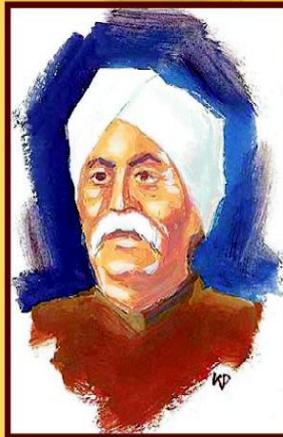


M.H. SYED

Lala Lajpat Rai



Editors

Anil Kathuria

Bharat Singh





An Illustrious Life

Great leader, Lala Lajpat Rai (1865-1928) was an eminent author and politician, who is chiefly remembered as a leader in the national fight for freedom from the British Raj. He was popularly known as Punjab Kesari (The Caesar of Punjab). He was also the founder of Punjab National Bank and Lakshmi Insurance Company.

Born in Dhudhika in Moga, on 28 January, in 1865 in a Hindu Vysya Family, Lajpat Rai created a career of reforming Indian policy through politics and writing. (When studying law in Lahore, he continued to practice Hinduism. He became a large believer in the idea that Hinduism, above nationality, was the pivotal point upon which an Indian lifestyle must be based). Hinduism, he believed, led to practices of peace to humanity, and the idea that when nationalist ideas were added to this peaceful belief system, a non-secular nation could be formed. His involvement with Hindu Mahasabhaite leaders gathered criticism from the Bharat Sabha as the Mahasabhas were anti-secularism, which did not conform with the system laid out by the Indian National Congress. This focus on Hindu practices in the subcontinent would ultimately lead him to the continuation of peaceful movements to create successful demonstrations for Indian independence.

As the need for partition and independence took an important turn for the possible, Lala Lajpat Rai's involvement became imperative to the Indian Independence Movement. His actions in anti-imperialist movements led to numerous arrests. He became an important member of the Arya Samaj. This political group was full of British-educated Indians who believed that Hinduism had a specific and direct impact on what it meant to be an Indian.

The group also took the ideas of a merged western and eastern world and promoted the view that the subcontinent had benefited from its coagulation. The involvement of the Arya Samaj in constitutional reform supported the freedom movements which took hold of the Indian population. Lala Lajpat Rai led political rallies which taught how the history of the subcontinent had always been heading to the philosophical idea that it would become an independent nation.

(Lajpat Rai presided over the first session of the All India Trade Union Congress in 1920. In 1923, he became a member of the Imperial Legislative Assembly. He also went to Geneva to attend the eighth International Labour Conference in 1926 as a representative of Indian labour. He had an opportunity to watch the labour movement in the USA and England where he was required to prolong his stay for political reasons).

In addition to espousing his philosophical principles, Lajpat Rai engaged heavily in direct action and protest against British rule. [He led the Punjab protests against the Amritsar Massacre (1919), the Non-cooperation Movement (1919-22), and the "Simon go back" demonstrations against the Simon Commission (1928)]. He was repeatedly arrested. He disagreed, however, with Mohandas Gandhi's suspension of the movement due to the Chauri Chaura incident. (He formed the Congress Independence Party, which was particularly pro-Hindu in voice and policy).

He was not only a good orator but also a prolific and versatile writer. His journal *Arya Gazette* concentrated mainly on subjects related to the Arya Samaj. *Bande Mataram* and *People*, contained his inspiring speeches to end oppression by the foreign rulers. He founded the *Servants of the People Society*, which worked for the freedom movement as well as for social reform in the country. He also wrote an autobiography in English titled *The Story of My Life*.

In 1928, Lajpat Rai led a procession with Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya to demonstrate against the Simon Commission. During this procession, Rai became the target of a lathi charge (a form of crowd control in which the police use heavy staves or 'lathis' in Hindi) led by British police. He was severely injured in the charge. Nevertheless, at a meeting held the same evening, he spoke with great vigour. His words at this meeting, "Every blow aimed at me is a nail in the coffin of British imperialism", have become historic. Though he recovered from the fever and pain within three days, his health had received a permanent setback and on November 17, 1928, he died of his injuries. His death led to great disturbances in the country and it inspired national struggle for freedom....he was a great fighter.

