

Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and the National Movement

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The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, was also known as Amritsar massacre, took place in 1919 on 13th April. On the day the people were on mass agitation against the policies of the British Government, the Rowlett Act. Acting Brigadier Dyer and his troops entered the garden, blocking the main entrance behind them, took up position on a raised bank, and with no warning opened fire on the crowd for about ten minutes, directing their bullets largely towards the few open gates through which people were trying to flee, until the ammunition supply was almost exhausted. Because of continuous firing more than 370 people had died and over 1200 injured according to British Government Report.

Even on the following day Dyer stated in a report that "I have heard that between 200 and 300 of the crowd were killed. My party fired 1,650 rounds."

Key words: estimate, recommendation, violent, figures, agitators

Introduction

On 13 April 1919, a huge gathering was organized on the auspicious day of Baisakhi, which was to be held at Jallianwala Bagh in Amritsar. It was in this meeting that the demand for the release of Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew was sought. But it was not known to anyone that this gathering would become the biggest event in the world, which will always be remembered as a symbol throughout its life. According to estimate, there were over 2500 casualties of whom over 1200 died. The example of which will be in the form of a large scale of atrocities for centuries. The incident will be remembered as black day of Indian History.

The Rowlett Bills

The Defense of Indian Act was only for the duration of the end of the war it would also come to an end. But the situation still being quite explosive, the Government of India did not wish to part with the special authority vested in it by the Act. Therefore, the Government was anxious to formulate such laws as could conveniently replace the existing defense of India Act. On the recommendation of the Rowlett commission, instituted to suggest necessary legislation to deal effectively with the revolutionaries after the war, two bills were drafted out of which only one could be passed. It was intended to confer upon the Government extraordinary powers of dealing with sedition. The spirit of this legislation is aptly summed up in this popular statement of those days; "*Na appeal, Na dalil, Na vakeel.*" Meaning "No appeal, No argument, No lawyer." To demonstrate people's resentment against the Rowlett Bill, termed Black Bills by the Indian and Mahatma Gandhi called upon the people to observe strike on 6th April. It excited great

enthusiasm in Punjab. Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Kitchlew, the leaders who were guiding the movement in Punjab, were immediately arrested and moved to the Dharamsala jail. As the news leaked out, people gathered at the Hall Gate to march in a procession to the deputy commissioner's office to plead for the release of their beloved leaders. On their way, the mob was twice fired at by troops, killing about ten persons. Infuriated at this treatment, the mob resorted to murder, arson, looting of banks, burning of railway stations, cutting of telegraph wires etc, etc. it was against this background of mutual hatred and violence that miss Sherwood was brutally assaulted in kucha kaurhianwala. Wherever the news of the Amritsar firing spread, it led to violent events. A violent mob in Kasur killed two European warrant officers and damaged public buildings. Near Tarn Taran, railway station was looted and burnt. At Lahore, when *hartal* was being observed, a black flag procession was fired at. These are only a few examples of the disturbances which took place in the various districts of the Punjab.

The Firing at Jallianwala Bagh

The town of Amritsar was handed over to General Dyer on 12th April, 1919 for administrative purpose. On the 12th of April, at about 10 a.m., General Dyer, along with a strong striking force of 125 British and 310 Indian troops, marched through the city. At one place in his route a big crowd collected and he had difficulty in dispersing them. There he actually thought of firing, but desisted from doing so, obviously for the reason that he wanted to wait for more appropriate occasion. During the day, some important arrests were made by the police, under military protection. (Bugga and Dina Nath were among those arrested on that day.

Thereafter in the afternoon, at 4p.m. a meeting was held in the compound of the Hindu Sabha High school but no president was elected. Hansraj, an active worker of the congress, made a speech in which he said "as they had no leader to guide them, every one of them was a leader." He announced that a meeting would be convened the next day in Jalliawala Bagh, where Letters from Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal would be read. He exhorted the people to be prepared for more sacrifices. He also proposed that volunteers should be recruited, whose duty would be to inform the public of the arrested made in the city, and further said that those proposals would be discussed at the next day's meeting. In the end, he advised that suspension of business should be continued till Dr. Kitchlew and Dr. Satyapal were released. The audience agreed to his suggestion.

The 13th of April was the day of Baisakhi, the New Year day of Hindus. It is the same day on which this auspicious day the great Guru Gobind Ji had founded the 'Khalsa' an organization of the 'Pure and faithful' dedicated to the service of humanity that took a heroic stand against religious tyranny and oppression by the mighty Mughal power. The Bagh is so near to the golden temple. People had started pouring into the Bagh after 2 p.m. when informed about the meeting by superintendent Rahill at 4:00 p.m., General Dyer preceded towards the meeting place with ninety soldiers and to armored cars. On

arriving there, the troops took their position. By this time seven speakers had already spoken and two resolutions calling upon the Government to repeal the Rowlett Act and condemning the firing on the 10th evening had been passed. The soldiers loaded their machine guns and Dyer ordered firing within thirty seconds of their arrival. Firing continued, according to various estimates, for 10 to 12 minutes. Altogether 1650 rounds of ammunition were fired. The general stopped shooting only when ammunition had run out. The crowds in panic, rushed towards the exits only to face a volley of bullets. It is difficult to describe the details of the holocaust and the exact number of those killed in Jallianwala Bagh. But the general Dyer drew sadistic pleasure out of it is certain. According to official figures, 337 people, 41 boys and a seven-week-old baby died and 1500 wounded. These are considered the unofficial figures and the numbers were more than these figures. No arrangements were made for the dead and the wounded because Dyer did not consider it to be his job. Many of the wounded tried to crawl out of the Bagh and with great difficulty reached the lanes and streets, but, unable to move further, they fell here and there and quite a large number of them died in the streets, "In pools of their own blood". After some time, residents of Amritsar, whose family-members, friends and neighbors were known to have gone into the Bagh to attend the meeting, took courage and entered in the hell to search for their dear ones. By then, darkness had descended on the Bagh and the dead and the injured were scattered all around throughout the area and heaps of were there at many places. It was therefore not easy for the residents to search out their dear ones.

