CHAPTER VIII
EXTORTION OF MEN AND MONEY

At the instance of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, all the officials, in collaboration with the Rais Sahibs and Khans Bahadurs in the province, employed many undesirable methods in exploiting the human and the material resources of the Punjab for helping Britain in the war. The people living both in the towns and the countryside were humiliated in many ways and made to pay through their nose. The attitude of the officials all over the Punjab turned from harsh to harsher with the ever increasing necessities of the war and this caused immense bitterness among the Punjabis particularly during the last phase of the war.

As in the past, so after the outbreak of the war, half the number of soldiers for the Indian Army were coming from the Punjab mainly through the efforts of the Civil Officers of the province. The credit for that large recruitment was, however, taken away by the Army Headquarters of India. O'Dwyer grew very envious of this. He felt he had the right to expect all praise for his administration for what they had not been doing to help the war efforts. Little wonder that he did/

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1. Chelmsford Papers, Roll 2, No. 88, Chelmsford to Cawnpore dated 15 September 1916; Memo of O'Dwyer is appended as Annexure 'A' with the letter; O'Dwyer, M., India as I Knew It, pp. 216-218.
miss the opportunity of having a fling at the Army Headquarters in April 1916 when there was an urgent demand for more soldiers after the Mesopotamian disaster at Kut. He felt he should make the best of it also because of the change of the Viceroy at Delhi. Lord Chelmsford had just then taken over from Lord Hardinge. O'Dwyer sent a long Memorandum to the new Viceroy in September 1916, detailing some serious complaints against the military authorities in the Army Headquarters.

O'Dwyer pointed out that in the Punjab there was lack of cooperation between the military and civil sides of the government and for that sorry state of affairs the fault was primarily that of the military authorities who suffered from a superiority complex. O'Dwyer complained that although at the lower level of the Divisional Commanding Officers of Lahore and Rawalpindi, military assistance was prompt and the military co-operation with the civil government great, yet that was not true of the Army Headquarters. He insisted that the attitude of the Army Headquarters seriously came in the way of the civil authorities co-operating with the army to the extent which was necessary then.

O'Dwyer complained that the Army Headquarters kept the information about the temper of troops stationed or recruited in his province a closely guarded secret to themselves.

2. Chelmsford Papers, Roll 2, No. 38, Chelmsford to Chamberlain, dated 15 September 1916: Memo of O'Dwyer is appointed as Annexure 'A' with the letter; O'Dwyer, 'H. India as I Know It', pp. 216-218.

3. Chelmsford Papers, Roll 2, No. 38, Chelmsford to Chamberlain, dated 15 September 1916: Annexure 'A'.
This was a very dangerous practice because it exposed the civil authorities to unexpected dangers. He cited a number of instances of this type where the military authorities had not only not taken the civil authorities into confidence, but also kept the latter completely in the dark. He gave the example of the 73rd Cavalry case in which eighteen persons were sentenced to death, all Sikhs, who had acted in close co-operation with the Ghadarites in 1915, and whose names were not given out to the Punjab Government. He insisted that it was not a solitary case and went on to list many other examples of similar sort. He said that no information was given to the local government also about the movement of troops so that they may be intelligently watched. There was thus complete absence of inter-communication in matters of great common interest.

O'Dwyer further stated that the raising of nearly one lakh soldiers since the war began was more the result of the efforts of Civil Government working through local men of loyalty and influence than those of the recruiting machine set up in the province by army authorities. According to him the recruiting machine of the army was extremely faulty and

