CHAPTER I

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The political ideas of a person are inextricably intertwined with his times. Therefore, to analyse the political ideas of Lajpat Rai, one has to begin by considering, howsoever briefly, the origin and growth of the National Movement in India. That, in fact, provides the necessary background and the perspective against which his ideas took shape. Among the many factors contributing towards the evolution of national consciousness, the British rule was the most significant.

British rule in India grew gradually and by 1858 it enveloped the entire country under its undisputed sway. (Entered in 1600, the East India Company which until 1760 was a trade venture transformed itself into a territorial power and progressively assumed the sovereign authority over vast parts of India. 1

British authority in India may be traced historically to a two-fold source. It is derived partly from the British Crown and Parliament, partly from the Great Mogul and other native rulers of India. In England, the powers and privileges granted by the Royal Charter to the East India Company were confirmed, supplemented, regulated and curtailed by successive Acts of Parliament, and were finally transferred to the Crown. In India concessions granted by, or wrested from native rulers gradually established the Company and the Crown as territorial sov reigns, in rivalry with other country powers; and finally left the British Crown exercising undivided sovereignty throughout British India, and paramount authority over the native states. - Ilbert, C., The Government of India, (Oxford, 1970), p. 1.
At every stage, the British in India met with resistance, feeble or strong, from the numerous Indian states which had assumed sovereign status after the fall of the Mughal empire. The armed resistance of the princely classes failed to overthrow the British and the struggle was carried on by the land owning classes and the caste groups whose interests were jeopardised by the policies and conduct of the new rulers. Economic exploitation and administrative failures in the wake of the foreign dominance also provoked strong reactions among the people. There were frequent uprisings, sometimes becoming violent, against the British administrative system in early nineteenth century. The Revolt of 1857 was the culmination of these sporadic protests. That the upsurge of 1857 did not succeed in no way meant the liquidation of resistance to the British authority. Cultural renaissance, western education and a press fostered the growth of resistance among the people. There were devastating epidemics like the plagues recurring famines in the post-mutiny period. Unemployment of the educated was on the increase. The Indigo riots, disturbances, the Bhagruat movement of the Santhals the Deccan riots were mainly economic in character. The oka and the wahabi took place in the sixties and seventies of the nineteenth century were religious movements. In addition to the above movements, the new intellectual
class which had come into existence as a result of the introduction of Western education and Western ideas not only became a line of resistance but also provided leadership to the movement.

The Development of the Means of Communication and Transport.

Before the British, there was little contact between towns and villages. The British built a vast network of railways, roads, posts, and telegraphs, for strategic reasons and developmental purposes. This proved a blessing in disguise to the Indian people, as it released powerful economic and socio-political forces. Karl Marx's prediction that "the railway system will, therefore, become in India the fore-runner of modern industry," came true. The pass of industrialisation of the country started, giving industry to Indian... The newly established means of transport communication provided opportunities to the people of a to develop wider social contacts. The mobility and al intercourse tended to destroy the previous orthodox ts of isolation. The increase in social exchange led to development of national consciousness and outlook. The

The British rule itself, contended Lajpat Rai, created the conditions which were conducive to political and national evolution.

**Administrative Unification**

Administrative unification of India spurred the national movement. The British introduced far-reaching changes in the administrative setup of the country, laying the foundation of a centralised state apparatus. The consolidation of the power of the government was the most notable feature of their administrative system. This took place at two levels: one at the centre, where the Government of India emerged as a power which could make itself felt throughout the country and the other at the district level where the representative of the government functioned as the symbol of the mighty state.

The British rule was bent upon introducing unity in many spheres. Race, language, religion and social conditions were divisive, but political association under a centralised power began to weld the people of India into one entity. 3

After 1853 new recruits to the high level of the Indian Civil Service were enlisted by competitive examination. Gradually India was equipped with a highly trained professional Civil Service, characterised in the main by efficiency and integrity. However, the presence of all India services, whose members could be posted in any part of the country coupled with the modification of laws uniformly applicable throughout the country materially contributed to the growth of the consciousness that India was one country and her people one nation.

**Introduction of New Legal System.**

The British established a judiciary which was a beginning of a sound and effective administration of justice on modern lines. Before the British there was no coherent, precise and well defined body of laws which were uniformly accepted throughout the country and which could be enforced by a well organised system of courts.⁴

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4. Addressing the House of Commons, Macaulay, whose contribution to the development of new legal system in India was considerable, said as early as July 10, 1833: 'I believe that no country ever stood so much in need of a code of laws as India....... As in Europe then, so in India now, there are several systems of law widely differing from each other, but coexisting and coequal. The indigenous population has its own laws. Each of the successive races of conquerors has brought with it its own peculiar jurisprudence;....' Keith, A.B., Speeches and Documents on Indian Policy, 1750-1921 (London, 1922), p. 260.
This laid down the foundations of an impartial, efficient and independent judiciary in India. In spite of the fact that, owing to the expensive nature of the litigation, the poorer sections of the people could not always take advantage of the system of laws and the administration of justice introduced by the British, no one will deny that they did perform an historically progressive function.

**Emergence of a Free Press.**

The Indian press, both English and vernacular, played a vital role in creating national consciousness in the country. With the spread of education, the press owned and edited by Indians both in English and the Indian

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5. Under British rule this principle of the "rule of law" entered so deeply in the minds and hearts of educated Indians that the occasional departure from it, under public security regulations in times of emergency, provoked quite genuine outbursts of indignation and horror.... The second new concept was that of equality before the law.... The third important characteristic of Anglo-Indian law is its firm recognition of the right of every man to be judged, in a wide range of civil matters, by his own personal law -- whether he be a Hindu, a Muslim, a Parsi or a Christian. No such principle was recognised in Mogul times.... The fourth and perhaps the most important feature of British judicial administration in India was the growth of the professional and therefore trained judicial hierarchy .......1 Griffiths, Percival, op. cit., pp. 152-53.
languages, grew rapidly. Between the years 1870 and 1885, a tremendous expansion of the Indian press took place. It became critical of the government and its policies.

