

highly educated people, were all extremists and it wrung his heart to have to state that the 'majority of lawyers were seditionists.' For arriving at this conclusion he gave what he no doubt considered a very convincing reason that 'they held meetings and preached sedition.' As to when and where they had done this his mind presented a total blank, and he very much resented the fact that his word was not accepted and that he was subjected to a cross-examination. Col. MacRae, another 'martial law administrator, had also certain fixed ideas about agitators, and his examination by Sir Ghimanlal Setalvad will bear being quoted. With reference to the martial law notices which he had ordered to be posted at the house of 'well-known agitators', he was asked what was meant by the term 'agitators' and replied that the meaning of the word was as shown in the English dictionary.

Sir Chimanlal : Whom do you mean ?

Witness. I think it is good English.

Sir Chimanlal : I never suggested it is bad English.

Witness : I don't want to answer it otherwise then. I have said, it is quite clear.

Sir Chimanlal : 'Agitators' may mean any class of persons.

Lord Hunter to the witness : Have you no idea in your own mind as to what you mean by 'agitator'?

Witness : A man who agitates against Government.

Sir Chimanlal : What do you mean by a man who agitates against Government ?

Witness : Who by expression or otherwise speaks against Government measures.

Sir Chimanlal : You ordered these notices should be

posted on houses of well-known agitators. Did you explain what was meant by 'agitators'?

Witness : No I did not.

Sir Chimanlal : What do you mean by 'malcontents'?

Witness : One who is discontented with any Government measure.

Sir Chimanlal : Were the houses of all lawyers selected ?

Witness : I don't know, I did not see how the police carried out the order.

Sir Chimanlal : As a deterrent against the defacing of these notices you warned that action would be taken against the property of persons on whose houses these notices were posted. Was that warning in writing or oral ?

Witness : What does it matter ?

Sir Chimanlal : Surely, Colonel this is not the way to answer. This is not the attitude to be adopted towards this Committee or any member of it.

General Beynon, the General officer commanding the 15th Indian Division, when questioned with reference to the prohibition of legal practitioners from entering the martial law area stated that 'from the military point of view he considered the presence of those excellent gentlemen not necessary'. When asked whether he was not treating Lahore as an enemy country and the reasons for the prohibition his mind could not travel beyond the fact that he considered their presence was not necessary.

With the existence of such feelings against the educated classes in general and legal practitioners in particular, it may well be surmised what must have been the treatment accorded to those who came especially under the

notice of the authorities. All over the martial law area pleaders without regard to age or antecedents were enrolled as special constables. Mr. Irvine, the deputy commissioner of Amritsar, when asked whether this was not because of the desire to punish local agitators, frankly replied : 'The idea did not originate with me. I can't speak as to the motives of the General'. Those who were known to have taken a part in the agitation relating to the Rowlatt Act were arrested and handcuffed and marched to jail and subjected to the most ingenious and unheard of indignities. Amongst the numerous questions put by Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya in the Imperial Legislative Council was one relating to Gujranwala. Mr. Thompson in reply practically admitted the correctness of the facts stated therein. It was to the effect : 'The deputy commissioner of Gujranwala, with a strong body of police and European soldiers and with an armoured car marched to the house of L. Mela Ram, B.A., LL. B., pleader, and arrested and hand-cuffed him and took him away without allowing him to dress and speak to his family. The party then arrested Mr. Labh Singh, M. A., (Cantab) bar-at-law, and chained him with L. Mela Ram. They proceeded to the house of 20 other respectable persons, arrested and handcuffed them and chained them all together. The persons arrested and chained together were marched to the city, two and two, headed by a Hindu and a Mahomedan, to ridicule Hindu-Moslem unity as was stated at that time by Col. O'Brien. Two municipal commissioners walked in front of the procession, and pointing to the aeroplanes hovering overhead kept on shouting to Indians to make way on pain of being wounded or shot down. After being paraded in the streets

the prisoners were taken to the station, put in an open coal truck guarded by European soldiers with fixed bayonets, with guns directed towards the prisoners. The prisoners were not allowed to leave their places even for the purpose of attending the calls of nature. On reaching Lahore railway station they were kept in a latrine for ten hours and then removed to the jail.'

From the official evidence adduced before the Hunter Commission it is clear that there were numerous cases of respectable persons being arrested, handcuffed and taken to jail where they were kept for a long or short period and then discharged in the absence of any evidence that could convict them. Dr. Manohar Lal, a barrister and ex-Minto Professor of Political Economy, was arrested, being a trustee of the *Tribune*. After being subjected to various indignities and for a time kept in solitary confinement, he was eventually discharged without being brought to trial. Maulvi Ghulam Mohi-uddin, pleader of Kasur, who last year had been publicly rewarded for his services in connection with the war, and Maulvi Abdul Quader, a senior pleader of Kasur, were arrested and kept confined in a jail for some weeks in an improvised lock-up and then released without any charge having been framed. Mr. Irvine stated in his evidence that he hesitated to fire on the mob at Amritsar as he found in the crowd two Indian gentlemen who were persuading the crowd to go away. One of these was Mr. Pradayal Singh, a practitioner in his court. He had tried to restrain the mob at great personal risk. He was arrested on the 23rd May, kept in jail for a month and a half and was eventually brought to Lahore and put up for trial. Witness had given evidence in that case, drawing attention to his action in



persuading the crowd to go away and he was acquitted. People in Amritsar laughed at Mr. Singh for his pains and for the reward he had got.'

The lamentable error of judgment displayed by those who had undertaken to advocate the cause of the people before the Disorders Inquiry Committee is much to be deplored in allowing the inquiry to proceed *ex parte* and thus forfeiting the chance of leading evidence which would have thrown considerable light on the events of the martial law period. One of the points in respect to which a vast amount of material was available was the official attitude towards the so-called political agitators and the treatment accorded to them with the view of stamping out political life in the Punjab. But even the evidence as it stands is sufficient to bring this significant fact out in broad relief. How are we to account for this peculiar attitude of the rulers of the Punjab? Were they perchance interpreting the views of the English nation? The idea on the face of it is preposterous. Were they acting in pursuance of a common policy which was to be adopted in all India? This is contradicted by the fact that in Calcutta, Bombay and Delhi a line of conduct was pursued by those responsible for governing the country which instead of seeking to stamp out the leaders of public opinion sought their cordial co-operation and support. Why then was this spirit of hostility so pronounced in the Punjab? There should be no difficulty in arriving at a solution of the problem. Sir Michael O'Dwyer was a strenuous governor and like all strong men he could not brook any opposition to his will or to his settled opinions. He has frankly stated that autocracy is the only form of Government which is suited for the India

of to-day. The educated classes were constantly rubbing him up the wrong way with their numerous pretensions. He fell foul of them in the Imperial Council only to find the next day that retraction or resignation was the only alternative left open to him. He retracted, but with a bad grace, for in safer quarters he repeated his charges. And when the catastrophe came in the shape of the Punjab disorders he threw all restraint to the winds and fulminated against the educated classes in language which for the vituperation he indulged in exhausted the English vocabulary. By six years of close contact with him his lieutenants in the province imbibed from him his political ideas and all the more readily as his was a strong personality. And thus it happens that a line of conduct was pursued which has aroused the indignation not only of the Punjab but of the whole of the intelligent population of India. The sequel is somewhat curious, for a new life born of intense suffering has been infused in the Punjab which no repression is likely ever to extinguish.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### METHOD IN MADNESS.

