THE IMPACT OF THE JALLIANWALA BAGH MASSACRE ON GANDHI

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Gandhi's personal spiritual growth. It focuses on his growing understanding of the relationship between suffering and systemic violence. Personal spirituality is virtually identical with political life for Gandhi, and it is possible to look at the developing socio-political situation in India between the years 1915 and 1921 with an eye to understanding major spiritual changes in Gandhi's personal life. This thesis advances the idea that the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, a crime perpetrated against innocent Indian civilians, had a major impact on Gandhi's understanding of suffering and violence--particularly systemic violence. The Massacre amounted to a spiritual and hence political watershed in Gandhi's life.

Ever mindful of dad's love

for India.

Walter Elvin McCutcheon (1912-1983)

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Throughout the time of working on this thesis my mother has continued to be the source of my spiritual well-being. Some family members have tolerated my chosen work, others have been genuinely supportive, fortunately none has condemned me; in a working class family as large as mine the last is notable, the first is understandable, and those in the middle are deeply appreciated. I continue to love them all.

Renate has blessed me with her patient and generous love during the most intense time of writing this thesis. When my well was nearly empty she gladly dipped into her own and replenished mine. Danke schön meine liebe.

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Preface

My initial research concentrated on the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. As I read the copious volumes of evidence and, subsequently, the variety of interpretations of the events--including the official reports--I came to realize the momentous impact this event may have had on the individuals involved in leadership positions in India's Freedom Movement. As I entered more deeply into the material and clarified my thoughts with evidence from Gandhi's Collected Works I began to see the impact the event had on Gandhi.

Working with the hypothesis that Gandhi was preeminently a spiritual person, and, furthermore, that he saw little if any difference between spiritual and political matters, I felt the urgency of the question of the spiritual significance of these events for India's acknowledged leader. Both scholars of Indian history and those who have dealt with Gandhi as a spiritual person pass over the massacre with little attempt to study the impact it may have had on him. My own thesis focuses on the inextricable entwining of his spiritual recognition of suffering and political recognition of colonial repression.

Introduction

In defining the meaning of the social sciences for the cultural tasks of our time C. Wright Mills said that the task and promise of all social scientific studies is "to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society."[1] He asserted that "no social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history and of their intersections within a society has completed its intellectual journey."[2] Mills's fundamental understanding of human biography and historical movement informs the framework used in this thesis to understand Gandhi more fully.

> We have come to know that every individual lives, from one generation to the next, in some society; that he lives out a biography, and that he lives it out within some historical sequence. By the fact of his living he contributes to the course of its history, even as he is made by society and by its historical push and shove.[3]

The present essay begins to fulfill the task and promise suggested by Mills taking Mahatma Gandhi as its subject. The purpose of the essay is to show the inter-

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[1]C. Wright Mills, The Sociological Imagination (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 6.

[2]Mills, The Sociological Imagination, p. 6.

[3]Mills, The Sociological Imagination, p. 6.

relation of Gandhi's religious biography with the prevailing social forces at work around him in Indian society from 1915 to 1921. I shall argue that for Gandhi to see with clarity and to know with certainty the true nature of suffering and violence required a dark hour. It required a spiritual awakening. At that time biography met history.

This thesis is about Gandhi's spiritual awakening, by which two things are meant: first, Gandhi's recognition of suffering and bondage, and second, his insight into the cause of suffering--systemic violence in the concrete form of British imperialism.

The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and the Martial Law which followed was Gandhi's Gethsemane: his hour of spiritual crisis. The result of that painful experience was a decision to do everything in his power to relieve the primary cause of the Indian people's suffering. In concrete terms that meant relieving the people of the yoke of British imperialism.

In Gandhi's context the way to end suffering was by spiritualizing politics. For Gandhi spiritualizing politics meant to return to ancient truths. 1) The way to the cessation of suffering is by nonviolence. 2) Nonviolence is a universal principle that can be applied to all human activity. In concrete terms that meant that there could be absolutely no distinction between religion and politics as universal ethical systems.

The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre has been chosen as a symbolic representation of the events of 1919 beginning with the introduction of the Rowlatt Act to the Imperial Legislative Council and ending with the termination of Martial Law in the Punjab on June 9th. It could be argued, based on the following assertion of Gandhi, that of the complex web of events during this time period the atrocities of the Martial Law may have had more of an affect on Gandhi than the massacre on the 13th of April.

> The paragraphs we have devoted to indiscriminate arrests and tortures for the purpose of extorting evidence, furnish perhaps the blackest chapter in the whole of the story of the cruelties perpetrated in the name of martial law. The tragedy of Jalleanwala Bagh was staggering for its dramatic effect. But the slow torture of the arrests was felt not only by those who suffered but by those also who were always in fear of being arrested, for, from the evidence collected by us it is clear that there was no method about these arrests.[4]

Nevertheless, for our purposes the massacre will serve as a convenient focus for the web of events in 1919.

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[4]Report of the Commissioners Appointed by the Punjab Sub-Committee of the Indian National Congress, 2 Volumes (Lahore: K. Santanam, 1920), p. 72.

Chapter 1: Setting the Question

On April 13, 1919 Brigadier-General Reginald E. Dyer marched fifty trained marksmen into a large enclosed garden (the Jallianwala Bagh) and opened fire on the unarmed crowd numbering some twenty thousand. That pogrom, commonly called the Amritsar Massacre, was a watershed in both India's national life and Mahatma Gandhi's personal life.

Dyer's troops fired 1650 rounds of 303 ammunition--their entire ration of shells--over a ten minute period of time. Official estimates of the carnage range from 379 dead and three times that number wounded (according to the official British figures) to some 1000 dead and a proportionate number wounded (according to the official Indian inquiry's figures).[1] Malaviya's estimate of about 700

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[1]The central documents related to the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre are two: 1) Report of the Committee Appointed by the Government of India to Investigate the Disturbances in the Punjab, Etc., 6 Volumes (London: Published by His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1920) and 2) Report of the Commissioners Appointed by the Punjab Sub-Committee of the Indian National Congress, 2 Volumes (Lahore: K. Santanam, 1920). Two further volumes of documents, previously withheld for political reasons, have been edited by V.N. Datta and published under the title New Light on the Punjab Disturbances in 1919: Volumes VI and VII of Disorders Inquiry Committee Evidence, 2 Volumes (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1975). See Vol. 1, page 29 of the British inquiry and Vol. 1, page 57 of the Indian inquiry for official estimates on casualties resulting from

deaths and three times that number wounded fits the evidence.[2]

The slaughter at Amritsar--which culminated in crawling orders, public floggings and other "indescribable horrors" (to use Gandhi's words)--was the turning point of contemporary Indian history. E.M.S. Namboodiripad, for example, argues: "An incident that took place soon after 6th April in Punjab turned the very course of [India's] history, which became notorious as the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, the beastly repression in Amritsar on 13th April."[3] This turning point in Indian history parallelled a turning point in Mohandas K. Gandhi's attitude towards the British.

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the firing. Other primary and secondary sources are noted in the footnote apparatus for chapters three and four of the present work.

[2]V.N. Datta, Jallianwala Bagh (Kurukshetra, India: Kurukshetra University Books and Stationary Shop, for Lyall Book Depot, Ludhiana, 1969), pp. 104-5.

[3]E.M.S. Namboodiripad, A History of Indian Freedom Struggle (Trivandrum, India: Social Scientist Press, 1986), p. 255. English historians of the time, even without the advantage of historical perspective, were well aware of the momentous nature of the Amritsar affair. Edward Thompson and G.T. Garratt, writing in 1934, reflect this awareness. "Certain points must be noted, for the bitterness aroused over this controversy had a marked effect on recent history. It formed a turning point in Indo-British relations almost as important as the mutiny. . . . The reason for this was not merely the number of the slaughtered at Amritsar, or even the brutality displayed in subsequent proceedings, so much as the assumption, implied in the behaviour of responsible Englishmen and in their evidence before the Hunter Commission, that Indians could and should be treated as an inferior race." In Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India (London: MacMillan and Co. Limited, 1934), p. 610.

Gandhi could not enter the restricted Punjab zone for some six months after the massacre,[4] nor were reports allowed out of the restricted district. Later, when he had fully assessed the events in the Punjab and the government's subsequent actions, he wrote a letter to Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy. That letter of August 1, 1920 is one of the most significant of Gandhi's career, for therein he articulates his complete rejection of the British Empire.[5]

> The punitive measures taken by General Dyer . . . were out of all proportion to the crime of the people and amounted to a wanton cruelty and inhumanity, almost unparalleled in modern times. Your excellency's light-hearted treatment of the official crime . . . and above all the shameful ignorance of the Punjab events and the callous disregard of the feelings of the Indians betrayed by the House of Lords, have filled me with the gravest misgivings regarding the future of the Empire, have estranged me completely from the present Government and have disabled me from tendering as I have hitherto whole-heartedly tendered my loyal co-operation.[5]

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[4]Gandhi was arrested while *en route* to the Punjab to help defuse any violence which may have been provoked there because of the ongoing *satyagraha* campaign. The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, 90 Volumes (New Delhi: Publications Division of the Government of India, Navajivan, 1958-84) Vol. 15, Doc. 197, pp. 207-209. [Hereafter this collection will be referenced as The Collected Works Vol. 15, Doc. 197, pp. 207-209. 197 refers to the entry number given to each document by the editors of the The Collected Works.] After being released from jail he applied for a permit to enter the Punjab on September 30, 1919. (Vol. 16, Doc. 112, p. 193.) which he followed up with an urgent request by telegram on October 2nd (Vol. 16, Doc. 120, p. 203.) and was subsequently informed that the restriction would be rescinded on October 15th; this was acknowledged by Gandhi in a press release on October 17th, 1919. (Vol. 16, Doc. 150, p. 239-241.)

[5]The Collected Works Vol. 18, Doc. 73, p. 105.

The question of Gandhi's relationship to the events at the Jallianwala Bagh has a history. For example, Louis Fischer, S.L. Malhotra and V.N. Datta each recognize changes in Gandhi after the Amritsar massacre. Each suggests a tentative thesis linking Gandhi, the Jallianwala Bagh blood bath and India's quest for freedom. But neither Fischer nor Malhotra nor Datta gives any serious analysis of the change in Gandhi. This is all the more noticeable given that each recognizes this period as formative for Gandhi's leadership role in India's freedom struggle.

Louis Fischer, Gandhi's noted biographer, articulates the dramatic about-face most eloquently, but while doing so he also advances an unsubstantiated argument that requires deeper consideration. This is Fischer's assessment, in its entirety, of the relationship between Gandhi, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and India.

> In December, 1920, the annual Congress convention at Nagpur, reversing its decision of the year before, voted against collaboration with the British. Gandhi thereupon sent his two South African medals to the Viceroy with a letter saying, "I can retain neither respect nor affection for a government which has been moving from wrong to wrong in order to defend its immorality."
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> This change from love of to rejection of the British Empire--momentous in Gandhi's and India's life--grew out of the Jallianwala blood bath. The interval of trusting co-operation, reflecting the Mahatma's congenital preference for peaceful accommodation, was quickly closed by country-wide anger. The actions of Gandhi were often shaped by a fear that if he did not lead the people, ugly passions would.[6]

GANDHI NEEDED TO LEAD THE PEOPLE SO HATE WOULD NOT

[6]Louis Fischer, Gandhi: His Life and Message for the World (New York: New American Library, 1954), p. 68. See also his biography The Life of Mahatma Gandhi (New York:

Fischer's observation--an observation rooted in their friendly relationship--that Gandhi moved from "love of to rejection of the British Empire" suggests extreme changes in Gandhi. And the cause of this major about-face, according to Fischer, was the Jallianwala Bagh blood bath. The question Fischer must answer is, why did Gandhi change after this particular event? His answer, an ambiguous statement in itself, is that Gandhi was "often shaped by a fear that if he did not lead the people, ugly passions would."[7]

In its broadest and most generous form, Fischer's thesis amounts to this in the end: Gandhi was pushed by the Indian people and by the historical situation to change. But little evidence supports Fischer's thesis that a causal relationship exists between Gandhi's fear of ugly passions, both in his life and in the life of the country, (a true, if not obvious, point) and the sudden change in his attitude towards the British government, precipitated by a violent, inhumane massacre. In short, Fischer's unsupported hypothesis is wrong because there is little, if any, evidence to support his contention.

Malhotra builds his thesis on the premise that "the tragic events in the Punjab following the Rowlatt Act agitation completely changed Gandhi's outlook towards the British Empire and brought him on the Indian political scene

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Harper & Row, Publishers, 1950), pp. 177ff.

[7]Fischer, Life and Message, p. 68.

which he dominated till his death like a colossus."[8] Malhotra then advances his thesis. "This political phenomenon marks a watershed in the history of the Indian National Congress, for, the movement launched by Gandhi for the redress of the Punjab wrongs transformed the character of the Congress as well as changed its method for attainment of its goal of independence of the country."[9]

This amounts to, as Takulia intimates,[10] nothing more than an unsupported claim, a convenient place to start an exposition on Gandhi's relationship to the Punjab. As Malhotra himself points out, even Subhas Chandra Bose recognizes the obvious fact that "the Punjab atrocities and their sequel made a rebel of the once loyal Gandhi?"[11] Do either Bose or Malhotra think that Gandhi was not a rebel in 1908 when he wrote Hind Swaraj?

Malhotra does not explicitly give any reason for Gandhi's change, but his argument indicates his belief that Gandhi seized this opportunity as a symbolic event to unite the Indian peoples, and particularly the Congress Party. When looked at in this way Malhotra's thesis boils down to the opposite of Fischer's: Gandhi, by his brilliant insight

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[8]S.L. Malhotra, Gandhi and the Punjab (Chandigarh: Panjab University Publication Bureau, 1970), p. ix.

[9]Malhotra, Gandhi and the Punjab, p. ix.

[10]H.S. Takulia, "Review Article: Gandhi and the Punjab," Gandhi Marg 6/10 (January 1985): 738-749.

[11]Quoted by Malhotra, Gandhi and the Punjab, p. 62.

into the Indian mind and manner, seized this opportunity to change history. A negative way of suggesting the same thing would be to say that Gandhi was an opportunist and saw this as a situation to be used to his advantage.

Neither Fischer nor Malhotra ask the pertinent questions: Why did Gandhi's attitude towards the British government change after the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and its aftermath? And, for example, why not after the brutal treatment meted out by the South African government under the direction of General Smuts? Did the change have to happen on Indian soil rather than South African soil? Why did Gandhi choose this point to go against his own maxim: "Even if the opponent plays him false twenty times, the *Satyagrahi* is ready to trust him for the twenty-first time, for an implicit trust in human nature is the very essence of his creed."[12] Was this the twenty-second time? Perhaps it was the intensity of the occasion? V.N. Datta at least raises the questions which need to be asked.

Whereas Fischer had suggested that Gandhi was impelled by a fear of the people's ugly passions and Malhotra proposed that Gandhi recognized a strategically ripe moment to enter the field of Indian politics, V.N. Datta turns to what might be called the "mahatma" thesis.

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[12]M.K. Gandhi, Satyagraha in South Africa (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1928), p. 147.

Datta does not begin his discussion of Gandhi with his platitude that "Gandhi changed after the massacre".[13] His thesis begins with a meticulous historical account of the socio-economic context of the events leading up to the Rowlatt Act. Datta shows that conditions in India were ripe for a major conflagration, but on the direct question of Gandhi's relation to the events at Amritsar Datta resorts to the "mahatma" thesis.

The "mahatma" thesis rests on the claim that Gandhi's whole system of "beliefs, practices and actions [are] not really amenable to rational explanations."[14] In this manner Datta prepares the ground to sidestep the whole question of Gandhi's relationship to the Punjab events. Datta's social and political analysis shows that before the Punjab events the Indian people were unfocussed. Their spirit was broken and the British Empire was entrenched as the overwhelming, dominant ideology. After the Punjab, however, the people recognized their bondage; their consciousness as a subordinate people was raised to the point that they were ready to act. The schism between ruling power and the ruled

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[13]V.N. Datta, "Introduction," in V.N. Datta and S.C. Mittal, eds., Sources on National Movement: Volume One (January 1919 to September 1920); Protests, Disturbances and Defiance (New Delhi, et al: Allied Publishers Private Limited and Indian Council of Historical Research, 1985), p. xxvii.

[14]Datta, "Introduction," Sources, p. xxxviii.

was complete. The results on a social-political level were decisive.

> After the traumatic experiences the Indian people had, the country could never be the same again. Indian politics took a new turn, the Government began to see things differently, the people lost their faith in Government and its professions of justice and fair deal. Politics was no longer confined to the intellectual, the professional, and the sophisticated but extended to wider sections of the people, including shop keepers, money lenders, students and workers.... Now was the period of a positive collective action rationally conceived and emotionally surcharged to fight the British.[15]

Datta asserts that previous to 1919 "India was contended [sic] with local and sectional leadership, and politics were then limited to the elite group in specific regions."[16] But after 1919, "Gandhi broke through at a mass level and emerged as a leader of the finest quality, who gave a new direction to Indian politics. He was a revolutionary *par excellence*."[17] Gandhi's role then, in all this, was as a political leader with an ideology "which had a mass appeal because of its simplicity and effectiveness."[18]

The social, economic and politic changes leading up to India's preparation for entering the freedom struggle are clear. One could put it differently and say that the field was well prepared for a leader, and that leader was Gandhi. But that presupposes that the leader, i.e., Gandhi, was also

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[15]Datta, "Introduction," Sources, p. li.

[16]Datta, "Introduction," Sources, p. li.

[17]Datta, "Introduction," Sources, p. li.

[18]Datta, "Introduction," Sources, p. li.

prepared. What developments took place in his biography that led up to his being able to take the leadership role? This question Datta does not answer, except in the form of his "mahatma" thesis.

In short, the "mahatma" thesis says that Gandhi cannot be properly fathomed, for according to the mahatma problems were to be spiritually comprehended. For Datta, solving problems in a spiritual fashion means by mystical-intuitional as opposed to rational-intellectual methods.[19] Thus it suffices for Datta, the rational historian, to say that Gandhi was guided by the "inner voice" which saw logic as inadequate to tackle Ultimate questions.[20] Following the kind of logic exemplified here by Datta, leadership of the Indian masses was an Ultimate question; therefore, an illogical leader was required. It is this part of Datta's analysis which falls short of the mark; it is this part of Datta's thesis that the present work will need to modify.

A close, critical reading of Datta's reflections on the "mahatma" develops the context and provides the setting for the body of this thesis.

> Ever since Gandhi launched his *Satyagraha* against the Rowlatt Bill, he remained at the centre of the stage. He had emerged as leader of the Indian people. He cast a magic spell on the people in whom he evoked the deepest reverence. He acquired the reputation of a *rishi* and a *wali*. In this period, he meets us at every turn but eludes us. It is not so much the principle events

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[19]Datta, "Introduction," Sources, p. xxviii.

[20]Datta, "Introduction," Sources, p. xxviii.

> connected with his life, but the complexity of his personality, the contradictions and paradoxes which his ideology and action produced and the spiritual reservoirs (another name for internal resources) which make the whole system of his beliefs, practices and actions not really amenable to rational explanations. It is a pitfall for historians to project the presentday notions into the past while judging Gandhi. Gandhi has to be judged and understood in the context of his times; how he was, what he came to be, what he did to himself and to others, what was the nature of his actions and their influence on society.
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> For the British, Gandhi had been their ally who turned later an agitator and a fighter against their rule. He was somewhat of a puzzle and an enigma, but the British still hoped that the country would be soon fed up with his vagaries. He had launched a non-violent Disobedience movement. He had no faith in violence. He was honest in his intentions, but the disturbances revealed that non-violence was the first casualty. His integrity of character and nobility of actions was never in doubt which was eloquently lauded by Montagu. People resorted to violence which Gandhi woefully regretted. Gandhi perhaps never realized that they would go berserk.
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> The question is what was Gandhi's motive, and how far was he responsible for the disturbances? Did he confine himself only to the withdrawal of the Rowlatt Act? Or was it his object to defeat his enemy by a sort of non-violent warfare? Why did he withdraw his movement after violence had occurred? Did he become conscious of his failure or did he realize like a true politician that his object in arousing national consciousness amongst his people had been well served. To take a charitable view, it was perhaps best for him to withdraw the movement when he found that the people were not morally ripe to practice *Satyagraha*.[21]

The criticism of Datta's thesis begins with his lack of appreciation for Gandhi's spiritual development in the years preceding events in the Punjab. As has been seen, Datta is particularly sensitive to the social and political development of the historical context of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the related events. Why does he hesitate

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[21]Datta, "Introduction," Sources, pp. xxxviii-xxxix.

to examine more carefully the biographical development of Gandhi as a human operating in an historical context? In Datta's analysis history is society, economics and politics; but there is no room to show the parallel development of an individual human. Hence, Gandhi suddenly, almost miraculously, appears on the scene as India's "unique leader".[22] Three specific criticisms arise from this general statement.

First, Datta casts a mystical air over Gandhi which should be challenged. What does it mean to say that Gandhi "cast a magical spell on the people"? Does it imply that the people were duped? Perhaps Datta has in mind his earlier statement that Gandhi relied on a "mystical-intuition" rather than an "intellectualistic approach."[23] Why is it that Gandhi is cast in such mystical terms? Gandhi refers to himself in word and deed as a practical realist, yet others seem intent on making him what he so adamantly disliked--a mahatma.[24]

Second, Gandhi articulated principles which he insisted were timeless. "I have nothing new to teach the world," says Gandhi, "Truth and nonviolence are as old as the hills."[25] In other words, these principles are ubi-

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[22]Datta, "Introduction," Sources, p. li.

[23]Datta, "Introduction," Sources, p. xxviii.

[24]It is pertinant to note, however, that as much as he disliked the title Gandhi did allow the name to stick and even allowed his own journals to use the term.

[25]Harijan, March 28, 1936.

quitous in human history. Why then does an historian like Datta, amongst many others, suggest on the one hand that Gandhi cannot be understood in rational terms and then, on the other hand, turn around and say that he must be isolated and analyzed in one particular context and at one particular time? Perhaps what is needed is a re-evaluation of the timelessness of nonviolence. Then it can be freed from the description which would make it a "mystical" adventure suitable for only a few in some particular context. Gandhi clearly wanted nonviolence to be understood as a valid way of life replete with both historical and rational justification for all times and places.

Third, Gandhi had no faith[26] in violence, but he did have faith in nonviolence. What does it mean to have faith in nonviolence? In what way could Datta argue that nonviolence was a casualty of the first *satyagraha* campaign on a national scale? Casualty suggests death, or at least severe injury. Gandhi's nonviolent campaigns only got stronger as he perfected the technique and disciplined the people. Nonviolence was the central tool (although certainly not the only tool) used to gain India's freedom from oppressive British rule. It took time and effort to sharpen its use, time and effort to educate and train *satyagrahis*.