The freedom of the Press was abridged by various press laws and ordinances. Notwithstanding official restrictions, the press did not fail in influencing Indian patriots, in infusing in the educated classes patriotic feelings and national consciousness and providing a forum of their expression as well as dissemination. Great was the impact of papers like the Indian Mirror, the Bombay Samachar, the Hindu Patriot, the Amrit Bazar Patrika, the Hindu, the Punjabe, the Banda Matran, the People, the Kesari, the Standard, the Bengalee and the like. The press percolated progressive ideas among the masses and became a veritable school of political education. Doctrines of the great masters of political thought were made accessible to the unlettered masses in their day to day reference and application to the contemporary political situation. The press forged provincial and inter-provincial contacts on cultural and political levels. Besides, it promoted a world

6. "In 1877 there were in the Indian languages alone papers in the Bombay Presidency and about the same number in Northern India, some 28 in Bengal and about a score in Southern India, and their total circulation reached the neighbourhood of 100,000. Newspapers in English found an even larger public" (Philips, C. H., India) (London, 1949), p. 94.
outlook by relating Indian national movement with the similar movements in other countries. Reference to the Russo-Japanese war was a case in point.

A champion of the freedom of the press Lajpat Rai believed that in giving the clarion call of struggle against tyranny, the national press made the heaviest of sacrifices. Lajpat Rai used the nationalist press and wielded his vigorous pen to enkindle the militant fervour amongst the apathetic masses. His propaganda through the nationalist press did not confine itself merely to rousing national consciousness but aimed at mobilising the enlightened political opinion the world over.

**Impact of British and European Liberalism.**

The eighteenth century was the age of enlightenment in Europe and it produced such great philosophers as Locke, Berkeley and Hume in England and Rousseau, Voltaire and Leibniz on the Continent. The progress in sciences transformed the generally held view of the nature of the material world. Many of the medieval ideas were exploded under the impact of scientific method. Isiah Berlin highlights this:

"Conscientious attempt to apply scientific methods to the regulation of human affairs. Dogmas were refuted, prejudices and superstitions were pilloried successfully. The growing conviction
that appeals to mystery and darkness and authority to justify arbitrary behaviour were all too often so many unworthy alibis concealing self-interest or intellectual indolence or stupidity, was often triumphantly vindicated."7

These developments did not have any repercussions, whatsoever, on India during the eighteenth century. She had in fact to wait for the social and political awakening until the nineteenth century.

In Europe the nineteenth century was an age of nationalism and liberalism. From Waterloo until the outbreak of the Great War in England, it was an epoch of liberalism. Liberalism cast a profound spell on the Indian mind and moulded its thinking in many ways. The fundamental premise of liberalism was a belief in the power of reason to regulate the conduct of life, a scrutiny of dogma, and an experimental attitude towards problems of government and society. Individualism is the key to the liberal doctrine and also a political theory of order based upon "the assertion of the absolute moral worth of each individual."8 Liberalism aimed at the happiness of the individual which

implied liberty of opinion and conduct, toleration, natural rights, equality and faith in progress.

There were proclamations of high ideals in regard to India by British authorities. For instance the India Act of 1833, among other things, stated:

"And be it enacted, that no native of the said territories, nor any natural-born subject of His Majesty's resident, therein, shall, by reason only of his religion, place of birth, descent, colour or any of them, be disabled from holding any place or employment under the said Company." 9

Another was the statement of Macaulay in the House of Commons on July 10, 1833.

"It may be that the public mind of India may expand under our system till it has outgrown that system; that by good government we may educate our subjects into a capacity for better government; that having become instructed in European knowledge, they may in some future age, demand European institutions.... Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history." 10

The attempts to popularise liberal ideas in India, which the British administrators made, were only partial. They only espoused a belief in the power of reason to regulate the conduct of life and demolish dogma. Other

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aspects of liberalism such as an experimental attitude towards problems of government and society were not considered relevant to the situation in India. But the spread of liberal ideas in regard to social and religious matters had its repercussions in the political field, because social, religious and political activities could not be separated and compartmentalised for long. The extremists like Tilak and Aurobindo stood for a total rejection of Western ideals. They were revivalists and sought to bring the past back to life again. But Lajpat Rai was at pains to steer clear of the extremes and evolve a third alternative which was to be a blend of the Vedic tradition and Western civilisation. In this respect, he was closer to the moderates who accepted the liberal doctrine, its institutions and its outlook. Lajpat Rai subscribed to the liberal ideas and institutions. He advocated Western education, a free press, impartial judiciary and parliamentary democracy. He was both an Arya Samajist revivalist and a votary of liberal thought and precept. He stood for a synthesis of the ancient Indian values with the modern scientific outlook.
Impact of Western Education on Indian Mind.

In 1835, Thomas Babington Macaulay wrote his famous minute on education to Governor General, William Bentick. This indeed was a decisive document in many respects for modern India. Macaulay's minute set at rest the controversy between the Orientalists and the Anglicists regarding the Government's educational policy in respect of higher learning. The Governor-General, William Bentick, accepted Macaulay's views and issued a resolution on March 7, 1835, declaring that:

"The great object of the British Government ought to be the promotion of the European literature and sciences amongst the natives of India and that all funds appropriated for the purpose of education would be best employed on English education alone."

