CHAPTER I
WAVE OF UNPRECEDENTED LOYALTY

No sooner it was learnt that the War had broken out in Europe on 28 July 1914 and the Government of India had taken precautionary measures as a consequence thereof than a sensation ran through the major cities of the Punjab. The people living in these cities started feeling excited as they saw the army guarding the wireless, telegraphic posts and other important public installations. Their excitement further increased in its tempo when on 5 August 1914, Baron Hardinge of Penshurst, the Governor-General and Viceroy of India, officially proclaimed that Great Britain had also joined war against Germany. The excitement expressed itself in the form of a prompt and enthusiastic display of loyalty both among the high and the low. The Rajas and Maharajas, as also the people of the Punjab hastened to give practical proof of their loyalty to the Empire in a way as was perhaps beyond the best expectations of the government.

The outbreak of the war was looked upon by the Punjabis as a very serious matter, "pregnant with the most awful possibilities". Irrespective of their class, creed, or position — whether dwelling in palaces or on pavements and whether employed on farms or in factories — they behaved as if they sincerely

1. The Amrita Bazar Patrika, 4 August 1914, p.6.
2. 30I-Hone-Pol-A-September 1914-Pro. No. 270.
believed that the Empire was the "first postulate of their well-being, and that it called for each man's best efforts".

The Punjabis rose as one man in support of the Britishers. They demonstrated their loyalty to the cause of the King-Emperor by holding public meetings in every city and town, passing resolutions in support of the Crown and offering prayers for the victory of British arms.

The inhabitants of Lahore, the premier city and capital of the province, took lead in the matter. A massive meeting, convened jointly by Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Parsees, was held in the Town Hall grounds in the afternoon of 3 August 1914. This meeting furnished a conclusive proof of what could be described as the deep and unswerving loyalty of the Punjab, and its unflinching resolve to stand by the British Empire.

The meeting was presided over by Sir P.C. Chatterjee, a prominent lawyer of the Chief Court Bar and a Hindu leader of the city. Initiating the proceedings, he struck the flattering note that England's rule in India had been more benign than the rule of other colonial powers of Europe in their respective colonies, and its institutions were democratic and liberal, and it behoved them to place their all at the disposal of their Sovereign and his government. While concluding

4. Leigh, M.S., Punjab and the War, p. 31.
5. The Bengal, 9 August 1914, p. 1; the Tribune, 11 August 1914, p. 2.
6. The Bengal, 9 August 1914, p. 1; the Pioneer, 10 August 1914, p. 8.
7. The Statesman, 9 August 1914, p. 10; the Akriti Bazar Patrika, 10 August 1914, p. 3.
his remarks, he reminded the audience:

"It was their duty to rally round their King-Emperor. He did not require their assurances or their help. But it was their duty to offer them."

Chatterjee had while saying that expressed the feeling of everyone present in the meeting. The high spirit with which the two resolutions were passed there was indicative of that fact. While supporting these resolutions many speakers spoke enthusiastically in praise of the British Raj and were frequently applauded by the audience. When the two resolutions were put to vote, they were passed with wild acclamations by all those present in the meeting.

In the first resolution, the Punjabis living in Lahore, of all classes and creeds, proclaimed their unflinching loyalty and steadfast devotion to the person and throne of King-Emperor George V and prayed "for the complete victory of British arms over Germany". By the second resolution they showed their earnest desire "to make any and all sacrifices for the defence and glory of the British Empire and render the Government whatever service may be required of them?"

The unanimity of views, the depth of sentiment, and the strength of determination which characterised the meeting and

8. The Statesman, 9 August 1914, p. 10; the Tribune, 11 August 1914, p.2.
9. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
its proceedings gave a remarkable evidence, if such was needed, of the firm and abiding hold the British had then over the hearts of the people of the Punjab.

Apart from this jointly-sponsored meeting, the many classes and communities residing at Lahore, vied with one another in organising separate public meetings, and in passing resolutions of loyalty. The offices of the Viceroy of India and of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab at Simla were flooded with a spate of telegrams conveying those resolutions.

The Punjab Hindu Sabha Lahore sent the following telegram to the Governor-General of India and the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab:

"Punjab Hindu Sabha on behalf of the Hindu citizens of the province on the outbreak of the war with Germany begs to assure [the] Government of its steadfast loyalty and intense devotion to the British Crown and places its all at the disposal of [the] Government and prays for decisive victory for British arms."

