CHAPTER I
LAJPAT RAI AND THE INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS
1888-1905

Lajpat Rai's entry into the Indian National Congress in December, 1888 at Allahabad marked the beginning of his political life. Through his powerful writings, public work, constructive criticism of the governmental policies, frank and eloquent speeches in the annual sessions of the Congress he emerged as a great national leader. His forceful speeches and conversations impressed Dinshaw Wacha\(^1\) and Gopal Krishna Gokhale\(^2\), the two Congress secretaries, who named him to the constitutional committee and suggested that he be included as the Punjab member on the deputation to England which was scheduled to leave India in the spring of 1905.\(^3\) He did much useful work in educating English public opinion about Indian demands. It proved a turning point in his life. Incidentally, Lajpat Rai's association with the Congress marked the significant entry of Punjab in Indian politics. Before this the Punjab's contribution was almost insignificant. Within seventeen years he gave the Punjab an important place in the national political organisation.

The birth of the Indian National Congress in December, 1885 marked an important historical event in the growth of political consciousness in the country. It heralded the beginning of a

---

1. B. 1849; Businessman, journalist and politician; Joint General Secretary of the I.N.C. 1895-1907; General Secretary of the Congress 1908-1913; President of the Congress 1901; d. 1915.

2. B. 1866; teacher and journalist at Poona; member of the Bombay Legislative Council 1901-15; President of the I.N.C. 1905. d. 1916.

3. Letter, April 10, 1905, Lajpat Rai to Gokhale, Gokhale Papers. See also Panjabee (Lahore) April 10, 1905.
moderate and constitutional, but at the same time, steady and continuous agitation in favour of certain reforms. It was recognised as the main vehicle of emerging nationalism in India.

Ever since the beginning of nineteenth century, powerful and varied forces were at work for the birth of the Indian National Congress. The most important were English education, the Press, quicker means of transport and communication, a strong and uniform system of administration, internal security and freedom from external danger. To these may be added a growing national consciousness in the country which in itself was fostered by a number of pioneers in the fields of education, journalism and social reform. The credit for giving expression to the nascent nationalism by founding Indian National Congress goes to Allan Octavian Hume, an Englishman and a retired I.C.S. who spent thirty years of his life in the service of the people of India.

A.O. Hume, sensed the fact of an approaching danger to the British empire. The discontent in India was mostly due to the short-sighted and arrogant policy of the rulers. The Indians were deprived of high offices in spite of the existence of the Charter Act of 1833 and the Queen's Proclamation of 1858. The gradual

4. B. 1829; entered Bengal Civil Service 1849; Secretary in the Revenue and Agriculture Department, G.C.I., 1870-79; retired 1882; General Secretary of the I.N.C. 1885-1906; left India 1892; d. 1912.

5. Before the emergence of the Indian National Congress, there were a number of organisations established in different provinces to voice the public opinion in the country. The first was "British India Association" in 1851 and "Bombay Association" superseded this body in the seventies of the last century. In Maharashtra there was the "Poona Sarvajanik Sabha". But perhaps the most important step in this direction was the foundation of the "Indian Association" in 1876 by Surendranath Banerjee. See S.R. Mehrotra, The Emergence of the Indian National Congress (Delhi, 1971).
improvishment of the country, the racial arrogance of the Europeans and the periodical occurrence of famines were some of the other evils which widened the gulf between the rulers and the ruled. During this period, the reactionary rule of Lord Lytton (1876-1880) characterised by the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, the Afghan War, the Arms Act, the costly Indian Darbar and the abolition of cotton import duties further alienated the people. Realising such widespread dissatisfaction and the faint rumbles of Nationalism as dangerous, Hume thought of diverting it into peaceful, constitutional channels. He, therefore, conceived a scheme of National Union where the leading Indians could be brought together once a year to discuss social problems facing the country. It was due to this reason that Hume travelled to Simla with the safety-valve formula concerning the birth of the Congress. The Governor General Lord Dufferin accepted the advice of Hume and told him:

"There was no body of persons in this country who performed the functions which Her Majesty's opposition did in England. The newspapers, even if they really represented the views of the people, were not reliable, and as the English were necessarily ignorant of what was thought of them and their policy in native circles, it would be very desirable... that Indian politicians should meet yearly and point out to the Government in what respect the administration was defective and how it could be improved".6

Hume, with the support of some prominent Indians, succeeded in giving a practical shape to this idea, and the first Indian National Congress met at Bombay on December 28, 1885, in the premises of the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College, Gowalia Tank Road. It met under the presidentship of a Bengali barrister, W.C. Bonnerjee.7

7. B. 1844, barrister of the Calcutta High Court, President of the I.N.C. 1885 and 1892; d. 1906.
Gradually, the Congress began to fulfil the object for which it was created. Patiently, it criticised the various policies of the Government and suggested the obvious remedies for national ills. It sought the abolition of India Council as a necessary preliminary to all reforms. It demanded simultaneous examination (I.C.S.) in England and India. It stood for the promotion of technical education and the principle of protection to the Indian industry. It pressed for the development of self-Government by means of representative councils formed on the basis of elective principles. It sought a better excise policy, reduction of salt tax, extension of permanent settlement and the stoppage of drain. It demanded introduction of jury system, amendment of the Criminal Procedure Code and the separation of judicial and executive functions. It condemned heavy expenditure on Defence and criticised forest laws as well as the Arms Act. It attributed increasing impoverishment of the country to the imperial and fiscal policies of the Government and called for the institution of a thorough enquiry through a Royal Commission. Finally, it wanted the British Government to ensure better treatment of Indian nationals in Transvaal, the Free State and the Cape Colony.

In condemning the Government, or in carrying out the task of national regeneration, the Congress adopted peaceful and constitutional methods. It passed resolutions, presented petitions, held

---


meetings and demanded reforms. The advantage of this method was that the Congress went on without serious opposition from the Government; the disadvantage was that it lacked the necessary strength which alone could make the ruling authority part with some of its powers and privileges.

The early Congress leaders professed unstinted loyalty to the Crown. The spell of the West was fully upon them and such names as Burke, Bright, Macaulay, Carlyle and Gladstone were music to their ears. The magic influence of liberal ideals enshrined in English literature and history produced in them a basic confidence in English sense of justice. Disloyalty, therefore, did not enter their nature; contempt was out of question. Rather, they expressed "unbounded faith in the living and fertilising principles of English culture and English education".¹⁰ British rule was to them "a rescuing hand held out to a drowning man in the darkness of the night."¹¹ They were happy to feel: "We are British subjects. England has taken us into her bosom and claims us as her own."¹²

For these reasons the Congress always rejected three things, viz. rebellion, aiding or abetting a foreign invasion and resort to crime. They made passionate appeals to the good sense and democratic traditions of the ruling nation. A good example of Congress approach and appeal may be found in Surendranath Bannerjea's

address to the third Congress in Madras. He said:

"When Italy was struggling for liberty England stretched forward the right hand of sympathy. When Greece was endeavouring to assert her place among the nationalities of the earth, England was then the foster-mother of freedom, responsive to the call. We are neither Italians nor Greeks. We are English subjects." (Loud Applause).

Also, the Congress leaders took their stand upon the solemn pledges given by the rulers themselves from time to time. The Queen's Proclamation of 1858 was to them as dear and fresh in memory as the first touch of love. This Proclamation and other similar promises were repeatedly quoted by them in support of the justness of their demands. In the fourth session of the Congress at Allahabad, Lord Ripon's words were quoted:

"Queen Proclamation is not a treaty; it is not a diplomatic instrument; it is a declaration of principles of Government."

Finally, the Congress leaders also significantly perceived a close connection between economics and politics. They constantly impressed on rulers the need for the extension of Permanent Settlement, encouragement of technical education, reduction of salt-tax, revival and development of indigenous arts and crafts, as well as the growth of new industries. They strongly deplored the increasing impoverishment of the country due to drain, excessive taxation, over-assessment, wasteful military and other burdens and unjust charges. They repeatedly demanded the appointment of a Royal Commission for the purpose of equitable and rightful apportionment of expenditure between Indian and England.

13. Ibid., January to June 1909, p.542.
15. Congress Resolutions - vide Home Department, G.O.I. (Public-A) Progs. 55-58 of April, 1920; Reports of the Congress Session from year to year (1885-1909).
The attitude of the British Government towards the new movement was definitely friendly in the beginning. High officials attended its deliberations, not only as observers but even as delegates. Lord Dufferin took a sympathetic view of the demands put forward by the National Congress at its first Session, and he described the objects of the more advanced party as "neither very dangerous nor very extravagant." He impressed on the Home Government the need to adopt a new attitude in view of the considerable changes that had taken place in India. The Governor of Bombay, Lord Reay, followed a policy of "benevolent neutrality" towards the Congress.

