, unless it displayed exceptionl resourcefulness in adapting itself to circumstances. The Muslim rule in Malerkotla, its clashes with the Sikhs, the panicky trek to Jagraon, the petty tyranny in everyday life under the Muslim Rais of Raikot, a spell of Ranjit Singh’s Ahluwalia proteges of

Kapurthala, the arrival of the British after the Sikh defeat on the battle-field-all these bewildering buffets of history this adoptable clan seems to have thriven on.

The short-statured Malery banya patwari had had no schooling worth the name. He was acquainted with the ingenious "Short-long hand" of the benya's ledgers, called the "Mahajani", but had no acquaintance with Persian and Urdu in which the land records were maintained. His was the advantage, however, of having come from a stock which accepted any situation in which it was placed, and adapted itself quickly to the altered circumstances. Possibly those who had the advantage of knowing Persian and Urdu were yet trying to get their own bearings in the quick and cataclysmic changes that history had staged. These practical people, however, wasted little time in idle gazing and futile introspection. They were adepts in trimming their economic sails to any political wind that blew. So they would supply a patwari, and one who would well manage his business in spite of his handicaps. They furnished a patwari, because in the tossing about by history they had found their feet earlier than those with the necessary training and qualifications. Their patwari ran true to type and like his jat bhais he was orthodox and strict in his religious observances. He performed his devotional rites twice a day regularly, and hospitably cultivated the company of the ascetic gurus-Shvetambara (white-robed) Jain Sadhus.

His wife was a bit "different". Not in being illiterate, or in her incapacity to count beyond twenty-handicaps common to most women of her generation-but in not being money-minded.

"I have not seen another woman." says Lajpat Rai of his grandmother, "as righteous, as pure-hearted, as hospitable, as generous and as simple. She was incapable of keeping money and her husband never gave her much. All her life she never used a lock and never kept a key in her custody. She was not fond of jewellery or of dressing well. She was so generous that practically all she got from her husband was given away to her neighbours."

Could the invisible fingers that join chromosomes and prepare the packet of heredity combine this woman's generous indifference towards money with the money-shrewdness and practical sense of her husband?

This "different" woman, we are told, was also a study in abnormal psychology—a subject, if you like, for parapsychology, or for psychical research. Occasionally the spirit of her husband's deceased sister seemed to possess her. The family would gather round her and consult her as an oracle, whenever she was in this state of trance. She would foretell the future or make revelations about matters not known to anybody. Later events corroborated her prophecies: the family anyway had great faith in her. Her grandson had often seen her, as a boy, in such a trance, and wrote what we have just quoted, without offering any explanation of the phenomenon, adding only that "ticks or fraud or humbugging my grandmother knew not". and that "she kept excellent health and seldom fell ill".

Her husband showed indications of a *wanderlust*, though we are not aware if he ever undertook really long tramps in those pre-railway days. His last illness lasted but a day, and he died practically in harness.

Born of these parents, Radha Kishan exhibited an unusual interest in religion. Macaulay had already written his famous note on educational policy in India, when Radha Kishan went to school. The madrasah set up by Macaulay's countrymen in Radha Kishan's village was conducted by a Maulvi and imparted what was known as Persian education. Radha Kishan was a bright pupil, ever securing the top position in the class, and in the final Normal School examination he came out first in the Punjab, securing the full quota of marks in "exact learning" i.e., in mathematics and physical science. He was more than merely intelligent, much more than a mere winner of prizes and positions in examinations. He had an intellectual sturdiness about him that gave to things of the mind a definite precedence over the mere running after cash. He had not his mother's complete apathy towards money, nor was he

like his father prone to “making money by all possible means”. He evinced great interest in religion; but to him this did not signify the routine ritual that had been accepted by his ancestors for centuries. He wanted to study, to ponder, to scrutinise and only then to accept. The one religion that he could study at his school was that of his teacher, a pious Sunni Mussalman, “very firm in his religion and honest and righteous”. His lofty character, we learn, made his Islam contagious, for several of his non-Muslim pupils embraced Islam later in life. Some of those who fought shy of apostasy, in their heart of hearts renounced their own faith in favour of the pious teachers. So did Radha Kishan. He said his *namaz*, fasted during the Ramzan, and he sought friends amongst the ulema. For years he was on the verge of formal conversion but fought shy of it fearing the tremendous domestic difficulties it would for certain bring in its trail. He studied Islam with a sincere devotion to truth. Ever responsive to new stimuli, he combined the receptive quality with the critical. When Sir Syed Ahmad Khan started his liberal interpretation of Islam, which came to be dubbed popularly as “natural theology”, Radha Kishan avidly drank in the new tenets. He read with zest all that Sir Syed wrote, and for years was in correspondence with him. Once in a letter he asked Sir Syed if to become a Mussalman it would be necessary for him to cease to be Radha Kishan, and to be known by an Islamic name. Sir Syed’s reply suited Radha Kishan admirably, for it said that change in name was not in the least fundamental, the essentials being a firm monotheistic faith in Allah, and in Muhammad as his prophet. This reply most have gone a long way in appeasing Radha Kishan’s conscience.

Duni Chand, the lawyer, shared with his intimate friend, Radha Kishan, his peculiar faith, and his peculiar difficulties about apostasy. One day, however, it appears, the two friends resolved to embrace Islam openly. With this intention they set out for the masjid. Radha Kishan’s wife somehow came to know of their plans and successfully thwarted them! She had felt bitterly, as any Hindu woman would, the heresy of her

husband, but she had tolerated it with the tact and adaptability peculiar to Hindu wives. Her parents believed in the Sikh gurus. She had been taught their *bani* in her childhood, and in Radha Krishan's house she kept up her regular recital of *Japji*, the Sikh mattins. Radha Kishan would bring his Muslim friends to his house to dine with him. In those days of orthodoxy (though not of political communalism) this was regarded as outrageous in a Hindu home. But Radha Kishan's wife created no scenes. She satisfied her husband by serving his friends in her own plates and afterwards satisfied orthodoxy by cleansing the plates (of metal, as usual in Hindu homes) in fire. A non-vegetarian Agarwal in those days was regarded by his people as little short of a monster. But Radha Kishan who in his thinking had ceased to be Jain or Hindu an Agarwal would at times carry home a meat dish cooked in the house of a Muslim friend. All these outrageous doings his wife put up with; but he knew she would draw a line somewhere—he knew exactly where. The day he became an avowed Muslim, he strongly suspected, she would leave his roof taking away the children and would seek either his father's roof or that of her own. "that my father did not become a convert to Islam.... is nothing short of a miracle, and the credit of having wrought this miracle goes to my mother." so wrote Radha Kishan's son. But a friend of the family gave the credit for his *shuddhi* (or conversion back to Hinduism) miracle to the baby Lajpat in Gulab Devi's lap when she overtook her husband on the steps of the masjid and appealed to him in the name of their little one. While the father in Radha Kishan listened and hesitated, the babe bewildered by this unfamiliar scene started crying, and this coming at a tense moment supported the mother's beseeching so successfully that overcome by domestic emotion, the near-Muslim halted just as he was about to cross the barrier, and returned home unconverted.

Radha Kishan's wife must have been a wonderful woman in her own way. The handling of such an erratic husband made extraordinary demands on her tact. And again as a housewife

she needed to be no less skilful in managing a house on his meagre income. As a teacher he was getting just twenty-five rupees a month. He was much too absorbed in his theological studies and in the pursuit of learning to bother about currying favour with the officials of his department, and so was never thought of in connection with any preferment, though superb as a teacher and so adored by his pupils. After years of keen interest in education Lajpat Rai wrote of Munshiji as a teacher; "In India I have never come across a better teacher." In his whole career he is said to have been granted an increment twice-each time a five-rupee one so that when he retired he had been getting the magnificent salary of thirty-five rupees a month! His wife had to bring up a large family on this slender income. In all she bore him ten children; at the time of her death six of these, four sons and two daughters, were alive. How she managed to feed and cloth this large family and to observe in addition all the religious feasts and festivals and *samskaras* - for we are told she missed none of these-within this income seems little short of a miracle. Yet her bigger miracle was that of fortitude which her husband was for ever straining to breaking-point by his sacrilegious enormities. She suffered deeply, but all in silence-a living monument of fortitude. No rows, no ugly scenes, and that made her suffering the more intense. Sorrow she kept strictly to herself. Lajpat, as a two-year-old, often watched her for hours shedding tears of grief at her husband's incorrigible ways. "For days together," wrote her son afterwards, "she would not taste her food, and would be sighing in grief with her children in her lap. But she would never think of deserting her husband. In fact she always lived with him and was never away from him for any appreciably long period of time"-we suppose to suffer, to serve, and thus to avert if possible the calamity of apostasy.

Good and remarkable in many ways, she was altogether unlettered. Her husband tried time and again to teach her, and later on her son tried too. But her frail health, the perpetual worry about her husband, the heavy household routine of a

housewife on a meagre allowance for a large family, and the fact, that most Hindu women of her generation even in families better favoured by fortune were uneducated, made her remain contest with her unlettered lot.

Radha Kishan remained an “unofficial” Muslim till about his fortieth year. He not merely admired Islam Zealously and sincerely, but cultivated in himself all the aggressiveness of a new convert in denouncing the religion and ritual of his forefathers. To have done so secretly or even privately would have been entirely unlike him. He wrote out his denunciations in newspaper articles which found ready publication in the *Brahmo Pres* of those days. His attitude towards Hindu religion, philosophy and culture changed only when his son had become an ardent follower of the principles of a new Hinduism, which the *Arya Samaj* had laid bare. He was able to show his father that beneath an exterior that had become ugly and even putrid, Hinduism at its core was pervaded by a beautiful aroma all its own. Radha Kishan was never wilfully blind but he knew no Sanskrit; and a keen seeker after truth as he was, the milieu of his school days had not favoured his seeing Hinduism in the true perspective. When he became aware of this lack he readily tried to correct himself. He studied all about Hinduism that was accessible to him. But he never joined the church for which his son so devotedly worked. His studies led him not to the *Arya Samaj*, but to Vedanta. The subtleties of the Vedantic philosophy held out a strong intellectual appeal and in his old age he found solace in the teaching of the Upanishads.

All his life Radha Kishan remained a keen student of religion. He could not go to the Hindu source books as he had done in studying Islam. But whatever was available to him in Urdu (or even Hindi or Gurmukhi), he read with avidity and studied with industry and conscientious scrupulousness.

Besides newspaper articles he occasionally wrote small books and had some title to authorship. His religious studies resulted in a book in Urdu called *Tahqiqe Mazahib* (“Inquiry into Religions”) a brief comparative study of the fundamental tenets

of the principal religions, advertised as “the fruit of the author’s study of different religions extending over a period of 22 years”. We do not know whether Munshiji ever composed verse, but he is known to have sported the penname of ‘Azad’ as appropriately betokening his spirit and his outlook. His published tracts included one on metempsychosis called *Risalah-i-Tanasukh* in which he particularly compared the teachings of his erstwhile guru, Sir Syed Ahmad, with those of the Hindu philosophers, generally to the advantage of the latter. But he himself did not subscribe to the views of any one particular school. He joined issue with Swami Dayananda in his doctrine according to which even souls that had attained moksha (salvation) enjoyed such beatitude not eternally but for an essentially limited, though a very long period. This doctrine he found to be contrary both to the teachings of ancient Indian philosophers and to the dictates of his own reason. Radha kishan throughout tried to be logical and terse and confined his attention only to the point at issue. He had his chapter and verse ready in support of his contentions and generally let the different philosophers he was discussing speak for themselves. His writing is dispassionate in the extreme, completely devoid of all attempts at decoration. In fact, it is ascetically bald, and definitely wanting in grace of presentation.

His studies in history resulted in an Urdu booklet of about 150 pages called *Bir Charitra* which was mainly a selection from Todd’s *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*. In a preface Munshi Radha Kishan speaks of the value of historical study and shows for some time, and even a second edition was called for.

This fondness for reading he retained till his very end. I was privileged to be his neighbour, in the sense of occupying the room adjoining his at 2 Court Street, Lahore, when I joined the Sevents of the People Society. Lala Lajpat Rai and given away the house to the Society and had built himself a smaller two storeyed one in the same compound. His father did not shift to the new house, but continued to occupy in the old

one a small low-ceilinged room in the south corner of the verandah. A cot and an office chair were about all the furniture one could notice in this room, besides the very conspicuously unvarnished, crudely-planned thick strong plank of wood running continuously along three walls, at a convenient height. This shelving came handy for stowing away books, papers and odds and ends and underlined the ascetic aspect of the bed-cum-living room of Munshi Radha Kishan. This was perhaps the only room in the house the ascetic aspect of which never accepted a glass-pane in door, window or ventilator. In summer, of course, he slept on the verandah or in the open. In the morning he would get up and would be seen reading one of his favourite books, or last evening's paper-for, Lahore in those days boasted of no morning paper-till it was time for breakfast. After breakfast he would walk to the shop of his second son, Ranpat Rai (a paper merchant on Ganpat Road, Anarkali) and spend his day there, most of the time readying. His supper he used to have at Ranpat Rai's, after which he would return to his own small room at 2 Court Street, with the afternoon's *Bandemataram* in his hand. He never went to sleep without having first done his reading.

Among the books that he was particularly fond of was an Urdu translation of Draper's classic *Conflict between Religion and Science*. Often he would dip into this early in the morning or else pick it out in the evening for a read when going to bed. His other favourites were mostly books on religion or history.

When he died he was eighty-two. His death was keenly felt by Lajpat Rai-the more so because being in prison at the time he could not be by his death-bed for a filial fulfilment. He sent special instructions that all expenses for the obsequies must be met out of his (Lajpat Rai's) royalties as a writer which he regarded as a particularly pure portion of his fortune.

Narture: The Sapling's Struggles

MUNSHI RADHA KISHAN taught for some eight years at the Government Middle School, Rupar, in Ambala district. During the Rupar days, early in 1865-January 28-he became a father. The first child, a son whom he named Lajpat Rai, arrived in a small mud house in his father-in Law's village, Dhudike, as is the custom largely even now, the expectant mother had moved to her father's home for her first child-birth. Dhudike is a small village in the Moga tehsil of the Ferozepore district, and about 8 km from Radha Kishan's own Jagraon, which is to the Ludhiana district.

The father happened to be away at Delhi for a short professional course. News reached him there that the new arrival was a puny thing. Tall and vigorous himself and devoted to physical exercise. this was not exactly what he had looked forward to.

Early childhood in malaria-infested Rupar did not go to make of Lajpat a model of health and vigour. When he grew up into a schoolboy he was more fond of books than of play. He became a constant victim to malaria, and early acquired an enlarged spleen.

The boy's schooling at first was largely carried on by Radha Kishan at home, where the lessons of the class-room were abundantly supplemented. The boy was intelligent and hard-working and as prize-winning as his father had been in his own day. The father taught him not merely the three R's. but soon began to interest him in that most interesting of all R's—Religion. The boy read parts of the Quran with

his father and like him used to say his numaz and occasionally even observed the Ramzan fast.

Young Lajpat must have been puzzled about feelings about religion as he saw it practised in his home. His father's father was an orthodox Jain, his own father a firm, though an unofficial, Muslim; his mother in perpetual agony about her husband's Islam but scrupulously regular in her Sikh recitals. If ever he went to her parents' house he must have seen plenty of Sikhism in evidence. How could he help feeling perplexed whenever he took stock of his situation even in a boyish way? Anyhow Munshi Radha Kishan succeeded in imparting to his son the contagion of religious enquiry and curiosity which continued unblunted through mature years, even though the boy before very long gave up Islamic observances.

From his father he also inherited his fondness for the study of history which in fact meant a fondness for the epic' in the widest possible sense. Radha Kishan started the boy early on Firdausi's immortal *Shahnama*, which is regarded as the Persian counterpart of Homer's epic or of Vyasa's *Mahabharata*. Again and again he read parts of Firdausi with his father, and when he had grown up, he continued to read them all by himself. The studies at once satisfied a craving, and created an appetite for more. It is to the early schooling in *Shahnama* that Lajpat in later years traced his passion for books of history, and it might be it was the dramatic declamations of Firdausi's heroes that first kindled in the child's mind an interest in oratory. Perhaps to his schooling might even be traced his life-long fondness for the dynamic, the heroic and the epic in any work. Like Vyasa and Homer, Firdausi is not content with a mere chronicle of what happens on the battle-field. In that sense he was very unlike the official historians of yore. He is all embracing and presents an exhaustive picture of the life and culture of the times his verse celebrates. The boy nurtured on this intellectual diet naturally sought ever after in books of history the same large sweep, the same encyclopaedic range.

Preoccupation with the Quran and the Shahnama and rather frequent interludes of malaria notwithstanding, he did not neglect his school-books. Almost always he occupied the top position. Being also the youngest boy in the school he was looked upon as a prodigy. He completed the Rugar school course consisting of six forms. Soon after the closing of that school, Munshi Radha Kishan was transferred to Simla. He could not take his wife and children there because his meagre salary would not suffice to meet the expenses of that place. Lajpat had been sent to Lahore for further schooling. The education department granted him a stipend of seven rupees a month and from Lahore he went to Delhi. He was there for about three months, but the climate of Delhi did not suit the sickly boy. By then the father had gone away to Simla, and Lajpat went with his mother to their home in Jagraon.

Before he was thirteen and while yet at the middle school, the boy had been married. Of course it was an arranged match, in the orthodox way, linking one Agarwal family with another. Radha Devi, the bride, came from a Hissar family and had seen there more affluence that was visible at the house of the ill-paid teacher. We shall have occasion to speak of her and of the married life of the couple later. For the moment we are concerned with the education of the bridegroom. After having left Delhi, and having spent a few months at home at Jagraon, he joined the Mission High School at Ludhiana, where also he was granted a stipend as a promising boy, and where again he fell ill and left the school after a few months. About this time Munshi Radha Kishan again received orders of transfer, this time to Ambala. There his wife and children joined him. At Rugar two more children were born to him—Mela Ram, who died young, and a daughter. In his Ambala days, three more sons were born—Ranpat Rai, Dhanpat Rai and Nand Lal, later named Dalpat Rai in better consonance with the names of his brothers. Also incidentally, a Dalpat Rai at Lahore was a very successful lawyer in those days.

Sickly Lajpat had not been Ambala quite two months when he fell dangerously ill, and for nearly four months had to be nursed in bed. This time it was an abscess which had to be operated on twice. Thinking of those days he later wrote:

“I have been a source of trouble and anxiety to my parents all my life, but that year I put them to so much trouble, that I can never possibly forget it.”

All the same he matriculated that year. In fact, he did a double matriculation. The University of the Punjab was yet in its infancy, and Dr. Leitner was trying various experiments to pattern it differently from the other universities. The infant university did not enjoy much prestige even in its home province, whereas the diplomas and degrees granted by the Calcutta University were at a premium. Lajpat solved the problem by taking both the examinations, the Calcutta and the Punjab ones. He was successful in both, and got a first class in his Calcutta examination, in spite of his long illness. For his Calcutta matric he took up Persian second language, but in the Punjab he was examined in Arabic and Urdu and physical science, besides all the Calcutta subjects. His father had been keen that he should learn Arabic, and in early boyhood he devoted a good deal of time to Arabic accidence and syntax; but in reality he was not much interested in the study, and his success in the examination was a tour de force. Dr. Leitner's university turned out barely 106 matriculates that year; the educational factories were working slow and Lajpat Rai stood somewhere in the middle of the turnout.

College : Influences and Friendships

LAJPAT'S FURTHER EDUCATION became a serious problem. The boy was no doubt gifted and keen on his studies. To his father so genuinely interested in education, it would have been painful indeed to wean such an eager and promising lad away from his books so soon, and yet where was the money to send him up to college? the difficulties were formidable, but eventually Radha Kishan made up his mind to give his son the benefit of a college education, whatever hardship that might entail on the family at home. A man of Munshiji's independent character could not go about begging support from friends. The only friend whose help he is said to have every sought was a much respected Mussalman of Jagraon, one Sajawal Biloch, who had been his schoolmate, probably his class-mate, and with whom Radha Kishan's relations were cordial and intimate. Sajawal would have willingly financed the high-school education of the boy at Lahore. But it does not seem he was ever called upon to make good his word for, as we have seen, Lajpat's stay at Lahore for school education was extremely brief. For his college education he depended on the stipends he could secure and a meagre allowance of eight to ten rupees a month from home, which sum, of course, was a considerable part of his father's earnings.

In February 1881, a little after he had turned sixteen, Lajpat joined the only college that Lahore (or the Punjab) then boasted of the University or Government College.

The struggle with poverty at college must have been grim indeed. He had not seen prosperity at home, but a frugal

standard within their slender means was maintained there, and whenever he fell ill, his parents could look after him. At Lahore, with the utmost that could be squeezed out of the family budget, supplemented by sundry stipends, he was constantly being reminded of his penury.

“For the first two or three months”, he himself tells us, “I had to face great embarrassment. My eyes gave me great trouble. Besides, I had at times to go without food. After a good deal of struggle I succeeded in getting a stipend of three rupees a month from the university. I had come to Lahore merely with the idea of studying for an arts degree, but on the advice of certain fellow-students in the hostel I joined the law school also. Out of my monthly stipends I was paying two rupees as tuition fee in the Government College, three rupees in the law school and perhaps one rupee as hostel fee. My father could, with difficulty, manage only eight to ten rupees a month, and I had to live within that amount. Law books were pretty expensive, but I got the more essential among them rather cheap, by buying them second-hand, or I depended on friends for their loan. I used the same economy in securing the arts books and got along by borrowing these. My parents were undergoing great hardship for my sake, and were even prepared to run into debt. But I did not want to put them to this trouble, and so lived very frugally.”

The grim struggle soon persuaded him that the first thing was to complete the law course and get the diploma that would enable him to earn a living. Liberal education soon came to occupy a subsidiary place in his plans. For his law examination he worked hard enough to qualify at the end of the year for mukhtarship-and also for jaundice. He continued on the college rolls for two years more, but without passing any more university examinations. Frequent illness, the law-school priority, preoccupation with certain live issues in public life, and absorption in education of a type very different from the university curriculum, all combined in 1883 to keep his name out of the list of successful candidates in the intermediate arts examination.

But his Government College days were otherwise very important in his life. Here his class-mates included names that later became famous—Mahatma Hans Raj, Pandit Guru Dutt Vidyarthi, Raja Narendranath and Professor Ruchi Ram Sahni. A college class in those days was a smaller affair. Although the number of students taking the corresponding examinations of the successor universities at Chandigarh and Lahore, nowadays, runs well beyond 50,000 yearly, it is doubtful if any other year in the Punjab's academic annals has seen a batch that will outshine this 1882-83 galaxy. Five men who have had half as much to do with the shaping of the modern Punjab, as Lajpat Rai, Hans Raj, Narendranath, Guru Dutt and Ruchi Ram, all of whom took their intermediate examination in 1883, could not easily be named out of students in any class. Some of his comrades were for Lajpat Rai much more than mere fellow-students; in fact, Guru Dutt, Hans Raj, Lajpat Rai, Chetan Anand and Rai Shiv Nath, who formed a coterie at College, had a great deal to do with one another's lives even after their college days. A puritanic way of living was a common bond. Rai Shiv Nath, later an engineer in the U.P., was perhaps the most ascetic of them all. He went about barefoot and was a zealous collector of ancient Indian MSS, curios and books: his Dehra Dun house was indeed a private museum with a unique feature displayed in its geometrical reproductions of the old Aryan *yajnashtalas* worked out from ancient texts with devotion and industry!

Urdu vs. Hindi : The Lure of a Cause

NOT MANY AMONG Lajpat's teachers at the Government College could by later judgment be regarded as nearly so important as the brilliant galaxy of his class-mates we have already mentioned. The only memorable names from amongst the teachers seem those of Dr. Leitner and Muhammad Hussain Azad. Dr. Leitner's ambition was to be a shaper of education policy, but his plan of creating a sort of oriental seminary under the aegis of the University of the Punjab met with little success. But he has a claim to be remembered as the scrupulous and painstaking author of an important report on Indigenous Education in the Punjab which brought to light facts showing that literacy, far from being such a scarce commodity in the pre-British days, was perhaps commoner then than after a century of British rule. As a teacher he was brilliant and versatile, and covered a wide and variegated range extending over the Arts, Oriental and Law Schools. He also had a number of linguistic, mainly Oriental, studies to his credit. But administration was a different affair, and the official history of the university seems to suggest that the brilliant Dr. Leitner had to go because under him there was too much laxity regarding the funds and accounts of the university.

Muhammad Hussain Azad was shaping history at the Government College in a different way. Steeped in Persian and Arabic erudition, he was keenly aware also that literature and learning must change with the times, and he had addressed himself to the task of enriching Urdu and of making of it a better vehicle for the new literary requirements arising

mainly out of the western impact. His verse is of little significance, but indubitably he ranks among the makers of Urdu prose. He produced the first comprehensive and systematic history of Urdu literature and so powerful and vivid was his style of writing that even where his facts have been shown by later research to be utterly baseless, his *obiter dicta* cannot be obliterated from the popular mind; for he is a clever literary portraitist, and his minutiae, and the anecdotes ingratiate themselves into the readers' imagination and abide there tenaciously. Historians may repudiate Macaulay when he says that a convict was offered the choice of reading Guiccardiani's *History* or working at the galleys, and after a trial of both chose the galleys as the lesser torture, but the story has stuck to Guiccardiani. Muhammad Hussain Azad had the same dangerous gift. When he made up his mind to give a particular character to an Urdu poet, always the stories came pat to support him. Most of the anecdotes he circulated about the ill-temper of the pathetic genius, Meer, have been found by later scholarship to be fables, but for generations Meer seems doomed to go down much as Azad portrayed him.

Lajpat Rai attended Azad's Arabic classes for only a few days, but those few days remained indelibly impressed on his memory. Azad could indulge in a broad joke even in the classroom, as Lajpat Rai learnt to his cost, the very first day. However, it was not because of banter that he left the Arabic class. He left it for more ponderable reasons. The language controversy was just then starting. In the United Provinces (now named Uttar Pradesh) a movement was afoot that resulted a few years later in the recognition of Hindi as the language of the law courts. In the Punjab the Arya Samaj was laying great emphasis on the importance of Hindi and Sanskrit for Hindus. Lajpat Rai's Samajist friends at college, having definitely espoused the cause of Hindi and Sanskrit, beseeched him to discard Arabic in favour of Sanskrit-of which he knew not a word-as a sacrifice for the cause.

Professor Azad's own attitude helped Lajpat Rai in yielding to the importunity. Azad used to boast that as a Shia and as a Persian scholar he considered Iran and not India as his home. This offended the patriotic awareness already fast developing in young Lajpat's bosom and made him suspect that there was a de-nationalising influence lurking in the study of Arabic and Persian. The enemy lay in ambush, and he must beware. He made up his mind to leave his Arabic class and to give a trial to Sanskrit. But if he had made poor progress in Arabic, he was not destined to fare any better in Sanskrit. Even during his staunch Arya Samajist days, he had access to Sanskrit wisdom only through translations.

Let no one run away with the impression that Azad was a sort of anti-Hindi bigot. He was, in fact, neither anti-Hindi nor a hater of India. He loved India in his own way. Perhaps in a different set of circumstances no one would have accused him of hostility to Hindi, even though his own contribution went only to Urdu. Azad found that Urdu literature was not only poor but was definitely suffering from stagnation. Prose had attracted little talent, and verse was wasting lavish amounts of it in outmoded channels. If it continued in the rut into which it had then fallen, there was no hope of its ever coming out to serve the many uses to which modern minds might put it. The modernising of Urdu literature had its birth in the Punjab. The initiative was taken by Muhammad Hussain. The great and almost unbelievable miracle of Urdu literature is that the modernising which is supposed to have come out of the impact of the West (made mostly through English) was achieved mainly by those who had little or no knowledge of English—by Azad and Hali, and next to them by Sir Syed Ahmad and Shibli. Amongst these four, the first place in the new movement must be given to Muhammad Hussain Azad. He set the movement going and under his influence it gathered momentum in the province. At his instance it was that Hali came down to Lahore and the combined efforts of the two resulted in something of a literary revolution. It was while Urdu was undergoing this

invigorating metamorphosis that the Hindi movement made its appearance in the Punjab and the Hindi-Urdu question became one of the major controversies of the day.

Lajpat Rai threw in his lot with the Hindi enthusiasts. But he was not to shake off so easily the influence of Muhammad Hussain. He left his class, because he thought there was a danger of his falling under the spell of Azad's Iranian leanings. Yet his national pride was destined to derive nourishment from the writings of this very Muhammad Hussain; and, in his autobiography, he paid a handsome tribute to this influence on his life. His father had been his first great teacher, and he had formed the boy's mind mainly by teaching him Firdausi's *Shahnama*. Muhammad Hussain Azad was to be his second great teacher, for it was from his very well-written slender Urdu book, *Qasis-i-Hind*, that Lajpat first became aware of India's glorious past. These chapters of Indian history in the form of legend and story presented her past in language that made their author's pride in the Indian heritage highly infectious. Incidentally it proved to him that his father had not been altogether right in concluding that pre-Muslim India had nothing to boast of. Both the *Shahnama* and the *Qasis* he continued to read off and on long after his school and college days. Later on he became acquainted with Col. Todd's *Annals & antiquities of Rajasthan*; these annals and Arya Samaj's revealing to him the manifold glories of India's ancient past changed for him the image of his motherland; but the beginning had surely been made by Azad's narratives in the *Qasis-i-Hind*.

His admiration for Muhammad Hussain Azad's dignified prose must also have started at this period of his life, At any rate it continued to the end of his days. Azad, Sir Syed, Shibli-these three were his perennial favourites.

Amidst Brahmos and Aryas

THE HINDI MOVEMENT soon found in him an active missionary. This was in fact the beginning of Lajpat Rai's public life a precocious beginning rather, for he was barely out of school. He and Guru Dutt and Hans Raj started their public careers with this movement, while (all three) still "Freshers" at college. Guru Dutt and Lajpat Rai had a busy time collecting thousands of signatures to a pro-Hindi memorial.

The first public speech that young Lajpat Rai made was in the cause of Hindi, at Ambala in 1882, when he was only eighteen. He had gone there especially for this propaganda. A subordinate magistrate happened to be among the audience and sent up a report to the Principal of the Government College who duly administered a warning to the young enthusiast pointing out that students were expected to keep at a safe distance from all such agitation.

Lajpat Rai's active participation in Hindi propaganda did not necessarily imply acceptance of the Arya Samaj. In fact for a time he wavered between the Brahma and the Arya Samajas. The Punjab Brahma Samaj was much under the influence of Nobin Chandra Roy, and unlike some other Bengali leaders of his day. Nobin Babu attached the utmost importance to the Hindi movement. He regarded Hindi as the foundation on which the entire edifice of Indian nationalism would one day rest. Agnihotri who later founded the Dev Samaj, the church without God, was in those days a pillar of the Punjab Brahma Samaj. Lajpat had brought to Lahore an introduction to him from his father. Agnihotri was still a drawing master or Art teacher at

the Government school, and was also editing an Urdu paper, called a *Biradar-i-Hind* (literally "Brother of India") Munshi Radha Kishan used to attack the Arya Samaj and orthodox Hinduism in the hospitable columns of this paper. At Lahore Lajpat Rai was very much under the influence of Agnihotri. Probably he went out occasionally with Agnihotri on lecturing tours. He read a paper on the life of Rammohun Roy at one of the Brahma Samaj meetings. In 1882 he was formally initiated into the Brahma Samaj by his father's friend. Agnihotri was a most eloquent public speaker and it is possible that the first realisation of what a mighty force a moving speech can be came to Lajpat through contact with him.

But Lajpat did not stay a Brahma very long. At college as we have already seen, his chief friends were Guru Dutt and Hans Raj and they frequently talked of the Arya Samaj to him. Guru Dutt was a prodigy; his towering intellect, his vast fund of knowledge in all branches of learning, his all-round dazzling brilliance made a profound impression on Lajpat Rai's mind. Yet it was not Guru Dutt who enlisted Lajpat Rai for the Arya Samaj but another who, though he had few intellectual pretensions, undoubtedly possessed a magnetic personality and a sound judgment regarding men. This was Sain Das, then President of the Lahore Arya Samaj. He often used to go to the college hostel, in search of converts for his church, and he knew how to attract a promising young man when he saw one.

Sain Das happened to be present at the Brahma Samaj meeting at which Lajpat Rai received initiation at the hands of Agnihotri. As he came out of the meeting Sain Das accosted him, and in a pitying tone remarked that a worthwhile young man had been misguided and entrapped.

Inside the Punjab Brahma Samaj, things seemed moving towards a crisis, with three factions striving for ascendancy. The bickerings bewildered the young lad from Rupar and Jagraon.

Towards the end of the year the Arya Samaj at Lahore was celebrating its anniversary. Lajpat Rai had heard a lot

about this other Samaj from his friends, Guru Dutt and Hans Raj. At the time of the anniversary curiosity led his footsteps towards the Arya Samaj. He had never before witnessed an Arya Samajist gathering. Having watched the anniversary meeting the first day, he went there the next day too. The principal speaker that day was one who knew him well and had great affection for him. He took him aside to the top of the building to show him a draft of the speech he was about to deliver, and it must have flattered the young students thus to be invited to give his opinion.

Lala Sain Das urged him to join the Arya Samaj, Lajpat Rai agreed. "Indescribable joy illuminated Lala Sain Das's face."

Aryas : Early Vintage

ONCE IN THE Arya Samaj, he was soon in its inner counsels, and before long among its front rank leaders. Sain Das, President of the Arya Samaj at Lahore, soon after selected Lajpat for a deputation to Rajputana and the United Provinces. He visited Meerut, Ajmer, Farrukhabad and other places, addressed public meetings, raised funds and everywhere met the Arya fraternity and exchanged notes with them. Growing intimacy with its working revealed the Samaj as a body extraordinarily fervent and dynamic, a well-knit determined lot that might work as the leaven for a vast quantity of inert dough. It provided just the environment that he had long yearned for; he had at last arrived where he felt at his ease.

It was not the theological or doctrinal superiority of the Arya Samajic teaching that had attracted him. It had rather been the patriotic zeal of its members, their ambition of restoring Aryavarta to its ancient glory, that inspired and permeated all activities sponsored by the Samaj and promoted by its members.

He had no doubt been influenced by the company of Guru Dutt and Hans Raj, his closest friends at college. How had these been drawn to the Samaj? Guru Dutt was precocious, and a much-talked-of prodigy of his day. As a very young lad he had displayed an interest in science and philosophy altogether beyond his years. He became a keen student of metaphysics. He had a facility for learning languages too. He studied Sanskrit while a schoolboy with the earnestness of an accomplished scholar of mature years. His studies in Western philosophy led him to the agnosticism so much in vogue among the European thinkers

of the 'eighties and nineties. But his agnosticism was not without streaks of faith. Spiritualism with its promise of mystical experience fascinated him as much as agnosticism did with its intellectual challenge to belief. He became interested in yoga, and the subtleties of Sanskrit grammar and philosophy attracted him even more than Bentham and Mill and Herbert Spencer had done. Yet he was not merely a man of books. He took his books too seriously to be content merely with reading and academically pondering over them. He wanted life to tally rigidly with thought. He kept a journal which showed a perpetual struggle to secure this concord, Flesh was weak and would often fail. With this earnest man, however, every such failure called forth immediately an entry of self-reproach in his journal-and fresh endeavour. He had met a yogi in his early youth when he still vacillated between faith and agnosticism. This yogi made a profound impression on him and Guru Dutt wanted to accompany him as a disciple; but friends intervened, and the ties of home and friendship proved stronger than the love of yoga. It is said that the last shreds of his agnosticism vanished when he saw Dayananda on his death-bed. The dying founder of the Samaj won a convert who came to be regarded as the greatest intellectual among his followers. Guru Dutt was an eccentric. He would often put on winter clothes in summer and summer clothes in winter. By these austerties he sought to make his mind and body perfect and obedient tools. With some slight alternation somewhere in his methods he might perhaps have become a Gandhi long before Gandhi had been discovered even by himself. And perhaps out of this revised Guru Dutt you could have made not only a Gandhi but a couple of intellectuals too from what was left over. From out of the products of the University of the Punjab. for sheer intellect nobody attracted as much attention as Guru Dutt, with the possible exception of Har Dayal, another intellectual that Lajpat Rai was to have a good deal to do with in later years at Lahore and in Europe, and above all (through Har Dayal's followers and lieutenants) in the States.

These two, in fact, resembled each other much. Both were eccentric in personal habits as well as in their thinking. Both were too much weighed down by a heavy earnestness. Both possessed great gifts of mind and memory—curiosity, receptiveness, a strong will and a flair for languages and for expression, for logical thinking, for a contagious persuasiveness. Both pushed their thinking to the extreme, and could hop from one extreme to another—from the westernmost to the easternmost, or from a cosmopolitanism that left internationalism lagging far behind to the narrowest and most parochial nationalism, from agnosticism to perfect faith and spiritualism. Both had a remarkable knack of collecting around them friends and admirers who never tired of offering incense to them.

Both had a strong streak of asceticism. Har Dayal's remained unaffected alike in the midst of American materialism and the gaiety of Paris. If like Guru Dutt Har Dayal kept a journal and if it were unearthed one day it will be interesting to see if this too is full of self-reproach and of renewed resolutions for mortifying the flesh.

Those interested to yogic philosophy and exercises aim generally at personal salvation. But Guru Dutt did not lose his sense of social and collective values in this endeavour at individualistic perfection. Though he would not be reckoned amongst the 'politically-minded' he was by no means wanting in patriotism. As a student he had been as little examination-minded as his friend Lajpat Rai, but because of his greater precocity he could not help outshining all competitors in an examination. He was an equally keen student of Sanskrit and the Vedas, and of Western thought and modern science. He passed his M.A. in physical science in 1886 and because of his brilliant university career was offered an assistant professorship in physics at the Government College, Lahore. As his journal shows, he kept on wavering between continuing in this career and giving it up in favour of a yogic pursuit of perfection.

At the time, however, he continued to work hard for the Arya Samaj, by lecturing, by writing, by organising, by guiding

and by exercising his personal magnetism on a large circle of friends and admirers. His intellectual gifts and attainments, and even more than these, his earnestness and sincerity and his readily sacrificing personal interest, profoundly impressed the youngest of the trio, Lajpat Rai. In shaping his own career Lajpat Rai at every step consulted him. Eyen apart from the service rules Guru Dutt's bias and temperament seemed removed from the sphere of politics. A directly political movement had not yet arrived-at least not in the Punjab. Even if it had, it is possible that "plunged in thought" Guru Dutt would have "let the thundering legions pass". But he was certainly patriotic in a broader sense, and the contagion that affected those coming within his orbit was not without an ingredient of patriotism. Lajpat was attracted by that part of Guru Dutt's idealism which demanded sacrifices in a cause, rather than by his high intellectual attainment or even yogic pursuit of personal perfection. This pursuit too he may have admired-somewhat from a distance, and with little inclination to emulate. In his pamphleteering fervour for the Samaj Guru Dutt was then editing a magazine in English, appropriately styled the *Regenerator of Aryavarta*, which rather suggested a patriotic mission. The patriotic side of Guru Dutt was to no small extent responsible for Lajpat Rai's being won over by the Arya Samaj. In choosing his own vocation he consulted Guru Dutt. At one stage he had to consider whether he should give up law and dedicated himself to the educational movement being set afoot by the Samaj. It was proposed that Hans Raj should work as headmaster (they had then started only high school; the college was to come later) and Lajpat Rai should be his second in command. He himself felt diffident. Hans Raj had taken his B.A. degree-a rather rare bit of parchment then-while Lajpat Rai had no academic credentials. The trio pondered over the matter, and eventually it was decided that Lajpat Rai could be more useful to the college by continuing at the bar.

Guru Dutt himself had had a choice of careers before him apart from the extreme alternative of discarding all worldly

careers. He could have become an "extra assistant commissioner", a provincial civil service man, in other words. He had been offered this; he could go up the rungs of the ladder of administrative jobs, and with his rare gifts he might go as high as any Indian was in those days permitted. After some anxious thinking he decided that work at the Government College could suit him best. He continued there, though he was a member-and a very prominent one of the D.A.V. College Society too.

Guru Dutt lived a life of voluntary poverty. His personal wants were very few and easily met. A large part of his salary always went to help others, and to buy books for which Guru Dutt had a passion. Hoarding money he regarded as a sin, and at his death it was found that he had saved nothing for his wife and children.

Before Guru Dutt died, two schools of thought had arisen in the Arya Samaj. One was dominated by men supposed to have a modern outlook, those who would think and talk in terms of what is practicable and expedient, rather than in terms of scriptural sanction of text and canon and of dogma. The other school denounced this workship of expediency and wanted to go by rigid principle and the letter of the text. It was generally believed that the first school was more political and patriotic in its outlook, while the horizon of the second school was dominated by dogma and theology, Guru Dutt was much respected by both. It was during his last illness that the cleavage became definitely pronounced. After his death the best tribute that was paid to him was that each party quoted him in its own support. Lajpat Rai's personal tribute to his dearly loved friend was paid in the form of a biographical sketch, published both the English and Urdu in the early 'nineties-Lajpat Rai's first claim to authorship, if we leave aside a few small tracts and pamphlets written for the Arya Samaj, and perhaps a minor professional production, dealing with criminal courts and litigation said to have been written during his Hissar days, This was by no means one of his important books; the author's

craft had not yet been acquired by him, and the book bore marks throughout of an amateur hand and of haste. But one can perceive that even in the crudest of its pages breathes the feeling of tenderness that actuated the attempt. It is significant that Lajpat Rai began his career as an author with an essay on biography. Till the end he retained a fondness for biographies. As an author he was to attempt a number of biographies later on, some of which enjoyed considerable vogue; and as we shall see, of all his books the one which helped most in bringing about a national awakening, especially in the Punjab, was his biography of Mazzini in Urdu.

Hans Raj, Lajpat Rai's other great friend at college, was temperamentally a contrast too Guru Dutt. Without the dazzling brilliance of Guru Dutt, Hans Raj was endowed with gifts that made for greater stability. He too had joined the Arya Samaj before he came to college but he had not been directed thither by any Sanskrit erudition. He never acquired proficiency in Sanskrit and could never have been much interested in yogic culture. He was actuated by a sincere passion to serve others, but he wanted to do so in the manner of a hard-headed practical man, and not that of an idealist pushing ideas to their logical extreme or seeking after perfection here and now. He could not draw round him a coterie of young enthusiasts, but he had a wonderful knack of managing things. He decided on a life of simplicity, even poverty and service. When the D.A.V. College was conceived he identified himself with the institution, with almost a Jesuitical single-mindedness. His critics have averred that the institution had been intended to be just a means, not an end in itself, and that Hans Raj treated the means as an end. That, alas, is the common failing of those dedicated to institutions. Hans Raj's special talent was for organisation; he would build up an institution entrusted to his care, inch by inch with meticulous devotion to detail, a devotion bordering on an idolatry which in jealously guarding the idol at times checked rudely the onslaught of a great and dynamic movement embodying a national aspiration.

Hans Raj was not interested in the subtleties of metaphysics and of theology. Vedic grammar and exegesis. For him it was enough that the Arya Samaj as a progressive movement was destined to play a vital part in the reorganisation of Hindu society. In other words, he had been drawn to the Samaj more by its patriotic than its philosophical or dogmatic side.

Lajpat Rai stood midway between the extremes of perfectionist idealism and of expediency; but his approach to problems interesting the Arya Samaj was much nearer that of Hans Raj than that of Guru Dutt. For him as for Hans Raj the supreme merit of the Samaj lay in its social, educational and welfare work, and in its stimulating a patriotic awareness in Hindu society.

It was good for the friendship of this trio and, incidentally for the D.A.-V. College, that their spheres of activity remained distinct. Lajpat Rai had intended to dedicate his life to the D.A.-V. College, like Hans Raj, and not having a university degree, to be for ever his subordinate. It was likewise suggested that Guru Dutt should take over the D.A.-V. College as Principal. The results in either eventuality could have been disastrous. Temperamentally the three friends differed too widely from one another to make a good team. They were bound to differ at some stage, and then the consequences might have been ruinous as much for their friendship as for the institution equally dear to them all.

Early Training in Arya Samaj

YOUTHFUL AND HIGHLY receptive, Lajpat Rai was drinking in through every pore of his being the ideas of the Arya Samaj-ideas that made up its real core rather than those that constituted its corpus of dogma. To understand the shaping of his outlook it is necessary to grasp the Samajic ideas of the 'eighties and the 'nineties, and we need to know a little more here of the elderly men then guiding the destinies of the Samaj.

First of all there was Sain Das, at that time President of the Lahore Arya Samaj who, as we have seen, had been immediately responsible for winning over Lajpat Rai for the Arya Samaj. What was his conception of the mission of the Samaj? Was he interested keenly in theological and metaphysical subtleties, or in the yogic pursuit, or in the practice of austerities for the attainment of individual perfection and salvation of the soul? Or did all these things combined interest him less than serving his people through the Samaj in a more secular way, by promoting social, educational or relief and welfare work, and inculcating a spirit of patriotism and self-reliance among them? He himself held a clerical job in a Government office. He could not directly be connected with any political movement. We do not hear of any yogis whom he pursued for the deliverance of his soul. He carried no heavy load of Sanskrit grammar or theological erudition in his head. But he was one of the shrewdest men going in the Arya Samaj, with an uncanny judgment about men and affairs. A harder-headed man with greater abundance of common sense would be difficult to find. He had no pretensions to being an intellectual, but it is remarkable

that he too had a claim to authorship. The only book that he wrote dealt not with Vedic exegesis or with Aryan philosophy, but curiously enough it was a translation of the essays of Francis Bacon. This may be some indication of the philosophy of life that guided this leader of the Arya Samaj.

Much controversy arose in later years as to whether the Samaj was political or a religious movement. The truth is that the founder of the Samaj was a religious personage and not a politician, all the same his work had a conspicuous streak of patriotism running through it. And he attracted round him not a few who were drawn as much by his patriotism as by his learning and spiritual accomplishments, and to whom patriotism was a sort of religion and a religion void of patriotism meant nothing at all. Some of these men were bound by their inherent bias to play an active and important role later on in political movements, when these made their appearance. But it was absurd to look upon the Arya Samaj as a camouflaged school of political thought or as a semi-secret political movement which had put on a religious mask to deceive the authorities. We shall remember that though Dayananda is rightly regarded as the founder of the Arya Samaj, the Samaj as a movement and as an organisation was really the result of the joint deliberations of the Swami and several of his disciples and friends some of whom in their thinking attached the highest importance to social reform and to a patriotic renaissance. The fundamental principles—the ten basic tenets—and the constitution of the Samaj were very largely drawn up by the Swami's Punjabi admirers and advisers, prominent among them being Rai Bahadur Mul Raj.

We may usefully indulge in a digression about Mul Raj, whose ideas seemed to be better defined than those of most other leaders of the Samaj, and who, even though, keeping largely behind the scenes, made an intellectual contribution of special importance. He took care not to be loud, but he was certainly articulate, and he had a knack of making himself effective through influencing the key men of the movement.

Without the ambition of political leadership, he played an effective role behind the scenes in various movements. He thought much about the political emancipation of his country. In later years Lajpat Rai used to say that Mul Raj had conceived the principles and programme of Gandhian non-co-operation when Gandhi must have been a mere schoolboy. But he was never known for bold action. He was himself in Government service, though he preached to young men who met him that they must never hanker after a career of that kind. He was an evangel of swadeshi-long before the swadeshi movement of the anti-partition days was born. He conceived industrial and financial reconstruction in the interests of swadeshi, combined with a political non-co-operation with the Government. Lajpat Rai in his autobiography had something to say about Mul Raj:

“Rai Mul Raj-he was the Rai Sahib-had with him a history of the secret societies of Europe in two volumes which he had borrowed from some library. He read the whole book. I read a few pages then and there but Rai Mul Raj did not permit me to carry the book home with me....”

Later Lajpat Rai got the book from England and satisfied his curiosity.

This early convert to swadeshism, though he wanted India to get rid of foreign rule, had no faith in Hindu-Muslim unity. His influence on Lajpat Rai's early outlook is revealed in a passage in the autobiography, without naming Mul Raj.

“The cause of my indifference towards the Congress after 1889 was the opinion of my Arya Samajist friends. After 1889 I had the privilege of being in the company of a respectable friend who was a staunch opponent of the Congress. The grounds for his opposition briefly were:

(1) The Congress has been founded by a few Englishment; as Englishmen love their own country it is not possible that the Congress should win political freedom for India. The English derive great benefits from their rule in India; it is impossible that they should willingly restore India to freedom. Being afraid lest the intelligentsia should organise a deep political movement

aimed at England's supremacy, they had provided this innocuous occupation for the intelligentsia so that they might gratify themselves by two or three days of 'speechifying' and by seeing themselves enlogised in the papers. In those days this gentleman looked upon every Englishman as an enemy of India..... He regarded the Congress not merely as useless, but even detrimental to the interests of India. What he then thought necessary was that Indians should make themselves stronger by education, by the spread of swadeshi and by the smuggling of arms, and then bide their time till they were strong enough to turn out the English.

(2) This gentleman had no faith in Hindu-Muslim unity. He believed that attempts at unity would harm the Hindus. The Hindus were void of internal solidarity, religious fervour and communal self-respect; the Muslims excelled in these virtues and would therefore always be the gainers in the attempts at unity. Also, the Islamic supremacy continued in Afghanistan, Turkey and elsewhere. So the attempts at unity would make the Muslims politically very strong. To him it appeared that the primary need was that the Hindus be strengthened and be shown the way to ultimate solidarity and that national fervour be instilled into them. The Congress movement, he argued, would divert energy from the work for Hindu solidarity and Hindu reform and set the Hindus a futile task.

(3) A further argument was that the political movement would make the Britishers suspicious of the Hindus, and they would therefore not only obstruct the progress of the Hindus, but harm them in all possible ways."

The Arya Samajist leaders generally shared these views which constituted the common credo of Mul Raj. Sain Das and Lal Chand (who later became a judge of the Chief Court in the Punjab). All three of them were in Government service. Sain das, we are told, clad himself in nothing but swadeshi, and preached swadeshi even in 1881. Mul Raj too believed in swadeshi, even though he did not practise it as rigidly as Sain Das. Of their younger colleagues Hans Raj took to swadeshi

very early in life. Many of the leading men in the Arya Samaj were preaching swadeshi long before the swadeshi movement had been born in Bengal and Maharashtra. Not all of them had been converted to swadeshi by the Samaj; possibly some of them had become swadeshi and patriotic before they joined the Samaj; but there can be little doubt these people found an affinity between the teachings, activities and the whole atmosphere of the Samaj, and their own swadeshi outlook. Some of them had conceived the idea of non-co-operation with the foreign government nearly half a century before the Congress thought of it. We read in Lajpat Rai's autobiography:

“Lala Sain Das and Lala Mul Raj often regretted that the best Indian brains were being used to strengthen the rule by a foreign nation. They used to dissuade the most brilliant Indian students from entering Government service.... Lala Sain Das felt it keenly that the pandits of Kashi should have brought Hinduism into disrepute by drawing the cart of Lord Ripon. The acme of public morality for Hindus, according to him, was that in their religious and social reform and educational affairs they should have nothing to do with the Government or with the Britishers, and should seek no help from them in the form of money, consultation, or guidance. Whatever the Hindus wanted, they must try to get by their own effort, and they must generate in themselves a spirit of self-reliance.”

The nationalism of these worthies was primarily a 'Hindu nationalism'. The memory of the days when the Muslims were the rulers and the Hindus the ruled was as yet too fresh. The flame of patriotism in the heart of these Arya samaj leaders was fed by a feeling for the degenerate condition of the Hindus.

Sain Das had more to do with the shaping of the Arya Samaj in the 'eighties than any other single person. You could say his religion was three-fourths 'political' and yet you could say his politics were three-fourths love of the Hindu nation, and if that be religion, his politics were three-fourths religion.

These were some of the men in Samaj with whom youthful Lajpat came into intimate contact. Whatever their

shortcomings, they were a dynamic group, determined to have a hand in shaping the events. They were just the company that Lajpat Rai's soul yearned for. And youthful, firm, earnest, dynamic Lajpat Rai was just the worker that the Samaj wanted. So he casts his lot with them to work with them and for them for long years to come; and even when he outgrows the Samaj and they part company, he will not altogether discard the Samajic impression on his outlook and on his methods of work. whatever departments of public activity he chose in the later years of his career, he could never forget that he had received his early training in the Arya Samaj. It was there he first schooled himself into a public speaker, and as a journalist, as a pamphleteer and a compiler of biographies, as a writer in Urdu and in English, as a leader of movements and an organiser of big institutions, as a zealous social worker leading relief campaigns wherever famines in earthquakes wrought havoc, or when orphans, those waifs of the storm' of life, needed the establishment of a permanent home to turn them into capable citizens. It was in the Arya Samaj that he acquired the art of appealing to the hearts of his audience and making them empty their pockets for great causes and institutions.

Mofussil Lawyer in Haryana Towns

VALUABLE AS THIS training was, it hardly helped solve the question of a living. His father had made great sacrifice and put the whole family to severe hardship to provide for him the benefits of education. He had qualified as mukhtar in 1881. He had passed no university examination in his arts course, having been too busy with other things. Meanwhile he had become a married man. He must earn his own living and must also afford some relief to his father who had to maintain a large family on a slender income. The father impatiently looked forward to the day when this badly needed relief would come. The son was haunted by a desire to serve the people, the miserable millions; yet he could not ignore the hardships of his own family, and he could not begin by being an ingrate to his own father. He lived in an agony, torn between these two apposing calls.

His heart turned away from his books. "My spirit wanted to soar higher, but poverty and the hardships of my parents made me despair. Again and again the Penal Code or some other law book might lie open before me while I finished in my mind the periods of a speech addressing people of a by-gone age." He thought of dedicating himself to the service of his people. He tried to train himself for this task and preferred self-devised tests to those imposed by the university. But ah, the butts that chain poor mortals down to sordid earth when their spirits yearn to soar higher and higher! For the moment it was with sordid circumstances that the last word lay. He had to set up as a mukhtar and to begin earning.

He went to his small native town, Jagraon, to practise in the law courts as a mukhtar. He found both the profession and the town uncongenial. The place was too small for him. He was fast growing beyond it. He felt choked in that little town where nobody thought of the big problems, where he could get no contacts which would yield nourishment to his spirit. His soul felt frustrated. The mukhtarship too was uncongenial-much more so than Jagraon, for it was humiliating. He had fed his spirit on heroic stories about the Rajputs. Could a Rajput do all the kowtowing before all the arrogant petty officials clad in brief authority? Yet if he wanted to succeed with them, he had to get all the fool Rajput things out of his head.

He was fed up with Jagraon, and to improve things at least a little he shifted to Rohtak, where his father was now posted. Rohtak was a bigger place than Jagraon and perhaps his dislike of knowtowing would not be such a handicap at the headquarters of a district as it had been at Jagraon.

He felt keenly the humiliation of being a mukhtar, and if he must practise law this must be as a member of the higher hierarchy of vakils. He had made an attempt at getting through this examination in 1883, but because of his preoccupation with so many other things he had failed. His father goaded him to a second attempt as also did the humiliation felt deeply by a sensitive soul. But again he had been dividing his time between work as a mukhtar, and work for the Rohtak Arya Samaj and preparation for the examination-with the result that once again he was among the 55 unsuccessful candidates and not among the successful ten. Three more marks would have done the trick! The failure was disheartening but his father insisted that he should make yet another attempt.

He would not neglect his Samaj work. He had found the Samaj at Rohtak in a sorry plight and was working hard to infuse some life into it. Besides, the social work was taking him to Lahore very frequently, for committee meetings, and consultations at headquarters. The D.A.V. College had been conceived in 1883, and he was taking an active interest in

the preliminary work and in the planning out of things. At Rohtak he kept busy finding support for the proposed college chiefly in the shape of funds. The college work interested him much more than did law.

Though he could not follow the example of Hans Raj he might have envied his friend's B.A. degree, and his having an elder brother who had undertaken to maintain him. Lajpat Rai could look for no such support; on the other hand he had a family to maintain. Already as a mukhtar he was earning Rs. 200 a month. Not a princely income, but certainly a substantial one as compared with what he had ever seen in his father's house. His sensitive soul had for moment to reconcile itself to the humiliation of a mukhtar's job.

During one of his visits to Lahore he made up his mind not to go back to the mukhtar's job, whatever the consequences. Yet he did not know what he should turn to next. His friend, philosopher and guide, Guru Dutt, discovering him in a state of spiritual agony, asked for the cause. Lajpat Rai laid bare before him his inmost heart, Guru Dutt, before he could advise him definitely, wanted to know whether he was having better luck in his third attempt at the law examination. The two of them, as was customary in such situations in those days, tipped a clerk to know Lajpat Rai's fate before the result was announced, and they were happy to learn that his third shot at vakilship had not gone amiss. When the result was published. Lajpat Rai stood second amongst the candidates. Guru Dutt sent him back to Rohtak to work as a vakil, telling him plainly that he could be more useful to the movement from there than by working as a second-master under Hans Raj.

At Rohtak he did some work in the local Arya Samaj and participated extensively in the Samaj and D.A.-V. College deliberations at headquarters. He also wrote occasionally for the press. Sometimes he wrote in English but more generally he wrote for the Urdu *Rafiq-i-Hind* conducted by his young friend, Maulvi Muharram Ali Chishti.

He had patriotic impulses and an earnest desire to serve his people, but the raw youth had little to offer by way of serious study of political problems of his country. He was by no means a fire-brand-opposing Government for opposition's sake. Indeed in accordance with the fashion of the day he used to belaud the Government in his speeches at the Arya Samaj. He had completely rid himself of the pro-Islamic bias that his father had fostered in him and had even moved away to the extent of feeling somewhat grateful to the British for having ended the oppression of Muslim rule. His political ideas were yet being formed. But he had started writing for public print. He and his friends felt that the Arya Samaj needed its own press. They decided on an Urdu journal to be named *Bharat Desha Sudharak* and an English journal entrusted to Guru Dutt and Hans Raj and christened (at Lajpat Rai's suggestion) Regenerator of *Aryavarta*. The Urdu journal was to be Lajpat Rai's care but his absence from the headquarters prevented his carrying out this task. For the moment he had to be content with occasional articles in *Rafiq-i-Hind* and any other journal that cared to publish his stuff.

He had no reason to be dissatisfied with the progress he was making at the bar, but he does not appear to have struck root at Rohtak. On the whole the Rohtak days were unimportant as a formative period. He himself writes that his spirit was famished in the 1883-85 period. He had arrived at Rohtak in 1884. In 1885 he had qualified as a vakil. In 1886 he accepted a somewhat important brief in the adjoining district of Hissar and finding that place more congenial settled down there. For the first time he felt he was striking root. He remained at Hissar for about six years, and those years made considerable contribution to the maturity of his mind, and to his work for the Samaj, and above all to his initiation in politics.

At Rohtak the Arya Samaj had arrived before him but had shown no strong growth. At Hissar he had to enlist the help of his friends to prepare the ground, and sow the seed; but the soil was more congenial and the new growth was soon flourishing

vigorously. In fact Hissar was soon reckoned among the most active of Arya Samaj centres in the province.

In his autobiography Lajpat Rai ascribes this achievement to the fact that the Hissar Arya Samaj was favoured with a set of leaders of calibre, and with tender delineation he has given us sketches of these leaders. Amongst them he contracted some of the most enduring friendships of his life. There was, for instance, Lala Chandu Lal, the "Sardar of Haryana". He was not associated with extremist politics. But a man more loyal to his friends could not easily be found. Even when Lajpat Rai was deported as an inconvenient extremist, Chandu Lal was one of the few friends who stood by him. His closest friends who had shared his political ideas and ideals disowned him but Chandu Lal stood by him openly as if nothing at all had happened. He had occasion to associate himself with officials, but he never tried to please them by disowning Lajpat Rai or even by trying to conceal the friendship. He openly said he was a friend of Lajpat Rai and firmly believed in his innocence. He wrote letters to Lajpat Rai in Mandalay and received the deportee's instructions about the conduct of his personal and family affairs. Of all the Hissar portraits done by Lajpat Rai in his autobiography, that of this loyal friend is drawn with the tenderest touch.

The Hissar leaders made the Arya Samaj a movement of the masses, instead of the vociferous intelligentsia. Here it was in genuine touch with the soil. Elsewhere the Samaj consisted of Babus; here it consisted of peasants. At Hissar, Chandu Lal and Lajpat Rai and Lakhpat Rai made the Samaj deeply vital. The experiment must be regarded as something unique in the history of the Arya Samaj.

At Hissar he was before long not merely a successful lawyer, but in many ways a leading figure, particularly known for his hospitality and for his being a voracious reader over a wide range. The self schooling of the young man who had had to leave the Government College without a degree had started in right earnest. His was soon a notable private collection of

books. Something distinctive enough in such a place to attract occasional visits from the European district head. He was a highly respected citizen in the new locality which elected him to its municipal body-from a constituency with a preponderance of Muslim voters. This municipality he served for some time as its secretary in an honorary capacity. The Hissar days were important for him not merely because of the Arya Samaj work but also as the formative period in his civic and political training.

Junius Junior

THE HISSAR PERIOD coincided with the earliest days of the Indian National Congress which held its first session in Bombay in December 1885 under the presidentship of W.C. Bonnerjee. Mul Raj, the shrewd and keen-eyed Samajist, as we have seen, had declared the new movement suspect. However, Lajpat Rai was not guided very long by such mistrust in advance. In 1888, Ali Mohammad Bhimji was deputed to tour the Punjab on behalf of the Congress. The young lawyer at Hissar invited him to his town and arranged a public meeting for him. This was his first contact with the Congress, then hardly three years old.

When Hume started the Congress, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan opposed it in the name of the Muslim community. The Aligarh leader advised his co-religionists to keep aloof from the new movement. He wanted the Muslims to further their interests by standing behind the rulers of the land.

Lajpat Rai had already travelled far from the Syed-inspired teachings of his father. When he saw Sir Syed in this new and unpatriotic role, his respect for the Aligarh leader dwindled further. He wrote a series of "Open Letters" to Sir Syed in the press in which he showed how Sir Syed was going back upon all that he had preached in former days. These letters gave a copious amount of English translations of the earlier writings (in Urdu) of Sir Syed which went to show that therein he had been preaching just the reverse of his new gospel. The "Open Letters" by "An Admirer" bore a Hissar date-line; and Hissar could not boast of many men in

those days who could aspire to such polemical effort. Those who knew Lajpat Rai had no difficulty in guessing who the real author of the "Open Letters" was. He had no particular reason to conceal his identity; but he had not yet become much of a leader, and modesty impelled him to remain anonymous.

In an Urdu version the letters appeared in the weekly Koh-i-Noor over the name of Munshi Radha Kishan. In English the first of these letters dated Hissar, October 27, 1888 is subscribed. "The Son of an Old Follower of Yours". When Sir Syed started his campaign against the Indian National Congress little could he have thought that his old writings would be flung in his face by one who had read with such care and thoroughness every word that he ever published in his books and magazines. Besides the proverbial short memory of his public, Sir Syed had the advantage that his writings had mostly been published in Urdu, and therefore, Wedderburn and Yule and Hume and the Bengal, Bombay and Madras leaders of the Congress who dominated its councils could not have been aware of their existence. The writer of the "Open Letters" at the very outset warned Sir Syed that he had been "a constant reader and admirer" of his writings.

"From childhood I was taught to respect the opinions of the white-bearded Syed of Aligarh. Your *Social Reformer* was constantly studied by me and preserved as a sacred trust by my revered parent."

The writer then reminded Sir Syed of the days when he had admired John Stuart Mill's *On Liberty*, and when Bentham's *Utility* was translated for his *Reformer* at his behest. Most telling of the quotations were those from Sir Syed's *Causes of the Indian Revolt* which had been written within a year of the "mutiny" and for the enlightenment of British M.P's had in 1873 been circulated in an English version. In this book Sir Syed had advocated the principles of representative government.

“Most men, I believe, Sir Syed had said, “agree in thinking that it is highly conducive to the welfare and prosperity of Government; indeed, that it is essential to its stability that the people should have a voice in its counsels. It is from the voice of the people that Government can learn whether its projects are likely to be well received. The voice of the people can alone nip errors in the bud and warn us of dangers before they burst upon and destroy us. This voice, however, can never be heard, and this security never acquired, unless the people are allowed a share in the consultations of the Government,” Sir Syed had explained in his brochure how the conceding of the principles of representation would have averted a catastrophe like the fifty-seven “mutiny”.

“If Hindustanis had been in the legislative councils, they would have explained everything to their countrymen, and these evils which have happened to us would have been averted.”

This book of Sir Syed’s had been rendered into English by Sir Auckland Colvin (at the time of the “Open Letters” Lieutenant Governor of the North-Western Province) and Lt. Col. Graham, Sir Syed’s official biographer. These worthies obviously had seen nothing ‘seditious’ in Sir Syed’s insistence on some form of representative government—an offence for which Sir Syed was now denouncing the Indian National Congress as a body of sedition mongers. Home rule, self-government, swaraj had not yet been declared the goal of the Congress which spoke in much humbler accents—at the worst it made a demand that the principle of representation should be conceded and an elected element be introduced into the legislative councils of the Provincial Governors.

True, some “natives” had, in a patronising way, been nominated councillors. But, pertinently asked one of the “Open Letters”:

“Can men like Raja Shiv Prasad and yourself be properly considered as representatives of the people, and the method of selection by which you are sent to the Council Chamber be

accepted as of any value? I think no reasonable man would contend that it would have been possible, if Raja Shiv Prasad had been an elected representative of the people of India, for him to have libelled the whole Indian nation, as he did, in his notorious speech on the libert bill. Could Raja Pearey Mohan Mukherjee and other native members have consented to the raising of the salt tax if they had thought that their seats depended on the voices of the people, whose throats were, so to speak, to be cut by that obnoxious and inhuman measure?"

Nor was the young critic of Sir Syed Ahmad content with quotations from his writings thirty years old. He produced excerpts from his writings thirty years old. He produced excerpts from his much more recent articles to show that till about seven years previously Sir Syed had been writing in the same strain. In 1881 when the question of raising the University College at Lahore to the status of a university was under consideration Sir Syed had written:

"Whatever may be stated by way of flattery, the fact is that in reality the relations of Hindustanis to their rulers are no better than those of slaves to masters."

A most pertinent excerpt on the question of representative government was dug out from an address Sir Syed Ahmad had delivered when laying the foundation-stone of the New Ghazipore College (later the Victoria College) which read:

"The appointment of natives to the Supreme Council was a memorable incident in the history of India. The day is not far distant. I trust, and when it does come you will remember my words, when the Council will be composed of representatives from every division or district, and that thus the laws which it will pass will be laws enacted by the feeling of the entire country."

Quoting this, the "Open Letter" commented: "Sir Syed, have the happiness to know that the day which you in 1864 said was not far distant is coming nearer and nearer and that you need no longer feel so much ashamed of your countrymen for not conforming to the age. Your prophecy is not fulfilled yet, but we are certain that some time or other it is sure to be fulfilled,

and then you will have the satisfaction of feeling that you did not prophesy in vain, Sir Syed, do you wish to withdraw this prophecy of yours?"

Sir Syed had criticised the Lucknow speech of the Hon'ble Pandit Ayodhya Nath of Allahabad and asked Congressmen if any of their agitations had existed when the Government "granted all the boons which we enjoy". Pat came the reply: "I have quoted largely from your own writings to show that such an agitation did exist, and that you yourself were one of the most prominent agitators." Then Sir Syed had written:

"I am afraid that a feeling of fear-fear that the Government or the district authorities would esteem you factious and discontented, were you to inaugurate a measure like this-deters you from coming forward for your country's good. Believe me that this moral cowardice is wrong, the apprehension unfounded, that there is no an Englishman of a liberal turn of mind in India who would regard with feelings other than those of pleasure and hope, such a healthy sign of increased civilisation on the part of its inhabitants... For better would it be for India were her people openly and honestly to express their opinions as to the justice or otherwise of the acts of Government."

Now as a critic of the Congress Sir Syed seemed to forswear all that he had stood for before.

Not so very long before, the Aligarh veteran had been known as an evangel of broad-mindedness and unity, and now he was raising a hue and cry that the interests of Hindus and Muslims clashed and that therefore the Mussalmans must keep away from the Congress. It was Sir Syed who had contributed the beautiful classic image of national unity by visualising the Hindu and the Muslim as the two eyes of mother India. Could the right eye clash with the left? His youthful critic, who had once been his admirer, had no difficulty in confronting him with passages from his speeches which had preached the oneness of Hindu and Muslim interests and which strangely contrasted with the new gospel that Sir Syed had started preaching. And these earlier speeches had by no means become ancient history, During

his Punjab visit, justly regarded as a notable event for the Punjab in the 'eighties, Sir Syed had laid the greatest stress on a single Indian nationhood claiming Hindus and Muslims and Christians alike. At Gurdaspur he had said:

“From the oldest times the word ‘nation’ is applied to the inhabitants of one country, though they differ in some peculiarities which are characteristic of their own..... Remember that the words Hindu and Muslim are only meant for religious distinction-otherwise all persons whether Hindu or Muslim, even the Christians who reside in this country, are all in this respect belonging to one and the same nation They must each and all unite for the good of the country which is common to all.”

And yet when soon after a common national platform was actually being created, he had gone over to the other extreme and started preaching a gospel of clash of interests. The Gurdaspur speech had been made in January 1884. Only a year later, Sir Syed seemed to have undergone an ugly transformation.

His speech at Lahore, on February 3, 1884, had been perhaps even more emphatic than the Gurdaspur utterance. In reply to an address by the Indian Association of Lahore, Sir Syed had said:

“Even granting that the majority of those composing this Association are Hindus, still I say that this light has been diffused by the same whom I call by the epithet of ‘Bengalees’. I assure you that the Bengalees are the only people in our country whom we can properly be proud of, and it is only due to them that knowledge, liberty and patriotism have progressed in our country. I can thereby say that, they are the head and crown of all the different communities of Hindustan..... I myself... heartily wished to serve my country and my nation faithfully. In the word ‘nation’ I included both Hindus and Muslims because that is the only meaning which I can attach to it (i.e., ‘nation’ or ‘qaum’).... We inhabit the same land, are subject to the rule of the same governors, the fountains of benefit for all are the same and the pangs of famine also we

suffer equally. These are the different grounds upon which I call both these races which inhabit India by one word, i.e., 'Hindu'. meaning to say that they are the inhabitants of Hindustan. While in the legislative council, I was always anxious for the prosperity of *this nation*."

There was not a demand put forward by the then Congress nor a principle or policy advocated by it that Sir Syed had not himself advocated at one time or another. But when the National Congress came into being he seemed to have altogether changed his principles and policies.

The Congress was being condemned as "seditious" by narrow-minded critics, for daring to suggest the creation of Indian volunteers. When in March 1883 (i.e., a short while before the Congress formally came into being) Hume had advocated the cause of "native Volunteers" in India, and Lt.-Col. Graham (Sir Syed's biographer) had tried to rebut his arguments in the columns of *The Pioneer*, Sir Syed had taken up the cudgels not on behalf of Lt.-Col. Graham, but of A.O. Hume. He wrote to Lt.-Col. Graham:

"I have perused your reply to Mr. Hume's letter advocating the volunteering of the natives of India. In not allowing the natives to become volunteers, the Government mean to say that they do not trust the natives of India, Its consequence should be judged (*sic*) from the saying: 'If you want us to trust you, you should also trust us.' There yet exists a wide gulf between Europeans and the natives of India and unless it be filled up, *nothing can secure and improve the prosperity of the country*."

The last ten words were italicised by the admirer turned critic, who did not fail to remind Sir Syed that the letter he was quoting had been written only about four years earlier. Lt.-Col. Graham, now "would be the selection, by the local authorities in 11 large stations in India, of a certain number of picked native volunteers-men of good family and well known for their loyalty-to be placed under the command of the officer commanding the European volunteers. I would let them

select their own company officers; and once started, I would also permit them to select their own recruits and vacancies occurred. Give us this much, and we will be satisfied for a long time to come.”

The strange contrast in the Syed of days before the Congress and the Syed of the days subsequent to the founding of the congress reminded his critic of the classic opening of the *Tale of Two Cities*, and the third of his letters opened thus:

“Well, many we say, that it is ‘the best of times’ as well as ‘the worst of times’. Best, as the country is on the point of having a *nation, worst* as a particular section of the community wants to check the progress of the country and unfortunately is headed or at least is said to be headed by a man who has been a frequent advocate of representative government in India.”

Quite forcefully the parallel continued through references to the ‘age of wisdom’ and ‘foolishness’, the ‘epoch of belief’ and ‘incredulity’, the ‘spring of hope’ and the ‘winter of despair’ since ‘we see her own sons deserting the cause of awakened India’.

The critic exhorted Sir Syed to feel happy that his countrymen were awakening, that his dreams and prophecies were about to come true, that the people had made up their minds not to be deterred by opposition-even if that came from Sir Syed himself!

The “Open Letters” were by no means a mere collection of excerpts from Sir Syed’s writings and speeches strung together. The comments accompanying them were quite a castigation-combining taunt, irony, satire, sarcasm and downright tomahawking-though the craftsmanship was at times crude and the youthful hand struck rather relentlessly. Here and there, in view of the veteran’s white beard-particularly in a country where respect for white beards is traditionally strong-the reader might even have been offended by what would seem the impertinence of a jackanapes.

Why there was this inconsistency in the attitude of the Aligarh veteran was the problem. At the end of the first letter,

the author referred to insinuations by “some people” that “these writings which I have quoted came from an honest, uncorrupted mind, at a time when the author had no prospect of being raised to the Legislative Council by mere favour”. He dismissed the insinuations, pausing for another solution of the riddle. The second letter once again dismissed as “childish” a possible claim to consistency “in the face of the above quotations” and Sir Syed’s fall was likened to that of Adam:

“Just as Satan is said to be the cause of the fall of that progenitor of our race, this seeking after worldly honours seems to be the real explanation of your decline.”

The jackanapes strain continues:

“It is nothing to you, because your term in this world must at no very distant date expire; but to us who are yet, we hope, to live long and to fight out the bloodless battles of liberty, it is destined to remain a permanent disgrace.”

A footnote to the last of these letters carried an insinuation of a different kind: “Can it be that your once massive, manly intellect, succumbed to the feeble, school-girl-like sophistries of your shallow-pated employee; that, Merlin-like, the great heart that once beat true for India is now pulseless, and that you lie bound inextricably, by the treacherous spells of a modern Vivien?”

Here and there, the letters bore marks of callowness, but on the whole they were a creditable performance for a mofussil lawyer yet in his early twenties.

This was the first big polemic of his career. He made a promising beginning. He who would succeed in the rough and tumble called politics must needs know how to deal with his adversary in controversy. He must have an eye for the enemy’s weak spot, and sharp tooth and claw to swoop down on it.

Even in his early twenties Lajpat Rai seemed possessed of sensitive political antennae for later developments have fully. “borne out his apprehensions of the dangers lurking in Sir Syed’s new preachment of Hindus and Muslims being two separate nations. The seed sown then bore fruit in Jinnah’s day. But his

hard hitting on this occasion never blinded Lajpat Rai to syed's great qualities. He even considered him pre-eminent amongst those who developed Urdu prose, and till the end he continued to command the Aligarh Leaders's advice to his co-religionists against the lure of Pan-Islamism and against looking for saviours in other Islamic countries, But weaning Muslims away from the national awakening and seeking salvation as a separate nation through the grace of the British rulers was bound to spell disaster, though no doubt even in such ill-advised or ill-considered doings Sir Syed had no personal axe to grind, for as Lajpat Rai always fully acknowledged, he was a man of high character and dedicated to ideals and sought to serve his people in an unselfish spirit.

Mazzini His First Guru

THE "OPEN LETTERS" created a great stir. Hume who had been feeling nervous found them very helpful. It was suggested to the author that the letters should be put together and reprinted as a pamphlet. He readily agreed. Hume himself revised or edited the letters. Here and there the phrasing must have been improved.

The pamphlet, debunking the great Muslim leader with such deadly effect and confronting him with his own utterances, was issued on the eve of a Congress session, and almost overnight it made Lajpat Rai a man of India-wide fame in political discussion.

The last of the letters to Sir Syed was published just a few days before the Congress met for its annual session at Allahabad. The ink of the letters had hardly dried when Junius emerged out of anonymity (Unlike the original Junius whose identity continues to puzzle scholars to his day) and rushed to Allahabad to be received at the railway station with an ovation by Malviya and Ayodhya Nath and to find that he had become a famous man in India's national politics. He was known as the controversialist who had so effectively exposed no less an adversary than the great Sir Syed Ahmad Khan of Aligarh. He made two speeches at the Congress session, one of them being a sort of continuation of the Open Letters. This he delivered as the seconder of the principal resolution of the day, the one relating to the expansion of Legislative Councils by the introduction of an elective element. In this speech he showed that Sir Syed, who was now seen as a leading opponent of the Congress, and

in particular of its demand for elections to legislatures, had formerly spoken in different accents, and thirty years earlier in his book on the "mutiny" had himself made the same demand.

The official historian of the Congress, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, commenting on the 1888 session, says:

"Lajpat Rai was doubtless a man of true vision, for he spoke in Urdu at the Congress of 1888 and proposed that half a day be set apart for educational and industrial matters. The resolution was accepted and the industrial exhibitions since organised are a direct result of the recommendations of the committee appointed in that behalf."

Of his two speeches and first may have won more applause a topical controversy, but the second led to solid work. Even at that time when the Congress conducted its business entirely in English, Lajpat Rai addressed it in Hindustani. He gave a clear indication that if he played a role of consequence in the affairs of the Congress, he would strive to make it the real mouthpiece of the masses. His emphasis on industrial exhibitions showed that he was no mere politician, but attached great importance to constructive work.

The 1888 session of the Congress definitely threw Lajpat Rai into a movement directly political. With brief spells of comparative indifference he was to work for the Congress for the rest of his life, that is, for the next four decades. He had not attended any of the first three sessions of the Congress, but he had not been indifferent, although (mainly because of the influence of Mul Raj) he had entertained honest misgivings about the Congress. He had read the writings of A.O. Hume and been moved by them profoundly, but Mul Raj had declared the new organisation a trap set by wily Englishmen who appeared in the dangerous guise of friends. By the time of the third session of the Congress (held at Madras under the presidentship of Badru-ud-Din Tyabji), Lajpat Rai had been converted into a Congressman. He has recorded in his autobiography that this session "impressed me greatly".

"About this time," says he, "were published two pamphlets

by Mr. Hume-*The Star of the East and An Old Man's Hope*. I have yet to come across in Congress literature another brace of pamphlets as good as these. A wave of liberty surged through their pages and they impressed me profoundly."

With his "Open Letters" and his speeches at the following session at Allahabad he had of course definitely cast his lot with the Congress though, as we have said, there were in his career brief intervals of comparative indifference both towards its organisation and its immediate policies. At Allahabad, the Punjab delegates deputed him to invite the Congress to hold its next session at Lahore, but Bombay was chosen, Though he attended the Bombay session his enthusiasm began to wane. He felt that the Congress leaders cared more for name and pomp than for the interests of the country.

Till 1893 Lajpat Rai kept away from the Congress sessions, and this was his first spell of indifference towards the Congress.

Even more than the Congress, his admirations for Mazzini urged him on towards the freedom movement. Perhaps if he had not adopted Mazzini as his guru the Congress might not have interested him so much. He had been led to the writings of the great Italian by Surendranath Banerjea's *Speeches of Joseph Mazzini* included in a collection of the Bengal orator's utterances which Lajpat Rai happened to come across at the beginning of the eighties.

"One speech," he records in the autobiography, "moved me to tears several times as I read it. It made a great impression on my tender heart and I determined that all my life I would follow the teaching of Mazzini, and serve my nation. I made Mazzini my guru, and so he continues to be to this day."

This was before he joined the Arya Samaj, His first 'guru', according to his own testimony, was Mazzini and not Dayananda. He had been soaked in patriotism before he joined the Arya Samaj. He felt drawn towards the Samaj because in it he saw a patriotic mission. No direct political movement had started as yet to which he might dedicate himself at the altar of his country. For a time he had to wait and hold his soul in patience.

He looked for the 'life and teachings' of Mazzini at bookstalls and eventually got a volume from England through a Punjabi friend of his. He read it avidly from cover to cover, "and I was moved by it far more intensely than I had been several years before by Babu Surendranath Banerjea's speech about Mazzini. The profound nationalism of the great Italian, his troubles and tribulations, his moral superiority, his broad humanitarian sympathies, enthralled me." He translated the *Duties of Man* into Urdu and when the manuscript was ready he sent it to a journalist friend in Lahore who, after giving it some touches, published it in his own name.

Later on, he was to produce in Urdu the life of Mazzini, and that of Garibaldi. These books, particularly that on Mazzini, were to be among the major influences that at this period affected the mind of the Punjab. We shall have occasion to speak of this later. Meanwhile, it is important to remember that Mazzini was the first guru that satisfied the longings of his restless heart. Before he joined the Arya Samaj and the Congress, his mind had already been formed. Both the Samaj and the Congress were to be the channels through which he was to work for the fulfilment of his mission, which had been formulated for him at its clearest in the writings of the great Italian teacher.

In 1883 Swami Dayananda Sarasvati died. The Arya Samaj was thrown into gloom on the Dipavali Day. The Samajists gathered to mourn the loss of their great master. Guru Dutt had attended upon the Swami during his last illness at Ajmer and had been profoundly moved by the death-bed and serenity that his eyes saw. He got up to address the Lahore gathering but his words utterly failed. Speaker after speaker failed; and the meeting was finally addressed by the young convert, Lajpat Rai, who spoke with fine feeling. For two hours he held the audience spellbound. It was this speech that made his reputation as a public speaker. He came to be regarded as the most effective orator of the Samaj. It is noteworthy that he made his reputation in public

speaking first not as a stump orator, as is the usual thing with politicians or even such of them as later became dignified statesmen, but in the classic way of Greek orators, with what was practically a funeral oration.

After the death of Swami Dayananda, his followers and admirers gave much thought to the question of raising a befitting memorial. The Dayananda Anglo-Vedic College scheme was the final upshot of these deliberations and when they were to take practical shape, Lajpat Rai did more than his share.

By the close of the eighties we find him still at Hissar, as an active leader in much wider field of the Arya Samaj with the established reputation of being its greatest public speaker, a fairly important figure in politics after the flutter caused by the "Open Letters" episode. He was giving a good deal of his time to public works now, and at the same time making quite a fine success of his job as a lawyer. He seldom made less than a thousand a month, and often doubled that figure. This was by no means a rare achievement in the profession but was sufficiently remarkable for a young man whose ambitions already lay largely in other nobler fields of activity. He commanded fees deemed handsome by any mofussil lawyer, and if he had given more time to his work at the bar he could certainly have made a good deal more, for by his able handling of briefs and his skilful advocacy he inspired confidence among his clients to the same extent, as he did by his sincerity and force of expression among the people at large. He now persuaded his father to give up his ill-paid teaching job. He set apart enough money for his father to retire and to provide for educating bringing up and marrying of the young children. This was a mere precaution against emergency, for Lajpat Rai was himself meeting all the expenses, of the father and the household, and neither for the education of his children nor for their weddings was Munshiji called upon to touch his reserve. Lajpat Rai saw all three of his brothers properly settled in life. The money set apart for the father simply accumulated with interest.

In his Hissar days offers came of property that would be

sure to appreciate and yield him sizable unearned increment at a later date. Those who availed themselves of such offers made goodly fortunes, but as his ambitions lay in other directions he shunned all such offers. Possibly he was all along thinking of leaving Hissar one day to settle down in the metropolitan Lahore, and did not want to be tied down to the provincial town by the shackles of real estate. He made no investments of that kind.

New Ferment in Ancient Town

THE LAHORE TO which Lajpat Rai returned to settle in life early in the nineties was vastly different from the Lahore of his student days. When he had got down at the railway station, the first time, for his matriculation examination, the most conspicuous sight had been the police constables bawling out warnings against pickpockets and swindlers, and the boy Lajpat as he trudged along followed by a porter carrying his baggage, had wondered all the time whether he would be led into a trap, done out of his small belongings and left stranded. Now Lahore was no longer so savagely insecure for the newcomer no policeman could be heard shouting anyway; and he, of course, was neither a lad at school, nor a stranger in Lahore. He did not have to trudge along either. He could pay for a comfortable conveyance; and a horse and gharry would soon be his own as necessary paraphernalia for his professional and public activity.

The British Raj was already half a century old. The administration had had time to consolidate and it seemed to be expanding by its own momentum. Its offices were multiplying and this meant a continuous influx of a 'babu' population into Lahore. And of course the mills turning out these babus were working more and more vigorously. Soon they would have got into their full stride.

Though Lahore was growing rapidly, no factories could yet be seen sprouting up. Banking and insurance had witnessed no enterprise from Indians; but European commercial offices were a good deal in evidence, most of these being the remote

ends of tentacles reaching out from Calcutta or Bombay or even the imperial octopus in London. These also absorbed some of the babus, but the majority were employed in State and railway offices. And with the growth of educational institutions, the student population too was swelling babus and potential babus, Lawyers also were increasing in number not as yet very quickly, but steadily. Thanks to all those newcomers, Anarkali was developing into a prosperous bazaar. The sahibs and memsahibs did their shopping on the Mall at stores housed mostly in bungalows-all built essentially after the model devised by some unknown genius of the Public Works Department, beautifully innocent of all architectural sense and bold enough to think out a pattern that looked a complete exotic in the East, and had never been known in the West.

These hordes-babus, lawyers, students-had to be housed. And physically Lahore seemed to be expanding like a tapeworm-cell added on to cell of brick and mortar. Wildernesses could be built upon and made to yield substantial rents. Do hoarded fortunes come as 'unearned increment' or as 'the reward of abstinence? Let learned economists wrangle over that.

Even more than the face of Lahore, its mind seemed to be undergoing a change. Whatever the causes, no one could help noticing that a ferment was at work. Vaguely, you could name education and religion, to some extent politics, as the ingredients of this ferment. The babus and the lawyers were the people it affected most of all.

A non-official purely Indian venture in education had not yet been thought of in Lajpat's student days, but the Christian missionaries with Dr. Forman at the head had been active in this field before Lajpat Rai had become a vakil; and in 1889 the Forman Christian College had been founded. The missionaries, of course, had vast resources behind their endeavour and they wielded unbounded influence with the rulers. Broad acres were their as a gift from Government for the manifold

institutions they had planned or might plan. These missionaries certainly had a lot to do with the ferment in Lahore.

They indirectly provided the impetus for indigenous endeavour to raise institutions that would impart the new education. So, besides the haphazard houses for babus, the bungalows and Government buildings like the Dayananda School were sprouting up too. The site where the D.A.V. School had since sprung up, in Lajpat Rai's student days had been an unsafe-frightfully unsafe-wilderness. The ferment was manifesting itself in brick and mortar and in the conversion of what had been wilderness.

In his student days he had watched the University of the Punjab more or less in the process of being born. Dr. Leitner who acted in a miauctic capacity had his own notions about the baby. By now these had been definitely discarded and his experiments more or less liquidated. The university had set into a routine shaped after the accepted patters of the universities at Calcutta and Madars. What used to be styled the University College had grown into the university, the college had come to be known as the Government College.

To this university were attached law and medical and oriental colleges (the last in a way a creation of Dr. Leitner's). This missionaries too had raised their college under the auspices of this university, and Indian leaders might follow suit now leaders of the ferment.

In the 'eighties in Lahore the two rival channels for the ferment had been the Brahma Samaj and the Arya Samaj Things had somewhat changed since the eighties.

Pandit Shiv Narayan Agnihotri, who as his father's friend had been a sort of guardian to the boy Lajpat had now given up his job as a schoolmaster. He had also left the Brahma Samaj, and founded a church of his own called the Dev Samaj. From Pandit Agnihotri he had thereby come to be known too his followers as "Dev Guru Bhagwan", He also weaned away many of the active spirits away from the Brahma Samaj, thereby enfeebling it in the Punjab and making it easier for its rival, the Arya Samaj, to elbow it almost out of the field.

To the new progressive element that was turned out by the new educational machine, the more dynamic and quite aggressive Arya Samaj could make a bolder appeal. And since education was a main activity of the day, the Arya Samaj had also set up a school and named it after its founder. This practically decided the issued against the Brahmos and in favour of the Aryas, Already their school had added on a college department. The head of this was a young man who after graduating had not sought a job and a career like other graduates, but had dedicated himself to the institution. He was the Honorary Principal a title that would not have been easily understood in Lajpat Rai's school days.

The Arya Samaj had definitely struck root among the intelligentsia. Its activity was expanding every year both at Lahore and throughout the Punjab. It professed to revive the Vedic religion. It harked back-like all revivalist movements. It compared the ancient glories of India with her present degenerate condition. It thus fostered sentiments of patriotism. That was one of its several facets. Another represented its activity in modernising Hindu society, of refitting it so that it might be able to tackle the modern problems with efficiency. It may be that all the evils in Hindu society had been unvedic; but the paradox remained that many of the Arya Samaj enthusiasts, paying homage to the Vedas, had more first-hand acquaintance with the modern writers, thinkers, historians and statement of Europe than with the Vedas and rishis. They wanted to equip the Hindu society for the struggle in the modern world. They wanted to eradicate child marriage, to abolish hereditary priesthood and to simplify all ritual, to lift the ban on the marriage of widows and on crossing the seas, to introduce (or reintroduce) an Aryan monotheism as rigid as the semitic one. Most of these things they shared with the Brahmo Samaj, but they were more aggressive and had more of rough and tumble in them. They had not much use for an eclecticism that stressed the good points of all religions.

They wished to give tit for tat when the missionaries of other religions assailed Hinduism, and they wanted Hinduism to become aggressive and proselytizing like its rivals. They laid great stress on the removal of untouchability and started a 'reclamation' Movement. They underlined the importance of Devanagari and Hindi, and here too their zeal perhaps outstripped that of the Brahmos. Their leadership may have lacked some refinement and culture, but it could put a more enthusiastic shoulder to the wheel. In the nineties the Arya Samaj seemed to promise a ubiquity that would pervade all walks in the public life of the Punjab. The Dynamic and progressive elements among the Hindus rallied more and more round its banner. The more the educated element concentrated in Lahore, the more grist there was for the very efficient mills of the Arya Samaj. The mind of Lahore was changing fast indeed. Revivalism and modernism alike were attacking the massive but lethargic force of sacrosanct superstition.

Politics also was being talked about increasingly. A branch of the Congress had yet to be established, but that of the Indian Association existed. Politics was becoming the hobby of the lawyers. Law was a very lucrative profession. It meant money as well as respect, In it a man with brains could rise without an investment and once he had arrived in the upper hierarchy he could command big fees. True, the Punjab did not abound in big landlords and rajas who could conveniently be fleeced to the tune of lakhs, but successful lawyers could get decent fees from prosperous middle class people. A princely income at the bar was not possible but one ensuring comfort and respect certainly was to be had without too much drudgery. The lawyers dominated in politics as a matter of right, as they were the "independent" half of the intelligentsia (those who had received education and enlightenment), the other half being bound by the "rules of conduct" for Government services. The more "Babus" there were in Lahore, the greater the number of potential Arya Samajists; the more lawyers there were, the greater the number of potential politicians.

Whilst the Brahma and Arya Samaj activity among the Hindus made this stir, the Muslims too were hearing new voices—that of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan who had toured in the Punjab in 1883-84 and of a new sect called the Ahmadiyyas. In many ways the Syed school with its modernistic liberal tendencies reassembled the Brahma movement among the Hindus (or rather the resemblance was very striking till he started his narrow-minded campaign against the Congress); while the aggressive Ahmadiyyas resembled the Arya Samajists in their zeal and pugnacity. It was about this time that the Sikhs happened to become aware that they were distinct from Hindus. Hitherto most people had supposed them to be one of the several semi-autonomous units in the loose federation of Hinduism. It was in Lajpat's college days (as sometimes, reminiscing about those days, he once recalled) that the students noted in the admission forms of the examination that they had to enter whether they were Sikh, Hindu, Christian or Muslim. Before that, Sikh and Hindu had not been thus differentiated. Macauliff was persuaded in 1893 to give up his judicial career to translate the Sikh scriptures into English—the version then undertaken resulting in his six volumes on the Sikh Religion. Dr. Trump who had translated the Adi Granth for the Secretary of State had died eight years earlier. John Bull and begun to take an interest in Sikh. They had proved so useful in the 'mutiny of 1857' that imperialism wisely decided they must receive especial treatment.

The ferment seemed to pervade all communities alike and from Lahore it radiated to remote corners of the Punjab. Thanks to the ferment, Lahore was becoming more and more the metropolis of the Punjab, more and more the nerve-centre of its body-politic.

Ferment, public life, politics—in other terms, the nerve-centre of the Punjab, Lahore was giving an increased importance to the press; The "intelligentsia" ruled the roost. The "dumb millions" were as yet very very dumb. Naturally, prestige and power were with the press conducted in English.

The *Civil & Military Gazette* had come into being soon after the annexation of the Punjab by the English. Indians wanted a paper too. The munificence of Dyal Singh Majithia resulted in the founding of the weekly *Tribune* in 1881.

In the mid-eighties the *Tribune* had begun to appear twice a week. This was the principal Indian paper in English the Lahore then had. In the 'nineties it began to come out thrice a week with an editor Nagendranath Gupta who hailed from Bengal.

The mind and face of Lahore were thus changing swiftly when Lajpat Rai arrived there in the early nineties to settle down, to practise at the bar and to be at the nerve-centre of the public life of the Punjab. The ferment that was working the change gave just the opportunity that his talent sought, and just the sort of adventure that his spirit craved for-an adventure far bigger than was to be found in a purely bread-winning career.

The Samaj Suffers a Schism

THE ARYA SAMAJ was now his principal field of activity. The Samaj was growing, undoubtedly, but at the same time it was passing through a grave crisis. Things seemed to be heading towards a split between the Little Endians and the Big Endians—with this interesting variation on the Lilliput theme that here one of the factions in its strict adherence to vegetarianism held as taboo the little end as well as the big, Sain Das and Guru Dutt, who had represented the two different trends of thought among the Arya Samajists, were now both dead. But the two schools of thought that they represented were ill at ease in each other's company. The D.A.V. managing committee had passed a resolution authorising the opening of the college department while Guru Dutt was still alive. Trouble started over it not long after his death. The cause that underlay these squabbles were thus described by Lajpat Rai, who in his autobiography has left a critical if not very detailed account of this split in the Arya Samaj:

“Firstly, Lala Hans Raj's personal unpopularity. People got the impression that he was haughty and conceited and grasping. His reserve, his aloofness, his sternness in administration, all went to make him unpopular.

Secondly, the question of vegetarianism. Underlying this was the question of the authority of Swami Dayananda Saraswati. Pundit Guru Dutt had in his last days become such a devotee of the Swami that he would not tolerate the smallest deviation from the doctrines laid down by the Swami. In his overzealous moments he often maintained that the *Satyartha Prakusha* of Dayanand was true in every syllable. The same

spirit worked among the Pandit's disciples and followers. When they raised the controversy about vegetarianism, naturally the opposite group maintained that it was not being on any Arya Samajist to accept Swami Dayananda's teachings in their entirety, and that the Swami was not infallible."

In the administration of the college differences became acute (soon after Guru Dutt's death in 1890) over the place of Sanskrit in its scheme of studies, and still more over the details of the Sanskrit syllabus itself, Dayananda's *Satyartha Prakasha* carried a chapter on education in which was set forth a detailed syllabus covering the entire range of elementary as well as higher teaching. In this puritanic scheme there was no room for Kalidasa or Bhavabhuti. In fact the Sanskrit drama was completely unrepresented, and in poetry only the epics of Valmiki and Vyasa tolerated, not as poetry but as history. The corner-stone of Sanskrit studies was to be Panini (with Patanjali's great commentary), for the Swami Vehemently condemned the later grammarians. It was a fundamental belief with Rishi Dayananda that between books composed by the rishis and those perpetrated by ordinary mortals lay an unbridgeable gulf, and the scholars to be prepared for realising the highest truths in the Vedas were to be nurtured only on the sacred fare provided by the rishis. The literalists regarded the *Satyartha Prakasha* as infallible and as essential a part of the Master's teaching as any other doctrine or dictum found in his voluminous works. At least so their professions ran, for when they had to work out a scheme they too made concession and compromise. The more practical-minded people held that the *Satyartha Prakasha* curriculum was not meant for present-day conditions and that underlying it was the presumption of a Sanskrit-speaking Aryavarta. The Anglo-Vedic College raised by Dayananda's followers in his memory was from the beginning intended to be different from the master's ideal scheme. Its very name proclaimed its spirit of compromise. Guru Dutt had been a party to that name and to the original manifesto setting forth the

promoter's aim and object which certainly were inspired by this spirit of compromise. Two years after the issuing of this manifesto nothing seemed to have materialised excepting a modest sum (considerably less than a lakh) but as soon as his friend Hans Raj offered his honorary services to the proposed institution he pressed for the starting of the school classes forthwith. Again when about three years later the Managing Committee decided (by a majority of one) to start college classes he (like Lajpat Rai) was amongst the six who voted for this step. He had served on the sub-committee of five appointed to implement that decision. As secretary to this sub-committee he had himself drawn up its report outlining the scheme of studies—still another compromise affair, Guru Dutt worked in a spirit of give and take; but there can be no denying that the trend of his own thought was different from that of Sain Das. The two trends produced a violent clash amongst the friends of Sain Das and the Disciples of Guru Dutt, when both of them were no more. The doctrinaire group became more and more fanatical and began to condemn openly and vehemently the way the college was being run. Eventually this group broke loose from the college, and to translate the master's ideas into practice founded the Gurukula University. The other group worked to make the college a success by acquiring funds for it and tangible assets of brick and mortar, and by attracting a large number of scholars. Their Samajic conscience was quite satisfied if they felt that besides helping in the spread of education in a general way, they had created a most important agency for making Hindi popular in the Punjab and for inculcating a love of Sanskrit among some of the students that came to them even though they could not adhere to the ideal of compulsory Sanskrit and Sanskrit taught in strict accord with Dayananda's curriculum for all of them; that even if their scholars did not go through the strict *brahmacharya* enjoined by the Swami, their school and college served as useful recruiting grounds for the Samaj; and that their institutions were helping the broad patriotic purposes dear to their hearts. If these things their

college could achieve, they would not make it compulsory for all their students to study the intricacies of Panini's grammar, though Panini and Patanjali had been so much extolled by Dayananda. They were not willing to scare away all their students for the pleasure of a literal adherence to an impracticable scheme of studies.

When Lajpat Rai arrived on the scene, the cleavage was becoming increasingly marked. For a while he tried to remain non-partisan. But his own bent of mind soon asserted itself. He could not see the feasibility of converting the college into an institution that would adhere literally to what Dayananda had prescribed in Sanskrit curriculum or idolatry. He was rationalistic and valued intellectual independence too much to accept the 'infallibility' of the Swami or of anyone else. He was not able to see the sinfulness of his flesh diet. He had adopted Mazzini as his guru and he found that his ambition of patriotic service to his people was shared more by the 'cultured' section than by the 'vegetarian' faddists. The latter seemed to him too dogma-ridden, too unpractical, too other-worldly. Also he felt that his friends Hans Raj was being misunderstood and misrepresented, and was the aggrieved party. He cast his lot with the group led by Hans Raj. Once he had declared his partiality, he was called upon to do a lot of propaganda for the party. When the controversy raged over the Sanskrit curriculum, he produced a brochure in Urdu to show that the D.A.V. College had not neglected Sanskrit, as its 'Mahatma' vegetarian critics made out. He had to write to the press frequently to defend his party or to attack its opponents. He had to take his share of consultations and committee meetings. Like others he too violated at times the code decorous. He did not like all he had to do as a partisan but he did it.

