INTRODUCTION

Although the leaders of India's movement for independence have received critical appraisal at the hands of writers, however, not much attention has been paid to the contribution of the ideas of Lajpat Rai to the movement and so far as this writer is aware no critical and authentic study has been made of his ideas in the context of the nationalist struggle. Hence this study.

The term "political ideas" in reference to Lajpat Rai has been deliberately chosen in preference to "political philosophy" since latter connotes a coherent and systematised study of political concepts. Lajpat Rai himself disdained any such philosophical presumptions and was essentially pragmatic in his approach towards political problems.

Pragmatism characterised his responses to the various events and situations during the freedom struggle. This study is an attempt to explore amidst the diversity of his ideas a coherence, if any, and also the contradictions between his thinking and political action. For Lajpat Rai political ideas were, in fact, in the nature of random reflections on objectives and methods, assumptions and beliefs regarding the nationalist struggle.

Lajpat Rai

The first chapter of this study discusses/in relation
to his cultural milieu. The focus is on the formative influences on Lajpat Rai, particularly the Indian Renaissance and British liberal ideas. Apart from giving the ideological context it seeks to explore the various strands in his political thinking and traces liberal reformist as well as revivalist trends in his political thinking.

The second chapter discusses Lajpat Rai's role as a political leader and the contribution of his ideas in the context of the nationalist struggle. It was the nationalist movement which gave a sharp focus to his political ideas and formed the political context in which these were shaped and crystallised. Here the emphasis is on the evaluation of his political ideas and the national movement provides the backdrop and the perspective, so essential in a study of a political leader like Lajpat Rai, who veered from one end of the political spectrum to the other in the course of his eventful public career. He went on adapting his ideas to the dynamic and ever-changing political demands of his people, sometimes assuming such public postures and giving statements that, were they to be taken out of context, an erroneous impression of inconsistency may be formed.

The third chapter is a discussion of Lajpat Rai's ideas on society and social reform. His ideas have been studied in the context of the controversy which was raging
between the reformers and revivalists during Lajpat Rai's times. Further his ideas have been evaluated in the light of the following propositions:

(1). Does the Indian society in need of revival or reform?

(2). If reform, then what role state is to play in bringing about social reforms?

(3). Should social reform precede political progress or follow it?

The fourth chapter examines Lajpat Rai's ideas on the nature of citizenship: the concept of rights and duties, functions of the state, liberty of the individual, his relationship with state and society and basis of his political obligation.

The fifth chapter is a study of Lajpat Rai's critique of western nationalism. It attempts to elucidate his own formulation of the idea of composite nationalism and its relevance in the context of multi-national Indian society.

The sixth chapter discusses Lajpat Rai's ideal of Swaraj in the framework of the extremist-moderate controversy over the question of the goal of the nationalist struggle.

The seventh chapter discusses the means for achieving his ideal of Swaraj as discussed in the sixth chapter.
The eighth chapter deals with Lajpat Rai's critique of revolution and revolutionaries. It also examines Lajpat Rai's own role in the context of terrorist movement in India and abroad. Could Lajpat Rai be considered a revolutionary, ipso facto, by his association with revolutionaries in India and abroad? An answer to this controversial question has been attempted. His ambivalence towards the terrorists has been examined in the light of his personal account of the revolutionary movement abroad and also the testimony of the various revolutionaries about their association with Lajpat Rai.

The ninth chapter charts the blueprint of the international order envisaged by Lajpat Rai and discusses his attitude towards the October Revolution and the rise of Bolshevism in Soviet Russia as well as his indictment of imperialism and war.

Could Lajpat Rai be acclaimed as the first Indian Socialist? If so, does he conform to doctrinaire socialism? The tenth chapter is an attempt at answering this question which is vital to a study of his political ideas.

This study is an humble attempt at an objective assessment of Lajpat Rai's political ideas, the relevance of these ideas for modern India and the nature of his legacy.
towards the emergence of a just and peaceful social order.

The present researcher is under an abiding sense of gratitude to his "friend, philosopher and guide" Dr. I.D. Sharma, M.A., Ph.D., D. Litt., Formerly Lajpat Rai Professor of Political Science, Punjab University, Chandigarh for the invaluable guidance ungrudgingly given at all stages of the preparation of this study. By his encouragement, seasoned advice and scholarly insight he has enabled this humble researcher to bring to fruition this pioneering work on the political ideas of Lajpat Rai. All that is original and creative in this study owes it to the inspiration of Dr. Sharma's encyclopaedic range of reading and for the failings and faults, if any, the researcher is solely responsible.

The present researcher would also be failing in his duty if he were not to express his indebtedness to the librarians of Dwarka Dass Public Library, Chandigarh; Lajpat Rai Bhawan, Delhi; Gokhale Archives, Poona; Royal Asiatic Library Bombay, Nehru Museum, Delhi; National Library, Calcutta; India Office Library and British Museum London; and the Director National Archives, New Delhi; who placed at his disposal the rare and inaccessible records and documents essential to this study last but not least, my special thanks are due to Mr. M.C. Manchanda who has spared no pains in typing out this thesis.

Madan Gopal Kaha