England rules over India and no sane person has any desire to subvert this rule or indeed to weaken the prestige of England. The desire for self-government is most laudable and is a goal we are bound to reach some day. But to say that we are ready to-day for complete self-government is to indulge in a wild dream which is calculated to imperil the future welfare of the country. It cannot be too strongly emphasised that in the interests of India its connection with England must be maintained and that every patriotic Indian should shape his conduct accordingly. But at the same time a corresponding duty devolves upon England, and that is to rule its subjects with equity, justice and humanity. English statesmen recognise this obligation as they realise the serious consequences which would follow any repudiation or slackening of this principle. Mr. Bernard Houghton, an ex-member of the civil service, is faithfully depicting the consensus of public opinion when he asks with reference to the disclosures made before the Hunter Commission: 'Has not a Government which can only keep the peace by such atrocities abrogated all claim, to be considered a civilised Government? If we can only preserve our rule by such means the sooner we can clear out of India bag and baggage, the better'. The *New Witness* is equally emphatic when it says: 'If we can only govern India by means of periodic massacres we must clear out'. The

manner in which India is being governed is therefore a matter of vital importance and it is doing a dis-service to England to hide or to minimise any action which is calculated to imperil the existing relations between the two countries.

While the political atmosphere was comparatively calm in the spring of 1919 there was a sudden explosion of disorder in various parts of India due to causes which were more or less common. It was natural that stringent measures should be adopted to put this down. Lord Ronaldshay, Sir George Lloyd and Mr. Barron restored order and peace in a few days within the areas for which each was responsible, but in the province which had been acclaimed as the most loyal an orgy of frightfulness was indulged in. It is said rebellion was rampant and the imposition of martial law saved the situation. Lord Hunter's Committee has been entrusted with the task of inquiring into this and other cognate matters, and we need not anticipate its verdict. But certain disclosures have been made which are quite apart from the issues to be dealt with by the Committee. As regards the Jallianwala affair English public opinion has made a pronouncement as emphatic as it is practically unanimous, realising that the national honour and credit were at stake. The *Manchester Guardian* considers General Dyer 'a mad man let loose to massacre at large.' A parallel case was that in connection with the Dublin Revolt. Mr. Sheehy Skeffington and two others were ordered to be shot by a military officer under circumstances which afforded no justification for such a step. The officer was tried and declared to be of unsound mind. Will General Dyer be tried and pronounced insane?

But in the tragedy of the Punjab, General Dyer was

one out of many actors. If he is a mad man, what about General Beynon and Sir Michael O'Dwyer who telegraphed to him their approval of his brave achievement? Are they to be treated as mad men? And what about the others the record of whose mighty deeds yet remains to tickle the fancy of a nation which plumes itself and rightly, on its justice and humanity. There are the Gujranwala episode and the crawling incident to be reckoned with. There are the brutalities which were impartially distributed in the whole area of martial law. There are the mountebanks who indulged in the invention of fancy offences and fancy punishments. There are those who gloated in the infliction of indignities and degradations of sorts to satisfy their petty spite against political agitators. What about the numerous boasters who exulted in their deeds and affirmed they would repeat them if necessary? And what about those responsible for preventing for months a leakage of the true facts? Are these all to be treated as mad men? The truth is, the British nation finds itself in a tight corner at present. It is easy enough to declare a single individual a mad man, but what is to be done with the band of men that are competing for that honour? And are we certain that these good people are entitled to be called mad men? They will not only deny the soft impeachment but will put on the virtuous look of martyrs who are the victims of the malicious attacks of individuals whose ignorance they will say is only exceeded by their unreasonableness.

A careful scrutiny will elicit the fact that if these men have acted as mad men there was considerable method in their madness. In the whole course of this sorry business it will be found that there was

a particular strain of mentality which characterised their conduct, and this has been brought out in broad relief by the evidence which has been recorded by the Hunter Commission. There is the racial feeling accentuated to the utmost extent. It was common talk amongst Europeans in those days that for every white man that had been killed the penalty paid was a hundred Indian lives. It was a feather in the cap of the European and more so in that of the Anglo-Indian who cherishes the most peculiar notions of his ancestry. It is refreshing to find the *Nation* writing :—‘Above all we must avoid like poison the fatal doctrine that the life of an Indian counts for less than the life of an Englishman, for that is a basis on which you build not the kind of society for which we profess to be preparing India, but the kind of society in which a foreign ruler takes over the traditions of an oriental despot.’ Then there is the pride which is the stock in trade of the conqueror who delights in impressing on him of the subject race the immensity of the gap which divides them. The salaaming incident, the umbrella episode, the forcing of individuals to prostrate themselves and rub the ground with their foreheads have a significance peculiarly their own. As to the anxiety for the maintenance of British rule no objection could have been taken to it but for the indifference shown as to the means by which this end was to be attained. Kindness, justice and humanity were superseded by frightfulness of every kind and this, it was verily believed, would terrorise the people into abject submission. There was an outcry in England against Hun atrocities and Hun inhumanity, and now writes the *Daily News*, ‘the scene of this new frightfulness is not Belgium, but India, the General responsible is not German

but British. The victims are not technically enemies 'but rebels,' in General Dyer's words, that is to say, British subjects who innocently or otherwise ventured to act in contravention of his decrees.' *Truth* says the 'affair reads just like some of the stories of German frightfulness in France and Belgium, and General Dyer's defence of himself before Lord Hunter's Committee is what will come naturally from the mouth of a Prussian officer in the same position'. The *Westminster Gazette* says: 'Not the least astonishing thing of all is that General Dyer's massacre did not precipitate a real rebellion...Sane people will realise that a few more episodes of this kind would suffice to bring our rule to an end.' This is strong language, but we shall see that it is justified.