But after the year 1887, the attitude of the Government changed. Even as early as 1887, a District Officer called upon a gentleman to furnish a security of Rs.20,000 to keep the peace, simply because he had attended the Madras Congress in defiance of his wishes. Next year, i.e. in 1888, Lord Dufferin expressed himself against the aspirations of the Congress leaders. He felt that the Congressmen "seek to sit in the Chariot of sun by demanding representation and enlargement of councils and legislatures on elective basis." He warned: "the man who stretches forth his hand

---

18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., p.228.
20. Speech at St. Andrew's Dinner, Calcutta, on November 30, 1888, vide Bannerjee, A.C., Indian Constitutional Developments (No. 84) pp.56-57.
towards the ark, even with the best intention, may well dread lest his arm should shrivel up to the shoulder." He described the Congress as a "microscopic minority." In the same year (1899), the U.P. Government did not allow Congress to get a suitable site for Allahabad Session. Lord Lansdowne's attitude towards the Congress was one of "good humoured indifference." He was strongly of opinion that the British Government should tolerate the movement for a hostile policy would make it dangerous. In the last decade of the nineteenth century, the Government's attitude took a turn for the worse because of a number of events - the outbreak of famine, the unpopularity of the plague operations, the murder of Rand and Ayerst, the arrest of Natu Brothers and the imprisonment of B.G. Tilak, the popular leader of Maharashtra. The Congress had strongly protested against these measures.

In spite of this growing hostility of the Government, the basic strategy of the Congress and deeper loyalty of the majority of its members remained unshaken. Basically, they had pinned their faith not so much on the good sense of every British ministry or its spokesmen as on the traditional and institutional sense of justice of the British people and the Liberal Party.

The programme, aims and demands of the Congress produced a different reaction among the Muslims of India. Under the leadership of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan a large majority of them remained aloof.

21. Ibid.
22. Speech at St. Andrew's Dinner, Calcutta, on November 30, 1888, vide Bannerjee, A.C., Indian Constitutional Developments (No. 84) pp.56-57.
24. B. 1817; entered service of the East India Company as a clerk 1837; retired as Sub-Judge 1876; founded Mohammedan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh 1877; member of the Imperial Legislative Council 1878-83; d. 1898.
from Congress and its activities though some Muslims continued to attend Congress sessions. The first Congress was attended by two Muslims, the second by 33 and the third Congress had a Muslim President. Sir Syed found his community economically and educationally very backward; he made it a mission of his life to promote western education among the Muslims and to work for their upliftment. This he sought to achieve with the active co-operation of the British, by remaining faithful to them and by shunning all political activities. He opposed the principle of election and representative institutions largely due to the fear of Hindu Majority. Sir Syed's opposition to the Congress did not stop here; he went to the extent of forming a rival association.

What made Sir Syed Ahmed Khan to take up this line? On December 25, 1887 he openly attacked the Congress in a speech before a large gathering of prominent Muslims in Lucknow. He made three points - that the Hindus and Muslims were two different nations inspite of many things in common; the representative institutions were unsuited to the Indian conditions as these would lead to the

25. Denouncing the Congress demand for more representative institutions in India, Sir Syed Ahmed Khan said that "while representative Government could succeed in a homogeneous country like Britain, where there existed a strong national feeling; in India, where the people were not homogeneous but were divided by profound religious and other differences, the introduction of representative government, pure and simple, would be productive of much evil, because as the Indian people, unlike the British people, would vote on the basis of religion and not political differences, the majority community, the Hindus would completely dominate the Indian Parliament and establish a government English in name, but Hindu in reality. (Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, The Present State of Indian Politics (1883), p. 61. See also Syed Ahmed's speech in the Proceedings of the Council of the Governor General of India, (1883), p.20.
permanent subjugation of the Muslims by the Hindus because of their numerical strength; and that Indian Muslims must depend on the British to safeguard their interests and secure their effective representation in administration. Replying to Badr-uddin-Tyabji's letter Sir Syed Ahmed wrote that there was no such thing as "the general progress of India" or "India as one nation". There could not be a National Congress of equal benefit to all the peoples of India. "Is it supposed", he wrote to Tyabji on January 24, 1888, "that the different castes and creeds living in India belong to one nation or can become one nation, and their aims and aspirations be one and the same? I think it is quite impossible and when it is impossible there can be no such thing as a National Congress." In short, he believed that the Muslim alignment with such an organisation would lead them nowhere.

Lajpat Rai in his book Young India discusses the genesis and objects of Indian National Congress. He asserted that as a child of the joint deliberations of Dufferin and Hume, Congress was a "safety valve" for preserving the empire. The immediate motive which underlay starting of the Congress was to save the empire from the possibility of a violent outbreak. Later, when this child was hardly three years old, its good-father, the Marquis of Dufferin, changed his mind and decided to strangle it. This he,

26. B. 1844, Barrister; Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court 1902; Member of the Bombay Legislative Council 1882-86; d. 1906.
28. Lajpat Rai, Young India (Lahore, 1927) pp. 133-34.
according to Lajpat Rai, sought to achieve by finding in Sir Syed Ahmed his ally, and raising through him the religious denominational bogey. Sir Syed's opposition to the Congress created a schism in the national movement. The cry which he raised was practically the death knell of Indian Nationalism at that time. Sir Syed's attitude towards the Indian National Congress, Lajpat Rai believed, was influenced by following considerations:

(a) "that in India the Hindus were in a majority, and if a form of democratic Government was accepted as the political goal of India, the Muslims were bound to be in a minority."

(b) that the Hindus were both economically more advanced than the Muslims, and would monopolise much of Government influence for a long period to come.

(c) that Hindu Raj might possibly mean the death of Islam in India or at least a position of subservience for it."

At the end of 1888 Lajpat Rai addressed a series of "open letters" to Sir Syed Ahmed, and he ruthlessly exposed the change in his attitude. These letters were published shortly before the fourth session of the Congress at Allahabad in 1888 in the Urdu weekly, Kohi-i-Noor of Lahore. He believed that the bestowal of knighthood brought a strange change upon him; his political opinions became blindly pro-government. Earlier, Lajpat Rai was a great admirer of Sir Syed Ahmed. But after the emergence of the Congress the Muslim leader changed his previous stand and he became anti-Congress. He asked the Muslims to keep away from the Congress which, he believed, was a seditious and sectarian organisation and a

29. Ibid.
harbinger of civil war. Lajpat Rai took up his powerful pen against him and wielded it with the utmost vehemenence. Sir Syed had opposed the Congress demand of representation in the legislative councils. Lajpat Rai described his stand about representation as "a mere mockery, a contradiction in terms." He drew attention of Sir Syed that "the correct solution is this and no other, that the people must be represented by delegates, elected by themselves, and subject of course to the restrictions to be imposed by the Government." "Co-sharers in the business of governing or legislating", he added, "these representatives must be such as to be totally independent of official favour of disfavour." If the selection of members of the legislative council was to be entrusted to officials, he feared that it would be a "downright farce." Defending the emergence of the Indian National Congress, Lajpat Rai reminded Sir Syed that the National Congress wanted nothing but that the voice of the people be listened to, and that the strong and turbulent "may not oppress the feeble and the poor." He described the Congress movement most opportune "for the redress of the grievances of the Indians in India."  

These "open letters" are Lajpat Rai's first important political writings. Written at the young age of twenty-three they reveal Lajpat Rai's deep insight into Indian political situation. Realising that without active Muslim participation the Congress movement would be weak and inadequate, Lajpat Rai made a bold attempt

32. Ibid., p. 9.
33. Ibid., p. 15.
to bring Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and his followers to his point of view. The letters are the clearest indication of Lajpat Rai's belief that the political interests of various communities living in India were identical.

Lajpat Rai's association with the elite of Indian National Congress started after its third session which was held at Madras. Ali Muhammad Bhimji, a Congress leader, visited Punjab on behalf of the Congress in the beginning of 1888 in order to deliver lectures. He addressed a meeting at Hissar at the invitation of Lajpat Rai who had been very much impressed by the proceedings of the third Congress and A.O. Hume's pamphlets entitled Old Man's Hope and Star in the East.