Macaulay's inner motive was to train a class of persons "Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, words and intellect." It was his devout hope that the introduction of English education would result in the destruction of Hinduism and to a large scale conversion

12. Ibid., p. 107.
to Christianity. In a letter to his father Macaulay wrote:

"It is my firm belief that if our plans of education are followed up, there will not be a single idolator among the respectable classes of Bengal thirty years hence. And this will be effected without any efforts to proselytise, without the smallest interference with religious liberty, merely by the natural operation of knowledge and reflection."13

Sir, Charles Trevelyn, a member of the Committee of Public Instruction and a brother-in-law of Macaulay, also believed that the introduction of Western education would "shake Hinduism and Mohammedanism to their centre and firmly establish our language and learning and ultimately our religion in India."14

While the manner of India's contact with the British rule gave rise to much bitterness, frustration and resistance but her contact with the scientific and industrial West was for-tuitious. The Western education enabled a large number of Indians to have access to European thought and literature and brought them under the influence of English liberalism and Western scientific thought. The Indian mind underwent a mighty change. It began to see clearly what the rights of the people were. Reinforcing itself with eloquent and conclusive arguments,

it began to weigh every act of the rulers whom it ceased to regard as a superior race. It began to spy out the 'drain' of India's wealth to Great Britain. It saw through the vagaries of British justice in India, the mockery and reality of the construction of old treaties and appropriation of more and more territories.

English education initiated the Hindus into an historical literature which revealed how people had obtained political power in the west; how they had wrested important privileges by rebelling against the tyranny of despots, dethroning and even executing them. The representative rule of the village Panchayat, with which the Hindus had till now been familiar was strictly of a local character and through English education, the Indians were exposed to the idea of a national representative Government. Abolition of class privileges and a greater share in the administration of the country were their outcry. They began to press for a representative system which would give to the Indians "the hold of their own purse-strings."

Western education taught to the Indians what it was to be a nation. The chains of caste and orthodoxy were loosened. The English language served as a common speech; better transport brought into contact the middle classes of various provinces. The newspapers inspired by Western thought and example began to voice common needs, common
problems and common aspirations. It provoked the spirit of inquiry and criticism; it awakened intellectual curiosity. The foundations of a touch-me-not divinity, so far associated with the ruler, were completely shaken. In short, the study of Western thought brought about a radical transformation of the Indian mind. Through English translations they got themselves introduced to such European figures as Gorky, Goethe, Victor Hugo and Balzac. Similarly, the lives and teachings of Burke, Mill, Voltaire, Garibaldi and Mazzini found a new and appreciative audience in this country. Their eloquence, depth of thought or patriotic heroism became the delight of the Indian youth who could no more reconcile with the despots in India and democrats at home.

In Punjab, Lajpat Rai's home province, English education came a little late because the province was annexed to the British dominion only in the middle of the nineteenth century. Some members of the professional classes in the region availed themselves of the opportunities of higher education. But an appreciable number could have an access to it only after the establishment of the Punjab University College at Lahore, in 1869. Born in January 23, 1865 in the village Dhudike, in Ferozepur district, Lajpat Rai belonged to the first generation of English educated
Punjabis. English education and study of European literature brought about a decisive change in his ideas and he acknowledged its unifying influence in the country. 'A common system of (English) education,' he said in 1912, addressing a conference of the Arya youngmen, 'has brought about a feeling of community of interests in different provinces of India and has materially helped to strengthen the national feeling.'

Indian Renaissance and Socio-Religious Movements.

In the political development of modern India religious, social and cultural awakening brought about changes of far-reaching consequences. The growing acquaintance with the progressive political thought through western education released new forces of nationalism and democracy. The revolutions of modern Europe stirred the Indian mind with militant ideas of liberty, equality and national freedom. By itself this could not have sustained a truly Indian national movement if it had not been prompted by a genuine national urge to revive what was noble and elevating in India's past and to overthrow the shackles of foreign rule and the rampant social abuses.

Indeed, discovery of India's past through the

endeavours of scholars, poets and social and religious reformers inculcated a sense of national self-respect. Incidentally the pioneer workers in this respect were a number of European scholars like Jones, Prinsep, Wilson, Colebrooke, Rosen, Roth, Burnouf, Schelegel, Bopp, Max Muller and many more. However, this supremely important task of rediscovering and reinterpreting India's past was also undertaken by several distinguished countrymen like Rammohan Roy, Radhakanta Dev, Rajendra Lal Mitra, Vishwanath Narayan Mandlik, Mani Shankar Jatashankar, Bhau Daji, Bhagwan Lal Indrajit, M.G. Ranade, B.J. Tilak, R.J. Bhandarkar, K.T. Telang, R.C. Dutt, Manomohan Chakravarty and Naraprasad Shastri and others.

Besides, the travail and misery of a people smarting under the yoke of foreign rule created a great spurt of literature. Dinabandhu Mitra's 'Nila-Darpan' (Mirrors of Indigo) was a scathing satire on the indigo planters of Bengal, whose dealings with the local ryots formed a tale of unspeakable tyranny.

The writings of Bankim Chandra Chatterjee revealed remarkably the 'inward spirit of Indian life and thought.' His writings penetrated into the hearts of the people and stirred them to their very depths. He was not only a 'prophet' of Indian cultural renaissance, but also, as

Aurobindo puts it, 'a seer and a nation-builder' and one of the 'Makers of Modern India.'