On the 13th April 1919, a couple of days before martial law was actually proclaimed in Amritsar, General Dyer promulgated an order prohibiting the holding of any public meeting, without in any way intimating to the people the capacity under which he passed this order. He admits he cannot say whether 'any measures were taken to ensure its publication to the citizens.' If all the people did not come to know of this order it was no fault of his, for he had left the publication to the police. And if on that particular day the Baisakhi fair happened to be held, when outsiders in crowds visited the city, well, so much the worse for them. Towards evening information was brought to him that a meeting was to be held at the Jallianwala Bagh. Forthwith his mind was made up. The people who had disobeyed his orders were rebels and needed a lesson in respect to flouting the orders of a General. He proceeded with two columns of twenty-five men each to the spot up to within eight or ten yards where



a man was addressing the crowd. He opened fire 'immediately', because, he says, 'I had thought about the matter and do not imagine it took me more than thirty seconds to make up my mind as to what my duty was.' His duty was to disperse the mob by firing on them. But he found that no sooner had he arrived on the scene the crowd began to run away. For all that the order was given to fire and he says the mob 'immediately began to disperse.' The firing was continued because, says the gallant General, 'I thought it my duty to go on till it did disperse. If I fired a little the effect would not be sufficient. If I had fired a little I should be wrong in firing at all.' Therefore the firing went on with certain intermissions, when it was checked so that it could be directed upon places where the crowd was the thickest. It ceased when the ammunition was exhausted, and the glorious task had been achieved of four to five hundred men being killed and about fifteen hundred wounded. The commander then wends his way homewards, proud of having done his duty as an officer and a gentleman. Now the officious *Daily Herald* steps in and wonders at 'the incredible indifference to human suffering in leaving the wounded unattended in the streets', and adds: 'This we presume was done in order to teach men and women of a different civilization and a different religion what a beautiful and merciful thing Christianity is and how sacred we British hold the law of Him who said that we are to love our enemies.' But the real explanation is to be found in the evidence given by General Dyer before the Hunter Commission where he lets us have an insight into his character and into the principles which formed the basis of his conduct. He was a man in authority and he

expected a general recognition of this fact. He was a conscientious man, ready to discharge his duty at all costs. He had a logical mind, which inspired him as to the proper sequence of events. For disobeying his decess the penalty must be paid. He honestly believed that for successfully ruling over India "the one thing was force." He was never precipitate but 'searched his mind' before deciding on any particular course of action. He was a very sensitive man and rather than 'be laughed at' he would any day see hundreds of men butchered. He was a man who, for the sake of 'making examples of the people' who had flouted his order, did not care if what he did 'had the effect of permanently alienating the people or putting them out of sympathy with the administration.' He was a man of grand ideas and aimed at 'doing something which would make an 'impression throughout Panjab', but unfortunately he overshot the mark and has made an impression throughout the world. It was but natural that an officer with his peculiar notions of 'duty' stamped on his brow should tell the Commission that 'it was not my duty to render aid to the wounded.' Mr. Irvine, the chief civil officer at Amritsar, says he did nothing because 'it was no business of his, a military officer being in command.' And as the curfew order had already been passed which prevented people leaving their houses after dusk the fate of the wounded can more easily be surmised than described.

A good deal less than this was enough to bring in a verdict of insanity against the military officer responsible for the death of Mr. Skeffington in Dublin, but it is unfair to General Dyer to force this plea on him. His narrative of what has come to be called the Amritsar massacre throws a flood of light on his mentality. He

reiterates the fact that it was his 'duty' to disperse the crowd, but if on his arrival on the scene he had found the mob had already dispersed he would have been grievously disappointed. He admits that 'he could have dispersed the crowd perhaps even without firing,' and to the question put to him, 'in firing was it your object to disperse the crowd' he gave the evasive but significant answer, 'I was going to fire until they had dispersed.' On his way to Jallianwala Bagh his mind seems to have been obsessed with the idea of teaching persons whom he had put down as rebels for disobeying his order 'a lesson that would make a wide impression throughout the Punjab.' It was on this 'duty' his whole mind was concentrated and therefore such trifles as asking the crowd to disperse before firing on them or allowing the frantic runaways to escape during the short intervals he stopped firing did not enter his logical mind. He says, 'I looked upon the crowd as rebels and therefore considered it my duty to fire on and to fire well.' Says the *New Witness* :—'He is so logical as to confess that in all probability he would have turned his machine guns on the helpless people if he had been able to bring them into play.' And this makes his conduct intelligible in leaving the wounded uncared for, because any attention paid to them would have detracted from the double duty he had in view, the punishment of the 'rebels' and the doing of 'something very strong which would create an impression throughout the Punjab.'

The crawling incident and the flogging episode elucidate still more clearly the mentality of General Dyer. Miss Sherwood, an English lady, was brutally assaulted in one of the streets of Amritsar by some ruffians and left for dead. Her own published statement testifies to the fact

of friendly Indians having dissuaded her 'from being out at that time and to their having eventually rescued her. She writes : "I heard not the cries of 'kill, kill' in that street, but the shouts in another of 'Leave her alone—she is a woman.' " It was Indians who rescued me, an Indian house that gave me shelter, and Indian hands that first dressed my wounds." No punishment inflicted on her assailants would have been too severe. Six men were taken in custody on more suspicion and kept in detention in the Fort. General Dyer goes to the spot a few days later and says he ordered the street 'to be blocked at both ends and no Indian was to be allowed to go through, and if he did he must go through on all fours. That all fours was by some means interpreted into crawling. My order said, on all fours'. Simultaneously he ordered, 'erect a triangle there,' the idea being that 'at this place the persons who had beaten Miss Sherwood should be flogged.' By a curious coincidence the six men, who were arrested on suspicion, and against whom no evidence had yet been recorded, were brought from the Fort to this spot and flogged with thirty lashes each for some alleged breach of Fort discipline. No sooner the 'all fours' order had been passed and General Dyer had moved a 100 yards than twelve men were arrested and ordered to go through the crawling process, the reason given being that they were insolent, but in reality, for the delectation of General Dyer and his associates. This order continued for five days, during which time the residents, if they had to pass through, had to crawl as best they could. And of course no scavenging was done during the whole period as it is out of the question that any outsiders would care to enter this proscribed area. The only visitors who favoured this spot were the

unfortunate individuals who were brought there to be flogged. That the electric current and water supply were cut off is admitted. The official explanation for this is by no means convincing, and there is a deep seated conviction in the mind of every Indian that reprisals were resorted to by a humane and civilised nation which not long before had vehemently inveighed against similar acts of savagery on the part of the Huns. To place under a ban both the innocent and the guilty is an achievement which only the heroes of the Punjab could have believed would redound to the credit and safety of English rule in India. 'The substance of Prussianism,' writes the *Manchester Guardian*, 'was to use terror indiscriminately to cow opposition, without regard to any question of guilt or innocence. At this the world was justly horrified, and in the long run the thing has been fatal to Prussia.'