Lajpat Rai attended as a Punjab delegate the fourth session of the Indian National Congress held at Allahabad in December 1888. He received a warm welcome from the senior Congress leaders of the Reception Committee including Hume and Madan Mohan Malaviya when he arrived at Allahabad to attend the Congress with the Punjab contingent of 80 delegates. In his speech, he repeated his criticism of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, and he was congratulated on his "open letters". The delegates lustily cheered his performance and Hume, the father of the Congress, was so much impressed that he got the "letters" translated into English and published them in the form of a pamphlet. He was also accorded the honour of supporting the first resolution on the expansion of the Governor-General's

34. Lajpat Rai: Autobiographical Writings, p. 84.
35. B. 1861; President of the I.N.C. 1909 and 1918; Vice-Chancellor of Benares Hindu University 1919-40; d. 1946.
Council and of the Provincial Legislative Councils. Lajpat Rai pointed out, "How can the people of a country have their voice constantly heard if not through their representatives?"36

The participation in the Allahabad Congress was the starting point of Lajpat Rai's political life. The young leader, from a backward district of the Punjab, who was not yet twenty-four had found a place among the senior leaders of the Indian National Congress. Proceedings of the Congress were conducted in English but for the first time Lajpat Rai spoke in Urdu in the session. The Congress was still an exclusive organisation of the elite, the new-educated and professional classes; prayers, petitions and protests were its instruments for the political reconstruction of India.

Lajpat Rai attended the fifth session of the Congress held in December 1889. He was outstanding in the Punjab contingent. Sir William Wedderburn,37 a former civilian like Hume, was the President of the session which was marked by the presence of Charles Bradlaugh, an eminent champion of the Indian cause in the British Parliament.38 Lajpat Rai supported the resolution for increased representation of Indians on the legislatures. The key note of the discussion on the subject was the claim voiced by a Muslim delegate for equal representation of his community in the Councils. Lajpat Rai argued that no distinction should be made among the members of the different communities in regard to political privileges. As for himself he

---

37. B. 1838; entered Indian Civil Service 1860; officiating Chief Secretary to Bombay Government 1886-87; retired 1887; M.P. 1893-1900; President of the I.N.C. 1889 and 1910; d. 1918.
38. Report of the Fifth Indian National Congress, Bombay 1889, p. XXV.
emphatically stated:

"I am a Hindu; in the Punjab the Hindus are in a minority and so far as I am concerned, I should be quite content to be represented by any good Mahommedan or Sikh member." 39

He, however, supported the clause of the reform scheme embodied in the resolution providing for representation of minorities by men of their own communities to remove their fears and guard their interests. 40 Lajpat Rai invited the next annual meeting of the Congress in the Punjab. 41

After the Bombay Congress, Lajpat Rai's interest in the Congress did not remain as strong as earlier. His attitude towards the Congress for the next fourteen years was that of indifference. Except for attending the annual meetings at Lahore in 1893 and 1900, Lajpat Rai did not take much active part in the Congress. In fact, he did not find any useful purpose served because the cause nearest to his heart, of full blooded Nationalism, was not much in evidence in the Congress. He felt, but vaguely, that the "Congress leaders care more for fame and pomp than for the interests of the country." 42

Lajpat Rai's indifference towards the Congress after 1889 was on account of the influence of his Arya Samajist friends, particularly Rai Mal Raj, a staunch opponent of the Congress. Since the Congress was the brain child of Hume, an Englishman, it could not possibly be, in his opinion, the vehicle for Nationalist aspirations. To Lajpat Rai, Hume's idea of "the safety valve" function of the Congress was

39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Lajpat Rai: Autobiographical Writings, p. 86.
a deliberate device aimed at setting up a harmless organisation for paralysing development of a broad-based and more militant movement. He did not subscribe to Hume's hope and expectation of the Congress as an instrument which would transform the character of Government of India, peacefully and gradually, from a foreign bureaucracy into a stable national self-governing Dominion. Lajpat Rai believed that Hume by securing the support and cooperation of a great majority of the middle classes and carefully inoculating them with a mild and harmless form of the political fever had taken certain precautionary measures against the otherwise inevitable ravages of a violent and epidemic outburst of disorder. He wanted to avert the possibility of violent revolution. Hume had further envisaged that the Congress was designed to limit and control forces which Western education and ideas had let loose before they would burst into a revolution. In the deliberations of the Subject Committee of the third and fourth sessions of the Congress, Hume had strongly opposed the proposals to pass the resolution which asked the Government to abolish the Arms Act and enable Indians to own arms. Hume had asserted that his memory of the Mutiny would never allow him to support such a resolution.

Like his Arya Samajist friends - Sain Das and Hans Raj - Lajpat Rai believed that participation in political movements would make

---


44. Ibid.
the bureaucracy suspicious about the Hindus, and the British Government would obstruct their progress and harm them in many ways. The Samaj, in its early days with its nationalistic outlook and principles of self-reliance and self-help, was looked upon with suspicion by the British authorities. Since it had several government servants among its members, many of its leaders, therefore, were in favour of keeping themselves aloof from the Congress which was a political body. Moreover, their Nationalism was basically Hindu solidarity since they found the Hindus suffering from internal dissensions.

Despite his indifference to the Congress, Lajpat Rai did not altogether eschew politics. Occasionally, he participated in the activities of the Lahore Indian Association and attended several meetings held under its auspices.

Lajpat Rai renewed his contact with the Indian National Congress when it met for the first time at Lahore in December 1893 and was presided over by Dadabhai Naoroji. He was elected member of the Reception Committee. He spoke on education and stirred the audience with his usual force and vigour. Lajpat Rai criticised the government for reducing grant to some of the educational institutions. He stated:

"In discouraging higher education and in reducing the expenditure upon it, the Government is laying itself open to a charge of forgetting its noble mission and work in India,

46. Ibid., pp. 87-88.
47. B. 1825; journalist and businessman, first Indian Member of British Parliament 1892-1905; President of the I.N.C. 1886, 1893 and 1906; d. 1917.
and of forgetting the high ideal chalked out for it by the founders of the Empire. While other civilised countries, like Europe and America, are spending large sums of money on education it is a matter of regret that the Government of India is reducing that expenditure.\textsuperscript{43}

As regards technical education, Lajpat Rai said:

"I beg to submit that it (Technical education) is of still greater importance. While civilised countries, like Europe and America, are devising national systems of technical education in order to fit their citizens to compete with other civilised countries in the arts and industries, India, with its growing poverty and starving population and its embarrassed exchequer, is sleeping. No care has been taken of the industries of the country.... Therefore, it is essential for the material progress of the country, that Government should look into and provide technical instructions in Schools and Colleges and enable us to earn our livelihood independently...."\textsuperscript{49}

Criticising the educational policy of the Government, he described it as "simply to produce clerks or to produce some law teachers who do not serve any useful purpose."\textsuperscript{50} In this Congress session Lajpat Rai strongly supported the resolution demanding more expenditure on technical education. This, he thought, would increase the wealth of the country. He wanted a voice of common people in the Legislative Council and protection of their life and property.\textsuperscript{51} He was also in favour of separation of powers.\textsuperscript{52} His speeches were greatly appreciated by the Congressmen. By his ability, eloquent speeches and persuasive skill Lajpat Rai greatly impressed Congress leaders. Here, he also met Bal Gangadhar Tilak\textsuperscript{53} for the first time, and in subsequent years this acquaintance ripened into a very intimate friendship and political collaboration; both were to work

\textsuperscript{43. Report of the Ninth Indian National Congress, Lahore, 1893, p.121}
\textsuperscript{49. Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{50. Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{51. Ibid., pp. 92-94.}
\textsuperscript{52. Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{53. B. 1856; teacher and journalist at Poona; jailed for sedition 1897-98 and 1908-14; d. 1920.}
for the realisation of Swaraj.

Between 1893 and 1900, Lajpat Rai did not again attend any session of the Congress. But, during this period, Lajpat Rai writes: "my interest in politics did not die out." He took part in the activities of Indian Association and local politics of Lahore. His chief field of activity during this period was writing on the lives of patriots. He published in 1897 his translation of the life of Mazzini whom he adopted as his Guru, and also biographies of Garibaldi and Shivaji. In the preface to his life of Mazzini, he emphasised that political liberation demanded the highest sacrifice. He urged that unless the leaders of the Congress proved themselves unselfish and worthy of being followed by the masses it was useless to agitate for political reforms. In 1897 he led a campaign in Lahore for raising funds for defending Lokmanya Tilak against charges of sedition. During this period Lajpat Rai also organized relief operation for famine. He was deeply moved by the reports that a large number of orphans and waifs were passing into the hands of Christian missionaries. He started in February 1897 the Hindu Orphans Relief Movement for the relief of orphans of the Central Provinces. The emissaries of Lajpat Rai succeeded in rescuing more than 250 destitute children from Jabalpur, Bilaspur and other districts. They were brought to the Punjab and lodged in the Arya Samaj orphanage at Ferozepur, Lahore and Amritsar. In 1899-1900 the Punjab and large part of the northern India were again affected by severe famine. Lajpat Rai again organised relief operations.