On 9 August 1914, the Hindus of the city held a public meeting under the auspices of the Sabha, where they offered prayers for the speedy and complete victory of British arms over Germany and assured the Government of the steadfast loyalty.

and deep devotion of the Hindus of the province
"to the person and throne of His Gracious
Majesty King-Emperor George V and of their
readiness to make all sacrifices for the
defence and glory of the British Empire."

Another public meeting was arranged on the morning
of 10 August, by the Pres Sagar Sabha Lahore which offered similar
prayers.

The President of the Dev Samaj sent a telegram to the
Viceregal and the Lieutenant-Governor, assuring loyalty and
devotion on behalf of his organisation.

The Central Committee of the All-India Shatri Association
held a meeting in Raja Dayan Singh's Haveli, Lahore, on 12
August, with Lala Sangan Lal in chair, and resolved to place
all their resources at the disposal of the government. The
committee expressed the view that it was their religious and
sacred duty to stand by the honour of their king as he was not
only in loco parentis to his subjects but also the shadow
of God. They sought permission from the government to start a
Khatri Volunteer Corps to serve the King and thus fulfill their
Khatriya Dharma.

13. The Tribune, 11 August 1914, p. 1; Ibid., 12 August 1914, p.3.
14. The Tribune, 12 August 1914, p.3.
15. Ibid., p.4.
The Muhammadans living in the Punjab did not lag behind the Hindus in expressing their support to the British. Muhsein Shah, the Secretary, Muslim Kashmiri Conference, sent the following telegram to the Viceroy and the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab:

"Muslim Kashmiri Conference, Lahore, begs to assure its unflinching devotion to the British Government and while fervently praying for the success of the British arms, places its all at the complete disposal of the Government."

The Lahore branch of the Anjuman-i-Islamia, Punjab, organized a public meeting on 17 August in the Barakat Ali Muhammadan Hall, to assure the government of the unflinching devotion of the Punjab Muhammadans for the person and throne of His Britannic Majesty.

Ahmadiyya Anjuman Ishaat-i-Islam, Lahore, held a meeting on 14 August at the Ahmadiyya buildings. The meeting was presided over by Sheikh Rahmatullah, proprietor, English Warehouse Lahore, and passed a resolution expressing the community's willingness to help the government in every way in its war efforts.

A joint public meeting of all the sects of Muhammadans

17. The Tribune, 14 August 1914, p.4.
18. Ibid., 15 August 1914, p.4.
19. The Tribune, 14 August 1914, p.4.
of Lahore was held on 16 August to affirm their faith in the
gerousness of the British cause and to express their
atisfaction at the declaration of neutrality by Turkey and
Afghanistan in the then European crisis.

Twenty thousand Muslims who had assembled to celebrate
Al-Fitr festival on 24 August 1914 in the Shahi Mosque, Lahore,
offered fervent prayers for the success of the British arms.

Even the Sikhs in the Punjab, who had some grievances
against the government at that time and were in an agitational
mood, voluntarily decided to suspend all political agitations
in order to avoid embarrassing the government.

Gur Singh Sabha, Lahore, soon after hearing of the
outbreak of the war, hastened to wire a message of loyal support
to the Government of India. The Sabha also held a mass meeting
of the Sikhs, at the Bawli eashib on 9 August. Sardar Sona Ram
Singh, who presided over this meeting, made a stirring speech,

20. The Bengal, 13 August 1914, p.1.
21. The Tribune, 30 August 1914, p.5.
22. The grievances agitating the Sikhs then were (1) the Sikh
passengers of the ship Khangatagar were treated shabbily
by the Canadian authorities and were not allowed to land on
the Canadian soil. The ship had to sail back. It was still
on its way back to India when the war broke out; (2) Govern-
ment had demolished the walls of Riqabgarh Burdwan at
Delhi in disregard to the religious sentiments of the Sikhs;
and (3) there was going on a bitter Aryan-Sikh controversy
in the press and at the platform over a pamphlet bearing the
title "Khalia Panth Ki Taqiqat" in which a certain blasphemy
was implied upon the Sikh religion and its founders. The
Sikhs were blaming the government for not taking stern actions
against the defaulters.

23. The Bengal, 13 August 1914, p.2.
and called upon the Sikhs to place their entire resources at the disposal of the British Raj and offer their personal services as volunteers for the defence and honour of the British flag. Sardar Amar Singh, editor of a Sikh weekly, the Loyal Gazette, who made the next speech, spoke with great enthusiasm and pointed out that as Sikhs of the Guru Gobind Singh had vanquished the Mughal hawks in pre-British times, similarly the Sikhs once more would bring down the German eagle.