It is doing General Dyer a great injustice to call him a mad man. He had a heavy responsibility thrown upon him, and he discharged it so as to win the approval of his superior officer and that of the Governor of the province. It was the policy of Sir Michael O'Dwyer that was being carried out by all the authorities concerned in putting down the disorder, and no protest was made by him in respect to the general indulgence of frightfulness. It is impossible to escape the conclusion that the ultimate responsibility is his, and not so much his personally as that of the policy pursued by him for six years and to which he gave expression before the Joint Committee of Reforms that the form of government best suited for India at present is autocracy. This, translated into action by his lieutenants, meant a license to indulge in any kind of frightfulness provided the object kept in view was the

conservation of British power and prestige. We have seen that in other parts of India different methods were adopted to secure the same end, and the reason of this will not be very gratifying to the people of the Punjab. They are credited with being a martial race, and yet an experiment was tried there which Englishmen know would not have been tolerated in any other part of India. A long residence in the Punjab has forced the conviction on me that toadyism, flunkeyism, the craving for rewards, titles and seats in a Durbar have obsessed the people there to an extent unknown elsewhere. They are utterly lacking in moral backbone, and for selfish ends will commit despicable acts without being conscious that they were doing anything improper. Corruption is rampant in all departments and amongst all classes of officials. To the credit of Sir Michael O'Dwyer it must be said he tried to clear the atmosphere by making examples of high judicial officers, Hindu, Mahomedan, Indian Christian and Anglo-Indian. If the later days of his regime have struck horror throughout the world, yet those recognised by Government as the leaders of their communities in the Punjab went in deputation and with the most fulsome adulation of his achievement bade farewell to the departing Governor. And only the other day his admirers at Rawalpindi entertained him, though only a few weeks before the united voice of India had condemned him at the Congress and Moslem League sessions in Amritsar and at the Moderate Conference in Calcutta in no sparing terms. That people so devoid of self-respect should be made the objects of any kind of experiment need excite no surprise. But the sufferings they have undergone have borne fruit and the small band of political agitators on whom rests

the future progress of the Punjab have received such an accession to their ranks that before long the race of toadies will be wiped out of existence. Frightfulness was utilised for a particular purpose, but it has aroused such a deep resentment in the whole of India that it has opened the eyes of the submissive Punjabis and has infused a new spirit in them which will make a repetition of this frightfulness next to impossible.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE DEMAND FOR REPARATION.

In the previous article the achievements of General Dyer have been noticed and in justice to the English nation the comments of the press condemning him in scathing terms have been freely quoted. But as there is an outcry for the punishment of others besides the hero of Amritsar it becomes incumbent to obtain at least a general idea of their actions which are being so keenly resented. We shall then be in a position to decide whether there are adequate grounds for the demand for reparation, as also what form this should take so as to serve the two ends which it is desirable to keep in view, that of affording relief to the outraged feelings of the people and of restoring their confidence in British justice and humanity.

A mentality similar to that of General Dyer is to be found in Col. Frank Johnson, the martial law administrator of Lahore. He was equally indifferent to the effect his repressive measures would have on the general attitude of the people towards Government. He was as eager to terrorize over them by a resort to frightfulness. He was as destitute of the faculty of discriminating between the innocent and the guilty. A martial law notice posted on a college wall was found torn and 500 students and professors were arrested and kept in custody for two days. The gallant officer airily explains—'I was looking for an opportunity to bring home to all concerned what martial law meant'. The students of three other colleges were

ordered to be present at roll-call four times a day at his headquarters, to do which they had for three weeks to walk sixteen miles daily in the blazing sun of May. It was not by way of punishment for any offence, but he says as a kindness in keeping them out of mischief and giving them physical training. He admitted that this would evoke in the young men a bitter hatred towards the British Government for the rest of their lives, but as there was so much sedition in these colleges nothing I did would make it worse'. The punishment most utilized was whipping and for the first few days it was administered in the open street. Its value was reckoned to be 'more than 1,000 rifles', besides its possessing certain special virtues which have been quoted in a previous chapter. To illustrate its indiscriminate use has been cited the flogging of a priest and others belonging to a wedding party for being more than ten in number. The appropriation of motor cars and carriages belonging to Indians and making them over for use to Europeans furnishes an excellent illustration of his ideas of justice. The estimation in which he held Indians is evidenced by his order that not more than two of them were to walk abreast as 'if they did not make way for Europeans the latter would be justified in assaulting them'. Martial law notices were to be posted on the houses of such persons who were certified by the criminal investigation department to be disloyal and all those supposed to be interested in politics came under this category and specially the lawyers, for Col. Johnson held the view that 'the majority of them were seditionists'. Informers had a grand time. The principal of the Dayal Singh College was fined Rs. 250 on the statement of an informer that

he had seen an objectionable poster on the outer wall. On the latter being convicted of perjury in another matter the fine was remitted. To threaten to blow up the surrounding buildings if a firearm was discharged from any particular spot testifies to the military commander's readiness to resort to the practice of Hun atrocities. He says he acted in perfect good faith and would do the same things over again and he was probably very much astonished at some hyper-critical persons accusing him of being deficient in the ordinary instincts of justice and humanity with the alternative that his mental condition rendered him an irresponsible agent.

In his evidence before the Hunter Commission, General Beynon, commanding the 2nd division Army Corps, not only expressed his entire approval of the manner in which martial law was administered but has characterized the operations of General Dyer and Col. Johnson as a veritable blessing to the people. We may, therefore, take it that with the modifications necessitated by local conditions the martial law orders promulgated in Lahore were also enforced in other infected areas. But the military administrators were allowed a discretion to issue any special orders that were deemed by them to be necessary. A recital of some of these will afford instructive reading. The salaaming order which required Indians to salute European officials was enforced all over the proscribed area, while in some districts its scope was extended to directing that 'all persons riding on animals or in wheeled conveyances will alight, persons carrying open and raised umbrellas shall lower them and all persons salute or salaam with the hand'. The experience of the legal practitioners in the area said to be infected would fill a whole volume. Suffice

it to say that a large number of them were arrested and had to go through indignities of sorts. Some of these were discharged after being kept in custody for weeks without being brought to trial, but the bulk of them were convicted of waging war against the King-Emperor and sentenced to transportation for life and confiscation of their property. It need hardly be said all these have now been released as they came under the category of political offenders who it was not even alleged had taken any overt part in the excesses that were committed by the 'riff-raffs' of the town and country.

Gujranwala has earned a right to a prominent place in the future history of the Panjab for not only being the scene where the first experiments in bombing from an aeroplane were tried by the rulers of India but for the manner in which the operations were carried on. On its approach the mob, as was to be expected, took to its heels and on this dispersing rabble bombs were dropped. One young airman stated before the Hunter Commission that 'noticing a band of Indians approaching the town two miles distant off he dropped three bombs killing three men and pursued them for some distance with his machine-gun.' Another deposed to finding '120 men in a field whom he machine-gunned till they fled and then scattered with bombs people listening to a speech in front of a house'. They both declared they were merely carrying out superior orders which were to disperse all crowds in and about Gujranwala. 'This use of the Royal Air Force for attacking defenceless citizens', says the *Manchester Guardian*, 'a use which even the laws of war do not permit, has been rightly denounced as one of the most serious features in this lamentable record.' Col. O'Brien,

the deputy commissioner, secured himself by obtaining the assurance of the Punjab Government that his acts would be validated. He was one of those who were indifferent to any resentment or bitterness that might be aroused by the indulgence in frightfulness, as he said that 'the bitterness was already existing.' He arrested 30 persons, mostly pleaders and barristers, who were handcuffed and chained in pairs, a Hindu and a Mahomedan, to ridicule the newly formed amity of the two communities. They were then marched through the city preceded by two municipal commissioners who pointed to the people to make way for the prisoners on pain of being bombed or shot down. They were taken to the railway station, put in an open coal truck and were conveyed to Lahore where with other prisoners they were kept chained in a room which opened in a latrine. They journeyed to and fro between Lahore and Gujranwala always handcuffed and chained. Col. O'Brien also cannot escape the responsibility of having allowed one of his subordinates, Mr. Bosworth Smith, the sub-divisional officer at Kasur, to indulge in the most extraordinary eccentricities. Major Smith, the martial law administrator of Gujranwala, Gujrat and Lyallpore districts, admits that in his area students including those in the infant class were ordered to attend a parade two or three times a day to salute the Union Jack and that restrictions were placed on the movements of the lawyers as he considered them 'suspicious characters.'