55. The Tribune (Lahore), October 24, 1899.
In an appeal to the public, he said, that "a nation which could not protect its own orphans and waifs could not claim respect at the hands of other people." His widespread relief work resulted in rescuing more than 2000 orphans who were brought into well organised orphanages which provided food, clothing and educational training. His relief work greatly impressed the Famine Commission which invited him to place his views on the subject before the Commission. Later, the Commission accepted his views and recommended in their report that deserted children and orphans should be made over to other persons or institutions only when their own religious institutions failed to take charge of them.

After an absence of six years, Lajpat Rai attended the sixteenth annual session of the Indian National Congress at Lahore in 1900. In his speech, in Urdu, he reminded the Congress elite to work for the improvement of the economic condition of the masses. He believed that 'the prosperity of a country depends upon its industries.' He moved a resolution (No. XII) which stipulated that at least half a day of each annual session of the Congress should be devoted exclusively to a discussion on industrial and educational problems of the country. He also moved a resolution for the formation of two separate committees to consider and suggest possible means on educational and industrial growth of the country. The Congress accepted this resolution. The resolution of technical

---

56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
60. Ibid., p. 70.
education (No. VIII) also received Lajpat's full support; it urged the Government to open more technical schools and institutions and to promote small scale indigenous industries. This resolution, incidently, may be called Congress' first commitment to the idea of Swadeshism - an issue which was to rock the Congress after a few years. In the wake of the resolution two committees, industrial and educational, were appointed "to consider the improvement of Indian industries and promote industrial education."61 The members of the Industrial Committee were Lajpat Rai, Tilak, Gokhale and Surendra Nath Banerjea.

The approval of the resolution calling for a half day debate of industrial and educational subjects and the appointment of the Committee mark a definite progress in Congress aims and programme.62 It clearly implied that the rhetorical speeches of the three day annual Congress should be replaced by serious political discussion of matters concerning directly with the hardships of the masses.63 Lajpat Rai's role in moving and piloting these resolutions is significant; this clearly shows his strong attachment for the educational and economic upliftment of the country. A significant result of Lajpat Rai's contribution to the 1900 Congress was that the Subject Committee gave Punjab a larger number of seats on the

---

61. Ibid., Resolution XXV, p. 79.
62. In the Second Congress held in Calcutta in 1886, a delegate from the Punjab, Hukam Chand said: "we shall try to compete with England by establishing such industries as would support our own artisans and by purchasing things from them." But his speech was cut short and his suggestions was dismissed. Vide Report of the Second Indian National Congress, 1886, p. 65.
Indian National Committee. The number of Punjab members was raised from four to six delegates, while the members from Bombay, Madras and Bengal were reduced from eight to seven delegates.

At the turn of the century, Lajpat Rai was ready for active participation in politics. The programme of the Indian National Congress, however, was still not in line with his ideas about political work. He found it still involved in theoretical discussions and unwilling to adopt bold and constructive policies. In view of the approaching Calcutta session, Lajpat Rai published two articles in which he expressed his views on the Congress, and suggested some measures for the forthcoming Calcutta Session (1901). In the first article entitled, "The Economic and Industrial Campaign in India", he blamed the British Government and the leaders of the Congress for the poverty of India. He argued that although India had great economic and industrial resources, the British Government purposely discouraged technical education in order to maintain India as an open market for British industrial goods. He also blamed the leaders of the Congress for persisting in fruitless political agitation instead of promoting Indian technological education. He emphasised that so long as India was poor, it could not achieve nor maintain political freedom and urged that each province should send one student every year to Europe and America to gain technological knowledge. He reminded the Congressmen that self-reliance and self-help were the essential pre-requisites to the economic and political advancement of the Indians. Lajpat Rai

64. 466 members from Punjab attended the Congress.
exhorted the Congressmen to devote themselves to economic and industrial reconstruction of the country. 66

In his second article entitled, "The Coming Indian National Congress - Some Suggestions," 67 Lajpat Rai criticised the character, methods and aims of the Congress. He ridiculed the Congress as an annual festival of English educated Indians who assembled in order to amuse themselves and to increase their fame by "uttering plausibly worded platitudes and well-disguised commonplaces in the shape of speeches." He mocked at the dress of the well-to-do delegates and condemned the lavish decorations and furnishings of the Congress pavillons as an unjustified extravagance. He argued that this gave cause to Englishmen in India and in England to point to the prosperity of Indians under British rule and to negate the deliberations of the Congress on the poverty of India. In anguish Lajpat Rai asked, "Is it not possible to achieve better and more tangible results from this annual gathering of the best and most intelligent of the educated Indians?" Elaborating its principal defects, Lajpat Rai accused the Congressmen of having created the false impression that it could gain political reforms by merely passing resolutions and delivering speeches, of misleading Indians to place unjustified faith in the efficacy of constitutional agitation, and failing to impress upon the people the need for greater sacrifices for the achievement of political freedom. He criticised the Congress for its failure to afford the opportunity of comparing notes and exchanging views, by which the unity of the

67. Ibid.
nation or at least of its principal component parts, might be really furthered and definite progress in that direction might lead to more extended exertions towards the same end. He also condemned the Congress for its "failure to take some practical steps to check the growing poverty of the country and to dispel ignorance" among the masses. He reminded the Congressmen that "we have not realised the full significance of the word 'patriotism'. We have been taking it easy and never realised in our heart of hearts that patriotism is a cult requiring the most rigid and ascetic course of life from its devotees." "It is only one degree lower", he added, "than the absolute self denial of a sanyasi."

In this editorial note Lajpat Rai suggested remedies for the efficient functioning of Congress organisation:

"Under clause 1:- I will suggest that the sitting of the general assembly be shortened, as much as may be possible to do, at once. In no case should it exceed two days with a maximum sitting of five hours every day at the most. In the general assembly no speaker, whether the proposer or the seconder or the supporter should be allowed to exceed the limits of 10 or 5 minutes respectively except the Chairman of the Reception Committee, the President, or the proposer of a resolution or amendment falling under clause (c)...

Under clause 2:- I will suggest (a) a total discontinuance of all such practices as are, if at all, adopted, encouraged or connived at to 'bring in' such people to the Congress as are otherwise either not eligible for its membership, or do not possess sufficient interest therein, or are on no use to it except in increasing the number of delegates from a particular class. It should be the business and duty of every Congressman to jealously guard the honour, the dignity and the prestige of the Congress, and nothing should be allowed or encouraged which has even the least semblance of being dishonourable, undignified, or likely to lower its reputation, or lessen its sense of all self-respect...

69. Ibid., p. 132.
Under clause 3:- I will suggest that only responsible and really working men should be selected as member of the Indian Congress Committee. The Provincial Committees, moreover, ought to see that only such men are placed on this Committee who take a real interest in the political reform movement and who are prepared to undergo some amount of sacrifice, in the cause of the country's political progress. Members who fail to attend even one meeting in the course of the year ought to be disqualified for re-election.

Under Clause 5:- I will suggest, that the least that should be undertaken at once, is the employment of a paid officer whose business should be to go round and collect information on both these heads. In my opinion we ought to be prepared to give a more substantial proof of our earnestness by voting a certain amount of money to be spent in this coming year, by ourselves on the object in question."

Lajpat Rai gave very valuable and significant suggestions to make the Congress more efficient and effective. He wanted to enlist keen, dedicated and selfless members in the Indian National Congress. Without caring for the numbers, he wanted to enroll only such members who were actually interested in political reform movement, and who could efficiently implement the programme of the Congress. It is thus clear that Lajpat Rai wanted Congress organisation composed of really dedicated and patriotic persons; he attempted to modify the character of the Congress. From a loose, casual and unwieldy organisation, he wished to convert it into an effective, dynamic, strong movement. Later on, some of his suggestions were accepted by the Moderate Congress in 1903.

When the Calcutta session convened in December 1901, Lajpat Rai did not attend the Congress. It was composed predominantly of delegates from Bengal. Its agenda and proceedings were entirely controlled by W.C. Bonnerji and Pherozeshah Mehta through the

70. Kayastha Samachar, November 1901, pp. 379-385.
71. Out of the total number of 896, 580 were from Bengal.
72. B. 1845; barrister of the Bombay High Court; President of the I.N.C. 1890; d. 1915.
President Dinshaw Wacha. The resolution moved by Lajpat Rai and passed in the 1900 session at Lahore to devote half a day to industrial subjects was not implemented. The Congress decided that a committee be formed to discuss whether a resolution on industries should be presented at the next Congress. Lajpat Rai was against this resolution. He wrote articles attacking Congress leaders, while The Tribune published numerous articles and letters criticising Congress "inaction". At the 1901 session the Punjab delegates threatened to leave Calcutta over the issue of the constitution and they were finally quieted only by the assurances of the Secretary, Wacha, that the Indian Congress Committee would meet the following year and form a Committee for the purpose of framing a constitution and also for electing the next President.