The small but wealthy community of the Parsis also followed others in expressing their loyalty to the government. On 17 September 1914, under the auspices of Lahore Zoroastrian Association, the Parsis assembled to celebrate the festival of Khordad Sal and after the religious ceremonies, offered a mass prayer for the success of the British.

The political groups as well rallied for the Empire. A public meeting was held on the evening of 15 August 1914 under the aegis of the Indian Association, Lahore, to consider the duty of Indians towards the government during the war. In this meeting the association recorded its complete willingness to stand by the government and passed enthusiastic resolutions expressing loyalty to the Crown without reservation.

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26. Ibid.
27. The Tribune, 22 September 1914, p.2.
28. The Indian Association, Lahore, was a political body of repute with a long history at its back. It was the nucleus of Punjab Provincial Congress (A branch of Indian National Congress) at that time.
29. The Bengal, 16 August 1914, p.2.
The contemporary intelligentsia of the province, outside the pale of official patronage or favour, like practising lawyers or working journalists running independent papers, were equally vocal in expressing their loyal sentiments. They proclaimed their sincere loyalty to the government as a call of duty.

The members of the Lahore District Bar assembled in an extraordinary meeting on 8 August and unanimously adopted the following resolution:

"Resolved that the members of the Lahore District Bar beg to offer their humble services to the British Government and fervently pray for the success of the British arms in the present war."

On 13 August the Chief Court Bar Association held a special meeting under the presidency of Sevan Petman, a government advocate. A unanimous resolution was adopted in that meeting to the following effect:

"That the members of the Chief Court Bar Association in a special general meeting give expression of their unflinching loyalty and devotion to the Crown and the British Government and their readiness to help the Government, in every possible way."

The Association further assured the Government that they would not lag behind any community or class of British subjects in

30. The Tribune, 12 August 1914, p. 4; The Bengalee, 13 August 1914, p.2.

identifying themselves completely with the Government in its
well and wee.

The journalists in Lahore connected with various local
newspapers held a meeting on 14 August 1914 in the house of Rai
Bahadur K.B. Thapar to consider the advisability of suitable
action with regard to the situation created by the war. They
held a sober discussion on the rights and duties of the Press
at that critical juncture and pointed out that "the present
meeting and the enthusiasm that inspired those present prove
conclusively that the press in this country knew its duties and
responsible facilities."

The following two resolutions were passed:

(1) "As loyal and patriotic citizens and journalists
representing public feelings and opinions and
realising that their and country's best interests
are identical with those of the British Government,
they offer their services to Government."

(1i) "That in view of the grave crisis which has arisen
in the history of the Empire, the meeting fully
realises the importance of presenting a united front
to the enemy and undertake to refrain from all
writings and discussions calculated to embarrass Government."

33. Prominent among those present in the meeting were editors
of the Observer, the Tehzib-ul-Hayan, the Arva Gazette,
the Hind, the Rash, the Akhbar-i-Aam, the Jang Hind, the
Desh, the Boh Jivan, the Zamindar, the Municipal Gazette,
the Baran, the Punjab Samachar, the Millat, the Brahman
Gazette, the Aryan, the Loyal Gazette. Editors of some
other papers like the Punjabi, the Pana Akhbar and the
Tribune regretted their unavoidable absence and expressed
their cooperation.

34. The Tribune, 19 August 1914, p.6; the Pioneer, 20 August 1914,
35. The Statesman, 23 August 1914, p.10.
36. The Tribune, 19 August 1914, p.6.
37. Ibid., 19 August 1914, p.6; the Bengalee, 21 August 1914, p.6.
The enthusiasm for the British war against Germany was not confined to the capital city of the province. Similar spirit prevailed at Amritsar, the second largest city of the Punjab, which was then, as now, an important centre of trade in piece goods, grains and hides, as well as the religious and political headquarters of the Sikhs.

No sooner the war broke out, than the Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar, wired a message to Sir for His Excellency the Viceroy, assuring him of the deep-rooted devotion of the Sikhs to the British Crown at home or on the battlefield.

In order to give further expression to the loyalty of the whole Sikh community, a general public meeting was held in the Golden Temple on 10 August at the instance of Sardar Bahadur S. Amr Singh, the Managing of the Temple. It was unanimously resolved in this meeting that Akhand Path (continuous reading of the Sacred Book) be held in the Temple and prayers be offered, both in the morning and the evening, for the success and victory of the British arms. Another meeting was held on 12 August when the reading of the Sacred Book was completed. A prayer was made to *kal Purrekh* (supreme being) in the *ardasa*, marking the close of the *Akhand Path*, that He may make the British Government ever successful and the Union Jack victorious in the then European crisis.