In Kasur, Capt. Doveton evolved fancy offences and fancy punishments and varied General Dyer's crawling order to the extent of forcing persons to lie flat and touch the ground with their foreheads. This, he said, was done

to impress on them the authority of Government. He had men stripped and flogged in the presence of prostitutes, just as in Amritsar men were flogged before the whole body of lawyers, all of whom, young and old, had been enrolled as special constables. Col. MacRae admitted that he sent for some of the bigger boys of a school and flogged them in public, not because they had done anything but by way of example and stated 'it was their misfortune that they happened to be big boys'. All the inhabitants, about 10,000 in number, including little boys, had to turn out for the identification parade and were made to stand bareheaded for six hours in the heat of the day. Out of these 150 were arrested and were confined in a cage placed on the railway station platform, where a gallows had been erected before anyone had even been put on his trial. It is more than likely that the railway staff was unwilling to give evidence which would lead to the identification of the criminals who had killed three Europeans under circumstances which are the subject of dispute, but to bring the staff to reason by flogging a ticket collector, an educated man, was a process for which so far it was believed the Huns had claimed a monopoly. Mr. Bosworth Smith has had an erratic official career, and at the time of the disturbances was going through a period of degradation. He refused to answer some of the questions put by the Inquiry Commissioners and declined to give any reason for doing so. He proposed the building of a house of repentance where persons could go and repent, but said he had forgotten whether he got the school boys to repeat at parade 'we have not committed any offence, we repent, we repent, we repent.' He arrested the station master at Sangla who later on was released and then

appeared as a Crown witness, but he could not say whether 'it was after the release of this man the identification process by the station staff was started.' He, however, recollected that persons were flogged in an open part of the town. He arrested 124 persons at Sangla and admitted that when the respectable persons of the town had agreed to pay a penalty of Rs. 50,000 he ordered the release of all but eight men, who were subsequently put on their trial for being concerned in the riots. He ordered the arrest of Attar Singh, a Lambardar, aged 60, as a hostage for his sons and directed his property to be confiscated till his son surrendered and any one touching it or cutting his crops was to be shot. Another Lambardar, Gowhar Singh, was also arrested as a hostage for his sons, but was released the next day when his sons surrendered. He was again arrested and was finally released when the martial law was removed, but his pension was stopped.

'It is obvious that some at least of the officers concerned in the martial law operations have been guilty of acts partaking more or less of the nature of frightfulness. The demand for reparation by the punishment of the most flagrant offenders is, therefore, by no means uncalled for or unreasonable. It is being advanced not only in India but in England where the Secretary of State for India has committed the Government to take some steps which 'would vindicate in the eyes of the world, the justice and honour of British rule'. 'The *Westminster Gazette* suggests the immediate recall of General Dyer and his being dealt with in a manner that the British nation would stand absolved'. The *New Witness* says 'he should be shot unless he is able to prove that Amritsar was in such a state of anarchy which if



unchecked would have developed into a condition of things similar to that of the mutiny.' The Bombay correspondent of the *Times* says with respect to the disclosures generally that 'they have administered a shock to the humanity and self respect of India . . . When the Hunter Commission has reported Parliament must allow no question of expediency to stand in the way of administration of justice however unpalatable, otherwise they will leave a wound which for generations will not heal'. Indian public opinion is fairly unanimous in this respect. Even the Moderates who are in high favour with Government passed a resolution in their Conference in Calcutta that 'it is imperatively necessary to make amends for the outraged feelings of the Indian nation and that British honour and justice should be vindicated by taking steps to bring to justice any officers, high or low, civil or military, who may be found to have acted unreasonably and in excess of their powers or to have authorized such acts. A Moderate journal like the *Leader* writes : 'The restoration of the confidence of Indians in the sense of British justice is more important than the saving of the skins of any number of officials.'

This raises a curious point as to the effect of the Indemnity Act to protect these officials. There were heated discussions when the Bill was introduced in the Legislative Council. So far not a word has been said by me on the subject, for I was not prepared to contest the proposition that it was the duty of Government to afford protection to those who had undertaken responsibilities at a critical period when it was alleged anarchy prevailed over a portion of the Punjab. The Government was under a moral obligation to move the Legislature in the interests

of those officers who had discharged their duties in good faith and under a reasonable belief that what they did was for the preservation or restoration of law and order. Looked at in the light of subsequent revelations the Government cannot escape the charge of having acted in a disingenuous manner in the strenuous efforts they made to suppress information. In a previous chapter we have seen that the Punjab Government by censoring the press and by means of other repressive measures prevented the outside world from obtaining any knowledge of the doings of the officials during the period of the so-called rebellion, though rumours which were by no means exaggerated were afloat that some frightful things were happening in that part of India. It is a significant fact indicating the extent to which people had been cowed down, that even when the martial law regime was over they were averse to disclosing even a tithe of the experiences they had undergone. Public spirited men from other provinces visited the Punjab and by their exertions some light was thrown on the frightfulness which for a time had reigned rampant. Government was of course keeping a discreet silence which from their point of view was natural. But when Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya put a large number of searching questions in the Indian Legislative Council with the idea of eliciting the truth of certain allegations in respect to the high-handed and oppressive measures of the officials the action of Government was inexcusable in answering a few of them in an evasive manner and refusing to answer the bulk of them on the plea that it would not be consistent with the public interest. This was an unwise course to adopt considering the hostile construction that was bound to be put on it, while the object of

Government to prevent any disclosures was defeated a few weeks later when the revelations made before the Hunter Committee withdrew the veil, at latest partially, from most of the scenes of this tragic period in the Punjab. The fatuity of those responsible for allowing the inquiry to proceed *ex parte* so far as the people were concerned has saved the officials from a fuller exposure of their vagaries, which involved frightfulness of every kind. The net gain to Government was the Indemnity Act, for even they would scarcely have had the hardihood to push forward the Bill if a straightforward answer had been given to the questions. But the Act is subject to certain limitations and it is more than doubtful if some of the officials concerned can take advantage of it. They plead good faith, but only on the strength of putting a great strain on the credulity of mankind. They vehemently urge that their acts were reasonable and were necessary for the restoration of order, oblivious of the fact that they are thereby claiming for themselves a low standard of intelligence, for no one possessing average mental capacity would care to justify some of the incidents and episodes which formed part of the frightfulness that was indulged in. The rashness of a single officer resulting in the loss of three lives turned the feelings of the Irish in favour of the rebels in Ireland, but how can we calculate the result of a series of outrages which have aroused the resentment of a justly incensed people?