When Wacha refused to call a meeting of the Committee and personally appointed Surendranath Banerjea as the 1902 president, Punjab delegates charged that the Congress was a "play thing of a clique", and seceded from the national organisation. Punjab did not attend the 1902 Ahmedabad Congress, and only a handful of older politicians from Ambala attended the 1903 Madras session.

Lajpat Rai's reaction to the Calcutta Congress (1901) was expressed in two articles in which he urged the Congress for the

73. Kayastha Samachar, "the Indian National Congress", January 1902, p. 58.
74. In his presidential speech, Dinshaw Wacha declared, "Many a vague idea is now floating in the air which requires to be definitely formulated, and many crude and ill-digested recommendations need to be... tested before we can all agree upon a common basis on which a fair attempt at industrial development might be made. Report of the Seventeenth Indian National Congress, Calcutta, 1901, p. 68.
75. The Tribune, January 28, 1902, editorial.
76. Ibid., October 1, November 5, 1901.
abandonment of constitutional agitation. In the first article entitled, "The Principles of Political Progress", he wrote, "the first axiom which every Indian politician ought to take to heart is that no nation is worthy of any political status if it can not distinguish between begging rights and claiming them." He condemned the Congress as an institution of beggars who pleaded for charity from the Government instead of realising that "sovereignty rests with the people." 78

In Indian politics, Lajpat Rai and Gokhale were two outstanding leaders during this period. They represented two different provinces in the Indian National Congress. They were excellent speakers who held each other in high esteem. They worked together as representatives of the Congress in England in 1905. Despite intimate relations they had some ideological differences. Gokhale wanted to mould India in the image of the West. He emphasised that India could take her place in the comity of nations only by imbibing the political thought of the West and adopting its representative institutions and methods of economic development. 79 He considered the British as the fortuitous dispensation of divine providence sent to rouse Indian from the lethargy of centuries and to teach her how to remodel her institutions in the image of the then most highly advanced nation of the world. He believed in sending resolutions and appeals to the rulers. His politics were shared by Dadabhai Naoroji, Ferozeshah Mehta, Womesh Chandra Bonnerjeea and D.E. Wacha. But Lajpat Rai was proud of Indian history, its communities and peculiarities. Although

78. Ibid., p. 1041.
he did not want to shun the West, but he emphasised the need to maintain and strengthen the indigenous base. He, therefore, underlined the need of political education to make the people conscious of their rights. Lajpat Rai wanted that the Congress should change its old methods; he roundly denounced the slow and halting approach of the Moderates. As a practical man, he emphasised that the Congress should have a band of earnest missionaries to work out the political regeneration of the country.

In 1904 Punjab was becoming a virile centre of political activities. There were various reasons. The Land Alienation Act of 1900 aimed to prevent the transfer of land from the agriculturists to non-agriculturists created discontent among the non-agriculturist or urban classes. No doubt, it could be defended as a beneficial measure aiming at the prevention of exploitation of the poor by the rich but those classes adversely affected by the legislation carried on a persistent agitation against the Act. It had the effect of politicising to an extent hitherto unknown large numbers of the people of the province. There was widespread involvement at all levels in all areas of politics, from local self-governing bodies to social, public and political association of various kinds. The second cause was increase in revenue, inadequate steps of the Government to deal with famine and plague in the province. The Punjab newspapers had become mouthpiece of the people to express their grievances. Lajpat Rai and his Arya Samajist friends were keen

32. The Tribune printed a dozen letters during 1904.
to revive political activity in the Punjab and renew contacts with the Congress. A newspaper in English was considered essential as the organ of their party and therefore The Panjabee was launched in October 1904. The political situation within the Congress had also changed, for Tilak and the Extremists were making a determined attempt to wrest a new constitution and a "practical" programme from the Congress leaders. Lajpat Rai proposed at a December meeting of the Indian Association that Punjab should demand a constitution and an effective programme for the Congress. The motion was carried on a majority. In his forceful speech, Lajpat Rai appealed to the local politicians to abandon the impolitic policy of remaining outside the Congress. Thus, Lajpat Rai succeeded in moulding the mind of Punjab's elite for the participation in the forthcoming Congress.

Lajpat Rai led a group of twenty-eight delegates to the Bombay Congress in December 1904. He was received by Sir Henry Cotton, the Congress President. In the session Lajpat Rai emphasised the need of a constitution for Congress. Here he gave a brief history of the agitation for a constitution. He pointed out that Lucknow Congress in 1899 was unanimous on the question of constitution and the leaders of different provinces like Surendranath Bannerjea and

83. The Panjabee, (Lahore), October 3, 1904. "The Congress, after 19 sessions of enthusiastic political work, finds the position of the country in many respects worse than it was at the commencement. The liberty of speech and freedom of the press have been seriously curtailed; Local self government, except in name has been a thing of the past; a very cruel damper has been put on higher education; the independence of Universities taken away; and last but not least, private enterprise in education has been emphatically discouraged if not actually vetoed."

84. The Tribune (Lahore), December 14, 17, 1904. Also see Panjabee (Lahore), December 12, 19, 1904.

85. B. 1845; entered Indian Civil Service 1867; Chief Commissioner of Assam 1896-1902; retired in 1902; President of the I.N.C. 1904; M.P. 1896-1920; d. 1915.
Raghunath Narasinha Mudholkar had signed the resolution. This resolution, Lajpat Rai said, was not the result of any impulse, neither was it framed in a hurry or carried by any chance vote, but was the deliberate decision of the Congress arrived at after careful sifting of all the pros and cons and after a very thoughtful discussion of the matter amongst the leaders as well as the general body of the Congressmen. In a meeting with Pherozeshah Mehta, Lajpat Rai told him that he had a firm faith in constitutional methods but the Congress was not likely to achieve much unless it was converted into a permanent organisation and worked under some sort of a constitution. The President, Sir Henry Cotton, expressed his sympathy with Lajpat Rai's demands. But the senior leaders of the Congress like Dadabhai Naoroji argued that the time had not yet come to give a constitution.

The Congress had not yet lost faith in the expedient of securing political rights and privileges by appealing to the conscience of the British rulers. In view of the impending General Election in Britain the 1904 Congress, on the advice of Sir William Wedderburn, resolved to send a delegation to place India's "claims..."
before the British electors, before the Parliamentary candidates and before the political leaders.92 The proposed delegates to England were Lajpat Rai, Pherozeshah Mehta, Sankaran Nair,93 Madan Mohan Malaviya and Surendranath Bannerjea.94 However, only two delegates, Gokhale and Lajpat Rai, were sent. Another feature of the 1904 Congress was its decision to appoint a committee to draft a new constitution for the Congress. Its members included Lajpat Rai and Harkishan Lal95 representing the Punjab; Surendranath Banerjea, Ambica Charan Mazumdar96 and Sachchidananda Sinha97 representing Bengal; Pherozeshah Mehta, Dinshaw Wacha and Gokhale representing Bombay; Sankran Nair representing Madras and Madan Mohan Malaviya representing U.P.98 Although the "Oligarchy" of the Congress formed the majority of the Committee, the decision to provide the Congress with a new constitution indicates an attempt to reconcile the radicals and close up the ranks of the Congress. Similarly, the extraordinary appointment of Lajpat Rai as an accredited delegate of the Congress to England was possibly intended

centre of influence, to British public opinion, to the parliamentary electors, to the candidates at the general elections, and especially to the prominent public men who are likely soon to occupy the place of power." The Panjabe, December 12, 1904.

92. Report of the Twentieth I.N.C., Bombay, 1904, Resolution XV.
93. B. 1857; vakil of the Madras High Court; President of the Indian National Congress 1897; Judge of the Madras High Court 1908-15; member of the Viceroy's council 1915-19 and of Secretary of State's council 1920-21; d. 1934.
95. B. 1864; politician and businessman; Minister in Punjab Government 1921-23; d. 1937.
96. B. 1850; lawyer and author; President of the I.N.C. 1916; member of the Bengal Legislative Council 1917-13; d. 1922.
97. B. 1871; member of the Imperial Legislative Council 1910; Secretary of the Reception Committee of the I.N.C. 1912; President of the Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council 1921-22; Vice Chancellor of the Patna University 1944; d. 1950.
to rally the Punjabi dissidents as also because he was the best fitted person\textsuperscript{99} for such a work.