39. The *Tribune*, 16 August 1914, p. 4; the *Pioneer*, 10 August 1914, p. 10.
40. The *Tribune*, 16 August 1914, p. 4.
41. Ibid.
The close of this Akhand Path was followed by a recital of 101 saptahik paths of the Granth Sahib in the premises of the Golden Temple. These paths were simultaneously commenced on 2 September 1914 and completed after a week on 8 September. The Bhog was performed on that day with great pomp in the presence of the Deputy Commissioner of the District, the Secretary, Municipal Committee and a great assemblage of granthis, mahants, sardars, rajas, jagirdars and others. Fervent invocations were made on the occasion to the Almighty God for the complete victory of the British forces, and for the prosperity and extension of the British Raj.

In his capacity as the Manager of the highest Sikh shrine, the Golden Temple, Sardar Arur Singh issued an appeal to the Sikh Community in which he said that it was the bounden duty of every sardar, the leaders of the community and the heads of families to preach and propagate the numerous blessings of the British Raj. He referred to the heroic deeds of the Sikhs for the British Government in the past, and proclaimed that the Sikhs "firmly believe that their 9th Guru had long predicted the advent of the English as august rulers over the vast Indian Empire".

The various communities and societies at Amritsar held many more public meetings, jointly and severally, to express

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42. The Tribune, 16 September 1914, p.5.
43. Ibid.
44. The Tribune, 15 September 1914, p.7.
their loyal sentiments. Suffice to narrate here two of them.
The first was held on 12 August in the Town Hall and was
attended by all the notables of the city like Rai Bahadur Copal
Das Bhandari, Khan Bahadur Sheikh Shalam Sadiq, Mir Habib Ullah,
Sardar Bahadur Arur Singh, Lala Duni Chand, Dr. Satya Pal and
D. Manock Shaw. A resolution expressing loyalty to the British
moved by Khan Bahadur Sheikh Shalam Sadiq and seconded by Lala
Duni Chand, Sardar Bahadur Arur Singh and Manock Shaw, was
passed amidst wild applause. Immediately after the meeting,
the following telegram was sent to the Lieutenant-Governor of
the Punjab for onward transmission to His Excellency the Viceroy:

"The Hindu, Muslim, Sikh and Parsi citizens
of Amritsar, assembled in a public meeting, request
you to convey to His Excellency their expression of
depth loyalty to His Majesty the Emperor. They beg
to assure His Excellency of their readiness to under-
take any service they are desired to, and ready to
sacrifice everything they have to defend the Empire
to which they are proud to belong."

On 13 August a special public meeting was called by the
Amritsar Temperance Society. Vian Ferzedin, an Honorary
Magistrate, presided over it. It was a crowded meeting bubbling

45. The Tribune, 14 August 1914, p.4; Ibid., 19 August 1914,
p.6.
46. Ibid.
with enthusiasm. In the meeting the society assured the government of its sincere loyalty and strong devotion to the British and decided to start Temperance 'First Aid' Brigade to serve the people and the government.

What happened at Lahore and Amritsar was indicative of the thrill among all sections of the Punjabis created by the clash of arms in Europe. As the war news spread to less important towns and he bouts in the deep countryside, both urbanites and village folk echoed similar sentiments as had been expressed at Lahore and Amritsar. The result was that within a few days of the outbreak of the war the whole of the province was agog by the wave of mass loyalty.

Even the religious fairs became venues of meetings expressing loyal devotion to the British. A great Hindu religious fair held at Thanesar towards the end of 3rd week of August 1914 in connection with the solar eclipse illustrates the point. Thousands of Hindu devotees had collected there from far and near. The Maharaja of Darbhanga, a staunch Hindu, was also there on his pilgrimage to the holy city of ancient saints and sages. The Hindus, taking advantage of the large gathering, held a large meeting on 21 August at Thanesar under the presidency of this Maharaja to give vent to the loyalty of the Hindu community to the British. In his presidential remarks the Maharaja

47. The Tribune, 10 August 1914, p.5; the Pioneer, 10 August 1914, p.7.

48. The Bengal, 23 August 1914, p.4.

49. The Asias Bazaar Patrika, 22 August 1914, p.8; the Pioneer, 23 August 1914, p.6.
of Darbhanga characterised the action of Germany in leading Europe to war as unrighteous and predicted doubtless victory for Great Britain. He emphasised that the entire Hindu Community was ready to sacrifice all that it possessed for the sake of the war.