Lajpat Rai's journey to the United States during World War I helped him to gather knowledge of how an independent nation formulates a nationalist identity. This is where he gathered information about how foreign nations, specifically Britain's imperialist hold on India, had negative affects on the people, the lifestyles, and the ability to generate bonds with other nations. He wrote articles that persuaded foreign nations to side with the subcontinent's struggle for independence. By accepting that westernised ideals were positive to the creation of nationalities, he gained support for breaking from Britain.

In *Europeanisation and the Ancient Culture of India*, Lajpat Rai wrote that nationalisation of India was imperative to spread western ideology to the rest of the world. Since the westernisation of India had successfully been adapted while continuing traditions remained a large part of the culture, he believed that India no longer needed an overbearing imperialist government.

He wrote that: "at first sight it seems absurd to give one name to all Indian civilization. But a close examination for facts and data amply proves the unity of Indian civilization, at least for the present geological period." These ideas were passed to foreign countries in order to show that despite cultural differences from the western world, India's society had become a sustainable, functional nation which deserved its own nationality as opposed to being overseen by an alien western country.

(Writings by Lajpat Rai include Josiah Wedgewood — The Man And His Work, The United States of America: A Hindu's impressions and a study, History of the Arya Samaj, Swaraj and social change, England's Debt to India: A historical narrative of Britain's fiscal policy in India, The Problems Of National Education In India and Unhappy India: Being a reply to Katherine Mayo's "Mother India", published in 1928). (Mother India was a polemical account of India's self rule by American historian Katherine Mayo).

The Lala Lajpat Rai Memorial Trust was formed in 1959 on the eve of his Centenary Birth Celebration, to promote education. The trust was founded by a group of Punjabi philanthropists (including R. P. Gupta and B. M. Grover) who have settled and prospered in the Indian State of Maharashtra.

A statue of Lajpat Rai stands at the central square in Shimla, India. Lajpat Nagar and Lajpat Nagar Central Market in New Delhi, Lala Lajpat Rai Hall of Residence at Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) in Kharagpur and Lala Lajpat Rai Institute of Engineering and Technology, Moga are named in his honour. Also many institutes, Schools and Library in his hometown of Jagraon, district Ludhiana are named after him.

An Intelligent Student

The great patriot Lala Lajpat Rai was born on 28th January 1865 in Dhudika village of Ferozepur District of Punjab Province, His father Lala Radha Kishan was an Urdu teacher in a government school. He belonged to the family of Agarwals, a family noted for its love of freedom and self-respect. Although illiterate, Lajpat Rai's mother Gulab Devi was an ideal Hindu woman. It was from her that Lalaji imbibed patriotic sentiments.

Lalaji was a very intelligent pupil. He won scholarships. Poverty and sickness stood in the way of his higher education. He passed the Entrance Examination of the Calcutta University in the first class in 1880.

The same year he also passed the Entrance Examination of Punjab University. Afterwards he joined the Lahore Government College. At the same time he studied law. Because of the poverty of the family his education was interrupted for two years.

Dawn of Ideals

The two years spent in Lahore were important in Lalaji's life. As he read the history of the past glory of India and the biographies of her great sons, the boy shed tears. The love of freedom and the keen desire to serve the country took root in him at that time. During those days the Arya Samaj founded by Swami Dayananda Saraswati was dynamic in social service. It was a time when enthusiastic Punjabi youths were attracted by the progressive ideals and reformist plans of the Arya Samaj. Lalaji was then hardly sixteen. When he joined the Arya Samaj in 1882 his life of social service began. Patriotism was kindled. The idea took root in his mind that the chains of Indian slavery should be broken.

Brilliant Lawyer

Having passed the first examination in law in 1883 Lala could practice as a *mukhtar* (a minor lawyer). He had also to bear the burden of running the family. Eighteen-year-old Lalaji practiced in the revenue court of Jagrav town. After passing the Pleaders' Examination he came to Hissar in South Punjab and commenced practice as a lawyer.

He had no thought of making money in his profession and settling down comfortably. He wanted to devote his life to the service of his country. He wanted to read the biography of Mazzini, the brave revolutionary of Italy. He could not get a copy of the book in India. He wrote to a friend in England and got it. Mazzini's bravery, magnanimity and patriotism thrilled him.

