

# 100 YEARS OF JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE



## WHY IN NEWS?

13th April, 2019 marked the 100 years of the historical Jallianwala Bagh Massacre.



## DETAILS



The Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act of 1919, better known as the **Rowlatt Act**, came into force in March 1919, even though every single Indian member of the Central Legislative Council opposed it.



The Rowlatt Act bestowed on the **Government** the power: - - - -

to set up special courts consisting of three High Court Judges for specified offences;

to direct execution of bond for good behaviour; internment within city reporting at police station; and abstention from specific acts; and

to arrest anybody suspected of terrorist activities, detain them for up to 2 years without trial, search a place without a warrant, and impose severe restrictions on the freedom of the press.



It shocked most Indians who had expected to be rewarded, not punished, for **willingly fighting** alongside the British in the First World War.

Immediately after the passage of the Rowlatt Act, **B.N.Sarma** resigned his office as member of the Imperial Legislative Council.

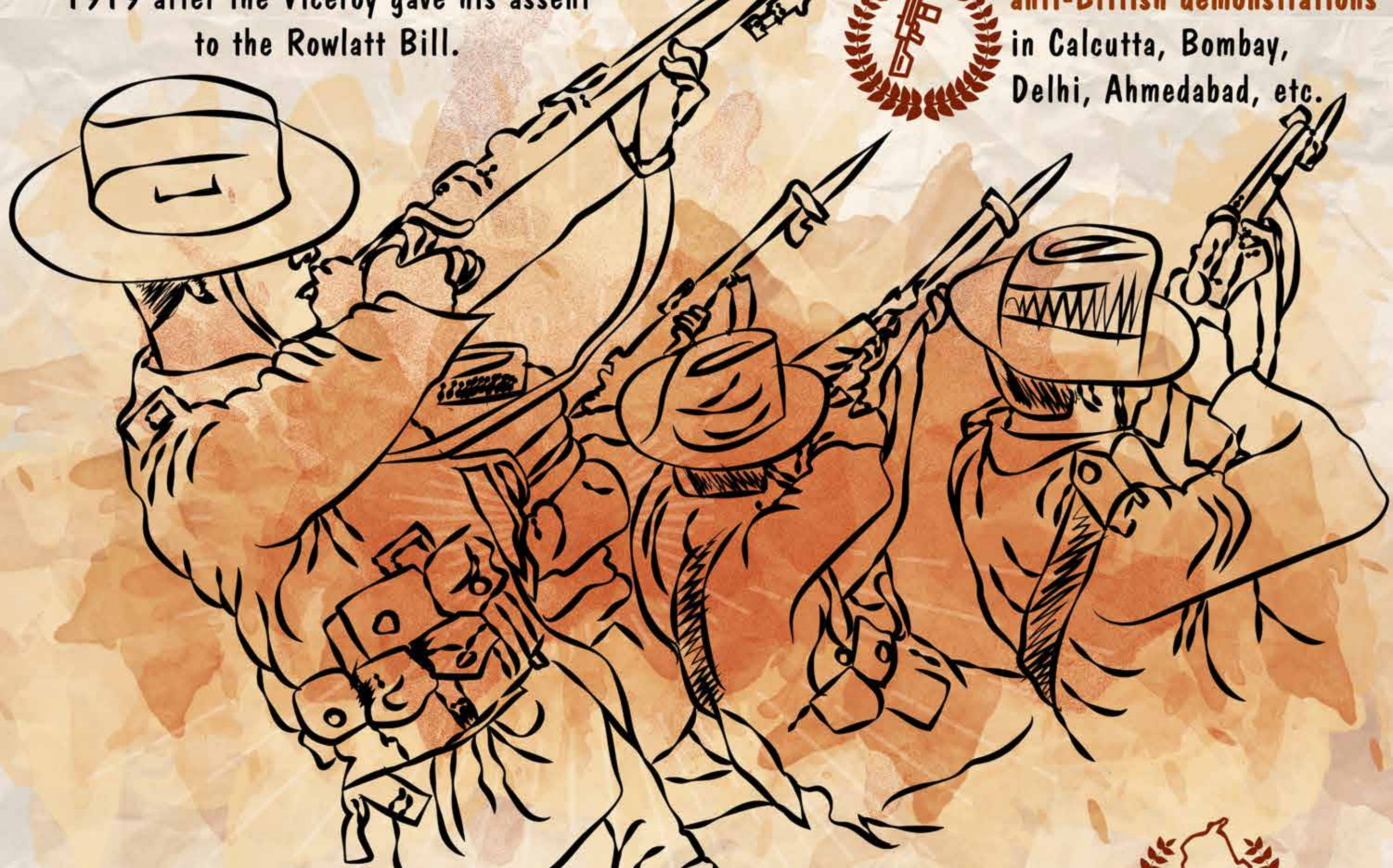


The **Madras Satyagraha Sabha** under the leadership of C.Rajagopalachari, A.Rangaswamy Iyengar, G.Harisavottama Rao and T.Andhinarayana Chetty opposed the Rowlatt Act.

**Mahatma Gandhi** called for a satyagraha against the act (Rowlatt Satyagraha). The hartal was observed on 6 April 1919 after the Viceroy gave his assent to the Rowlatt Bill.



But even before the satyagraha there were large-scale violent, **anti-British demonstrations** in Calcutta, Bombay, Delhi, Ahmedabad, etc.



In Punjab, the situation was tense under the oppressive regime of lieutenant governor **Sir Michael O' Dwyer** who had imposed martial law.



It was under his orders that **Gandhi** was arrested at Palwal near Delhi and prevented from entering Punjab.

He also directed that Amritsar's popular leaders **Satyapal** and **Saifuddin Kitchlew** be deported to some "unknown place". They had been agitating against the implementation of Rowlatt Act,

On **Baisakhi day**, people gathered in the small park for peaceful protest against arrest of their leaders.

The army surrounded the gathering under orders from **General Reginald Dyer**, who was given a free hand by **Governor Michael O' Dwyer**. The only exit point was blocked, and army opened fire on the unarmed crowd, killing more than 1000.

## AFTERMATH



**Mahatma Gandhi** was overwhelmed by the atmosphere of violence and **withdrew the Rowlatt satyagraha** on 18th April, 1919.



**Rabindranath Tagore** renounced his knighthood in protest.



On 14 October 1919, after orders issued by the Secretary of State for India, **Edwin Montagu**, the Government of India announced the formation of a committee of inquiry into the events in Punjab.



Referred to as the Disorders Inquiry Committee, it was later more widely known as the **Hunter Commission**.

Congress boycotted this committee.

The Hunter Commission did not impose any penal or disciplinary action because Dyer's actions were condoned by various superiors (later upheld by the **Army Council**).

Dyer was initially lauded by conservatives in the empire, but in July 1920 he was censured and forced to retire by the **House of Commons**. He was disciplined by being removed from his appointment, was passed over for promotion and was prohibited from further employment in India.

**Mahatma Gandhi**, in 1920, returned the Kaiser-i-Hind medal awarded to him after the Boer War by the British Government as a part of his movement against Punjab and khilafat injustice.



The corrupt mahants of the Golden temple **honoured General Dyer** with a sarapa (robe of honour), which led to the agitation that resulted in the formation of a committee known as Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC), which was given the control and management of the Golden Temple, the Akal Takht, and other Gurudwaras.



Accepting the report of the **Repressive Laws Committee**, the Government of India repealed the Rowlatt Act, the Press Act, and twenty-two other laws in March 1922.



**Udham Singh**, a revolutionary belonging to the Ghadar Party assassinated **Michael O' Dwyer** in London, on 13 March 1940.

