In May 1907 the Punjab was in a state of ferment; it was looked by the local government as a centre of subversive activities with Lajpat Rai as its ring-leader. The "unrest" was on account of the Colonisation Bill, the Land Alienation Amendment Bill, the increase of land revenue in the Rawalpindi District and the appalling mortality from plague. The Punjab Government greatly exaggerated the "unrest" and succeeded in securing from Minto's Government the orders for deporting Lajpat Rai.

After the annexation of Punjab in 1849, the British Government adopted a policy calculated to conciliate the people of the province, especially the Sikhs. They made a series of changes in the political, territorial and administrative set-up of the province. The British greatly succeeded in their aim. One can say that from 1849 till the end of 19th century, broadly speaking, Punjab was a "loyal" and pacified province. They proved their loyalty in the revolt of 1857.

During the second half of the nineteenth century, there were some important factors which led to awakening and political consciousness in the province. One of them was the introduction of Western education. For this purpose a large number of schools and colleges were established. 1 It generated a new nationalistic

1. The Medical College was established in 1860, Forman Christian College in 1866, the Government College in 1833. There were, besides two 'denominational' colleges of Indian origin. The Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College set up in 1888 by the Arya Samaj; the Islamia College by the Anjuman-in-Hinayat-i-Islam in 1892. See R. Kumar's (ed.) Essays on Gandhian Politics (Oxford, 1971), pp. 245-46.
outlook especially among the new middle classes who imbibed the ideas of political liberty from the writings of European thinkers.

Then, there was the Arya Samaj founded in 1877. The founder of the Samaj, Swami Dayanand,\(^2\) has been compared to Martin Luther who denounced the corruption of the priestcraft and sought to restore the authority of the Vedas. He attempted to revive and reform Hinduism through a reinterpretation of its history and sacred literature. He claimed that the Vedas were given to the Aryas at a time when India stood first in knowledge and cultural achievement. Descendants of the Aryas had been led away from the Vedas - the source of all truth and light - by false doctrines and by the trickery of the Brahmans. India's fall from her golden age had been completed during the Muslim and British conquests, when the degraded Hindus began quarreling and they fell prey to wine and beef urged upon them by the new rulers.\(^3\)

In Punjab its membership included a large proportion of Hindus commercial castes which virtually monopolised western education and the new professions introduced by the British.\(^4\) The Arya Samaj shaped the political attitudes of Punjabi Hindus by giving them an interpretation of India's past, providing a vision of and pride in the Hindu nation, and suggesting remedies for India's economic degradation. This influence was particularly evident in the intellectual development of Lajpat Rai. Between 1893 and 1900,

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2. B. 1824; d. 1884.
Aryas gradually became interested in provincial politics. Many of its members were also members of the Indian National Congress. They condemned the educational policy and inadequate famine relief work of the government. They also criticised an excise tax on cotton which was imposed by the government in 1895.\(^5\) Aryas were prominent in the 1896 and 1898 provincial conferences and the subsequent political programme of the association. In 1898, for example, they helped to organise the agitation against the Punjab Alienation of Land Bill. At the turn of the century, the Samajists were completely involved in the local politics. Thus the Arya Samaj was helping to produce a powerful educated community in the province which possessed the courage of its convictions besides a deep faith and pride in the roots of the past glory.

The association of the Punjab leaders with Indian National Congress also helped to broaden the notion of nationhood in the province. The Congress had held its first session at Lahore in 1893. Besides other things, it gave an opportunity to Punjab leaders to discuss with many prominent leaders of the national organisation the important questions of the day. Again in 1900, they invited the Congress to Lahore. In 1904, the Punjab Provincial Congress sent its leader Lajpat Rai to England as a Congress delegate.

The political awakening in the Punjab was also the result of some contemporary literary works. Alama Iqbal's *Hindustan Hamara*\(^6\)

\(^5\) *The Tribune* (Lahore), February 19, 1895, January 2, 1896.

\(^6\) *Our India*. 
had become the rallying cry for the expression of patriotic fervour. His famous poem *Bulbal Ki Faryad* was symbolical of prayer for India's demand for freedom. Another poet Mulkh Raj Bhalla wrote his *Ram Chander Ka Darshan*. Ostensibly it was a call to active social and religious reform but by innuendoes it asserted that the Indians should occupy the same place of honour in their country as others did in theirs.

Thus by the early years of the twentieth century the political situation had gradually changed in the Punjab. There was widespread involvement at all levels in all areas of politics, from local self governing bodies to social, educational, public and political associations of various kinds. Later, the partition agitation and the *Swadeshi* movement in Bengal also influenced the Punjab. But the chief factor in the growing unrest was agrarian grievances.

The unrest in the Punjab was largely due to the Punjab Colonisation Bill. The Chenab Colony in the Punjab was mostly inhabited by ex-soldiers - a majority of them being Jat-Sikhs. Earlier, for their services they had been given lands in the rainless tract but now irrigated by the canals. As the size of each holding was gradually being reduced by partition among the heirs, the Government proposed to check their further division by passing an Act providing for inheritance by primogeniture. There was great resentment against the measure; people regarded it as unjustified interference in their traditional rights.

7. Request of Nightingale.
8. A Glimpse of Ram Chander
relating to the division of property. A large number of protest meetings were held throughout the province. This Bill was strongly opposed in the Punjab Legislative Council and numerous petitions were sent. This Bill affected the educated classes also, as a good number of their leading men had proprietary interests in the colony which, in their opinion, were now threatened by the proposed legislation. This was the common platform upon which the educated and the uneducated joined their hands. Throughout March, April and May 1907 public meetings were held against the Colonization Bill at Lahore, Rawalpindi, Amritsar, Gurdaspur, Lyallpur, as well as in surrounding villages.