But for all that I entertain grave doubts as to the expediency of the nature of the demand for reparation that is being made. It is bound to produce considerable irritation in the minds of the English community, official and nonofficial. The present moment we are at a critical

period in the history of India when it is most essential that general harmony and good will should prevail. Is it desirable to rake up matters which would be a necessary consequence of the general outcry for the punishment of the principal offenders. The punishment could be either through the courts or at the hands of the executive. As to judicial proceedings can we be certain of the result? By the Indemnity Act the *onus probandi* is placed on those who assert want of good faith or that the officers concerned exceeded their powers or that their operations were so outrageous that no reasonable person would consider they were really necessary for the preservation or restoration of order. The whole strength of the executive will be put forward in their defence and I am not prepared to say that Government could be reproached for doing this in spite of the fact that in some of them a strain of mentality was developed which puts them out of the pale of those who are entitled to protection. For we ought to bear in mind the fact that the officials have good grounds for pleading that they were merely the instruments for carrying out the orders of their superiors, or that the latter were fully cognizant of their proceedings and never raised any objection to them and in most instances approved of them. The airmen who threw bombs on a defenceless crowd in Gujranwala have stated that they only carried out orders that were given to them to disperse all crowds in and about the city. The massacre at Amritsar was approved in the famous telegram sent by General Beynon to General Dyer communicating his own approbation and that of Sir Michael O'Dwyer whose attempt in a letter to the *Times* to explain the incident is on the face of it absurd and inconclusive. Col. O'Brien stated that he had a free

hand given to him by the Punjab Government who promised to validate his acts. And one of the reasons urged by the Government of India for the passing of the Indemnity Act was that a promise of protection was given to the officers concerned in putting down the disorders. Any proceedings started against them would probably end in a revulsion of feeling in their favour and would anyhow be productive of bitterness that had better be avoided.

But how can we account for the strange coincidence that in the Punjab was congregated a band of men who were afflicted by a peculiar kind of mental and moral infirmity which found relief in the indulgence in frightfulness of sorts? There are ample grounds for the conclusion that this particular strain of mentality was induced by their being for years familiarized with a policy, the natural outcome of which was the cultivation of a spirit of autocracy and of bending the will of the people by a resort to force and repression. And for this policy, Sir Michael O'Dwyer was entirely responsible. He has confessed to autocracy being the form of Government best suited for India and during the six years he ruled over the Punjab he had ample opportunity, which he fully availed of, for putting his theory into practice. He repeatedly gave expression to his want of confidence in and to the absence of sympathy with the educated classes and of the necessity of a tight hand being kept over them, and can we wonder that his subordinates and others living in close association with him should have imbibed similar ideas? The final responsibility for the orgy of frightfulness therefore rests on the late Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab. It was by him and with instructions from him that aeroplanes were sent to Gujranwala. It was at his instance that

martial law was proclaimed and we have it in evidence that daily conferences were held at Government House to devise measures for the occasion and that orders issued by the military authorities were in due course forwarded to him. He did nothing to mitigate their rigour nor did he express any disapprobation beyond ordering the gallows erected at Kasur to be pulled down, the flogging in public to be discontinued and cancelling the crawling order at Amritsar. Under these circumstances it is futile to expect the executive to punish even the most flagrant offenders.

Are the people then to have no reparation for the wrongs they have suffered? Public opinion in England is against this view and India looks to the British Parliament for some compensation for the lacerated feelings of the people. The acts of frightfulness that have been committed should be repudiated by the English Government as foreign to the instincts of a civilised nation, and a formal declaration to this effect should be made by the Government of India. Sir Michael O'Dwyer should have the severest censure passed on him for his maladministration and for having degraded the British name and honour. India should be relieved of the presence in it of men of the type of General Dyer, Col Frank Johnson, Col O'Brien and Mr. Bosworth Smith, against whom there is to be found in the country a strong feeling of resentment. As to the rest the repudiation of their acts will constitute in itself a censure which will serve as a lesson to English officials in the future. If even to this extent reparation is denied it is useless to expect the people of India to have any good feeling towards the English and towards English rule. But the Government have ready at hand another means of mollifying the feelings of the people. The Privy

Council has dismissed on points of law the appeals of Bagga and others, on some of whom sentences of death have been passed by the martial law courts. There is a strong feeling in India that these courts acted vindictively in some instances and in other instances strained the facts so as to arrive at conclusions that were not justified. The desire is most strongly expressed that an amnesty should be extended to such of the persons who were not actually engaged in the act of committing outrages. And so far as that goes it is a common belief that Englishmen more than compensated themselves by the outrages committed by their agents in the Punjab. It is therefore to be hoped the cases of those men will be reconsidered to whom so far no clemency has been extended.



## CHAPTER XV.

### THE FUTURE OUTLOOK.

In bringing to a close this series of articles it would be desirable to take a general survey of the political condition of India so as to be able to form some idea as to what the future has in store for us. The first article appeared in the *Leader* of the 2nd October 1919. During these six months events have been spinning fast but unfortunately in counter directions, for while the tendency of some of them has been to promote mutual good feeling and to allay the existing unrest and discontent that of others was calculated to produce disunion and to exasperate the people and accentuate the underlying bitterness towards the nation that rules over our land. The promise made by the Secretary of State to introduce such changes in the constitution of the government of the country whereby the people may have a responsible share in its administration has been discharged so far that the English Parliament has passed an Act which will, to an appreciable extent, meet the pressing demand for self-government. There are indications of a decided change in the attitude of the English, both officials and non-officials, towards Indians, in spite of the imminence of a transfer of a considerable amount of power from the rulers to the ruled, and expression is being given to a desire on their part for co-operation, which, though unexpected, should nevertheless be very welcome. The *entente* between the Hindus and Mahomedans is progressing by leaps and bounds, and is

as remarkable as the rapid increase in the number of those who have come under the influence of the new awakening to political consciousness. The King-Emperor's proclamation evincing a genuine sympathy for the aspirations of the people and an earnest desire to promote their material and moral welfare, followed as it has been by a general amnesty towards political offenders, indicates that the art of government is not lost to the English nation, for these expressions of good will have made a deep impression on the minds of the people and have won their hearts. These are satisfactory features and are calculated to exercise a salutary influence on the political future of India.