How deeply he had been affected by these unseemly squabbles of his co-religionists may be gathered from his reflections on the 1891 election of the Samaj, though they relate to the Hissar period.

"These scenes I saw with my own eyes. They moved

me immensely and I used to keep awake at night pondering over them the wondering whether God himself could cure us of our national malady of disunity. To end dissensions and to unity the people we had put ourselves under God's own care, but even there we could not rid ourselves of our sins and the result of our dark deed was that instead of being united we had begun to quarrel with each other, and that too in a manner the indecency of which knew no bounds. When I went back to Hissar after the 91 anniversary I was sick at heart and the condition of the Samaj and my own uneasiness over it compelled me to leave (Hissar permanently for Lahore.)"

Discussing "the blackest episode" in this warfare, he comes to the conclusion that both the parties were equally to blame. "In my opinion" says he, "Lala Hans Raj's responsibility was as great as that of Lala Munshi Ram".

The actual split came about towards the end of 1892, at the time of the annual election of the Lahore Arya Samaj. On the evening previous to the election, the party with which Lajpat Rai had cast his lot met at the house of one of their prominent leaders, Lala (afterwards Mr. Justice) Lal Chand. Their object was to decide what course of action they should adopt the next day, in view of all the irregularities and malpractices that the other section was supposed to have perpetrated to ensure a packed house.

"Some," chronicles Lajpat Rai, "wanted to take possession of the Samaj mandir with the aid of the police. Others wanted a decision by a court of law fixing different timings for that meetings of the two parties. Still others would dispense with the police, capture the mandir by force of lathis at night, and give battle if there was resistance. A fourth group, in which I was included, was of the opinion that since it was impossible to co-operate with the mahatmas it was better to part company with them and for the time being to rent a house for our separate weekly meetings."

In a characteristic speech Lajpat Rai said at this meeting, memorable in the history of the Arya Samaj:

“Principles and not brick and stone constitute the Samaj. We joined the Samaj to reform our lives and to serve the people, not to take possession of house or to quarrel over them... I am entirely opposed to quarrelling or fighting or inviting the police or a court of law to our aid.

This sane and large-hearted appeal succeeded. The party passed a formal resolution of separation and founded the next day what came to be known as the Anarkali Arya Samaj. The idea of abandoning the original Samaj mandir in Vachhowali was very painful to Lala Hans Raj; even so he agreed.”

Of this Samaj Lajpat Rai was chosen the first President.

Later he had to review his own conduct with severity as he realised that in the heat of his partisanship he had formed an uncharitable opinion of Mahtma Munshi Ram (Swami Shraddhananda), the leader of the other section. “I must say,” wrote Lajpat Rai in his autobiography, “that I have largely revised the opinion I had of him in 1892-93 and for several years after, that he was a mischief monger, and a hankerer after fame, and ambitious to become a leader. Now I believe it was unjust to pronounce upon Lala Munshi Ram’s character on the basis of what he did in party spirit for party ends, Like all great men Lala Munshi Ram had his own failings and those who hung round him often exploited them. Those by whom he was always surrounded largely influenced his opinion and his actions...”

But I am certainly far from saying that he was a mischief-making or a vindictive person. In moments of heat I formed an opinion which I had to change afterwards and I am extremely sorry I should ever have done him such injustice. Lala Munshi Ram was by nature impulsive; lofty and noble impulses dominated him, and not the petty or ignoble ones. He was generous and hospitable and was actuated by a high sense of public service. He knew what it was to suffer and sacrifice. As a friend he was very frank and open and pious.”

This was written in 1915. There is little doubt that Swami

Shraddhananda rose still higher, very much higher indeed, in Lajpat Rai's estimation in the period beginning with 1919-days of Martial Law in the Punjab-and ending in 1926 with the Swami's martyrdom. How often did he envy the glorious death the crowned Shraddhananda's career!

Energetic and industrious as he always was, the work he had to put in in those days must have been pretty strenuous even for Lajpat Rai. He had to work hard in his career at the bar and to work harder in his dearer career in public life. Almost all his off days at the court he had to spend in touring about to raise funds for the college, for he was becoming not only its chief public speaker, but also its chief beggar. The split in the Samaj and the mutual hostility of the two groups made the burden peculiarly heavy. As a small instance, Lajpat Rai mentions that once he had to rush straight from Simla to Peshawar, for "had I arrived at Peshawar even a few hours later I would have got nothing. In two days I collected Rs. 3,000 in cash. Then the Mahatma deputation arrived and the college collection stopped."

Though the two groups in the Samaj had separated in 1892, the separation was not complete. The Samaj mandirs were separate; but the "Mahatmas" who were on the College Managing Committee started wrecking tactics there, and from 1897 it was a period of severe struggle.

One day the fight took the form of an exchange of lathi blows. Sunder Das, eldest son of the late Sain Das, had his skull fractured and laid down his life for the sake of his party; somebody from the other side also paid the same heavy price."

There was hard work and there was this nerve-racking strife. No wonder that his health suffered badly, and at one time during this period he was at death's door from pneumonia, Both lungs were seriously affected and he went through more than one crisis, being confined to bed for about two months. "Doctor Beli Ram tended me with great affection and took great pains to save me. To him I remain indebted as long as I live," he wrote gratefully afterwards.

A Congress Session in Lahore

WE HAVE SEEN that after attending its Bombay session in 1889, Lajpat Rai's enthusiasm for the National Congress abated a good deal. He did not trouble to attend any more of its yearly Christmas gatherings, till at last the 'mountain came to Muhammad' in 1893. The Punjab had invited the Congress at the suggestion of one of the D.A.V. College leaders, Bakhshi Jaishi Ram (father of Mr. Justice Bakhshi Tek Chand) Lajpat Rai too joined the Reception Committee, but he was not among its most active participants. Although the Congress had been invited at the suggestion of one of their important leaders, the Arya Samajists were rather lukewarm. There were others more willing, particularly Dyal Singh Majithia the philanthropist, and young Harkishan Lal, the latter by no means favourably inclined towards Bakshi Jaishi Ram and his Arya Samajists, So the Congress session was the care not so much of the Aryas as of the Brahmos and so Nobin Chandra Roy, an outstanding Brahmo in Lahore, was Chairman of the Reception Committee.

Lajpat Rai made two or three speeches at the Congress session. "What was most worthy of note is," he records, "that Rai Mul Raj took a large part." This gentleman, as we have seen, was a Government servant, and what is more, he was part of the judiciary. He was thus supposed to be doubly dead to politics. But as a matter of fact he was busy pulling the wires from behind the scenes and at informal meetings. He had drafted the Arya Samaj constitution for Swami Dayananda and he wanted the Congress to adopt one somewhat on the same lines. His suspicions about Hume still continued and the demand

for a constitution was probably his way of putting these to the test, anticipating that Hume would not find it convenient to accept the suggestion. The anticipation was not falsified by events. Hume saw no necessity for any constitution and did not let the proposal materialise.

Today it may sound unbelievable that the Congress remained practically without a constitution all these years. Till the 1899 session in Lucknow it was without any constitution whatsoever and the one adopted that year hardly met the essential points of the proposals inspired by Mul Raj, i.e., a representative character for the delegates and some sort of machinery for their election, and a standing organisation with regional branches for carrying on the work all through the year. Provincial Committees for such work were not thought of by the Congress leaders till 1908. The Punjab delegates insisted at several sessions on the Congress giving itself a constitution before it got the country one and the idea of course had originated with Mul Raj, that inscrutable man who always revelled in putting his ideas forward from behind a smoke-screen.

Even in 1904 the Punjab contingent headed by Lajpat Rai and his friend Dwarka Das urged in vain that the Congress should define its constitution. Now the high priest of the Congress was the grand and imperious Sir Pherozeshah Mehta. As Duni Chand (of Ambala) who was present at this Bombay Congress session says:

“Both Lala Lajpat Rai and Lala Dwarka Das pleaded in vain for a constitution for the Congress; the Parsee Knight coerced them into silence without much difficulty. Lala Lajpat Rai had not by that time developed that personality which he did only two years later.”

This “two years later” is a reference to the memorable Banaras session, to the happenings of which we shall devote a chapter later. Here let it suffice that already in 1893 Lajpat Rai and his friends had realised the necessity of a proper constitution for the Congress, and the resistance they thus evoked must have impressed on them how hard they would

have to struggle before a constitution could be wrung for India from the unwilling hands of her alien rulers, seeing that even the patriotic autocrats of the Congress were so unwilling to become constitutional rulers of their own organisation.

It was at this second session of Congress at Lahore that Lajpat Rai for the first time met the two leaders from poona, G.K. Gokhale and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, acquaintance with whom in later years developed into the most valued friendships of his life.

Biographies for a Mass Awakening

THE KEEN URGE to share with those who had no access to books in English what he had got from Mazzini, more than anything else, impelled him to start, in 1896, a series of books in Urdu which he named the *Great Men of the World*. The first great man he picked on was his Italian Guru, Guiseppe Mazzini, whose teaching had so much moved and moulded him in this early youth. He had once attempted an Urdu version of the *Duties of Man*. Now he wrote out a small popular life of Mazzini and followed it up with another of Garibaldi. These sketches do not fulfil the demands made on the modern biographer as a portrait artist. It was not really the impulse to portray that moved him. And Mazzini and Garibaldi were not figures already familiar to his readers, so that these personal portraits clearly done would be welcomed by them. Lajpat Rai was working definitely on utilitarian, call it a political, plane. The Italian movement of unification and freedom had appealed to him and he had seen points of similarity in the problem of India to that the Italian leaders had had to face. Besides, Mazzini's appeal was universal; his teaching was not addressed merely to his own countrymen. Lajpat Rai was one among the many admirers this teaching claimed in many lands. A sketch of Garibaldi was necessary as a complement. Without it the picture of Italian unification would not be complete for his reader. Garibaldi was the hand that executed the ideas which Mazzini as the head had thought out. Like Mazzini he too had loved freedom and not merely loved Italy, as his numerous and valiant fights in South America showed. He fought and

won and with magnificent light-heartedness gave kingdoms to others, himself returning again and again to poverty or at best to the arcadian simplicity of an island home. Lajpat Rai's purpose in selecting Mazzini and Garibaldi had definitely been to infuse a patriotic spirit into the youth of his own land.

Naturally he had compiled these biographies from well-known books in English. He drew chiefly on the six-volume edition of *Mazzini's life and writings*, and on Countess Cesaresco's work. Bolton King's *Life of Mazzini* and most of the other popular books in English had not yet appeared. His task was neither to produce new facts nor to offer original interpretations. He merely wanted his countrymen to become acquainted with the life and teachings of the great Italian who had so profoundly impressed his own mind. And it is a fact that for decades afterwards patriotism was fed to young minds particularly in the Punjab from these Urdu booklets of Lajpat Rai's. The Mazzini sketch helped more than any other book by any man to infuse a new spirit and create a new awakening in the Punjab. The awakening made the political movement soon grow strong enough to the big events of 1906-07

Mazzini dreamt of Italy's liberation, her unification, and here being a democracy. He was a nationalist, whose vision unfettered by parochial barriers embraced humanity, a revolutionist who believed in revolution "by the people, for the people" and denounced terrorism for it did not conform to this criterion. Ever giving a dynamic call, Mazzini was yet a teacher who laid great stress on moral values. All this to Lajpat Rai constituted an almost perfect gospel for his own people under alien rule. He greatly valued the unity that British rule had given to India, and wanted to liberate his country without jeopardising this unity. This was a cause for which he thought no sacrifice too heavy.

Meredith's summing up the makers of Italian unity may here he aptly recalled:

*"Cavour, Mazzini, Garibaldi: Three!
Her Brian, her Soul, her Sword..."*

The Soul Lajpat Rai prized above all else, but his vision and his teaching never neglected. The other two in Meredith's Three-though (like Mazzini and (Garibaldi) he may not have found all Cavour's doings in the name of expediency as commendable or even justifiable.

Some official smelt danger in this small Mazzini book, and Lajpat Rai often got reports of an impending prosecution; but probably the lawyers of the Government found it difficult to make out a case against him. His information was that "two or three times the officials had this book translated into English to get legal advice", and that "the official legal experts disagreed among themselves". The Education Department took very conspicuous notice of this new menace. Circulars were sent out to all headmasters about it. and more than once the Principal of the D.A.V. College was asked by the Director of Public Instruction whether Lajpat Rai's books were being taught in his college or school. An Inspector of Schools discovered a copy with a student in the mofussil and the headmaster concerned was called upon to submit an explanation!

His next three Great Men were form his own country, Shivaji, Dayananda and Krishna. His *Shivaji* came out soon after his *Mazzini* and *Garibaldi* had been issued. In fact all the three books belong to 1896. This was just the period when the reaction was beginning to set in against the unfavourble picture of Shivaji presented by the Muslim historians who wrote mostly for the glorification of the very people whom Shivaji had fought all his life. The books by European historians on Maratha history were also at that time based mostly on Persian sources. Shivaji as a national figure had, yet to be presented properly. Tilak had about this time begun his work in the Ganapati celebrations and he was using this great festival for a political awakening in Maharashtra. It is possible that Lajpat Rai got his inspiration form Tilak's Ganapati festival. Ranade's book on Maratha history may be regarded as the first serious attempt to utilise the Marathi sources instead of the hitherto prevailing exclusive reliance on the Persian histories

written by Muslim writers. The tide turned, and Shivaji has since ceased to be a petty adventurer, brigand, "mountain rat" and all that. When Lajpat Rai brought out his little book on Shivaji, Ranade's work had not yet been published; but he had the advantage of seeing it in manuscript and he drew upon it a great deal. His was one of the early books that marked the swing of the pendulum from ridicule and condemnation to adoration and hero-worship. It was still scanty, work on Maratha records and chronicles having only begun. All the same, the author clearly took sides and defended Shivaji in almost every episode that had been used to tarnish his name. The Marathi archives had only begun to be studied and so the appraisal made had per force to be incomplete and tentative.

His own approach to Indian history he presented in a well-written introduction to *Shivaji* running into more than forty pages. In this he told Hindus why they should pay heed not merely to the history of their past glory, but also to the history of their decline and how their turning a blind eye to this period had given scope to interested misrepresentation which had made current false notions about the Hindu mind and character. The Hindus themselves seemed passively to acquiesce in this falsification of their character; this had infected the contemporary Hindu mind and the result was psychological effects that hampered its natural growth. In his preface he expressed a desire to follow up his account of the Maratha hero with that of: "the great hero of the Punjab to whom the Punjab owed a rebirth in a period of crisis"—this no doubt referred to Gobind Singh, the last of the ten Gurus of the Sikh faith, for whom he was ever full of admiration. He definitely promised a life of Krishna as number four in his "Great Men".

The wish about the Punjab hero remained unfulfilled. The promise about the *Mahabharata* hero was made good, though *Sri Krishna* appeared not as number four but number five in his series. His number four was *Dayananda*. Dalpat Rai Vidyarthi had published in Urdu Swami Dayananda's autobio-graphical fragment, After Dalpat Rai's death Lajpat

Rai was working for two months on collecting other biographical material on the founder of the church he had joined. This book came out in September 1898. One would not expect a member of a church to be very critical towards its founder, but Lajpat Rai took good care to keep at a safe distance from hagiography. Its usefulness lay in the fact that it brought together not only the principal facts of the Swami's life and activities since his founding the Arya Samaj, but also all that could then be gathered of his little known early life, and this it presented the whole in the form of a readable story. That is why it remained for some decades the standard life of the Swami although the Arya Samaj set up a committee to produce an official biography with its own imprimatur. Lajpat Rai's book read quite well, as it avoided the language of excessive eulogy, and the dullness of official tones, and its pages were enlivened by small and clever touches of portraiture furnished by personal habit and mannerism and by pointed anecdote. But it could not be anything more than an interim sketch and was duly superseded by later attempts embodying later painstaking research in Kathiawar, Dayananda's homeland.

Sri Krishna is the last of this bunch of biographies and in certain ways the best written. Cut out a few passages of rhetoric here and there-in all these may amount to a dozen pages or so-and you have a "rattling fine yarn" in the best sense. The narrative shows the practised ease of a story teller. It might still be the best book for the young (of all ages) who want just the story of Krishna, provided you cut out those dozen pages intruding in the narrative, and the prefatory discussion. The Krishna of Lajpat Rai's story is mainly the Krishna of the Mahabharata. Later embellishment of the Bhagavata and some of the other puranas and of decadent Braj poetry he dismissed out of hand. To the rich poetry of the *Bhagavata* or to the elaborate artistry of the decadents he was perhaps not sufficiently sensitive; to their devastating effect of the mass mind which took all these embellishments rather literally (even for modelling ethical conduct on) he was certainly far more alive. In telling

his tale faithfully he had every right to stick to the *Mahabharata* and that need not have compelled him to enter the lists against anyone. But he felt that to resurrect the *Mahabharata* Krishna it was necessary to nail to the counter the spurious Krishna of decadence. Once you accept the historicity of Krishna the task is not difficult either. For certainly, then, the authority of the *Mahabharata* outweighs all the legend and poetry of the subsequent millennia. Besides, once you start a historian's scientific scrutiny most of the poetic legends cancel each other, and many of them cancel themselves by their inherent contradictions. The poetic embellishments have helped hostile critics to make a facile accusation against Krishna of a youth rather wasted in escapades with the Gopis of Gokul. Yet, according to all legends (Puranic, poetic and other), Krishna had finally bid good bye to Gokul and Cowherds-to assume duties that befitted his princely station very early in his life, in his boyhood you might say. This single detail was enough to make Lajpat Rai throw out of the window all the legends, that lent support to the blasphemous accusation, as rubbish, of no value to a historian.

The Wax Half

HALF WAX, HALF Steel” The is how an Urdu poet once dissected the heart of Lajpat Rai. The secret of his stubborn resistance against all odds, his indefatigable energy, his under going great suffering with dignity lay in the steely part, while the waxen half made him sensitive to suffering particularly of the poor and oppressed.

A fighter all his life, the ‘steel’ naturally looms large in his life story; but the sensitive wax can easily claim at least half his greatness.

The Arya Samaj made use of his head as well as both halves of his heart. Besides editing or writing for the Samaj journals, turning out tracts, touring, lecturing, and raising funds, he was called upon to work in various capacities for the D.A.V. college and its off-shoots (like the Anglo-Sanskrit school at Jullundur which also later grew into a college). In fact his work for the college ranked next only to that of Principal Hans Raj. Yet his most important work under the auspices of the Arya Samaj lay in fields far removed from the academic, and from these fields it was the sensitive wax that first registered the SOS.

The closing years of the century were marked by severe visitations of natural calamities-drought, famine, epidemics. In 1897 Tilak was sent to jail for 18 months for venturing to criticise the plague administration of the Bombay authorities. The year drought and famine seemed bent on doing their worst. Ghastly reports poured in from Rajputana among other places. Such misery any where was bound to affect the ‘wax’ that the visitation should choose the land whose heroic

annals had ever filled the boy Lajpat with a sense of glory and had continued to inspire him through youth and maturity was unbearable. Descendants of the brave and proud Rajputs were dying life fled and, struggling against dire want, they were even living and feeding worse than flies.

Stories from Rajputana spoke not only the acutest misery but what was for worse, of wretched exploitation of this misery. Many of the Christian missionaries in their proselytizing zeal seemed to have regarded the visitation as a godsend for them to collect a rich harvest. Ostensibly they were doing humanitarian work of giving food and shelter to those who needed it most. But at close range much of this activity took on a different complexion altogether. They were 'rescuing' not only babies, but even those who know Hinduism was different from Christianity, and all means were being used that might be handy in seduction. The mission workers draped themselves in dhotis and even sported the sacred thread and the *tilak* on their foreheads to pass for Brahmins. Boys and girls were taken to the 'Panditji' by the agents sent out by Pandita Ramabai's Christian Orphanage at Poona. And sometimes the zealots would not stick at things much worse than this for instance, the spiriting away of the starving wife of a starving husband and not restoring her to him though he happened to survive. These reports filled the sensitive heart with the anguish of humiliation.

Lajpat Rai felt deeply stirred in his inmost being. It was from there the words came to his tongue and his pen that imparted the wax quality to his hearers and his readers.

The 1897 famine and the 1900 famine taxed his entire energy, his gifts of eloquence and persuasion and his organising, administrative talent.

Lajpat Rai was a pioneer among the Hindu leaders. Though he started the work under the Arya Samaj he was soon addressing the entire Hindu fold, and he sought and got the co-operation of all Hindus-of the orthodox, no less than of the Arya Brahmo Samajists. He organised relief committees.

and raised funds for them. His personal contact with the student community in the D.A.V. College placed a strong contingent of volunteers at his disposal. He insisted that mere temporary relief was not enough and that permanent orphanages must be brought into being which would meet like emergencies in the future, and would train the rescued boys and girls in various crafts so that they might stand on their own legs and grow up to be useful citizens. He instructed his workers that in administering relief they must give the first attention to infants, to widows, and to minor girls-to those who could benefit least by the relief works started by the Government, and were the easiest victims of the unscrupulous sort among the Christian missionaries. In urging that 'relief' should consist not mere by of 'doles' but that as far as possible people should be made to work and earn their food, he specifically recommended hand-spinning, though not to the exclusion of everything else. It was his foresight and his insistence that brought into being the premier Arya Samaj orphanage at Ferozepore of which he was the General Secretary for several years, as well as the Hindu orphanage at Lahore and another at Merrut. Temporary orphanages were created at other places and some permanent orphanages also followed-some the direct, other the indirect results of Lajpat Rai's work. The example he set in the Punjab and at Meerut was soon being emulated all over India.

When the first batch of the furnished orphans arrived at Lahore he could see that he had succeeded in infusing a fresh life, the pulse beat of which could be felt in the surging crowd that had assembled at the railway station. This batch, and the others that followed, found their first home under Lajpat Rai's hospitable roof, (He had already bought the house in Court Street after having lived in a rented house on Ganpat Road, off Anarkali, for some time.)

His workers had to fight the missionaries if they were at all to do their job. And the ardent devoted band that he had brought into being was quite equal to the task. He insisted

that the official machinery must not take sides and his workers got their due share from the official relief agency wherever it decided to work through volunteers and non-official bodies. Several cases were taken to courts of law and there were inconvenient exposures for the missionaries. It was finally established that the missionaries could claim no Hindu orphans unless the Hindu agencies first declined to have them.

There were solid gains. Lajpat Rai looked upon them as moral gains rather than statistical ones. But measured in numbers, if you must so measure them, they were not poor showing. In 1897 when the entire machinery had to be created out of the void as it were, Lajpat Rai's volunteers were able to rescue some 300 orphans who were sheltered in the orphanages, besides of course administering relief to vast numbers. In the second famine they rescued about 2,000 orphans. The moral gain of course far exceeded that measured by figures. Hundreds of workers, particularly student workers, received sound training in civic and patriotic work. The whole movement was a vast venture in self-help by a community that had been prone to accept listlessly the official or the foreign missionary agencies as the only ones that could afford any relief what so in such dire calamities. Was not such self-reliance after all the quintessence of the D.A.V. College experiment too?

In the development of Lajpat Rai's own personality these two campaigns were of the highest importance. They gave him an opportunity to expand, and removed all apprehension of a provincial cramping that might possibly have resulted from routine Arya Samaj work confined for the most part to the Panjab. His name now became a password throughout the land and amongst the vast multitudes who politically still were a mere apathetic mass. Congress' speeches so far could affect only the intelligentsia; the relief work touched the neglected mass.

There was a debit side too. The missionaries active in the field resented encroachment on what they had regarded as their preserves and they did not at all relish the exposures they had to face in courts of law, before the famine commission and in public

print. The dis-esteem of course was mutual, Seeing these pseudo-Christians at close quarters in these campaigns did not fill Lajpat Rai with a sense of high regard for their moral and humanitarian standards, and when later during his stay in the U.S.A. he studied the tactics some of them employed in getting money for their work by misrepresenting and denigrating India to their wealthy fellow countrymen, he saw no reason to revise his estimate. Anyway he had made enemies of the missionary bodies and they were certainly both powerful and vindictive. They could bide their time.

When a Famine Commission was appointed and witnesses were invited Lajpat Rai availed himself of the opportunity. Besides suggested constructive economic measures he strongly urged effective redress against proselytizers with resources at their back regarding all the waifs as their prize booty. To what extent the fight against the exploitation of human misery in the name of religion succeeded may be assessed from Section XXIII on "Orphans" in the Report of the Famine Commission (1901) which urged strongly that "the policy of the Government in regard to orphans should be formulated in Provincial Codes, beyond risk of misconception either by its officers or by the public". The Commission laid down that in the time of famine the State should be... the temporary guardian of children when it finds deserted, and should not.....divest itself of the care of them, until a reasonable period has elapsed after the close of the famine, during which efforts should be made to discover the natural protectors of the children, or failing these, respectable persons of the same religion who are willing to adopt them. For proper enforcement forules made in these principles should be periodically inspected by a non-official committee, comprising gentlemen of different religions".

The years 1897 and 1898 proved full of calamity for Lajpat Rai personally also. After strenuous work in the famine campaign which kept him busy till August 1898, in need of rest and escape from the sweltering heat of the plains he went to

Abbottabad. There one day he got drenched in rain and developed fever which he could not shake off easily, and it lingered until it had inflamed his liver. He remained bed-ridden from September to April. Ever after his liver was a source of trouble. Probably the foundation for this trouble had been laid during the Rupar boyhood. The time the malady seemed so obstinate that many of his friends lost all hope of his recovery.

During his own illness his brother Dalpat Rai was found to be suffering from tuberculosis. When the elder brother left the sick-bed the younger's tuberculosis was already in an advanced stage. In June 1899 Lajpat Rai suffered the first sharp bereavement in his family. Lajpat Rai loved Dalpat Rai deeply and, of all his brothers he was the one most full of promise for public work. A staunch Arya Samajist, Dalpat Rai had great enthusiasm for Sanskrit. Probably that is why he styled himself Dalpat Rai Vidyarthi. "I had hoped that he would have better record of public work than mine." so writes Lajpat Rai in his autobiography.

The death at the young age of about thirty of the most promising of his brothers was a loss deeply felt by Lajpat Rai.

Throwing Away a Thriving Practice

HOW DID A busy lawyer find time for so much of extraneous activity? As lawyers are fond of putting it, law is a jealous mistress, Lajpat Rai's literary output was that of a whole-timers writer and editor. His touring, lecturing, raising of funds, attending to office routine of the several institutions he was connected with, committee meetings and organising work in the Samaj, the college, the famine relief campaigns, the orphanages easily equalled the burden carried by two or three competent whole-timers. A host in himself one would say. Even so no one in his profession could have engaged himself in half that enormous amount of public activity without its affecting the number of clients who came to him, and without having to turn down some of the briefs. He was proving a great success at the chief Court and was noticeably rising to the top. This seemed to happen in spite of himself, for Lajpat Rai's heart was not in these briefs. "My practice," he writes, "hampered my public activity, and my public activity hampered my practice." He was faced with the difficult situation of having to manage two jealous mistresses at once.

At time he felt impelled to make a choice. He could not think of deserting the mistress of his ruling passion, with the other, it had been an affair of convenience or of sheer necessity for making a living to begin with, and that pressing necessity being no longer felt, he wondered if time had not come for ending the cumbersome bigamous arrangement. But of course this would have important consequences for his family, and he was told he could not take a decision all by himself. He

was now the father of three children—two sons and a daughter all born in the nineties. (The youngest of his children was to come early in the next decade.) They were too young to have a voice in the family counsels, but a father's obligations were inescapable. His brothers had by now completed their education and were settled in life. His wife perhaps did not have very much of a say. It is not without significance that in his autobiography there are passages full of deep affection for his parents; there are tender sentiments occasionally expressed for some of his brothers or children. But there is very little said about his wife. The way Gandhi discussed, we might say dissected, Kasturba in his *Experiments with Truth* had not been to Lajpat Rai's taste. His autobiography refers but little to his wife, though that little is utterly frank writing.

His parents had married him off while he was still at School, but domestic life began some years later. It certainly remained free from rows and squabbles, but it does not seem to have been blessed with much of felicity of a higher type.

It may be a problem for psychologists whether his passionate zeal for reform, for creative work, and his *wonderlust* would not have been much less in evidence, if he had been more passionately attached to his wife and home. As it was, he had a sort of grievance that his partner in life could not take much interest in what life meant to him. His wife seems to have realised this fully, and was no the whole content with looking after her husband's comfort which indeed she did devotedly. Perhaps she felt very justifiably that the husband was not always fair to his home and children and seldom did by them all that he could or should, judged by accepted standards. But she must have realised early that there was no mending his ways and kept her feelings to herself and must of a contribution by an active participation in what he considered a richer life, she put no obstacles in his way, scrupulously avoided doing anything that might make for unhappiness or domestic tension. No

jarring note, and taking the peculiar context fully into consideration, this was a considerable, even if not a positive, contribution. And thus by mutual consent (or her acquiescence) she had no effective say in the big decisions in Lajpat Rai's life, and the only members of the family to be consulted when the question of his retiring so early from the profession arose were his parents.

Munshi Radha Kishan was glad of the prosperity that his lawyer son's fees had ushered in. At the son's suggestion he had himself, long ago, somewhat prematurely, thrown away his teaching job. He strongly disapproved of Lajpat Rai's ideas of retiring from practice while still full of youth. Father and son disagreed. "Work at the bar," so the son wrote afterwards, "was not after my liking. I wanted to give it up and to devote myself entirely to the service of my country. But my father stood in my way. He wanted that I should make my pile and provide adequately for my brothers and my children. I used to reply that I had already discharged the obligation of educating my brothers and that I had with me enough to support my children. In this noble resolve of mine my mother offered no resistance. Her sympathy was with me."

A tug of war went on for some time till on the occasion of the Lahore Arya Samaj anniversary in 1898 he announced his resolve to curtail his work at the bar and devote his time more and more "to the service of the college, the Samaj and my country". He now set up an office for himself in a room in the school building where, when not out touring, he would go every day to work for the college and the Samaj. His visits to the mofussil Samaj as became much more frequent, for after the announcement every Arya Samaja in the province (owning allegiance to the College section) thought it had a right and a duty to invite him to its annual celebrations. He started lecturing on Indian history to the college though he could not keep this up beyond a couple of months. He wrote small book in Urdu, mainly for the use of school boys, (but actually it was appreciated by grown up people as well) giving an

account of the ancient Aryan civilisation. This was in a way a forerunner to something more ambitious dealing with ancient India which he may have conceived then, but which was actually written much later during his non-co-operation prison term. He compiled also an English reader for schools. For a while it looked as if he were setting up as a full-time teacher and educationist.

He was systematically reducing his work for his clients. To make his new resolve more effective he took a further step about two years later, by deciding to give away whatever he earned at the bar. This he announced in a letter to his friends Principal Hans Raj, and for several years he continued to offer his earnings, thus dedicated in advance, to the D.A.V. College (and the Samaj). He was generally understood to have earmarked his entire income exclusively for the college and the Samaj. As a matter of fact his resolve related only to his professional fees as a lawyer, his main object being to take the edge off the temptation to be wasting time and energy in swelling his earnings. Adding to the pile must no longer come between him and his dedicated work. Although for a number of years he gave away this income mostly to the college and the Samaj, his pledge left him free to divert it to any other good cause at his own discretion. This kind of sacrifice was novel, perhaps unique, and it created a profound impression. It was this sacrifice, this utter disregard for money as a personal possession. As such as the eloquence and vigour of his speech, that made him such a dangerous beggar. His appeal for funds became a regular feature of the Arya Samaj anniversaries and, instead of scaring away people, it ever proved a great draw. His moving eloquence made the stingiest loosen their purse strings and helped in the collected on the spot of large amounts that were only too welcome as the yet scantily lined coffers of the Samaj and the college.

Harkishan Lal

AMONGST THE LIVE wires in Lahore of the nineties was a young barrister, Harkishan Lal. Lajpat Rai was bound to come in contact with his at the Chief Court. A scoffer at the expense of Arya Samajists, he delighted in dubbing them 'humbugs'. All the same, the two soon discovered they had much in common and the contact grew into collaboration and even friendship.

Though fresh from England after completing his education, Harkishan Lal seemed already aware of his own importance. He had had a fairly distinguished career at Cambridge as a student of mathematics. He qualified for the bar as did most other Indian students in England. But unlike them he had to some purpose watched the ways of Lombard Street and the working of the stock-exchange. He arrived in Lahore early in the 'nineties, carrying a massive head on sturdy shoulders choke-full of ideas and with a perfect understanding of finance high finance as well as the crook business of a bucket shop with scant respect for convention and a cynicism that would usually ill comport with youth. He seemed sure a big career awaited him somewhere—he did not quite know whether at the bar, in politics or in industry or finance. At the bar a bright man had right chances in those days. In politics he could see rudimentary beginnings already made and an ample scope for talented and daring leadership. In industry and finance the Punjab's had as yet nothing to their credit. Harkishan Lal had set up as a barrister, but was undecided whether taking a firm root in the profession was worthwhile. He seemed to be looking round to see how the land lay, spying out the tortuous business

contours as well as the spacious political terrain. He was too much of a scoffer and a cynic ever to join the Arya Samaj. He could laugh too much and in too loud guffaws for the all-too earnest Samajists. To him they were a pack of low-pated killjoys. He treated them with ill-concealed contempt and found them a handy topic for his sharp tongue.

Despite admiration and esteem for Harkishan Lal's talent and profound acquaintance with the ways, including the by-ways, of the business world, the question dimly shaped itself in the listener's mind: were these wizards of high finance the models of conduct Harkishan Lal had chosen for himself?

After the rejoicing in the enemy's camp over Harkishan Lal's crash the celebrations by Britishers when his bank failed one was disinclined to be censorious towards him. And the splendid manly way in which he comported himself during the martial law ordeal in 1919 made every true Punjabi feel proud of him. When Lajpat Rai returned after years of exile, the two could meet with mutual esteem much enhanced and both anxious to undo the vast injury Michael O'Dwyer had inflicted on the Punjab. O'Dwyer had hated Lajpat Rai and Harkishan Lal alike, and thus forged a fresh bond of friendship between them. As soon as he had settled down to work in the Punjab after his years of absence in America, Lajpat Rai started his Urdu daily, *Bandemataram*, and founded his Tilak School of Politics. Harkishan Lal came forward with a generous offer of help. He became an important shareholder and a director of the paper and promised a handsome donation of Rs. 10,000 for the School of Politics. Yet this collaboration was short-lived. The non co-operation movement found them again in different camps one a member of Government, the other a prisoner in one of its prisons. Harkishan Lal's holding in the *Bandemataram* had to be bought by Lajpat Rai and the promise of a Rs. 10,000 donation remained unredeemed. When Lajpat Rai sent a reminder Harkishan Lal, about to set sail for Europe, wrote back from Bombay that he did not believe in the Tilak or any other School of Politics and that it was no use asking

him for money unless his friends could first convert him. Thus till the very end this friendship ran its erratic course!

To get back to our narrative of the nineties.

Mul Raj had for some time been insisting on an Indian joint-stock bank as the first step in constructive swadeshi. At his suggestion Lajpat Rai had sent round a circular to selected friends and the response had been satisfactory. But Lajpat Rai made up his mind that the bank must be somebody else's care; his own hands were too full and he did not want his work for the College and the Samaj to suffer. Meanwhile Harkishan Lal's talent was emerging fast and attracting attention. In spite of the ridicule that he poured on the Arya Samajists he had come to realise that in the Punjab their co-operation would be necessary for any venture to achieve success. He had often exchanged notes with Mul Raj. He enjoyed the confidence of Dyal Singh Majithia and had got the Sardar's Editor, Nagendranath Gupta of the *Tribune*, by his side. The Punjab National Bank was floated. Lajpat Rai was not on the Board of Directors, but Mul Raj and Harkishan Lal chose his brother, Dalpat Rai, for the post of Manager-cum-Secretary. From this experiment came the first blow to Lajpat Rai's friendship with Harkishan Lal.

"As Secretary," he records in his autobiography, "my brother had done something under Harkishan Lal's orders in which another director was concerned. The transaction brought a loss to the Bank, and the Board asked the manager to submit his explanation to Lala Harkishan Lal. My brother showed Lala Harkishan Lal his own signed instructions under which he had acted. Lala Harkishan Lal wanted Dalpat Rai to destroy the document. By refusing to do so, he incurred Lala Harkishan Lal's displeasure, and resigned."

Harkishan Lal, it seems, made the unpleasantness more acrimonious by deferring refund of the ten thousand rupees that Dalpat Rai had had to deposit as security.

Says Lajpat Rai: This amount was not paid back by the Board till after my brothers' death, although this occurred more than a

year after his having resigned the bank job. This amount my brother had borrowed from me and he left unhappy about it even in his last moments.”

The second blow to this friendship came not long after. Harkishan Lal found that the Punjab National Bank Board did not suit him. He floated the People's Bank but when his term as director of the Punjab National Bank expired he sought re-election. The Arya Samaj group put up Lajpat Rai against him. This was the first direct duel between the two, and Lajpat Rai won.

“I was elected in his place,” says Lajpat Rai in his autobiography, “but lasting unpleasantness was left behind; and it became further accentuated by the squabbles over Congress funds, In the Bharat Insurance Company too, differences with an ugly aspect arose between Mul Raj and Harkishan Lal. In fact Mul Raj was so embittered that the ruination of Harkishan Lal seemed to have become the mission of his life.”

Harkishan Lal and the Arya Samajists did not get on well together and this rather tended to wean the Samajists from the Congress movement. Dyal Singh Majithia, who founded several philanthropic trusts and started *The Tribune*, took keen interest in the affairs of the Punjab Congress. The 1893 session had been invited to the Punjab by Bakhshi Jaishi Ram, a leading light of the Lahore bar as well as of the Arya Samaj and a prominent leader of the D.A.V. College group. But the Arya Samajists as such took little interest in the affairs of the Congress. The ‘Mahatma’ group on principle was opposed to all dabbling in politics, particularly under ‘disloyal’ auspices. Mul Raj, though anxious to play the part of a leader from behind the scenes, had clearly expressed his hostility to the Committee. Dyal Singh and Jogendra Chandra Bose, a leading Brahmo Samajist, remained prominent figures in the Punjab Congress. Harkishan Lal became a great favourite with Dyal Singh, and identified himself completely with his politics. In the 1893 session as during the years that followed Congress affairs in

the Punjab were mainly in the hands of Dyal Singh and Harkishan Lal.

In 1900 Lahore was privileged to have a second Congress session. Dyal Singh had died in 1898. Bakhshi Jaishi Ram had kept up a consistent interest in politics and by 1900 he had built up good influence in his own circle. In this session, therefore, the Arya Samajists evinced more zeal than they had done on the previous occasion. They were methodical, trained hands and the suggestion came from them that instead of wasting money on a temporary *pandal*, they should erect a large hall in which the Congress session might be held and which would remain a permanent structure. It was thus that Bradlaugh Hall came into being, though some of the Arya Samajists did not quite like the hall being named after a foreigner.

Differences arose again between the Arya Samajists and Harkishan Lal amongst other things over the accounts of the Congress session. Bakhshi Jaishi Ram died a few months before the session, much mourned by his numerous friends and by the D.A.V. College. The Chairman of the Reception Committee, Baba Kali Prasanna Roy, referred to him as "the light and life of the Congress movement in this province". By Jaishi Ram's death political life in the Punjab received a great setback.

Did, Harkishan Lal share the misgivings of some of the Samajists regarding the Congress ? Later when some of the Arya Samaj leaders, in the difficult days of 1907, protested in the name of 'Hindu interests' and dissociated themselves from all 'disloyal' activity, Harkishan Lal was seen with them, and not with those under a cloud. Lajpat Rai possibly has these loyalty deputations of 1907 in mind when he says that "Harkishan Lal's political outlook was the same as that of the Samajists, but ostensibly he was a Congressman."

When the Congress met in Lahore in 1900, two opposite camps had already been formed in the public life of the province—Harkishan Lal's camp and that of the Arya Samaj. The

founder of the Tribune Trust, Dyal Singh, had nominated Harkishan Lal as a trustee in his will. In Dyal Singh's life time the Arya Samajists had no grievance against the paper, but things changed when Harkishan Lal began to control it. At the time of the Lahore Congress (1900) the *Tribune* was already Harkishan Lal's paper.

The Arya Samajist leaders began to think whether they had not better start a paper of their own. Political life in the Punjab had been completely snuffed out, as it were, after the 1900 session in the Bradlaugh Hall. There was not much work being done by the Punjab Congress at any time, but now even the little that it did was far from smooth.

“The disputes about the accounts of the 1900 Congress session,” we read in the autobiography, “were never properly settled. Therefore, whenever the Committee met, these controversies came to the surface. At last Lala Harkishan Lal stopped calling any meetings. Besides, Harkishan Lal himself fell out with the Congress leaders. The Indian Association had already gone to slumber. The Punjab was left without any political life whatever and took no conspicuous part in the agitation seen in other provinces during the early days of Lord Curzon's viceroyalty.”

The administration grew utterly indifferent to public opinion and before long the Punjab leaders realised that if they were not to be trampled upon in contempt, they must bestir themselves and revive politics in the Punjab. Again and again during 1903 and 1904 the Arya Samaj leaders took stock of the situation. The political movement must be revived. The question was how? The Congress Committee was moribund and in the hands of Harkishan Lal; the Indian Association was almost dead; the *Tribune*, entirely under Harkishan Lal's dictation, was unfriendly and its politics were becoming execrable. What seemed indicated in their many consultations was a political paper of their own. An honest vigorous journal for the Punjab would not be a bad corollary to the Harkishan Lal problem.

The Punjabee

LAJPAT RAI ENTERED on the new century with horizons very much widened, and still widening every day. The Arya Samaj and the Punjab were beginning to look too small to utilise fully the new energy that he felt surging within him and seeking appropriate outlets. The Punjab was coming to know him more as the author of those booklets on Mazzini and Garibaldi that were stimulating a new national awakening and a passion for freedom than as a leader in a socio-religious movement. The smaller things were all right in their own place but his spirit yearned for a big epic theme.

The Congress seemed too tame as yet to serve this purpose, but it had potentialities. There seemed to be no hot blood coursing in its veins. But given such a galvanising force, it could certainly serve.

After the 1900 session of Lahore the Punjab, as we have seen, was experiencing one of its periodic lapses in apathy. Even Harkishan Lal who was supposed to be running the Congress seemed to have had enough of it. All this was not much to the liking of Lajpat Rai. He began to devote his time and attention more and more to work directly political, and ere long he realised that the first and supreme need for making such work effective was a newspaper. He and those of his way of thinking did not believe that the existing press was willing to do its share in laying those sound foundations of popular education without which no political superstructure worth the name could be built up.

One day a situation arose which was simply unbearable. The editor of the leading Indian paper of Lahore had shown himself unworthy of any confidence and ignorant of the fundamentals of journalistic ethics by handing over to the Principal of the Government College the original manuscript of an anonymously published communication from some of his students. The students were victimized. Following this, Lajpat Rai and his friends could no longer resist the conclusion that a paper of their own must be started at once. Ten of them met and agreed to put in if need be and to lose a thousand rupees apiece in the venture. They lost nothing, in fact, for they chose for manager a man with a sound business instinct, Jaswant Rai, a lecturer at the D.A.V. College. *The Punjabee* so the paper was named—was launched in October 1904, From its very first issue it confirmed the public expectation that it would take a bold stand. The policy of the paper, it was well known, would be generally guided and controlled by Lajpat Rai. He appointed K.K. Athavale as editor, at the suggestion of Tilak, and himself wrote signed articles quite frequently, besides almost regularly writing unsinged editorials. *The Punjabee* was not meant to be just one more newspaper. It was definitely intended to work week after week, and in a variety of ways, for the creation of a new political consciousness in the Punjab. Whatever it may have appeared to be to other people, to Lajpat Rai it was no doubt a weekly continuation of the work started years ago by his Mazzini booklet. The task in both cases was the same: journalism was just one more medium of preaching the same gospel. And an effective one too, for it dealt in concrete terms with the day-to-day application of that gospel. He started *The Punjabee* because it was necessary to ship up a lazy public opinion that had steadily grown more indolent during the past three years. He felt too that the time was at hand when it would be proved how salutary and timely this castigation had been.

Judged by the standards of today. *The Punjabee* was not a great newspaper. Judged by the standards of tomorrow, it will

appear to be a poorer thing still. It was an eight-page weekly, turned out by an insignificant press. It had no resources for news 'stories'-in those days such journalistic singnification of 'story' did not seem familiar in Indian newspaper office-nor an elaborate staff to prepare a varied banquet. What are called 'features' were then unknown. A half-tone block was a rarity, for to get one made you had to go to Bombay or Poona or Calcutta. Typography and make-up tricks had not yet been mastered by many news editors, and the readers were none too fastidious in these matters. *The Punjabee* might appear crude in its ways; but it was alert and effective. It knew what to say and how to say it with its real purpose ever in view-preparing the Punjab for the big battle inevitably coming and already instinctively being anticipated, if not so much by the older Congress leaders, certainly by some of the younger ones, and by Lajpat Rai who always seemed to sense in a mysterious instinctive manner the coming on a big events. For this object *The Punjabee* worked most effectively; week after week, the local grievances, police high-handedness and race arrogance were dealt with in its columns. Then there were India-wise issued like the Universities Bill of Lord Curzon, and foreign and international events which could be used to further the same end. From the very beginning *The Punjabee* devoted great attention to the lessons of the Japanese victories against Czarist Russia. These victories were going to affect the awareness of the entire East and *The Punjabee* saw to it that its readers did not escape the invigorating influence.

The big battle that Lajpat Rai and *The Punjabee* were preparing for soon came-perhaps sooner than they expected. In Bengal it arrived with proconsul Curzon's bureaucratic act in cutting up the Presidency into two; in the Punjab it came with the Lieutenant Governor Ibbetson's Land and Canal Colony laws. *The punjabee* played an important role both in creating public opinion on these issues and in giving a true and bold expression to it when the agitation had become a swelling, onward rushing tide.

Bombay Congress Session

THE PUNJABEE GROUP decided to renew contacts with the Congress and accordingly they sent a contingent of delegates to the 1904 session in Bombay. Lajpat Rai and his friend Dwarka Das (after whom Lajpat Rai and his friend Dwarka Das (after whom Lajpat Rai named the library he presented to the Servants of the People Society) were amongst the prominent leaders of this group in the Congress session. The Congress did not yet have much fight in it and it did little 'constructive work'. It held sort of an annual festival at which its orators gave excellent account of themselves. Its chief purpose till then seems to have been to give a public expression to the year's grievances (in addition to the stock or standing grievances). It remained a somewhat amorphous body. The Arya Samajists, used to well-nit organisations and well-planned public work, did not much admire the ways of the Congress. They urged again, with Lajpat Rai and Dwarka Das as their spokesmen, the need for a constitution that would set up machinery for sustained work throughout the year. But in this second attempt they were easily snuffed out by Sir Pherozeshah Mehta, who at that time was the grand potentate of the Congress.

However, this session proved of some consequence to Lajpat Rai in another way, as we shall presently see.

Immediately after it he took a boat to Sri Lanka, looked at and admired the landscape and the seascape of the Malabar coast, and on his way back made a pilgrimage to Rameshwaram, and visited the famous temple of Madurai. This was his first visit

to the south. For three days he stayed at Madras as the guest of G. Subramania Iyer and then proceeded to Calcutta.

It was in the course of these wanderings after the 1904 Congress session that he had his first significant meeting with Gokhale, who happened to be in Calcutta for the Supreme council, Gokhale took him as a visitor to the Council which was that day discussing a validating bill in regard to the irregularities of Curzon's University Act. He heard Gokhale speak from the non-official side. He heard other speeches too and recorded that "the mockery of the whole thing made a great impression on my mind"!

Feeling sore at the policies initiated by Curzon, the Congress leaders decided on sending a deputation to the Viceroy. Curzon refused to see the Congress President and thus 'slapped the Congress in the face'. The leaders "felt offended, they fretted and fumed... resolved to appeal to the British public". To place the grievances of India before the British public, therefore, the Bombay session decided to send out a deputation at the time of the impending general elections in England. Gokhale suggested that Lajpat Rai should be one of the proposed deputation to England, and Lajpat Rai readily agreed, feeling that he could be of use to the deputation, and that the experience abroad would certainly be worth his while. The contact with Gokhale he valued highly, and soon a friendship based on mutual esteem grew up between the two for the sake of which Lajpat Rai later made sacrifices without ever regretting them. The political outlook of the two was not identical, and in days that soon followed the difference became accentuated, but that never meant a clash.

Through Gokhale he made certain other notable contacts in Calcutta, and he esteemed that with Sister Nivedita as a rare experience. Possible he was already acquainted with her writing on "aggressive Hinduism" and kindred subjects. The Arya Samaj was nothing if not "aggressive Hinduism" and by now his Arya Samaj had become a good deal liberalised. In interpreting Hinduism the emphasis in his outlook too was on the

underlying genius of Hinduism rather than on this or that sectarian dogma. In action, the emphasis was on an all-round liberation of the people, particularly political liberation. He had not accepted Vedantism as his father had done, but he had now culture and understanding enough to be able to appreciate the beauty of that philosophy. Nivedita was working in the cultural and spiritual fields; he more and more in the political and active sphere. But they could understand each other well. The contact developed into one of two kindred souls. They talked politics also and talked without reservation. On their way to the office of Mr. S.K. Radcliffe (who was then editing *The Statesman*) they had a frank exchange of views.

“I can never forget,” he wrote afterwards, “the things I heard on the way from her lips. She was a great hater of British raj, and a great lover of Indians. In politics she stood for the just principles that Mazzini had expounded. In short, this interview further confirmed me in my own convictions and gave me profound joy.”

It left behind sweet memories. When in later years he some times recalled them, he did so in a joyous mood and they came forth fresh and fragrant like treasured things perennially laid up in lavender.

With Gokhale in England

THE GENERAL ELECTIONS in Britain were delayed. The British voter, supposed to be the ultimate master of the British Parliament, could not thus have the pleasure of conveniently receiving in audience the delegation from India for the next few months. Gokhale changed his plans. The day (May 10, 1905) Lajpat Rai was starting from Lahore, he received a telegram saying that Gokhale had been advised by Sir William Wedderburn, head of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, to put off his visit till July and had done so accordingly. Lajpat Rai found this extremely awkward; he had completed his preparations for his first visit to Europe and his friends at Lahore had already given him a grand fare well. All that might now appear to have been much ado about nothing. General elections or no, he was not going to alter his plans.

As Lajpat Rai found out subsequently, Wedderburn had merely intimated the election schedule-which was misunderstood in Bombay as suggesting a like change in Indian delegate's schedule!

He kept his schedule. On his way to Bombay he halted at Poona where during his brief stoppage he was the guest partly of Gokhale and partly of Tilak and the next day he set sail.

He could not continue the unsigned editorials for *The Punjabee*, but he took the earliest opportunity of sending it letters about his travels and activities abroad. His travelogue detailed his impression of Port Said and of Naples and Rome

and Milan-places that he visited *en route*. On June 10, 1905 he arrived in London.

Some propaganda on behalf of the Indian National Congress, which was already a 20-year-old organisation, was being conducted in London by an India Committee of which Sir William Wedderburn was the chairman. This committee issued a small monthly about Indian affairs called *India*. The Congress was annually voting substantial sums for this journal. Dadabhai Naoroji too was in England most of the time. He lived in South Kensington and devoted much of his time to canvassing support for the Indian cause. He had already presided over a Congress session in 1886 and again in 1893. Dadabhai had a pathetic faith in the Englishman's "instinctive love of justice and fair-play" and most of his time was spent in appealing in vain to this "instinctive love" on behalf of India. Dadabhai and Wedderburn were the chief spokesmen of the Indian National Congress in England.

Younger and keener men were very much dissatisfied with the tame and staid politics of Congress leaders and of their India Committee in London, Shyamji Krishna Verma was the moving spirit and leader of this younger group. Shyamji had started as a disciple of Swami Dayananda, at whose recommendation Professor Monier Williams, the renowned Sanskritist, had taken him to England for help in his researches. After qualifying there for the bar, Shyamji had returned to India, tried his hand at a few odd jobs in the course of a few years and then finally left India, finding conditions in this country too uncongenial for a lover of freedom. He seemed to have settled down in London. He had been deeply influenced by the writings of Herbert Spencer and when he started a journal in England he called it the *Indian Sociologist*. Sociology own is vogue largely to Herbert Spencer and the name of the journal was intended to proclaim the Spencerian leanings of its editor in social thought. This journal made vigorous attacks on the Congress leaders, on Gokhale and Dadabhai and on the British friends of the Congress. It was a sort of

counterblast to *India*. Shyamji was a difficult man to get on with, and though he was initially considered the brain and the chief inspirer of the Indian revolutionary movement abroad, he made no lasting friendship and attracted no loyal disciple. For one thing, his stinginess was a serious limitation. He could make money always, but was ever loath to part with it. All the same, he acted as a very potent influence in creating discontent against the sober and staid politics of the Congress leaders.

“To say that Har Dayal and Savarkar were his ‘disciples’ would be to belittle these two great men, but there can be no doubt that Shyamji’s ideas did influence them,” writes Lajpat Rai, and the implication clearly is that since Har Dayal and Savarkar are known to have influenced the entire revolutionary movement, Shyamji’s role may not be dismissed lightly merely because of this lack of devoted disciples. In 1905 Shyamji was very active with his *Indian Sociologist* and with his India House, a hostel intended to attract Indian students. He called on Lajpat Rai at his hotel and exchanged notes with him and invited him to stay at India House an invitation availed of somewhat later.

The India House in Highgate was formally opened about this time, and Lajpat Rai was present on that occasion.

For about a month Lajpat Rai toured about visiting the English counties and Scotland, addressing meetings for the cause he represented, and when he got back to London in August responding to Shyamiji’s invitation he put up at the India House.

However, his stay at the India House could not have found favour in the eyes of some of the members of the India Committee of the Congress in London. When one day Shyamji and Lajpat Rai addressed a Labour or Socialist meeting in Holborn Hall in favour of Home Rule, a flutter could be seen in the India Committee dovecots. Lajpat Rai had not yet moved in to Shyamji’s India House. The meeting had been called by

a labour organisation and Lajpat Rai invited by Dadabhai Naoroji, its vice-president.

Lajpat Rai Writes:

“When Sir Henry cotton learnt that Shyamji and myself had made speeches from the same platform in favour of Home Rule, he felt greatly annoyed and brought a motion before the British Committee to the effect that as I was in England as a delegate such conduct on my part was objectionable.”

Sir William Wedderburn, however, did not support Sir Henry and Lajpat Rai himself “made it plain that by becoming a Congress delegate I had not bartered away my liberty, that though my speech contained nothing to which a Congressman could take exception, if it was suggested that (being a ‘delegate’) I had no liberty to express my views in that country, I was quite prepared to resign from the delegation, but would in no case sacrifice my freedom.”

Sir Henry Cotton at last put the blame on the inaccurate reporting of the speech and the incident was closed.

Lajpat Rai would not lightly let his freedom be taken away, and he exercised it fully. He addressed meetings in Manchester, Edinburgh, Liverpool and elsewhere. Gokhale had also arrived. Often they spoke from the same platform. Sometimes they toured about and spoke separately. They delivered their message to the British voter leaving, of course, the decision to his good sense.

In an article on India and British party politics, contributed to *The Punjabee*, Lajpat Rai wrote that there was nothing to choose between Liberals and Tories and the only people from whom some friendship might be expected were Labourites. (Till then the Labour group was only a part of the Liberal party). Through Shyamji and Lajpat Rai made some friendships in radical circles. He particularly mentions the British socialist writer, H.M. Hyndman and some of the Irish leaders.

The Gaekwad of Baroda who also happened to be in London, gave a reception at the Cecil where he was staying. The guests

included Lajpat Rai and Shyamji, these constituting two-thirds of the entire number of Indian guests. They were introduced to Her Highness the Maharanee. The Gaekwad whispered to them asking them not to hurry away when the reception broke up. They stayed on after the English guest had departed and had a talk "in which the Maharaja laid bare his heart before us", to render Lajpat Rai's Urdu literally. "the blisters of a scorched heart".

Before returning to India Lajpat Rai made a brief trip to the United State, in the company of Dewan Badri Nath, the scion of a well-known family of Punjab 'chiefs', at that time a young man with progressive views.

In October he was back again in London and Sir William Wedderburn had drawn up the programme of another lecture tour for him. Both he and Gokhale addressed a large number of meetings, several of these, particularly Lajpat Rai's, arranged under Labour auspices.

Gokhale's choice of Lajpat Rai as a fellow-delegate to England had been readily endorsed by the Punjab branch of the Indian Association and it had sent round an appeal for money for the delegate's expenses. On his return to Lahore Lajpat Rai announced that the three thousand or so thus collected had remained intact to be used for other public causes. It may be that his earnings at the bar for this year went to political work abroad instead of the D.A.V. College.

The New Spirit

EARLY IN NOVEMBER 1905 Lajpat Rai left the shores of England, at Marseilles taking the very steamer *S.S. Peninsuler*, by which Lord Minto was coming to India to take over an Viceroy, landing in Bombay on November 17.

At Lahore an unprecedented welcome awaited him. A huge crowd had collected on the platform and outside the railway station and just as he stepped out of his compartment, a very distinguished citizen, the Brahma leader, Babu Jogendra Chandra Bose lifting him up put him on his shoulders. He could thus be seen by the eager crowd and at the same time be spared the jostling. As he got into his carriage, the students unharnessed the horses, themselves drawing the carriage for the three km. and more right into his Court Street house. The students simply adored Lajpat Rai and when the round of parties and addresses of welcome started, they by no means lagged behind-even those of the Government Colleges came forward with their address of welcome.

As he looked round, he could immediately read the portents foreshadowing big events. For the Arya Samaj anniversary he had of course been announced, and that had drawn such an unexpectedly big crowd that the meeting had to be adjourned to improvise adequate arrangements. He addressed the crowd later in the D.A.V. College hostel. It was at his meeting that he said that the credit for whatever was good in him belonged to the Samaj. However, the speech became more memorable for certain other passages in it. For, it was in this speech that later on the official apologists sought justification

for his deportation. In concluding the speech he foresaw “blood raining down from the Indian sky. At the moment it was a seemingly clear sky but tiny red specks were already visible.”

The Lajpat Rai menace in C.I.D. records was obviously swelling. The “blood raining” speech was followed soon after by this one threatening “unpleasant consequences” and, besides, perpetrating the dangerous heresy of “conditioned loyalty” Lahore, where a short while before the official had thought all was so quiet, had galvanised of a sudden and become so dangerous. That the very first meeting of protest against a lathi charge in far-off Barisal would be held at Lahore must have seemed incredible to the official mind. Shocked and bewildered, officialdom had to wake up to an intolerable state of affairs, and to the new phenomenon of Lajpat Rai’s Lahore, Lajpat Rai’s Punjab.

And it was not imported or vicarious resentment. The Punjab had its own grievances in the new land measures.

A measure restricting the alienation of land had been enacted. This evoked much hostility, but it was supported by the classes which it sheltered in its ample schedules as “agriculturist”. Lajpat Rai and *The Punjabee* opposed the bill. At the next Congress session a resolution was passed against this measure. Later on when the Congress saw that a large body of Muslim landholders supported the measure as affording just protection to their rights, it dropped its opposition.

Far more intense was the opposition to Ibbetson’s Land Colonisation Bills. Here Hindu, Sikh and Muslim, urban and rural, agriculturist and non-agriculturist joined hands, and soon the Punjab was in the grip of a whirlwind agrarian agitation. We shall have to speak of this agitation in a later chapter.

A few days after the Barisal conference, the Congress met for its annual session at Banaras. For the first time “left” and “right”, then styled “extremists” and “moderates”, openly clashed.

In Bengal the new spirit had been visible in the columns of Aurobindo's *Bandemataram*. In Maharashtra Tilak's party decried the moderate methods of Gokhale and his followers. In the Punjab Lajpat Rai was already the idol of the people, especially of the younger generation, and he had left little doubt in anybody's mind that he was with Tilak and Aurobindo and Bipin Chandra Pal, rather than with Gokhale and Dadabhai Naoroji, and Pheroza Shah Mehta.

At Banaras the new spirit loomed large; all round there was far more of fervour than had been witnessed at previous Congress sessions. The presidential procession with its enthusiastic scenes was a flattering homage to the moderate leader, Gokhale; but the fervour was engendered not by moderatism but entirely by the new spirit. In the presidential carriage with Gokhale was his colleague in England, Lajpat Rai, and he recorded afterwards:

"The citizens of Banaras gave a splendid reception to Gokhale. I was sitting in the same carriage with him. On the footboard stood a volunteer whose shouts deafened the ears. Looking at this reception one thought that the nation's evil days were coming to an end. Gokhale was joyous. "If only we had worked, there would be enough appreciation and fervour amongst the people, observed he, and tears were seen in his eyes. It was a wonderful sight indeed."

Lal-Bal-Pal

THE YEAR NINETEEN hundred and six but underlined the changed temper as seen at Banaras. The more virile element had definitely made its presence felt at the Congress session in the holy city. An annual iteration of neatly drafted resolutions, supported by superb oratory with rounded periods that won applause and yet left the people cold and the alien ruler unperturbed could no longer do. Not words, but dynamic action, mass agitation that would know no rest till it had won something worthwhile. A basic law of dynamics about action and reaction being opposite and equal could be seen very well illustrated. The bureaucracy under Curzon had been in a correspondingly high mood, feeding the resentment against his Universities. Act and against his bisection of Bengal, and against numerous other unpopular doings the cumulative effect of which was enormous. Curzon, went away in 1905, but the imperious mood continued an part of the legacy left behind by him. The New Party-as the very assertive school of thought represented by the advanced nationalists in Bengal by Pal and Aurobindo and the *Bandemataram*, in Maharashtra by Tilak and his *Kesari*, and by Lajpat Rai the *The Punjabee* in the Punjab came to be characterised-were intensifying their campaign of swadeshi and boycott. The vows and pledges in Bengal, originally binding "till the annulment of the partition", were now made absolute. The boycott of British goods, particularly of British cloth, was becoming stiffer. The indents to Manchester, made not by political enthusiasts but by hard-headed Marwaris when they ushered in their new

year, in the winter of 1906 shrank very nearly to the vanishing point. The boycott was far from becoming as ridiculous as its critics had prophesied. On the contrary, it was being effectively preached from a thousand house-tops and being enforced by a thousand volunteer pickets. The national education movement was affecting the mind of the students. They picketed White-way Laidlaw's in Calcutta, and fashionable ladies had to accept with good grace their brotherly supplication, unless they were prepared literally to trample over the pickets' bodies.

Curzon's fiat had created a new province in East Bengal. But when the Lieutenant Governor of this province wanted to buy a piece of Manchester mull in Barisal, his men were told at the stores that they would have first to obtain the write of Aswini Kumar Dutta, the New Party leader of East Bengal!

Bipin Chandra Pal, as the chief orator of the New Party, was widening the scope of "boycott" so as to include all avoidable association with the alien ruler or his governmental machine—to signify in fact an attitude that a decade later was adopted under the colourless negative label of "non-co-operation" with Pal's customary vehemence attacking the NCO programmes.

Things were taking a serious turn, and the bureaucracy seemed definitely jittery. In a fluster they were led to so many things that revealed symptoms of psychosis. There was an infamous circular regarding students and the Swadeshi movement in Calcutta about which the leading Anglo-Indian paper, *The Statesman*, wrote:

"We should really like to know the name of the imbecile official at whose instance the Lieutenant-Governor sanctioned this order. Government has blundered apparently into a childish and futile policy which can only have the effect of manufacturing an army of martyrs."

Most infamous of the many circulars, perhaps, was the one in East Bengal that forbade the shouting of *Bandemataram* in public. A direct result of this circular was the crisis precipitated when the Bengalis assembled all their heavy artillery

in a provincial conference at Barisal in April. Surendranath Banerjea was arrested and the meeting broken up by regulation lathis. There was intense resentment against the brutalities at Barisal. In Lajpat Rai's Lahore, as we have seen, a public meeting voiced this resentment promptly and vigorously, and Lahore's lead was followed in principal towns in different parts of India. Bengal, Maharashtra and the Punjab were regarded as the strongholds of "extremism". Undoubtedly the Punjab was in the thick of the fight.

The movement acquired fresh strength from the lathis used at Barisal. The year was to close with the Congress session at Calcutta. The moderate leaders of the Congress had reason to be nervous. To prevent things passing completely into the hands of the "extremists" they got Dadabhai Naoroji to come from England and guide the deliberations from the presidential chair, even though that meant for him the adventure of a long voyage in his 82nd year. Dadabhai was respected by the extremist wing as much as by the moderates. His presence prevented the cleavage from becoming patent though the difference in outlook between the two groups could escape no discerning eye.

On the whole, the Calcutta congress was a further triumph for the more virile elements. Its resolutions endorsed swadeshi and boycott (though not in the all-out Pal style) and national education, the three-fold programme of the Bengal school. What is more, Dadabhai Naoroji himself in his presidential address, hit upon a potent word which was to serve as an even greater rallying cry than swadeshi. It was he who first uttered the word "Swaraj" from the Congress rostrum. "Swaraj, Swadeshi, Boycott" now became the thrice-sacred *mantram* of nationalism.

Writes Lajpat Rai: "This session, satisfied the nationalists very much, whilst some of the moderates were grumbling at the impropriety of the ideas so boldly expounded by the leader whom they had brought over from England in the expectancy of having a moderate address. But that was the only possible

thing to do in Bengal at that juncture. Any other course would have jeopardised the very existence of the Congress.

A tonsorial casualty deserves to be noted here. Like many of the Arya Samaj leaders of his day Lajpat Rai had worn a long beard for many years. Bengali crowds had of course given a most enthusiastic welcome to Dadabhai Naoroji, the President-elect. But the Lal-Bal-Pal phase in Indian politics had already set in, and Bengal of course was overwhelmingly aligned with this school, and emphatic evidence of this was afforded by the extraordinary fervour with which teeming crowds paid their homage to their two idols from Maharashtra and the Punjab. As he alighted from the train at the Howrah railway station the beard served a distinctive emblem for the crowds to spot the Lala from a distance.

Yet, at the start of the Congress session when the chairman called upon Lajpat Rai to second Dadabhai's name for the presidency it was someone without a beard that walked up to the rostrum. The audience felt puzzled-but as soon as the would be seconder opened his lips, his voice dispelled all doubts. The voice that could hold such sway was the real Lala, not the beard.

He had arrived at the house of his host, Rai Bahadur Rallia Ram (a Punjabi and Arya Samajist, serving as Superintending Engineer in the Bengal Eastern Railway), with a flowing beard, and from there arrived at the Congress session with a clean chin. In fact many of his admirers who had assembled in the evening to meet him at his host's residence had to keep enquiring-but where is Lalaji himself, till in puzzlement they heard the Lala's voice come out of a beardless source! He never again grew a beard, though his moustache remained intact till the last.

The closing months of 1906, as also the early ones of 1907, were quite a stormy period. In the Punjab loud and resounding as were the echoes of the boycott started in Bengal, more important than these and far more important than the resentment amongst the educated classes against the Curzonian ways was the crop of grievances raised by Lieutenant-Governor.

Sir Denzil Ibbetson, through his Canal Colonies legislation and his measures increasing water rates and land revenue. In Bengal the movement was mostly a *bhadralok* affair; in the Punjab an agrarian situation was fast developing.

Bengal had its *Bandemataram* edited by Aurobindo and Maharashtra Tilak's *Kesari*, the Punjab had *The Punjabee*, with Athavale as its editor, but guided and controlled, as every one knew, by Lajpat Rai. He was himself virtually the editor. His morning routine usually included a visit to the press to pass the final proofs. *The Punjabee*, started as a weekly, had now three issues instead of one every week. Its circulation and influence were increasing. The Government's annoyance with it was naturally increasing too. Every now and then there were rumours that *The Punjabee* was getting into trouble; but though it took a bold line, its proofs were scrutinized by Lajpat Rai as a careful lawyer.

At last, however, the Government initiated a prosecution against its editor, K.K. Athavale, and its printer, Jaswant Rai. Objection was taken to an article calling attention to the mystery surrounding the death of a police constable. This appeared in an issue not seen by Lajpat Rai in proof, otherwise the article might not have been permitted to stand as it was, though it may be doubted whether that could have averted a prosecution against *The Punjabee* on one ground or another. The proceedings, as could be expected, made *The Punjabee* more popular and more influential than ever, particularly as the facts contained in the article were widely believed to be true. The paper enlisted Muslim sympathy too, for the constable in whose death it had interested itself was a Mussalman. Jaswant Rai and Athavale were arrested, bailed out, tried, convicted and awarded hard labour.

The Punjabee trial added a good deal to the excitement and the tension in the Punjab. The day its editor and printer were sentenced marked one of the peaks of excitement in Lahore in that period.

Later, the Sessions Court reduced Jaswant Rai's sentence to six months. An appeal was taken to the Chief Court.

About this time Gokhale was touring in northern India, Lajpat Rai and Gokhale now were generally supposed to belong to different schools of political thought, but the mutual personal esteem had no whit been affected, Lajpat Rai invited Gokhale to Lahore on behalf of the Indian Association (of which he was the President then) and Gokhale readily accepted the invitation. He arrived in Lahore the day of the exciting happenings just described-when Jaswant Rai was jailed for two years and bailed out. The crowd that in the morning cheered *The Punjabee* heroes and jeered at the Anglo-Indian reporter arrived in the afternoon at the railway station to receive Gokhale. He was given a grand reception. A wave of enthusiasm surged in the crowd. *The Punjabee* sentences and the continual friction between the crowd and the police had surcharged the atmosphere to a high voltage. But the pleasure of such an enthusiastic reception and of sky-rending shouts was somewhat marred for Gokhale when the procession arrived in Anarkali, and heroes of the day, Jaswant Rai and Athavale (already enlarged on bail) joined in, and the crowd without consulting either their wishes or Gokhale's convenience, simply lifted them and put them in the same carriage in which Gokhale, and at his insistence, Lajpat Rai were.

During *The punjabee* trial came a great bereavement. Dr. Jai Chand of Dehra Dun married to Lajpat Rai's only daughter, Parbati Devi, died, leaving behind a young widow and an only son just a few days old. Getting the news in the court room while in the middle of arguments for *The Punjabee* friends, Lajpat Rai felt the heavy blow; but with characteristic stoicism he refused to interrupt his work. He gave his son appropriate instructions, sent him off to Dehra Dun, and himself went on with the day's work. Most of his domestic affection was ever after reserved for the widowed Parbati. He interested her in his own work; she was quite a success at public meetings, and went to prison in the non-co-operation movement. Eight

years after his death, when the Congress fought elections to the reformed provincial assemblies, she was elected an M.L.A. from the Lahore women's constituency; but soon after she developed a serious illness and died in January 1938.

The Punjab in Revolt

THE YEAR NINETEEN hundred and seven sent the wave of agitation sweeping virtually through the entire land. In the Punjab it took on the form decidedly of an agrarian revolt and was generally described as the zamindar agitation. The 'zamindar' in the Punjab context mostly connotes a peasant proprietorship. The new land measures had created serious discontent and day by day this was becoming more and more vocal. The Canal Colonies bill created a stir among the peasantry of the canal-irrigated area; of this ferment Lyallpur, the principal Canal Colony town was the natural focus. In the western Punjab, Rawalpindi was as bad as Lyallpur, for there the Government had, most unreasonably, enhanced the land revenue as assessed by their own settlement officer. Lajpat Rai voiced the grievances but did not quite plunge into this agrarian agitation. He did not keep aloof either-the zamindars would not permit him to.

Ajit Singh, the 'Bharat Mata' firebrand, like his brother Kishan Singh (father of Bhagat Singh), had been a student at the Anglo-Sanskrit School, Jullundur, where Sunder Das, eldest son of the Arya Samaj leader Sain Das, was the headmaster. Ajit Singh was a favourite pupil of his, and in Lajpat Rai's opinion "there can be no doubt it was Lala Sunder Das who first inoculated the two brothers with the germs of patriotism". Lajpat Rai had known Kishan Singh as a relief worker under him in the 1897 famine in the Central Provinces. "He did excellent work there. When he returned with a batch of orphans, he was made superintendent of the newly started orphanage

at Lahore.” Lajpat Rai was the secretary of the orphanage for several years and had often occasion to see the superintendent, but does not seem to have been much impressed by his brother.

“Ajit Singh”. writes he, “was at that time a student of the D.A.V. College and had rather spendthrift habits... To me Kishan Singh appeared to be superior to his brother. At the 1906 Congress Ajit Singh was noticed at the meetings of the extremist group. He had besides started taking part in public debates and was writing for the press. With Sufi Amba Parshad he founded, in 1907, a society, called the ‘Bharat Mata’, and young men under its auspices openly promulgated the doctrines of the extreme wing and made vigourous speeches against the British Government.”

Lajpat Rai had no connection with ‘Bharat Mata’, and the young men conducting it did various things that he could not possibly have approved of. All the same, the young men looked up to him for help and were convinced that Lajpat Rai knew them to be patriotic, a claim they well understood to be irresistible for him.

“About his time.” writes Lajpat Rai, “Ajit Singh approached me repeatedly for financial aid, though he did not care to fulfil the conditions I laid down.”

Ajit Singh and his ‘Bharat Mata’ took a prominent part in the zamindar’s agitation. A Jat by birth, he had every right to speak in the name of the peasantry, but unlike many other Jats taking part in this agitation he and his brother were not merely interested in the repeal of the Colonies Act—they were using this agitation for creating discontent against Feringi Raj.

Ajit Singh was developing into an effective agitator. He toured about and addressed meetings all over the province, and everywhere people flocked to hear him. The Lyallpur Canal Colony, as one of the areas directly affected by the Colonies bill, was worked up more easily by the agitators than most other places. Amongst those concentrating on this area was Chowdhury Sahab-ud-Din, later a knighted Speaker of the

Punjab Legislative Assembly. Then he was a practising lawyer and took a very active part in the zamindar agitation.

Towards the end of March 1907 (or at the beginning of April) the Zamindar Association of Lyallpur sent an invitation to Lajpat Rai and followed it up with repeated reminders for an occasion when a cattle fair was being held at Lyallpur. Shahab-ud-Din called upon Lajpat Rai personally to press the invitation on him. One April 21 Lajpat Rai arrived there accompanied by Rai Bahadur Sukh Dayal (afterwards a High Court Judge in Jammu and Kashmir), Bakhshi Tek Chand, Ram Bhaj Dutt Chowdhury and Jaswant Rai.

Lyallpur and Rawalpindi became the storm centres. Ajit Singh had addressed audiences at Rawalpindi a few days before the Lyallpur meeting. Conspicuous amongst the local leaders at Rawalpindi were Hans Raj Sawhney and his brother Gurdas Ram Sawhney, both distinguished members of the bar and both active leaders of the Arya Samaj. Actuated by patriotic impulses, the Sawhney brothers were keen on politics, and attended annual meetings of the Indian National Congress. What is more to the point, they were among the ten guarantors of *The Punjabee*, which might be an added reason for the paper to take a keen interest in the 'Pindi affairs'. For some months the Deputy Commissioner of Rawalpindi, Mr. Agnew, has been subjected to scathing criticism in the news and editorial columns of *The Punjabee*. One of Ajit Singh's meetings at Rawalpindi was presided over by Gurdas Ram Sawhney. His brother, Hans Raj, and two other members of the bar, Janki Nath Kaul and Khazan Singh, also spoke at this meeting which had been convened by yet another leading light of the Rawalpindi bar, Amolak Ram.

All five of these gentlemen were asked by the District magistrate to show cause why they should not be disbarred for having participated in the meeting.

This notice caused a tremendous stir throughout the Punjab, for Lala Hans Raj and Lala Amolak Ram were much respected leaders of the province. Lajpat Rai arrived in Rawalpindi a day

prior to the hearing of the notice and learnt that the town had decided to observe a hartal whilst the court heard the notice.

The atmosphere in Rawalpindi seemed extremely tense. The notice to the five lawyers excited so much interest that on the day fixed for its hearing a huge concourse-estimates put it at 20,000-was seen at the court compound. A sort of anticlimax came when the District Magistrate-who arrived a couple of hours after the normal starting time-announced that "under instructions from the Punjab Government" further proceedings were being stayed. Lajpat Rai records "the crowd received this by cheering, and the news travelled quick like lightning."

Lajpat Rai was pressed to address the crowd-or at least to accompany it in a procession through the streets. He declined, though agreeing to address a regular public meeting in the evening.

While still in the Bar Room he heard that "the mob had forced its way into the bungalows of the Deputy Commissioner and the District Magistrate". Though messengers rushed to stop such activity it was believed agents provocateurs were at work to incite violence.

Things moved fast on both sides-rumours fastest of all!

"We were still in the court when we learnt that the military had been sent for to suppress the rioting and to arrest the rioters. We were told also that a Pathan regiment had shown some unwillingness in getting ready. A Pathan came to me saying that such and such regiment awaited my orders. I laughed and put him off-I suspected that man to be a spy.

The military put down the rioting and cast a large number of people into the lock-up, including some very prominent citizens and some educated young men. We were getting all the news but what could we do?"

The public meeting to be held in the evening was disallowed and given up. The next day's round up included Lajpat Rai's host-Amolak Ram-and the other notice case lawyers. Bail was refused and Lajpat Rai rushed back to Lahore to move the

Chief Court. Even there very unusual things happened. We read in Lajpat Rai's account:

“The judge decided that the application should be heard by a division bench, and that in the meanwhile the Government Advocate would ascertain from the Rawalpindi District Magistrate why the bail should not be granted.

Before the application came up for hearing, the District magistrate concerned came to the court with a letter from the Officer Commanding at Rawalpindi Addressed to the Chief Court Judges which presumably said that if the arrested leaders were let out on bail there might be a revolt among the Indian troops. The counsel for the accused were not permitted to see this letter though they applied for a copy. After formally hearing the arguments the judges decided not to allow bail.”

Spirited Away

THE MAN REALLY responsible for the entire mischief is still at large but will not so continue for long," so confided a high British official, the Registrar of the Chief Court, to Bodh Raj, then a member of the Chief Court bar, later a judge in Jammu and Kashmir. The man he referred to was Lajpat Rai.

Similar reports reached Lajpat Rai's ears from other sources too. A friend who had occasion to see some high European officials told him in confidence that "they were gnashing their teeth at the happenings, and that they believed that I was the source of all mischief and wanted me to be dealt with strongly and summarily" From another quarter he came to know that his speech at Lyallpur was being assiduously assayed for any seditious element in it.

Some of his friends suggested that he should leave Lahore and keep away till the storm had blown over. His reply to all such suggestions was that "having done nothing by which the authority of the law could be invoked against me and not being conscious of having done anything by which the executive arm of the government could legitimately be brought down on me, I feared neither the one nor the other".

A more amazing, and yet, in a way, a more definite report was brought by a friend on the authority of a person known to be in the confidence of high officials that he stood in danger of being "treated like Bhai Ram Singh", the founder-head of the Namdhari Sikhs, popularly known as the Kukas. In 1872, after 50 of his followers had been blown away, Guru Ram Singh

was deported without a trial to Burma under Regulation III of 1818, and had not been heard of since.

This led Lajpat Rai to look up Regulation III of 1818, Says he in his *The Story of my Deportation*:

“A perusal of the Regulation was, however, reassuring; as being fully conscious under the Regulation. I could not persuade myself to believe that the Punjab Government, presided over at the time by a man whose sense of his own resources as well as of the omnipotence of Anglo-Indian power in the Punjab was simply unbounded, would be likely to publish to the world such a confession of their weakness as the deportation of my humble self would be bound to imply. Having, however, prepared myself for the worst, the idea of an attempt to escape having not even for a moment entered my head, I set myself to do what I considered my duty towards my friends at Rawalpindi and towards my country. I wrote letters to some Indian leaders in the other provinces informing them of the situation in the Punjab, and also one to Sir William Wedderburn, President of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, enclosing certain papers on the administration of the Chenab Canal Colony. Two days before the English mail day, I sent a letter to a friend in England saying that I was posting early as there was no knowing if I would be free to write a letter on the mail day itself.”

The same day he wrote to his father-only his eldest son, Pyare Lal was with him at the time, the rest of the family being away at Ludhiana, because of an outbreak of plague at Lahore-of his impending arrest. In this letter the son made a “respectful prayer” to the father:

“Whatever might befall me you should not lose your presence of mind. One who plays with fire must take the chance of now and then getting his face burnt. Criticising the acts of the ruling authorities is playing with fire. If there is anything which ever disturbs me, it is the idea of the (consequent) trouble to you. I would, therefore, very much like to have your

assurance that my arrest will not upset you. Whatever comes should be manfully borne.”

So he was not altogether without warning. In fact he was fully resigned in advance to whatever the future might have in store for him. In his letter to his father he detailed certain instructions, in the spirit of a testament, for the mutation of his Jagraon properly in favour of his sons.

May 9 happens to be ‘mail day’, he sits down in the morning to do some letters for the English mail—also one for the press on the political situation in the Punjab. He is busy writing when Lala Hans Raj comes in at about 10, and asks him to come out with a few friends on a picnic. Lajpat Raj declines somewhat curtly: he has no time and is in no mood for picnics. His friends turn away. He finishes his writing, then his breakfast and again sat down on another letter or two. Having disposed of the morning’s work, he got ready to go to the Chief Court, mainly to engage a senior counsel for a client who had two days earlier left a sum of Rs. 350 with him for this purpose. He has just put the wad of currency notes in his pocket and ordered his carriage, when his Munshi announces two visitors.

He comes out and meets Inspector Ganga Ram of the Anarkali Police, and Munshi Rahmat Ullah of the City Police, both in Mufti. They bring a message that the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner want to see him urgently.

The Commissioner of Lahore had been sending for important people “to seek their intercession to allay the prevailing unrest”. Was Lajpat Rai too being invited for this mission of peace? He tells Inspector Rahmat Ullah that he has some business in court and would see the Commissioner a little later. The Inspector replies that the Commissioner is waiting at the District Office and wants him only for a few minutes; he might see the Commissioner first and then go to court.

This undue haste of course arouses suspicion. Smiling, Lajpat Rai says, “Very well, come in, my carriage is ready and we shall go together,” The carriage has hardly moved out of the gate when two European officials jump on to its steps like highwaymen in ambush. Mr. Rundle, the Superintendent of

Police, is known to Lajpat Rai and is duly asked into the carriage. At the District Police office-barely two minutes' drive from Lajpat Rai's house-the Commissioner, Mr. Young husband, conveys to Lajpat Rai the change in his civil station effected by a warrant issued by the governor-General in council.

So they had decided to treat him "like Bhai Ram Singh" The same Regulation had been invoked. Only it remains to be seen whether they lodge him like the Namdhari Guru somewhere in Burma or whether they choose some other place for his exile and confinement. At the moment all that is vouchsafed is a polite assurance that he would be treated with consideration.

The “Mutiny” Psychosis

BECAUSE OF THE Mutiny a great feat broods over the European community in India..... The Mutiny-that nightmare of innumerable savage hands suddenly upraised to kill helpless women and children-has been responsible for the waves of hysteria which from time to time have swept the European community and for a while made it a pathological case for pity and sympathy.... And there can be no doubt that the dramatic and heightened fashion in which the Mutiny has been pictured to us has been responsible for deeds that would have been impossible to Englishmen in their right frame of mind.”

To understand how the decision to deport Lajpat Rai under *lettre de cache* was taken, we must first examine the psychotic condition of the Anglo-Indian mind in 1907, for the Lieutenant—Governor and the Governor-General could not altogether be proof when the mind of the community fell a prey to a pandemic contamination.

The Anglo-Indian ruler had become so used to smooth easy ways, and to managing things on the strength of prestige, that on finding opposition gathering strength daily and hostile forces confronting him, he soon became panicky. In certain situations the Anglo-Indian mind was prone to fall a victim to the psychological legacy-1857 complex-of the ‘mutiny’ days. So in 1907 memories of 1857 began to haunt the Anglo-Indian mind. From 1857 to 1907 was exactly half a century. How ominous! Sure enough the same forces would be let loose

* Thompson Edward, *The Other Side of the Medal* (Third Edition), pp. 86-87

again. The Indian troops would again revolt, and unnameable things be done alike to soldier and civilian, even to woman and child, in cold blood! The Anglo-Indian press too showed acute symptoms of the "mutiny complex". At the clubs and messes gossip was day and night busy one with this topic. Sahibs, burra and smaller fry, saw blue devils everywhere (reds were not yet born!) the ghosts of 1857! They could swallow any story if it worked in the mutiny *motif*, Unscrupulous informers found this rather helpful.

The Anglo-Indian press could be seen drifting towards hysteria even before 1907. The 'tie-up' with 1857 made matters very much worse. The Anglo-Indian daily of Lahore was in a hysteric range and in its columns were published mad letters that asked for flogging of the educated people involved in political agitation. C.F. Andrews, then new to the ways of Anglo-India—he had not so long ago arrived in India to work as a professor at St. Stephens' College, Delhi—was shocked and wrote a letter of protest. Some time later, even the Bishop of Lahore, Dr. Lefrov, had to protest against the tone of the Anglo-Indian press, Lord Minto himself admitted (in confidential despatches to Whitehall, as we shall presently see), that the tone of these writings was disgracefully low; but the Punjab Government refused permission for the prosecution of the offenders.

Doped daily by these rabid prints, the Sahibs were quite willing to believe that there were plans a foot for a repetition of 1857—that quite a hundred thousand sepoy waited only for word from Lajpat Rai! The 1857 holocaust had started on May 10; for the dread half-centenary repeat performance too, May 10 became ominous. It distinctly had the 'ides of March' odour about it. As May 10 drew near, nightmarish shrieks could be heard hysterically insisting that something drastic must be done immediately. For that fateful date, it is said, the Sahibs at Lahore had made bandobust for their families to be given shelter in the Fort. The railway authorities too were said too have been asked to be ready to meet any emergent call.

Keir Hardie who visited India in 1907 found ample evidence of this pathological state of mind. At Delhi the municipal tax had been doubled Keir Hardie recalls this and observes:

“There was agitation and the tax was withdrawn. On May 10 there was a street fight between natives, over in five minutes. Reports were disseminated at the European club that dissolute Eurasians and natives had risen and were butchering Europeans. In the native city business and pleasure went on as usual.”

What amazed Keir Hardie most was, however, an Etawah happening in which Lajpat Rai's name figured. The episode afterwards came to be known as the 'Etawah hoax' and affords a helpful glimpse into the working of the Anglo-Indian mind in 1907.

It appears that at Etawah in the United Provinces the Hindu and Muslim parts of officialdom had for some time been working at cross purposes. The Hindus got the Muslim Kotwal transferred and succeeded in importing a Brahmin Deputy Superintendent of Police in his place. The Muslim-dominated departments and officials were therefore at loggerheads with the police. Nothing seems, however, to have happened (writes Keir Hardie) till the Lala Lajpat Rai affair arose in the Punjab. Shortly after the Magistrate (Mr. Rose) was informed confidentially by the Tahsildar (a Muslim) that they had reasons to believe that a subscription list on behalf of Lala Lajpat Rai had been circulated amongst the local Hindu officials, notably by Mr. Shyam Bihari Misra, Deputy Superintendent of Police, Mr. Pushri Prasad, Deputy Collector, and certain vakils, notably Mr. Jaswant singh, a Punjabi pleader practising at Etawah and that these people had in addition been carrying on a seditious correspondence with the various sections of the Arya Samaj. It was stated that it was possible to intercept such correspondence and immediate steps were taken to do so, Keir Hardie tells us:

“In due course nineteen letters were intercepted or at least were produced by Khalil (specially employed informer) as having been intercepted.... most of them being of a very inflamma-

tory and incriminating nature, though some were of a private nature, an important feature being the signature of one or other of the Hindu officials mentioned above. The Commissioner, of the Division. Mr. Coble, then made further enquires and assured everybody of the apparent genuine nature of documents. Mr. Sharpe, the Director of the Provincial Criminal Investigation Department, was summoned. He also agreed as to the seriousness of the case and advised a simultaneous search and inquiry at three other centres, viz., Unao, Kheri and Amritsar.

Meanwhile, however, a very extraordinary thing occurred. Mr. Rose had evidently been talking over the situation with the local commandant of volunteers, Capt. Adamson. There can be no doubt that all the local officers took a serious view of the case and were fairly hoaxed into the idea that the city was on the verge of rising and that the police were unreliable.

At all events the upshot of their discussions with the captain of the defenders of their hearths and homes was that the latter warned the volunteers at Tundla and Cawnpore to be in readiness to come to their rescue when wired for. In the interval, however, both Mr. Coble and Mr. Sharpe had arrived on the scene and they were followed shortly by the Inspector-General of Police himself. The latter for some unexplained reason took a completely different view of the case.... It is certain that he.... after a very cursory investigation announced his opinion that the letters were all forgeries and he succeeded in eliciting from the Inspector responsible for taking up the case that Khalil was certainly a man of bad character with a reputation as a swindler but without any convictions against him.... An acute difference of opinion between the officials making investigations arose. Mr. Rose was said to have protested that he was prepared to put the matter to test in a court of law, However, the Government accepted the Inspector-General's view and a warrant of arrest was issued against Khalil, who absconded. The Government reprimanded Mr. Braully and dealt more severely with Mr. Rose, perhaps because of the volunteer fiasco."

The Anglo-Indian officialdom could be made to swallow almost any preposterous story readily if the name of Lajpat Rai was somehow worked in. It imagined the whole town of Etawah as ready for a rising. "The loyalty of the police had been tampered with," It is said the Government was asked to make use of the Regulation of 1818 and had almost agreed to do so. Keir Hardie says that deportation warrants had actually been issued.

The Punjab Government was in a like frame of mind when it got Lajpat Rai deported.

The initiative for the arrest of Lajpat Rai of course came from the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, Sir Denzil Ibbetson, though it is not clear whose flash of genius it was that first thought of this new use for Regulation III of 1818. Ibbetson's own reactions to the stormy events of 1907 were reflected in a memorandum he drew up then. Minto sent on the gist of this to Morley, as we shall see later. The Indian Sedition Committee (1917), presided over by Justice Sir S.T. Rowlatt, examined this document and summarised portions of it in their report. After giving a short of regionwise summary of the minute, the Rowlatt report observed:

"The Lieutenant-Governor held that some of the leaders looked to driving the British out of the country or at any rate from power either by force or by the passive resistance of the people as a whole, and that the method by which they had set themselves to bring in the Government machine to a standstill was by endeavouring to stir up a strong feeling of racial hatred. He considered the whole situation 'exceedingly' dangerous and urgently demanding remedy."

The 'remedy' adopted was the deportation of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, as leaders of the movement, under the provisions of Regulation III of 1818. The proposed Canal Colony legislation too was vetoed by the Government of India but the suggestion that the root of the trouble was agrarian was not accepted by the Secretary of State, Lord (then Mr. John) Morley. Speaking in the House of Commons on June 6, 1907, he said:

“There were 28 meetings known to have been held by the leading agitators in the Punjab between 1st March and 1st May. Of these five only related, even ostensibly, to agricultural grievances, the remaining 23 were all purely political.”

Maintaining that the agitation in the Punjab was essentially agrarian in character and that the underlying causes were economic, Lajpat Rai thus corrected Morley's facts:

“The number of meetings held from March 1 to May 1907, was at the lowest calculation, at least double of 28, or perhaps treble, and *most of them* related even ostensibly to agricultural grievances; the number of purely political meetings could not have exceeded ten or twelve.”

Lajpat Rai's deportation was readily sanctioned by the Viceroy, Lord Minto. The 'Liberal' Secretary of State, 'honest John' (Lord Morley) was informed after the warrant had been issued. All the same, he defended it firmly in the House of Commons. What passed between the Viceroy and the Secretary of State may be seen partly in Lord Morley's *Recollections* and partly in Lady Minto's *India, Minto and Morley 1905-1910*.

On May 2, 1907 Minto wrote to Morley:

“Sir Henry Cotton not long ago asked you in the House of Commons about some letters which appeared in the *Civil and Military Gazette*. They were disgracefully low in tone, just the sort of writing to stir up racial hatred. The Punjab Government decided not to prosecute and would not allow private prosecution. They may have been right, but it makes one's blood boil to know that a leading English newspaper could publish such productions. We have written to the Lieutenant-Governor suggestion that, though no definite action is to be taken, he should see the Editor and point out the harm that is being done.”**

Six days later, Minto telegraphed to Morley:

“*Telegram (deciphered) Minto to Morley, May 8.*

* *The Political Future of India*. p. 164

** *Mary, Courtess of Minto: India, Minto and Motelly 1905-1910*, p.123

Three days ago we received a weighty and urgent minute from Ibbetson on the present political situation in the Punjab..... He describes a state of things giving rise to the greatest apprehensions. Everywhere the extremists openly and continuously preach sedition, both in the press and at largely attended public meetings convened by them, while well-disposed classes stand aghast at our inaction and will before long, in Ibbetson's opinion, begin to despise a Government which permits sedition to flourish unrebuked and submits to open and organised insult.

The campaign of sedition assumes two main forms. In the town of Lahore, Amritsar, Pindi, Ferozepore, Multan and other places, has openly advocated the murder of high officials, and he and others have urged the people to rise, attack the English, and be free. In the country systematic efforts are being made to corrupt the yeomanry from whom the army is recruited. Special attention is given to Sikhs and military pensioners; seditious leaflets are circulated to Sikh villages, and, at a public meeting at Ferozepore, where disaffection was openly preached, the men of the Sikh regiments stationed there were invited to attend, and several hundred were present. The Sikhs are told that they saved India for us in the Mutiny, that we are now ill-treating them, and that this is a judgment on them for betraying their country in her war of independence... It is alleged that we wish to crush the flourishing indigenous industries of cotton and sugarcane; it is said that we have taken the people's money and given them paper in return, and the villagers are asked who will cash our currency notes when we are gone. The people are urged to combine to withhold payment of Government revenue, water rates, and other dues; to refuse supplies, carriages and other help to Government officers on tour, and Native soldiers and police are pilloried as 'traitors' and adjured to quit the service of the Government.

This propaganda is organised and directed by a secret Committee of the Arya Samaj, a society, originally religious, which has, in the Punjab, a strong political tendency.

The head and centre of the entire movement is Lala Lajpat Rai, a Khatri pleader, who has visited England as the Congress representative of the Punjab. He is a revolutionary and a political enthusiast who is inspired by the most intense hatred of the British Government.”*

The Viceroy was as far away from truth in describing Lajpat Rai’s political affiliations, as he was from accuracy when he called this Aggarwal a “Khatri” pleader.

The cipher telegram continues:

“He [L] keeps himself in the background, but the Lieutenant Governor has been assured by nearly every Native gentleman who has spoken to him on the subject that he is the organiser-in-chief. His most prominent agent in disseminating sedition is Ajit Singh, formerly a schoolmaster, employed last year by the supposed Russian spy, Lasseff. He is the most violent of the speakers at political meetings; he has frequently advocated active resistance to Government and his utterances are largely directed towards exciting discontent among the agricultural classes and the soldiery. After dwelling upon the objections to prosecuting these men under the ordinary law and the impossibility under present conditions of producing satisfactory evidence of what has been actually said at a meeting, the Lieutenant-Governor made a formal official application for the issue of warrants against them under Regulation III of 1818, and laid stress upon the extreme urgency of immediate action, as the situation, instead of improving, shows signs of growing seriously worse.

The case was considered in Council yesterday, and warrants have been issued today for the deportation of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh to Mandalay, special measures being taken to avoid the possibility of popular demonstrations *en route*.

In my opinion, and in that of the whole of my Council, this action was imperatively necessary, and the present emergency is so great that I may be forced to issue an ordinance

* *Ibid.*, pp. 124-25

under section 23 of the Act of 1861 to regulate public meetings, chiefly with the object of obtaining full and accurate reports of the utterances of the speakers, and in extreme cases to prohibit meetings altogether. It is impossible in the absence of shorthand reporting of vernacular languages to get correct reports of speeches. We have to trust to oral reports of informers smuggled in, and do not consider that, in face of the multitude of witnesses who would be brought to contradict informers, we could obtain conviction for sedition.

Information received today shows that systematic attempts are being made to tamper with the troops in the Pindi division, but the troops themselves are quite satisfactory.”*

Following up the lengthy code telegram from which we have just been quoting, Lord Minto wrote to the Secretary of State on May 8:

“... I have had some long talks with Lord K. [Kitchner] and from what he has heard, no mischievous effects whatever would appear to have been produced on the troops, but the feeling in the country districts in the Punjab is evidently bad, as the 11th Bengal Lancers thought it advisable to recall some survey parties they had sent out, owing to the disagreeable attitude of the villagers.

Though we have heard rumours from time to time of bad feeling in the Punjab. We were quite taken by surprise by Ibbetson’s information No one, I suppose, knows the Punjab better than he, and I should not think him in the least inclined to exaggerate. At the same time at the present moment I cannot see any danger in the nature of a rising from an un-armed population as long as the Army is loyal. We shall in all probability have further riots, and there may be bad ones, but now that we are warned we ought to be able to take ample precautions as to these.”**

* *Ibid.*, pp. 125.

** *Ibid.*, pp. 124-25

There was bad news from the Frontier too, as we lean in the next paragraph:

“In the Peshawar district there is cause for anxiety owing to the possibility of the fanatical Mahommedan sympathy of the frontier tribes with the Mahommedan population of the province As far as danger goes it is, in my opinion, confined to the Punjab and the North, and Lord K. has taken every military precaution” †

The neurotic condition of the Anglo-Indian mind at this moment is also revealed in this despatch from Lord Minto:

“My own feeling.” continues he, “is that a great deal of the unrest is due to the anniversary of the mutiny. We have been told to expect trouble, between the 8th and the 11th. I think the mutiny broke out at Meerut on the 10th, and at Delhi on the 11th, and I feel pretty convinced that, putting political cause aside, recollections of 1857 are making the present year an exceptional one.”*

1857-1907! Golden Jubilee of the Great Holocaust falls due! May the 10th—a date as ominous as the ‘Ides of March’.

Two paragraphs later on the neurotic state of the Anglo-Indian mind is admitted more clearly:

“The information I get from Calcutta points to a nervous hysterical Anglo-Indian feeling there which I can only call very unpalatable, the beginning of much of the same feeling which it is not pleasant to read of in Lord Canning’s time during the mutiny. We are infinitely stronger now than we were then. On the other hand, the communication of ideas and native public opinion has become much more easy and universal than it was in 1857, and the mistakes our officers make are much more generally known, and are known by people who are much more aware of their own rights, and are far less ready to accept such mistakes as a matter of course. At the present moment we have to deal with a crisis which I earnestly hope will not

† *Ibid.*, pp. 126.

** *Ibid.*, pp. 126

last long and during which we must be very firm and very just. The factors that we have to control and to conciliate are so inflammable that we cannot afford to throw a chance away. Any general belief that we are undecided or weak would be fatal. But the more I see, the more convinced I am that we cannot continue to govern India with any hope of tranquillity until we give her educated classes a chance of a greater share in the government of country” *

Morley promptly replied-just general observations that left action to the people on the spot.