4. Chelmsford Papers, Roll 2, No. 83, Chelmsford to Chamberlain, dated 15 September 1916: Annexure 'A'.

5. O'Dwyer cited a number of cases in which Punjabi soldiers were involved in subversive activities in collaboration with the Ghadarites but about whom the Local Government had no knowledge. He argued that half of the Indian army was raised in the Punjab but this aspect of the sedition was generally ignored. O'Dwyer complained that men of various units mixed up with revolutionaries — 73rd Cavalry, 22nd Cavalry, 20th Punjabis, 36th Sikhs, 47th Sikhs, 62nd Punjabis, 33rd Infantry, the 4th Cavalry, the 94th Punjabis, the 14th Sikhs — and convicted but no information was passed over to the Punjab Government.
Inadequate, the recruiting officers worked at random and their methods of collection and despatch of recruits were most unsatisfactory. They followed a tardy and cumbersome procedure and thus damped the enthusiasm of a recruit. O'Dwyer complained that the innate conservatism of military traditions which determined its method of working had prevented new and promising sources from being tapped. He pleaded that it was the Local Government which was in continuous touch with all sections of the civil populace and had a better knowledge of native life and thought than the military authorities. "They should consult us where and how to raise the units of animals even."

At the end of his Memorandum, O'Dwyer criticised the general functioning of the Army Department. He complained that its operations were always shrouded in a mystery, which was neither essential nor conducive to efficiency. The working of the department was also too centralised and bureaucratic. "The Army Department", he wrote, "is too self-contained".

Perhaps because O'Dwyer's note revealed the defects in the prevailing working-system of the Army Headquarters in a very lucid manner, the higher authorities ignored the motives of the Punjab Lieutenant Governor in sending it and took the note seriously. Possibly that was also because the need for more

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6. Chelmsford Papers, Roll 2, Chelmsford to Chamberlain, No. 27, dated 15 September 1916. Copy of O'Dwyer appended as Annexure A.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid.

9. Chelmsford Papers, Roll 17, No. 188, Chelmsford to O'Dwyer, dated 3 November 1916.
recruits was very great and urgent. A new pattern of recruit-
ment was devised and quickly introduced throughout India.
The important change introduced was to give up the exclusive
attention of drawing recruits from the so-called martial
races all over and go in for more men in the army under a
rational "territorial scheme" which had been strongly advocated
in O' Dwyer's note.

The main feature of the territorial scheme was the
coordination of all recruiting agencies in a given area. That
was to be brought about by an intimate association of civil
and military officers and providing special officers for
particular areas or for particular needs. Recruiting officers
were appointed to civil divisions and districts and were made
responsible for all enlistments effected within their spheres,
irrespective of the class or tribe to which the recruit may
belong.

The adoption of the new scheme in February 1917
resulted in the Civil Administration assuming direct responsi-
bility for recruiting operations. That brought O'Dwyer
directly into the picture and enabled him to pose as the
foremost recruiting agent in the Empire.

The new scheme which gave an increased importance to
O'Dwyer got new dimensions a few months later, An entirely

10. Chelmsford Papers, Roll 2, No. 38, Chelmsford to
Chamberlain, dated 15 September 1916, Annexure 'A'.
11. Supplement to Punjab Gazette, dated 20 March 1913, p.36.
12. O'Dwyer, India As I Knew It, pp. 219-19.
new situation was created by the intimation conveyed by the Army Department on 11 June 1917 to all the provincial governments that it was necessary to double the previous flow of recruits to meet the future exigencies of the military situation.

The Central and the Provincial Recruiting Boards were set up and they fixed quotas for each province.

The demand from the Punjab in its final form was communicated to the provincial government by the Central Recruiting Board on 20 June. The province was called upon to provide a monthly total of 14,300 fighting men, 1700 muleteers and 300 non-combatants throughout the year opening on 1 July 1917 and thus began an intensive campaign for recruitment in the Punjab. The Provincial Recruiting Board fixed quotas for each district and invited the attention of all district officers to the vital importance of making every effort to meet the demand of the Central Recruiting Board.

