CHAPTER I

PUNJAB IN 1919

In 1919 the world had emerged from World War I which resulted in depression, discontent and frustration etc. throughout the world. India which had participated in the war on a large scale was no exception. "The 1914-18 war had an unsettling effect on India and at its close many parts of the country were in a state of ferment."¹ During the earlier stages of the war, the British forces had suffered a series of defeats, resulting in the shaking of confidence in the stability and permanence of the British Raj. There was widespread discontent owing to the rise in prices. The war with Turkey had all along been unpopular with the Indian Mussalmans, since the Sultan of Turkey was the Caliph or Supreme Head of the Muslim world; and on the complete defeat of the Turkish armies in the autumn of 1918, rumours that the Turkish empire would be dismembered and the Caliphate abolished began to stir Muslim fanaticism. Along with the dissatisfaction created by the above factors among the masses, the spirit of nationalism was spreading amongst the educated classes whose hopes and ambitions had been aroused, but who were disillusioned by the meagre political reforms which were likely to be granted to

¹P. Moon; Gandhi and Modern India; The English Universities Press, Ltd., 1968, p.9.
India by the British Government, after the war.

The Punjab's share - both in men and money had been the largest. The number of fighting men raised during the four years of war was roughly three hundred and sixty thousand, more than half the total number raised in India. "Even before the war the Punjab had a name familiar in the military annals of the empire. But during the war she became a household word, not only on account of the number of men from the Punjab joined the colours, but also on account of the splendid fighting qualities they displayed in many a campaign."²

Though the Punjab had contributed so enthusiastically to the war efforts and thus exhibited its sense of loyalty to the British Raj, there came a reaction as soon as the war was over. The Punjab became a scene of frustration, disappointment and dissatisfaction. It witnessed a revolutionary movement of the kind which it had not witnessed since the inception of the British Raj. Its reputation changed from the 'loyal' province to the 'most dangerous' province. To fully understand the reasons for this change it would be better to have a close look at the society of the Punjab as in 1919, various social groups and the immediate effects of the war on them, the discontent which affected the various sections of the society, and the effects of the policies of the Government during the

²Michael O'Dwyer: India As I knew it; London, 1925, p. 215.
war and immediately after its cessation.

The Punjab, according to the census of 1911, had a population of 24,187,755 (including Delhi which was a part of it) and according to the census of 1921 it was 25,101,060 (excluding Delhi). The Mohammedans were in a majority, comprising 51% followed by Hindus (35%) and Sikhs (12%). The Punjab was predominantly an agricultural region with 58% of the working population engaged exclusively in agriculture. 90% of the population lived in rural areas. Though the Punjab was industrially a backward province, yet 22% of the working population was involved in industries of various kinds, a large proportion of which was confined to Lahore—the capital of the Punjab. "Lahore was by no means an industrial city in 1919. But it could still boast of a considerable number of manufactorys, 42 in all, which had survived the commercial crisis of 1913. Besides, the city was also the centre of a number of art industries which produced articles for daily consumption.... The industrial development of Lahore was geared to a rural rather than an urban economy. This was because industrial activity in the city was related to the processing of cash crops like cotton or oil seeds."³

Thus Lahore had a considerable number of industrial workers. Out of a population of 280,000 nearly 45,000 persons in Lahore were dependent upon the various crafts and industries

for their subsistence. The majority of the workers and the artisans were the Muslims. They occupied an inferior position in society and were looked upon as low caste people both by the Hindus and the Muslims.

From the point of view of political importance, Lahore was the first city in the Punjab, being its capital and seat of the government. There were also a good number of lawyers pursuing their profession in the city. Being the seat of government it had a considerable number of government servants. Lahore was also a big centre of education. There were ten colleges for boys and two for girls and a number of high schools. It had two English dailies - one conducted in the interests generally of bureaucracy and European commerce, the other devoted to Indian national interests. It had several dailies and weeklies in vernaculars. Therefore, Lahore had the largest number of literate persons. Young Punjabis with ambition flocked to Lahore for English education, or for employment or for business. Lahore was a big railway junction for Peshawar, Calcutta, Karachi and Bombay. The distance between Lahore and Delhi was 298 miles. The population of Lahore, excluding that of the Cantonement, was about 250,000 of which the Muhammedan element was preponderant, Hindus being only a third of the Muhammedans.

Lahore was the only city in the province which could be called a politically conscious city. The Indian Association
was the most important political organisation of the city. Its Secretary was L. Duni Chand, one of the most popular Municipal Commissioners of Lahore, who had a record of unbroken public service.

Amritsar was the chief distributing centre for piece-goods in northern India. It was an important trading centre. It was also an important centre of speculative dealing in foodgrains. Amritsar had important trade links with centres both in Punjab and outside Punjab like Delhi, Ahmedabad and Bombay. Thus Amritsar was a sort of link between the traders of the Punjab and those of other important trading centres of India. Virtually, Amritsar was second in importance to Lahore, though in some respects it was even more important than to Lahore. Its population numbered 160,000. Another important point about Amritsar was that the Golden Temple was situated there, which was one of the important places of worship for the Sikhs and for a large number of Hindus as well. Thus, Amritsar, on account of being the largest commercial centre in the Punjab and having the Golden Temple, attracted travellers and visitors from all parts of the Punjab and even from outside.

The development of the export trade in wheat had created new centres of trade, in places favourably situated on the lines of communication, especially on the Southern Punjab railway and on the line from Wazirabad through Chenab Colony. Large grain markets had been established at Rohtak,
Kaithal, Bhatinda and Abohar. In the Chenab colony important trade centres had been established at Gojra, Lyallpur, Sangla, Chiniot and Toba Tek Singh.\textsuperscript{4}

Thus there were important trade links and relations between the various trading centres. A majority of the trading people were Hindus. In the villages the trader was both the collecting and distributing agent, combining money-lending with shop-keeping.

The financial crisis of 1913 had a very serious effect upon trade and industry in the province. No new undertakings were launched even after opportunities were offered by the World War. "The financial crash of 1913 was a traumatic experience for the middle classes of Lahore. The middle classes, who had no knowledge of the actual intrigue conducted behind the scene, ascribed the crash solely to O'Dwyer's hostility towards them, and to his partiality to English financial interests. They looked upon the crisis as something that marked an end to their honeymoon with the British Government."\textsuperscript{5}

\textbf{The Ghadr Emigrants}

Though small in number but scattered all over the Punjab, and constituting an important section of the society, were the returned emigrants from America and Canada or the


\textsuperscript{5}R. Kumar: op. cit., pp. 258-59.
members of the Ghadr Party. Though they were small in number, the effect of their activities on the Punjabis was considerable. Their effect is described in these words: "The return of the Ghadritis was the first live contact that the Sikh peasants experienced with the politics of any kind." By the beginning of 1919 nearly a thousand individuals closely knit by the ideals of the Ghadr party in the U.S.A. and Canada had returned to India and settled in the Punjab. Hardayal, the founder of the Ghadr Party, had long perceived that war between Germany and England was bound to take place and that would provide a great opportunity to Indians in foreign lands to strike for freedom. Immediately after the declaration of the war between Germany and Britain overseas Indians began to hotly discuss about leaving America and returning to India to take part in the liberation struggle. A large number of them gathered together at the Yugantar Asharam to know what course of action the Ghadr Party wanted them to take. A few among them secured passages immediately and proceeded to India in advance. Kartar Singh was one of those who left early by the Nipponmaru and arrived in Colombo on 15 or 16 September. The C.I.A. could not arrest him when he secretly entered India. He tried to set up some sort of propaganda machinery.

