Lajpat Rai is one of the most illustrious sons of India. He played a very significant role in Indian struggle for freedom. Popularly called as the 'Lion of the Punjab', his life is a permanent inspiration to succeeding generations of India.

Although there are political biographies of many Indian Nationalist leaders like Dadabhai Naoroji, Pherozeshah Mehta, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Aurobindo Ghosh and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, but no such attempt has been made in regard to Lajpat Rai. As far as I am aware no critical and authentic study has been made of his political activities in the context of Indian nationalism. Hence the need for this study; my main object is to write an authentic political biography of Lajpat Rai and to form an estimate of his contribution to Indian Nationalism.

The literature on Lajpat Rai began with the publication of two volumes, entitled The Call to Young India (Madras, 1920) and Ideals of Non-cooperation (Madras, 1924). These are collections of Lajpat Rai's speeches and articles. The first brief biography entitled, Life of Lajpat Rai, (Calcutta, 1928) by Jyotish Chandra Ghosh is a kind of tribute to the hero. It does not give details or any assessment of Lajpat Rai's political activities. It was during Lajpat Rai's Birth Centenary year, 1965, that two volumes were edited by the renowned archivist Mr. V.C. Joshi. His Lala Lajpat Rai: Writings and Speeches, 2 volumes (Delhi, 1965) is a collection of Lajpat Rai's valuable articles and speeches, scattered among numerous old newspapers, periodicals and journals. Mr. V.C. Joshi also edited Lala Lajpat Rai's Autobiographical Writings (Delhi, 1965). The
Some more works on Lajpat Rai have made their appearance during the past eight years. Dr. Argov's *Moderates and Extremists in the Indian Nationalist Movement 1883-1920* (Bombay, 1967), based on the writings and speeches of the Indian leaders, is one such publication. However, this work suffers from some serious inadequacies. Daniel Argov has not used private papers of the Viceroy's and Indian leaders, the Governmental proceedings of the foreign department and foreign newspapers which are important and reliable sources of information; these throw new and significant light on the activities of Lajpat Rai. Then this book does not cover an important phase of Lajpat Rai's activities i.e. the period from 1914-1920, when Lajpat Rai worked in U.K., U.S.A. and Japan for the emancipation of the country. Another significant period (1920-28) of Lala Lajpat Rai's life and nationalist struggle also does not find any mention in Argov's book. It seeks to portray biographies of Surendranath Banerjea and Lajpat Rai within a general comparative study of the Moderates and the Extremists in an analysis of political beliefs and modes of political action in the Indian National Movement, 1883-1920. The author has kept Lajpat Rai in the line of the Extremists without making a close study of his political beliefs. Discussing about the twenty-second Indian National Congress in 1906 at Calcutta, he writes: "An open split was forecast in the Congress when the hitherto unconsolidated groups of conservative and radical Congressmen converged on two opposite factions. The veteran leaders and their followers became styled the "old party" or "the moderates", while "the new party" led by Tilak, Lajpat Rai, Bipin
Chandra Pal and Aurobindo Ghosh became known as "the nationalists" or "the extremists" (p.119). This is an oversimplification of what was a complex development. The fact is that Lajpat Rai never supported any group blindly. In practice his political vision was independent and unique. When the controversy over the boycott of the Prince of Wales arose in the twenty-first session (1905) of the Indian National Congress Lajpat Rai adopted neutral policy at the appeal of Gokhale. "I agreed and gave him a promise", writes Lajpat Rai, "that we would abstain from attending the sitting whilst this resolution was being dealt with so that we might not have to oppose it; the understanding was that in the record it would not be said that the resolution was accepted unanimously." (Autobiography, p.111). At the Calcutta session of the Congress in 1906 and at Surat in 1907 Lajpat Rai honestly strove for a rapprochement between the two factions, and he made many secret attempts for "reunion" (Letter, January 8, 1908 Gokhale to newspapers, Gokhale Papers).

Further, Mr. Argov writes that Lajpat Rai rejected the aim of "self governing India within the Empire" (p.125). But Lajpat Rai's speeches and writings reveal that he strived hard for self-government. On October 20, 1905 at London, lajpat Rai said that the people of India "were loyal, but not much contented or happy; yet it was neither their desire nor object to overthrow allegiance to England. What they asked was that England should do them justice, in the promotion of education, in the granting of measures of self-government, by which the people could have a voice in the government of their own country, and in the encouragement of industries, to increase the prosperity and happiness of the country", (India, London, October 13, 1905). Again

Incidentally, K.K. Sharma in his book, Life and Times of Lala Lajpat Rai (Ambala, 1975) repeats the same mistake made by Daniel Argov in respect of Lajpat Rai being an extremist and that he rejected the idea of self-government within the Empire. Further, the author has not, unfortunately, consulted all important material like correspondence of the Viceroys and private papers of contemporary Indian national leaders such as G.S. Khaparde, N.S. Hardikar, Jawaharlal Nehru and the A.I.C.C. files.