For the chiefs and the rulers of the native states of the Punjab, whose political relations with the Government of India were controlled by the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, it was more than an occasion for displaying their sentiments. In a meeting held at Amritsar on 6 August, the Punjab Chiefs Association unanimously decided to place all their belongings, inclusive of personal services, at the disposal of the government. This was only natural because it was in continuation of their old traditions. They said that there would be no greater honour for them than to shed their blood in service of their Emperor. The readiness with which the large states — Patiala, Jind, Kapurthala etc. — equipped their Imperial Service troops for war got approval from all quarters.

50. The Aurit Bazar Patrika, 22 August 1914, p.3; the Pioneer, 23 August 1914, p.6.
51. The Aurit Bazar Patrika, 12 August 1914, p.3; the Pioneer, 15 August 1914, p.7.
52. Pallava, 10 September 1914, p. 147; Speech of Sardar Daljit Singh on behalf of the Punjab aristocracy and Chiefs.
53. There were 43 tributary states under the political control of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab. Ten states out of them had area ranging from 500 to 15,000 square miles. See R.A.R.P., 1914-15, pp. 1-3 for details.
Rallies held in other parts of India and professions of loyalty to the British Crown by the Congress and Muslim League leaders of national stature further added to the Punjabi enthusiasm to side with the British in the war. The statements of these public leaders were widely publicised in the press and on the platform in the province. Without any exception, the newspapers circulating in the Punjab gave prominence to the words of such leaders as were known for their sincerity, patriotism and big sacrifices to the cause of the nation. There was hardly any paper which did not open its columns to the appeals made to their countrymen to help British cause by persons like Lala Lajpat Rai, B.C. Pal, C.G. Banerjee, Perouzeshah Sehta, G.K. Gokhale, B.G. Tilak, Annie Bosant, Agha Khan, and last but not least the grand old man of Indian politics, Lala Bhai Naoroji.

The assurance of Congress stalwarts to the British public that "India stands firm in support of His Majesty's Government [as she is] convinced that future welfare of the Indian people is bound up with the welfare of the British people"; Lala Lajpat Rai's pleadings to the Britishers as well as to the Indians that "It is an occasion for proving that British Rule in India does not rest on the British sword but on British principles"; B.C. Pal's exhortation that "they must forget the

55. Newspapers, especially those of the first three months of the war, are full of such accounts.
56. The Tribune, 10 September 1914, p.1: Joint statement issued by the members of Congress deputation in London.
57. Ibid., 13 October 1914, p.2.
past and throw themselves whole-heartedly to help the cause of the British; the memorable appeal to his countrymen by Bal Gangadhar Tilak that it was the bounden duty of every Indian "to support Government in every possible way at the present crisis"; and Dadabhai Naoroji's sober advice in a letter addressed to his countrymen to the effect that "our duty is clear, to do our every one's earnest to support the British fight with our life and property" — those and many such statements gave a great stimulus to the already aroused sentiments of loyalty of the Punjabi masses.

So splendid and spontaneous was the virile Punjabi's response in the beginning of the war that at times the British in India did not know what to do with it. Sir Michael O'Dwyer, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, described the response of the Punjabis to the Viceroy's proclamation of the war in a private letter of 12 August 1914 to Hardinge as "almost embarrassing". In fact the demonstration of loyalty on the part of people was so instantaneous, dazzling, overwhelming and beyond expectations that for some time the Government of India itself was in a fix and could not decide how to harness that mass enthusiasm into proper channels. Ultimately, however,

53. The Bengal, 10 August 1914, p.2.
50. The Indian Review, September 1914, p. 719; the Tribune, 33 August 1914, p.6; the Statesman, 28 August 1914, p.7.
60. The Statesman, 13 August 1914, p.7; the Pioneer, 15 August 1914, p.4.
after a good deal of thought and consultation between the central and local governments, the Viceroy established a Central Committee of Relief Fund, with branches in the provinces, for the relief from distress arising in India owing to the war. It was thought that the Committee, which would have branches all over the country, would offer opening to the great mass of Indians eager to help in the crisis. The announcement to this effect was made public on 16 August by the Viceroy himself.

The first city of the province, Lahore, took initiative and showed the other towns of the Punjab the way to do something practical and tangible in this matter also. The leaders of the Lahore public convened a meeting on 23 August 1914 and declared that the Viceroy's call was a call on behalf of the distressed in India, and, in responding to it, they were only doing their duty, and nothing more. They subscribed a large amount of about Rs. 86,000 at the spot to mark the inauguration of the Relief Fund Scheme.