Though the movement ultimately failed due to various

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reasons, yet it was successful in creating a spirit of revolt among many Punjabis. Most of the leaders of the Party were arrested, but before their arrest they had acquainted the people with their ideas, their programmes and their ways. "There had been plots against the British Government in India, which, though detected and suppressed made man's mind familiar with the possibility of the Government being overthrown. All this contributed to a feeling of general unrest, the great herd of the people had, so to speak, their heads up...." The Government report says, "On arrival in India during the autumn of 1914 and the winter of 1914-15 the vast majority of these conspirators being Sikhs proceeded to the Punjab of which they were residents, and those that were not interested continued the conspiracy with the common object of waging war on His Majesty, the King Emperor, of overthrowing the Government established by law and of establishing a system of Self-Government. 8

"Lahore and Amritsar being leading Sikh districts larger number of the conspirators returned to their homes in this tract, and consequently the Lahore, Amritsar neighbourhood became a centre of revolutionary campaign...." 9

7 Punjab Disturbances 1919, Amritsar District. (See also Satya M. Rai - Revolutionary Terrorist Movement in the Punjab)


9 Ibid.
Many of the Ghadritis travelled back to India in the Kamagata Maru and the Tosa Maru, but on account of the vigilance of the British intelligence services and quick action taken by the authorities, 400 out of the 8,000 passengers who returned during the first two years of the war, were arrested, 2,500 were interred in their villages and the remaining 5,000 were kept under strict watch. "Those who escaped from the clutches of law, however, tried to carry out their plans, like working among the peasantry; seduction of the army, procurement of arms; manufacture of bombs; commission of dacoities; looting of treasures and thanas; recruitment of young men for revolutionary work and distribution of Ghadr literature etc...." 10

Some of the leaders of the movement like Kartar Singh Sarabha, Kanshi Ram, Jagat Ram, Harnam Singh (Tundilat) Rehmat Ali, Nidhan Singh Cheeglea, Prithvi Singh escaped the Government net till 19th Feb., 1915. 11 Till then they tried to carry on their work—setting up working centres, carrying on propaganda and collecting funds. They even invited Rash Behari Bose to Amritsar and Lahore in the middle of January, 1915. O'Dweyer records: "Some of the worst men slipped in through the ports unobserved, or failed to report themselves, and some of those who reported, but were not then regarded as very dangerous, proved afterwards to be so. It was these


11 Sohan Singh Josh: Hindustan Ghadr Party - A Short History; People's Publishing House, New Delhi, p.211.
men that later gave us most trouble."  

Majority of the Ghadraits belonged to the Central tract. In the Central Punjab the pressure on the land had increased thus leading to economic difficulties. To escape the effects of economic problems the people had gone to foreign lands.

The Demobilised Soldiers

The Punjab in 1919 had a large number of men who had returned from the War fought in Europe i.e. the demobilised soldiers. These soldiers came back to India as changed men, with a broader outlook, a desire to reform their society and to improve their standard of living. The Punjabi soldier had fought by the side of the white soldier and against white soldiers and had acquired some idea of their own importance. Here in India they saw a white man as a Sahib and had a great fear of and respect for him which was lost due to contact and close association with the white soldier. "Punjabi soldier had spent much more time in France than in England and claimed France as a paradise. They had received a hero's welcome at Marseilles which had made them overconfident of their value. They had good experience of contact with French civilians who had treated them like equals, as against the treatment of the English to be looked upon as Sahibs."  

After this close

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association with the English and Europeans, when they returned to India they had again to reckon with the superiority of the English which was frustrating and irritating. The Punjabi soldier had seen in France better standards and better conditions of life of the soldiers. This created an urge in them for better economic conditions. This urge, in turn led to political awakening.

These soldiers became an agent of change after returning to their homeland, as can be seen from the following letters of the soldiers written to their relatives in India. In 1919 a Jat Risaldar wrote feelingly: "My prayer is that you will give up your foolish customs and extravagant expenses, and if you love your country you will get others to follow your example." Another Sikh soldier wrote in 1918: "If God spares me to return, I intend to start new customs. Look, in our country people ruin themselves over marriages and law suits. In this country rich and poor, high and low, go to Church together and worship, and there is no distinction...." Thus a keen desire was seen among the Punjabi soldier to reform their society.

Continuous living together of Hindu and Muslim soldiers in the battlefield brought about a sort of unity, an attitude of compromise and adjustment. In 1915 one Punjabi Muslim wrote: "We are very well united inspite of religious differences." In short, the experiences gathered during the war broadened

\[14\] Ibid., p. 357

\[15\] Ibid., p. 358
the vision of Punjabi soldiers and opened their eyes to new things, new ways of life and to some of their own potentialities. As one veteran has put it in the words recorded by the interviewer - "The new ideas which the Indian soldiers took from the soldiers and people of other countries were remarkable. The Indian soldier who has no courage to speak before the British started protesting against them in connection with their salaries and other issues. They demanded that there should be Indian officers also in the Indian Army. They raised their voice against injustice of inequality...."\(^1\) This reduced the fear of the English.

The soldiers and their relatives came to believe that it was due to them that the Allies had won, and they felt proud of it.

After acquiring such a sense of pride the conditions of demobilisation were humiliating. The Punjab became a scene of thousands of demobilised soldiers who were discontented at the treatment meted out to them, after the British purpose had been served. As the Government report says "Reports received from some police stations show that the demobilised sepoys continue to show disinclination to join the army especially on the plea of their bad treatment on demobilisation, when it is reported that they were deprived of their kits and clothes and ordered to clear off the cantonment or they would be handed over to the police. They are also reported to have said that

\(^1\) Ibid., p. 358
they would not re-enlist unless they were paid at the rate laid down for British soldiers and no differential treatment made between them and the British soldiers by putting them before the enemy."17

When the demobilised soldiers returned, they had to face disappointment. Lands of many of them were lying uncultivated and life had to be started again. They had some expectations in joining the war. Every effort had been made to make them feel that the war was their own war, but, inspite of the victory, no gains were forthcoming. Rather there were economic difficulties to be faced. There was some sort of recognition of war services in the form of grants of jagirs, and in other forms for individual services, but nothing had been done to recognize wider services of the general public.

There was a proposal for extensive remission of land revenue in those villages of which a high proportion of the available manhood had enlisted in the army, and also for special assignments of revenue for the benefit of those families who had sent a large number of their members to the army. As 90% of the recruits were agriculturists, the Punjab Government was suffering a great loss and the matter was being referred to various branches of the Government which took time and thus caused disappointment. Finally the proposal was dropped in July, 1919. The people as a whole had come to expect a lot, and

17Home Pol.B.1920 No.3736(Appendix xi),Ill Feeling Among Demobilised Soldiers.
the grant of land to certain individuals resulted in jealousy and people lost faith in the British sense of justice. The slowness in paying the pension claims was the subject of unfavourable comment.