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[26]Datta, it seems, is not aware of the religious implications wrought by using this term. Or if he does he certainly does not follow the logical route to its end.

On occasion nonviolence had setbacks--but it clearly did not die with the first major campaign.

The questions raised by Datta's analysis lead to a deeper awareness of how crucial the issue of Gandhi's relationship to the events of April 1919 truly is. Again, what was Gandhi's motivation for getting involved in the struggle at this point? Why is it that Gandhi's first clear statements on the meaning of the *Bhagavad Gita* occur shortly after the Bagh Massacre?[27] Did he enter the struggle forced by historical necessity. By the abstract forces of the people. By a shrewd rational decision, or maybe even a mystical dream? Are these questions too difficult?

A fruitful inquiry can be made into these questions, especially if one does not begin from the primary assumption that Gandhi was principally a mystical figure and relied heavily upon a mystical intuition. Mystical intuition? Yes, but never divorced from practical, rational judgement of the prevailing ebb and flow of the political situation.

The primary hermeneutical concept for understanding Gandhi's thinking at this point must grow out of Gandhi's own conviction that the boundaries between religion, politics and other facets of daily human behaviour are vague and at times wholly invisible. Margaret Chaterjee

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[27]J.T.F. Jordens, "Gandhi and the Bhagavadgita," in Robert Minor, ed., Modern Indian Interpreters of the Bhagavad Gita, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1986), p. 89.

articulates the relationship of religion to other concerns in Gandhi particularly well when she writes that he "never looked on social, political, economic and religious issues as if they were in watertight compartments. He saw them as a complicated fabric, spun by the hands of millions, to use the idiom of spinning and weaving that he so loved."[28]

On numerous occasions Gandhi expressed this entwining of religion and politics, sometimes explicitly desolving any distinctions between the two as in 1922: "For me there is no distinction between politics and religion."[29] But in later times (note his somewhat loose maxim to give preference to later statements) he preferred to provide a more fluid expression of the boundaries between life's primary concerns, although he retained a preference for religion. This option for religion is central to the present work. In 1935 Gandhi wrote:

> I could not live for a single second without religion. Many of my political friends despair of me because they say that even my politics are derived from religion. And they are right. My politics and all other activities of mine are derived from my religion. I go further and say that every activity of a man of religion must be derived from his religion, because religion means bound to God, that is to say God rules your every breath.[30]
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> I could not be leading a religious life unless I iden-

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[28]Margaret Chatterjee provides a model approach for understanding Gandhi's entwining of religion and politics in Gandhi's Religious Thought (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1983 and 1986).

[29]The Collected Works Vol. 22, Doc. 172, p. 404.

[30]Harijan, March 21, 1934.

> tified myself with the whole of mankind, and that I could not do unless I took part in politics. The whole gamut of man's activities today constitutes an indivisible whole. You cannot divide social, economic, political and purely religious work into watertight compartments. I do not know any religion apart from human activity. It provides a moral basis to all other activities which they would otherwise lack, reducing life to a maze of 'sound and fury signifying nothing.'[31]

It is not an exaggeration to suggest that a study of Gandhi's spiritual life[32] is also a study of his growing

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[31] Harijan, December 24, 1935. Perhaps the best example of a politician's recognition of the necessity for spiritualized politics is Jayaprakash Narayan's statement of 1957: "From Socialism to Sarvodaya." In Socialism, Sarvodaya and Democracy (London: Asia Publishing House, 1964), pp. 138-171.

[32] The task of documenting, understanding and interpreting Gandhi's religious thought has been sadly neglected, perhaps because the source material is so voluminous and the question is so vast and elusive. In his 1983 introduction to Chatterjee's Gandhi's Religious Thought, John Hick noted: "There are innumerable biographies of Gandhi: indeed his is possibly the most minutely recorded and scrutinized life that has ever been lived. There are also numerous books on his political, economic and moral teachings. But, surprisingly, whilst there are studies of Gandhi's relationship to Christianity, there are none (known to me) devoted to his religious thought as a whole." (p. ix.) More recently, Sushil Kumar Saxena indicates that studies of the religious component of Gandhi's life are still rare. Ever Unto God: Essays on Gandhi and Religion (New Delhi: Indian Council of Philosophical Research, 1988), p. vii. His own study, apparently indebted to the work of Margaret Chaterjee, provides a philosophical study of Gandhi's religious thought. Unfortunately Saxena does not offer a bibliography of what he considers to be a rare commodity. Erik H. Erikson"s Gandhi's Truth: On the Origins of Militant Nonviolence (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1969) is difficult to situate in this literature. Although he claims to be doing a psycho-historical study, clearly its brilliance, as seen for example in Part Three, Chapter I (pp. 229-254) is found in his probing psychological analysis. His focus on the Ahmedabad Mill-Hand's strike of 1918 is incidental to his insights into Gandhi's psychological development. Historical evidence dictates that The Event was actually one year later than Erikson has proposed.

political, economical and social awareness.[33] His spiritual awakening is the other side of his political awakening.[34] His recognition of suffering on a spiritual plane is tantamount to his recognition of structural violence on a political level. This spiritualized politics is our concern. But we approach the subject from the spiritual

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[33]I am particularly indebted to the following paragraph from Chatterjee's book which provided an important incentive for my own research. "Students of modern Indian history and political thought have been largely concerned with Gandhi's role in a sequence of events which amounts in fact to the story of the making of modern India. But there is an inner story which has yet to be explored. Having said that, something else must be admitted. Gandhi himself made no such distinction. He never looked on social, political, economic and religious issues as if they were in watertight compartments. He saw them as a complicated fabric, spun by the hands of millions, to use the idiom of spinning and weaving that he so loved. To try to isolate his religious thought is in a sense to do violence to this most non-violent of men. A full-length study would require constant reference to the socio-economic and political implications of the religious component in his thought." (p. xiii.) This thesis is a small, exploratory and hesitant step towards such a full-length historical study. An M.A. thesis is not the place, however, to try and assert final conclusions or reference the voluminous literature on such an intricate and vast subject--but it is a good place to start the process.

[34]Susanne and Lloyd Rudolph have helped clarify this question, from a different perspective than Margaret Chaterjee, in Gandhi: The Traditional Roots of Charisma (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1967 [1983]). I note, for example, this passage from the Rudolf's work. "The Gandhian model of politics as a vocation emerged in the years immediately following his return to India in 1915. Although in its particulars this type was related to the Indian cultural context, it has more general application as an example of the professionalization of peaceable ideal politics. Its concern for spiritual meaning, its emphasis on service, its insistence on non-violent means, and its suspicion of power distinguish the Gandhian from... [the professional revolutionary and professional politician]." p. 81.

side, rather than the more often used political side of the question.[35] We do so because Gandhi did so, and because it makes good sense.

Gandhi changed after the Jallianwala Bagh incident. A sensitive reading of Gandhi's correspondence during the years under discussion reveals that in part he simply got angry with the British. In part he saw an opportunity to unite the Indian people into a self-determining populace. In part he knew that he had to pick up the reigns of power, or see India devolve into hopeless violence. But in this thesis it will be asserted that changes fundamental to Gandhi's spiritual understanding were going on at this point in his career. Contrary to Datta (see above p. 11) I assert here that it is precisely those "principle events connected to his life" that makes Gandhi's life, at least in part, amenable to rational explanation. And one of the most important principle events connected to the roots of Gandhi's spiritualized political life in India is precisely

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[35]The best example of a scholar giving politics preferential treatment in regard to this period of Gandhi's life is Judith M. Brown's Gandhi's Rise to Power: Indian Politics 1915-1922 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972). Brown's historical analysis lacks the proper appreciation for Gandhi's development as a religious person concerned with, and in part awakened to, political questions. Raghavan Iyer's The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi [revised edition] (New York: Concord Grove Press, 1983), begins at a theoretical/philosophical level to reintegrate the notions of religion and politics driven asunder by Western attempts at interpreting Gandhi. In part he does this by referring to the "moral" aspects of Gandhi, thus avoiding the troubles caused by Western civilization's separation of religious matters from political questions.

the subject presently to be discussed--the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre.

Gandhi moved from being a supporter of the colonial power to an anti-colonialist because he was awakened to new aspects of violence and nonviolence; he was awakened in a spiritual way to suffering and in a political way to systemic violence. And the two should be understood as being inseparable. Before the Bagh massacre Gandhi understood violence to be a human fact; after the actions of Dyer and the British administration violence was seen as the product of a system--state terrorism. And this Gandhi now saw clearly, so clearly that it enabled him to recognize what, rather than who, was his adversary. The adversary was not a General Smuts, nor a General Dyer. It was the system: "We do not want to punish Dyer," says Gandhi, "We have no desire for revenge. We want to change the system that produces Dyer."[36]

The present thesis is simple in outline. Chapter one is essentially theoretical, critical and abstract. Chapters two and five focus on Gandhi's biography: his thoughts, words and actions. (Thus, these two chapters rely heavily on The Collected Works.) Chapters three and four are concerned with the social forces at work directly bearing on Gandhi. (Hence, most of the references in these two chapters are to historical sources.)

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[36]In Datta, Jallianwala Bagh, p. i.

More specifically, chapter one critically examines several scholars' views on the Gandhi of 1919. This provides the background for the present thesis. Gandhi's views on the relationship of British education, language, economics, and so on to religious concerns such as *satyagraha*, *ahimsa*, *swadeshi* and *swaraj* as well as other relevant related matters are examined in chapter two. The research is restricted to the period before April of 1919. Chapters three and four are a chronological account of events in the Punjab during 1919; Gandhi's reaction to the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and its aftermath. Although chapter four highlights the ongoing debate about the underlying causes of the incident, i.e., premeditated act of state terrorism versus an isolated case of temporary insanity, it is not principly an analysis of the Massacre. Its focus is what Gandhi heard and saw about the suffering of the people of the Punjab caused by British oppression. It should be noted once again that our interest is not in the massacre *per se* but in Gandhi's religio-political awakening. Having established a pattern in Gandhi's understanding of the relationship between religious insights and historical realities in chapter two and detailing the momentous events surrounding the massacre (chiefly from Gandhi's perspective) in chapters three and four, chapter five develops Gandhi's growing recognition of what happened in the Punjab. In chapter five the pattern of

Gandhi's thoughts and actions after 1919 and before he went to jail in 1922 is developed. A brief conclusion suggests a tentative answer to the questions: Why did Gandhi change after the events of April 1919? And, what is it about Gandhi that changed?

Chapter 2: Before the Events of 1919

A brief look at Van Den Dungen's paper on Gandhi is an appropriate and useful point of departure for the present chapter.[1] Van Den Dungen advances an argument against the myriad scholars who take for granted Gandhi's dramatic changes in 1919.[2] His thesis is that Gandhi did not change from a "Loyalist" to a "Rebel" in 1919 or thereabouts; but rather, Gandhi was already a "Rebel" by 1909 when he wrote Hind Swaraj.[3] The upshot of Van Den Dungen's paper is that the *satyagraha* of 1919 was precipitated by the Government of India's war mentality and Gandhi had little to do with it, for Gandhi had been ready to enter the fray since at least 1909.[4]

Van Den Dungen divides his historical analysis into three time periods: before 1905, between 1905 and 1909, and

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[1]P.H.M. Van Den Dungen, "Gandhi in 1919: Loyalist or Rebel?" in R. Kumar, ed., Essays on Gandhian Politics: The Rowlatt Satyagraha of 1919 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1971), pp. 43-63.

[2]On page 43 of "Gandhi in 1919" he provides further examples of scholars who treat Gandhi's changes in 1919 in abbreviated manner, similar to those that have been singled out for comment in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

[3]Dungen, "Gandhi in 1919," pp. 44, 50, 59 and 63.

[4]Dungen, "Gandhi in 1919," p. 63.

from about 1914 to 1919. He dwells on the two former and treats the latter only briefly. Speaking to the first period, Van Den Dungen suggests that Gandhi's view of British rule in India "fitted in reasonably well with his claim to be loyal."[5] However, he also notes that "it was not something to which he gave much thought and it is unlikely that it was ever a strong factor inhibiting the emergence of his nationalist sentiments."[6] Nevertheless, Van Den Dungen concludes that during these early years (1893 to about mid 1905) "the concept of loyalty dominated Gandhi's thought and action."[7]

The crucial period for understanding Gandhi's developing political view of the British, according to Van Den Dungen, begins in mid 1905 and finishes at the end of 1909. He rests his argument on the partially true if not obvious statement that during these years Gandhi developed his own technique of political action--namely *satyagraha*.[8] The salient point to be made about this period is that Gandhi equated British rule with modern civilization which

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[5]Dungen, "Gandhi in 1919," p. 47.

[6]Dungen, "Gandhi in 1919," p. 47.

[7]Dungen, "Gandhi in 1919," p. 50.

[8]Dungen, "Gandhi in 1919," p. 50. Throughout his paper Van Den Dungen never articulates an understanding of satyagraha, except that he always equates it with political action. [See for example pages 50, 52 and 53.] Satyagraha is certainly a form of political action, but only in the religious context of a search for Ultimate Truth--a notion Gandhi considered crucial.

was in turn equated with violence.[9] The clearest exposition of this attitude was given by Gandhi in Hind Swaraj, a document of crucial importance for understanding Gandhi--as Van Den Dungen notes, the culmination of the previous four and a half years of thought.[10] Van Den Dungen shows that by 1908 Gandhi had condemned the British Raj completely as the purveyor of modern civilization's violence.[11] Still Gandhi held an emotional tie to the Empire and did not consider using soul-force against it until well into 1908. Finally, by 1910 Gandhi was "completely disillusioned by the attitude of the Imperial government."[12] However, he still held to an "ideal" of what the Empire could be, but even that was being eroded by events in South Africa. This loyalty to an ideal was, in Van Den Dungen's opinion, a mere shadow of what it was up to 1905. He concludes that Gandhi kept it because "it satisfied the needs of the South African struggle, it assuaged Gandhi's conscience and gave ample scope to his idealism."[13] Gandhi's loyalty was henceforth a subservient concept only useful for the advancement of *swaraj*.[14]

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[9]Dungen, "Gandhi in 1919," p. 54.

[10]Dungen, "Gandhi in 1919," p. 54.

[11]Dungen, "Gandhi in 1919," p. 55.

[12]Dungen, "Gandhi in 1919," p. 56.

[13]Dungen, "Gandhi in 1919," p. 58.

[14]Dungen, "Gandhi in 1919," p. 59.

With his return to India in January of 1915 Gandhi was principally interested in advancing his notion of *swaraj* through the medium of *satyagraha*. Van Den Dungen spends little time analyzing the years between 1915 and 1919; he feels that he has sufficiently proven from his previous analysis the inescapable conclusion:

> Gandhi's eagerness to replace the methods of violence and to show the general utility of *satyagraha*--aspects of his outlook apparent by 1909 or a year or two before--at times overruled all other considerations.[15]

Gandhi comes out looking a bit like a child with a new toy to play with, eager to use any opportunity to show it off. In more serious terms, Van Den Dungen's argument fits in well with the opportunist thesis that Gandhi was simply looking for a "political" opening to enter into Indian politics. In any case, Van Den Dungen's analysis leads to his statement that "Gandhi's motives and activities in India from 1915 to at least early 1919 fitted, broadly speaking, into a pattern established between 1905 and 1909."[16] The coming of the Rowlatt Bills "only provided the occasion for the exercise of an old policy."[17] For, "Gandhi had been ready since at least 1909."[18]

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[15]Dungen, "Gandhi in 1919," p. 61.

[16]Dungen, "Gandhi in 1919," p. 63.

[17]Dungen, "Gandhi in 1919," p. 63.

[18]Dungen, "Gandhi in 1919," p. 63.

Before noting the severe limitations of Van Den Dungen's paper, those points in his paper that the present thesis accepts and even builds on should be outlined. First, Hind Swaraj clearly marks a watershed in Gandhi's thought. It can be cogently argued that most of Gandhi's later thoughts can be found in seminal form in Hind Swaraj.[19] Second, it is accepted without argument here that Gandhi went through important changes in the years outlined by Van Den Dungen; but the changes he went through were not primarily political. Third, insofar as his analysis is constrained by the question he asks, Van Den Dungen's data supports his findings. However, data not cited in his paper throw serious doubt on the appropriateness of his "political" question. This thesis accepts the argument in form and pattern and even builds on a similar pattern, but insists that the questions asked are misguided.

If one could accept that Gandhi was overwhelmingly preoccupied with an interest in politics,[20] then Van Den Dungen's conclusions would be persuasive. Gandhi was clearly not preoccupied with politics,[21] consequently one

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[19]See Raghavan Iyer's discussion of Hind Swaraj, a polemical tract, according to Iyer, that he considers "the point d'appui of Gandhi's moral and political thought." The Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi, Second Edition (New York: Concord Grove Press, 1983), Chapter 2.

[20]Dungen, "Gandhi in 1919," p. 44.

[21]See for example Gandhi's letter of 30 June 1918 to Esther Faering where he indicates even a lack in interest in Indian politics up to that point. The Collected Works,

can assert with confidence that Van Den Dungen's paper suffers from a bad case of historical reductionism. How is it that an historian can discuss one of the preeminent religious figures of contemporary history without once mentioning his religious thought? Indeed, the word "religion" does not occur in Van Den Dungen's paper at all. Gandhi clearly understood politics by means of religious categories--nonviolence, *swaraj*, *satyagraha*, Truth and so on.[22] Furthermore, these very religious categories were developed in initial form during the period analyzed by Van Den Dungen in purely political terms. Van Den Dungen suggests that scholars have not done justice to the complexity of Gandhi in 1919. Yet he concludes some nineteen pages later that there is nothing unique in Gandhi in 1919. Van Den Dungen must be judged on his own terms, and must be reminded that his own conclusions hardly do justice to one as complex, as searching and as difficult as Gandhi before and after 1919.

I shall argue in this chapter that to understand Gandhi, in 1919 and throughout his career, one must consider the interplay between his religious biography and the social forces around him. In 1919 Gandhi undergoes significant

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Vol. 14, Doc. 320, p. 462.

[22]Van Den Dungen certainly recognizes these concepts; unfortunately, he does not seem to recognize them as the context in which a discussion of so-called politics must take place.

changes in his understanding of the relationship between religion and politics. In the time period emphasized by Van Den Dungen (1905-1909) Gandhi's thoughts on that relationship are characterized by the distinction he makes between suffering understood as a religious category and his growing misgivings about the British system. Suffering, from 1905 to 1909, is seen as essentially controlled by "divine law," while the British system is seen as a political ideal. In 1907 Gandhi provides an exemplary statement of suffering as a religious category defined by Divine Law:

> ...He who abides by the divine law will win bliss in this world, as also in the next. What is this divine law? It is that one has to suffer pain before enjoying pleasure and that one's true self-interest consists in the good of all, which means that we should die--suffer--for others.[23]

It is not until the time period extending from 1915 to 1920 that Gandhi brings together suffering and British Imperialism. As he progressively associates the cause of Indian suffering with a violent political system (namely British Imperialism) his views of suffering on a spiritual plane become more tied to humans and less tied to abstract divine laws. The more Gandhi sees the political reality of the source of suffering, the more Gandhi sees unnecessary suffering as not divine at all--only unnecessary. He says

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[23]Indian Opinion, 27 July 1907.

in his eulogy of Gokhale in 1918 the essence of what will become his own motto after 1919;

> Only a change brought about in our political condition by pure means can lead to real progress. Gokhale not only perceived this right at the beginning of his public life but also followed the principle in action. Everyone had realized that popular awakening could be brought about only through political activity. If such activity was spiritualized, it could also show the path to *moksha*.... He firmly declared that, unless our political movement was informed with the spirit of religion, it would be barren.[24]

The culmination of this recognition is the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and the Martial Law in the Punjab, after which Gandhi solidifies the idea of spiritualized politics and recognizes that moksha is as much a political necessity as a religious one. He expresses the solidification of this change cogently in June of 1920 when he writes:

> ...What then is the meaning of non-co-operation in terms of the Law of Suffering? We must voluntarily put up with the losses and inconveniences that arise from having to withdraw our support from a Government that is ruling against our will. Possession of power and riches is a crime under an unjust government; poverty in that case is a virtue, says Thoreau. It may be that in the transition state we may make mistakes; there may be avoidable suffering. These things are preferable to national emasculation.[25]

In sum, the reason Gandhi did not act upon his recognition of the shortcomings of British Imperialism in the period 1905-1909[26] is that until 1919 he had not become fully awakened to British Imperialism as a religious

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[24]The Collected Works, Vol. 14, Doc. 122, p. 201.

[25]Young India, 16 June 1920.

[26]A question Van Den Dungen skirts, p. 55.

category embodying "Satanic"[27] truth to be countered with nonviolence--a universal religious category embodying Truth. It took the events in the Punjab during 1919 to drive him to his final solution to the matter. After 1919 "spiritualized politics" becomes a concrete reality in Gandhi's thought. It brings together the spiritual, not to be identified as partisanship tied to one religious institution or creed, and the political, understood in its broadest sense as being the praxis of the people (not the praxis merely of government). With this recognition of 1919 Gandhi cuts through the typical Western practice of dividing religion and politics, while successfully countering any form of fundamentalist religious politics, especially those that could result in overt violence.

I shall now discuss the pattern in Gandhi's thoughts from January of 1915 up to the introduction of the Rowlatt Bills in February of 1919. The underlying thesis is that Gandhi increasingly links the suffering of India to the oppression of British rule. In concrete terms Gandhi progressively recognizes how the British have subjugated India by imposing their language, education, bureaucracy, legal system and technology upon Indian indigenous culture. On 27 October 1920, for example, Gandhi brings these

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[27]The Collected Works, Vol. 14, Doc. 198, p. 299. Gandhi is not consistent with his use of the capital on satanic. When quoting him I will use his form, otherwise I will use small case.

religious-political revelations together by calling the British system wicked and "*Ravanarajya*"[28] (or the Rule of Ravana, Rama's enemy, i.e., Satanic Rule.)--primarily religious terms used in reference to what is understood by Western thought as a political entity. Reference to a satanic British system does not occur consistently and forcefully until after the events of 1919. Gandhi, after the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, clearly perceived the British system in religious terms as wicked, as satanic. For the purpose of analysis the years 1915 to 1919 can be divided into three fluid phases. The first phase is characterized by Gandhi's preliminary analysis of the Indian situation. In this first period Gandhi does a lot of talking: speeches, letters, journal articles and so on. It extends from January 1915 and runs up to the end of 1916. The second phase is characterized by action and runs from the end of 1916 to July 1918, which marks the end of the Kheda struggle. This second phase sees in Gandhi an inner struggle evinced outwardly by his seemingly incomprehensible full support of the British War Effort and his fight for the people and against the Government of India in the Champaran, Ahmedabad and Kheda *satyagraha* actions. This period, then, is understood to represent a transition in Gandhi. The last phase before the events of 1919 is comparatively short.