On January 21, 1907, Lajpat Rai informed Gokhale that "our province is just now in the throes of a fresh revolution on the two bills before the local Council. They are both mischievous and dishonest (a) The Punjab land alienation Bill amendment bill and the Land Colonization Bill."

There was also widespread dissatisfaction among the peasantry owing to enhancement of water rates and land revenue in the Rawalpindi settlement. It had created discontent among the "Indian troops in the province owing to their being drawn from

9. The Tribune, (Lahore), February 8, 1907.
12. Letter, Gokhale to the editor of the Times of India, May 21, 1907, Gokhale Papers.
13. The districts in which new land revenue assessment was sanctioned since the beginning of 1904 were: Attock, increase 25 per cent; Jhang, increase 43 per cent; Rawalpindi, increase 25 per cent; The Harisabad Tehsil in the Gujranwala district, increase 31 per cent - Telegram, May 13, 1907, Viceroy to Secretary of State, Minto Papers.
the ranks of the peasantry." These unwise steps were taken at a time when the zamindars in the canal colonies were economically threatened by crop failure and a labour shortage. For thirteen years scarcity had prevailed almost without intermission in the province.

Then there was plague. The first plague case in the Punjab was detected in 1897 and soon it spread taking about two million lives by 1910. Before Lajpat Rai's deportation, the official record of death from plague in the Punjab rose to nearly 65,000 in one week. The large scale mortality was responsible for creating bitterness in the minds of the people and the comparative immunity of the Europeans led to popular rumour that the British were spreading the disease. This greatly increased racial antagonism.

Imposition of illegal fines in the canal colonies was still another cause of discontent. "I am told on excellent authority", Minto informed Morley, "that the amount collected in fines during the last four years was 11 lakhs, and that in all probability reckoning in addition to the fines, bribes paid by the colonists to subordinate officials, the whole amount would equal about a crore and a half. It is perfectly monstrous. It really makes my blood boil. No wonder there was discontent, and yet in all

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14. Letter, Gokhale to the editor of the Times of India, May 21, 1907, Gokhale Papers. Approximately 30,000 Sikhs (23 per cent of the army) and 13,000 Punjab Muslims (13 per cent of the army) were in the army in 1907. Statistics from Indian Army list, 1907.

probability, I believe, these poor people would have continued to be mulcted if the agitators had not seen their opportunity of publishing their grievances to the world. It is no excuse whatever for the Punjab Government to say that they were ignorant of what was going on. They must at any rate have known that 11 lakhs of fines were contributed to their revenues." \[16\]

The Government policy towards Indian Press was also responsible for creating anti-British sentiment. Indian opinion was constantly irritated by the abuse and ridicule heaped upon the educated Indians by the Civil and Military Gazette, the leading Anglo-Indian paper of Lahore. Even Denzil Ibbetson, the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab, admitted the harm done by such press. When asked twice by the Viceroy to put an end to this kind of journalism as stirring up hatred between the races, Sir Denzil Ibbetson refused to prosecute. \[17\] On the contrary, the Indian papers were prosecuted for articles criticising the British government. This certainly created greater incitement to racial animosity. \[18\] In Lahore, the discontent was intensified by the prosecution of the Panjabee for publishing two articles on April 11, 1906 entitled, "How Misunderstanding Occur" and "A Deliberate Murder". The first referred to the death from exposure of two Indians who were employed to carry the luggage of the Deputy Commissioner of Rawalpindi when on tour. In the second article shooting of an Indian shikari by the District Officer of Rawalpindi was described as a "deliberate murder".

\[16\] Letter, August 7, 1907, Minto to Morley, Minto Papers.
\[18\] Ibid.
While the *Panjabee* was prosecuted, no similar action was taken against the *Civil and Military Gazette* which published letters that incited worse racial antagonism. The proprietor of the *Panjabee*, Jaswant Rai, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment and the editor, Athalye, to six months' imprisonment for "inciting race hatred." Pindi Das, the editor and proprietor of the *Weekly India*, published from Gujranwala, had also been sentenced for publishing a letter from America containing a "seditious appeal" to the Indian troops. It was addressed to the "Men of the British Army" by "Natives of India and Afghanistan who have emigrated to America." It urged them to rise against the British Government with a view to achieving *Swaraj*. Copies of this letter were recovered from possession of some soldiers at Lyallpur. The prosecution and conviction of the editor and proprietor further embittered the relations between European community and the Indian population. These sentences provoked a riot in Lahore. The house of the District Magistrate was

19. Sir Denzil Ibbeston, Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, admitted that the prosecution of the *Panjabee* was a blunder and that the *Civil and Military Gazette* incited worse racial hatred. *Home Department, G.O.I. Minute Progs. 7590*, April 30, 1907. Minto also admitted that some letters which appeared in the *Civil and Military Gazette* were disgracefully low in tone, just the sort of thing to stir up racial hatred. The Punjab Government decided not to prosecute and would not allow private prosecution. They may have been right, but it makes one's blood boil to know that a leading English newspaper could publish such productions." Vide Mary Countess of Minto, *India: Hinto and Horley*, p. 123.


22. Letter, Gokhale to Editor of *The Times of India*, May 21, 1907, *Gokhale Papers*.

23. Ibid.

attacked and damaged, Europeans passing by were abused and manhandled, while the released prisoners were hailed, with cries of "Bande Mataram", "Death to the enemy". The tone of the prevailing atmosphere was expressed by the Vakil of Amritsar: "Indians consider the injustice done to the Panjabee, Indians. Strike for independence. Arm yourselves and form secret societies. Seize arms and drive the tyrants from the soil of India."  