The greatest achievement of Bankim Chandra was to raise nationalism to the dignity of a religion. Aware of the fact that nothing could move the hearts of Indians more than religion, he preached patriotism as the highest religion. He identified the motherland with Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati. In fact he gave a new orientation to image worship by exalting the motherland into the Goddess.

Bankim Chandra's idea of nationalism as a religion may be found in his famous novel 'Anand Math' which became the holy book of the Bengali patriots. In this novel, Bhavananda, a leader of monks, explained to Mahendra, a new recruit that the new order did not recognise any mother but the mother country. In it he gave a new interpretation to

19. Ibid., p. 417.
20. Ibid., p. 421.
21. Ibid., p. 422.
22. Ibid., p. 422.
the image of goddess Kali. His conception of the motherland is fully enshrined in his immortal song 'Bande Matram.' This notable song "converted them into staunch nationalists more effectively than thousands of platform speeches and newspaper articles could have done." In it they saw the picture of a national militia, defending the country and driving out the enemy.

The impact of 'Bande Matram' song and 'Anand Math' was immense. Although the poet had visualised nationalism in terms of Bengal only, yet the impact of his ideas was felt in the whole country. Bipin Chandra Pal, deeply influenced by the philosophy of the poet, declared in 1909 that the motherland was a synthesis of all the gods worshipped by the Hindus.

Spiritual idealism has also been a highly potent factor in promoting the progress of nationalism in modern India. The social and religious reform movements have undoubtedly exercised much influence on the course of

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23. "Kali is the symbol of degradation of India. She is black in colour, of the intense misery of the country. She is naked, because India had been denuded of all her wealth. She wears the garland of human skulls because the whole country has become a vast burial ground. She has Siva under her feet to show that Indians are trampling down their own welfare."


25. Ibid., p. 420. Also see "Many undaunted patriots, including Madan Lal Dhinra, went to the gallows with the utterance of 'Bande Matram' as their swan song." (Mazumdar, B., op.cit., p. 420).
Indian national development. Rammohan Roy, Devendra Nath Tagore, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Keshub Chunder Sen, Dayanand Saraswati, Ram Krishna Paramahansa and his disciple Vivekananda impressed on the minds of their countrymen the profound and sublime cultural heritage of India.

Brahmo Samaj.

Early in his life, Lajpat Rai came under the spell of the Brahmo Samaj. But the spell was rather short-lived. Since Brahmo Samaj was too much westernised particularly under Keshub Chunder Sen, he grew disillusioned with it. The staunch nationalist in him inclined him towards Arya Samaj. A comparative study of the tenets of the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj becomes relevant in understanding this turning point in Lajpat Rai's thinking.

The rise of the Brahmo Samaj in 1828 was the expression of religious nationalism amongst the intelligentsia who had received Western education and had been introduced to Western ideologies.26

The Brahmo Samaj under the leadership of Keshub Chunder Sen, attempted to synthesize Hinduism, Islam and Christianity into an Indian National Church. Keshub Chunder Sen came from one of the most Westernized families in Bengal, drew heavily upon Christian teachings, and believed that Hinduism and Islam would first coalesce and then be shaped by Christianity. "The spirit of Christianity," he preached, "has already pervaded the whole atmosphere of Indian society and we breathe, think, feel and move in a Christian atmosphere." Keshub Chunder's "New Dispensation" called for the harmonization of all conflicting creeds and the fusion of East and West. He wanted "Europe to enter into the heart of Asia and Asia to enter into the mind of Europe" and added, "We instantly realize within ourselves an European Asia and an Asiatic Europe, a commingling of oriental and occidental ideas and principles." He supported the idea of England's providential


29. Ibid., p. 627. See Sen, Keshub Chunder, Lectures in India, "We Apostles of the New Dispensation" (London, 1901).
mission in India not as a political doctrine but as an integral part of Brahmo ethics and asserted: "It is Christ who rules British India and not the British Government." He saw the hand of Providence in the British conquest of India and emphasized that it was primarily an intellectual and moral conquest which was ordained to enlighten the people of India and raise them from depths of degradation. India was held by Britain on a trust accountable to God and the Government of India was dutybound to expedite the mission with which it was providentially entrusted.

As a corollary to it, he believed, the Indians were bound to profess loyalty to British rule not only on the grounds of expediency, but as a sacred duty. The sovereign, Keshub emphasized, was God's representative and must, therefore, have the subjects' allegiance and homage:

"We look upon Victoria as our Queen Mother and we are politically her children. She sits upon the throne as India's mother, protecting the lives and property of her children, promoting their material and moral prosperity and helping them to attain political and social manhood. She represents law, order and justice and is appointed by Providence to rule over us."31

Hence any form of sedition was a rebellion against the authority of God's representative and was, therefore, not


only a political offence, but, a direct sin against God. 32

This concept of sovereignty accords with the traditional ideas of Kingship in India. When the title of "Empress of India" was conferred on Victoria, Keshub Chunder declared, with reference to the Delhi Durbar, "We were rejoiced to see the Rajas and Maharajas of India offering their united homage to Empress Victoria and her representative at the imperial assemblage." 33 This view implicitly equates Queen Victoria as the Empress of India with the Indian concept of the Chakravarti. The fact that Victoria reigned in England, did not, in the least, detract from her position as the Sovereign of India.

This was the manifestation of the continuity of a millennia-old process by which Indians attempted to absorb and transform the British Government in the same manner in which former foreign conquerors of India were absorbed and accepted as India's own rulers. The enthusiastic processions were witnessed at Lord Ripon's farewell tour of India. His reception in Calcutta — was compared to the legendary entry of Rama into Ayodhya.


which attested to the readiness of Indians to accept a popular viceroy as their own ruler.