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[28]In Mahadev Desai, Day-to-Day With Gandhi, Vol. III (Varanasi: Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan, 1968), p. 20.

Herein Gandhi reflects on his activities over the past several years and comes to some conclusions: that *satyagraha* is a universal way of life, not merely a political activity, and that the British system--even as an ideal--is not compatible with ancient Indian ways.

1) January 1915 - December 1916

Four texts near the beginning (April 1915),[29] middle (February 1916)[30] and end (December 1916)[31] of this time period serve to establish a pattern (supported in the intermittent time by personal and formal letters, minor speeches, and so on) characterized by Gandhi's analysis of India's problems from a distinctly religious viewpoint. Whether the point of discussion is methods of social change, economics, language or education, the analysis is always couched in religious terminology, religious symbolism and morals and is often backed with religious texts. Although this period does not reveal any particular attitude towards the British which had not already been present in Hind Swaraj, it does exhibit an overwhelming tendency on Gandhi's part to understand India's problems in a religious manner and not in a political, economic or social manner. Furthermore, Gandhi's analysis does not draw only from

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[29]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 64, pp. 64-67.

[30]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 166, pp. 210-16; and Vol. 13, Doc. 169, pp. 219-25.

[31]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 226, pp. 310-17.

India's religious traditions, but rather from all religious traditions--a process that effectively cuts through sectarian bias or fundamentalist misuse of spiritual experience.

Gandhi returned to India in January of 1915 and, as is well known, heeded at least to some degree[32] Gokhale's advice, which was, in Gandhi's words: "One who had been out of India for 25 years should express no opinion about affairs here before he had studied things carefully. Accordingly, I keep my ears open and my mouth shut."[33] Within a couple of weeks of disembarking from the ship, however, Gandhi had already expressed his desire to strive for "truth" in India both personally and collectively with the Indian people. "If we do [follow truth]," says Gandhi on January 25th, "not I alone but all of us shall deserve honour and be able to play our part in some great task."[34]

In a letter to his nephew Maganlal Gandhi[35] written

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[32]According to Homer A. Jack, Gandhi seems to have kept his ears well open, but keeping his mouth shut required more effort. See his commentary in The Gandhi Reader: A Source Book of His Life and Writings (New York: Grove Press, Inc., 1956), p. 128.

[33]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 19, p. 16.

[34]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 13, p. 13.

[35]Son of Khushalchand Gandhi, M.K. Gandhi's cousin. Maganlal was with Gandhi in South Africa for about ten years. After returning to India he went to Tagore's Santiniketan.

sometime after March 14th[36] Gandhi reflects at length on the meaning of nonviolence in relation to tasks at hand. He is "absolutely clear" in his mind that India's "deliverance and ours" depends upon nonviolence (*ahimsa*),[37] for soul-force (*satyagraha*) is based on it. The vow of nonviolence is not sufficient for a *satyagrahi*, however. Gandhi tells his nephew that other *yamas*[38] including *daya* (compassion), *akrodha* (freedom from anger), *aman* (freedom from the desire to be respected) and others are of equal importance when taken as vows to be kept. Truth underlies all of them and therefore they are of equal value for those intent upon salvation, either individually or as a nation.

While stating that he and his family intended to strive for their goals not by imitating the West but in their own Eastern ways,[39] Gandhi also proceeded to address the Madras Law Dinner with words about the British Empire. His talk clearly shows that he still had faith in the just and fair British Empire. In the course of his speech on 24 April Gandhi suggests that:

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[36]Perhaps written on 25 April according to The Collected Works editors.

[37]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 44, pp. 37-38.

[38]Understood as any great moral or religious duty or observance. Their number is usually ten, but various writers enunciate the list differently. They always include such vows as truthfulness, celibacy, compassion, nonviolence.

[39]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, p. 24.

> I discovered that the British Empire had certain ideals with which I have fallen in love, ("Hear, hear.") and one of those ideals is that every subject of the British Empire has the freest scope possible for his energies and efforts and whatever he thinks is due to his conscience. I think that this is true of the British Empire as it is not true of any other Governments that we see. ("Hear, hear.")[40]

Not long after this (three days), while still in Madras, Gandhi addressed a group of students at the Y.M.C.A. about his vision of India. The speech is important for it shows how Gandhi at this point, not long after his return from South Africa, placed no blame on the British for being in India. The speech is also the first prominent occasion when Gandhi analyzes the connection between India's spiritual heritage and British importation of violence *via* modern civilization.

He starts by asking the students whether the goal of their education is to achieve the realization of a land "which shall embrace in its possession the whole of the world, the whole of humanity by the might or right not of physical power but of soul-power."[41] Or, whether their education is aimed at securing a job with the Government.[42] If their intent is the latter, then the former is foredoomed, for education for the sake of a job is the way of modern civilization. But, the students ask, "How can we help it,

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[40]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 59, pp. 59-60.

[41]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 64, p. 64.

[42]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 64, p. 65.

seeing that our rulers bring that culture to our Motherland?" To which Gandhi answers:

> Do not make any mistake about it at all. I do not for one moment believe that it is for any rulers to bring that culture to you unless you are prepared to accept it, and if it be that the rulers bring that culture before us, I think that we have forces within ourselves to enable us to reject that culture without having to reject the rulers themselves. (Applause.) I have said on many a platform that the British race is with us. I decline to go into the reasons why that race is with us, but I do believe that it is possible for India if she would but live up to the tradition of the sages ... to transmit a message through this great race, a message not of physical might, but a message of love. And then, it will be your privilege to conquer the conquerors not by shedding blood but by sheer force of spiritual predominance.[43]

A close reading of his speech suggests that Gandhi saw no inconsistency in the ideal of British India and the ideal of India articulated by Bankim Chandra Chatterji's national song. In other words, he still had not begun to clearly articulate his schism with the British ideal and his own religious vision. Indeed, it is not India's "R-i-g-h-t" to have freedom given to her, but rather it is her "D-u-t-y"[44] to take it with the way of ancient India, the way of soul-force and not physical force. He concludes his speech to the large group of students on 27 April reflecting on the means which will secure their Motherland:

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[43]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 64, p. 65.

[44]Gandhi draws on Max Muller's observation that India's religion "consists of the four letters 'D-U-T-Y' and not the five letters 'R-I-G-H-T'." The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 64, p. 66.

> The message is to spiritualize the political life and political institutions of the country. We must immediately set about realizing its practice. The students cannot be away from politics. Politics is as essential to them as religion. Politics cannot be divorced from religion. Politics divorced from religion becomes debasing. Modern culture and modern civilization are such politics.[45]

Gandhi ended his first year back in India with the first indication of what would become ever-increasingly evident to him. There are direct connections between the British system and prejudices and economic injustices. When stating why he felt that rights were being withheld from Indians in the British Administration Gandhi identified both undying prejudices which would "have to be borne down," and economic causes which would "have to be examined."[46]

On January 3rd, 1916 Gandhi pointedly asserted that, "India needs to wake up; without an awakening, there can be no progress."[47] And from this point on his own analysis begins to take a more radical position. One of the first indications of his more strident attitude is found in his controversial speech at Benares Hindu University.[48] This is no less so in his speech on *swadeshi* a few days later at the Madras missionary conference.[49]

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[45]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 64, p. 66.

[46]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 146, p. 154.

[47]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 155, p. 195.

[48]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 166, pp. 210-16.

[49]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 169, pp. 219-25.

Gandhi's speech at Benares Hindu University on February 6th is a watershed in his analysis of India.[50] It can be seen as Gandhi's first major articulation of frustration into the inability of both the Indian people to effect changes and the British Administration to see its moral error. It is also the first prominent example of Gandhi linking human bondage to an inhuman system. Here he begins to bring suffering down from on high and to see it in the eyes of India's poor.

After saying how "fed up" he is with speeches, Gandhi proceeded to urge the necessity of moving one's heart and actions in unison, and that cannot be done on Indian soil in a foreign language. He considered it "a matter of deep humiliation and shame for us that I am compelled this evening under the shadow of this great college, in this sacred city, to address my countrymen in a language that is foreign to me."[51] Why? Because by being forced to study the English language every youth of India lost six years of education and every youth lost the ability to express the best of Indian thought, the best of self-expression.[52] Furthermore, by studying English Indian youths were forced into learning English education and only English education. The result is a paucity of Indian expression and an inability to

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[50]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 166, pp. 210-216.

[51]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 166, p. 211.

[52]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 166, p. 211.

speak to the Indian heart. These same students, if not tied up with learning the English language and education, could instead be working amongst the poorest of India's poor making India a freer nation.[53] Clearly, Gandhi was under no delusion about what was one of the main causes of India's propensity for soaking up Western ways like a piece of blotting paper: "the chief fault lies in education being imported through the medium of English."[54]

Gandhi is particularly eloquent when he attacks the wealth disparity evinced by a Maharajah speaking about India's poverty. The wealth of some is a religious affront to the millions, Gandhi says, and must be given up before "salvation" can be achieved by India. "I compare with the richly bedecked noblemen the millions of the poor. And I feel like saying to these noblemen: 'There is no salvation for India unless you strip yourselves of this jewellery and hold it in trust for your countrymen in India.'"[55] Salvation will only come through the farmer; not through doctors, lawyers, or landlords.[56] India's soul is in the hands of those who toil closest to its heartbeat.

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[53]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 166, p. 212.

[54]See also for example his speech on education--The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 217, p. 297-300.

[55]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 166, pp. 213-214.

[56]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 166, p. 214.

Gandhi's speech ends with words freely mixing religious metaphors, patriotic sentiments, an appeal to scriptures and the proper form of honour necessary to achieve salvation:

> If we trust and fear God, we shall have to fear no one, not Maharajahs, not Viceroys, not the detectives, not even King George. I honour the anarchist for his love of the country. I honour him for his bravery in being willing to die for his country; but I ask him: Is killing honourable? Is the dagger of an assassin a fit precursor of an honourable death? I deny it. There is no warrant for such methods in any scriptures. If I found it necessary for the salvation of India that the English should retire, that they should be driven out, I would not hesitate to declare that they would have to go, and I hope I would be prepared to die in defence of that belief. That would, in my opinion, be an honourable death.[57]

Gandhi has attacked the roots of British domination in India when he speaks against the English language and education; moreover, he has done so in a religious framework. Days later he adds material restraints to the list of constraints subjugating India. Gandhi articulates for the first time in definitive fashion what he understands *swadeshi* to mean, and note that it is fundamentally a question of spiritual orientation, not political nor economical:

> *Swadeshi* is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote. Thus, as for religion, in order to satisfy the requirements of the definition, I must restrict myself to my ancestral religion. That is, the use of my immediate religious surroundings. If I find it defective, I should serve it by purging it of its defects. In the domain of politics, I should make use of

[57] The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 166, pp. 214-215.

> the indigenous institutions and serve them by curing them of their proved defects. In that of economics, I should use only things that are produced by my immediate neighbours and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they might be found wanting. It is suggested that such *swadeshi*, if reduced to practice, will lead to the millennium. And as we do not abandon our pursuit after the millennium because we do not expect quite to reach it within our time, so may we not abandon *swadeshi* even though it may not be fully attained for generations to come.[58]

Having provided a working definition Gandhi proceeds to assert that this definition has been the principle behind Hinduism, a principle that allows the Hindu devotee to absorb the good in other faiths while rejecting the bad. So on this basis Gandhi tells the Christian missionaries that their end would be better served "by dropping the goal of proselytising but continuing their philanthropic work."[59] This principle also provides the ground for realizing that even Christianity has "influenced politics not a little."[60]

Given that politics divorced from religion is "like a corpse only fit to be buried" Gandhi asserts that the lack of *swadeshi* indicates that the political life of the country cannot be in a happy state of affairs.[61] The end result of rendering unto Caesar only what is due Caesar has been the debasing of the people according to Gandhi's analysis. The upshot of Gandhi's analysis is that "we have laboured under

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[58]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 169, p. 219.

[59]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 169, p. 220.

[60]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 169, p. 221.

[61]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 169, p. 221.

a terrible handicap owing to an almost fatal departure from the *swadeshi* spirit."[62] And this involves not only religious matters but is indeed economic, industrial and all facets of life wrapped up in a religious concept.[63]

Gandhi closes his speech by articulating this religious concept, asserting on the one hand that England has "sinned" by forcing free trade upon her and on the other hand that *swadeshi* is "a religious discipline to be undergone in utter disregard of the physical discomfort it may cause to individuals."[64] In the end, the use of property relates to a grand doctrine of life, and not merely legal maxims. "It is the key to a proper practice of *ahimsa* or love."[65]

Gandhi turns briefly to another, perhaps more deep-seated cause of Indian subjugation, latent racism. "The average Englishman," Gandhi explains, "considers himself to be superior to the average Indian and the latter is generally content to be so considered."[66] This racism Gandhi considers both demoralizing and a menace to the stability of the Empire.[67] The significance of this observation is found

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[62]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 169, p. 221.

[63]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 169, p. 222.

[64]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 169, p. 223.

[65]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 169, p. 224.

[66]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 178, p. 249.

[67]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 178, p. 250.

in the growing pattern of Gandhi's linking the immorality of the British system with its downfall.

An overt example of the change occurring in Gandhi at an ever-increasing pace is his reference to Indian civilization as the representative of divine force.[68] India embodies all that is chiefly spiritual, while Europe, represented by the British, embodies the "forces of evil and darkness."[69] The upshot of Gandhi's equation leads to the discovery of what is most needed by the Indian people. It is not a political awakening, nor for that matter is it a collective religious awakening. It is rather an intensely personal, individual recognition of one's own self worth. An individual's spiritual awareness that only has God as its judge;

> If we grasp the fact that there is a divinity within us which witnesses everything we think or do and which protects us and guides us along the true path, it is clear that we shall cease to have any other fear on the face of the earth, save the fear of God.[70]

By March of 1916, then, Gandhi has seriously begun to prepare the people for an intensely spiritual fight (as opposed to "religious"), a fight which must begin within each person. Gandhi's last major speech in 1916 re-affirms the pattern well established throughout these two years of preliminary analysis: religious concepts are the key to the

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[68]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 191, p. 261.

[69]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 191, p. 261.

[70]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 191, p. 261.

criticism of all aspects of life. His last major speech of 1916 is addressed to the Allahabad Economic Society.[71]

The question addressed by Gandhi is "Does economic progress clash with real progress?"[72] By economic progress Gandhi means "material advancement without limit" and by real progress he means "moral progress, which again is the same thing as progress of the permanent element in us."[73] In other words, does material advancement of a people insure their moral advancement? The argument is often made that before we can talk about moral welfare we must satisfy daily wants, and the argument often proceeds from this to the claim that once material needs are satisfied there is automatically equal progress in morals. This Gandhi denies emphatically.

> I need hardly say to you how ludicrously absurd this deduction would be. No one has ever suggested that grinding pauperism can lead to anything else than moral degradation. Every human being has a right to live and therefore to find the wherewithal to feed himself and where necessary to clothe and house himself. But, for this very simple performance, we need no assistance from economists or their laws.... Indeed, the test of ordiliness in a country is not the number of millionaires it owns, but the absence of starvation among its masses. The only statement that has to be examined is whether it can be laid down as a law of universal application that material advancement means moral progress.[74]

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[71] The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 226, pp. 310-17.

[72] The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 226, p. 311.

[73] The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 226, p. 311.

[74] The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 226, p. 311-12.

Drawing on a lengthy analysis of Jesus's statements in Mark (Ch. 10, vss. 17-31) dealing with Jesus's admonition to the rich young man to sell all his possessions in order to enter heaven, Gandhi concludes for his mainly European audience that: "In so far as we have made the modern materialistic craze our goal, in so far are we going downhill in the path of progress. I hold that economic progress in the sense I have put it is antagonistic to real progress."[75] Because Western nations are groaning under the heel of "the monster-god of materialism" their moral growth has become "stunted." And India cannot remain immune from such vices if she talks primarily in terms of material wealth. "I have heard many of our countrymen say that we will gain American wealth but avoid its methods. I venture to suggest that such an attempt if it were made is foredoomed to failure. We cannot be 'wise, temperate and furious' in a moment. I would have our leaders to teach us to be morally supreme in the world...."[76] Gandhi's concluding statement leaves the realm of the abstract and directly addresses the British presence in India, as well as his view of the correct form of economics.

> Under the British aegis, we have learnt much, but it is my firm belief that there is little to gain from Britain in intrinsic morality, that if we are not careful, we shall introduce all the vices that she has been a prey to, owing to the disease of materialism. We

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[75] The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 226, p. 314.

[76] The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 226, p. 315.

> can profit by that connection only if we keep our civilization, and our morals, straight, i.e., if instead of boasting of the glorious past, we express the ancient moral glory in our own lives and let our lives bear witness to our past. Then we shall benefit her and ourselves. If we copy her because she provides us with rulers, both they and we shall suffer degradation. We need not be afraid of ideals or of reducing them to practice even in the uttermost. Ours will only be a truly spiritual nation when we shall show more truth than gold, greater fearlessness than pomp of power and wealth, greater charity than love of self. If we will but clean our houses, our palaces and temples of the attributes of wealth and show in them the attributes of morality, we can offer battle to any combinations of hostile forces without having to carry the burden of a heavy militia. Let us seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and the irrevocable promise is that everything will be added with us. These are real economics.[77]

A summary look at the first two years of Gandhi's return to India, then, shows that his preliminary analysis of India's condition remains fixed on religious matters, but always with reference to the causes of India's subjugation found in modern civilization *cum* British spirit. The pattern, as indicated by representative speeches outlining these years, is an insistence upon the ancient Indian religious spirit as a means to end subjugation of India's people--both individually and collectively. Gandhi's analysis does not at this point reject the British as rulers; but it does show signs of his growing awareness of the British system of modern life in complete contradiction to the ancient spiritual way of India.

2) <u>January 1917 - July 1918</u>:

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[77]<u>The Collected Works</u>, Vol. 13, Doc. 226, p. 316.

The second phase is outlined by actions rather than words--namely the Champaran, Ahmedabad mill-worker's strike and the Kheda *satyagraha*. In these struggles Gandhi essentially repeats what he has said in the first phase, but he does so through the medium of his actions. The same themes of language, education, economic disparity, duty versus right and suffering appear in this period, only they are couched in the concrete problems of the people. As always, the answers to these problems come out of spiritual concerns.

While Gandhi is deeply immersed in struggles on behalf of the people and against the Government of India, he also takes on full support of the British war effort by lending his name to the recruitment of Indian soldiers. This seemingly contradictory state of affairs indicates Gandhi's attempts to be everything to everyone. It is his last attempt to accept in his mind and through his actions the rulers, while at the same time rejecting their culture and civilization. The latent separation of Indian and British ways found in his preliminary analysis becomes overt and radical in his actions. There remains in his thought two separate and distinct civilizations that can be reconciled. The radical separation marks Gandhi's last attempt to bring the two together with their own separate integrity. The British are not yet judged by the universal principles forming in Gandhi's mind. When they are, Gandhi

comes to the final conclusion that the British have to go. The first indications of this come when Gandhi starts in March of 1918 to articulate in clear and forceful language the idea of "satanic" Western ways. It is in this period that he begins to make the connections between "evil" systems and a "pure" religious way of life more explicitly.

Because the pattern developed in the first phase is only accentuated in the second, for the purpose of this thesis it is necessary only to establish the ongoing emphasis in Gandhi's thought and biography on religious answers to questions and the linking of social concerns to religious concerns during this time period.

One of Gandhi's first concerns for the new year is to act on his belief, founded in the first years of his stay in India, that British education given through the medium of English must be halted. Indeed, throughout this entire time period Gandhi occupies himself with the establishment of national education.[78] In the prospectus for this new national education[79] Gandhi makes it clear that English will not be taught in the first three years of the program, and when it is introduced it will be seen as a foreign language. In this manner the students will not have several years of education forfeited to foreign languages, and thus they will achieve a much higher degree of education. Of fundamental

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[78]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 265, pp. 358-9.

[79]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 242, pp. 332-4.

importance to Gandhi is his insistence that "every opportunity will be taken to rid [the student's] mind of the fallacious notion that the aim of education is to get employment."[80] Of singular importance is the religious element of this education. Gandhi believes that by using the indigenous languages, India's students will remain in touch with the ancient religious ideals, for if religion in the end is ignored, India's serfdom will only become worse.[81]

Of equal concern throughout this period is Gandhi's efforts to eliminate the indenture system.[82] His words are harsh. They provide some indication of how he begins to equate various parts of the British system with the subjugation of India's masses. He refers to the indenture "system" as nothing but a new form of slavery.

> The system [of indenture] is but a form of slavery. We have in it, under the British Empire, elements of the very system which England claims proudly to have abolished; this system can be described as slavery for a limited period. All the essential elements of the earlier system are present in this, and one more. It makes one shudder to know all. The system brings India's womanhood to utter ruin, destroys all sense of modesty. That in defence of which millions in this country have laid down their lives in the past is lost under it.[83]

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[80]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 242, p. 334.

[81]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 265, p. 359.

[82]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 245, pp. 338-9; Doc. 246, pp. 339-42; Doc. 254, pp. 347-51, etc.

[83]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 254, p. 349.

While maintaining the work of reforming the education system and eliminating the slavery of the indenture system Gandhi becomes embroiled in the first *satyagraha* on Indian soil.[84] Louis Fischer provides a concise summary of the situation in Champaran.

> Most of the arable land in the Champaran district was divided into large estates owned by Englishmen and worked by Indian tenants. The chief commercial crop was indigo. The landlords compelled all tenants to plant three-twentieths or 15 per cent of their holdings with indigo and surrender the entire indigo harvest as rent. This was done by long-term contract.
>
> Presently, the landlords learned that Germany had developed synthetic indigo. They thereupon tried to induce the sharecroppers to pay them compensation for being released from the 15 per cent arrangement.
>
> The sharecropping arrangement was irksome to the peasants, and many paid willingly. Those who resisted, hired lawyers; the landlords hired thugs. Meanwhile, the information about synthetic indigo reached the illiterate peasants who had paid, and they wanted their money back.
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> At this point Gandhi arrived in Champaran.[85]

In April Gandhi had let the authorities know of his intent to visit Champaran for the purpose of ascertaining the conditions there. "My mission," he writes, "is that of making peace with honour."[86] And in a personal note to Esther Faering he confides that he "must trust in God."[87]

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[84]For a full discussion of the Champaran struggle see: P.C. Ray Chaudhury, Gandhiji's First Struggle in India (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Pub. House, 1955).

[85]Louis Fischer, The Life of Mahatma Gandhi (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1950), pp. 149-50.

[86]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 269, p. 362; Doc. 270, pp. 362-3; Doc. 271, p. 363.

[87]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 273, p. 364.