Beginning of Public Service

His life of six years in Hissar became the apprenticeship for public service. After the death of Swami Dayananda, Lalaji with his associates toiled to develop the Anglo-Vedic College. The three tenets of Arya Samaj are the reformation of society, the advancement of Hindu Dharma and educational progress. Lalaji earned a thousand rupees a month. He kept aside a part of his earnings to keep his father above want and arranged for the interest on it to be paid to his father. One-tenth of his income was earmarked for work for the nation. The greater part of that sum was being used for Arya Samaj activities.

When the Lieutenant Governor visited Hissar, Lalaji pleaded that the Welcome Address to be presented to him should be in Urdu. To satisfy the British officer a speech had already been prepared in English. Lalaji's suggestion made everyone nervous. But without a trace of fear, he presented the Address in Urdu and there by invited the wrath of the British.

Most of his time was given to Arya Samaj activities. Working ceaselessly he set up branches of the Arya Samaj. He built up educational institutions. But he was not partial towards any community. He was elected unopposed to the Municipal Council from a constituency where there were a number of Muslims.

In Active Politics

In 1888, still a lawyer, he entered politics. The Indian National Congress was fighting for the country's freedom. Realising the dire need for freedom, Lalaji joined the Congress as a freedom fighter. Sir Syed Ahmed who was in the Congress had just then left it. He had begun to argue that Muslims should not join the Congress and that they should support the government. Lala wrote bitter open letters to him in the Urdu weekly 'Koh-e-noor'. The letters earned high praise in political circles. The same year in the Congress session at Allahabad, when Lalaji arrived with eighty delegates from Punjab, he received a tumultuous welcome, his heroic speech in Urdu there had a great effect on the Congress leaders. Lala was a young man of 23 years. His fame spread quickly in Congress.

Stay at Lahore

The small town of Hissar proved inadequate for his growing social work. After qualifying to practice as an advocate in the Punjab High Court, he settled down in Lahore in 1892. The Congress session of 1893 was held at Lahore. The first Indian to become a member of the British Parliament, Dadabhai Naoroji, was the president of the session. Lalaji served as an enthusiastic volunteer.

Lalaji worked like a bee. There was no time for rest. When he was immersed in Congress work there was a split in the Arya Samaj. Lalaji gave a new shape to the DAV College and stood by it.

Lightning in his Pen

Lalaji was not merely an outstanding politician but also an able writer. The biographies he wrote in Urdu are memorable. He wrote the biographies of the patriots Mazzini and Garibaldi who unified Italy. He also wrote outstanding books about Indian great men Shivaji, Sri Krishna and Dayananda Saraswati. The books on Mazzini and Shivaji contained passages, which encouraged people to fight for freedom. So the government even thought of arresting Lalaji.

Servant of the Suffering

The sense of service shown by Lalaji and his devoted endeavour to help the poor, the downtrodden and those in difficulties bestowed luster on his multifarious exertions. A terrible famine struck the Central Provinces in 1896. The draught shook people. No one can forget the part played by Lalaji at the time. Orphans and the destitute were at the mercy of the Christian missionaries and were being converted to Christianity.

Lalaji began a movement to help the orphans. He saved 250 orphan children from Jabalpur, Bilaspur and other districts, brought them to Punjab and admitted them to the orphanages of the Arya Samaj. He realised that he did not have sufficient time for both social service and legal practice; so in 1898 he reduced his legal practice. In 1899 a worse famine struck Punjab, Rajasthan, Kathiawad and Central Provinces. Again Lalaji led the movement by the Arya Samaj to save helpless children.

It was a trying time for him. He organised an extraordinary movement. Not only were 2,000 helpless persons saved but they were also provided with food, clothing, education and employment. In this movement sometimes there were clashes with Christian missionaries. Government set up a famine relief commission in 1901 and got Lalaji's views. His account of famine conditions and his views led to a change in the government's attitude to the destitute. Hindus and people of other religions were able to establish orphanages for destitute children of their folds.

