

Jallianwala Bagh Massacre 1919 Centenary Committee



*The time has come when
badges of honour make our
shame glaring in the
incongruous context of
humiliation, and I for my part
wish to stand, shorn of all
special distinctions, by the
side of those of my country-
men, who, for their so-called
insignificance, are liable to
suffer degradation not fit for
human beings.*

Rabindranath Tagore

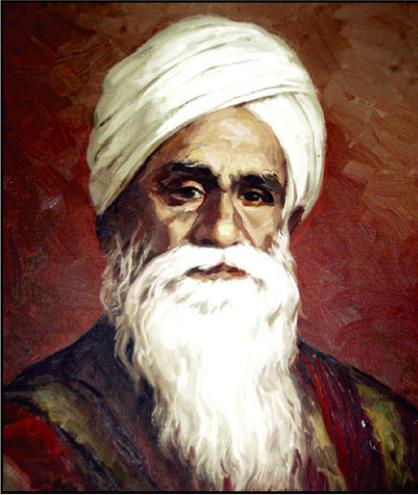
**WE DEMAND A FORMAL APOLOGY,
TO BE STATED IN PARLIAMENT, BY THE
SERVING BRITISH PRIME MINISTER.**

David Cameron, the former Prime Minister wrote in the visitors' book:
"This was a deeply shameful act in British history, one that Winston Churchill rightly described at that time as "monstrous". We must never forget what happened here and we must ensure that the UK stands up for the right of peaceful protests."

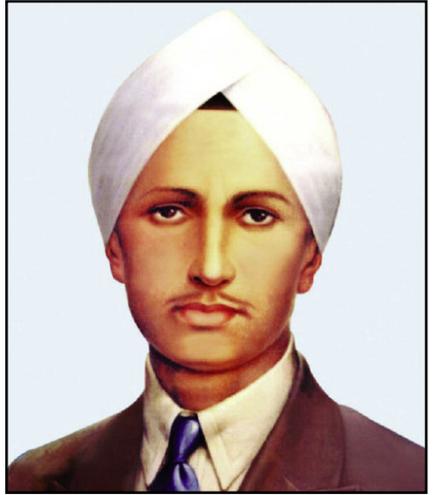


Massacre at Jallianwala Bagh 13 April 1919 British Army General Dyer in command

Jallianwala Bagh Massacre 1919 Centenary Committee. initial Sponsors:
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Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna



Shaheed Kartar Singh Sarabha

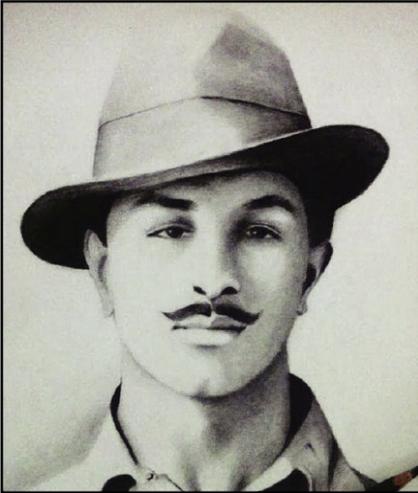
Pre-Jallianwala Bagh

The epoch making Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 in Russia made its impact on India's struggle for freedom. The freedom movement broadened its vision with a realisation that without social and economic equalities, freedom will be meaningless.

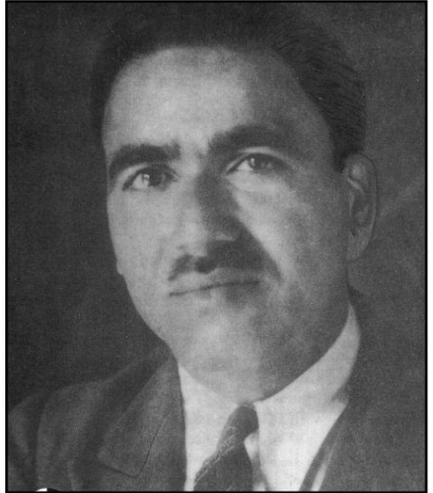
The onward march of the people and the formation of the Ghadar Party in San Francisco in 1913 under the leadership of Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, the 1914 Komagatamaru episode in Vancouver Canada, and their return to Punjab made the British imperialists nervous and on alert.

The Ghaderites plan for the British Indian army to mutiny did not succeed and provided the pretext for the Ghaderites brutal repression. The Defence of India Act of 1915 was a legislative measure targeted at the Ghaderites.

About 50 were executed. Kartar Singh Sarabha was barely 19 years old when he was executed in 1915. His martyrdom was to inspire an entire generation of revolutionaries, most prominent amongst them was Bhagat Singh.



Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh



Shaheed Udham Singh

Divide and Rule

In an attempt to divide the struggle for freedom a two pronged approach was adopted by Britain:

- 1) Some minor concessions provided to the legislative body under the Montague and Chelmsford proposals and the Government of India Act of 1919.
- 2) Widened the scope of the defence of India Act of 1915 through the more draconian and stringent provision of the Anarchical and revolutionary Crimes Act, better known as the Rowlatt Act. Main objective was to stamp out “revolutionary crimes” and restrain the rising tide of popular resistance.

People expressed their anger through massive participation in the anti Rowlatt agitation. Punjab was the epicenter for the one day General Strike of 6 April 1919, with Amritsar, Lahore, Kasur and Gujranwala leading the way. Two popular leaders Kitchlew and Satya Pal were arrested.

The joint Ram-Naumi celebrations on 9 April by Hindu’s, Muslims and Sikhs and their solidarity worried the Lt.Governor Sir Michael O’Dwyer as religious bigotry and divisions were seen as important instruments of colonial policy.

Alarmed by the people’s anger, the city of Amritsar was handed over to Brigadier General Rex Dyer.

“All Indians, no matter their rank, had to ‘salaam’ – bow and scrape – to any passing European”

13 April 1919: Massacare

On Sunday, April 13 – Vaisakhi Day –people’s agitation against Rowlatt and thousands of pilgrims descended on the city of Amritsar to bathe in the pool of immortality and worship in the Golden Temple. Few could afford hotels, so the Jallianwalla Bagh, a public gardens, became a popular meeting and resting place.

By this time the crowd at Jallianwalla Bagh was vast – estimates on the day vary between 5,000 and 15,000.

Suddenly soldiers appeared through the narrow passage at the end of the garden and began to spread out. General Dyer shouted “Fire!” The 50 soldiers kneeled, aimed their rifles and fired a volley of shots into the centre of the crowd.

Total panic broke out with people running to the walls and trying to clamber out. Sgt. Anderson, General Dyer’s personal bodyguard, later recalled that there was no attempt by the crowd to rush the troops. The firing was so organised that, no matter what direction the pilgrims tried to flee, they were trapped. Many died from suffocation and being trampled in the panic. Others miraculously survived protected from the bullets by the bodies of the dead and the dying. In one narrow passage approximately 150 bodies were found heaped on top of each other.

General Dyer is reported to have left the scene of the slaughter, walking briskly to his waiting car without as much as a backward glance at the carnage. He stated that he was pleased that some had escaped for it would serve to warn others of the consequences of rebellion. At the end of the day more than 1,500 men, women and children lay dead or wounded.

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