On the other hand, counteracting forces have also been at work. The breach between the two parties of the educated classes has been widening in so far that a reconciliation between them seems improbable without a sacrifice of principle on one side or the other. Sectarian differences have become more pronounced, evidence of which is to be found in the frantic efforts put forward for communal representation in the various Councils. The disclosures made in course of the evidence given before the Disorders Inquiry Committee have aroused an intense feeling of indignation and resentment in the minds of the people against the Government for allowing the perpetration of a series of uncalled for acts of frightfulness. The misfortunes of Turkey have struck a sympathetic chord in the hearts of the Mohamedans, and there is to be noticed an increasing volume of excitement and bitterness by reason of the threatened dismemberment of that country and the effect it would have on the Khalifate, in respect to which the followers of the Prophet in India rightly claim a close and abiding interest. The attitude of the

extremist section of the home rule party towards Government is becoming more hostile and irreconcilable and the nature and extent of their demands and the manner in which these are asserted are calculated to obstruct the practical working of the reforms that will soon be put in motion. The future is therefore far from reassuring.

The impending reforms have some special features which stand out in broad relief. The general outline of the Act which introduces the new scheme of government does not as a matter of fact meet the demands made by the people in their quest for self-government, but to stigmatize the concessions made as "unsatisfactory, inadequate and disappointing" is doing them less than justice. In all fairness it must be admitted that an appreciable and substantial advance has been made in the direction of conferring on the people a responsible share in the administration of affairs. That this has been achieved by a persistent and an unwearied demand on our part is no doubt true, but to continue the agitation for a further extension of powers is much to be deprecated. I do not question our capacity to acquit ourselves with credit in the new role we are called upon to undertake, and it may be, as is asserted by some oversanguine individuals, that we are fit at the present moment for complete self-government, but for all that the rulers of the land, who are morally responsible for the material welfare of the country, are by no means unreasonable when they ask us to give some practical evidence of our capacity to utilize to good purpose the opportunities that are being offered to us and the power that is to be placed in our hands before making any further addition to it. To continue to agitate in this direction is therefore futile, and

our energies should rather be applied in the future towards making the best of the privileges that have been conceded to us. We find, however, threats being used by those who wish to be treated as serious politicians that they will so work the reforms as to bring about deadlocks to compell the Government to surrender to their importunate demands. It does not seem to strike them that in adopting this attitude they are giving evidence that while they are adepts in the art of destructive criticism they are either impotent or unwilling to engage in any constructive work. And, of course, such a small matter as to what the rest of the Indian people will think of their propaganda does not trouble them, for they verily believe that they alone possess a monopoly of patriotism and of the capacity requisite to engage in the task of self-government.

While some of the extremist leaders and their organs in the press are deprecating the differences which have resulted in a cleavage into parties, others are urging on the electors to send to the Councils only such men as will represent their extreme views so that the administration of affairs would be committed to them to the exclusion of the moderates. Should their efforts in this direction be successful one of two things will happen; either the responsibilities of office will have a sobering effect on them so that they will shape the conduct of affairs keeping in view the interest of the country or they will get into such a muddle that they will have to make room for others, who though not so advanced in their opinions may be able to achieve better results. But it seems very probable that neither the extremists nor the moderates will obtain a clear majority at the coming election. We have to take into account the extension of

the suffrage which will enfranchise a large number of agricultural tenants and, these, as is but natural, will be more or less under the influence of the zamindars, using this term to signify the land owners and not the cultivators to whom it is applied in the Panjab. Now the bulk of the zamindars are still somewhat backward from the educational point of view. They have eschewed politics and their submissiveness to the authorities has often made them reactionaries. It will take time to imbue in them a true spirit of patriotism which will operate on the one hand to release them from the official leading strings, and on the other hand will infuse in them a genuine sympathy with the wants and necessities of other classes, and especially their tenants, so that their activities may be directed towards the promotion of the material and moral advancement of the country. As between the moderates and the extremists the balance of power will be in their hands and the educated classes whose agitation has resulted in bringing about a new order of things may, to start with, have to face reactionaries drawn from the officials and the zamindars. This is the true significance of the unfortunate differences which have split up the *intellegentia* into two curiously hostile parties. The extremists are pursuing a suicidal policy in putting forward extravagant demands which are not likely to be conceded by Government, nor will they receive any support from the sober-minded and thinking portion of the Indian people. And while paeans of joy are being sung to celebrate the newly formed amity of the Hindus and Mahomedans abuse and vituperation is being showered on the rask and file of those who refuse to join them in their headlong onrush towards the goal they have in view. It makes one despair

as to the future of a country where men are so irrational and short-sighted as to indulge in such an inconsistency, and yet aim to appropriate the ruling power to the exclusion of all others. In their present frame of mind it is almost useless to point out to them the advantage to be gained by the exercise of mutual toleration and co-operation on the part of all classes and communities, for in spite of the encouraging attitude of some of the officials, we ought to keep in view the contingency that there may be others who might prove reactionary and obstructive under the honest belief that they were thereby protecting the interests of the minorities and of classes that were not represented.

The progress made by the Hindu-Mohomedan *entente* to which various causes have contributed, is as striking as it is gratifying. The first move was made by some of the leaders of the two communities in the furtherance of their political propaganda, but a process of careful engineering has brought the masses to fraternise with each other to the extent of discarding social and religious prejudices. A most prominent feature of the protest against the Rowlatt Act was that it furnished an occasion for all classes and communities to join in a common cause. With a hazy idea of the provisions of this measure a large number of persons joined in denouncing it in obedience to the solicitations of their leaders or under the impression that they were doing a patriotic act. Other circumstances favoured to cement this union between the Hindus and Mahomedans. From the platform and the press the news has been proclaimed as to the advent of reforms which would give the people a share in the administration of the affairs of the country and this stimulated a spirit of co-operation.

The disclosures made before the Hunter Commission of the orgy of frightfulness indulged in by the authorities has struck a note of horror which has resounded in the remotest corners of India and has united the most divergent elements of society in the expression of their indignation. The Khilafat question though it exclusively concerns the Mohomedans has been utilised by certain political leaders on both sides to develop the union between the two communities so as to bring pressure to bear on the Government. And herein lies the weak point—an artificial *entente* influenced by ulterior motives. Eliminate these and dissolution may set in, for the union was not based primarily on mutual regard and sympathy. The Moslems for joining the Hindus in their political agitation fixed a price which consisted in the concession to them of communal representation on a numerical basis. Any difference of opinion on this point or an attempt to extract further concessions would at once produce a breach. The debate in the Legislative Council on the Dacca University Bill revealed this feature of the *entente* in that the Moslems apart from the question of merit claimed a special representation on the University and the tutorial staff. This being in excess of the bargain that had been struck was demurred to by the Hindus, which led to mutual recriminations. If the principle of communal representation is to be extended to other departments of public life, which is resisted by a strong volume of public opinion, the Hindu-Mahomedan union cannot be held to be an unmixed blessing. But as the Moslems consider it the only means to keep pace with the other communities the portents are unfavourable as to the continuance of the *entente*. It is, however, to be hoped the



advance of education and the undoubted advantage to both communities to be derived from mutual toleration and co-operation will place the understanding on a more solid basis.