Morley to Minto:

“May 9,-It looks from your Punjab news as though we were approaching deep waters.... Well, we must make the best of it. If rows go on, I dare say some stern things will have to be done. You may be sure of my firm support, even if the sternest things should unluckily be needed. It may turn out that you will want that support not only against sedition-mongers, but also against your ‘law-and-order’ people, who are responsible for at least as many fooleries in history as the revolutionists are. I only hope that plenty of deliberation and comprehensive balancing of pros and cons may precede any strong measures.... If there be a scintilla of real evidence that seditious rags are infecting the Native Army, nobody would refuse suppression. Only you won’t forget that in moments of excitement, such as this may become people are uncommonly liable to confuse suspicions and possibilities with certainty and reality....†

About the mischief that the hysteria of the press was working:

“You have no idea of the sensational headlines in some of our most widely-read prints! One would have supposed that Pindi was a scene of fire and sword, carnage and rape, as if it had been the siege of Magdeburg in the Thirty Years’ War. Idiotic, isn’t it?”**

* *Ibid.*, pp. 127.

† Morley, John, *Recollections*, Vol. II, pp. 211-112

** *Ibid.*, pp. 213

Morley gave his imprimatur to all sorts of reactionary and coercive measures; but the ghost of his former 'liberal' self was not perfectly laid to rest and kept on pointing the finger of reproach, and whispering the names of various Czars and other tyrants. Some of this whispering one can overhear in the records of his thinking that Morley was sending to Minto. Thus, about the reactionary policy in India:

"The question is the Future. 'Tis like the Czar and the Duma. Are we to say: You shall have reforms when you are quiet. Meanwhile we won't listen to a word you say. Our reform projects are hung up..... People here who have been shouting against the Grand Dukes in Petersburg for bullying the Duma, will shout equally vociferously against you and me if we don't, in our own sphere borrow the Grand Duke policy...."*

To understand the 1907 doings of the Government in the Punjab we have to watch carefully Morley and Minto and to some extent Ibbeston. Morley had a reputation of being liberal, almost a radical, but he bade goodbye to that reputation-except inasmuch as it was found useful in disarming opposition to the new coercive policy. Minto was conservative and reactionary, but usually free from hysteria. He could not, however, altogether remain unaffected. Hysteria broke out as a sort of pandemic among the European community in India. At any rate he found that exaggerated accounts were helpful in getting things done entirely his own way, but with the Morley imprimatur, Ibbertson was, of course, utterly reactionary.

Some people even suspected that he was creating trouble deliberately to be able to get a free hand with all sorts of agitation. A more charitable view would be that taken by Morley, when Ibbetson, not long after the deportations, went on leave to England in shattered health and had to be operated upon by a surgeon. Morley thus put down his impression of the Punjab Lt. Governor:

* *Ibid.*, pp. 215

“... Ibbetson came to see me-rather a wonderful recovery. it strikes me. He is clear-headed and firm of purpose according to his lights and experience: that he reads his experience aright. I don't feel so sure. It cannot be easy for any man to waken up to new times, after a whole generation of good honest hard labour in old times. It is your hard lot to have to carry things by the agency of men whose feeling is inclined to be backward. Well, we must make the best of it. I talked to him a little of the difficulties-not considerable at present. But very real-of the S.S. and hope I opened his mind, though it is a hard mind, I suspect..... The plain truth is that *if there were any solid and substantial reason for believing India is drifting into a dangerous condition*, and if that can be decently established, then-so far as opinion in Parliament and the country is concerned-we can do what we please.”*

Morley had his doubts that any such “solid and substantial reasons” existed when all they had to offer him was hearsay and at best the oral reports of informers smuggled into public meetings.

Minto had developed a clever technique of handling Morley, and it succeeded exceedingly well for a while. He talked of the articles of war, of shooting for sedition after summary trial, and then as a concession he would be content with a press measure! Minto was very much aware of the success of this technique, He wrote to his wife:

“*June 6 (Simla)* I cannot help being amused at *The Times* which arrived last week. They think that everything has been done by Morley. He has backed me up splendidly, but he did not initiate any action here: I have had to take the whole responsibility of everything. With regard to the deportation of Lajpat Rai, he (morley) had not even time to express an opinion. The Ordinance ‘proclaiming’ certain districts was absolutely

* *Ibid.*, pp. 223

my own act. The power to 'proclaim' rests only with the Viceroy personally.....*

Minto was not far wrong when towards the end of his term he wrote to his wife:

"As a matter of fact I believe I have gained my point in everything since I have been here, but it has generally been by not losing my temper when I should have been thoroughly justified in doing so, often by asserting myself in the most courteous language, and always by humouring the personality with whom I have had to deal."

The brilliant Morley was jockeyed into the Minto policy by the none too brilliant but rather astute Viceroy. Probably he himself began to suspect that the policy he had fathered was really the ugly progeny of somebody else. The putative father made some exhibitions of temper in the *Recollections* in which one could trace the history of the widening gulf between the Secretary of State and the Viceroy. As early as August 1907 Morley seemed to be getting fed up with Minto's men.

"They have," reads the jotting for August, 23, "just sent me your press telegram of yesterday. It startles me that even hard Tchinovniks like your-and your-should so far forget that they are the servants and agents of Parliament in a free country, and should dream that a S.S. could live one hour after the assembling of Parliament who should have assented to these new provisions. I see that-says that this drastic power of muzzling and agitator will save the necessity of 'urging deportation'. He must have forgotten what I very explicitly told him, that I would not sanction deportation except for a man of whom there was solid reason to believe that violent disorder was the direct and deliberately planned result of his action. Who are these-and-? The very men who resisted you in your Arundel reforms-the most admirable and prudent thing that has been done in our time! The very men, or the sort of

* Mary. Countess of Minto: *India, Minto and Morley 1905-1910* p. 138

men, who urged us to take advantage of disorder at Lahore and Pindi, as a plea for dropping Arundel reforms! And then, at a time when the Cabinet is dispersed, the lawyers are dispersed, and my Council is half depleted, they give me a short week in which some of the most delicate and thorny points in the whole range of law and politics are to be disposed of. I dare say these executive gentlemen (who are so ready with compliments to one another for sagacity, experience, and all other virtues) can dispose of them in a week or an hour. But then they have the advantage of not having to argue and defend their proposals. I am not in so happy a position. I have often told you of my wicked thought that Strafford was an ideal type, both for governor of Ireland in the seventeenth century and governor of India in the twentieth century. Only they cut off poor Strafford's head, and his idea of government has been in mighty disfavour ever since. My decision will have reached you by wire before this, but I shall be much surprised if it is anything else than a flat veto. If a man's harangue provokes a riot, why don't they lock him up for riot? Have they not police enough? If not police, what then has become of the 'obligatory garrison'? It is all very well to say that these proposals are held by the G. Of I. to be necessary 'for the peace of the country'. But what is the use of saying that, when Parliament won't accept it? And I, for one, should think I was abusing the confidence of Parliament if I tried to make them accept it.

The former proposal to pass a general Press law to be put in force exclusively on the initiative of the military authorities, was, I should guess, about as stiff a dose as ever was proferred to a British Minister within a hundred years. But this notion of turning a private meeting into a public one almost beats it. And the notion of giving the Lt. Governor or other authority the right of forbidding a speaker whose views he dislikes to open his mouth in a given area! Let-go for an honest guillotine and have done with it. And let him try, in Gordon's phrase,

to put himself in the skin of an unlucky S.S. who has to oil and grease the slider.”*

Later he talked of the administrative tandem with the horses in the comic but unhappy *Pickwickian* situation:

“We both try to understand India in the same way, and look at our common business in the same spirit. Yet it is and must be from the necessities of the case, that one horse in the pair is sometimes tugging to the right, and the other to the left; or is it like the tandem in *Pickwick*-the leader turning round to stare at the wheeler?”**

When two years after Lajpat Rai’s return from his exile in Mandalay, Minto again wanted his sanction for further deportations (in Bengal), Morley did not accept his suggestions readily (Nov. 9, 1909).

“I won’t follow you into deportation. You state your case with remarkable force, I admit, But then I comfort myself, in my disquiet at differing from you, by reflection that perhaps the Spanish Viceroy in the Netherlands, the Austrian Viceroy in Venice, the Bourbon in the Two Sicilies, and a Governor or two in the old American Colonies, used reasoning not wholly dissimilar and not much less forcible. Forgive this affronting parallel. It is only the sally of a man who is himself occasionally compared to Strafford, King John, King Charles, Nero, and Tiberius.”†

A couple of months later, talking again of the policy underlying the deportations:

“Jan 27, 1910-That policy did not work out brilliantly in Russia, and did not save the lives of the Trepoffs, nor did it save Russia from a Duma, the very thing that the Trepoffs and the rest of the ‘offs’ deprecated and detested.” †

Whilst he affected airs of gravity on the floor of the

* Morley, *John, Recollections*, Vol II, p. 231-232

** *Ibid.*, pp. 234

† *Ibid.*, pp. 322

† *Ibid.*, pp. 328

Commons when saying that the disclosing of the grounds of Lajpat Rai's imprisonment would not be in 'public interest'. as a matter of fact Morley had himself never been told, except in vague hints, what those precious grounds might be!

Again and again Morley had to take shelter behind 'public interest' in refusing to disclose the nature of 'other facts' concerning Lajpat Rai. One finds no clue to these mysterious unrevealed 'facts' either in his *Recollections* or in Mary Minto's compilation-or in any publication by the Government or its apologists-though the passage of time should have rendered it safe long before now to disclose the nature of the dreaded happenings! All Morley could have disclosed would have been the silly stories of Anglo-India-its vision in delirium tremens of another Nana Saheb and a lakh of sepoy awaiting his word.

A European official who out of Christian charity visited Lajpat Rai in his captivity told him that he was believed to have weaned the troops from their loyalty to the king and that he was taken for a second Nana Saheb.

1857-1907! Nana Saheb Lajpat Rai! Yet Lajpat Rai wrote the truth when he said in his representation to the Government of India that he never had an opportunity to mix with the troops. And the Government had certainly no evidence to the contrary. The idea was suggested, in fact, not *before* his deportation, but *afterwards* when the Government were known to be looking for some evidence against their victims. The first glimpse of this in the Minto-Morley despatches-the official source-book of Indian history for this period-is in Minto's letter of August 29.

Minto to Morley Aug. 29:

"..... I am afraid as regards the Army we have not made the position quite clear..... It is quite lately, since the arrest of Lajpat Rai, that we have become aware of the attempts to corrupt Native officers and soldiers....."

I have told you that we were entirely taken by surprise and the more we get to know, the worse things seemed.” *

This particular despatch is one of the most alarmist-even hysterical-of the Minto despatches as Minto was trying his best to get Morley to agree to an odious Press Law- the tone of the despatch and the mentality underlying it will become clearer by a further extract:

“Here we have the evidence of everyday life, the constant information that comes to us from Native sources, the warnings of Native officers, the statements of our own Native informers. I fully admit a great deal of it may be unreliable. If it went home and were sifted we should be told that it was mere hearsay often emanating from personal prejudices. But we cannot disregard everything that is in the air. The mysterious story of the *Chapatties* before the Mutiny might have been a warning, but not evidence. The facts that stare us in the face are the circulation of leaflets and seditious newspapers in the line of native regiments.....

It is only lately that we have become aware of the tremendous efforts the agitators are making to trade upon the existence of the low rate of pay, the ravages of plague, and anything else they can lay their hands upon to corrupt the loyalty of the native Army. We know that nothing is being left untried to bring this about... Of course the Articles of War give very great powers, but at the present moment I should be sorry to have a man shot for sedition, though his guilt were proved up to the hilt. So far I believe only two men have been tried for it by Court Martial. With things seething as they are, any extreme action might simply mean provocation. All we can do is to be very firm, cool and cautious. We are fully warned, and we think certain precautions absolutely necessary to prevent further corruption. The next step of sedition in the Army, if it

* Mary Countries of Minto: *India, Minto and Money* 1905-1910, p.151

makes another step, must be Mutiny, and then we can take up the Articles of War in all their strength.....”*

1857- 1907 ! The *Chapatties* the leaflets! Nana Saheb-Lajpat Rai Deportation to Burma then of the last Moghul Emperor-now of the Lion of the Punjab-if we may anticipate the adoring sobriquet!

Yet in this despatch there is no direct mention of Lajpat Rai having attempted to seduce the loyal troops; on the contrary, the trend of the writing shows that these attempts *followed* his arrest and deportation. In appraising these attempts, Minto was no doubt led to exaggeration by the alarmist state of the Anglo-Indian mind in the jubilee year of the 57 ‘mutiny’; it may be conceded, however, that the deportation of Lajpat Rai had aroused universal resentment amongst Indian and some of this resentment penetrated into the cantonments, though they were believed to have been perfectly inoculated against sedition or disloyalty.

To revert to the Minto despatch to Morley that we were quoting. This interesting despatch contains an interesting story about Habibullah and Lajpat Rai:

“We have had some curious information too of communications from Lajpat Rai and other agitators with the Amir. As regards the Amir, I attach are value to it all, he probably puts such letters in his wastepaper basket, if he has one, but it shows how immensely important his friendship is to us.....”**

Yes, how immensely important, and therefore how completely it justified the enormous expenditure on the Amir’s visit, which looked very extravagant even to Curzon!

* *Ibid.*, pp. 151

** *Ibid.*, pp. 151

A Sealed Train: Destination unknown

HAVING BEEN MADE aware that he was being spirited away under a warrant of deportation, Lajpat Rai was asked if he would like to see anyone before starting on this journey with secret destination. The offer was promptly declined. In fact, he was glad things had shaped so neatly that all domestic 'scenes' and all 'moaning of the harbour bar' were simply ruled out, even though this meant his setting out on the strange adventure without a bedding from home or a change of clothes from his own wardrobe.

Asked if he cared to leave any letters, he gladly availed himself of the offer. Of the two he wrote out straightaway, one was addressed to his friend Dwarka Das and in this he desired that a few briefs that he was leaving behind should be properly attended to, very firmly instructing that in each case the client be offered the option of having his fees back, if the arrangements made did not satisfy him. He enclosed the wad of currency note he was carrying in his pocket but when he learnt that he could keep the money on him, he took it back, adding a postscript to that effect. The letter concluded by asking the friend not to be anxious for him at all, as he was in God's hands and whatever he did was for the best.

The other letter was addressed to Pyare Lal, the only one of his children then at Lahore. This "only communicated the fact of my arrest with a wish that, in my absence, he was to obey and to console my father and look to his comforts." He

also desired that some clothes and a bedding be sent to him through the police.

These preliminaries settled Lajpat Rai was told to accompany the Deputy Commissioner in his motor-car which was drawn up outside. Mr. Mant, the Deputy Commissioner, himself took the wheel, and Mr. Rundle, Superintendent of Police, armed with a revolver sat by his side. On the back seat sat the prisoner and a European Sub-Inspector of Police. It was an "all-white" arrangement, no Indian police official or even a chauffeur having been entrusted with so confidential a job. The car drove through the Gol Bag, got on to the Upper Mall and crossed the canal bridge to the Cantonments. Elaborate military arrangements betokened a most extraordinary occasion. Even artillery had been taken out and was being paraded.

The motor-car stopped in front of a European guard, and the prisoner was asked to get down. A cell was unlocked to receive him, and here he remained till about 6 p.m. (May 9) with a British soldier mounting guard outside. The Deputy Commissioner and the Superintendent of Police left after the prisoner had said, "No, thanks." to their query if he would have something to eat or drink.

Within less than an hour of his arrest, he found himself alone to think of the future. "Having made myself comfortable on Tommy Atkins' prison bedstead of wooden planks, I began the process of self-examination." and the first thing for which he felt thankful was his good luck in having been spared a "scene" at the time of arrest, as neither father, nor wife nor any of the children had been present. The second thing for which he "thanked God was that my mother was dead".

About his father he says, "I had such a strong faith in his strength of character and in his habitual presence of mind in times of misfortune that the idea of his discomfiture did not weigh very heavily on me. As for my wife and children, the thought that they were under the guardianship of my father left no cause for serious anxiety in my mind."

Having thus freed his mind from all thoughts of the family, his introspection continued and he records:

“Having been a believer in the wisdom of Providence from my infancy. I found that I possessed a sufficient reserve of faith to stand me in good stead in all emergencies and under all circumstances. Having thus subjected myself to a process of serious self-examination. I came out of the ordeal stronger and firmer than I had ever been in my life. I concluded this self-examination by a fervent prayer to my Creator to give me strength to preserve a manly, dignified and firm attitude in my tribulation and to save me from the temptation of ever doing anything consciously or unconsciously that may in the slightest degree injure the sacred cause of my country, bring the latter into disrepute, or be a source of disgrace to the society to which I belonged.”

And he could not help having, in that cell, a laugh at the Government's doings:

“Knowing my people so thoroughly as I did, I was amused to find the Government to hopelessly betrayed by its informants. In all this, however, I saw the hand of God, pointing out a silver lining in the dark clouds on the horizon of my country's future, brightened by the paralysation of those forces which had kept it in chains of bondage for such a long time.”

About six in the evening the prisoner heard the key turning in the lock and as the door opened he saw Mr. Rundle, accompanied by another European officer and a Muslim Inspector or Sub-Inspector. Mr. Rundle escorted the Prisoner in a landau to the military siding of Mian Mir (as the Lahore Cantonment West station was then called), where on the siding a special train awaited the party. After telling him that his letters had been delivered Mr. Rundle bade him 'goodbye' as the train whistled away. Lajpat Rai was bidding goodbye to his Lahore but, as he records, never believed that “it was my last farewell to Lahore”. He felt somehow his fate would be different from that of the Namdhari Guru.

Little pin-pricks to which the political prisoner is so sensitive began as soon as the train started. The Chief Police Officer in charge of the escort, a Deputy Inspector General, came to his charge of the escort, a Deputy Inspector General, came to his carriage, and in his presence he was searched again by the European Police Inspector. The cash in his pocket and his gold watch and chain were taken away, to be kept in safe custody till the end of the journey. The police officer expressing regret that "they had been forced to take the steps against me," explained that "they had done it in self-defence."

The police officer conveyed to Lajpat Rai the assurance that the Government proposed to treat him well and also the let drop some remarks that confirmed Lajpat Rai's own intuitive feeling that he was not bidding the last farewell to Lahore, though in a matter of high policy a mere police official could hardly be expected to have been taken into confidence.

This police official also informed him that he could dictate his own menu, that there were two Hindu policemen among the guard who could be of use to him, and that the Inspectors had orders to look to his comfort, And on the whole he was well looked after during this journey.

At Moghul Sarai a change of clothes had to be procured for the prisoner, for his own bedding and clothes, it was clearly understood from the beginning, would follow and not accompany him. One of the Inspectors brought him a ready-made shirt and pyjamas from the local bazar. Still the halts were not encouraged, and the railway staff were given to understand that it was a special Railway Board train, and at all the halts the Indian personnel in the police guard-consisting of a Mussalman Sub-Inspector and half a dozen Muslim constables, a Hindu sergeant and a Hindu constable-were closely watched as if they were prisoners suspected of fugitive intentions.

"Throughout the Punjab the shutters of the carriage were drawn up but on the Oudh and Rohilkhand Railway I was allowed to lower them between the stations," The prisoner did not feel the journey to be so uncomfortable, in spite of the

high temperature. He was given a punkha and a punkha coolie. And by now he had got into a somewhat care-free mood.

“I had for some years been suffering from chronic insomnia. But the state of my mind during that night can best be judged from the fact that I enjoyed a very good sleep and my guardians had to awake me at Phillour to give me some warm milk.”

The train journey ended at Diamond Harbour at daybreak. The chief police officer in charge came to him and asked him if he knew where he was and if he could guess where he was going. He told him he knew the station as he had been there once before, and that probably he was being taken to Rangoon of Mandalay. He must have been surprised at this, because till now his final destination had been very carefully kept a secret from him.

At Diamond Harbour a ferry steam-launch picked up the prisoner and his escort and carried them to the Government steamship *Guide*. Before he left the railway carriage, the prisoner was made to put his thumb mark on the back of the warrant of committal as a mark of identification.

He asked if he might send a telegram to his people, but this was not permitted. He was, however, allowed to write letters and he wrote one to his father (who somehow never got it) and one to his son, Pyare Lal, saying:

“I am prepared to take things as they come. Please look after your grandfather and mother. Obey them and console them and take particular care of your widowed sister and her little son. Keep well with your uncles and bear your misfortune manfully.”

The Deputy Chief of the Punjab Police now made over charge to a senior police official from Bengal, took a snapshot of the prisoner, after putting him on the boat and bade him good-bye. His last remark was rather quizzical: “you are leaving India; let us see when you return.”

The European Police Inspector and the police guard from the Punjab continued. But the new head of the escort was less

courteous to him than the one from whom he had taken over, for this gentlemen reserved all his courtesy and attention for the European Inspectors.

A minor difficulty arose over accommodation on the boat. The Captain pointed to the hold as the only place available. But the European Inspector of Police took him aside and successfully negotiated two cabins—one for himself and the other for the European sub-Inspector. The prisoner, the Muslim Sub-Inspector and the constables were asked to enter “that den of a hold stinking with nauseous smell and vitiated air”. They were asked to make themselves comfortable; but Lajpat Rai stood on his rights and protested that Government were bound under the law to provide accommodation suitable to his position in life. This opened the eyes of the Inspector.

“He asked me, however, to go into the hold for a while promising that he would see the captain about it and get better accommodation for me.”

The Captain really had no other accommodation available and about an hour later the Inspector came back to say that the cabin originally assigned to the European Sub-Inspector was at Lajpat Rai’s disposal. “The cabin, however, was of no use to me as I kept on the deck all the time I was on board the steamer.”

S.S. Guide left Diamond Harbour on the 12th forenoon and reached its destination-Rangoon - on the afternoon of the 15th after encountering a good deal of foul weather. It was raining when she threw anchor. The Captain was as rough as the weather. Knowing who the prisoner was, he tried to draw him out in a chat on politics once or twice.

“But when he began to shower choice billingsgate on the ‘Bande Mataram’ people and on Mr. Surendranath Banerjea, I cut the conversation short and gave him to understand that I did not want to continue it.”

The Captain had been seen using his first on the butler, and this certainly did not tempt Lajpat Rai to renew the contact.

The Police Inspector posted guards on the prisoner even on board the steamer. This tickled Lajpat Rai's sense of humour and laughing he told his custodian that he had no mind to drown himself as he esteemed his life of greater value to him-self and his people than it was to the Government and its officers.

When *S.S. Guide* got into the harbour, the problem of secrecy had to be tackled afresh. Lajpat Rai was asked to keep to his cabin, while waiting for the Police Commissioner's launch, lest people going about in boats might notice him. The launch landed the party on a jetty free from all other traffic. The European Police Inspector from Lahore and Lajpat Rai got into a palki gharry that drove them to the Panduzuing railway station-a small suburban affair at some distance from the main station of Rangoon.

Lajpat Rai had never before been in Burma. Burmese faces that he could see from his carriage excited his curiosity and touched a chord of sympathy that was waiting for the first Asian country if you leave aside his trip to Sri Lanka to be included in his wanderings

“In Burma I did not feel the desponding sense of being in a strange land. At Indian faces, of course,, I looked with sentiments of affection, regardless of their being Hindus or Mohammadans, Punjabees, Bengalees or Madrasis. To me all of them were my own people, bound upto me by a tie which at the time appeared to be particularly dearer and stronger than any other.” Going down the overbridge, duly guarded in front and behind, he passed by a “well-dressed Punjabee gentleman who recognised me at once. Involuntarily I read a volume of misery and grief in his face and responded to his salam with a winking of my eyes.”

From the first-class compartment reserved for him and his guard, he had noticed too that the rear carriages carried a number of “Punjabi Sikhs wearing police uniforms looking at me eagerly and talking rather excitedly”. Soon, however, the shutters of his carriage went up and screened off the

view—a precaution repeated at every stop. The journey was uneventful “except for some touching marks of respect and regret shown by Mohammadan constable forming part of my escort”. Throughout the journey from Lahore to Mandalay, he records he met with nothing but kindness from the Hindu and the Mohammadan policemen forming escort, On board the steamer, they spoke to him “freely” and his narrative particularly recalls the “depth of feeling displayed by a young Mohammadan constable having a most handsome and prepossessing appearance.” While deeply regretting his misfortune and “along weeping over it”, he gave expression to his own and to his country’s feeling of helplessness in words of deep and sincere pathos”. One of his escorts during the railway journey bought, with his own money, some Burma bananas to offer the same to him. very feelingly remarking that “perhaps this was the last time they saw me”. In reply the prisoner asked him “never to despair of Providence”. adding that “something within me whispered that I was sure of returning to my country after a short absence. My words had their effect and in token of his pleasure the man clasped my feet,” And he records: “For the first time in my life, perhaps, did the noble purity of the Indian mind, uninitiated in the hypocritical gloss of the western civilization burst upon my soul in its full and original grandeur. Here was an Indian, holding a different faith from mine, belonging to a poverty-ridden peasantry, whom circumstances had driven to active service in the police on a pittance of seven or eight rupees per month ready to risk his livelihood and his prospects for the mere sake of showing that he sympathised with me in my trouble” The moral could not be missed: “If the superior police officers and selected these Mohammadan constables to be my escort on the ground of their difference in faith from me and consequently their not being likely to sympathise with me they were quite mistaken in their estimate of them.” No wonder that “It was a zeal pang I parted from them at Mandalay.”

At Mandalay a most welcome surprise came. The Railway platform had been cleared, but by now it was no secret that the distinguished Punjab leader had been brought to Burma. As he got down on the platform he "could see several Punjabee friends peeping at me from office windows and door-panes". He had hardly stepped out of the railway station when to his amazement, he noticed G.K. Deodhar of the Servants of India Society, Poona, touching his feet. The unimaginative police officers misconstrued affection and respect for an attempt at rescuing the prisoner, and to "the Inspector took hold of my arm and a European sergeant getting hold of me took him off my feet."

Mandalay

IN THE EAST no less than in the West, 'Burma' conjures up a picture of gay and bright colours and of romance, Mandalay, the ill-fated capital with an all too brief meteoric existence, had been the scene of dramatic intrigue and high passions within living memory. Gossip still narrated stories about Queen Suplayat and King Thebaw who had been dethroned and exiled not quite quarter of a century ago. Their palace still stood there enclosed in a large square on the extensive grounds of his Fort. Despoiled of its gilded furniture and picturesque hangings, but with a faint aroma of its kingly days still clinging to its air, in the ghostly evening silence of its deserted and sombre chambers it could eloquently narrate one small chapter in the history of Britain's empire-building.

To this Fort, the last royal ruler of which had been sent into exile two decades ago, now came another exile from far off Punjab. The hackney-carriage into which Lajpat Rai had been put at the railway station, in the custody of the Assistance Commissioner of Rangoon police (Besides, of course, the European Inspector from Lahore) drove by devious paths, shunning the crowded main thoroughfares of Mandalay, and at last entered it by the South Gate. Driving past the Royal Palace and royal tombs, it stopped in the portico of a P.W.D. bungalow in brick with a tiled roof.

An European officer, the Superintendent of Jail at Mandalay, had been warned before hand, and he duly received his new charge. He relieved, finally, the Inspector of Police from Lahore, giving him an official 'receipt' for the prisoner

and his belongings including currency notes for Rs. 350 and the gold watch and chain.

The high wall with its immense sun-baked bricks was the colour of old rose. It was surrounded by a moat, whose still but not stagnant waters serenely reflected the thick foliage of the abundant trees. At intervals the wall had its turrets and its bastions; but the turrets looked like the belveders of a pleasure-garden and bastions carried pavilions of teak which looked the leisurely progeny of fancy rather than creations of the warrior mind. Grand and beautiful in its own way, the Fort did not come up to accepted notions of a fort—a bit like Singh, not a bit like what he might have seen at Udaipur or Shivaji's fortress at Purandharpur. To the exile the first look round was rather disappointing—not “a strong citadel on an eminence and surrounded by lofty walls”. but just a plain building situated on a level with the other parts of the city though surrounded by a high wall and a broad deep moat.

At any rate vast grounds were there and turf and the tall acacias and the noble tamarind in plenty.

The Superintendent took the new arrival to the first floor and showed him the two nice, airy, well-lit and commodious rooms that had been set apart for his use for the time being till his more permanent lodgings could be set up. Furnished very simply with a table, a couple of chairs, a nivar-bed with two pairs of Jail blankets and about the same number of white sheets, the apartment was brightened up by three Burmese ‘carpets’, colourful ribbon-like affairs, in fact trimmings rather than carpets, for though longer than the length of the floor they decorated, their width was within six inches.

The cuisine presented a problem. The Fort authorities arranged “Indian” food for him, which really meant Anglo-Tamil meals prepared by a South Indian. The Punjabi prisoner not finding these very suitable, a Sikh cook was arranged. But the experiment proved an utter failure. With the candour and outspokenness of a Sikh peasant, the so-called cook confessed that he had been tempted to accept the job more for the sake

of having *darshan* of so distinguished a personage than out of any other consideration-least of all out of a sense of his competence as a cook. The Punjabi food experiment had been a miserable failure, and at the end of two day he reverted to his Anglo-Tamil meals which tasted so dainty by contrast with the so-called Punjabi dishes improvised by a so-called Punjabi cook.

The two rooms in the Superintendent's bungalow served as Lajpat Rai's lodgings only for his first two days. After that he moved into a P.W.D. bungalow beyond the Palace Canal, on the north side of the Royal Gardens. Between this bungalow and the Royal Gardens lay a metalled road open to the public. The roads had their own use, for the Superintendent had already given him to understand that he could stroll in the compound within sight of the constable. All Indian passers-by, and more particularly Punjabis, watched and greeted him respectfully from the roads while he was still in his first 2 days lodgings.

The new bungalow was a modern structure built of wood and brick-a double-storeyed house, with each floor bisected by a partition wall, so as to accommodate two families. The western side of the upper storey was allotted to Lajpat Rai. It consisted of two rooms opening on to the verandah and a bath-room connected with a wooden staircase in the compound. At the foot of the staircase were placed a bed and a table for the European sergeant on guard, so that none could use the staircase without his knowledge. The rooms were furnished with a dining-table, a meat-safe, a reading table, a rattan easy chair, a couple of office chairs and teapoys, an almirah to serve for wardrobe and a bed provided with a mosquito-curtain. The wooden floor was bare except for the three six-inch wide strips of Burmese carpet. At night two candle sticks lit the room, and later on a kerosene reading lamp was provided.

There were no fellow-prisoners for him and the only company were those engaged by the authorities to minister to his comfort-the South Indian cook, another servant engaged on Rs. 25 a month to attend to his wants, the *dhobi* appointed to

wash his clothes, the *bhishti* and sweeper who looked in twice a day. For some of the things and services the prisoner was asked to pay and some were declared luxuries and vetoed outright by the Superintendent. The vetoing pin-pricks of course caused a certain amount of irritation.

There were other pin-pricks too, though the prisoner's first impression of the Superintendent was that of an accommodating and even likable sort of person. The Superintendent gave him assurances of proper attention and consideration. He lent him his own books to read—Justin Me' Arthy's *Reminiscences* and an Anglo-Burmese handbook, with the suggestion that he should devote his time to the study of the Burmese language. He examined him, being a medical man, and prescribed for him, and otherwise showed him courtesy and consideration. But things did not remain so smooth for long. The Superintendent was hopelessly ignorant of the ways of men of Lajpat Rai's position in the Punjab; jurisdiction was shared with the Superintendent of Police who considered himself responsible for looking after the prisoner in various ways and he had a butler ever on the lock-out for opportunities to feather his own nest, particularly out of the moneys to be spent for the prisoner. Trouble started over a serious issue, at once constitutional and tonsorial! We read:

“A barber was told off to shave me every other day. After the expiration of the first month the barber came to me and asked for his pay. I told him that he would be paid by the Superintendent of the Jail who had appointed him. He said the Superintendent wanted me to pay for his services. I asked him to wait until I had ascertained the wishes of the Sahib.” When asked by the official why he had not paid the barber. he replied that the Government should pay him, “as under the Regulation III of 1818 they were bound to maintain me according to my status in life”. His standing on his legal rights “was too much for the good man and he retorted by saying that he knew of no such law and that so far as I was concerned his word was law. He also added shaving was a luxury which

the Government would not pay for, as it was not necessary that I should shave. To impress me with his knowledge of the customs of this country he added that he could understand a Mohammadan insisting upon his head being shaved now and then, but why was it necessary for me—a Hindu—to shave my chin? Why could you not grow a beard?" asked he. "Did you not keep a beard at home? Had you ever employed a barber to shave you there?" Such were the questions he hurled at me one after another without waiting for a reply." What really hurt him in this outburst was not the Superintendent claiming that his word was low, but "his questioning my veracity when I stated that at home also I employed a barber to shave me every other day and that I had not taken to shaving as a privilege of my imprisonment and a luxury at the cost of the Government."

For same time he had grown a beard like several of his friends in the Arya Samaj but this had disappeared a good while before his deportation.

The prisoner paid the barber himself, though after two or three months the authorities changed their mind and began to foot the bill for this "luxury".

Lajpat Rai had always been fond of good food-by good food being meant above all food that is so pronounced by the palate. The Superintendent's butler, who exercised an indirect but very effective control over Lajpat Rai's kitchen arrangements and who always wanted to make as much money as possible out of buying his victuals, contributed his share to occasional misunderstanding. Lajpat Rai could not get the vegetables he wanted, for the butler wanted to pocket the money outright and the Superintendent was told-and he believed what he was told-that the vegetables asked for were not available at all or could be had only at fancy prices, even though Lajpat Rai would notice the sergeant guarding him enjoy those very vegetables at his none too expensive table.

Trouble arose above all over the strolls. The Superintendent had of his own accord and at the very outset permitted

Lajpat Rai the freedom to move about within sight of the sergeant. Not much later he gave him permission to take walks within the Fort escorted by the European sergeant in command of the guard on duty. In the interest of Lajpat Rai's health he was rather keen that he should regularly go out for a stroll for an hour or two every day. The Deputy Commissioner who occasionally visited him also endorsed this suggestion. But the sergeants were generally unwilling to go twice a day and positively disliked walks. They had very good grounds for this as they were required to go in uniform with swords and loaded revolvers, and 24 rounds of ammunition. They had in any case to walk it up in the summer sun at the head of the guard fully armed and accoutred from the Police depot No. 6 about three km from the bungalow.

A 'consitutional' difficulty complicated matters still further. "As prisoner I was in the charge of the Superintendent of Jail, but as the guard to keep watch over me was supplied by District Superintendent of Police, he thought he was responsible for my safe custody in the bungalow and during walks. He therefore objected to my walking on any roads not sanctioned by him."

When Ajit Singh also arrived in mandalay Fort as a deportee, there were left only two roads on which Lajpat Rai was not out of bounds, and of these the longer stretch had no tamarinds to give protection against the glare and heat. Lajpat Rai pointed this out to the Deputy Commissioner. This gentleman recommended a pair of dark glasses which, however, were ruled out by the Superintendent of Jail as an article of Luxury!

Fish abounded in the Palace Canal and the Superintendent of Jail suggested to him angling as a pastime. He had never shown any inclination to join Izaak Walton's tribe, but a captive's's hankering for remaining outdoors made him agree. So he bought a fishing rod to be used by the sergeant or the constables on duty, whilst he merely sat looking on! To the bored prisoner the short-lived experiment "gave neither pleasure nor relief?"

At Mandalay Lajpat Rai tried to keep a journal, the first entry in which was made on the 20th June. The journal has not been preserved, but some excerpts from it he used in the *Story of My Deportation*. The entries show that he was not keeping good health. There are frequent references to stomach disorders and to sleeplessness and to purging powders and soporifics like sulphonal prescribed by the Superintendent. And he proceeds to give us his own diagnosis of his troubles:

“A state of confinement, and loneliness, insufficiency of exercise, a sense of annoyance produced by humiliation and unwarrantable subjection, want of agreeable company and similar other discomforts were bound to produce their effect. and make chronic troubles assume an acute shape. Consequently. I suffered a great deal from these complaints, in the first three months of my confinement, but latterly having been reconciled to my fate and surroundings I improved considerably.”

A still further cause for a few sleepless nights was a minor “*love affair*” This story had best be given in his own words, for perhaps the best half a dozen pages of this *Deportation* book are those narrating it.

“My chief trouble in my exile was loneliness... Some of the European sergeants on duty were kind to me and I sought their company now and then, but after all, what pleasure could their company give me? Firstly, the disparity between my education and position in life and theirs was too large to admit of their entering into my sentiments and feelings. Then our tastes differed very much. They represented the animal side of the British character, while my tastes bent towards the spiritual side of the Hindu temperament.”

He eventually preferred two tiny things on the lower rungs of the tiger family ladder to two human beings representing the British lion, and to these little pets is devoted the most human page of the *Story of My deportation*.

“I was much relieved to find two kittens in my bungalow! They were very pretty. One looked like a Ginger-coloured tigress and the other had black spots. I began to feed

them, and they became attached to me. Their company was thus a happy change. It soon, however, transpired that it was not an unmixed blessing, as at night they would insist on sleeping in the same bed with me. This disturbed me very much and for some nights a regular struggle ensued between my attachment to them and the discomfort they thus caused to me. They wanted to give me their company during the day as well as at night, while I wanted it only for the day” Eventually, he had them. shut in an outhouse every night, after dinner. How he enjoyed watching his kittens! He writes:

“Sometimes I spent a good portion of an hour in watching them playing with each other, licking each other and lying in each other’s arms like twin sisters. Their attachment to each other was remarkable. For me, at least, it was a new experience.”

Finding the kittens such fun he began to think of other extensions to his household. He got a pup, but his sweeper promising to bring him a better one, he sent it back to the owner. Yet another (non-human) source of delight presented itself, but this soon proved a tale of frustration:

“In the roof of the staircase, amongst the beams and rafters, lived a family of *Mynas* who administered music to me but one of the sergeants took a fancy for them. The mother being too astute, he could not get hold of her but removed the two young ones to his home. This was done in the absence of the mother, who on her return, not finding her little ones, became utterly disconsolate and filled the whole house with bitter cries and pathetic lamentations. She hovered round her nest for a few days and then left it in despair, never to return again. Thus I lost the company of these good birds by the cruelty of one of my gaolers, a man who had inherited the evil nature of both the English and the Indian and was entirely devoid of the good points of either.”

His prison too had become a “second home” to him and the Prisoner of Mandalay, when being set free, experienced within him something akin to what Bonnivard had experienced when being set free from the Castle of Chillon. As Mandalay

his reading had included Byron, and in the *Story* he recalls lines from his *Prisoner of Chillon* to convey his own feelings on the occasion of his farewell to his "second home";

"And thus when they appeared at last,
And all my bonds aside were cast,
These heavy walls to me had grown
A hermitage-and all my own!
And half I felt as they were come
To tear me from a second home;"

Byron's *Bonnivard* speaks of having made friendship with spiders "in their sullen trade" and having "seen the mice by moonlight play". in fact, "My very chains and I grew friends". The Byron passage befittingly ends: "Even I regained my freedom with a sigh." The *Prisoner of Mandalay* gives us an additional reason for his regaining his freedom with a sigh.

"On the morning of the 11th [November] my two kittens had gone out for a ramble when I was removed bag and baggage to the railway station. There was no time to wait for their return as the Commissioner had told me that the special train was ready. The Superintendent and the Deputy Superintendent of Police wanted me to be quick. So the only pang that I felt in leaving that house was this forced separation from the two kittens."

The pets of course were a mere relaxation. He devoted his compulsory leisure at Mandalay to reading and writing. On an average he must have given eight to ten hours every day to reading and writing of a serious type, besides of course the magazines and fiction to which he took resort for "killing time". He read a number of books dealing with Burma, the Burmans and Burmese history and afterwards published a volume in Urdu which he named *Afsanah-i-Brahma* (Romance of Burma). This was partly descriptive of Burmese social and religious usage, and partly a discussion of the economic, educational, social and political problems of modern Burma, with a few preliminary chapters furnished the necessary historical back

ground. In his general reading in the Mandalay Fort (a list is given in the *Story of My Deportation*), standard works of history, Hallam's *History of Middle Ages*, Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic*, Kaye and Malleons's *History of the Indian Mutiny*. Next to history, in this list, comes philosophy, including, Lecky, Herbert Spencer, Fielding Hall. His 'fiction' list is dominated by Thackeray and Dickens, but also includes, Tolstoy and Voltaire. Anthony Hope, Marie Corellie and Churchill were good to "kill time" but the Persian odes of Hafiz touched certain chords of his heart as they had never before done. His Urdu reading at Mandalay included Zauq's verse and of course the prose of his former teacher Muhammad Hussain Azad.

His Mandalay writings included the Urdu book on Burma already mentioned, a fragment of an autobiographical Urdu novel, of which he wrote about 150 sheets, but which he never completed. This manuscript was afterwards destroyed by his father and friends (so he tells us in the introduction to his autobiographical fragment of 1915). He had devoted some time to the study of the Bhagavadgita in the Mandalay Fort and this resulted in a paper in English called the Message of the *Bhagavadgita*. This originally appeared in the *Modern Review* of Calcutta for March 1908 and was re-issued as a booklet later on.

The Gita and Hafiz came to his help in his days of imprisonment, for they are good friends for anyone who would cultivate serenity of mind, Lajpat Rai acknowledges the inspiration of these books:

"Krishna conversed with me in words of practical wisdom, pitched in immortal strain: and the celebrated poet of Shiraz spoke to be of love and of the troubles that inevitably followed the course of the later... I enjoyed Hafiz in my imprisonment more than I had ever done before in my childhood, when I read it with my father."

Besides the Gita he used to read some of the Upanishads treating the daily reading of scriptures as a religious duty. In saying his morning prayers he was very regular and is apologetic

about his not being so regarding the evening *sandhya*, though this never meant complete exemption from prayers in the evening; only he did not adhere to the formality of a set selection of Vedic hymns in a prescribed sequence.

One chapter in *The Story of My Deportation* is named "State of Mind during Confinement". towards the close it reads:

"... although occasionally I was very sad and melancholy during my exile. I was generally contented and made every efforts to make the best use of my time."

This self-analysis is followed by a note recording the restoration of the peace of mind and a sense of satisfaction at the sense of things as they were.

A good deal of annoyance was no doubt caused at times by this sensitiveness being wound by the treatment he received. The Superintendent of Jail about whom he had in the beginning formed a very happy impression was not always accommodating and considerate. We have already referred to the barber episode.

The Story of My Deportation reveals a sensitive soul, very touchy when people neglected decorum in their dealings. It is by no means a saga of martyrdom and the reader who picks it up in search of such a saga may not only be disappointed, but positively feel irritated by its narration of trivialities. yet one knows it would be a silly mistake to infer that its author was not prepared for suffering and sacrifices. He did not regret the sacrifices he had to make and never for a moment did he think of deviating from the path he had chosen for himself. When he wrote of the petty things that hurt him, he was by no means a pathetic figure trying to collect pity from the public. His soul suffered anguish when treated with incivility or rudeness and this condition—which a hurried reader may easily construe as weakness and vacillation—he has portrayed with characteristic condour. To a less sensitive man some of those things would have appeared as trifles; to a less candid man their narration would be unnecessary. He brooded much and often, and in the *Story* the reader is permitted to see this

private and personal happening. The result is a micro-film made-up of a series of 'psychographs'. Thus "he [the Superintendent] was particularly rude to me one day on my having written to a friend that I was ill, saying that I wanted my people to agitate for my release, on the ground of my illness, and practically charging me with feigning illness. Another time he was even more insolent when he refused to pay the barber, in a way questioning my veracity as the my being shaved every other day at home. His method of addressing me grew studiously uncivil. While addressing me by name or writing prescriptions for me or sending letters to me he generally omitted the usual words of courtesy."

One day the Superintendent asked him if he had a brother Dhanpat Rai by name and if that brother had ever desired to see him. Lajpat Rai replied that was his youngest brother.

"After he had gone away, I wrote to him saying that his question had set me at thinking that he had perhaps detained some letter containing the information about my brother's application, and that I should feel obliged if in accordance with past practice he would let me know merely the name of the writer. The next morning when he came round, I was standing upstairs in the verandah waiting as usual to know his wishes and the European Sergeant and other policemen were giving him the salute, when he shouted out in an angry tone that I had no business to put counter-questions to him when he asked any question of me."

He is at great pains in giving his actual words in a footnote : "His actual words were as follows :

Don't put any questions to me when I ask you any question Don't put any such impertinent questions to me. I don't want any cross questions.' Again he said 'I do not want to argue the matter with you but don't you do it again.' I noted these words immediately after he left."

Obviously and words were stinging his soul even when he recalled them in footnote. To some readers it might appear (as it did to Wildfred Blunt) that sensitiveness gets here the

better of dignity: but there was seldom a footnote of just five lines that laid bare a soul so revealingly-another micro-psycho-graph, which without the "actual words" would not be possible.

Some sort of extenuation for the officer's behavior is also offered in the *Story*

"There was a certain amount of botheration on account of so much secrecy being kept about everything relating to the State Prisoners. He could not ask for any assistance from the subordinates. But the most important fact, which in my opinion, affected his temper was that he was a Superintendent of Jail. In this latter capacity he had to deal with thousands of convicts over whom he exercised vast powers and whom he was not required to show any courtesy. His idea of the requirements of a prisoner were based upon his experience of ordinary jail life."

The minutiae in *The Story of My Deportation* seem sometimes trivial, but they give a measure of the sensitiveness of their recorder. When in the beginning the Superintendent of Jail treated him nicely, this sensitive soul looking upon things in a curiously personal manner recorded:

"For the first few days he was kind and considerate, evidently anxious to make up for the high-handed and barbarous action of his Government in kidnapping me from my native country, without giving me a trial and without framing charges against me."

This is too obviously subjective, for it is difficult to believe that the Superintendent's considerateness and courtesy had anything to do with the feeling ascribed to him by the author in an ego-centric moment.

What he called the "salaming scare" was amongst the things that wounded him most deeply. He needed a daily walk badly, to make his sluggish liver work a little bit, and to earn some restful sleep; yet he felt constrained to give it up, because it led to complications in which his sensibility had to undergo torture. During his stroll he was escorted at first by a fully

armed European Sergeant and later on two constables in uniform were added to the escort. Plain-clothes men too kept busy prowling about the house and on the nearby roads. These extra precautions were found necessary by the officials because of the large number of Indians in Mandalay. On the road no one was permitted to have a word with him. Indian passer-by on the road in front of the house were put to a lot of annoyance—at times totally forbidden to use it, Still the passer-by's silent spontaneous greeting from a distance by touching the forehead became a red rag to (John) Bull, and, at times led to a good deal of trouble.

It would flatter any prisoner's vanity to receive in prison affectionate homage from his countrymen in the measure that Lajpat Rai almost daily did, Punjabee women would every now and then come to have his darshan, from a distance of course, and the prisoner could easily notice this. At times a party of Indian country youth would pass that way and he could hear them sing plaintively of his exile. At still other times he observed a different sort of troop struggling along in monsoonish weather “with their eyes lifted towards the verandah of my house, their gay trim proclaiming them to be prosperous Bohras from Bombay”. For any Indian who happened to go to Mandalay the Fort must needs be on the list of sights and a glimpse of its illustrious captive a pilgrimage well worth all the vexation that might accompany or follow it.

“Secrecy” in the Fort became an amusing farce when his fellow-Regulation prisoner, Ajit Singh, arrived in Mandalay. For weeks and months the pretence was kept up that neither knew of the presence of the other in the same Fort. But the very precautions dictated by secrecy proclaimed the secret.

Though a ‘State’ prisoner, Lajpat Rai was kept under pretty rigorous restraint in the Dufferin Fort. He was not allowed any newspaper, not even after he had addressed the Government of India on the subject. In fact “even the European Sergeants on duty were forbidden to have any newspapers with them while on guard”. Books were scrutinised before being

passed on to him and we have already seen he was not permitted to learn Burmese "on political grounds". During his six months' stay in Mandalay he did not have one interview with a friend or relation. His brother, Dhanpat Rai, applied for permission to interview him, but Government of Sir Denzil Ibbetson refused to grant it. "That stopped further applications of similar character."

He applied for permission for driven out of the Dafferin Fort, but this too was not granted. In fact, even inside the Fort he was closely guarded day and night.

All his correspondence was censored, "only some of the letters addressed to me being actually delivered". Letters containing any allusion to his arrest or deportation or to the tumultuous happenings at Lahore or Pindi or elsewhere were invariably stopped, though in one of his own letters a query about the affairs of "Khazan Singh & Co." escaped the censor-Khazan Singh being one of the 'Pindi lawyers hauled up for sedition.

Even a purely business letter from a firm of solicitors was detained; this wanted his instructions with regard to a proposed libel action against the *Daily Express* in connection with the canard in its Simla correspondent's letter about him. The solicitors wanted a form of Warrant of Attorney to be signed by Lajpat Rai. Even such a 100 per cent business communication seemed objectionable, it being inexpedient on 'general political grounds' to use the convenient formula of the Superintendent of Jail to permit a political prisoner to vindicate himself against libels appearing in the British press! And yet, 'honest John' replying in the House of Commons, on July 9, 1907, to Mr. William Redmond, said:

"Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh are allowed to correspond with their friends, but their correspondence is examined to prevent messages being sent by them that might give rise to disturbances. So far only one letter has been stopped. My information from India is that no one has expressed a desire to see the prisoner, but there would, I presume, be no objection

to their doing so under such supervision as would ensure that no mischievous and undesirable communications were made." To a supplementary question by Mr. Mackarness, "Can the prisoner communicate with their legal adviser?" Mr. Morley's reply was, "I presume so."

In his captivity he often thought of his home. Perhaps he had more leisure here to think of his domestic affairs than he had when supposed to be living in his home. The letters he wrote to his father or his sons from the Fort give glimpses of his domestic plans. These letters had to avoid all reference to matters political. They generally describe how he was passing his days in prison, the weather, his health, his reading and writing. Occasionally they bespeak from home something not locally available to him, and sometimes they give instructions about the management of his affairs or those of his family.

The father took his son's incarceration quite stoically; "He was manfully doing his duty by my children and was bearing his misfortune with fortitude. I had, however, no means of knowing that besides looking after the family he had taken up his veteran's pen in my defence and was wielding the same with effect, to the utter discomfiture of the evil-doers amongst my countrymen, I have learnt it with shame that an Indian Deputy Commissioner should have considered it necessary in the performance of his duties as a British Magistrate, to keep a regular and perfectly unwarrantable espionage upon the old man's movements, as if he was in any way responsible for my political creed and for any acts which I might have done. The old man, however, never flinched for a moment, and kept up his faith in my innocence, never giving way to despair in the poignancy of his grief at the absence of a son who had never let his filial love and respect take even the second place to his affections and regards."

John Morley's Ordeal

NOT MANY WEEKS after his arrival in Mandalay, as a prisoner detained without trial and with no defined sentence, Lajpat Rai came to know that "a question had been put in parliament enquiring from the Secretary of State for India If I had protested against my deportation and if so, what was the substance of my protest". This information led him to think that "my friends in the British Parliament probably wanted to know what I had to say against the Government's high-handed action in deporting me without trial." Till then he had not made up his mind to petition for his release. This Commons question decided him. He had already applied for a copy of the Government of India's order relating to his arrest and the grounds on which it was based. In due course he had the pleasure of reading the Warrant of Committal, dated the 7th May, 1907, which ran as under:

Home Department, India,

To the Superintendent of Jail, Mandalay.

Whereas the Governor-General in Council, for good and sufficient reasons, has seen fit to determine that Lajpat Rai, son of Radha Kishan, shall be placed under personal restraint at Mandalay, you are hereby required and commanded in pursuance of that determination to receive the person above named into your custody and to deal with him in conformity to the orders of the Governor-General in Council and the provisions of Regulation III of 1818.

By order of the Governor-General in Council.

Dated the 7th May, 1907

(sd.) H.H. Risley
Secy, to the Govt. of India,
Home Department

So this document revealed none of the grounds-it had only to be presumed in the words of the Regulation that he had been arrested "to prevent commotion within the dominions of his Majesty". He had already received a copy of Regulation III which he had sent for from home the Superintendent Jibbed at allowing such dubious literature and did not pass it till he had consulted the local Government. On getting a copy of the Warrant Lajpat Rai drew up a petition or memorial addressed to His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, Simla, and on June 29, 1907 handed it over to the Superintendent of Jail. About tree weeks later the Superintendent asked him for another copy, for the Burma Government. Lajpat Rai had kept none, but from memory he produced one which he believed to be a "substantially faithful reproduction of the original". Having kept a copy of this version he was able to reproduce it later in *The Story of My deportation*.

In this memorial Lajpat Rai protested his innocence and "respectfully but emphatically" denied that "at the time of his arrest or immediately before or after it, there was any reasonable apprehension of any 'commotion' taking place in any part of the dominions of His Majesty, the King Emperor of India." and equally respectfully and emphatically he denied ever having done or attempted to do anything which was likely to cause such commotion in his Majesty's dominions or which could otherwise justify the application of Regulation III of 1818 against him. He submitted that he had always been a peaceful worker, devoting most of his time to futhering the cause of education amongst his countrymen, organising and distributing charity for the relief of orphans and needy widows and famine stricken people and to organising relief for other sufferers like those in the Kangra Valley after the terrible earthquake of 1905; that he had worked as a municipal commissioner for a period of three years and had been a practising lawyer for about 25 years; and that never in his public life, extending over quarter century, had he ever been suspected of doing anything likely to cause "commotion" in the dominions of His Majesty

He also called attention to his being a "constant sufferer from enlargement of the liver and diseases of the stomach". In the end he prayed that if his immediate release could not be ordered he might be informed of the grounds on which action had been taken against him and his petition might be forwarded to His Majesty, the King emperor of India. Pending disposal of the petition he asked for certain facilities, viz., that he might be permitted to (a) read Indian and English newspapers, as "being deprived of the right of reading them, he feels extremely lonely", and (b) "to send for a servant of his own from home to attend upon him". In the last paragraph he desired to "be informed of the probable duration of his confinement".

On August 6, the Superintendent read out to him the orders of the Government of India on the petition and later on gave him a slip with the following memorandum of the Government's decision:

"Government of India decided that you cannot go for drives beyond Fort Dufferin, Nor reduce police vigilance (terms of request vague). Regarding desire to be informed of charges against you, Government of India direct that no more particulars can be given beyond the reasons already given. You must submit your memorial to the King through the local Government.

Can't have your own servants nor newspapers (already refused) Nor any information regarding duration of confinement. No strong objection to your seeing your relatives but meetings and individuals to be restricted and only with permission of the Punjab Government."

This was a consolidated reply to the 'memorial' and to certain requests sent up by the Superintendent.

From the copy of the Regulation received for Lajpat Rai, the Superintendent of Jail had come to know that the law required him to submit a report about his charge to the Government of India on July 1. He asked Lajpat Rai if he might recommend any privileges for him. In reply Lajpat Rai said that he would like

to be permitted "to take drives out of the Fort; to have the police vigilance reduced a little and also to be allowed to see my friends".

He did not avail himself of the tip that he could send a petition to the King through the local Government. It amused him to find the Government taking their stand on technical grounds, in refusing to forward the petition to his Majesty as it had not been received through the proper channel. "I thought it was extremely ludicrous to say to a prisoner who had been refused all access to legal or other advice that a petition handed over by him to the Superintendent of Jail, the only person to whom he could do so, had not been sent through the proper channel." Of course he had "intelligence enough to know well that His Majesty being a constitutional monarch was not likely to interfere in the Government of India's action which had received the seal of approval from a statesman of Mr. John Morely's political principles". All the same he would have liked His Majesty to be acquainted with the "heartlessness of his Government in India in refusing newspapers to a political prisoner of my position and education". He also suspected that the Government of India were unwilling to acquaint His Majesty with the facts of the case while they were still trying "to fish out some evidence against me". "The accused in the riot cases at Lahore and Rawlpindi were being pressed and in some cases tortured to implicate me in those disturbances and the Government of India evidently hoped to get something substantial against me."

The Superintendent of Jail repeatedly reminded him if he would care to submit his suggested memorial to the King Emperor, but Lajpat Rai did not both about it, always replying that he would choose his own time for this.

"Knowing a bit of history as I did, I despaired of getting any justice or fairplay from despots, and resolved to settle down in the life of bondage to which I had been doomed by the latter's verdict. I thought that it was sufficient that I had entered a written protest and a denial to the general charge against me."

However, he had to bother about this wretched memorializing business once again, a few months later.

“In September.... I happened to read in an English magazine which had been passed on to me by the Superintendent, that one of the charges against me was that of having attempted to temper with the loyalty of the native army.” This utterly unfounded charge he considered to be a “gross libel” and he wanted to vindicate himself against it. As we shall see, he filed Libel suites against certain newspapers after his release. Perhaps he was already contemplating such litigation when he submitted his second memorial from Mandalay on September 22, this second memorial was addressed to the Right Honourable, the Secretary of State for India, London. In this once again he protested his innocence of anything calculated to cause commotion or in any way to make him liable under Regulation III of 1818. He reiterates his protest against having been kept in entire ignorance of the allegations against him. Besides this recapitulation of what he had said in the previous memorial he points out that newspapers having been totally disallowed to him, “your petitioner is not even in a position to explain away or refute the ‘supposed grounds’ of the Government of India’s decision against him”. Then in the paragraph that followed he in a way dealt with these “supposed grounds”:

“That you petitioner further begs to submit that he took no part in the Lahore or Rawalpindi riots; that he did not directly or indirectly encourage any person to bring about the same; that he did not make any seditious speeches; that he was always within the bounds of law and the constitution in expressing his disapproval of certain measures of the Government which were at the time of and immediately before his arrest exercising the public mind; that he never advocated any violent or illegal methods of redress; nor did he associate himself with any people who, to his knowledge, advocated such measures; that the suspicion, if entertained against him of having tampered with the native soldiers of His Majesty’s Army is entirely devoid of any foundation, your petitioner having had

no opportunities whatsoever of mixing or communicating with the same.”

The memorial also raised a legal and constitutional issue of some importance: “That the petitioner has reason to think that the Regulation which has been enforced against him is an unconstitutional act of the late East India Company, beyond the powers granted to them by their Charter; that being opposed to the letter and spirit of the British constitutions and British laws it is *ultra vires*; that it has never been approved of or sanctioned by the British Parliament. That the provisions of the said Regulation giving permanent powers for all times to come to the executive Government to deprive British subjects of personal liberty, without a proper trial by a court of justice are opposed to all notions of natural justice and Government by law.”

The idea that the Regulation was *ultra vires* he had got (according to the *story*) from a history of the East India Company, entitled *Ledger and Sword* that he had lately been reading. Some competent lawyers later on discussed the question in professional journals and concurred in the opinion that the Regulation was *ultra vires*.

To be deprived of newspapers was what pinched him most. He could never do without them. In later years when he could not claim the privilege of being a “State” prisoner and stupid jail regulations forbade all newspapers, some unauthorised arrangement had always to be devised for him. Such arrangements would, of course, occasionally fail, and not many happenings in prison life made him so fidgety and pettish as his being deprived of a daily paper. He refers to his deprivation in the second memorial as he had done in the first:

“That the petitioner very respectfully begs to point out that the ‘personal restraint’ mentioned by the Regulation could not have contemplated more than what was absolutely necessary for the object stated in the preamble; that the Regulation ostensibly aimed at prevention and not at the punishment of a man who has had no trial.”

That, looked at in this light, the decisions of the Government of India in disallowing newspapers and refusing to let the petitioner have a private servant of his own or a cook of his nationality are hardly just and necessary; nor can there be any justification for not allowing him to see any of his friends at all and in laying down that only such relatives can be permitted to see him as have received the previous sanction of the Government of the Punjab to that effect and that only in the presence and immediate hearing of an official.

“That the said restrictions are opposed to the practice observed in Great Britain for the treatment of political prisoners or persons confined under special Acts of Parliament without a trial.”

In the end “the petitioner very earnestly hopes for that justice and fairplay for which the British nation and their Government are renowned”—a formula in great favour with Indian political leaders of those days.

Read as a whole, the memorial is no petition for mercy. It clearly and emphatically takes its stand on legal rights. It is a protest and a challenge against not only the application of the law, but even its legality.

To this second memorial no reply was vouchsafed—except if you choose to see one in his release which, as the next chapter will show, was about this time under correspondence between Morley and Minto and presumably between Minto and the Punjab Government. At any rate, the Superintendent this time read out no “decisions” to him, nor wrote out a “memo” for him based on these.

Back from Exile

HOW LONG WOULD they keep him in Mandalay? He of course did not know. Perhaps, they did not either, The question was on the lips of everyone, the answer nowhere.

He looked around keenly for a clue and watched all happening that might possibly furnish one, as best as a State prisoner could in far away Mandalay, without proper access to newspapers. First of all, he awaited anxiously the result of the 'Pindi riot case.' Wrote Lajpat Rai afterwards in his *The Story of my Deportation*

'My first impression was that my release would not possibly be effected earlier than the final conclusion of the Rawalpindi and Lahore riots trials.... The acquittal of the Rawalpindi lawyers was as much a certainty to my mind as the rise of the sun every morning. As soon, therefore, as I heard of their honourable discharge, I concluded that my release could not be far off.'

The rather protracted proceedings in the Pindi case had from his point of view a most prosperous ending, for not only were his friends honourably acquitted by the Chief Court, but Mr. Justice Martineau plainly declared that the prosecution had cooked evidence, and he administered a memorable reprimand to the officials concerned. This augured well and he began to hope that the Government of India would take a fresh decision about him before they broke up in Simla to reassemble on the plains-'wishful thinking', as we might put it, using an expression overworked today but not yet in vogue then. May be, but partly it was shrewd guessing too. He had heard the silly

stories about his having seduced the troops. He could see how in a moment of panic these would be accepted without scrutiny, but the Government were bound to find out how utterly they had been gulled. His "mind was disturbed by constant conflict between hope and fear:.

This state of suspense was put an end to at 10-15 on the morning of November 11, when the commissioner of the Mandalay Division accompanied by the Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent of Police paid him a visit and told him that he was going to be released. The Commissioner added a warning on behalf of the Viceroy that in case he was again found doing anything seditious, he would be arrested and immediately deported!

Lalaji was told to pack up immediately as a special train was waiting. According to the schedule it should leave at 10-45. He was given less than half an hour to bid goodbye to what had become a second home to him.

The Superintendent of Police accompanied him to the railway station where on a siding the "special" was berthed ready to steam away. A knot of European officials stood by. Of these the Superintendent of Jail shook hands with him saying, "I am awfully glad to get rid of you and wish you well" and advised his erstwhile charge not to be "fooling" again. The Superintendent of Police gave him a cordial handshake after he had been escorted to the first-class compartment reserved for him.

In the yard he noticed a sergeant, who he knew was on duty that day with Sardar Ajit Singh. He concluded that Sardar Ajit Singh also was in the same train. He learnt before the sun went down that Sardar Ajit Singh was in a second-class compartment in the same train with a European Inspector of Police and a European sergeant as his escort.

A glimpse into the inner working of the Governmental machinery resulting in the release of the deportees is now afforded by the Minto-Morely correspondence as published principally in Morley's *Recollections* and Mary Minto's compilation from her husband's papers.

On October 25 Morley wrote to Minto:

“..... I do wish you would seriously consider how Lajpat can be dealt with. It occurs to me that when the time comes to promulgate your new Meetings Law, the occasion might be taken to say: ‘We have now armed ourselves with new powers; we shall probably go further; with this new strength and considering that deportation has wrought its perfect work. *Lajpat may go*’... I am quite sure you realize the difficulty-not to call it by any stronger name-of defending in the House of Commons indefinite detention without charge. His release will be one way of procuring assent here to the Meetings Act, and to whatever other repressive measures you may feel bound to take.”

This is the first despatch definitely suggesting release; the first move had thus come from London, though not made by the King as some at the time thought and though it need not follow that the suggestion was forced on Calcutta against the Viceroy’s wishes. Morley was obviously tired of having to defend on the floor of the House, day in and day out the indefensible practice of “indefinite detention without charge”. When Minto wanted approval for his seditious meetings law and possibly for other repressive measures, Morley, as a sort of counterpoise, suggested that one wrong may be righted before another was perpetrated. This would help Morley in his desperate endeavour to retain the last shreds of his miserably tattered liberalism. Having ordered the release of the victims of his *lettres de cachet* he could once again hold his head high and claim he had not altogether given a free hand to reaction. At the same time it could help Minto with the Anglo-Indian bureaucracy, whom the repressive measures would reassure that the release of the deportees did not signify a surrender of the principles of firm rule!

Being keen on his Meetings Act, Minto readily fell in with Morley’s suggestion. But Ibbetson does not seem to have agreed to it at any stage.

* *Ibid.*, p. 161

Replying to Morley's despatch quoted above, Minto said on November 5:

“As to Lajpat Rai Ajit Singh, I have not a shadow of doubt that we must in common justice release them, and that the sooner we do so the better. Now that we have declared the Punjab to be quiet we cannot logically justify their further imprisonment... No doubt the release will be hardly [sic] criticized by the Punjab Government and perhaps in other quarters where unthinking repression is the only weapon recognized... I have no doubt at all myself as to what is right, I have made all necessary arrangements and am informing you by telegram.”

Ibbetson demurred. But Minto by now was wiser:

“There is nothing whatever that I know of to justify his assertion that one of Lajpat Rai's main objects is to tamper with the loyalty of the Indian Army. I have never seen any evidence in support of this. Ibbetson appears to me to entirely misunderstand the position. He appears to assume that we can stamp out the unrest. This we can never do. It has come to stay, in the shape of new ideas and aspirations of which everyone who has thought seriously over the subject ought to be aware. He confuses this with sedition which we are absolutely determined to put down.”**

In this wiser mood Minto wrote:

“Lajpat is undoubtedly a man of high character and very much respected by his fellow-countrymen, and if when I was asked to arrest him I had known what I do now, I should have required much more evidence before agreeing.” #

But he did not want his complimentary observations to be taken to apply to Lajpat's co-deportee:

* *Ibid.*, p. 163.

** Quoted by Syed Hazi Wasti in *Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement 1905 to 1910*, p. 105

Quoted by Syed Razi Wasti, p. 105.

“Ajit Singh is of much lower standing in every way and I shall regret associating them in their release.”

Again Morley to Minto:

“November 8, I was greatly relieved by the line you took as to Lajpat Rai. The Cabinet to whom I stated the case very much in your own language was unanimous in the conclusion that you will never have as good a chance of getting rid of your precious *detenus* as at this moment, when you have acquired new repressive powers.... According to Ibbetson’s line of argument, as the quiet is only ephemeral, and as Lajpat is to be kept locked up until the ephemeral has changed into the eternal, he will remain in Mandalay for ever! Nothing could be mor childish....

If the addition of a seditious meetings measure to the legal armoury was any justification for his release, Lajpat Rai need never have been deported. He had not indulged in addressing public meetings wholesale, and Morley could not lay on the table more than two reports of his speeches in which he saw sedition, and the matter could surely have been dealt with in a court of law.

Minto himself had his doubts, perhaps, even when he got the deportation sanctioned, that the situation had really become as grave as it have been imagined to be. On May 15, 1907, he wrote to his wife (then in England):

“..... though personally I have never thought the position really dangerous, things have been and still are very ticklish.”

Ticklish, Yes-that seemed his own judgment, but the panicky measures were dictated by the judgment (or want of judgment) of the “Europeans and Eurasians” of whom he said in the same letter;

“The Europeans and Eurasians have been buying arms everywhere, and I hear the soldiers on the plains have been

* Quoted by Syed Razi Wasti., p. 105

** Marry, Countress of Minto :India, Minto and Morley 1905-1910, p. 163.

Ibid., p 136

sleeping with their rifles in their beds, and the gunners with their gun-traces by their sides. I only tell you this as gossip, but true gossip, I believe, to show you the feeling in the air. The recollections of the Mutiny have shed a great influence over both Europeans and Natives: but K. and myself, and the people who know best, do not think that the present agitation is deep-seated as regards danger for the moment.”

It seems that not long after the deportaion, Minto found out that there was no tangible evidence against Lajpat Rai. In the same letter to Lady Minto from which we have just quoted, we read:

“The police at Lahore muddled the arrests: they never attempted to take a single paper from Lajpat Rai’s house, and never ought to have allowed the other man to escape, as they did.”**

Yes, Lajpat Rai’s house was not searched; but it may be taken as certain that a search would have been most disappointing to Minto. Lajpat Rai had not indulged in raising a “Mutiny” and could not have had in his possession really dangerous documents-letters from the Amir of Afghanistan and that sort of thing.

Did he really have any of these imaginary papers? It is clear he had been forewarned and could easily have been forearmed against-so Minto believed. “The issue of the warrant for the arrest of Lajpat Rai is said to have been known in the bazaar here long before it was executed.” But Minto’s disappointment does in a way indicate that the police had not been able to produce any evidence to satisfy him about Lajpat Rai’s guilt.

Minto started with implicit reliance on Ibbetson, the man on the spot, The delay in executing the warrant for Ajit Singh’s arrest-there was a gap of 25 days in the two arrests-clearly

* *Ibid.*, p 136

** *Ibid.*, p 137

*** Minto to Moprley, 21st May 1907, Morley Papers. Quoted by Syed Razi Wasti, in his *Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement 1905-1910* p;. 143

revealing the Punjab authorities' ignorance of his whereabouts, and their own unvigilant inefficient ways must have given a rude jolt to that faith. It did not take him long to see that Ibbetson was unable to produce any evidence and had relied on rumours and none too reliable police reports.

It was generally believed that Gokhale's endeavours on behalf of Lajpat Rai had to some extent influenced the official mind. There is nothing inherently improbable in this. Minto was credited with a policy of wooing the Moderates, Gokhale demanded Lajpat Rai's release not only in the press, but it was believed he was also using his personal influence with the authorities. In particular Gokhale in his discussions with Minto and Dunlop Smith (Minto's Private Secretary) took strong exception to Lajpat Rai's being bracketed with Ajit Singh. He wrote to Dunlop Smith on June 10, 1907:

“To bracket Ajit Singh with Lajpat Rai is monstrous injustice to the latter. When I was in Lahore in February last, Ajit Singh had already begun to denounce Lajpat Rai as a coward and a pro-Government man, because Lajpat Rai would have nothing to do with Ajit Singh's propoganda.”

“Gokhale had a talk with Dunlop Smith as well. The gist of this talk was that Gokhale virtually begged for the early release of Lajpat Rai-as for Ajit Singh he might rot in Jehannum (hell)'. Gokhale had again insisted that Lajpat Rai should not have been bracketed with 'that miscreant Ajit Singh who should have got transporation to the Andamans.'**

Possibly also Keir Hardie's visit to India during Lajpat Rai's deportation proved helpful. He had studied the Indian situation at first hand, and arrived at certain conclusion which were embodied in a cable sent from Baroda to the *Daily Express*, London, on October 21:

* Quoted by Syed Razi Wasti in his *Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement 1905 to 1910*, p. 102. Gokhale's letter formed an enclosure to Minto's letter formed an enclosure to Minto's letter to Morley, 18th September 1907.

** Syed Razi Wasti, *op.cit.*, p. 103.

“I have returned from the visits of the United Provinces and the Punjab.... Your readers remember that sensational report from the Punjab last spring that sedition, murder, arson and general lawlessness were rampant. It is now known that they were a figment of overheated, jaundiced journalistic imagination.

The districts round Lahore and Rawalpindi were agitated by 25 per cent increased rent, fresh heavy irrigation charges and confiscatory land legislation. Agitation followed. The canal charge was withdrawn and the Colony Bill vetoed. The agitation ended. This was the only seditious movement. Fifty-five leading men were kept in jail four months without bail. Trial and acquittal followed, the judge declaring the prosecuting witness perjurers and the evidence fabricated. So much for the seditious movement, of which I can find no trace. The native police are miserably paid, ignorant and venal. These, supplemented by a tactless magistracy and sensational news-mongers, were responsible for most of the trouble.....

Government officials are misinformed. They are too far removed from the people and dependent entirely on police reports which the higher courts almost universally disbelieve....”

H.W. Nevinson’s visit to India during this period must also be mentioned here. His despatches to the *Daily Chronicle*, the *Manchester Guardian* and the ‘Glasgow Herald also strongly criticised the Government’s doings.

“Tranquillity” of a kind there was, certainly in the Punjab after the deportations. But amongst the causes of this tranquillity was the vetoing of Ibbetson’s colonization Bill, which vetoing Minto adjudged “indispensable” on merit, also the honourable discharge of the Rawalpindi leaders, and also the fact that the Punjab had been proclaimed. No public meetings were allowed. A public meeting was held at Delhi to protest against the deportation of Lajpat Rai, and after that Delhi was “proclaimed” too. East Bengal had also been proclaimed. A conference was to have been held there, at Faridpur with the

Collector's permission, but was abandoned because the Collector objected to the resolution about Lajpat Rai's deportation.

"Tranquility" merely meant that public meetings had been banned. Otherwise, we have already seen that even at the end of August, four months of deportation, Minto was himself reporting serious aggravation. And the lack of public meetings was much more than made up for, in police reports, by private meetings throughout the Punjab, even in the N.W. Frontier, informal group gatherings, not only of men, but very often of women also, arising out of the resentment felt over deportations, at which funds for agitation and organisation were raised and sometimes reported to be meant for work in Bengal and Maharashtra. All these, particularly as full information was not available, fostered suspicion and made the authorities' migraine more acute.

Gokhale and Keir Hardie may have had something to do with the decision for release; but if would be ungenerous to insist that Minto and Morley were altogether dead to the grave injustice that continued detention would involve. As Minto put it, they had to let out Lajpat Rai "in common justice". In six months they had not been able to get an iota of evidence of his complicity in any secret doings and, on the contrary, there had been evidence enough that the officials were being duped by informers, and that the informers were taking advantage of the officials' panicky and gullible frame of mind. They were at any rate required by the Regulation to review the case at the end of six months, and when Morley urged release in his despatch to Calcutta the sixth month was already running.

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In spite of official attempts at secrecy the news had leaked out by November 12. The Rangoon correspondent of *The Statesman* had wired details and that was taken as authentic confirmation.

The journey homewards was a repetition in reverse order of the journey towards Mandalay six months prior, with the

difference that now there was more courtesy all round from officials concerned and the supply of victuals was lavish, even wasteful. The same attempt at secrecy continued, and yet the crowds somehow seemed to divine the secret and were on the scene wherever the 'sealed' train stopped. There was the same systematic putting up of shutters at all stoppages. Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were not to catch a glimpse of each other particularly on board the steamer. This created some ludicrous situations! The prisoners were made to get down from the train at Poozaundaung, the same suburban station of Rangoon where the deportee had entrained for Mandalay and driven to the same jetty where he had landed six months earlier on his way to Mandalay. *S.s. Guide* again picked them up. Leaving Rangoon at 7.10 on the 12th morning it entered the mouth of the Hooghly on the 15th evening anchoring opposite the Saugor Lighthouse. Early next morning at 5.30 anchor was raised and about 8.30 the steamer passed Diamond Harbour. On the return voyage too the sea was rough, though the last day was pleasant. The secrecy business was the cause of unnecessary gyrations. At 10 in the morning the steamer again anchored at Rajpur, some 40 to 50 km from Calcutta.

There the party remained till 4.30 in the afternoon. About sunset they landed near Budge Budge—"Once again I was on Indian Soil." The special train kept in readiness was berthed on a siding to avoid public notice. An Inspector from the Bengal police took over charge. Of course the two prisoners were kept apart—one in a first-class carriage, the other in a second-class one. The train made a detour and went by an *ad hoc* route, at Bilaspur it took to a branch line to Katni, from thereon it followed the Southern Punjab Railway *via* Bhatinda to Lahore. "The train was running under a false name and particular care was taken to keep the platforms clear of Indians."

Besides the police escort, Mr. Clark, the Traffic manager of the Bengal Nagpur Railway, and the Assistant Traffic Manager also accompanied them from Calcutta. "Mr. Clark provided dinner to me in his own saloon and was very courteous

and kind.” Mostly they had to depend on tinned food, but Mr. Clark did everything to assure plenty and comfort.

On the return journey stores were supplied liberally, but a large number of costly articles supplied were not even touched by Lalaji, since he regarded these as sheer waste of public money.

The end of the journey came at last. They got down not on the main railway station at Lahore, but at Mianmir West (now Lahore Cantonment) at 5.30 in the morning of November 18, 1907, Immediately after that he and Sardar Ajit Singh were taken to a saloon where Major C.H. Bansley, the Superintendent of Lahore Central Jail, read them first, the warrant of transfer from Mandalay Jail to Lahore Jail and then the writ of release. This over, a Landau was placed at his disposal and a tumtum for luggage. Mr. Rundle, the Superintendent of Police, Lahore District, drove in front of him in his tandem and left after Lajpat had entered the compound of his bungalow.

Thus after an absence of six months and nine days he returned home.

**The Triple Stream
Flows on**

The Aftermath of Deportation

FROM MANDALAY LAJPAT Rai returned the hero of the day in Indian politics. The deportation soon became the outstanding landmark of his career. In his rise to fame we see the first significant signpost in the speech he made as a young man hardly out of his teens on the death of Swami Dayananda. This proclaimed beyond doubt his magic gift in public-speaking and promoted him straightway to the inmost circle in the Arya Samaj. For the next landmark we must turn to the "Open Letters" to Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. These made his name known and talked about beyond the bounds of the Samaj and the Punjab, so that immediately after when he arrived at a Congress session he found he had already stormed the citadel of fame. His Banaras speech with its message of a self-reliant and assertive nationhood stands out as a landmark as much in the career of the Congress as in his own. The new forces that at once caught the people's imagination and made the prevailing moderatism of politicians look by contrast pettifogging, beggarly, unreal were not the creation of this utterance, but it proclaimed, as nothing else had done, their definite arrival in the humdrum doings of a Congress used only to a staid style and measured, somewhat timid, accents. For Lajpat Rai himself this was an emphatic avowal of the bolder thinking to which he had been led as much by his experience in England as by the dynamic forces then at work in human affairs, particularly in the East. The deportation came as the fourth landmark, the one that marked the culmination to which the previous ones had led.

Youthful hearts that the finished oratory of the Moderate leaders had touched but little responded readily to the new gospel of Swaraj, Swadeshi and Boycott. Whoever controlled the Congress, there could be no doubt that the people's imagination had been captured by the New Party. The heart beat of the mass was quickened by the new message-the mass that had been left cold by the most perfectly worded speeches of the Moderate school. Hero worship soon made itself an assonant new trinity-Lal-Bal-Pal, from Lala Lajpat Rai, Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Bipin Chandra Pal, leaders from the Punjab, Maharashtra and Bengal, the three strongholds of the new movement. Popular prints from photographs of this trinity decorated the walls of innumerable homes to proclaim their political allegiance. Of the generation then growing up, those who in later life suffered and sacrificed for India's freedom would still recall Lal-Bal-Pal, the three-faced beacon that gave them the first clear glimpse of their path and their goal. "Bande Mataram" and those popular prints of Lal-Bal-Pal opened their youthful eyes to a new world in which passive resistance and non-co-operation later on logically and naturally seemed to follow from the 1907 gospel of Swaraj, Swadeshi and Boycott.

"Bal" and "Pal" were very definite in their party loyalty; "Lal" however believed in the gospel rather than in the church, and besides would not forswear his personal loyalty to Gokhale, the high priest of the rival church; but whether or not he was a staunch partisan, his already distinguished record of service and sacrifice, his lofty character and unquestionable sincerity, combined with the universal belief that he had been completely clean and above board and had had nothing to do with any secret dark designs that his enemies imputed to him, gave his exile a halo of martyrdom. It at once elevated him in the esteem of all interested in or sympathetic to the new movement and few with any political awareness were not sympathetic to it-besides making the extremists' resentment against the alien ruler deeper and grimmer than ever, driving the extremists further to the extreme and accentuating the passions of the enthusiast

and of the reckless. When this happened, the restraining influences were naturally enfeebled. In analysing (on the whole very objectively) the events that followed his deportation, Lajpat Rai wrote in *Young India*:

“The sudden deportation of Lajpat Rai in May 1907 changed the whole current of thought and action. The Nationalists concluded that the movement for passive resistance required to be supported by secret propaganda as well as the use of force against force. In the worlds of the Honourable Mr. G.K. Gokhale, in a speech delivered in the Council of the Governor-General after the deportation of Lajpat Rai, the latter was ... one of the persons whom the extreme Nationalists claimed as their own, populace ‘liked for his philanthropic and educational activities’. Whom the Moderate Nationalists also respected, and whom the The sudden capture of this man, without trial, without charge, and without notice, drove the young Nationalists to frenzy. Even the sober and the thoughtful among the Nationalists were in despair.

The Anglo-Indian press all over the country, however, was in jubilation. The leading semi-official daily published at Lahore, the headquarters of Lajpat Rai, described him as the leader of a deep-laid revolutionary movement every detail of which passed through his fingers. He was said to have a following of ‘100,000 desperadoes’. *the Englishman*, at Calcutta, charged him with having tampered with the loyalty of the Indian army, and having invited the King of Afghanistan to invade India. As a result of adding, as they did, insult to the injury of deportation, the country was ablaze with indignation.... All differences of opinion were forgotten and the whole country joined in protest. The extreme wing of the Nationalists, however, decided to take the next step. They decided to use force and began to think of bomb and revolver and of a guerilla warfare against the established despotism. The older people, though they sympathised,

* pp. 155-56.

would not agree to take any part in the movement using physical force, nor would they give their sanction to such a course.”

This analysis is convincingly supported by the chronological sequence of events:

“It is possible that some sort of secret organisation existed in Bengal in 1906, but force did not enter into their programme till after May 1907, i.e., until after the deportation of Lajpat Rai. The deportation decided them. Yet the first shot was not fired until December 1907, and the first bomb was not thrown until April or May 1908. The split at Surat in December 1907 irrevocably divided the Nationalists into two parties and confirmed the younger party in their programme of force.”

As further comment on “force”, we may recall here that when Tilak received the news of Lajpat Rai’s deportation, his spontaneous reaction is reported to have been- “and is Minto alive?” Tilak himself of course used only the weapon of popular agitation. But the “younger party” reacting thus naturally thought of other means. Senapati Bapat, who was very close to Tilak and who is credited with having brought the younger party the Bomb Manual from Europe, has attested to Lajpat Rai’s deportation having been a decisive factor.

The deported Lajpat Rai affected the Anglo-Indian mind quite as profoundly as he did that of the Indian extremist-of course, in a vastly different direction. The fact that he was a man of such lofty character according to the admissions of their own best and highest placed man, and that there had been not a shred of evidence to justify the dark suspicion because of which it had been decided to spirit him away under *lettre de cachet* put a heavy strain on the mind of those whom “prestige” compelled to keep on pretending that they were infallible. If to the end of this story you find this cleanest and most candid of men, alike as friends or foe, pursued by the British officials again and again under the suspicion of being somehow connected with subtle and secret design and deep-laid intrigue, it is the kink in the Anglo-Indian mind created by the 1907 episode that is responsible. If only they had found some flimsy

scrap of evidence to justify to themselves the wrong they had done this need not have happened! Or else, if they could muster courage enough to own up that they had been misled, their mind would have been purged of an element that kept obstinately popping up again and again from subconscious regions, and the sequel might have been vastly different.

The Surat Split

“LIKE GOETHE AT the battle of Valmy, I could have said, Today marks the beginning of a new era, and you can say that you were present at it.” *

“Lalaji was the central figure around which the events of 1907 turned.” **

“History very seldom records the things that were decisive but took place being the veil; it records the shown front of the curtain. Very few people know that it was I (without consulting Tilak) who gave the order that led to the breaking of the Congress and was responsible for the refusal to join the new-fangled Moderate Convention which were the two decisive happenings at Surat.”

- Sri Aurobindo on himself.

Yet another train awaited him—a harder one perhaps than that out of which he had emerged a national hero. Even before his arrest he had been noticing the growing cleavage between the Moderates and those with more virility in their politics who called themselves Nationalists, and were often termed Extremists or Tilakites or the New Party-’leftists’ would be more convenient—but in 1907 “right” and “left” had not yet become current in Indian political parlance. But for the signs that augured well for the thriving of this virile group, it was

* Henry W. Nevins (in *The New Spirit in India*, p. 258) commenting on the scene at Surat that marked the split of the Congress in 1907.

** Pattabhi Sitaramayya in *History of the Indian National Congress*.
Vol. 1 p. 102

very doubtful if Lajpat Rai would have been attracted much to politics and to the National Congress. The early phase of the Congress had altogether failed to "enthuse" him, and his own contribution to a national awakening at that stage was made more through his books in Urdu on Mazzini and Garibaldi than from the Congress platform. But from 1904-05 he had perceived a change in the atmosphere and he was quick to react to it. His speech at the Banaras Congress was a very definite contribution to the assertiveness of the left wing. But, as we have seen, even at Banaras he had taken good care not to offend Gokhale personally: him he held in real high esteem. His regard for Gokhale had made the compromise formula possible by which 'scenes' in the Congress pandal which looked inevitable were averted; and though he sided with Tilak, he had by that compromise definitely obliged Gokhale. Even when he played the mediator successfully, his own convictions were generally believed to be the same as Tilak's.

Lajpat Rai was released in November, and it was clear next month there would be a tussle between the right and left wings at the annual session of Congress. Lajpat Rai, though he stood for a bold policy, was anxious more than most other people seemed, that a split be avoided. Possibly in striking a balance he considered the disadvantages of too quick a pace. Possibly it was his personal regard for Gokhale (and maybe to some extent for Malaviya) that made him halt and hesitate. Whatever the cause, it remained a fact that he was unwilling to be a party man out and out.

The common people, with some political awareness, placed him in the Tilakite camp, more particularly after his deportation, and expected him to act accordingly. Indissolubly they had linked Lal with Bal and Pal in the new "trimurti" in their political shrine.

Likewise, the Nationalists (or leftists) in the Congress who wanted to run him as their candidate for the presidential chair.

In a negative way the Moderates too gave him a party label inasmuch as they made it clear that they would not have him in the presidential chair.

It is true Gokhale had genuine and high regard for him. It appeared an enigma to many that Lajpat Rai should be a friend and admirer at the same time of Tilak and Gokhale. The popular mind while uncharitably making him responsible at least partly for Tilak's incarceration gave Gokhale credit, even perhaps more than was actually due, for his endeavours in that behalf when Lajpat Rai was restored to Freedom. Yet it was pretty clear when the issue was Moderate vs Extremist. Lajpat Rai was not to Gokhale a fellow-worshipper in his (Gokhale's) own political shrine, and of course must be dealt with accordingly.

Thus the public mind, the Tilakites and the Moderates all treated Lajpat Rai as a staunch leftist, and yet Lajpat Rai himself was unwilling to adopt that role, if this meant a split. There he drew a line. He did not want the highest honour in the gift of the nation, if the conferment or the acceptance should mean displeasing Gokhale and splitting the Congress into two warring camps, He could easily wait.

He certainly could afford to. But how would his refusal react on the prospects of the left wing? Perhaps he did not attach much importance to that aspect; perhaps he valued unity too much to be a staunch partisan. He ran the risk of his friends feeling as if he had deserted them, Of course, it would be a different kind of desertion from that of Browning's Lost Leader—"for a ribbon he left us". For the only ribbon Lajpat Rai could look forward to was in the gift of those whom he was supposed to be 'deserting'. He declined the 'ribbon' and deserted! Leaving out details and analytical comment, the bare essential facts on the eve of the Surat session were thus recorded by Lajpat Rai years later:

"We were released in November and immediately on my coming back to India. Mr. Tilak proposed my name for the presidency of the coming Congress. The Moderates opposed and I refused to stand. My action pleased Mr. Gokhale but displeased Mr. Tilak. So it was given out that Mr. Tilak's name would be formally proposed for the presidency in the open

session of the Congress in opposition to Rash Behari Ghose who had been elected by the Reception Committee.”

But actually at Surat things shaped rather differently, and when one goes into detail, there was controversy even in regard to facts particularly regarding pourparlers as may be seen from the opposing versions from the two camps.

After the Surat session the ‘Extremist’ version (issued in reply to the official version) over the signatures of Tilak, Khaparde, Aurobindo Ghose, H. Mukherjee and B.C. Chatterjee blamed Gokhale for turning down the nomination of Lajpat Rai. Gokhale was alleged to have brushed aside Lajpat Rai’s nomination on the ground that ‘we cannot afford to flout Government at this stage, the authorities would throttle our movement in no time.’ This was naturally regarded as an insult to the public feeling. The country and Dr. Ghose must have received at least a hundred telegrams from different parts of India requesting him to generously retire in Lala Lajpat Rai’s favour. “And though,” the statement continued, “Lala Lajpat Rai publicly declined the honour, this did not satisfy the people who wished to discuss the principle of selecting a Congress President on the above ground, believing as they did that the most effective protest against the repressive policy of Government would be to elect Lala Lajpat Rai to the chair.”

Gokhale protested that this version was an “unscrupulous distortion of stray sentences from a private conversation taken apart from their context”. The conversation, he said, had been with the Extremist gentleman of Surat to whom, in the course of discussion he had prior to the meeting of the Reception Committee on the 24th November, he had pointed out the unwisdom of bringing forward Lala Lajpat Rai’s name for the presidentship of the Congress, because at this late stage ‘any division among the workers at Surat was most undesirable as it was sure to hamper the progress of their work,’ and because there being no chance of the proposal about Lala Lajpat Rai being carried in the Reception Committee, “the rejection of

Lala Lajpat Rai's name would only be a painful and wanton humiliation for him."

Besides, Gokhale said that he had pleased "that though Lala Lajpat Rai had been personally restored to freedom, the larger question of principle involved in his deportation had yet to be fought out and it would best be fought out by keeping up the feeling of the country united and intact behind him, and that this feeling was sure to be divided if one section of the Congress tried to run him as a party candidate." About 'flouting' the Government Gokhale's version read: "I next pointed out that there were other ways in which we could all honour Mr. Lajpat Rai and then I added, 'if your object is simply to flout the Government, I can understand your proposals.'" To this one of the gentlemen said, 'Yes even if we do nothing else we want to show that we are prepared to flout the Government.'" I thereupon said, 'I don't believe in such flouting. The Congress must, of course, express condemnation of Government measures when necessary, but it has other important work to do. We cannot do without the help and co-operation of Government in many matters at our present stage.'

That had been a month prior to the plenary session.

In yet another statement detailing his version of the pourparlers Gokhale said:

"Lala Lajpat Rai, who arrived at Surat on the morning of that day (Dec.25) saw Messrs. Tilak and Khaparde in the afternoon and intimated to them to settle the question in dispute. Messrs, Tilak and Khaparde having agreed, he went to Mr. Gokhale to arrange for the Committee if possible and Messrs. Tilak and Khaparde returned to the Nationalist conference which was held that evening (25th December). At this conference a Nationalist Committee consisting of one nationalist delegate from each province was appointed to carry on the negotiations with the leaders on the other side; and it was decided that if the Nationalist Committee failed to obtain any assurance from responsible Congress officials about the *status quo* being maintained. the Nationalists should begin their

opposition from the election of the President... No kind of intimation was received from Lala Lajpat Rai, this night or even the next morning....

On that day (25th) in the afternoon, Lala Lajpat Rai, who was going to visit the Extremist Camp, asked me if he might personally assure the leaders on that side that they were under a misapprehension about the resolution and that would find them all on the agenda paper when it arrived from the press. I readily agreed and Lala Lajpat Rai went and gave the assurance that same evening.

The Extremist statement speaks of certain attempts made by certain gentleman to arrange a compromise and it mentions three gentlemen as having undertaken to speak to me—Lala Lajpat Rai, Babu Surendranath Banerjea and Mr. Chunilal D. Saraya. Of these Mr. Chunilal never saw me in any such connection. Lala Lajpat Rai had a brief talk with me, It was on the 25th December, in the evening, at the railway station when we had gone there to receive the President, about a proposal made by Mr. Tilak that five men on his side and five on the other should meet together and settle the wording of the resolutions. I pointed out to Mr. Lajpat Rai that it was the business of the Subjects Committee to settle the wording and that a committee such as Mr. Tilak suggested had never been appointed before. Moreover it was easy for Mr. Tilak, whose followers were meeting in a conference day after day, to nominate five men to represent his side. But amidst the excitement and bitterness of feeling then prevailing, what five men, I asked, could claim the authority or undertake the responsibility to act in the name of the other delegates and I said to him, ‘Let the Subjects Committee meet tomorrow and let us see if any differences remain to be adjusted. And if any remain, we can make this proposal to the Subjects Committee’ Lala Lajpat Rai saw the force of this and did not press the suggestion further.”

Whatever the considerations that weighed with Gokhale, Lajpat Rai, for his part, made no grievance. He stepped aside—

and did so not sullenly, but broadmindedly. The episode did not seem to have affected his loyalty to or esteem for Gokhale. He tried his utmost to remain loyal to Gokhale as well as to Tilak and also true to the course of action that to him appeared to be sane and proper. His only regret was that his stepping aside did not avert the calamity he had dreaded. There was too much suspicion and mistrust on both sides and in a way even determination to fight it out. As Lajpat Rai said, the episode had only a historical interest:

“Suspicion and mistrust between the two parties was so deep that the rank and file on both sides seemed determined to fall out. All efforts to bring about a reconciliation proved fruitless.”

But he was unwilling to blame either Gokhale or Tilak. In a press-statement issued by him after the Surat session he remarked that “both parties had come determined to fight and that the Moderates were more eager to have a split than the Nationalists. But whatever might have been Gokhale’s opinion he did not desire a split. Nor did Mr. Tilak desire it. Circumstances however proved too strong for both of them to avert it.”

Conflicting versions were given out, particularly about the peace efforts. In rather broad terms Lajpat Rai wrote about his own peace errands:

“I was in close touch with Mr. Gokhale at that time and I saw all the time how nervous he was, Shattered in health, he could not sleep and get any rest at all, Most of his time was spent in discussions. With his messages and assurances and even on my own behalf I visit the Nationalist camp several times every day and pressed upon Mr. Tilak the undersirability and unwisdom of opposing the presidential election. We discussed and argued the matter and every time I left with the impression that he agreed with me. But that was not to be.”

Though the decisive fight that split the Congress came over the election of President, dissension had really arisen over political issues, and after withdrawing his own nomination

Lajpat Rai was seeking a compromise formula regarding these. No settlement was effected, and the Nationalists felt impelled to resort to unusual tactics. We have seen that the Nationalists had reason to be satisfied with their achievement at the previous session in Calcutta, and they were wanting to consolidate their gains. But reports were afloat that the Calcutta resolutions were being watered down, and there was no timely and firm repudiation of these reports. A distinctive feature at Surat was that the Nationalist party had set up a separate camp. This by itself gave things a look of opposing forces arrayed against each other. The Nationalists had meetings of their full strength for two days before the session which were addressed by Tilak and Aurobindo. In this separate camp, as Henry W. Nevinson observed, "suspicion cried aloud and indignation grew on rumour". *

Negotiations yielded no result, the scheduled hour arrived, and again to quote Nevinson:

"The platform people began to arrive, Among the first came Dr. Rutherford.... Then a quiet white-turbaned figure, with sad determination in his look, entered from the side. Like one man, the ten thousand sprang to their feet, Cheer followed cheer; it seemed as though the cheering would never cease. Who does not love the man that has suffered for a cause? it was Lajpat Rai." **

Tumult burst as soon as after the Reception Committee Chairman's address, the name of Dr. Rash Behari Ghose was proposed. "Tumult burst, and no word more was heard" †

The sitting had to be suspended. Envoys kept busy through the evening and night-and achieved nothing.

Next day as the procession entered the pandal Tilak sent notice for an amendment to the motion regarding presidential election. As he rose to speak he was ruled out or order—he did

* *The New Spirit, in India*, p. 242.

** *Ibid.*, pp. 245-46

† *Ibid.*, p. 247

not accept the ruling: Ghose was not yet the President and could give no ruling—Malvi (Reception Committee Chairman) was “no longer in the chair”. Tumult arose and continued, the climax coming when a red-leather missile—a Maharashtra style slipper flew through the air and struck Surendranath Banerjea and then hit Pheroza Shah Mehta. That moment marked the beginning of a new era.

Years later recalling the Surat scene before his mind’s eye, Lajpat Rai wrote:

“With it [the Surat session] ended one epoch of our national movement and another began.” and “both the ending and the beginning” [of the epochs], he remarked, “were the work of the late Mr. Tilak.”

Tilak’s personality as revealed at Surat left an indelible impression of Lalaji’s mind

“The thing that fixed itself on my mind then and which I have never been able to efface was the unique strength of Mr. Tilak. The moment he stood up to propose his amendment he was hissed and booted from all sides, (he) stood on the platform amidst a crowd of big people hostile and determined to defeat him. Amongst leaders who were seated on the platform there were very few, if any, who were Tilakites.... Determined and unflinching, resolution could be read from every line of his face. His fearlessness infused feelings of admiration in the heart of all who had no bias against him. The whole of this attitude during that session marked him out as a man of destiny who would defy all powers on earth and heaven to carry out his will.”

In a reminiscent mood Lalaji often recalled the Surat happenings. His memory’s picture of the plenary pandal was dominated (as we have seen) by Tilak’s standing unperturbed in a hostile gathering when tumult raged all around him. Of his visits to the Extremist camp on his mission of peace he used particularly to recall how he pleaded with Aurobindo that as a teacher his role was above party strife. Sri Aurobindo’s reply to this was: “You cannot fill the cup till you have first

emptied it” and Lalaji would add that with appropriate gesture Aurobindo’s hands matched the words of his reply. And, whenever Lalaji recalled that moment he too with his hands like Sri Aurobindo emptied the cap before filing it.

* * *

In 1907 Lajpat Rai simply could not help bring the cynosure of the political horizon, the focus of a myriad gazing eyes. No matter who the President and who the party managers, he was the people’s hero, and him they gave their best and lustiest ovations. All bouquets and incense they seemed to have reserved for him. If a fight there was to be, that too must be fought around his name, even though he acted as peace-maker all the time and found it most embarrassing to have his now name embroiled in the squabble. Such was the great paradox of Surat, Even after the negotiations had finally broken down and the Congress split into two, he made yet a final appeal for peace. His last message from Surat went out in his address as President of the Swadeshi Conference:

“I would beg of my Moderate friends:” and he, “not to play into the hands of our enemies.... It may be that some of the so-called Extremist methods are not to their liking, but for that reason to give them over to the enemy and to force them into the position of perpetual opponents by slighting them or holding them up to the persecution of the Government and the ridicule of the Anglo-Indian will not be wisdom... To my extremist friends I would respectfully appeal not to be impatient of the slowness of age and the voice of practical experience!”

The fight so it looked, arose out of the Moderates refusing to have Lajpat Rai as President: and when negotiations were afoot, one of the principal terms from Tilak’s side insisted on a graceful reference’ to Lajpat Rai. The negotiations bore no fruit and Dr. Rash Behari Ghose got no opportunity to read out the address he had written for the occasion, but as was discovered afterwards, it was not without a ‘graceful references’

to Lajpat Rai. The 'reference' of course was not to his claims to Congress presidentship but it discussed at length his incarceration—a reference not to the presidential crown but to the "crown of thorns"

"The year that is now fast drawing to a close," we read in the presidential address, "has seen the country convulsed to its depths and has truly been a dramatic year. The first act opened with the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, This was followed by the ordinance against public meetings, the Rawalpindi trial and the Press prosecutions in the Punjab and in Bengal."