The present study is an attempt to unveil the life and times of Lajpat Rai, to analyse his rich and varied activities and to assess his contribution to Indian Nationalism.

The first and second chapters discuss Lajpat Rai's role as a leader of the Indian National Congress and his contribution to the nationalist struggle. Under the umbrella of the Congress he went on adapting his ideas to the dynamic and everchanging political demands of his people. These chapters examine as to how Punjab, politically "backward" and "inert" province, was roused to political activity. From now onwards Punjab, owing largely to the exertions of Lajpat Rai, began to have prominent place in the history of Indian National Congress. These chapters also deal with the growth of the Congress, his association and disappointment with the functioning of the Congress delegates, his peace-making role and the British policy towards him.
The third chapter deals with Lajpat Rai's deportation to Mandalay in May 1907. Here I have attempted to solve many erroneous notions about his activities. Was Lajpat Rai a terrorist? What were the circumstances which led to his deportation and whether he played any role in creating the ferment in the Punjab which had acquired the dimensions of a 'near mutiny'? Was there any substance in the reports on the basis of which the Viceroy ordered his deportation? These are some other important questions which deserve careful investigations.

The fourth chapter deals with Lajpat Rai's activities in England, America and Japan. It describes the story of Lajpat Rai's contacts with leading revolutionaries outside India. It also examines Lajpat Rai's own role in the context of terrorist movement in India and abroad. Could Lajpat Rai be considered a revolutionary ip so facto, by his association with revolutionaries in India and abroad? An answer to this controversial question has been attempted here. His attitude towards the terrorists has been examined in the light of his personal account, secret report of the revolutionary movement abroad and also the testimony of the various revolutionaries about their association with Lajpat Rai. Discussion about his new style of leadership abroad has also been attempted.

The fifth chapter deals with non-cooperation movement. It examines his role as the president of one of the most momentous special sessions of the Indian National Congress (September, 1920). The session is a landmark in India's struggle for freedom as also in the life of Lajpat Rai as a leader of the non-cooperation movement. An attempt has been made to study his role as a leader of the non-cooperation movement particularly in Punjab. The sixth chapter deals
with Lajpat Rai's role as the leader of the Swaraj Party and of the Independent Congress Party. It also aims to examine his attitude towards the communal problem which had assumed alarming proportion.

In the preparation of this work I have made an extensive use of all the available sources - the private papers of Viceroy's, confidential proceedings of the Home/Political/Foreign departments, Indian National Congress reports, All India Congress Committee Reports, the Parliamentary debates, contemporary newspapers and other secondary sources. I have also consulted the private collections of various Indian leaders such as G.K. Gokhale, Dadabhai Naoroji, G.S. Kshaparde, K.R. Jayakar, V. Krishnaswamy Aiyar, Pheroze Shah Mehta, M.K. Gandhi, Motilal Nehru, N.S. Hardikar, Jawaharlal Nehru, B.G. Tilak, Brelvi, Haribhau Upadhyay and Banarsidass Chaturvedi.] The diary of Lajpat Rai, a rare and a revealing document in Lajpat Rai's own handwritings, too has been used.

It is rather unfortunate that the private letters of Lajpat Rai have not been preserved. I have collected some of his original letters from the collections of other Indian leaders. This is a highly useful and rewarding source of information. I have also explored Lajpat Rai's private correspondence with friends residing abroad which was censored by the Government of India. These letters throw a new light on the activities of Lajpat Rai, the Indian National Congress and the British policy towards him.

I have discovered an autobiographical fragment of Lajpat Rai from an old Lahore newspaper which he had started writing three months before his death. It is really a very authentic and reliable source to explore his activities and ideas from 1913 to 1916.
During this period I met some of the surviving members of Lajpat Rai's family namely Mrs. Saraswati Rai, daughter-in-law of Lajpat Rai, four grandsons Mr. Baldev Rai, Bikram Dev, Dr. Inder Dev and Mr. Kulbhushan. I also met Lala Jagan Nath, Secretary of the Servants of the Peoples' Society and a close associate of Lajpat Rai. They provided me fresh insights into the personality and nature of the national leader. To these I tender my thanks.

Most of this time I worked in the National Archives of India, Nehru Memorial Library, Library of Indian Council for World Affairs, Lajpat Rai Bhawan, Gandhi Smarak Sangrahay, New Delhi; Punjab State Archives, Patiala; Panjab University Library, Tribune Office Library and Dwarkadas Library, Chandigarh where the authorities provided me all possible facilities. I am thankful to them.

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