When Turkey was coerced by Germany to join in the war against the Allies the Muslims of India regretted that a country peopled by co-religionists should be fighting against England which claimed their allegiance. But there was no wavering on their part. Mr. Lloyd George has done no more than common justice in his declaration in the House of Commons that "there had been no more loyal adherents to the throne or more effective supporters of the Empire in its hour of trial than the Moslems of India." These therefore expect and in all fairness are entitled to some adequate return, and in considering the Khalifat question this should be borne in mind. But it is much to be feared that in their excitement they are unable to see things in their true perspective and to exercise a calm and clear judgment. In accusing England with a lack of zeal in advocating the cause of Turkey they ignore the strenuous and persistent efforts made by Mr. Montagu, Lord Sinha and the Maharajah of Bikaner to obtain the best possible terms for the Ottoman Empire. As a result of their advocacy and in deference to the wishes of the Mahomedans of India the Sultan, who ran a great risk of being expelled from Europe, will it has been announced be allowed to retain Constantinople. This decision of the Peace Conference has given rise to a counter agitation in England and in America, which is being resented in India by people who seem to forget that the Christians of those countries are doing no more than interest themselves in the fate of their co-religionists.

who have been the victims of Turkish misrule, just as the Mahomedans are interesting themselves in their co-religionists in Turkey. It seems more than probable that the decision arrived at will not be rescinded unless as stated by Bonar Law fresh provocation is given by Turkey to justify a change. As regards the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire which is another of the objectives of the agitation in India it is superfluous to say much as this question is now outside the range of practical politics. Turkey has been condemned on the alleged grounds of its chronic misrule, its being the centre of intrigue and a menace to the peace of Europe, its repeated massacres of Christians and its taking up arms against the Allies. It was not likely that the arbiters of its fate would forego this opportunity for the application of the principle of self-determination in favour of those nationalities who desired to throw off the Turkish yoke. The Germans and Austrians have had to submit to the dismemberment of their respective dominions and the Ottomans had no reason to believe or to expect that any different treatment would be meted out to them. With reference to the third objective the preservation of the Khilafate no one has ever suggested that it should be taken away from the Sultan of Turkey. The Mahomedans of India evince a great respect and veneration for the Ottoman ruler; but his own subjects assassinated Sultan Hamid and there is no guarantee whatever that if it suited their views they would not treat the present Khalifa in a similar fashion. He is the *de jure* ruler of Turkey but the *de facto* rulers for years past have been the young Turkish party who headed by Enver Pasha became the tools of Germany and have brought disaster on their country and on the devoted

head of its sovereign who is most probably innocent of any wrong doing. The Mahomedans of India in their desire to succour the Sultan are very possibly playing into the hands of those who make a boast of their atheism and at any rate, have but a scant respect for their Sultan.

Doubts have been expressed as to the extent and genuineness of the Khalifat agitation. From the fact that the leaders of the extremist party occupy a prominent position amongst the exponents of the Moslim views the inference was inevitable that this agitation is being engineered for political purposes. And support was lent to this view by certain Hindus who are the pronounced critics of British rule in India associating themselves with the propaganda. And matters were made worse by Mr. Gandhi's proceeding in his blundering way to proclaim a *hartal* for Hindus on the Khilafat day and by asking them to refrain in sympathy with the Moslems from participating in the Peace Celebrations. That no response was made to this appeal is significant of the interest taken by the Hindus in this matter. But perhaps the worst blunder of all is the expression given to threats that the loyalty of the Mahomedans will be strained if an unfavourable decision is given as regards Turkey. From people who are engrossed in the struggle for existence and have their own misfortunes to think about or from men who fought for England and were cognizant of the consequences of a defeat of its opponents the most that can be expected is a sympathetic regret for the trials of their co-religionists. It is a little far-fetched to impute to them the slackening of their loyalty in their concern for those who, after all, are practically strangers. Of course as the result of agitation any result that is desired may be obtained, for

unfortunately the Mahomedan temper is acutely inflammable. But is this desirable in the interests of the country and of the people especially affected by it? Tactics like these are calculated to injure a cause which has much to commend it, and will produce needless trouble, for so long as England is responsible for the tranquility of India any attempt to disturb it would certainly be nipped in the bud. Hartal and boycott in the long run recoil on those who resort to such measures for carrying on a propaganda, and how far they are effective in attaining the end in view is doubtful.

Perhaps the most notable event during the last six months has reference to the disclosures made before the Hunter Committee of the frightfulness indulged in by the authorities, civil and military, during the late disturbances in the Panjab. This Committee as pointed out by the *Times* has no judicial character and is merely charged with the task of investigation. It did not take evidence on oath, and had no power to insist on a witness answering a question, and frequently the most relevant points failed to be elucidated by the witness proving recalcitrant. It had no power to summon witnesses but merely jotted down the statement of such officials as the Government chose to produce before them. By a most lamentable error of judgment the Congress Committee which was advocating the cause of the people refused to take a part in the proceedings and the worst features of the orgy of terrorism have not been disclosed. The value of the findings of both Committees is problematical, and it is useless to speculate on the conclusions that will be arrived at. What we are concerned with most is pithily stated by the *Manchester Guardian* which writes:—"Now the question

underlying all these stories is simple but penetrating. Is this what British rule in India means? Do we propose to hold our position there not by wisdom, restraint, and a growing partnership of liberty, but by indiscriminate shootings, and bombings and light-hearted floggings? Is it to be the method of the Turk, or of the older, not yet Prussianized England? Of these questions the final verdict on the Punjab horrors will be the acid test." Sir Michael O'Dwyer in a letter to the *Times* which had commented on the disclosures has adopted the attitude so common with the officials in India of resenting outside criticism and is probably surprised at being told that "British officials in India and elsewhere are public servants and are not exempt from public criticism....The *Times* suffers no dictation from any official quarter in regard to its public duty." Whatever be the verdict of the Hunter Committee the people of India will ever be grateful to the English public and the press for the kindly and sympathetic manner in which the Punjab grievance has been dealt with and for the declaration that for the vindication of British justice and humanity the offenders should be severely dealt with.

This has to a large extent neutralised the indignation which was as deep as it was universal. Strong language was indulged in as to the consequences of this shock to the feelings of the people but it was no stronger than that used by the English press which recognised that a needless strain had been put on their loyalty and that a repetition of the conduct complained of would drive them to open rebellion. There is a strong feeling in the country that the declaration of open rebellion in the Punjab was most gratuitous and the imposition of martial law most iniqui-

tious. Any other conclusion arrived at by the Hunter Committee will again arouse the dormant discontent of the people and if to this be added the agitation on the Khilafat question, in respect to which strenuous efforts are being made to draw in the Hindus, it can easily be surmised that the future outlook is not very reassuring.

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