

## **Influence of Giuseppe Mazzini on the Life of Lala Lajpat Rai**

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**Key Words :** Social reformer, Giuseppe Mazzini, Fighter of India

### **INTRODUCTION**

Lala Lajpat Rai was a great patriot, a social reformer, and a distinguished freedom fighter of India. He was also a prolific writer among the contemporary nationalist leaders of India. He authored scores of books in Urdu and English during his life time for social and political emancipation of the nation<sup>1</sup>. His main literary works are *Life and works of Pandit Guru Dutt*, *Giuseppe Mazzini-the Man and his Duties*, *Giuseppe Garibaldi*, *Shivaji-The Great Patriot*, *Maharishi Swami Dayanand and his Works*, *Sri Krishna*, *The story of My Life*, *The story of My Deportation*, *Indian Revolutionaries in America and Japan*, *The Arya Samaj*, *The United States of America: A Study of Hindu Impression and a Study*, *Young India*, *England's Debt to India*, *The Political Future of India*, *The problem of National Education in India*, *Samrat Ashoka*, *Hindu Muslim Unity and Unhappy India*. Besides that he wrote so many articles in contemporary newspapers, journals and magazines in India as well as abroad<sup>2</sup>.

Lajpat Rai's Lahore stay provided him opportunity to read the biographies of great men like John Stuart Mill, literature related to India's ancient past and various vernacular newspapers<sup>3</sup>. In his own words he explained that tears came into my eyes, whenever, I read ancient history of India and its vanquished glory. Filled with the patriotic feelings he pledged to dedicate his life for Hindu community. Now he resolved that a reasonable portion of his life would be devoted in telling people about Hindu greatness and to the service of his community<sup>4</sup>. He continued this spirit till the end of his life.

After the completion of his study in law, Lajpat Rai moved to Hissar for practicing as a Vakil

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1. Malhotra, U.R., "Lala Lajpat Rai", *Lala Lajpat Rai: A Biography of His Vision and Ideas* (ed. Varinder Grover), Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1998, p. 602
  2. Malhotra, U.R., "Lala Lajpat Rai", *Lala Lajpat Rai: A Biography of His Vision and Ideas*, p. 602
  3. Joshi, V.C. *Lala Lajpat Rai- Autobiographical Writings*, Delhi University Publishers, pp. 26-27
  4. Joshi, V.C. *Lala Lajpat Rai-Autobiographical Writings*, Delhi University Publishers p. 28

in the court. There he filled gap in his studies by reading a number of books on social and political problems and religion besides the general literature<sup>5</sup>. He started writing for the newspapers at Hissar and took keen interest in the political affairs<sup>6</sup>.

He was a successful lawyer, a good speaker and a keen observer. He observed the intensity of prevailing situation in the society and started responding to that through his pen. His every writing was written with a special purpose. His writings were not the moral teachings for others as he himself followed and implemented in his life, whatever he said to others. He inspired the youth to write such patriotic works in the service of nation<sup>7</sup>.

In the last decade nineteenth century Lajpat Rai decided to write a series of biographies 'Great Men of the World' to the service of nation. He found that there was lack of knowledge among Indians about the life stories of the great men. Due to his ill health and weak financial background Lajpat Rai resolved to use his writings as a tool against unjust foreign rule to create awareness among his people about Indian culture, religion, society and glorious past of the country<sup>8</sup>.

The first two biographies in the series were of Italian freedom fighters *i.e.* Mazzini and Garibaldi written by him with a special reason. He realized, most of the Indian people due to foreign rule in India prefer all things foreign, foreign language, foreign lexicon, foreign clothing, even the foreign manners and etiquette are very much liked by Indians. There was hardly anything without foreign influence. So, he decided that he should start the series with these venerated heroes of foreign country. Personally he was not captivated of this idea but, went with the public opinion. Moreover, there was no better example to give to inspire Indian public than the life of these two freedom fighters. Secondly, Italy was recently unified and liberated and was once in much worse situation than India. In simple words there was much to learn from Italy by Indians<sup>9</sup>. Actually, Lala Lajpat Rai had come to know about Mazzini through Surendra Nath Benerjee's speech at Lahore during his study days. He was deeply moved by the hardships faced by him during Italian struggle for freedom and unification. In his own words Lala Lajpat Rai accepted that the life story of Mazzini put a deep impression on my tender heart<sup>10</sup>.

Lala Lajpat Rai presented highest examples of sacrifice before the people of India through these two biographies of Mazzini and Garibaldi. He tried to arouse the feelings of nationalism in the youth of India to liberate the country from the yoke of foreign rule. He wanted to create a class of nationalists in India to challenge the British rule. This literary work was for those, who wanted to see the higher reaches of patriotism<sup>11</sup>.

The first biography written in the series was *Giuseppe Mazzini- the Man and his Duties*, in Urdu (1896). Mazzini was a great Italian freedom fighter of Italy. The entire leadership of India

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5. Joshi, V.C. *Lala Lajpat Rai- Autobiographical Writings*, p. 42
  6. Joshi, V.C. *Lala Lajpat Rai- Autobiographical Writings*, p. 43.
  7. Joshi, V.C. *Lala Lajpat Rai- Autobiographical Writings*, p. 43
  8. Nanda, B.R, *The Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai*, (Manohar Publication, New Delhi, 2000) Vol. I, p. 313
  9. Nanda, B.R, *The Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai*, Vol. I, p. 313
  10. Geeta, Srivastva, *Mazzini and His Impact on Indian National Movement*, Chugh Publications 1982, p. 206.
  11. Lajpat Rai, *Mazzini*, (Hindi), pp. 26-27, Nanda, B.R, *The Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai*, Vol. I, pp. 285-86.

was influenced by the writings of Milton, Mill, Mazzini and others. But, Mazzini's spirit of nationalism appealed to them to a great extent<sup>12</sup>. Impressed by the life of Mazzini Lala Lajpat Rai made him his political Guru. He followed the path shown by him throughout his life. It is essential to understand that why Lajpat Rai made Mazzini his hero? Why not he inclined towards Bismarck, the person behind the unification of Germany by uniting various principalities together into a powerful kingdom? The reason was simple that in comparison to Mazzini, Bismarck had everything at his disposal for his success, including the support of king and his mighty army. But, Mazzini, other side had nothing to achieve his goal for the unification and liberation of Italy. Mazzini's faith in him-self which could move mountains for the unification and liberation of Italy attracted Lajpat Rai in a great manner<sup>13</sup>.