This sentiment was expressed by early Congressmen when they responded with cheers to William Wedderburn's supposition that they wished to transform the British Government into the national government of India. They also harped on Keshub Chunder's theme of harmony and reconciliation and stressed the providential mission of British rule in India. But they lacked the religious fervour of Keshub Chunder. Nevertheless, the principal Brahmo ideas which they voiced on the Congress platform were: Hindu-Muslim co-operation, and Indian patriotism, loyalty to England and the permanence of British rule.

**Arya Samaj**

The Brahmo Samaj movement was regarded by the majority of devout Hindus as unduly rationalistic in its outlook and it led to a number of other attempts at purifying orthodox Hinduism. One such movement was the Arya Samaj, which could be called "the greatest religious movement in India."  

corrupt forms of popular Hinduism. The main points of difference between the two were that while the Christian slant of the Brahmo movement was unmistakable, the Arya Samaj, on the contrary, did not tolerate the proseltising activities of the Christian Missions as well as of Islam.

The Arya Samaj was founded by Mul Shanker better known as Swami Daya Nand Saraswati, in Bombay, in 1875, but the headquarters of the Samaj were shifted to Lahore in 1877. In contrast with Keshub Chunder Sen, Dayanand Saraswati, came from an orthodox Brahman family of Gujarath, a province which was relatively less affected by British cultural influences. He received a Sanskritic education and spent much of his life as a wandering ascetic. The Samaj believed in God and in the doctrine of transmigration of soul. It disapproved ancestorworship and accepted the Vedas as the infallible Books of true knowledge. The Arya Samaj was meant to be essentially a Hindu organisation, even though it was open to everyone, regardless of caste, colour or nationality who subscribed to its principles and desired to be enrolled as a member.

While the ideal of Brahmo Samaj was to find a common denominator for Hinduism, Islam and Christianity, the Arya Samaj was a Hindu Reformation movement. Dayanand Saraswati rejected Western values and relied solely on the Vedas, as
the "repository of knowledge and religious truths — the word of God." He denounced post-vedic Brahminical Hinduism as an over-subtle and exacting ecclesiasticism, which had reduced the Vedic religion to a spiritless dogma. He denied the authority and superiority of the Brahmans as it rested on deception and rigid indoctrination which had no sanction in the Vedas. He attacked the caste system and reached the right of equal opportunity for all according to their merit. In reaching back to Vedic roots and in interpreting the Vedas liberally, the Arya Samaj wished to purge Hinduism of the caste system, child marriage, and restrictions on widows and emphasized that they had been foisted on the Vedic religion by Brahmanical Law.

Though the Arya Samaj believed in the doctrines of 'Samsara' and 'Karma,' it laid stress upon the ability of the individual to forge ahead by his energetic action (Karma Yoga) rather than resigning to fatalism and predestination. In practice, the Arva Samaj uplifted

37. 'Samsara' — transmigration 'Karma' — literally "deed." The effect of former deeds—performed either in one's present life or in previous ones—one's present and future condition.
untouchables to the status of *Dvija* by investing them with the sacred thread and by interdining with them.

Lajpat Rai summed up the social ideas of the Arya Samaj:

1. The Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of Man,
2. Equality of the sexes,
3. Absolute justice and fair play between men and women and nations and equal opportunity to all according to their nature, karma, and merit,
4. Love and charity towards all.

Inherent in Dayanand's call of revival was an emphasis on Aryan pride, self-confidence, and self-help. The Arva Samaj drew its strength from the achievements of ancient India and considered the Brahma Samaj ideology a confession of Hindu inferiority and decried its attempt to introduce social and religious reforms as merely intended to enable English educated Indians to be in harmony with Western social behaviour.

Dayanand was averse to learning English and discarded

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38. 'Dvija'- twice born. The three higher classes: Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas were "twice born." Once at their natural birth and again at their initiation, when they were invested with the sacred thread and received into Aryan Society. The Sudras had no initiation and were not looked as Aryans at all. Basham A.L., The Wonder that was India, (London, 1954), p. 133.

the word "Hindu" because of its Persian origin, preferring instead "Arya." Thus in its efforts to "unfasten the chains of intellectual, moral religious and social bondage," the Arya Samaj grew into a militant movement which combatted Brahminism, as well as Islam and Christianity. Though the Arya Samaj officially claimed that it was not an anti-British political body, its emphasis on self-reliance and self-help, and its unobsequious attitude, inevitably spelt defiance of political bondage.

Thus Arya Samaj movement was the direct outcome of the Hindu aspiration for the golden age and aimed at reforming degenerate Hinduism. It was based like the Brahma Samaj on pure monotheism. But it attracted the masses by its insistence on the revelational character of their ancient scriptures, the Vedas. "Back to the Vedas" was the watchword of Swami Dayanand and the belief in revealed scripture was a living inspiration to those who could not find adequate moral or religious sustenance in the eclectic principles of the Brahma Samaj.

Impacts of Contemporary Socio-religious Movements on Lajpat Rai.