In short order the authorities threaten Gandhi with imprisonment. And Gandhi's reaction? "I am absolutely joyed," he exclaims to Miss Faering, "that I shall be imprisoned for the sake of conscious."[88] The pressure of the people and Gandhi's growing stature are sufficient, however, to forestall the threat and in what is seen as a victory for *satyagraha* Gandhi is given permission and even help from the authorities to conduct his inquiry.[89] By the 4th of October Gandhi's inquiry into the indigo growers' complaints is completed and its recommendations accepted by the Government.[90]

The importance of this event for us lies not in the details of the campaign, but rather in the recognition that here Gandhi first articulates the moral basis of civil disobedience in India. He asserts in court that he must "submit without protest to the penalty of disobedience.... not for want of respect for lawful authority, but in obedience of the higher law of our being--the voice of conscience."[91] Furthermore, in the course of conducting his inquiry Gandhi draws on his faith in the Englishman's highest ideals to accomplish his task. In his report on the

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[88]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 279, p. 371.

[89]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 290, pp. 377-8.

[90]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 418, pp. 560-1.

[91]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 285, p. 375.

conditions of the *ryots* in Champaran[92] Gandhi calls on the British ideal of liberty and freedom:

> Believing as I do that the *raiyats* are labouring under a grievous wrong from which they ought to be freed immediately, I have dealt, as calmly as is possible for me to do so, with the system which the planters are working. I have entered upon my mission in the hope that they as Englishmen born to enjoy the fullest personal liberty and freedom will not fail to rise to their status and will not begrudge the *raiyats* the same measure of liberty and freedom.[93]

In this struggle Gandhi shows a continued propensity to trust the ideals of the British, to use a religious means to achieve a solution, and to recognize all people involved in soul-force struggles to be victorious. In the end Gandhi's Champaran struggle does achieve at least partially his desire "to promote peace between the planters and the *raiyats* so as to secure to the *raiyats* the freedom and dignity that should belong to all mankind."[94] The uphill task, as Gandhi puts it, is "to spread the gospel of *satyagraha* in the place of methods of violence."[95]

Gandhi's complete failure to break through the idealized image of Britain to the concrete reality of the system developed consciously by the British is transparent in his support of the war effort. Early in 1917 he had committed himself in principle to helping the British. He

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[92]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 301, pp. 385-90.

[93]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 301, p. 390.

[94]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 330, p. 424.

[95]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 398, p. 526.

reasoned that those who did not have faith in the principle of nonviolence should take up arms. Just because you cherish belief in non-violence, "does not mean that you are effectively observing the rule, for in that rule there is no place for running away in fear. It is your duty to defend those among the Indian people who want themselves, their women, their moral standards and their wealth to be defended."[96] Hence the necessity to take up arms. What he has agreed to in principle becomes formal in April of 1918,[97] followed by intense efforts on his part to fulfill his obligations.

At virtually the same time Gandhi begins to make forceful statements about European civilization in general and the British in particular. He refers to European civilization as "Satanic,"[98] obviously proved by the fierce war going on (a war he was helping to sustain with his recruitment drive). And in India Gandhi's hope for a revitalized interest in the spiritual roots of a "new social and political order" is made useless because "the wretched fever of the West has taken possession of us."[99]

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[96]The Collected Works, Vol. 13, Doc. 254, p. 350.

[97]The Collected Works, Vol. 14, Doc. 258, pp. 380-1.

[98]The Collected Works, Vol. 14, Doc. 198, p. 299; also Doc. 147, p. 232.

[99]The Collected Works, Vol. 14, Doc. 226, p. 332.

The latter part of 1917 sees Gandhi re-articulating the pattern already established in the first years of his return to India. His position remains, although now it is stated in a more radical form, that: "India is fitted for the religious supremacy of the world."[100] In his full explanation of the differences between *satyagraha* and duragraha Gandhi attempts to clear up any misunderstanding about his program. In essence, *satyagraha*

> proceeds on the assumption of the ultimate triumph of truth. A *satyagrahi* does not abandon his path, even though at times it seems impenetrable and beset with difficulties and dangers, and a slight departure from that straight path may appear full of promise. Even in these circumstances, his faith shines resplendent like the midday sun and he does not despond. With truth for sword, he needs neither a steel sword or gun-powder. Even an inveterate enemy he conquers by the force of the soul, which is love.[101]

Duragraha has all the attributes *satyagrahis* refuse:

> The man who follows the path of duragraha becomes impatient and wants to kill the so-called enemy. There can be but one result of this. Hatred increases. The defeated party vows vengeance and simply bides its time. The spirit of revenge thus descends from father to son.[102]

Gandhi displays a practical side when he asserts that it is beyond his imagination that the whole of India would ever accept *satyagraha*.[103] However, "the right thing to hope from India is that this great and holy Aryan land will

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[100]The Collected Works, Vol. 14, Doc. 13, p. 53.

[101]The Collected Works, Vol. 14, Doc. 13, p. 63.

[102]The Collected Works, Vol. 14, Doc. 13, p. 64.

[103]The Collected Works, Vol. 14, Doc. 13, p. 65.

ever give the predominant place to the divine force and employ the weapon of *satyagraha*, that it will never respect the principle of might being right. She will ever reserve her allegiance to the principle: 'Truth alone triumphs.'"[104] He summarizes the point he has reached in his understanding of *satyagraha*:

> On reflection, we find that we can employ *satyagraha* even for social reform. We can rid ourselves of the many defects of our caste system. We can solve Hindu-Muslim differences and can solve political problems. It is all right that, for the sake of convenience, we speak of these things as separate subjects. But it should never be forgotten that they are all closely inter-related. It is not true to say that neither religion nor social reform has anything to do with politics. The result obtained by bringing religion into play in the field of politics will be different from that obtained otherwise.[105]

The Ahmedabad Mill-Hands' strike of February and March[106] and the Kheda *satyagraha* of March and April 1918[107] serve to enhance Gandhi's clear cut distinctions between the possibility of the British ideal being actualized in India and the recognition of the reality of a system which has taken on a life of its own. In these two struggles Gandhi saw that self-suffering can be an effective method in the

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[104]The Collected Works, Vol. 14, Doc. 13, p. 65.

[105]The Collected Works, Vol. 14, Doc. 13, p. 65.

[106]The situation was simple. The mill-workers were underpaid and overworked. They simply wanted their fair return, more money and better working conditions. Gandhi agreed that they had a strong case and proceeded to work on their behalf.

[107]The purpose of the satyagraha was for the remission of taxes on the area's peasants who had suffered a severe loss of crop due to drought.

context of *satyagraha* but at the same time it is now a human affair. The leaflets Gandhi produced for the Mill-Hands' strike and the Kheda struggle show how far he has come in his understanding of the people and the source of their bondage.

During the Kheda struggle Gandhi holds to a crumbling vision of the British. He recognizes that "our kings sometimes used to oppress the subjects and rob them of their possessions, but I cannot believe that such a thing can happen under British rule."[108] That is exactly what did transpire in the end, for his *satyagraha* campaign was only partially successful. The peasants who were rich enough to pay the taxes did while those who were too poor did not. As a teaching venue, however, the struggle proved useful to Gandhi. Repeatedly he affirms that in the revival of "this way of dharma [*satyagraha*] lies the key to *swaraj*,"[109] and that the struggle is an "auspicious time for learning self-suffering."[110] As for himself, Gandhi makes his intent clear to the Viceroy; "in season and out of season ... I shall discipline myself to express in my life this eternal law of

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[108]The Collected Works, Vol. 14, Doc. 240, p. 356.

[109]The Collected Works, Vol. 14, Doc. 244, p. 362; Doc. 346, pp. 365-6; Doc. 250, pp. 369-71, etc.

[110]The Collected Works, Vol. 14, Doc. 250, p. 371.

suffering and present it for acceptance to those who care."[111]

3) August 1918 - February 1919:

The last phase before the events of the Punjab, quite short in relation to the first two, is characterized by reflection. It sees Gandhi turning inward to reflect upon himself and what has taken place in the previous months. The result of his reflection is a somewhat despondent attitude coupled with the discovery of *satyagraha* not as mere political activity but as a universal principle. This last phase includes Gandhi's six month illness immediately prior to his involvement with the Rowlatt Bills and so extends from about July 1918 to January of 1919 when he has an operation to relieve his illness and almost immediately after the operation writes to O.S. Ghate about those "damnable bills".[112]

Throughout this period Gandhi makes personal statements that are almost shocking in their candid nature. These statements are not often considered by scholars in their studies of Gandhi. They show, however, how Gandhi's biography cannot be adequately understood by looking only at his public speeches. True, his reflections are not as frequent as one might think. There is much deleted from the historical records. As the year 1918 winds down and

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[111]The Collected Works, Vol. 14, Doc. 257, p. 379.

[112]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 95, p. 81.

Gandhi's strenuous activities reach a peak before he falls into serious illness, a series of impromptu remarks reveals some of the inner workings of his thoughts. First, he is disillusioned by what he sees around him; second, he believes that out of it all he has discovered a new universal principle. On the first point he writes an intimate letter to his son:

> It bores me to see people blindly worshipping me. If they know me as I am and even then honour me, I can turn their honour to account in public work. I derive no honour if I have to conceal my religious beliefs in order to have it. I would even welcome being utterly despised for following the right path....[113]

Later the same month, defending his decision to end the mill-hands' strike with a fast, Gandhi reflects in despairing tones on the actions of the people and the Government. In an open letter to the mill-hands he wrote:

> Every day I discover so much of hypocrisy in the world that many times I feel I just cannot go on being here. At Phoenix, I often told you that, if one day you did not find me in your midst, you should not be surprised. If this feeling comes over me, I will go where you will never be able to seek me out. In that hour, do not feel bewildered, but go on with the tasks on hand as if I were with you all the time.[114]

Gandhi ends his reflections on a more positive note. On 22 July 1918, he writes to his South African friend Mrs. Polak that, "...I am undergoing a revolution in my outlook upon life. As it seems to me some old cobwebs are falling

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[113] The Collected Works, Vol. 14, Doc. 150, p. 235.

[114] The Collected Works, Vol. 14, Doc. 182, pp. 266-7. This passage begs a study of Gandhi's messianic feelings.

away."[115] In a letter from August of 1918 to his beloved Maganlal Gandhi clarifies his cryptic statement to Mrs. Polak: "I am realizing in my own experience the principle that *satyagraha* has a universal application."[116] This discovery on a personal level does not come to fruition for some time. First Gandhi must lie on his back for some six months passing through "the severest illness" of his life.[117] Then he must witness the events of 1919 in the Punjab, to which the discussion now turns.

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[115]The Collected Works, Vol. 14, Doc. 356, p. 497.

[116]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 20, p. 19.

[117]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 22, p. 21.

Chapter 3: The Rowlatt Act and Gandhi

The end of the World War found India in a state of suppressed excitement. Industrialization had spread, and the capitalist class had grown in wealth and power.... The great majority, however, were not so fortunate and looked forward to a lightening of the burdens that crushed them. Among the middle classes there was everywhere an expectation of great constitutional changes which would bring a large measure of self-rule and thus better their lot by opening out many fresh avenues of growth to them. Political agitation, peaceful and wholly constitutional as it was, seemed to be working itself to a head, and people talked with assurance of self-determination and self-government. Some of this unrest was visible also among the masses, especially the peasantry. In the rural areas of the Punjab the forcible methods of recruitment were still bitterly remembered, and the fierce suppression of the "Komagata Maru" people and others by conspiracy trials added to the widespread resentment. The soldiers back from active service on distant fronts were no longer the subservient robots that they used to be. They had grown mentally, and there was much discontent among them.

Among the Moslems there was anger over the treatment of Turkey and the Khilafat question, and an agitation was growing. The treaty with Turkey had not been signed yet, but the whole situation was ominous. So, while they agitated, they waited.

The dominant note all over India was one of waiting and expectation, full of hope and yet tinged with fear and anxiety. Then came the Rowlatt Bills with their drastic provisions for arrest and trial without any of the checks and formalities which the law is supposed to provide. A wave of anger greeted them all over India, and even the Moderates joined in this and opposed the measures with all their might. Indeed there was universal opposition on the part of Indians of all shades of opinion. Still the Bills were pushed through by the officials and became law, the principle concession made being to limit them to three years.[1]

Jawaharlal Nehru's concise assessment of the years immediately prior to the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre brings the discussion up to the Rowlatt Bills. Three questions focus this chapter and the next: (a) What were the Rowlatt Bills--known as the "Black Bills" to the popular mind--and how did they serve to ignite the soon-to-be conflagration? (b) What was Gandhi's reaction to the Rowlatt Act? (c) What

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[1]Jawaharlal Nehru, Toward Freedom: The Autobiography of Jawaharlal Nehru (New York: The John Day Company, 1941), pp. 47-48.

did Gandhi see and hear about the massacre and Punjab atrocities at the time?[2]

The discussion of the Rowlatt Bills gives some perspective to the social, political and cultural forces at work on the Indian sub-continent immediately prior to the Bagh Massacre. It particularly shows the callous disregard of Indian opinion by the British Raj. The second part of the description shows how this attitude of the British Government results in the events leading up to the Bagh Massacre. This discussion highlights how the Indian people and Gandhi come to recognize that the British continue to treat Indians as a subservient people. The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre, discussed in chapter four, closes this part of the discussion. To see the massacre through the eyes of the Indian people and particularly through Gandhi's eyes after the fact, in the next chapter, provides the foundation for seeing and understanding Gandhi's dramatic changes after the massacre.

The purpose of this description is to graphically depict the events which were to have a profound impact on

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[2]Chapters three and four are for the most part descriptive, not critical. Its purpose is to highlight the events of the time with emphasis on their inherent emotional impact on Gandhi and on the Indian people. I deliberately emphasize the Indian point of view to reflect, in part, the feelings Gandhi would have been most exposed to in this period. For these reasons, among others, the sources I utilize are almost wholly Indian. Some might call them inflammatory propaganda, as the British did when they banned Malaviya's account of the atrocities committed in the Punjab.

Gandhi's development as a spiritual-cum-political person. The description of the massacre enters into the realm of the subjective insofar as the descriptions of the massacre by those attendant are emotionally and graphically charged. And here the crux of the exercise is found.

Gandhi was not present at Amritsar during the massacre, nor for some time thereafter.[3] It is important to note, however, that it was primarily Gandhi who penned the official report for the Congress party.[4] By listening to the evidence, even that which is most sensational, it is possible to gain some insight into the powerful forces being stirred in Gandhi. Whether or not the evidence was skewed, whether or not the witnesses were accurately reporting the events in the Bagh, nevertheless it is their words which

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[3]See above p. 6, n. 4.

[4]The compilers of The Collected Works make a strong case for Gandhi's authorship of the Congress Report. See The Collected Works Vol. 17, pp. 115-6. Gandhi reflects on his role in the making of the Congress Report in his autobiography. There he writes: "The responsibility for organizing the work of the Committee devolved on me, and as the privilege of conducting the inquiry in the largest number of places fell to my lot, I got a rare opportunity of observing at close quarters the people of the Punjab and the Punjab villages.... The task of drafting the report of this Committee was also entrusted to me." Mohandas K. Gandhi, An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments With Truth (Boston: Beacon Press, 1957), pp. 476-7. The Collected Works also draw on M.K. Jayakar's memoirs. He recalled that the whole day was spent in "discussing Gandhi's draft Report." "The Report was drawn up by Gandhi, with assistance from me." "Gandhi made the first draft of the Report in a quiet little room." "By that time, Das, Motilal and Tyabji had dropped out, and Gandhi and myself worked hard on the publication of the report." The Collected Works, Vol. 17, p. 115.

shaped Gandhi's understanding of the suffering which was endured by the Punjabi people in general and by those of Amritsar in particular.

It is not, then, my purpose to advance here a thesis about this period of Indian history, about the Rowlatt Act and the attendant events, or in particular the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. Datta, Majumdar, Namboodiripad and Ram, amongst many others, have brought sufficient historical evidence to bear on the subject to provide an adequate understanding of the events of 1919 from a decidedly Indian perspective. Their accounts are not always sympathetic to Gandhi. What these scholars have not adequately done is to link the horror, and the awesome nature of the events, to major and profound changes in India's incipient leader, Gandhi.

A) The Rowlatt Bills

According to Amnesty International's 1988 criteria[5] the Rowlatt Act of 1919 would place the British Government of India amongst the world's most blatant abusers of basic civil liberties and human rights in the same category as countries such as Chile, El Salvador and South Africa. B.G. Horniman, who was deported from India in April of 1919 for his pro-India journalism, observed in 1920 that this "drastic legislation" deprived people of "their most

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[5]Amnesty International, "Amnesty International Report 1988," Amnesty International Bulletin 15/6 (November 1988): 15-20.

elementary human rights" and that the Bills were "unparalleled in the laws of any modern civilised State."[6]

Several revolutionary movements were active in India congruent with the first War. The Ghadarites,[7] the Pan-Islamic movement,[8] the two prongs of the Home Rule League headed by Bal Gangadhar Tilak[9] and Annie Bessant gave good reason for the British to start paying attention to India's demands for freedom. Instead of responding to India's challenge with openness and sincere efforts at negotiated

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[6]Benjamin Guy Horniman, British Administration & the Amritsar Massacre (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1984), p. 49. This was originally published as Amritsar and our Duty to India (London: Unwin, 1920).

[7]Datta gives a good, brief introduction to this movement in his book on the Jallianwala Bagh. Majumdar provides a sympathetic account of the movement, while Namboodiripad's Marxist perspective seems to (ironically?) avoid the issue. See also, for example, Bhai Hahar Singh and Kirpal Singh, eds., Struggle for Free Hindustan: Ghadr Movement, Volume I--1905-1916 (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 1986).

[8]For a historian commissioned by the Government of India Majumdar, while pointing out his differences with Gandhi, reveals a very negative view towards Indian Muslims suggesting as he does that "if a hundred million Muslims are more vitally interested in the fate of Turkey and other Muslim States outside India, than they are in the fate of India, they can hardly be regarded as a unit of Indian nation." He goes on to suggest that the Hindu leaders did not realize the "true significance of the Khilafat Movement and the danger to Indian nationality lurking behind it." R.C. Majumdar, The History and Culture of the Indian People, Volume 11: Struggle for Freedom (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1969), p. 319.

[9]Namboodiripad's discussion of Tilak is particularly enlightening. His comparison of Tilak and Gandhi is very good. See A History of Indian Freedom Struggle (Trivandrum, India: Social Scientist Press, 1986), pp. 158-214.

settlements, the British Government chose a "might makes right" iron-fist policy. The Rowlatt Bills were the culmination of a severe wave of repression which had started with the Defence of India Act.

On March 18th, 1915 the Imperial Legislative Council passed the Defence of India Act--unanimously and in a single sitting.[10] Majumdar effectively captures the essence of this proposed legislation:

> The net effect of these rules was that the Government could authorize any official to do anything in regard to any person and his property, merely on *suspicion* that such a person *may act* in a way which in the opinion of the Government was 'prejudicial to the public safety'--a beautifully vague term which may mean anything and everything.[11]

These "laws" were in effect the abolition of law and the beginning of an ever increasing imperialistic military oppression. The extent of this lawless rule in British India has been suppressed in Western history.[12] To know of the atrocities committed by the British under the Defence of India Act prepares the ground to see how the Jallianwala

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[10]R.C. Majumdar, History of the Freedom Movement in India, Volume II (Calcutta: Firma K.L. Mukhopadhyay, 1963), pp. 490ff.

[11]History of Struggle, p. 493.

[12]As recent as 1988, in a book acclaimed by some as the new standard in works of its kind, Paul Kennedy manages to summarize the importance and impact of the Amritsar Massacre on British colonialism in one telling line: "The sharp British response at Amritsar in 1919 ... testified to the residual power of European armies and weaponry." Paul Kennedy, The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers (London: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd., 1988), p. 370.

Bagh Massacre was the result of a system--a system which calls up comparison with other such systems. Referring to forced internments, torture and executions without trial perpetrated by the British in India under the Defence of India Act, Majumdar--a conservative-minded Indian historian--draws comparisons confirmed at a later date by Bertrand Russell.

> Inhuman cruelties and barbarous methods of torture applied to men kept on mere suspicion within the four walls of a dungeon at the absolute mercy of the so-called 'guardians of law and order' recall the barbarities perpetrated in the German concentration camps during the Second World War. It is true that the British Government in India, unlike the German Government, did not perpetrate mass massacres by Gas Chambers, but so far as barbarous torture of helpless victims is concerned, their crimes certainly differ in degree and extent, but probably not in kind, from that perpetrated by the German Nazis. It is very serious--one may call, an odious--charge against British rule in India.[13]

India's viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, was well aware that the Defence of India Act (originally introduced as a war measures act) would lapse with the end of the War. In Chelmsford's own words: "The very important powers [i.e., the Defence of India Act] which have enabled the public peace and order of India to be preserved during the war will shortly come to an end." Therefore, it was essential in his judgement that "they should be replaced by adequate substitutes."[14] To that end Chelmsford set up a special

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[13]Majumdar, Struggle for Freedom, p. 195.

[14]V.N. Datta and S.C. Mittal, eds., Sources on National Movement: Volume One (January 1919 to September 1920); Protests, Disturbances and Defiance (New Delhi, et al:

committee--officially called the Sedition Committee and later called the Rowlatt Committee after its president, S.A.T. Rowlatt, Judge of the King's Bench Division of His Majesty's High Court of Justice--to accomplish two tasks: to report on the nature and extent of the revolutionary movements in India, and to advise on any necessary legislation to enable the Government to deal with them.[15]

The proceedings of the Committee's enquiry were held in complete secrecy. Their results were inevitable, for "apart from the facts and figures presented before it by the Government, the Committee did not care to examine witnesses, nor did it try to ascertain public opinion by any other means."[16] The Rowlatt Committee went against the advice of Edwin Montagu,[17] who warned against "Government by means of internment and police."[18] Disregarding this sound suggestion

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Allied Publishers Private Limited and Indian Council of Historical Research, 1985), p. 4.

[15]Majumdar, Struggle for Freedom, p. 292. E.M.S. Namboodiripad gives the official name as Revolutionary Conspiracies Enquiry Committee. See Indian Freedom Struggle, p. 253.

[16]Namboodiripad, Indian Freedom Struggle, p. 253.

[17]Shortly after his chastizement of the Secretary of State's (Austin Chamberlain) leadership of the Government of India as being "too wooden, too iron, too inelastic, too anti-diluvian, to be of any use for the modern purposes we have in view," Edwin Montagu himself became the new Secretary of State. In that capacity he formed what came to be known as the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms which are discussed briefly presently.

[18]Majumdar, Struggle for Freedom, p. 263.

the Rowlatt Committee submitted its report to Chelmsford on April 15th, 1918. The measures it proposed, which were made public on July 19th, 1918, proved to be even more draconian than the Defence of India Act. Before discussing the Rowlatt Bills, however, it is worth noting another development in British reform-cum-repression policy.