Michael O'Dwyer

The administration of the Punjab was headed by a Lt. Governor, who had a Legislative Council under him. Members of this Council were partly elected and partly nominated. Michael O'Dwyer was the Lt. Governor of Punjab from 1913 to 1919. "He represented the outlook of the nineteenth century empire builders who believed in the 'white man's burden' and in England's divine mission to bestow on India the blessings of a sound, strong and efficient administration. He made full use of the authority vested in him."\(^{18}\)

After assuming office as Lt. Governor, O'Dwyer's brought about a sudden change. His predecessor Sir Louis Dane had been accessible to all classes of people. "But O'Dwyer who believed in the overall authority of the Lt. Governor said in a speech at Rawalpindi that he did not want suggestions about how to rule, he knew how to rule. He said he knew his business best, and people should mind their own business."\(^{19}\)


\(^{19}\)Seventh Punjab Provincial Conference - Presidential Address, Jullundur.
Thus he carried on the administration of the Punjab without caring for the public wishes and feelings, and adopted policies and rules without caring to know their reaction. L. Lajpat Rai writing about him and the Punjab disturbances said, "He was not only a tyrant and a snob of the worst order but he was incompetent also. One of the two things must have happened. Either he was out of touch with public feelings in the province or he deliberately provoked this disaster by a policy of strength."

O'Dwyer was badly against the educated classes to whom he showed his antipathy even in reply to the farewell address presented to him when he said, "what are their characteristics? They are wild, evil, dangerous, insidious, disloyal, revolutionary, mischief makers given to the use of inflammatory language, to circulating malicious rumours and to exciting feelings of deadly hatred towards Europeans as tyrants and oppressors."

He tried to suppress all sorts of political activity. "He abused the powers given to him by the Defence of India Act by prohibiting the entry into the province of Messrs Tilak and Pal. He interned hundreds of local men with little or no cause. He gagged the vernacular press, prevented the nationalist papers edited outside the Punjab from circulating in the province, as for instance, The 'New India', the 'Amrita Bazar Patrika', the 'Independent' etc. He prohibited the circulation even of precensored vernacular paper, and brought about a state of things, whereby it became practically impossible for the

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20 Lajpat R: Political Future of India; New York, 1919, p. 16
people of the province to have a free interchange of independent views, or a free ventilation of their grievances in the public press; and then, having prevented free speech and free writing, allowed himself to think and gave outsiders to understand that the people of the Punjab were the happiest under his rule."\(^{22}\)

**The Montford Reforms**

The most important of all issues which agitated the educated people was his attitude towards the reforms, for which they had been anxiously waiting. He was not in favour of giving franchise to the urban classes while the rural were being excluded. In 1917, 19 members of the Imperial Legislative Council signed their famous memorandum, setting forth their proposals for reforms. Four of the signatories were from the Punjab. O'Dwyer sent for them and administered a severe rebuke to them for having dared to think for themselves and to sign the notice."\(^{23}\)

This attitude of O'Dwyer was the single most important contributory cause of alienation of the middle and educated classes. These classes had fixed their eyes on the reforms scheme since the famous announcement made by Montague on


\(^{23}\)Congress Committee Report, op.cit., p.12, Vol.I.
August 20, 1917, and all their political activity had centered around it. The pronouncement which was described as "the most momentous utterance ever made in India's chequered history" ran as follows:

"The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India is in complete accord, is that of increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realisation of responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British empire. They have decided that substantial steps should be taken in this direction as soon as possible. Montague's mission arrived in India on 10th November, 1917. After inquiry and consultation the Report was drafted and signed jointly by Montague and Chelmsford on 22nd April, 1918."

The Montford report was based largely on the Congress-Muslim League scheme of 1916. The Punjab leaders had not figured prominently in it. Therefore, the Punjab was kept backward and the Sikhs were not given separate representation as the Muslims were given. Lajpat Rai was in exile in the U.S.A., L. Barkishan Lal, then President of the Indian Association, Lahore, was fully occupied with a personal financial crisis, and Fazl-1-Hussain was deeply involved with a split in the Punjab Muslim League.

The Sikhs had not been invited to these confabulations. The Chief Khalsa Dewan had addressed a memorandum to the Lt. Governor stating that they would not accept a constitution
which did not guarantee to them (Sikhs) a share in the Provincial and Imperial Councils as well as in the Civil administration of the country, with due regard to their status before annexation of the Punjab, their present state in the country and their past and present services to the empire. In order that such representation be adequate, effective and consistent with their position and importance, the Sikhs claimed a one third share in all seats and appointments in the Punjab as their just share; they demanded that their share in the Viceroy's and the Secretary of State's Council should be adequate.... A deputation of the Sikh leaders waited on the Viceroy (November 22, 1917) and pressed their claim to a one-third representation in the Punjab on the basis of their services in the war.  

The Punjab Government was sympathetic to the claims of the Sikhs. On November 23, 1918, they pleaded for a liberal treatment of the Sikhs with the Franchise Committee. But the Government of India Act of 1919 was a disappointment to the Sikhs as it did not give them the 33% share they had expected. The new Legislative Council was to comprise 93 members of whom 15 were to be Sikhs elected by Sikh constituents. In other words they were given only 16% representation. The Central Assembly was to have 145 members of whom three were to be Sikhs (i.e. 2.09%), the Council of State was to have 60 members

of whom one was to be a Sikh. The Sikh community was very much disappointed.

Some sections of the Sikh community began to feel the necessity of a political organisation of their own. It was felt that it was the absence of political organisation of their own which gave the impression to the others that Sikhs were a politically backward community. The 'Loyal Gazette' said, "The Sikhs were asleep at the time when Minto-Morley scheme was drawn up, with the result that, unlike the Muhammedans, they did not get separate representation. They are already aware of the harm done to them through their avoidance of politics and their failure to establish a Sikh political association. Why do not capable men rise among us? Why have we no influence with our fellow countrymen and the authorities? Why do we remain unsuccessful in every matter undertaken by us? The reply to these questions consists in our holding ourselves aloof from politics..."25

Meetings of Sikhs were held at which concern was expressed at the absence of their political organisation. Need was stressed for the formation of a purely political organization and Sikhs were asked to enlist in large numbers.

At a conference of Sikhs presided over by S. Gajjan Singh on March 30, 1919, a Sub-Committee was formed for drafting of the Constitution of the proposed 'Sikh League'.

Thus was established a purely political Sikh organization—'The Sikh League' in early 1919. 'The Tribune' commented on the birth of the League in the following words: "This is the first occasion when the Sikhs have come to realise from the logic of events that no class of the Community can afford to commit political suicide, and we heartily welcome the inauguration of the new League as a channel to focus Sikh opinion and to voice Sikh aspirations and Sikh demands."\(^{26}\)

From the very beginning the founders and the supporters of the Sikh League were in favour of cooperation with the Congress. They believed that the Congress was the main political organization of the country, and it was on account of the association of the Muhammadans with the Congress that they were able to secure so many favours under the new reforms scheme. They believed that the association with the Congress would result in their political advancement.