In 1905 an occasion arose for Lalaji to dive deeper into another matter. There was an earthquake in Kangra district resulting in enormous loss of life and property. The Arya Samaj of Lahore set

up a relief committee, as its secretary Lalaji toured Punjab province extensively and collected money for the committee. His service to the people at that time was unforgettable.

Visit to England

The same year general elections were being held in England, the Indian National Congress decided to send two representatives to acquaint the public with conditions in India. Lajpat Rai and Gopal Krishna Gokhale were the two representatives. When they returned from their visit to England, thousands of people welcomed them at the Lahore railway station. Students unhitched the horses and they pulled the carriage.

During his tour of England Lalaji told the people they're about the conditions in India during the British rule. More than this, his reading of the situation was important. It became clear to him that Indians alone could mould their future and for that purpose, the government should be in their hands. He resolved that India should undertake the fight for freedom, the use of articles made in India and boycott of foreign goods. He put forth these views at the 1907 Congress session held in Surat City.

Government's Wrath

1907 witnessed a high-water mark in the adventurous life of Lalaji. That was a time of revolution when the winds of change were blowing across the country; new ideas and a new zest moved the people. There were riots in Lahore and Rawalpindi. In Meerut preparations were being made to observe the fiftieth anniversary of the first fight for freedom (1857). Peasants were upset on account of the proposal of the government to increase the water rates in Punjab. It was a grievous crime in the eyes of the government that Lalaji and certain lawyers addition to this, there were disturbances, supported the ryots.

Sir Densil Ibbotson was the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab. He wrote to Lord Morley, then the minister in the British Cabinet who was in charge of Indian affairs: "It appears that some leaders like Lalaji have sworn to drive the British out of India. An attempt is being made to kindle hatred against Englishmen and break the government administrative machinery."

Those were days when there was a sense of fear in official circles. A poor Indian was murdered. A factual report appeared in newspapers. An attempt was made to foist the guilt on a Punjabi journalist. The people of Punjab protested against the mischief of the government. In addition to this, there were disturbances, because of unjust laws like the Colonial Settlement Act and Land Mortgage Amendment Act and because of increase in the tax on land and water rates. Sir Densil was perturbed. Without any reason he deported Lalaji and with him Ajit Singh (a relative of the great patriot Bhagat Singh) to Mandalay in Burma.

People all over the country opposed the unjust action of the government. Tilak wrote in the newspaper 'Kesari' — "if the British rulers act like the Russian Czars, the people of India will have to react as the people of Russia did." Government had to bow to the vigorous protests of the people and the legal profession; it had no choice. Government realised that the deportation order was improper and illegal; it brought Lalaji to Lahore on November 18 and set him free.

Lalaji was considered one of the famous trinity of the Congress radicals. The three great men were Lala Lajpat Rai of Punjab, Bal Gangadhar Tilak of Maharashtra and Bipin Chandra Pal of Bengal. The country affectionately called them Lal, Bal and Pal. There was a split between the radicals and the moderates in the Congress organisation. Lalaji found that it was not possible to bring about an agreement between the two factions; he therefore kept out of the Congress for a few years.

In 1911, he re-entered the Lahore Municipal Council. When he stood for election to the Municipal Council his popularity was immense. Even the deaf, the dumb and disabled' people turned up to vote for him. A dumb voter brought a photograph of Lalaji to indicate that he would vote for Lalaji.

In other Countries

Lalaji re-entered Congress in 1912. He left for England in April 1914 with the Congress delegation as a representative of Punjab. He had planned to be there for six months. But because of the outbreak of the First World War, he had to change his plans. It did not seem wise to return then. It was likely the British would

keep him in detention for a long period. Lalaji went from England to America. His visit to America was a voluntary exile. In America he made a number of speeches about India and conditions of life in this country. He wrote a number of books. As part of the effort to develop the Indian agitation he established the Indian Home Rule League in New York. How could there be dearth of work for the Indian hero in America? He set up the 'India Information Bureau'. He started a journal 'Young India' and gave a fillip to the movement. He himself edited the paper. The paper expounded the Indian culture and explained in detail the necessity for Indian freedom. It attracted the attention of everybody. The circulation increased. Through this paper it became possible for not only Indians but also Americans and people of other countries to understand the aims and objects of Lalaji and to sympathise with India's aims. The movement gained support.