Edwin Montagu was a politically astute governor. In mid-1918 it was clear that the Allied forces were overcoming the German offensive. The British had needed in late 1917 a short time of consolidation and relative peace in their own empire to make the final push to the war's end. This meant that India had to be placated; India was proving to be the most discontent and restless of Britain's ill-treated offspring. It is in this context that Montagu came up with his reforms, reforms which by his own admission bought the British time at a most crucial period of the war.

Montagu announced to the British Parliament his scheme about "responsible government" for India on August 20th, 1917;[19] he arrived in India on November 10th, 1917 and

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[19]The essence of Montagu's reforms is as follows: "The policy of His Majesty's Government, with which the Government of India are in complete accord, is that the increasing association of Indians in every branch of administration, and the gradual development of self-governing institutions with a view to the progressive realization of Responsible Government in India as an integral part of the British Empire. They have decided that substantial steps should be taken in this direction as soon as possible." Quoted in Majumdar, Struggle for Freedom, p. 265. See Majumdar's discussion on wording etc. on pages following.

proceeded to court Indian politicians. By February 28th, 1918 he could write in his diary: "I have kept India quiet for six months at a critical period of the War; I have set the politicians thinking of nothing else but my mission."[20] The promise of "responsible government" for India, given when Britain was being severely challenged on the war front, became a shadow of the original by July of 1918, when Britain once again held the balance of power. The result was a split in Indian political opinion over whether or not the watered-down promises should be respected at all. This was a condition the British were fond of encouraging--divide and control.

As the British are fond of saying, the proof is in the pudding. The "pudding" being prepared for India (at the same time as Montagu was serving the main dish called responsible government) was served on the 6th of February, 1919, in the form of the Rowlatt Bills.

The Rowlatt Bills were adamantly opposed by Indians on all fronts. Yet they passed through parliament in a mere five weeks--a very short period of time for bills destined to change the course of British rule in India. Chelmsford introduced the bills on February 6th, 1919; they were passed into law by the Imperial Council on March 18th, 1919 and were placed in the Statute-book three days later. What had the Rowlatt Committee recommended?

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[20]Quoted in Majumdar, Struggle for Freedom, p. 271.

The Rowlatt Act came to the parliament in two separate but integrated bills. The first bill, properly called the Criminal Law Amendment Bill (Bill No. I of 1919),[21] dealt with amendments to an already existing Indian Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure. Although the bill was never passed by the Imperial Legislative Council, it nevertheless served an important role in provoking Indian agitation. Its contents are worth noting even if its more important articles were incorporated into the main bill--the Rowlatt Act.

The Criminal Law Amendment Bill essentially proposed three amendments to the existing Codes. The most important was the insertion of a new section, 124-B, which in essence created a new crime and set up a new principle of law. The article reads:

> 124-B. Whoever has in his possession any seditious document intending that the same shall be published or circulated shall, unless he proves that he had such document in his possession for a lawful purpose, be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to two years or with fine or with both.[22]

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[21]The entire text of both bills as they were presented to the Imperial Legislative Council on February 6th, 1919 is found in H.N. Mitra, ed., Punjab Unrest: Before and After (Calcutta: N.N. Mitter Annual Register Office, April 1920), pp. 135ff. Mitra also includes the full texts of debates over the legislation for the duration. Datta and Mittal include the Rowlatt Act as it was passed on the 18th of March, 1919 (that is after any changes brought about because of parliamentary debate) in their Sources, pp. 41-53. Datta and Mittal also include edited versions of the most important debates.

[22]Mitra, Punjab Unrest, p. 135 (iii).

Further explanation provided by the Committee clarified "seditious document" to mean "any document containing any words, signs or visible representations which instigate or are likely to instigate whether directly or indirectly--the use of criminal force against [the King, the Government, or a public servant or servants]."[23]

The net effect of the proposal was, first, to provide the wherewithal for labelling virtually any document that the Government or police wanted to call seditious, seditious, for example, Gandhi's Indian Home Rule and his translation of Ruskin's Unto This Last, published under the title of Sarvodaya, were both labelled seditious using the Rowlatt Act's form of this article. Second, the proposed amendment effectively inverted the standard principle of British law in that the accused no longer was innocent until proven otherwise, but rather was guilty on mere suspicion until he or she proved himself or herself innocent.

The bill went further by suggesting that a person's habitual or voluntary association with any person already convicted of a seditious offence could be used against him or her in a court of law. Thus, "friends and relatives of a man who had been convicted under one of the dangerously vague sedition sections of the Indian Code might well begin to shun him, in the knowledge that association with him

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[23]Mitra, Punjab Unrest, p. 135 (iii).

might be used against them at some future time."[24] The overall ramifications of this proposed amendment were very serious, but nothing compared to the Rowlatt Act which did in fact become law.

Any semblance of responsible British rule in India disappeared with the passing of the drastic measures of the Rowlatt Act of 1919 (Bill No. I, the Main Rowlatt Bill, which was passed by the Imperial Legislative Council on March 18th). "*Nadalil,navakil,naappeal*"[25] summed up the new law, which was really the negation of law according to virtually all Indian opinion.

The complex legal language of the document, now officially called the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, 1919, obscured its simple message. Indian lawyers *et al* lost no time in stripping the bill of its double-talk. It has been summarized eloquently by numerous commentators; it will suffice the purposes of this thesis to provide three such paragraph summaries. The first is by B.D. Shukul from his speech against the Bill on February 6th; the second is a period piece from B.G. Horniman; and the last is from R.C. Majumdar, writing with historical perspective.

B.G. Shukul in 1919:

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[24]Horniman, British & Amritsar, p. 57.

[25]"No argument, no lawyer, no appeal."

> So far as the present Bill is concerned, without entering into the details thereof, I make bold to say there is a real danger, as the people anticipate, that the Bill will seriously threaten the liberties of even the innocent people. You do not only legalise secret inquiries and trials, but you dispense with all rules of evidence. The accused has no chance to prove his innocence before he is arrested; you deprive him of the right of trial by jury and above all you withhold from him the right of appeal and revision.[26]

B.G. Horniman in 1920:

> One need not analyze legislation of this sort closely, to justify the opposition to and fear of it by a people on whom it was being thrust by an autocratic Government. The broad fact is sufficient that, at the con-clusion and not the commencement of a war, at a time when no emergency existed, when no danger to the State was indicated, it was proposed to take away, not from persons of hostile origin or hostile association, but from subjects of the British Crown, the right of trial, and to expose them to all the terrors of arrest without warrant, imprisonment without trial, drastic restrictions of liberty of other kinds, and Star Chamber tribunals. And deeper still, perhaps, in its effect upon the public temper, was the moral hurt to the self respect and the awakening sentiments of freedom of a people who had just made ungrudging sacrifices to win victory for the freedom of the world; while the brutal indifference to the popular sentiment and will with which every protest and every appeal was ignored ... was in itself enough to rouse the fury of the most submissive population.[27]

R.C. Majumdar in 1969:

> It will suffice to indicate, in broad outline, the manner in which the Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act, 1919, sought to curtail the liberty of the people. It provided for speedy trial of offenses by a Special Court, consisting of three High Court Judges. There was no appeal from this Court, which could meet *incamera* and take into consideration evidence not admissible under the Indian Evidence Act. The Provincial Government could order any person, on suspicion, 'to furnish security or to notify his residence, or to reside in a particular area or to abstain from any specified act, or finally to

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[26]Mitra, Punjab Unrest, p. 45.

[27]Horniman, British & Amritsar, pp. 65-66.

> report himself to the police'. The Provincial Government was also given powers to search a place and arrest a suspected person without warrant and keep him in confinement 'in such place and under such conditions and restrictions as it may specify'. There was provision for an Investigation Committee of three persons appointed by the Provincial Government before whom the person dealt with under the Act could appear *incamera*, and offer an explanation, but he had no right to engage a lawyer to advise him.[28]

B) Reaction and Satyagraha

Indian response to the Rowlatt Committee's recommended legislation was immediate, comprehensive and of one accord. No Indian member of the Imperial Legislative Council supported the legislation; and according to their calculation no native born person in the whole of India gave the idea that the legislation might be acceptable a passing thought. During legislative debate on February 7th of 1919 Srinivasa Sastri articulated the unanimous Indian rejection of the proposal in forceful but unheeded eloquence:

> The tragic story of India may be summed up in these words, that you governed all these centuries in India in isolation, without having any responsible section of public opinion behind you. Now at this supreme hour, whom have you behind you? No section of public opinion supports you. The nominated members have not given their blessing to this Bill. The zaminder members have not given their blessing. The lawyer members will have none of it. The members of commerce will have none of it....[29]

At some point every Indian member of the Council spoke against the Bill--either in principle or against specific portions of the Bill. They tried every conceivable

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[28]Majumdar, Struggle for Freedom, pp. 293-4.

[29]Mitra, Punjab Unrest, p. 78.

argument available to public debate. They attacked it from British law precedence, from legal pro-cedure, from historical example, from internal rationale and logic, from personal experience based on the Defence of India Act, with passionate emotional rhetoric and, finally, through direct warnings and even threats.

Speaking against Parts II and III of the Bill--those parts of the bill, which, respectively, (a) allowed for restraint and restriction of liberties for any person suspected (not convicted, or charged) of complicity in anarchical or revolutionary movements, and (b) allowed for arrest and search without warrant, and confinement of those persons without trials in any chosen location for renewable periods of up to one year--Tej Bahadur Sapru pleaded: "The entire provisions in Parts II and III are so subversive of elementary principles of British jurisprudence, they are so shockingly unlike anything known to British institutions or British law, that I venture to hope that the Statute-book will not find a standing place for this uncanny intruder."[30]

With similar rigour Madan Mohan Malaviya attacked the illegality of the way in which the Bill was introduced into parliament.[31] M.A. Jinnah argued strongly against the rationale and logic of the propositions.[32] And Srinivasa

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[30]Mitra, Punjab Unrest, p. 54.

[31]Mitra, Punjab Unrest, pp. 23-4.

[32]Mitra, Punjab Unrest, pp. 15ff.

Sastri reminded the British that history has shown how legislation of this nature often aggravates rather than cures the problem for which it has been prescribed.[33] Sastri's eloquence stands as a particularly moving indictment of the British proposal and the manner it was being pushed rough-shod through the legislature. Sastri argued passionately on behalf of the innocent:

> I have known Governments lose their head. I have known a reign of terror being brought about; I have known the best, the noblest Indians, the highest characters amongst us, brought under suspicion, standing in hourly dread of the visitations of the Criminal Investigation Department. I remember in my own time [such things happening]...When Government undertakes a repressive policy, the innocent are not safe. Men like me would not be considered innocent. The innocent man then is he who forswears politics, who takes no part in the public movements of the times; who retires into his house, mumbles his prayers, pays his taxes and salaams all the Government officials round.[34]

In referring to the government's fear of agitation Sastri had premonitions of Gandhi's agitation against the Rowlatt Act. "None of us ... has the power to go and stir up a violent agitation in the country. The agitation must be there already. The heart must be throbbing.... The agitation is there.... None of us has had a share yet in this business, but if our appeals fall flat, if the Bill goes through, I do not believe there is anyone here who would be doing his duty if he did not join the agitation."[35]

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[33]Mitra, Punjab Unrest, p. 75.

[34]Mitra, Punjab Unrest, p. 74.

[35]Mitra, Punjab Unrest, p. 79.

In a final stern summing up, replete with an explicit warning of impending resistance, Vithal Javehribhai Patel, echoing Gandhi's own words, set the stage for Gandhi to enter the debate with actions rather than words.

> No wonder then that under these circumstance you find some of us who care for liberty, who believe in liberty, who love liberty are prepared to disobey laws of this character and submit to the penalty of such breaches. Passive resistance, my Lord, is the last and only constitutional weapon of a despairing people. It is my duty to warn your Excellency's Government against the consequences of driving the peaceful and law-abiding people as the people of India are to resort to passive resistance. I do so, my Lord, in the best interests of India and the Empire.[36]

Gandhi was recovering from serious illness while the Rowlatt Act was being hotly contested and condemned in parliament by India's intellectual elite. Exactly when he became fully engaged by the seriousness of the government's proposals is vague, but the following can be asserted with some degree of certainty.[37]

The Sedition Committee submitted its Report to the viceroy on April 15th, 1918. In the meantime work on the Montagu-Chelmsford Report (referred to as the Mont-Ford Report in short) was proceeding in measured increments. It finally saw the light of day on July 8th, 1918.[38] Gandhi was

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[36]Mitra, Punjab Unrest, pp. 149-50.

[37]The following reconstruction of Gandhi's involvement with the Rowlatt affair at its beginnings gives some indication of the mistaken belief that Gandhian sources are for the most part in agreement about even mundane matters.

[38]Majumdar, Struggle for Freedom, p. 274.

apparently waiting for the Mont-Ford Report (or did he have an advance copy?) for he definitely knew of their publication the following day, July 9th.[39] The Rowlatt Committee's Report was published on July 19th, shortly after the Mont-Ford Report.[40] Gandhi had read the Mont-Ford Report carefully by July 22nd.[41] And by August 11th Gandhi had fallen seriously ill. He writes in a letter to a friend, "Today I am too weak to get up or walk. I have almost to crawl to reach the lavatory and I have such gripping pain there that I feel like screaming."[42]

During Gandhi's illness the first preliminary attempt to abort the Bills took place. On September 23rd, 1918, Ganesh Khaparde moved a resolution to keep "the consideration and disposal of the Rowlatt report ... in abeyance, and that a thorough and searching enquiry be under taken ... into the working of the Criminal Investigation Department and Central Intelligence Department."[43] His purpose was to subvert the Bills before they could be

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[39]Mahadev H. Desai, Day-To-Day With Gandhi [Secretary's Diary], Volume I (Varanasi: Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan, 1968), p. 183.

[40]Majumdar, History of Struggle, pp. 505-6.

[41]Desai, Day-To-Day, p. 191.

[42]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 19, p. 18. Many of his letters reflect great pain. Examples are numerous; note his letters on August 17th. The Collected Works, Vol. 15, pp. 22ff.

[43]Mitra, Punjab Unrest, p. 14.

formulated by bringing to light their origins in darkness, i.e., in complete secrecy. The motion, ironically, was defeated soundly.

Gandhi continued to be sick throughout this period. The doctors had even recommended that he not try to write letters.[44] From November 30th to December 12th he reposed to Matheran.[45] He then returned to Bombay where on January 20th, 1919, he underwent an operation for piles.[46] The operation was successful and Gandhi was told by the doctors to convalesce for three months at the Sabarmati ashram. There is no indication from written sources that Gandhi had even heard of the Rowlatt legislation from their inception on February 6th up to January 20th, 1919. On January 30th Gandhi received a letter from O.S. Ghate who was acting as the defence lawyer for the Ali Brothers. Ghate's letter indicated that because of the forthcoming Bills, "the fate of the Ali Brothers was now practically sealed."[47] Gandhi's first recorded words on the Rowlatt Bills is found in the course of his January 30th answer to Ghate's letter:

> I agree with you that the new Bill [the Rowlatt Bills] for the preservation of internal tranquillity is damnable and no stone may be left unturned by us to kill the measure. But I strongly feel that because of its very

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[44]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 63, p. 55.

[45]He had indicated his intent to Harilal on November, 26th. The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 76, p. 65.

[46]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 88, p. 73.

[47]Mahadev Desai's summary in Day-To-Day, p. 285.

> severity it will never become law. I think that all the Indian members of the Imperial Council will strenuously oppose it. But all this is no reason for the country not taking up vigorous agitation. I am myself preparing to do my humble share in it. I am watching its course. There is no fear of its immediately becoming law. There will therefore be ample time to direct and develop the strongest possible agitation.[48]

Gandhi's letter to Shankarlal Banker, secretary of the Home Rule League, which was written at some point before February 2nd, clearly indicates that Gandhi had read the Committee's Report,[49] but it does not indicate when. Chelmsford introduced the Bills to parliament on February 6th, 1919. Gandhi paid close attention to the proceedings. On the 8th he wrote to Madan Mohan Malaviya from Bombay: "I read all the speeches on the Rowlatt Bills today. I was much distressed. The Viceroy's speech is disappointing. Under the circumstances I at any rate hope that all the Indian members will leave the Select Committee or, if necessary, even the Council, and launch a countrywide agitation."[50] The next day Gandhi wrote an impassioned letter to Srinivasa Sastri indicating that he was in full agreement with Sastri's forceful speech, and that he himself

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[48]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 95, pp. 81-2. Note the exceptionally strong language which Gandhi uses in this letter: "damnable" bills, "kill the measures", "vigourous agitation," and "strenuously oppose."

[49]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 97, p. 83.

[50]The Collected works, Vol. 15, Doc. 101, p. 86.

could "no longer watch the progress of the Bills lying in bed."[51]

A point of historical clarification should be made here. The problem arises from an apparent misunderstanding of Gandhi's activities during this period. In his autobiography Gandhi reflects on his original involvement with the Rowlatt Bills.

> While on the one hand the agitation against the Rowlatt Committee's report gathered volume and intensity, on the other the Government grew more and more determined to give effect to its recommendations, and the Rowlatt Bill was published. *I have attended the proceedings of India's legislative chamber only once in my life, and that was on the occasion of the debate on this Bill. Shastriji delivered an impassioned speech, in which he uttered a solemn note of warning to the Government. The Viceroy seemed to be listening spell-bound, his eyes rivetted on Shastriji as the latter poured forth the hot stream of his eloquence. For the moment it seemed to me as if the Viceroy could not but be deeply moved by it,it was so true and so full of feeling.*[52]

D.G. Tendulkar, an important source for the study of Gandhi,[53] and an anonymous writer for the Government of India[54] both confirm that, "Gandhi attended the proceedings of India's central legislature for the first and last time on the occasion of the debate on this bill. From the

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[51]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 102, p. 87.

[52]Gandhi, Autobiography, pp. 457-458. [My emphasis]

[53]B.G. Tendulkar, Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (Bombay: The Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1960).

[54]Government of India, Jallianwala Bagh (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1969).

gallery he saw Lord Chelmsford listen to the eloquent words of Sastri."[55]

A contradiction becomes apparent when the speech that both Tendulkar and the writer for the Government of India quote at length is examined. There can be no mistake that Sastri's powerful speech quoted at length by both sources was given during the February 7th debate in the Imperial Legislative Council at Delhi. The evidence indicates, however, that Gandhi was lying in bed, very weak from a recent operation in Bombay. Gandhi's Collected Works indicate that he wrote letters from Bombay on February 2nd, 5th, 6th, 8th, 9th and 13th. He did go to Delhi. He indicates in a telegram to Syed Hussain that he would be leaving for Delhi on March 3rd.[56] Gandhi met with the Viceroy in Delhi on March 5th,[57] and then told Srinivasa Sastri in a letter that he was leaving Delhi for Bombay again on the evening of March 8th.[58]

Internal evidence of letters dated between February 6th and March 2nd confirm the conclusion that Gandhi was either in Bombay or at his Sabarmati ashram outside Ahmedabad (a manageable distance from Bombay in his weakened

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[55]Tendulkar, Mahatma, p. 243; and the equivalent in Government of India, Jallianwala Bagh, p. 6.

[56]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 129, p. 125.

[57]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, p. 125, note 3.

[58]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 132, p. 127.

condition) during this period. There is no doubt at all that Srinivasa Sastri's memorable speech did occur on February 7th during debate on the Rowlatt Bills in the Imperial Legislature Council in Delhi.[59] The distance from Bombay or Ahmedabad to Delhi was too great for Gandhi to have made an overnight quick trip. It is clear then that Gandhi could not have listened to the speech of Sastri quoted by both Tendulkar and the Government of India in the Imperial Legislative Council as they have suggested--at least not in person. It can only be concluded that the speech Gandhi refers to was given sometime during his time in Delhi between March 3rd and March 8th. This would also correspond with Gandhi's words in his letter to Sastri on March 8th as well as his retelling of the episode in his autobiography.

Gandhi must have had some idea of what the Rowlatt Committee was planning. It is very possible that he would have read the Congress's resolutions condemning the Report passed at its Delhi session on December 26th.[60] And Gandhi's visitors during his illness included many of the very Indians who argued so strenuously against the Bills at a later date. What is known for certain is that shortly after his operation he read the Rowlatt Bills published in the

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[59]Confirmed by Majumdar, Mitra and Datta and Mittal.

[60]Tendulkar, Mahatma, p. 238.

Gazette of India,[61] and that by the time of his letter to Ghate on January 30th, he had formulated a strong opinion about the "damnable" Bill.

Tendulkar helps to clarify the point at which Gandhi realized that the Rowlatt Bills were serious indeed. He records that;

> Recommendations of the Rowlatt Committee's report, which Gandhi happened to read while he was convalescing in Ahmedabad, startled him. He first mentioned his apprehensions to Vallabhbhai Patel. 'What can we do?' Vallabhbhai asked. Gandhi said: 'If even a handful of men can be found to sign the pledge of resistance, and the proposed measure is passed into law in defiance of it, we ought to offer *satyagraha* at once. If I was not laid up like this, I should give battle against it all alone, and expect others to follow suit.[62]

This conversation must have taken place between January 21st, when Gandhi began to recuperate from his operation, and February 23rd, when Gandhi held his first meeting to plan *satyagraha* against the Rowlatt Act. From this point on events move very quickly.

Everything that Gandhi could do to apply leverage to the Government, he did. He sent private letters to the Viceroy[63] and public letters through the press.[64] It became

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[61]Gandhi informs us that he found out about them while casually reading through the newspaper. According to his autobiography this was after his operation on January 20th. Autobiography, p. 456. The Gazette of India published the Bills on January 18th.

[62]Tendulkar, Mahatma, p. 240. This too is from Gandhi's Autobiography, p. 456.

[63]e.g., The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 115, pp. 102-3 and Doc. 135, p. 129.

very apparent that this was all to no avail. The British Government was simply not willing to bend to Indian opinion in the slightest.[65] The time had come to plan for action, and this Gandhi did with all the heart he could muster while still ill. His first action was to set up a *Satyagraha Sabha*. The first meeting held at Sabarmati Ashram was attended by only a few persons. They drafted a

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[64]e.g., The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 126, pp. 120-22.