On April 21, 1907, a public meeting was held at Rawalpindi to protest against the Colonization Bill. It was attended by Ajit Singh the "notorious anti-British agitator", where he delivered a strong anti-British speech. The Deputy Commissioner sent a notice to three pleaders, Lala Hans Raj, Lala Amolak Ram and Lala Gurdas Ram, the organisers of the meeting, and summoned them to his court for an enquiry. A large crowd gathered at the court to express sympathy for the pleaders, and when informed that the proposed enquiry would not be held, they committed acts of rowdyism. Lajpat Rai was also in Rawalpindi at that time and had consented to address a meeting before it was prohibited by the Deputy Commissioner. On May 2, 1907 disturbances again broke out at Rawalpindi where the people committed excesses. The Government arrested leaders like Hans Raj Sawhney, Gurdas Ram Sawhney, Amolak Ram, Khazan Singh and Pandit Janji Nath and many others. Most of these were Arya Samajists and legal practitioners; they had been very prominent in promoting the cause of Swadeshi.

25. P.N.M.R. Vakil, March 7, 1907.
26. Letter, Gokhale to the Editor of The Times of India, May 21, 1907, Gokhale Papers.
and general political consciousness in and outside their areas. They were extremely popular and, therefore, "undesirable" from the Government's point of view. Altogether, the authorities brought 68 persons to trial before a special Magistrate, only six of them could be convicted. The news of these arrests at Rawalpindi spread in Lahore in no time and the citizens held a protest meeting at the Bharat Mata office. After the meeting, the young men were intercepted by the police in Anarkali, so that they may not proceed towards Upper Mall where the quarters of the Europeans were located. The crowd refused to disperse and shouted "Bande Mataram". The Police worked themselves to an unusual degree of frenzy and heat and began to trample people under their horses without making the least discrimination. Many innocents were injured by the Lathis and the butt ends of their muskets.

In this tense situation the Government wanted to make an impressive show of force and as Gokhale said, "they struck at Lajpat Rai simply because he was the most prominent worker in the province." Henry Nevinson, the noted journalist, who was in India in 1907-08, writes of his meeting with the British officer at Peshawar. When Nevinson asked the latter why a man of Lajpat Rai's character was selected for the Government's attack, the reply was, "You see, it was just because he was so good that

29. Letter, Gokhale to the editor of The Times of India, May 21, 1907, Gokhale Papers.
they fired him. If he had been a rotter, they would have left him alone."30

The authorities grew extremely nervous. The Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab felt that the situation was getting out of control and needed drastic measures. On May 3, 1907, the Government of India received from Sir Denzil Ibbetson a weighty Minute showing that sedition was being openly preached in many towns of the Punjab at the largely attended public meetings convened by professional agitators; that the murder of high officials had been advocated; that the attempts had been made to tamper with the native army and the police; that the people had been incited to rise against the Government; that the Government had been charged with disseminating plague and the villagers had been urged to combine to withhold payment of Government revenue, water rates and other dues and to refuse supplies, carriage and other help to Government officers on tour.31 In view of "persistent", "malignant" and "widespread" agitation the Lieutenant Governor requested the Government of India for "power to prevent, by executive action, the stream of seditious poison being poured into the minds of our people either by printed matter or orally." Sir Denzil Ibbetson described Lajpat Rai as, "a revolutionary and a political enthusiast who had been carried away by his theories into the most intense hatred of the British Government."

32. Ibid.
"Throughout the agitation", he added, "he keeps himself as far as possible in the background while engineering systematic propaganda" against the government. The Lt. Governor recognised him, "the moving spirit" of the whole agitation.33

Ibbetson based his minute on C.I.D. reports of Lajpat Rai's and Ajit Singh's speeches before the peasants of Lyallpur, Multan, etc. The secret report of police held Lajpat Rai responsible for the agitation. The Officating Director of the C.I.D., C.I. Stevenson Moore, wrote on April 7, 1907 that Ajit Singh spoke at a meeting in Lahore which was one of the most dangerous and seditious speeches where thumb impressions were taken on an agreement not to pay the enhanced canal rates. His Lahore agent informed him that Ajit Singh received one hundred rupees a month from Lajpat Rai. Lajpat Rai gave him notes for his speech and paid his expenses out of the political funds which was placed at his disposal.34 The C.I.D. discovered in 1909 two letters written by Lajpat Rai in the possession of Bhai Parmanand along with a copy of the bomb manual used by the revolutionaries implicated in the Alipore Bomb case. The first letter was dated February 28, 1907 in which Bhai Parmanand was asked to request Shyamji Krishna Varma to place at his (Lajpat Rai's) disposal a portion of his gift of Rs. 10,000 for "political missionaries" and also to send a number of books containing "true ideas" on politics, for the use of the student community at Lahore. The second letter was dated April 11, 1907 and it stated: "The people are in sullen mood.