The question of reforms divided the Muslims of the Punjab into two groups. The one under the leadership of Muhammad Ali Shafi did not like the entente established at Lucknow, and wanted the Muslims to hold fast to separatist tendencies. This group first tried to take the Muslim

\(^{26}\)The Tribune: Ist. April, 1919.
League with it, but they failed in their attempt and consequently set up a new platform for themselves. A meeting was held on December 30, 1917 under the auspices of the old Punjab Muslim League, the U.P. Muslim Defence Association and the Indian Muslim Association, Calcutta, to form an 'All India Muslim Association' for safeguarding the Muslim interests. In explaining the objects of the new Association Mr. Shafi attacked the Congress League scheme which, he said, would materially injure the cause of the Muslim Community - both in administrative and legislative affairs. This was not well received in the press which attacked it vehemently. 'The Punjab', a Muslim Daily published from Lahore noted: "While the better minds of India are trying to secure liberty for India, there are some nominal leaders among Hindus and Muhammadans who are only seeking to secure the fall of the country into the pit of degradation. The Hon'ble Khan Bahadur Mian Muhammad Shafi is a son of the Punjab, but whenever the time comes for representing the view of the country, he tries to destroy the aspirations of the nation and the country and continues to harp on his own theme. This is the reason why the All India Muslim League disaffiliated his provincial League. But he still desires that the people should consider him a leader. But his latest mischievous attempt will have no better success.... what can the nation expect of the All India Muslim Association which is managed by men like Mian Md. Shafi and Khan Bahadur
Sheikh Ghulam Sadiq.\footnote{27} Md. Shafi who was elected the General Secretary of the Association was not followed by many people. The 'Bombay Chronicle', wrote about Md. Shafi, as below: "The moving spirit and General Secretary of the body is the Hon'ble Mian Md. Shafi of Lahore - a man who dare not show his face at any respectable political meeting of Mussalmans without running the risk of being hooted out of the gathering."\footnote{28}

The other section comprising of young English educated Muslims was in favour of the Congress league scheme. They believed that their community could progress only with cooperation with the Hindus. Thus their grievances about the reforms centered around the backward position given to the Punjab and not around their communal position.

Among the Hindus, the Hindu Mahasabha was opposed to separate electorate. They believed that the Hindus in the Punjab were in a minority, but they constituted an important influential and affluent community, and they would suffer in view of separate representation being granted both to Muslims and Sikhs. Founded in 1908 for the purpose of safeguarding the interests of the Hindus, the Sabha opposed the Lucknow pact on the basis of undue

\footnote{27} 'Punjab', 7th Jan. 1918, quoted in Punjab Native Newspaper Report - 1918-20.

appeasement of the Muslims. The Hon'ble Raj Bahadur Bakshi Sohan Lal expressed concern at the position of the Hindus when he asked in the Punjab Legislative Council as to whether "the Hindus, who form an important minority in the Punjab, have been recommended for a special representation in the Punjab Legislative Council to be constituted under the coming constitutional reforms, so as to secure seats for Hindus more in number than their numerical ratio of population in this province, just as Muhammadans have got special representation in other provinces."  

There was a big section of Hindus and Muslims who were young and English educated and who had great faith in Hindu-Muslim unity, and believed this unity to be necessary for the political advancement of the country and viewed the 'Lucknow pact' as the only solution to Hindu-Muslim differences. They were agitated over the backward position of the Punjab under the reforms.

Soon after the announcement of Montague Chelmsford Scheme the public of Lahore expressed their resentment over the reforms by holding a Conference in October, 1917 to which some prominent persons from other provinces were also invited, such as Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Mr. Surendranath Banerjee, Mr. N.K. Shastri etc.

But O'Dwyer did not allow them to come, except Mr. Shastri and Mrs. Naidu on the plea that he wanted the atmosphere calm and quiet during the war.

The publication of the Montford Report divided the Congress-League supporters into two sections in the Punjab as in the whole of the country. The Moderates viewed the scheme as an advancement and were in favour of accepting the same, while the Nationalists were disappointed with it. The Reforms Scheme was looked upon as a breach of faith on the part of the British, who had given by pledges during the W.r. The 'Punjabee' writing about it said: "The policy now enunciated for adoption is radically different from the one that has so long held the day. But it cannot, at the same time, be denied that the scheme of reforms does not fulfill the expectations that had been raised in the public mind by the announcement of His Majesty's Government in August last and the repeated declarations of British statesmen about their war minds." 30

Most of the Punjabis were agitated over the backward position assigned to the Punjab. Professor Gulshan Rai in many articles in 'The Tribune' described the position of the Punjab under the new scheme in the following words:

"Under the new Franchise proposal it is again the Punjab that has to be the most

backward. This province with 20 million population gets a Council of 83 members, the Central provinces with 14 millions gets a proportionately larger Council of 70 members, and Assam with a small population of less than 7 millions gets a Council of no less than 53 members. Even Burma, which is to be outside the scope of the new reforms scheme, with a population of 12 million, is to have a Council of 93 members. Surely education and public life, the criteria for producing large number of men fit for council work, are not more developed in Central Provinces, Assam or Burma, as compared with what we find in this province. Again look at the proposals from the point of view of comparing the strength of elective element in the different provincial councils. Here also the Punjab stands at the bottom as the following Table shows -

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Province</th>
<th>Elective Element</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bengal</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Provinces</td>
<td>79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bombay</td>
<td>78%</td>
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<td>Madras</td>
<td>78%</td>
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<td>Central Provinces</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bihar &amp; Orissa</td>
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<td>Assam</td>
<td>73%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Punjab</td>
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The question of the reforms was taken up by the Punjab delegates at the Delhi Congress of 1918. Pt. Rambhaj Datt Chaudhary moved the following resolution: "That this Congress viewes with grave apprehension the attempt made in certain quarters to assign an inferior position to the Punjab in the Reforms Scheme and urges that, having regard to its political, military and historical importance, its wealth, education and social advancement and its magnificent services during the war, the Punjab should be placed on a basis of equality with Bengal, Madras, Bombay and the U.P."32

31 The Tribune August 15, 1919.

32 Quoted in the 'Tribune', Jan. 1, 1919.
He stressed the need for a well organised agitation conducted through the press and the platform with the support of other provinces.

Another great division came about - that between the rural and the urban classes. The antipathy between the two areas started by the Land Alienation Act was strengthened by the Reforms. The rural people thought that the urban member of the Council would repeal the Land Alienation Act; therefore, they welcomed the separate electorate provided for the rural and urban areas. They did not like the provision of separate electorate for the Sikhs, for they believed that it would result in the election of non-agriculturist Sikhs who would support repeal of the Act.

The urban population believed that the giving of separate electorate to rural areas would mar the progress expected by the reforms, for the rural population was not fit for Reforms. Public meetings were held against separate electorate for the rural population.