[65]An Indian newspaper of the time, included in Mitra's sources, gives a vivid description of the stubborn attitude concerning the passing of the Bill. "Despite a whole Nation's protest, the Rowlatt Bill passed into law on the 18th March 1919, by the sheer grinding force of that 'Block of Granite'--the official phalansk of the Government of India.... Such was the setting of the Rowlatt Act in the political machinery of India. It was an augury of coming events. War won, flushed with victory, secure in their strength of Arms--such was the under current of British mentality, official and commercial, in India. An imperialistic *sangfroidness* characterized it.... 'The British Government which has subdued enemies can despise agitators'--that was the official attitude, the attitude of benevolent despotism which has in recent years tumbled down everywhere except in India." Punjab Unrest, p. 50. To give credit where it is due, not all Britishers in India supported their Government's actions. A notable exeption is Bernard Houghton who writes, "On the broad principles of government, the people have a sound judgement! Who was right as to the effect of the saltern, the officials or the people? Who was right as to the swollen Army expenditure, the officials or the people? Who was right about the massacre at Amritsar, the officials or the people? And if you examine events in India since the people began to criticise the Government, you will find that again and again the people have been right and the officials wrong." And further, has the Government not sought to convince India, says Houghton, "that beureaucracy is the best form of government not through argument but by force? These special laws, these additions to the I.P.C., these bonds and forfeitures and internments, what are they but bludgeon arguments?" The Revolt of the East (Madras: S. Ganesan Publisher, 1921), pp. 37-39.

satyagraha pledge which was signed by those present. The pledge said:

> Being conscientiously of opinion that the Bills known as the Indian Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill No. I of 1919 and the Criminal Law (Emergency Powers) Bill No. II of 1919 are unjust, subversive of the principle of liberty and justice, and destructive of the elementary rights of individuals on which the safety of the community as a whole and the State itself is based, we solemnly affirm that, in the event of these Bills becoming law and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such laws as a committee to be hereafter appointed may think fit and we further affirm that in this struggle we will faith-fully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person or property.[66]

Gandhi threw himself into the campaign whole-heartedly. His time was used up writing to the press, giving speeches and developing the core of his *satyagraha* campaign. By March 11th Gandhi was ready to send the Viceroy an ultimatum: "Even at this eleventh hour I respectfully ask His Excellency and His Government to pause and consider before passing Rowlatt Bills.... There is no mistaking the strength of public opinion on the measures...."[67] Even though he had not by this point figured out exactly how he was going to proceed with the campaign to stop or get rid of the Bills, Gandhi was sure that there was "no other course except to resort to *Satyagraha* at once."[68]

Gandhi received an invitation from Sgt. Kasturi Ranga Iyengar to go to Madras and help plan actions from there.

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[66] The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 114, pp. 101-2.

[67] The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 135, p. 129.

[68] Autobiography, p. 456.

(Gandhi later found out that the invitation had actually been from Rajagopalachari.) Although he was very weak he agreed to go and do what he could. While there Gandhi spent a great deal of time discussing plans for the coming fight, but he remained at a loss as to how to offer civil disobedience against the Rowlatt Bill if it was passed into law. "One could disobey it only if the Government gave one the opportunity for it. Failing that, could we civilly disobey other laws? And if so, where was the line to be drawn?"[69]

The Rowlatt Act was passed on March 18th. That night Gandhi went to bed thinking about the problem. "Towards the small hours of the morning I woke up somewhat earlier than usual. I was still in that twilight condition between sleep and consciousness when suddenly the idea broke upon me--it was as if in a dream. Early in the morning I related the whole story to Rajagopalachari."[70]

> The idea came to me last night in a dream that we should call upon the country to observe a general *hartal*. *Satyagraha* is a process of self-purification, and ours is a sacred fight, and it seems to me to be in the fitness of things that it should be commenced with an act of self-purification. Let all the people of India,

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[69]Autobiography, p. 459.

[70]Autobiography, p. 459. Datta, as I note in the first chapter, attempts to make this "dream sequence" into some sort of mystical insight on Gandhi's part. When placed in its proper context the event as it unfolds is quite similar to what many graduate students tell me is the source of their dissertations.

> therefore, suspend their business on that day and observe the day as one of fasting and prayer.[71]

Gandhi's proposal was well received by his fellow *satyagrahis*; his *Hartal* Declaration of March 23rd[72] announced in moderate tones that, "the second Sunday after the publication of the Viceregal assent to Bill No. 2 of 1919 (i.e., 6th April) may be observed as a day of humiliation and prayer."[73] Gandhi's conception of a day of humiliation and prayer added up to three integrated activities. First on his list was "a twenty-four hours' fast ... to be regarded, for the *satyagrahis*, as the necessary discipline to fit them for civil disobedience." More threatening to the British, at least on the surface, was Gandhi's suggestion that "all work, except such as may be necessary in the public interest, should be suspended for the day." And insisting on the right of the Indian people he further advised that, "public meetings should be held on that day in all parts of India, not excluding villages, at which resolutions praying for the withdrawal of the two measures

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[71] Autobiography, pp. 459-60.

[72] The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 147, pp. 145-6.

[73] The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 147, p. 145.

should be passed."[74] The *hartal* was, using Majumdar's restrained tone, a "unique" success.[75]

An error in communication, however, caused the *hartal* to be observed on March 30th in the city of Delhi. Although the *hartal* was a success, it was not bought without Indian blood. During the course of the day a number of *satyagrahis* tried to persuade a shop-keeper to close the doors to his shop. In the course of their confrontation the station-master called for the help of some British officers who were in the vicinity. The confrontation escalated and eventually ended with a number of British police officers

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[74]The Collected Works Vol. 15, Doc. 147, pp. 145-6.

[75]Majumdar, Struggle for Freedom, p. 302. A close reading of the origins of Gandhi's *satyagraha* campaign against the Rowlatt Act leads me to conclude that, given the context surrounding his actions, it was Gandhi who set the agenda for events at this point. My reading points out in particularly clear fashion a major difference between Gandhi's conception of "aggressive" nonviolence and pacifism, or passive resistance. By his own admission Gandhi saw that it would be necessary to provoke the British into applying the Rowlatt Act. Passive resistance as espoused by Quakers, for example, would find Gandhi's deliberate provocation of the British to be aggressive and hence not "nonviolent." Clearly the British could pass the law and let it sit in the Statute-book without enacting it. To oppose the Act Gandhi saw that it had to be enacted. Therefore he set up the conditions, namely a day of mourning, to force the British to engage the new Act. Then, and only then, would the conditions be right for *satyagraha* to take place against the Rowlatt Act proper. Of course, Gandhi could not have set the agenda if the social, historical and cultural stage was not set. It clearly was and Gandhi played it for what it was worth. He could not have done so, in the aggressive, provocative manner that he did, from a truly "passive" position. It also will become clear that in so doing Gandhi was not prepared for the British response in the form of a massacre. Here lies one of the roots of his dramatic change after Jallianwala Bagh.

firing upon the ever growing crowd in a couple of locations. These rash actions on the part of the British resulted in at least eight dead and thrice that number wounded.[76] Defending the actions of the Indians and showing up the nature of racism, Horniman observed that "such a demonstration would have been dealt with very differently in this country, and an Indian crowd on such an occasion is far less dangerous than an English crowd."[77]

These intimations of the Jallianwala Bagh were already being seen in Gandhi's newspaper Young India which reported on events at Delhi with prophetic accuracy: "The full measure of arbitrary power which would be enjoyed by the executive in future under the Black Law can hardly be realised at the moment, but the tragedy at Delhi comes as a foretaste of what is in store for the public."[78] From an Indian perspective the importance of the Delhi affair was to show "the reckless and culpable haste which the authorities in India displayed in opening fire on crowds at the least prospect of a disturbance."[79]

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[76]Mitra, Punjab Unrest, p. 52. Mitra includes in his sources a number of accounts of the Delhi riots (as they were called) including official Government interpretations of the events. Pages 51-67.

[77]Horniman, British in Punjab, p. 81.

[78]Datta, Sources, p. 68.

[79]Horniman, British and Amritsar, pp. 81-2.

In a telegram to Shraddhanand about the tragedy, Gandhi sent a message to the people of Delhi: "Tender my congratulations to ... [the] people of Delhi for exemplary patience in opposing Rowlatt legislation. We are resisting spirit of terrorism lying behind. No easy task. We may have to give much more such innocent blood as Delhi gave Sunday last. For *satyagrahis* it is a further call to sacrifice themselves to the uttermost."[80] They did exactly that on April 13th at Amritsar.

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[80]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 163, p. 172.

April 13 Amritsar

Chapter 4: The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre

This chapter has but one objective, to give a vivid description of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and the Martial Law which followed. The outline of this description is based on the Punjab Sub-Committee Report of the Indian National Congress,[1] primarily penned by Gandhi.[2] Through the use of the Punjab Sub-Committee Report as the basis of this summary description, the reader is invited to begin to

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[1] Report of the Commissioners Appointed by the Punjab Sub-Committee of the Indian National Congress, 2 Volumes (Lahore: K. Santanam, 1920). Hereafter referred to as The Congress Report. The Congress Report was conceived as an expansion and correction of the Hunter Inquiry. It uses evidence supplied to the Hunter Commission as well as evidence brought together separately. The Congress Report states its purpose in its opening paragraph in these terms:

To
The Hon'ble Pandit Moti Lal Nehru,
Ex-officio President, Sub-Committee,
All India Congress Committee,
LAHORE.

Sir,
On the 14th November 1919, the Punjab Sub-Committee of the All India Congress Committee appointed yourself, the Hon'ble Fazlul Haq, and Messrs. C.R.Das, Abbas Tayagji, and M.K.Gandhi, as commissioners, with Mr. K. Santanam as Secretary, to examine, sift, collate, and analyze the evidence already collected by and on behalf of the Sub-Committee regarding the events of last April in the Punjab, and to supplement such evidence where necessary, and to present their conclusions thereon.

[2] See Chapter 3, footnote #4.

identify with the sources that Gandhi was biased towards and most ready to accept. Other primary sources for the description include the official Government of India Report,[3] and assorted period pieces written at the same time.[4] Any significant differences in the material presented by the various sources are noted in footnotes. The text, however, always gives preferential treatment to the Indian or pro-Indian sources. Gandhi himself indicates his preference for indigenous reports of the events on numerous occasions--these are noted as the description proceeds.

Although it is not the intent of this thesis to enter into the debate on the subject of the Massacre, interpretations made by the numerous secondary sources on the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre cannot be totally ignored.[5]

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[3] Report of the Committee Appointed by the Government of India to Investigate the Disturbances in the Punjab, Etc., 6 Volumes (London: Published by His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1920). Hereafter referred to as Government of India Report. There is a majority and a minority report, the former signed by all members of the committee and the latter only by the Indian contingent. References are to the majority report unless otherwise noted. In addition to this is New Light on the Punjab Disturbances in 1919: Volumes VI and VII of Disorders Inquiry Committee Evidence, 2 Volumes (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1975).

[4] I use descriptions by Malaviya, Open Rebellion; Horniman, British & Amritsar; Pearay Mohan, An Imaginary Rebellion; and Mitra's collection, Punjab Unrest.

[5] V.N. Datta provides a concise summary of the basic proposals which have been put forward in secondary literature on the subject of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. See pages xxxviii-xlii of Sources. Apparently Datta did not have either Alfred Draper's The Amritsar Massacre: Twilight of the Raj (London: Buchan & Enright, Publishers, 1981

Knowing the general nature of that debate, from the outset, will be useful for understanding the events as they unfold in the present description.

The first observation that should be made when reading accounts of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre is how polarized the question has become in virtually all literature on the subject. Asserting an objective position is out of the question. The basic point of discrepancy revolves around questions of cause, blame and responsibility. One interpretation has it that the massacre was the result of one individual (namely Brigadier-General Reginald E.H. Dyer) misunderstanding his responsibility and perhaps even being psychologically unbalanced. The opposing interpretation insists that the events at Amritsar formed a part of an organized system of tyranny; the massacre was from this perspective clearly a premeditated act of overt violence. This polarization has existed since the time of the massacre. The two basic interpretations are represented well by the official Government of India's (Majority) Report and the official Congress Report. In contemporary works the

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[1985]); or S.R. Bakshi's Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy (New Delhi: Capital Publishers, 1982) available as he makes no mention or analysis of them. Bakshi does not make significant contributions to the debate, but Draper adds the interesting perspective of Edwin Montagu's moral cowardice in not speaking the truth about O'Dwyer-and-company's program "to convince the Indians that the British were there to stay--by military might, by the negation of democracy and by the suspension of the inalienable right of all the King's subjects to a free and fair trial." p. 16.

extreme positions on either side of the debate are clearly seen in books by Rupert Furneaux[6] and Raja Ram.[7] Readers should interpret whatever conclusions are drawn in the present description in light of the overall thesis of this work.

The verb "to goad" means: "Urge with goad; irritate; goad-(on), instigate, drive, by annoyance (to, into doing, to or into fury etc.)."[8] Gandhi begins his description of the events at Amritsar with the use of the word "goading" in relation to the actions of the Punjab Government under the head of Sir Michael O'Dwyer towards the people of Amritsar.[9] Gandhi indicates in this opening sentence that (a) Amritsar is of first importance when dealing with the Punjab atrocities, and that (b) he was convinced that people in Amritsar were unnecessarily provoked into violent actions by the British administrators.

As well as its own population (160,000), Amritsar attracted visitors from all parts of the Punjab and beyond because in 1919 it was both the largest commercial centre in the Punjab and also (as it remains today) the city of the

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[6] Rupert Furneaux, Massacre at Amritsar (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1963).

[7] Raja Ram, The Jallianwala Bagh Massacre: A Premeditated Plan (Chandigarh: Panjab University Press, 1969).

[8] J.B. Sykes, ed., The Concise Oxford Dictionary of the English Language, Sixth Edition (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1982).

[9] The Congress Report, p. 45.

Golden Temple, the Sikh's most important place of worship. At least one commentator, S.R. Bakshi, goes so far as to say that the people of Amritsar were particularly capable of self-sacrifice. "Flanked by a *mofussil* known for sturdy, prosperous and patriotic Hindus and Sikhs, any kind of sacrifice could be expected of them to save the honour of their motherland."[10]

The hartal on April 6th against the Rowlatt Act was observed in Amritsar by all members of the populace in a peaceful manner. It was followed by two Hindu festivals that traditionally take place in the middle of April: Baisakhi and Ramnaumi. The former marks the Hindu New Year's Day and is celebrated as both a religious and commercial day. It always draws large crowds to the major cities. It is preceded by Ramnaumi day which was celebrated on the 9th of April in Amritsar. Ramnaumi is principally a Hindu religious function, but because of, and in support of, the growing *satyagraha* campaign against the Rowlatt Act, it was celebrated in Amritsar as a day of Hindu-Muslim Unity. Dr. Saif-ud-din Kitchlew, a Muslim, and Dr. Satyapal, a Hindu, were the principle organizers of the fraternization.

Kitchlew and Satyapal were both supporters of Gandhi's nonviolence.[11] Satyapal was prohibited from public

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[10]Bakshi, Jallianwala Bagh Tragedy, p. 34.

[11]The Government of India Report confirms that both men had taken the *satyagraha* vow. p. 19.

speaking on the 29th of March, Kitchlew had spoken on March 30th (coinciding with the Delhi hartal) to some 30 to 35 thousand people in Amritsar about the peaceful and religious character of the hartal. Kitchlew told his audience on that occasion:

> We will be ever prepared to sacrifice personal over national interests. The message of Mahatma Gandhi has been read to you. All countrymen should become prepared for resistance. This does not mean that this town or country should be flooded with blood. The resistance should be a passive one. Be ready to act according to your conscience, though this may send you to Jail, or bring an order of internment on you.... Do not cause pain or distress to any one. Go home peacefully. Take a walk in the garden. Do not use harsh words in respect of any police man, or traitor, which might cause him pain or lead to the possibility of a breach of the peace or a riot.[12]

On April 3rd Sir Michael O'Dwyer, the Lieutenant Governor of the Punjab from 1913 until he was recalled in 1919, served an order on Kitchlew that prohibited him from further speeches. K.D. Malaviya notes with proper gravity just what was the status of these two men in the popular mind.

> By their sturdy independence, lofty patriotism and active participation in public movements the two gentlemen had long before the advent of *Satyagraha* established their place in the hearts of their fellow-townsmen. The extraordinary fascination of their *satyagraha* activities so intensified the regard of the public for them that they virtually came to be apotheosized when at a most adventitious moment they launched the new campaign of Hindu-Muslim unity.[13]

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[12]The Congress Report, p. 46.

[13]K.D. Malaviya, Open Rebellion in the Punjab (Allahabad: Abhyudaya Press, 1920), pp. 12-13.

Thus, O'Dwyer had prohibited two of Amritsar's most popular and influential leaders from exerting any control over the tense crowds.[14]

Not surprisingly, the curtailment of their freedom did not go down well with the population, which showed its anger by observing the 6th of April hartal with yet a larger meeting than that of March 30th which was estimated to have been attended by over 50,000 people. The main resolution of the April 6th meeting was a demand for Kitchlew and Satyapal's prohibition to be rescinded.

Ramnaumi day (April 9th) was celebrated with particular fervour in 1919 Amritsar because it was respected by both Hindus and Muslims, and because of the strength of the *satyagraha* campaign led by Kitchlew and Satyapal. When the parades of the day passed by the two leaders great ovations

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[14]Gandhi dwells at length on the administration of Sir Michael O'Dwyer. His conclusions on the person of O'Dwyer runs as follows: "[O'Dwyer] wanted to make and did make a supreme effort to crush the spirit, that was struggling to be free from the thraldom, under which he had bound it during his iron rule. He scented danger in every honest speech made by the leaders and he detected conspiricy in every combination, and thus forgetting himself issued his orders against Dr. Satyapal, Dr. Kitchlew and Mr. Gandhi. He must have known that this could only end in exasperating a people, who had already been incensed against his rule. We feel tempted to say that he invited violence from the people, so that he could crush them. The evidence ... shows that he subjected the Punjabis to the gravest provocation, under which they momentarily lost selfcontrol. They have paid dearly for it, but they have also, with amazing quickness, regained selfcontrol and risen purified through the fire of sufferings, mostly undeserved, and earned the certificate for sanity given to them by Sir Michael O'Dwyer." The Congress Report, p. 23.

were given to them. The people in procession also paid respect to the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar by playing "God save the King" as the procession went past.[15] Gandhi records that even though this was a "great" demonstration it was observed without any regrettable incidents.[16]

The popularity of the two leaders, witnessed by the large popular protest, put significant pressure on the Amritsar authorities to take action. Rather than choose the sensible route of letting Kitchlew and Satyapal speak to the people, calming and directing the people to peaceful resolutions of the matters at hand, O'Dwyer, "enraged" (to use Gandhi's word) by the popular support of the indigenous leaders, decided that they must be deported. The Government of India Report justified their deportation and internment at Dharamsala by using the Defence of India Act.[17] The orders were received at Amritsar on April 9th and surreptitiously were served to Drs. Kitchlew and Satyapal in the morning of April 10th. The prospect of carrying out the deportation order caused the local British authorities to have "very grave apprehensions."[18] Their apprehensions were well founded, for tumultuous anger erupted in Amritsar because of the deportations.

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[15]The Government of India Report, p. 20.

[16]The Congress Report, p. 47.

[17]The Government of India Report, p. 20.

[18]The Government of India Report, p. 21.

The Congress Report dwells at some length on the events which transpired on April 10th caused by the deportation of Kitchlew and Satyapal,[19] because, as Horniman notes, it was "to be recorded as the prime cause of the terrible events which followed."[20] Reading the two official accounts of what happened in Amritsar from about 11:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on April 10th shows a serious divergence. The Congress Report is an important source for understanding the inner story of Gandhi's understanding of the events in Amritsar. Take particular note of the contrasting interpretations of the events of April 10th given by The Government of India Report and The Congress Report--being mindful that Gandhi was the primary author of the latter.

Amritsar crowds were confronted twice by British force. The essence of The Congress Report's description is that a small crowd of Amritsar people quickly came together to demand the release of their "beloved" leaders. "It was a crowd of mourners--bareheaded, many unshod, and all without sticks."[21] They proceeded to try and go to the bungalow of the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar to plead for the release

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[19]The Congress Report, pp. 48-51.

[20]Horniman, British & Amritsar, p. 88.

[21]The Congress Report, p. 48. The Government of India Report records that "The mob had not armed themselves with sticks or *lathis*. Still it is abundantly clear that the crowd was no mere crowd of mourning, and that to represent it as a large but peaceful body bent on respectful, or even lawful, protest before authority is a travesty of facts." p. 22.

of his prisoners through the use of a *Faryad*--a prayer. The crowd was stopped the first time at the Railway carriage bridge, called Hall Bridge, by a military picket. "There is no reason to suppose," writes B.G. Horniman, "that anything dreadful would have occurred had they been allowed to proceed. The reports of people on the spot show that they were not, up to that time, a threatening crowd."[22] Even The Government of India Report, so biased against the actions of the crowd, acknowledges that "it is an ascertained fact that this angry crowd ... took no notice of Europeans whom it met on the way."[23] Events quickly took a turn for the worse.

> The men demanded passage.... They pushed forward, the picket fell back a little. They advanced, the military fired, killing and wounding some of them; whereon the crowd fell back. It was now no longer a peaceful crowd. It was a crowd foiled in its effort to secure the release of its leaders, and exasperated at the wounding and killing of some of its members. These enraged men went to the Railway foot-bridge and some to the hall Bazar, carrying the killed and the wounded. The sight of the wounded persons and dead bodies inflamed the citizens who saw them. Within a short time, a large crowd was again seen near the carriage over-bridge [variously called the Hall-Bridge or the road-bridge] and the foot-bridge. This time it armed itself with sticks and pieces of wood.[24]

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[22]Horniman, British & Amritsar, pp. 88-89.

[23]The Government of India Report, p. 22.

[24]The Congress Report, p. 48. The Government of India Report goes into more detail on this point providing names, etc. of commanding officers and so on. They state that, "the crowd pushed back the picket making the horses restive and uncontrollable by hitting them with sticks. The picket was pushed back from the bridge and more quickly down the slope which leads from it to Madan's shop. Near this spot was a heap of half-bricks and stones and further crowds were already there. The crowd on both sides of the picket joined in stoning them. It is possible, but not proved,

While some members of the Bar, who had offered to help the Deputy Commissioner with mediation, cleared the foot-bridge of trouble, two others--Messrs. Salaria and Maqbool Mahmood--worked desperately at the Hall-Bridge to reason with the crowd and to restrain the authorities from firing. They were not successful. "At one time it appeared as if they would succeed, but some persons in the crowd threw stones or pieces of wood at the military, who instantly fired, killing about twenty persons and wounding many."[25] Predictably, The Government of India Report said that, "the order to fire was rightly given, and we can find no ground for saying that the necessity of the moment was in any way exceeded or abused."[26] Unlike The Government of India Report which gives no tangible justification for its actions, Gandhi writing in The Congress Report puts the matter with his own characteristic verve:

> Our study ... leads to the conclusion that there was no warrant for the firing. The authorities omitted all the intermediary stages that are usually resorted to in all civilized countries. There was no parleying, no humouring, and no use of milder force. Immediately the crowd became insistent, the order to fire was given. In this

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that at some stage before the stone throwing, one soldier fired in the air without orders.... [Lieutenant Dickie was told] that it was his duty to fire. On this two British soldiers of the picket dismounted, took cover behind some culverts and fired three or four shots each. Some of these took effect, three or four being killed or wounded." pp. 22-23.

