

courts of law men like Brigadier-General Dyer who is proved by his own statements to have caused the deaths of a large number of persons under revolting circumstances, leaving it to them if they can to establish sufficient grounds of justification or exculpation. As regards Lord Chelmsford and Sir Michael O'Dwyer, there can be no doubt that the case for impeachment in respect of their maladministration has grown very strong.

Extract from "the A. B. Patrika," dated Calcutta, the 22nd November 1919.

THE WAY THE WIND BLOWS.

There is already a breeze in the Hunter Committee. The other day when the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar was under examination by Pundit Jagat Narain and was seeking to justify the firing at Jallianwalla Bagh without warning and said that the "rebellion" collapsed as the result of it and therefore "the end had justified the means," Lord Hunter disallowed the following question of the Pundit:—

Q.—"If there were a number of dacoities, say, by two hundred people, you would declare Martial Law and stop that at once?"

The Pundit put this hypothetical case apparently to ascertain how far the Deputy Commissioner's idea about the end justifying the means went. We do not know why such a question was disallowed. Then again when one Bikram Singh who had deposed that "he heard while promenading in front of his gate at noon several men who were taking their meals at a baker's shop near by, to say that they should go to the city (Amritsar) and have a share of the loot from the National Bank," was being examined by Sir Setalvad who asked him at least six times "why he did not at once inform the military guard there" and failing to get an answer said, "you do not mean to answer the simple question." Lord Hunter did not intervene and ask the witness to give an answer. The same witness defied Pundit Jagat Narain also and refused to answer his question "whether he had heard actually that people from outside were coming to loot Amritsar." Then followed the following interesting dialogue:—

Pundit Jagat Narain.—If this Committee is helpless to get any answer from witnesses what is the use of it?

President.—He has tried to give you an answer.

Pundit.—But it is useless.

President.—I have given you full opportunity.

Pundit.—Do you think that is the proper answer?

Comment on the above is needless.

Extract from "the Bombay Chronicle," dated Bombay, the 15th November 1919.

JALLIANWALLA.

"I looked upon the crowd as rebels and I considered it was my duty to fire and fire well."

"I had arrived at this logical conclusion that I must disperse the crowd who had defied the arm of the law and there was no medium course."

"I continued firing until we ran short of ammunition."

—General Dyer before Hunter Committee.

"To put to death a quarter or more of the adult male inhabitants of a village because some shots have been fired, or are supposed by an excited soldiery to have been fired, out of the houses, is mere murder."

—Lord Bryce on German Atrocities.

The evidence of General Dyer before the Hunter Committee is a confession of the wilful ferocity with which the firing at Jallianwalla was executed. Beyond saying that he did it, his deliberate and cold-blooded attempts at justifying what is now admitted to have been an instance of ruthless massacre, consisted merely of a tissue of incoherent reasonings. We were prepared for a certain amount of brusqueness and soldierly hardness in the testimony of General Dyer, but we feel almost stupefied at the utter lack of compunction with which he could recount the story of the carnage. Barring a small section of the Anglo-Indian community who are wont inwardly to gloat over didactic terrorisations of the kind, we think everyone will share the sense of horror and loathing associated with the Jallianwalla outrage, now we have the whole story narrated to us by the principal actor. He regretted nothing, apologised for nothing and attempted to conceal nothing. The meeting at Jallianwalla took place on the evening of 13th April,