33. Ibid.
34. Home Department, G.O.I. (Poll.), Nos. 44-56, December 1907.
Even the agricultural classes have begun to agitate. My only fear is that the bursting out may not be premature.\textsuperscript{35} Between March 1, and May 1, 1907 twenty-eight such meetings were held. It was alleged that at most of these meetings either Lajpat Rai or \textit{J}~Singh or both criticised the Government's actions particularly the Colonisation Bill. Sir Ibbetson also referred to another rumour that Lajpat Rai was in correspondence with the Amir of Afghanistan and attempts had been made to tamper with loyalty of the army.\textsuperscript{36} Under these circumstances Ibbetson requested Minto that the warrants for their confinement under Section 2 of Regulation 111 of 1318 be issued.\textsuperscript{37}

Minto was of the opinion that Ibbetson knew the Punjab very well and was not likely to exaggerate the situation. He was alarmed by this official information about the existence of so much sedition in Punjab. His own reaction was, "we are just now at a moment when if we act quickly, we may save a lot of trouble", and he favoured the issue of warrants at once. He did not consult Horley. "It is a matter of few days. If we temporise and ask advice from home, things may drift from bad to worse."\textsuperscript{38} So, trusting Ibbetson's judgement, Minto was inclined to accept his request. The question was discussed in the Executive Council. The Council had little information except for the Punjab letter and its enclosures. The Local Government had been able to support its case only with few reports of speeches, history sheets

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\item[35.] \textit{Home Department} (Political-I) Nos. 26/26 January 1910.
\item[36.] Minute by Ibbetson, \textit{Home Department}, G.C.I. (Poll.) Progs. 7590, April 1907.
\item[37.] Letter from the Punjab to the Indian Government Vide Home Department, G.C.I. (Poll.) No. 695, April-May 30, 1907.
\item[38.] Letter, May 5, 1907, Minto to Kitchener, Minto Papers.
\end{itemize}
of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, and excerpts from district officer's correspondence. Because the Imperial C.I.D. was prevented by statute from collecting information within the areas falling under the jurisdiction of the provincial governments, the C.I.D. and the Council were virtually dependent upon the Punjab police agency for news and analysis. In the emergency meeting which was called to discuss Lajpat Rai's deportation Edward Baker, a Member of the Council, distrusted Ibbetson and urged his fellow Council Members to oppose the Punjab request. Erle Richards, the legal Member, was in favour of employing only the legal machinery "now in existence", and he was against utilizing an old act. But Minto had made up his mind and he issued orders of deportation. Lajpat Rai was arrested and deported without trial on May 9, 1907 and Ajit Singh on June 3, 1907, and both were sent to Mandalay, Burma.

40. Letter, May 5, 1907, Minto to Kitchener, Minto Papers.
41. On the day of arrest, Lajpat Rai writes: "On being informed that two gentlemen wanted me outside I went out to receive them and found Lala Ganga Ram, Inspector, Anarkali Police, and Kunshi Rahmat Ullah, Inspector, City Police. The latter said that the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner wanted me, but that they could not say why and for what purpose. As I knew that the Commissioner of Lahore had been sending for difference people to seek their intercession to allay the prevailing unrest, my first thought was that I was also sent for with the same object and I told Inspector Rahmad Ullah that I had some business in Court and would see the Commissioner on my return. The Inspector, however, said that the Commissioner was at the District Office and wanted me for a few minutes, after which I could go to Court... My carriage was just passing out of the gate when I saw Mr. Rundle, District Superintendent, Police, coming towards my house. Almost simultaneously I saw another European Officer also coming in the same direction. Both jumped on the steps of my carriage and I was no longer in doubt about the object of the police visit. On arriving, there I was told by the Commissioner, Mr. Younghusband, that I had been arrested in pursuance of a warrant issued by the Governor-General in Council, who have decided to deport me." vide Lajpat Rai, The Story of My Deportation, (Lahore, 1908), pp. 31-33.
May 11, 1907, Minto issued the Regulation of Meetings, and it was simultaneously applied to the Punjab and Eastern Bengal and Assam. He wrote to Morley that, "I believe the arrest of Lajpat Rai and the proclamation of the ordinance have done endless good in restoring public confidence." 42

In Minto's view the reasons for the Punjab unrest were three - the 50th anniversary of the Mutiny (May 10, 1907), the Punjab Colonization Bill, and the plague. Lajpat Rai saw the whole thing in a different light. He thought that the unrest was due to the Government's unwise policies. He also believed that the riots at any rate in the district of Rawalpindi, were organised by the police with a view to arresting the popular leaders. 43

Soon Minto realised the causes of unrest in the Punjab. He believed that the Colonization Bill was the root cause of present unrest. The discontent it caused was, in the opinion of the Governor-General, "genuine and justifiable," and he was inclined to veto the Bill. But Sir Denzil Ibbetson was strongly opposed to disallowing the Bill on the ground that it would be a surrender to agitation and derogatory to the prestige of the Punjab Government. Minto, however, ignored the protest of the Punjab Government. Refusing his assent to the Bill, he characterised it as "a very faulty piece of legislation, legislation which would be unadvisable at any time, but which at the present moment,

42. Telegram, May 21, 1907, Minto to Morley, vide Home Department, G.O.I. (Poll.), July-December 1907, 7590.
if it becomes law, would add fuel to the justifiable discontent which has already been caused, whilst the appearance of surrender to agitation, should any portion of the public entertain such reasoning, would in my opinion be far less dangerous than to insist on enforcing the unfortunate legislation proposed upon a warlike and loyal section of the Indian community."

Commenting on unrest in Punjab and his innocence, Lajpat Rai admitted that the political storm was intensely fierce in the Punjab during the months of January and February 1907, "Public meetings were organised spontaneously and resolutions were passed against the Government. I also visited several places and addressed audiences on Swadeshi and Boycott and on patriotism." The situation was diagnosed by Lajpat Rai and summed up in a communication to the Panjabee only a few hours before his arrest. The unrest, according to him, was due to the several causes arising out of unjust administrative and legislative measures of the Local Government. Significantly among those were the Colonization Bill, increase of irrigation rates in the Bari Doab Canal and the abnormal increase of land revenue in Rawalpindi District. In a statement, Lajpat Rai denied charges which were levelled against him. He wrote: "I deny that I ever preached or promoted sedition or that in any of my speeches I ever called the mutiny of 1857 a war of Independence or made these suggestions." Lajpat Rai sent a memorandum to the Secretary