The Recruiting Campaign

Though O'Dwyer was in favour of rural and lower classes of society and always showed his sympathy towards them, but his policies during that war could not keep these classes loyal to the crown. He antagonised them on account of his ruthless methods of recruitment and of collectin
contributions and loans for the war. Discontent and
dissatisfaction was seen among the people during the later
stages of the war at the methods adopted to obtain recruits
and to secure funds. "Of the male population of Punjab one
man in 28 was mobilized, in the rest of India one man in
150. Contributions in cash and kind from the province
and the Indian states within its boundaries were also most
generous and the total amount raised for such funds as the
'Punjab Aeroplane Fund' (through which 51 aeroplanes were
purchased), the Imperial Relief Fund, Red Cross Fund,
Comforts Funds etc. was over 2.25 crores of rupees. In
addition to this the Punjab lent to the Government at least
11½ crores of rupees, its subscription to both first and
second Indian war loans being only exceeded by the wealthy
commercial provinces of Bengal and Bombay."33 In the
enlistment of men there was great variation according to
race, religion and locality. One great difference was between
the rural and the urban areas. The towns people though
constituting 1/10th of the population contributed very few
recruits. The recruits, at least for the combatant services
were almost exclusively rural. The urban men were enlisted
for technical work and the educated classes got enlisted for
clerical jobs.

The Mohammedans of the Rawalpindi division, the

33Land of Five Rivers - Being Vol. I of the Punjab
Admn. Report, 1921-22 and containing portion of the report,
Lahore.
Sikhs of Amritsar, Ludhiana and part of Ferozepur, the Hindus Rajputs of Kangra and Hoshiarpur, the Hindu Jats of Rohtak and Gurgaon were foremost both in proportion of men raised and in their fighting value. The Mohammedans of Multan division, the Sikhs of Lahore, Lyallpur and Gujarwanwala, the Jats of Karnal and Ambala were among the worst. Much depended upon the military traditions of races and localities, much too, on economic conditions. Their very prosperity and the needs of a highly developed agriculture were among the causes that kept back the Sikhs and Mohammedans of Lahore, Lyallpur and Gujarwanwala. Majority of the combatants were from the central districts. This could be due to the increasing population pressure on the land. Recruiting provided them as a means to escape the harshness of population pressure. Military employment was congenial to the Jats and those of the Central tract it provided a welcome means of alleviating the increasing land and population pressure. The extent to which the three main religious communities of the province contributed to the combatant manpower can be seen from the following figures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Mohammedans</th>
<th>Hindus</th>
<th>Sikhs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Combatants in the Indian Army on Ist. Jan., 1915.</td>
<td>88438</td>
<td>33777</td>
<td>19615</td>
<td>35146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>39.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combatants recruited during 1915–18</td>
<td>282,171</td>
<td>156,308</td>
<td>63900</td>
<td>61910</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>55.4%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>370609</td>
<td>190678</td>
<td>83515</td>
<td>97016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


35 M.S. Leigh: Punjab and the War, Lahore, 1922, p. 44.
J.P. Thompson, Secretary to the Punjab Government admitted (Minutes of Evidence, before the Hunter Committee) that pressure of some kind was used for recruitment, though he believed that it had nothing to do with the disturbances. He said, "The position of the Government is not so much that no pressure of any kind was used, but that such pressure as was used had nothing to do with the disturbances."

"Active help in recruiting, was from the outbreak of hostilities placed by the Government foremost among the duties of the civil officials and rural men of influence, new depots were opened and the recruiting organisation steadily expanded. No effort was spared to bring home to the people that the war was their own war, one for the defence of their hearths and homes." Practically, every district had some organisation for war work; many had several war leagues, Recruitment Committees, Publicity Committees, Red Cross Societies, and so forth.

Recruiting started in 1914. Till 1917, nearly for three years, Punjab had already supplied 124,000 combatants, i.e., more than the number they had supplied during the preceding three years. The first five months of 1916 were the blackest months of the whole war. In April Prime Minister of England appealed to India for help, in Delhi a Conference

36 V. N. Dutta: New Light, op. cit., p. 44.

37 M. O'Dwyer: India As I knew it; London, 1925, p. 216.
was called by the Viceroy and the provinces were called upon to show what they could do. The Punjab, at a meeting on 4th May, 1918 held in the University Hall, Lahore, called by M. O'Dwyer gave its answer that Punjab would raise its annual offering of recruits from one lakh to two, that 9/10th of this would be combatants and that it would not shrink from introducing conscription if the men could not be got in any other way. On the same day a conference of Divisional Commissioners resolved unanimously that it was essential for the local Government to be given power by Act or ordinance to apply compulsion in any district, town or other area which failed voluntarily to produce the required quota. However, the proposal was rejected by the Government of India. Had the Government of India not interfered the local Government would not have hesitated to introduce compulsion and force.

The demand on the province for the year was distributed over districts and divisions. From February 1917 in the Punjab, and from June, 1918, in the other provinces, the Civil administration was directly associated with the military in the task of providing men and munitions, the recruiting organization was rapidly expanded by the appointment of experienced civilians, official and non-official, with the knowledge of the people as assistants to the military recruiting officers. "Thus the whole machinery
of the province was concentrated on providing men for the army."38

In May, 1917, the Government of India appointed a Central Recruiting Board with the Finance Member (Sir William Meyer) as President. Provincial Recruiting Boards were formed in each province, with the Head of the province or some other high official as president, to help the local Government to carry out the policy of the Central Recruiting Board. In the Punjab this Board had the Lt. Governor as President and the members were the Head of the Land Revenue Department, Sir Patrick Fagan, the five Commissioners of Divisions, the three principal military recruiting officers and seven influential Indian gentlemen representing the martial races of the province - 3 being Mohammedans, 2 Hindus and 2 Sikhs. With the assistance of this Board, the quota fixed for the province by the Central Board — two hundred and four thousand men for the year beginning 1st. July, 1917— was distributed roughly over the five Divisions and 28 Districts of the province. The local recruiting boards were given immense powers. Recruiting was left to local units with assigned quota. They could adopt any measures — may be harsh — with or without the knowledge of the Government. For instance, in a village, the system of dharna was adopted

by the Panchayat. The system was that "Certain persons connected with recruiting went to a village and said, 'you ought to supply so many recruits'. The village people said it would be very difficult, and the recruiters said we will not leave unless you can." The village had to arrange for their living and food.

O'Dwyer made the maximum use of the immense power in him for enlisting recruits in the army. Government officials, such as, Collectors, Tehsildars and Lambardars, etc. exceeded the limits of property and rules in their campaign for increasing the quota allotted to them.

From very beginning O'Dwyer had zealously taken up recruiting in the Punjab. In a durbar held at Gujranwala he rebuked the people of Gujranwala who had not responded well to the call for joining the ranks and he appointed Col. O'Brien as the Deputy Commissioner in place of Mr. Hamilton who was lenient and would not use coercive methods to obtain recruits. Col. O'Brein started an intensive campaign of recruiting from November 1917. On his first public appearance at Hafizabad he used the words "main lunga, main lunga, main lunga" ("I will take, I will take, I will take") (viz. recruits). In his time rigorous methods were employed to get recruits and war loans.