Lajpat Rai was barely sixteen when he arrived in the

40. Ibid., p. 242.
metropolis of the Punjab, quite oblivious of the fact that the city was to play an important role in his later career. The sojourn at Lahore for two years was of vital import in moulding the ideas and life of the young student from Jagraon. Arriving there at an impressionable age, he was influenced by the men and movements of those days. Lahore was the centre of varied public activities and offered to him a valuable opportunity of acquiring a wider outlook upon life. The new Hindu socio-religious reform movements, born out of the impact of English education and Western culture, had found their way to Lahore before his arrival there. The atmosphere of the city was charged with the spirit of public discussion and debate. When Lajpat Rai came to Lahore, among his first mentors, was Pandit Shiv Narain Agnihotri, at that time an earnest Brahmo leader of the Punjab, and a friend of his father, Munshi Radha Kishan. Pandit Agnihotri was an aggressive preacher, a gifted writer and a great orator. Under his influence, Lajpat Rai became a member of the Brahmo Samaj in 1881. But the Brahmo Samaj failed to satisfy his patriotic longings for a national heritage because of its Western orientation. Moreover, it was torn by internal dissession.

At the Government College, Lahore, among Lajpat Rai's contemporaries, were two ardent young Arya Samajists, Guru Dutt Vidyarthi and Vans Raj, who were to influence his life and ideas in a decisive manner. Speaking of the milieu
of his College days, Lajpat Rai recalled the change that came about in him due to his association with Guru Dutt and Tans Raj:

"My outlook began to take on a nationalistic colour. The soul nurtured on Islam in infancy, and beginning adolescence by seeking shelter in the Brahmo Samaj began to develop a love for the ancient Hindu culture in the company of Guru Dutt and Tans Raj." 41

The process of change was also helped by the study of Indian history which developed a sense of pride in the old heritage of Hindu India and deep sorrow over the degeneration of Hindus in the wake of alien invasions. Another factor that made a deep impression and generated nationalistic feelings in him was the Hindu movement. Those days he also studied some literature about the controversy that was raging among the three groups in the Brahmo Samaj.

Two years he spent at the College proved to be eventful ones. These left a lasting impression on his character and determined largely the course of his public life. 'It was in those two years' wrote Lajpat Rai in 1914:

"I became wedded to the idea of Hindu nationality. It was in those two years I learnt to respect the ancient Aryan culture which became my guiding star for good. It was in those years that I fixed the mission of my life, not merely in theory but by practical work for it and that mission continues unchanged to this day." 42

42. Ibid., p. 28.
It was in December 1883, that Lajpat Rai joined the Arya Samaj on the occasion of its anniversary celebrations. This was a turning point in his life and he always looked back on this event with pride and gratitude. Within an incredibly short time of his joining it Lajpat Rai became one of the front-rank leaders of the Samaj. He was drawn to it by its nationalistic outlook, its social reform programme and its educational mission. The Samaj stimulated his patriotic impulses and the spirit of self-sacrifice, self-reliance and self-help. In fact it prepared him for the larger and more vital field of political work.

Family Education and Occupation.

Initially Lajpat Rai had been hesitant to join the Arya Samaj because of his father's hostility towards it. Lajpat Rai's father, Munshi Radha Krishan belonged to Aggarwal (the vaish) caste. He was educated in a Persian School, whose devout Musalim headmaster zealously inculcated love of Islam among his pupils in order to encourage them to embrace the Islamic faith. Though he did not formally declare himself a Muslim, his religious conviction leaned heavily towards Islam (Sunni). He observed Muslim fasts and deprecated the Hindu customs and rituals. He was an ardent follower of Syed Ahmed Khan and his close friends were also Muslins. On the other hand, Lajpat Rai's mother came from
an orthodox Sikh family and was deeply religious. She resented her husband's religious leanings and regularly performed the "puja" and "shraddha" rituals in secrecy, in order not to arouse her husband's wrath.

During 1870-1873, Lajpat Rai lived with his parents in Rupar in Ambala District, where his father taught Persian in the local school. Lajpat Rai received his elementary education from his father, who taught him Urdu and Persian, read to him the 'Quran' and thereby he sought to evoke the appreciation of Islamic ideals in his son. Viewed in this background, Lajpat Rai's decision to join the Arya Samaj was, indeed, an act of real courage.

Lajpat Rai's initiation into the Arya Samaj symbolized a three-fold rejection of his father's idealization of Islam; of his mother's practice of Hindu ritualism which he considered as sheer superstition; and of the Brahmo Samaj. Above all, the Arya Samaj reaffirmed his pride in being a Hindu and through its principles and teachings he learnt "to love the Vedic religion, to be proud of Aryan greatness and to make sacrifices for the country." 43

Lajpat Rai's knowledge of Indian history was primarily

43. Ibid., p. 30.
based on a book entitled *Waglat-i-Hind*, from which he learnt that the Hindus were subjected to periodic persecution during the Muslim rule. A second book entitled *Oasis-i-Hind*, made a deep impression on his mind. It eulogized the valour of the Rajputs in their struggles against the Muslims and this bred in him a feeling of pride in being a Hindu.

Lajpat Rai's early identification with Hindus and his attachment to Hinduism, in a way, amounted to rejection of his Islamic upbringing. In his own words: "The respect for Islam that I had acquired from early training changed into hatred." 45

Early in 1832, a fierce controversy was going on in the Punjab over the use of Urdu or Hindi. Lajpat Rai's friends were ardent supporters of Hindi as the most suitable language for the rejuvenation of the Hindu nationality. He was prompted by his friends to uphold the cause of Hindi. In his first public speech in April 1832, at Ambala, he opposed the use of Urdu and declared his newly formed conviction that the political solidarity of the Hindus necessitated the development of Hindi into the national language of India. Significantly, Hindi's cause was pleaded in Urdu since Lajpat Rai at that time did not know the Hindi

44. Judges of India.

alphabet. As an outcome of the Urdu-Hindi controversy, he seriously took up the study of Hindi.