The example set in this meeting, produced a powerful impact and it started appearing that every Punjabi had decided to make the Relief Fund in the Punjab a grand success. Everyone, from a prince to a peasant, contributed handsomely and

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63. Harding Papers, Vol. 39, No. 120, O’Dwyer to Harding, dated 12 August 1914.
64. The Indian Review, August 1914, p. 600; The Statesman, 13 August 1914, p.7.
65. The Tribune, 27 August 1914, p.1; The Bengales, 27 August 1914, p.2; The Pioneer, 23 August 1914, p.5.
66. The Bengales, 27 August 1914, p.2.
voluntarily to the maximum of his capacity. Even the Arya Samaj, a quarter from which the Government did not expect any support, strove hard to make liberal contributions to the Fund. On 5 September 1914, the Secretary, Arya Pradesha Pratinidhi Sabha, Punjab, Sind and Baluchistan, with its headquarters at Lahore, issued the following circular to secretaries of all branches in the region:

"You know ... His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India has appealed for aid towards his Imperial Relief Fund and subscriptions are being collected for this purpose. I earnestly appeal to you by this circular letter that all Arya Samajists should contribute liberally and to the best of their might in the local funds started for the purpose."

As the Viceroy had especially addressed the chiefs for their loyal support and assistance, in the Punjab they came forward in a big way to offer money for the Relief Fund, in fact everything which could help the troops in the field, relieve the wounded, and safeguard their dependants against distress and want. So good was their performance that the Punjab Government recorded:

"The war supplied the occasion of putting to the test the proverbial loyalty of the Ruling Chiefs of the Punjab, and they came out of the ordeal with nobler reputation."

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G7. The Tribune, 17 September 1914, p.3.
The feeling of widespread loyalty shown by the people and princes of the Punjab towards the British as revealed in the public meetings and the contribution towards the Relief Fund was further reflected in the meeting of the Punjab Legislative Council at Simla on 19 September.

While presiding over this meeting of the Punjab Legislative Council, Sir Michael O'Byrne moved the following resolution to express the Punjabi gratitude to their King-Emperor:

"This Council desires to convey to His Gracious Majesty the King-Emperor George the Fifth an expression of the sincere devotion and staunch loyalty of His subjects in the Punjab to the Throne and the Government and an assurance of their solemn determination to maintain the proud martial traditions of the province by serving His Majesty in every form in which their help may be required in the present war against the enemies of His Empire."

Member after member got up to support the resolution. The representatives of the people in the Council, spoke on behalf of the community or interest they represented and assured the government that they would not fail to perform their duty in the titanic struggle in which the Empire was then involved.

70. P.L.C.D. 19 September 1914, p. 120: The Council at Council Chamber, Barnes Court, Simla at 11 a.m., Saturday the 19 September 1914.

Sardar Daljit Singh was the first to speak in support of that resolution. He spoke on behalf of the Sikhs and the aristocracy of the Punjab and while referring to their loyalty to the British, said:

"to uphold the honour and prestige of the British, whose advent was so prophetically predicted by one of our Gurus, is the central concern of each and every Sikh."

The Hon'ble Sardar then assured the Government that the Sikhs in general and the Punjab Chiefs Association in particular, would think no sacrifice too great to uphold the honour of British flag. He concluded his speech with the following remarks:

"The Punjab is of one mind, animated with one sentiment and prepared to offer its full cooperation, grateful loyalty and whole-hearted devotion to the Crown on the present occasion."

Khan Bahadur Mian Muhammad Safi then rose to support the resolution. He accused the German Chancellor for the worldwide catastrophe, and feared that the war would be a protracted one. Should this happen, Mian Muhammad Safi said,

"Government may rest assured that even if the whole of our army, British as well as Indian, were to be despatched to Europe, India's loyal sons will, as volunteers, gladly assist their Government in maintaining law and order in the country."

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72. He was also a member of the Imperial Legislative Council of the Viceroy and had already spoken much on behalf of the Punjab in that Council. See 


75. Ibid., p. 143.
He emphasised that his co-religionists would "throughout remain steadfast in their loyalty and devotion to the British cause". Safi received a tremendous applause from every section of the Council when he wound up his speech in these words:

"Your Honour, as an Indian, I am proud of this complete solidarity of my countrymen in support of a righteous cause; as a Mohammedan, I rejoice to have, once more, this opportunity of assuring Government of the Muslim Community's unswerving loyalty to the British Crown, and as for myself, I gladly place all that life holds dear at the disposal of Government."