The quota fixed for the Punjab was more than double the average figures ever achieved previously and could not have been met without special measures. Numerous novel means were adopted in the campaign to popularise military service and stimulate recruitment. They comprised such varied innovations as the holding of recruiting darbars in all the districts by the Lieutenant Governor, the monthly publication of

15. For details see War Speeches of O'Dwyer.
elaborate statistics to stimulate inter-district and inter-tribal rivalry, the grant of liberal rewards to all those who would come forward to assist the campaign, the establishment of local depots to which newly enlisted recruits were drafted, holding of frequent meetings at all important places in which the advantages of a military career were explained, and the touring of regimental recruiting parties specially selected from the residents of the locality. The unit of the campaign was everywhere the district, and in every district the Deputy Commissioner was assisted by a Committee which in most cases was mainly non-official in composition. All persons holding positions of privilege under the Government were called upon to assist. The responsibility of zamindars, jagirdars, and landholders for intensive recruitment was explicitly affirmed by an amendment of the Land Revenue Rules. Local efforts were coordinated and guided by the Provincial Recruiting Board, which at its frequent meetings discussed all questions connected with the recruitment. The decisions taken by the Provincial Board were immediately communicated to all district officers.

The response to the new methods was very encouraging in the beginning but the situation changed after a few months. With the recruitment of large number of men every month, the

reserve of persons to whom imperial, economic or other spontaneously operative motives appealed was reduced, and it became necessary to supplement such motives by variety of other appeals. It also became necessary to insist on the exercise of successful effort by those persons - particularly village officers - whose position placed them under an obligation to assist the Government.

The intensive effort of the Government, of applying more pressure than persuasion, succeeded in enrolling a large number of recruits, but alienated the sympathy of the masses. By the beginning of the year 1918 the strain resulting from intensive recruitment began to be felt by the people.

Many a Deputy Commissioner sent reports that the campaign was producing general feeling of tiredness and there had begun to appear signs of acute tension. A number of regrettable incidents were reported by them. In Noshiarpur, mothers threatened Recruiting officers with self-immolation if the latter did not discharge their only sons whom they had induced to join the army. In Bisnar District messengers of Recruiting Officers were killed by the villagers. An awful incident occurred in the Shidimpura District. On 14 February 1913, people of a big village, Lak in that District, collectively resisted the entry of Recruiting parties to enter the village for new recruits. Fearing that the success

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20. GOI-HOME-Pol-Deposit-March 1913-Proc. No. 38, p. 12: 76,000 soldiers were recruited from July to December 1917.
of this attempt of the people of Lai might spread to other places, strong police contingent was sent there to overawe them. The Police contingent acted with quick severity. It opened fire on the protesting villagers of Lai and killed and wounded a number of them. A reign of terror was let loose by the Police to force the villagers surrender their young ones for the army.

In view of this rapidly growing anger among the villagers, the Punjab Government thought it wise to give a breathing time to the campaign during the coming harvesting season of Rabi crop. It moved the military authorities to sanction the suspension of active recruiting operations and decided that there should be no recruitment for two-and-a-half months after 1 April 1913.

Unfortunately for the people of the Punjab, circumstances rendered it impossible to continue the suspension of the recruitment for the whole period of two-and-a-half months. In consequence of the altered military situation arising from the German offensive in Europe followed by the appeal of the British Prime Minister to India for more combatants, a resumption of active recruitment operation had to be ordered on 13 April 1913. The Viceroy called an Imperial Conference

23. GOI-Home-Pol-Deposit-March 1913-Pro. No. 41, p.16; another incident also took place on 10 February in which Qultan and Party were unsuccessfully attacked.
25. Ibid.; GOI-Hone-Pol-Deposit-May 1913-Pro. No. 64.
of India to devise ways and means for intensive recruitment. The conference held at Delhi and pledged the country to raise a minimum of half a million combatants in a single year opening with 1 June 1913. As a consequence thereto Central Recruiting Board fixed the Punjab quota of combatants at 1,30,000. O'Dwyer went a step forward. He called his own Provincial Conference at Lahore on 4 May and prevailed upon it to raise the quota to 2 lakh men.

The target for this large recruitment called for strenuous and extraordinary efforts.

The Punjab Government formed a Central Publicity Committee for conducting a vigorous propaganda for greater recruitment in the Punjab. The Committee's business was to create a war psychic and an atmosphere of excitement among the Punjabis so that they might be better persuaded to enlist themselves in the army. People were told that war was being fought for the safety of Indians and the protection of their hearths and homes. Subordinate publicity committees were formed in the towns and villages and their work coordinated by the Central Committee. In fact it were these subordinate committees that did door to door campaign for recruitment. The Government also began publishing a newspaper, the Jag, in three languages to work up the martial sentiments of the people.