Martial Law was proclaimed in Amritsar on the 15th, so that at the time of General Dyer's coup against "rebels," people had no real proclamation that civil authority had abdicated in favour of Martial Law régime. General Dyer pretends that Mr. Irving handed over the situation to him and he felt free to do what he pleased. It is not yet contended on behalf of the authorities that they discarded lawful procedure because they had no time to observe the law. The few days preceding the 13th and the occurrences of that particular day show that the military acted not on the sudden impulse of panic but with premeditation. General Dyer arrived in Amritsar on the 11th, and there were no untoward occurrences till the evening of 13th. At the peaceful meeting held at Dhap Khatika the previous evening, the Jallianwalla meeting was publicly announced, so that the people were not prepared to be faced with musketry next day. In fact a prominent promoter of the first meeting was Hans Raj whose empty evidence in the capacity of approver was made to inveigle leaders whose character was above reproach. On the morning of the fateful day, Amritsar was a "proclaimed area" under the Seditious Meetings Act—an act of civil authority. It was subsequently placarded by Mr. Irving that the shooting took place because of the breach of a prohibition order issued by the General. If there was a breach of the law proclaimed applicable in the morning, the right course would have been the arrest of the promoters of the meeting. We have to infer, with the corroboration of General Dyer, that the object of the military promenade was not the suppression of the meeting—made illegal by the announcement of the morning—but to fall on the crowd which "he looked upon as rebels and enemies of the Crown." Let it be remembered there was peace since the 10th; there was no rebellion, no Martial Law. The "crowd" was regarded by the General as "defiant" and therefore "rebellious." Furthermore, the crowd imagined his order was bluff and what excited him more, there was laughter, concerted laughter. These are the accumulated offences of the people but with General Dyer's confession of his state of mind, it will be conceded that they were more a collection of subjective terms than of tangible realities. The insidious introduction of terms like "rebels" and "soviets"—why not spartacists?—by official witnesses is part of the artifice required to magnify the peril they vanquished and incidentally to lend heinousness to the words and acts of innocent men.

What actually took place in Jallianwalla was a piece of incredible savagery. We say so on the authority of General Dyer himself whose evidence is the best indictment we have yet had. Defiance, bewilderment, sullenness, hesitation, nervous ignorance—these things on the part of a crowd have apparently no distinctions in General Dyer's mind: the crowd was "defiant" and so there was "rebellion." He went with a well armed force and two armoured cars, took up his position on the elevation and opened fire on the seething mass of humanity. Granting that it was an unlawful assembly and granting also that General Dyer was competent, while civil authority continued, to do what he did without warning, it was simply outrageous of him to go beyond the need of dispersing the crowd. With the first volley, the crowd surged off in panic, but the lack of exits and the suddenness of the onslaught enabled the troops to have an undissolved target. He continued firing, not for the purpose of breaking up the assembly but because a little *firing* was bad." Bad for whom? There was some mania abroad which was not far from diabolic to make a responsible soldier think that he might go on firing for the good of the falling victims. They were unarmed, helpless. But General Dyer says that the people who attended the meeting were not innocent. Was the baby of seven months who was shot dead guilty? Were the 42 boys whose corpses lay mangled rebels? There were large numbers of boys of 14, 15, and 16 slain. The people were unarmed and as a matter of fact they consisted of a mixed crowd of young and old who met with no intention that could be called insurrectionary. Some might have been thoughtless, others ignorant, while the majority might have come with vacant-minded curiosity. It is in these circumstances that General Dyer, without any enquiry into the motley character of the crowd and without any sense of restraint, ordered the play of musketry which continued till a shortage of ammunition terminated the bloodshed galore. Mr. Thompson estimated the dead at 291. Mr. Tiwary, after special inquiries, identified 530 dead and 200 wounded. What provision was made for the rescue of the suffering, the treatment of the mangled and the burial of the dead? Asked if he took any measures to attend to the wounded, General Dyer says: "No, certainly not. It was not my job." In his fierceness he forgot these things! But fancy the callousness with which he marched his men away without so much as inquiring as to how the victims were to be treated or what should be done through the night. Not my job! His was the wanton destruction of life—wanton because it was not merely for the dispersal of the meeting, but for insensate suppression of "rebels" that he exhausted his ammunition.

General Dyer's description of the crawling order is in conformity with the cast of mind that could recall the shambles of Jallianwalla without perturbation. He wanted to make the street in which the dastardly assault on Miss Sherwood took place, a sacred spot. Knowing as we do the sense of sanctity of human life displayed at Jallianwalla, we should not be surprised at the ways of General Dyer. To make the spot holy, he made it a place of hellish sufferings for others. The "accidental crawling of twelve persons" and the flogging of Miss Sherwood's assailants on motives other than those of retaliation, mark the limit of General Dyer's ingenuousness. We are appalled at the monstrous self-complaisance of General Dyer. Wilful and impenitent