"It has been said in defence of the resurrection of Regulation III of 1818 that it is a standing law. It is not a standing law but a standing negation of all law; not a standing law but a standing menace to our liberty, a standing reproach in our Statute book..... a weapon which is as obsolete in civilized jurisprudence as the rack or the screw. Their action in deporting a man for reasons which they dared not disclose was 'illegal', 'unconstitutional', 'tyrannical', 'arbitrary', 'impudently absurd' and 'preposterous'. None of the epithets are mine. They have all been taken by me from Hansard and were used by a staunch liberal on a memorable occasion. And was not Mr. Morley's answer in the House of Commons the most outrageous and indefensible answer given since Simon de Montfort invented Parliament!" And he went on to pay a tribute to Lajpat Rai :

"And who was the first victim selected for the exercise of this arbitrary power? An earnest, religious and social reformer, a man whose character was above all reproach, a man who lived not for himself but for others—the idol of the Punjab..... and if Lala Lajpat Rai is now regarded as a martyr by his countrymen generally, it is the Government and Government alone that have elevated him to that position and placed that priceless crown of thorns upon his head. If the Fort of Mandalay is now regarded as a holy place, as I know it is by some of my

countrymen, it is the Government and the Government alone that have invested it with that holiness."

Here followed a list of the causes of discontent quoted from Lajpat Rai's article written for the *Punjabee*, a few hours before his arrest, and then this comment.

"This diagnosis was perfectly correct, for as soon as the most pressing grievances were removed, the Punjab became quiet. Though the bureaucracy will probably persuade themselves that this happy result was entirely due to the deportation of Lala Lajpat Rai and of Ajit Singh and that another mutiny had been averted solely by their foresight and timely precautions."

* * *

Lajpat Rai was the big paradox of Surat, whilst he strained every nerve for peace, the fight went to around his name. When the peace efforts broke down and a split could not be averted, he sat with those who thwarted his elevation to high honour, and not with those who fought in his name. And, the paradox of paradoxes-when the Congress ended in tumultuous scenes breaking it into two internecine camps-a civil war you might call it - he sat down right at Surat-the field of battle-to quiet, constructive work as if nothing had happened.

The Surat split means a severe setback in the career of the congress, and that of Lajpat Rai could not escape its impact. For him as perhaps for no other Congressman who was then or became later a front rank leader. The split created peculiar and enormous difficulties. He did not want to break away completely from the Congress and would not join hands with the Nationalists in setting up a rival show, and yet he knew that, thrown into the company of the Moderates, he would ever be ill at ease. He feared besides that politics might soon be a moribund affair.

* * *

Meanwhile there was an urgent and distressing summons from another quarter-an SOS that would brook no delay. In 1906 plague had made its ravages. Now famine was raising

its ugly head and threatened to outdo the record of the previous year's visitation. To such agony Lajpat Rai could never remain indifferent-polities or no politics. Besides, politics to him meant nothing if it did not include a programme of service of the masses. He was not willing to fritter away his energy in a meaningless feud. For the next few months he must keep busy with organising a relief campaign. He took the resolve while still at Surat. Concluding his presidential address to the Swadeshi Conference he said:

“The country is now in the grip of a dire famine. The nation that we aspire to serve mostly lives in huts and is in great distress. The Government is doing its duty, or at any rate, professes to do it ... Shall we the blood of their blood lag behind?... I appeal to my friends and co-workers to put their shoulders to the wheel, to organise a non-official famine relief campaign in the famine affected province. I know that the work is tremendous and the difficulties still more so, but it affords the most useful and most effective training for a disinterested patriotic life.”

“It was significant of his strength of character and indifference to popularity.” writes Nevinson, “that after the breach in the Surat Congress, he had his immense influence to the Moderate party and declared he would fight under the old banner.... But it was still more characteristic that, when the Congress had vanished, he remained in Surat for the Social and Swadeshi Conferences, and organised a famine-relief fund there, just as if nothing had happened.*

Nevinson, who watched the Surat happenings, naturally saw Lajpat Rai at close range at Surat and wrote:

“..... A man of austere and generous life, one who had given up great worldly success for the service of the poor, and unlearned... Lajpat Rai was one of those men into whose soul the wrongs of their people enter. By nature averse from politics, he devoted himself to those deeper questions which lie beyond

* Ibid., p. 296

the touch of governments good or bad, and it was not till he was forty that the decisive change came. It is true that he joined the Congress movement in 1888, within two or three years of its beginning; but no one has more severely criticised the Congress and its methods-its unwieldy size, its holiday aspect, its failure to touch the poverty and ignorance of India, and its mistaken confidence in the power of speeches and resolutions for the redress of political wrongs.” *

Nevinson found him “a sad, retiring, clear-minded man, seeking neither advantage nor fame”** and by way of summing up said ; “Deeper things than can be reached by Government or speeches have occupied his life.” †

* Ibid., pp. 296-96

** Ibid., p. 302

† Ibid., pp. 296

Sequel to Surat

THE SURAT HAPPENINGS tore asunder the two wings of the Congress. Lajpat Rai to the surprise of many who usually differed from him and the disappointment of many more of the admirers who looked up to him as a leader in their own camp, openly declared that he would continue to “fight under the old banner”-the banner for the time being captured exclusively by the Moderates. He declined the company of the seceders, though in his political convictions he had much more in common with them than with those who now found themselves in undisputed possession of the Congress. Outwardly he seemed to accept the Moderate label by joining the convention called by the Moderate leaders soon after the Surat session but in reality he was pressing the Nationalists’ point of view from inside in the counsels of the moderates. This unexpected course of action caused him little loss of popular esteem. His triumphal tour throughout India after the Surat Congress conclusively showed that. But he had lost caste with a section of the political leaders. The Moderates knew they could not keep him for long; nor had he any wish to get lost in moderatism. The Nationalists were sore as they thought he had deserted them.

Perhaps he did not feel the “desertion” charge as much as a man of his loyal and exceedingly sensitive nature might normally have done. For one thing the Congress minded Punjab had stood by him. Duni Chand, Ram Bhai Dutt, Harkishan Lal and the other Punjab Congressmen all participated in the convention

without necessarily identifying themselves with the Moderates. His critics in his own province were mostly of a different type. Pre-eminent amongst them was Har Dayal, then fast developing into an eccentric hot-gospeller of various creeds. He brooked no compromise; but then, logically enough, he condemned the entire Congress policy and history as examples of abject moderatism.

At Surat the Punjab contingent participated in the convention. From the other provinces too many attended it who could not be considered thorough Moderates. These included Moti Lal Ghosh and Aswini Kumar Dutt. Several confirmed Nationalists wanted to take part in it, but were turned back by the conveners as unwelcome trespassers. When the convention reassembled in April 1908 at Allahabad, it was again attended by many who could not have subscribed to a "moderate" creed and who in later years were prominently associated with "non co-operation"-Purushottam Das Tandon from U.P. and Deep Narain Singh from Bihar, for example.

The Surat convention started under the presidency of Rash Behari Ghose, but soon transformed itself into the all-India conference, presided over by Sunrendranath Banerjea. At a brief sitting it adopted a decalogue of resolutions, including four on the major controversial issues. Self-government, Swadeshi, Partition and Boycott, and National Education, and one on deportation which ran thus:

"(a) This conference places on record its severe condemnation of the sudden arrest and deportation in a time of peace and general tranquillity of Lala Lajpat Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh without trial and without giving them any opportunity to establish their innocence, under an obsolete enactment intended for different times and for a different class of persons and wholly incompatible with the established traditions of British rule.

(b) This conference strongly urges that now that Lala Lajpat Rai and Sardar Ajit Singh have been restored to liberty, the

grounds on which the Government proceeded against them in May last should be published forthwith.

(c) In view of the fact that the Regulation of 1818 and similar regulations put dangerously extensive powers into the hands of an irresponsible executive and constitute a serious menace to liberty of innocent persons, this conference urges the the immediate repeal of the Regulations.”

The convention appointed provincial secretaries, and for the Punjab it selected Lajpat Rai and Harkishan Lal. It met again at Allahabad in April following. Before then Bipin Chandra Pal had stated the Nationalist terms of reconciliation in a speech at Calcutta He wanted the adjourned Congress to be summoned again with Rash Behari Ghose as President and he wanted that the “creed” around which so much controversy had raged should not be foisted on the Congress. On these terms he said the Nationalists would be willing to come back to the Congress. At Surat they had refused to recognise that Dr. Ghose had been duly elected. Though still uncovinned that the election had been regular, now for the sake of compromise Pal was willing to recognise Dr. Ghose, if the Moderates on their side would waive the “creed”. At the convention Lajpat Rai was amongst those who tried to get both these demands accepted. But the Moderates did not seem anxious for the return of the Nationalists. Gokhale may not have wanted the split, but he wanted to be left in peace and perhaps the Congress could be no haven of harmony if he had to work with the Nationalists. Many, If not most, of the Moderate leaders were happy without the Nationalists even though it meant a weakening of the political movement. The rapprochement endeavours at Allahabad evoked no warm support or sympathy from the Moderate leaders. When Gokhale’s amendment enjoining the “creed” was thrown out, Sir Pherozechah Mehta, hugely enraged, held out many angry threats, and left no room for doubt that he welcomed only such as would sign along the dotted line. When the question of resummoning the Congress came up, the Moderate leaders did not want to accept the compromise

proposal made by Bipin Chandra Pal, even though the proposal was in line with the stand taken by the official party at Surat and not with that of the seceders. The official party wanted it no longer perhaps because they did not want the Nationalists back; also they were rather desirous of lavishing some affection on their own child, the convention. Instead of requesting Dr. Ghose whom they had elected president of the Congress at Surat to resummon that body, they vested secretaries of the convention, Gokhale and Wacha, with the function of calling a Congress session afresh. Lajpat Rai supported A Chowdhury's proposition along Nationalist lines-resummoning the adjourned session- but the Moderate leaders opposed it and carried their own proposition. In his inmost thoughts perhaps he attached precious little importance to the technical discussion so elaborately distinguishing the tweedledum of a fresh session from the tweedledee of an adjourned one resummoned. If he had his way, the Nationalists should be back in the Congress even in a session called by Gokhale and Wacha. He failed to persuade the Nationalists to rise above technicality and adopt this course. Equally he failed to get the Moderates to agree to the Nationalist suggestion of a reassembling of the adjourned session.

A reunion seemed completely ruled out. To persist in the mediator's role looked a rank fool's errand. Yet he fitted into none of the party grooves that now seemed stabilised and were becoming more and more rigidly exclusive, driving people more and more apart from each other. So recently returned from Mandalay, he might continue to be the recipient of the most enthusiastic ovations, but in national politics he now found himself isolated. About this time, speaking at a political conference Rabindranath Tagore said that "the strife and bickerings among public men were the result of the lack of a sufficiency of useful work to furnish fuel for their enthusiasm and give employment to their public spirit". and as an illustration he pointed out how all the warring sections had joined hands when useful work like that on the Transvaal question

claimed attention. "let us hope." continued Rabindranath. "Babu Bipin chandra Pal will bring his Vedanta to bear upon the situation and show the futility of quarrelling over creeds and constitutions, names and words, technicalities and personalities when the only way to attain the good is work, work and work" In "work, work and work" Lajpat Rai was never found lagging behind, but his non-party attitude deprived him of the natural position that his talents and sacrifice entitled him to in shaping the policy of the national movement. None too happy with party strife, he threw himself into more useful and less controversial activities. In particular famine relief kept him busy for the next few months!

From Burma invitations continued to come persistently, pressingly. He himself longed to see that glamorous and mysterious land as a free roamer about. He had accepted the Burma invitation and from Allahabad intended to proceed thither, immediately after the convention. But bad health sent him back home for rest; and when he was fit again he found himself too much engrossed in work that would brook no delay. Immediate relief had to be arranged for the famine-stricken in the United Provinces.

Famine

OUR ANXIETY TO have done with the political sequel to Surat, the conventions and controversies, has somewhat anticipated events. Strictly, after Surat, the narrative should begin in Bombay, the starting point in an itinerary which became infact a triumphal march, because of the engerness everywhere to see and hear the hero freshly back from exile. He visited Bombay, Calcutta, Kanpur and Delhi before returning to Lahore.

In Bombay he arrived in time for the Arya Samaj anniversary. A most enthusiastic reception awaited the hero of Mandalay Fort, from the entire Bombay citizenry and not merely from the handful, directly interested in the Arya Samaj anniversary. Lajpat Rai's activities in Bombay might be taken as typical of his public doings during this post-Surat period—two public speeches, one on the Arya Samaj (which told his audience about the D.A.-V. College and about the need for National Education) and another on Swadeshi, and going round in search of funds for famine relief. From Bombay he proceeded to Calcutta: a splendid reception on arrival at Howrah; two addresses of welcome, one on behalf of the citizens and another on behalf of the vanguard of Indian youth in those days, the student community of the eastern metropolis; a packed meeting in the Town Hall in which he spoke about the Arya Samaj (and as in Bombay about its work for National Education) and about famine relief and the need for “work among the masses”, another next day with Surendranath Banerjea in the chair, and Calcutta flocking to hear the hero at Mandalay, although

it drizzled all the time. At Kanpur too he expounded to the people the gospel of Swadeshi and asked of funds urgently needed to feed the starving. At Delhi, the last halt in this triumphal march, again it was a tale told varyingly in enormous quantities of flowers strewn and stringed, versified eulogies, processions, addresses of welcome. He was taken from his host's residence to Patni Mal ki Haveli, where his audience awaited him, in a landau drawn by embarrassingly enthusiastic admirers. Again, what he had to say in reply was that in nearby districts mass starvation had to be combated and that this needed funds and would brook no delay. Back in Lahore, he appealed for funds for the same purpose, first from the platform of the Arya Samaj at its weekly gathering on Sunday morning and then through the columns of the press.

He did not stop long at Lahore. In the latter half of February 1908 we find him touring in the United Provinces for his famine work. Agra town and district were among the most squalidly affected areas and he gave them special attention. At Agra he was presented with an address of welcome and a purse from the Arya Milan Sabha, and his audience at Swadeshi Bazar in response to his appeal produced Rs. 1,000 on the spot—then a goodly sum for such occasions. After a 12-day tour in the United Provinces he sent out to the press a signed account of what he had seen in the famine areas. He had been telling people that the official agency, however efficiently it worked, would not be enough. The task was enormous and, besides, he thought a broad-based, popularly organised campaign would be invaluable training in self-reliance and in solidarity of the people. As it was, the bureaucratic agency could not boast of much efficiency either. He had ample occasion to see certain peculiar defects of the official machine. At Agra he found a poor house with 47 inmates on the dole whose actual feeding cost no more than Rs. 120 a month but the establishment—superintendent, a hospital assistant, an accountant, two chaprasis, a gate-keeper, a cook, a waterman—

took away quite a fat chunk compared with the wafer-like slice allowed to the miserable dolesmen.

In his famine work he frankly continued to be humanitarian-cum-Hindu-not an aggressive sectarian, but a Hindu all the same on the defensive against unscrupulous "Christian" missionaries. He claimed no converts for the Hindu fold, but he felt hurt when he saw the misery of famished Hindus being exploited by the Christian evangelists. He helped in organising temporary orphanages where the waifs could be given shelter till a more permanent institution took over the responsibility.

In May he set out on a second tour of the famine area, starting with Lucknow and visiting among other places, Sitapur, Gonda, Mirzapur and Allahabad. He went to the relief camps and exchanged notes with his workers. Local famine committees were set up at many places with central committees at Lucknow and Allahabad, Babu Purushottam Das Tandon worked as secretary of the Allahabad committee, and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya who took a keen interest in the relief campaign accompanied Lajpat Rai to many of the places he visited in this tour. Amongst Lajpat Rai's lieutenants in this campaign was G.K. Devadhar of the Servants of India Society who came down (from Poona) to Lahore to receive his instructions before starting work in the U.P. Most of Lajpat Rai's volunteers were of course recruited from his own province. An offer from Bengal had to be refused because the would-be workers were not sufficiently familiar with Hindustani. His appeal for funds met with a fairly good response all over India, and even Indians abroad (for instance, those in Japan) sent him money. In one of his press notes he complains about the apathy of the United Provinces from where he could not recruit many workers and asks his own province to make up for the deficiency. At certain centres his workers received good help and co-operation from the official side, but at others he complains of the unsympathetic attitude of the police and officials. The North-Western Railway announced at an early stage that goods meant for famine areas and so certified by Lajpat Rai would be

carried at half the scheduled freight. A like concession (on the same condition of a certificate from Lajpat Rai) was later announced by the E.I. Railway

The relief work at a later stage was extended somewhat beyond the U.P. border. Some surplus was perhaps left after the dole had been stopped, for in a press note he is seen inviting applications from indigent school children needing money for their education, and in another asking some of his donors to permit him to utilise their money for this purpose.

This grappling with mass starvation gave Lajpat Rai a grim intimacy with India's chiefest problem-the poverty of the masses-which no politician depending only on blue-books and statistics and facts furnished in cold print could acquire. At times this intimacy shattered him utterly and led to despondency. Here is an excerpt from one of his articles describing the famine scenes:

"A large number of them seemed to be on the verge of death. We wanted to give help to select cases and we had given only a few doles. When we were observed doing so, a whole regiment of children and other rushed on us with cries of help. The volunteers threw some handfuls of coppers, and the scene that ensued was so pathetic and heart-rending that I had to ask him to desist from doing so....

It was in this camp that the idea seriously entered my head whether it would not be more humane to let these people die at once because a large number of them are sure to die in the end."

And the gloom is at times lighted up, not perhaps with the usual "ray of hope" or "silver lining", but by a mood of sheer transcendence-one not generally revealed by the routine distributors of doles-in fact, one that might even scandalize the more dour sort amongst them. Lajpat Rai spoke of it in one of his famine articles and called it a "Vision Celestial", though in the end even such a vision only added to the depression caused by the dismal sights.

“Amidst all this misery I saw a sight which made a different sort of impression on my mind. A girl of about ten or twelve, a tiny little thing, altogether naked from head to toes with the exception of a little rag tied round her loins to protect her modesty, was carrying a basket of earth and was smiling all the time. It seemed as if in her soul she was laughing at all the world around-at this seemingly absurd conventional world of distinctions and differences-at this world of strife and struggle for things transient and temporary, and happy at her indifference to the misery surrounding her.

As soon as my eyes fell on this angel of innocence I felt chained to the spot. I looked at her and smiled. The girl also smiled. Unhesitatingly, and as if driven by an impulse of love, I advanced towards her and caressingly put my hand on her head. My next impulse was to kiss her and give her some money. The idea of being ridiculed by those surrounding me deterred me from the first, and the thought of my demoralising this pure soul by putting a price on her sweetness kept me from carrying out the second. All this took only a few minutes. The poor little thing went on with her basket, and with a heavy heart I felt the place.

It was past 12 noon I think when we left the place. The sight had a depressing effect on me which I could not throw off for the rest of the day.”

Such a “vision” puts him in a class apart from the tribe of do-gooders, however well-meaning.

Again to the U.K.

ON AUGUST 23, 1908 his friends including several from the mofussil gave him a send-off at the Lahore railway station. On August 29, Lala Lajpat Rai left Bombay quietly by s.s. Marmora for England.

By this time Tilak had been sentenced to six years' hard labour, Aurobindo Ghose had been hauled up for writings in his paper and his sister had appealed to the public for funds to make the defence arrangements. Several sedition and other proceedings against nationalist papers were going on in the Punjab and elsewhere. Of the Lal-Bal-Pal trinity, Bal had been transported to Burma—from where Lal had returned the previous year to serve a six-year sentence—and to write his monumental *Gita Rahasya*. Now Lal was for the moment out of party politics—though for the popular mind the trinity continued intact. Aurobindo Ghose was by many looked upon as the person sharing with Tilak the responsibility, work and privilege of shaping the nationalist politics and he too was no longer free. Pal had after Surat thundered in a triumphal tour in the southern presidency, but having done that he too decided to go to Europe to tell the “British people and the leaders of world opinion in Europe and America” that in India “the Revolution is bound to come... whether that revolution is to proceed along peaceful lines or otherwise must depend, to a very large extent, upon their own policy”. Tilak's immediate lieutenant, G.S. Khaparde, too left for Europe about the same time.

Lajpat Rai could not have been carrying a happy picture of the political scene. The split had weakened the movement, as he had feared it would. The Government had started a policy of repression-and the split came to its aid. The wave of national enthusiasm had not spent itself, but direction was sadly wanting. Enthusiastic youths who found no satisfying outlet in the open movement were recruits for enlisting in the movement of secret society terrorism. A notable terrorist case was being tried in Bengal. On board Lajpat Rai learnt that it had taken a sudden turn of high drama, that the approver Narendra Gosain had been murdered by Kansilal Dutt and Satyendra Nath Bose.

In 1905 he had definitely gone to Europe as a Congress delegate; and besides he wanted to see and study so many things there. This time there was no definite call and no definite mission. Why and in what mood he decided upon this second trip he discussed at length in a letter from the ship addressed to Jaswant Rai and published in *The Punjabee* (as obviously it was intended to be).

He mentions how he "had been pressed to proceed to England in April that by some eminent friends" and, how he declined then because he had the famine relief work in hand and, later because of "rumours afloat as to searches being imminent in connection with the bomb scare and arrests being in contemplation for seditious libel of those in whom I felt any interest"

Then his letter goes on to divulge-to Jaswant Rai and the readers of his paper-what really drove him out, and does this rather elaborately:

"Well, the fact is that I was getting sick of Lahore life. I could have no idea of the demoralisation that has characterised life, ever since the deportations until the facts began to ooze out bit by bit by a chain of circumstances over which the prominent persons, who played such an important part in bringing about the deportations and the subsequent demoralisation, had no control. One can quite understand and even co-operate with

honest loyalists, straightforward and true Moderates, well meaning Extremists, but it is impossible to tolerate imposters, hypocrites, and traitors in either camp. Is it possible for honest folk to associate with and work in concert with people who can play the loyalist, the Moderate, the Extremist, and to top it all, the *informer* also as it suits their interests and their pockets?

Now, if one is to believe even a fiftieth of what is talked about in Lahore as to the part played by certain people who posed as loyalists and Moderate leaders in the last crisis, all one can say is 'God save our country from such patriots'.

But, of course, there were Moderates and Moderates, exceptions like Malaviya and Babu Surendranath. He had nothing against them. But—"what are you, however, to think of people whose loyalty, moderation or extremism changes with the amount of money they can make from one or the other; who would not even scruple to act as spies and informers if that role can help them in the one moving object of their life and raise them to a position from which they could add to their pile with impunity...? Lahore, nowadays, seems to abound in such people. You do not know whom to talk to in confidence and whom to rely upon. There are some people holding respectable positions, dressed very respectably, whose sole or principal occupation seems to be to carry tales to the authorities, true, false, or exaggerated it matters little. It was often in the last two or three months that I felt sorry to have drawn myself off the congenial work I was doing in the more modest atmosphere of the Arya Samaj. People doing quiet social and religious work in the Arya Samaj or the Brahmo Samaj or any other Sabha or Samaj are at least reliable men.... People outside Lahore cannot imagine what a moral wreck the Lahore society has made of itself during the last political crisis. Life-long friendships seem to have been betrayed with the least compunction ... Life-long enmities too have had ample scope for gratification. Add to this the worry that I felt from the constant espionage to which I was subjected and then you and

other friends will know why I have preferred to tear myself off from my family and my work for some time at least, in the hope that a short absence from India might restore the equilibrium of my mind and enable me to resume my work in a more hopeful mood."

It was the stink that drove him out—he could stand it no longer! "Espionage" pin-pricks continued even on his voyage—which often had humours of its own. In the press paragraph reporting Lajpat Rai's departure from Lahore we read: "It is said that a Mussalman Deputy Superintendent of Police occupied a first-class saloon adjacent to the second (class) compartment reserved by Lala Lajpat Rai." The *Muslim* police official does not appear to have accompanied him on board the ship—but a European did, and had a hard time of it, when at Marseilles the enthusiastic crowd of Indian students, assembled to welcome the leader of India's youth, boarded the train and crowded him out. He had to shift for himself, somehow to arrive in London to keep an eye on Lajpat Rai's doings!

The letter to Jaswant Rai goes on to a discussion as to how political work in the Punjab should proceed, how the Punjab should continue to refuse diving itself into warring camps labelled Moderates and Extremists and what type of political leader and worker would have to be found and encouraged.

The concluding paragraphs say something about the company on board the ship, and we learn that there were about a dozen Punjabi students bound for British universities, that altogether the Indians on board numbered 30 to 40, including a young Bengali lady of the Tagore family, and also Mr. A. Chaudhury "We have managed to get *Chappatis* and a vegetable curry today. The boys had begun to long for *roti* and they have appreciated his change."

He had gone without a definite mission and had, as he said, been driven out of his country by the disgust that filled his soul when he saw the demoralisation in public life around him; but that by no means implied that he let go any opportunity to work for the cause of his country. Already we find him a

very resourceful propogandist, acquainted with the task of creating opportunities for propoganda and of seizing all opportunities that came his way. He wrote for the press and he spoke from the platform. If enemies of the Indian movement writing in the British press gave wrong facts and were guilty of misrepresentation, they gave him a useful handle. Important British journals like the *Manchester Guardian* and the *Daily News* published interviews with him. Men occupying the highest position in British Journalism interviewed him-amongst them Nevinson and Stead. Interviewing him for the *Review of Reviews*, Stead set him a fine task-asking the Indian leader what he would do if he were the British Viceroy in India. Lajpat Rai had probably not prepared himself for this situation but had to accept "a strictly provisional appointment pending other arrangements", and after he had expounded his views in a modest key about the provincial and central legislatures and governments, the interviewer found himself summing these up thus: "In other words, you would use your Viceroyalty for the purpose of digging the grave of the British Government in India." We need not wonder the "strictly provisional" appointment was forthwith terminated. Mr. Nevinson, having himself studied the Indian question and the Indian movement on the spot and having formed his own views on these, was more interested in questioning Lajpat Rai about smaller matters-the immediate grievances; and so Lajpat Rai had to tell him about the espionage and about the enormity of treating political prisoners like common felons.

Somebody-an Indian-wrote to the *Daily News* saying, that a pennyworth of food was enough to live on in Hyderabad and that evoked a reply from Lajpat Rai giving figures about current prices in India. A "Punjab Missionary" wrote to the same paper justifying *begar* or forced labour and was promptly given a sharp rap on the knuckles. Mr. Lloyd George speaking at Swansea emphasised the necessity of "revaccinating, liberal constituencies and liberal young men" with a good liberal lymph and laid down that "a privileged caste in the country

decreases courage and mainlines in a nation and nothing can save a people afflicted by such Institutions from a spirit of bondage but incessant protest against them". This too was excellent grist for Lajpat Rai's mill and promptly in a letter to the *Daily News* he asked why the principles of Liberalism expounded by the Chancellor of the Exchequer were not to be regarded as universal truths applicable to India also. This would illustrate and resourcefulness of Lajpat Rai's propoganda.

He toured widely and lectured At Clapham S.K. Radcliffe presided over his meeting, at Westbourne Park Chapel, G.P. Gooch, M.P. amongst others at other places, Ramsay Macdonald and Oliver. At the end of his speech he welcomed questions, quick and to the point, for his answers always did even more than his speeches. Once he was asked to give "An idea as to the many millions he spoke for in demanding representative government, and give some statistics of bodies that have sent in petitions, etc. of other reliable indication that he could speak for more than 5 per cent of the whole boiling. The brief but conslusive reply was that the British Government itself had testified to the genuineness of the movement! Deportations and repression would not be necessary if only 5 per cent of the 'whole boiling' had to be dealt with." He showed a ready wit and a mastery of facts and figures. One Mr. Percival Landon wrote letters on 'Indian Unrest' for the *Daily Telegraph*, and the furnished Lajpat Rai note an excellent opportunity for countering the allegation that the Nationalist movement was a movement for Bralimin supremacy, and the palpably absurd statement that the Arya Samajists had tampered with the loyalty of the Sikhs. There were allegations against Lajpat Rai himself, but he contented himself with saying:

"These allegations are at the present moment before the High Court at Calcutta awaiting adjudication in a case filed by me against my libellers in the press. (Lajpat Rai vs. *The Englishman*). Ordinary rules of fairpaly required that your correspondent should have avoided a reference to these insinuations

pending the litigation, but the temptation to prejudice me in the eyes of the British public was evidently too strong to be resisted.”

In his contemptuous references too the supposed unmilitary character of the Hindus. Mr. Landon had talked of the Afghan peril. This evoked a very effective reply from Lajpat Rai.

“Mr. Landon should have read his history more carefully to remember that the Afghan bugbear had lost all its fears for the Hindus of the Punjab long before the British went there. An enquiry on the Afghan border will satisfy him that it is the name of a Hindu Khatri general—a class now described as that of money-lenders—which is used by Afghan mothers up till now as a terror for their children. The fact is that military propensities are the creation of time and circumstances. They are not the exclusive monopoly of any one race or colour.”

Indians in London has a National Day observance on October 16, 1908. They held a public meeting in Caxton Hall. Lajpat Rai and Bipin Chandra Pal were among the principal speakers. Pal poured forth an “Invocation” in poetic prose. Lajpat Rai said that Nationalism in India had been born on October 16, 1905 and they were celebrating its third anniversary.

We have already quoted from the first of Lajpat Rai’s *Letters from Abroad* published by *The Punjabee*. That paper kept up the series. Some of the despatches were mainly descriptions of the sights and happenings Lajpat Rai saw during his stay abroad. Number two, for instance, was principally a description of an Anglo-French Exhibition of Art and Industry then in progress. The next one consisted mainly of vivid press descriptions of the sensational doings of Mrs. Pankhurst and her fellow-suffragettes in the stormiest days of England’s feminist movement.

Once again at least for part of his stay in London he was at Shyamji’s India House. Amongst his new contacts in radical and fevolutionary circles during this visit was his meeting with Kropotkin, the Russian anarchist Prince at that time considered

among the foremost revolutionary writers and thinkers of Europe.

In the company of Gokhale he called on Wilfrid Seawen Blunt who was recorded his impressions of the two Indian leaders in his *Diaries*. Jawaharlal Nehru has referred in his *Autobiography* to what Blunt wrote (in 1909): "He is very hard on both, considering them far too cautious and afraid of facing realities." And after adding, "and yet Lalaji faced them far more than most Indian leaders". Jawaharlal draws a moral: "Blunt's impressions make us realise how low was the temper of our politics and our leaders at that time, and how an able and experienced foreigner was struck by them."

That "a decade" (and a World War) made a "difference" is of course plain enough appraising and for this, the contrast in the war-time and post-war attitudes of Mahatma Gandhi who ushered in the non-co-operation temper is far better testimony than the *obiter dicta* of Blunt. It is interesting to find that the "able and experienced" foreigner was hugely impressed by Khaparde about whom Jawaharlal has recorded that in "later years he became as mild as a dove and too moderate even for Moderates". At the Simla meeting with Khaparde, at a dinner given by Sir Rash Behari Ghose Khaparde is reported by Jawaharlal to have begun by "criticising Mr. Gokhale (who had died some years previously) saying that he had been a British agent who had spied on him in Landon". We may be sure he regaled the able and experienced foreigner. The Khaparde entry in the Blunt *Diaries* might seem quite satisfactory regarding the "temper" of Indian politics. Gokhale represented but one school in Indian politics-perhaps was its best specimen. Blunt made no secret of his contempt for the moderate creed. For Lajpat Rai it must have been very awkward to meet such a person for the first time in the company of Gokhale just when (mainly because of the Morley reforms) their politics had already become so divergent. Yet, Lajpat Rai would

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not have much cherished the idea of exhibiting such divergence before a foreigner, at the very first meeting. It was unfortunate that he met Blunt for the first time in Gokhale's company when, because of his personal esteem for Gokhale he had to become uncommunicative, there by giving an impression of being "confused" in his political views. A careful scrutiny of the Lajpat Rai and Khaparde entries is rather revealing. It seems a Practical certainty that the entries in Blunt's *Diaries* are not too strictly dated and that part of what Blunt says in the Lajpat Rai entry was allowed to creep in after his meeting Khaparde five months later-Khaparde of course had told Blunt that Lajpat Rai was a person of no consequence! Blunt may not have been impressed by the amateurishly written *Story of My Deportation*, but his comments on some of its pages in the self-same entry that tells us of the author handing him a copy when taking leave of him makes dubious reading. He could have commented only after reading the book-and it seems he did so in the light of what Khaparde told him. It seems most likely that when Blunt remarks that India would have done better to send a fire-brand like my friend with abuses on his lips to show the redicals that India has men to be afraid of, he is really referring to Khaparde who saw him in the ensuing October, introduced by Hyndman.

Keeping Away from Lahore Congress

IN MARCH 1909 Lajpat Rai returned to India, to Lahore, to the old factions and controversies. The leaders at Lahore were more than usually excited about the next session of the Congress, though it was still a good few months ahead. One group was pushing on the Reception Committee arrangements, another did not want a Congress session at all—not in the Punjab anyway.

Sharing in all essential the Nationalists' political creed, he had joined the Moderates' convention in the interest of unity. But it did not take him long to find out that a Nationalist peg in a Moderate hole was a sad misfit. His attempts at reunion bore no fruit. Whatever hope there still could be was shattered by Tilak's removal to Mandalay. Tilak he might have won over but the Tilakites he could never. He had also seen how the Moderates' ill-conceived tactics of active hostility—they too were "emptying the cup", and did so with a zest oblivious of the possibility that in a continued tussle the cup itself might be shattered—towards the Nationalists had enabled the Government to pursue a policy of repression aimed at crushing the left wing, and how this had resulted in weakening the entire political movement and in making the National Congress anaemic.

He spoke very frankly about the split and its sequel, about 18 months after Surat, in a letter to *The Punjabee* (July 1909) evoked by the controversy as to whether in December 1909 a session of the Congress should be held in Lahore. At the outset,

in this remarkable communication, he referred to the restraint he had imposed on himself;

“What little experience of public life I have had, has demonstrated to me the wisdom of keeping aloof from a controversy in which one cannot definitely take sides and wishes well to both. That was and had been my attitude towards the congress controversy after the split of December 1907 at Surat, During my tour in connection with famine relief I repeatedly declined to answer questions asked with a view to eliciting my opinion as to the respective liability of the two parties in bringing about the split.”

But now in a different set of circumstances he was somewhat relaxing this restraint. Now he wrote:

For Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Mr. Gokhale I have the highest respect and admiration. Sir P. Mehta I consider to be the ablest, the most consistent and in his environment, the most courageous of Indian politicians. Mr. Gokhale's patriotism and high-mindedness are above suspicion. To doubt his sincerity will be denying the existence of any sincerity in the country. But even holding these opinions, one may honestly doubt the wisdom of the policy that has been persistently followed since the unfortunate split of 1907. No one deplores the scenes of Surat more than I do. I have reason to think that no one deplored them more than the man who was held to be directly responsible for it in the country. Mr. Tilak's chief fault (for which he is paying the penalty of transportation) was that instead of leading his party he allowed himself to be led by some of its wild spirits. Twice on my request, at Surat, he agreed to waive opposition to the election of Dr. Rash Behari Ghose and leave the matter of the four Calcutta resolutions to the Subjects Committee, but the moment I left he found himself helpless before the volume of opinion that surrounded him. But while it is true that Mr. Tilak's party was directly responsible for the scenes, can anyone deny that the leaders of the other side were also *anxious* to bring about the split and that had they been in a different mood, their resourcefulness

could have avoided it? I am of the opinion that the best interests of the country demand that the party called '*Moderate*' should retain the actual control and management of the Congress; but that the other party should remain inside the Congress, and should exercise its influence in the way in which all strong minorities do. It was under the influence of that opinion that, joining the convention, I gave out my intention of working towards a reconciliation. It did not take me long, however, to find out that my attempts in that direction were considered to be presumptuous, and so I had to drop them at an early stage. Since then all attempts to bring about a reunion made by well-intentioned friends, on both sides have been contemptuously repulsed and at present there seems to be no prospect of success in case of their renewal. To a man of my humble understanding it seems that the moderate 'nationalists' are committing an error of tactics in making the split a 'settled fact'.

I am emphatically of opinion that the extinction of the extreme left wing of the Indian National party is a grave menace to the Congress itself. The Moderate leaders may discover it when it is too late. I am inclined to think that with the change of Government in England their position as advocates of colonial self-government for India will become untenable. Already the wind has begun to blow in that direction. In the second speech in the House of Lords delivered on the 26th of February while moving the second reading of the Indian Councils Bill, Lord Morley gave a gentle hint to that effect. Be that however, as it may, it is clear that at present there are no chances of the two parties reuniting on the same political platform. With mutual mistrust reigning on the same political platform. With mutual mistrust reigning in the minds of both, it is really difficult to forget the past and again become one."

About the constitutional aspect of the decisions of the convention held at Allahabad, Lajpat Rai writes in this letter;

"I seriously doubt the right and title of the Moderate party to sail under the name of the 'Indian National Congress'. The

latter, as it was known to the country from 1887 to 1907, has ceased to exist. The convention had no right or title to make a constitution for the old Indian National Congress. It could only recommend one which when adopted by the latter even by a majority of votes would have established its right to continue its old life. Personally I make no secret of the opinion that the principles as settled by the Allahabad convention are the only principles on which the Congress can be run as such, but what I cannot bring myself to accept is the high-handed precedent of fastening the constitution on those who had no legal hand in framing it, and that too in the name of the old organisation.”

He even goes on to suggest that the annual meetings of the Congress should be suspended for some time.

“On my return from England in March 1909 I received a private letter from one of the General Secretaries of the Congress about the situation in the Punjab and in a confidential reply I communicated my views to him, authorising him to communicate the same to Sir Pherozeah Mehta and Mr. Gokhale. It should be noted that the present controversy in the Punjab was started before my return and in the starting of it I had absolutely no hand.... I am strongly of opinion that the efforts to hold the next session of the Congress at Lahore *in defiance of the best Hindu opinion of the province* are unwise and not in the best interests of the country, the Province and the Congress:

Then he goes on to a quote and discuss the views of different leaders in different town of the province whom he had consulted to ascertain the trends of prevailing public opinion. The letter includes :

“Should the Congress then be wound up? Certainly not. For some time the annual demonstrations should be given up and the standing Indian Committee may be maintained or demonstrations may be held in provinces where there is practical unanimity of opinion, at least amongst educated Hindus, Coming nearer home, we find that the Hindus of this

province are rightly indignant at their defeat. Give them time to think and to study. Let them try, if they are so disposed, other methods of regaining their lost position. Don't provoke them into hostility, don't create further splits, don't add further bitterness to the already bitter situation, don't make a hell of public life in places where it is a weak and tender plant unable to stand an abnormal trial of strength. In a time of national emergency, it is better that reason should rule over sentiment. Nor was the Nationalist vs. Moderate the only stumbling block. The Hindu-Muslim maladjustment; that had arisen in the Punjab made the venue chosen for the annual session, in Lajpat Rai's opinion, singularly inappropriate;

“In December last when certain Punjab delegates invited the Congress to Lahore, the situation was different, It had since then materially altered. There is no dishonour involved in changing our plans in accordance with the changed exigencies of the situation. Time is a great healer. It is not a despicable factor in national life. Let us coolly depend on its beneficent intervention, at the same time strenuously carrying on the work of nation-building in directions less open to misconstruction by Government. It is better to work in a humbler spirit than to lay down wrong principles. When there is no unity and can be none, it is better not to provoke active hostility between the parties by an attempt at forced union. At the present moment not only any attempt to speak in the Joint names of Hindus and Muslims will be strongly resented by the former, but any attempt to speak in the name of the majority of the Hindus will also find an emphatic repudiation.”

These considerations and the Morley reforms widened the gulf that lay between Lajpat Rai and the Moderate Congress leaders including Gokhale himself. He did not attach as much importance to such moderate concessions as, for instance, Gokhale did and he totally disapproved of the principle of communal representation introduced into the scheme by Minto as a lure for Muslims. Rally the Moderates-rally the Muslims.

That seemed to be the quintessence of the Minto-morley scheme.

Of course the Congress authorities did not accept Lajpat Rai's advice. The annual meetings were not abandoned and the delegates duly assembled in the last week of December in Lahore. Harkishan Lal's group ran the show; the Arya Samaj leaders mostly kept away from it. Lajpat Rai and Harikishan Lal drifted further apart. Under Mr. Alfred Nundy's editorship *The tribune* became more and more hostile to Lajpat Rai—became even bitter and nasty. And this paper was supposed to be controlled by Harikishan Lal, as the most effective amongst its trustees. Some time before the session there were rumour that the President-designate, Sir Pherozeshah, Mehra, would decline to preside. Six days before the session the rumour became a definite fact and his place had to be taken by Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya. In spite of his very great personal regard for Pandit Malviya, Lajpat Rai kept away from the Congress session. In fact he kept away from Lahore while the Congress met.

The Morley-Minto policy of rallying the Muslims and providing for communal representation in the new scheme of constitutional reforms, although blessed by Mr. Gokhale, was highly resented by the Hindu leaders of the Punjab. Some controversy of a communal nature over certain appointments to high office had already figured in the columns of the press. A new move was soon in many minds that the Hindus should have a separate organisation of their own. A prominent leader of the D.A.-V. group, Lala Lal Chand, (Later Chief Court Judge, till then a 'superceded' Hindu member of the bar, for Shah Din was given a preference over him in elevation to the bench), took a very keen interest in this move. The Punjab Hindu Sabha came into being. The first Hindu conference was held at Lahore on 21st and 22nd October, 1909, i.e. shortly before the Congress could meet at Lahore. Lajpat Rai attended this conference as a delegate, and made a speech on Hindu Nationalism in seconding the first resolution of the conference

(moved by the eloquent Brahmin Dia Dayal Sharma) which read as under.

“That this conference urges upon all classes and sections of the Hindu community to promote mutual brotherly feelings and to consolidate and strengthen the sense of common nationality in order (a) to occupy their proper place in the galaxy of nations, (b) to contribute to the general advance of humanity, (c) to protect and safeguard their communal interest, and (d) to spread and propagate from generation to generation and for the benefit of mankind, the culture and civilization handed down to them by the researches, sagacity and wisdom of their ancestors.”

Lajpat Rai made a speech full of quotations about ancient Hindu glory. He covered the ground from the religious angle, from the social angle; his-counsel to the Hindu community he summed up thus:

“I bear no ill-will to my countrymen of other faiths. I wish them all joy and prosperity. In their efforts to ameliorate the condition of their own community and to secure a position of advantage for their co-religionists, I do not find fault with them. In the existing political conditions of India they are perfectly justified in looking to the interests of their community so long as by doing that they do not injure the Hindus by in unholy alliance with non-Indians. My exhortation to Hindus as against non-Hindus and to Indians as against non-Indians is summed up in the following words of Yudhishtira on the occasion when the enemies of Duryodhana approached the Pandavas with a proposal to join hands with them in fighting the party of the latter:

‘Five are we, five are we and one hundred are they. But in a fight with others, we are a hundred-and-five.’”

Perhaps not all the promoters of the Punjab Hindu Sabha were actuated by this hundred plus five spirit-if you forget for the moment that the Hindus were not *five, but hundred, that both the Hindu and the India slogans more appropriately

could have been "They are few, you are many." Two years later Shadi Lal (later Chief Judge of the Punjab High Court and then Privy Councillor) addressed a subsequent conference of the Hindu Sabha and ended his address on the self-same *Mahabharata* text-only he restricted the application to a union of Hindus against non-Hindus, not conceding to the other Indian communities even the cousinly claims of a Duryodhana!

Lajpat Rai, though he did take some interest in the affairs of the Punjab Hindu Sabha and was enthusiastic about what he expounded as Hindu Nationalism, does not seem to have completely identified himself with the new move, which, as time passed, became more and more a struggle for minor things-loaves and fishes of office; and he was interested more in the bigger issues.

It is rather curious to find that soon after the inception of the Punjab Hindu Sabha, Harkishan Lal who was supposed to represent the Congress-to which the Punjab Hindu Sabha was to some extent a counter-blast-was on its executive committee, whilst Lajpat Rai stood aloof! Paradox was ever the stable pattern of politics! In certain things Lajpat Rai continued to give the Sabha friendly support; in other a dissenting friend's warning notes. But in various things he gave his co-operation to the Sabha. At the fourth annual conference, held in October 1912 at Delhi, he moved a resolution, held in October 1912 at Delhi, he moved a resolution for help to the educational institutions of the Hindus, suggested the creation of a Hindu education fund. The speech brought Rs. 5,500 to the coffers of the Hindu College at Delhi. He had seen, however, what demoralisation the Hindu deputations to the Lieutenant-Governor, after the deportations, had brought about, and he could never lose sight of that aspect.

Reaction at Home: Propaganda Abroad

BUY OF THE five or six years above summed up, at least one-1910-demands special notice. Towards the end of 1909 Bhai Parmanand's house was raided by the police and proceedings started against him in a court of law, resulting later on in his being bound over for good behavior. In the search the police took away a number of documents, and among them two letters from Lajpat Rai. These were later produced in the court and the writer of the letters himself examined regarding them. The Rowlatt Committee on Sedition and Revolutionary Conspiracy (1917-18) makes rather prominent mention of these "remarkable" letters. We read in the Committee's Report:

"In the same year (1910), a certain Bhai Parmanand, subsequently one of the lahore conspirators and sentenced to transportation for life, was prosecuted under the Criminal Procedure Code and bound over to be of good behaviour. A copy of the bomb-manual used by the Alipore conspirators, as well as other documents, including two remarkable letters from Lajpat Rai, had been found in his possession. These letters had been written during the troubles of 1907 to Parmanand, then in England. The first was dated the 28th February 1907 and another was dated 28th February 1907 and another was dated the 11th of April following. Both were addressed from Lahore. In the first Lajpat Rai requested the recipient to ask the notorious Krishana Verma to employ of little of his money in sending out a number of books containing true

ideas on politics to the student community here', He also asked Parmanand to sound Krishna Verma as in the placing at our disposal of a portion of his gift of Rs. 10,000 for political missionaries'.

In the second letter Lajpat Rai wrote: The people are in a sullen mood, Even the agricultural classes have begun to agitate. My only feat is that the bursting out may not be premature.' When the case against Parmanand came up in the court. Lajpat Rai stated that by the above expression he meant nothing more than that agriculturists, not being accustomed to a political agitation might not be able to carry on their agitation peacefully. He was not at the stage in favour of a political among the agricultural population'. He further said that the books which he asked for were of the description mentioned in another letter produced that day and containing a list of standard publications, including revolutionary, political or historical novels.' He added the words: Till after my return from deportation. I never knew that Shyamji Krishna Verma had views about political violence or crime such as are now expressed by him. After that I had nothing to do with him."

The "remarkable letters" were nothing out of the ordinary unless you sought to read an extraordinary meaning into them. but the episode had certain important consequences for Lajpat Rai. After the police raid at Bhai Parmanand's house and the inclusion of the letters in the 'recovery' list, Lajpat Rai's friends asked him to be ready for a like raid at his place. In fact they insisted on being given a free hand, and removed whatever part of his papers and books they thought unsafe-and, without ever consulting or informing him, destroyed these too! Amongst the pile of letters, journals, papers, manuscripts that fed the flames was an autobiographical novel in Urdu. which Lajpat Rai had started writing at Mandalay. At the time he believed it had merely been removed to safer keeping but later on to his regret and surprise, he was told that along with certain other papers the manuscript had been entrusted to the custody of flames! He could never make up his mind to tell

afresh his life story in the grab of fiction. Some of the printed books from his collection too disappeared. Even long, years after he would sometimes talk of Prelooker's *Russian Heroes and Heroines* and say:

“You know in those days that was a favourite with me and I recommended it much to young men. But when by friends got nervous about my safety, they destroyed a number of things; they even took away my *Heroes and Heroines*.”

A More important consequence of the proceedings against Bhai Parmanand (and of other like happenings) was the demoralising effect on the leaders of the Punjab. “Those who are not with us are against us.” was the peculiar doctrine then enunciated and the D.A.-V. College authorities who succumbed to its pernicious implications dismissed Bhai Parmanand—who had dedicated his life to the service of the college and had rendered service of rare merit to the Samaj—even without waiting for the verdict of the court. Already in 1907 the leaders in the opinion of many had been weighed and found wanting. Lajpat Rai chose to judge them charitably lest he might be guilty of judging them too harshly where his own person was concerned. When he came back he defended them against their critics, and to save them from possible inconvenient situations, when somewhat to the chagrin of the leaders, he was elected president of the Arya Samaj) at the next election, he declined that honour.

Now he was forced to look the facts in the face, And, seeking escape, once again he set sail for England carrying in his mind a dark heavy cargo of disgust.

During his stay in England in 1910 Lalaji represented India at the Conference on Nationalities and Subject Races, held in Caxton Hall at the end of June. Professor Gilbert Murray in his inaugural address made a reference to Lajpat Rai:

“I believe that India has given of her best to movement of the sort in which Mr. Lajpat Rai is a leader. I may mention that a high official who approved of Mr. Lajpat Rai's deportation

told me that there were few men in India for whom he had greater respect.”

India's representatives to this conference (besides Lajpat Rai) were, Bipin Chandra Pal, Dube and sire Henry Cotton. The India-Egypt-Morocco sitting was presided over by Frederick Mackarness and the main Indian contribution was Lajpat Rai's speech on "The present Condition of India". The speaker gave his criticism of the new constitution in India based on Morley's reforms, but the greater part of his speech was devoted to the sad state of civil liberties accompanying the "reforms" of the liberal regime—"deportation of eleven Indians without the semblance of any trial", withdrawal of freedom of speech and of right of public meetings, barbarous punishments for political offences, complete gagging of the press, and barbarous treatment of political prisoners, innovations in public and private espionage. Besides castigating the Government for the denial of civil liberties, he spoke of the unholy alliance between the foreign bureaucracy and the landed aristocracy of the land, as well as the capitalists, against the educated classes which is the capitalist, against the educated classes which is the distinguishing feature of the reform scheme as well as of the new Press Act;" and he denounced also the "open and systematic encouragement of racial and communal distinctions in the administration of the country by a policy of denominational preferments".

Summing up this arrangement he said:

"In fact, the making of every sort of public activity, political, educational, religious, social or philanthropic, a matter of great risk to those who engage therein, thus making patriotism itself a crime."

And he showed up the hollowness of Morley's reforms, viz., the addition of an Indian to the three Executive Councils of Bengal, Bombay and Madras, and one to the Viceroy's Councils." And about Minto's contribution of communal representation he said: "The division of the country into two different camps, Muslim and non-Muslim, under the highest sanction has not only taken the grace from the reform scheme, but rendered it the

most mischievous scheme ever propounded to perpetuate religious rivalries for political purposes in a country aspiring to be united.

He showed up the sham "democracy" of the Morley Act in working when he told his audience that a person like Surendranath Banerjea was ineligible for the local Council of his province. "On a hue and cry being raised, an exemption was made in his case, of which he very properly declined to avail himself." "The property qualification," continued Lajpat Rai, "would make men like Mr. Gokhale and Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji ineligible for election to the Provincial Councils." In his own province, the Punjab, he said :

"The Council consists of 14 non-official members as against 11 officials; out of these 14, only 5 are elected. Then the beauty of the whole thing is that while the work of the Council is done in English, several of the nominated members are quite innocent of a knowledge of the language."

The most eloquent part of his speech was devoted to the tyranny of widespread espionage under a so-called Liberal regime, "extending in schools and colleges with the help of an ill-paid, ill-educated and necessarily corrupt police."

"I could write a volume on my personal experiences in this matter," said he. "There can be no justification," he continued, "for a policy which by appealing to the baser instincts of human nature aims at setting up father against son, brother against brother, wife against husband, friend against friend; and last but not least, teacher against pupil, and *vice versa*. This is polluting the very fountains of manhood."

Mrs. N.F. Dryhurst, the Irish translator of some of Kropotkin's works into English and the enthusiastic General Secretary of the Committee that had convened the Conference, had her curiosity aroused by the eulogistic tributes paid by Gilbert Murray and Frederick Mackarness to Lajpat Rai and the Egyptian Farid Beg. "I was naturally very curious," says Mrs. Dryhurst, "to see and hear both the Egyptian and Hindu leaders, both of whom became my personal friends. Farid Beg

spoke in French and was in appearance western European, but Lala Lajpat Rai brought the Far up East vividly before us. Slight in stature but extremely dignified, his well-cut features expressing that untarnishable pride which comes only through a generous and pure nature; wearing the picturesque head dress of his native state he held the vast audience for nearly an hour with a flow of clear and beautiful English.”

Mrs. Dryhurst became an excellent friend of Lajpat Rai and when a few years later he went to the States she wrote about him to her women friends in Chicago, “where they made much of him, and wrote afterwards warmly in his praise”. She thus became a source of other contacts and friendships for him. Lajpat Rai saw her for the last time some fifteen years later when at his request she wrote an article for his weekly *The people* criticising the Soviet policy towards Georgia. In 1910 he visited her house on several occasions and she attended several of his “gay little Indian luncheons” at which he regaled his London friends on eastern cookery. One afternoon when Lajpat Rai was a guest at her house, the wife of an Indian Army officer or rather of an officer of the Army in India happened to call on her and hearing Lajpat Rai’s name she drew the hostess aside” with horror on her face” and said: “Do you know that you are entertaining the most dangerous man of all India?”

A great domestic tragedy occurred for Lajpat Rai during this period. His second son, Pyare Krishen, of whom he entertained high hopes, was sent to England and started studying pharmaceutical chemistry to be able to undertake original and much needed work regarding Indian medicinal herbs and drugs. He had not been long a student there when he fell ill and had to be admitted to a Devonshire sanatorium. During his visit to England in 1908 the father visited the ailing son at Chafford and was hopeful of his recovery. But Pyare Krishen returned to India and the illness proved fatal. The father lost in the flower of youth a son whom he loved dearly and whom he had always regarded as the brightest of his children; the

patriot lost all hope of bequeathing on his death bed one day to one of his own family continuance of his work and of the great fight for his people.

Sometime later during this dismal period of political reaction death took away the dearest of his friend; and comrades, to whose memory he inscribed his first major book on Indian political movements, *Young India*, with profound feeling, referring to Dwarkadas as "my dearest friend who died of a broken heart at the collapse of public life" in the Punjab in October 1912. To his memory the book was dedicated as a "humble tribute to his uncompromising attitude towards public life, his lofty principles and his uncompromising attitude towards public life, his lofty principles and his noble advocacy of them".

The truncated Congress did not become whole again till considerably after Tilak's return from Mandalay. Till then it continued as moderates' conclave and Lajpat Rai more or less kept aloof from it. On his return from Europe in 1909 he went back to his profession and in public life found other channels for himself than those of direct political work. As we have seen, he had a hand in the founding of the Punjab Hindu Sabha. He continued to interest himself in some of the Arya Samaj ventures. At one of the annual gatherings of the Lahore (Anarkali) Arya Samaj, he raised funds for creating the Ayurvedic and Technical departments in the D.A.-V. College in his own way doing something for the cause of national education. He helped to raising for building a lecture-hall in the D.A.V. High School to be named after his friend Principal (Mahatma) Hans Rai. In 1909 he delivered a series of lectures about the "depressed" classes the untouchables. In fact, to this work among the "depressed" classes he now gave a good deal of attention. This culminated in an announcement in November 1913, on the occasion of the Arya Samaj anniversary, that Lajpat Rai was giving a princely amount-at least so it looked by the standards of those days- of Rs. 50,000 for work among the depressed classes About half the money was used for buying a piece of land across, the Ravi which was intended for creating a model settlement of

depressed class families. The intention was to work for their educational and economic uplift. A number of schools and centres for "depressed" classes were started in the Jullundur district. Bhai Balmokand, the martyr, as we have already seen, looked after these centres under Lajpat Rai's direction.

In the same year (1913) he founded a high school in his native village, Jagraon, named after his father-the Radhakishan High School.

Meanwhile he had offered himself for a seat on the Municipal Committee in the elections. The candidature of Lajpat Rai was an event in itself. Never before had such a volume of spontaneous enthusiasm prevailed at the time of polling; and he polled a record number of votes. He used to recall with amusement how one day after he had addressed a meeting in this campaign, another would-be city father-a different political type altogether-asked him with folded hands to say a few words in his behalf also, as that was the only "authority that Vahiguru had granted him"- the authority, i.e. of the spell-binder; the gentleman was himself an honorary magistrate and had therefore been duly vested with real solid" authority"! An incident remembered for decades after was the appearance of an illiterate and dumb voter at a polling booth, carrying in his hand a photograph of Lajpat Rai to indicate his choice!

About this period he started a League for Elementary Education, which sought to spread literacy through devanagari in practical inexpensive ways by appointing willing part-time teachers in mohallas. He himself went round in mohallas and by-lanes to organise the work and watch its progress.

Lajpat Rai's work on the Municipal Committee compelled respect even from his political enemies in the official and Anglo-Indian quarters. They began at last to revise their fantastic picture of him as an "enthusiast" who secretly inspired all the dark cults of political crime. It was during Lajpat Rai's tenure as Municipal Commissioner that the Lahore streets got electric lights. The chief municipal reform associated with his effort however was the segregation of prostitutes in the

Hira Mandi area. Before the segregation quite a number of the used to pay in Anarkali.

He was continuing his interest in commercial and industrial progress. His serving on the Punjab National Bank directorate proved of immense help to that institution. He made endeavours also to introduce small industries. These endeavours were probably helpful in popularising the hosiery industry in the Punjab. He had a hand in the starting of the Co-operative Life Assurance Company.

The Punjabee and its press were now sold away at a profit and he drew up a scheme for the training of political workers which was to be financed by the funds thus obtained.

But his departure for Europe delayed all these plans. As it happened, it also put an end to his career at the bar. In 1909 in the *Englishman* case he had said in the witness-box, with becoming modesty that he ranked among the first six or seven advocates of the Punjab Chief Court. Now if at all he cared to run he could be Number one in a canter. As he himself says:

“At the bar I was making good money and my prospects of early coming to the top of the profession were very bright and hopeful. Even the judges of the Chief Court (the highest Punjab Court had not yet been raised to the status of a High Court) who at one time did not like me on account of my extreme political views and did occasionally display a kind of bias against me had changed their attitude and were talking to me more kindly. My work in the Municipal Committee had brought about a certain change in the official mind and they were coming round to the view that after all I was a reasonable man and not the kind of solid revolutionary they had imagined me to be!”

The Exile-Ambassador

A Jejune Mission Made Worthwhile

FOR THE FOURTH time to England—and, as on the first occasion, as a Congress delegate.

At its annual session in December 1913, held at Karachi, the Indian National Congress resolved to send a deputation to England, because Lord Crewe, Secretary of State for India, was expected to introduce in Parliament, early in the spring of 1914, a bill for the reform of the India Office. The Karachi session voted a deputation but voted no funds, leaving that uncongenial task to the provincial bodies. These, or the members of the deputation themselves, were to foot the bill. With this arrangement went the right that the personnel of the deputation be also named by the provincial bodies. The Punjab nominated Lajpat Rai, those chosen by the other provinces being Bhupendra Nath Basu (Bengal), M.A. Jinnah and Samarth (Bombay), and Krishna Sahai (Bihar). Lajpat Rai readily accepted the nomination, for his experience had been that an occasional trip to Europe “was a great education and inspiration. It was besides politically useful.”

He was also being mentioned as the next President of the Congress- for the 1914 session in Madras. It was but meet that he should represent the Congress in England, when legislation pertaining to India was on the British Parliamentary anvil. These somewhat extraneous considerations weighed with him more than the scope, provisions and phraseology of Lord Crewe’s bill. The bill and its drafting the deputation could easily leave to the care of Bhupendra Nath Basu, the ponderous Moderate from Calcutta who took himself so seriously and

took all the “wherefores” and “hereinafters” of the legislative measures perhaps more seriously still.

Lajpat Rai could not accompany his fellow-delegates because of a bomb conspiracy case then being tried. At times there were ugly dark rumours that Lajpat Rai might somehow be connected with the conspiracy, that his house might be searched and he himself arrested as a conspirator or an inspirer of terrorist deeds. Lajpat Rai knew full well there could not be a scrap of evidence of that nature against him, but he knew that the police were by no means friendly to him and also that at times they were altogether wanting in scruple.” The only dark cloud,” says Lajpat Rai writing of these 1914 days, “in the otherwise rather bright firmament of my life at that time was the apprehension that the police might somehow drag me into the Lahore Bomb case then being tried at Delhi. He was anyway intimately interested in two of the accused and he had to stay on to render them whatever help he could. One of these was Bal Raj, ‘son of his friend Principal Hans Raj and a very dear friend of his own promising son Pyare Krishen, who had died to young. Bal Raj had full access to Lajpat Rai’s house, his books and his papers. The other was Bhai Balmokand, a kinsman of Bhai parmanand who had been working with Lajpat Rai for about a year to develop the scheme for the uplift of the untouchables. The noble character of Bhai Balmokand filled him with great admiration. In his auto-biographical fragment Lajpat Rai pays high tribute to the memory of Balmokand; “During my life I have come across a very large number of educated and half-educated young Indians who have shown the highest and the noblest traits of self-sacrifice and devotion to the service of the motherland. Balmokand, a young man of about 20 then, was one of the best of that type. His personal character was of the purest and his selflessness of the rarest. He was deeply attached to my person and would have any moment given his life at my bidding. I had impressed his mind with the desirability of doing constructive social work and not to go after political fireworks. He

had agreed to that and started work among the untouchables. Only once, towards the close of his one year with me, did he give me an inkling that his mind was not so much after constructive work as after stronger and revolutionary measures for the political emancipation of his country. The story of his connection with a revolutionary secret society was told in the trial of 1914, I do not remember the exact beginning of that connection and its date, but be it said to his credit that when the time for 'action' came, he voluntarily left my service and went away. Balmokand was a sober earnest young man not liable to be carried away by momentary impulses. It is clear now that he joined the revolutionary movement after full deliberation. The employment under me was only a ruse. I considered him too high-minded to practise deception on me and recalling certain conversations he had with me on occasions during his year of service, I have reason to think that being unwilling to practise deception on me he was not happy.

The thing which completely put me off my guard was the fact that during this one year of service with me he married a young girl and showed great devotion towards her.

As far as I can remember, the prosecution did not prove that he had any hand in the diabolical bomb thrown in the Lawrence Gardens at Lahore which was one of the principal charges against the accused in that case. The courts, however, found that he was one of the moving spirits of the secret organisation in pursuance of the objects of which the bomb was thrown in 1911. The accused in that case were also suspected of having been connected with the murderous attack on Lord Hardinge in December 1912.

Balmokand was hanged and that very day his young wife died at Lahore.

I knew nothing of Bhai Balmokand's connection with the revolutionary movement until after he had been arrested. Had I known of it earlier, I would have tried to persuade him away and possibly saved him for a life of better service and greater usefulness to his country."

So Lajpat Rai did not set sail till after the prosecution had concluded their innings, and his friends including Principal Hans Raj had suggested that he need no longer delay his departure.

Bhupendra Nath Basu and the other delegates had already seen Lord Crewe and discussed with him the provisions of the bill when Lajpat Rai joined them on May 17, 1914. The Calcutta Moderate had made himself the virtual head of the deputation.

“Babu Bhupendra Nath Bose,” says Lajpat Rai, “was the informal head of our delegation. He was in close contact with the officials of the India Office and with other British statesmen, and the best man by temper and training to carry on negotiations. He told us from time to time what the authorities wanted to be done, how far they would go and what was practicable or otherwise. Under his guidance we prepared notes and submitted these to the Secretary of State for India for his consideration. What consideration he gave them was known only to Bhupendra Babu.”

And about the bill itself:

“The bill which Lord Crewe introduced was a typical Whig measure which satisfied no one and provoked opposition from all sides. When the delegation left India, the provisions of the bill had not been published and so Indian opinion on it had not been expressed. When the provisions became known, the Indian Press expressed great ‘dissatisfaction’. At best their support was now half-hearted and very much qualified. Even the delegation was divided in its opinion. Personally I saw no reason to welcome the bill, but our chief was pledged to support it and for the sake of unanimity we submitted, notes to the Secretary of State in which after suggesting radical changes we gave our general support to the bill. The bill was, however, very stoutly opposed by the Tory party and the Tory press raised quite a howl over it...”

Lord Crewe's bill was thrown out and, says Lajpat Rai, "no one was very sorry for it except perhaps the leader of the Indian delegation."

Watching this bill had been for Lajpat Rai just a handy pretext for a visit to England. So alongside he interested himself in various other things, and in particular utilising his stay in widening and deepening contacts that might be useful for the cause he had espoused. He had missed Keir Hardie during the Labour leader's visit to India, being at the time a State prisoner in Mandalay Fort, In 1909 he had of course met Keir Hardie, but in 1914 much fuller opportunities of friendship came. Among the first letters of welcome that Lajpat Rai received on arriving in London in 1914 was one from Keir Hardie "with an ever recurring invitation to lunch at the House of Commons".

Then there was Frederick Mackarness, who as we saw in the deportation chapters gave no quarter to Morley in the fight in the Commous. Between him and Lajpat Rai quite naturally a close friendship develop now.

"Frederick Mackarness". writes Lajpat Rai, "was another Englishman from the fountain of whose friendship and hospitality I drank copiously. He had espoused my cause in 1907 and had by his daily persistence in asking questions relating to my deportation lost the goodwill of John Morley and other leaders of the Liberal Party. Before 1907 he was thought of highly. His ripe scholarship, his legal acumen, his sober and sound opinions, his balanced speeches had marked him out for great things. At one time he was considered to be the coming man in radical circles. But alas! my deportation led to his 'fall',

Deportation without trial was such a fundamental violation of the elementary principles of 'Liberalism' that Mackarness could not reconcile himself to it. No amount of explanations and remarks from the fanciful John Morley prevented him from constantly raising questions relating to my deportation on the floor of the House. He had never met me; he knew nothing of me. He simply stood for a principle. This principle

he idolised. His advocacy of it cost him the esteem of the leaders of his party. He was so much persecuted and hated for his pointed attacks on John Morley's Indian policy that solicitors dropped sending him briefs, and a senior lawyer with a flourishing practice at the bar was soon reduced to the position of a briefless junior!

Frederick Mackarness was by no means a person, of revolutionary mentality or tendencies. He strongly disapproved of strong language, and of revolutionary methods... He was a man of peace and always advocated constitutional methods of agitation. He had an equally noble-minded wife who was very much interested in Indian philosophy and literature. I had made their acquaintance in 1908-9 and enjoyed their confidence and friendship till the last..."

Another much valued friendship was with the Webbs. Of them he writes:

"Another set of English friends whose friendship and kindness has been of the greatest service to me are the Webbs. Their learning and scholarship and the monumental works they have written are known the world over, but few perhaps know how kind and good they are as friends. They are socialists but they are not revolutionary socialists. The British Fabian Society, the Fabian Mentality, the Fabian literature own everything to them. They have been instrumental in building up the Labour Party. During my stay in England in 1914 Mr.. Sidney Webb was very useful to me..."

Of the veteran Sir William Wedderburn of course he was bound to see a good deal:

"All Indian political workers, in fact, all classes of Indians, had in the late Sir William Wedderburn a friend, philosopher and guide. He was a retired Indian civil servant. He was an English patriot of the highest type, but of him it could be truly said that he loved India. Every farthing of the pension he received from the Indian National-Congress, and for years the Committee and its

weekly organ *India* were financed principally by him. The Indian politicians who went to England for political work often consulted him and he did his best in making things smooth for them. His advice and help was almost indispensable to us." "Sir William happened to be away at Vicky (France) when Lajpat Rai arrived in London. But as soon as he returned (mid-June) he met all the Congress delegates. From Vichy he had written to Lajpat Rai to say that he was going to meet the other delegates at 11 a.m. but would like him to come at 10.15 as he wanted to have "a little conversation before the other delegates came in". At the meeting the principal subject of discussion was Lord Crewe's India Office Bill. Sir William repeatedly invited Lajpat Rai to his country residence at Meredith. "The state of unrest in the Punjab" was a recurring theme of their discussions. It was suggested that Sir William should write out a note on the subject and present it to the India Office-which probably did not happen.

Lajpat Rai interested himself in the British labour and trade union movements, and already in 1914 he contemplated launching a trade union movement in India.

The Webbs invited him to a Fabian Summer School. This sojourn in the beautiful English Lake district provided him at once with "relaxations and instruction."

"The last 10 days of July." he wrote afterwards recapturing memories of this School, "were spent in delightful conversations with the best socialist workers and thinkers of England. Amongst them were Mr. and Mrs. Webb, Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. Cole, and Mr. Babbit. The younger party headed by Cole was in revolt. They criticised, attacked and ridiculed the webbs freely but the latter never lost their temper and met all attacks and criticism in good humour."

Lajpat Rai kept his weather-eye open and this seldom missed an opportunity to study educational institutions abroad. He paid particular attention this time to the problems of the Indian students in England. For this he had several interviews with T.W. Arnold of the India Office and when the editor of the

New Statesman, at the suggestion of the Webbs who then guided and controlled that paper, agreed to accept a number of articles from him on Indian subjects, Lajpat Rai gave him (among others) one on the problem of the Indian Student". This article he found as fresh and pertinent 15 years later as at the time of writing, and reproduced it in his autobiographical fragment.

* * *

A much tangled affair was the *Komagata Maru* episode which broke into headlines about this time. It made the problem of Indian in the Dominion in general and in Canada in particular one of the burning questions in May-June-July 1914. And Lajpat Rai during his stay in London had his own contribution to make, particularly through writings in the press. Besides the *New Statesmen*, his chief journalistic contacts in London at this period were with the *Daily News* (then edited by A.G. Gardiner) and the *Westminster Gazette* (edited by J.A. Spender).

Writing of his work in connection with the *Komagata Maru* episode, in his autobiographical fragment, he says:

"The question had been brought into prominence by Baba Gurdit Singh's enterprise in taking 'a shipload of Hindus' to the shores of Canada in a ship specially chartered for the purpose, and in order to test the legality of the immigration rules of British Columbia which denied admittance to Indians unless they had travelled to Canada in the same ship direct from India, which was an impossibility. Ordinary ships carrying passengers to Western Canada would not carry an Indian except on the penalty of being forced to take him back to his port of embarkation free of return fare. At great cost and with commendable self-confidence Baba Gurdit Singh of the Punjab who had been a contractor in China and took about 500 Sikhs to the shores of Canada. These Sikhs were not allowed to disembark and a strict guard was posted at sea and on the

shore to prevent the landing of any of the passengers. One of these passengers, through his lawyer, appealed to the legal court for a writ of *habeas corpus* which was denied. His appeal to the Supreme Court was also dismissed and eventually the ship was forced back with its human cargo. On reaching England in May I started taking interest in the matter, and besides seeing the Under-Secretary of State for India and some other persons in connection therewith and seeking their intervention. I interviewed the important editors and also wrote to the press pointing out the danger of the policy." Lajpat Rai recalled also his meeting with a leading Canadian statesman. Mr. Henri Bourassa:

"Mr. Henri Bourassa was then the leader of the French Canadian Liberals in the Canadian Parliament. He was a man of great culture, power and influence and edited a daily paper in Montreal. His object in wanting to meet me was quite different from what Mr. Charles Roberts thought. I had a long talk with him in London and once again the U.S.A. He threw the whole responsibility of the anti-Asiatic policy of the Dominions on the British and was more interested in the general development of democracy in the world than in the particular question of an open-door policy for Indian in Canada. It was a great pleasure to meet him but he could promise me no relief in the matter in which I was immediately interested."

All efforts to bring relief to the *Komagata Maru* victims of British imperialism proved futile. The rejected immigrants returned to their own country where they were welcomed with dum-dum bullets when they landed at Budge Budge (near Calcutta).

Differences with Fellow-Delegates

WHEN HE SET out from home, he had contemplated a six-month trip. He had now been in England for about ten weeks, and the official business of the Congress deputation was already over. He made plans for continental tour—the usual France, Germany, Switzerland, with Austria thrown in, and ending with the Balkans and Turkey and thence to Egypt on his way back home. He had armed himself with introductions to prominent people in all these countries. The Webbs had been particularly helpful in this. He had made all arrangements when towards the end of July he went to the Fabian Summer School. After the school was over he would take leave of England, but before he could bid good-bye to the Lakes news had come of the Serajevo murder which was to spark off a world conflagration.

He returned to London on July 31 and found the atmosphere tense with a sense of impending catastrophe—those complex inarticulate emotions peculiar to the approach of zero hour. Travel bureaux would not advise his proceeding to the continent until it was known what sort of sequel was coming. Next day Austria and Germany made a formal declaration of war.

The British Government's decision to take the side of France raised tremendous issues for Indians in Britain. Their spontaneous impulses and considered conduct, their contradictions and vagaries and vacillations came under Lajpat Rai's skilled scalpel when later he dealt with this scene in his autobiographical fragment;

“Within 24 hours of the decision of the Cabinet I met a number of Indians sitting in the smoking room of the National

Liberal Club and talking of the war as if it were an occasion of jubilation. The group included some of the highest placed Indians, Hindus as well as Muslims. Their mirth and jubilation became so unmannerly that Mr. Jinnah had to rebuke them for their indecent behaviour, considering that the English members of the Club were so gloomy and anxious about the situation. Within 24 hours from then, the whole situation changed. All the leading Indians including the men present at the Club on the previous occasion began a competitive race in which everyone tried to outbid others in expressions of loyalty and devotion to the Empire and to take the credit of having given the lead. Differences arose among the Congress delegates too.

One of these days I happened to go to the romms of the British Committee of the Indian National Congress and there found two of my colleagues, members of the congress delegation, discussing the issuing of a statement of loyalty on behalf of the Congress. They had seen high British statesmen and the letter had advised them to do so without lose of time. The only thought that disturbed them was the apprehension that I might not join them. So the moment they saw me they opened the attack. They wanted to issue a statement then and there, as we three formed the majority, and the other they assumed would willingly sign. However, as expected, they found a tough customer in me. I objected to their proposal on various grounds:

1. No formal meeting of the delegation was called to consider the question.
2. Delegates were functus office, having finished their work and dissolved the delegation formally after the rejection of the bill.
3. The Indians leader at home had not expressed their minds and had sent us no instructions.

My colleagues were very angry at my obstructive opposition. One of them Mr. Samarth, called me names and some hot words passed between us. Eventually it was discovered that at least one another delegate, M.A. Jinnah was available at the

National Liberal Club and could be sent for. This was done. He came and expressed his agreement with me. So the matter had to be postponed. It was resolved to call a formal meeting of the delegates the next morning giving notice to the fifth member who was absent. The next day the formal meeting was held and it was decided by a majority of votes that there was no hurry and we should wait for news from India.

In the meantime, the other Indians started a movement to get a general declaration signed by all prominent Indians then present in London. Sir M. Bhavanagree and Pandit Bhagwan Din Dube were the principal sponsors of the movement. The defeated delegates of the Indian National Congress took their appeal to Sir William Wedderburn who was then at Meredith and brought down a draft made by him.

The first news of this statement I got was from the columns of the Times wherein the text of the statement was published with a note that all the delegates including myself had signed it.

It seems that someone put in my signature in the belief that I would, as a matter of course, accept a draft made by Sir William Wedderburn. My signature on the statement was considered necessary in the interest of the country and also of myself.

On the 7th August I received the following wire from Pandit Bhagwan Din Dube at Hampstead.

‘Letter to Lord Crewe assuring our loyalty signed by elderly Indians including delegates. If you wish sign come immediately 3 Middle Temple Lane’. What followed is narrated thus by Lajpat Rai!

“I did not go to the rooms of Pandit Dube to sign the statement, but a day or two later I did sign it at the National Liberal Club. Mine was perhaps the last signature. So I was definitely committed to a policy of loyal co-operation in the war in the interests of the Empire. The news from India was even more disconcerting. Almost all the Nationalist leaders joined in declarations of loyalty and devotion to the Empire.

In the Viceroy's Legislative Council a resolution was unanimously passed that all the expenses of the Indian contingent then and during the war will be borne by the Indian exchequer. The British public, Parliament and press were naturally full of India and Indian loyalty. On September 10, *The Times* published a letter from Sir Valentine Chirol in which he pointed out that the war had proved that the educated leaders had no real influence with the princes and people of India that even they did not want the disappearance of the British Raj. In the same issue appeared a letter signed by Babu Bhupendra Nath Basu.

There was great jubilation all over England and India's offer was called voluntary, spontaneous, enthusiastic, universal and so on. It was freely argued that this was due to the inherent justice of the British rule.

A speech made by Sir Pherozeshah Mehta in Bombay was widely quoted in the British press. The *Daily Mail* wrote a leader with the caption 'A Day Worth Living For.'

Now all this was extremely embarrassing to those of us who had been preclaiming from house-tops that British rule in India was unnatural, unjust and unrighteous and that India was being economically bled white by the policy of 'drain'. The 'outburst' of loyalty was thrown at our faces as a complete answer to our statements against British rule. Under the circumstances I asked the permission of the Webbs to write an article on 'India and the War' for the *New Statesman*. They naturally wanted to see the article. When the article reached the editor he declined to publish it as it breathed sentiments of disloyalty and enmity towards England."

He made a second attempt which, with the commendation by the Webbs, was accepted by the editor. This article appeared not over his own name but as from 'One Who Knows'.

Sir W. Wedderburn did not know who the author was but he immediately sent out a longer letter endorsing the suggestion of 'One Who Knows'. and besides wrote to Lajpat Rai saying:

“On reading an excellent article ‘India and the War (Do you know who wrote it?) in the *New Statesman* I decided that a letter on the subject to the editor would be the best form my communication could take. Please see next issue in which I hope it will appear.”

When Sir William learnt that ‘One Who Knows’ was no other than Lajpat Rai, he wrote to him:

“As you were doubtful as to the expediency of putting forward the case in your own words, it occurs to me that I might write a letter to the *Westminister* or the *New Statesman* (Whichever you prefer, giving your views as being those of ‘a well-informed Indian friend who wishes well to the British Government: If you think this is a good plan, please send me a copy of the letter you addressed to the *Westminister*, and I will then prepare a draft which I will send for your approval.”

But says Lajpat Rai

“The only other thing which appeared in the English press on the real significance of India’s loyalty was an anonymous article from ‘An Oxford Indian’ that appeared in the *New Age* of October 1st.

When the loyal Indian press began to complain of the exactions that were being made in India in the name of war subscriptions and war loans I wrote another article in the *New Statesman* (this time signed) on the economic effects of the war on India which was severely criticised by some Englishmen as an utterance of disloyalty.

Now considering the matter alter fourteen years I am inclined to think that the conduct of the Indian national leaders in the war of 1914 was grossly improper and unpatriotic. I refuse to believe that they or their compatriots loved England and were anxious to save her for her own sake. I have no hesitation to say that most of the declarations of loyalty and devotion were hypocritical and insincere. What, however, may be conceded is that perhaps that was the only policy to be followed. They were not prepared for anything else and some of them perhaps believed that an experience of war and war

methods would not be bad. In fairness it must be stated that the only two men who raised a feeble voice against the giving away of Indian, money and Indian men were the late Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. It is easy for public men to vote away millions of men and money as a generous gesture of chivalry without any terms but this only proved their political inability.”

At a Loose End

HIS RETURN TO India had been delayed a good deal. The Madras session of the Indian National Congress for which he had been considered the most likely president was now drawing near. Would he get back home in time to take the chair at Madras?

But, first of all, would he be offered the chair? He could not be sure till he had been duly elected. Many things had happened since his quiet departure from Bombay by s.s. *Marmora*. Above all these was a war on-the Great War that had upset so many and far bigger applecarts. Those who might tolerate him in the Congress presidential chair in normal times might consider such choice rash when a war was on; for the Congress continued in the grip of the Moderates.

Advices from home were that six out of nine provincial Congress, committees had voted for him. Ordinarily it would be taken for granted that the Reception Committee would just put its seal of approval on the decision of the majority of the provincial bodies. *The Leader* of Allahabad which was as well-informed about Congress affairs as any other paper in India had confidently predicted this. Though he himself had misgivings about the applecart being upset, he could take it as quite likely that he might be called upon to occupy the chair that Tilak and so many others had desired to offer him several years earlier. Then it had meant such embarrssment for him; would things be different now? He pondered, and in his own choice under the circumstances then prevailing, the cons seemed to outweigh the pros. As it turned out, the Moderate

Congressmen of Madras themselves felt that Lajpat Rai, whom they could at no time reckon as one quite of their own fold, might not be a very suitable president in the extraordinary situation created by the war, and so the Reception Committee overrode the majority decision of the constituent units. C.Y. Chintamani, editor of *The Leader*, sent a confidential report to Lalaji detailing the manoeuvring.

There was no knowing how long the 'duration' would last, and, the atmosphere in England he found none too congenial—thanks largely to many of his own countrymen (including some of his fellow-delegates)—and so he decided to cross the Atlantic.

The *S.S. Philadelphia*, that set sail from Liverpool on November 14 and carried only one class of passengers, had on board several Indians, including besides Lajpat Rai, and Babu Shiv Prasad Gupta of Banaras (Lajpat Rai's real companion in the itinerary), the scientist Professor (later Sir) Jagdish Chandra Bose and his wife, and Prof. Benoy K. Sarkar. There were many (of different nationalities) who had been forced to quit Britain in spite of a very long stay in that country because with the breaking out of the war, they had now become 'enemy aliens'.

The Atlantic voyage (as in 1905) was not uneventful. They had heavy weather for more than 48 hours running during which period, records Lajpat Rai, "we did not stir out from cabins, not even for meals." Yet he adds, "on the whole, I enjoyed my trip."

On November 21, they sighted the skyscrapers and soon after landed in New York. "Our Punjabi friends," written Lajpat Rai, "were received on the docks by friends they had written to." but he himself (as also his banaras friend) "had some difficulty in finding hotel accommodation as colour prejudice stood in our way". This, he says, was his first experience of the kind obviously his 1905 brief visit had been free from this direct experience of colour prejudice. They did, however, succeed in getting hotel rooms and, after spending about four weeks in New York, set out on an American itinerary stopping at

Boston, Washington. Atlanta, New Orleans, Chicago, Salt Lake City, and in March 1915 found themselves in Los Angeles. He had occasion to address American audiences at several places, speaking largely on Indian themes but “the chief object of the tour was study and pleasure”.

He ever wanted his travels to be of educative value, and liked to go about unhurried, with his weather-eye open. In this American wandering about, he decided to give special attention to the colour question, to educational institutions, to social work conducted through philanthropy and, last but not least, to “the processes which had led to the fusion of different races from which the population had originally sprung into one nation”- what the Americans themselves refer to as the “melting pot”. The results of these studies were embodied in *The United States of America: The impressions of a Hindu*, serialised by the *Modern Review* of Calcutta, and then issued as a book through the same agency. (Hindu’ in the sub-title was of course used in the broad sense of ‘Indian’-the usual connotation of the word in the States before India’s cutting up had been conceived).

The States itinerary lasted about six months. He devoted a good deal of his time to writing *Young India* pertains to this period, but we reserve the story of this and some other books for a separate chapter. He came in close touch with the Indian Community on the Pacific Coast and witnessed the revolutionary ferment among them-a topic that were best dealt with in a chapter exclusively devoted to that theme. After six months he left for Japan and returned to the States at the end of a few months, to stay on for the duration. Our narrative may legitimately deal with the Japan interlude separately, and revert to the main theme of the American days treating the brief stay before the trip to Japan, and the prolonged one after return from there, together as parts of one narrative.

Japanese Interlude

THE WAR HAD dragged on for nearly a year and it seemed in no hurry to come to an end. For all you knew it might still continue for years. Where was he to spend all the years till “cease fire”? At the end of seven months in the States there was no knowing whether he would be able to get back to his own country or have to remain in exile for the duration. After seven months in England he had crossed the Atlantic and arrived in America; after seven months in the States he decided to cross the pacific and see Japan. He had never seen an Asian country other than his own even Burma which was then part of Britain’s Indian Empire he could not claim to have really seen, having been taken thither only as a State prisoner. Japan, foremost in modern progress in the East, might not be a bad idea for a change. And if his exile must continue for the duration, Nippon, Land of the Rising Sun, perhaps might be as good as that of the Stars and Stripes.

A visit to japan being decided upon, Shiv Prasad Gupta crossed the Pacific in May; Lajpat Rai followed suit a couple of months later. He had to complete the twin Mss., *Young India* and *England’s Debt*; and, besides, he had been advised by Mahatma Munshi Ram (later Swami Shraddhanand) that his eldest son, Harish Chandra, had proceeded to England in the company of Raja, Mahendra Pratap, and was likely to go thence to the States and there meet him. Lajpat Rai was interested in Harish Chandra and was curious about news of Mahendra Pratap’s plans, Harish Chandra’s arrival, however, got delayed a good bit.

Lajpat Rai set sail from San Francisco on July 3, 1915, not quite certain whether it was *an revoir* or his final adieu to the States: he longed to get back to India, but his plans were uncertain. For two weeks he enjoyed floating on the Pacific, with a stop at the colourful Hawaii Islands where he felt fascinated by the lovely seascape, and the marvellous marine fauna and shrubs and trees.

On July 19 he landed at Yokohama, an utter stranger with no one to receive him on the docks. For the first time in his travels, perhaps, leaving his things on board the steamer, he set out just by himself to look for hotel accommodation in Tokyo, 27 km from there.

But he made himself at home sooner than might be expected, and not merely because of a good number of his compatriots, and because his companions in the States, Shiv Prasad Gupta and Prof. Benoy K. Sarkar were already there. The people in kimonos, wooden-shod but strangely agile in their daily life seemed rather akin to his own people.

For study or sight-seeing July was the least congenial month—the mercury shot up higher, recalling dear old Lahore in the hot season. To see the functioning of Japanese universities and to meet university men and students—this was one of his main interests, and he found the universities closed. So he spent some time at a summer resort on Lake Hakone.

In Tokyo he was staying at the Imperial Hotel, but as he planned for a somewhat prolonged visit it was suggested that it would be cheaper to shift to a rented house. So, from the Imperial he moved into a double-storey Japanese style house in Koamicho in Hongo Ward, just behind the Third High School, close to the then site of the Imperial University. Lalaji lived and worked on the upper floor, leaving the ground floor to a young companion, Keshoram Sabarwal of Peshawar who had met Lalaji in India a few years earlier and had arrived in Japan somewhat ahead of Lalaji. The devoted young companion made himself useful to Lalaji in many ways and remained with him till Lalaji's departure from Japan. In keeping with Japanese

usage a maid-servant was engaged to cook and to look after the household.

Lalajii had arrived in Japan, partly because he found himself at a loose end. But he by no means intended his visit to Japan to be merely a pleasure trip. He had real curiosity about this eastern country reborn into modern greatness. Soon after the Russo-Japanese War, he had written a preface to an Urdu booklet by a Punjabi lawyer on Japan's renaissance. He had also been responsible for engaging a Japanese teacher for a Japanese class at the D.A.V. College when perhaps such arrangements had existed nowhere in northern India. Even before he booked his passage for the States from England, his correspondence shows he had been thinking of a visit to Japan. Of course he would study things to see for himself the secret of Japan's marvellous progress. But there was another objective too in his mind:

“I was determined to try to establish a link between India and Japan which might be of permanent value to both the countries. So with that object in view I began to see persons and institutions.”

Lecture invitations came from almost every university (except the Imperial), and even from important schools in Tokya. Special mention has to be made of the Waseda and Keio Universities and of the Higher Commercial School. Count (later Marquis) Okume, the then Prime Minister, was the President of Waseda. Prof. Shiozawa, Dean of that University, who presided over Lalaji's lectures, became a very good friend of Lalaji, quite frequently inviting him to the Nippon Club, an adjunct of the University.

At Keio, the topmost man, Prof. Kamada, presided over Lalaji's lectures (Lalaji spoke in English and to be interpreted to his audiences by English-knowing professors.) Here too club contacts followed, Prof. Kamada inviting Lalaji to “Kojunsha”, the University Club. The Higher Commercial School later grew into the Commercial University. Baron Kanda, Governor of the School, presided over Lalaji's lectures. One of the

young students there, who later became one of its renowned professors, Tatsunosuke Uyeda, called frequently at Lalaji's house-which in fact had been chosen and secured for Lalaji by Uyeda himself-and made himself particularly useful by translating for Lalaji what appeared in the Japanese press about him-just as a labour of love. Lalaji frequently asked the young man to lunch or dinner.

About an interview with Premier Okuma which lasted an hour and a half-a Waseda professor interpreting the Premier who spoke in Japanese but could follow Lajpat Rai's English-Lalaji has recorded that though Japan was supposed to be with the Allied powers, he was very happy to find the European powers engaged in mortal combat, and heartily wished that the fighting would continue to the point of exhausting the rival combatants! (America had kept aloof till then.) Okuma spoke in the same strain to the students at the Waseda University-Lalaji was struck by the way the Prime Minister seemed to take into confidence Japanese students in regard to matters diplomatic.

The Tokyo journalists gave a banquet in honour of Lajpat Rai, at which he made an important speech suggesting a sort of Asian Federation. The idea received a very favourable press but made no further progress.

Lalaji spoke at a function arranged at the office of the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, then a small upcoming newspaper, now one of the three most widely circulated metropolitan dailies of Japan claiming a circulation of over half a million copies. Lalaji received good publicity in the columns of the *Yamato Shimbun*. Some of his articles appeared in the *Kukumin shimbun* as well, now defunct, but a power in those days. Some journalists from the *Asahi Shimbun* also used to call upon him. This paper is now one of the world's most widely circulated dailies. Despite the Language barrier Lalaji found the Japanese press very hospitable.

Amongst the statesmen and politicians Lalaji's most noteworthy contact was with the Prime Minister, Count Okuma.

But his official position dictated reserve and diplomatic tact. At times Lalaji had to judge the working of the Prime Minister's mind from a friendly chat at the Nippon Club with Prof. Shiozawa who, as a Waseda Dean, was very close to Okuma.

Lalaji met several cabinet ministers and other political personages too. On the whole he found these interviews disappointing. His 'Asian Federation' idea, he gradually came to realise, would not fit into Japanese *realpolitik*. The Japanese political leaders were not willing to do anything to strengthen China—they were keen only on Japan's getting a "free hand" in exploiting her. Regarding India, they were stretching their obligations under the Anglo-Japanese Alliance far beyond the natural or normal limits for such arrangements. A mutiny of Indian soldiers in Singapore was quelled for Britain by Japan's blue-jackets; the Japanese authorities obligingly stretching the Alliance to cover what was strictly a "domestic" matter of the British Empire. This was criticised by some writers in the Japanese press. In fact the press seemed quite sore about the Alliance, but its chief grievance was that the Alliance afforded equal opportunity to foreign powers in China thus denying Japan a "free hand"—something far removed from Lajpat Rai's notions of an Asian solidarity and his way of looking at the Alliance.

A notable new contact for Lalaji was that with D. Sun Yat Sen, the great Chinese leader who after the abortive second Chinese Revolution of July 1913 had taken refuge in Japan. Lajpat Rai's Asian notions were much after Sun Yat Sen's own thinking, and there is no wonder that the two met frequently and the contact developed into a friendship. Mme Sen, with her American background acted as interpreter. Unfortunately no authoritative record of what transpired at these interviews is available to us.

We have said little about the Indian community in Japan, Lalaji's new contacts meriting special notice were with "P.N.

Thakur” and other revolutionaries—a subject dealt with in the next chapter.

What he gleaned in Japan as to student, Lalaji presented to his own countrymen through the *Modern Review*, Calcutta, which also issued the entire series (with some additions) as a brochure, entitled *The Evolution of Japan and Other Papers*. The “papers” had quite a wide range dealing with conditions in Japan, “political, economic, social and religious”.

To him “the most wonderful things were the intense patriotism of the Japanese and the wonderful progress they had made in every department of life within a short period of 50 years, i.e., since the Meiji era, He found it worthwhile to study the secret of their success; to find out the traits of character which had not only saved them from falling prey to European organisation, but even helped them to become as well-organised and efficient a nation as they had proved themselves to be in the great Russo-Japanese war.”

The outstanding Japanese event during Lalaji’s stay was the installation of Emperor Taisho. The Indian community decided on a banquet as their part of the celebrations, and Lalaji was asked to preside. He laid down two conditions before giving his assent—first that he would be the sole spokesman of his compatriots, and second that no toasts would be proposed nor any “political” speeches made. The Indian banquet on November 27, 1915, held at the Uyeno Seisken Hotel was a brilliant, very well-attended affair. The non-Indian elite included (besides a number of Americans and Britishers) seventy Japanese, a majority of them being eminent educationists—all universities and all the important colleges of Tokyo being represented and the rest comprised outstanding personages in business, industry, politics and journalism. Hugh Byas, the British editor of *The Japan Advertiser* owned by an American Jew, said in his paper the next morning that Lajpat Rai’s oratory reminded him of Lloyd George. Of course having himself put politics under a ban, he had but to offer felicitations and goodwill on behalf of his own people.

Certain developments coming in the wake of this banquet, though these might not have been its consequences, caused great stir in the Indian community, but these must be reserved for the next chapter.

The homesick exile had fully to weigh the hazards of trying to return to his own country. In the fragmentary reminiscences that Lalaji was writing in his last days we read: "When leaving America I had not intended to return if I could proceed to India without much risk to my *safety of person*. I had not been in Japan for more than a week to be able to decide that my return to India would not be free from danger".

"Safety of person" (italicised by us) is an elastic expression, and he may have deliberately chosen this. Everything seemed fair in war, and he had no doubt made himself *persona non grata* to the British rulers. The hazards might include not merely arrest and imprisonment, most likely without trial, but other varieties of foul play—the way they dealt with the Irish patriot, Sir Roger Casement, is well known, and M.N. Roy in his *Memoirs* speaks of repeated attempts at kidnapping him.

The war-time atmosphere in India under the Defence of India Act, the O'Dwyer regime in the Punjab, his own attitude towards the war as made known through the British press, the Likelihood of a distorted intelligence version of his freely mixing with pro-German, Ghadrities, all these factors implied an enormous risk. Particularly after the mutiny in Singapore there were tales of great harassment. His idea of proceeding to India he had to abandon perhaps within a week of his stay in Japan, possibly, because of the prevailing talk of hardship suffered by and persecutions inflicted on those returning to India via the China Sea, tales of people being arrested, searched, detained and otherwise harassed at Hong Kong and Singapore. (His friend Shiv Prasad Gupta was among those thus harassed.)

The plan of proceeding to India had to be abandoned. Though the highest Japanese authorities were treating him as an honoured guest, undue deference towards the Alliance as part of national policy filled him with misgivings. Prof. Shiozawa

told him that "it would be all right for him to remain in Japan, adding as his personal view:" that one could not say when the British might exert pressure for his deportation.

Besides there seemed little for him to do in Japan. In the U.S.A. he could do worthwhile work for his country as his own countrymen's ambassador to the American people. The scope for undue British pressure on the U.S. compared with the possibilities in Japan was negligible, and, American's still continuing a neutral was a decisive consideration.

A good while before the banquet, Lalaji had made up his mind to get back to the States and accordingly had asked for a December booking. The language barrier tended to make a prolonged stay dull and the way the Anglo-Japanese Alliance was being enforced made it hazardous. The United States was still keeping aloof from the war-and that was decisive reason for preferring it to the Alliance-obsessed Asian country.

On December 4 he was advised by the tyo Kissen Kaisha that he had been allotted a cabin on the *s.s. Tenya Manu* and a week later (December 12) his friends saw him off at Yokohama.

Lalaji expected his young companion, Keshoram Sabarwal, to accompany him on the voyage. In fact when they first met in Japan, the young men had told him that he would be going to the States for education and awaited a remittance from home for this purpose. So, when Lalaji took him as a companion in the house they set up, he had offered also to help him in this with funds if necessary. Knowing about the young man's allegiance to the revolutionary party, Lalaji laid down the condition that when they arrived in the States the young companion would keep aloof for some time from revolutionist contacts. But Rash Behari needed Sabarwal by his side and would not let him go away. The young man was in a dilemma and in the end Rash Behari's pressure prevailed, perhaps because (as will be seen in the next chapter) the great revolutionary leader was in peculiar difficulties at that time.

Sabarwal had looked after Lalaji very well and naturally Lalaji had become very fond of him, with the result that Lalaji's interest in him continued till the end, and they wrote to each other quite frequently, during Lalaji's stay in the States.

Though Sabarwal could not himself accompany Lalaji he found him a substitute in another young man who wanted to go to the States to study agriculture. This was *S.S. Sarna*, who later on set up in New York as a successful businessman. It is possible that, apprehending foul play Lalaji was keen on having a trustworthy companion by his side. That is how Kesho ram Sabarwal read the working of his mind, and Lalaji's speaking of "risks to safety of my person" would support such a reading.

Indian Revolutionaries during the War

LEAVING ENGLAND HAD very largely been for Lajpat Rai a flight from the sickening hypocrisy of the professions of 'loyalty' of his compatriots there. This malady seemed unknown among the Indian community in America. On the contrary, particularly when he went to the Pacific coast and met his countrymen (largely Punjabis) settled in California, he found a movement afoot for an alliance with England's enemies and for engineering an insurrection in India against British authority. Here even his own attitude, as that of Tilak, of helping Britain if such help could be offered consistently with India's interests and dignity, was frowned upon as cowardice and as high treason against Indian freedom. Though he had seemed something of a seditionist to the cautious Indian politicians in England, here in the lurid glow of revolutionary fireworks he at moments appeared to some of the fervent raw youth a timid near-traitor! There it has been all expediency of the moment to the neglect of abiding fundamentals; here in a fit of patriotic fervour practical considerations seemed to have been thrown to the winds. Whether or not Germany meant really well by India, enough it was that she was at war with Britain. An insurrection in India must be called-and at a moment to suit the Germans-whether or not India was ready for such a call, and even if the abortive coup proved a leap off the edge of a high precipice into a dark unfathomed abyss. Lajpat Rai realised full well the unwisdom and the peril of such

plans. But he was repeatedly approached by Indian revolutionaries, particularly by some of the leaders of Ghadar Party-which Har Dayal had founded shortly before the outbreak of hostilities-to join their forces and even to lead them. He had to say 'no, thanks' as he had said to the far more innocuous invitation to lead Gandhi's Ambulance Corps.

These embarrassing invitations were pressed on him, with exhortation, entreaty, cajolery and denunciation, by the Indian revolutionaries in the States, before he sailed for Japan and again on his return, as also by some in Japan.

At times such encounters with revolutionaries came rather disconcertingly and took him unawares. The young man who had offered to act as his Secretary or guide and interpreter in Japan, having been in the first instance commended for that role by Prof. Benoy K. Sarkar, was found (within two weeks) to be mixed in revolutionary party doings and he disappeared all of a sudden, leaving behind a note saying that he was going away for an indefinite period! As Lajpat Rai discovered later he had been sent by his party on a revolutionary errand to China."

A more embarrassing encounter had come within a fortnight of Lajpat Rai's landing in Japan. At a summer resort he was visiting, as he glanced through the hotel list to see if there were any Indians staying there, he suddenly came across some rather inconvenient names. He did not mean to invite harassment by the Japanese police and so made up his mind at once to quit the rooms he had just engaged. Though they had not met before, one of the inconvenient ones on knowing about Lajpat Rai's arrival immediately called on him Lalaji frankly told

* Such an errand would presumably be connected with the securing of arms to be shipped to India. Abany Mookerjee was the young man concerned. He was arrested at Singapore and after sometime let off. He travelled to Moscow as Dr. Shaheer and was a controversial figure, being suspected by some. Occasionally at Lahore Lalaji received a letter from him. He is supposed to have come to India on a short visit in 1922 but Lalaji was in prison at that time.

him that he was packing off from the hotel. But the inconvenient one obligingly assured Lalaji that "they were themselves leaving that very minute-and so they did" Later they met (by appointment) in Tokyo, and came to an understanding that "each will follow his course without his being molested by the other". "I kept my part of the understanding, but the other party did not," says Lajpat Rai. He soon found himself being shadowed at close quarters. Wherever he went, men from the Japanese police followed him day and night. Knowing that his movements were being closely watched, he did not relish visits from the inconvenient one of the summer resort or his confederates.