39 V.N. Dutta, op. cit.
People were bullied, beaten and coerced. Consequently malpractices followed. Thus it came to pass that recruits could be purchased like cattle, and indeed things came to such a pass that complaints against the high-handed actions of the local Tehsildar with reference to recruiting and war loan, found their way into the 'Naqush' a Calcutta paper. But the Punjab Government stopped the entry of the paper into the Punjab on the report of Lt. Col. O'Brien.\(^4\)

Thus the recruiting varied from person to person engaged in recruitment work. In the same place where a lenient man like Mr. Hamilton was replaced by a ruthless man like O'Brien recruiting rose in astonishing proportion.

Till 1917 one man in every 150 of the population on an average had joined the colours but soon it rose to an average of one man in every 14 of military age, and in some villages it went up to 3. The result was that many families were left without a single able bodied male worker.

Already, the Punjab had supplied a large number of men, and those who were anxious to join had already joined. So the increased demand was not met with favour. The 'Bulletin', a Hindu paper of Lahore wrote - "We think it would be unjust to draw so heavily on the province which has been

bled white already. We hope other provinces will be made to play their part more vigorously before ours is topped on a still more excessive scale.\textsuperscript{41}

In the early years of the war these methods had proved successful. There were economic advantages resulting from joining the ranks, but by 1918 the reserve of men began to lessen. Most of the eligible and enthusiastic men had joined, and it was then that the demand for more men was placed on the Punjab. It began to show tiredness and resistance among the people.

"In February 1918 the Commissioner of Rawalpindi (the place which had been the foremost in recruiting) reported that the campaign was producing a general feeling of tiredness and that some signs of tension were appearing."\textsuperscript{42}

Chaudhary Lal Chand wrote in the 'Leader' that, "the Punjab was getting exhausted on account of the part she had played since the beginning of the war, and there was a real danger lest we might fail in our attempt to get a greater number of men."\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{41}The 'Bulletin', 5th May 1918 quoted in Punjab Native Newspaper Report, 1918-20.


\textsuperscript{43}Alfred Nundy: The Present Situation, op.cit., p.20
There were a few districts in which the news that a Government Officer was coming sufficed to empty the villages within a five mile radius.

During the last phase of the war the Punjabi soldiers also exhibited a feeling of tiredness and resentment. The Punjabi soldiers wrote home to discourage enlistment in the army of their family members, and expressed the desire to return to India. "In one instance a Punjabi soldier urged his family in India to send him something which would permit him to feign illness."\(^{44}\)

The tracts with military traditions responded well to the call for men but the hostile tracts with no military traditions gave severe resistance. The Commissioners of Multan division observed that efforts to obtain recruits in Multan and Muzzafargarh had given rise to local disturbances. He commented: "Those who worked in organising recruiting in the division have had an arduous task; they have to contend with apathy, timidity and even with open hostility, which in some cases unfortunately culminated in riot, bloodshed and defiance of authority especially in Multan and Muzzafargarh."\(^{45}\) Some villages organised themselves against this

\(^{44}\) Ganda Singh (ed), *Punjab Past and Present*.  
tyranny of the Government. Recruiting parties were attacked, collaborators in recruitment were hacked to pieces and war loan parties were assaulted.

In addition to men, the Punjab had also subscribed generously to the war loan. The methods adopted were both voluntarily subscriptions and compulsions. The Punjab was a poor province, a great part of the population living on agriculture, so its generous subscriptions to the war loan can only be ascribed to pressure and coercion that were used by the official machinery. Officials made common cause with non-officials to extract from the public as much money as they could.

Those who did not subscribe to the war loan were unjustly treated at the hands of the local officials. A personal experience of Pandit K. N. Agnihotri shows the illegitimate way in which the people not subscribing to war loan were treated. "A group of 6 or 7 men came to me and asked me to contribute to the war Relief Fund. The group consisted of one Khan Sahib, one or two merchants, one Kanungo who was working in the income tax department and one tehsildar's peon. As I had already contributed my mite to this fund through another source, I expressed my inability to do so again. On hearing this the Tehsildar insulted and threatened me that I would be forced to pay and that my income tax would be raised. (This latter step was, however,
taken and I had to pay $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the amount of tax, I used to pay before.) I was sent for by the tehsildar but I did not go. My neighbours and others informed me of similar treatment meted out to them.'

There was discontent and dissatisfaction during the last phase of the war, but O'Dwyer and his colleagues maintained the myth that the people were loyal and contributing happily towards recruitment and war loans. By curbing the freedom of the Press and Speech, O'Dwyer did not allow the truth to be made public, and hence it was generally believed that the Punjab was a loyal province. Durbars were held in which people who had received favours or expected to receive favours, proclaimed the loyalty of the province.

The Effects of War

The end of the war and armistice did not create much enthusiasm among the people, for it did not bring any change in their condition. There had been a general war weariness and the people expected that the armistice would end all their trouble, and the good days were ahead, but there were no visible results of the victory which could make the people enthusiastic about it. So long as the war went on the people accepted the discomforts as a part of it,

but they wanted relief after the armistice which was not coming. "Prices and taxes were as high as ever and it is no wonder that discontent grew into an angry bewilderment as to whether after all the people were not being tricked and Government was not, for some obscure motives, at the bottom of all their trouble."^47

The war acted directly as an agent of change by its economic impact upon the country. "It forced up prices, thereby creating a situation where people outside the political nation felt the pinch of hardships and the hand of the Raj and became more willing to participate in new forms of public activity to protect themselves.... This economic issue was not a local issue but spread throughout the Indian empire."^48

The economic effects of the war were more severely felt in India due to her poverty, the vast mass of India being agricultural labourers who were permanently in debt. "The expression used by Lord Hardinge, that India was "bled white" in the early part of the war, applies to her condition throughout the four and half years that it lasted."^49

^47 Punjab Disturbance 1919, Amritsar, District.


^49 B. G. Horniman: Amritsar and our Duty to India; Fisher Unwin Ltd; London, 1920, p. 19.
The high prices pressed most harshly on the poorer classes and on the people living on fixed incomes in the towns. It was not only the food supplies which revealed a serious shortage in the year 1918-19 owing to the high prices of raw cotton throughout the world and the high cost of manufacture, the dearness of cotton cloth pressed heavily upon the poorer classes in the year 1918. The monsoons of 1918 had been the worst for 47 years, and foodstuffs had suffered an increase in price equal almost to that of imported articles. Wheat was dearer by 47% than in 1914, European cotton cloth 175%, Indian cloth 100%, ginned cloth 310% and sugar 68%.

The rise in prices led to heavy indebtedness of the masses in the rural areas. The 'Jat Gazette' noted - "Zamindars except those who have canal irrigated lands, are all alike in desperate straits. Those who produce food are the first to fall victims to dearness." In 1919 some investigations were conducted into the problem of agricultural indebtedness by the Registrars of Cooperative Societies in the Punjab. It was found that in case of large proprietors the average total debt was seven times the land revenue paid by them. In the case of smaller proprietors owning or cultivating less than eight acres, the indebtedness was more serious, being 28 times the land revenue.


In addition to the rise in prices there was the scarcity of fodder which resulted in the deterioration of the condition of the cattle which formed an important asset of an agriculturist. Consequently, agriculturists were obliged to sell their cattle at throw away prices. The poorer sections of society had to sell even their household goods to meet their basic needs.