Before his departure from Lahore for England, as a Congress delegate, Lajpat Rai had categorically stated that he did not believe in the benevolent intentions of the British electors. For political aspirations it was of no use to appeal to them in the name of political philanthropy or ethical justice. He criticised the Government of India for the tyrannical rule and voiced his uncompromising attitude by emphasising that, unlike previous delegations of the Congress to England, he would mainly seek support not from the Liberals but from the Social Democratic Federation of Henry Hyndman.\textsuperscript{100} Making a realistic assessment of the political situation, Lajpat Rai declared that he was not over-optimistic about the results of his mission. When he arrived in London in June 1905, he found that the Liberal party was not interested in advancing the cause of Indian freedom and the British electorate were generally ignorant of and apathetic to the question of Indian reforms. The people in England were so much busy with their own problems that they could hardly devote any attention to the affairs of a distant part of the empire. The only section from which he received some sympathy and encouragement was the Labour and the Irish Members of the Parliament. He became all the more convinced that they were the people from whom Indian nationalists could hope to receive

\textsuperscript{99} In a letter, D.E. Wacha earnestly suggested Lajpat Rai's name as the representative of the province. The \textit{Panjabee} also felt that "he was the best fitted person to take the responsibility on his shoulders, by the mental equipment no less than by his earnestness in the public cause and devotion to duty." vide \textit{The Panjabee (Lahore)} March 20, 1905.

\textsuperscript{100} B. 1842; socialist leader; formed Social Democratic; a prominent advocate of Indian self-government.
support.\textsuperscript{101}

On his arrival in London in June 1905, he was not greeted by any representative of the British Congress Committee. He was met by Shyamji Krishnaverma\textsuperscript{102} who took him to stay at the then newly opened India House in Highgate. Shyamji Krishnavarma founded in January, 1905 "Indian Rule Society" and acted as its President. His Indian Sociologist propagated Home Rule for India and he severely criticised the British Committee of the Congress. Through Shyamji Krishnavarma, Lajpat Rai met Henry Hyndman and it is to this period of Lajpat Rai's stay in England that his socialist ideas can be traced.

Lajpat Rai delivered his first speech in London at a meeting of the National Democratic League. Shyamji Krishnavarma also addressed the same meeting and he moved a resolution on Home Rule for India. Lajpat Rai supported the resolution and asked the meeting not to place any reliance on statements made by Congressmen to the effect that Indians did not want Home Rule.\textsuperscript{103} Sir William Wedderburn and some others defended Lajpat Rai's speech.\textsuperscript{104} On the contrary Sir Henry Cotton strongly resented Lajpat Rai's support to Shyamji Krishnavarma's resolution, and he moved a resolution in the Congress British Committee to censure Lajpat Rai and to disown him as a delegate of the Congress. In his defence, Lajpat Rai contended

\textsuperscript{101} The Panjabee (Lahore) May 15, 1905. Also see letter, August 3, 1905, Lajpat Rai to Ganga Prasad Varma, London, Gokhale Papers.

\textsuperscript{102} B. 1857; revolutionary who worked outside India for the liberation of the country; represented India at a Conference of Orientalists in Berlin; d. 1930.

\textsuperscript{103} Lajpat Rai: Autobiographical Writings, p. 105.

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
that as a delegate of the Congress he had by no means forfeited the liberty of expressing his own views, and the motion of Sir Henry Cotton was dropped. In the first week of July, 1905, an open meeting was held to welcome Lajpat Rai as a Congress delegate under the auspices of the Stockport Labour Church and the Manchester Indian Association. It was attended by nearly 1,000 persons at Stockport.

Welcoming Lajpat Rai, the president, H. Bockwell of Manchester said:

"His learned friend, Lajpat Rai, at a considerable personal self sacrifice, had come to the country to arouse interest and to spread the agitation especially among the working classes of Lancashire and to tell of what he might call the tragedy in India."105

In his address, Lajpat Rai said although physically separated by thousands of miles Lancashire and India, by a strange and inscrutable Providence, were closely allied. Their interests were bound together by trade and commerce. India supplied much of the raw material which was manufactured into finished articles and exported back to India. The English speaking natives of India were the consumers and Lancashire were the producers. But unfortunately the consumers were consumed by poverty whereas Lancashire was increasing its wealth at the cost of Indians. Lajpat Rai also alluded to the rotten system of education provided for the natives by the British representatives in India, who denied them schools of technical education. He condemned in a forceful language the idle and incompetent Englishmen who were sent out to official positions in India with little or no knowledge of the native vernaculars, and he related how some of the judges were so ignorant of the language as to mistake the names of animals and articles for those of human beings.106 He condemned the excessive and growing expenditure in

106. Ibid.
India on wars and other imperialistic undertakings. He was most critical of the anomalies, injustice, and persecution to which the educated natives in India were subjected by the incompetent ruling classes placed over them by the British Government. Lajpat Rai also referred to the Indian National Congress' demands for cheaper and more representative government, lighter taxation, extended and more practical education. He said that a cheaper government could be attained by the larger employment of Indians in the government services and by the reduction of military expenditure. He appealed to the Lancashire people to join the Indians in their demand for reform in the Government of India. Lajpat Rai's speech was supported by Sheikh Abdul Qadir, a Congress sympathiser.  

On July 19, 1905, Lajpat Rai attended an Electoral Congress at Holborn Town Hall, London. He supported the resolution asking for the payment of salaries to the Members of Parliament. He also supported a resolution which demanded that the election expenses should be borne by the State. The resolution on adult-sufferage received the greatest support from Lala Lajpat Rai. Here Lajpat Rai said that some Indians and Anglo-Indians believed that the demand of Home Rule for India was incompatible with loyalty to England, and that the Indians who made the demand or agitated for it were guilty of sedition towards the established Government of the country. If loyalty meant the acceptance of a permanent connexion of one community with the other under conditions of equality with the rest of the Empire, then he was as loyal as any Anglo-Indian could possibly be. He also urged the British people not to place

107. Ibid.
108. Ibid.
any reliance on the statements that the Indians did not want Home Rule for their country or the country was prosperous or happy under the existing system. In his opinion the political subjugation of one country by another was unnatural. It was a reversal of the ordinary conditions of nature. Lajpat Rai informed his English audience that India was far from being contented under British rule; if her woes and sufferings did not reach their ears it was because she was held in a stern grip by the civil bureaucracy. The bureaucracy, he added, were sadly mistaken if they thought they could crush her spirit and keep a nation down for ever. He said that it was not the wish of the Indians to go out of the Empire; what they aspired to was the position of citizenship and fellow subjects. What they asked was that England should do them justice by promoting education, by granting larger measure of self-government which would give the people a voice in the government of their own country, and by encouraging industries to increase the prosperity and happiness of the country.

Towards the end of July 1905, Lajpat Rai visited Manchester, Leeds, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Islington and several other cities. He made several speeches before the British people and enjoyed the hospitality of the Indian students. During August, Lajpat Rai addressed a meeting of the Liberal Party at Kettering and a meeting of the Labour Party in Lancashire. He told his Labour audience that

109. Ibid.
110. Ibid.
111. Lajpat Rai, Autobiographical Writings, p. 106.
the Indians had lost faith in the Liberals and henceforth they
looked hopefully to the support of the working class of England. 112
To his Liberal audience he said that the racial arrogance of English-
men in India could no longer be tolerated, and that as long as
Englishmen constituted a separate ruling class in India, Indians
could not but regard them as aliens and their rule as tyrannical
and unacceptable. 113

Since Gokhale was to arrive in London in October, Lajpat Rai
filled in the intervening two months with a short trip to America. 114
He addressed meetings in New York, Philadelphia and Boston, where
he told his American audiences that since India was exploited by
Britain, India deserved self-government. In a lecture at Boston,
Lajpat Rai made the following remarks:

"The present system of Government there (in India) is very
unsatisfactory, as it practically gives no voice to the
people in the administration of affairs, and has resulted in
bringing about an extreme condition of poverty, which causes
great mortality on occasions of famine and pestilence.

You are probably unaware that 10 dollars a year is the average
earnings of one of our natives, and out of that goes 2 dollars
50 cents (10 shillings) as taxes to the Government... The
present policy has ruined all Indian manufacturers, and there
is no way out of the difficulty unless the Government adopts
some favourable attitude. This is bound to bring on great
sufferings.

The great burden on India is the tremendous military expenditure
which has been increased by Lord Kitchener to $ 23,000,000 this
year, giving India a military form of Government." 115

112. India (London), August 4, 1905.
113. Ibid.
114. Letter, August 3, 1905, Lajpat Rai to Gokhale, London,
Gokhale Papers.
115. Home Department, G.O.I. (Public/Political-;) Nos. 148-235,
August 1907.
Although Lajpat Rai's stay in the United States lasted less than a month its significance may be described in terms of pioneering Indians' political contact with the Americans.  