27. Ibid. GOI-Home-Pol-Deposit-August 1913-Pro. No. 22.
28. GOI-Home-Pol-Deposit-August 1913-Pro. No. 28.
29. GOI-Home-Pol-Deposit-September 1913-Pro. No. 20; GOI-Home-Pol-Deposit-September 1913-Pro. No. 41.
It was, however, soon realised that the propaganda alone would not work and the redemption of the pledge was not possible without resorting to coercion. Actually O'Dwyer was conscious of that even at the War Conference where he had promised nearly two hundred thousand combatants from the Punjab in one year. He had got a resolution passed by the Provincial War Conference itself that if the voluntary system failed, the Government should not hesitate to take such measures as might be necessary to produce the requisite number of recruits. Soon after the conference he got prepared a draft Bill to give effect to the principle of compulsion by his Government and submitted it to the Government of India for approval. In doing this, his hands had been considerably strengthened by the Divisional Commissioners who had unanimously expressed the view that it was essential for the provincial Government to have the power by an act or Ordinance, to use compulsion in any district, town or other area which failed to provide the fixed quota voluntarily. Unfortunately for O'Dwyer the suggestion of his government made in the Bill was not accepted by the Government of India.

32. Ibid.
33. The Government of India rejected the proposal on two strong grounds. In the first place the Government of India feared that in case of conscription the urbanites, especially the educated, would find a plausible pretext to raise a hue and cry against the Government. Conscription would have also provided them the opportunity for demanding unrestricted openings for military commissions. Moreover, the Government of India was keen on making the city people trained in the use of arms. In the second place by enlisting the sons, kith and kin of notables and big wigs under the force of law, the Government did not want to risk their loyalty. It was felt that it would not be wise to drive into the enemy camp those who had been standing by their side through thick and thin.
O'Dwyer was left with no choice but to use considerable executive pressure for recruitment of men in the Punjab. He divided the quota fixed for the Punjab into divisional, district, tehsil and village quotas and threatened the villagers that the failure to fulfill the quota fixed for their respective villages within a specified period voluntarily would entail the use of force.

The force began to be used also by persons holding positions of privilege under the government when they were urged to assist in the recruiting campaign. All those who wanted to seek favours/one kind or the other from the government began coercing the people for enlistment in concert with the revenue and police officials who had a direct hold over the ruralites.

The leading loyalists did not volunteer their own sons and relatives for the army but began buying men of lower stratum for the purpose. Under the belief that their loyalty and efficiency were to be measured by the large number of recruits they would be able to enrol, and not by offering their few relatives, officials and notables started using high-handed methods to achieve that end. Perhaps conscription would have been more palatable to the people than the way the recruitment was now being done in the Punjab.

The quota system had increased the official and non-official pressure on the poor villagers to almost an unbearable

34. G.II-Home-Pol-D-February 1920-Pro. No. 373.
36. horniman, B.O., Amritsar and our Duty to India, p.25.
degree. The district officers and Commissioners were the chief authors of many coercive measures. In their bid to secure the maximum recruits and thus earn O'Dwyer's approbation, they would encourage the registration of false cases against those who showed reluctance to enlist themselves. Subordinate officials were encouraged to implicate the reluctants in criminal cases. Abuse of power by the Executive now became a common feature of the time. Villages were raided at night, menfolk paraded to recruiting offices, women insulted for not giving up of their young ones, and defaulting villages deprived of their irrigation rights. The judiciary was not allowed to interfere in the cases registered to increase the recruitment tempo.

The pressure of the loyalists and the bureaucracy on the ruralites soon became so great that the people's patience gave way. The poor developed a genuine feeling that they had already contributed a great deal to the War and were being put to an unbearable strain and that officials and the loyalists were now asking them to do things which they were themselves not willing to do. The result was that at many places villagers organised themselves and began assaulting the Recruiting Parties. The tension soon developed to such an extent


38. *P.I.C.E.*, Vol. VI, p. 236; In Multan and Buzafargah, Deputy Commissioners had to be restrained by Government from the employment of still more drastic methods.