44. Viceroy’s order, enclosure to letter, May 27, 1907, Dunlop Smith to Maclagan, Chief Secretary, Punjab, Minto Papers.
45. Lajpat Rai, Autobiographical Writings, p. 115.
46. The Panjabee, (Lahore), May 11, 1907.
of State for India from Moulemein on the 29th June 1907 in which he wrote that he had never done nor attempted to do "anything which was intended or calculated to cause commotion in any part of the dominions of His Majesty the King Emperor of India."48

The Arya Samaj circles in the Punjab were shocked at the heavy hand with which the Government fell upon Lajpat Rai. A deputation of their leaders waited on Ibbetson, in May 1907, to convince him that the Samaj as a body was purely socio-religious, having no connection with politics. They issued a statement which asserted that a few fanatics drawn from different classes have been preaching and writing sedition, and have brought troubles even upon those who were for constitutional agitation.

In an open letter to the Civil and Military Gazette, forty-two prominent Punjabi lawyers and leaders of the Arya Samaj, including Hans Raj, declared that they "disassociated themselves from, and expressed their emphatic disapproval of, all methods of political agitation which tend to promote disloyalty, sedition, or disorder."49 These leaders submitted:

"We as members of the Arya Samaj and as subjects of the British Government, strongly disapprove of the conduct of fanatics. It is unfortunate that Lajpat Rai and Hans Raj and Gurdas Ram - prominent members of the Arya Samaj -... have been suspected of unconstitutional agitation. We believe they were advocates of constitutional agitation."50

Arya Samajists' conciliatory attempts had no effect on the Government. Ibbetson continued to accuse them of being members of a "seditious" body.

49. The Civil and Military Gazette (Lahore), June 11, 1907.
50. Ibid.
The deportation afforded an opportunity to the "loyalists" to once again demonstrate their loyalty. His Highness Maharaja Sir Prabhu Narayan Singh of Benares assured Dunlop Smith, Viceroy's Private Secretary, of his loyalty to the Raj. He said that "the entire Hindu population" approved of Government's strong measures and they had no sympathy with Lajpat Rai, Ajit Singh and the like. The Maharaja also organised a Hindu deputation to the Government.\(^51\)

Some loyal Punjab Muslims too condemned revolutionary movement. "We condemned from the beginning all methods of popular agitation, which tend to promote disloyalty, sedition or disorder, and it is a matter of undoubted gratification for us to find the leaders of the Hindu community openly falling in with our views", commented the Observer, the leading Mohammedan paper in the Punjab.\(^52\) The Azad and Watan published extracts from Lajpat Rai's speeches to demonstrate his guilt of sedition, while a letter to the Akhbar-i-Am read, "The sooner such enemies of India are wiped out the better for the country."\(^53\)

The Anglo-Indians reaction to the agitation and to Lajpat Rai's deportation was expressed in the following letter to the Civil and Military Gazette: "We must hold the country with the power of the sword, and in the interests of our women and children and the Empire we must see that the edge of the sword is not dull. The only thing an oriental respects is power."\(^54\) The Anglo-

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\(^{52}\) The Civil and Military Gazette (Lahore) June 23, 1907.

\(^{53}\) Ibid.

\(^{54}\) P.H.U.R., Akhbar-i-Am, August 6, 1907.

\(^{55}\) Civil and Military Gazette (Lahore) June 12, 1907.
Indians fully supported the Government's strong measures.

The reaction of a large majority of people was, however, different. As the news of deportation reached from district to district and province to province, the people felt shocked and provoked, and voices full of anguish, remonstrances and warning were heard all over the country. The Indian nationalist press expressed indignation. Jan Natam wrote: "the Swan has been carried away from the garden of India." On May 15, 1907, The Panjabee reported: "In certain respects an exact parallel to the deportation of Lajpat Rai is furnished by the memorable Dreyfus case of France who formed the great European sensation of about seven years ago. Like Captain Dreyfus, Lajpat Rai is a victim of ignorance on the part of the high and mighty among the rulers of the land, coupled with an eagerness on the part of certain underlings, self-seekers, time servers and political opponents to profit by the same." Sandhya of Bengal wrote on very next day: "Haji, wherever you may be and in whatever condition, all Indians are remembering you with the greatest reverence. You are the first offering at the Mother's Yajna" (sacrifice). Patrika's correspondent from Lahore reported: "The mountain cavalry are patrolling the streets.... Great sensation prevails throughout all classes of people." According to the same paper consternation

56. B.K.K. Sandhya, May 10, 1907.
57. The Panjabee (Lahore) May 15, 1907.
prevailed among the Punjab residents of Mandalay who fasted for days together after Lajpat Rai's arrival. The Hindustan reported: "To the best of its information, Government was misled into believing that Lajpat Rai was the Proprietor of the Panjabee; that he was at the bottom of the recent riots at Rawalpindi; and that Ajit Singh was the captain of his (imaginary political) soldiers. In all probability, however, the most serious item of the information furnished to Government against him was that he was to lead one lakh of desperadoes against the Lahore Fort on the 10th instant. At all events, Government has deported him under the mistaken impression that he was the author of the unrest prevalent in the Punjab and that all young men of the Punjab were ready to die at a signal from him." The Swadeshi Bandhu reported: "The incident has caused feelings of intense grief not only in Punjab but throughout the country, the adoption of such measures by Government is calculated only to deepen the unrest that prevails among the people." "The hour for speeches and fine writings is past," wrote Vande Mataram, "The bureaucracy has thrown down the gauntlet. We take it up. Men of the Punjab! Race of the Lion! Show these men who would stamp you into the dust that for one Lajpat they have taken away hundred Lajpats will arise in his place. Let them hear a hundred times louder your war-cry 'Jai Hindustan'."