In October 1905, Lajpat Rai returned to London to join Gokhale in a lecturing tour which included London, Manchester, Leeds, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Islington, Hoveham and Brixton. In his speeches he described the poverty of Indian masses and emphasised Indian desire for self-government. In a meeting at Union Church in Putney Lajpat Rai stated his aim thus "India for the Indians, under the guidance and control of British". On October 19 at Brixton, Lajpat Rai spoke on "India and its Government" in which he severely criticised Lord Curzon's regime. He pointed out the broken promises of the Government of India, the wrongs and injustices under which the people suffered, the increasing burden of taxation, the rise in the number of famines, and the evils of the principles on which the whole government was based.

When Lajpat Rai was thus explaining Indian demands and conditions before the British public, his movements were being watched by the detectives of the Central Intelligence Department. Even his house at Oxford during his absence was kept under close watch by the agents. Referring to such incidents Lajpat Rai wrote:

"On Thursday and Friday the watching business about which I wrote to you reached its climax. On Friday I was shadowed by the same man who followed me on Thursday for full four hours... I received a letter from my son informing me that more than one

116. Ibid.
117. Ibid.
man watched my house at one and the same time and twice an effort was made to decoy me out after dark under the pretence of meeting an Indian near the Hampston Health Station. This has roused my suspicion and it is possible that it may be more than easily watching my movements, possible the Daily Express people are laying a trap for me.118

Despite this hinderance and irritation caused by the detectives of the Criminal Intelligence Department, Lajpat Rai made strenuous efforts on behalf of the Congress to explain India's political and economic problems in Britain and America, and rendered very useful services to the national cause. His experience there further confirmed his belief that self-reliance and self-help were the best means for the growth of Nationalism. It was a turning point in his life.117

On 17 November, Lajpat Rai arrived in India after six months visit to England and a short visit to America. To welcome Lajpat Rai, the Bombay Congress Committee held a meeting where he advised the Indians of all castes and creeds to forget their differences and unite for the purpose of national good. He warned the Congressmen that memorials and petitions to Government had been of no avail and that the time had come when action should take the place of suggestions.119 Lajpat Rai summed up his visit to Britain in the following words:

"The English voters and the English Press were absorbed in their own domestic problems to care about the grievances of the Indians. The liberal Party was indifferent to Indian affairs as the Conservatives. The Liberal Party above professed sincere support for Indian Home Rule, but because of its weakness the most it could do was to pass resolutions of sympathy. Hence, Indian should cease to expect any support

118. Letter (Monday) undated (1905), Lajpat Rai to Gokhale, Gokhale Papers.
119. Home Department, G.C.I. (Public/Political-A) Nos. 143-235, August, 1907."
from England and should strive themselves to achieve political reforms."120

He concluded that India's political salvation would depend on the efforts of her own people. It was futile to depend on the benevolence of the British rulers or Parliament for the redress of Indian grievances. He said:

"You can, at times, successfully appeal to the humanity and benevolence of individuals but to hope for justice and benevolence from a nation is hoping against hope. The rule of a foreign democracy is, in this respect, the most dangerous. The democracy is swayed by so many diverse interests and motives that it is simply impossible to expect anything like unanimity or even a preponderance of opinion in dealing justice with a subject race, because justice to a subject race often clashes or is inconsistent with the interest of some class of the ruling democracy."121

On his arrival in his home province, in an address delivered on the occasion of the anniversary of the Arya Samaj, on December 5, 1905, Lajpat Rai called upon Hindus and Muslims to form a united front against the foreign enemy (i.e. the Government of India) and concluded with the following words: "Our struggle for freedom must be carried on in India.... the tree of the national calls for blood, let us crown our national movement with martyrdom."122 Lajpat Rai questioned the very validity of constitutional agitation in England and called for united action in India.

When Lajpat Rai was in England, Swadeshi and boycott movements were inaugurated in India as a protest against the partition of


Bengal. Under the new partition scheme, which was effected on October 16, 1905, Assam, Dacca Division, Chittagong Division, Rajshahi Division excluding Darjeeling but including the State of Hill Tipp-era were formed into a new province, Eastern Bengal and Assam.

Although the ostensible motive for the partition was promotion of administrative efficiency but there was also a political factor which could not remain unconcealed. In February 1905, Curzon had written to John Brodrick: "Calcutta is the centre from which the Congress Party is manipulated throughout the whole of Bengal and indeed the whole of India. Its best wire pullers, its most frothy orators all reside there. They dominate public opinion. The whole of their activity is directed to create an agency so powerful that they may one day be able to force a weak Government to give them what they desired." The Government attempted to weaken this class through the partition of Bengal.

The partition was regarded by the Bengalis, not as an isolated measure, but as the climax of Lord Curzon's unpopular policies. It evoked an unprecedented wave of protests culminating in the Swadeshi and Boycott movements. These movements were the outstanding features that distinguished the anti-partition agitation from any former Indian protest against the policy of the Government of India. It is difficult to ascertain their precise origion, yet early advocacy of Swadeshi and boycott as an economic and political doctrine can be traced in the later half of the nineteenth century in India. In

1873, some inhabitants of Poona 'determined to wear no cotton fabrics but those of home production'. Swadeshi companies were formed at Bombay, Ahmedabad, Surat, Satara, Sholapur, Nagpur and other places. In December 1875, "Ahmedabad Swadesh Udyam Vardhak Kandali" was founded for popularising Indian products. In 1881, the President of the Arya Samaj, Lala Sain Dass of Lahore, publicly wore Swadeshi clothes and preached economic and political merits of Swadeshi. In 1896, Tilak advocated Swadeshi and boycott in Maharashtra, and in 1897, Rabindra Nath Tagore established Swadeshi shops in Bengal. In 1900, at the Lahore Congress, Lajpat Rai attempted to commit the Congress to the promotion of Swadeshi but without much success. Swadeshi was a direct corollary of the principle of self-reliance of the Arya Samaj and during 1905-1907 members of the Arya Samaj were prominent supporters of Swadeshi and boycott in the Punjab. On his return from Britain, Lajpat Rai assumed command of the Punjab Congress and pressed his hesitant followers to make the boycott movement successful. His experience in England had convinced him that only a powerful economic lever such as boycott would move India Office in Britain to change its policy towards India. He exhorted every province to act like Bengal. He described the boycott of English goods as the most

125. Ibid.
126. Lajpat Rai, Autobiographical Writings, p. 83.
128. Ibid., No. 106, July 1907.
129. The Panjabee (Lahore) November 3, 1905.
effective way of bringing the Government to its senses and most telling to England. He said that the people of Bengal had done nothing illegal in resorting to the boycott of English goods as a political weapon. He advised his countrymen, "if we can not do without foreign goods, let us import them from Japan and China first, and from Germany, France or the United States next." He considered his scheme as an effective method of constitutional agitation. Lajpat Rai fully supported the Bengal agitation and emphasised the use of indigenous goods.

Before the Benaras Congress in 1905, Lajpat Rai published a comprehensive scheme to make the Congress more active and truly representative of the nation. This scheme was the result of his practical experience which he had gained in England. He had acquired considerable knowledge of English political system and its working and the struggle of working classes for improving their conditions and securing better rights from the Government. Consequently, his ideas and suggestions were, in his own words, "mature". On August 3, 1905, in a letter to Babu Ganga Prasad Varma, Lajpat Rai wrote about the next Congress thus: "I am of opinion that we should not erect a Pandal nor should we in the Congress Committee arrange for the accommodation of delegates or visitors. At any rate, we should fix one day for monster meeting - a great demonstration of at least a lac of people on the bank of the Ganges in the open air to protest against the policy of Lord Curzon." "From the Ganges", he added,

130. Ibid., December 11, 1905.
132. B. 1863; journalist; one of the founding members of the I.N.C.; member of the Provincial Legislative Council of U.P.; d. 1914.
"you can have your ordinary Congress for two days consisting of not more than 200 delegates." He was of the opinion that "a demonstration of a 100,000 people thus collected as a protest against the policy of Lord Curzon will carry more weight and will impress the people in England more than any number of your Congress." In an article Lajpat Rai advised the non-official members of the Legislative Council to organise a central office and to guide the Provincial Congress Committee. He wrote: "the time has come for more vigorous measures and for a substantial change in the methods of our agitation." He further wrote: "We ought to improve upon the general annual demonstration at the Congress session by arranging to bring about a greater and a bigger meeting every year attended by no less than a hundred thousand persons from all parts of India. The educational and the political value of such gathering can not be over-estimated. Let the next session of the Congress at Benares set the example." Lajpat Rai believed that actual deliberative work of the Congress should be done by a smaller conference attended by not more than a hundred of the best men of the country. Two whole days might be reserved for this work and one day for popular demonstration, at which speeches might be delivered to the assembled masses from different platforms by different men in their own vernaculars. The executive and administrative work of guiding the movement all round the year should be done by a smaller standing committee of 20 to 30 men. That committee should meet at least two or three times a year.