Lala Lajpat Rai took his motivation from this Italian hero for freedom struggle for India. He wanted to put the mission for the liberation of India before them loud and clear like beating of a drum<sup>14</sup>. He encouraged the youth that all the hardships will disappear before our dauntless courage and the masses will start following path set for the freedom of our country<sup>15</sup>.

Lajpat Rai discussed the life of Mazzini right from his childhood. He was physically so weak and delicate right from his birth that he barely learnt to stand in the sixth year of his life. He had special affection towards poor and beggars in his childhood which was a great indication towards his higher goal for humanity. His thrust to read literature did not develop his interest to be a medical professional as desired by his parents. He became the member of *Shersevana* a famous literary society of Italy at a young age of 13. After passing the degree of law he tried his luck in the career as a lawyer. Even after becoming a successful lawyer he was not satisfied with this profession because, he had a big dream to become the advocate the cause of his nation.

To achieve his goal Mazzini joined *Carbonari* a secret society against the foreign rule in Italy. He did not only realize that it is necessary to liberate Italy from the foreign yoke, but, it was equally important to curb the internal rivalries, as a result of which Italy was divided into so many small principalities. Along with political freedom and the unification of his country he wanted religious freedom for his people as Italy under the stronghold of Pope was living in superstition and ignorance<sup>16</sup>.

After sometime Mazzini himself founded *Young Italy* a new society to liberate his country, which proved to be a great force behind the national struggle. Mazzini's arrest and exile to Marseilles could not stop him. It made him much strong to move ahead to achieve his set goal. He continued writing for the people Italy from outside countries during his exile, which finally, awakened the people of Italy.

Mazzini's patriotic writings made him the hero of his people. After reading them the people of Italy arose against the foreign rule in their country and revolts started taking place at several places in Italy. With the passage of time the urge for the freedom became intent in the mind of the people of Italy. Mazzini and his friends, despite of so many setbacks, assiduously struck to their mission. In his fight for the freedom of his country Mazzini took shelter in Switzerland and England. In England

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12. Geeta, Srivastva, *Mazzini and His Impact on Indian National Movement*, Chugh Publications 1982, p. 118

13. Nanda, B.R, *The Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai*, Vol. I, pp. 287

14. Nanda, B.R, *The Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai*, Vol. I, pp. 283-84

15. Nanda, B.R, *The Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai*, Vol. I, 284

16. Nanda, B.R, *The Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai*, Vol. I, p. 295-96

he united the freedom fighters of different countries and established a new society *Young Europe* to liberate all the European countries from the foreign rules<sup>17</sup>.

During his England stay Mazzini opened a school and started teaching to the students from Italy and prepared them to work to liberate Italy from the foreign yoke. On the similar lines many schools were opened in Italy for the purpose and finally the lucky day came when Italy got unified in 1870 and achieved freedom with the untiring efforts of this Italian hero<sup>18</sup>.

Lala Lajpat Rai was fully convinced that if a country, like Italy can attain freedom in much worse circumstances in India then why Indians cannot liberate their nation from the alien rule. So, he took a pledge to arouse the feelings of nationalism in India against British rule by his strongest weapon of pen. Lala Lajpat Rai followed the footsteps of Mazzini throughout his life. Like Mazzini, he used propaganda machinery against British rule in and outside India, started writing for the nation like him throughout his life. Behind his taking up the noble cause of national education, was also the inspiration of Mazzini<sup>19</sup>. Lala Lajpat tried to follow footsteps of his political guru Mazzini as we look into the life of Lala Lajpat Rai. He also worked tirelessly for the sake of his country. He openly criticized every policy of British Government and did not hesitate from the alien government although he was arrested and deported to Mandalay in 1907 during peasant struggle in the Punjab. He was very keen to provide education to the youth so; he opened a library at Lahore from his own pocket. He opened Tilak School of Politics to provide political training to the youth in Lahore. Later on this was converted to Servants of the People Society. He also seems to have replicated Mazzini in the field of education as throughout his life education remained favorite subject of Lala Lajpat Rai. He was one of the founding members DAV College Lahore and under the aegis of Arya Samaj contributed from the core of his heart for the education of depressed classes of Punjab. He also authored a book "The Problem of National Education in India" while he was in exile (USA) during World War I. Apart from that he wrote several articles in India and abroad regarding the precarious condition of education in India under British. But, Lala Lajpat Rai was not enough lucky like Mazzini to see the independence of his country and passed away in 1928 due to the injuries while leading protest against Simon Commission at Lahore. In nut shell we can say that Lala Lajpat Rai' life was motivated by the life of the hero of Italian Unification Giuseppe Mazzini whom he considered his political Guru.

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17. Nanda, B.R, *The Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai*, Vol. I, p. 298

18. Nanda, B.R, *The Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai*, Vol. I, p. 298

19. Nanda, B.R, *The Collected Works of Lala Lajpat Rai*, Vol. I, p. 298