Protest meetings against deportation and to secure his release were held in the province of Lajpat Rai and in other parts of the

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60. Ibid.
61. P. H. Hindustan, May 17, 1907.
62. Ibid. The Swadeshi Bandhu, May 20, 1907.
63. Mukerjee, India Struggles for Freedom, (Bombay, 1946).
country. On May 24, 1907, a protest meeting was held at Benares which was attended by 250 persons, chiefly Maharattas and some Bengalis. Confidential report of the Government reported that on August 13, 1907 a meeting of local nationalist was held at Baharampur. Ram Ditta, a local leader, gave a speech in which he exhorted all Indians to show their sympathy with Lajpat Rai. He urged them to settle disputes among themselves and to boycott Government law courts. On September 2, 1907, Lajpat Rai's father, Radha Krishan, said that until all different races living in India united, it was impossible for them to drive out the foreign rulers, but if the agitation could only be kept going they were sure to succeed. On August 13, 1907, a protest meeting was held in Jhelum where a lecture was delivered by Bakshi Bhagwan Das who exhorted all members of the society to boycott foreign sugar. Funds were collected in Jullundur, Gujarat, Lahore and Benares. A meeting of sympathy for Lajpat Rai was held at Allahabad. A meeting was held in Ferozepur to obtain the release of Lajpat Rai, and it was urged that he should be made President of the next Congress.

It seems that the Indian railway staff at many places also protested against the deportation of Lajpat Rai. Confidential report of the Government wrote: "Collections are being made among

64. Department of Home (Poll.-3) October 1907, Nos. 40-49.
65. Ibid.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid.
68. Letter, May 1, 1907, Motilal to Jawaharlal, J.H. Papers.
the staff of the Oudh and Rohilkhand Railway, and some of the station masters and ticket collectors are said to pay monthly subscriptions to the fund raised in connection with Lajpat Rai's case. The Government report added that "at heart the people were as disaffected as ever" though there was no outward disturbance in connection with the arrest of Lajpat Rai.

The Congress condemnation of these deportations was equally strong and bitter. The Extremists as well as the Moderates joined in the protest against the deportation without affording Lajpat Rai a chance to defend himself. Tilak took a challenging posture and wrote in the Kesari, "If the rulers adopt this Russian method then the subjects in India will have to imitate the subjects in Russia. The modern histories of Russia, Germany, and Ireland are booming out to us that the people's yearning or desire for Swarajya cannot be suppressed by tyranny. The time has now arrived to see whether the subjects of India are less manly than the subjects of these other countries. If we fail this test then ours will have been the lot of committing the deadly sin of putting our future generations into slavery for all times." The elders of the Congress like V.K. Mahajani, Gokhale, Indulkar and Jetaalvd met soon after the deportation and called the Government action "entirely unjustifiable". They


70. Ibid.

declared:

"There is unanimity of opinion about the procedure adopted in regard to Lajpat Rai being entirely unjustifiable. No one conceives it possible that he was directly and indirectly engaged in plotting against the British Rule. All feel from the beginning that the cry of an incipient mutiny or an organised or contemplated rebellion is due partly to panic partly to the desire to create prejudice against us in England and rouse the apprehensions of the people there about the safety of the empire and the lives and property of their countrymen. Action intended to secure the release of Lajpat Rai is deemed necessary."

Gokhale was outraged by this disregard of due process and wrote to The Times of India to protest against the "grievous wrong" done to Lajpat Rai in

"Depriving him of his liberty without a trial and deporting him out of the country. No doubt the Police have plied the local Government with secret reports against him, but we all know the utter worthlessness of such reports in this country, especially when there is no likelihood of their correctness being tested in a Court of Law."

Lajpat Rai's activities were well known to Gokhale. "Lajpat Rai is no mere dreamer," Gokhale added, "he has been all his life an earnest and practical worker, and has behind him a record of solid work of which any Indian may be proud. He knows the limits within which political agitation must be confined if it is to be really fruitful in the present circumstances of the country, and it is inconceivable that he can have transgressed those limits."

Gokhale considered Lajpat Rai as "constitutional" leader and nearer to his vision. He wrote:

"Again and again he (Lajpat Rai) and I have discussed our aims, our hopes, our methods of work and there never has

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72. Letter, May 1907, Madhalkar to V. Krishnaswamy Iyiar, Iyiar Papers.
73. Letter, Gokhale to the editor of The Times of India, May 21, 1907, Gokhale Papers.
74. Letter, Gokhale to the editor, The Times of India, May 21, 1907, Gokhale Papers.
been any substantial difference of opinion between us. His language was at times a trifle strong - this must necessarily be a matter of temperament - but his aims and methods have always been strictly constitutional and I refuse to believe, unless clear evidence to the contrary is forthcoming, that he could ever have done anything that could in any way constitute a justification for the action of the Government."  

Gokhale was fully convinced that Lajpat Rai was not a revolutionary. He exerted all the influence he had to get deportation order rescinded. He wrote the following letter to the Private Secretary of the Viceroy: "To bracket Ajit Singh with Lajpat Rai is monstrous injustice to the latter. When I was in Lahore in February last, Ajit Singh had already begun to denounce Lajpat Rai as a coward and pro-Government man, because Lajpat Rai would have nothing to do with Ajit Singh's propaganda."  

The Government believed that Ajit Singh was in the pay of Lajpat Rai. But it appears that Lajpat Rai had stopped making such payments for Ajit Singh had not observed "certain conditions" attached to the payment. Presumably these "certain conditions" pertained to the method of conducting political struggle. Lajpat Rai's approach was peaceful and constitutional whereas Ajit Singh was a revolutionary. Gokhale had also a talk with Dunlop Smith, the Private Secretary of Minto. The gist of this talk was that Gokhale virtually begged for the early release of Lajpat Rai and as for Ajit Singh, he said, he might rot in "Jehannum" (hell).  