134. Ibid.
136. Ibid.
137. Ibid.
It is obvious that Lajpat Rai was anxious to change the old methods of the Congress. He was keen to take the Congress message to the masses and make it popular and truly representative of the national demands.

The struggle within the Congress was growing. The younger generation wanted to make the Congress more active. They had succeeded at the Bombay Congress in getting a committee appointed for drafting a constitution for the Congress. Lajpat Rai was one of those who had supported this resolution. The partition of Bengal had proved the hollowness of Congress policies and methods. In this background Tilak decided to present a programme of action through Boycott, Swadeshi, National Education and the demand of Swaraj as the ultimate goal of the people in the Benaras Congress. Lajpat Rai fully supported this programme, but he did not want to create rift within the Congress. At the same time he did not know as to how this schism could be avoided. As the Panjabee put it: "The hour of the inevitable parting of ways has come for our national Assembly. It should either decide to take advantage of the new spirit and launch out a bold policy or resign its own death." It was in these circumstances that Lajpat Rai reached Benaras to attend the twenty-first session of the Congress in 1905.

The controversy at the Benaras Congress centred on the Subject Committee's deliberation over the proposal to pass a resolution welcoming the Prince of Wales, later king George V, to India. The resolution was opposed by Lajpat Rai who argued that the "severe

138. The Panjabee (Lahore) December 18, 1905.
famine prevailed in the country and people were dying of hunger; besides the Viceroyalty of Lord Curzon had created great unrest. To call the Prince of Wales at the moment was bureaucratic subterfuge, the intention of the inviters being to allay political unrest by diverting public attention to gala shows."¹³⁹ Lajpat Rai along with other leaders tried to present the adoption of this resolution and they wrote in following to the President of the Congress:

"We the undersigned delegates beg respectfully to bring to your notice that we hold that there is not even a constitutional necessity for adopting the first resolution regarding the proposed wire of welcome to Their Royal Highnesses, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and therefore humbly request you to drop the same as otherwise we shall be constrained to raise and opposition in the Congress pandal.

G.S. Khaparde
B.G. Tilak
Lajpat Rai
and many others."¹⁴⁰

When the resolution was carried by the majority in the Subject Committee Lajpat Rai warned that he would oppose its passage again in the general meeting of the National Congress. His threat infuriated the loyalists who counterwarned Lajpat Rai and Tilak not to act as "sedition mongers" and "badmashes".¹⁴¹ The Chairman of the Reception Committee, Munshi Madho Lal, informed the police that he expected a riot during the opening of the session, and he ensured the Congress pavilion. The imminent rift was averted, however, by Gokhale's appeal to Lajpat Rai and asking him to waive opposition for

¹³⁹. Lajpat Rai, Autobiographical Writings, p. 110.
¹⁴⁰. Letter, December 27, 1905, from some delegates of the Congress Camp, Benaras, to the President, I.N.C., Gokhale Papers.
¹⁴¹. Chintamani, C.Y., Indian Politics Since the Mutiny (London, 1940 p. 79.)
his sake. "To this", writes Lajpat Rai, "I agreed and gave him a promise that we would abstain from attending the sitting whilst this resolution was being dealt with that we might not to have to oppose it; the understanding was that in the record it would not be said that the resolution was accepted unanimously."\[142\] Thus the welcome resolution was carried.

Again, on the question of Boycott, Lajpat Rai along with Khaparde and Tilak wanted to extend its scope and application. They wished to bring about a basic change in Congress policies and ideology. In the atmosphere of popular discontent they endeavoured to broaden the Congress movement. But the 1905 Congress was a personal triumph of Gokhale. By his stature, reputation and eloquent pleading he succeeded in meeting the attacks of his opponents, and the Congress, in a great measure, retained its old image.

Gokhale, the Congress President, in his important address said: "The aim of the Congress is that India should be governed in the interests of the Indians themselves, and that in the course of time a form of Government should be attained in this country similar to what exists in the self-governing colonies of the Britain Empire."

Referring to the anti-partition agitation, Gokhale praised Swadeshi but cautioned against Boycott. He explained that the term "boycott" meant a vindictive desire to injure another and emphasised that "such a desire on our part as a normal feature of relations with England is

\[142\] Lajpat Rai, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 111.
of course out of the question." 144

But Lajpat Rai impressed upon Congressmen that Boycott ushered "the dawn of a new political era for India." "I must tell you", he continued "that the message which the people of England wanted to send you through me was the message that in our utterance, in our agitations and in our fight and struggle for liberty, we ought to be more manly than we have been hitherto. An Englishman hates or dislikes nothing like beggary. Therefore, it is our duty to show Englishman that we have risen to the sense of consciousness, that we are no longer beggars and that we are subjects of an Empire where people are struggling to achieve that position which is their right by right of natural law... They (Bengal) have exhibited a spirit in this battle which has to be commended to other Provinces of India. If the other Provinces of India will just follow their example, I say, the day is not far distant when England will grant our rights. But if you simply go there (to England) as a beggar without the consciousness of your power to demand your rights, you go there simply to be rejected..... Therefore, as friends of government, as friends of order, we warn Government against treading this path of danger and difficulty. Let Government remember and let you, gentlemen, also remember that people once awakened and awakened rightly cannot be put down. It is impossible for the Government of India after a century of British rule, after a century of liberal education, to put us down like dogs and slaves." 145 Lajpat Rai

144. Ibid., p. 11.
145. Ibid., p. 74.
justified resort to passive resistance in the political movement and congratulated Bengal for heralding a new political era for the country. He stressed the urgent need for "a band of earnest missionaries to work out the political regeneration of the country", and said that it was a matter of shame that Congress during its twenty-one years lives had not produced any 'political Sanyasis' prepared to sacrifice their lives for the regeneration of India.\footnote{146. Ibid}

The speech created a stir in the Congress camp. The old leaders did not relish its tone but it made a visible impact on the audience.

Lajpat Rai fully supported the Congress resolutions on Boycott and Swadeshi. He expressed the yearnings of the new generation in a powerful and eloquent manner. He greatly emphasised the necessity of adopting stronger, bolder and more vigorous measures. He openly expressed his disapproval of the "old" methods and policies of the Congress; he characterised them as inadequate, halting and incapable of achieving the aims of the country. But at the same time he did not want to do anything which might have the slightest effect of impairing the unity and strength of the Congress organisation.

Lajpat Rai and his friends' demand was not heeded by the 1905 Congress on the question of boycott. The Panjabee reacted in the following editorial: "If the Congress persist in the present infatuated policy of disgraceful inaction and contemptible talk heedless of the demand made on them for action, the country will come to regard them as a body of ambitious imbeciles or a society

\footnote{146. Ibid.}
of self-seekers who are sacrificing the real interests of their country on the altar of their vanity or own aggrandisement. Speeches without action are demoralising. If the Congress be hopelessly wedded to impotent rhetoric and despicable pomp, the people who have been crying for action should combine and start a Congress of work.\textsuperscript{147} Describing the character of the proposed new Congress, the \textit{Panjabee} added that it should concentrate imparting political education to the masses by regular weekly meetings and by issuing pamphlets in the vernaculars.\textsuperscript{148}

To sum up, we may say Lajpat Rai appeared on the platform of the Indian National Congress as a member of one of backward districts of Punjab when it (Congress) had made its three years history. Its early history, policies and methods were based on resolutions, petitions and prayers. Lajpat Rai condemned such methods and strove hard to expose the hollowness of the Congress methods. For this, he gave forceful speeches, wrote articles and adopted the policy of keeping himself aloof for some time from the sessions of the Congress. He wanted to make the Congress more active, practical and popular among the masses. He emphasised self-reliance and self-help to achieve the political emancipation. His suggestions became guide lines for the future programme of the Congress. In the beginning of the twentieth century Lajpat Rai started to influence the Congress ideology within the Congress sessions. He was on the side of the Nationalists in attacking the Congress policies and methods. But his close relations with the old leaders and the role within the

\textsuperscript{147} Panjab Native Newspaper Report, \textit{Panjabee}, January 10, 1906.
\textsuperscript{148} \textit{Ibid.}, January 13, 1906.
Congress sessions gave him an independent stature. His leadership also influenced the growing political consciousness in the Punjab. Lajpat Rai's eloquent speeches in England and a short visit to America reflected his far-sightedness and these proved very useful in educating the English opinion about India.

Thus, Lajpat Rai was the most outstanding spokesman of new India, new spirit and the changing times.