Sir P.C. Chatterjea eulogised Britshers' sense of justice and freedom. Expressing warm sympathies for the English nation, he said:

"In the time of danger our hearts go out to her and impel us to place all at her disposal for use against the common enemy ... I rejoice that we shall have an opportunity to draw our swords on behalf of our gracious sovereign ... Punjab will, I am sure, cheerfully undergo any sacrifice and make contribution of every kind, men, money and service, in the interests of her King-Emperor and of the Empire."

Sardar Sunder Singh said that their religion had taught them that for a righteous cause no sacrifice was too great and

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"for the help of the needy, the brave sons of Guru Gobind Singh must always be ready". He said that the war had been thrust upon the peace-loving England, which was compelled to take up arms against Germany per force for the preservation of liberty and for the protection of a weaker nation like Belgium. In such a righteous cause India, which was proud of the privilege of being the brightest jewel in the diadem of His Imperial Majesty, could not remain behind others in her devotion to the throne. Sikhs, he said, true to their salt and their traditions, had always done their duty valiantly wherever their services were requisitioned by the Empire in the past. He hoped that "on the present occasion also they will show to the vain-glorious Germans what they are made of". He warmed up and described the war as a crusade (religious war) for the Sikhs. He concluded his speech with the remark that the Sikhs would

"lay down their lives in the service of the Empire, under whose aegis peace, happiness, religious toleration and prosperity are assured [to] them."

Khan Bahadur Khwajah Yusaf Shah assured the President, the Lieutenant-Governor of the province, that it was the solemn determination of the Punjabis, whatever be their caste or creed, to maintain their proud martial traditions of sacrificing their lives to uphold the honour of their sovereign.

73. PAC2, 19 September 1914, pp. 150-151.
70. Ibid., p. 161.
Rai Bahadur Hari Chand praised Great Britain's sense of moral obligation and expressed the opinion that her timely declaration of war against Germany "will be an epoch in history and will enhance her dignity." He felt sure that the Indians knew their duty well and under no circumstances they would be found wanting.

Navab Ibrahim Ali Khan of Kanjpur, referred to the unlimited enthusiasm, the war had created and appealed to the Government to make use of it. He added:

"With thousands of our young brave men in the theatre of war, we are not satisfied, and feel that we have to do more."

Then Rai Bahadur Bakhshi Sohan Lal took his turn. He dwelt at length on the causes of the war and drew an analogy between British war against Germany and Lord Krishna's Mahavritth of ancient times:

"Great Britain has been ordained to draw the sword and to intervene for the honour, protection and liberty of mankind and for the sake of just and rightful cause of the weaker nations... just as Sri Krishna Ji Maharaj had done in the old Mahabharat to help the Pandavas who though weaker in physical force than Kaurvas, were much stronger in the moral force of their cause than that of their greedy enemies."

32. Ibid., p. 154.
On behalf of the Central Group of the Punjab Districts, he assured the Government that they were prepared to place all their resources as well as their lives and personal services at the disposal of the Government and to sacrifice their all in support of the British arms.

Bakhshsh Mohan Lal was followed by Lala Kashi Ram, a great Arya Samajist by faith. He made a long and impressive speech in the course of which he said:

"Loyalty to the Throne is a religious duty which is enjoined on the subjects by our shastras .... British Government is as essential to the Arya Samajists for their existence and for their growth as is their life breath. Loyalty to the King-Emperor and patriotism are to them inseparable and mean one and the same thing?"

Sardar Gajjan Singh, who had been patiently waiting for his chance so far, rose to speak. He explained that their interests were identical with those of the British. As the Indian Army was shortly to take part in the war he considered it a 'unique chance' for the army to win an 'impeccable glory'. "The Indians," he said, "can no longer stand as silent spectators from afar while their kith and kin are draining their dearest veins for their beloved sovereign". Raising his voice a bit louder at this stage, he continued to say

"the Germans will find a terrible foe in the Sikhs when lion-like the latter will furiously fall upon the former with their famous Khalsa war cry of Sat Sri Akal". In the end, the Sardar once more assured the government of Sikh support: "My brethren... fully realise that their interests are bound up — indissolubly bound up — with the Empire, and that they must stand or fall together."

When the President put the resolution to vote, it was passed unanimously and with members standing. O’wyer felt so satisfied with the expression of Punjabi loyalty that he hastened to forward the resolution passed by the Council to His Excellency the Viceroy for onward transmission to the King Emperor.

The Punjab entered the war, thus, with great excitement and an outburst of splendid loyalty to the British Government.