In the Council Chamber, Gokhale made an outspoken comment on the

75. Ibid.
77. Lajpat Rai: Autobiographical Writings, p. 119.
78. Ibid.
the deportation. He said:

"The whole country was convulsed, and while the Punjab itself was paralysed, in other parts of India even the most level-headed men found it difficult to express themselves with due self-restraint. That a man like Lala Lajpat Rai, loved by thousand, not in his own province only, a man of high character and of elevated feeling, a keen religious and social reformer, and a political worker who, whatever his faults, worked only in broad daylight, should have been suddenly arrested and deported without trial, this was a proceeding which stunned the people throughout India." 79

He then urged Wedderburn to stimulate "energetic action on the part of Indian friends in England." He added: "we must not rest till we have secured Lajpat Rai's restoration to liberty." 80

The Congress of 1907 and 1908 denounced the Regulation III of 1818. In 1908 the Congress demanded the repeal of this Regulation and urged that the deported persons be brought to trial. Tej Bahadur Sapru and Syed Husein Imam, two prominent lawyers and moderate leaders, spoke against this Regulation and declared that its spirit was against the basic principles of English jurisprudence and inconsistent with the tradition of the English constitution. Motilal Nehru considered Lajpat Rai as the "most prominent man in the Punjab" and he said that he was arrested "simply with the object of overawing the people." 81

In England, Lajpat Rai's deportation evoked public discussion and led to heated debate in the House of Commons. Questions were

80. Letter, Gokhale to Wedderburn, May 24, 1907, Gokhale Papers.
asked by the radical and Irish members about the reasons for Government's action and the causes of this unrest. Dr. V.H. Rutherford, J.O. 'Grady, William Redmond, Sir Henry Cotton, C.J. O'Donnell, and others asked searching questions to find out the real reasons for Lajpat Rai's deportation. They even pressed the Government to charge him and try him in a Court of Law. H.C. Lea asked whether there was any other place under the British flag where these letters de cachet obtained as they did in India. Such questions were asked frequently and Morley first evaded direct answers, but then he made a statement on June 6, 1907. He justified the Government's action and based his speech on Ibbetson's minute. Though he did not enumerate the charges against Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, he suggested that the unrest in the Punjab was caused more by their speeches than by any agrarian grievances. This remained the Government's explanation for some time. The Government did not publicly admit that the agrarian grievances were the main cause of unrest in the Punjab in spite of the fact that Minto vetoed the Colonization Bill. On June 18, 1907, F.C. Mackarness then asked whether Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh were entitled to appeal to the Governor-General and whether they had availed themselves of this opportunity. Morley replied in the affirmative to the first part of the query but in the negative to the second.

82. Hansard, House of Commons, 4 Vol. 174, Col. 1634 (1907).

83. Morley to Minto, August 23, 1907, Telegrams, October 30, November 2, 1907, Hansard, 48, Vol. 174, Lajpat Rai knew from the beginning that his imprisonment would not be for very long; that his friends in Parliament would try to secure his release. He wrote in his Story of My Deportation that he decided to petition to the Government of India against his detention after he had learnt that a question in Parliament had been asked about his petition, p. 199.
The inside story of Lajpat Rai's arrest, as revealed in the confidential Records of the Government of India, also deserves notice here, because it serves to disclose the thinking of official minds at different levels. The Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab alleged, "Lajpat Rai's avowed object is to tamper with native troops." Two Members of the Viceroy's Council, namely, H.B. Richards and E.T. Baker, regarded Lajpat Rai as a moderate and "constitutional" leader and they drew the attention of the Lieutenant-Governor to the following facts about him:

"Lajpat Rai has attended a few meetings only; his speeches have been much more moderate and he is a member of a society of Moderates whose policy is to proceed by constitutional agitation... His arrest will cause the more commotion..., and will call for Gokhale and his followers to arms and possibly set against us a party which ostensibly at least is on our side. The case against Lajpat Rai is practically one of suspicion..."5

These views written on May 5, 1907, four days before the arrest, were set aside by other Members of the Council and also by the Viceroy. Although all the Members of the Viceroy's Council were aware that Lajpat Rai's arrest would "undoubtedly give rise to troublesome agitation", yet they issued the orders of deportation.

Lady Minto's account of Minto's attitude to Lajpat Rai gives an erroneous impression. She implies that Minto thought Lajpat Rai to be "the head and centre of the entire movement" that excited "discontent among the agricultural classes" and tempered

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34. Home Department, G.O.I. (Poll.-A) Progs. 4-7 of November 1907.
36. Ibid.
37. Mary, Countess of Minto, op. cit., p. 124.
"with the loyalty of the army". But this was Ibbetson's viewpoint and not Minto's. Minto first took Ibbetson's views at their face value and did not ask for more details. If he had done so, it would have meant that he had no faith in the Lieutenant-Governor whom he treated as an expert on Punjab affairs. Minto trusted Ibbetson's judgement so completely that the Government of India before issuing orders for the arrest of Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh did not even try to find out the whereabouts of the two. It was believed that Ibbetson knew their whereabouts and it would be easy to arrest them. This, however, was not the case as it took a long time before Ajit Singh was arrested.