"But one day," writes Lajpat Rai, "the same gentleman deliberately and out of sheer... mischief came to visit me. The two policemen were with him. They did not enter my compound but they were outside in front of the gate all the time. I begged of him not to embarrass me and it was with some difficulty that I persuaded him to leave me alone. A few days later it was announced that he had eluded his 'guardians' and left the country. The other gentleman, however, was still in the country and was soon after joined by another from America. Be it said to the credit of the former that he did not worry me, never came to my place and left me alone though I met him sometimes at the house of a common friend, being for a fairly long time ignorant of his real name and personality. But the new arrival from America did not leave me alone. He insisted on seeing me occasionally. This gentleman was well supplied with money. He lived in style and earned the suspicion of the Japanese authorities."

A little puzzling out seems called for. The one whose name and personality puzzled Lalaji himself was none other than Rash Behari Bose, leader of the Hardinge Bomb conspiracy who had escaped to Japan and lived under the assumed name of P.N. Thakur, his summer resort companion being Bhagwan Singh Gyanee. Keshoram Sabarwal had once met Rash Behari

in India, and it was he who finally removed Lalaji's doubts about the identity of "Thakur".

These Japanese episodes by no means were the beginning of this series of encounters. In fact these had started soon after his landing in New York in November 1914. One of his companions, Professor Benoy K. Sarkar, was responsible for his going to a dinner at Dr. Chakravarti's place where some strong pro-German speeches were made. Lajpat Rai found the meal, the company, the entire atmosphere uncongenial and made this clear to Prof. Sarkar, in whose company he left the place ahead of others. A German had taken a clay John Bull with him, which he smashed to pieces with a matching speech. Before leaving the place Lajpat Rai explicitly dissociated himself from the irresponsible utterances and the German's crude doing. He left no one in doubt about his own attitude. He said:

"I am an Indian patriot and I wish freedom for my country. I have no sympathy with the Germans nor have I anything against them. Considering our present circumstances we will better stay in the British Empire as a self-governing part than go out to be governed by another nation.

"I have been always rather fanatically attached to the theory that liberty won with foreign help was not worth having."

A few days later; and again through B.K. Sarkar-he had occasion to meet Maulvi Barkatullah of Bhopal, who had taught Persian at the Tokyo University and was considered a cofounder (with Har Dayal) of the Ghadar Party. About this meeting and this personage Lajpat Rai records:

"Shortly after Professor Sarkar arranged a meeting with Barkatullah. We met the later several times and he told me that they were expecting a big rising in India, that a date had been fixed and everything was ready. He also said that the Amir of Kabul was with them, and that I need not be afraid of co-operating with them as India would be free in three months. I called him a 'baglol' which meant that the man was too sanguine and was a kind of fool. I told him I had not a

grain of faith in what he said and also that I did not want either the Amir's or the German's rule in India, and that howsomuch I hated British rule I did not believe that at this state India could defend herself against foreign intruders even if they succeeded by any chance in turning out the British. He called me a coward and refused to give me any more confidences. We parted, however, quite friends. I formed a low opinion of his intelligence but a high one of his patriotism and character. We met several times but he told me nothing further."

For the sincerity and ardent patriotism of the Bhopal Maulvi he ever after cherished a very high regard and paid him a high tribute (in *The people*) with the news of his death was received.

He had occasion to meet a few Germans too, a German Professor at a dinner arranged by Professor Sarkar, who, later, in Chicago, in the course of a talk, showed himself as having many good German contacts. But Professor Sarkar's role ever seemed to Lalaji as somewhat mysterious.

Heramba Lal Gupta persistently sought to enlist Lalaji's support for the Indo-German plans. They first met in New York early in February, 1915.

"On the morning of the last day when I was about to go to Washington, H.I. Gupta called on me and as I had no time to talk with him in my room he took his seat with me in the taxicab and we drove together to the Pennsylvania station. He gave me to understand that he was in the confidence of the German Government and wanted to know if I could co-operate with them. My reply was in the negative. He promised to see me again somewhere in the Middle East."

H.L. Gupta saw him a second time in Chicago:

"He had a pretty long conference with me, possibly two. He tried to persuade me to join them and impressed upon me the importance of the opportunity. He said the Germans were eager to have me on their side and were prepared to follow my advice, on any terms I would like to make. I explained to him my position and refused to have anything to do with the movement. I impressed upon him the desirability of using a

part of the money they were getting from the German for educational purposes and also for the purpose of establishing colonies of Indians in the South American Republics mainly for the benefit of and in the interest of Indian political refugees.”

And the last meeting with the persistent revolutionist:

“The next time I met Gupta was at Los Angeles some days after the Chicago meeting. He had come specially to see me. This was his last attempt to win me over to their side. He wanted me to sign a proclamation of independence which they wanted to issue and to which they proposed to incite the Indian soldiers fighting in Flanders to rebel. Once more he offered me the leadership of the whole organisation and told me that the German leaders had issued special instructions to their consulates, to try to win me over and that they would do anything I would want them to do. Once more I refused and ended with the suggestion I had made before for future propaganda and asylum for themselves and others. He promised to lay aside, if he could, a certain sum for that purpose and hinted that the same may be entrusted to me. A few days later he telegraphed under an assumed name that that could not be done. That was my last meeting with Gupta before I left the U.S. for Japan.

I have reason to believe that Ram Chandra advised him against my suggestion.”

Heramba Lal Gupta was involved in certain happenings in Japan that occurred soon after the Indian banquet in celebration of the new Emperor's coronation. In Lalaji's posthumously published fragmentary reminiscences we read:

“As soon as the banquet was over the two Indians revolutionaries (both Bengali gentlemen) who had been chiefly responsible for that banquet were served with a notice to leave Japan within five days. Two police constables were deputed to watch and follow them all the 24 hours. This raised great indignation amongst Indians and Japanese both. Virtually the whole of the Japanese press condemned the order and denounced

this violation of the right of asylum to political refugees so much honoured and respected by the European natives. A deputation of the leading Japanese journalists and other leading men waited on the head of police but he excused himself on the ground that the order had originated from the (Foreign) office. Count Okuma, the Premier, who was sick and confined to his room at the time pleaded ignorance of the order and his inability to cancel it as it would imply humiliation of the Foreign Minister. So the Japanese politicians opposed to the order found another way of saving the Indians affected by the order. On the eve of the last day, the Indians followed by the two constables went on a visit to one of the leading members of the Japanese Diet (Parliament). The men went inside but the police remained outside. After a while it was found that the Indians had walked out of the house by another door and were missing. They were never arrested. One of them after some time returned to the United States, the other is still in Japan, married, if my information is correct, to a respectable Japanese woman."

The man who stayed on, for some time in hiding, but later led a settled life in Japan was of course Rash Behari alias Thakur. Not long after he was supposed to have acquired considerable influence with the Japanese. The other one Heramba Lal Gupta, was back in the States but lost his glamour, having been replaced by Dr. Chakravarti as the trusted agent for German funds and Indo-German plans. Rash Behari too had a considerable amount with him and, himself in hiding, he had to keep his revolutionary money in safe custody till it had blown over. He sought and received help in this situation from both Lalaji and Sabarwal. A goodly amount-19,500 yen-remained in trust with Lalaji who remitted it to "Thakur" from the States when he thought he could safely receive it through certain people.

Lalaji genuinely and outspokenly disapproved of the revolutionaries' plans depending on German or other foreign support. He willingly helped many a genuine revolutionary in

times of difficulty. "Thakur" in his difficulty wanted safe custody for his money. Somewhat later, another revolutionary. M. N. Roy, had to flee from the United States to seek refuge in Mexico. He needed help in this, being at that time almost destitute and it was Lalaji who came to his rescue-as he came to the rescue of several other revolutionaries in difficulty-and gave him the needed money.

This in brief is the story of Lalaji's contacts with revolutionaries more to bring out Lalaji's own stand with regard to war and the wartime plans of Indian revolutionaries than to provide a full narrative of such contacts. Lalaji was a keen and careful student of revolutionary movements and secret societies. His *Reflections on Revolutions** written for his own magazine very tersely summarising the conclusions that his personal contacts and inside knowledge and his reading yielded will be found readable even today. He also jotted down-not for publication, but only for his own use, as aide memoire perhaps-some notes regarding the Indian Revolutionaries which remained in a sealed cover with his publisher friend, Mr. W.B. Huebsch. These jottings provided uninhabited comment on a good many Indian revolutionaries-not always laudatory.**

* Reproduced from Young India (periodical) in the Lajpat Rai Number of *The People*.

** The Huebsch MS. has been printed by Shri V.S. Joshi in the *Autobiographical Writing of Lajpt Rai* edited by him.

The Exile-Ambassador

HE HAD ALREADY been away from home for twenty months instead of the six originally planned. The war was nearly a year and a half old, and nobody could say how many months or even years its course might drag on. Once again he was in the States—not for just a short sojourn, but to settle down for the duration. Return to India did not seem feasible. Later events very clearly show that even if he had sought to go back to India, it was not likely that he would have been permitted. For he had much difficulty regarding a visa even months after the “cease-fire”—in fact, even after the peace had been signed. He found himself virtually an exile, and for asylum he had begun to prefer the United States to Japan.

So towards the end of 1915 back in the United States for this war-time exile, he began to settle down to work appropriate to such a situation. The specific problems of Americans or of Indian workers in the U.S.A. that he set himself for study he had already covered in his book on the United States which he had completed in June before going to Japan. His activity now was to be directed to the educating of American opinion regarding the Indian problem and the enlisting of American sympathy, for what it might be worth, for the Indian cause. Now he was in the States, as at an earlier time the Hungarian patriot-exile, Louis Kossuth, had been, an exile from his own unfortunate country to whose cause his life was dedicated, an ambassador from his own subjugated people to the freedom loving people of America.

Except when Vivekananda made a stir in the American cities. India did not seem to exist even for well-educated and very liberal-minded Americans. A Hindu girl student at an American school told Lajpat Rai that her curriculum included Indian history, but the teacher always skipped that item. Asked by the student why she never had a word to say about Indian history, the teacher's reply was that Indians had never achieved anything, and were not entitled to a mention in history! This seemed typical, even though America had produced some eminent Sanskritists like Whitney and Lanman.

To remedy this state of affairs and in particular to call attention to the urgency of the problem of India's freedom this was the assignment that Lajpat Rai now set himself. The U.S.A. still kept neutral, though British propaganda was making all-out efforts to enlist American support in the name of liberty and democracy. Anti-Indian propaganda aimed at justifying the continuance of British imperialist rule in India was of course part of this propaganda. Something had to be done to counteract the British propaganda. Christian missionary activity in India depended to a considerable extent on American funds, and some of the missionaries engaged in this found it profitable to misrepresent grossly Indian history and culture and to depict Indian people as uncivilised heathens. Such vested interests too were an obstacle in the task of giving the true image of India to the American people. Particularly because of the war-time British propaganda in the U.S.A. the need for voicing the Indian point of view was greater than ever before; and since Britain was wooing support everywhere, this seemed to Lajpat Rai a suitable occasion to push the Indian question to the fore. The exile was quick in making contacts. There always was something universal and cosmopolitan about this nationalist leader from India that helped him to make himself at home among diverse peoples and races. His democratic, downright way had an especial appeal for just the type of Americans whose sympathy he sought. Even when he bluntly told them something unpleasant to their faces and pulled their pride to pieces, they

could see the man's sincerity and liked him the more for his disconcerting conduct and for his curt brushing aside of the polite conventional lies. Francis Hackett, the brilliant Irish journalist, then on the staff of one of America's 'highbrow' weeklies, *The New Republic*, recalls that shortly after they had been introduced to each other Lajpat Rai said:

"The Irish, you know, are even worse than the English to us in India."

"I was not surprised to hear it," says Mr. Hackett, "since those who are new to power are likely to become dictatorial, but what delighted me in this remark was its impolitic condour. Lajpat Rai did not evade the truth."

Lajpat Rai made contacts especially among the radical leaders and the progressive journalists and among university men. He was soon in considerable demand as a public speaker and did quite a good bit of writing for the press. As we shall see, this was facilitated a great deal by his book on the Indian freedom movement which he called *Young India*. For some of the highbrow liberal or radical magazines he regularly reviewed new books on India and on other Asian lands, or on eastern themes-which also helped in fostering contacts and in making him widely known.

When Lalaji settled down and started planning regular sustained work for the cause of Indian freedom, he naturally had to look for some lieutenants to assist him, and he found a loyal and devoted colleague in N.S. Hardiker, then a medical student.

In October 1915 the Indian Home Rule League of America was founded by Lajpat Rai with himself as President. J. T. Sunderland, an indefatigable fighter in the cause of India, was elected Vice-President of the League. (Dr. Sunderland continued the work of the League even after Lajpat Rai had come away from the States.) Amongst others associated with this organisation were K.D. Shastri and N.S. Hardiker as Secretaries and R.L. Bajpai as councillor.

From January 1917 the League brought out a small monthly

journal of its own which was named *Young India*. The journal's office soon began to attract people seeking information about Indian happenings to 1400 Broadway, and as a natural corollary to this, Lalaji setup there an Information Service, followed by another subsidiary in the form of a Workers' Union.

The League, *Young India* and the information Centre were the first organised effort to take India's case to the forum of world opinion, and as such stand out as an important landmark in the history of India's foreign propaganda. Before this the Indian propaganda in foreign countries had been confined more or less to work in England, where the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, under the direction of Wedderburn, voiced the Congress point of view, particularly through its journal, *India*. *Young India* was edited by Lajpat Rai himself and he was assisted in managing it by N.S. Hardiker. It looked a tiny venture but was very effective in impact-without the bulk of a dreadnought, but with the economy of a pocket battleship.

The League and *Young India* were not officially associated with the Indian National Congress, though such affiliation, now that the two Congress wings had reunited in the 1916 session at Lucknow, need not have been inconvenient to Lajpat Rai. His work in America remained unofficial, however, and the only great leader in India who gave him more than lip sympathy and moral support was Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak who had gone to England in 1918 to fight-and-lose-a defamation suit against Valentine Chirol. Overtowering as the Lokamanya's personality was-lofty as the Himalayas, deep as the ocean as Gandhi found-he still lacked that universal cosmopolitan something that Lajpat Rai had, as also Lajpat Rai's considerable foreign experience. During his visit to the U.K. the Lokamanya had found formidable obstacles in his way in organising publicity through the British press. Perhaps after this experience he all the more appreciated the splendid work being done by Lajpat Rai. In his letters from England Tilak sent Lajpat Rai much encouragement and definite promise of substantial support.

Dr. N.S. Hardiker recalls that in some of his letters to his own people he had spoken of Lalaji being severely handicapped in his work for lack of funds, and that the Lokamanya happened to see some of these letters.

The succour from the Lokamanya was most seasonable, and it is highly problematic whether the Indian Home Rule League in America could have continued to function if the Lokamanya had not come to its aid. N.S. Hardiker has recalled how beholden Lalaji felt to the Lokamanya.

The Lokamanya's first remittance was of \$ 5000 (at that time equal to about Rs. 17,000). War-time censorship created peculiar difficulties even in making such a remittance. So, it seems Lokamanya Tilak sought the good offices of Mrs. Annie Besant. Even then he was not free from misgivings, and so in a letter sent early in 1919 from London, Tilak desired to be intimated urgently "if the five which I sent have reached you". The "five" had to do duty for "5000" in the attempt to escape the censor's attention. When he had made sure that the "five" had not gone astray, he arranged to send a further 1000.

An event of importance for the Indian cause-for India's image in America-was Tagore's lecture tour in the States in 1918. Though not directly a political affair, it undoubtedly secured for India more room in the American consciousness than she had been allowed hitherto. The poet and the patriot did not meet but there can be no doubt that Tagore's visit undoubtedly helped work being carried on systematically by Lajpat Rai.

Lajpat Rai's Home Rule League propaganda culminated at the time of the Peace Conference in the formal presentation of India's case before the Foreign Relations committee of the American Senate. Senator Dudley Field Malone took the brief before the Committee. Senator Norris was among others associated with this move. The brief, of course, had been prepared largely by Lajpat Rai. But for the presence in the States, such a move would have been inconceivable.

N.S. Hardiker has narrated how India's case happened to be presented before the Foreign Relations Committee. It seems Lalaji had not much faith in the Committee and was disinclined to knock at a door he believed to be unsympathetic. But some of his lieutenants, including Hardiker Himself, thought the opportunity should not be ignored.

It seems when the invitation from the Committee was received in the office, Hardiker was not present, and Lalaji was-and Lalaji had not been aware at all that the Committee had been requested! Thus a situation was created, and since he could not disown what his lieutenants had done, he had to accept it! Of course the younger friends knew well enough that the job could be handled only by Lalaji himself, not by any of his lieutenants. The Committee wanted to hear the Indian case to be presented before it after just two days. At such short notice the Indian case had to be written out and printed off! So Lalaji was forced into this situation and given just one day to write out the memorandum. He sat through the night and the next day a 12 page memorandum was ready in print.

The manuscript duly handed over to the printer, Lalaji got in touch with his lawyer friend, Dudley Field Malone, and persuaded him to accompany him to the Committee. And, so those who had created the situation which Lalaji had to face, coolly told him. In the words of Hardiker, the chief mischief-making lieutenant: "You may carry on the work at the Committee in co-operation with Mr. Malone." For themselves they felt free "to go to a play this evening for relaxation", and for this they returned to New York!

India got the widest publicity and support for her cause in America that was possible in the circumstances, and this could happen just because she was fortunate in having in Lajpat Rai not merely an exile who suffered for his convictions with fortitude and philosophy, but one who was at the same time her ambassador to the American people-an ambassador of rare ability and ability and magnetic personality.

President Wilson was the biggest noise of the 1918-19 period. His name shone like a beacon-light for all the daring and true spirits that sailed forth in search of a brave new world in which individuals led a freer life and nation-states lived in more peace and harmony. From India a great communication was addressed to him by S. Subramania Iyer in which India's case was set forth at considerable length. The Indian press was for many a day full of echoes of this epistle to the American apostle of liberty who at one time promised to eclipse all the great American names, including that the Abraham Lincoln himself. Perhaps the Indian publicists did not quite realise the insignificance of the whole affair when seen in the American perspective. But the communication did get a certain measure of publicity in the American press too, credit for which was surely due to the work done for it, and for the Indian cause generally, by Lajpat Rai.

Hardiker mentions another somewhat similar occasion when a senator wanting to say something about India in the Senate sought Lalaji's help.

Lalaji was an ambassador to the American people, and so Washington could not be the centre of his activity. He thought it more profitable for his cause too work in the liberal and radical, leftist circles or among the more sympathetic university men, journalists or intellectuals capable of a sympathetic response and with some potentialities in moulding opinion. The rulers were not much wooed by him. He did not find time ripe for that.

The Government of India took it for granted that whatever Lajpat Rai published in America, periodical, pamphlet or book, must not be permitted to enter India. Had not insinuations been made by British propagandists that he was a German agent? The British Government banned his book *Young India*. This stupid ban was defied in a dramatic challenge by Commander Josiah C. Wedgwood on the floor of the House of Commons. *Young India* triumphed. But more important than the fight between the ban and the book-the story of which

we must reserve for the chapter dealing with Lajpat Rai's books written during this period-was the purely human adventure, the starting of a friendship between two kindred spirits. The intimate friendship between Lajpat Rai and Wedgwood during many years was well known in both their countries, but not many knew that the friendship started with the Commander putting up a fight for an Indian patriot author whom he had never seen. Not long after Wedgwood happened to visit the States and the two met for the first time in Baltimore, New York. Even before this meeting (after the *Young India* episode) they had exchanged letters. From now on they always kept in close touch with each other's welfare and thought and doings through correspondence. That, one of his best friendships with an outstanding Englishman was made in America.

In the last year of the war we find a rather novel suggestion of Lajpat Rai's going to Persia cropping up in the Wedgwood correspondence. In a letter to Wedgwood we find Lajpat Rai agreeable to accepting a mission to Persia if certain conditions were fulfilled. Lajpat Rai's letter might indicate a change in his war attitude towards willingness to co-operate in Britain's war effort. But this hypothetical letter would seem to be a solitary indication of such a change; one does not see much of it in his public speaking and writing. What exactly Wedgwood did in regard to the suggestion discussed in his correspondence with Lajpat Rai and how the British Foreign Office and India office men with whom he must have discussed it received the proposal we do not know. All we know is that nothing materialised. About Wedgwood's proposal I never heard a word from Lalaji himself and came to know about it only after looking through his papers after his death, but I distinctly remember Lalaji telling us about the Aga Khan's seeking from the British Foreign Office an Ambassadorial Assignment to Persia at the end of the war. So perhaps he did know something about what happened behind the scenes regarding this diplomatic post.

Mariquess Reading was Britain's ambassador to Washington immediately before his coming to India as Viceroy. when Reading took over in Washington, Wedgwood wrote to him to introduce to him India's exile-ambassador.

The names of several of the American friends of Lajpat Rai have already been mentioned in the course of this narrative. Rev. J. T. Sunderland was perhaps, of all of them, the one who helped him most in the furtherance of his cause. He had been to India and had met Lajpat Rai there; in a note he prepared (early in March 1916) for Huebsch, the publisher of *Young India* (the book, not the weekly journal), he recalls (among other things) Lajpat Rai's work for the elevation of the Depressed classes, i.e. the 40 millions of outcasts or untouchables and says:

“Two years ago I attended a national conference, called to promote this work, at which he presided and gave a powerful address.”

This noble activity did not find favour with a certain type of Christian missionaries who regarded this as an encroachment on their own preserve and who therefore remained unfriendly towards Lajpat Rai. But rev. J.T. Sunderland, a much truer Christian than this lot, was amongst the very best friends of Lajpat Rai in his New York days.

Sunderland had himself for several years been working on a book to answer the question Should India have Self-Government? but was not sure of finding a publisher. His usual publishers issued only theological literature not that of political interest, and many of the others he thought would be unwilling, being under the spell of British propaganda in America. Also the burning question of that day in the U.S.A. was whether America should intervene in the European war, and Sunderland's attitude made him unpopular with an influential section. His *India in Bondage*, a well-documented powerful plea, found publication in India in the twenties.

Another good Christian who took very sympathetic interest in Lajpat Rai's work for India was Rev. John Haynes Holmes

an outstanding figure in the unitarian Church. He was editing *Unity*, a weekly published from Chicago. Lajpat Rai may have come in personal contact with him when before setting up his New York headquarters he stayed at Chicago. *Unity* rendered memorable service to India during the later mass movements led to Gandhi.

B.W. Huebsch, the publisher, was not merely working under a commercial arrangement with the author. He was a trusted friend and that is why we find that a somewhat detailed memorandum about Indian revolutionaries whom Lalaji met in Japan and in the U.S. written in Lalaji's own hand (in English) and, obviously not meant for publication-written as a sort of confidential journal or report to which he might turn to aid his memory-remained in a sealed cover with this trusted friend. Huebsch spoke very feelingly about Lajpat Rai at the public function to mourn his loss, and in 1943 the manuscript that had been entrusted to him and not claimed by anyone after its author's death, he handed over in the sealed cover to the New York Public Library, from where about a decade and a half later it was acquired by the National Archives of India. Huebsch's weekly called *Freeman* was one of the American weeklies that Lalaji particularly liked but this was born after Lalaji's return to India.

Lalaji had a good many friends amongst journalists with liberal, radical or leftist views. Oswald Garrison Villard was the doyen of this intellectual liberal type of journalism in the States at that time. His weekly, *The Nation*, Lalaji ever looked forward to avidly even after his return from the States. Next to *The Nation* came another weekly. *The New Republic*, on the editorial staff of which he must have had several friends. Besides Walter Lippmann, Francis Hackett, the highly talented Irishman, already mentioned, is entitled to fuller notice. Lalaji's cordial relations with the Hackett family imply meetings outside the weekly's office, and he used to speak of his Danish wife, Anna Toksvig, as an ardent feminist who never adopted her husband's name because of her feminist views. "You see

one sometimes addressed her as 'Mrs. Hackett' and invariably there was great fun—'Don't I have my own name, Mr. Rai?' she would protest."

John Haynes Holmes and his weekly have already been mentioned; and to our list here we should add another journal more to the left of these—the *Masses*. Lalaji was a welcome visitor to the offices of these journals and had personal contacts there that he valued and at times joined in their editorial lunches.

The Indian people's Exile-Ambassador had contacts in trade union circles, and even amongst Negro leaders. He was not particularly keen on contracts with the leaders in politics and Government. But we have already mentioned senators Malone and Norris. Dudley Field Malone was lawyer by profession and may have occasionally been consulted by Lalaji for his legal knowledge. Hardiker refers to him as "our lawyer in America". Another lawyer friend was John Quinn whom Lalaji consulted in writing out his will. Three times he made his will during his stay in the States, the first of these having been executed in 1916, and the last in 1919. Writing to Gandhiji in July 1921, about the public moneys that he received during his years abroad and that he held in trust, Lalaji refers to the will that he executed when he was about to return to India, and this he says he deposited with "Mr. John Quinn, 31, Nassau Street, New York, who is a friend of mine and a lawyer of great distinction and merit in New York".

Lalaji did not much exert himself for contacts at the Governmental high echelons in Washington, but he was certainly well aware of the problems of the Indian community in the U.S. and these were bound to necessitate an occasional knock at the doors of authority. Thus, we find among his papers letters from the Department of Labour showing that he had sent up proposals for the settlement of his countrymen on certain lands, and the final reply about these proposals we find in a letter (from the office of the Assistant Secretary), dated

May 15, 1936, conveying to him Secretary Wilson's decision that;

“it would not be possible to carry through your plans concerning the settlement of Hindus upon lands furnished by the United States without first securing legislative enactment, which does not seem to be within the limits of probability at this time.”

The people's Ambassador had some good contacts in universities and centres of learning. To the names in this category that have already found mention in our narrative we must particularly add that of the noted American economist, Prof E.R.A. Seligman of Columbia University. When, on his return, to India, his son Amrit wanted to go abroad for higher study, Lalaji had in the first instance asked him to go to *Seligman* of Columbia University, though later on Amrit shifted to Germany. He was bound to have come in touch with some of the leading writers on political science. We find J.A. Hobson regretting inability to be “with you at the International Dinner on the 31st as I am away from New York on the date”. and adds-

“I must hope that you are making good progress in influencing opinion in the country in favour of a democratic policy though democracy appears to have some strange implications in America.”

K.K. Kawakami, a Japanese authority on international relations living in America, should also find mention here. He had to his credit a number of books on this subject, more particularly on Japan's foreign policy, all published in America. One of his younger associates and admirers was Agnes Smedley who became keenly interested in India's freedom struggle, more particularly in the doing of Indian revolutionaries. She later became attached to Virendra Chattopadhyaya, (Mrs. Sarojini Naidu's brother, living in Berlin) who during World War I was a leading Indian revolutionist in alliance with the Germans. Agnes Smedley later wrote books on the Chinese Revolution, and an autobiographical novel, *Daughter of Earth*,

in which Lajpat Rai, under the name of Ranjit Singh, figures as a hero. Because of a sprightly manner about her, Lalaji affectionately used to call her *Panchhi*, and when she started writing for the Indian press she often signed her contributions as "A. (or Alice) Bird".

The perennial student in him put the leisure of his exile to good use. In New York he was in the habit of spending a good deal of time at two libraries—the New York Public Library and that of Columbia University both of which extended special facilities to him and he often suggested books they should add to their shelves particularly on Indian history and politics and on other topics of Indian interest. In passing on Lajpat Rai's sealed cover to the New York Public Library, B.W. Huebsch no doubt had in mind the relationship that his friend had developed with that institution during his stay in New York.

Many of his own compatriots then living in America who should be mentioned in this part of our narrative have already been mentioned, particularly in our chapter on Indian revolutionaries.

Chief among his immediate colleagues was of course N.S. Hardiker on whose reminiscences our narration of Lajpat Rai's American days has drawn so copiously. One of the younger associates was D.S.V. Rao, who followed Lajpat Rai on his return to India at a few months' interval to put himself at his disposal. This promising young man died whilst Lalaji served his prison term.

A good many of his compatriots then in America in the intellectual professions or engaged in higher studies for such careers very naturally came to him either simply as admirers of a great leader of their country or to seek advice or guidance. Dr. Taraknath Das, a teacher of political science, who wrote a great deal emphasising the international importance of Indian freedom kept in close touch with Lalaji. When in Lahore Lalaji started his weekly journal, *The People*, Dr. Taraknath Das was one of the regular contributors. He had an American wife and

later took American citizenship, but his interest in India's freedom never abated because of that.

Lalaji very keenly realised that India was lagging sadly behind in science and technology, and it gave him especial satisfaction to come across his compatriots who gave a "good account of themselves in these fields. In this category we might mention Dr. Kokatnoor, N. Bisey and the sugar technologist Sarangdhar Das whose German wife Frieda came to India in the late twenties banking largely on Lalaji's support. She was a portrait painter and Lalaji was able to get her a few commissions, but she did not strike root in this country and went back to Europe and wrote out her own story in a book she called *Married to India*. R.K. Khemka, who settled down in business in Calcutta, kept in touch with Lalaji after his return through correspondence. A very outstanding name we should mention here is that of Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, an authority on Indian art. He was not a mere art critic, but put his knowledge of Indian art to use in reconstructing Indian history with a penetrating insight into its real spirit. In this task he had the collaboration of Sister Nivedita for whom Lalaji always had great admiration.

There would be no point in attempting an exhaustive roll call. The names mentioned show the sort of contacts Lalaji made or particularly valued. Everyone interested in Indian freedom naturally came to him, and all those who, attracted by his personality, by his forthright, at times even disconcerting, candour, or his natural unsophisticated democratic way in dealing with high and low that did away with barriers of class or caste or race and made the whole world kin, or by the story of his life of sacrifice for high ideals—all such once they were drawn into his orbit were bound to become friends of the cause with which he had identified himself. He was the embodiment of a natural-*A man's a man for a' that*- democracy celebrated in song by Robert Burns and having its great apostle in Walt Whitman. This could not go neglected by the people that had thrown up Whitman, and still continued, in spite of

many contradictions in their ways, to pay homage to his name. So, in general he attracted people imbued with a kindred spirit, and he sought contacts not in the high governmental or financial quarters, but among those who may broadly be characterised as leaders of progressive movements, and not much in the established order, but mostly in dissent.

One of the progressive educational institutions (for adults) that particularly attracted and impressed him-but of which he had had nothing to say in his book on the United States, because perhaps, he discovered it after the publishing of that book was the Rand School of Social Sciences, New York. The dual role of student and teacher that he had adopted early in his travels he continued in the States. At the Rand School he listened to many a lecture and himself very often lectured on history and politics. For instance, he gave a series of six lectures on "Asia in World Politics"

A somewhat similar series he delivered under another progressive auspices-that of the American Women's Association.

At one time during his American stay he even enrolled himself as a regular student in a Languages Institute in their class for elementary Spanish-the language of quite a considerable block in the American "Museum of Humanity". But he made little progress and till the end English was the only European language he knew.

Like Indians the Irish were also struggling to end their subjugation by Britain. Their movement very naturally evoked sympathetic echoes and even received very substantial concrete support in America because of the large numbers in several generations of Irishmen that had crossed the ocean and settled down at American citizens, As fellow-victims of the self-same British imperialism, some of the Irish leaders felt sympathy for India's cause. Eamon de Valera after his escape from prison crossed the ocean during this period. Lajpat Rai's meeting the great Irish leader was an event of some significance. And as N.S. Hardiker recalls. the two leaders discussed ways and means of achieving independence for their respective countries.

“Young India”

THE MOST IMPORTANT of Lajpat's American bunch of books was *Young India*. 'An Interpretation and a History of the Nationalist Movement from 'Within'—that is how a superscription on the title-page reveals its scope. As an interpretation of the Indian Nationalist movement (for the period covered by it) it continued, even a quarter century after its publication, to tower above the rest of the plentiful literature on the subject. The writer's knowledge of the movement from within, in its various phases and aspects, inside the Congress and without it, and his detached non-party attitude, combined with the deep thought and objective scrutiny to which he had subjected the Indian problem, peculiarly fitted him for the task. Strict adherence to constitutionalism, passive resistance, the terrorists' bomb and revolver and attempts at an armed rising are all interpreted from the different angles of their respective votaries and then subjected to a cold and objective scrutiny with the searchlight of criticism in hand, in a masterly way that remains unequalled. In many ways *Young India* is the best written of Lajpat Rai's books. The very title epitomizes a vital phase of his thinking wherein 'Young India' forms a recurring motif. A little later he started a monthly journal and named it *Young India*,* and later still a collection of his speeches and newspaper writings published in India after his return was named *A Call to Young India*.

* This was a short while before the weekly journal of that name afterwards taken over by Mahatma Gandhi had made its appearance.

The History of the book itself is worth recording here. *Young India* was conceived and completed in the early part of Lalaji's wartime exile. Though the manuscript was completed during Lalaji's Californian days, parts had been written in Japan.

B.W. Huebsch, the publisher, told the story briefly at a meeting held at the Civic Club, New York, on November 30, 1928, to mourn the loss of Lajpat Rai. For some reason the author chose to remain anonymous and stuck to this decision till almost the point of publication. It occurred to the publisher that a book on a remote subject like India whose authorship was not known to any except the author's personal friends would not be easy to market. Mr. Huebsch therefore thought of getting a celebrity associated with it-in one of the usual roles of celebrities, as the writer of a foreword. Mr. Huebsch wrote to Professor A.U. Pope (a great friend of Lajpat Rai's who took a keen and sympathetic interest in his movement, and now well known as the author of certain very authoritative and expensive books on Islamic art) suggesting that it might be a good idea to have Winston Churchill write a foreword. Professor Pope fell in with the suggestion and accordingly wrote a letter to Churchill, who, however, declined the invitation "not knowing enough about India"! The book finally appeared over the author's own name and with a foreword written by that most sincere and enthusiastic of India's American friends, Rev. Dr. J. T. Sunderland. The book was dedicated "to the memory of my dearest friend, the late lamented Dwarka Dass, M.A., of the Punjab, who died of a broken heart, at the collapse of public life in his native province (October 1912) as an humble tribute to his uncompromising attitude towards public life, his lofty principles and his noble advocacy of them".

The author's introduction is dated Berkeley, California, March 1, 1916. By August 1916 the book was published. It got a very good press. Amongst other Mr. H.W. Nevins wrote a full-length and enthusiastic review of it for the American weekly, the *New Republic*. In less than six months a second edition was called for, and was produced in April 1917 with a fresh preface.

The initial American response was quite encouraging though the book could be sent neither to India nor to Britain. It helped the Indian cause by making its author known. Invitations from many societies and universities for lectures and from newspapers and journals for articles came in, in the first instance because of *Young India*, and this was no small gain.

The Governments of Britain and India lost no time in banning the book. But the last word did not rest with them-not in England. There, under Commander Josiah C. Wedgwood's guidance an English edition was printed off quietly with the imprimatur of the India Home Rule League and copies of it distributed amongst all members of Parliament. Wedgwood himself wrote a foreword for the English edition, and flourishing a printed copy of the book in his hand, he challenged the police from the floor of the House of Commons to do their worst. Scotland Yard got busy afterwards and took away the remaining stock.

Wedgwood at the time was a member of the Liberal Party, and joined Labour not long after. But even then he was known as a firm single-taxer, and as one who held radical views on certain subjects and as one of the most independent M.P.'s going. He had just then served on the Mesopotamia Commission; that job had made him keenly interested in India and his note of dissent had made India interested in his career.

Wedgwood and Lajpat Rai were not known to each other personally; but the *Young India* gesture immediately laid the foundation of a warm and abiding friendship. Soon they were writing to each other regularly even though their first meeting did not come off till next year when Wedgwood visited the States. Lajpat Rai asked Wedgwood if he would find out from the British Home Office as to what particular passage in *Young India* they found objectionable, so that they might consider if these could be modified or excised. Wedgwood summarily turned down the suggestion.

In India the ban continued till Lajpat Rai himself had become an assemblyman and was thus in a position to 'dun' the

Home Member and others personally at New Delhi. Towards the end of 1927 the ban was lifted and the Servants of the People Society reprinted the book; though the Indian edition needed no foreword, that by Wedgwood introducing the unlawful English edition, which had become part of *Young India's* own history, was allowed to stand.

This edition was exhausted quickly; but Lalaji thought that before reprinting it he might revise the book to cover the period since 1916. In the last train journey with him I recollect he asked me to assist him in this task as I had then done in his last book, *Unhappy India*; and we discussed one or two other projected books too-amongst them a life of Parnell (for the series of Under biographies) in which we might collaborate. For *Young India* he had thought of a second part covering the later period, which (he suggested) we might do jointly so that his first might more or less stand as it was. But he was not spared to carry out the plan.

A 'companion volume to *Young India*' followed it within about a year. This set forth the economic effects of British rule in India. The announcement on the fly-leaf called it 'An Economic History of British India'. However, when it actually came out it bore the catching title *England's Debt to India*, and the thesis implied therein was fully borne out by statistics and documentation. In fact the distinguishing feature of the book was that the author chose to speak almost exclusively out of the mouths of Britishers. In everyday experience, as he said in the preface, it is the wearer that is supposed to know best where the shoe pinches; but in politics this common sense rule seems to have been reversed.

"In judging of Governments and rulers, it is they whose word is to be accepted and not that of the governed and the ruled. So I have chosen to speak from the mouths of the English themselves."

The volume made no claim to originality, and yet in a way it was original in the very conception-in this denial of 'original' writing.

‘The toad beneath the harrow knows
 Exactly where each troth point goes
 The butterfly upon the road
 Preaches contentment to the toad.’

So the title-page proclaimed. But even the type of readers allergic or loftily indifferent to the toad squealing from beneath the harrow were soon won over by the effective device of giving him an authentic report of the harrowing happenings not through the toad tribe but entirely in the words of those plying the harrow or their kinsmen. Very appropriately the book is inscribed to those brave, high-minded and honest Englishmen and Englishwomen, on whose testimony it was principally based. *England's Debt to India* embodied painstaking work on source books, and on other authoritative writing lying scattered in books, periodicals and reports, many of them not easily accessible to the general reader. It was in the best tradition of economic research created by the two eminent political leaders of India, Dadabhai Naoroji and R.C. Dutt, and along with their work (and that of William Digby) gives the authentic economic history of India under British rule.

The book opens with a historical retrospect giving a rapid economic history of India before the advent of the British, then addresses itself to showing what the Industrial Revolution in Britain and the building up of the vast British Empire owed to India. One chapter discusses the vexed question “Tribute or Drain?” and those that follow illustrate British economic policy in and towards India by choosing two industries, textiles, and shipping and shipbuilding. Then follow chapters on agriculture and on economic conditions of the people and, of course, one on famines and their causes. Railways, irrigation and education—the much advertised boons of British rule—come next. Towards the end one chapter discusses taxation and governmental expenditure, and another presents material relevant to ‘Certain Fallacies about the Prosperity of India’.

The book was published in America by B.W. Huebsch. It was very well received by the press and, being based entirely

on British authorities, proved the most devastating reply to Britishers' war-time propaganda in America which tried to make out that British rule had conferred great prosperity on India, making exploitation look almost like philanthropy.

Work for this book required library facilities which could not have been available to Lajpat Rai in California. He had already moved to New York and there the Columbia University Library extended to him the facilities he needed. Two of the professors of the university went through his manuscript, Professor A.R. Mussey and the renowned economist, E.R.A. Seligman.

The book had a peculiar topicality not only because of the general British propaganda about India in America, but because in the jingo press proposals were just then being made that after the war India should be made to take over part of Britain's foreign debt. In other words, they wanted India to pay for Britain's war.

"India," said Lajpat Rai's *Foreword*, "had stood by England magnificently and some of the nationalist leaders have had a hard time in resisting the advances made by the enemies of Great Britain. Let us hope that they were not labouring under vain illusions and that Great Britain was sincere when she proposed to stand for right and justice in international dealings."

The foreword spoke not only of such post-war hopes, but voiced serious misgivings too:

"Great Britain has suffered large losses in the war. As soon as the war is ended there will be cry to make them up. No other part of the Empire offers such a field as India. She has no voice in her Government and is helpless to make herself heard. She can neither check nor retaliate. What can be easier than to make her pay for the war?"

The misgivings were amply justified by the manipulation of the Indian exchange ratio in the years that followed.

In India the book remained under ban for years. When at last the ban was lifted it was already in arrears by almost a decade. Lalaji thought he would revise and bring the book up to

date or get someone to do it before it was re-issued-an idea that did not materialise.

Lajpat Rai's next book on the political situation came in 1919 and was called *The Political Future of India*. The Montagu-Chelmsford report for constitutional reform in India had been published a few months earlier (July 1918) and formed a live topic of discussion. *The Political Future of India* (published as usual by B.W. Huebsch) was primarily a criticism of this report.

The moral of the discussion and survey in the book is effectively given in its concluding paragraph:

“With a republication China in the north-east, a constitutional Persia in the north-west and a Bolshevist Russia in the remote north, it will be extremely foolish to attempt to rule India despotically. Not even the gods can do it. It is not possible even if the legislature devotes all its sittings to the drafting and passing of one hundred coercion acts. The peace of the world, international harmony and goodwill, the good name of the British Commonwealth, the safety of the Empire as such, demand the peaceful introduction and development of democracy in India.”

The book was intended at least as much for the American reader as for the British statesman. America had been swamped with talk of democracy and self-determination as the aims of the Allies. Keep that in mind and the book will appear a model presentation of India's case. Almost every chapter takes its text from the speeches of David Lloyd George. These speeches did not fail the author even for his chapter on India's Revolutionary party which opened with a suitable text taken from the British Premier's speech at Glasgow on “Causes and Aims of the War”.

“Revolution is a fever brought about by a constant and reckless disregard of the laws of health by the government of a country.”

With that text the entire fabric of the Rowlatt recommendations could be blown up skyhigh. This necessarily had to be done, for the book appeared immediately after the martial law

regime in the Punjab which came in the wake of the agitation against the Rowlatt Act.

Lajpat Rai, like most other nationalist leaders in India, had taken rather a hopeful—one might say a charitable—view of the proposals for reform at that stage. That is the impression one gets from *The Political Future*. But later on when the outlines laid down by Mr. Montague had to be filed in, at every stage the voice of the reactionaries prevailed and the whole scheme was changed past recognition. *The Political Future*, tentative and not definitive, was not without misgivings about such a sequel. The Preface concluded thus:

The bill began a series of disappointments, further steps in recommendations or will they allow them to be whittled down?" Mr. Montagu's bill, which is promised to be introduced in the House of Commons early in June, will answer the question."

The bill began a series of disappointments, further steps in which were provided by the joint parliamentary committees, and later by those who framed the various rules and schedules under the Act.

Besides the three books already discussed in this chapter, Lajpat Rai gave his American readers several pamphlets three of which deserve notice here. One was *An open Letter to David Lloyd George*, Britain's Prime Minister, another to the Right Hon'ble Edwin Samuel Montagu, when that gentleman was appointed Secretary of State for India.

The immediate provocation for the first of these public epistles came from the news that India had been made by her rulers to contribute a hundred and fifty cores towards their war against Germany. Such callous exploitation of this poor subjugated country by her imperialist masters was heart-rending. India had been "bled white"—so Montagu himself had put it. Lalaji "felt miserable". observers N.S. Hardiker, and he sat for seven hours at a stretch and completed the *Letter*—so we learn from N.S. Hardiker.

The *Letter* found good publicity in the American press.

The story of the genesis of the other epistle, that to Montagu, has been given by N.S. Hardiker.

Many of the Indian politicians hailed Montagu as their would be deliverer just as in 1906 they had hailed John Morley, under whom Montague first acquired experience of India Office. That earlier chorus of jubilation and the disappointment in which it ended were recalled by Lajpat Rai in this *Open Letter*. Some comment was offered on the various rival proposals for India's future then being advertised, in particular the Islington proposals, the Congress-League scheme and a draft memorandum by G.K. Gokhale published posthumously. In appraising this last, Lajpat Rai wrote:

“In weighing Mr. Gokhale's scheme, it should be remembered that it was drawn up (a) when he was very ill; (b) in the early days of the war, long before the developments of 1915, 1916 and 1917 had taken place. The world has since then advanced much further than could have been imagined by Mr. Gokhale. The scheme bears upon it the stamp of over-cautiousness and is more a kind of halting compromise than a record of his wishes. I yield to none in my respect for Mr. Gokhale. I do not think Indian public life, during British rule, has produced a man of greater depth of patriotism, more sincere love of country and finer sentiments of honour and self-respect than he. His disinterestedness and incorruptibility were above suspicion. In his conceptions of possibilities, however, he was rather timid and over-cautions. He was afraid of being called a dreamer. The charge which he dreaded most was that of a visionary. Hence his mind always halted in making even just demands. He was rather a poor negotiator.”

In particular, this memorandum fought shy of fiscal autonomy and without fiscal autonomy the Indian problem could not be solved.

The Pamphlet we have still to consider-Reflections on the Political Situation in India-had an interesting history. Chrono-logically it would come before any of the other books discussed in this chapter. In fact it was originally written during

the early months of the war when Lalaji was in Japan. Later on the Germans caught hold of it and had it 'edited and issued by the Indian nationalist Committee (European Centre) with the added 'imprint of Verlag von Otto Wigand, Leipzig. Very obligingly that furnished an introduction of their own and by some mysterious process even reserved 'all rights'! In the introduction we are told that the pamphlet embodying, the Reflections is addressed (by the author) "Primarily to the people of Great Britain, in the pretended belief, loudly expressed by the moderate party in India, that the British character loves 'justice and fair-play' and that the British people have a dormant conscience capable of being quickened into life on behalf of the millions of Indians who are groaning under their rule."

About the author himself we are told:

'He stands midway between the Moderates and the Revolutionaries. Throughout his career he has adopted the public methods of the former, though his heart is with the visions and aspirations of the latter. The present pamphlet is a characteristic example of his political attitude. In the form of a friendly warning to British statesmen to change their methods, it is in reality a veiled threat of an impending revolution in India, and it would seem as if Lala Lajpat Rai intended in this publication to perform for the last time his pious duty to Britain as a moderate public leader.'

The writer of the introduction made it clear he that he did not agree with Lajpat Rai in his public attitude'; that the pamphlet was however being issued on its own merits as it "explains with sufficient thought and clearness of judgment the present political situation in India. It is for this reason that we commend it to the attention of the European public."

The pamphlet contained some home truths, from Lajpat Rai at his bluntest, about British rule in India, and about the O'Dwyer regime, then in full blast in the Punjab. Whether or not it received any attention from the 'European public,' the Government of India promptly proscribed it and got the Chief court of the Punjab to disbar its author, and after that banned almost all his publication as a matter of routine. The Chief

Court probably never disbarred any other advocate in such high handed manner. i.e., without his having been convicted of an offence and without his getting a hearing.

Our survey has not noticed several minor writings from Lalaji's prolific pen. We may mention here the *Fight for Country and A Call to Young India*, both addressed primarily to his own people, the Indian student community in the States, and *Self-determination for India* addressed to the Europeans in America! Some of these minor writings, even though ephemeral, had made a very forceful impact within the national limitation of such creations. N.S. Hardiker makes particular mention of a brochure entitled *India; A Graveyard* which attracted much attention. "Over one lakh copies were printed." It was reproduced widely in the press the world over in Italian, German, French, Spanish, Russian and Persian versions, and of course in different Indian languages.

This chapter has so far concerned itself only with the books of Lalaji's American days meant primarily for foreign, more particularly American, consumption.

Young India and *England's Debt to India* were certainly of very considerable interest in this country to the general reader as well as the scholar, but their entry into this country was not permitted, and so they became a major part of his work as exile-ambassador in the U.S. But, the patriot in exile never neglected his home audience, and so before closing this chapter we may mention a few other books too—some have already been noticed or at least named in this narrative.

This war-time sequence started with Lalaji's *Arya Samaj* which we have already briefly noticed and this was certainly meant neither exclusively nor primarily for readers at home but there certainly was a demand for such a book amongst them. Next came *The Problem of National Education in India*, published by Allen & Unwin in England, and though

written half a century earlier has been reprinted by the Publications Division of the Government of India with a foreword by the late President Zakir Husain, who, as a distinguished educationist, found Lalaji's observations and suggestions very apt and still pertinent. Then come the two books meant just for Indian readers, one on Japan and the other on the U.S.A., both of which have already been mentioned in our narrative. These four books, as also the autobiographical narrative in Urdu of which we shall speak presently, have to be added to the three (besides a number of pamphlets), specially dealt with in this chapter, in an inventory of the literary output of the years spent in exile. The writings for the press could fill several volumes. Literary work was but one department of his activity, and yet, his performance in this department only would be more than enough to show the years of exile as a period of very arduous industry. There is little exaggeration in what his disciple secretary of those days, N.S. Hardiker, says that whether in the League office or in his own apartment he seldom saw Lalaji without either reading or writing material in his hand.

The most important of Lalaji's writings of this period for Lalaji's biographer and, in chronological sequence somewhat preceding the published books, is an Urdu manuscript written in New York (in November 1914) giving the story of his life up to his deportation in 1907. This manuscript—a hundred sheets in Lalaji's own hand—remained in safe custody with the Westbrook family in England. He brought the manuscript with him during one of his visits to Europe in the middle twenties, but it saw the light of day only after his death—serially in his own papers, the Urdu daily, *Bandemataram*, and in English and Hindi versions in *The People* and *The Punjab Kesari*, respectively.

Lalaji's quite frequent contributions to the Indian press to some extent made up for the ban on his books published in America. *The Modern review*, Ramananda Chatterjee's monthly

journal, at that time commanded high prestige, and Lalaji's thoughtful and educative writings very frequently appeared in this magazine. The Japan and U.S. studies appeared in the first instance in its pages. Quite frequently Lalaji wrote on Indian political topics too, a memorable instance being his controversy with Mahatma Gandhi on the place of ahimsa in politics which aroused great interest. The exchanges in this polemic pertained in part to a rather abstract principle. Of a very different nature were the outpourings of his heart when he first learnt about Punjab's martial law ordeal in 1919. Distance made his agony the more severe and his pen communicated it effectively, showing a patriot's lacerated heart to his fellow-countrymen.

Glimpses

“I DISDAINED TO do no work. I have cooked my food with my hands. I have washed my clothes with my hands. I have cleaned my room. I have at time gone with five cents of bread for the evening meal. Not that I had no money. There were thousands of public funds in my hands. But I would not spend one cent of it for myself.”— Lajpat Rai. There was certainly no ambassadorial pomp about it; but the simple austere life of the patriot-exile had a dignity of its own. When he saw that his stay would have to be a long one he made up his mind to have nothing to do with expensive hotels. Though later on his writings for the American press met part of his personal expenses, he foresaw that he would have to live for an undefined period on his savings. At times his house-keeping was very frugal indeed and even austere, so that he and his young compatriots who collected round him and lived and worked with him managed even the kitchen with the minimum of hired help. Dr. Hardiker affords us valuable glimpses of these New York days.

N.S. Hardiker gave up his medical studies to meet Lalaji's need of a full-time secretary. In reality he was something much more—a young disciple receiving instructions and training from his guru, assisting the guru in his work, and living with and looking after the guru and a devoted whole time companion.

Lajpat Rai scrupulously avoided using public money on his personal comfort, even when he was devoting his entire

time and energy to his country's cause, and doing little to each a living. The funds made available to him almost invariably came as personal offerings, not as donations to an institution's fund, and, were generally not earmarked for a specified purpose. Even so Lajpat Rai treated all the funds as trust money strictly to be used for the causes he espoused. Repeatedly during these years he wrote out a will and each time he gave full details of these funds held in trust by him. He kept one or two public men (like Pandit Malaviya) posted about these matters so that even if he died, the trust money would run no risk. It is typical of him to have sent a detailed account of these transactions to Mahatma Gandhi, on his return to India. His letter of July 9, 1921 (to Mahatma Gandhi) giving full details opens with a reference to what he had orally narrated to him nearly a year earlier:

“In August last when I was in Bombay I told you the story of certain moneys that had been entrusted to me by Indian nationalists in Japan and the U.S. what I had done with them...”

And before relating “the story of the funds” he makes it clear that “at the time I was abroad I used *my own money* for my personal expenses which included many items that were spent to further the interests of my country”.

When he arrived in New York in November 1914 (We learn from his letters), he had with him about Rs. 10,000 of his own. From time to time his eldest son was making remittances to him. Details of these are also set forth in the letter, and these amounted to Rs. 27,000. His earnings from contributions to the press and from speeches he estimates as amounting (in the course of four years) to Rs. 12,000. About Rs. 3,000 came as royalty on his books. The total of “my own money” thus came to “bout Rs, 52,000 which was more than sufficient for my personal expenses including the travelling that I did. I lived very frugally, getting most of my cloths (swadeshi) from home. My personal expenses never exceeded \$100

a month. At times they were much less. The rest was all spent on or for the cause of my country.”

A few more sentences from the same longish letter to Mahatma Gnadhi may be quoted here not as affording glimpses of the life Lajpat Rai himself was leading, but otherwise significant as showing his way of dealing with the funds he was holding in trust. After giving full details of the money received by him from different parties for different - purposes, and of how he disposed of or invested these funds, he says:

“It will be thus seen that the securities covered a larger amount than was due from me on count of trust moneys and interest. On the 23rd of December, 1919, when I was about to sail for India, I deposited the securities for safe custody with the Equitable Trust Co. of New York, and at the same time executed a new will and deposited it with Mr. John Quinn, 31, Nassau Street, New York, who is a friend of mine and a lawyer of great distinction and merit in New York. In this will I said that these securities did not belong to me and that in case of my death before reaching India or within six months of my reaching India, this property might be taken possession of by three trustees for political propaganda in the Punjab. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya was one of the trustees named. The first of the wills was executed in 1916 and the last in 1919. That is, a will to the effect has since been in existence all the time from 1916 to date.”

As ill luck would have it, “since 1919 the prices of the securities have considerably fallen”-some of them “gone down disastrously”. Although one investment was reported as having prospered, in the aggregate a substantial loss had resulted. The final upshot is given as under:

“The present value of all these securities may be roughly estimated at about 6,000 dollars or a little more, which at the present rate of exchange, will be represented by about 24,000 rupees. I have instructed the Equitable Trust Company and my son in New York to sell off these shares and remit the

proceeds to India, and I propose to dispose of the proceeds as follows:

Significantly, in this concluding part the last mentioned item is—"Rs. 1,000 for the Khilafat Fund".

The concluding paras of the letter may also be quoted here:

"I may add for your information that all stories about my making money in minutes in the United States are untrue. In fact I lost 700 dollars in a foolish transaction.

This statement is a complete story of my receipts and disbursements for the period I was in United States and Japan. It has been prepared from memory and might not be exact to annas and pies. You are at liberty to make any use of the statement you choose. I am sending a copy to Pandit Madan Malaviya for his information."

Political opinion in India was slow to recognise the worth of systematically working upon American opinion, and so the sort of work that Lajpat Rai started could not be expected to attract funds from home. (Tilak was the only one among the political leaders to appreciate it -as this narrative mentions in its proper place.) All the same, Lajpat Rai seems to have sent out an appeal or a "circular" sort of letter to some. We gather this from some of Mushir Hussain Kidwai's letter preserved in Lalaji's papers. (Mushir Hussain Kidwai of Gadya, Lucknow, kept on writing to Lalaji till the end) Nothing seems to have come out of the appeal, but the Pan-Islamist politician's letter makes interesting reading and may be found of somewhat unusual interest:

"Dear Friend,

I received your circular letter and read it with great interest throughout. As you probably know, I have been a Nationalist and also Pan-Islamist all my life. That is the reason why I have been greatly interested in your letter.

I agree with many of your suggestions as regards Indian politics and also as regards Islam in general.

There has been lack of organisation on our part and that

unfortunately still continues in both respects. But as you do not delude yourself of any good from any foreign intervention I also never did, only perhaps with this difference, that you do not seem to hope for anything from a military foreign intervention, I have no hopes from any kind of foreign intervention, and in foreign I include England and America and every other country except India itself.

The lesson which has been taught to us is that it is only force which counts, and we lack that at the present moment. That is the reason why we are looked down upon with contempt.

Senator Reed was not for wrong when he called us the chattel of Great Britain. To materialistic Europe the hoary civilisation of India is nothing, nor the unexcelled culture of Islam. Of the Eastern races, Europe respects only Japan, simply because Japan can wield the sword.

Holding such views you cannot blame me if I doubt whether incurring huge expenses in foreign countries on mere paper propaganda will be quite justifiable. But these are only my personal views. I will consult Indian leaders on your letter, and particularly Muslim leaders and later on will let you know what they think.

Thanking you once more for sending the letter to me”.

Next month the Pan-Islamist' friend sent Lajpat Rai some of his own literature, mainly a “confidential” copy of a book which “otherwise... is meant to be publicly published in Europe and America”, and in his letter sent separately made the following observations regarding Lajpat Rai's work:

“I am extremely thankful to you for the work you are doing for us in America. Please send me copies of your Indian political pamphlets and publications also. You know I am an Indian Nationalist as well as a Muslim Pan-Islamist. I have been both all my life, at one time the only person all over India who was both at the same time.

I was always against the policy of political or even educational separatism.

I have not yet received the papers you mention. When they do arrive, I will show them over to Messrs. Jinnah and Hassan Imam.”

Towards the end of 1916 he moved to New York as a better HQ for the work he had taken in hand. Here he had better library facilities for his, literary work; New York itself was a much more interesting study for him as the museum of mankind and it was a far better centre from which to direct the work of educating American opinion with regard to the Indian question-particularly after America became a belligerent. 1400 Broadway became the rallying centre for all interested in India's cause.

After having moved to New York for some time, Lalaji enjoyed the hospitality of Mr. Dave, a Gujarati Pearl merchant. A dyspeptic himself, Mr. Dave had a very skilful cook and to do justice to her dishes, guests with appreciative palates and good appetite were always welcome.

There were other difficulties created by the rigorous censorship, espionage, etc. Even before the American Government kept aloof from the war, British spies could harass those who were supposed to be unfriendly to Britain. Lajpat Rai seems to have received especial attention from them. An illustration is provided by Francis Hackett's account of one of Lajpat Rai's visits to the *New Republic* office which he wrote as part of his reminiscences for *The people's Lajpat Rai Number*:

“one day he came over to our office in 21st Street in just such excitement. He had in his hand an old little disc of the most innocent appearance; it was the microphone that the Secret Service had installed in the Broadway office building where he and his fellow exiles used to meet. Down in the basement, as they discovered, the Secret Service had planted a detective. Lajpat Rai told us with much humour of the deluge of Indian languages which had tumbled on the Unfortunate

head of the spy in the basement before the microphone was removed as a trophy. The sight of it, I believe, convinced the most grudging of us that Lajpat Rai's attraction for the Secret Service was as strong as he said."

Lalaji was occasionally writing for the British press, and Sidney Webb tried to put him wise about certain things in one of his letters:

"Dear Lajpat Rai,

I received your two letters. The present state of the mail service does not favour correspondence. I need hardly remind you that all letters are opened so that nothing private should be written. I will hand over what you sent to the editor of the journal named, but your contributions would be safer if they were addressed direct to him. I am afraid that in the country you mention, and indeed, in all others, the Government finds it necessary to take action which in ordinary time would be condemned as arbitrary and even illegal, but in a state of war, it is difficult to criticise either justly or with any effect. I do not pretend to approve of the actions of this or any other Government, but it is useless to complain. The very terrible oppression which is being suffered by many people in different parts of the world is very grave. I think it is well to remember, however, that time is only a passing phase, and those who suffer may perhaps be well advised to consider always what their position will be when peace comes. I am sure you will not misunderstand this letter, which does not indicate any lack of warm sympathy with those who have suffered wrong. What we have all to do now is to make the best of the terrible calamity which has come to the world, and in which all the evil tendencies of the past are temporarily accentuated. I hope the time may not be far distant when we may be able to meet again."

To put American political opinion right about India, British propaganda of course had to be refuted. But at times Lalaji found himself pitted against people who would not be known

as British agents. Christian missionaries of the sort who had resented Lalaji's setting up homes for orphans of famine ravaged areas that might otherwise be legitimate "booty" for not very scrupulous christianisers would be saviours of "heathens" and had also been upset by his work for the uplift of the outcastes—these people had never taken kindly to him. They also felt that the image of India's hoary civilisation that he presented to American audiences ran counter to their vested interests deriving sustenance from their usual picture of a benighted heathendom—the picture necessary to collect funds for their traffic. Lalaji used to narrate one particular encounter with one connected with the Christian College in Lahore. This gentleman once happened to be among Lajpat Rai's audience and got up to challenge some of his statistics. Not succeeding in this he said, "Don't you think, Mr. Rai, we love India as well as you do?" Quick came the reply: "If I loved my country the way you do her, I had better run to the nearest stream and drown myself!"

The mail brought letters sometimes from unexpected quarters and with odd requests. One such letter, preserved intact among his papers with its envelope obviously because of the amusement it afforded him, we copy below:

"Lajpat Rai,

My Dear Lajpat Rai,

My friend and benefactor Mr. P.V. Shukla has told me that you might help me in my desire and eagerness to progress spiritually. Any advice you give me or any instruction you will be kind enough to impart, will, I assure you, be appreciated and studied."

(Hindus as spiritual guides were in demand even in Hollywood.)

Amongst the minor surprises for me in Lalaji's papers was one showing Lalaji's having joined a class to learn Spanish. We know he never added a language to those he had acquired

in his school days, but the unsolved riddle is what made him think of acquiring Spanish. True, Spanish is an important world language, but it was hardly necessary for the work he was engaged on. Was it some Spanish speaking friend that persuaded him? If so, who? Spanish has far greater importance in Central and South America than in the United States. Did Lalaji at any stage think of contacts in those lands? We know Lalaji had without success pressed a suggestion on his revolutionist friends that they might divert a part of the funds they were raising or receiving towards creating settlements in South American States where Indian political refugees might seek asylum when necessary. Though those controlling the German money did not act up to his suggestion, did he himself in some other way or at least in his own mind keep on pursuing that idea? And did he think a knowledge of Spanish would be helpful in this? We do not know. But we cannot venture another guess appropriate to this Spanish class context. Last of all, a glimpse into the patriot exile's very own soul. A few sentences from a piece published in *Young India* anonymously and entitled *At the Mother's Feet*:

“Mother, what shall I offer you? I possess nothing worthy of being offered to you. I am humble, too humble. But I possess one thing which could be offered to you at any time and at any place. And that is my unbounded love for you. Oh Mother! I love; I have respect for you. Would you forgive me if I claim that I have been a devotee of yours? I know it is audacious and pretentious to say so. But you are the Goddess sanctifying my heart. You are aware of this and so, I have the faith that you will not deny me... Oh Motherland! You are the mother of such mothers and so your position is on top and supreme. So much so, you have derived to name ‘Jagat Mata’ (mother of Universe). Oh Mother India) It is only you whom I adore as so high.”

Altogether too sentimental-perhaps a bit childishly so, for people with mature ways and correct taste. And why was it

published anonymously? Just because his own objective assessment might have been somewhat akin. But exile made the pangs of separation express themselves in child language. As inner compulsion made him pour out his heart—and yet he could not publicly own that he was in such a state! It is only a patriot who had adored his country as a goddess and as Mother who could be so extremely sentimental. A poet's sentiment of equal intensity may find a very different sort of expression. But Lajpat Rai was not a poet. Even though to some this piece is bound to sound childish it undeniably had great force. I witnessed conclusive proof of this when I found Bhagat Singh intensely moved by it—he copies it out to read and re-read it, and to read it out to his comrades!

Having seen Lalaji at close range in many moods, after his return from his exile till the very end I cannot recollect anything in his speech or writing exactly in this over-sentimental strain. It was only in exile that this could happen to him. Emotional intensity of a high pitch could be seen when he was moved by the sight of misery—as for instance, when he saw the suffering of people dying helplessly, in large numbers, in the famine-ravaged areas, but of course the sentimentality of our *Young India* piece is a thing apart.

Reflections on Indian Situation

GERMANY WAS VANQUISHED and the Allies won their 5-year World War “to make the world safe for Democracy”. Indian soldiery had shown its fine fighting qualities in the various theatres of war in Europe and in Asia, and Indian resources had been lavishly drawn upon to assure victory for the Allies. Yet, ironically, her rulers enacted fresh repressive measures to keep the people down and to make their impressive measures to keep the people down and to make their imperialist sway safe. The story of the Rowlatt bills, of the agitation that followed under Gandhi’s leadership, the alien rulers’ reply to this in the form of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, and the emergence of Gandhi as the Indian people’s leader—all this is a familiar story. Thanks to the vicious blackout of news that the British were able to enforce, it was months before authentic and full accounts of Jallianwala could be available abroad. When Lajpat Rai heard the story of his people’s suffering and humiliations, his exile became unbearable for him. The concerned British authorities (in the U.S.) were unhelpful, and even after the end of the war his passage back home was being denied or delayed. So he poured out his heart in a “message” that he sent out for publication in the Indian press.

“Message to Punjabees” began:

“Dear Friends: How shall I tell you what I feel at the present moment about the situation in the Punjab? My heart is full though my tongue is dumb... I have tried my very best to be with you but I have failed. I do not wish to be a martyr but I long to be of use to you in your troubles”

Then follow his reflections on the situation as he can visualize it from a distance, and he asks his compatriots to “listen, weigh, decide and determine”. He complains in the bitterest terms not about the alien rulers, but about his own countrymen who have brought disgrace to the land of their birth.

“My heart is bitter, my soul is sore, I am filled with anger at the doings of the bureaucracy, but even more so at the conduct and behaviour of my own countrymen. It is the latter whom I hold responsible for all the sufferings and the shame that you have been afflicted with. I am told that the Punjab is dead and demoralized. All public life has ceased to function and everybody is afraid. Lawyers have refused to defend ‘political offenders’ and newspapers have ceased publication. Friendship, love, sympathy, comradeship and fellow-feeling have all disappeared. Everyone is for himself and the devil for the rest. I can picture the conditions. I saw something of that kind in 1907 and then in 1910. But this time the blow has been the hardest and consequently the knockout most complete.

He exhorted young Punjab to stand by the suffering leaders “bravely, nobly and in pure spirit”. His reflection led on to remarks about institutions: “Then we have amongst us many a person, truly noble and patriotic, wedded to institutions. Remember that institutions are only means to ends. They are for us and not we for them. A people morally high, alive to a sense of responsibility, self-sacrificing and ready to suffer for principle and for causes can raise institutions but a people morally degraded, dead to a sense of honour, devoid of a spirit of comradeship, of courtesy and loyalty to friends and co-workers, always ready to compromise and temporize, ready to change their principles in every emergency cannot in the long run serve institutions. Institutions cannot instill life, cannot be source of inspiration, unless led by men of life and spirit. Stick to your institutions. kept them, save them, stand by them in every way you can,

but never let your higher nature be drowned in the sea of anxiety to save them at the cost of everything else..... Do not let your morale and your spirit suffer for the sake of institutions and numbers and figures. Let your spirit stand high and undefiled and uncorrupted though lovely.”

What a pang it must have caused him to have to write these sentences, when we remember that some of these institutions he had served with the very best in him ever since he entered public life!

The reflections led on to remarks about sectarian organisations:

“Let your Hindu Sabhas and Muslim Leagues take care of themselves. They are to a great extent responsible for all your troubles. Avoid all such organisations. Their basis is false, their propaganda untrue, their example poisonous, and their company demoralizing. Give up all religious, credal and communal controversies at least for a time.”

This was the most sweeping condemnation of communal organisations that Lajpat Rai ever uttered. It reflected no doubt the broadening influences of his five years’ stay aboard.

In the American slogan style that he had to some extent adopted, he exhorted his countrymen to “organise, educate and agitate”. He summed up his gospel in a three-word *sutra*: *Behave like men*.

Paying a tribute to Gandhi he said that in his judgment “Mr. Gandhi is the best leader you have just now” and wanted his compatriots to imbibe his (Gandhi’s) spirit. In conclusion he again regretted his own absence from India.

“I am sorry I cannot help you directly, but I will do all that I can with tongue, pen and money even though I may not be with you in body. I will beg, borrow and steal for you. I will work for you and send you what I earn. Let it not be said of the Punjabees of the early 20th century that they were so poor to spirit that one blow crushed them completely and demoralised them irretrievably.”

The message was subscribed thus:

“One with You in Sorrow and Grief”

Things in the Punjab had begun to get not even before the European war started. O’Dwyerism was in full swing in the province. On May 26, 1913, Sir Michael O’Dwyer who had been absent from the province for about 15 years, having originally served there in minor capacities, returned as the head of the Government.

A most noteworthy outcome of the British rulers’ doings was the disillusionment of Gandhi who had, in his own way, been helping their war effort. Lajpat Rai duly noted this. What N.S. Hardiker gives us of Lalaji’s observations regarding Gandhi obviously pertains to this period.’

About Mahatma Gandhi, the Father of the Nation, he said: and when. For some time, one will have to keenly observe the programmes he undertakes. One will have to properly interpret every word he speaks or writes. It is better to wait and watch.”

Though remote from the scene, and largely dependent on the meagre Indian coverage in the American press, he must have very closely watched Gandhi’s doings, and by the time he sat down to write his “message” he clearly seems to have made a firm assessment of the new leader, whose earlier phase he had seen in the London encounter of the early war days.

He had been cut off too long. The “duration” was also now over. He must be back in the midst of his own people. He made what arrangements he could in regard in his own people. He made what arrangements he could in regard to the institutions he had started to America. But the British authorities blocked his way, and he had to struggle hard to get from them the necessary passport.

Francis Hackett throws an interesting sidelight on how the struggle for the passport at last came to an end:

“He had hard work getting his visa from the English pass-

port office in New York. His name, I have no doubt, was on a black list. His presence in the outer office was delayed as long as possible, since he seemed to have aroused the uncouth and violent hostility of one of those English door-men whose disposition Shakespeare has so caustically and imperishably described. Every time Lajpat Rai appeared, this lesser official tapped at his heels until he was frayed and exasperated. It was the British Empire in the mean occupation of pin pricking, and he could not help exploding about it to a group of friends at lunch. And then one of those things happened which, for him, always cleared the air. A lady was present at the lunch who had an ardent admirer in an English official. Furious at these miserable indignities to her friend Lajpat Rai, she called up her admirer and asked him to stop this nonsense. The persecution instantly ended and the visa was granted. Within a few weeks Lajpat Rai was in London, talking to the Secretary for India."

How utterly a stranger the unofficial ambassador after a full term in that capacity in United States, remained to 'diplomatic' ways!

Lajpat Rai arrived in Bombay on February, 20, 1920 after a long absence from home.

**The Last for Which
the First was Made**

As Congress President

FOR THE THIRD time the question confronted him-should he permit his name to be canvassed for the presidentship of the Indian National Congress? The old difficulty now no longer existed, he being anxious not to break with some of the Moderate leaders and the Moderates wanting somehow to keep him out. The Congress was fast becoming a mass movement. The Moderates now counted for little. The Amritsar session, even though it drew up no radical programme, had been too much of a mass show for their taste. With the death of Gokhale, Lajpat Rai's ties with that group which were more of personal esteem than of a common political outlook had snapped. He was not troubled by the 1907 compunction-whether the Moderates would find him unacceptable, whether his nomination would embarrass Gokhale. He need not worry, as in 1914, whether the Moderates would manipulate and manoeuvre, taking advantage of his absence abroad to smuggle in one of their own group for now a moderate could not possibly be foisted on the Congress. Now there was no fear that he would be treated as the nominee of one faction pitted against that of its rival.

But though the Moderates were fast becoming extinct in Congress politics, there were fresh problems to face. He had hardly been three weeks in India when Mahatma Gandhi published his first manifesto expounding a programme of non-co-operation, a programme to which the Khilafat leaders in consultation with Gandhi had already committed themselves. In a way non-co-operation admirably expressed his own feelings

and his own political philosophy; but some of the items of the programme drawn up by the Mahatma he certainly found it hard to endorse. And more important than any of the items was the question would the people respond to an appeal for a whirlwind mass campaign of the kind that Mahatma Gandhi envisaged? In other words, was the moment ripe? The individual items did not matter so much, but everything depended on a sound estimate of the practicable tempo. His own political affinities in the past put him very close to the Maharashtra and Bengal nationalists but Gandhi was a new force. For Gandhi's saintly personality, his courage, simplicity and truthfulness" he had the very highest regard, and he had begun to look upon him as the perfect type of leader for the Indian masses-as one who could in his personal living just be one of the masses and yet lead them prophet like even as Moses led his people out of Egypt. He had watched with the keenest interest Gandhi's emergence in south Africa and his activities on his return to his own land. He had seen him at work in England when the war broke out, and admitted his zeal and earnestness and organising talent, without altogether sharing his politics. Later on he had had controversy with him in public print over the doctrine that formed the very core of the Gandhian political philosophy-the doctrine of ahimsa. But in spite of these differences in outlook he had spoken in the very highest terms of Gandhi's personality and work. Especially since the Rowlatt Act days he had felt drawn more and more towards Gandhi and he had clearly indicated this in messages that he addressed to his countrymen before he left the United States. "He (Gandhi) is just the leader after our own heart." so he had said. Yet Gandhi's leadership had not so far been tested in any really big campaign that might justify his being accepted as the Field-Marshal for the war that he now offered to wage. And Gandhi seemed determined to know whether those more experienced than himself gave him their co operation or withheld it. There were indications also that if the veterans did not fall in, there might be tough time in store for them. The Choice certainly seemed no easy affair; and for one

who had been away from India for five years it was particularly difficult. Lajpat Rai stuck to his old avoidance of party grooves. It looked again as if a new set of rival grooves was forming. In the third week of April, Gandhi issued a manifesto, setting forth his programme as president of the Home Rule League, and Tilak issued another on behalf of his National Democratic Party. Lajpat Rai was in no hurry to seek an affiliation with the one or the other.

At the end of May 1920 the All-India Congress Committee met at Banaras and for the first time considered non-co-operation. Tilak though he happened to be in Banaras kept away from the meeting. The Banaras meeting decided that the programme be considered at Calcutta at a special session of the Indian National Congress*. In fact it had been understood at Amritsar that a special session would be required to consider the Government's decision on the report that was being prepared by the Hunter Committee on the Punjab happenings. This report had already been published-also that the sub-committee of the Indian National Congress-and the Government, had made known their decision. Meanwhile the peace treaty of Sevres had been signed and the Muslim misgivings about the Khilafat had come true. Both these combined-the Punjab and the Khilafat wrongs-had given rise to the non-co-operation programme. Since the Amritsar session, Rules under the Reforms Act had been framed and published and, in the opinion of many, these had taken away a good deal from the Montague Reforms which the Amritsar session had already declared 'unsatisfactory and disappointing.' All these happenings could be considered by a special session of the Indian National Congress, and a special session was called to meet in Calcutta in the first week of September 1920.

* A few days later an informal conference, but one meant to be representative of all parts of India, met at Allahabad especially to consider non-co-operation, Gandhi had practically made his pact with Mussalmans-and also made his non-co-operation programme a 'matter of conscience' with himself, so that whatever decisions the Congress took, he for one had burnt his boats for a retreat.

The Constitutional machinery of the Congress was soon set to work too choose the president for a session necessitated by a combination of extraordinary circumstances that confronted India and her National Congress. Lalaji's name suggested itself most naturally to many people, because such recognition of his great career of service and sacrifice had long been due, and because the people looked forward to what may be offered out of the rich experience he had garnered for them in his years of exile. Besides, this particular session was to consider the question of the Punjab wrongs more than anything else and the greatest Punjabi would therefore be a most appropriate choice for the presidential chair.

Other names too were proposed-amongst them that of Tilak Himself. On July 24 there was a pressing telegram from Motilal Nehru, President of the Congress for the year, saying: "Tilak definitely declined; none other more suitable than yourself." On July 27, Nehru wired again from Dumraon (Where the parties to a very big lawsuit kept him and C.R. Das busy as opposing counsel): "You are duly elected President Special Congress. Congratulations." But he still vacillated particularly because the election had revealed no unanimity, not even an absolute majority. But from no quarter was there opposition to his name of the sort that had been seen in 1907 or 1914. He took counsel with several friends and did not decide for yet a few days. Amongst his papers is a letter from Kalinath Ray, editor of the *Tribune*, Lahore, and another from his old friend Mul Raj-both dated July 28 and both strongly urging acceptance.

"The days of absolute majorities are drawing to a close," observed Ray, "and in the present case even persons wholly in favour of your election may have been deterred by considerations wholly irrelevant to your claims."

And Mul Raj pointed out that the President's job would be no sinecure and enumerated briefly what seemed to him the great forces "all determined to smash it (the Congress)' but,

characteristically advised, "It is perhaps, best in the words of our friend Lala Harikishan Lal to leave the matter to Higher Powers." And above all, the wishes of Bengal nationalists, for whom he had great regard and who after all were to be the hosts, were conveyed in a telegram dated July 29:

"Bengal majority entirely favours your election. Should accept-Chaudhary" (This was Sir Ashutoosh Chaudhary who had a short while earlier retired from the Calcutta High Court Bench and was already taking a conspicuous part in Congress doing in Calcutta.)

So he agreed to preside over the special session to be held in Calcutta in a month's time.

Tilak's death at this time (August 1, 1920) added to the complications. It plunged the whole country in mourning; but it meant a peculiar loss to those who still stood aloof from the new programme of non-co-operation. They felt sorely in need of his sound judgment and sturdy leadership. A leader of the Lokamanya's stature would at any time leave behind him a great void; at such a critical moment the void inevitably was amongst the most outstanding features of the political scene. Ever since their first meeting at a Congress session in Lahore, more than two decades earlier, Lajpat Rai had felt drawn towards Tilak. With the passage of time invisible bonds forged by the attraction exercised by a forceful personality had ever grown stronger. The staple of their political creed might well be identical, but in policies of the moment differences were bound now and then to arise, even very sharply, as happened at Surat in 1907. What was remarkable was that Tilak's fascination never dimmed even when these differences looked most acute. At Surat Lajpat Rai had refused to be a partisan and had lost caste with some of Tilak's followers; but Surat left behind an indelible print of a picture that remained a source of inspiration and that he ever recalled with joy—that of Tilak dominating the Surat scene. Tilak on his part showed large-heartedness and rare understanding by the way he continued to cooperate with Lalaji as if there never had been a hiatus. From no other Indian

leader had Lalaji received as much support during his stay in the United States as from Tilak. He had ever avoided formal Political affiliation; but his political creed undoubtedly was that of Tilak. Especially after Gokhale's death he had found himself very close to the Maharashtra group led by Tilak; but with the chief gone, would his ties of affection and loyalty to the Maharashtra group continue? Amongst the group itself the question of course arose as to who was to be its leader henceforth, and some were inclined to look outside Maharashtra and to turn to the Punjab leader whose angle in politics they knew had always been closer to that of their chief than that of any other Indian leader of the front rank. Soon after Tilak's death it was becoming apparent, however, that though Mahatma Gandhi insisted that if the Lokamanya had lived he would have blessed his movement, the Tilak group were not taking kindly to the new leader from Gujarat or to the new gospel that he was preaching. This added to Lajpat Rai's difficulties in committing himself definitely in regard to Gandhi and non-co-operation. He had still to watch things closely for some time.

Even in his presidential address at Calcutta he did not commit himself either for or against the non-co-operation programme and commended to future presidents the advantages of not taking sides in a certain type of controversy.

“The President should not try to anticipate the decision of the Congress on a question on which the country is so sharply divided as it is on the question before us ...

“I have my personal opinion on the question involved in the programme of non-co-operation but during the session of the Congress. I will conduct the proceedings without taking sides.”

(As president of a “special session”. It was easier for him to act up to this precept, for his tenure ended with the session itself.)

Although there was very little left—barely a month—when he made up his mind to accept the call, the presidential address was an affair of close on 50,000 words of sustained

vigour. It was a marathon performance and a masterly one in its own way. Manuscript oratory was never in his line, for he always needed a live and continuous communion with his audience. Luckily he had been endowed with a memory that solved the problem for him. He delivered his 50,000 words with but the scantiest reference to the printed text—a performance that amazed many among his audience.

Of this address an easy three-fourths was devoted to the Punjab's long tale of woe under the O'Dwyer regime, culminating to the Martial Law terror. All that had been agitating his inner being ever since the news of Punjab's humiliation and agony had reached him found vent in this address. He started with certain happenings during the early days of the O'Dwyer regime. He recalled what had come to his personal knowledge as a director of the Punjab National Bank when a banking crisis had arisen!

“While relief was promptly and freely given to European establishments, every Indian establishment was allowed to go under for want of timely aid—and presumably for ‘Moral effect’... The banking crisis made us realise, as perhaps we had never before realised, the absolute helplessness to which we had been reduced by the present system of government. We felt the situation keenly which had made it possible for the foreign capitalists to impose upon us not only their system but also their terms and their business, by the use of the very moneys that were realised from us by the government in the shape of revenues. When the Industrial Commission visited the Punjab, these and other facts were related to them by Lala Harikishan Lal in his evidence and on some Commissioner asking him if he realised what he was saying he replied by an emphatic ‘yes’”

In this strain he surveyed for his audience the entire O'Dwyer tenure to show that “it was all through a regime of terrorism and frightfulness and that it was only carried to its logical conclusion in the months of April and May 1919”. “In the Words used by Mr. Montagu (referring to General Dyer), the ideas

which Sir. Michael O'Dwyer had set before himself were 'terrorism, humiliation and subordination' and they reached their climax in the promulgation and administration of martial Law." He examined the Martial Law doings and gave it as his verdict that "of all the persons who had anything, to do with the introduction of Martial Law in the Punjab and with the events that preceded and followed it, sir Michael was the chief culprit" "Indeed I may venture to assert that no man in the whole history of British rule in India has done such a great disservice to the British Empire and has brought such disgrace on the good name of the British nation as Sir O'Dwyer."

He drew up a regular charge-sheet against O'Dwyer. Under a round dozen counts, charging him with deliberately intensifying the "divide-and-rule" policy, and fomenting communal and rural urban dissension, with having used his authority in illegal ways in the interest of his campaigns for recruitment and war funds, and for having sheltered those guilty of the "most brutal and diabolic deeds" as his tools in this work. Coming down to the culmination in the promulgation of Martial Law he accused O'Dwyer of having misled and deliberately deceived the Government of India to get their sanction, and with deliberate manipulation of the continuance of Martial Law. The charge-sheet further made him responsible for the promulgation of barbarous orders and infliction of barbarous punishments under the Martial law orders, which had his express or tacit consent. He further charged, him with "being as accessory after the event", the Jallianwala massacre, because of his unqualified approval of that massacre. The last count in the charge-sheet was about O'Dwyer's having extorted, on the eve of his exit from office, through 'illegal and near threats" addresses appreciative of his services-which addresses he had put to dishonest use in his own defence in England.

And he proceeded to marshal his evidence in support of the charges he made. The greater part of his address consisted of this evidence, for which he freely drew upon O'Dwyer's own utterances and upon his personal knowledge of certain happen-

ings so far as the early part of O'Dwyer's reign of terror was concerned. For the later period he found material in the way O'Dwyer carried on his recruiting and levying of 'voluntary' contributions for war funds; in the Czarist methods used in creating and handling 'conspiracy' cases, and above all, of course, the Hunter report and the Congress Sub-Committee's report on the Martial Law disorders, and two authentic source-books, were a rich, not easily exhaustible quarry.

O'Dwyer later on won a libel case against Sir Sankaran Nair and claimed to have vindicated himself. The fact is that Sir Sankaran was severely handicapped by his having been party to most of O'Dwyer's misdeeds, indirectly as a member of the Government of India. Simla had proved too weak for O'Dwyer, and the fact that Sir Sankaran had in a way become party before he threw up his job in disgust was enough for O'Dwyer's purposes. All that O'Dwyer's 'vindication' amounted to was that the Government of India had not stayed his hand. But if he were keen on a genuine vindication he should have filed a libel suit against the Congress Sub-Committee, or perhaps, even sought permission to sue the majority of the Hunter Committee, and above all he should have sued Lajpat Rai than whom nobody ever made more serious charges against him or in more emphatic words. Through Lalaji's address the Punjab the O'Dwyer had terrorised voiced her arraignment of his misdeeds and that arraignment was never challenged.

Besides the Punjab wrongs, the special session had to consider two other important questions-the Turkish Peace Treaty and the Rules Framed to work the Montagu Reforms. About the reforms he was rather brief but categorical, summing up his reaction to the scheme in one sentence.

"It was one of partial elation in 1918, it sank into one of depression in 1919, it changed almost into one of despair in 1920."

Whatever 'elation' might have been created in his mind when the joint report of the Secretary of State and the Viceroy

appeared vanished when the Report finally crystallised into a statute and now the Rules framed to work it had rendered that statute still more hopeless. He asked his people "to make up their minds that what they want is the whole loaf and not merely half of it. I could have no objection to take even the half, provided I was sure that the half offered was not selected by the bureaucracy. The bureaucracy is so adept in the art of mixing and cooking that the half which they propose to retain contains all the nourishment of the whole, leaving the other half worse than chaff. They manage it so skilfully that in the process of doughing they mix many a germ of disease in the half which they propose to let you have.

It will be a marvel of good fortune, if with all the distinctions of Hindus, Mussalmans, Sikhs and Christians, of urban and rural, of Brahmins and non-Brahmins, of residents and non-residents, of British subjects and those of Native States, of military and civil, made in the rules and regulations, we are still able to evolve a national spirit and with a will to live and prosper as a free nation."

On the Turkish treaty he spoke very strongly and very wisely. The merely religious aspect of the question did not detain him long.

In the words of Mr. Leland Buxton it does not in the least matter what professor. This or Doctor That thinks the Muslims ought to believe. What does matter is that the vast majority of Sunni Muslims do believe that the Sultan of Turkey is their Khalifa and the interests of Islam require him to be the head of a large, powerful and independent State. The Mohammedan law-books define the boundaries of such a State."

On the purely religious aspect the last word must be with the followers of the faith:

"We may then take it for granted that the interpretation put upon this matter by the Central Khilafat Committee is correct. It was a matter for our Mohammedan countryman to decide and they have decided it."

There could be no doubt the pledges given to the Indian Mussalmans by the British Prime Minister had been cast to the winds when the time for a peace settlement came; equally there could be no doubt that the Indian Muslims were gravely perturbed that the 'Turkish Peace Treaty violates the fundamentals of Islam, prevents from fulfilling their religious obligations, makes it impossible for them to maintain friendly relations with a nation which is the cause of it.'

On the political implications of the Peace Treaty and their indirect bearing on the problem of India (not merely for India's Mussalmans) he had a lot to say:

"But there are in my judgment other issues also involved in the Turkish Peace Treaty which deserve consideration. I maintain that any further extension of the British Empire in Asia is detrimental to the interests of India and fatal to the liberties of the human race. The British have frequently used Indian troops to conquer various parts of Asia and Africa. For a long time there was an unwritten law which every European Chancellory considered binding on itself that non-European troops were not to be used in any European war. This was abolished in the last war. African troops and Indian troops were used during and after the war by the Allies in Europe. Black troops were in occupation of Germany and some time stationed in Ireland. I do not, of course, resent the abolition of the invidious social bar. From that point of view, I many even welcome it, but surely it widens the scope of militarism."

The extended scope might one day realise possibilities not foreseen by many:

"If the British Imperialist has no scruples in using Indian troops in Egypt, Persia, Arabia, Mesopotamia, Syria and Central Asia, why will he have any in using the troops he raises in these countries against us? The Hindu-Muslim problem will become ten times more troublesome and dangerous, if this turns out to be true."

Conversely, "if the Muslim population of these countries continue to resist British attempts at occupation which they are likely to do for years, the Indian Army will be in constant requisition to fight their battles in those regions, which means a constant and never-ending drain on our resources, both human and economic."

He had no illusions that the League of nations was going to usher in a new comity of peoples—"Gentlemen, there is no such thing as the League of Nations. Great Britain and French are the League."

He spoke very firmly of the Khilafat wrong and he spoke with all the vigour that he could command of the Punjab wrong; but, as we have said, he kept quiet over the corollary of these two—the non-co-operation programme advocated by Mahatma Gandhi to get these wrongs redressed. Stalwarts were arrayed on both sides. Gandhi was supported by the Ali brother and a number of Muslim leaders, and eventually by the President of the Amritsar session of the Congress, Pandit Motilal Nehru, too. The Pandit wanted a small alteration—that the boycott of schools and courts be gradual—and having secured this, accepted the non-co-operation resolution which was moved by Gandhi himself. Bipin Chandra Pal moved an amendment and C.R. Das seconded it. In fact the task of leading the opposition to Gandhi's programme fell to Das's lot. Tilak was dead. Lajpat Rai was content to have a Speaker's neutrality. So Das led the Bengal and Maharashtra nationalists in opposing the programme. In the Subjects Committee the resolution was passed by a very narrow majority of seven votes; but in the plenary sitting Gandhi won the day convincingly. There was elaborate recording of votes. The pandal had to be cleared for the purpose and the telling operations, personally superintended by the President, lasted six hours. There were 1855 votes cast for Gandhi's resolution and 873 for the amendment. Lajpat Rai expressed some misgivings in the closing session; for the rest he returned from it as 'neutral' as he had gone to it.

With the principle of non-co-operation he was in hearty agreement; with the Calcutta programme too in a way, he had not much fault to find. It was at what might seem details that he jibbed, but he found it necessary to be very frank about his compunction. The titles, decorations, etc., received from the Government would not be given up by the 'loyalists', but it was all to the good that others should get out of this crowd and make its stock go down in public esteem. The people would lose nothing and gain a good deal, if a large number of practising lawyers boycotted the courts. He had himself no intention of ever setting up as a lawyer again, and from his experience he knew what mischief the British judicial system had done. To other critics of Gandhi's programme in the nationalist camp, the boycott of legislatures was the item which formed a most formidable obstacle, but this item had been originally suggested by Lajpat Rai himself and only then appropriated by Gandhi. He saw no reason to change his mind after the Calcutta session. The boycott of education he could not swallow easily. He had been a worker in the cause of national education, according to his lights, since he entered public life as a young man. In India and abroad he had devoted much time to a careful study of problems connected with national education. Few among the top leaders had given these problems half as much thought as he had expended on them. The result of his experience and his study he had embodied in *the Problem of National Education in India* the manuscript of which he had entrusted to an English publisher before he returned to India. He had had some bitter experience and disillusion from the institutions that he had devotedly helped in building up, and no one could feel more keenly the harm that a wrong system of education was inflicting on the people; still he could not hail the abolition of schooling for the young as a boon for the nation.

More than the merits of the different items of the programme, what worried him was the question-was the moment ripe? Mistakes would not matter if a whirlwind campaign

with real and determined backing from the masses materialised; the most perfect paper programme would be a fiasco if it did not catch the popular imagination. He preferred therefore to wait a while and watch how things developed. He did not plunge into the movement; but he would not criticise or condemn those who did. "I have my doubts about the country being with us in the self-denying ordinance.... I will do nothing to hinder the progress of the movement. I wish you every success, and if you gain the popular ear you will find in me an enthusiastic supporter." so Gandhi reported (after Tilak's death) Tilak's attitude towards non-co-operation. Lajpat Rai's attitude at the moment was no different. On one thing he was perfectly clear in his mind-the impossibility of 'Swaraj within a year'. He was not among the optimists who believed that if they worked the Calcutta programme for a year or so, Governmental machinery would be brought to a standstill and the British will to rule India be paralysed. The struggle for swaraj he well knew would have to be hard and long and the Calcutta programme could at best be a preparatory stage. 'Swaraj while you wait' may be a very catchy slogan for demagogues, but he did not think it wise for leaders to base national politics on such headlong optimism or on slogans that would raise hopes with little prospect of fulfilment.

Non-co-operation

BACK IN LAHORE he quietly settled down to the work he had taken in hand before the non-co-operation session. He worked for his Urdu daily, the *Bandemataram*, and he went ahead with the scheme he had already announced for starting the Tilak School of Politics. He went about raising funds for this School, and though he was not seducing students away from their colleges, he rather thought if some of them 'non-co-operated'. his School might get a better opportunity of giving them sound political training.

In the Punjab the non-co-operation campaign did not seem to start in right earnest. The Punjab Congress Committee did not show enough enthusiasm for it, and so an ad hoc non-co-operation committee was set up with Saif-ud-Din Kitchlew, K. Santanam, and Sardul Singh Caveeshar as secretaries. These and Rambhaji Dutt Chaudhary and Sarala Devi were the leading lights of non-co-operation. A few college students began to assist them to some extent a little later. Santhanam and Caveeshar tried hard to win over Lajpat Rai and Harkishan Lal for they knew without these stalwarts a real vigorous campaign in the Punjab was not likely. Harkishan Lal the inveterate scoffer would listen to their earnest pleading, and put them off with wit and banter which left them guessing whether in the end it was going to be 'yes' or 'no'. He would laugh all serious argument off, and 'yes' and 'no' alike seemed eternally in disgrace. Lajpat Rai wished well by the movement but seemed to hold himself back yet awhile.

Mahatma Gandhi came down to the Punjab; for a few days the college boys were greatly excited and their strikes made the managing bodies anxious; Large crowds also flocked to see the hear the Mahatma. But the visit did not succeed in winning over Lalaji for the non-co-operation campaign. After the Mahatma had gone, a vast majority of the students who had struck resumed their normal studies; just a handful chose to hold out. The net gains of his visit were small. The Punjab still seemed to be 'watching'-as Lalaji certainly was. Students-individually (or in small groups), not as a community-came along to seek Lalaji's advice whether they should non-co-operate. His usual replay would be that a student should weigh the pros and cons for himself and then decide. He did not attach much importance to the liberal education being given in the colleges but a student must discard it only if he felt strongly and had the will to be firm about it and not be just carried away in a moment of impulse. If he happened to be a medical or engineering student or the parent of such a student that sought his advice, he definitely discouraged the idea of non-co-operating. Mere graduates perhaps were useless, but the country needed many more doctors, engineers and technicians. To law students he wholeheartedly commended non-co-operation.

Occasionally those came to him who had definitely 'non-co-operated' with their college teaching. They approached him with misgivings, for he was not with the movement. But to their surprise they found him friendly and helpful with advice; and his Tilak School extended a welcome to them. He wanted them not to non-co-operate with *all* education. He knew that generally the students had non-co-operated against their parents' wishes. He provided a rented hostel for them and drew generously on the funds of the School in finding stipends to maintain them. To this School came non-co-operating students not merely from his own province; a few came from the U.P.' some from the C.P. and Maharashtra, one or two even from the far south.

So things dragged on till the regular annual session of the Congress was due at Nagpur. Now he must either actively join the movement or definitely keep away from it.

Even though in the Punjab the movement had not quite caught on, he could see there was good scope for it. In many of the other provinces the response had been a delightful surprise to him.

He was in a way being drawn towards the movement, and his neutral friendliness was not without its own humours. Alongside the Congress session an all-India students conference was being organised at Nagpur. He accepted the invitation to preside over this conference. It was the Calcutta situation over again: the Congress passing the non-co-operation resolution which he could not accept-with this difference that the organisers of the students conference knew beforehand what they were up to and also that it would not be quite the thing to suit their President!

He did not, however, shirk talking plainly to them on students's non-co-operation and he seemed to be thinking aloud;

“In my concluding address at the Special Congress at Calcutta, I said that I was opposed to that item of non-co-operation which related to the boycott of schools and colleges... Immediately after returning from the Congress, I addressed a public meeting at Lahore and I told the students and other that I would welcome the abolition of all the arts and law colleges. Whenever students approached me for advice, my advice was given under the following heads:

Law college: leave at once. Medical, engineering and technical colleges: don't leave. Arts college: consider the situation well.

We are all agreed that the present educational system does tend towards strengthening the bureaucracy and that we should do what little we can, considering our present political responsibilities in a way to establish institutions which might be free of official control both on the side of finance and on the side of education. But I do not know whether we are

agreed that national schools and colleges now established will be included to carry on the more important work of political propaganda in the country. We cannot afford to do that. We are out to obtain swaraj in the shortest time possible and we cannot give our time and energy to the solution of a problem which requires both time and money. I have therefore been saying to my friends that we shall not incur any responsibilities and we shall not undertake any duties which will in any way militate against the work we have in hand. If we do that we shall be frittering our energies in enterprises the results of which might not be achieved very soon. We cannot devise a national system of education without a national Government.... Having made that clear, I am perfectly willing to ask and encourage every student in any arts or law college to leave that college if he feels the call of duty, provided he has no delusions in his mind that provision is going to be made for his education, either locally, provincially or imperially by anybody. Provision may be made in some places as it is being made, but he should not expect it."

Answering the question what are those (non-co-operating) students to do?' he said:

"There is a great field for work-the work of propaganda, organising the nation, reviving industries, making an honourable living without being traitors to our country. Put your hand to any work you find handy.... I know.... that sentence of Mahatma Gandhi was ridiculed-that people ought to go and construct roads or work in factories.... As honest, independent, patriotic road-mender is infinitely superior to a Deputy Collector. I want the youth of the nation to go forth into the villages, factories, workshops and to work with their hands and feel the spirit of comradeship with fellow-workers who are waiting for their inspiration to come from you."

The students paid little heed to his words of warning and decided on unconditional 'boycott' of all 'Government and Government-aided colleges and colleges affiliated to the Government chartered Indian universities", and in the next reso-

lution looked “to the-national leaders to bring into existence in every province at an early date national colleges conducted on national lines affiliated to the national universities..... and to start educational institutions for general and industrial training of Indian youth....’

He had done his duty by sounding the note of warning and left the conference to take whatever decisions it thought fit, as he was needed in the many consultations of the Congress leaders.

In the Congress itself, luckily, a spirit of accommodation prevailed. During the preceding three months everyone had realised that Gandhi had to be accepted, and Gandhi too had realised how seriously handicapped he was if Lajpat Rai and C.R. Das did not join hands with him. He was anxious to enlist their support as they wished to see a united front. Both parties honestly and sincerely wanted unanimity and were willing enough not to be too exacting about matters of mere detail.

Lalaji’s objections to the educational boycott enjoined in the Calcutta resolution were paid heed to and a fresh formula was evolved to meet them. In the Calcutta resolution we read:

“Gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided or controlled by Government, and, in place of such schools and colleges, establishment of national schools and colleges in the various provinces.”

At Nagpur this had to be amplified—

“By calling upon the students of the age of 16 and over to withdraw without delay irrespective of consequences from institutions owned, aided or in any way controlled by Government, if they feel that it is against their conscience to continue in institutions which are dominated by a system of Government which the nation has solemnly resolved to bring to an end, and advising such students either to devote themselves to some special service in connection with the non-co-operation movement or to continue their education in national institutions;

By calling upon the trustees, managers and teachers of Government affiliated or aided schools and municipalities and local boards to help to nationalise them”

Lalaji was satisfied that the abolition of schooling had been averted, that a necessary distinction had been made between minors at school and grown-up lads at college, and the impossible responsibility for starting a system of national education not rashly undertaken, as it had seemed to be in the Calcutta resolution. If only medical and technical education could be expressly excepted, his stand would be completely endorsed, but this did not seem easily feasible; as he himself told the students' conference he knew medical and engineering education had been harnessed for imperial ends to British militarism. He was quite satisfied with what he got.