While in America he wrote two books: 'Arya Samaj' and 'England's Debt to India.' His life in America was not bed of roses. He himself cooked his food. He earned money for his living by writing books and articles. Germany was then at war with England. The German Government attempted to take advantage of the dissatisfaction of the Indians by enticing Lalaji. But he refused to be tempted.

While in America, Lalaji found time to visit Japan. In both the countries he made friendship and won the sympathy of influential people. He conducted himself in such a way that both countries came to trust him. Thus, he made a name for himself. At the end of the great War in 1919 he wanted to return to India. The British Government would not give him a passport. In India in Jalianwala Bagh of Amritsar, British soldiers fired on helpless Indians at a public meeting. Lajpat Rai got news of the dreadful massacre even when he was in New York. He was eager to join his countrymen. He got the passport at the end of the year. In December 1919 Lalaji came from New York to London. There he met the famous author Bernard Shaw and some socialist friends. Then he came to Paris.

Non-cooperation Movement

Lalaji thus brought about a revolution in the attitudes of the people of England and America towards India. He returned in

February 1920. Lokamanya Tilak, Jinnah and Shrimati Annie Besant accorded a heroic welcome to him. Welcome Addresses were presented to him in Bombay, Delhi and Lahore. He was elected as the president of the special session of the Congress held in September 1920.

Next year Mahatma Gandhi started the Non-cooperation Movement. The movement gained momentum in the country. Lalaji jumped into the agitation with his bosom friend, the revolutionary Ajit Singh. In response to Lalaji's stirring call, the whole of Punjab Province joined the movement. The agitation shook the firm foundations of the government. Government schools and colleges were boycotted. Work in courts and offices came to a halt. The people were firmly united against imperialism. Lalaji himself started a national school in Lahore. Tilak opened a political science institution. Thus, enthusiastic youths found guidance. Lalaji undertook a whirlwind tour of Punjab for ten days for that purpose and collected nine lakh rupees. Full of reverence for him, people contributed money enthusiastically.

In Prison

Lajpat Rai's organising ability and heroic speeches were inspiring. Government was finding it difficult to face the intense Non-cooperation Movement growing day by day. All over the country there were agitation and hartals and the rulers were shaken. Lalaji became a dangerous person in the eyes of the government. In December 1921 Lalaji was arrested.

The other leaders of the movement, Motilal Nehru and Chittaranjan Das were also imprisoned. Lalaji was sentenced to 18 months' rigorous imprisonment. Because of the people's protest and the pleadings by lawyers he was released after two months. It was one o' clock in the night when he was released. When he came to the door he was arrested again. He was tried for another offence and was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for two years.

While in jail he fell ill and his health deteriorated. When the public learnt this vigorous agitation was started throughout the country for his release. Government released him. Lalaji went to Solan to improve his health.

Organising the Community

As soon as his health improved Lalaji became active again. He joined the 'Swaraj Party' of Motilal Nehru. He was elected to the Central Legislative Assembly. By that time the Hindu Muslim unity move shaped by Mahatma Gandhi had failed.

Lalaji had to turn his attention to communal problems. He was himself influenced by the Arya Samaj and was a staunch supporter of the Hindu dharma. But he was aware of the need for Hindu Muslim unity in the fight for Swaraj. The Non-cooperation Movement was crumbling and ill feeling between different communities was reaching dangerous proportions. In the 1924 Hindu-Muslim riots Hindus suffered much in Kohat of North-West Frontier Province. In two days of riots not only were 150 Hindus killed but 400 persons had also to be shifted to Rawalpindi. Mahatma Gandhi undertook a fast.

There was a conference to bring about friendship among the followers of different religions and a national council was set up. But the problem was not solved. The Kohat tragedy pained and disappointed Lalaji. He had to stand by the helpless Hindu community. To counteract associations formed by the Muslims, Lalaji tirelessly fostered movements for 'Purification of Hinduism' and 'Organisation of Hinduism'. As long ago as in 1924 Lalaji expressed the fear that Muslims might want a division of India and demand a separate state for themselves. This shows his far-sightedness.