Martial Law in the Punjab

The tragedy of Jallianwala Bagh was followed by the proclamation of Martial Law on 15th April during this period a number of orders were issued which made the life of the people of Amritsar and other four districts for examples: Lahore, Gujranwala, Gujral and Lyallpur. Lahore suffered a worse fate in Amritsar. The army administrator ordered tradesmen to open their shops on pain of being shot and having their stores distributed free to the public; not more than two persons were allowed to walk abreast on the sidewalks; electric fans and other electric gadgets belonging to Indians were requisitioned for the use of British soldiers; Badshahi mosque, where meetings had taken place, was closed excepts for the Friday prayers; for several days flogging was carried out in public. Educated classes came in for special attention. Students of several Lahore colleges were ordered to report four times daily-in some cases four miles away from their colleges. Other places in the Punjab which suffered at the hands of Martial law administrators were Wazirabad, Nizamabad, Akalgarh, Ram Nagar, Hafizabad, Sheikhpura, Chuharkana, Sangla, Moman, Manianwala, Nawanpind, JalapurJattan, Malakwal, Lyallpur, Gojra and Chak No.149 and Gujarat. In the seven weeks that the Punjab was administered by martial law nearly 1200 were killed and at least 3600 wounded.

Jallianwala Bagh tragedy impacting on the National Movement

Jallianwala Bagh tragedy added ghee to the burning fire. Due to this, people's anger in all parts of the country especially in Punjab reached the peak. Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy had a profound impact on the growth of the Indian National movement in India. People started various kinds of movements to liberate India from the British state.

Powerful All-Indian Freedom struggle

The incident of Jallianwala gave special power to the National movement in the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh. The movement took the form of the entire Indian movement and the demand of the national litigants was no longer constitutional and administrative reform, but to make the country. Even though the Indian had to struggle for the freedom of the country for almost 28 years, it can be said that the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh proved to be the root cause of the Independence of the country because of this people became very much aware about the intentions and future planning of the Britishers.

During 1920-1925 AD, the Sikhs fought Non-Violent but vigorous struggle for the improvement of the Gurdwaras, which is considered an important part of the independence movement in Punjab. In 1920, the Non-cooperation movement was run by Gandhi Ji particularly in Punjab, Peoples (Children, Women, old and Students) Participated actively in this movement. At this time a baton army came into existence in Punjab under the leadership of Chamandeep. The flag was written on the army's "Hey Hindu, Muslims, Sikh brothers joined the flag army and fought bravely against the British, this is Gandhi Ji command".

Reaction and Resentment of various Indian Leaders

The Massacre of Jallianwala Bagh was condemned in harsh words by various leaders of India and expressed resentment against it. Mahatma Gandhi said that this was an act of barbarism which no other example can be found. He returned the fair Kaiser-I-Hind medal and Zulu war Medal to the Government for expressing displeasure with the British Government in return for services rendered during the great war. Mohammad Ali Jinnah condemned the Massacre as a physical Butchery. Motilal Nehru called it the saddest Incident. Ravindra Nath Tagore said about the incident, "that the time has come now the honors can explain our stigma in the absurd context of insult, as far as I am concerned, I want to stand with my country devoid of all special titles". Ravindra Nath Tagore returned the Title of knight in protest of this Massacre Viceroy, executive member Shankaran Nair resigned from the executive. The congress constituted a probe committee under the chairmanship of Madan Mohan Malaviya against the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. The members of this committee were Motilal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, Chittaranjan das, Abbas Tyabji, Pupul Jayakar. In its report, the congress inquiry committee condemned Dyer and accused him of taking steps through prudence and emotion. A new consciousness was realized in the Public by the session of the Indian National congress held in Amritsar in December 1919. And the agitator's started campaigning extensively.

Impact on Khilafat Movement

After the Great war, the Muslims of Indian Launched a Khilafat movement against the British Government in favor of the sultan of Turkey. Encouraged by the massacre of Jallianwala Bagh and the subsequent slaughter of the people Dr. Kitchlew, Nizam Hussan and Muslim leaders of Punjab, appealed to the people to join the National Movement against British rules.

Impact on Extremist's and Revolutionary Movement

The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre had a profound impact on India's revolutionary movement. The revolutionary leaders of India and especially Punjab, agitated by the incidents of Jallianwala Bagh, started powerful violent movement against the British after 1920 by the Babber Akali movement and later powerful violent movement were organized by organizations like Naujawan Bharat Sabha and Hindustan socialist republican Association. The Gurudwara reform movement also received a strong boost to the anti sentiments of the people of Punjab.

Murder of Michael Dwyer

Jalliawala Bagh was also a child Udham Singh who was serving people by drinking water. He also got a bullet in his hand, but his life was saved. The Massacre had a deep impact on him. He vowed to kill Michael O'dwyar and avenge the crimes committed on the countrymen. He got a chance to fulfill his Oath. On 13 March 1940, shortly after a meeting at Canton hall in London, he fired at him with his pistol and killed Michael O'Dwyer. Udham Singh was hanged on 3 July 1940.

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