But later the Viceroy revised his stand. He began to feel that Punjab government had asked for the deportation of the two leaders on meagre evidence. As he said:

"I am bound to say the information on which the Punjab Government asked us to take immediate action seemed to me weak, when I became acquainted with it."89

Minto also began to feel that Lajpat Rai was a moderate and constitutional leader, and he never attempted to tamper with the loyalty of the troops. He was inclined to release him at the earliest. He wrote to the Secretary of State thus: "There is nothing whatever that I know of to justify his assertion that one of Lajpat Rai's main objects is to tamper with the loyalty of the Indian Army. I have never seen any evidence in support

88. Ibid.
of this. Ibbetson appears to me to entirely misunderstand the position. He appears to assume that we can stamp out the unrest. This we can never do. It has come to stay, in the shape of new ideas and aspirations of which every one who has thought seriously over the subject ought to be aware. He confuses this with sedition which we are absolutely determined to put down." Minto was actually convinced that "Lajpat Rai is undoubtedly a man of high character and very much respected by his fellow countrymen, and if when I was asked to arrest him, I had known what I do now, I should have required much more evidence before agreeing. Ajit Singh is of much lower standing in every way and I shall regret associating them in their release." Thus Minto admitted that the Government's action was hasty, unjustified and based on slender evidence.

Morley, in the beginning, supported Minto's action in deporting Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, but soon afterwards he became impatient. He, in fact, was never quite happy about this deportation. It weighed heavily on the conscience of Secretary of State for India. He called it "a wholly exceptional measure so alien to deeply rooted political habits of mind and established maxims of Government in this country...." Morley was conscious of the opinion of his Radical supporters and of the fact that his "Tory opponents will scent inconsistency between deporting Lajpat Rai and my frightening of Balfour for locking up William O'Brien."  

90. Letter, November 5, 1907, Minto to Morley, Minto Papers.  
91. Letter, August 23, 1907, Morley to Minto, Minto Papers.  
92. William O'Brien (1851-1928), the Irish nationalist leader, was convicted in 1887 on a charge of conspiracy to intimidate tenants to refuse to pay their rents and sent to jail for six months. A.J. Balfour was Secretary for Ireland. Morley put up a strong fight for his release.
Then, he could not disregard the opinion of the British House of Commons which was overwhelmingly liberal. He wrote to Minto, "I beseech you not to lose sight of the indisputable fact that - provided things are quiet in India - it will be impossible for me to face the House of Commons in January, if the two men are still under lock and key. It has been a pretty stiff strain this session, and indefinite detention won't be stood much further." \(^93\)

And finally, on October 30, 1907, the Secretary of State sent the following telegram to the Viceroy: "Private. Release of Lajpat Rai. I venture to urge upon you to make passing of Meetings Act the occasion for releasing Lajpat Rai." \(^94\) Minto gladly accepted this advice for he had already revised his opinion about Lajpat Rai and he, too, was in favour of his release. Consequently the two deported leaders were released on November 13, 1907 despite the strong opposition of Sir Denzil Ibbetson. \(^95\)

Lajpat Rai's release \(^96\) was a turning point in his political life. It gave great impetus to his popularity. Public meetings were held in many parts of India to congratulate him on his release. According to an official report, "the celebration of the anniversary of the Arya Samaj commenced on November 29, 1907. A very large crowd gathered to hear Lajpat Rai's speech since his return (from Mandalay). He spoke...for two hours. He referred

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93. Letter, August 23, 1907, Morley to Minto, Minto Papers.
94. Ibid.
95. Telegram, November 2, 1907, Lieutenant-Governor, Punjab, to Minto, Minto Papers.
96. Ibid. November 1907, The Commissioner of Lahore added a warning to Lajpat Rai on behalf of the Viceroy that in case he was again found guilty of sedition, he would be arrested and immediately deported.
to his deportation. He assured the hearers that he had worked for the Swaraj for twenty-five years and would always help it. "I cannot leave the church in which I believe and to which I owe so much... My hopes and ideas are the same which I held six months back. The present time is not of criticism... but of embracing each other. Take each other's hand and walk side by side." On December 6, 1907, a public meeting held at Bradlaugh Hall, Lahore, in which Lajpat Rai said that these six months had made absolutely no change in his political views. They were not deterred by the occurrence of recent events.

The Indian students in London and elsewhere in Britain who had earlier reacted strongly to Lajpat's deportation welcomed his release. In London, a Lajpat Rai Memorial Fund was raised. In this connection Indian students in Britain passed on donations to Har Dayal, who wrote to his brother at Delhi asking him to see if clay models of Lajpat Rai could be made and sold at Diwali festival at Delhi. On hearing the news of release of the two leaders, there was jubilation at Delhi. The students of St. Stephen's college asked for a holiday in honour of the event. Telegrams of congratulations were sent to the two leaders, and they were invited to visit the city. Here some people decided to construct a statue in honour of Lajpat Rai. One person donated his whole property to him. Another donated his gold chain.

97. Home Department, G.O.I., (Pol.) Deposit, Nos. 7, November 1908
98. Ibid., December 14, 1907.
99. Abhyudaya (Pryag), December 20, 1907, Roll I, Jayakar Papers.
101. Abhyudaya (Pryag), December 20, 1907, Roll I, Jayakar Papers.
and influential. Here a number of revolutionary groups and societies came into existence. Similarly in Bengal the deportation had the effect of stiffening the backs of younger generation and giving fillip to revolutionary activities.

The six months' imprisonment of Lajpat Rai gave a new dimension to Indian nationalism. The constitutional leaders who had pinned their hopes and expectations on the Government began to lose ground in the country because of this stunning blow. The repressive does on the part of the Government evoked strongest protest in various parts of the country. In such conditions the Moderates' beliefs and ideology received a set-back, and the people now became more receptive to radical and revolutionary preachings. Viewed in this context, Lajpat Rai's deportation lent new energy, dynamism and force to Indian nationalism.