

Rowlatt Act and Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (1919)

These notes are your ultimate revision weapon to revise Rowlatt Act and Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (1919) history. We've distilled years of previous exam questions (PYQs) into one powerful, concise resource. Everything you need to know, nothing you don't.

- **PYQs, Decoded:** All key concepts from past exams, organized and simplified.
- **Revise in Record Time:** Short, precise, and designed for last-minute review.
- **Focus on What Matters:** Master high-probability topics and boost your confidence.

The Rowlatt Act (1919) and the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

1. The Rowlatt Act (1919)

- **Official Name:** The Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act of 1919.
- **Viceroy:** Passed during the viceroyalty of **Lord Chelmsford** (1916-1921).
- **Purpose:** To curtail national and revolutionary activities by suppressing sedition.
- **Basis:** Based on the recommendations of the **Sedition Committee (1918)** chaired by **Justice Sidney Rowlatt**.
- **Provisions:**
 - Authorized the government to imprison any person **without trial**.
 - Allowed for summary procedures for trial (no jury).

- **Public Reaction:**
 - Aroused widespread popular indignation as it severely curtailed individual liberty.
 - Famously condemned as a law offering "**No plea (Daleel), No lawyer (Vakil), No appeal.**"
 - Denounced as the "**Black Act.**"

2. The Rowlatt Satyagraha

- **Leader: Mahatma Gandhi.**
- **Significance:** It was **Gandhi's first venture into all-India politics.**
- **Nature:** A pan-India movement involving people of all religions, castes, and genders.
- **Demands:** Protested for freedom of the press and an end to detention without trial.
- **Methods:**
 - Gandhi tried to utilize the **Home Rule League** for the agitation.
 - **Swami Shraddhanand** suggested launching a tax campaign (refusing to pay rent) as a form of protest.

3. The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (1919)

- **What & When:** A tragic shooting of a peaceful gathering by British troops occurred on **April 13, 1919**, in Amritsar, Punjab.
- **Context:** The massacre happened during the **Rowlatt Satyagraha.**
- **Immediate Cause:**
 - People gathered to protest against the **arrest of two popular Punjabi leaders, Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlu and Dr. Satyapal** on April 9, 1919.
 - Many were also in the city for the annual **Baisakhi fair.**
- **The Event:**
 - A large, unarmed crowd gathered in the enclosed garden of Jallianwala Bagh.
 - **General Reginald Dyer** blocked the exits and ordered troops to open fire on the crowd without warning.

- **Casualties:** An estimated **1,000 people were killed** and **2,000 were injured** in the 10-minute shooting.

4. Aftermath and Protests

- **Rabindranath Tagore:** Renounced his British knighthood (on May 30, 1919) in protest.
- **Sir Sankaran Nair:** Resigned from the Viceroy's Executive Council in protest.
- **British Stance:** The British Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab, **Sir Michael O'Dwyer**, is widely considered the chief architect behind the oppressive policies that led to the massacre. He endorsed Dyer's action.
- **British Inquiry:** The **Hunter Committee** (Disorders Inquiry Committee), chaired by Lord William Hunter, was appointed to investigate.
 - Its report justified the imposition of martial law and criticized Mahatma Gandhi for the unrest.
- **Congress Response:**
 - The Indian National Congress condemned Dyer's actions and the use of martial law.
 - The task of drafting the **Indian National Congress's own inquiry report** was entrusted to **Mahatma Gandhi**.
- **British Term:** The Secretary of State for India, **Edwin Montagu**, characterized the massacre as "**Preventive Murder**."

5. Key Figures and Their Roles

Figure	Role
Lord Chelmsford	Viceroy of India when the Rowlatt Act was passed and the massacre occurred.
Justice Sidney Rowlatt	Chaired the Sedition Committee whose report led to the Rowlatt Act.

Mahatma Gandhi	Led the all-India Rowlatt Satyagraha; tasked with drafting the Congress inquiry report.
General Reginald Dyer	The British officer who ordered the shooting at Jallianwala Bagh.
Michael O'Dwyer	British Lieutenant-Governor of Punjab; chief architect of oppressive policies; assassinated in 1940 by Udham Singh for his role.
Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlu & Dr. Satyapal	Popular Punjabi leaders whose arrest was the immediate cause for the Jallianwala Bagh gathering.
Rabindranath Tagore	Renounced his knighthood in protest (1919); awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature (1913).
Swami Shraddhanand	Suggested a tax campaign (non-payment of rent) to protest the Rowlatt Act.
David Lloyd George	Prime Minister of England during the events.

6. Sequence of Contextual Events

1. **April 9, 1919:** Incarceration of Dr. Satyapal and Saifuddin Kitchlu.
2. **April 13, 1919:** Jallianwala Bagh Massacre.
3. **May 30, 1919:** Rabindranath Tagore renounces his knighthood.
4. **December 1919:** Amritsar Congress Session.
5. **1940:** Michael O'Dwyer assassinated by Udham Singh in London.

Know More About Rowlatt Act and Jallianwala Bagh Massacre (1919):

- [Rowlatt Act and Jallianwala Bagh Massacre \(1919\) -Old Year Questions and Answers](#)
- [Rowlatt Act and Jallianwala Bagh Massacre \(1919\) One Liner Questions & Answers](#)