Lajpat Rai's public career in the Samaj had a short break after he left Lahore because of the family's demands on him. He turned into its bread-winner at the early age of eighteen. On qualifying for Mukhtarpship, Lajpat Rai went to his native-town Jagraon, for legal practice in the revenue court. Shortly afterwards in 1894, he shifted to Tohtak, where his father was serving in the local school. In 1896, he passed the Pleader's examination and shifted to Hisar, a small district town in Southern Punjab to practise law in the district courts. For the next six years, Hisar was the venue of his activities and a training ground for his future career.

At Hisar, Lajpat Rai took keen interest in the Arya Samaj. During the last three years of his stay there, he was elected member of the Municipal Committee and also served as its honorary secretary. He was elected unopposed to the Committee from a ward which was mainly inhabited by Muslims.

At Hisar, Lajpat Rai tried to fill in lacunae in his education by extensive reading, particularly in history and political literature. Here, he also went through the first stages of his public life. The young pleader, inspector of his success, felt uneasy in the small town. Hisar was not
the place for fulfilling his ambitions and he felt that he was 'neglecting his real mission and wasting his life.'

Lajpat Rai longed for a wider field for his public activities, therefore, decided to leave Hissar. As soon as he was eligible for practising as Pleader of the Punjab Chief Court, he applied for licence and in 1892, he once again moved to Lahore.

This metropolis of Punjab was to remain the main centre of his public activities for the rest of his life. Here the Arya Samaj claimed his foremost attention. But the Samaj was heading towards a split. There was a clash of both principles and personalities and it appeared almost impossible to put an end to this internal strife. Lajpat Rai tried first to be neutral and bring about a reconciliation between the rival groups. His sympathies, however, were with the group led by Hans Raj, Principal of the D.A.V. College, which was derisively called the 'Cultured Party' and later the 'College Party.' The other group known as the 'Mahatmas' later called the 'Gurukula Party,' was headed by Munshi Ram. The members of the latter group attached great importance to theology, Sanskrit studies, and vegetarianism. They considered the teachings of Swami Dayanand infallible. Lajpat Rai disliked religious dogmas and theological hair-splitting and was not a devotee type.
He was also strongly in favour of English education, though he was not opposed to the inclusion of Sanskrit in the scheme of school and college studies. He wanted the Dayanand College to continue without a drastic change in its curricula. Along with the progressive Samajists, who were rationalistic in their outlook and in favour of maintaining intellectual freedom, Lajpat Rai did not accept Dayanand and the 'Satyarth Prakash' as infallible. On the question of diet, he was indifferent; he did not think it a sin to take meat. The 'Mahatmas,' appeared to him, to be too dogmatic, impractical and other-worldly. Lajpat Rai naturally cast his lot with Hans Raj and his associates. The squabbles between the two groups took an ugly turn and there was much mutual recrimination and unseemly personal attacks. The nerve-racking strife caused deep pain to Lajpat Rai and he felt ashamed of the unsavoury behaviour of the protagonists of both the sections. The split finally came in 1893. Those who supported the College resolved in September, to withdraw from the established Arya Samaj and to hold their separate weekly prayer meetings. Lajpat Rai was elected President of the new Samaj.

Since 1891, Lajpat Rai had been intimately connected with the Dayanand College as Secretary of the College Managing Committee. To defend the College from the attacks of its opponents, he started the Dayanand Anglo-Vedic College.
Samachar, a monthly paper, and also wrote in 1894, a booklet in Urdu, giving an historical account of Sanskrit education in the College. He contributed to the Bharat Sudhar and the Arya Messenger, the organs of the College section, published in Urdu and English respectively. In addition to these activities he had to make frequent visits to the mofussil towns for raising funds for the College and for Arya Samaj propaganda.

Lajpat Rai was deeply interested in educational problems. In 1902 he tendered evidence before Curzon's Universities' Commission. His memorandum covered both the administrative and academic aspects of the Punjab University. He gave valuable suggestions for improving the teaching of physical sciences, history, political economy, English and Sanskrit. He wanted the University's Senate and Syndicate to be fully representative of teachers and educationists and opposed the appointment of government officials on these bodies.46

Revivalists and Modern Elements in Lajpat Rai's Political Thinking.

Lajpat Rai had great faith in the Indian genius. To

Physically we are the equals of any people on earth. Intellectually too, given the opportunities, the sons of India have given no occasion to shame their mother country. The Hindu civilization, the Buddhistic achievements are standing monuments of their high intellectual calibre."\(^{47}\)

Inspite of their outstanding achievements in the realm of religion, philosophy and ethics, why were the Indians so low in the scale of nations? asked Lajpat Rai. His answer was that it was lack of social responsibility which required "each and every member of the organism to place the interests of the community or the nation over and above those of his own." His prescription was that they must learn to subordinate their individual interests to the interests of the community at large. He wanted this to be regularly taught as the highest religion because that alone would bring about the salvation of India. To cultivate and develop national outlook and national pride, Lajpat Rai advocated the study

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47. Lajpat Rai, *Writings and Speeches*, Vol. I, pp. 55-56. Lajpat Rai remarked: "In the domain of religion we stand almost unequalled. In the realms of philosophy, where in one country we find such a galaxy of truth loving, honest and bolder thinkers as the immortal authors of the six Darshanas." (Ibid, p. 56).

of India's glorious past. He held that Indian history was brimful of instances of thousands of men and women who had sacrificed their all for the sake of honour and faith.49