39. GOI-Home-Pol-Deposit-September 1913-Pro. No. 10, p.13; The poorest families were being forced to give their young ones who could least be spared, but sons of headmen and landlords went scot free.
that for getting a few recruits from a village, many a time large recruiting party was sent there, with arms and ammunition to prevent any resistance by the villagers. But so strong was the anti-recruitment feeling that far from frightening the villagers to submission, the arrival of the party would provoke them to resist the recruiting officers. In Multan district, a Naib Tehsildar sent a recruiting party of 120 strong, armed to the teeth under a local Naib to fetch two recruits from a village named Jangal Sikanderabad in June 1913. The party was assaulted by the villagers, a conflict ensued resulting in the death of many villagers. That necessitated the arrest of a large number of young people and the despatch of a strong Police contingent fully armed to patrol the area.

What had happened at Jangal Sikanderabad was not an isolated incident. A fracas occurred at a village named Allahbad in Multan district on the night of 20 June between a recruiting party and the villagers in which a number of men were injured. In Jhang people refused to enlist on even Rs. 500 per recruit. A Pasraili was enlisted for Rs. 1,100 and lease of land for Rs. 600, but he deserted soon afterward. In Dera Ghazi Khan a Naib Tehsildar and his Party were assaulted on 6 July by the villagers with sticks, knives and swords.

Sardar Nadir Hussain, Tehsildar of Thora in Shahpur was murdered on 27 July while on recruiting duty. He was hacked to pieces by decoying him in a trap by the Lambardar of Dha-i-Lurka village. In village Masitan of Ferozepur district,

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41. GOI-Home-Pol-Deposit-September 1913-Pro. No. 10, p.19.
42. GOI-Home-Pol-Deposit-September 1913-Pro. No. 40, p.19.
Tehsildar of Zira was assaulted and was only lucky to escape death. Dangerous restlessness was widespread also in the Karnal and the Hissar districts.

The means employed to raise war loans and funds were as obnoxious as those employed for recruiting men for the army. Officials, high and low, with active collaboration of the non-official loyalists, used all sorts of tactics and pressures to extort as much money from the public as possible.

The pressure on the people had become particularly great after the Government of India had undertaken to make a gift of £100 million to England to enable her to meet her war expenditure in 1917. It was decided that the money should be raised through war loans in India. A campaign of extortion was initiated by the War Loan Committees especially set up for the purpose. When that failed, income-tax-payers were forced to invest from one-fourth to one-half of their annual income in the war loans. Income-tax law was so amended as to make it possible for income-tax authorities to over-assess the income of an assessee and then coerce him to give more subscriptions.

43. GOL-Home-Pol-Deposit-October 1918-Proc. No. 32, p. 21.
44. GOL-Home-Pol-Deposit-January 1918-Proc. No. 39.
45. Runci, Alfred, Present situation with special Reference To the Punish Disturbances, p. 25.
46. Williams, Rushbrook L.F., India in the Years 1917-18, pp. 81-92.
47. GOL-Home-Pol-B-February 1920-Proc. No. 373.
Wealthy citizens were given warnings that they would not receive Government favours in business or social status if they failed to make liberal contributions themselves and prevail upon others to follow suit.

The poor wage-earners were required to invest money per force. Generally donations were deducted from paybills regularly. Similarly, the ruralites were pressurised through the revenue officials to fill the coffers of the war fund. Title hunters were encouraged to extract war loans from the masses and were promised honours for doing so. One who would not pay or would show reluctance to do so was prosecuted or implicated in criminal cases. In courts, litigants who paid liberally to war loans were treated favourably.

The public knew very well that it was for all practical purposes obligatory on their part to meet the official demands.

By the time the war ended the campaign for collecting more and more sinews of war had generated a good deal of excitement by way of bitterness in the Punjab. It was particularly so among the lower strata of society whose whole socio-economic fabric had been shaken by the war in many other ways too.