

APOLOGY: RELEVANCE NOW & for the FUTURE

DECEMBER 6th 2018:

Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London said:

“It is wrong that successive British governments have fallen short of delivering a formal apology... I am clear that the government should now apologise...”

The apology to be meaningful must offer a remedy for the future

Apologies offer opportunities to challenge misconceptions about the past, in this case, how is colonial history perceived by the British and how is it perceived by those with their roots in the old colonies.

Many people from the old colonies were invited to live and work in the UK, resulting in the current rich mix of communities. The younger generations do not understand the reasons for why they are in the UK. They have little or no awareness of the shared history between Britain and their countries of origin or have a skewed view of it.

The apology can be a welcome starting point for more introspection about both the past and the present and how the past is presented to future generations by a more reflective school curricula, text books, museums and public monuments.

This then also, offers an opportunity to encompass within it issues from across the colonies and eliminate the need for separate apologies to be issued for other wrongs.

It is time to provide a wider perspective and share the actuality of colonial history, both the good and bad, with our future generations so they can appreciate the events in the past which have led to their present.

Who Does this campaign affect?

The call for an apology goes beyond any religious, national or cultural barriers, it affects everyone who believes that human life is precious and freedom of speech a fundamental human right.

Current Supporters of the Campaign:

Over 50 MPs from all parties, Unions, Community, Cultural and Religious organisations and Grass roots support via petition.

How to support the campaign

Sign our online petition. Please visit; you.38degrees.org.uk and search Jallianwala Bagh Massacre.

To sign on paper. Please contact:

Joginder Bains 07877 553949 Satbir Johal 07859 908079

Lobby/write to your local organisations, councillors and MPs

For Facebook please search; 'Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (100 Years)'

www.jallianwalabagh.info

Campaign headed by: Jallianwala Bagh Massacre 1919 Centenary Committee initiated by Indian Workers Association (GB)

DEMAND for a FORMAL APOLOGY

for the slaughter of innocent men, women, and children.

WHERE? Jallianwala Bagh, next to Golden Temple, Amritsar, India.

WHO DID IT? British Army (General Dyer in command)

WHEN? 5.15 - 6pm April 13th 1919 (day of the Vaisakhi Festival)

WHY? Dyer's words "to punish the Indians for disobedience"

Winston Churchill described it as: "the slaughter...is...without precedent or parallel...a monstrous event...The crowd was unarmed...It was not attacking anybody or anything...When fire had been opened...it tried to run away...packed together so that one bullet would drive through three to four bodies...When the fire

was directed upon the centre, they ran to the sides. The fire was then directed to the sides. Many threw themselves down on the ground, the fire was then directed down...it stopped only when the ammunition had reached the point of exhaustion"

Why Demand an apology after 100 years?

Because an apology shows RESPECT and REMORSE, which starts HEALING which brings RECONCILIATION.

The slaughter has been described as "inhumane, brutal and shameful." It left lasting pain and bitterness, which refuses to go away.

The lack of an apology keeps the pain and anger simmering, preserving barriers and mistrust.

Those innocent lives deserve to be shown respect, those still affected need to start healing and reconciling with the past. Only then, can our increasingly diverse communities move forward with self-respect, dignity and on an equal footing.



RAIGURU



BHAGAT SINGH



SUKHDEV

23 MARCH 1931
SHAHEED



SHAHEED UDHAM SINGH
26 December 1899 - 31 July 1940

What led to the events of 13th April 1919?: India was under British Rule, Indian soldiers served in the British Army but there was an increasingly unified movement for Independence amongst the civilians. To suppress this movement, stronger and unbearable sanctions were imposed, including the cruel and degrading 'Crawling Order' and the oppressive 'Rowlett Act'. When people protested, they were shot at and many killed. Well-loved leaders were imprisoned in secret locations creating a mood of anger, frustration and humiliation.

Jallianwala Bagh, a 6-acre park enclosed on all sides by high walls and accessed via five narrow gated alleys, was a popular place for families, to rest, meet and make speeches. Vaisakhi, one of the most important days in the Indian calendar, attracted huge crowds (about 10000) to the Bagh from near and far, young and old, most, unaware of the happenings in the city, with no knowledge of politics or legislation.

Rabindranath Tagore renouncing his Knighthood wrote:
“...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 countrymen who for their so-called insignificance, are liable to suffer degradation not fit for human beings”

legendary martyr of the Indian Independence in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Apologies made and apology evaded

Since 1919 various British dignitaries have visited the Bagh and uttered words of regret but they all fell short of an apology.

1997, the Queen visited Amritsar, her carefully chosen words were far from 'sorry'.

2013 David Cameron called it a 'deeply shameful act' but then said it would be wrong to 'reach back into history' to apologise.

Yet, he reached back into history to apologise for the Bloody Sunday killings. Tony Blair did the same for slavery, apologising 200 years after it was abolished.

Not one came armed or ready for violence.

5.15pm as people rested, talked, shared food, listened to speeches, soldiers without any warning, ran into the Bagh, positioned themselves around the perimeter and were ordered to fire at the crowd as described so vividly by Churchill.

After the shooting, Dyer turned and walked away, leaving blood soaked, agonised mounds of human bodies. Curfew fell. No aid or water could reach the wretched survivors for 12 sweltering hours. According, to Williams

Deemeddy and other local sources, 1526 died, including 120 bodies that were dug out of the well. The Hunter Commission stated the dead as 379, amongst them 41 boys and a baby of just 6 weeks. Thousands more were injured. The variance may be the result of the authorities wishing to down play the horror.

After the 13th April 1919? Despite Government efforts to suppress news of the slaughter, word spread, causing universal horror and outrage.

Dyer told the 'Hunter Commission' that he had intended to use machine guns on the crowd but could not get them through the narrow alley.

Despite the premeditated and cold blooded nature of the slaughter Dyer was protected from criminal prosecution by the Government. In fact the Army contributed to a payment of £26000.00 for him, rubbing salt into Indian wounds. Families of those slaughtered were given £25.

Udham Singh, a fervent young gadherite and freedom fighter, hearing of the events at the Bagh vowed revenge. 21 years later on 13th March 1940, he fulfilled his vow by shooting Michael O'Dwyer who as Governor of Punjab at the time, was believed to have planned and approved the slaughter. He was tried and hung for murder by the British Court on 31st July 1940. But along with Shaheed-e-Azam (meaning great martyr) Bhagat Singh, he is revered as a