C.R. Das had been principally opposed to the boycott of legislatures. The general elections were over before the Nagpur session. Thanks to the boycott, more than 80 per cent of the voters had kept away from the polling booths. At Nagpur while talks for a compromise and a united front were afoot in the late hours of the night, C.R. Das told Muhammad Ali that he had decided to accept non-co-operation. Overjoyed, Muhammad Ali kissed the Bengal leader on the right cheek and the left. Next day, the principal resolution, reiterating the Calcutta resolve and laying down the programme of non-co-operation as finally amended after give and take, was moved by C.R. Das and seconded by Lajpat Rai. This was indeed a great triumph for Gandhi-and one the credit for which went to Gandhi and Das and Lajpat Rai alike. The official historian of the Congress has summed up the occasion with the aid of a somewhat grotesque image:

“In Calcutta.... the stool of the non-co-operation was resting on but one leg. At Nagpur it stood on all its four legs with perfect equipoise. Gandhi and Nehru, Das and Lalaji were all for it....”

Things had partly been shaped behind the scenes, for not all misgivings could be set at rest by clever phrasing. The Punjab

contingent as might be expected had discussions with him and this too helped. However, this happened, the chief thing was that the re-union had come and that it was not a mere patch-up but a hearty re-union.

Besides, the non-co-operation resolution, Lalaji was commissioned to second another one also which made an equally fundamental change since it affected the creed of the Congress. Ever since 1908 no one could enlist himself as a member of the Congress without first subscribing to the British Empire—a sort of oath of loyalty which the Moderates had prescribed, largely to keep out some of the extremists who openly stood for severance of the British connection. Now that the Moderates had gone out of the Congress, there was no reason for this legacy to continue. It went ill with the non-co-operation programme any way. The resolution removing this anomaly was moved by Gandhi and seconded by Lajpat Rai. The Congress creed was now changed to ‘Swaraj by all peaceful and legitimate means’, instead of ‘responsible Government within the British Empire by constitutional means’! There was a change in the goal, not merely in the means.

In a forceful speech Lalaji gave the history of the creed and explained how the Surat split had been partly caused by differences over this issue. Even then, he said, it had struck him as unreasonable that a man with Sri Aurobindo’s sincere and lofty patriotism should be kept out of the Congress.

“Not that I believed at that time we had either the means or the will to work for complete independence but I thought that none of us had the right to exclude from the deliberations of this Congress anybody who pitched his ideal so high.”

Replying to those who drew distinctions between ‘empire’ and ‘Commonwealth’, he asked if there was a British Commonwealth. “Not yet,” replied Holford Knight, one of the three fraternal delegates from British Labour. Talking of the pledges of British statemen, Lalaji said:

“We may place every faith in the words of an English gentle-

man but we can no longer place any faith in the words of British statesmen.”

He passed in review the big names of the British cabinet—Lloyd George, Curzon, Winston Churchill, Milner and Montagu—and said, “Point out to me a single member of the present British cabinet whose words carry greater weight than those of a grocer.” He made it clear that the change in creed did not necessarily mean a severance of the British connection, but it did mean that if this connection continued, it would do so only if Indians wanted it of their free choice and on terms acceptable to them.

Referring to the change in the ‘means’ he said:

“I am one of those who believe that every nation has, when the occasion arises, the inherent right of armed rebellion against a repressive autocratic government but I do not believe we have either the means or even the will for such an armed rebellion at the present time. I will not discuss the future possibilities but I want that my countrymen should not have any misconception or misgivings about the fact that the leaders of the National Congress do not want them to resort to violence for the attainment of any of the objects which have been laid before them.”

Lalaji well knew the heavy responsibilities that his acceptance of non-co-operation meant for him. The Punjab would have to pull its weight and that was going to be his exclusive responsibility more or less, besides his sharing the all-India responsibility with his colleagues. There was a strenuous time ahead, but this was strenuous work of the sort that filled him with joy:

He got busy getting things right in the Punjab as soon as he returned from the Nagpur session. One of the first things he did was to arrange a conference of college students, for it was from them he was to recruit his workers for the ‘drive’ that he was going to launch. As one of the student workers in touch with him, and as one who had already responded to the

call, I was sent for and instructed to make arrangements for a conference of Punjab students.

A reception committee was formed which duly elected its office-bearers (I myself working as secretary of this committee and of the conference). For president Lalaji suggested Dr. S.D. Kitchlew. Lahore district was proclaimed and the conference was shifted to Gujranwala. Lalaji himself, of course, addressed the students and the clarion call was sounded. In the press he launched a vigorous campaign and did not fight shy of attacking the D.A.-V. College authorities. For the first and last time he had a controversy in public print with his old friend and colleague, Mahatma Hans Raj, and once in it, he of course made a neat job of it.

The colleges did not close down; but he got the student workers he needed to carry the message to the villages. The students started, in keeping with the practice of the non-co-operation days, and ashram and after a brief preparatory stay there marched out in khadi clothes to the countryside in all directions.

The Congress Working Committee had drawn up a heavy programme of collecting a crore of rupees for the Tilak Swaraj Fund and of enrolling one crore members for the Congress, Lalaji's Punjab must not be found wanting. His student army acquitted itself creditably. He had also been able to increase considerably the number of non-co-operating lawyers. There was a unique upsurge of patriotic fervour. It looked as if it would simply march from strength to strength, engulfing and sweeping away all that stood in its way. Great enthusiasm was seen at a provincial conference at Rawalpindi held in March and there were any number of district and other regional conferences. Where everything had seemed indifferent and inert a few months before, all was now galvanized and quick with new and vital sensation.

In Lahore itself Lalaji ran his candidates in the municipal elections and captured for the Congress almost all the Hindu seats with very enthusiastic majorities against old-timers who

had believed themselves to be unchallengeable. The Congress team in the Lahore municipality became a most inconvenient affair for the bureaucracy. The example of Lahore was followed elsewhere too,

The students who had come out of the colleges brought in their train some rather awkward problems. Village work was all right for a while, but after that they wanted to complete their education. They insisted on arrangements for their studies. A Kaumi Mahavidyalaya was improvised to educate the college boys who on completing their studies would get their degrees from a Kaumi Vidyapith of which Lalaji was made the chancellor. A school department with stress on handicrafts was also started. (Lalaji's grandson-the only child of his daughter-was amongst the first to join the school.) Some schools sprang up at other centres too. Lalaji's own school at Jagraon, the Radhakishan High School, was 'nationalised'-and in due course depleted of students.

All these problems meant hard work; and the hardest of all was the raising of the crore for the Tilak Swaraj Fund. Here the Punjab must find its quota, happen what may.

For this Lalaji toured about incessantly, often visiting and addressing half a dozen out-of-the-way townships in a day and levying and collecting the quota from each one. Nine lakhs for the Punjab was a large amount, but Lalaji was a beggar on a grand scale and he did not rest till he had raised this amount.

Lalaji worked with the speed of a whirlwind. The normal tasks of course could not be neglected-his responsibilities as editor of the foremost daily of the Punjab and various other routine jobs, big and small. There were besides frequent calls from outside the Punjab. The other provinces had claims on him as one of the half a dozen national leaders, 'and the National Working Committee had to meet at short intervals, and it met all over India. In one of these tours the Ali brothers accompanied him, somewhere the laundry got mixed and a

huge *Salwar* of the Big brother which when fully opened out looked more like a canopy than a garment long remained a souvenir of that tour-and of the then prevailing intimate collaboration' between Hindu and Muslim leaders.

Opera Bouffe

BY THE BEGINNING of November 1921 the parties really seemed to be spoiling for a quick, decisive round in the fight. "Swaraj within a year" had been promised by the leader of the movement and the promise broadcast in every nook and corner by the local leaders and volunteers. The year was drawing to a close. Something really drastic if not desperate was 'indicated'. Civil disobedience seemed very much in the air; the chief concern of Gandhi and the Congress Working Committee was to settle the details of the opening campaign.

Nor did Lord Reading mean to go on with the comparatively mild measures to combat open sedition. Attempts of the mediators (like Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and Sir Sankaran Nair) had failed: the interviews of Lord Reading with Gandhi and the other Congress leaders had yielded no results. Lord Reading had been particularly anxious that the Duke of Connaught when he visited India should not be boycotted. (Originally the Prince of Wales was to have come out; but the plans where changed and the Duke was made to deputise.) The Viceroy did not strike with full force earlier because he wanted to smooth things over for the Duke's visit. But by now it was obvious the parties could not come to an agreement. The Congress leaders, in right earnest about their civil disobedience, seemed determined to give the Duke the heartiest boycott they were capable of. The sole reason for Lord Reading's not stiffening further the repressive policy already launched by him and made conspicuous with the imprisonment of the

Ali brothers had therefore vanished. On both sides things clearly seemed to be rushing towards a crisis.

An unforeseen complication arose in the shape of rioting in Bombay. On November 17 mob fury vented itself, mostly against certain Parsees opposed to the boycott. The peaceful atmosphere that the leaders of non-co-operation had demanded of the people was rudely disturbed. Gandhi was himself present in Bombay when the trouble started. Much upset over the happenings, he started a fast. Lalaji and the other important leaders of the movement rushed to his side. Normal conditions in Bombay were soon restored. The Mahatma was persuaded to give up the fast. The Working Committee of the Congress considered the situation; and to stress the importance of discipline and non-violence it amended to some extent its policy regarding civil disobedience. Provincial Congress Committees were told that they would not be permitted to launch mass campaigns without previous reference to the Working Committee. The volunteers' pledge was also tightened to curb indiscipline.

But this meant no slackening of the pace. On the contrary there was every indication of a firm resolve to go ahead full steam. That was how both parties read the situation and each went on with its plans. When word went round for 'firmness'. The Punjab officials of course could always be depended on.

Lajpat Rai returned to Lahore after the Bombay decisions. His political antennae could sense the changed temper of the officials of his province. Him too the Bombay happenings had given food for thought. The want of discipline, and the strange, unexpected and allergic reactions to it of the leader of the movement had revealed a chink in the satyagraha armour. Failure would not matter so much; but would the leader order retreat and surrender if like happenings recurred? The doubts arose and for the moment were quelled; things had shaped quite satisfactorily at the Working Committee. At Bombay he also made a mental note that some of the trusted lieutenants

were not always as clean as one would expect them to be, and he wondered whether the chief could really be altogether innocently unaware.

Lalaji got busy with the implementing of the Bombay decisions wholeheartedly in his own province. To explain things fully to his team he called a meeting of his Provincial Congress Committee. But seeing the changed temper of the officials, he rather sensed that he might not be permitted to work as a free man very long. Should he march to prison at the head of a defiant vanguard, or would it be better for the proper direction of the movement if he remained available to it yet awhile? Yet he could not be sure of being spared even for a short while, when law and order aggressively reached out its numerous tentacles. He felt it would be better to acquaint the chief with the somewhat changed situation and to ascertain his wishes. Normal channels of communication, post and telegraph, because of the vagaries of censorship, might not be dependable and prompt. I was sent as special messenger to Sabarmati. It was arranged that at least on one point Mahatma Gandhi's wishes were to be sent on by telegram whether Lalaji should seek arrest immediately or whether he had rather keep back for some time. To dodge the censor a sort of commercial disguise was to be adopted for the message that would give it a completely innocuous look-it would ostensibly relate only to a transaction in gram or cotton. It was to be addressed not to Lalaji but to a fictitious businessman-perhaps Jaswant Rai.

Off I went Sabarmat-to find, on reaching there, that the Mahatma had gone a few hours earlier to Surat on his way to Bardoli to supervise the preparations afoot there for launching the campaign of civil disobedience. Mrs. Gandhi's hospitality gave me my first taste of *bhakhari* (the wheat cake of Gujarat) which I enjoyed with a chutney-like relish that went very well with it, before I left for Surat. There I met the Mahatma at the Anavil Ashram, and delivered my message. He listened patiently and then gave me his opinion and

instructions. At the end he asked me if I had followed him aright and if he could be sure that his message would be conveyed faithfully to my chief. I replied, "Yes," But he was too methodical to leave things at that. He asked me to write out the gist of our conversation. I did so. He was satisfied with my report and passed it, and one of his secretaries (I believe his own son Devadas) copied it out for his own files. In my draft the Mahatma made a single emendation; at a suitable place he added these seven words which summed up the most important part of his message—"Lalaji must neither seek nor avoid arrest." His point was that the 'seeking' at that stage might be necessary or helpful to the new leaders of the movement who still had to undergo the test and to get their credentials. Lalaji needed no such credentials. Before I took my leave, the Mahatma invited me to accompany him to see for myself how Bardoli was preparing for the grim ordeal of mass civil disobedience. Then talk drifted to the wider and bigger issues that were facing the country and, thinking aloud, the Mahatma remarked that already he was wondering whether civil disobedience (or was it satyagraha?) could not be given a benign 'Vishnu' form, for, as he said, what he had hitherto visualised had a grim 'Rudra' aspect. I sought a clarification but had to be content with the merest glimpse already afforded me, for the Mahatma said he was himself awaiting clarification; the idea had only hazily dawned on him and if at all it clarified, it would of course find a place in the columns of *Young India*.

The invitation to Bardoli I had to decline, for I did not feel sure how many days Lalaji would be allowed to remain a free man, and if possible I wanted to be with him before they put him under arrest. In accordance with the code we had agreed upon, I handed in a produce market message at the Surat Telegraph office and set out on the return journey. As I got down at Delhi where I had to change my train and look up Dr. M.A. Ansari, I could hear the newaboy shouting "Lala Lajpat Rai arrested".

So he had gone in for the 'transaction' in spite of my telegram advising rather against it for the moment.

Trouble arose on December 2, 1921 over the meeting of the Provincial Congress Committee that he had called for the next day. The authorities seemed to be fishing for a pretext; this might be as good as any. The Seditious Meetings Act of 1908—a statute-book souvenir of his 1907 deportation—was invoked and Lahore proclaimed. (In fact they had proclaimed three whole districts—Lahore, Amritsar and Shiekhupura.) They had also declared the volunteer organisation unlawful.

The Congress in the Punjab took up the challenge. A meeting of the Executive Council of the Provincial Congress Committee, on November 27, decided upon a reorganisation of their Congress and Khilafat volunteers on the basis of instructions that the National Working Committee had framed at its Bombay meeting. To eliminate all risks of indiscipline and violence it was also decided that only very small meetings be held and the attendance as a rule so controlled as not to let in anyone who was not willing to abide by the Congress discipline of non-violence or not prepared to go to prison.

Major Ferrar, the Deputy Commissioner, got busy, fishing (like Aesop's Wolf, who had a famous dialogue with the Lamb before eating it up) for a pretext. Of a disturbance of public peace there could be no reasonable apprehension, as it was going to be strictly a committee meeting. There had been no such disturbance or excitement in the past; and this time added precautions were being taken by the organisers to enforce perfect orderliness. But that could no more help the organisers than the fact of its drinking downstream, and of its not having been born a year earlier could help the Lamb in the fable.

A day before the meeting the Aesop dialogue reopened in the form of a letter from the Deputy Commissioner. It seemed he looked upon the committee meeting to be held in the committee's office behind closed doors, with nobody except the members attending it, as a 'public meeting' within the

meaning of the Seditious Meetings Act. The witch dance had already started around the cauldron of repression, and word gone round that fair was foul and foul fair; so this committee meeting with all non-members strictly excluded was to be construed as a public meeting, whilst public places where King's justice was being publicly dispensed-for British law insists it cannot be dispensed privately-were being treated as private. Some Congress volunteers in the Punjab were about this time prosecuted for 'trespass' for venturing inside a court of law when a political case was being heard!

The Deputy Commissioner's letter was promptly acknowledged by the Congress Secretary. Some further correspondence followed the next morning. The Deputy Commissioner wanted an assurance that only the items on the agenda paper already circulated would be taken up. He raised other like issues also, all wanting in sense and relevance but quite intelligible if one kept in mind the Aesop context.

What authority laid down the Congress could not accept without stultifying itself. Lalaji's Working Committee decided to go on with its meeting and not to heed the magisterial objections. The consequences of this defiance of course were plain. Lalaji arranged to send word beforehand to the members that they should assemble a good while ahead of the scheduled hour so that they might transact their business before being put under arrest. The 'business' was given a perfect cut and -dried shape so that no delay might occur. Next morning his letter to Mahatma Gandhi and his message to his countrymen were both ready in anticipation of his arrest.

The final order, definitely prohibiting the meeting under the Seditious Meetings Act, was received a short while before 2 p.m. when the meeting was actually in progress. Before the clock struck two the committee had finished the entire business, except telling the Magistrate to his face what they thought of his orders and earning arrest thereby. They were not kept waiting long.

“I declare this meeting to be a public meeting. I order you to disperse,” so spoke British authority in the person of major Ferrar, the Deputy Commissioner, as soon as he arrived on the scene supported by the Senior Superintendent of Police and one or two other European police officials and a posse of constables.

“I declare that this is not a public meeting, that your order is illegal and that I refuse to disperse the meeting.” in its authentic stern tone replied Moral authority, in the person of Lajpat Rai, president of the interdicted meeting.

The police were asked to arrest Lajpat Rai and to break up the meeting with force. All attending the meeting were of course prepared for arrest; but the authorities preferred to pick and choose. So they took away just three others-K. Santanam (General Secretary to the Provincial Congress Committee). Malik Lal Khan (Secretary of the Punjab Khilafat Committee, but in no way more intimately connected with the meeting than other members of the Provincial Congress Committee) and Doctor Gopi Chand Bhargave (already quite a popular leader and as a Municipal Commissioner known to Major Ferrar as an inconvenient person).

The prisoners were driven neither to a police station, nor a prison, nor a court-the usual places to which people are taken when arrested. They were taken instead to the Government Telegraph Office. Armed police and military were in attendance there. After they had been there the best part of three hours, a magistrate remanded them to the custody of the police; only then were they removed to the lock-up in the Central Jail. Did Lajpat Rai's arrest once again put the authorities into the 1907 mood of panic and were they once again expecting an upheaval to follow this event? There could be no other explanation for this avoidance of the routine places and for keeping Lajpat Rai in the semi-fortified Telegraph Office.

No upheaval followed; no mob violence-none need have been apprehended. But that did not end the worry of the authorities. They had made the arrests all right, but now

they began to scratch their heads to think out of plausible justification. That, they were not finding this an easy job became apparent from the way the prosecution again and again asked for an adjournment. Though the facts of the case were too simple to necessitate any elaborate investigation, the Court accommodated the police each time. As Lajpat Rai himself said in a statement he wrote out in the course of a trial, whose story we shall be telling a little later:

“This was pre-eminently a case in which no remand was necessary or proper. The district Magistrate had proceeded under the Seditious Meetings Act. He had arrested us personally and if the Act applied we were guilty. The case could be disposed of in about an hour’s time.”

Doubts about the legality of the whole thing had however arisen soon after the arrest and Lajpat Rai had noticed prolonged confabulations going on at the Government Telegraph Office itself. “The Magistrate who afterwards tried us was all the time present on the premises and for aught we know might have taken part in the consultations.” ‘Shifting grounds’ had also started right at the Telegraphs office. The District Magistrate had been confronting them all the time with the Seditious Meetings Act; but now doubts having arisen about its applicability to a committee meeting, the magistrate who remanded the accused to the custody of the police informed them that they would be proceeded against under Section 145 of the Indian Penal Code and that if they cared they could be enlarged on bail. The magistrate granted a liberal two-week remand for the prosecution to be ready with their case.

On December 7, 1921 they were taken to court and another remand was sanctioned.

“Evidently, the authorities were not yet quite sure of their law, and time was needed to hunt up the law in connection with the case. The District Magistrate and the police were not sure if they had got hold of a right section of the Criminal Law to charge us with. So we were locked up in jail and the business of hunting up the law proceeded. On the 13th

December, as soon as we entered the court room, we were told that a complaint under Section 6 of Act 10 of 1911 had been put in by the District Magistrate as complainant. The Magistrate intimated that he would first proceed with the complaint although this was a summons case and the other a warrant case. To my mind it is clear that all this had been done after consultation between the law officer of the Crown, the District Magistrate and possibly the trying Magistrate. the prosecution thus took 9 days to make up their mind as to the law applicable to the case, and as they were not prepared to take any chances they decided to have two strings to their bow, so that the Magistrate could give heavy sentences.”

These delays seemed to go on interminably. The prosecution at last presented their case on December 19; on the 21st Lalaji was invited to put in his statement; the next day the Government Advocate ‘argued’ and the magistrate reserved his orders till January 4, 1922. Actually these were pronounced on the 7th, for five weeks they had kept him in prison merely because they had themselves been inefficient and brainless.

When he framed the charge the magistrate had asked each of the accused whether he pleaded ‘guilty’ or ‘not guilty’ ‘Plead nothing’ had been the reply in conformity, with the vogue of the non-co-operation days, Lalaji said he did not recognise the authority of the government or of its law courts and did not participate in the trial. No counsel represented him, no witnesses were produced by him and none of the prosecution witnesses were cross-examined by him. In conformity again with the non-co-operation vogue Lalaji made a brief statement at the close of the trial. The statement recalled that in his first two letters addressed to the Provincial Congress Committee Major Ferrar had issued no orders prohibiting the meeting; that these as well as his final letter prohibiting the meeting had been sent by major Ferrar as Deputy Commissioner of Lahore and not as District Magistrate and that as Deputy Commissioner he had nothing to do with the Seditious Meetings Act; that the meeting at any rate had not been open

to the "public or any section of the public"-notice was issued only to the members of the Provincial Congress Committee who are elected representatives of the different Congress Committees in the Province, plus a few co-opted members-co-opted by names." The Deputy Commissioner had been informed of this fact, (Precautions were taken even to exclude the clerks and the chaprasis of the office.) And when Major Ferrar arrived at the meeting he did not tell them that they were in any way an unlawful assembly or that he had prohibited the meetings; he had merely bawled out "I declare this meeting to be a public meeting. I order you to disperse"-which made neither sense nor law.

"I want to take no advantage of any technical plea. My contention is that the whole proceedings from beginning to end were lawless, and it is another reason why I do not recognise this Government-I do not admit it has been constituted by law."

Here the Government Advocate, Mr. Herbert, objected that the accused was not starting a fact and the reply came. "It is a fact, Mr. Herbert. This Government in brute force personified by Major Ferrar" Mr. Herbert persisting in his objection, the court refused to record this part of the statement. "You have asked me to make a statement and it is not my business to see whether you put it down or not." said the accused non-chalantly, and immediately added:

"I have practised for 40 years as a lawyer, but I have not been able to find any law wherein an accused can be obstructed in his statement by a Magistrate."

Magistrate. I am not going to hear such a statement.

L.R. Well then I sit down under protest.

L R. Will you please make a note that you disallowed certain statements? Please also note down the fact....

Magistrate. If it is a fact?

L.R. Yes, that no one excepting myself made any remarks or made any speech in the meeting I take the whole

responsibility of that meeting upon myself of having convened it, having presided over and having conducted it.”

On January 7, 1922 the Magistrate pronounced his judgment and Lalaji was awarded a year's hard labour under Section 115 and 6 months' confinement and a fine of R.s. 500 under the other charge.

The arrest, the trial the sentence were all apiece-and the scandal attracted attention not only in India but in Britain as well. The invoking of the Seditious Meetings Act for stopping routine committee meetings had itself been sufficiently novel to attract attention of the more knowledgeable British journals, like the *Manchester Guardian* and *The Nation*, and they had commented on this even before the trial. *The Nation* describing Lalaji as “Mr. Gandhi's strongest ally in North-Western India.... who is more widely known in England and America than any Indian Nationalist of the time.” had noted that “he was arrested on account of a meeting of the Provincial Congress committee described as a part of the routine business preliminary to the annual assembly of the National Congress in Christmas week.”

“Presumably,” *the Nation* comment continued, “Mr. Lajpat Rai will be given a regular trial which will be a new experience for a man whose deportation under an old ordinance of the East India Company provoked a storm in India and in Parliament fourteen years ago. India does not contain another man whose personality and history make so damaging an indictment of bureaucratic Government. He is not, like Gandhi, “a man of unscrupulous theory’-as Mrs. Browning said of Mazzini. He is by temperament a liberal politician; by profession a lawyer; by calling a philanthropist and educational reformer, with a long record of self-sacrificing social service. And the reason why today he is a non-co-operator and looked upon by Simla as a danger second only to Gandhi instead of being in his proper place as a responsible Minister of the Punjab

Government is known to every educated Indian from Cape Comorin to the Khyber.”

He did get a ‘regular’ trial and it had been not merely a ‘new’ experience but a novel one and one that scandalized even the Government. They intervened forthwith and the sentence under Section 145 L.P.C. was remitted. For the conviction under the other count too they took counsel with their law officers, and before January was out they had passed orders remitting sentences, under Section 104 of the Criminal Procedure Code. An official communique was also issued admitting that meetings of the sort for which Lajpat Rai and his companions had been arrested were not public meetings and lay outside the pule of the Seditious Meetings Act.

Thus were four of His Majesty’s subjects arrested, prosecuted, sentenced and kept in prison for full 59 days before the Punjab Government could discover that all that its agents had been doing had been illegal!

Even while seeking to set right the blundering of its magistrates the Punjab Government had no intention of restoring Lajpat Rai to liberty. His three companions were set free but not he. After the midnight of January 30 he was awakened and taken to the Superintendent’s office and “released.” As he stepped out of the prison gate he was confronted with another “warrant” that mocked at the liberty granted him only five minutes earlier. This document was again signed by Major M.I. Ferrar, the District Magistrate, and read

Whereas, Lala Lajpat Rai stands charged with an offence under Section 7 Act X of 1911 and Section 17 Act XIV of 1908, you are hereby directed to arrest him and to produce him before me at the Central Jail on the 31st January.

(Sd.) M.L. Ferrar,
District Magistrate,
Lahore

30th January, 1922

The prison gate opened again to re-admit him. He and his bedding and other baggage were back in the cell that had been

his abode now for two months. No suffragette under the cat and mouse acts had ever regained and re-lost freedom so quickly and in such dark secrecy. The world heard next day of his having been arrested again at dead of night without any earlier having known of his being a free man.

The attempt to put the illegalities right was rendered utterly futile by the re-arrest. In fact there was a bumper crop of illegalities now, where there had been only two or three before. For one thing, the prosecution for the same offence over again was opposed to all law, for technically his previous illegal conviction still stood. In ordering his release the Government had remitted the sentence under Section 104 of the Criminal Procedure code but (out of a false regard for prestige) not annulled the conviction. This half measure gave rise to several questions which it was not convenient for the Government to face. Here is the volley of questions that Lalaji fired through a statement he sent out afterwards:

“(a) Was the Punjab Government a party to these arrest and prosecutions? Did they authorise or approve of them?

(b) If so, did they consult their law officers before they sanctioned these prosecutions?

(c) If they did, and the latter approved of these prosecutions why did they so hastily remit the sentence under Section 145, Indian Penal Code? Was this remission an act of clemency or because they found that the conviction was illegal? If the latter, why did they not instruct the Government Advocate to withdraw the case before it reached the stage of judgment? If it was only an act of clemency, why was it not stated in the communique?

(d) If they did not consult their law officers, who was responsible for this omission? The Government or the District Magistrate?

(e) If the District Magistrate, what steps have the Government taken to express their displeasure at this colossal

ignorance of law on the part of the District Magistrate and the trying Magistrate?

(f) What have they done to compensate the accused for all this illegal detention with its attendant trouble, worry and expense?

(g) What steps have the Government taken to apologize and compensate those against whom force was used on the 3rd of December while dispersing the meeting of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee?

Under (e) we find that the Magistrate who convicted us has been promoted and the District Magistrate is still in charge of the Lahore District.

Under (f) I was re-arrested within only five minutes of my release on charges based on the same document which was the basis of my previous conviction under Section 145, Indian Penal Code. It should be understood that technically both these convictions stand and can be used against the accused whenever the Government chooses to do so."

The trying Magistrate-one G.H. Harris, a first-class magistrate-framed the charge against him on February 13-

"That you, on or about the 3rd day of December 1921, at Lahore, did issue a manifesto as President of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee, which manifesto was published in the *Tribune* of the 6th December, 1921, in which manifesto you exhorted every Congress member; who was not afraid of the consequences, to enrol himself in the National Volunteers Association that had been declared to be unlawful by Government, and thereby committed an offence punishable under Section 17 (1) of the Criminal Law Amendment Act XIV of 1908 read with Section 117, Indian Penal Code, and within my cognizance."

Once again a fit of legal uneasiness assailed the minds of the prosecution and the court. By now the District Magistrate had already played a good deal of hanky-panky with the law. His illegalities till this stage in the new case were thus summed

up Lajpat Rai in two paragraphs of the statement from which we have already quoted and of which we shall speak again presently:

“Out of these two offences, one was a summons case and bailable. The other would also be a summons case and bailable if the offence was under clause (1), Section 17, Act 14 of 1908, but the warrant conveniently omitted to mention the clause. On the 31st I was produced before the District Magistrate and he sanctioned a remand under Section 167, Criminal Procedure code, which again is obviously not applicable to the case. He did not ask me if I wanted to be let out on bail. On the 31st when I asked the District Magistrate what were the charges against me, he only mentioned the section stated in the warrant. In reply to my enquiry as to the clause of Section 17 of Act 14 of 1908 the District Magistrate said he could not say, but the Court Inspector mentioned clause (2).

Section 167, Criminal Procedure Code had no application because the case had been started at the instance of, and by the District Magistrate himself. After the remand had been sanctioned the Police recorded the first report under Section 154 of the Criminal Procedure Code (see column 1 of the first report and the concluding remarks) in order to legalise the proceedings under section 167. No remand was needed as the prosecution relied on my manifesto.”

But this was by no means the end of magisterial horse-play with the law or of Lajpat Rai's novel experience in this case.

After the charge had been framed and read out on the 13th (Lajpat Rai declining to make any statement) the Government Advocate wanted to address the court for arguments; but the court dispensed with that little formality as the case was such an obvious and simple affair and no arguments were needed! The only thing left was the judgment and for this the court fixed the 15th of February.

On the 15th no judgment was pronounced; instead a fresh series of hanky-panky started. Obviously they discovered that

they were making themselves ridiculous by presuming a good deal which had no basis in fact. To quote again from Lajpat Rai's statement:

“It seems that between the 13th and the 15th the Magistrate or the prosecution discovered;

(1) That on the 3rd and the 6th December the ‘National Volunteers Corps’ had not come into existence.

(2) That it was not declared unlawful until the 16th December on which date an order dated the 12th December was published in the Punjab Government *Gazette*.

(3) That having been in jail from the 3rd December onwards I could not be held responsible for the bringing into existence of that body or for its activities. Having discovered this the prosecution and the Magistrate entered into consultation and resolved upon postponing judgment and remedying the defects. All this was done behind the back of the accused and I have reasons to believe that the District Magistrate, the law officers and the trying Magistrate were all parties to it.”

The upshot was that there was no judgment pronounced on the 15th; that day the Magistrate gave an adjournment till the 20th because-

“Mr. Herbert, Government Advocate, asks for an adjournment with a view to putting in a petition. He says a mistake has crept into the case which mistake was of course on the part of the prosecution which did not correctly represent the case to the Court at the beginning. He asks the case to be postponed to Monday, the 20th February, 1922.”

On the 20th the Magistrate framed charges afresh, separately, for the two cases, and these read as under:

“That you, on or about the 3rd day of December 1921, at Lahore as President of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee did issue a manifesto which was published in the *Tribune* of 6th December, 1921, in which manifesto you instigated the public generally to hold public meetings in all places

where the Seditious Meetings Act has been applied, in express disobedience of the provisions of that Act and to court arrest and preached the doctrine of civil disobedience, and thereby committed an offence punishable under Section 7 of Act X of 1911 read with Section 117, Indian Penal Code, and with my cognizance.

That you, on or about the 3rd day of December 1921, at Lahore, as President of the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee did issue a manifesto which was published in the *Tribune* of the 5th December, 1921, in which manifesto you exhorted every Congress member, who was not afraid of the consequences, to enrol himself in the 'National Volunteers Association', which association is an unlawful association within the meaning of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, Section 17 and essentially the same body as the Congress and Khilafat volunteers which have been declared to be unlawful by Government and thus abetted the commission of offence by a number or class of persons exceeding ten, punishable under Section 17(1) Act 14 of 1908 read with Section 117, Indian Penal Code, and within my cognizance."

That day for the first time Lalaji threw off the non-co-operator's nonchalance and in a moment of exasperation he asked for an adjournment as he wanted time to reply to the Government Advocate's petition for amending the charges. The court which had been so accommodating to the prosecution in giving adjournments turned down this request and recorded:

"Mr. Herbert, Government Advocate, has today put in a petition. It is to the effect that this case has been treated as a summons case but that having regard to the questions put to the accused on 7th February, 1922 and the evidence adduced by the prosecution, the case would appear to be really a warrant case, viz, one under Section 7, of Act X of 1881 read with Section 117, Indian Penal Code. The Government Advocate therefore prays that a charge may be framed under the above

sections and the accused called upon to enter on his defence after recalling if he so desires, any of the prosecution witnesses.

The accused has asked this court to note that he wants time to reply to the petition put in by the Government Advocate. It appears to me to be unnecessary to give an adjournment at this stage. I agree with the Government Advocate that this case should have been tried as a warrant case. From the question put by the court to the accused on 7th February, 1922, the accused, who is a lawyer, knew that the case against him was under Section 7 of Act X of 1911-117. Indian Penal Code.

The accused has throughout said that as a non-co-operator he means to take no part in these proceedings. I agree with the Government Advocate that the accused will not be prejudiced, if he is charged today and then allowed time to put in any application he likes.”

When his request for a brief adjournment was refused, Lalaji had in fact threatened to take a petition to the High Court for the transfer of his case to some other court. What the court did itself and what it permitted the Prosecution was no doubt exasperating enough, but the real cause of Lalaji's exasperation lay entirely elsewhere. (We shall see that in the next chapter.) After this Lalaji made no statement before the court either written or oral; but he sent out one in which he set forth a connected history of both of his trials. It is from this statement we have been quoting.

Here he addressed not the authorities but his own country-men, exposing the mean tricky ways of those in authority. The object in issuing the statement, it was plain at the outset, was not to prove his innocence, nor to ask for mercy or even sympathy but just to show “how ignorant of law certain officers of the Crown and magistrates are in the Punjab and how forms of law are being used for political purposes: Concluding this terrific exposure of the magistracy, he wrote:

“It would be more in keeping with truth and would enhance the dignity and prestige of the Government if the latter were

to say that by reason of non-co-operation we had forfeited all claims to be treated in accordance with law, and, so far as we were concerned, all laws, rules and regulations had been suspended. That will save much unnecessary trouble on both sides.”

The real facts relevant to his fresh charges also were summed up in this statement:

“The real facts are:

That the original notification of the 14th November declaring the association now known as ‘the Khilafat Volunteers’ as unlawful was also defective. Firstly, there was no such association as the ‘Congress Volunteers’. The young men called volunteers were known by different names in different localities. There was no provincial organization as such. Those who worked under the Punjab Provincial Congress Committee constituted ‘the Indian National Service’. Those who worked under the city Congress Committee, Lahore, were called ‘Swaraj Sena’ (i.e. the army of swaraj). The matter was discussed at the meeting of the Working Committee of the All-India Congress Committee held at Bombay on the 20th November and it was decided to organise the volunteers under an entirely new constitution. (a) They were to be called ‘National Volunteers Corps. (b) There was to be one unit for the whole province, and (c) Under the control of one Central Provincial Board. (d) Everyone had to apply in writing, signing three separate pledges about non-violence and other matters. (e) All these applications were to be accepted by the Punjab Provincial Board. It will thus be seen that-neither the original notification was in proper legal form nor could the second notification have retrospective effect. An independent Magistrate should have declined to allow the prosecution any further time to fill up these gaps. They have been prosecuting me for the last ten weeks and had had ample time to find out both facts and law. The Magistrate, however, was dead to all considerations of justice and fairness. He wanted to please the District

Magistrate and the Crown. So he really consented to all that the latter desired and did not give me even one day for reply or objections.”

And the irregularities in his fresh conviction-for he was a convict by ‘the time this statement was published:

“A perusal of Section 117 (I.P.C.) will show that it is not applicable to the facts of this case.

Firstly, assuming that I instigated the people to become volunteers and to hold public meetings it is obvious that Section 117 implies an action by public as such collectively and conjointly (vide 3 Weekly Reporter, Criminal 41 quoted in Rattan Lal’s Penal Code). The act of enlistment of volunteers is an individual act of each volunteer. It cannot be performed by the public in their collective and conjoint capacity. Similarly, there can be no conjoint and collective lecture or speeches by the public under Section 7 of Act X of 1911.

Secondly, the National Volunteers Association did not come into existence till after the manifesto.

Thirdly, the manifesto expressly stated that no Civil Disobedience was to be committed by anybody except with the previous sanction of the Working Committee.

Fourthly, this very manifesto and the very facts which form the basis of these charges were the basis of conviction under Section. 145 of the Indian Penal Code which still stands.

Fifthly, the language of both these enactments is such as to suggest that abetment is a part of the substantive offence. I wonder how many more charges are still hanging over my head for this manifesto. I am, however, a willing scape-goat.”

He was convicted all the same and awarded a sentence of two years.

Bardoli Decision

DURING THE THREE months that elapsed between Lalaji's arrest at the Punjab Congress meeting and his conviction on February 20, 1922, great changes had occurred in Indian politics. The seeds had been there at the time of his arrest but their subsequent career on germination might not have been very easy to foretell. These developments sprang from two factors- the Congress resolve to launch a campaign of civil disobedience, and the outbreak of mob violence in spite of Congress injunction to the contrary.

'Civil disobedience' had of course been from the outset visualised as a culmination of the progressive non-violent non-co-operation, though it is possible the author of non-co-operation had cherished hopes of a settlement with the Government before non-co-operation had to be taken to the grim stage of refusing taxes. These hopes not having been realised, the people of Bardoli-a small taluk in Gujarat-under the guidance and presidentship of Vallabhbhai Patel had resolved in October 1921 on a campaign of civil disobedience. The author of non-co-operation had planned that this experiment would start at Bardoli under his personal supervision to serve as a model for local leaders elsewhere. The Working Committee in a resolution passed on November 3, 1921 had laid down certain tests which, if fulfilled, would empower Provincial Congress Committees to take up individual and even mass civil disobedience. Within a fortnight of this came the riots in Bombay-with a toll of more than 50 dead and 400 wounded—

on the occasion of the hartal called to mark the popular boycott of the Prince of Wales's visit to India. The leader of non-violent non-co-operation flinched. But besides the spectacular fast the net result had been the laying down of further restrictions for the launching of civil disobedience, and the drawing up of an elaborate pledge of non-violence for volunteers. But the movement was by no means to be abandoned - it was definitely to be accelerated. More and more volunteers were to be enrolled, and though the final launching of a campaign of civil disobedience in a particular area would no longer rest with the Provincial Committees, those bodies were expected to continue active preparations for such campaigns, if possible even at a quickened pace. The Bombay riots had retarded preparations for the battle of Bardoli, but clearly there was no apprehension of its being dropped with a euphemistic announcement saying it had been "indefinitely post-poned". The atmosphere was kept tense with the expectancy of zero hour.

This is where Lalaji had left things at the time of arrest. Every moment the country was expecting big happenings. He had not pinned his faith on "Swaraj within a year", but a bold bid for it in the very near future he certainly did look forward to. In his message to his countrymen at the time of his arrest he said:

"When I left the shores of America, I knew that I would not be allowed to remain outside the jail for a long time; and on my departure from there, I had told my friends that I would be satisfied if I were allowed to work amongst my people even for six months. But now through the grace of God, I have been enabled to work with you for about 19 months, and I go to jail with a glad heart, and with the firm belief that what ever we have done, we have done according to our conscience and our God. I have no misgivings or fears in my mind. I am convinced that the path we have chosen is the right path, and our success is sure. I also believe that I shall soon return

amongst you and resume my work; but even if that is not to be, I assure you that I shall have nothing to be sorry for when I return to my Creator. I am a weak and frail man, and do not claim to possess the splendid spirituality of Mahatma Gandhi. Sometimes I am not able to control my anger, nor can I say that I have never harboured feelings which I ought not to have entertained. But this I can truthfully assert that I have always kept the interests of my country and nation before my mind, and my actions have been directed with a sole eye to the interests of my country. I know that I have made many mistakes in the discharge of my duties, and have sometimes indulged in criticism which might have given offence to some of my countrymen. For all that I beg forgiveness. I hope that they will forgive me, especially my Moderate and Arya Samajic brothers.

My countrymen, I now bid you goodbye. I go to jail in the firm belief that the honour of my beloved country and nation is safe in your keeping. *The Bandemataram* and the Tilak School of Politics are my two children; and those also I leave in your keeping.”

The Ali brothers had been arrested even before Lalaji, although they had let themselves be persuaded by the Mahatma to express regret for certain statements they had made. Then, one by one, had gone the other front-rank leaders-C.R. Das, Abul Kalam Azad and Motilal Nehru. The Mahatma no longer had the advantage of their criticism and advice. Now leadership had become really a one-man affair.

The Congress met at Ahmedabad in December 1921, and formally appointed the Mahatma executive head of the Congress-if you will, its dictator. But this was clearly understood to be a war exigency. The Mahatma was given these extraordinary powers to launch the campaign and make the best of it. The Congress resolutions appointing him virtual dictator ended with significant limitations to the dictator's authority.

“In view of the impending arrests of a large number of

Congress workers this Congress whilst requiring the ordinary machinery to remain intact and to be utilised in the ordinary manner whenever Feasible, hereby appoints until further instructions Mahatma Gandhi as the sole executive authority of the Congress and invests him with the full power to convene a special session of the Congress or of the All-India Congress Committee or the Working Committee, such powers to be exercised between any two sessions of the All-India Congress committee and also with the power to appoint a successor in emergency.

This Congress hereby confers upon the said successor and all subsequent successors, appointed in turn by their predecessors, his aforesaid powers.

Provided that nothing in this resolution shall be deemed to authorise Mahatma Gandhi or any of the aforesaid successors to conclude any terms of peace with the Government of India or the British Government without the previous sanction of the All-India Congress Committee to be finally ratified by the Congress specially convened for the purpose, and provided also that the present creed of the Congress shall in no case be altered by Mahatma Gandhi or his successors except with leave of the Congress first obtained.”

The Mahatma took the rudder and proceeded full sail. On February 1, 1922 he addressed a famous ultimatum to Lord Reading, a seven-day notice demanding the release of all sent to jails if no violence could be proved against them, and besides an assurance of full freedom to carry on a non-violent campaign for the redress of the Khilafat and Punjab wrongs and for the achievement of swaraj. Failing this, at the expiry of the ultimatum civil disobedience was to be launched-to begin with at Bardoli.

Then started a new chapter somewhat abruptly. There was a sporadic outbreak at Chauri Chaura, an unknown small village (in Gorakhpur district, U.P.), which has since become a historic name. Twenty-two constables were done to death.

Bombay (November 17), then Madras (January 13) and finally Chauri Chaura on the 5th of February just two days before the Bardoli 'ultimatum' expired!

The Mahatma Flinched once again. After this second and sudden jolt he began to rethink civil disobedience. Had he started rethinking soon after Bombay? Had this continued even after the Bombay decisions following the Prince of Wales riots? Was the 'Vishnu roop' just the beginning of this re-thinking started by manifestations of violence? Whatever the answers to these questions, the next event relevant to this narrative was that of February 12, 1922. The Congress Working Committee met at Bardoli, and on Mahatma Gandhi's advice indefinitely suspended mass civil disobedience. The decision was based on the manifestations of violence in Bombay and at Chauri Chaura. All activities designed to court arrest, all processions and public meetings, etc, in defiance of bans imposed by authority, were to be abandoned and Congressmen were instead asked to devote their energy to a constructive programme in which hand-spinning was the most important item.

The zero-hour expectancy ended in this anti-climax!

“Civilly Dead”?

THE MAHATMIC HARA-KIRI had at last come! To Lalaji his initial premonition of some such ending was no consolation. He had completely set the misgivings at rest and accepted the Mahatma's leadership without mental reservations and given him the utmost loyalty. The tacit assumption was that the General whom he and his other colleagues were obeying so loyally would lead on his forces “to win or lost it all”. Now without ever putting it to a test, the General and ordered a retreat! The climb-down looked almost like a betrayal. A million Irish peasants assembling to hear ‘the Chief, Daniel O’Council, ‘give the word’ to fight and being sent back quietly to their homes-even that classic example would be inadquate to give an idea of the reactions set up in the mass psyche by the unintelligible retreat ordered by Gandhi at a moment so pregnant with high expectation.

It is against this background that we have to see the court room scene on February 20 when Lalaji asked for an Adjournment and threatened to put in a petition for transfer of the case to another court. In reality he had not much interest in a transfer. “I merely wanted time,’ he afterwards wrote in a lengthy statement to which we shall have occasion to refer again. He felt most strongly that things were being bungled and that he should come out of prison to set them right or at least to give full vent to an inner conflict. He knew the case against him was but a mismanaged flimsy affair; it being a summons case he could at any rate be enlarged on bail, and

even that might be enough for him to give a bit of his mind to the colleagues who had ordered the retreat and, with a load off his breast get back to the comrades in prison. The A-I.C.C. had been called for the 24th to consider the Working Committee's Bardoli decision, and so he must hurry!

He seriously meant to come out. K. Santanam, no longer a prisoner, under-trial or otherwise, but present in the court as a friend, dissuaded him from starting a revolt in this impulsive fashion. But in that towering mood Lalaji was not easy to handle, and the discussion went on a long while in a corner of the jail courtroom, before Lalaji submitted-mollified by the friendly entreaties and appeals but by no means convinced by the arguments of Santanam and the other friends who supported him.

His feelings now found vent in a hugeous letter he addressed to Mahatma Gandhi. It was part of the settlement with Santanam that instead of giving a bit of his mind personally at the A-I.C.C. meeting he should do so in a letter which Santanam would arrange to have delivered. The letter began with high tribute to the greatness of Gandhi as man and as leader of men; but his blunders, it added, had been enormous in like measure (both equally 'Himalayan', using Gandhi's own epithet). and recounted several occasions on which he had committed these. It criticised certain ingredients of non-co-operation which others had had to accept merely because of Gandhi's insistence and against their own better judgment. Above all, the letter ruthlessly criticised the Bardoli decision, and with the unsparing scalpel of analysis it sought to lay bare the limitations of non-violence; for the atmosphere of perfect non-violence that Mahatma Gandhi now seemed to think essential to the launching of his campaign was simply an impossibility where large masses of men had to be led. The letter was frank and outspoken and in the end Lalaji apologised for any offence he might unwittingly have given, asking

Mahatma Gandhi to take him for what he was, impulsive and perhaps rash but not insincere.

Mahatma Gandhi acknowledged the letter in a postcard to K. Santanam. All he cared to say was that Lalaji was “civilly dead” and had no business to be writing such letters—a reply that ignored a very pertinent fact the Lalaji had never accepted the Mahatma’s code of ideal conduct for the political prisoners and was not bound by it. It may be pertinent to recall that protests had been likewise sent from prison by his other front-rank colleagues without their being told that they were “civilly dead”. A really great document, the letter had been smuggled out of the Lahore Central Jail. Finding the letter a product of angry impulse Gandhiji, it seems, had given instructions for its not remaining on record! But the document somehow survived that direction and there seems little room to argue that the letter did not essentially represent Lalaji’s calm verdict on the Bardoli retreat. Long after the ‘impulsive’ moment, when he was taking stock of the non-co-operation movement in a series of articles for the press, he wrote:

“The decision, however, about Bardoli and the Bardoli resolutions which were the outcome of it, burst upon a confiding, expectant and hopeful country like a bombshell. The shock was too sudden, cataclysmic and unexpected. It bewildered, and, to a certain extent, surprised and angered the people. About twenty thousand of the rank and file were in jails. About ten million rupees had been collected. The provinces had been depleted of most of their prominent workers. The people had kept their heads cool under the greatest provocation given by the Government and its agents. Thousands had suffered cruelties at the hands of the police and in jails without any retaliation. All this had been done in the expectation of the millennium at Bardoli. All of a sudden came the collapse. Disappointment, resentment and anger was bound to follow, as a reaction.”

Mahatma Gandhi received more or less similar criticism from other prisons too—from Motilal Nehru and perhaps from C.R. Das. Lalaji's reaction was shared by the Mahatma with other friends at an informal consultation at Dr. M.A. Ansari's house on February 24, 1922 with the comment that people in prison being "civilly dead" were not expected to guide or advise political movements! That obviously was the Mahatma's own code lacking the imprimatur of the organisation. Neither Lalaji nor Motilal Nor Das considered himself "civilly dead".

After Bardoli naturally all the intelligent lieutenants of Mahatma Gandhi in the non-co-operation campaign had begun to take stock afresh. Lalaji at any rate had started rethinking as soon as the news of the Bardoli climb-down came.

When the other front-rank leaders came out of prison, they began to give a new orientation to things. In June 1922 the A-I.C.C. appointed a "civil disobedience committee" and in November the A-I.C.C. considered the report submitted by this committee. Ostensibly the committee had been appointed to revive civil disobedience, and the A-I.C.C. resolutions authorised provincial bodies to start civil disobedience under certain conditions. But it was more or less understood that in the near future there was no prospect of these conditions being fulfilled or of civil disobedience being launched. The net result of the labours of this committee was the suggestion that the ban on legislative bodies be lifted, and thus it served to prepare the ground for a Congress party which would get active during the general election due in 1924.

Lalaji too was thinking more or less along these lines, and even from his prison-cell he was doing his share of work in the revolt that led to the founding of the Swaraj Party. C.R. Das came down to the Punjab and naturally wanted to know Lalaji's views in the post-Bardoli phase. He was not permitted to see Lalaji, and so a personal discussion was not possible. But Lalaji wrote out what he called "tentative opinion

and the tendencies of one's thoughts” in a letter to C.R. Das which began with “a most hearty welcome to the Land of the Five Rivers and a salaam of love and respect from your admirer and fellow-labourer”. In this letter Lalaji put it down as a definitive verdict that “our propaganda has had a wonderful vogue and a remarkable success. In spite of our mistakes it has completely changed the psychology of our people, and has brought about a transformation in their political views, ideas and ideals. Judged from that point of view I have no regrets for what we did.”

Referring to his own scepticism about non-co-operation at the earlier stage, he said:

“You know that I was quite sceptical about the programme at the time of the Special Congress at Calcutta but looking back to the last two years. I have no doubt that after all Mahatmaji was right.”

In spite of this verdict when he examined the non-co-operation programme, item by item, it seemed he had a good deal of revising to suggest. On the whole, he found the programme had been excellent for a one-year drive; but now that they had to chalk out something less intense and spread over a much longer period they could not go on repeating the old shibboleths. Sacrifices that might be asked of the people for one year could not be demanded indefinitely. He wanted a suppleness in tactic which he found Mahatma Gandhi to be lacking in at times:

“The real mistake which I am inclined to regret was the inflexibility of Mahatmaji in December and January. In politics I think one may be or rather must be) inflexible in Principles, but not in strategy and methods. Please do not misunderstand me; by ‘strategy’ I do not mean ‘stratagem’. Under no circumstances will I sacrifice honesty and truth at the altar of expediency. Yet I cannot bring myself to believe that strategy and expediency can be safely and totally banished from a political campaign. In my judgment Mahatmaji missed

the opportunity of ordering an honourable suspension of hostilities which the Viceroy gave him in December. Then again his inflexible attitude at the Malaviya conference, and his ultimatum were grave slips. I am saying all this not in a spirit of captious criticism or with the object of finding fault with Mahatmaji, but under a belief that it is necessary for us to have a correct appreciation of our work (our gains and losses, our rights and wrongs) in order to build up the future. Let us see where we stand now. The Government is both apprehensive and defiant. They are afraid of our influence in the country but seem determined to crush us. In this latter work, they have thrown away all considerations of justice, fair play and morality. They believe in, and act on the principle 'all is fair in love and war'. Of course we had never built on that hope. but Mahatmaji and some of us did hope that they will not throw away to the winds all such considerations."

The principal revision that Das was interested in was the doing away with the embargo on legislatures. The Maharashtra leaders were urging that the entire programme of non-co-operation be scrapped. Though Lalaji's angle was very much the same as theirs he could not see what would be gained by insisting on an 'abandonment' of the items that were doing no harm as they had already ceased to be operative. Thus talking of the boycott of schools:

"We are carrying on no propaganda against schools; the item (of the boycott of schools) is more of an ideal than otherwise. The Congress penalises no one who cannot practise it."

So also he would not waste his breath on denouncing the boycott of law courts even though a complete boycott of courts was "an impossibility", as all non-co-operators in their conduct acknowledged.

"I know of several Congressmen (some of them among the leaders) who did not boycott the civil courts. Can businessmen and trade people boycott civil courts? Can landlords and tenants do it? If we want the Congress to be an all-covering

national organisation, the giving effect to this idea is an impossibility.”

But “in my opinion we acted very wisely in not defending ourselves in criminal prosecutions started by government; we had to make a demonstration and we have made it fairly effectively... Without admitting that we have so far erred... I do think that the time has come to sanction a change or attitude in this matter. One can defend it (this item of non-co-operation) as a war-time measure, but it cannot be enforced even by a moral sanction for an indefinitely long period. A few of us may do it but the nation or the Congress as a whole cannot.

In this letter he did not discuss in detail the principal question that Das was interested in—the Congress ban on legislatures. Justifying the ban (which had originated with himself—appropriated by the author of non-co-operation), he said:

“Now we come to the third point which is perhaps the most important of all. After careful consideration, I am disposed to think (tentatively) that it will be a mistake to go into the councils either for co-operation or for obstruction. The terms ‘responsive co-operation’ and ‘responsive non-co-operation’ are mere phrases which mean nothing. The best we can do is to follow the Sinn Fein plan—the attempt to set up a rival Government. A rival assembly and rival councils elected on Government franchise will be a great moral victory. In my humble judgment, it will be wise to postpone all changes in the programme to a special session to be held in May or April next year. Things are developing every day and we should not bind down our hands so early. Politics is a changing game and I do not believe in any inflexible, cut-and-dried scheme good for all times and under all circumstances. Do not start or sanction mass civil disobedience unless you are prepared to see it through at any cost and at any risk. As to individual civil disobedience, do not sanction it on an *extensive* scale unless the country is prepared to spare at least 50,000 men to

court and suffer imprisonment but at the same time do not prohibit it altogether.”*

By now he was thinking of lifting the ban on councils but his ideas had not finally crystallised. Neither the liberal concept of ‘working’ the reforms appealed to him, nor the newfangled one of ‘non-co-operating from within’ by obstructionist tactics. At any rate the implication was there that he, the original author of the boycott of legislatures, was not insisting on the boycott any more. For Das’s immediate purposes that was enough. Das sent him word that they would like to press the change at the Gaya session itself and wanted him to do whatever he possibly could from the prison cell to support them.

The request was not made in vain. Lalaji wrote a series of articles, pointed and vigorous, which appeared in the press as the *Cogitations of a Constitutional Grumbler*, in which the Constitutional Grumbler unburdens his mind to Dyal Dass, who with an asceticism that goes with his Gandhian creed meets him punctually at six, not minding the chilly November mornings, and even declines a cup of tea to warm himself up—a likeable soul and one who would “ascend the steps of the gallows or throw himself into fire for the sake of his faith” “Gandhiji had solved for him all problems of life and death and saved him from the worry of thinking and deciding for himself.”

* The closing part of this letter had something to say about Hindu-Muslim unity. Portions of this letter are often quoted (or misquoted) to this day. We shall have something to say about it in a subsequent chapter.

Incarceration

“**A**S YOUR PRISONER I would want no favours and privileges from you. I would eat what you give me, and toil as you want me to,” so Lalaji said to Harkishan Lal (then a member of the Punjab Government). When, a few weeks before the arrests, the Minister called one afternoon at 2, Court Street.

In fact he had looked forward to a term of imprisonment as a schooling in self-discipline and serenity.

‘I am quite happy and cheerful,’ said Lalaji in the letter he wrote to Mahatma Gandhi early in the morning (anticipating his arrest in the course of the day) “and will not whine for favours. I am going to insist on being treated as an ordinary prisoner even if they are so magnanimous as to offer me some privilege. Which I do not believe they will. Rest assured I will not bring disgrace on your movement.”

At the government ‘Telegraph Office, before he was removed to the lock-up, he left word that food from home was not to be sent as he would prefer ‘pot luck’ in the prison’. After he had been in prison, as an under-trial, for weeks, in a message addressed to the people of the Punjab, he spoke in the same strain. He spoke of his imprisonment as “moral sadhana” and thanked God for this opportunity. The first look round was enough to set up within him a train of thought about certain fundamental interests and created for him an abiding interest in prison reform. He was not a mere politician and it was not merely concessions for political prisoners that interested him. His broad humanity would not exclude the despised felon. In this message we get a fine glimpse of this:

“Last time (1907) I had no experience of jail life and I had no opportunity of witnessing the spectacle wherein human beings are degraded from humanity. The experience that I am having this time has taught me that it is not possible to increase the dignity inherent in being a mere man by means of wealth, riches, learning and position. There are very few men in the world and therefore my only desire is to become a man. Around me there are innumerable men, many of them are prisoners and some officials. In my judgment a large majority of these people who are outside jails and owing to the possession of wealth, riches, learning or position are looked upon with respect by society, are not better than these prisoners. They are outside jail because society as constituted punishes poverty and helplessness and not crimes. There who does not commit an ‘offence’ (*badmashi**)? But while the poor and helpless prisoner is cruelly degraded from the pedestal of humanity, other get the reward for this *badmashi* in the shape of increment and prosperity. A prisoner is deprived of treatment deserving of a man, merely because he is a prisoner, so much so that gradually all the finer qualities in his are wiped away and he becomes a quadruped. Their warders become quadrupeds because society tolerates them. The result in both cases is the same. I have felt that it is necessary for us to love men merely because they are men and not because of their wealth, riches, learning, position. Jails are Satan’s home. Within them there is also dishonesty and mischief not fit to be described. But my heart longs to love more and more, these dirty, mischievous misery-stricken criminals. They are wicked and criminal because society by its inhuman treatment has made them so, otherwise everyone of them possesses within himself the same priceless gift with which Mahatma Gandhi is endowed. These jails have not been made for reform purposes

* This is the usual word in Punjab jails for all infringements of jail regulations—particularly smuggling. i.e. receiving things through unauthorised channels.

but in order that certain persons, who are in possession of power, may find an opportunity of fostering their pride. These people are themselves helpless. Their education and training are responsible for their helplessness. That is why they are themselves deserving of pity. I am trying to make my mind free (from any unkind thoughts) towards them also so that there may remain in my mind no trace of any feeling of grudge or anger against them. Owing to these reasons I look upon my imprisonment as an unequalled blessing. There is no better school than this for practising self-control and learning humility, provided one can adapt one's nature to practise these..."

No apology need be offered for the lengthy excerpt. This gives us not merely the broad outlook on prison reform, but if you ponder over it you will get a more vivid idea of Lajpat Rai as a democrat than may be possible to get out of a much longer discussion.

Nor did the authorities seem anxious to extend special privileges to him. For one thing, the magistrates in their crass ignorance had made such enormous blunders that getting out of them had become a problem for them, and they would have required extraordinary tact to conceal the feeling that he was proving a nuisance to them. Otherwise there could be no sense in their ruling out all interviews whether with relatives or friends for preparing their defence. To begin with, he and his comrades were not allowed interviews, not even with a counsel. As Lalaji put it the Jail manual had also been suspended.

This anomalous stage was however soon over, and as an under-trial prisoner he was getting the usual facilities for interviews. Friends started liberally supplementing the prison food with baskets of fruit, etc, which, of course were always shared with the other Congress prisoners. The food that the jail authorities were providing them was on the meagre and monotonous side and seldom properly cooked. Yet certain other Congress prisoners—whom the prison authorities regarded as

the less important sort-were being served with fare which was worse still. The fourteen "better class" prisoners headed by Lalaji wrote to the Superintendent asking him to abolish this distinction.

But the authorities paid no heed to such egalitarian representations whether made in a spirit of self-abnegation by the Better Class or of assertiveness of the "Worse" or the "Ordinaries" And at times some of the "Ordinaries" did not feel quite happy with the "Bettors" even though they knew that whatever the friends of the "Bettors" sent was in reality being shared alike among the "Bettors" and the "Ordinaries". They naturally felt sore that they could not receive the supplementing gifts in their own right.

The unavailing protests and representations over, at last he settled down into the routine life of a Better Class prisoner in the Central Jail, Lahore. When the prolonged trial period was finally over, the contacts with the world outside were naturally reduced. The then prison rules prescribed an interval of one month between one interview and another. Nor did he depend now on regular or frequent supplementing of the prison diet. The subordinate prison staff were very sympathetic and respectful to him. The deference and homage he daily received from the ordinary convicts and convict workers must have reminded him of the 'salaaming' incidents in Fort Mandalay. On some of his fellow-prisoners, not always political, he could ever depend for personal attendance given him as a token of affection. Occasionally he looked tired, and a youthful bhangi convict with a swarthy face and strong muscles would massage him, and some of Lalaji's most devoted friends who were with him in prison too, felt mildly jealous of the privileged bhangi. Some of the Congress volunteers would let go no opportunity of making themselves useful to him, in particular one who had been a captain of the Lahore corps, and another almost illiterate Akali Sikh from the Doaba in whose education Lalaji took personal interest as long as they continued to be fellow-prisoners.

Books and writing material were freely permitted, but newspapers and magazines strictly forbidden, and newspapers were the one thing he could not do without. He made a very good prisoner indeed, for he faced suffering cheerfully, he never whined for favours and comfort and never departed from the code of dignity. He took a good deal of interest in the human material that surrounded him, made friends with them, even tried to get inside their skins. With all this his ethic as a prisoner was frankly not that of Mahatma Gandhi's ideal satyagrahi. If the prison authorities had not the imagination to see what a newspaper meant to him it was his duty to himself to get one in spite of them. As the reader of prison memories of great political sufferers will readily recall, he was in as good company as he cared to have, even if this company did not include Mahatma Gandhi. In these matters indeed on the whole the ethic of martyrs of the church has been different from that of those who suffered and sacrificed at the political altar of freedom. Of course if he had become one of Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagrahis and had accepted the "civilly dead" declaration, things would have been different.

Not committed to code Gandhi he did his own channels that connected him with the outside world, channels through which he could get newspapers and magazines and occasionally send out something intended for publication in the press or a letter that would not pass the normal channels. It was the business of his young men-the Servants of the People-to see that the necessary supply of newspaper cuttings or specially prepared news summaries, etc, reached the prison gate daily and from there the arrangements fixed up by him operated. When C.R. Das was not permitted to interview him, he could send his views on the altered situation, through these channels and at the Deshbandhu's suggestion he even did some propaganda by articles in the press for lifting the Congress ban on legislative councils.

The articles and the letters he had received from Lalaji were put to very effective use at the Gaya Congress session by

C.R. Das. When Mahatma Gandhi received a letter of protest against the way he had called off the movement he was content to remark that Lalaji and Motilalji being civilly dead had no business to be writing such letters. Lalaji and Das and Nehru evidently did not believe a man became "civilly dead" when he was sent to prison. (In subsequent imprisonments it would seem the Mahatma too ceased to enforce that dictum).

Newspapers he must have and he had them, whatever the prison rules. If by any chance his bundle was delayed he fidgeted a good deal. If it was inordinately delayed, that was the end of all 'serenity'. He cursed aloud and protested that his people had ceased to care in the least for him! Some of the prison staff knew well how anxious he used to be for the daily paper; the kindly doctor when on his round would almost invariably 'forget' his own copy of the *Tribune* near his cell, so that he might get the paper a few hours before his own copy could be smuggled in! Even at Mandalay the barber and the bhisti had managed to get him newspapers through ingenious devices.

While generally the Punjab authorities were rather chary of allowing special interviews, occasionally they did sanction these when the interviewer did not seem quite as objectionable as C.R. Das. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya had a long talk with him in prison though he could not pass on his bundle of newspapers and magazines to the prisoners and brought these back to be sent through the usual channels. C.F. Andrews had not much difficulty in getting the permission. Dr. N.R. Dharmavir who still continued to practise at Padiham (In England) was on a short visit to India after a very long absence and of course was keen on meeting Lalaji-in fact, he had two interviews, at Lahore and again at Dharamsala.

St. Nihal Singh who came to India after a similar absence was in Lahore early in 1921, when Lalaji's first trial had already resulted in an illegal conviction. He had come as one of the press entourage accompanying the Prince of Wales and at a luncheon with Sir Edward Maclagan, the Governor of the

Punjab, he asked whether he might be permitted to see his friend Lajpat Rai. Sir Edward immediately issued the necessary instructions. Being a privileged interviewer, St. Nihal Singh, in the Central Jail, expressed the wish (to prison officials) that he might see Lalaji in his own cell. He was taken straight to that cell and afterwards put down his impressions in his vivid, graphic style, particularly recording how shocked he was when he saw the food served. He took away with him "a bit of the leather-like bread to show to Mr. Montagu; but before I got back to London poor Mr. Montagu had been hounded out of office." St. Nihal Singh also recorded that "the Inside knowledge of prison life that Lalaji gained revolted him. He told me in front of the jail official that when he got out he intended to work for prison reform."

Of the friends otherwise very close to him and who happened besides to be his comrades in the same prison, K. Santnam and Gopi Chand Bhargava left him as soon as the Punjab Government decided to set right the illegalities of the convicting magistrates. This loss was made good to him by Ram Prasad who earned a sentence of two years for his writings in the *Bandemataram*. S.E. Stokes was kept apart as much to his own regret as that of Lalaji and his other Punjabi friends. Aga Mohammed Safdar whom Lalaji (with the consent of the Provincial Congress Committee) had appointed to succeed him as the head of the Punjab Congress soon joined the company. There were other notable Mussalman friends too-Abdul Ghaffar Khan from the North-West Frontier, then young and unknown to fame, but undoubtedly with a personality that arrested attention by his commanding stature and his courtesy and cordiality. Another prominent Muslim was Habib-ur-Rahman, a well-known Maulvi from Ludhiana, then an outstanding figure in the Punjab Khilafat Committee. With these Muslim friends around him Lalaji derived in prison opportunities for understanding the Muslim point of view, theological as well as civil, in Indian politics, by frank and full

talks for which such ample opportunities had not come his way before then.

It was during his stay in prison that the Lakshmi Insurance Company was conceived. He was keen that Santanam who had thrown up a promising career at the bar and was about the brainiest lieutenant he had in the Punjab should not be forced to quit his adopted province in search of a living. Out of this anxiety was born his plan to start a life office on release.

It was out of this imprisonment too that the third important crop of his books came. The first crop had come in the 'nineties in his Arya Samaj days-that of the Urdu biographies partly assisted no doubt by his prolonged illness at Abbottabad. A small one had come out of his six months' stay in the Mandalay Fort. The second important crop was the result of his five years of exile. Now the third one was sprouting as the result of a term in prison. This included (besides some newspaper writing) an Urdu history of ancient India running into 600 pages, a fresh addition to his series of 'Great Men' (the Urdu monograph on Asoka) and a completely re-written 'Great Man', *Shivaji*.

The newspaper writing including the articles he did, partly at the instance of C.R. Das, to help the revolt within the Congress against the orthodox school of non-co-operation, in particular against the ban on legislatures. *The Cogitations of a Constitutional Grumbler* was a remarkable series in its own way, and helped considerably the cause it sponsored. Being "civilly Dead" compelled him to resort to anonymity or the wear the mask of a pseudonym; very often he signed his articles as 'Vidur'. The need for anonymity led to the creation of the 'Constitutional Grumbler' whose cogitations, full of iconoclastic vigour combined with a cold scrutiny and unsparing analysis, of ruthless candour in self-criticism and occasionally of irony and sarcasm, revealed gifts that make one wish he had been handicapped more often from coming out in the open so that

in seeking indirect but effective devices he could have developed these gifts and put them to the fullest use.

Another notable bit of writing was the *A.B.C. OF Indian Politics* which appeared in the *Modern Review* over his son's name, but which discerning-readers could easily make out as the father's handiwork. This was one of the rarer attempts (outside Marxist Circles) when an Indian political leader scrutinised the theoretical fundamentals and tried to link active politics with sound sociological foundations. Lalaji himself had never been particularly fond of playing the role of a theoretician. But some of the Liberal leaders had been indulging in talk of 'law and order' and of 'fundamental duties' with a reverential attitude to certain text-book platitudes, and he had keenly felt the need of educating these gentlemen as to recent trends in abstract political and sociological thought. He had accused the Moderates of high treason in his famous Bombay speech and had very much enjoyed the subsequent bout with Srinivasa Sastri. In the 'Cogitations' he returned to the charge with the same zest and acerbity. In the *A.B.C.* he examined the facade of theoretical apologetics that the Moderates (who had styled themselves Liberals) had raised around their alliance with the bureaucracy in a policy of repression.

He was doing a prisoner's toil too and he loved to do it. Except during the first few weeks he never much bothered about becoming an accomplished hand-spinner-after the Bardoli decisions he was in no mood to. But he found a congenial medium for manual work in another fibre-*Munj*. Of this he made several mats and was proud of his handiwork. When he came out of prison he managed to bring these with him. In due course the mats left him one by one to find permanent homes with either rich admirers who subscribed generously to the causes he sponsored or with friends whose affection was even more valuable than the donations of the wealthy.

Two years was a pretty stiff sentence, and it would have been surprising indeed if in the uncomfortable prison conditions in which he was kept his health did not break down.

With the Bardoli retreat—and the retreat becoming rout—and the frequent communal fracas, the conditions in the country were becoming gloomy. To these had been added a bereavement—his father died in 1923, and he knew and keenly felt that his father had missed him by his deathbed.

These various factors combined to undermine his health. Even though for some time he was removed to the much cooler Dharamsala jail (in the Kangra valley), his health was a constant source of anxiety. Even early in prison his young companion, Doctor Gopi Chand Bhargava had noticed that he was not able to digest the prison diet, that his insomnia was getting worse and that he was developing dyspepsia. By and by his entire system seemed to have been upset. A low fever attacked him and the prison doctors could do nothing about it. The fever persisted and his energy seemed to be running out. Some sort of lung trouble was suspected but its exact nature seemed not easy to determine. The news of his breakdown naturally caused widespread anxiety. The Government had to face questions in the Legislative Council; at first they thought it enough to declare that the trouble was not serious, that it was being properly treated, and that he had had an inflamed liver before his imprisonment. The prison doctors totally failed, and the patient was permitted to consult his own physicians. Dr. Maharaj Krishnan Kapur and Dr. Nihal Chand Sikri examined him and discussed the case at length with Lt-Col. A.W. Greig. Superintendent of the Central Jail. Dr. Maharaj Kriishnan Kapur gave his opinion in detail in a letter to Lt-Col A.W. Greig. The lung condition was a cause of deep concern, both because at repeated examinations the intervals had, revealed progressive deterioration, and because the family background of tuberculosis sounded a stern warning. After the doctors had watched the low fever persist for more than six or seven weeks in the intense heat of a Lahore summer Lalaji was transferred to the Dharamsala prison (In Kangra). As the symptoms causing anxiety persisted even there, the Punjab Government felt impelled to decide on his release. So he was

transferred back to Lahore, and discharged from prison there.

He was released on August 16, 1923.

The arrangements for transfer, etc., were meant to be a close secret, but did not prove lead-proof. The prisoner sought to make use of his own channels for letting these out but his arrangements did not prove pilfer-proof either-his two letters to P.L. Sondhi (of The Servants of the People) were both intercepted - and before he started from Dharamsala he had come to know about it. Yet, secrecy at the Lahore end also was found not leak-proof-and so, when this train pulled up at the Lahore cantonment station-from where according to the final arrangements he was to be taken to jail. P.L. Sondhi was there-on the platform just at the point where Lalaji alighted-much to Lalaji's surprise and delight, and the discomfiture of the escort. "See, how my intelligence arrangements work"-said Lalaji twitting them in triumph.

Great Men : Second Look

AS SOON AS he could settle down in jail, Lalaji collected beside him a large number of books on Indian history and got busy with the writing of a fairly comprehensive Urdu volume on ancient India. The six hundred odd pages (in Print) of this book were dictated by him during the first two months of his stay in the Lahore Central Jail. By the time Doctor Gopi Chand Bhargava, who was acting as his amanuensis, was released, the first draft was ready. On Lalaji's coming out of jail, this book was published by the Servants of the People Society by arrangement with his usual publisher in Lahore. As we have already seen Lalaji had in the 'nineties published a slim volume on ancient India and also held out a promise of something much fuller. The imprisonment gave him the leisure and he addressed himself to this task which fulfilled a long-standing promise and was besides a source of great pleasure to himself. This fresh edition, like its predecessor, made no claim to original investigation but was certainly the best book available on the subject for the general reader with no access to books in European languages. In particular Lalaji tried to give as full a picture of the ancient Indo-Aryan civilisation as the then available data made possible. In a very interesting appendix he compared this civilisation with the modern Western one and expressed the hope that man would still create a new culture that would bind in a rich and harmonious blend the best ingredients of both.

He wanted to follow up this volume by a second one covering the Muslim period. In fact he had collected most of his

material : from the Persian source-books partly in jail and partly after his release. But he could never find the leisure to put it together in the form of a book. He intended also to revise his first volume a few years later. Even this required leisure that he could not get, though some slight revising was carried out under his instructions for a Hindi edition sent to press a short while before his death. The Urdu history of ancient India he inscribed to his first teacher, Munshi Radha Kishan, from whom he had inherited an appetite for history-and whom he lost while he was working on this book in prison.

Next in this bunch of studies in history was an Urdu monograph of more than 360 pages called *Maharaj Asoka*. In the eighteen-nineties Asoka had been a faint echo. In the year that followed the proudest triumph of indologists was the snatching of Asoka from oblivion and installing him in his rightful place in the gallery of immortals-a triumph made possible by Asoka's own foresight in leaving behind his story inscribed on stone. The inscriptions recovered from remote corners enclosing an area bigger than the one known as the British Indian Empire was a complete reply to those who said India had never known administrative unity before the British raj. The chief lure in Asoka's life, however, is the lofty idealism that one looks for in philosophers and prophets but not amongst kings. It was this noble and rare trait that attracted Lalaji and urged him to write the story of Asoka's life for his people.

Commenting on Asoka's lofty edicts, Lalaji shown himself a sensitive psychologist when he says that at times they smell of personal vanity, but "this is a failing from which no prophet or apostle, orator or fakir or leader of men could altogether be free, and if anyone ever did become so he of necessity made himself completely unknown to posterity."

Maharaj Asoka was very fittingly to be inscribed to Mahatma Gandhi, Lalaji asked for and obtained Gandhi's permission but the book was published without the dedication either

through the publisher's oversight or perhaps because the permission was received too late.

Maharaj Asoka ends with a forty-page dissertation on Dharma. This epilogue is of value to anyone curious about Lalaji's own philosophy of life, how this had developed when the links with formal religion had ceased, in other words his outlook in his liberated maturity, on God and Man, on Religion, on what he thought the right objectives of human life-on what are considered matters of ultimate interest and importance. For years he had kept away from the pulpit, but Asoka's pre-occupation with Dharma provided a befitting occasion for a discourse through which he might air his own views on this vast theme. We translate below a few excerpts from this epilogue to the monograph on Asoka:

"I for one do not believe in a God who from His remote seat somewhere on high rules over us day and night, and who for certain could be declared omnipotent, just, and merciful though a punisher and a destroyer, and who has to be worshipped with offerings of prayer and flattery. I do believe in a Being that is the Final Cause of all existence but whose nature nobody can ascertain. Who that Being is, or what it does remain unknown. The universe is infinite and beautiful and so must that Being be. But nobody knows or can ever know the Absolute. The teaching of the Vedas and the Upanishads which says neti, neti, 'not this, not this'.... to my mind carries a profound truth.... In great humility the Upanishads proclaim that he who claims to know, knows nothing.

But the religions which lay down that He is all wise and just surely insult Him if at the same time they tell their followers that this world is full of misery and that to be happy they should tread the path of renunciation. The life granted us is for living and not for endeavour to get out of the 'cycle of life and death' To prolong life and to make it beautiful, to make it spacious and enrich it till charity and love so suffuse it that living becomes love itself; to make life move towards such a higher and fuller living, and to take the

endeavour for this as real joy is the fulfilment of life and its very heaven. Towards such fulfilment there is nothing more helpful than Truth. As the Upanishads rightly lay down: there is no *dharma* higher than Truth. He who adopts this *dharma* will truly become *dharmatma*, and him Truth shall liberate from pride and vanity, from lust and anger, from avarice and all else that is mean and cramping. He ever lives on the heights, free and fearless and exalted and generous and overflowing with love. Fear may not touch him nor cowardice put its ugly stain on him. To him the whole universe will be the panorama of Beauty.

Did the Creator create Nature and Beauty for man to shun them as deadly poison? ... Could he have made his most beautiful creation, woman, as a thing to be shunned? Of course the religion of truth and love does enjoin that man does not ill use this embodiment of Beauty nor make her a slave to his lust.

And in this panorama of beauty what is the role of woman? This is a central question—more particularly in ascetic philosophies (prevailing in India for many centuries) which considered her to be an embodiment of evil or the root cause of man's fall and by denunciation often succeed in defeating their avowed purpose. Lalaji does not shun the question and emphasising the beauty of motherhood gives woman a noble and elevating role, and vests his own philosophy with added beauty:

“Woman is at once a marvellous phenomenon in Nature and a miniature of entire Nature. Motherhood is the most wondrous, the most beautiful, the noblest manifestation of the cosmos. For man there is nothing higher than the emulation of Nature in adding to his creative power.

Woman inspires love in man... The Vedas ask women to become the mother of heroes; but that is possible only when in obedience to the behests of Nature the Male and Female principles unite in the purest love that is free from all taint of a sense of sin.

To shun this creative duty is not *dharma* but the want of it.

It is woman again who teaches man that for the creative duty no risks-not even of death-are too great. What risks she runs when she creates!

Procreation is not the only form of creating. Discovery, invention, authorship, exploration, art and crafts all give play to the creative powers. To develop these creative powers to their utmost and to give the fullest play to them- this and nothing else is Heaven.

Spiritual realisation does not mean mumbling Allah or Rama in the forest, or merely chanting the Vedas or tolling the temple bells. The highest realisation is the portion of those who develop their creative powers and add to Beauty in this world. He who attains beatitude thus and sheds beauty all around, all his imperfections and defects are overcast by the superb Beauty.

To put an end to life by renunciation is the negation of beauty which is creative. Even death at the proper moment has a beauty all its own, but untimely death is a jarring note against which the whole of Nature protests."

Religion that the handiwork of priestcraft had not much chance of commendation from him:

"Whether these customs and creeds are of any use is not what I propose to discuss; but I firmly believe that they do not constitute pure *dharma*-they are all part of a social religion. To teach that he who does not accept them would be cast into hell is to mislead mankind..... For me it is not necessary to accept or to reject life after death; but I cannot ignore the life before death and from this we must extract the maximum-by truthful living..... I do not believe that a man should deny the present life for the sake of a future one. On the other hand if there be another life after death that ought to be the richer for him who lived this life and fulfilled it, than for him who denied it..... In its true essence the *Dharma* of life enjoins neither turning a fakir nor avoidance of woman. If a man finds life in fakirhood, let him turn fakir; I do not

stand in his way But nor can't accept his way as the highest form of life. To face the test and come out true, that to me is higher than running away from it to seek shelter in fakirhood. To flee from woman is want of manliness, to realise her beauty, her nobility and to comprehend motherhood and worship it—that is true life. To brave all dangers and to see beauty in them, to fill your mind and being with beauty to make it the very collyrium of your eyes' and to make you heart a perennial fount of love—this is the highest attainment. Than this there is no higher life.”

In the monograph on the Buddhist monarch he naturally, though just in passing, paid a tribute to Buddha. Him he regarded as pre-eminently great. He intended to do a separate work devoted to Buddha and his teaching—so through this book he announced, but was not able to make good his promise.

The last in this crop of books was an urdu monograph on Shivaji intended to supersede the earlier attempt of 1896. “The introduction tells us that the author happened to look into the sixth impression of his original *Shivaji* and could not help feeling that some of its facts and inferences had gone out of date and his first impulse was to cancel the publication outright, but on second thoughts he decided to replace it by a revised edition. When he sat down to this task he produced a larger book written *entirely afresh* with just the preface and epilogue of the original permitted to stand to reflect the author's 1896 point of view.

The intervening quarter century had brought to light much about Shivaji's early life and his later campaigns that had not been known before. The Persian material had been submitted to scientific systematisation by an expert like Jadunath Sarkar, and the Marathi sources too had been examined by a number of scholars. In 1896 the Marathi material had been particularly scanty; then he had to depend on a Maharashtrian friend reading out to him M.G. Ranade's Marathi work, *History of the Marhathas*, still in manuscript. The histories

written by Englishmen (like Grant Duff), then available, had depended almost exclusively on the Persian sources. Now their successors, like Rawlinson, had tried to check up the earlier work and verdicts with the help of the Marathi records and chronicles. (Lalaji had reviewed Rawlinson's book when it had come out during his stay in the United States.) Besides, there were Marathi scholars like Takakhau and Kirloskar who had made available in English the Marathi material and the Maharashtra point of view. A drastic revision, in fact, a rewriting, was called for in the light of these developments.

Besides, Lalaji's own horizons had widened since the eighteen-nineties. In June 1895, Tilak and his associates had given Maharashtra a new annual celebration-the shivaji festival which commemorated his coronation. A building up of Shivaji as a hero-almost as a Cult-had started. Then Lalaji approached his subject as a hero-worshipper and his presentation seemed naturally at times like that of an apologist and propagandist. Now the approach was more purely that of a student of history and the presentation more objective and critical.

In his new preface he wrote:

“A lie is a lie, dishonesty is dishonesty, treachery is treachery, selfishness is selfishness and imperialism nothing but imperialism, whether they are perpetuated in Asia or in Europe or in America, by Englishmen or Indians or Chinese or negroes or Japanese. To hold any of them otherwise because the author is our man is a sin. A sinner is a sinner whatever his race or nationality. Extenuating circumstances might be pleaded to crave indulgence for him, but they do not take away from his sin. We can also urge that moral standards have varied from age to age and that a man can only be judged by the standards accepted by his age.... Our own verdict about Shivaji we shall give only after laying down these general principles. In my younger days, under the intoxicating influence of a Hindu nationalism I formed an estimate of Shivaji's character which I give at the end of this

chapter. I would not say that estimate was false and now stands withdrawn; but I can say that what I wrote then is somewhat different from what I believe now-that estimate has not remained unaffected by time.”

Shivaji came out very well indeed in the critical and rather severe tests-as one whose achievement is a sure title for him to be reckoned amongst the great, whose private life was remarkably pure, whose high regard for woman's honour even in war and pillage never knew an exception, whose qualities of leadership and lofty character make his personality shine forth when compared with that of any of his contemporaries, or contrasted with that of Aurangzeb. But Lalaji could not accept the deification of Shivaji attempted by eulogists like Takakhau who could find no parallel in ancient or modern history to Shivaji's administrative genius and his talent as a leader of men, and who besides interpreted Shivaji's personal rule in the light of modern democratic ideas. To Lalaji Shivaji was an empire builder, rather than a nation-builder; his rule was not Swaraj in the sense of people's own rule; his ministers were the usual bureaucratic machinery employed by every despot, and not the representatives of the people, and though on the whole it was a benevolent despotism, Lalaji could not accept the high exaction from the cultivator-two fifths plus certain extras which brought it up to nearly one half of the entire produce - as a mark of benevolence. Great and genuine as his admiration for Shivaji was, Lalaji could not canonize him as a “champion of liberty”

He examined afresh the Afzal and Shaista Khan incidents and still could not censure Shivaji. The charge of ‘treachery’ was not proved. Nor could he condemn Shivaji's Guerrilla tactics. “For a group without resources and out to challenge superior organised force guerrilla warfare is the best mode of war.” He had the highest admiration for the Rajput's uncalculating recklessness but he knew too well in this world that expediency is a high virtue, for the lack of it can prove fatal. Judged by the standards appropriate to his own context

Shivaji comes out very high and that should be enough. They err who judge him by standards entirely foreign to that context. But this did not in any way mean that Lalaji's standards were lower than those of, say, the West. The insinuation in Professor Rawlinson's dictum that Shivaji should be judged by the standards of his age and his people (or country) did not escape Lalaji's notice and evoked from him an effective rejoinder regarding 'standards' in the West where even scholars of repute many have three different pairs of scales for weighing the moral conduct of nations—one for theoretical purposes and mere preachment, another for dealing with European nations and a third for damning the "lesser breeds without the law". The "appropriate standards" to Lalaji meant the standards by which empire-builders, whether in the East or the West, might be judged; and compared with the morality, personal or public, of Alexander, Tamarlane, Mahmud of Ghazni, Ala-ud-din Khilji, Napoleon, or Clive, Shivaji had nothing to be ashamed of. If he appears smaller, it is by the standards of Asoka and not by those of Alexander or Napoleon.

In his summing up. Lalaji divided great men into three categories. Of these the highest worked solely for the good of others caring naught for personal gain—Buddha, Sankara, Christ, Muhammad, Omar, St. Paul, Nanak, Dayananda, Gandhi, Asoka, Karil Marx Mazzini, Washington. To this, the highest order, Shivaji did not belong. The lowest hierarchy was of great men' who in self-aggrandizement had often been great tyrants like Genghiz and Tamarlane, Shivaji belonged to the intermediate category whose achievement, though inspired mainly by personal ambition, all the same did benefit the people.

Recouping at Solan

IT WAS ABSOLUTELY necessary that he be removed speedily to a cool place, to escape the scorching heat of a Lahore hot weather. Arrangements were fixed up at Solan, and within two or three days of his release he had moved to the hills. In a short time his temperature became tractable and he began to recoup. The faculty of quick recovery he did not seem to have lost with youth and till the end it was noticed that even after a grave illness, once the disease had been properly tackled, his recovery was swift and he could always resume his writing and public speaking and touring and fairly hard work sooner than his friends or his doctors expected-like a spring of coiled steel bouncing back to its original position the moment you relax the pressure. But at Solan though the progress of the malady was soon checked and he was pronounced out of danger, he was not completely restored to health. It seemed clear that his system needed prolonged rest and the entire hot season at any rate he had to spend at Solan convalescing and of course, combining that with a certain amount of reading and writing and of guidance and direction for the institution he was connected with. Occasionally he took part in political consultations too, for Abdul Kalam Azad and Motilal Nehru spent part of the hot weather at Solan. For a short while Jawaharlal Nehru also joined his father. They all met frequently, and anxiously discussed the new problems that had arisen-the Hindu-Muslim controversy and that around the 'capture' of legislatures. The idea was being mooted that a 'National Pact' should be drawn up as a fresh approach to the

Hindu Muslim problem, just as in a limited way a pact had been entered into at the Lucknow Congress. At the next Congress session to be held at Kakinada (in Andhra Pradesh), it was believed, such a pact would come up for consideration. Lalaji and Azad had several talks regarding the broad lines for such a pact, and it seemed they were largely agreed on these.

The political discussions with Motilal Nehru generally related to the shaping of the Swaraj Party and the need of educating public opinion about its programme of capturing the legislatures for the Congress. The Swaraj Party had already been launched, whilst Lalaji lay ill in prison, with C.R. Das as president and Motilal Nehru as Secretary. Even from prison Lalaji had been helpful. Now that he had come out he was of course expected to give all the help he could in his state of health. In particular the general election for the Punjab Legislative Council was to be his care. As a convalescent at Solan he chose and ran the candidates in the Punjab elections with the imprimatur of the Swaraj party, and the party had every reason to be satisfied with the victories he secured for it. Here it was not possible to win the absolute majority of seats as had been done in certain other legislatures, notably in that at Nagpur; but almost all the Hindu urban seats with some of the rural seats and a few Sikh seats were won for the party. More than this of course it could not even have aspired to in the peculiar conditions of the province. With the Hindu-Muslim entente no longer a living reality, the Swarajists in this province could not expect much success with the Muslims, and that meant half the seats. Again in the Punjab O'Dwyer's policy of setting up rural against urban had been deliberately adopted in carrying out the constituencies so that a large number of seats were all but reserved for the landocracy, and of course the landocracy in the Punjab was as reactionary as elsewhere. The seats won, therefore, though they secured no very effective strength for the party, were regarded by it as a matter for congratulation.

The Punjab Swaraj Party was put more or less under Lalaji's direction, though he was not a member of the Council himself (nor that of the Party); and not long afterwards, Lalaji had to tell Motilal Nehru that in certain matters the party in the Punjab would have to be given some latitude to be able to look after the peculiar problems of the Hindus (who were a minority in the legislature and yet the mainstay of the party) of this province.

Even apart from the peculiar difficulties in his own province, Lalaji had not been much impressed with the suggestion of an out and out obstructionist policy. When he had watched the Swaraj Party at work for some time (in the rest of India too, and not merely in the Punjab and even at the Centre). He became altogether impatient with tall talk of going to the legislatures to blow them up by wrecking tactics'

The 'non-co-operation form within tactic did not find much favour with the Gaya session of the Congress. The official historian of the Congress writes:

"The Gaya Congress was a battle royal between the two contending parties. It was not to be expected that a man of Das's personality with the support of eminent men like Motilal and Vithalbhai would tamely succumb to the spirit of the masses and submit to Council boycott. A party was, therefore, organised and a programme was drawn up. Das was to capture the Provincial Council of Bengal and Motilalji was to mount guard over Delhi and Simla. Maharashtra would look after Nagpur...

Das really had two precious documents in his pocket when he presided over the Gaya Congress; one was the presidential address, and the other his resignation of his presidency together with a constitution of the Swaraj Party."*

* A third document the Deshbandhu had armed himself with was Lalaji's 'Confidential' letter (sent from prison) setting forth his views on the Council's Programme. The letter expressly mentioned persons with whom Lalaji wanted him to share it. But Das broadcast it to all and sundry at his own discretion.

When the Gaya session was over, Das handed in his resignation, and while its fate awaited a further meeting of the A.-I.C.C. his party and that of 'no-changers' under C. Rajagopalachari's leadership opened their campaigns against each other with full vigour. By the time of the A.-I.C.C. meeting Abul Kalam Azad and Jawaharlal Nehru who were in prison when the Congress met at Gaya had come out, and their keen efforts to avoid a split succeeded in arranging a truce for a few weeks during which a way to reunion was to be sought. There was no reunion, however when the stipulated period expired, and since the A.-I.C.C. passed a resolution which was opposed by C. Rajagopalachariar and other leaders of the orthodox or 'no-changer' wing, six of them resigned from the Working Committee. Das resigned from the presidentship. The Working Committee was constituted afresh under Dr. Ansari's chairmanship, and a special session of the Congress summoned to face this situation in the third week of September under the presidentship of Abul Kalam Azad.

Lalaji was still convalescing at Solan when this session met and sent him the greetings of the Congress on his return from prison.

The session was causing great anxiety as it was generally feared it would cut the Congress in two, sharp and clean. Das and Nehru were taking all care to mass their full strength at Delhi and to marshal it with the utmost skill. On September 6 came Motilal Nehru's telegram:

"Dectors permitting you presence at Delhi when preliminary conference held 10th September will be invaluable will arrange your stay at Qutab only select parties seeing you there Wire. Nehru."

But Lalaji had to keep away from the Preliminary meeting as well as from the session itself.

Azad had been chosen to preside over the deliberations of the Delhi session because it was believed he enjoyed the confidence of both the parties. But it was becoming doubtful whether even that would avert a split. When Azad came out

of prison, his best efforts had succeeded only in arranging a two-month respite. Now the task looked rather beyond even his talents of mediation. But luckily another leader came out of prison just in time for the session and averted the threatening calamity-Mahammad Ali talked of a 'bird whispering in his ear' that the Mahatma himself would not fight against Council entry. He kept things beautifully vague; but the no-changers had no reason to suppose him to be partial to the other camp and the impression was created that Mahatma Gandhi had sent a message from prison to Muhammad Ali Through Devadas Gandhi, favouring a rapprochement. The Congress passed a permissive resolution which declared:

“Such Congressmen as have no religious or other conscientious objections against entering the legislatures are at liberty to stand as candidates and to exercise their right of voting at the forthcoming elections. And this Congress, therefore, suspends all propaganda against entering the Councils.”

The decision was reiterated at the regular annual session held three months later at Kakinada with even C. Rajagopalachariar supporting it. The decision gave the Swaraj Party the necessary latitude that it wanted; anything further by way of a direct Congress imprimatur might well wait for some time. The Delhi Congress also set up a committee of two to prepare a draft for a national pact. Originally entrusted to Dr. Ansari at a previous meeting of the A.-I.C.C. the task was now to be shared by him with Lalaji.

The prolonged Solan season at last came to an end. He returned to Lahore, still feeble in health but to some extent attending to normal work.

A Hakim Cures him

WHILST AT SOLAN, Lalaji got an attack of some sort of colic. A second attack, then a third-till they settled down into a weekly visitation-each more agonising than the previous week's. The solan and Simla doctors tried a course of emetine injections and various other things; but the attacks became both more intense and more frequent, and every attack left him feebler.

To get better medical aid he came down to Lahore even though the hot season was not yet over. Doctors Maharaj Krishan Kapur, Nihal Chand Sikri, Gopi Chand Bhargava, Lt-Col, D.H. Rai, Lt.-Col. Amir Chand-all these doctor friends called every day, some of them several times a day, and took counsel together and gave him the very best of their skill. He was put completely on liquid diet, confined strictly to bed, purged every day. Neither the changes in regimen nor medicament seemed to do him the least bit of good. The doctors all agreed that the trouble was seated in the gall-bladder. There was obstruction in the bile-duct, presumably caused by gall-stones. The many clinical tests warranted no positive evidence.

Major C.J. Fox, noted pathologist who after retirement from service had settled down in the Simla hills, had been seeing Lalaji at Solan, mainly to enlist his help in promoting his scheme for a tuberculosis sanatorium. He suspected that the mischief was being caused by Streptococci, and accordingly had auto-vaccine made and wrote that he expected 'great things' out of it.

The 'gall-stones' proved rather obstinate. The purges and liquid diet did not succeed in ridding the patient of the obnoxious things; meanwhile repeated attacks had enfeebled him, and if they could help it, the doctors would not take the risk of the surgeon's knife. Besides, neither of the top leading surgeons was available in that, season in Lahore.

Lalaji eventually gave the doctors notice that if they met with no success by a particular day he would have to try some other system of medicine. The doctors themselves were completely baffled, and without much protest from them at the expiry of the notice one or two homeopaths-such as could be found in Lahore-were tried. They too had no better luck and a Lahore Hakim-the late Shifa-ul-Mulak Faqir Muhammad, who besides being the top Unani physician of Lahore then, hailed from Lalaji's own Jagraon, and what is more, had been a pupil of Munshi Radha Kishan in his school days-was called in. Hakim Ajmal Khan whom he had in the past on several occasions consulted was at the moment away from delhi and not readily traceable. About one or two other well-known Delhi Hakims too inquiries were made but none of them seemed available. Then K.D. Kohli happened to hear of a "Nabeena Sahib"-the blind hakim who had not been in Delhi very long but had made a few near miraculous cures in cases diagnosed by allopathic physicians as appendicitis or colitis-and after a brief telephonic communication with us, Kohli rushed the blind miracle-worker to Lahore.

The aged hakim arrived next morning and with astounding self confidence took over charge of the patient, predicting in half an hour's time that the attacks would no longer recur; and that in two days' time he would be free to go back to Delhi.

The Hakim, it now appeared, was an elder brother of Doctor M.A. Ansari and had not been known much in Delhi because he had spend the best years of his life in the service of the Hyderabad durbar, and arrived in Delhi only recently, after a rupture with the durbar. He spent about a quarter of an

hour over Lalaji's pulse-the time that it took me to get his baggage properly stowed in his room-the hakim himself having been straightaway taken upstairs to Lalaji's room. When I jointed him, he had already made his diagnosis and prognosis and was emphasising, that he had spent 'a deal of time' studying Lalaji's pulse, that he was certain there were no stones anywhere, that the only trouble was with the humour rheum which has medicament would set right forthwith. He objected to the exclusively liquia diet, and far more seriously to the repeated purging. The very first day he insisted on a bit of solid nutriment; but as Lalaji felt too hesitant he seemingly yielded for just one day or one meal. Even then he had pieces of chapati mashed in the soup.

When the hakim arrived Lalaji was getting repeated attacks several times daily, and the anguish was such that we who attended on him found the sight of his writhing unbearable. What torture it had been that evening when K.D. Kohli telephoned from Delhi to suggest the Nabeena Hakim! Lalaji lay in the severest anguish when Dr. Maharaj Krishan after finishing his evening round looked in. Lalaji was no longer his patient, as the allopathic doctors had all retired. But he was permitted to allay the anguish if he could. He immediately took out his syringe only to find that his bag at the moment was without a tube of morphine. He rushed home in his car and did not find one there either. The chemists' stores were closed at that hour and it was a good while before he could avail himself of the night arrangements of one of the chemists' stores. All these delays when every second seemed an eternity of torture!. The injection was at last given and the pain somewhat dulled-it did not subside, for the repeated injections by now had rendered his nerves less responsive to the drug. That night the doctor stayed on till a late hour, full of the most worrying thoughts. Medicament, he was now sure, had completely failed and the only chance lay in a surgical operation. He did not feel very sure either of the patient's vitality for this or of the surgeons available having the high

skill needed; yet weighing pros against cons he made up his mind to commit the patient to the surgeons' care the next day.

The next morning the hakim took over charge, and after his arrival there was just one attack, very mild and lasting but a few minutes. This, the hakim declared, was a different kind of ache altogether, and he definitely claimed the anguish that had hitherto tormented the patient had already been banished for good.

The hakim's beside manners and personality-his cultural deportment and courtier ways, his gift of conversation, his self-confidence- had as much to do perhaps with the cure as the powers he produced from his chest of phials, his memory directing his sensitive fingers unerringly to just the phial wanted out of the vast assortment.

Two nights and three days he spent at Lahore and would not at all concede that he might be needed yet awhile longer. He left saying he would be glad to see Lalaji at Delhi in a week or ten days and then start a longer course to tone up his entire system.

The doctor-friends were very sceptical, One of them discussed with the hakim certain anatomical questions and declared him to be hopelessly ignorant. That the attacks did not recur for some days, the doctor was sure, was merely a lucky accident-the gall-stone having by chance shifted its position. But the fact remains that not once after that did those anguishing attacks recur.

Wherever the trouble lay, the hakim had effected a great cure. Almost overnight the Nabeena Sahib became known throughout the Punjab as a miracle-worker and soon patients from all over the province were flocking to his clinic in Delhi. For years he enjoyed a tremendous vogue. Whenever as a token of his gratitude Lalaji took some presents to the hakim, the Nabeena Sahib would protest: "Am I not already amply rewarded by my name becoming famous amongst thousands who had never heard it before?"

The Bengal Pact

SSOME TIME LATER it was suggested that the sea-side might do Lalaji good and Karachi was selected as being dry and salubrious. There he stayed for a while as the guest of Jaswant Rai who since *The Punjabee* days had settled down there to a prosperous business career. On December 8, 1924 Lalaji received at Karachi a telegram from Motilal Nehru which read: 'Abul Kalam Azad proposes important consultation Delhi 11th. Please join health permitting Nehru' This was followed up by another telegram from the Pandit: "Can reach Lahore on 12th wiring Das."

They met at Lahore for an exchange of views, this being necessitated by the slender likelihood of Lalaji's attending the forthcoming Congress session.