Lajpat Rai was no narrow Hindu Revivalist and his outlook on life and religion was modern and scientific. 'Any attempt to live in the past was not only futile but even foolish.'50 He disapproved the tendency noticeable in many religions to regard this world as unreal or illusory, to pay too much attention to life after death and to exalt 'vairagya,' laying emphasis on desirelessness and 'mukti' with a view to escaping from the pain of rebirth. "Life is the real thing - not peace at any price. We have been taught to love peace and quiet more than life and 'kartaviya' and that has brought about our downfall." The foremost task before him was to wean people away from the other worldliness enolozised in the religions and to fasten their volition and energies on improving the conditions of the here and the now -- their social and political environment. Higher Hindu religion taught that salvation lies in 'Jnana,' which postulates that the aspirant must live a full life, albeit, controlled. The great 'rishis' and 'Munis' of the past had property as well as families. If they preferred to live away from madding

crowds, it was to concentrate on the problems of life and
to help humanity in their rational solution. In later times
the ancient ideal seemed to have been degraded -- until the
life of 'tyaga' or renunciation came to be exalted. The
latter, according to Lajpat Rai, amounted to a negation of
life as distinct from its assertion. At the same time, he
stressed that prosperity without a sense of public duty could
be the very foundation of a future fall. On the one hand, he
denied the traditional system which seemed to divorce
religion from life, the individual from the collective, and
justified the existing social structure on the basis of
'past 'Karma.' On the other hand, he felt that the so-called
modern system had a different kind of curse on its head in
that it gave property and rank unmerited respectability. He
deprecated the tendency of assigning the place of honour to
possessors of ill-gotten wealth and power.

He condemned the hankering of westernized Indians
after western materialism.51 The exchange of India's heritage,
particularly, the harmonious structure of the family, for
the "noisy and pushfull manners of the west," would result
not in the acceleration of India's progress, but in
retrogression. Reviewing J.N. Farquhar's article, "Is
Christianity destined to become the religion of India?"

51 The assumption that in pre-British India materialism
was totally shunned, is inaccurate, since both in
Hinduism and Buddhism, there are references to one's
duty to strive for material success. The Jains and the
Marwaris needed no western impetus for their enterprise
in business. Lajpat Rai's denunciation was against the
adoption of Western capitalism. See, Argov, Daniel,
Moderates and Extremists in National Movement (London,
Lajpat Rai answered in the negative and denounced "the accursed industrial method of the west which necessitates the accumulation of so many human souls under one roof in a vitiated atmosphere and then necessitates the enactment of factory laws." He showed a keen awareness and appreciation of some of the sociological concepts and political institutions of the Western democracies. He, however, recognized the significance of modern civilization in catering to man's needs, comforts and pleasures. At the same time, he did not approve of a rigid monotony and a dull uniformity which characterised the mechanical civilization of the west. He vindicated Eastern culture because it permitted greater degree of unity in diversity in the field of religious ideals, intellectual norms, artistic canons and social ethos.

Lajpat Rai held that it was unwise to perpetuate the social philosophies of Manu, Narad and apastamb. He pleaded that Arya Samaj should widen its horizon and be more tolerant and universal in its approach so as to achieve a reconciliation of Hinduism with the greater

52. Lajpat Rai, "Christianity and Hinduism," The Indian World, 1908-1914, Calcutta, p. 491. See Argov Daniel op.cit., p. 146

ism, nationalism. He wanted Arya Samaj to follow a policy of "mobility tampered with conservatism." He, however, believed that the Vedic ideas about cosmology and sociology were "nearer the truth than those of modern civilization." He emphasised that India must have its moorings in the cultural traditions of her Vedic past. But he was not for an outright break with the glorious cultural heritage of India. He, in fact, stood for those modern ideas and ancient values which still had a meaning and significance and which helped laying the foundation for an honourable life on this earth in the present condition. He had a keen sense of history and was convinced that "western civilization was a gigantic force and we cannot protect ourselves from its advancing march." Therefore, he urged the Indians be alive to the need of adopting modern institutions and present day culture. That necessitated radical reforms in Hindu thought and conduct. "To din into the ears of the boys and girls that this world is unreal, illusory or that secular things are of no importance is positively mischievous." The self realization was nothing but consecrated or magnified selfishness which

54. Ibid., p. 224.
55. Ibid., p. 234.
had destroyed the grand doctrine of public duties among the Hindus. He disagreed with those Hindus who, educated on Western lines, thought that the genius of Hinduism was essentially individualistic and anti-social, and so no substantial reform in social life was possible through a revival of the past. Hence the Indians, they held, must draw on the West; the new social edifice was to be built on rationality, as distinguished from nationality, in religion and social life. But the question of social reform was, Lajpat Rai believed, of paramount importance to national life and the whole future of the nation depended upon the amount of social efficiency achieved by its people. Social efficiency was necessary for the Indians to hold their own in the stress and strife of the modern world of competition. No nation as such could be spiritually high or pure which was socially corrupt, degraded or inefficient. In a communication published in 'Young India' on December 17, 1919, he declared that 'what we need is not creed but 'Dharma.' Religion does not consist in contemplation but in contemplation and action. To attempt to divorce 'Dharma' from life is a very

57. Ibid., p. 196.
risky affair. He confessed, however, that he did not know yet how to build up life and society on a true basis of 'Dharma,' securing substantial justice, social, political and economic. He was, however, convinced that there could be no social progress in disregard of the genius and ethos of the people. Like Vivekananda, he thought, that there was to be no blind imitation of the West, and there was to be no blind revival of the past. Giving undue prominence to nationalism in any programme of social reform and divorcing it from religion would be equally dangerous.

60. Ibid., p. 336
61. Ibid., p. 339.