Though the effect of the rise in prices was on both rural and the urban population but this discontent was deep amongst the lower income government servants and fixed income groups. J.P. Thompson, Chief Secretary to the Government of Punjab, also admitted the difficulties of the fixed income groups when he said - "But I think that really the people on low pay, or who were not making very much and had no means of expanding their incomes - I think they were the people who felt it most." 52

The lower income groups were so hard hit by the rise in prices that they formed an "Indian clerks Association" in February 1919 at a meeting of about 1,000 lower grade clerks in the various government offices of Lahore.

There was an increase in the salaries of military clerks but no increase was made in the salaries of Civilian clerks which caused resentment and a memorial was sent by the clerks to the Government for an extra allowance owing ________

to extraordinary rise in the prices of all commodities. But no attention was paid by the Government.

The people were also irritated over the export of wheat while the people were suffering for want of it. The leaders took up the cause and Dr. Saif-u-Din Kitchlew called a meeting on 26th February 1919 to consider the opening of a cheap grain shop. He blamed the Government for high prices and said that the grain acquired under the Defence of India, Rules was being exported to Europe. Dr. Kitchlew was a Mohammedan barrister enjoying considerable practice, and respect amongst the people. He was a Doctor of Philosophy of Munster and a graduate of Cambridge. He was a great propagator of Hindu-Muslim Unity and had started taking interest in politics only recently. Similar meetings were held at other places. In a meeting held at Multan on 29th January, 1919 under the auspices of the District Congress Committee the following resolution was passed, "Considering the existing state of famine in the country, this meeting is of the opinion that the exportation of wheat outside India should at once be stopped and government should take immediate steps to commandeer the stock and sell them at cheaper rates in the country.

These hard conditions of life led to the chances of a strike of railway staff who formed a considerable portion of
Lahore's population. The strike failed partly from lack of courage and organisation.

The hard conditions of life gave rise to lumpen groups who were ready to agitate at any moment or were ready to give numbers to any agitation or dissen der.

The lower income groups were severely hit by the rise in prices, but there was an opposite effect on the trading classes. They profited from the rise in prices and their affluence gave them a sense of pride and independence. Towards the end of 1918 the Government tried to acquire compulsorily stocks of grains acquired by the traders. This was bitterly resented by the grain merchants. The towns where the stocks were seized under the Defence of India Rules were Amritsar, Kasur, Patti, Lyallpur and Gojra. This action was looked upon as an extortion committed for the benefit of England. Further, the wholesale grain merchants had been adversely affected by the orders restricting export from the Punjab, and by the purchases by the Government on the public account in November and December, 1918. In addition to grain merchants the piece-goods traders also suffered due to restrictions of war and control of railway in the interest of military traffic.

In addition to the rise in prices a new Income Tax
Act came into force in Punjab in 1918. The Act provided for the bringing together of all sources of an assessee's income for the purpose of determining the rate at which he should be taxed on each part of it, whereas under the former law it was not incumbent on the collector to obtain from any assessee a return of his total income. The new law laid down that the collector should obtain returns of income in all cases where the estimated annual income was Rs. 2,000 or more. In addition, the collector was empowered to utilize for purposes of assessment any evidence which he might obtain through his own sources. The collector was also authorised to enforce the attendance of any person, including the assessee, for this purpose and compel the production of the information required. A drastic measure in the Act was the provision that no assessee could object to the amount or rate at which he might be assessed unless he had made the requisite return and substantially complied with all the terms of a notice requiring him either to attend the collector's office and produce or cause to be there produced for the inspection of the collector such accounts and documents as the collector might require. The new Act also laid down that if for any reason income chargeable under the Act escaped assessment in any year, or was assessed at too low a rate, the collector might require at any time in the following year, assessment or re-assessment of such income. Another harsh
feature was that any person making a false statement in a return or petition would be deemed to have committed the offence described in Section 177 of the Indian Penal Code.

The Income-Tax Act had been preceded by a Super-Tax Act of Ist. April, 1917 which was to raise revenue by imposing a super tax on large incomes. On Ist. April, 1919, came the Excess Profits Duty Act which imposed a duty on excess profits arising out of certain businesses and the object was to obtain for the Government a one-half share in profits which accrued during 1919. These various taxation measures caused alarm and irritation among the men who had grown into the habit of regarding themselves as exempt. "Prior to 1916-17 the assessment of income tax formed part of the routine work of the ordinary district staff, and there were reasons to believe that, owing to other and more urgent demands on their time, district officers could not devote as much attention to the assessment of income tax as the nature of the work required, especially in large towns." In 1916-17 the Government sanctioned a special staff for the assessment of income tax in Lahore, Amritsar, Gujranwala, Batala, Ferozepur and Ludhiana, consisting of one Extra Assistant Commissioner, three Naib Tehsildars, two clerks and one Munim (auditor of bazar accounts). The Bombay system of house-to-house survey was adopted in which a Naib Tehsildar (special survey officer) appointed to work under the Income Tax Officer was required

to personally visit every house in each street where business firms or persons of assessable income were likely to be found, and to keep notes of the work done by him. All information thus obtained was to be subsequently recorded in a house register, which contained entries relating to the annual value of the house and its rent, and notes in respect of likely assesses. This resulted in the discovery of many new assesses and proper figures of the tax. This system was greatly resented by commercial and trading classes for it exposed their position and credit and thereby humiliated and disgraced them in the eyes of their neighbours. A public meeting was held in Sargodha on September 15, 1918, to protest against the measure. In 1917-18 these operations were extended to the towns and cantonments of Ambala, Karnal, Hoshiarpur, Jullundur and hill stations of Simla, Kasauli and Dalhousie. Encouraged by this experiment which had proved so helpful to the Government, four units of special agency, each under a selected Extra Commissioner, were appointed on Ist. April, 1918 to assess the principal urban areas of the province. These four units secured an increase in tax of Rs. 9 lakhs, nearly half of which came from Lahore division alone, as can be seen from the following figures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lahore City</td>
<td>1,09,700</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amritsar city</td>
<td>1,60,399</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other urban areas in Lahore division(Kasur, Gujranwala, Wazirabad, Sialkot, Patti, Khem Karan, Hafizabad, Akalgarh, Sodhra, Sangla, Chakarkha, Nankana Sahib, Eminabad, Patia ki Chuhian)</td>
<td>1,74,000</td>
<td>217%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>4,44,099</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The number of units was increased to six from Ist. April, 1919 and it was proposed to increase them to eleven from Ist. April, 1920. This increase in income tax in the urban areas—especially in the most enlightened cities of Lahore and Amritsar—led to the discontentment of the urban intelligentsia.