[25]The Congress Report, p. 48. The Government of India Report is virtually identical on this point.

[26]The Government of India Report, p. 23.

> country, it has become too much the custom with the executive and the military never to run any risk, or, to put it in another way, to count Indian life very cheap.[27]

The crowds lost all control at the sight of yet more blood according to Gandhi. He noted that before they finished their rampage five Englishmen were dead (compared to some 25-35 Indian persons) and much damage was done to British buildings.[28] The banks, the Town Hall (Post Office), the Telegraph Office, the Mission Hall, the Station, and Goods Yard were all ransacked and burned. Miss Sherwood, a missionary who was out cycling at the time, was brutally attacked, but she was saved by the Indian father of one of her pupils. Mrs. Easdon, the doctor in charge of the Zenana Hospital, provoked an attack upon herself when, upon seeing the wounded laughed and said that the Hindus and Muslims had "got what they deserved."[29] She was concealed by a Mrs. Benjamin, her orderly, in the hospital and was able to

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[27]The Congress Report, p. 49.

[28]Both official documents know and list the names of the few Britishers killed; neither indicates knowledge or lists any of the Indians killed.

[29]The Congress Report, p. 49.

escape any harm.[30] By 5:00 o'clock, long before dusk on April 10th, the tired city of Amritsar was quiet.

The two days following the conflagration of April 10th were quiet. The five Europeans were buried with full honors on the 11th, and funeral processions for the 30-odd Indian dead were eventually allowed by the authorities. According to an eye-witness arriving on the 11th and staying for the next several days the city "looked like a regular military post, with soldiers and guns scattered all over."[31] Indeed, Brigadier-General Reginald Edward Herry Dyer had come to town. The city had been turned over to the military verbally by the 11th of April, but only "for the purpose of re-establishing civil control."[32]

Dyer entered Amritsar on April 13th at about 9:30 a.m. and immediately proceeded to let it be known that the epitome of British military force was in the environs. His

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[30]The Congress Report, p. 49. The Government of India Report puts the incident in rather xenophobic terms: "Another incident, vividly showing that no European of either sex was safe from the mob is the search for Mrs. Easdon ... [The Zenana Hospital] was entered and twice ransacked to find her; she contrived to conceal herself on both occasions and the second search was discontinued before she had been discovered upon news reaching the rioters of loot at the National Bank." p. 26. Note that there is no mention of the provocation, mention of proffered help only later as an aside and an insinuation that the crowd was only interested in race-hatred directed at destruction and making a profit at the expense of the Europeans (as if the British thought they were the only legitimate Europeans?).

[31]The Congress Report, p. 52.

[32]The Government of India Report, p. 27.

first act was to go through the city with the District Magistrate and have a proclamation read out to the people, who were summoned by beat of drum at a few places in the city. The proclamation--which was heard by fewer than half the residents of Amritsar and even fewer of the accumulated crowds formed during the festivals--[33]said this:

> It is hereby proclaimed, to all whom it may concern, that no person residing in the city is permitted or allowed to leave the city in his own or hired conveyance, or on foot without a pass. No person residing in the Amritsar city is permitted to leave his house after 8. Any persons found in the streets after 8 are liable to be shot. No procession of any kind is permitted to parade the streets in the city, or any part of the city, or outside of it, at any time. Any such processions or any gathering of four men would be looked upon and treated as an unlawful assembly and dispersed by force of arms if necessary.[34]

Another notice was being read in Amritsar at almost the same time as Dyer was flexing his muscles. On April 12th, to move back one day for a moment, one Hans Raj[35] held a meeting in the compound of the Hindu Sabha School announcing a meeting to be held on the next day under the chairmanship of Lala Kanhya Lal, a very popular leader of

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[33]The Congress Report, p. 53. The Government of India Report glosses over the fact that very few of the people actually heard the proclamation. P. 28. Malaviya adds the interesting note that, "as the people were afraid of the armoured car very very few of those who saw it approached it." Open Rebellion, p. 18.

[34]The Government of India Report, p. 28.

[35]Gandhi acknowledges the role of Hans Raj in the perpetration of the Massacre, but rather than pin the blame on him, as Datta does, Gandhi sees him as a common hooligan co-opted by the British (especially O'Dwyer and Dyer) for their own purposes. See The Congress Report, pp. 52-54.

advanced years who would help insure a large crowd. Gandhi accepts Lala Kanhya Lal's denial of ever being asked to chair the meeting.[36] In any case, an announcement was subsequently made by a youth beating a tin can to the effect that there would be a meeting held in the Jallianwala Bagh in the afternoon of April 13th.

As useful as a full description of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and the Martial Law which followed would be for critically understanding the making of modern India and also to help understand what was going on in Dyer's mind at the time (which is the aim of most historical studies of the massacre), it is not necessary for the purpose of probing Gandhi's growing inner awareness of the attitude exhibited by the British in 1919 India. The Congress Report admits that "it is not possible to describe in all the hideous details, the events of the 13th, and, to use Justice Rankin's expression, its 'frightfulness'. In order to appreciate it fully, one must read the whole of the official evidence and the evidence published by [The Congress Report]."[37]

Period pieces written subsequently and summarily to inform the people of what had transpired in the garden serve

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[36]The Congress Report, p. 52. The Government of India Report does not seem to note this point.

[37]The Congress Report, p. 57. I infer from this statement that Gandhi did in fact read all of the attendant evidence.

to indicate what Gandhi would have been intimately aware of.[38] This will be supplemented by direct quotes from the cross-examination of Dyer which Gandhi certainly read. It will be useful to begin the account of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre with a contemporary description, marked by its concise, detailed information, of the place where the deed was done.

> In 1919, Jallianwala 'Bagh' was no 'garden', but a desolate piece of land--a rectangle of irregular shape, about 250 yards long and 200 yards wide. (Originally, however, it had been laid out as a garden in the middle of the nineteenth century by its original owner, Pandit Jalla, after whose name the garden came to be properly known as JALLIANWALA BAGH. Later on, the garden fell into disuse, and, still later, became desolate.) Long before 1919, houses had been built all around the Bagh with their backwalls towards it. Only on the southern side, for a small length, there was no house, and, instead, there was a small stretch of low boundary wall about five feet high. There were only four or five narrow lanes leading into the Bagh--each hardly three or four feet wide. The Bagh contained one small 'Samadh' (tomb) towards the southern side, with four small trees growing near it, and an open well of quite a big circumference towards its eastern boundary, with three trees growing nearby. It is also a noteworthy point about the Bagh of those days that the level of its land was not even. A small strip of land near the entrance from the Jallianwala Bazar side was on a higher level, while the rest of the land was lower by 4-5 feet.[39]

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[38]It is tempting, for example, to use Arthur Swinson's eloquently worded account of the actual firing in the Bagh. See, Arthur Swinson, Six Minutes to Sunset: The Story of General Dyer and the Amritsar Affair (London: Peter Davies, 1964), pp. 47-48. However, Swinson's account informed by years of accumulated research and debate would not reflect Gandhi's situation and thus would not be a fair representation of what emotionally charged literature was shaping his inner reactions to the Massacre.

[39]Raja Ram, A Premeditated Plan, pp. 114-115.

At 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon of April 13th, Dyer got definite news that people were assembling in the Bagh, a place he had never seen. He promptly set out for the Bagh. His contingent included two motor vehicles (one of which he rode in) and two armoured cars armed with machine guns; these were escorted by fifty soldiers armed with rifles and a further forty Gurkhas armed only with *khukris*--they were placed in front of and behind the vehicles. When he arrived at the Bagh at 5:00 or 5:15 p.m. he discovered that the armoured cars were too large to fit through the narrow lanes leading into the enclosure. Not deterred, he promptly walked into the Bagh with his soldiers. Recall from the description of the Jallianwala Bagh that on the north side of the enclosed space there was an elevated strip of land some four to five feet higher than the rest of the plot. Dyer marched into the Bagh onto this high ground and immediately deployed his armed troops on either side of himself--25 to the left and 25 to the right. Within 30 seconds Dyer had his men open fire on the unarmed crowd numbering over twenty thousand. He did not stop until his ammunition was depleted. In all he fired 1650 rounds of 303 ammunition over a ten minute period of time, directing his deadly single-shot controlled fire at the densest parts of the fleeing, terrorized crowd. The number of people killed and wounded cannot be accurately assessed because no effort was made to ascertain a figure until July, some four months

later. Gandhi believed that 1000 dead was "by no means an exaggerated calculation." He reasons that the soldiers "must have been indifferent shots, if after directing their fire in the thickest part in a concentrated area, and among 20,000 people, the soldiers were not able to kill 1000 men." He concludes that "there can be no doubt that General Dyer's plan was to kill the largest number, and if the number was 1000 and not more, the fault was not his."[40] Gandhi's close friend, B.G. Horniman, who would have had a marked influence on Gandhi's understanding of the events, wrote with unabashed directness about Dyer's and O'Dwyer's doings:

> No less than 2,000 people, including a number of mere boys, and even children in arms, who were defenseless, unarmed, committing no sort of wrong in the view of anyone but himself, were shot down by this British General without warning, and left by him where they fell. And his action was immediately approved by the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Michael O'Dwyer, in a telegram sent to him by his military superior after he had obtained Sir Michael's assent, which ran: "Your action correct: Lieutenant-Governor approves."[41]

Dyer's own cold-blooded words, which The Congress Report (and Gandhi) pays special attention to, relate the story in chilling fashion. Lord Hunter presided over the cross-examination of Dyer during the Government of India's investigation.[42]

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[40]The Congress Report, p. 57. (The three preceding quotes are in sequence.)

[41]Horniman, British & Amritsar, p. 120.

[42]These excerpts from Dyer's cross-examination are not necessarily in the order of the examination, but rather follow the sequence of events in the Bagh. They come from

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Q. I think you had opportunity to make up your mind while you were marching to decide what was the right course. You came to the conclusion that if there really was a meeting, the right thing for you would be to fire upon them straightaway?

A. I had made up my mind. I was only wondering whether I should do it or I should not.

Q. No question of having your forces attacked entered into your consideration at all?

A. No. The situation was very, very serious. I had made up my mind that I would do all men to death if they were going to continue the meeting.[43]

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Q. When you got into the Bagh, what did you do?

A. I opened fire.

Q. At once?

A. Immediately. I had thought about the matter and don't imagine it took me more than 30 seconds to make up my mind as to what my duty was?

Q. As regards the crowd, what was it doing?

A. Well, they were holding a meeting. There was a man in the centre of the place on something raised. His arms were moving about. He was evidently addressing. He was absolutely in the centre of the square, as far as I could judge. I should say some 50 or 60 yards from where my troops were drawn up.[44]

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Q. On the assumption that there was the risk of people being in the crowd who were not aware of the proclamation, did it not occur to you that it was a proper measure to ask

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the minority report of The Government of India Report, pp. 111-117; and from The Congress Report, pp. 55-74.

[43]The Government of India Report (Minority), p. 112.

[44]The Congress Report, p. 55.

the crowd to disperse before you took to actually firing upon them?

A. No, At the time it did not occur to me. I merely felt that my orders had not been obeyed, that martial law was flouted, and that it was my duty to immediately disperse it by rifle fire.[45]

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Q. Before you dispersed the crowd, had the crowd taken any action at all?

A. No, sir. They had run away, a few of them.

Q. Did they start to run away?

A. Yes. When I began to fire, the big mob in the centre began to run almost towards the right.

Q. Martial Law had not been proclaimed. Before you took that step, which was a serious step, did you not consider as to the propriety of consulting the Deputy Commissioner who was the civil authority responsible for the order of the city?

A. There was no Deputy Commissioner to consult at the time. I did not think it wise to ask anybody further. I had to make up my mind immediately as to what my action should be. I considered it from the military point of view that I ought to fire immediately, that if I did not do so, I should fail in my duty....

Q. In firing was it your object to disperse?

A. No, sir. I was going to fire until they dispersed.

Q. Did the crowd at once start to disperse as soon as you fired?

A. Immediately.

Q. Did you continue firing?

A. Yes.

Q. After the crowd indicated that it was going to disperse, why did you not stop?

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[45]The Government of India Report (Minority), p. 114.

A. I thought it was my duty to go on until it dispersed. If I fired a little, I should be wrong in firing at all.[46]

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Q. Supposing the passage was sufficient to allow the armoured cars to go in, would you have opened fire with the machine guns?

A. I think, probably, yes.

Q. In that case the casualties would have been very much higher?

A. Yes.

Q. And you did not open fire with the machine guns simply by the accident of the armoured cars not being able to get in?

A. I have answered you. I have said if they had been there the probability is that I would have opened fire with them.

Q. With the machine-guns straight?

A. With the machine-guns.

Q. I gather generally from what you put in your report that your idea in taking this action was really to strike terror? That is what you say. It was no longer a question of dispersing the crowd, but one of producing a sufficient moral effect.

A. If they disobeyed my orders it showed that there was complete defiance of law, that there was something much more serious behind it than I imagined, that therefore these were rebels, and I must not treat them with gloves on. They had come to fight if they defied me, and I was going to give them a lesson.

Q. I take it that your idea in taking that action was to strike terror?

A. Call it what you like. I was going to punish them. My idea from the military point of view was to make a wide impression.[47]

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[46]The Congress Report, pp. 55-56.

[47]The Government of India Report (Minority), pp. 112-113.

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Q. Did you observe that after the firing was opened, there were a number of people who lay on the ground in order to save themselves?

A. Yes.

Q. And your men continued to fire on these people who were lying on the ground?

A. I cannot say that. I think that some were running at the time, and I directed them to fire, and sometimes I stopped firing and re-directed the firing on other targets. The firing was controlled.

Q. Did you direct the firing on people who were lying down in order to save themselves?

A. I probably selected another target. There might have been firing on the people who were still lying down, though I think there were better targets than that.[48]

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Dyer's written statement said: I fired and continued to fire till the crowd dispersed, and I considered that this is the least amount of firing which would produce the necessary moral and widespread effect it was my duty to produce if I was to justify my action. If more troops had been at hand the casualties would have been greater in proportion. *It was no longer a question of merely dispersing the crowd*, but one of producing a sufficient moral effect, from the military point of view, not only on those who were present, but more specially throughout the Punjab. There could be no question of undue severity.[49]

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Q. What reason had you to suppose that if you had ordered the assembly to leave the Bagh they would not have done so without the necessity of your firing, continued firing for a length of time?

A. Yes, I think it quite possible that I could have dispersed them perhaps even without firing.

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[48]The Government of India Report (Minority), p.

[49]The Government of India Report (Minority), p.

Q. Why did you not adopt that course?

A. I could disperse them for some time, then they would all come back and laugh at me, and I considered I would be making myself a fool.[50]

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Q. After the firing had taken place did you take any measure for the relief of the wounded?

A. No, certainly not. It was not my job. But the hospitals were open and the medical officers were there. The wounded only had to apply for help. But they did not do this because they themselves would be taken into custody for being in the assembly. I was ready to help them if they applied.

CLAIMS THE WOUNDED DIDN'T ASK FOR HELP

Q. Were any measures taken immediately for dealing with the dead?

A. They asked that they might bury their dead.

Q. That was much later?

A. My recollection is that when I got back they came and asked me and I said certainly. It never entered my head that the hospitals were not sufficient for that number of wounded if they had liked to come forward.[51]

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[50] The Government of India Report (Minority), p. 114.

[51] The Government of India Report (Minority), p. 116. Horniman's biting criticism of this passage is indicative of the strong commentary Gandhi was influenced by. He writes: "And on the very day that he left two thousand dead and dying on the ground at Jallewallian Bagh--to go to the hospitals if they liked--he had issued a Curfew Order, that all persons must be indoors after 8 p.m., and would go abroad in the streets at the risk of being shot at sight. Is it surprising that the wounded lay in their agony, that the dead lay putrefying in the hot atmosphere of an Amritsar April night, that the vultures and jackals came to tear the flesh from the bodies of the innocent victims of this dreadful holocaust, while the anxious relatives of innocent victims remained terrified in their houses." British & Amritsar, pp. 123-124.

Q. Did it ever occur to you that by adopting this method of "frightfulness"--excuse the term--you were really doing a great disservice to the British Raj by driving discontent deep?

A. No, it only struck me at the time it was my duty to do this and that it was a horrible duty. I did not like the idea of doing it, but I also realised that it was the only means of saving life and that any reasonable man with justice in his mind would realise that I had done the right thing; and it was a merciful act, though a horrible act, and they ought to be thankful to me for doing it.[52]

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Dyer was far from finished with the people of Amritsar. After having lashed innocent people with a stinging scorpion tail[53] Dyer proceeded to flog them with regulation military whips. Martial Law was declared officially on April 15th and did not end until June 9th. Crimes against humanity were perpetrated on a par with the "acts of 'frightfulness' committed by some of the German military commanders during the war in Belgium and France."[54] The most severe cases of torture are horrible in the extreme, while the public floggings and enforced crawling order overtly served to terrorize the citizens of Amritsar. The extent of the Martial Law atrocities defies easy summary, although Sivaswamy Iyer's introduction to "Martial Law in the Punjab" manages in one lengthy paragraph to

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[52]The Government of India Report (Minority) pp. 115-116.

[53]An metaphor used by Wilfred Cantwell Smith in Modern Islam in India: A Social Analysis (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd., 1946), p. 198.

[54]The Government of India Report (Minority), p. 115.

relate the litany of Dyer and O'Dwyer's crimes in a striking fashion.

> The wholesale slaughter of hundreds of unarmed men [sic.] at Jallianwala Bagh without giving the crowd an opportunity to disperse, the indifference of General Dyer to the condition of hundreds of people who were wounded in the firing, the firing of machine-guns into crowds who had dispersed and taken to their heels, the flogging of men in public, the order compelling thousands of students to walk 16 miles a day for roll-calls, the arrest and detention of 500 students and professors, the compelling of school-children of 5 to 7 to attend on parade to salute the flag, the order imposing on owners of property the responsibility for the safety of the Martial Law posters stuck on their property, the flogging of a marriage party, the censorship of mails, the closure of the Badshahi Mosque for six weeks, the arrest and detention of people without any substantial reason ... the flogging of six of the biggest boys in the Islamiah School simply because they happened to be schoolboys and to be big boys, the construction of an open cage for the confinement of arrested persons, the invention of novel punishments like the crawling order, the skipping order and others unknown to any system of law, civil or military, the handcuffing and roping together of persons and keeping them in open trucks for 15 hours ... the taking of hostages and the confiscation and destruction of property for the purpose of securing the attendance of absentees, the handcuffing of Hindus and Muhammadans in pairs with the object of demonstrating the consequences of Hindu-Muslim unity, the cutting off of electric and water-supplies from Indian houses, the removal of fans from Indian homes and giving them for use by Europeans, the commandeering of all vehicles owned by Indians and giving them for Europeans for use, the feverish disposal of cases with the object of forestalling the termination of Martial Law, are some of the many incidents of the administration of Martial Law, which created a reign of terror in the Panjab and have shocked the public.[55]

Each clause of Iyer's summary can be supported by numerous personal testimonies recorded in the official evidence collected by the official bodies--a procedure that need not be gone through here. However, in trying to draw

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[55]In Mitra, Punjab Unrest, pp. 119-120.

closer to Gandhi's reaction to these events it is worthwhile to dwell on a few personal accounts which Gandhi would have heard while securing evidence for The Congress Report. Reading The Congress Report reveals that Gandhi was touched particularly by four types of suffering endured by the people of Amritsar. Of Iyer's long list, Gandhi dwelt on and reacted strongly to the crawling order, public floggings administered without proper trials, cases of torture which resulted in deaths, and the basic inhumanity exhibited in the gross suffering of unattended to people in the Bagh.

By Dyer's orders, for several days every Indian person--without exception--who passed through the street where Miss Sherwood was assaulted was ordered to crawl with their belly to the ground. The order was enforced rigorously by soldiers stationed at the entrances to the street. As incredible as it is, Dyer stated: "It never entered my brain that any sensible man, any sane man would under the circumstance go down that street."[56] Apparently many things did not go through Dyer's brain. He posted pickets at either end of the street from 6 a.m. to 8 p.m. apparently forgetting that he had also ordered curfew on penalty of being shot from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. (for some days the curfew order lasted from 8 p.m.).[57] When told this by Hunter, Dyer reflected that "if they had suffered a little, it would be

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[56]The Congress Report, p. 61.

[57]The Congress Report, p. 61.

no harm under Martial Law."[58] Kanhya Lal, a 25 year old citizen of Amritsar, describes the procedure for crawling on one's belly British style.

> One day, during the Martial Law period, I was going to the house of L. Bute Shah, my master and relative, when I met two British soldiers with rifles in their hands, near the Jain Sabha Mandir. I salaamed them. They asked me to lie down on my belly. As they threatened me, I did so. After that, when I was going to rise, they struck me with the butt-ends of their rifles, and asked me to crawl along on my belly. Then I crawled on to the house of L. Bute Shah. All the while, the two British soldiers kept laughing at me. And, when I stopped for a moment in the way to take breath, they struck me again with the butt-ends of their rifles. When half an hour after, I wanted to go back to my house, I had again to undergo the same crawling up to the Jain Sabha Mandir.... I saw several people made to crawl. One day, an old, lame Mohomedan passed that way, and he was made to crawl. In spite of his entreaties and prayers to be allowed to go back, he was forced to crawl on up to the Kaurianwala well. On the way, he was kicked and beaten with the butt-end of a rifle.[59]

Gandhi found it hard to fathom such an order: "[The Crawling Order] had to be obeyed by those who might never have seen Miss Sherwood. They might have, as the vast majority of the residents of Amritsar must have, deplored the cowardly assault on her. It was such men who had to undergo the punishment. *It is difficult to characterize a*

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[58]The Congress Report, p. 61.