A few days later he left again for Sind to give the bracing climate of Karachi a fuller chance. For a few days he stopped at Hyderabad. During the previous visit he had had talks with Jairamdas Doulatram, Choithram Gidwani and the other political workers there, mainly about the problems arising out of the riots and the consequent search for a formula of adjustment. Lalaji found the Hyderabad friends very receptive to his point of view. At Lahore, before setting out for Karachi a second time, Lalaji had received letters and telegrams from Jairamdas stressing the need of his presence at Kakinada particularly for the proposed Hindu Muslim conference. "Dr Choithram and I request you to arrange a meeting of Hindu Congressmen before the 22nd, if the 22nd, H.M. meeting cannot be postponed". and this letter was followed

up by a telegram in which Choithram, myself appeal you attend Cocanada or Hindu-Muslim question will go wrong”.

Not intending to go to Kakinada, he met these friends at Hyderabad before they left for the Congress meetings. He rather liked that band of workers, particularly Jairamdas being impressed as much by his sincerity and devotion as by his methodical ways. Lalaji talked to Jairamdas and other friends about the political issues of the day, and about the peculiar problems of his own province and theirs. These exchanges alternated with chats on Indian history; he recollected that whilst working on his history of India during his imprisonment, he had wanted certain details of the first Muslim invasion of India and that he had not been able to get a copy of the *Chachnama*. He was keen on reading the *Chachnama* account in full. The English translation of this source-book having gone out of print, they could not lay their hands on a copy forthwith but promised to be on the look-out for one. Some time later they did secure a copy and sent it to Lalaji.

In spite of all temptations beckoning him to Kakinada he stayed on in Karachi. But when the Congress session started, he was impatient always for news. Early in the afternoon he would set out for a drive and for a stroll along the Clifton. On his way he would stop the car outside a newspaper office to get the latest news. The editor would come out all smiles, and when asked about the news would smile vacantly again and eventually say there was nothing of any consequence. This went on for some days before it dawned on us-I was with Lalaji at Karachi, and throughout the rest of this tour, and used to accompany him on the afternoon drive-that this gentleman's politeness did not permit his telling us plainly that his paper had no arrangements of a news service, and he had himself to wait for the day's news till the other evening papers came out!

However, certain item of consequence to Lalaji did come in the news during this stay at Karachi. Three stand out from

amongst these-one preceding the Congress session, one part of it, and one following soon after.

The first of these was the 'Bengal Pact' entered into by C.R. Das to get Muslim support in the politics of Bengal. The news of this pact came as a shock to Lalaji. He did not much like some of the clauses of the pact. He definitely thought it was short-sighted to think of a separate Bengal settlement especially at the moment when a national pact was being hammered out; for, the national Pact Committee, on which Lalaji had worked, had submitted a draft which was coming up for consideration at Kakinada. A separate Bengal pact in a way torpedoed the national one. Faced with two rival drafts, the Kakinada Congress withheld its own imprimatur and just let both be circulated.

To Lalaji far more serious than the merits of the formula adopted or the moment chosen was the fact that Das had done all this while deliberately keeping him out, and leaving him to get the news from the newspapers after the event, when all the time he (Lalaji) believed that they were working in very close mutual consultation. Like many others Lalaji suspected that in the talks leading to the pact Abul Kalam Azad had had a hand-an inference that today might seem more or less borne out by the Maulana's glowing tribute to Das's statesmanship as seen in this pact. If the misgiving proved true it was something serious, for had not Abul Kalam Azad been discussing altogether a different kind of pact with Lalaji, and in the discussions had he not definitely condemned what Das's pact now upheld? Abul Kalam was there in Calcutta sure enough; could Das have ignored him completely in entering into a pact with the Calcutta Muslims? Das at any rate had met Lalaji at Lahore only a short while before, and though they had talked a good deal about the Hindu-Muslim question he had given him no inkling of a local pact in the offing. Even if his pact had been conceived after their meeting, Das certainly had known that Lalaji was at work on a national pact and the least that he could do was to let Lalaji know how his hands had

been forced by local emergencies. Even that small courtesy Das had not conceded.

Abul Kalam may or may not have taken a hand in the pact-making. If he did, it was not fair-play, but what Das had done definitely pained Lalaji as personal injury; it went so violently against his own code of friendship and loyalty, and Das was such a dear friend.' In his political life his most intimate contacts had been with the Maharashtra and Bengal nationalists. When after long years of absence from his country he picked up the old threads at the Calcutta special session, Das was the head of the Bengal nationalists, and these and the Maharashtra group had stood together. At Calcutta Gandhi had not been able to convert either Lalaji or Das. They had both held out till Nagpur and then they had both made a settlement with Gandhi. Again while still in prison, both had begun to revolt against the orthodox programme of non-co-operation. Das had come out earlier and openly started the revolt; Lalaji had gladly given him all the help he could from his cell in prison. Since his release he had believed that Motilal Nehru and Das and he were working in the closest collaboration. Even more than to Nehru he had felt attached to Das who was for him the symbol of all his old and precious ties with Bengal, and who besides in all the stages in the political detour towards Gandhian non-co-operation and away from it had been so near himself—much nearer than the Allahabad Pandit who had accepted non-co-operation at Calcutta itself before either Das or Lalaji had done so, and who had come round to the Councils programme somewhat later than either of them.

Lalaji recollected also that Das had not been quite fair to him in circulating the confidential letters he had sent him from prison. In one of these he had with utmost frankness laid before Das all the misgivings created in his mind by talks with certain Muslim friends in the Lahore Central Jail; and though the letter had been meant strictly for Das himself he had heard reports that Das had not at all treated it so.

Some time earlier Joseph Baptista, the Bombay trade union leader with a sharp tongue and Maharashtra fondness for play upon words, had perpetrated the witticism that the verdict of history would be that the 'Dasses were Asses' Now Lalaji recalled that half in despair, half laughingly, and for days he could be heard repeating it to himself. The 'pact' proved a great strain, for though he was free to say that it had come as a surprise to him and that he did not approve of it, he could not give free vent to all his feelings; he had to restrain himself where C.R. Das was concerned.

From the Congress session itself, what amazed Lalaji, was the audacious proposal made from the presidential chair by Muhammed Ali that the 'untouchables' should be split between Hindus and Muslims-and this in the name of and as a contribution towards unity! This naturally perturbed Lalaji. So on getting up one morning he announced it as a solemn resolve taken on a sacred day-it being Guru Gobind Singh's birthday in fact-that he was going to start a nation-wide drive for the speedy removal of untouchability. He wrote out a longish statement to explain the background and implications of his resolve and then handed it to me to make out a telegraphic summary for the press, adding that this would enable him to see my aptitude for journalistic work (for he was then already thinking of training me in journalism). He could not promise Swaraj in a year, but the eradication of untouchability could be substantially achieved in twelve months. Civil Disobedience having receded, he had to turn to 'constructive work" and, here, as he put it, universities could wait, untouchables could not.

The last of the three outstanding items of news at Karachi came on the 12th or 13th of January and was easily the most alarming of all-the news that Mahatma Gandhi becoming a victim to appendicitis in the Yeravda prison had had to be operated on by Col. Maddock in the Sassoon Hospital at Poona. Soon after the operation was declared successful, but that by

no means ended anxiety. Lalaji decided to set off for Poona, and we took the boat to Bombay.

In spite of the strain put on him by these happenings, the sojourn in Karachi had been definitely good for his health. He did some reading or writing when he felt like it or attended to his correspondence, but did not have heavy work to do. The climate was salubrious, the weather fine, Clifton was a pleasant drive and the beach a delightful sight. Best of all, not many visitors turned up, and few came repeatedly, excepting T.L. Vaswani-with whom he occasionally exchanged notes about the *Gita*-and one other gentleman keenly interested in physical culture, who liked to give Lalaji tips regarding his health and presented him with a pedometer as he attached some importance to knowing how much work one's legs had done during the day. Of his own choice Lalaji occasionally called on Jamshed Mehta or Abdullah Haroon or Hatim Alavi, and sometimes, before the afternoon drive went round to some of the prosperous businessmen, Punjabis, Sindhis or Marwaris, to collect funds for the Servants of the People Society. But there were no crowds to face, no visitors keen on *darshan* butting in at inconvenient hours, and no public functions, except the grand garden party given by the citizens of Karachi in his honour.

In Bombay he stopped for a day, met a few friends and proceeded to Poona. N.C. Kelkar and his friends of the *Kesari* group received him with all the cordiality and warmth that his ancient friendship with Maharashtra entitled him to. His first anxiety being to see Mahatma Gandhi he hastened to Sassoon Hospital. The patient greeted him with a smile which in itself allayed half the anxiety. By then of course cause for serious misgiving was already gone, and though the patient was very feeble in health, his progress was quite satisfactory.

Lalaji was very happy to be in Poona and to recapture memories of the stalwarts who were no more and whose friendship had meant so much to him-the Lokamanya and Gokhale—the memories of his first visit to Poona in 1905, and of Gokhale's

being his guest at Lahore somewhat later; also the historic associations of Sinhgadh and Shivaji. The happiest news he got here was that Kelkar was working on what might be called a full-length biography (in Marathi) of the Lokamanya. He felt so happy and so perfectly at home, and of course he made the fullest use of the opportunity he got of a frank exchange of views regarding the new problems-the riots, and Hindu-Muslim unity and Muhammad Ali's proposal about untouchables. Besides the Poona friends, some of the other leaders also who happened to be in Poona (among them Gangadhar Rao Deshpande of Karnataka) because of the Mahatma's illness participated in these talks.'

Back in Bombay, he met many old friends, amongst them Vithalbhai Patel and R.B. Lotvala. He stayed at Seth Hindumal Dani's house on Walkeshwar Road, where Patel had come to meet him before he went to Poona. Later they met at Patel's office (for his public activity) in Arya Bhavan (Sandhurst Road), near Chowpati. In the course of talk Patel gave Lalaji his impressions of the Kakinada session and asked him where he would be going from Bombay. Lalaji said that at the moment he was keen on Calcutta so that he might tell C.R. Das what he thought of his pact business- "I'd kiss him and tell him that he is an ass and that I love him all the same." Patel himself did not approve of the pact, but as to the kiss of reproof, his comment was that Das was not person to relish that sort of thing.

On his way to Calcutta Lalaji stopped at Nagpur with Mr. Deshmukh, the barrister, and there he had an opportunity to meet Abhyankar-and possibly Moonje had also come down-so that between Poona and Nagpur he had in a way met almost all the leading met of Maharashtra and had full and frank exchange of views with them.

At last he arrived in Calcutta.

At he climbed the steps of that palatial mansion on Russa Road, with the Hindu pantheon lavishly represented by a vast number of icons lodged in niches on both sides of the steps

and at other appropriate sites, he must have thought again of Baptista's impertinent verdict of history; of his own wish to kiss Das and tell him that he had been an ass but that he loved him still, and must have been reminded also of Vithalbhai Patel's warning sounding like the last word on the subject.

In the commodious room in which they sat down to a chat, things did not seem to go according to plan. From the beginning the atmosphere for conversation seemed several degrees too cold to offer without offence the sort of compliment that Lalaji had intended to. After the customary greetings Das asked Lalaji about his health. Then Lalaji asked Das where his son was, what the young man was doing and what plans he had. Das gave matter-of-fact replies, said in absolute disdain that apart from the country house in Bihar (where his son happened to be)- 'his plans? Well, he simply is there and that's all'- all that had been left of his estate was the Russa Read house, and he could not say how long it would take before that also slipped away to meet his debts. Here Das was lofty as nobody else could be; for on the vanishing of one's wealth who but the Deshbandhu could look with such after unconcern?

After he had told Lalaji about his own affairs, Das asked Lalaji a few similar questions-of a domestic nature. Then silence set in. When 'breaking the ice' seemed called for, Das made up his mind and broke it with a thud.

D-"Well, what have you against me?"

L-"Mostly the way you went about it."

D-"That is just my way of doing things."

And the accents had an air of such finality that further conversation on the topic seemed useless, ruled out.

A long pause followed.

Somebody put an end to it-maybe this was Abul Kalam Azad who also came in-by offering another topic. The news had just come of Britain's first Labour Government, under Ramsay MacDonald. Would the new experiment make any

fundamental change? And who was this Olivier who had been entrusted with the India portfolio? Did Lalaji know him personally? What were his antecedents?

Lalaji knew Olivier but casually, possibly through the Webbs. for he was a Fabian and, it was said, had tried to govern Jamaica liberally. But Lalaji had no big hopes of him or of the Labour Government. He had noticed also that his friend, Wedgwood, had been in a way punished by being fobbed off with the Duchy of Lancaster. The suggestion was thrown out that it might be worthwhile someone going to England to gauge precisely the new possibilities. Would Lalaji care to?

Lalaji had no illusions about the Labour Party. The Deshbandhu had no expectations of big things from Ramsay MacDonald. He thought rather differently of Lloyd George-whom the Deshbandhu himself perhaps resembled in certain ways, in quick and decisive leadership, in a daring with which each brushed aside all inconvenient commitments once a particular course of action had been chosen; both had an amazing capacity for taking unexpected decisions and springing surprises. Of all the British statesmen, Das thought, Lloyd George was the one person really capable of doing big things; and he added he rather felt one day he would stage a come-back at the head of Labour. After all, his social programmes even in pre-war days had shown such leanings, and once he made up his mind, he would know how to awe the working-class crowds better than any of the leaders thrown up by the Labour Party. This prophecy was not fulfilled, but Lloyd George did on several occasions, after the Liberal Party had been all but liquidated in the years that followed, seem to be seriously seeking an alliance with labour. "Lib Lab" was a new coinage that went round for some time.

C.R. Das talked also a great deal about the ending of dyarchy and was optimistic about achieving this speedily. Not that he supposed that when his majority in the Bengal Council threw out all official proposals the end would be achieved; but it seemed there were some talks going on for certain

measures which might technically change the provincial dyarchy into something else.

On his way back from Russa Road Lalaji wondered whether, encouraged by Das's pact with Muslims, the Bengal Civilians too had started dangling before him the prospect of a separate constitutional advance for Bengal. Das, with his great gifts of leadership and his tremendous sacrifice made so cheerfully, might yet be unwarily led into a trap by those more practised than himself in the craft of high diplomacy—that impression on Lalaji's mind seemed to be the net result of the Russa Road chat. He had not been able 'to have it out' with him as he thought at Karachi that he would try to remove to load off his breast. But perhaps the load vanished in another way. He now adjusted himself to Das's 'way of doing things'. While admiring his great qualities and valuing his friendship dearly, he knew that his friendship henceforward must be put on a different basis, if he was no more to undergo the sort of disappointment that the Bengal Pact had caused him. The friendship certainly did not die. When a few months later repression started afresh in Bengal and Subhas Bose, without any charges brought home against him, was imprisoned under a mere executive fiat, Lalaji felt much moved, and as soon as he got the news he sent the *Deshbandhu* a telegram, putting himself entirely at his service.

The homeward journey too was punctuated by halts-at Banaras, Allahabad and Delhi. At Allahabad his principal object was to meet Madan Mohan Malaviya and to exchange notes with him—as he had done with other since his release and more particularly during this tour.

It happened to be an ardh-kumbh year and pilgrims were flocking to Prayag for this six-yearly event. Lalaji arrived there in time for a Vidwad Parishad convoked by Malaviyaji on this occasion at the Sangam (the confluence of the sacred rivers that makes Prayag holy). The Pandits from Kashi and other places had assembled there to consider the problems of 'untouchability' of those who were being claimed back on behalf

of Hinduism and to give a *Vyavastha* or verdict based on scriptural authority. Being neither a Brahmin nor a Sanskrit scholar, Lalaji had the franchise neither of birth nor of learning to have a say in this assembly. He just watched and listened. He too knew a thing or two about the *Smritis*-though he had read them in (or with the aid of) translations-and could confront the pandits with authorities that would not be easy to challenge or explain away. But he could never frame half a sentence in Sanskrit, and the Parishad recognised no other language. Nor was his less than nodding acquaintance with the sacred language of much help to him in properly following the proceedings. But it required no Sanskrit for one to make out that Malaviya whom all his political co-workers regarded as the conservative of conservatives in social questions was by many in this assembly taken for a rank revolution-monger! Again and again the text-flinging became riotous and it looked as if all the time half a dozen crazy badminton rackets were promiscuously battering half a dozen shuttle-cocks. When the august assembly was in a high mood, a dozen or more of its distinguished members would be seen rising in their seats and shouting at the top of their voices-*vayamapi Panditah* ('We too are pandits')

It was fortunate for the Hindu fold that the 'untouchables' never heard the Pandits in assembly, for their conservative wing in one sitting's speeches might have driven out more untouchables than had been weaned away by the proselytizing activity of Christian and Muslim missions in a few centuries. It speaks volumes for the unique patience and optimism of Malaviyaji that he was trying to carry even these Pandits along on the road of reform.

With the work being directed by the Shuddhi Sabha headquarters at Delhi, with Swami Shradhananda at the helm, Lalaji was probably acquainted well enough already, though he had no intention of taking a direct interest in it. The chief attractions of Delhi, therefore, were the new M.L.A's in Khadi who began to pour in for their maiden session. It would be

a sight to watch them at their new job and also there would be a further opportunity of meeting some of the leaders whom he had missed in his recent wanderings - in particular those from the south. At Pandit Motilal's invitation he attended some of the early Swarajist meetings for important consultations in which N.C. Kelkar and Vithalbhai Patel and A. Rangaswami Aiyanger besides, of course, the leader, Motilal Nehru, used to be the principal participants.

The khadi-clad, Gandhi-capped M.L.A.'s were a new excitement for the large retinue of the Assembly Chamber, but on the whole they took the liveried salaaming all right without embarrassment and yet unapologetic about their own white homespun livery.

One of the early things they wanted to do, after the swearing in and other preliminaries were over, was to demand the release of Mahatma Gandhi. The Congress President, Muhammad Ali, has said that he was looking for the 'key to Yeravda.' The Swarajists thought they might try and succeed where the Maulana did not appear to have much chance. On February 5 the question was to be debated in the Assembly; that morning Lalaji went to Pandit Motilal's Western Court rooms. His visitor's pass had been arranged. While yet they conferred the news came that the Government had ordered the Mahatma's release, and where they had been thinking of slashing speeches for the day's battle, they soon got busy with appropriate greetings to their leaders on his release, and in these messages some of them could not help claiming the credit for their party to have found 'the key to Yeravda'.

The Delhi sojourn provided occasion also for a discussion with Hakim Ajmal Khan and Dr. M.A. Ansari regarding the deterioration in Hind-Muslim relations.

"The sea-side stay in quest of health and the subsequent wandering about in many provinces beginning with the dash to Poona and ending with the return to Delhi and Lahore had been worthwhile. Perhaps this gave him a much better opportunity to study the 'lie of the land' after the ebbing away of

the non-co-operation campaign than attending the Kakinada session could have provided. This had also settled his priority no. I-the untouchables-for work in the immediate future.

The present writer had accompanied Lalaji throughout on this important tour, Lahore to Sind and back again to Lahore.

Fighting Untouchability

THE 'DRIVE' AGAINST untouchability conceived at the end of 1923 had had for its immediate provocation the outrageous proposal in Mahammad Ali's presidential address to the Kakinada Congress to split the 'untouchable' community between Hindu and Muslim missionary organisations. The suggestion really emanated from a wealthy Mussalman willing to give away a large amount of money for work on behalf of Islam in this 'field', and had been conveyed to the Congress by its Muslim president as a proposal that would eliminate one effective cause of friction. Before long it became known that the unnamed wealthy Muslim philanthropist behind the scenes was none other than His Highness the Aga Khan whose men and money in fact were already vigorous inroads into Hinduism in the worst of proselytizing traditions.

Jugal Kishore Birla's munificent offer of Rs. 5,000 a month had relieved Lalaji of the immediate worry of a begging campaign and he straightway set up an Achhut Uddhar Committee for work in the Punjab in which the Sanatanists might collaborate with the unorthodox. But the work was not to be confined to the Punjab. Lalaji set up an all-India committee with himself as president. The head office was set up at Sabzi Mandi, Delhi. The Servants of the People—the number of whose branches with new additions now ran to nearly a dozen—were out, almost the whole lot, to various districts for the Achhut Uddhar drive in the Punjab and the U.P. The number of whole-time workers under this organisations at one state ran to nearly one hundred. The work was confined mostly to the

Punjab, Delhi and the U.P., but the Servants of the People had its own centres outside these areas too. A remnant of Lalaji's much earlier work in this field was a stretch of land on the Ravi not far from the Shahdara railway station, near the *baradari*, that he had bought for creating a colony where some depressed class families might be settled and where a centre might be set up for educating them to better ways of life and to economic betterment through small industries. Other things had intervened, in particular his long exile. Now he thought many times of working out a scheme and putting the land to its proper use—a colony of the untouchables. This time however all the emphasis was on propaganda work through public meetings, lantern lectures, conferences, etc. amongst the caste Hindus to banish from their minds the idea of untouchability. The *baradari* land was eventually sold by the Servants of the People Society after Lalaji's death and the money realised went to the Society's *Achhut Uddhar* Fund. A part of the land remained with the Society and on this was set up on a modest scale an ashram run by the Village Industries Association.

Under Mahatma Gandhi's guidance the Congress had adopted the removal of untouchability as one of the planks of its constructive programme. Lalaji devoted his time and energy to working out this item, as it was one that appealed to him most in that programme. With him this was neither theological nor proselytizing activity. In fact his approach was in no way different from what Mahatma Gandhi had preached. Still critics who accepted the constructive programme sometimes found fault with Lalaji's *Achhut Uddhar* activity as communal work; presumably because it was not done under the Congress auspices. The little known fact was the Lalaji had offered his services to the Congress Working Committee to work on their behalf this item of the constructive programme. He had offered further that he would not burden the general funds in any way, but would himself raise all the money the work needed. The Working Committee never accepted or acknowledged the offer. But some time later Deshbandhu Das conveyed to

him that the offer had been considered by the Committee but the President (Muhammad Ali) could not swallow some of the names suggested by Lalaji for constituting a board proposed by Lalaji for their work, and he mentioned that of Malaviyaji as amongst those objected to. The Deshbandhu said he would talk things over again with the Maulana, but Lalaji never after wards heard from the Working Committee or the President or the Deshbandhu. Reliable reports reached him, however, that the maulana had remarked that the Congress could not permit a 'second Shardhananda' working under its own auspices. Anyway, he gave Lalaji to chance to make the Congress professions regarding untouchability good. There was nothing surprising in that, for was not Lalaji's resolve a direct counter-blast to the Aga Khan's suggestion that Muhammad Ali had presidentially commended? It is significant that Mahatma Gandhi started the Harijan Sangh a good while after he had completely cut adrift from the influence of the Ali brothers.

The Birlas had in the first instance promised money only for one year, but the fact is that they continued it till Lalaji's death and on a reduced scale even after that for a while. Then the Harijan Sangh was started and they had to divert their grant-and to enhance it. For the Punjab the Harijan Sangh was a sort of continuation of Lalaji's work, because gradually he had withdrawn his life-members from the Achhut Uddhar Committee, as they were needed elsewhere.

Once Again to Europe

WITH HIS UNTOUCHABILITY campaign properly launched, his 'life member' youngsters sent out to serve the 'untouchable' and to fight untouchability, and the necessary stock-taking and consultations with important men that he had been keen on carried out, Lalaji was feeling a bit freer. The Punjab elections he had run while convalescing at Solan and his Swarajist team in the Punjab Council had settled down to work as the principal group in opposition. In his wandering about he had also kept adding to the funds of the Servants of the people, and on his return to Lahore had found time to look into the affairs of the *Bandemataram*. On the whole he had reason to feel satisfied with the work done during the period of convalescence.

It was felt, however, that for a really satisfactory recovery he must have more perfect rest than this. After Labour's coming into office it had occurred to many that as the Congress leader with the best experience in work abroad and the best contacts in England (more particularly amongst Radicals and Labourites), Lalaji might usefully be sent there for a short while as a sort of informal delegate—that he could combine the interests of his health with those of political work if he took a holiday abroad. Suggestions to that effect came from England too. In particular there was a letter from Beatrice Webb. (Sidney Webb, later transformed into Lord Passfield, had joined the Cabinet, but Beatrice declined to be known as Lady Passfield) She rather thought some in the Cabinet would like to be told what might be done for India, and suggested that if would

be a good things if Lalaji could manage to be with them for a while though of course she warned him against expecting big results. "Labour is in office, but not in power," said she.

Solan and Karachi had partially put him right. A brief trip to Europe might restore to him all the vigour he needed for shouldering his many responsibilities. After all, at Solan, or anywhere in India, he could not get the perfect rest that his body needed now. Consultation with European specialists also might prove worthwhile. The Labour Government might not mean much but it was an additional reason, in a small way, for a visit to Europe in 1924, and he decided on one. He took a Lloyd Triestino boat from Bombay on April 9 1924.

It was a trip undertaken primarily for his health. The voyage did him good, the rest he got did him good, and he also consulted the specialists, particularly in the Swiss nursing homes. It was a pleasure to meet his old friends again amongst the older folk Shyamji Krishna Verma in Switzerland, the Ranas and Mme Cama in Paris, and amongst the younger people, Chattopadhyaya and Agnes Smedley in Berlin. Smedley whom he had affectionately dubbed 'panchhi' in his American days and who on the strength of that had signed her writing for Indian magazines 'A Bird' or 'Alice Bird', and who one day in a graphic style was to delineate Lalaji (as 'Ranjit Singh') in perhaps her best written book, an autobiographical novel called *Daughter of Earth*, had some time ago crossed the Atlantic, and, was at the time living in Berlin with Chattopadhyaya, both working for a communist world revolution. In England Lalaji met his Indian friends as well as the Wedg-woods, and the Webbs and other English friends mostly in the Labour and radical circles. He had no defined mission and did not do much public speaking or writing during this trip .

The whole of Many 1924 he was in England, living at Hampstead. He took an early opportunity to see Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald. He renewed his contact with Lord Olivier who on May 7 asked him to lunch at the Savoy. A few days later came a letter from Lord Olivier saying. "I shall

be very glad to have another opportunity of a talk with you” and asking him to lunch again at the Savoy. They met a good few times and the friendship continued long after the Labour Government had gone out of office. A man of broad sympathies and of wide culture, Lord Olivier could be very companionable. The chief good, on the political side, that came out of this contact with that Lalaji was able to make the India Officer realise the urgent need for reform in Indian prisons, thus making good the resolve he had taken as a prisoner in the Lahore Central Jail. For the rest, as Lalaji himself often put it after wards, Olivier was a “perennial wobbler”.

Early during his stay in England the *Times* one morning (May 5) carried a cabled message from its Calcutta correspondent saying that Mr. Gandhi proposed to lay down a programme of co-operation in the Councils and have it adopted by the next Congress, and that he would try to obtain majorities in the Assembly and the Councils. The news was startling and Lalaji could not readily believe it. Mahatma Gandhi was convalescing at Juhu and kept the pressmen guessing about his plans. The *Times* correspondent had ventured on a silly sort of guess. Lalaji asked Mahatma Gandhi about it by cable and the reply came:

“Never dreamt such thing. See no change of heart warranting co-operation, Gandhi.” This reply he had sent on immediately to the *Times*, to Ramsay MacDonald and to Lord Olivier.

The impressions he formed of the situation in England he sent on to Pandit Motilal Nehru as well as to Malaviyaji, with both of whom he was in regular correspondence. What these impressions were may be seen reflected in the following excerpt from a letter which Malaviyaji sent him some time later, primarily to keep him posted about developments in India:

“I have fully understood the position so far as the Labour Party is concerned. They will be glad to do something for India, but they have not sufficient power. They are not prepared to do anything for us for which they cannot secure the

support of the Liberals and the Conservatives. This support will not be given to anything which the Government of India will not support. The Government of India have become callous to public opinion in this country and they stand quite well with the public opinion of England. Unless therefore we organise ourselves much better and carry on a vigorous propaganda here, we have little hope of any substantial improvement in the situation. The Reforms Committee which includes Sir T.B. Sapru, Sir Sivaswami Aiyer and Mr. Jinnah will no doubt make many recommendations both with regard to the Provincial and the Central Governments which will advance us on the road to provincial autonomy. I am not sure that the Committee will unanimously recommend such autonomy. In fact I think they will not.

As regards the Central Government, the prospects are not at all cheering. But I have no option but to continue to work for the introduction of responsibility in the Central Government. I expect that all the three named above will support such introduction to at least a limited extent. But our success will depend on the extent to which we can organise public opinion on the subject and make it quite vocal. This demands unity among all sections of Indian opinion. But unfortunately there has been a big division in the ranks of Congressmen....”

Yet for various minor things Lalaji was asked to get in touch with the Labour Government. Malaviyaji’s letter, for instance, continues:

“I request you to revisit England before returning home. Possibly some aspects of our national problems may make it necessary that you should talk to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State and the Labour Party generally by the time you will be again in England. I have particularly in mind the necessity of reducing our military expenditure. I am sending you a few articles, written by K. Rama Aiyanger, one of my esteemed colleagues in the Legislative Assembly, which will show you the necessity of your trying to draw the special attention of the leading men of the present Government, and

of the Labour Party to the crying need of the curtailment of our expenditure. There are 27,000 British troops; there is no justification for keeping them up. I urged this in my speech in which I opposed the Finance Bill. The necessity of organising the Indian Territorial Force on a scale that it would serve as the second line of reserve has also to be pressed. This will eventually lead to curtailment of military expenditure. They may not grant us power. But why cannot the Labour Government try to understand the question of our military expenditure, and insist upon a reasonable reduction of that expenditure? If it will, it will make it possible for us to reduce the burden of taxation under which the people are groaning and will also make it possible for the Provincial Governments to be placed in a position to promote nation-building activities among the people entrusted to their care. There may be other matters on which you may find it necessary to speak to some of the English public men. On the whole I think it will be an advantage from many points of view that you should re-visit England before returning home.”

The letter went on to tell him something of the happening here:

“I presume you are getting sufficient number of our papers and that you are in full possession of the reports of what took place at Ahmedabad. It is difficult to forecast what will happen at the annual Congress at Belgaum. The Swarajists are going to meet at Calcutta early next month and Mr. Gandhi is to start on an all India tour to enlist public opinion on his side. Of course if he can put sufficient life and vigour into the non-cooperation movement, he will make a better impression on the Government than the Swarajists can by their work in the Councils at present. But whether Mr. Gandhi will be able to achieve what he desires is very doubtful. Yet, so far as he is concerned, he had no other course open to him. I told the Swaraj Party a year ago that Mr. Gandhi would follow the course he had decided upon. Except that I did not expect that he will be so strong against Council entry as he is.”

Malaviyaji emphasised to him the need for rest, and in particular asked him to keep quiet about controversies at home:

“Pray give yourself complete rest while you are in Switzerland. The work of *achhutoddhar* is going on. Ram Parshad is organising well. But much more has to be done yet..... I am fully alive to the necessity of our solving this problem as early as is practicable.”

But about developments at home he was posted much more regularly by Motilal Nehru, who was sharing all his plans at this stage more with Lalaji than perhaps with any member of the Swaraj Party. Nehru sent him all such details as he was unlikely to find in the Indian papers, of the negotiations between himself and Mahatma Gandhi, of meetings of the Working Committee and the A.-I.C.C.

During this visit to England he for the first time formally joined a socialist party. His outlook had no doubt been for a long time influenced by socialism and socialist contacts like those at the Rand School in New York, and his social programme for India, drawn up even whilst he was still in America, leaned distinctly the socialist way, but he did not think the moment was ripe for starting a definitely socialist movement or party in India. On his return in 1920 however he had put the trade union movement on an all-India basis, and presided over the inaugural session of the A.I.T.U.C. The next step might now be taken by joining a socialist party. In India a communist party was already there, but of course it was directed from Russia: the indigenous socialist movement was still to come into being. While in England, Lalaji agreed to join the Independent Labour Party; later on he made several attempts to create a socialist or labour group in the Legislative Assembly but met with meagre success. The only persons whom he could get to take some interest were Dewan Chaman Lal, Tarini Sinha and M.N. Joshi. In England however he definitely joined the I.L.P. Whilst away in Istanbul (or Constantinople as it was then called). he received a letter

from George Lansbury forwarding one from a. Fenner Brockway which said:

“You are quite to order to nominate Mr. Lajpat Rai for membership of the Central London Branch, although he might prefer to become a member of the National Branch, since he is not likely to be in London often.

He can become a member of the National branch by a minimum yearly subscription of £ 5. If you would prefer him to belong to the Central London Branch, however, the Secretary is J. Allen Skinner, 92, Oakley Street, Chelsea, S.W.3.”

There seemed nothing much to do in England. He had met old friends, perhaps made a few new ones, studied the attitude of the Labour statesmen, heard from them of their difficulties, and by some mental arithmetical process converted the face value of their professions of sympathy and friendship to their intrinsic worth. The only notable outcome was his joining the I.L.P. and getting Olivier interested in Indian prisons. So he decided to leave for six weeks' stay in Switzerland and a subsequent wandering about on the continent. He had had his visa extended to Germany, Denmark, Austria, Hungary and Turkey. Before he left England, Indian students and Indian doctors presented him with a purse, which later on he passed on to the Gulabdevi Tuberculosis Hospital funds. He had to think of his health first. and for this above all he wanted to spend some time in Switzerland.

Most of the letter from Motial Nehru reached him during his holiday in Switzerland. So also did this one from Mahatma Gandhi.

Dear Lalaji,

I am glad that you are at last where you should be. I hope you will not stir from that place till you have completely regained your health.

I hope you will not be disturbed by the happenings here. Co-operation between Swarajists and myself on the same platform is not possible but it is possible if each works with a separate organisation. The Congress should father only one

programme at a time. How can you look up to the Government and the people at the same time?

4-7-24

Yours sincerely
M.K. Gandhi

Lala Lajpat Rai,
Glarens, Montreuse, Switzerland

He had been keen on going to Constantinople. He had watched the Young Turk movement since its early days and admired its leaders. They were now in power, not in the vast empire that Sultan Abdul Hamid and ruled, but in their own homelands. They had had, however, to face tremendous difficulties created for them by the European powers. These had partially been settled in 1923 in the Treaty of Lausanne. So he thought he would get a good opportunity to watch how young Turkey was managing her affairs after her determined army had wrested power. He was welcomed in Constantinople and was proud to have friends among those who counted there. One of the Indian Muhajarins, Shaukat, Osmani, had recorded in his memories of the *hijarat* days how when he met Enver Pasha somewhere in Central Asia, one of the first questions the renowned soldier asked him was about Lajpat Rai and his activities, paying the Indian patriot high tribute as a leader.

Lajpat Rai's son, Amrit Rai, who had been studying in Germany had joined Lalaji. From Turkey father and son proceeded to Egypt, and after a few days' stay there set sail from Alexandria by the same Italian boat which Lalaji had taken from Bombay for the outward voyage, landing in Bombay on September 20, 1924.

In the Swaraj Party

“**N**OW, WHICH OF you three is going to make room for Lalaji?” was the somewhat abrupt question with which Shamlal Nehru greeted the three Swarajist Assemblymen from the Punjab—Duni Chand (of Ambala), Raizada Hans Raj and Dewan Chaman Lal whom he found chatting in the Assembly library. Shamlal obviously looked full of important news. He had just come to know that the rules for eligibility to the Legislative Assembly were about to be amended, and that it had been decided that the existing rule which disqualified anyone who had been in prison with a sentence exceeding six months would go.

“Anyone of us, and willingly.” was the Punjab trio’s reply to Shamlal’s query. They were all delighted that Lalaji would become eligible.

This unofficial forecast came early in 1925 during the Delhi session of the Assembly. Lalaji had hitherto been ineligible not merely because of his sentences of imprisonment, but also for his having been disbarred by the Chief Court. In 1917 during his war-time exile in the States the authorities had banned the circulation of some of his books and on the strength of this arbitrary ban, the Chief Court, without hearing him, had removed his name from its rolls. Of this additional disqualification few even among his close friends seemed aware and the term in prison was generally believed to be the sole obstacle. The question naturally arose whether a seat could be found for Lalaji if the obstacle disappeared.

The very day Shamlal had brought the news, Raizada Hans Raj sent a letter to Lalaji offering to make room for him. During the next few months he repeated his offer several times, leaving it to Lalaji to avail himself of it at the right moment.

In the course of that very session the amendment in rules was notified and it did not go quite far enough. The six months' limit was raised to one year, and as Lalaji had served an aggregate sentence exceeding that period, it did not seem quite sure whether he would be eligible. Raizada himself consulted some of the eminent lawyers in the Assembly-amongst them M.A. Jinnah-and they could not give a reassuring reply. Later on, during the Simla session, Sir Alexander Muddiman, the Home Member, was informally asked, and his interpretation made clear Lalaji's way to the Assembly; for, according to Sir Alexander it was not the aggregate of the different sentences but the length of each single sentence that was to be taken into account. None of the sentences awarded in Lalaji's case went beyond a year and he might therefore be deemed eligible.

Shortly after, Lalaji was taken ill at Solan. On his recovery he told Raizada Hans Raj that he had satisfied himself about the interpretation of the amended rule and made sure that he was eligible. The Raizada wrote out his resignation and came down to Lahore to place it personally in Lalaji's own hands.

About his other disqualification, some of Lalaji's friends sounded the Punjab authorities and ascertained that they had not intention of obstructing Lalaji's return-possibly it was presumed that in any event the disqualification could easily be removed by a representation to the High Court. Since it could be taken as a certainty that there would be no rival candidate to dig up this inconvenient fact and bring it to the notice of the returning authority, Lalaji felt sure that his way to the Assembly Chamber was now clear. So Raizada Hans Raj resigned and in bidding farewell to his constituency through the press, he thankfully recalled that he had been returned

unopposed, and he confidently hoped that Lalaji would be returned in like manner. Thanking his colleagues in the Assembly the Raizada expressed the hope that Pandit Motilal would find in Lalaji his "best friend and a true colleague".

When the dates for a by-election were gazetted Lalaji had to be summoned from Delhi telegraphically to Jullundur to file his papers. Lalaji and the Raizada were the only ones to file nominations. Lalaji had to preside over the Hindu conference, being held On December 6, 1925 in Bombay and thither he proceeded on the withdrawal day. That day (after Lalaji's departure) the Raizada withdrawing. Lalaji was returned unopposed. In the people (December 13) he offered his thanks to Raizada Hans Raj and to the constituency; even to the authorities for "having put no difficulties in my way".

His concluding words were:

"As to my programme in the Legislative Assembly. I must take some time to formulate it."

We have deliberately given a somewhat detailed recital of these minutiae, for in the subsequent controversy the question loomed large whether Lalaji was pledged to join the Swaraj Party by assurances given at the time of his election. In strict accord with the party code the correct thing for Raizada Hans Raj would have been to place his resignation in the hands of his leader and not in those of Lalaji. The fact in that in his repeated offers to Lalaji, during the best part of a year, the Raizada never laid down any conditions and never demanded any assurances. In correspondence as well as in talks his offer to resign had all along been entirely free from even a remote suggestion of any accompanying conditions. When he finally desired the Raizada's resignation, Lalaji did so in the full assurance that the seat was being vacated for him without any conditions for him as "Lalaji", and not for a member or prospective member of this or that party. On the Raizada's side the only public statement was the one in which while thinking his fellow-Assemblymen and his constituents he expressed the hope that Pandit Motilal would find in Lalaji

his "best friend and a true colleague". The hope that he expressed conveyed his own desire and not an assurance extracted from or given by Lalaji; and, even so, he did not explicitly say that he expected Lalaji to join the Swaraj Party. Was the "hope" in any way based on any "assurance"? For an answer we should record two further details—a little talk that preceded Raizada Hans Raj's statement, and a letter written in the sequel. After Raizada Hans Raj had written out and signed his resignation and placed it in Lalaji's hands he begged leave to say something—that he held Pandit Motilal in very high esteem and that it should pain him if he (Lalaji) should in any way inconvenience Panditji. Lalaji in reply said that Motilalji should find in him his best friend and true colleague. The talk was all too brief and in broad and rather vague terms. Later on when Raizada Hans Raj issued his statement to the press, he sought really to repeat Lalaji's own words—though he did not explicitly say so. Seeing in this a possibility of misconstruction and misunderstanding, Lalaji wrote to Raizada Hans Raj, that if in any way it was suggested that there was any condition or obligation accompanying his offer or his own acceptance thereof, he was quite willing not to avail himself of the offer, and though the vacancy had already been caused he undertook to have the Raizada re-elected, and to foot the bill for these proceedings. Raizada Hans Raj does not seem to have taken any further steps one way the other—neither withdrawing his press message nor explaining it to Lalaji, nor availing himself of Lalaji's offer to have him re-elected. Shortly after they had to meet at Jullundur for the nomination ritual; both filled in the papers and filed them but neither said anything about the press statement or the letter. After Lalaji's departure, Hans Raj filed his withdrawal and secured for Lalaji an unopposed return.

Lalaji was returned early in December 1925. He attended the Congress session at Kanpur at the end of that month without having committed himself to joining the Swaraj Party

—in fact at Kanpur he was very near parting company with Pandit Motilal. In *The people* for January 17, he said:

“I am not a member of the Swaraj Party; I need not become one, as being a Congressman I am a Swarajist for all practical purposes.”

When he was sworn in, he had not yet joined the party. In fact before joining the party on January 25, he had already attended several sittings of the Assembly. Five years prior to his formally joining the party he had accepted Pandit Motilal's invitation to join the Swaraj Party, and in doing so, had written to him as leader of the party.

January 20, 1926

My dear Panditji

I have to thank you for the invitation you have extended to me to join the Swaraj party in the Legislative. Assembly. Last time when I met you I said that personally I had made up my mind to accept your invitation; but that before giving my final consent I would consult my lahore friends and would give you a final answer on Monday next. Since then, I have consulted my friends, and this letter is the result of that consultation. While joining the party, I would like to make my position quite clear, so that there be no misunderstanding about it now or hereafter. As I read the rules of the party, I do not think my position is in any way inconsistent with them.

(A) I believe in council work. I am opposed to the boycott of councils and the assembly. I am not in favour of the Swarajists accepting offices in the gift of Government.

(B) I don't believe in wholesale obstruction and have never believed in it.

(C) I wish to retain my freedom of action on communal questions.

I understand that communal questions shall not be decided by a party vote.

(D) In disputes between labour and capital, I am a labour man; but as I understand, the majority of the Swaraj Party is also of the some way of thinking.

Subject to these observations, I shall be glad to be a member of the party

Yours sincerely,

Lajpat Rai.

He told Motilalji, besides, that his joining the Party would not make his newspapers, *The People* and the daily *Bandemataram*, controlled organs of the Party; these were to remain as independent of party affiliation as they had hitherto been.

The assurances and formalities apart, what was Lalaji's political stand about the time he joined the Assembly? In July 1925, he had started his weekly *The People and* though even before that he was writing frequently for the press and airing his views, now he was doing so every week and there could be no room from anyone to say that it was not known where he agreed and where he differed. When the withdrawal of non-cooperation started with the Chauri Chaura anti-climax, he had begun to re-think politics and even from jail he had sent out articles (his authorship of which was not much of a secret) giving the trend of his thoughts. This was clearly a Swarajist trend—that is, he desired Congressmen to capture the legislatures. Even from prison he had helped C.R. Das in laying the foundations of this party. When he came out even while convalescing, he had done his bit for the Swarajist candidates. In the Punjab the entire campaign had been his care. After that, when he went to England he had been in the closest contact with Motilalji, and had carried on talks with the Labour Government on behalf of the Swaraj Party. But he had not joined the party, had never been subject to its discipline and had valued and exercised his freedom to criticise it wherever he thought fit. He was an unofficial Swarajist in the sense that:

(1) he believed in a council programme and was not with the "no-change" school; and

(2) he did not believe in acceptance of office, and therefore was not with the Responsivist school.

To a hurried lumper he might easily appear to be nothing but a Swarajist, and yet to one rather scrupulous about essential detail his differences with Swarajism were clearly expressed, and you might even say, underlined in his writings, week after week. Starting as a heresy, and for a while being treated as such by the 'no-change' orthodoxy, Swarajism had in turn settled down into an orthodox church and developed its own Athanasian creed which demanded that "whosoever will be saved" must swear by "obstruction, continuous, uniform and consistent." This formula Lalaji had at no stage been able to accept. Like "Swaraj within a year" and by a named date it seemed to him obviously much too unpractical and to his ears almost had a ring of insincerity about it. In practice the Swarajists had often strayed far from the letter of the formula. They had installed V.J. Patel into the Speaker's chair and their everyday practice in the legislature was by no means consistently governed by the obstructionist canon. Obstruction in fact was just one of the weapons in their armoury. But they put certain rather severe limitations of their co-operation they would not accept 'office', and in its original wide signification this had meant that even committees of the house were under taboo. By the time, however, Lalaji arrived on the scene, the taboo was already slackening its grip, for the Swarajist leader himself, quite wisely (as Lalaji thought), had accepted a seat on the Skeen Committee on Indianization of the Army. This was a significant departure from the Swarajists' avowed creed—a serious violation of the taboo, and one that many expected would inevitably lead to other violations. In fact some feared (others hoped) that this might be the thin edge of the Responsivist wedge.

At times Lalaji felt that the Swarajist leadership was becoming too exacting in the name of discipline, that it was

forgetting all too soon the indulgence it had asked for its own 'heresy', that of late there had been too much talk of 'amputating the diseased limb". whilst the orthodox non-cooperation still could not convince himself that the entire Parliamentary limb calling itself the Swaraj Party was anything but a malignant growth on the body-Politic. In criticising what seemed to him the intolerant attitude of the leadership, Lalaji seemed at times to be taking the side of the Responsivists thought he was so little in sympathy with the quintessence of responsivism in the 1925 context, viz., the desirability of accepting office in a dyarchical constitution.

He himself had expressed misgivings about his having chosen wrong moment for his parliamentary debut. For, as he put it, the "situation was uncertain and obscure". In 1925 the discipline and solidarity of the Swaraj Party was being sapped by dissension, and an over-stressing of discipline was only making matters worse. Things came to a crisis with the Tambe episode. Shreepad Balwant Tambe, the Swarajist Speaker of the C.P. Legislative Council, was offered an executive councillorship and he accepted it. His action was trebly open to objection. It was wrong of a Congressman to accept office in dyarchical system. It was a had parliamentary precedent that a Speaker should be thus seduced by the Government. And it was beyond doubt a clear act of gross indiscipline, for Tambe had never cared even to inform the national executive of the Swaraj Party about the offer and of his own intention. Pandit Motilal was naturally much upset. What made matters worse was that Jayakar and Kelkar and certain other important Swarajists offered, if not exactly an apologia, at least an extenuation of Tambe's conduct. To them it was practically on the same level with V.J. Patel's appointment to the Speaker's office and Pandit Motilal's nomination to the Skeen Committee. It might be that the conduct of Pandit Motilal and of V.J. Patel was not censurable technically as a breach of the party's rules, but the crux of the whole thing (the two dissenters urged) was that

the rules had not kept pace with the real evolution of the party's principles and tactics. These had been in a flux and from obstruction simpliciter the party had, without openly admitting so, already travelled a considerable distance towards responsive co-operation and it was high time the party rules and leadership gave due recognition to the fact.

L'Affaire Tambe filled the political forum all through October. On November 1, the national executive of the Swaraj party met at Nagpur. Pandit Motilal maintained that Tambe's was not an isolated action but that it had the backing of many others and that in the Central Provinces-where the Swarajist successes at the elections had outshone those in all other provinces, the leader of the party himself had encouraged attempts at securing office. It was plain that the C.P. Swaraj Party was not of one mind regarding the Tambe episode, and a goodly part were in favour of the Responsivist heresy. In Bombay, Kelkar and Jayakar set afoot a move to get responsive co-operation accepted by the local Swaraj Party. The death of C.R. Das a few months earlier had been a severe blow to Swarajist leadership. Motilal had to face the storm so soon after. He must have missed in counsel the uncanny intuition of C.R. Das, and in action his gigantic dynamic force. The A.-I.C.C. met at Nagpur and the meeting ended in a patched up truce. But, within a few days this was followed by resignations of Kelkar and Jayakar from the Executive. Because they complained that the leaders had violated the truce by persisting in attacks on Responsivists. They resigned so that they might be free to air their views.

Thus the storm still continued to rage when Lalaji was returned by the Jullundur Constituency

Though he was himself opposed to experimenting with offices Lalaji's sympathies lay very largely with the Responsivist group. There were ties of personal esteem-a legacy from Tilak's days, and Kelkar and Jayakar and the Maharashtra group in general more or less shared his outlook regarding the need for a Hindu organisation. But more strictly

relevant to the questions at issue was fact that the talk of “uniform, continuous and consistent obstruction” was to Lalaji even more abhorrent than that of office. Besides at a time when a big campaign like that of non-co-operation was not in progress, when the leaders themselves were groping in the dark and policies and principles seemed to have been thrown into the melting pot-at such a time he felt it was not wise to stifle all difference of opinion in the name of ‘discipline’. Rather, freedom for a cold scrutiny of all doings seemed more than ever needed so that a clarification might be possible. Jayakar complained of the ‘hectoring’ tone of the leader of the Swaraj Party and there were many who, whilst not sharing Jayakar’s responsiveness, felt that the leader was invoking ‘discipline’ too often and all too readily, and who did not like to see him set up in the role of a political saw-bones ready to lop off whatever he suspected of being a “diseased growth”

The Responsivists were getting a certain measure of sympathy and support from Lalaji even though he himself was neither enamoured of their label nor convinced that the acceptance of office under the dyarchical constitution would be a wise step. In fact he was not completely reconciled even to the acceptance of the Speakers’s office, though here experience soon allayed his apprehensions for which the credit we suppose should go to the genius of V.J. Patel who filled the office with dignity and yet made himself useful to the cause to an extent beyond the best expectations.

This feud inside the Swaraj Party was thus leading to an internal crisis when Lalaji arrived in the Assembly. Not being a partisan, and in fact not being even a member of the party, he was for a while of use as a moderating influence. After filing his nomination papers he had proceeded to Bombay to preside over the Hindu Conference, for which M.R. Jayakar had been chosen Chairman of the Reception Committee. Pandit Motilal and the President-elect for the next Congress session. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, were also present in Bombay, and after much

discussion in which Lalaji's was an effective role a truce was arranged.

But the "cease-fire" did not mean a settlement. It afforded an armistice; whether a settlement was possible could only be decided at the Congress session at Kanpur at the end of the month.

And a settlement formula seemed as far away as ever when the Congress assembled at Kanpur and Sorajini Naidu took over from Mahatma Gandhi. At the end of his term, the Mahatma retired from the political arena devoting a whole year to his ashram and to the direction of his pet constructive programme. The Congress organisation he now handed over to the Swarajists-completing the surrender he had started some months earlier. This surrender had begun with a bare tolerating of the Swarajist heresy of a parliamentary programme; and even for their being tolerated within the pale, the Swarajists had had to pay a price in the form of especial support of the khadi programme. At Belgaum, when Gandhi presided, they effected a settlement with him by accepting the 'khadi franchise' for membership of the Congress. When a few months later the A.-I.C.C. met at Patna, it was clear that the Swarajists regarded the franchise as unworkable, to put it bluntly, as a nuisance, and some of the no-changers indulged in plain-speaking and said that the Swarajists had never been sincere in accepting the franchise. Gandhi himself was in the mood to yield further, and even waiving aside the question whether the A.-I.C.C. had any jurisdiction to tamper with the resolution passed by the plenary session, sacrificed his pet, the spinning franchise, as a peace-offering and as a gesture of generosity. At Kanpur he completed the surrender by handing over the Congress machinery to the Swaraj Party. Hitherto the Swaraj Party had managed the elections on its own, with the barest sufferance from the Congress; now the elections were to be run fully with the Congress imprimatur. The parliamentary programme had hitherto been an affair of the Swaraj Party only; now it became the care of the Congress

as such. The Swarajists thus got the entire Congress prestige, machinery and funds at their disposal. The Congress now accepted the responsibility of whatever they did as a parliamentary party, and of course, this also meant in a way that for their doings they were now accountable before the entire Congress. The Swarajist camel was now in possession of the Arab's entire tent. The surrender completed, Gandhi retired to Sabarmati to devote himself to the charkha and the promotion of the homespun.

But the principal resolution of the Kanpur session not merely installed the Swarajists in power in the Congress, it also laid down a programme for them. And here controversy again popped its head: will it be an obstructionist programme or a responsivist one?

All attempts at finding a via media failed. Pandit Motilal would not tolerate the Responsivist label, nor would he brook any formula that might expressly or by implication tolerate acceptance of office. Within the limitations thus set it did not seem possible to satisfy Kelkar and Jayakar.

As in 1907 at Surat and in 1920 at Nagpur, Lalaji was the question-mark of the Congress session. He had not even joined the Swaraj Party; for his unopposed election to the Assembly he had not had to ask for party nomination or to appeal in the name of that party or its programme, and in his writings in the press since his election he had quite freely criticised some of the Swarajist doings and doctrines. The Responsivists got a certain measure of support from him, but he was not attached to their group and had not accepted either their label or their faith in capturing office. In his home province there was no question of office for the Swaraj Party; nor were there any Responsivists among his Punjab lieutenants and friends. In fact, their full pressure was exerted in favour of a settlement with Pandit Motilal. The Responsivists, on the other hand, were bound to feel let down by him should he settle with Nehru.

When the Swarajists, first went to the Legislative Assembly, with the support of the Independent Party, they had offered terms of settlement to the Government. This had happened on February 18, 1924 and all the "innocent souls" in the Congress believed that the Swarajists would just present that demand-an 'ultimatum' as some chose to call it-and be done with the Assembly for good. The demand had been presented and for the best part of two years there had been no indication that it was going to be accepted; meanwhile those who had been anxiously waiting for the final exit of Congressmen from the Assembly had with surprise and with misgivings watched the progressive dilution of the original obstructionist programme, till it had come down to acceptance even of a nominated seat on the Sken Committee. Now that the next general election was in sight, the Swarajists once again began to think of the much deferred break over non-acceptance of the "National Demand". The draft resolution for the Kanpur Congress laid down that they should walk out of the Assembly and go to the country and devote themselves to the furtherance of the constructive programme. Such a gesture, it was believed, would impress the voters' imagination and thus secure for the party even more glorious triumphs at the polls than those of the 1923 elections.

Such a programme was not much to Lalaji's liking. It seemed he would rather go with Malaviyaji and Jayakar and Kelkar, and then there break with the Swaraj Party-which would now mean with the majority party of the Congress itself. But pressure was brought to bear upon him, particularly from his Punjab friends, to avert such a happening. Within the framework of the draft resolution. Pandit Motilal was willing to consider modification of detail, and friends urged that Lalaji must come to a settlement with Motilalji. At Nagpur too the Punjab contingent had insisted that he must settle with Gandhi. But there was this difference-he himself was anxious to arrive at a settlement with Gandhi; for, he accepted

the principle of non-co-operation, and was all for starting a big non-co-operation campaign; only certain details were unacceptable to him. His own inclinations and commitments led him much further away from the Nehru programme in December 1925 than they had done from the Gandhi Programme four years earlier. Negotiations led to a breaking-point again and again, but common friends tirelessly ran to and fro and again and yet again brought Panditji and Lalaji together to arrive at a settlement. At Lalaji's insistence the draft resolution was changed in several of its provisions; in particular it was provided that the Swarajist members of the Legislative Assembly and the Council of State shall vote for the rejection of the Finance Bill and immediately after leave their seats. Till then they could function as they had hitherto done under their party rules. Also it laid down that

“It shall be open to the Special Committee to allow the Swarajist members - to attend the legislatures when such attendance is in its opinion essential for some special or unforeseen purpose”.

In other words, of the budget (or New Delhi) session only the fag-end was being risked, though the brief, much less important session at Simla would be under interdict, and if in all likelihood the special committee deemed it of unusual importance it would ask the Swarajist Assemblymen to attend it. This was the compromise resolution that Pandit Motilal moved and Lalaji supported. Malavijaji moved a briefly worded amendment which reads:

“That the work in the legislatures shall be so carried as to utilise them to the best possible advantage for the early establishment of full responsible Government, co-operation being reverted to when it may be necessary to advance the national cause and obstruction when that may be necessary for the advancement of the same cause.”

Jayakar, while seconding the amendment, announced his own and Kelkar's resignations from the Assembly and Moonje's from the C.P. Legislative Council.

A break had thus come-not with Motilal Nehru, but with Kelkar and Jayakar-and this was no small wrench to Lalaji. Perhaps if his own Punjab lieutenants had not been so keenly insistent he would have acted differently. But Lajjavati and Santanam and Achint Ram had in beseeching him done their utmost and it was not so easy for Lalaji to ignore their earnest entreaties. Perhaps if these lieutenants had fully taken into consideration their leader's commitments with Jayakar and the Poona group, or realised how ill at ease he would feel after a break with them, they might not have been so insistent. The Kanpur resolution in its final form had enough elasticity to be deemed not completely inconsistent with his own assessment of what the political situation required, but he would not have liked to break with Jayakar and the Poona group. On the merits of the resolution he wrote in his paper that the Kanpur session had "brought back the Congress into its own" as all political work was hence forth to be done "in the name and under the guidance of the Congress. The Swaraj Party had been dominating the legislatures; outside it had no organisation worth the name." On the anomaly of such a self-contained party with no one except the electorates to give account to, his comment ran: "A good many Swarajists did not care at all for the Congress Committees, they paid no subscription, attended no meetings and did nothing to further the cause of the Congress. The only authority they looked to and cared for was their leader. In fact, the Council Swaraj Party had members who were not Congressmen. The Kanpur resolution has changed all this.

In current controversy the two concrete recurring issues were-obstruction and office. On the first of these he reiterated his stand: "I am very strongly opposed to the boycott of Councils and also to the policy of wholesale obstruction in the Councils. I believe that the councils should be worked for what they are worth in the same way in which they have been worked by the Swaraj Party during the last two years."

And on the acceptance of offices: "I am still of opinion that Nationalism requires that there should be at least one party of Indian politicians who would not accept any high office in the gift of the Government. In doing so, Indian Nationalists, are only following the historic example of Irish Nationalists."

The Kanpur resolution was in no way opposed to such an approval. But it could be asked, "What is the meaning of that part of the resolution which requires the Swarajists, after the next session, to come out of the Councils and appeal to the country?"

Lalaji's interpretation (and justification) of this provision was: "As I understand it, the object is to make a striking demonstration. A helpless people like ourselves who have no material sanction behind their demand cannot altogether banish demonstrations of this kind from their programme. In the history of Indian Nationalism this has been done several times, even long before Mahatma Gandhi's movement was born. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta once left the Council with all his followers as a protest against the Government attitude.... Mr. Shastri left the Council after the Viceroy had rejected his resolution about the administration of Martial Law in the Punjab. The Swarajists are going to the country for the new elections. Their chief work in the existing Assembly has been to unite with other parties in putting forward their minimum demand for the change of the Constitution. I see no objection on principle to the course contemplated by them. They want to show to the Indian public, and to the world in general, that they have done everything possible to come to terms with the British Government and the Government has invariably treated their advances with contempt."

Assessing the gains of the Congress, Lalaji wrote: "I think the one permanent gain of the Congress session has been that the Congress has come into its own. So far as political work is concerned, it has been non-est for the last three years. The whole of the political work was done by the Swaraj Party. Consequently the latter loomed large and the Congress was

overshadowed by it. The Swaraj Party will not be practically abolished. The Congress Executive will control and guide the policy of those who seek election to the Councils and the Assembly in its name and under its prestige. This is a decided advantage both from the tactical and practical points of view.” and he added “though it is not entirely free from risk.”

However convincing this might have sounded, the fact is that the leaders of neither of the two schools in conflict were satisfied, and, on neither side could be seen the requisite good will and trust needed for making a compromise a success. Lalaji himself had been pressed rather overmuch by his own Punjab lieutenants-particularly by Santanam and Lajjavati not to part company with Pandit Motilal, and somehow to evolve or accept a compromise. The sequel showed that such pressure had not yielded an enduring settlement.

One notable little event was an innovation at this session-the ceremonial hoisting of the national tricolour. Hardiker's Hindustani Seva Dal was by now regularly functioning and Lalaji was chosen for unfurling the flag and taking the salute.

But as could have been anticipated, the Maharashtra group were sore. And not long after Lalaji had to complain about the sour comment he was getting from them. He wrote in *The People*:

“My Mahratta friends appear to be very angry with me. Ever since the Kanpur Congress, the *Mahratta* has been at me in some way or the other. In every issue it has some fling at me. I have never replied and do not intend to do so now. My respect for the attachment to Messrs Jayakar and Kelkar has not in any way been affected by the differences in our policy. The Poona Maharashtrians and myself have been life-long friends and it will pain me immensely if ever I have to say anything unkind about them. I must resist that temptation to the best of my capacity. I am confident that we shall work on the same platform and with the same mutual good-will as we have always done in the past. The present differences are only temporary. I do not think sarcasm and

ridicule ought to be employed against friends and that is my only reply to the last fling in the *Mahratta*.”

He was being invited to preside over a Hindu Conference in Burma. He accepted the invitation but asked the organisers to put off the conference till after the New Delhi session. But (as he wrote later on in *The People*) “the desire to see Burma, and be finished with it prevailed.” This was somewhat natural as he had never been to Burma after 1907, and then, being kept in captivity had only aroused his curiosity about Burma without an opportunity to satisfy it. Possibly also he wanted to work off the rather melancholy effect produced, on him by the Kanpur developments and on second thoughts he hastened compliance with the Burma summons. Accompanied by Achint Ram from Kanpur, he proceeded to take the steamer that was leaving Calcutta on New Year’s Day.

He met his old burmese friends, and made new contacts among them and of course he met and heard the Indian settlers there and gave them what advice he deemed fit regarding their problems. Above all he visited Fort Dufferin and the P.W.D. Bungalow inside that Mandalay fort in which he had been kept a prisoner.

He saw the pagodas and the images, the ancient ones as well as the new shrine, then being built for the relics that the British authorities at Peshawar had presented to the Burmese priests.

His jottings published in *The People* had some interesting observations about the Burmese manners and morals, the picturesque costumes even of men and the extraordinary long hair of the women folk-streaming down to the ankles-”and are even longer than that.” He heard that when some time ago the patriot priest Uttama was released from prison..... “young Burmese ladies, made him pass through a double row of themselves on a path covered by their hair, which they stretched along the path.” This beat all the emotional doings of crowds for their leaders that he had witnessed in his own country!

The Indian community were rather perturbed over the legislation then pending regarding expulsion of non-Burmese. With his keen sense of realities and his customary candour he summed up the situation facing them: "The Indian has had his time. He is no longer essential. The country can be governed and managed without his help and co-operation. In fact, the Anglo-Indian rulers, merchants and manufacturers would be happy if the Indian is eliminated from Burma altogether". He frankly said that "the problem of Burma altogether." He frankly said that "the problem of Burma must be decided in the interest of Burma and the Burmese and not of anybody else." He advised the Indian community therefore to "remain there only as Burmans". completely indentifying themselves with the Burmese, so that they would not have to ask for special representation and the Burmese not to treat them as aliens. This counsel of perfection was never adopted and the result was seen in the sufferings of the Indian community when to 1942 they were forced to flee to India before the ourushing tide of a Japanese invasion.

From Burma he returned to New Delhi to attend the Assembly session which started in the latter half of January 1926. A few days later, as we have seen, he formally joined the Swaraj Party. During this session he made a notable contribution by participating in several important debates-when first Indian Traders-Union Bill came up and when a resolution on employment came up, and yet another (Mr. Shafee's) regarding Political Prisoners and exiles. The last-mentioned touched the personal chords, recalling what he had undergoing and claiming that no one else in the House was better qualified to speak on the motion out of personal experience.

"Practically, all the three clauses have applied to me at some stage or other of my life. In 1907 I was deported under Regulation III of 1818. In 1921 I was convicted of a crime which the Government of India afterwards declared was not a crime. The same year I was again convicted of a crime which the Government Advocate said had not been proved. When I

wanted to return from America I was treated as an exile by the refusal of a passport.”

While yet this session was on, the Hindu Mahasabha met at Delhi under the presidentship of Raja Narendranath. Lalaji took a leading part in its proceedings. In fact, the Mahasabha police was then being shaped mainly by Malaviyaji and Lalaji Raja Saheb as President had been, in the first place, their joint choice. A strong section in that organisation favoured the idea that the Hindu Mahasabha should run candidates on its own ticket in the general election due in a few months. Lalaji (and Malviyaji) opposed this policy, and following his lead, the delegates decided against the proposal except to a very limited extent, that is, where the local contingencies absolutely demanded that the Mahasabha should be represented by its own nominees.

In March while the Assembly session was still in progress. the A.-I.C.C. met at Delhi, and substantially altered the walkout provisions of the Kanpur resolution. The course now decided upon was that the walk-out should not be put off till the rejection of the Finance Bill. The Kanpur Resolution was sought to be amended. Lalaji objected that the A.-I.C.C. had no jurisdiction to amend the resolution passed by the plenary session. The objection was accepted but the sponsors of the new move thereupon shifted their ground and said that they ‘interpreted’ the Kanpur resolution as laying down the latest date and that an earlier walk-out was not contrary to its text. Lalaji took exception to the ‘interpretation’, but was outvoted. At Kanpur he had insisted that the walk-out should be resorted to only after the throwing out of the Finance Bill. That provision now having been abrogated, he was in a way free to absolve himself of the Kanpur commitments. In actual fact the A.-I.C.C. resolution cut short the party’s attendance in the Assembly only by a few days-it was already near the fag end - Lalaji wrote in his paper that if he had his way he would have put off the walk out till the August session-but “the die has however, been cast”

As Workers' Delegate at Geneva

“SIMPLIFICATION OF INSPECTION of emigrants on board the ship” might be a very fit problem to figure as the chief item on the agenda paper for an international conference at Geneva called by the International Labour Office in May 1926; but what exactly was Lalaji's interest in the details of inspection of emigrants? Perhaps these interested him even less than the clauses of the India Bill for which in 1914 he had gone as a Congress delegate to London. Then as now he was far more interested in the bye-products. Above all, at such a conferences workers' delegates from all over the world would assemble, and whatever the agenda, he did value a comradely handshake with some of them.

Lalaji's active participation in the Indian trade union movement had started, as we have already seen, in 1920 when he presided over the first session of the Indian Trade Union Congress at Calcutta. After that he continued on the national executive of the Trade Union Congress and he did his bit in important consultations. He took some interest in the organising of trade unions in the Punjab and the N.W. Railway strikers received guidance and support from him, but on the whole he did not find conditions such that with the limited time that he could find because of his other commitments, he might be as useful to the movement as he would like to be. Also as he thought “non-co-operation” could not at that stage suit the working class, he resigned his AITUC office long before completing his term. It was, however, his heart's desire to lend a helping hand to the building up of the trade union

movement. When an opportunity presented itself, he sent two of his U.P. young men from among the Servants of the People to Kanpur to work for the Mazdoor Sabha there. Both of these, Harihar Nath Shastri and Raja Ram Shastri not long after became important trade union leaders. From his newspapers, particularly from *The People*, the Labour and Socialist movements in those early stages received valuable support. When he arrived in the Assembly, he was soon thinking of a parliamentary labour group. That is why, in his letter to Pandit Motilal accepting the invitation to join the Swaraj Party, he specifically mentioned that he would keep himself free to voice the workers' point of view. His idea was that a labour group for certain specific purposes might be formed in the Legislative Assembly, even though for purposes other than those specified its members might belong to different parties. Congress, Liberal, Muslim League or Independent. N.M. Joshi and D. Chaman Lal and he himself were to be the nucleus to get things started. He had several talks with them and with Tarini P. Sinha, but somehow the plans were deferred and the labour group was not inaugurated.

The setting up of the ILO as a League of Nations offshoot had been one of the important reasons given in Lalaji's presidential address for creating without further delay a national trades union body in India. C.F. Andrews, though he did not participate in the inaugural session in deference to the wishes of Mahatma Gandhi, who thought the time not yet ripe for this, had also felt likewise. When a couple of years later he presided over the AITUC, he too emphasised the importance of ILO to the Indian working class, and it was under his presidentship that Lalaji was named the workers' delegate for the conference in Geneva.

The question was raised by doctrinaire non-cooperationists whether the nomination to the International Labour Conference could be accepted by a Congressman, and if it could, whether after the walk-out from the Assembly it could still be availed of with propriety. In fact, at the A.-I.C.C. meeting in March at Delhi

the question was raised whether. V.J. Patel, the Speaker, should also not leave the Assembly, and whether Pandit Motilal could be permitted to continue on the Sken Committee, but since discussion on Lalaji's nomination as workers' delegate for the International Labour Conference was disallowed by the Chair, the House decided that Patel should continue in the Assembly as Speaker, and that Nehru could retain his seat on his own. Both the President of the Congress and the leader of the Swaraj Party were quite clear that Lalaji's selection for the International Labour Conference was clearly outside the purview of the ban on offices, etc. Lalaji himself was absolutely clear that he was going as the workers' accredited delegate and not as a nominee of the Government and that the opportunity offered him of serving the Indian workers and of making useful international contacts was too valuable to be thrown away.

In Bombay, a couple of days before his scheduled departure, he received a telegraphic message from the deposed Maharaja of Nabha, a telegraphic message from the deposed Maharaja of Nabha, Ripu Daman Singh, then living at Dehra Dun, and the telegram was followed by a special messenger. The Maharaja received sympathy from many Nationalist leaders (apart from rather widespread Sikh sympathy). He was at that time seeking redress from the India Office by having his case represented mainly with the help of his solicitors in London. Lalaji's help also he sought so that his case might be properly represented. Lalaji made it clear to the Maharaja's emissary that as a public man he did not feel interested in this kind of errand, but that if the Maharaja wanted to engage his services as a lawyer he could accept the brief. This he made very clear to the Maharaja himself through a letter written before his departure from Bombay in the course of which he said: "I have taken up your case as a lawyer-agent of yours, and not as a public man."

He was going this time by a P & O steamer, *S.S. Ranpura* one of their largest and most up-to-date liners. He noted that the food served was by no means up to the pre-war standards, in fact was inferior even to what he got on the Italian boat that had taken him to Europe two years ago.

It was the racial exclusiveness of the P & O that had made Jamsetji Tata, the father of Indian industrialism, realise the need for an Indian shipping industry. Things had changed since then, but "racialism was still far from having completely disappeared from the P & O atmosphere."

Lalaji landed at Marseilles early in the morning on May 7, 1926 and left immediately for Paris. The International Labour Conference which he had to attend in Geneva was to meet in the last week of May. Britain was in the throes of a general strike-the big strike that someone dubbed as Britain's only civil war since Cromwell; and so, though he had booked his heavier kit direct for London, his proceeding straight thither did not seem feasible. In fact, H.S.L. Polak advised him by telegram to stay on in Paris for the time being. So he did, and did not proceed to London till after the strike had been settled.

In Paris he stayed with S.R. Rana, the pearl merchant, and many old friends. Amongst the interesting new contacts was that with Jean Longust, "one of the two topmost leaders of the French Socialist Party", and a grandson of Karl Marx, through his daughter who had married a Frenchman. Lalaji had an interesting interview with this "very good-looking, strongly built, tall Frenchman with a fine forehead, extremely polite, extremely well-informed and extremely balanced in his views"- for he did not swear by the communist creed and was expecting that before long the peasants would come into power and overthrow the communists in Russia.

He was in London for barely a week-to, see friends, to collect impressions about the very recent general strike, to have a preliminary talk with his solicitor-friend, H.S.L. Polak, regarding the Nabha brief, leaving over any tangible steps till the relevant documents arrived, and to see the *Light of Asia*,

the first Indian enterprise in film-making in England, with Devika Rani as a star and produced by Niranjan Pal in whom he was interested because of his father Bipin Chandra Pal.

And then he left for Geneva

The eighth session of the International Labour Conference opened on May 26, 1926 for the 'simplification of inspection of emigrants on board the ship'. On the very opening day Lalaji handed in two resolutions, one demanding an inquiry into the conditions of native and coloured labour in Africa and America—which was agreed upon after some amendments, Lalaji accepting the amended form as a first instalment. His second resolution called the attention of the Governing Body to a previous resolution sanctioning the appointment of a correspondent in India which had remained in cold storage for about four years. He was told that the year's budget arrangements having been settled, nothing could be done immediately, but was given an assurance that his reminder would prove effective the following year.

But his main speech was delivered on June 2 when the Directors presented their report. He had received a cabled representation from Kanpur urging the enforcement of an eight hours' day for India. But here he was well aware that (at that time) the eight hours' convention had not yet been ratified even by some of the principal European countries and that year there had been a conference in London regarding this subject. He knew too that India could not go ahead of her competitor, Japan, and he exhorted the Japanese to show the way. He spoke of a "skeleton in our cupboard", the existence of begar or forced labour in British India and the Indian states. This was resented by Sir A.C. Chatterjee, who representing the Government of India, was deemed India's principal delegate. Lalaji addressed a letter to the President of the conference the next day and challenged an inquiry and promised that "as soon as I return to India I shall send to the International Labour Office proofs in support of my statement". This letter, at Lalaji's request, formed part of the record of the conference.

It seems hardly necessary to say that on his return to India he made good his promise.

Lalaji was rather struck by the continental atmosphere of the conference. The British no doubt dominated the league; but the Labour Conference at any rate was permitted to develop in a different way, and the British were far from ruling the roast. This to Lalaji was an added reason why India should pay more attention to ILO and why she must send a full and truly Indian complement to its conferences. To the conference that Lalaji attended, India had sent just four delegates, Sir, A.C. Chatterjee and Sir Louis Kershaw to represent the Government, Sir Arthur Froome to represent the employers and Lalaji to represent the workers. Just the minimum number of delegates and just one Secretary for the Government representatives; not a single substitute and not a single adviser for employers or for workers. And of this delegation Sir Atul and Lalaji, only two, were Indians. S.N. Haji, Manager of the Scindia Steam Navigation Company who was present in Geneva, in fact addressed an ably prepared representation to the authorities of the conference, challenging the credentials of Sir Arthur Froome who had been chosen by the European Chamber of Commerce, the Indian Merchant's Chamber having had no chance. Lalaji felt handicapped for want of expert advisers to assist him. Perhaps at the whole conference at which more than 30 countries were represented, Lalaji and Sir Arthur were the only delegates who had no advisers attached to them. In contrast to the two Indians he noticed the delegation from Japan were fifteen strong-delegates and substitute-delegates and advisers- the maximum number laid down and a few extra too! He noticed the Japanese were making excellent use of all international opportunities that came their way.

Lalaji had looked forward to the conference somewhat avidly as it was the first international gathering for him since his return from the United States. He used the occasion as

best he could for developing international contacts. Of the informal events on this occasion, Lalaji's dinner on June 3 was a notable one, workers' delegates from almost all the important European and Eastern countries, having attended it. These included Jouhaux, the French Socialist leader, Duffy and Suzuki from Japan, the British Trade Unionists, Pugh and Ben Tillit, and Margaret Bandfield (who later became Lady Chatterjee). Besides the delegates from Switzerland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Germany, Bulgaria, Australia and South Africa.

Jawaharlal Nehru who was in Switzerland at the time because of the illness of his wife, Kamala, was amongst the Indian visitors who watched the proceedings of the conference. Other Indian visitors included Dr. Taraknath Das and the sugar technologist, Sarangdhar Das, and his American wife (Freeda, who afterwards left Das and wrote a book which she called *Marriage to India*) and S.N. Haji (the shipping expert then with the Scindias) and Mrs. Haji.

At Geneva Lalaji had occasion to meet his old friend Shyamji Krishna Verma and found him a sad, forlorn figure, and in certain respects very unlike the more famous rebels-Rousseau, Mazini, Kropotkin, Lenin-who had found asylum in Switzerland, and for long had lived in poverty and endured hardship. "Shyamji has plenty of money but he also prefers to live a life of poverty. He carries on no propaganda and simply lives." Somewhat surprisingly Shyamji was attending the international conference as a pressman, on the strength of his *Indian Sociologist* which had ceased regular publication some time after his leaving England about two decades earlier and of which he had brought out an edition in 1920 when the Lokamanya died.

Romain Rolland lived nearby, and Lalaji paid several visits to his villa.

Lalaji was in Geneva for about three weeks during which he attended one or two international gatherings (besides the

one for which he had undertaken the voyage), in particular one styled the World Parliaments Union.

Then he went again to England, meeting his numerous friends there in a stay lasting nearly two months.

At Geneva, the centre of so many international bodies, he came in touch with certain other organisations too. In particular the World Parliaments Union solicited his interest in their work. Just a short while before the ILO conference, they had been in session in London, with sir Purushottamdas Thakurdas representing India.

The World Migration Congress was being held in London and Lalaji had been invited to represent the Indian working class. Lalaji spoke on the colour question with his usual vigour, and perhaps some of the British and colonial 'labourites' did not much relish the home-truths and home thrusts from India's representative.

These two conferences provided him with excellent contacts among the labour and socialist movements the world over.

An internationally signed manifesto was issued from London during Lalaji's stay there demanding the abolition of conscription. Its signatories included Romain Rolland and Henri Bar-busse, and from India Tagore, Lajpat Rai and Gandhi.

Talking of international organisations we might mention one more body, though of a different type, for it had no workers' delegates and did not concern itself with labour or leftist movements. Lalaji evinced some interest in it about this period. This was the Empire Parliamentary Union, in which Lalaji and some of the leading Swarajists began to take interest. A local branch was formed in India, and next year two of the Indian Swarajist Assembly men went on its behalf to Canada and Australia. There was nothing in the Swarajist creed or policy then to preclude such interest in the Parliaments of the Empire, but we fancy the Swarajist creed or policy then to preclude such interest in the Parliaments of the Empire. but we fancy the Swarajist leaders' interest owed a good deal to the persuasive diplomatic personality of Sir Howard d'Egville, the Secretary of the organisation, who

during a short visit to India made friends with many of the Indian leaders.

A Royal Commission on Indian currency, presided over by Sir Hilton Young, was busy drafting its report about the time of Lalaji's stay in London. It was on the recommendation of this commission that a little later the Government decided to fix the exchange ratio by statute at 18 pence to the rupee. This was generally condemned in India as manipulation in the interests of Britain, a 16-pence ratio being regarded as fair by most Indian economists. Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas who was in London as a member of this Royal Commission regarded the ratio suggested by his colleagues as disastrous to Indian interests and had misgivings about certain other suggestions favoured by them. He took counsel with Lalaji and at repeated meetings with him spoke of his many doubts and difficulties. While not presuming to teach the Bombay expert on the technical side, Lalaji was of great help to him by his firm insistence that he must not be overawed by the opinion of the majority or permit himself to be persuaded or cajoled into signing recommendations that in his own judgment would adversely affect Indian interests. Lalaji could not give expert knowledge to Sir Purushottamdas but he certainly could give him moral support which he seemed to need. Lalaji thus made an indirect contribution by insisting that Sir Purushottamdas must write out a minute of dissent. He may also be said to have contributed something to the firm tone of this minute.

Lalaji had to overstay in London, more than once putting off his departure because of his Nabha brief. One of the Maharaja's men had accompanied Lalaji, but he did not have the necessary record with him and this, it was understood, would follow soon after by post. In London Lalaji had a consultation with his solicitor friend, H.S.L. Polak; but before being able to take any effective steps the solicitor wanted certain documents which Lalaji and the Maharaja's

agent accompanying him did not have. Letters and cables seemed to have no result in expediting things. In the end Lalaji cabled to the Maharaja that he could not wait indefinitely in London and returned. The Maharaja felt much annoyed; but afterwards when he saw that in the circumstances Lalaji was justified, he expressed regret to Lalaji for his earlier annoyance, made up with him and next year when Lalaji again happened to be going to Europe requested him to get legal advice for him on certain minor things, which Lalaji gladly agreed to.

An India debate came off in the Commons during stay in London and Lalaji attended some of the sittings.

A week before he started on his return journey, the *Times* published a letter from Lajpat Rai on certain points raised in correspondence being carried on in its columns regarding "communal tension in India" This earned him a rebuke of a rather unusual sort. He had joined the National Liberal Club; and even before he had yet been elected or confirmed a member, he was guilty of a breach of its rules; the letter, as it appeared in the *Times*, bore the writer's club address. Promptly, the Secretary called his attention to the rule that laid down that no member could use the name or the address of the club in communications to the press without the previous sanction of the General Committee.

For two whole days he was with his old friends, the Webbs, and wrote in *The people* that though he had had the privilege of their (Webbs) friendship over a number of years, "he never knew them so well as he does now after having lived with them for two whole days under the same roof and after having read Mrs. Webb's *My Apprenticeship* from cover to cover."

Lalaji was much impressed by this book, and when he returned for several days it seemed to be his chief enthusiasm. He not only wrote enthusiastically about this book in *The People*, but had brought a number of copies with him which he presented to his friends, one to Lajjavati, another to his own

daughter-in-law Saraswati (Mrs. Amrit Rai) commending it in glowing terms.

On the return voyaga Acharya Prafulla Chandra Ray, the scientist, was amongst the company. Acharya Ray was then writing an autobiography and he would very fondly read out to Lalaji the chapters he had already completed, inviting his opinion of criticism sometimes, but as was his habit, all the time asking him "You follow?" Lalaji sometimes felt amused by his mannerism and sometimes even irritated and then he would say: "I follow all right, for heaven's sake don't make me repeat again and again that I do."

On August 13, 1936 he landed in Bombay.

“Communalist”?

I

THE GODS AND the Titans joined hands in churning the ocean, in quest of the draught of immortality. The churning threw up many precious boons and also noxious by products, and eventually the gods and the Titans fell out, each wanting to grab the goblet of ambrosia. In their quest of freedom the Hindus and Muslims started an epic churning under the Mahatma's direction. The scheduled year of toil came to an end without securing the boon; though the churning was called off soon after, the noxious by-products had already started mischief-the worst of these being the lurking suspicion that the other party might grab the boon, though this seemed still a long way off, and though wise men warned that if the two did not pull together the churning could not be resumed, and without this the boon could not materialise.

Though news of the Punjab happenings in the last year of his exile had given Lajpat Rai agony, Swami Sharddhananda's appearance on the Jama Masjid pulpit was somethings unprecedented and inspired new hope. In his "message" to his countrymen before he left the American shores he had emphasised with utmost force the supreme, need for unity. He asked them to follow the lead of Gandhi, because above all this seemed to promise unity. On landing in India he uttered grave warnings against communalism particularly warning his own community. He denounced the Khilafat

wrong, both on anti-imperialist grounds and out of sympathy for Muslim susceptibility. Out of the *unspent funds* that had been placed by friends at his disposal when in the U.S. he made a donation to the Khilafat fund. He toured about with Shaukat Ali in the non-co-operation campaign. When the Ali brothers' Karachi trial started, he was amongst the 17 signatories to the statement for which the Alis were being prosecuted. Even though he had his doubts about certain things he considered the Mahatma's leadership invaluable, because he had been able to secure Muslim support.

II

Whilst he was still in jail, things changed and Hindu-Muslim riots seemed to become the order of the day. The need for unity was as great as ever, but the Gandhian handling had clearly failed to achieve it. The prison-term leisure was devoted by Lalaji above all to a much-needed stock-taking-the results of which were given out in several series of articles smuggled out and published over fictitious names. As part of this stock-taking and of pondering over the problem of unity, Lalaji undertook quite an intensive study of Islam and Muslim history, and of modern movements in Muslim lands, and became rather enamoured of Shibli's writings-his lives of the Prophet and of Omar and his other biographical and historical writings.

Very naturally he discussed things with some of his fellow prisoners. One such discussion left behind abiding misgivings and therefore has to be taken note of here. This particular discussion was with Maulvi Habib-ur-Rahman (of Ludhiana), a prominent Khilafatist and notable divine, and a fellow prisoner. Drawing the Maulvi into a frank exchange Lalaji desired to be enlightened about the limits within which, in strict conformity with religious injunctions, Muslims could co-operate with Hindus. The reply (in effect) was that the

Believers could certainly remain in partnership with Infidels in turning out the alien Christian rulers, but not beyond the achievement of that objective. In a letter to C.R. Das Lalaji spoke of the misgiving thus engendered-suggesting that he might pursue things for an authoritative interpretation, and in the light thereof determine the implications for the nationalist programmes. Lalaji had indulged in loud thinking in a confidential letter. Das seemed uninterested in what the divine said and he could not treat the letter as confidential for he wanted to use what was said in other paragraphs regarding the need for re-thinking on boycott of legislatures. At the Gaya session, Das shared that letter with all any sundry! And, unheeding the implied warning it was at Gaya he let himself be led by another Maulvi into accepting the Kabul scheme-which we shall deal with later in this chapter.

Some nationalists thought it improper to raise such awkward questions or to express such misgivings. The people who had most reason to feel perturbed were, of course, just those who in their hearts shared the theological dictum though they thought the Ludhiana Maulvi's candour had been devastatingly inexpedient.

That letter to C.R. Das has to be mentioned also because of its contribution to Lalaji's assessment of his colleagues. Das he esteemed very highly-and yet Das seemed interested only in what had relevance to the immediate political context, not in giving serious thought to what Lalaji regarded as a matter of fundamental import.

Lalaji mentally made note of this and kept quiet. He could not help thinking that such nonchalance on the part of the leadership was a perturbing symptom.

Soon after his release Lalaji found himself on a panel of two set up by the Congress Working Committee to draft a "National Pact". Before the Ansari-Lajpat Rai draft could be considered, news came from Calcutta that C.R. Das had entered into a local pact there! The Bengal Pact at best had

a short-lived initial success; in the long run it only created complications and dissensions in the Bengal Congress, and it blighted the chances of a National Pact. Das seemed to care too much for immediate dividends.

Lalaji was convalescing at Solan, and some other Congress leaders including Abul Kalam Azad also happened to be there for a holiday in the hills. A short while after that holiday came C.R. Das's Bengal Pact like a bolt from the blue. Lalaji wondered how Azad who had spoken to him in vastly different accents from those of the new Bengal document could possibly endorse that Pact, and yet how was it possible for Das to have made the Pact if Abul Kalam did not approve of such a move? He had no facts as to what had happened behind the scenes; But the superlative tribute to Das's statesmanship as evinced in this Pact, in the Maulana's posthumous book (*India Wins Freedom*) goes to confirm Lalaji's suspicion.

Gandhiji's strategy of the "blank cheque" had not worked and the national leaders in negotiating a concrete settlement seemed too prone to be lured away by what seemed the local requirements of the moment, instead of working for a lasting arrangement based on fairness and mutual accomodation!

III

How far did the Hindu-Muslim riots affect Lalaji's attitude? The 1924 happenings deserve special consideration here—particularly the Kohat holocaust.

1924 witnessed outbreaks of communal frenzy. in quick succession and at places far apart—"specially at Delhi, Gulbarga, Nagpur, Lucknow, Shahjahanpur, Allahabad, Jubbulpore, and worst of all at Kohat".* At Kohat the Hindus formed a microscopic minority—less than 5 per cent, the toll was enormous, but a far more perturbing symptom was the complete

* *The History of the Congress*. Vol. I.P. 275

exodus of the entire Hindu population who sought shelter at Rawalpindi, 320 km away.

Of all communal rioting, that at Kohat in September 1924 was the most perturbing. Lalaji did whatever he could to arrange relief for the afflicted people, but he could not endorse the idealist advice that came as Gandhiji's first reaction. Gandhiji soon after took out the most powerful weapons in his armoury—agonised prayer, a 21-day fast, which brought in its sequel a Unity Conference which started in real grand style with a fanfare and raised high hopes, but the promise came to naught. As the Congress *History* puts it pithily, Kohat broke India's backbone.

Gandhiji had the utmost faith in the Ali brothers. Apart from the Unity Conference, he tried to work with their help to retrieve things and to create conditions for the Kohat evacuees to return to their homes. This attempt proved a bitter disappointment. Acharya Kripalani has summarised this episode in his life of Gandhi:

“Gandhiji along with some Muslim leaders wanted to go to Kohat to enquire into communal incidents there and to bring about peace. The Government did not permit him to go there. After a few months, however, he was allowed to go. He and Shaukat Ali were asked by the Working Committee to make an enquiry and send in a report. The work did not proceed smoothly. The Muslims were willing to come out with the facts. They were, however, tutored by Shaukat Ali not to do so. The result was that Gandhiji and Shaukat Ali were unable to submit an agreed report. This was the beginning of the estrangement between Gandhiji and the Ali brothers. It had been manifest earlier at the Unity Conference.” *

Some interesting details of the rupture may be found in Mahadev Desai's *Diary*. It seems the Mahatma had in his anguish been getting up at 3 in the morning to pray for divine

* J.B. Kripalani, *Gandhi: His Life and Thought*, p. 102.

guidance-till on the 16th September the response came in a flash, a call for a 21-day fast. The resolve was straightway made and announced. Many of his friends and followers (including Mahadev) pleaded that since he had in no way been responsible for the holocaust, no penance could be due from him; to which the reply was:

“My error! Why, I may be charged with having committed a breach of faith with the Hindus. I asked them to befriend Muslims. I asked them to lay their lives and their property at the disposal of the Mussulmans for the protection of their Holy Places. Even today, I am asking them to practise *Ahimsa*, to settle quarrels by dying, but not by killing. And what do I find to be the result? How many temples have been desecrated? How many sisters came to me with complaints? As I was saying to Hakimji yesterday, Hindu women are in mortal fear of Mussulman *goondas*. In many places they feared to go out alone. I had a letter from How can I bear the way in which his little children were molested? How can I now ask Hindus to put up with everything patiently? I gave the assurance that the friendship with Mussalmans was bound to bear good fruit. I asked them to befriend them, regardless of the results. It is not in my power today to make good that assurance.... And yet I must ask the Hindus even today to die and not to kill. I can only do so by laying down my own life. I can teach them the way to die by my own example.” *

The Unity Conference which started in the second week of the 21-day fast was a very impressive gathering, and its appeals for and assurances of harmony made many think that it had made the fast a real success. Actually, the National Panchayat Board that it gave birth to proved only a still-born babe. Towards the close of the year Gandhiji visited the Punjab.

* Mahadev Desai : *Day-to-day with gandhi*, Vol.4, p. 195.

(Gandhiji wanted to go to Kohat in the company of some Muslim leaders-but the authorities forbade this). Other leaders, including the Ali brothers, Hakim Sahib and Dr. Ansari joined him. There were lengthy discussions at Lalaji's place; everybody had his say, and the special stress on this occasion seemed to be on finding an acceptable formula of apportionment (in legislatures; etc.) No agreement could be reached. What is relevant here is that in these discussions, as on all like occasions (whether a large Unity Conference, or a small National Pact sub-committee) Lalaji patiently and earnestly strove for finding an agreement in a rational (as distinct from a purely sentimental) way, but fully taking into consideration the realities of the situation, however irrational or uncongenial some of these might be. Even when he addressed a purely Hindu audience he laid the utmost stress on the need for communal harmony and exhorted his people to strive for this in a spirit of accommodation. He did commend courage and strength but all suggestions of retaliatory goondaism or of insults to Islam or the Prophet he condemned with all the force he could command. At the Hindu Mahasabha meetings at Belgaum (when the Congress met there under Gandhi's presidentship) Kohat naturally loomed large. But Lalaji's speech there (as also that from the Congress platform on the same topic) was found unexceptionable by Gandhiji-though when Lalaji opposed his "spinning franchise" at the Congress meetings Gandhiji taking exception to some of his remarks ascribed them to the Kohat tragedy having cost Lalaji his sleep and his health! But Lalaji's addresses on Kohat, particularly that at the Mahasabha meeting, clearly showed that whatever the damage to his health he had not lost his poise.

Lalaji's attitude and his message were in no way different from those of Gandhiji except that for his message Lalaji made full use of the Hindu platform, and that though Gandhiji declared himself against the "dole" Lalaji even though, on

principle, fully appreciating Gandhiji's stand did not want to be a stickler and collected funds that were used for the "dole"

IV

The way the Ali brothers reached to Kohat affords a contrast that disillusioned Mahatma Gandhi about them. As we have noted in the leaders' discussions at Lalaji's place (December, 1924) Shaukat Ali's chief contribution had been a clamour for a "holi" which Lalaji treated as a piece of buffoonery, but Gandhiji still relied on the Alis and valued them as "pure gold". (In another discussion when one of the Alis talked about the flowing Ganga of Hindu-Muslim bloodshed flowing in the Punjab Lalaji's spontaneous retort was—"Gangotri in Rampur", from where the Alis hailed!).

The progress in Gandhiji's disillusionment regarding the Alis can be traced in Mahadev Desai's *Diary*. We would content ourselves with a couple of extracts. In the last week of December (1924) at Belgaum Mahatma Gandhi formally took over from Muhammad Ali, the outgoing President of the Congress. There was no indication of divergence between the two in regard to the Kohat happenings, though these were naturally a major topic and one of grave concern. But barely a couple of days later the Muslim League met in Bombay and passed a resolution on Kohat which upset Gandhiji a great deal, particularly because this had been proposed by Muhammad Ali. The very next day (January 1, 1925) Gandhiji sent a letter to the Maulana full of rebuke and sore disappointment. After the text of the letter we read Mahadev's own noting:

"Bapu at first would not let me take down a copy of this letter but agreed afterwards. When I talked of Shaukat Ali's shamelessness, Bapu said: The cat will be out of the bag by the end of the year. Rather by the end of two or three months, Bapul' I said. 'Still better then,' Bapu returned." *

* Mahadev Desai : *Day-to-day with gandhi*, Vol.5, p. 112.

The revised time-limit proved nearer the mark. Whether Shaukat Ali's 'shamelessness' had also been exhibited at the League is not clear. The younger Maulana who had been a party to the Congress resolution on the subject moved at the League meeting one widely divergent therefrom, and Muhammad Ali had moved this in substitution of a motion which Gandhiji found decidedly less offensive—the less offensive motion had come from none other than the redoubtable Zafar Ali Khan who had frankly expressed dissatisfaction at Belgaum with the Congress resolution!

Still appearances were kept up and early in February Gandhiji accompanied by Shaukat Ali arrived in Rawalpindi for the Kohat Inquiry which the Working Committee had entrusted to these two. This inquiry resulted in an open rift—the cat was out of the bag, and in about one month rather than in two!

The *Diary* for 10-2-1925 bears the heading—*A Shocking Disclosure*. We cannot quote in *extenso*, but by way of samples would give a few bits. Under Gandhiji's cross-examination the two leading Muslim witness “unconsciously gave revealing but truthful answers”—and this proved inconvenient to the Maulana. The *Diary* reports that Shaukat ali “had prewarned the Peer and all others” against betraying their internal differences in the evidence. But the tutoring notwithstanding the Peer came out with shocking disclosures:

“Every year the figure of converts to Islam [at Kohat] goes up to 150. There are sure to be a few of them on every Friday. Even married women are converted. But the difficult question then arises as to whose wife a converted woman should be. According to the Shariat she cannot be allowed to go back to her husband.” *

On this “shocking” statement which the witness gave “in

* *Ibid.*, p. 262

a casual and nonchalant manner as if there was nothing wrong in it"-Gandhiji wanted Shaukat Ali's own "candid view".

"It is really a shocking affair. It is preposterous if a man like you, too, goes to an Ulema (a Muslim Divine) for the interpretation of the Koran's and the Shariat's texts." *

And the Maulana pleaded ignorance of Arabic for consultations! "And he (Gandhiji) said many other prodding things besides this Shaukat Ali gave evasive and halting replies" The next morning (February 10) Gandhiji began a "heart-stirring discourse" thus-

"I am now in the position of a man who is shocked to find a snake under his quilt and gives it a thorough shaking and sweeps his whole room clean. I came to learn amazing things about Kohat which I had never known before."**

When Gandhiji spoke of the enormity of conversion through abduction the Maulana just "sighed and kept silent"

And there were further shocks too-unconnected with Kohat-the news from Afghanistan of fanatical mobs pelting heretics to death, and Shaukat Ali's approval of this.

Lalaji's touchstone had done better assaying than Gandhiji's which had declared such dross to be "pure gold"

The Nehru Report finally showed up the Ali Brothers in their true colours-open opponents of democracy and nationalism and of the basic principles of the National Congress. Perhaps death intervened too early for the full blossoming to have come into view.

In retrospect it may seem surprising that the fanatical Alis could be accepted as the spokesmen of Congress nationalism. and permitted to brand not only Sharddhananda, but even Malaviya and Lajpat Rai as "communalists" As long as the Alis wielded power in the Congress, they successfully created a hiatus between Lalaji and many other Congress leaders.

* *Ibid.*, p. 262

** *Ibid.* p. 264

Gandhiji understood Lalaji well enough not to be completely misled by the Alis, but the fact remains that there was far better rapport between Lalaji and Gandhiji after the unwholesome Ali influence had disappeared. For a proper assessment of Lalaji's stand in regard to nationalism and communalism the story of Gandhi's relations with the Alis is a very relevant factor.

V

About the Ali brothers Lalaji had come to the right conclusion-that they were too fanatical to be accepted as nationalists-much earlier than did Gandhiji.

Once during a halt at Delhi, on his way back from a rather extensive tour of many provinces, Lalaji called on Hakim Ajmal Khan. Dr. M.A. Ansari was present and probably Abul Kalam Azad also. Talk inevitably drifted to the growing Hindu-Muslim tension. “There must be four or five persons from the Hindu side and four or five from amongst the Muslims, who, however awry things might go, will be able to talk things over with mutual trust and perfect candour, and place before each other their doubts and difficulties without mincing matters.” From the Muslim side Hakim Sahib named Azad and Ansari and himself and the two Alis. With his usual outspokenness Lalaji forthwith said, “I must make it plain I put the Alis on a very different plane from that of Ansari and Ajmal Khan. I do not think I could trust them so implicitly”

Things came to head with Muhammad Ali's presiding over the Congress session at Kakinada (1923 end) and in the presidential address making an outrageous proposal, at the instigation of the Aga Khan, as became known afterwards, that the “untouchables” should be divided amongst Hindus and Muslims. The cold impudence of this suggested share-out hurt Lalaji deeply and, as we have seen, it was this proposal

from the presidential chair of the Congress that made Lalaji decide on an immediate nation-wide drive for the removal of untouchability and making such a drive the number one item of his programme. As narrated in our chapter dealing with that campaign, the treatment that Lalaji's offer to the working Committee received from the Maulana (as Congress President) was by itself enough to create a wide gulf between Lalaji and the Alis.

Muhammad Ali had amongst his many gifts a vitriolic pen and a vitriolic tongue and a waspish readiness to use both against those who did not agree with him. When Lalaji began to criticise certain aspects of Congress leadership, Muhammad Ali hurled missiles at him from his oratorical catapult, and in lampooning him in columns of his *Comrade* dipped freely his pen in the rich assortment of his vials of slander and satire. This sustained lampooning was taken scant notice of by Lalaji who dismissed it as 'billings gate'. but in certain quarters it was bound to work mischief.

For attacking Lalaji Muhammad Ali very often chose Lalaji's heresies in respect of programmes sanctioned by the Congress or carrying the Gandhi imprimatur, but not many were deceived by such alibis. Lalaji gave mortal offence to the Maulana by his publicly denouncing his suggested fifty-fifty deal regarding the Depressed Classes (later designated as 'Harijans') and his launching in all earnestness a drive to counteract that move. Perhaps none amongst the front-rank Hindu leaders of the Congress could endorse the Maulana's proposition but whilst most others listened to the mischievous proposal from the presidential chair in discreet silence-Gandhiji, it must be mentioned, was still in prison-Lalaji though not present at the Kakinada session had the temerity to start effective action to frustrate the mischief. The Maulana could not resist his proselytizing zeal, but that he should thus exhibit it from the Congress presidential chair and simply walk away with it was a symptom profoundly perturbing betokening a debasement

of values. In such a topsy-turvy context Lajpat Rai no doubt was seen in the role of a “communalist”.