There were many reasons for this spontaneous display of loyalty in the beginning of the War. The most important of them was that Lord Hardinge had, by his shrewd and sober statesmanship, successfully created a congenial atmosphere in India on the eve of the outbreak of the War. But it was not some the only reason. The people had been moved by many instincts, of which would have exerted the selves even without the climate

34. Palais-Royal, 19 September 1914, p. 137.
35. Ibid, p. 159.
created by Hardlogo. The cultivating class, which formed the bulk of population (90%) in the province was conservative by nature, a devout believer in the wisdom of Providence, whose representative they saw in the person of the King of England and their Emperor. Little wonder that this class was impelled by some sort of spiritual loyalty to him. But apart from that, the members of the class were also aware of the opportunity that the war had offered them to win laurels on the battlefields and add to their martial tradition. On the whole the British were popular with the Punjab peasant proprietors. That class certainly then disliked exchanging the British rule for any other alien rule. Perhaps it was not then prepared even to exchange it for the rule of their own countrymen. The security of their land-tenure was their primary concern, and they believed that their interests in the ancestral land and property could remain safe only under the British Raj.

Unlike the cultivating class, the big landlords and zamindars as a class were loyal to the government not because of sentimental attachment to the Britishers but because of vested interests. They had everything to gain by helping the alien government. The money which they would be contributing in various war funds was likely to gain them new sources of income through additional favours of the government when the men they would enrol for the army, would come from the peasants.

37. GOI-Home-Pol-Deposit-August 1914-Pro. No. 1, para 10.
The war had given them the golden opportunity of winning more favours from the benign government which fostered them and under whose benevolence they had flourished so far.

The commercial class which included big traders, banking, industrialists, and bankers, was equally vociferous in expressing its loyalty. It was profitable for them to be on the right side of the Government. Britain's defeat could well mean their economic ruin. Their interests bound them to the future destiny of Britain.

The Princes had much more in common with the British Government than among themselves or between them and their subjects. Their very existence was at the mercy of Britishers in India. Each of them had enough sense to realise that in order to maintain his so-called ancestral glory intact it was necessary for him to offer arms and make liberal donations to the British. They made a virtue of necessity and clung to the Britishers as steadfastly as they could.

The literate class at that time comprised roughly no more than 10% of population, out of which nearly half were semi-literate and only one per cent had received English education. Majority of this so-called intelligentsia was in Government service, and because of their profession ultra-loyalists. Others had entered big business, trade and commerce where it suited

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then to be in the good books of the Government. Without
Government patronage and favour, it was difficult for them to
earn large fortunes in big business. Only a small number of
people, like doctors, technocrats, journalists and teachers, had
independent means of livelihood. They constituted a class
within a class, and many of them were confirmed and genuine
loyalists. They were imbued with enough common sense to know
that they had more to gain from British success in the World War
than from her defeat, which might well mean change of a known
master by an unknown one. This class had, however, many people
in its ranks who were imbued with latest political thoughts
of the east as well as the west, which occasionally made them
for an outburst of patriotic sentiments and make anti-British
speeches. The views they propounded would swing from the extreme
left to the extreme right. Influenced by the various cross-
currents of the time, a section of this class was indeed very
vocal and a source of strength to ardent Indian nationalists
who posed an occasional danger to the British rule in India.
The educated class thus was then divided into three parts —
Government servants, Moderates and Extremists and they had
their own reasons for the demonstration of loyalty.

39. Moderates meant in those times as professed constitutionalists,
who aspired for self-rule but within British fold and under
British patronage.

90. Extremists were those Indian nationalists who wanted
complete Swaraj and the expulsion of foreign rule from India,
not by means of prayers and petitions but by asserting them-
selves in every possible manner.
The Government servants were loyal to the Government because they did not want to risk their pay and prospects and all other prestige, power and paraphernalia that was associated with the name of a 'Babu Sahib' in those days. The attitude of pensioned personnel was the same and for the same reasons.

The Moderates and the Extremists, inspite of whatever views propounded by them in the past in pursuance of their convictions or nationalist ardour, had buried their hatchet for the time being and preached loyalty and submission to the wishes of the Government because either they sincerely did not want to embarrass the government for the time being or felt themselves helpless in creating any hostile climate in the situation that existed then. Under both possibilities their demonstration of loyalty was purely political.

The spectrum of the Punjabi loyalty, almost the reflection of the Indian loyalty in general, thus, had a wide range of colours starting from spiritual on the one end to political on the other. But by and large, the one or the other vested interest, only varying in degree, was the mainspring of that loyalty, and everyone was excited because he saw in the outbreak of the war an ample opportunity to further that interest.

91. Typical denomination for a government servant holding a subordinate ministerial post.