He presided over the Hindu Mahasabha held at Calcutta in 1925. The speech he made about Hindu dharma and the necessity to uphold it woke up the Hindus. In 1926 Lalaji participated in the International Labour Conference held at Geneva as a representative of workers in India. He also took part in similar conferences held in Britain and France.

"Unhappy India"

Lalaji went to Europe in 1927 to improve his health. Katherine Mayo, a foreign journalist, visited India. She wrote a book called 'Mother India'. It was about Indian civilization, culture and life. She saw only sheer ignorance and filth in India and nothing good

or decent. It gave a totally misleading picture of India. In an article Gandhiji protested and called it a 'gutter inspector's report'. The book Mayo wrote was published when Lalaji was in London. The book created uproar in India and Britain. People who were opposed to the freedom of India had given money for the publication of the book. Lalaji read it. He could not keep quiet. Soon after his return to India the first thing he did was to write a book 'Unhappy India.' He gave a fitting reply to the false propaganda of Miss Mayo.

Simon Commission

The Non-cooperation Movement failed. Therefore, there was a lull in political activities. In 1927 the British Government wanted a report on political reforms in India and on amending the Government of India Act. So it appointed a commission. The commission consisted of Sir John Simon and six other members. All of them were members of the British Parliament. There was not a single Indian as member. It was composed solely of White people. The commission was an insult to Indians. These White men were to shape the future of India. The people of India rose as one man against this step. Under Lalaji's leadership, it was resolved to boycott the Simon Commission.

Lajpat Rai moved a resolution in the Central Legislative Assembly in February 1928. "The present Constitution of the Commission and its terms of reference are unworthy of acceptance by this House; therefore, this House advises the Government that it should have nothing to do with the Commission." He made an impassioned speech on that occasion. There were several English men and government officers in the Legislative

Assembly. It was known that they would vote against the resolution. Lalaji appealed to the Indian members thus: "Let the members understand that they are slaves in the eyes of the British Government and of the world. When they vote on the resolution let them remember that in 1919, because of a single epidemic, six crores of people died in our country. Let them remember that in this country ten crores of people do not have even one meal a day."

What right did the British Parliament have to frame a Constitution for India? That was Lalaji's fearless question. Only Indians had the right to decide about their future. They were

determined about it. The report of Motilal Nehru and his colleagues was ready. It had protested against the British attitude. Lalaji toured the whole of India to give publicity to the Nehru report. He asserted: "Those who oppose the report are the enemies of Swaraj and enemies of India."

Strike of Imperialism

The 30th of October 1928 was an evil day in India's political history. The Simon Commission was expected to arrive in Lahore on that day. The rulers had taken precautions to prevent a public protest. Prohibitory orders were enforced. Lalaji was ill that day. Still he led the procession to protest against the Commission.

When the Simon Commission arrived, on one side there were traitors to welcome them. On another side the revolutionaries demonstrated against the Commission. In the protest march youths staged a tremendous show. A hartal was observed that day; there was a sea of black flags. Thousands and thousands of hearts and voices shouted "Simon, go back!" The lion of Punjab, Lala Lajpat Rai, led the procession. When the trains reached the station, the cry "Simon, go back!" hit the sky.

Police security arrangements crumbled. The crowd was so thick that movement was impossible. The Police charged with their Lathis (stout sticks). The blood of innocent people began to flow. Lalaji's friends Sukhdev, Yashpal, Bhagavati Charan and others surrounded him, in order to protect him. Police officer Scot saw Lalaji and his bodyguards. He ordered the Police to beat the bodyguards. A Police officer named Sanders came forward to do the job. The Police Lathis rained blows on Lalaji - on the head and all over the body. Lala realised this incident would lead to conflict and a bloodbath. He told the huge crowd of revolutionary youths: "Leave this place." The crowd dispersed.

Last Days and Demise

The same evening there was a mammoth public meeting. The despicable action of the Police was severely condemned and the Simon Commission was boycotted. Police Deputy Superintendent Neal was present at the meeting. Lalaji turned to Neal and said

in English so that he could understand him: "The blows, which fell on me today, are the last nails driven into the coffin of British Imperialism."