VI

An ardent nationalist, Lalaji had not abjured his duties towards the Hindu community, mainly of the nature of social reform or of uplift of backward sections, and wherever the Hindus faced a calamity, man-made or act of God, they expected Lalaji (and Malaviyaji) to rush to their help. Because of these activities Lalaji was dubbed by some a “communalist” We may here briefly examine Lalaji’s “communal” activity to see if it really ran counter to his professions of nationalism.

Foremost among Lalaji’s “communal” activities was of course his work for those treated as untouchables. He had been interested in this from the very start of his public life, and he attached the highest importance to it as a Hindu reformer, as an Indian nationalist, and above all as a believer in man to man equality. His work here, in its objectives and in its methods, in no way ran counter to nationalism. Under Gandhi’s leadership the Indian National Congress adopted this work as part of its “constructive programme”-and it has so continued, in spite of a deplorable lapse or perversion, in Muhammad Ali’s presidential speech.

Lalaji started his nation-wide campaign in this field nearly a decade before the founding of the Harijan Seva Sangh. After suspending civil disobedience the Congress was supposed to have taken to constructive programme, but the all important anti-untouchability part of the programme remained neglected for many years so far as the Congress was concerned. Lalaji who earnestly took it up had to create his own medium and also to make use of “communal” bodies for this national work. In all essentials Lalaji’s work here was but an anticipation of Gandhiji’s work through the Sangh. For Lalaji the immediate provocation had come from the Aga Khan inspired proposal

made by Muhammad - Ali. This perturbed Lalaji just as Ramsay MacDonald's Award which too (like the Kakinada proposal) was calculated to treat the Harijans as no part or at best a detachable part of the Hindu community. In his agony the Mahatma resorted to fasting and prayer and achieved an agreed formula of representation and started the Harijan sangh. Lalaji, deeply perturbed, sought inspiration from what he deemed a sacred day-the day sacred to Guru Gobind Singh-and announced his resolve, following this up with the launching of a drive through the Achhut Uddhar Committee.

The only other "communal" item that figured in Lalaji's activity was his association with the Hindu Mahasabha. Lalaji's earliest association with such a body was in the first decade of the century when the Punjab Hindu Sabha was started. The date is significant, for to Lalaji such communal bodies seemed a sort of corollary to certain communal provisions in the constitution. Minto had then introduced the communal electorate, which even Gokhale, much to Lalaji's chagrin, had found acceptable. We have called attention to this early fact because Lalaji regarded the communal electorate as poisonous in its effect on the growth of Indian nationalism but if perforce we had to woo the voters in communal compartments we may have wily-nilly to set up some sort of communal organisation, without losing sight of our nationalist goal. A British friend of the Indian movement put Lalaji's thesis very tersely thus:

"..... If could have avoided communal representation. democratic institutions could have been used to unite the two communities, would have brought them together on planes of economic interest. But with communal electorates in full swing and in the absence of any overriding class interest we have got to put the clock back"*

* Josiah C. Wedgwood's letter of October 8, 1926 to Lalaji, published in *The People*, November 7, 1926

It is necessary to remember that the Hindu Mahasabha has passed through many phases, and Lalaji could not possibly have approved of all its policies and activities. (Even in the Punjab Sabha Lalaji's active interest had been short lived, as he did not approve of much of its doings) Anyone wanting to adjudge Lalaji's Mahasabha activity will have to restrict himself to what that body did during the period when Lalaji had a decisive say in its counsels.

Thus viewed, a very noticeable thing in the Mahasabha, under the Malaviya-Lajpat Rai leadership, is that it had little to do with hustings. Thus there was no confrontation with bodies like the Congress, nor any question of its in any way weakening the fight for liberation. Lalaji's association with the Mahasabha could thus indirectly prove to be of help to the Congress party. A significant admission of this came from Pandit Motilal himself, and just in the course of his-high polemic against Lalaji:

“Up to the time you left India you were a stout champion of Congress candidates and put up a brave fight for them in the Hindu Sabha.* You do not say what particular incident in the last four months has revolutionised your ideas.” (Pandit Motilal's reply dated 30 August to para 3 of Lalaji's letter of resignation from the Swaraj Party.)

Lalaji's hold over the Sabha was useful to, perhaps greatly needed by, the nationalist cause. (A “particular incident” also there was as we shall see. Motilalji may have had a shrewd suspicion about this and about Lalaji's unwillingness to come out in the open). Even when Lalaji left the Swaraj Party, for the hustings he joined hands with Malaviyaji to create the Independent Congress Party still keeping under check the enthusiasts who wanted the Mahasabha to run its own candidates.

At a Hindu conference in Bombay someone objected to the presence of a “non-Hindu”. the noted Parsi scholar. G.K.

* Italics ours.

Nari man. Lalaji straightway brushed aside the objection, saying (as Nariman himself recalled*) that anyone-Hindu, Muslim or Christian-could, be included in the conference provided he loved India. Such was the broadmindedness that ever characterised Lalaji's Hindu Sabha Work.

Always he took good care that his work for his own community was carried on so as to make a wholesome contribution towards the bigger cause to which he had dedicated himself-that of India's liberation and of building a great Indian nation. Even for the furtherance of Hindu-Muslim unity he thought work through a communal body-of course with his own nationalist approach-was helpful, even necessary, his approach and his methods being clearly different alike from those whose thinking could not transcend the sectarian or communal barrier, and from those Hindu leaders who, ignoring the realities of the Indian context, shunned all Hindu bodies lest the contact sully their pure nationalism! Many of these worthies in private assured Lalaji of their full support, but their public stand was different! At Belgaum Srinivasa Iyengar told him in effect: I am in agreement with your stand but would like to be left alone for one year!

VII

Like many other Lalaji felt that too much of religion had been let loose in the wrong handling of the Khilafat movement. He supported the Mussalmans in their Khilafat demand wholeheartedly, but he would not keep quiet when some enthusiasts began to sing songs inviting Enver Pasha's hordes or those from Afghanistan to India-and, characteristically, Lalaji chose a Khilafat Platform to speak out what he felt! Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru who was no Hindu Sabhaite wrote to Lalaji:

"I was much pleased to hear an account of your spirited and straight speech at the second sitting of the Khilafat

* *The People: Lajpat Rai Number*, April 13, 1929

Conference. I think it is up to us to tell Shaukat Ali and his friends that we cannot possibly contemplate the prospect of our friends the Afghans coming to ‘rescue’ us: all that is nonsense and mischief pure and simple and I am afraid the non-co-operation movement as understood by some of our friends in the Mohammedan community is very much different from the non-co-operation movement of Mr. Gandhi-though even with his view I do not at all agree. But though one may differ from Mr. Gandhi, one can respect him and his view. It is entirely impossible however to agree with Mr. Shaukat Ali and his friends who dream of Afghanistan as the redeemer and saviour of India. I was much pleased to hear that you told them what Hindus thought of it.”

When one of the young muhajireen from India met Enver Pasha somewhere in Central Asia, about the first question the valiant Turk asked him was a polite enquiry about Lajpat Rai-the only Indian leader in whom he evinced interest! Lalaji had friends amongst the young Turks and amongst Egyptians. Whenever their delegations came to India, he felt proud to act as their host as in their country he had gratefully accepted their hospitality.

VIII

The Kohat tragedy apart, the one act of communal madness that Lalaji felt with the keenest poignancy was the murder of Sharddhananda. Neither of these events however turned him away from attempts at a rapprochement whenever an opportunity for this arose. Not even threats to his own person. Some time after the Sharddhananda murder, he received one day an anonymous letter threatening him that he shall pay with his life for his “Sangathan” activities. He sent on the letter in original with the cover in which it had come to the District Magistrate of Lahore. About this time a stranger one day tried to get at him in a rather suspicious way, at the Court

Street house. When questioned, the man could give no satisfactory explanation of the purpose of his visit and seemed to have got into a blue funk. This much seemed clear that he was a Mussalman and that he had come on no normal errand. Lalaji had him sent away, refusing to call in the police to hand him over. Lalaji acquired a new habit in these circumstances of going about with a revolver in his pocket. Those around him besides began to insist that as far as possible he should not stir out unaccompanied. But no fuss was made about either happening—the threatening letter and the suspicious visitor. So far as I can remember, neither was mentioned in the press.

IX

Lalaji felt that Gandhiji's stress on religion, which to the Mahatma connoted tolerance above everything else, was in the long run likely to create complications since it ignored what had often been a strong trait of the fane. Not for nothing is the *fanatic* a derivative of *fanum*.

Lalaji always strove after a concrete and well-defined settlement based on considerations of equity and of mutual accommodation by the two communities. He could not be persuaded that high gestures about offers of a 'blank' (Hindu) cheque to be filled in by the Muslim leaders, or that professions of implicit faith in the Mussalmans's *khandani* (a favourite phrase with Gandhiji in the early twenties) could solve the problem. Lalaji did not find such preaching to be supported by his reading of history and by his assessment of the realities of the contemporary Indian scene. Today it is commonly recognised that the 'blank cheque' approach, while it alienated a certain amount of Hindu sympathy, was at the same time mistrusted by Mussalmans as something insincere or at best evasive.

Lalaji did not set much store by the idealistic Gandhi approach of the early twenties. It lacked realism and in Lalaji's view could have little bearing on practical politics.

In his own way Lalaji remained consistent in his attitude towards the Hindu-Muslim issue; that is, remaining true always to certain fundamentals (with the sturdiness of the oak), yet always willing to make adjustment in details (with the suppleness of the willow) The phase in his thinking with which we are here concerned more particularly started during his stay in the States when he made that emphatic declaration against communalism which we have already quoted. When later on he found it necessary to organise the Hindus on a communal platform he kept the warning he had sounded ever before his mind's eye. He would not permit the Hindu Mahasabha to be used in the dangerous way he had condemned; till the end he did not even permit the Hindu Mahasabha to put up candidates in elections and thus fall foul of the National Congress. The phase of thought that began with the declaration on Hindu-Muslim dissension made during Lalaji's American days continued till the very end, for in his last days most of his time and energy were being devoted to work for the (Motilal) Nehru draft of a settlement. The last presidential address that Lalaji wrote out-the one delivered at the Hindu Conference at Etawah less than three weeks before his end-was a passionate plea for a Hindu-Muslim settlement along the lines laid down in the Nehru report. The fact that here Motilalji and Lalaji were in perfect accord is conclusive proof that the mature thinking of both on this problem had led them to basically the same conclusions and that the one was as keen on unity as the other. But their methods of work were different. For instance, Lalaji's utterance was made from a Hindu Sabha platform, which Motilalji would not have made use of. And as a practical politician Motilalji must have seen how useful and necessary Lalaji's influence over the Mahasabha was in the furtherance of the Nehru scheme.

Even after liberation-and partition-Hindu-Muslim unity continues of baffle statesmanship. But, basically the Indian Constitution adopted the Nehru scheme proposals on Muslim

representation as far as they could be in the redrawn map of India. That this has not solved the problem only means that at best such adjustment can provide only part of the solution, not the whole of it.

Lalaji made an earnest, detailed, realistic study of the Hindu-Muslim dissensions in a series of thirteen articles which he wrote to 1924 for the press. Every page of the Brochure reprinting these articles shows his keen desire for unity, and, may of the suggestions made therein hold good even today—though of course the map of India as redrawn in 1947 has outmoded others.

To anyone interested in a proper assessment of Lalaji's "communalism" and nationalism we would suggest a careful reading of the brochure as also of Lalaji's speeches at all the Hindu conferences.* His yearning for unity and his earnestness in seeking it is inescapable, whatever the merits of the detailed suggestions put forward by him.

Lalaji wanted not merely a settlement, being well aware that this by itself could not effectively solve the problem. The real integrational work had to come through education. And Lalaji's contribution here is found tersely—very pregnantly touching ticklish problems like that of the re-writing of the history of Muslim rule—given in his book on National Education. There can be little doubt Dr. Zakir Husain was particularly struck by Lalaji's contribution here when he wrote his highly laudatory foreword to the centenary reprint of that book.

X

It was not only for eliciting Hindu support to the Nehru scheme that Motilalji had to lean heavily on Lalaji; for even

* This series on the Hindu-Muslim problem has been included in V.C. Joshi's 2-volume edition of Lala Lajpat Rai's Writings and Speeches (New Delhi, Servants of the People Society, 1966). See Vol. II. pp. 170-222.

securing the support of an outstanding Muslim leader like Jinnah, if the relevant data of those days were fully examined, Lalaji's contribution would be found to outweigh that of any other Congress leader. Lalaji strove for a united stand against the Simon Commission, and secured full support from Jinnah. In his last days he was again in touch with Jinnah to secure his support for the All Parties Conference to consider the Nehru scheme.

Lalaji had generally not much difficulty in working with M.A. Jinnah. They had often worked together in the pre-non-co-operation days and though Jinnah left the Congress when Gandhi came into power, they had once again to work with each other when Lalaji went to the Legislative Assembly-and they were often seen discussing things not on the Assembly agenda but the broader aspects of the Hindu-Muslim relationship. They did not always see eye to eye and sometimes differed sharply and publicly criticised each other with zest and vigour, but it was always possible to know where the differences lay and to what extent they could work together, the boycott of the Simon Commission being an instance in point. During the Assembly session Jinnah would frequently walk into Lalaji's room without an appointment and unannounced. Sometimes he would do so several times in the course of the same day. Lalaji visited him likewise and very often they both would rise from a talk and go together to Malaviyaji to continue the discussion. There were no formalities, and whether or not the talks resulted in agreement there never arose a question as to who should seek whom-the trivial things that in the thirties and forties often hindered pourparlers. Jinnah had no Muslim League Party in the Central Assembly and was the leader of a small group of independents. The relations between two opposition leaders Lalaji and Jinnah may not have found a satisfactory formula for a communal

settlement, all the same in most assembly matters, they could wholeheartedly co-operate with each other.

XI

Writing of the 1926 elections Jawaharlal Nehru has said in his *Autobiography*:*

“I had met Lalaji in Geneva that summer, and from our talks. I had not gathered that he contemplated taking up an aggressive attitude against the Congress Party ... But in the course of the election campaign, he made certain vague charges, which showed how his mind had been working. He accused the Congress leaders of intriguing with people outside India. He further accused them of some such intrigue in establishing a Congress branch in Kabul.....

“I remember that when I read in the Indian papers..... about Lalaji’s charges I was astounded. As Congress Secretary, I knew all about our organisation; I had myself been instrumental in getting the Kabul Committee affiliated (Deshbandhu Das had taken the initiative in the matter).... I do not know how Lalaji was misled in the matter. He may have relied on various rumours, and I think he must have been influenced by the talk he had recently had with Moulvi Obeidulla, although there was nothing in that talk which seemed extraordinary to me.”

Obviously Jawaharlalji, being away in Europe, had not been in close touch with things; otherwise he would not have given the Kabul congress Committee such absolute precedence over the other issues which loomed large in Lalaji’s campaign whilst the Kabul committee was hardly ever mentioned in his public utterance.

But the Kabul Congress Committee too had made its own contribution, not so much in the actual campaign as a factor in

* Pp. 158-159.

the background which influenced Lalaji's own attitude as it filled him with deeper and darker misgivings than even those inspired by the recurring riots in Malabar and at Multan and Kobot and elsewhere.

The misgivings engendered by Habib-ur-Rahman in Lahore jail acquired poignancy through what we may call the Episode Obeidullah, after Maulvi Obeidullah Sindhi to whom goes the credit of having set up that branch of the Indian National Congress. Episode Obeidullah merits special consideration because of its influence, real or supposed, on the 1926 general election, and more than that on Lalaji's thinking and outlook and his relations with the contemporary Congress leadership, and above all because of its import as revealed by subsequent events.

First of all the tangible facts. In August 1924 Obeidullah saw Lalaji in Istanbul, his visiting card describing him as a functionary of the Kabul Congress Committee, and the Maulvi gave Lalaji a printed scheme about the federated republics of the sub-continent issued on behalf of that committee. On his return to India Lalaji who had never before heard of such a committee or its scheme of federated republics had enquired made from the A.-I.C.C. headquarters (then in Allahabad) and these confirmed affiliation having been granted to a committee in Kabul in 1922 when Deshbandhu Das was President of the Congress and Lalaji a prisoner.

The visiting card had presented an anomaly; for a branch of the Indian National Congress in Kabul could make no sense and besides, how could he as a member of the Congress Working Committee remain ignorant about such an innovation? Perhaps it had come into being unauthorised. The scheme issued over this new imprint Lalaji's penetrating eye could see through at once as a camouflage for cutting up India, so that an independent Muslim state might be carved cut thereby; Kabul could be interested in such a scheme. Obeidullah was a dark horse, but what could he be up to? And, above all,

what business had the Congress to let him use its prestige and authority the way he liked a glimpse of which had been afforded by the Kabul Committee's scheme? About the camouflage he had no doubt; what lay behind it might or might not be actually or even potentially dangerous. But careful scrutiny and vigilance were certainly called for.

Filled with misgivings Lalaji tried to share these with the topmost leaders. And the real tragedy (it must be stressed) lay in their reactions which ranged from a "so what"? nonchalance to pooh-poohing the question raised. Such an attitude on the part of his colleagues and comrades at the helm made things infinitely worse.

It has become possible now to view the whole thing in retrospect in a factual objective manner, instead of indulging in conjecture about what had been camouflaged. A boy born in a Sikh family in Sialkot embraced Islam, styled himself Obeidullah Sindhi, and as he grew up, decided to dedicate his life to the service of Islam, identifying himself entirely with a school of Indian divines who, ever since the decline of the Mughal empire, had through generations kept up a determined secret endeavour to bring into being a theocratic Muslim state. No sacrifice was too big for achieving this end. The means included camouflage, alliances with foreign Muslim powers, in later phases-World War I onwards-aligning themselves with Indian nationalist or revolutionary forces working for India's liberation. In the twenties it was difficult to get the real facts about the teachings, methods and aims of this school. Today no one who recalls that episode for a cold objective scrutiny can help admiring Lalaji's penetrating foresight which could straightway after the Istanbul encounter visualise what had been so deftly camouflaged, and had put all the other leaders, including Das and the Nehrus, off their guard. Lalaji smelt 'secession' when others failed to suspect anything.

But he was hesitant to mention "secession" in public lest such lack of discretion precipitate things and go to make of

it a live issue when it was still possible by vigilance and seasonable action to nip the sinister thing in the bud. His forebodings-for the most part expressed only in private talks with a few with whom he thought sharing these necessary-then described as cock-and-bull stories-became stern realities within two decades of his death. The controversy was closed by History's verdict which proved the forebodings prophetic. What needs mention here is that the Episode Obeidullah was an important contributory factor in the 1926 elections for even though he avoided talking about Obeidullah and his scheme or openly mentioning “secession” he found impelled to deplore the leaders' lack of vigilance and their attitude of nonchalance in matters which he regarded of fundamental importance. The electioneering evinced a good deal of acerbity and thus, at least for the time being, it went to create an unfortunate estrangement between Lalaji and some of the leaders.*

The effect of the episode on Lalaji's outlook on politics, particularly on what constitutes the theme of the present chapter, may be summed up thus:

(a) The camouflaged plans of “secession” or for a theocratic Muslim State went to confirm further his apprehensions about communal representation; in particular, it made him all the more adamant against communal electorates the logical outcome of which he foresaw in a demand for “secession” Therefore, it was necessary not only to be vigilant with regard to the camouflaged Obeidullah plans, but also to stand firm against the extension of communal representation, and firmly oppose all settlement formulas based on the communal electorate.

(b) Plan like the Kabul Committee had to be avoided like poison by nationalist leaders. Lack of vigilance here would jeopardise Indian unity.

* For a fuller discussion of this episode the reader is referred to *The Uniheeded Prophet* by the present writer. (New Delhi : Lajpat Bhawan, 1972).

Paradoxically, the Obeidullah school, in the early forties, seemed to oppose the League-evolved scheme of partition. The difference lay in this-that the Ulema of this school did not relish negotiation with the British as a means, and in their (still veiled) final objective they were completely theocratic. Lalaji's misgivings of "secession" applied to both, though after the Congress-Khilafat honeymoon had ended the Obeidullah school-because of its secretive way, and its raising an insuperable theocratic barrier against real abiding unity-was a graver peril.

We have called attention to the main episodes which, over and above the general pessimism arising out of the riots, made Lalaji particularly pessimistic in regard to unity-the frank Lahore jail discussion, Mohammad Ali's presidential address, the Episode. Obeidullah. Despite such depressing influences Lalaji never slackened his own efforts for unity. Because of such difficulties the efforts had to be redoubled! Coming out of prison he got busy, jointly with Ansari, in evolving a "National Pact". After meeting Obeidullah he wrote a series of thirteen articles, published simultaneously in the most important dailies, and soon after related as a brochure. This was Lalaji's best considered, most earnest contribution, on this subject. I am not aware if anyone else has ever taken such pains to present all the problems and difficulties in detail, and striving to meet these has offered for serious consideration suggestions in a spirit of fairness and of mutual accommodation.

It is remarkable that though at the time of writing these articles Lalaji's mind was assailed by the "secession" foreboding he said in these not one word about the Kabul scheme or its author, but somewhat enigmatically he concluded the series with these words:

"I have not said all that I wanted to say. I have deliberately kept back some important and unsavoury facts that recently came to my knowledge in the hope that there will be no need to give publicity to them."

Service for Service Sake

“**T**HE SPIRIT OF service should become part of our character as a necessary ingredient in our discipline. Cultivate the habit of service for its own sake, free from all motive and all thought of reward. Service of Prisoners, unmindful of the ‘waste of time’ that this entails, feeding, protecting and loving the children of the poor even though they be shabby or filthy, helping womankind irrespective of faith, community, colour or nationality, and in general, to serve others, sacrificing one’s own interest—that should be our insignia,”

-Lajpat Rai

Lalaji’s return from his wartime exile had coincided with the birth pangs of a stupendous mass struggle, and the hectic times could not be congenial for long-term plans. But it seems the brooding in exile had shaped out several plans which should unfold themselves as opportunity arose after the exile had come to an end.

The first of these to be announced and to materialise was for a daily paper of his own. Next came, after a short interval, the Tilak School of politics which, metamorphosed into an order of life-members, the Servants of the People, became the foremost of Lalaji’s institutional creations. This chapter, devoted to the institutions set up by Lalaji after his return from exile, may benefittingly stare with the Servants of the People Society which even chronologically may claim precedence if its long period of gestation be taken into consideration.

To trace the origin of the Servants of the People Society in its founder's mind, we have to go back to 1903 when the Indian Association in the Punjab collected about Rs. 3,000 to meet a part of Lalaji's expenses for a trip to England as a delegate jointly of the Indian National Congress and of the Indian Association. On his return Lalaji announced that he had throughout been spending his own money, and that out of the amount collected stipends would be given to selected young men expected to devote their time to political studies and postgraduate research. He had been influenced by what he saw at Poona during his halt there before setting sail for England from Bombay. Gokhale had just founded his Servants of India Society; impressed by what he saw and heard Lalaji began to think of starting something analogous in his own Punjab. The scheme of stipends for political education was intended as a small beginning towards that end.

Many things intervened to delay the realisation of the 1905 dream. As Lalaji wrote when the Society was already five years old, in what has ever since been a sort of permanent foreword for the Society's periodical reports:

“But my deportation of 1907 prevented any definite action being taken My misfortunes in 1907, 1910 and 1914, and my public engagements and disappointments throughout this period gave me no rest and no time to expand my idea and give it a practical shape.”

In the prefatory piece from which we have just quoted, after paying a tribute to the pioneering genius of Maharashtra for creations like the Deccan Education Society, and acknowledging his debt to Gokhale who founded the Servants of India Society, Lalaji speaks of certain American institutions that made a notable contribution in the definitive shaping of his idea. He “learnt and unlearnt much” during his American years, and at some of the American institutions he was both a lecturer and a student off and on”. He felt particularly attracted to the Rand School of Sociology, New York, which

imparted instruction in Social Sciences to people denied by their circumstances the benefits of regular university education in these subjects, and to people who could not afford large fees. This school (he observed) "is run more or less on the lines of self-help. Lecturers are paid small honoraria from the fees collected." Acknowledging a personal debt Lalaji says:

"I owe a great deal of education in Politics and Sociology to my stay at New York, and one of the ideas that I borrowed from there was the need of institutions of that kind in my own country."

The Rand School, as Lalaji points out, "is a centre of Socialism" From this centre Lalaji drew inspiration in formulating his plans for a School of Politics in his own country which he announced not long after his landing.

In less than six months after his welcoming Lajpat Rai from the presidential chair at a huge Bombay meeting Tilak departed on August 1, 1920 from this world mourned by the people of India who loved and adored him as the "Lokamanya" and for whom he had sacrificed all and undergone unique suffering. Soon after the sad happening Lalaji announced that he was starting an institution to be called the "Tilak School of Politics". To a considerable extent the memories of the Rand School influenced his initial plans for this School, but as we shall see, the impact of subsequent events made his changes those plans.

The Tilak School seemed to have made a very promising start—a decent home of its own, a fine library, and the collections in response to Lalaji's appeal and his effort adding up before long to a six-figure corpus. With such a start under Lalaji's fostering care the School could be expected to make rapid progress. But even in the quarter that intervened between the first announcement concerning the School and its actual start in December 1920, events were moving fast that seemed destined to have their impact on this nascent institution - as on a good many others very well established.

These events with such an impact were of course connected with the non-co-operation movement. The Congress session at Nagpur at the close of 1920 found Lalaji fully committed to calling upon college students to non-co-operate and many of them naturally demanded alternative arrangements for their study. In the Punjab a Board had to be set up for education on national lines and a Mahavidyalaya or National College was set up under this Board. Though the Tilak School had not been conceived on identical lines, a good deal of overlapping and duplication was inevitable. As a result, when the Mahavidyalaya came into being Lalaji transferred the small lecturing staff that he had engaged for the Tilak School to that institution—one of them as its Principal. The School was thus bereft of its primary sole:

At the same time the new situation presented an opportunity for somethings more ambitious. Some of the non-co-operating young men might be available for dedicated service for a long period, and so the dream of a devoted missionary band of whole-timers for social and political work with the Poona Society as prototype—constituting a life order might now come true. The Tilak School teaching was taken over by the Mahavidyalaya—the assets (Home, Library, corpus) became available for founding a life order. It may be mentioned, however, that though the life order was named the Servants of the People Society, for many years the name adopted for the earlier phase—the Tilak School—continued in use. Particularly, Lalaji himself often used the two names as equivalents.

It had been Lalaji's practice always to give himself before he called on others to do so. Before inviting public subscriptions he announced that he was giving away his house at 2, Court Street to a trust for setting up the Tilak School of Politics. The announcement made a little reservation—Lalaji wanted a cottage built for his family in a part of the compound with a modest sum-out of the Trust funds. Perhaps this

was only his way of breaking the news to his own family and of wearing down any possible opposition that the might have to face from them. After he had brought round the family one never heard a word about the reservation or the stipulation for the trustees-the southern portion of the Compound remained with the family, but the Trust funds were not touched.

The Trust consisted of Duni Chand (Barrister), Bhai Parmanand, Ram Prasad and Jaswant Rai, with Lalaji as Chairman.

The idea of converting the Tilak School into an order of life-members like Gokhale's Servants of India took definitive shape at a political conference at Rawalpindi in the spring of 1921. Achint Ram, P.L. Sondhi and the present writer were the first three members.

The brief and simple rules-just one printed sheet-did speak of an undertaking to work for 20 years, but Lalaji did not set much store by signed undertakings or pledges, manifold vows or elaborate do's and don'ts. Word plighted before Fire was, however a different affair. Even when dogmatic religion had sloughed off, something elemental in his gave profound solemnity to such a ritual.

About three weeks after the inauguration Lalaji went to jail.

Fully aware that the young initiates had missed their regular "training" under his own direction, from the jail came a letter to the "young men of the Tilak School of Politics (or the Society) in which Lalaji expressed in detail his wishes as to what sort of life he wanted them to lead and what sort of training he expected them to undergo. This letter, written in Urdu and subscribed "Your Friend, the Prisoner", became for the young initiates a basic document, giving them valuable guidance about a curriculum for study, as also about the Chief's idea of the other training that they would need to be adequately equipped for their mission in life: and it said golden words

about the spirit in which they must go about their work and which must underlie all their doings, and without which their training and equipment and even their work would be mere husk with the really valuable-kernel gone. The quotation preceding the narrative in this chapter is from this basic document.

A methodical systematic training in those hectic times was simply out of the question, but the hectic times were in themselves quite valuable schooling-intimate touch with the people, the countryside experience of mass propaganda, working with fellow workers in a spirit of comradeship, experience as organisers, prison terms. Training through classes and courses of study could be valuable-the "hectic" training was simply invaluable. For anyone really eager for the requisite intellectual equipment, the opportunity offered by the Dwarkadas Library-as the library started with Lalaji's gift was named and curricular guidance received through Lalaji's letter could be enough at least for the basic requirements. It was clear also that the training that Lalaji envisaged for his whole-time missionary worker, though fully recognised the need for proper intellectual equipment, was to be very different from that available through academic bodies. It was to come as much from living reality as from books, so even those who had to work, in what many would consider the intellectual sector, had to have adequate field experience. Nearly all the young men that Lalaji enlisted in his life order had done mass propaganda in the non-co-operation movement, and in the next phase when Lalaji launched his anti-untouchability drive almost the full strength worked for some time in this field under the Achhut Uddhar Committee.

Though our Founder had fully acknowledged the debt too Gokhale's pioneer institution, the two Societies were generally supposed to be very different from each other. The Poona Society had by the time ours came into being completely identified itself with the politics of the Liberal Party, whilst

the Lahore Society had been founded by non-co-operators. A more basic distinction was that our Founder did not want the changing political exigencies or programmes to be a permanent article of faith: the Servants of India had "British connection" written down into its institution, as something with the sanctity of the Athanasian creed. Though an order of life-members was working in a missionary spirit Lajpat Rai's creation had very little of the Jesuitical ways-neither the vows, nor the cast-iron discipline nor the ban on dissent.

Strange as it may seem to many, our Founder himself was not a member of the New Order-a note worthy difference in the set-up of the two Societies. Our succinct constitution had to make a special provision to define his position as that of life-long Founder-Director. Gokhale as the founding member was the first to be sworn in, and then Gokhale administered the seven-fold vow to his colleagues of the founding batch Lalaji took no vows and administered none. His was already a life of perfect dedication-had been so for many years, a formal (re-) dedication would be a meaningless superfluity And, though he had withdrawn from normal earning activities, he had never been a burden on public money. A deviation from that pattern would no doubt have meant a mental strain. Not being a member he never drew any allowance from the society's funds. What may seem as an anomaly to some, for us had a natural look.

His moral authority as a father was there and the consultation recognised this by making him life-long Director His guidance as Director and his fatherly affection were ever available, but he did not like to lay down the law for the members, not much even when they still underwent training. Unhampered discussion and a free exchange of views often resulted in accord; but where this did not happen, dissent was fully recognised. Did this work in such a Society? The answer is that though casualties did occur, now and then a member seeking release before completing his 20-year term,

this never happened because of political differences. Political contingencies were a changing pattern, and programmes must be periodically reviewed. No durability could be found in these, so a pattern had to be evolved in which only the durable essentials had to remain intact, and for the rest harmony was to be aimed at rather than uniformity. Accord was generally desirable but where this could not be achieved, harmony, based on a catholic tolerance of others' views was to be looked for.

As I look back and reflect I cannot help noting that our training and our career of service owed far more to the impact of the Founder's personality than to all the other factors. I have mentioned. The perennial source of inspiration was his own perfect dedication to the cause of freedom and of the Indian people; and, for harmonious working, his own broad minded catholicity and respect for convictions earnestly held even if these happened to be different from his own. His affectionate hug for Achint Ram as he came home after casting his vote for the Swarajist candidate pitted against Lalaji in the 1926 election—the story of which is told in the narrative for that period—was a thing of rare beauty and abiding worth, a beacon that would shine undimmed for many years and withstand many a squall—and became the noblest part of our tradition, of the legacy that the Founder left us.

After his return from prison, the Society was seen functioning through a number of centres or branches in the Punjab and the U.P., and in most of Lalaji's work one or more of Society's members were associated with him—in particular, to begin with, in the anti-untouchability work. But they were assisting him besides in the Congress work. and later on in journalistic work and under his direction started other departments of activity like the trades-union centre at Kanpur. The *Bandemataram* was being looked after by P.L. Sondhi, and Chhabil Das ran the National College as Principal.

When the Society was well out of its infancy and the Founder felt satisfied about its stability and about its having

to its credit enough useful work to entitle it to the public support, in March 1927 for the first time publicly celebrated its "anniversary". The Society needed an auditorium and the library and offices were finding the old yellow bungalow very inadequate. A new double-storey block was planned at the same time. The funds needed for this had, some time prior to the first public celebration, led the members to discover the Founder's birthday, and his completing sixty years had brought a few substantial cash gifts which constituted a good start for the Lajpat Rai Hall-so the new block was named-the foundation-stone of which was laid by Malviyaji on the occasion of the 1928 anniversary.

The Founder-Director had already taken one member in Kathiawar, Balvantray G. Mehta, and in Orissa he had started a branch of the Society under Gopabandhu Das, who was also chosen vice-President of the Society. The *Samaj*, its printing press, and some of the Gopabandhu's lieutenants (Lingaraj Misra, Radhanath Rath) were parts of this branch. Gopabandhu Babu on the return journey after the 1928 anniversary fell ill and shortly after died. Orissa of course mourned for a beloved leader. Lalaji and the Society deeply felt the loss. In Gopabandhu Babu's place, Lalaji (and the members) selected the present writer for the vice-presidentship. The U.P. membership had considerably increased-including four Kashi Vidyapith Shastris-Algurai, Hariharnath, Lal Bahadur (under training in Lalaji's days) and Raja Ram-besides Baldev, the seniormost (Harnam Singh having resigned) and Mohanlal Gautam.

After the 47 partition the Society set up its headquarters in New Delhi, and in course of time it was expanded a great deal, adding to the number of its branches and the area of its activity. It has been particularly lucky in its succession of Presidents-Purushottam Das Tandon, Balvantray Mehta, Lal Bahadur, the present incumbent being Biswanath Das. Of these, Balvantray and Lal Bahadur had been taken into the

Society by Lalaji himself. Tandonji had on Lalaji's persuasion moved from Allahabad to Lahore (as Secretary of the Punjab National bank) where he kept in close contact with Lalaji and the Society. Lalaji no doubt desired Tandonji to join his life order one day, but he hesitated thinking that it might not be fair to ask for his sacrifice till the family had found bread-winners in its younger members. The sacrifice had to be made after Lalaji's death, in deference to the wish that some of us knew had been in our Chief's mind.

A notable creation of Lalaji's last years was the Tuberculosis Hospital named after his mother. More correctly, the hospital had a posthumous birth: Lalaji had merely created the Trust and given it a corpus of more than Rs. two lakhs. Tuberculosis which had taken away Dalpat Rai, the most promising of his brothers, in the prime of life, and then the most promising of his sons, Pyare Krishna, when he was barely twenty naturally claimed his special attention.

Lalaji sent his tentative plan for the Gulabdevi Trust to a few friends, including Gandhiji, for comments, Gandhiji observed that the idea was noble, but that the execution called for improvement; so the original plan was amended in the light of Gandhiji's observations.

At the time of the 47 partition of India and Gulabdevi, Hospital was a well-established institution doing highly useful work. The hospital and equipment could not of course cross the new boundary line, and presumably the old hospital near the Lahore airport continues to serve the people in Pakistan.

The Gulabdevi Trust was not the last of what may be called Lalaji's philanthropic ventures. For his last gift, in his last months, was for the creation of a centre of physical culture for women. This was a minor project which could go into action without an elaborate project stage. But Lalaji was not spared to see it through.

For the conceiving of the project we have to bear in mind the grave misgivings that (in his closing years) filled his inmost

mind. The project and the misgivings both had their genesis in the intractable posture that the Hindu-Muslim problem had assumed. He had begun to visualise a demand for “secession” with large-scale violence, particularly the mob and *goonda* varieties, and he wanted our womenfolk to be prepared for such eventualities and to get some training that might be of some use in such situations. He had somewhat earlier, when this phase in his thinking had started, given a *Katari* (a small dagger) as a present to one who had been very close to him, explaining to her the underlying purport of such an unusual gift along the line we have indicated. He was being inspired no doubt by the way indicated by Guru Gobind Singh inspired no doubt by the way indicated by Guru Gobind Singh who had made the *Kirpan* part of his followers’ apparel, India’s integrity and freedom demanded that Hindu women should follow that model, cease to be helpless weaklings and take to a hard, militant way on the Rajput or Khalsa lines.

One aspect of this chain of philanthropy must not be missed. Philanthropy as commonly understood and practised it was not. ‘Renunciation’ one hesitates to call it-out of deference to Lalaji’s own allergy to some of the connotations or undertones of that word. But whatever label one might give it this chain had started when he announced his resolve, in the prime of life, to accord public work a clear priority over (Professional work and, further, to neutralise the pull of the money incentive be resolved to give away all his earnings after meeting the household expenses.

It was in accordance with the resolve we have recalled above that he had virtually denuded himself of all his worldly assets - all that in the form of investment or savings had still been left over from his earlier career plus all that out of “by-product” earning in the ‘twenties remained after meeting his frugal household.

To Cecil Rhodes, a regular and outstanding “philanthropist” is ascribed the saying that philanthropy is good but philanthropy plus 5 p.c. is better. One of Lalaji’s institutions of

this period the Lakshmi Insurance, may be said to conform to the Rhodes dictum. From a personal angle, this venture was conceived as solution to the problem of retaining K. Santanam who had thrown away a promising career at the bar in the non-co-operation movement, and who was considered by Lalaji amongst his top lieutenants. If he was not to go back to the bar he might have to leave Lahore and go back south of starting a new career. A lift office with Santanam as Managing Director was the solution, that Lalaji conceived-and, of course, a good life office must have been a part of Lalaji's Swadeshi programme. Lalaji was the chairman of the new venture-and this made for astoundingly rapid success. A special feature during Lalaji's days was that controlling interest possibilities were totally ruled out, as (because of the Chairman's insistence) no application for more than 100 shares (of Rs. 100 each) was entertained by the Board, not even Santanam being permitted to go beyond this limit.

Lalaji's newspapers were a vitally important part of his work. A daily paper of his own he must have decided on before he got back from his exile. For as soon as he had settled down he registered a joint-stock venture called the Punjab Akhbarat & Press Co. Ltd, which launched the Urdu daily *Bandemataram*. Lalaji was Chairman of the company and Editor of the daily. None of the shareholders had a controlling interest, but Harkishan Lal had a handsome holding and served on the Board of Directors till his becoming a Punjab Minister when the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms took effect.

The *Bandemataram* was a powerful organ from the very start. Its career forms and important chapter in the annals of Urdu journalism, and it made a creditable contribution in the fight for liberation. Lalaji had not just lent his name. Though he had no editorial desk at the office in Gowalmandi, occasionally he called there for a brief while; but the next in command, Ram Prasad his trusted lieutenant from the Arya Samaj days, would be sure to call in the forenoon at 2, Court

Street-provided Lalaji was in town-for the editorial conference at which the two could review the previous day's performance and plan the issue to come out in the afternoon-morning papers started in Lahore some time later, and the *Bandematarm* was among the first to effect this change.

In no time the *Bandemataram* became the foremost urdu daily, wielding influence on public opinion in the Punjab as no other paper did. It made an all round contribution in raising the standards of the Urdu press-by the fare presented, its variety. its comments and contributions at once thoughtful and forceful, by its bold and high professional ethics, by its superior production and decidedly more liberal payment to workers.

The *Bandemataram* had gained circulation, popularity and power, by becoming the fearless, vigorous evangel of the great mass movement launched by the Congress under the Mahatma's leadership. The weekly in English, *The People* was born when the non-co-operation high tide had ebbed away. The role of *The people* offering a varied weekly fare with a stress on educative value was decidedly different. In particular it acquired a high reputation for its cold objective scrutiny and stock-taking and for its independent, fearless, realistic analysis and examination of political programmes and policies and slogans and shibboleths, no matter how high the authority from which these emanated. It was not afraid of being charged with heresy, nor in the name of "discipline". being made to forego the right (or neglect the duty) of dissent-a task which required much more of moral courage than might be needed for vigorous attacks in which required much more of moral courage than might be needed for vigorous attacks on alien rule.

As a prisoner Lalaji had made a resolve to do what he could for prison reform-in the interest not merely of jail-going leaders, but for the sake of the 'common felon" This promise was to be made good through his papers. The *Bandemataram* exposures of prison doings led to a defamation case-which led to further exposures, and then to the appointment

of a Committee and to legislation on its recommendations Lord Oliver (Secretary of State for India) paid a notable compliment to *The People* and the *Bandemataram* for this.

The Story of a Bout and a Rout

IT SEEMED TO be the privilege of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu to act as an angel radiating peace and goodwill whenever in Indian politics, at the top, tempers were frayed. During her term as Congress President, in 1926, enormous calls were made on her magic talent for soothing the troubled waters. Her success achieved by extraordinary exertions at Kanpur and Sabarmati did not last long, and on the eve of the autumn session of the Legislative Assembly she seemed to have her heaviest task on hand. Watching Delhi sessions for the distinguished visitors' gallery, she had often found an excellent pastime but the Simla sessions, usually brief and unimportant, had not much attraction for her. The problems of 1926, however, were peculiar and the call of duty urgent as she was head of the Indian National Congress.

Lalaji returned from abroad in mid-August and within a few-days the Assembly was to begin its autumn session.

When he was leaving India at the end of April, the Sabarmati pact had just been entered into; though perhaps before his boat had left the Indian waters, misgivings about it had already started. From Calcutta at the same time news was pouring in a communal rioting and bloodshed.

On his return Lalaji found his Sabarmati pact already buried seven fathom deep. The pact had (in Motilalji's words) proved still-born, for almost from the outset each party put its own interpretation on it. The Swarajist-Responsivist feud therefore

continued. the stink of communal orgy had made the atmosphere thick and foul.

When Lalaji returned from Europe he talked to a few friends here and there of his having heard of certain schemes fostered by certain "revolutionaries" of slicing up India and of a "Congress committee" having been formed at Kabul to further them.

We have dwelt at some length on this Kabul committee affair elsewhere. What is relevant here is that though Lalaji thought it inadvisable to start a public controversy over this matter, he found that though no one was able to explain what for such an anomalous thing had been set up, there was nothing but mischief of grave import such a thing could be. Their refusal to take him seriously was to Lalaji even a graver symptom than the original anomaly. This created a hiatus between him and them. This was an important factor though in the background in the sequel.

Put more briefly, Lalaji did not approve of the nonchalance which it was the fashion with certain leaders to affect regarding "communal" questions. He had never much approved of a parliamentary programme to consist largely of Abstention from the Assembly. He had now further begun to realise that by their abstention the Assemblymen injured or at least neglected the interests of the constituencies they represented, and as the abstainers mostly were the representatives sent up by the Hindu constituencies, it was exactly the Hindu interests that suffered most by such tactics. Some of those who were keenest on this policy for the last session of the Assembly looked upon the walk-out as striking gesture, as in fact an investment that should yield a handsome dividend on the not so distant polling day. Lalaji on the other hand thought the voter might as well tell his representative that having neglected his post he had lost his confidence. In the Simla session, two important official measures were coming up, one embodied the Government's decisions on the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Currency and finance and therefore of the utmost importance

to India's industry and commerce, and the other proposal an amendment of the Criminal Procedure Code that would affect civil liberties. It was possible the Government were in a hurry about these measures just because they thought the Swarajist walkout gave them an excellent opportunity to rush to the statute-book whatever best suited their own wishes.

Thus full of doubt the wisdom of the walk-out policy, and brooding sadly over having again been torn asunder from his Maharashtra friends by the Non-ratification of the Sabarmati pact, Lalaji arrived in Simla.

He took counsel with Malaviyaji, who shared much of his own doubt and misgiving and who, at any rate, had never accepted the swarajist discipline or tactics. He tried at the same time to discuss things with Motilalji and other Swarajist friends. As these talks tended more and more towards a split, Sarojini Naidu, anxious to preserve the unity, got bust using all her womanly tact, and with infinite patience, trying to explain the position of each to the other, and carried whatever messages, formulas, queries and replies were entrusted to her, even at odd hours, up and down between Firgrove (where Lalaji stayed) and Shantikuteer (where Malaviyaji was) and Hotel Cecil (where Motilalji had his G.H.Q.). But the soothing unction compounded of tact and wit and charm and patience failed to produce the healing effect. The Swarajists lifted the ban for a day to attend the Assembly for the Currency Bill debate, with the result that the Government no feeling sure of the majority put off the proposed currency legislation to the first session of the new assembly. After that the party executive decided to ignore the rest of the session. This did not suit Lalaji. On the 24th the party had an important meeting. Overnight Sarojini Naidu and A. Rangaswami Iyengar had given Lalaji a message from Motilalji requesting him to be present at the meeting and saying that Motilalji would like to see him at his room at Cecil before the meeting. As he thought the pourparlers were at an end, he did not call on Panditji before the meeting, but in response

to the special message he attended the meeting at which his resignation from the Swaraj Party, a longish typescript, was read out.

Sarojini Naidu even then kept up her efforts in the hope that the differences might be composed and the resignation withdrawn. Instead, three or four days later the resignation was passed on to the press and became the opening shot in the most memorable political bout of the year and of many a year perhaps.

The long opening paragraph of the letter of resignation was devoted mostly to a criticism of the walk-out tactics, and Lalaji complained that the March resolution of the A.-I.C.C. had been unfair to him.

“At Kanpur I insisted on my amendment relating to the budget debate being accepted as a necessary condition of my supporting the resolution. The party accepted this, though reluctantly. But two months later the amendment accepted at Kanpur was again negatived by a lesser authority than the congress. I voted against this change and questioned the jurisdiction of the All-India Congress Committee to do so. But I was overruled. Still in the interest of discipline, I walked out along with the rest of the party.”

But he maintained that because of this later tampering with the resolution his own obligation to abide by it was at an end.

“Slowly and gradually,” the letter read, “I have come to share the belief of many other Hindus that the Swaraj party, as at present constituted, is distinctly harmful to the Hindus not so much in the matter of their differences with the Muslims.... as in matters between the Government and the Hindus inasmuch as the walkout meant neglect of the normal duties towards the constituencies. The Hindu constituencies which returned us are thus deprived of the services of their representatives.... I consider this to be a breach of faith with the constituencies and I cannot any longer be a party to such a breach of faith.”

And lastly he suggested that the peculiar need of the political situation was not that a vigorous party policy be pursued, but that all progressive public men and groups should get together.

Some papers called the letter a formidable indictment of the Swaraj Party. It is true the Swarajist tactics were subjected to rather severe criticism in it. But on the whole while forcefully setting forth the stand he took, Lalaji was trying to avoid importing acrimony into the discussion.

Motilalji came out with a reply to the "indictment". This reply did not much seek to justify the walk-out tactics, which had been the main ground of resignation and were certainly the main theme of the letter under reply; but it let go no opportunity for sarcasm and ridicule. On merits, Motilalji's principal contention seemed to be that Lalaji was as much bound to the Swaraj party as if he had been actually elected on the Swarajist ticket—an academic futility when the last session of the outgoing legislature had but a couple of days left, and a general election was already in the offing. We have already given the facts relevant to this issue raised by Motilalji in his two letters and need not repeat them here. From these facts let the reader form his own conclusions and frame his own replies to Motilalji's queries and contentions (as formulated in the second of his two letters).

But the choice bits in Pandit Motilal's letter were not its facts nor any arguments adduced in defence of Swarajist tactics but its sarcastic flings. He opened characteristically by congratulating Lalaji on "the well-deserved compliment paid to you by such a friend of Indian rights and aspirations as the Pioneer". Discussing the objection to the walk-out tactics, Motilalji underlined, again and again, to Lalaji's having been a party to the decisions (as at Kanpur), or having acquiesced in them—or even when differing (as at the Delhi A.-I.C.C. meetings) not straightaway taking things to a rupture. "Slowly and gradually" came here very handy to Motilalji to exercise his sarcasm on—perhaps it relieved him of the obligation to meet the argument. He went

one still better in picking on another phrase which he found rather inviting-in Lalaji's pronouncing the Swarajist tactics a breach of faith with the constituencies and his declaring that he could not "*any longer*" be a party to this.

Motilalji disowned responsibility for non-ratification of the Sabarmati pact for "if the agreement was as I take it to be, who was in the wrong in not confirming it?" and not without an undertone of sarcasm added, "I am glad to note that on the question of accepting offices your views remain unchanged, and trust you will adhere to them at least from some time to come." If in veiled sarcasm he wanted to suggest a prophecy, this never came true.

The Working Committee resolution enabling one community to block legislation. Motilalji too did not endorse. He said it had been passed "in my absence under a misapprehension and is being reconsidered". The resolution of his own Provincial Committee recommending that the elections be fought by the Swaraj Party, as had been done before the Kanpur resolution, instead of by the Congress direct, Panditji dismissed on a technical plea taking shelter in an allegation-denied by the chairman of the meeting among others-that "it was the result of permitting a number of non-members to attend the meeting, and the Working Committee of the Congress had refused to look at the resolution." He did not wish to take any notice of the growing feeling among Congressmen that the Congress imprimatur be not embroiled in election squabbles. Another choice fling came in dealing with the point in the letter of resignation-pleading for a united front instead of party antagonism.

There were other taunts too scattered in the body of the letter which accused Lalaji of 'moderatism'- taunts in which some saw a boomerang readiness to rush back to the glass house from which they had issued forth. Motilalji's letter concluded like Lalaji's-on a note of cordiality, though even here he could not resist once again and at the wrong place rubbing in

the “slowly and gradually” that he had picked out from Lalaji’s letter as a target for ridicule—“I do not expect you to change your mind in a hurry; but am hopeful that ‘slowly and gradually’ you will find the faith that is in you, and proclaim it to the world in no uncertain terms.”

Blow and counter blow followed in quick succession. The day Lalaji’s letter was published, Motilalji wrote out his and sent it on to the press. (Sarojini Naidu, hoping against hope, still continued her efforts; but Motilalji fittingly changed his emissary and sent his reply to Lalaji through Lala Girdharilal of Amritsar.) Motilalji’s letter was delivered to Lalaji on the 30th night (of August) and on September 2 Lalaji sent his second letter, for he had found Motilalji’s reply “full of institutions and innuendoes, half-truths and misstatements which I cannot let go unnoticed and unanswered”.

Motilalji did not care to say whether he regarded the proposed amendment to the Criminal Procedure Code, which Lalaji had said was going to be a serious infringement of the citizen’s liberty (and in particular of the liberty of the press), as not sufficiently important to warrant Swarajist attendance in the Assembly. He chose rather to take advantage of Malaviyaji’s having supported the measure, and the jibe thrown at Malaviyaji was what Lalaji resented most of all in his reply. Referring to Malaviyaji as “your present comrade in arms” and recalling his speech in support of that bill Motilalji asked. “I put it to you to say what place a Swarajist can have in company like this.”

The criticism that the walk-out was a vigorous demonstration had lost its value because of the exceptions—the “walk-ins”—and that it had otherwise proved a failure; for the expectation that the Swarajists would leave of the parliamentary pastime so that they might devote themselves to plying the charkha, propagating khadi and to promoting the other items of the constructive programme had not much been fulfilled. Here too Motilalji neither denied the allegation nor yet owned its truth, but told Lalaji that the “walk-out” had been sanctioned to oblige him and that if

the 'constructive' work had not been taken up, Lalaji as a member of the party was as much responsible as anyone else, even though apart from other things Panditji knew well enough he had spent the recess in Europe.

Lalaji's second letter once again sought to prove that he had been returned to the Assembly an independent candidate and that he had given no pledge to his voters, nor any assurances to the Swaraj Party that he would join or remain in that party. And about the walk-in clause and the use made thereof—Motilalji's seeking to pass on the responsibility for these to Lalaji—"All walk-ins took place in my absence from India and I did not participate in any decision relating to them."

These walk-ins had included many sanctioned by the special committee and some even without the formality of a sanction and yet connived at and silently accepted.

Again he referred to the shabby sequel to the Sabarmati pact.

The fling about the *Pioneer* congratulations and that about "moderatism" evoked a ready reply:

"The sting in your congratulation on the *Pioneer's* comment is only an electioneering tactic. It does not come with good grace from a gentleman who had been the recipient of many praises from that and other Anglo-Indian journals for his level headed moderate politics in the Assembly. You have followed a course which was a judicious combination of moderation and extremism, a very proper thing to do as was evidenced by your speech relating to the desirability of Indian appeals being decided by the privy Council in London rather than by an Indian Supreme Court in India and also by your support in the first stages of the contempt of Courts Bill. Both these actions I presume had the approval of the *Pioneer* and the Government.

But above all, Lalaji resented Motilalaji's dig at Malaviyaji.

In the concluding paragraph, he once again made an appeal for avoidance of acrimony—"Let us fight a clean fight, if fight we must."

The epistolary bout concluded with a further reply from Motilalji. "My last unwilling contribution to the unbecoming controversy started by the publication of your letter of resignation." No fresh points were raised in this nor any fresh contribution made on the issues already under discussion. Panditji again referred to Lalaji's election to the Assembly and crystallised his allegations on this subject into "four Central facts". "I shall take your denial of the four central facts... as conclusive and throw myself on your mercy."

He went on to explain that Lalaji was entirely wrong in making out that "I do not share with you the sentiments of respect and esteem which you have for Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya," and sought to sum up the controversy about the resignation as a series of shifting and inconsistent attitudes, all equally untenable, to which the sender of the resignation had been forced to take resort.

There ended the fight with paper missiles, with two shorts from each side, Interviewed by the *Tribune* (September 5) Lalaji repeated that in going to the Assembly he had accepted Raizada Hans Raj's unconditional offer, that the other Punjab members too had offered to make room for him, and none had laid down any conditions. He contended that the walk-out policy was harmful to the country, specially to the Hindus. He disclosed further that he was not likely to have resigned from the Swaraj Party if the party had decided to participate in the debates on the Criminal Law Amendment Bill, and on the communal resolution, and that the pourparlers which continued even after his handing in the resignation came to a sudden end, with no chances of resumption in the immediate future, because of the insult to Malaviyaji in Pandi Motilal's letter.

The letter of resignation had sought to raise certain political issues-the Sabarmati pact, and the March resolution of the A.-I.C.C. the walk-out policy and its effects, and whether the Congress organisation should participate in the election fight or whether Congressmen might, as they had done in the past, fight

through a separate organisation for parliamentary work. But these issues were given comparatively little attention, and whether or not any assurances or commitments accompanied Lalaji's entry into the legislature became the central topic of controversy. There Lalaji was able to take care of himself as the facts were strongly on his side, his trenchant criticism of the Swarajist tactics too was bound to make some impression, but though many who studied the correspondence not for political enlightenment but merely as a contribution to the literature of controversy, to see which of the participants wielded more deftly the weapons of ridicule and sarcasm thought that the honours lay with the illustrious lawyer of Allahabad.

The two rounds of hard hitting, of thrust and parry by two experienced duel-fighters, gave a foretaste of the big fight that was to ensue in the general elections two months later.

The letters were but preliminary to the real tournament of the general election, for which the teams were already being selected by the two parties. Officially now the selection of Congress candidates rested with the Working committee of the Indian National Congress, and Lalaji still continued as a member of that body. The Working Committee started selecting its team and making its plans early in September. Lalaji deliberately kept away from that and subsequent meetings. He got busy instead forming another party of those Congressmen who wanted to have a parliamentary programme and who at the same time were dissatisfied with the Swarajist tactics—those who in General shared his own outlook and that of Malaviyaji and the Maharashtra group.

A whirlwind campaign was launched by Motilalji and his lieutenants on the one side and by Malaviyaji and Lalaji and their friends on the other. The latter decided to call themselves the Independent Congress party, following unconsciously perhaps the British I.L.P. pattern. They not only refused to appeal to the voters in the name of the Hindu Mahasabha; they claimed they were as good Congressmen as those in the

Swaraj Party, though they did not believe in the Swarajist formula about abstraction. They made it clear besides that they did not approve of the Congress as such participating in the elections.

The question was often asked whether the real clash was that of principles and policies or of personalities. The differences in principles and policies we have already explained, and these differences were by no means unreal or trivial; but it is possible the clash of personalities lent them an exaggerated sharpness and precipitated matters. When originally the Swaraj party was formed, Lalaji was still in prison (though he was helpful even from there): when he came out not being eligible for the legislature, he did not deem it necessary to join the party. Das and Nehru were the founders of the party and they did well in demarcating their respective areas—Das, was President of the party, and in the Bengal Legislature its leader; Nehru, Secretary of the party, its leader in the Central Assembly, After the death of Das, Nehru was both President of the party and its, leader in the Assembly when a seat was found for Lalaji. In spite of the differences in their outlooks, Lalaji and Motilalji had collaborated with each other very well as long as Lalaji did not formally come to be one of Motilalji's flock. From this point of view his entry into the legislature was a mistake, for an adjustment with the leader of the party now became more necessary and more difficult. Occasions often arose when either he felt that the discipline was too irksome or that the leader was overbearing, or when the leader felt that Lalaji was too big for the handling that he had devised for his flock. Lalaji as second fiddler to Motilalji was to many an inept situation, though a split was not the only solution for ending it, for Lalaji could easily remain out of the Assembly, and then he could have continued to help Motilalji while maintaining his freedom to criticise him.

The campaign proved an enormous tax on Lalaji's energies. His was the main responsibility for the party nominations from

the different provinces and for deciding the main questions affecting the plan of campaign. He had, of course, to visit many constituencies in his own province as well as outside, to help the candidates of his party and to explain to the voters what the new party stood for. He was besides being fiercely opposed personally. When Motilalji came down to Lahore to beard the lion in his own den, many Congressmen desired that Lalaji and Malaviyaji should not be opposed, as their personal standing demanded that they should be in the legislature even if in certain matters they differed from the parliamentary leadership of the Congress, and also because it would unnecessarily embitter things and leave behind a bad legacy. Their point of view was placed by a few spokesmen before Pandit Motilal. It was urged before Panditji that the setting up of candidates against patriots of such eminence would be disliked by the voters and generally go against the Congress Party. But Motilalji had been assured of thumping victories by some of his lieutenants in the Punjab and because of (thanks to) their enormously miscalculated assurances he rode the high horse. Quoting Lloyd George, he told his interviewers he preferred the cobbler of his party to the leader of the rival one.

But though he rode the high horse, he rode for a fall. When the results of the polling came he had to own not a defeat but a rout. He could still continue as leader of the opposition in the Legislative Assembly, but that was merely because Malviyaji and Lalaji gave him fight only in northern India and not on the peninsula. Motilalji would now be no longer leader of the opposition but for the Madras M.L.A.'s at his back. In his own province the voters punished him very severely indeed.

In the Punjab the Swaraj Party was almost obliterated out of the local council, but for a solitary seat regarding which out of personal regard for the candidate Lalaji was persuaded to keep away from the constituency. At a late stage of the polling when Lalaji's own polling was over, he was persuaded to

leave alone Bodh Raj (of Multan) and thus Bodh Raj was permitted to be elected with a very narrow majority. Not one Swarajist was sent by the Punjab to the Central Assembly, Lalaji took the unusual step of offering himself from two constituencies, and the double personal fight notwithstanding he kept busy running about to help his party candidates not only in the Punjab but even in other provinces.

In his two constituencies he was being opposed by Raizada Hans Raj and D. Chaman Lall. Raizada Hans Rai was most unwilling for the fight and tried to dissuade his leader from putting up a candidate against Lalaji, but his advice was ignored and he was ordered to contest the seat. He loyally abided by the orders and entered the lists and for a while put forth his best, but it did not taken him long to realise that he stood not the ghost of a chance and so he virtually withdraw from the Contest a good while before and so he virtually withdrew from the contest a good while before the actual polling.

The Lahore Congressmen's deputation that had waited on Pandit Motilal only to be subdued and dismissed with Lloyd George's terse stinging words had included some from the Servants of the People Society, who had given full assurances that they had no interest in the new party being launched by Malaviyaji and Lalaji and no intension of diverting their loyalty as Congressmen in the altered context and that Lalaji had never asked any of them to join his party. (The present writer was one of the deputationists.

Though hurt deeply by the rebuff of that interview, Achint Ram, a founder-member of the Society, went to the booth to cast his vote for Chaman Lall. When he come home after this, Lalaji strightaway hugged him affectionately and patted him for having acted up to his convictions. Achint Ram may have himself been unhappy over his conduct because of the mischievous use to which some of the Punjab Swarajist leaders (who no doubt had egged him on) put it in the next day's paper.

But Lalaji made no complaint. A sequel to Lalaji's own double victory in the poll is noteworthy. D. Chaman Lall has

tened to 2, Court Street to make sure for himself of the seat that Lalaji must needs vacate. "If not in the Assembly, I am just nobody and nowhere," said he. What he had been doing during his campaign against Lalaji was simply a closed chapter. Lalaji readily conceded that he had done creditably in the Assembly and therefore readily made room for him retaining for himself the Raizada's (Jullundur) seat. Raizada Hans Raj too came down to Lahore; they met with the same cordiality as ever before, and things were so managed that he got into the Punjab Legislature. Had Lalaji adopted the Lloyd George canon, neither Chaman Lall could get back into the Assembly nor Hans Raj become an M.L.C.

Elections are a queer phenomenon and the values governing the conduct of contestants often seem paradoxical, Thus Lalaji's nomination was objected to on behalf of the Congress Party on the ground that he had been debarred by the Chief Court for having written a book or books which being considered seditious were banned by the Government. He was, therefore, disqualified from being elected to the Assembly—so urged the Congress rival at the scrutiny of nomination papers! But Lalaji had forearmed himself against this possibility and by a representation to the High Court had had the absurd order of 1917 set aside.

Though bitterly opposed and harassed by the Swaraj Party and declared by Motilalji to be of less account to him than any Swarajist cobbler, Lalaji for his part, when he heard that some of the U.P. lieutenants of Malaviyaji were keenly pressing the desirability of setting up a candidate against Motilalji, strongly opposed the proposal and wrote to Malaviyaji:

Oct. 14, 1926

My dear Pandit Malaviya,

I have read a statement in the Press to the effect that the members of the Independent Congress Party in the U.P. are pressing you to contest the same seat as Pandit Motilal is

expected to stand for in the coming elections of the Legislative Assembly. I hope the statement has no foundation in fact. In any case, I would beg of you not to follow the advice of your friends in this matter, as in my judgment the country needs both of you in the Legislative Assembly.

As for myself, I think I can take care of myself. I do not believe in the doctrine of retaliation.

Yours sincerely,
Lajpat Rai

In the wider context of the fight for liberation Lalaji did not attach an exaggerated importance to party labels. Here as also in regard to the notions of discipline within a political party—were very different from those upheld and proclaimed by the Swarajist chief.

Lalaji fought vigorously but tried his best to keep the fight clean and honourable, even when he knew mud was being thrown at him. The one regrettable episode on his side—but in which he had no hand—was the publication, in the *Bandemataram* (along with some other papers of a slanderous story against Motilalji. Lalaji was away from Lahore when this happened, but as soon as he came to know of it, he expressed his strongest disapproval; and after the elections he made the guilty paper apologise to Motilalji unconditionally and to make amends to the Swarajist Chief's satisfaction.

Jawaharlal happened to be in Switzerland by the side of Kamala Nehru in her illness. Just when he had finished the campaign tour and even before all the results had come, Pandit Motilal wrote to him a very despondent letter. The rout had so depressed him that he was seriously thinking of resigning from the Assembly and retiring from public life! Though “still acclaimed as the leader of the strongest party”, he could not forget that not only in the Punjab he had been beaten hollow, but in his own U.P., what had happened was “nothing short of a disaster”*.

* A bunch of Old Letter, p.49

Not being accepted by the electorate one could understand, but the most amazing confession was-"I had hardly any workers worth the name to help me in my own Province."* this surely could not be put down to the credit of "Birla's money" or the "lies" of the "Malaviya-Lala gang"! But whatever the reasons the upshot was-"I am thoroughly disgusted and am now seriously thinking of retiring from public life."** He wanted to keep quiet about this till the Congress met at Gauhati in 3-4 weeks from the date of the letter. He was thinking of sending in his resignation from the Assembly after the Congress session, but it seems the favourable session trends changed his plans.

* Ibid, p. 49

** Ibid., p.50

In the Central Legislative Assembly

IN THE ASSEMBLY eventually Pandit Motilal of course continued as the leader of the opposition. In the south no fight had been offered by Malviyaji and Lalaji; they sought the verdict particularly of the North India Hindu voters, and this went convincingly in their favour. Central India and the Western presidency were not neglected, but the southern presidency was left out of the campaign. The result of the poll was overwhelmingly in their favour (in the region of the campaign but the campaign put a heavy strain on Lalaji's health. In the Sind tour he nearly broke down. The Independent Congress party contained in its ranks enough both of talent and of genuine patriotism, and it got sound leadership from Lalaji and Malaviyaji. "I am the leader of the party, and Malaviyaji is my leader." Lalaji used to say. The two leaders got on quite well. Their new party kept up the fight-for freedom-splendidly. In all fights against the bureaucracy the Swarajists and the Independent Congressmen stood shoulder to shoulder.

Soon after the elections the Congress was meeting at Gauhati (in Assam) under the presidentship of S. Srinivasa Iyengar. Lalaji's colleagues were for making a determined effort to get a fair hearing and, if possible, a favourable verdict from the congress. Malaviyaji strongly urged Lalaji's participation in the Gauhati deliberations. So also did M.R. Jayakar. Lalaji perhaps made no particular effort to canvass support and to collect forces at Gauhati, but he himself agreed to attend the Congress session. The news of a grim tragedy overtook him

en route- that of the martyrdom of Swami Sharddhananda at the hands of a fanatical Muslim assassin. Gauhati was bound to be enveloped in gloom, and against the background of such a tragic happening all political controversies of the moment would seem pale and puerile. No one could predict what might be coming in the wake at Delhi or elsewhere in northern India. On his way, at Calcutta, Lalaji's very first impulse was to rush back to Delhi and the Punjab. Mahatma Gandhi agreed with him. Instead of proceeding to Gauhati Lalaji made a dash for Delhi. (Kelkar and Jayakar having been kept back by illness, the field was left clear to the Swarajists.) His last Congress it seemed was to be a U.P. one-the 40th session at Kanpur-as even his first had been, the 4th at Allahabad.

The Assembly session started soon after at Delhi and his work as party leader was very strenuous. He had been able to get no rest since his return from Europe in mid-August the previous year, and throughout the session he had been feeling the strain. When the Assembly session was over, he made up his mind he must give himself some rest and again arranged three to four months' trip to Europe like the previous year. Wrote he in *The People*:

"I am not going to Europe on a mission of any kind. The trip has no object except that of rest and recuperation. From repeated experience of Indian resorts of health (the hills and the seashores) I have found that the climate and the environments do not give me the rest I need. The climate of the hills does not suit me. My stomach gets deranged. Moreover the call for speeches and meetings, etc, is so incessant and insistent that one finds it impossible to resist it without giving grave offence to friends and constituents. Life on Indian hills is no less expensive than in Europe. I can live in Europe fairly cheaply because I do not go in for pleasure or luxurious living. I believe that 3½ months' trip (because that is all I will get) to Europe will re-set me for serious work in India and I therefore hope that my friends and countrymen will forgive me for this

absence from India for a short time. On my return I shall again be at their disposal for such service as I am fit to render.”

On May 4, 1927, he set sail by the P & O boat S.S. Rawalpindi.

This time he eschewed political work in the interest of his health, during his stay abroad. On his return in mid-August he wrote:

“I will be absolutely frank with them. I saw nothing in particular, and did nothing but take rest and get treated by doctors. From the very first I had determined on this trip being an absolutely non-political one. In November last I had had a nervous collapse and I did not recover completely there from even up till the end of March. In April again I had a bad attack of liver during my tour in Sind. So I kept to my decision. On board the ship while going outward I did no work and for the first ten days felt very well indeed—much improved and much refreshed. In the Mediterranean, unfortunately, I had a chill and contracted a cold from which I suffered more or less for five weeks. I was in London only for four weeks and a few days. During this period I did no work, saw no one in Particular except a few friends of the Labour party. I did not ask the Secretary of State for India for an interview and did not even go to the India Office. I met the Under Secretary for India at a dinner at the House of Commons, where I said or heard nothing political. The talk was mostly about poetry, literature or the prayer-book.”

When he returned however he seemed to have in hand a job that might take a good deal of his time during the next few months. This was shaping out of a book that had just been published as he was returning from Europe and that he like many of his fellow passengers carried with him on the steamer. This was none other than the calumny perpetrated by Katherine Mayo—*Mother India*. On his return early in his stay at Simla for he had to go there for the Assembly session—he seemed to have made up his mind to publish a reply to the slanderous

book. In fact when he returned from Simla to Lahore he already seemed to have finished a substantial part of his manuscript. But work progressed rather slow in Lahore. He could not find much leisure. Besides he wanted me to edit his hastily done manuscript and to give it proper shape, and I too was in the fetters of other routine. So he decided that we might both go to Calcutta and shut ourselves up till the task was finished. To Calcutta we went and more than a month's hard work gave us *Unhappy India*-so Lalaji chose to call his last book-in the final shape fit for the publisher. The book actually did not come out till about the end of spring 1928.

His assembly work took up an exceptionally large amount of time as he served on two committees-one on age of consent and the other regarding roads, and both involved a good deal of touring about. The work on the Road Committee had enabled him amongst other places to visit Adyar and to meet Mrs. Annie Besant after many years. When the committee's work was finished on April 4, he went to Sabarmati on April 6 to meet Mahatma Gandhi who was then planning a trip to Europe. The trip had to be abandoned largely because of the Simon Commission situation. Lalaji discussed with the Mahatma a campaign for the boycott of spinning franchise for the congress which he had in the past opposed. The plain fact is that he wanted a vigorous boycott campaign worked up and he did want to safeguard against the mill-owners exploiting it at the cost of national good, and also he felt that with the output of the mills along India could not meet all her requirements in cloth. In Mr. Gregg's book the chief thing that impressed him was the way the colossal waste through 'unemployment' in India was being caused and how this could to an appreciable extent be remedied by home-spinning and weaving.

By June the no-rent campaign in the Bardoli taluk had been launched. When he happened to be in Poona, he wrote to Vallabhbhai Patel if he could be of any use at Bardoli, but the Sardar wrote back:

“The rains have set in and villages have become unapproachable. Japti (Zabti) operations have ceased and the people are all busy with their agricultural operations. It would be impossible for me to take you to the various camps or to any of the important villages. In fact you can only come to the Bardoli Ashram where it would be possible for you to meet me and some of my co-working in this Ashram.”

So he decided not to go there.

The election fight had already become a mere ‘bygone’. Lalaji and Pandit Motilal were working together in a friendly spirit in the Assembly. But the way Lalaji endorsed the Nehru report and magnanimity with which he put himself at the disposal of Pandit Motilal for all work required for a complete success of this venture opened the way to their working together even with greater trust in each other than they had done in 1921 or 1924.

At the end of August the Nehru report was considered by an all-party meeting at Lucknow, and slight alterations adopted. Lalaji, along with Dr. Ansari, Mrs. Besant, Malviyaji, Mr. Jinnah and C. Vijayaraganavachariar, was added on to the committee. Lalaji threw himself heart and soul into the campaign. The true picture of the co-operation that now subsisted between Lalaji and Pandit Motilal could be formed by some of the letters that passed between them during this period.

The Last

WHEN YOU ADVISE an attack, do not say, 'Go' but 'Come'." Mrs. Annie Besant very fittingly recalled this saying of Charles Bradiaugh's in a tribute she paid to Lalaji.

The Simon Commission landed for the second time in the dark hours of October 11, 1928 and, according to their schedule, would be expected in Lahore on the 30th. On the Twenty-seventh and twenty-eighth Lalaji presided at Etawah over the deliberations of the Agra Provincial Hindu Conference. He had gone there to mobilize Hindu opinion in favour of the Nehru report proposals, the Nehru scheme and the Simon boycott being his two preoccupations at the moment. From Etawah he hastened to Lahore to be in time for the Simon Commission's arrival in his own city, so that in the boycott demonstrations he should be able to say "come" instead of ordering from afar "go".

"Come," he said on the thirtieth morning as he marched along at the head of a huge "Go back, simon" procession—a vast concourse whose enthusiasm found vent in their lusty shouts of "Go-back"—and yet the despondency of their hearts was well symbolized by the gloomy little flags that most of them carried and waved. The black flags betokened that they did not want John Simon and his colleagues, and they waved these constantly to reinforce their demand of "Go back, Simon". The demonstration was amongst the most orderly and the best controlled that Lahore had witnessed. Lalaji's presence at the head engendered great enthusiasm, but it was the best guarantee

that there could be that the demonstrators would be a disciplined peaceful body of men. He could lead crowds like Browning's Pied Piper, but he ever led like a veteran responsible general.

The authorities had made their preparations in advance. Overnight they erected a barbed-wire barrier at the western approaches to the railway station, and it was arranged that the Simon Commission would be led out of an exit at the eastern extremity. The procession chorus would be loud enough for Sir John Simon and his companions to hear as they got into the motorcars waiting for them outside the railway station. Their greetings would reach the ears they were meant for even though the black flags be too far away to darken the horizon for the unwelcome intruders.

There the procession had to stop and wait for the signal which would indicate the arrival of the Simon team. There they halted whiling away the time. Ataulah Shah Bokhari. That great charmer of crowds who could continue to sway an audience even when the night was running into the short hours, was present and Lalaji found him very handy in keeping the crowd busy. It was a long wait and it was not early morning either. The day was getting hotter and Lalaji stood beneath an umbrella, in supreme satisfaction that the crowd was so perfectly well-behaved in spite of the great barbed-wire irritant that was provoking them all the time.

Law-and-order, however, was in a different mood. It had its policemen ready with Regulation lathis. Not only with the demonstrators, but even towards the pressmen its behaviour showed that it was 'standing no nonsense'. The Senior Superintendent of Police questioned the genuineness of the permit armed with which the *Tribune* representative had worked his way on to the railway platform. He had him insulted - and later on lost a law-suit to him paying him substantial damages!

It would be useless to inquire how exactly the police felt

provoked into ordering an assault on the demonstrators. They just seem to have made up their minds in advance. If a 'reason' you must have, the time-worn Esop fable of the lamb and the wolf would give you all that is relevant.

The peaceful crowd was charged, in particular the leader who kept them restrained and orderly in the face of all provocation. On him the lathis rained. The chief assaulter was Mr. Scott, the Senior Superintendent of Police himself. Another was an assistant of his, one Mr. Saunders. The leader beneath the umbrella was the special target that day for John Bull's 'splendid brutality'-a short-statured elderly man with a walking stick in his hand who commanded an unarmed crowd and kept them restrained and peaceful, even when the blows rained on him, hard and true.

A rather frail puny thing he looked, but his spirit was dauntless. He could receive the blows like a man. He did not flee. He did not flinch. He did not budge. He did not permit his people to hit back. His lieutenants tried to surround him and to share the blows aimed at him. He still received the lion's share so that one of his doctors-Gopi Chand Shargava, who gauged the force of the blows not as a mere eye-witness but more intimately and more exactly as one of those who took on themselves some of the blows meant for the Chief-wondered how it was that he stood up to it at all without collapsing on the spot.

Manfully he took the blows and shouted with a lion's roar at his assailant, asking for his name. More lathi blows were the only reply. Again he shouted and challenged the assaulter's manhood demanding his name once again. The challenge was lost on the unmanly, inhuman thing with the lathi. The brute automaton just delivered more blows. He did not get the name-not at least from the unmanly thing itself. But his roar was effective in keeping the crowd firmly rooted where they stood-furious but perfectly under control.

When the assault had halted and the occasion for the

demonstration was over, badly mauled, and wounded mortally in mind, but still undaunted in appearance, he marched at the head of the procession on the way back.

In the evening the citizens of Lahore assembled in a mammoth public meeting outside the Bhati Gate. The injured lion roared again. Lajpat Rai narrated what had happened, congratulated his own people on their splendid behaviour in the face of grave provocation and gave his memorable reply to the morning's brutality. One sentence that he uttered was being repeated next day by the whole town, and soon after it was echoing all through India. To this day the echo is heard as the voice of prophecy well fulfilled. "Every blow that they hurled at us drove one more nail into the coffin of the Empire." And he said also that if he died and if the young men whom he had kept under check decided on a contrary course of action his spirit would only bless whatever they thought fit to do. What eloquence in gilded chambers or learned assemblies with all the aid that rhetoric might give it could ever have matched the pealing thunder of the lion that had that moment been injured! Such rhetoric and oratory at their best would, in comparison, seem a pale absurd affair.

His audience was worked up into a high pitch of expectancy - a 100,000 Irishmen awaiting that O'Connell 'would give the word', or soldiers *qui vive* for the General's command to start the march on the enemy's citadel. But he did not give the word and he did not order a march. He ordered a firm cold resolve, a grim determination to continue their struggle and for its continuance to be ever prepared to suffer and sacrifice.

Next day an official version of the happenings was put out. This was followed by a departmental inquiry which completely exonerated the police. Some two weeks later another inquiry was announced Mr. D. J. Boyd, ICS, Commissioner of the Rawalpindi Division, was deputed to conduct it and to submit a report. Lalaji and other leading publicmen declined to appear before Mr. Boyd. Lalaji had alternative suggestions to make :

“I have read the Government communique regarding the attack made by the police on me and others on the 30th October. It is as usual an, extremely one-sided document full of lies. I will make no comment on it just now and await Mr. Boyd’s report. The official version is changing from day to day and we will wait and see what further changes are made therein by the time Mr. Boyd’s report is out. We do not accept this inquiry and I have no intention of appearing before Mr. Boyd to give any relevant evidence. I will advise all my friends to do likewise. I frankly confess that I expected nothing better from the Punjab Government. We do not want a departmental inquiry and we do not want an inquiry by a single I.C.S. officer. If any inquiry is to be made it must be an, open inquiry by a commission consisting of two non-officials and one judicial officer. The police officials must be subjected to cross-examination if the falsity of their statement is to be exposed. I can not do better than repeat the challenge already given by me.”

In the legislature, when it was too late to be of any interest to Lalaji, a resolution demanding an inquiry was thrown out by the Government vote.

His own eye-witness account he had given publicly at the meeting that very evening. His doctors had examined him soon after the assault and found two longitudinal contusions on the left side of the chest. They had him photographed 29 hours after the assault and the photographs showing the contusions appeared in the press. He did not content himself with vague allegations, but in a signed item in the next issue of his weekly, under the caption “How the Guardians of Law Behave” named some of the guilty officials and threw out a bold challenges :

“Evidence is accumulating of a complete demoralisation of the ruling powers in India. I never saw such a conclusive proof of this demoralisation as I witnessed on Tuesday in connection with demonstrations directed against the Simon Com mission. . .”

Narrating the happenings he described how the precession

had stopped near the barbed wire barricade that had been erected leaving a gap of about 5 feet or more towards the wall of the Railway Industrial School, having "absolutely no intention of crossing the barrier. The statement made in the official version that I or anybody else attempted to cross the barrier is a contemptible lie, invented to justify the unprovoked and cowardly attack launched by one Mr. Scott, Superintendent of Police. Lahore, and other police officers on me and others who were standing near the gap, towards our own side. The way in which this man Scott and one or two other European officers behaved showed to me completely their demoralisation. There was no provocation and yet these men lost their temper because they thought that it was too much of an impertinence on our part even to have come there and then the way in which they belaboured us in spite of the fact that we were all unarmed - I had a small walking stick in my hand, others had not even that - to my mind showed that the British officers now ruling in India have lost their grip of character which had obtained for them the rule of India. There was no decency, not even a show of courtesy. . . I shouted several times for the names of the officers who had assaulted me. The Punjab M.L.C.s standing by my side sent slips to the Magistrate and to the Deputy Commissioner asking for the name of the man had assaulted me but no reply was given. I shouted to my assailant that if he was a man he should give me his name but there was no reply. It was several minutes after the occurrence that the idea struck them of collecting some evidence to show that the crowd had thrown some stones at them. This charge against the non-violent crowd is absolutely false, and whoever be the man who has dictated or written the so-called official version published by the *Tribune*, I have no hesitation in saying that he is a damned liar, and I challenge him to prosecute me for this statement. The statement contains several lies and the whole trend of it shows

that things have been deliberately concocted to make a show of justification.”

After describing earlier events since the early non-cooperation days that had earned for the Punjab officials “a name for lack of knowledge of law, lack of statesmanship, and of a great inclination towards high handedness” Lalaji went on with his narrative :

“The Senior Superintendent of Police is said to have questioned the genuineness of the Government permit which the representative of the *Tribune* showed to him when seeking admission to the railway platform, and on this side of the railway station where the demonstrators were gathered, the same police official showed gross incompetence in handling the situation. May I ask His Excellency the Governor if he is going to rule this province with the help of this class of men? If as these guardians of the peace will pave the way for a bloody struggle. . . and the Government will be helping us substantially if they depend on officers of this class to stem the tide of the coming revolution.”

In a press paragraph acknowledging the numerous messages of sympathy that poured in, he said :

“I am deeply touched by the numerous messages of congratulations and sympathy that I have received from my country men all over India in relation to the recent incident of police attack on me. I cannot sufficiently thank the senders of these messages for their affectionate kindness and goodwill. I think the attack of the police has been on the whole a help to the national cause than otherwise. My first and foremost thanks are due to those who took on themselves the blows that were aimed at me, amongst them being Dr. Satyapal, Dr. Gopi Chand, Raizada Hans Raj, Dr. Alam and others. I accept Sardar Sardul Singh Caveesher’s statement that the blows were really aimed at me and but for these gentlemen taking the

blows on themselves injuries would have been much more serious and perhaps fatal.”

Yet he went on with his usual work every day. The A.I.C.C. was meeting at Delhi on November 3 and 4, and he attended that meeting and addressed it and took an important part in its deliberations. But he found that the strain was too much for him; he had to leave the meetings and run back to Lahore. In fact he left a public meeting, for which he had been announced, to Annie Besant. Back in Lahore he wrote in his paper (*The People*, November 8):

“My speech at the All India Congress Committee has not been properly reported. I was a little bit excited and nervous. The injuries caused me at Lahore by the police attack are not serious in any way, but I think their after-effects have resulted in a great shock to my system, which is affecting my health. All the time at Delhi I felt very much pulled down and on Monday owing to fever I had to absent myself from a public meeting where I was advertised to speak. I left the Nehru Committee on account of a kind of influenza from which I am still suffering.”

In his A.I.C.C. speech he had joined issue with Jawaharlal Nehru. In his Autobiography, Nehru had referred to this :

“A short time after the Simon Commission beating, Lala Lajpat Rai attended a meeting of the All India Congress Committee in Delhi. He boremarks of injuries, and was still suffering from the after-effects. . . The question of Independence came up for discussion in some form or other. . . I remember speaking at some length. . . The speech had no importance and I would have forgotten it but for the fact that Lalaji replied to it. . . and criticised some parts of it. . .

On returning to Lahore, Lalaji reverted to the subject of my speech at the A.I.C.C. meeting, and began a series of articles on various issues connected with it in his weekly journal, *The People*. Only the first article appeared; before the second could come out in the next week’s issue, he was dead.

That first unfinished article of his, perhaps his last writing for publication, has had melancholy interest for me.”

He had, as a matter of fact, paid high tribute to Jawaharlal and Subhas Bose as “of the younger men the only two whose sincerity, high character and scholarship I value”. But he was not much in agreement with the “Complete Independence” talk for one thing because it seemed at the moment a bit academic, and, what is more important for another because certain people, in his opinion, were exploiting it, just to torpedo the Nehru draft, out of their dislike on other grounds of that draft or of Motilal Nehru.

“Those who are not with us are against us,” Lalaji had said in the challenge he threw down in *The People* for November 1 - taking the slogan from what had been said by his opponents some two decades earlier. This he amplified in another article which remained unpublished, the last bit or writing by him and one written in the same vein as part of his speech on October 30, in which he had said his spirit would permit the younger men to act as they themselves deemed best - and bless their doings!

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“Every blow. . .drove a nail into the coffin of the Empire.” It injured the assaulter, not him. How did the Great Teacher himself say in his last and immortal discourse?

“Nothing will injure me, not Meletus not yet Anytus - they cannot, for a bad man is not permitted to injure a better than himself. I do not deny that Anytus may, perhaps, kill him, or drive him into exile, or deprive him of civil rights; and he may imagine, and others may imagine that he is inflicting a great injury upon him; but there I do not agree. For the evil of doing as he is doing-the evil of unjustly taking away the life of another-is greater far. And now, Athenians (the ‘great and mighty and wise’ Britishers) I am not going to argue for my own sake, as you may think, but for yours. . . For if you kill me you will not easily find a successor to me. . .”

And yet he went on with his work-in particular, with doing his very best for the Nehru report. He kept busy seeing meeting their objections, sending them back to their towns to canvass support there for the Nehru settlement, making arrangements for press publicity and platform propaganda for it. He kept himself busy and denied himself the rest that his doctor told him he needed. The injuries still intruded themselves on his attention by an occasional pain and sometimes a slight temperature, but otherwise he did not talk much of them. Within his bosom no doubt he carried a heavy load all the time and keen humiliation kept gnawing at his inmost heart. His doctor noticed that he looked rather exhausted and paler than he used to; but his pleading for rest had no effect.

Diwali seldom failed to touch in him the chords of natural mirth, He took a boyish delight in the candles and the sweets. So he asked some of his younger friends to break bread with him on November 12, the Diwali evening. A vivid picture of this evening was drawn by one* of the company later on :

“But, Sir, I am not free this evening.’ He was asking me to a meal that evening. I was leaving Lahore the next day for a fortnight, and had innumerable little things, trifling and otherwise, to attend to. My protest and anxiety were both in vain. He had put a hand on my shoulder, in the manner of old old days, when I had been a mere boy, and said: ‘Yes, I know. But you are coming to us this evening. I may be going away very soon, and not return for a long time.’

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“There we sat in a room, squatting on the ground. It was a little chilly. He leaned against the wall. The room was full of laughter-his over flowing the room with its merry boyish peals. It was a rich meal and we heartily-but none cared for what they ate. We always listened to him, and wondered

* Madan Mohan Singh

how he ever so wise in counsel could be so gay in banter. At times the voices were subdued, and a little sadness fell over us all, as his voice failed him. We knew he was still suffering. There was a throb of pain. He had never complained-no, not even in the days when he lay in bed cheerfully laughing at the blows that had sent him home a dying man. He was lion hearted, as we knew, as the world always said.

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“We had shifted to another room: his bed-room. He lay in bed resting; he had exhausted his strength. He always let us take too much out of him. He never grudged us the smiles we valued, the laugh we shared with him. But this evening more than ever before he had been happy. He had talked of the work that lay before him. We had come to the parting of the ways in the affairs of the country, he said. We must choose the right path. We must depend on our past experience alone. We had nothing else to go by. Sagacious and practical, he built on sure foundations. He left little to chance; he knew the odds against us, and was for preparing us to meet them. His own suffering was but the beginning, but the foretaste of what was coming. He saw it as clearly as if he had been in the thickest of our battles.

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“Yes, we were all a little subdued now. I was sitting next to him, the nearest, at the foot of his bed. Perhaps that was why I was the saddest. He was not sad : only a little grave. a little looking into the distance, foreseeing and retelling. It was not his usual mood; he always kept his dreams to himself. He talked only of what was-not of what would be. But tonight it was different. That’s why it all comes back to me, as if it were yesterday.

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“Yes, I sat nearest to him and listened as he lay on his bed. He had suffered, but never complained. How could we know,

we who suffered less and complained more? Only a little tired, at the end of the day's work, we thought. He took all out of himself for our sake. So they left him one by one, all the seven or eight of them. I could not make up my mind to go. I looked up at him, and would have gone, but he understood and said- 'Wait yet a while. You come to me so seldom. They are always here: they work with me.'

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"There was no reproach in the voice or the words-only a wish unfulfilled, a desire unrealised. Yes, I had tied myself hopelessly in a mess of things. I had been useless to him, or to his great work. But he had always understood me, and never talked of it except at my wishing. And had we not so often planned and thought how I could get out of my angle of a life into a freer, simpler and nobler being? But his voice never sounded to me as it sounds today-a wish unfulfilled.

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"Yes, I had disappointed him. For the end came sooner than I expected. He had indeed gone on a journey to a distant land and I was never to see him again."

Thus things went on at 2, Court Street.

November 16 afternoon : As was his wont he was talking to friends and visitors. In particular he had had a business chat, punctuated with hearty laughs with talented journalist G. S. Raghavan when he more or less told him that he would be appointing him to organise press publicity for the Nehru report. Earlier, his doctor, N. R. Dharmavir, had called and had spent about an hour with him. Lalaji told him that he was refusing an invitation to preside at an important meeting as he did not feel equal to it and asked him to take him in the evening for a drive. But before the doctor called again to pick him up he had decided on a stroll instead and marched out leaving word for him to follow. Not having been able to find him, the doctor called again after dinner.

The family are having a game of bridge, probably because Lalaji is not feeling equal to serious work. Lalaji plays too and then gets the doctor to examine him. The doctor notices that his exhaustion has developed into aching all over together with some neural pain on the right side of the chest, and near the spine. No disturbance is noticeable in the heart or the pulse. The beats are normal, so is the temperature, though the respiration is slightly above the normal. The tongue is somewhat furred; but there is neither headache nor thirst and the pain is very mild, though Lalaji fears he might be developing dengue fever which he has never had. The doctor notices that the exhaustion which used to disappear with rest or massage or a stroll or drive in fresh air, has since October 30 become rather persistent. The thought makes him anxious of course. But he sees no cause for alarm, just gives Lalaji an aspirin and at eleven bids him good night.

November 17 : In the grey hours Lalaji's man comes running from his rooms to the old bungalow where live the Servants of the People. Not all of them are yet out of bed. Presently everybody rushes to Lalaji's room. Wife and son and daughter and the rest of the family already stand there stock still. Doctors have been rung up and are anxiously awaited though obviously all seems up. The perfect serenity that reigns seems to whisper that the 'fitful fever' is over.

The doctors arrive and declare it to be so.

After the doctor had left the previous night, he had retired. But he had seldom been favoured with quick sleep and that night Bharati, his grandson, continued to massage him till about half past one. At 6-30 Bharati heard him complain that the pain was increasing, and immediately went to Amrit's room to wake him up. Before 6-45 when the two stood by his bed the end had already come.

Who could explain the exact cause and dabble with the mystery of death? But Dharmavir and Gopi Chand and the

other medical friends who had been in touch with him had no doubt that the physical and psychological injuries, result of the savage assault on him on the fateful thirtieth of October, had contributed their sinister share.

It is a matter of moments before the news spreads through the town. Lahore, old and new, (the walled city and the Civil Lines) pours out to have the last glimpse, to do the last honours to its most distinguished citizen. Not a soul amongst them but links November 17 immediately with October 30. Not one but is sullenly thinking of that day's savagery outside the railway station, visibly hitting the Chief, but invisibly and far more grievously causing a lesion in a people's psyche. In sullenness they think of this : in pride they all recall the lion's last roar that evening—"Every blow. . . drove a nail into the coffin of the Empire."

By the afternoon a sea of humanity in solemn mourning is seen marching to the Ravi, and on its bank solemnly hands back the Son of Fire to his Primal Parent.

A city in mourning stood round a pile of burning wood the flames of which rose sky high and fell reflected on the quiet waters of the Ravi. As we stood and watched, motionless and still, a mass of humanity, the sunset. Man, nature, and flames all bathed in one colour-quiet and resplendent, rich and glorious.

Yes, it was a glorious sunset.

Epilogue

No homily is it that in the bosom lies hid
From the scaffold it can be revealed,
But not preached from the pulpit.
—GHALIB.

A month later

December 17 : Towards dusk revolver shots are heard near the District Police Office. Grim reports spread with the wings of lightning. In the dark hours the people recall the memorable meeting on October 30, the memorable sentence: "Every blow. . . drove a nail into the coffin of the Empire." Had that been a prediction from one becoming vaguely aware of his own approaching end? 'And now, you who have condemned me, I would fain prophesy to you; for I am about to die, and in the hour of death men are gifted with prophetic power. And I prophesy to you who have sentenced me to death, that immediately after my departure, punishment for heavier than you have inflicted on me will sure await you. . . For I say that there will be more accusers of you than there are now, accusers whom hitherto I have restrained; and as they are younger they will be more inconsiderate with you, and you will be more offended at them. . . that is the prophecy which I utter before my departure. . ."

The prophecy, commentators assure us, was fulfilled soon after the exit of Socrates. His accusers were universally despised

and shamed—one was torn to pieces and the other fled for shelter, and in addition a raging plague desolated Athens. Of the assaulters of Lajpat Rai, the principal one, Scott, was sent away from his Lahore job to take shelter in a secure haven. One of his younger men was shot at by lads (who perhaps really wanted Scott rather than Saunders), and died on the spot. But these events and the “plague in Athens” that raged for several years are beyond the scope of our narrative. Jawahar lal Nehru has very aptly said :

“Bhagat Singh. . . did not become popular because of his act of terrorism, but because he seemed to vindicate. . . the honour of Lala Lajpat Rai, and through him of the nation. He becomes a symbol; the act was forgotten, the symbol remained, and within a few months each town and village of the Punjab, and to a lesser extent in the rest of Northern India, resounded with his name. Innumerable songs grew up about him and the popularity that the man achieved was something amazing.”

Let these events be the historian’s domain. In 1907 Lajpat Rai’s deportation had been a deciding factor for the younger elements’ resort to violence. In 1928 the assault on him, the national humiliation that this implied, and his death acted once again in the same fashion. They decided the younger party which was already getting restive. The 1907 sequel was inimitably told by Lalaji himself in his *Young India: An Interpretation and a History*, the author referring to himself (like the Greek historian Thucydides) in the third person, and narrating events connected with his own person, with rare detachment. The 1928 sequel may miss that masterly handling. But whoever the historian of those events and whatever his style of narrating them, through his pages will echo the prophecy and its fulfillment.

“For I say that there will be more accusers of you than there are now, accusers whom hitherto I have restrained; and as they are younger they will be more inconsiderate with you,

and you will be more offended at them. . . That is the prophecy which I utter before my departure.”

In 1907 the Punjab authorities had made of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh a sort of ‘binary system’-deporting the two under the same Regulation, keeping both in detention in the same Fort, though the two were not permitted to meet even when the same train carried them back to Lahore for release. It was this same Ajit Singh’s nephew, Bhagat Singh, whose name in 1928 became indissolubly linked with Lajpat Rai’s and who became the *beau ideal* of the younger party-as one who sought martyrdom by avenging within a month the assault that had deeply humiliated a whole people and conferred martyrdom on its victim.

Young Bhagat Singh had inherited a rich family legacy-his father, Kishan Singh, had started life as a social worker under Lajpat Rai’s direction and been in extremist political movements since the “Bharat Mata” days in the century’s first decade. A far more potent influence had been his uncle Ajit Singh-the legend of his exploits, for the lad had had no personal contact with this uncle long in exile; and yet as he grew up locating him and establishing contact with him had become a passion with young Bhagat. Reinforcement came in his years at the National College, Lahore, with Bhai Parmanand as its potent inspirational influence, and an atmosphere surcharged with India’s yearning for liberation. Here he heard and read about the Kuka Revolt, and the doings of certain young revolutionaries like Kartar Singh Saraba who had sacrificed themselves for the cause.

Endued with rare courage and determination and with many qualities that marked him out for leadership, and saturated with the influences we have mentioned, Bhagat Singh seemed destined for the martyr’s role. The present writer had ample opportunities of watching him for several years and as he tries to recall his image, the total impress of his personality, he finds it effectively given in Ghalib’s Persian utterance cited

(Perhaps through a rendering not quite adequate) at the top of this Epilogue.

The assault on the people's leader and the extreme national humiliation involved there in acted as the stimulus for the inmost secret to come out and announce itself from the scaffold: the decisive goad that precipitated and clinched matters came from the challenging statement of Basanti Devi (Deshbandhu C. R. Das's widow) who as a "woman of India" demanded from India's youth a befitting reply to the affront to the nation.

The youth of India could ill afford to decline such a challenge. Through Bhagat Singh the reply must come. Again and again he pored over Basanti Devi's statement and seemed haunted by the challenge. He pondered deep till he saw the light-and he made his resolve.

Despite the utmost official arrangements for secrecy and suppression the scaffold revealed and broadcast the message. *Inquilab Zindabad* may have remained a mere slogan: (from the scaffold, Bhagat Singh endued it with unique potency. The scaffold's broadcast straightway caught fire.

SOURCE MATERIAL

A brief note on Lajpat Rai papers, autobiographical materials, etc.

Every now and then there is an enquiry as to where the Lajpat Rai papers could be seen. Lalaji's personal papers, i.e. such correspondence (and newspaper clippings) as he had cared to preserve, from the war-time exile days had been available to me at Lahore when I first started work on this biography. That valuable material has now to be written off as a '47 partition casualty. Lalaji's letters, etc. can be available now only in published material, or in the collections of papers of those with whom he exchanged letters.

Lalaji did not keep a diary-except perhaps for short periods, which also he did not preserve.

Autobiographical Writings, Lalaji's Story Of My Deportation (in Urdu *Meri Jalavatni Ki Dastan*) was published soon after his return from Mandalay. Quotations in the chapters about Lalaji's deportation to and confinement in Mandalay not otherwise acknowledged are from this book. The pre-deportation story he wrote out in Urdu in 1914 and it remained in safe keeping abroad. In one of his post-non-co-operation visits to Europe he personally brought the MS with himself-but let it lie unpublished. It fou68 (1920-30).

What seems an *aide-memoire* about the Ghadr Party men that he came in contact with was drawn up by Lajpat Rai in June 1919, put in a sealed cover and entrusted to his friend and publisher, Mr. B.W. Huebsch of New York. Many years after Lalaji's death Mr. Huebsch handed over the unclaimed sealed cover to the New York Public Library. It is now available in the National Archives of India. It was obviously never intended for publication. It has been reprinted in the *Autobiographical Writings* of Lala Lajpat Rai edited (for the Servants of the People Society) by V. C. Joshi.

Lalaji's travelogues are of course of auto biographical interest. These started with Lalaji's despatches to *The Punjabee* when (in 1904) he went to Europe and America for the first time. (He wrote also for some Urdu periodicals - notably the *Zamane*, a literary monthly published from Kanpur). Whenever he went abroad, after starting *The People* he was generally sending such despatches to this weekly.

A Lajpat Rai number of *The People* was brought out in April 1929. The serialising of Lalaji's autobiographical writings started with this Number. A few selected items from out of Lalaji's papers also found publication therein, besides, of course, a rich fare of reminiscences from Lalaji's friends in India and abroad.

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Popularly known as Punjab Kesari, Lala Lajpat Rai was one of the foremost leaders who fought against British rule in India. He was one of the three most prominent Hindu Nationalist members of the Indian National Congress and was part of the Lal-Bal-Pal trio which formed the radical faction of the Indian National Congress, as opposed to the moderate one.

Lalaji believed that it was important for the national cause to organize propaganda in foreign countries to explain India's position because the freedom struggle had taken a militant turn. He went to Britain and USA to galvanize support for India. He founded the Indian Home League Society of America. After his return, Lala Lajpat Rai led the Punjab protests against the Jalianwala Bagh Massacre and the Non-Cooperation Movement. He was arrested several times. He led processions against Simon Commission in 1929 where he received severe head injuries and laid down his life for the country.

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