Muslims by and large were agitated over the fate of Turkey. Though the Indian Muslims had joined the war against Turkey, some Pan Islamists did not approve of it. They feared that the Sultan of Turkey would be deprived of the authority as Caliph (or spiritual head of Islam). In view of this they formed the 'Anjuman-i-Khuddam-i-Kaaba' (Association of the Servants of the Kaaba), whose members took an oath to sacrifice their life and property for the defence of the holy shrine against non-Muslim elements. The Ali Brothers (Mohammed Ali and Shaukat Ali) were its heads and their followers started their work in towns and called people to enrol as members. "The response to the call to arms was nowhere more eager or sustained than in the N.W.F.P. and the Punjab."54 Most of the influential Punjab Muhammadans like Nawab Bahram Khan, Sir Fateh Ali Khan, Sir Umar Hayat Khan, Khuda Baksh Khan, and Maulvi Sir Rahim Sayed and great Pir's were loyal to the British but outside agents were working actively in the region. As early as December, 1914, a big Mohammedan educational conference attended by Abul Kalam Azad, Mohammed Ali and others was

held at Rawalpindi. This had a considerable influence upon the young Muslim students. The Hijrat Movement which meant that since India was a Darul Harb (place of war), therefore all Muhammadans should leave India and migrate to Afghanistan - a place of Mohammedan rule. The movement was started in February, 1915. Fifteen young students started for Afghanistan. Other batches followed. Concern over the fate of Turkey gradually increased and it became more pronounced after the war came to an end. This concern was exhibited at a meeting of some 1,500 Muhammadans held on 31st January, 1919 in the Bande Mataram Hall. The gathering protested against the handing over of Constantinople to Christian States. Various resolutions protesting against this action of the Allies were passed.

**Political Activity**

The effect of all these causes was that political activity was started in 1917. Local Congress Committees were revived or formed. The press also started displaying interest in the Congress activities and great enthusiasm was exhibited in the matter of attending the Delhi Congress of December, 1918. "About 50 delegates were selected to attend this Congress session and some 100 persons of different classes proceeded from Amritsar for that purpose." There was a feeling or realization of the fact that Punjab was sufferin

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because it had kept itself aloof from the Congress. Dr. Kitchlew of Amritsar invited the December, 1919 Session of the Congress to Amritsar. He said a rumour was current that Punjab was being sought to be turned into an Ulster of India. If their brethren of other provinces did not want this, they should come next year to Amritsar. Thereafter Amritsar became a scene of active and enthusiastic political activity.

Immediately after returning from the Session at Delhi in the last week of December, 1918, preparations started to be made. On 8th January, 1919, Mr. Din Dayal, Secretary of the Amritsar District Congress Committee called a meeting of its members to decide upon the Reception Committee and Rs. 25 was fixed as fees for the membership of the Reception Committee. For the enlistment of such members the city was divided into four sections and for each section a Convener was appointed. To assist each Convener, bands of 6-10 persons willing to work zealously were formed.

This mood was also reflected in the Press when 'The Tribune' wrote:

"Until recently this organisation was lamentably defective, and there was a movement in the long night of gloom and sadness following upon the events of 1919 when it looked as though the efforts that were being made in some quarters to cut the Punjab off from the wider life of the country would partially succeed. Happily the tide has now turned as it was bound to turn." 56

56 The Tribune, January 9, 1919.
Attention was diverted to the organization of the Congress and the need for a sound organization was stressed. As at the 1918 Delhi Session of the Congress, and even earlier, it had been decided to take the Congress to the masses. Efforts were now made in the Punjab to popularize the Congress in the rural areas also as the trading classes were comparatively better represented on it. Mr. Girdhari Lal, Provisional General Secretary of the Congress Reception Committee wrote:

"It is essential to popularise Congress propaganda amongst all classes - merchants, bankers, doctors and members of other professions, as well as agriculturists - in Amritsar especially, and all over the Punjab generally. With this, necessity is felt of enlightening those who are not already in touch with the Congress as to its Constitution, its aims and objects, as well as with its traits and achievements in the past thirty years of its existence and its possibilities in the future by the issue of small pamphlets in regional languages." 57

The particular anxiety of the Congress to bring the Punjab peasants into the Congress fold is evident from the fact that agriculturists joining the Amritsar Congress session were exempted from paying the delegates fees.

Though the last two sessions of the provincial Conference, one general and one special, were held with great enthusiasm and a number of Congress Committees at the headquarters of a

57 The Tribune February 2, 1919.
number of districts came into existence and a large number of delegates participated in the annual session of the Congress held at Delhi and even invited the next Session of the Congress to the Punjab, but the situation of the Congress was far from satisfactory. The Tribune stressed the need to have a Congress Committee not only in each district but said that there should be a Congress Committee at the headquarters of each subdivision, and if possible of each tehsil, so that there may be complete network of organization in the districts, coordinated and controlled by District Committees. It said, "Further all these Committees of several grades should as far as possible, fully represent their respective areas, so that when the delegates meet in the Congress, it may not be possible for the several detractors of that body to say with plausibility that it speaks only for a section of the people."\(^5\)

At another meeting of Congress workers held on 12th January, 1919 the Executive Committee consisting of 19 persons was formed, with Dr. Kitchlew and Mr. Girdhari Lal as Secretaries of the Reception Committee. This was followed by a meeting of the provisional executive committee itself, to which eight more prominent and influential residents, including representatives of the Sikh Community, were added, bringing the total to 27, with Mr. Todar Mal Bhandari as its

\(^5\)The Tribune, January 9, 1919.
Chairman. People like Dr. Satyapal and L. Radha Kishan took up the work of the Congress enthusiastically.

Due to the decision to hold the Provincial Conference at Jullundur on 18th and 19th April, Jullundur also became a scene of political activity. A large number of people started enlisting as members of the Reception Committee. By February, 1919, 200 gentlemen had enlisted as members. Following the decision of the Delhi Session of the Congress this conference also tried to enlist the peasants as members. To secure the support of the peasants a deputation consisting of some members of the Reception Committee toured the Jullundur district. Each tehsil promised a number of delegates. The trading classes did not want to remain behind and 100 members of the Reception Committee belonged to this class. The Trading class also undertook to bear the expenses of the delegates' boarding.

In some important towns municipal elections were held in January, 1919, and they roused much excitement. Enthusiasm in Amritsar was so great that there was a drive to have a non-official chairman elected for Amritsar Municipality, though the motion was defeated by 3 to 4 votes. Dr. Kitchlew gained much popularity during the elections and was returned, ousting one of the old members.

Even if there had been some discontent in the Punjab during the war - especially during the late years, there was no opportunity to revolt against the British
domination. The Home Rule Movement which had gained considerable popularity in some parts of India did not make much headway in the Punjab. Though efforts were made to popularise it by saying that Swami Dayanand, the founder of Arya Samaj, was the first exponent of Home Rule, but on the whole, it was unsuccessful being confined to larger towns only and that too only in a limited measure.

O'Dwyer was very much against the Home Rule Movement and described it as akin to Ghadr and passed orders against the entry of B.G. Tilak and B.C. Pal into the Punjab. He also banned the entry of the 'New India' which advocated the cause of Home Rule into the province. On the whole, the Home Rule League did not attain success in the Punjab. "In the Punjab the local leaders had had little or no opportunity to participate in Home Rule affairs." In a nutshell, an atmosphere of unrest, dissatisfaction, disappointment and resentment prevailed in the Punjab in the early part of 1919, due to various causes enumerated above. Since the Punjab's share had been the largest in the war, the effect had also been the greatest in the Punjab.

Such was the condition of Punjab that any issue properly exploited by political leaders could lead to a great turmoil and agitation. It was at such a time that Gandhi's call for satyagraha came.