One word from Lajpat Rai to the youths would have been enough; they would have let loose rivers of blood. But Lalaji practised non-violence strictly. The country had to restrain its anger. In the very week of the incident Lalaji attended the All-India Congress Committee and all-party meetings. He grew weak and returned to Lahore.

Lalaji fell ill and died of a heart attack on 17th November 1928. The whole of India knew that his death was a result of the lathi blows. A deliberate murder by the Police!

More than a lakh of people took up in his funeral procession.

Country did not Forget

The movement did not abate though Lalaji died. In fact it acquired a new vigour. The Congress Party began the no-tax campaign. Punjab could not easily forget Lalaji's death. To avenge the cowardly Whites' attack on their beloved leader, the people of Punjab rose in fierce revolt. The young revolutionary Bhagat Singh murdered the Police officer Sanders, mainly responsible for the attack on Lalaji, in a dreadful manner. This happened on December 17, exactly one month after Lalaji's death. Next year the British sentenced Bhagat Singh to death.

'The Lion of Punjab'

The lesson which the Lion of Punjab Lala Lajpat Rai taught the country was to be brave. To the Indians in the chains of slavery his message was "Begging or prayer cannot bring freedom. You can win it only through struggle and sacrifice." Because throughout his life he fought fearlessly, he was called the Lion of Punjab. The sacrifice of his life was like a warrior's death in battle.

A Multifaced Personality

Lala Lajpat Rai the martyr was a store-house of many good qualities. Efficiency, tireless industry and patriotism gave lustre to his personality. He was friendly. For the sake of his country

he won a large number of friends both in India and abroad. From the platform he spoke for hours eloquently. His speeches were fiery and galvanizing. People heard him spellbound and his words opened their eyes. He was indeed a lion among men.

He was a brilliant man and he was devoted, in body and mind, to the cause of education. The DAV College, the National College, the Tilak School of Politics and others are living monuments to his patriotism. His service in the field of journalism was no less valuable. He founded the Urdu weekly *Vande Mataram* and the English weekly 'The People' - and both maintained high standards. In the field of commerce too, he will be remembered forever. It was Lalaji who established the Punjab National Bank and the Lakshmi Insurance Company. As a member of the Arya Samaj he worked incessantly. He fought against Untouchability. When Gandhiji started the 'Harijan Sevak Sangh' he worked for it. He was like a father to the orphans. He was responsible for starting numerous orphanages in the country. The Gulab Devi Hospital and the Servants of People Society are living monuments to the memory of that great man.

Lalaji was one of those who sowed the seeds of socialism in India. He was well acquainted with Henry Meyers, Beatrice Webb, Lansbury and others who promoted the growth of socialism in Britain. He was in the vanguard of labour organisation. He founded the 'All-India Trade Union Congress' and was himself its president. He started an organised effort to improve the conditions of the working class. He pleaded that a part of the profits of an industry should be given to the workmen.

The people of India were in chains, and they had to be aroused. They had to be organised. Lalaji was the symbol of the power, which did this. As Mahatma Gandhi said: "So long as the sun shines in the Indian sky, persons like Lalaji will not die."

Lajpat Rai once said: "If I had the power to influence Indian journals, I would have the following headlines printed in bold letters on the first page:

Milk for the infants

Food for the adults

Education for all,"

The Legacy

A great national leader who came to be called the 'Lion of Punjab.' Worked tirelessly to improve education, to promote unity among Hindus and to reform society. His clarion call and glorious life inspired the nation. The Lathis of the servants of British imperialism cruelly cut his life short.

It was the evening of October 30, 1928. Standing on the platform at a crowded public meeting in Lahore City, a person known as the 'Lion of Punjab,' said in an inspiring voice:

“Every blow on our bodies this afternoon is like a nail driven into the coffin of British imperialism.”

Terrible blows had battered the chest and the body of the great man who made that stirring speech. The humiliation inflicted by the high-handedness of the British was more painful than the wounds.

On the morning of the seventeenth day after this, the great revolutionary died. Onward along the path he had trodden his followers marched towards freedom.

The great leader cut down by the high-handedness of the then imperialist Punjab Government was Lala Lajpat Rai.