[59]The Congress Report (Volume 2--Evidence) St. #98 There are so many such descriptions that the sheer weight of the allegations cannot be doubted. There are few pictures of such acts, and any that did exist have been kept as classified information to this day. Alfred Draper, however, has managed to get a verified copy of a picture of an Indian being forced to crawl on his belly. The photograph is on the cover of Draper's book. The Amritsar Massacre: Twilight of the Raj (London: Buchan & Enright, Publishers, 1982 [1985]).

mind that invents and takes pleasure in inflicting a punishment, whose object is merely to degrade man's state."[60]

Floggings were common during Dyer's rule. They were administered without trial and without mercy. An exceptional case, involving Miss Sherwood again, revealed the depths reached by the British Administration in Amritsar. Six men were chosen indiscriminantly by Dyer to be punished for the assault on Miss Sherwood. "These men had not been tried or convicted for the crime. They were awaiting trial. But to create an example, they were brought to the scene of the assault, and *publically flogged in the street*. They were tried afterwards! What words can be strong enough to describe this iniquity adequately?"[61]

> One day towards the end of April, at about 11:30 a.m., I witnessed the flogging of six boys in front of Kucha Kurichahn. Sundar Singh was the first to be fastened to the flogging post and given 30 stripes. He became senseless after the 4th stripe, but when some water was poured into his mouth by a soldier, he regained consciousness; he was again subjected to flogging. He lost his consciousness for the second time, but the flogging never ceased till he was given thirty stripes. He was taken off the flogging post, bleeding and quite unconscious. Mela was the second to be tied to the post. He too became unconscious after receiving four or five stripes. He was given some water, and the flogging continued. Mangtu was the third victim. He too got thirty stripes. While Mangtu was being flogged, I cried bitterly, and as I could not bear the sight any longer, I lost my consciousness. When I recovered my consciousness, I saw the six boys who had just received flogging, bleeding badly. They were all handcuffed, and, as they

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[60] The Congress Report, p. 61. My emphasis.

[61] Horniman, British & Amritsar, p. 127.

> could not walk even a few paces, they were dragged away by the Police.[62]

Why did Dyer resort to such brutality? "I felt women have been beaten. We [the British] look upon women [British women] as sacred. I searched in my brain for a suitable punishment for these awful cases.... I ordered a triangle to be erected, [and had the six boys flogged without trial]."[63] Women sacred? Here is the statement of Balochan, daughter of Sadrang Nat Pairni, Ram Bagh Gate, Katra Shair Singh, Amritsar.

> During the Martial Law days, I, along with others, was arrested and taken to the Police Station.... We all were most indecently treated. I was asked to take off my trousers which I had to do under Police pressure. My sister, Iqbalan, was subjected to the same treatment. All the policemen laughed and enjoyed this. We were allowed to go home at about 10 in the night, but called again at 6 in the morning. This continued for about five days. At times, sticks were pushed into our vagina. We all were beaten with cane and abused constantly.[64]

In considering Gandhi's state of mind when hearing the accounts of witnesses, the statement of Moulvi Gholam Jilani should be heard:

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[62]The Congress Report, (Volume 2--Evidence) St. #115.

[63]The Congress Report, p. 61.

[64]The Congress Report (Volume 2--Evidence) St. #147. Pearay Mohan adds a related example: "Mr. Bosworth Smith beat the women of the whole village out of their houses, paraded them all in front of him, unveiled their faces with his stick, and used the most unmentionable language, calling them contemptible flies (Gandi Makkhi), bitches, she-asses, swine and worse things; and addressed them in the following terms:--'You were in the same beds with your husbands, why did you not prevent them from going out to do mischief.'" An Imaginary Rebellion, p. 180.

> Kesar Singh and two armed constables took me in another carriage. They began to beat me without saying anything. They beat and beat me till I passed urine. Then they caused my trousers to be put off, and beat me severely with shoes and a cane. I cried out, and asked what they wanted from me. Upon this, I was abused and beaten again, and asked to become 'All right.' I told them I did not understand what they wanted. Kesar Singh and the Sub-Inspector shook me by the beard, and said that I must name Saif-uddin Kitchlew, Bashir, Dr. Satyapal and Badrul Isalam and others, if I wanted to be released. I said, I was not acquainted with any one of these persons, although I had known some of them by sight. At this, they beat me again, till I became senseless. After some time, when I regained consciousness, I was taken back to the Kotwali. There I remained till about 4 p.m. Then Kesar Singh took me back to the Police Line ... [where they asked me if I had not paid boys to dress up as Turkish Constables] for taking part in the Ram Naumi procession. I said it was absolutely false. On this, Kesar Singh again took me into another room and beat me severely. Not content with that, he pushed a stick into my anus. While this was being done ... several others were present. I could not bear the agony and became unconscious. When I regained consciousness, I entreated them to spare me, and said that I would do whatever they wanted me to do.[65]

Here is the statement of Haji Shomas-ud-din:

> The policemen beat Ghulam Jilani mercilessly. I saw with my own eyes one of the policemen driving a wooden stick into his anus. His cries were most heart-rending and could be heard even at some distance. A lady in *Burqa* veil was outside. On hearing his cries, she began to raise a hue and cry. The policemen, outside, drove her away from there brutally. At the same time, the policemen were also treating one Khair Din [who subsequently died] in the same manner. They drove a stick into his anus also. He was in a most pitiable condition. I saw his urine and excreta coming out. All of us who were outside were told by the police that those who did not give evidence would be treated like that. The police had no fear of God or man in those days.[66]

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[65] The Congress Report (Volume 2--Evidence) St. #134. This statement is corroborated by statements 2, 6, 135-140.

[66] The Congress Report (Volume 2--Evidence) St. #135. This account is confirmed by numerous witnesses.

Gandhi reflected on the evidence he was hearing as follows:

> We were incredulous when we entered upon the inquiry, but as statement after statement came under our notice, we were driven to accept the general charge. The most damaging statements are so fully supported that, in our opinion, they will stand the test of investigation in any court of law.[67]

"*Cold-blooded disregard of the sanctity of human life amounting to butchery.*"[68] Malaviya's italicized one line summary of the firing in the Bagh sums up well the gross suffering of people trapped in the (to use Arthur Swinson's phrase finally) "screaming hell"[69] of British making. As to the Martial Law Donkey Courts: 51 persons were sentenced to death, 46 to transportation for life, 2 to imprisonment for ten years, 79 for seven years, and the list goes on.

Before moving to an analysis of Gandhi's growing awareness of what transpired at Amritsar from April to June, this chapter closes with Rattan Devi's description of her experience in the Bagh given before the PunJab Sub-Committee and therefore before Gandhi:

> I was in my house near Jallianwala Bagh when I heard shots fired. I was then lying down. I got up at once as I was anxious, because my husband had gone to the Bagh. I began to cry, and went to the place accompanied by two women to help me. There I saw heaps of dead bodies and I began to search for my husband. After passing through that heap, I found the dead body of my husband. The way towards it was full of blood and of dead bodies. After a short time, both the sons of Lala Sundar Das came there; and I asked them to bring a *charpai* (cot) to carry the

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[67]The Congress Report, p. 72.

[68]Malaviya, Open Rebellion, p. 21.

[69]Swinson, Six Minutes to Sunset, p. 47.

dead body of my husband home. The boys accordingly went home and I sent away the two women also. By this time, it was 8 o'clock and no one could stir out of his house, because of the curfew order. I stood on waiting and crying. At about 8-30, a Sikh gentleman came. There were others who were looking for something amongst the dead. I did not know them. I entreated the Sikh gentleman to help me in removing my husband's body to a dry place, for that place was overflowing with blood. He caught the body by the head and I by the legs, and we carried it to a dry place and laid it down on a wooden block. I waited up to 10 p.m., but no one arrived there. I got up and started towards Ablowa Katra. I thought of asking some student from the Thakurdwara to help me in carrying my husband home. I had not gone far, when some man sitting in a window in an adjacent house asked me where I was going at that late hour. I said, I wanted some men to carry my husband's dead body home. He said, he was attending a wounded man and as it was past 8 p.m., no body could help me then. Then I started towards Katra and another man asked me the same question. I made the same appeal to him and he gave me the same answer. I had gone hardly three or four steps, when I saw an old man smoking and some people sleeping by his side. I repeated the whole of my sad story to him with hands folded. He took great pity upon me and asked those men to go with me. They said that it was 10 o'clock, and that they would not like to be shot down. That was no time to stir out; how could they go so far? So I went back and seated myself by the side of my dead husband. Accidentally, I found a bamboo stick which I kept in my hand to keep off dogs. I saw three men writhing in agony, a buffalo struggling in great pain; and a boy, about 12 years old, in agony entreated me not to leave the place. I told him that I could not go any where leaving the dead body of my husband. I asked him if he wanted any wrap, and if he was feeling cold, I could spread it over him. He asked for water, but water could not be procured at that place.

I heard the clock striking at regular intervals of one hour. At 2 o'clock, a Jat, belonging to Sultan village, who was lying entangled in a wall, asked me to go near him and to raise his leg. I got up and, taking hold of his clothes drenched in blood, raised his leg up. After that, no one else came till half past five. At about six, L. Sundar Dass, his sons and some people from my street came there with a *charpai*, and I brought my husband home. I saw other people at the Bagh in search of their relatives. I passed my whole night there. It is impossible for me to describe what I felt. Heaps of dead bodies lay there, some on their backs and some with their faces upturned. A number of them were poor innocent children. I shall never forget the sight. I was all alone

the whole night in that solitary jungle. Nothing but the barking of dogs, or the braying of donkeys was audible. Amidst hundreds of corpses, I passed my night, crying and watching. I cannot say more. What I experienced that night is known to me and to God.[70]

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[70]The Congress Report (Volume 2--Evidence) St. #75.

Chapter 5: After the Events of 1919

I began this thesis with criticisms of various interpretations--past and present--of Gandhi's biography which assert that Gandhi changed after the events of 1919 without entering into the details of that change. Interpretations have tended to be of three types: (1) Gandhi was driven by historical fate, destiny, *karma*, and so on to change. (2) Gandhi was an astute politician who seized the opportunity to launch his own political career. (3) Gandhi was an unfathomable "mahatma" who cannot be rationally understood; therefore, his change must be accepted without rational inquiry.

I have argued that none of these positions is tenable in itself. Each position results in a static understanding of Gandhi, when what is needed is a dynamic approach that draws out the dialectic at work in Gandhi's biography and the historical forces in India during his rise to prominence. There is a discernable pattern to the dialectic. The key to that dynamic is Gandhi's option for spiritual matters. This is the focal point for understanding his biography, how he perceives the history of the moment, and how history affected the course of his spiritua-

lized biography. What was happening to Gandhi at this point in his life was a veritable awakening to new insights into the process of spiritualized politics--one is tempted to say spiritualized history.

The proof of this spiritual transformation is found in a close reading of the texts available to us from the period extending from his return to India in 1915 to early 1920 when he makes his rejection of the British in powerful and uncompromisingly spiritual terms. That close reading reveals a significant change in the pattern of Gandhi's thoughts and actions from before to after 1919.

In chapter two, dealing with the period immediately before 1919, Gandhi continues to recognize distinctions between religious matters and political matters. Although he analyzes India's political situation always from a religious perspective, he continues, apparently without conscious awareness of the fact, to divorce what he sees as an "ideal" British system from the overall analysis.

Chapters three and four emphasize the historical process taking place at the time of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and the Martial Law which followed. Reading accounts of these events from Gandhi's perspective leads to a greater appreciation of how they would serve as the catalyst to energize a spiritual struggle within Gandhi. The concrete result is a complete rejection of the British "system" based on his insight that Truth must transcend all

human constructs--commonly labelled religion, politics, society and so on.

In the first fifty years of Gandhi's life he produced barely sixteen volumes of written material, while in the final thirty years he produced seventy-four volumes. Why? It is too simple to point out the obvious and say: "He wrote so much after the events of 1919 because that is when he got involved in the national struggle." Rather, it is only after 1919 that Gandhi consolidated his outlook on spiritual matters, which gave him the foundations to begin his life's work. Perhaps it is unfortunate that his awareness required such a drastic catalyst, but here I have argued that the confluence of his suffering, his people's suffering and his insight into the heartless and soulless British system came together in a dramatic fashion producing, so to speak, the spiritual resolve to enter into a nonviolent war.

In the remainder of this chapter I turn to two tasks. First I complete the historical development of Gandhi's understanding of what happened in the Punjab by tracing his growing knowledge of the Punjab events. Then I focus thematically on the same time period to demonstrate how the pattern of Gandhi's biography (as opposed to the historical development of that biography) established in chapter two becomes dominated by the inclusion of the British system in an encompassing spiritual analysis of India's condition. Gandhi's analysis results in understanding the British

system to be an "evil" and "satanic" system which must be countered with truth and nonviolence. Gandhi's complete disillusionment with the British left him, in the end, with his true life task: securing India's "salvation" from the British.

I will now outline when, what and how Gandhi learned the full extent of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and the Martial Law which followed. There was a significant time lag in Gandhi's understanding and realization of what actually had transpired in the Jallianwala Bagh due to imposed martial law censorship. When news of the massacre at Amritsar on April 13th and the period of military rule afterwards did finally come to Gandhi it was through three principle sources: (1) Gandhi's first-hand interviews of victims of the massacre while preparing the Congress Report on the Punjab disturbances were most important for the formulation of his understanding and interpretation of the events. (2) Newspaper accounts of the Bagh tragedy, although these were severely censored and very contradictory, provided a second source of information on Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. (3) Personal correspondence from friends who were not restricted access to the area were particularly important in the initial stages of Gandhi's understanding of the events.

Gandhi was receiving mixed reports about what was happening in the Punjab at the time of the massacre and the

martial law that followed. Fully one month passes from the time of the massacre until some indication of the extent of Gandhi's knowledge of the events becomes evident. His first clear written statement about his knowledge of what was going on in the Punjab occurs on May 16, 1919 in a letter to Maffey (the Private Secretary to the Viceroy).

> I have said not a word about the events in the Punjab, not because I have up to now not thought or felt over them, but because I have not known what to believe and what not to believe. Even the official communiques have not been over-frank. I was, as I am still, hoping that very soon there will be the fullest investigation made as to the causes of disturbances and the measures adopted to quell them.
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> But a shock like the one caused by the reported flogging has been delivered by the arrest with the attendant circumstances of Mr. Govardhandas and the prohibition order against Messrs Norton and Roy engaged as counsel for the defence of the Editor of *The Tribune*.[1]

It was not long until the news became clear that something terrible had happened. Within two weeks he had sufficient information to call an informal private *satyagraha* conference.[2] Its purpose was solely to discuss the Punjab. And at that time Gandhi was already prepared to undertake *satyagraha* within two weeks (i.e., June 14th).[3] At this point he was sufficiently informed to demand from the Viceroy "an independent and impartial committee of enquiry to examine the causes of the Punjab disturbances, the

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[1] The Collected Works Vol. 15, Doc. 285, p. 311.

[2] The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 302, pp. 332-3.

[3] Which he eventually does: The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 366, p. 396.

administration of martial law, and to revise the sentences passed by the Martial Law Tribunal."[4]

It would appear that Rabindranath Tagore was more familiar with what had happened in the Punjab than Gandhi, for by June 7th his letter renouncing his knighthood over the matter was published in Young India. On the occasion of its publication Gandhi confided to Srinivasa Sastri that he personally thought the "burning" letter "premature."[5] However, says Gandhi, "He cannot be blamed for it."[6]

On June 18th, some two months after the fact, in a letter to a "lady friend" in South Africa, Gandhi makes his first assessment of the situation based on reports from newspapers and friends: "....Disturbances in the Punjab at Lahore, Amritsar and other places and at Ahmedabad, near which the Ashram is situated, have been of very grave character, involving the proclamation of martial law. Loss to life and property has been enormous."[7]

> During the six weeks from 20th April, the events in the Punjab have been of an unprecedently cruel character. Martial law had been proclaimed in several areas and was withdrawn only a week or two ago.[8] Aeroplanes have been

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[4]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 302, p. 332. He continued to press for it; see Doc. 337, pp. 367-8; Doc. 338, p. 369 [both from 14 June]; Doc. 352, p. 387 [24 June]; Doc. 358, p. 392 [27 June]; Doc. 378, p. 419.

[5]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 315, p. 346.

[6]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 315, p. 346.

[7]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 347, p. 383.

[8]Ended on the 9th of June 1919.

> used to throw bombs, machine-guns have been used, and educated public leaders have been arrested under serious charges of waging war against the King, etc...[9]

When Gandhi suspended civil disobedience against the Rowlatt Act on 21 July he only mentioned his awareness of the legal cases against Kitchlew and Satyapal.[10] The texts from April to July indicate that his knowledge of the "horrors" of the Punjab, to use his phrase, remained minimal until August of 1919. At that time he received a brief appeal from Shraddhanand that outlined essentially what had happened in the Punjab.[11] Shraddhanand wrote that "not less than fifteen hundred persons must have been killed.... There must be one thousand families in the Punjab which are left only with their womenfolk and children. It is our duty to reach them food and clothing."[12] Gandhi supported the appeal,[13] but his reaction to the statement was restrained. This is his only statement of note: "That many who lost their lives in Amritsar and elsewhere were innocent cannot be doubted."[14]

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[9]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 347, p. 384.

[10]The Collected Works, Vol. 15, Doc. 415, pp. 468-71; see also Doc. 422, p. 483 [28 July 1919].

[11]The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 2, pp. 1-3.

[12]The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 2, p. 1.

[13]The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 2, p. 2; Doc. 21, p. 31.

[14]The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 2, p. 2.

When Sir Michael O'Dwyer was transferred out of India Gandhi took the opportunity to level a parting shot at the man who would be his chief target in The Congress Report.[15] He wrote that "though Sir Michael is no longer in India in body, he is certainly in our midst in spirit..."[16] His pointed remarks indicate that he had begun to discover the nature of the events in the Punjab.

The article also indicates that Punjab cases were being published regularly in Young India by August. However, it does not appear that Gandhi was personally involved in the affair yet. He had deduced from reports that "the Punjab Government went mad," and intimated his conclusion that "the Punjab Government had deliberately and with malice afore-thought planned an insurrection in the Punjab,"[17] which he asserted outright on August 17th: "In the Punjab, the people were goaded into violence."[18] Now Gandhi was involved, now he began to reveal his growing impatience with the system.

> It is my unpleasant duty to present another batch of cases to the reader from the Punjab which reveal a state of things that is utterly unbearable.... The desire to secure for Englishmen almost absolute immunity from physical harm from the "natives", by inflicting exemplary

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[15]The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 8, pp. 10-13.

[16]The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 8, pp. 10-11.

[17]The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 9, pp. 14-15.

[18]The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 25, p. 39. Note that this is virtually identical to his words in The Congress Report which had not yet been commissioned.

> punishments on someone or other, appears to have been the master passion overruling discretion, wisdom and justice. These reflections are caused by a perusal of the judgement and the evidence of the Hafizabad case.... During the whole course of my practice of law, by no means inconsiderable, extending over an unbroken period of nearly twenty years, I have never come across cases in which capital punishment has been so lightly pronounced on the flimsiest evidence taken down in a most perfunctory manner, as appears to me to have been done in the Hafizabad case.[19]

Persistent pressure on the government of India finally, on September 3rd, yielded an inquiry into the Punjab. Gandhi greeted the news confidently, feeling sure that "the truth about the atrocities perpetrated in the Punjab will fully come out."[20] The appointment of the Commission temporarily strengthened Gandhi's confidence in the British sense of justice. He was sure that "our case is so excellent, the injustices that have been already brought to light are so glaring that we need not fear an abortion if the people of the Punjab will but do their duty."[21] His hopes were unfounded, to his own chagrin, and by September his disappointment in the inquiry is evident.[22]

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[19]The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 29, p. 45; see also Doc. 38, p. 56 which relates that the death sentence was commuted to 1 year of imprisonment.

[20]The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 64, p. 103.

[21]The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 72, PP. 114-5; Doc. 73, pp. 119-22.

[22]The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 96, pp. 162-4; Doc. 97, pp. 165-6; Doc. 102, pp. 170-4; Doc. 105, pp. 178-79.

The prohibitory orders restraining Gandhi from entering the Punjab were withdraw on October 15th.[23] He immediately went to Lahore where he was greeted with a vast concourse.[24] He told Tagore that "I feel happy that I have been able at last to visit this unhappy land."[25] Gandhi visited the Jallianwala Bagh on November 4th.[26] His reflections on the visit to the Bagh reveal that Gandhi saw the events in Amritsar in terms of a spiritual awakening for the people, no less so for himself.

> These were solemn scenes. Just as the Americans get energy from the Niagara Falls for their use, so can we also make use of the energy which exists at Amritsar and other places. Today this energy flows to waste like that of a waterfall. But it can be turned to valuable use. Patriotic pride has been awakened in the hearts of thousands of men and women. They realize, too, that this patriotism should be formed with the spirit of dharma.... for the uplift of the nation, nothing more is required than love for one's country and readiness to serve her or, in other words, a spiritual awakening. A spiritual awakening means devotion to duty. If each individual understands his present duty and performs it, the next duty will of itself become clear to him.[27]

From this point onwards Gandhi's life becomes hectic in the extreme. In the next five months, January through

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[23]The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 112, p. 193; Doc. 120, p. 203; Doc. 150, pp. 239-241.

[24]The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 168, pp. 261-3.

[25]The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 171, p. 264.

[26]The Collected Works, p. 564. He visited the Bagh again on December 21st, before proceeding to the annual session of The Indian National conference which was held at Amritsar during December 27, 1919 and January 1, 1920. Doc. 228, pp. 354-5.

[27]The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 199, p. 298.

June, he: attends the Amritsar session of The Indian National Congress, appears before the Government of India's Inquiry Committee,[28] does a whirl-wind tour through the Punjab (January 23-February 15), conducts the Congress Sub-Committee Report on the Punjab and submits a draft of the Report by February 20th,[29] organizes an appeal for a Jallianwala Bagh Memorial, and becomes the president of the Home Rule League. These activities are accompanied by daily lectures, articles and voluminous correspondence.

Gandhi expresses his opinions on the progress of the inquiries repeatedly. In the process he remarks that "General Dyer's deed is proof of man becoming devil under fear and excitement."[30] Dyer's inhumanity shows British character at its worst, according to Gandhi.[31] On April 3rd, a week after his Report was published, Gandhi demanded the impeachment of O'Dwyer and Dyer.[32]

The months of June and July saw Gandhi's hopes for a just British response to the Punjab fade to extinction. Speaking against the Hunter Committee's Report he blatantly

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[28]This resulted in a lengthy statement on satyagraha amongst other matters. The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 240, pp. 378-460.

[29]The effort clearly drained Gandhi. The Collected Works, Vol. 17, Doc. 242, p. 527.

[30]The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 231, p. 360.

[31]The Collected Works, Vol. 16, Doc. 231, p. 360.

[32]The Collected Works, Vol. 17, Doc. 231, pp. 513-14.

asserts: "I believe the Hunter Report is a plain, deliberate shielding of the officials in the Punjab."[33] By this point Gandhi sensed that his three minimum demands--the recall of Chelmsford, return of the fines incurred during the martial law, and the "burial" of the Rowlatt Act--would not be fulfilled. The suffering of the people combined with his own suffering over the matter resulted in his letter to the Viceroy completely rejecting the British system.[34]

> The punitive measures taken by General Dyer . . . were out of all proportion to the crime of the people and amounted to a wanton cruelty and inhumanity, almost unparalleled in modern times. Your excellency's light-hearted treatment of the official crime . . . and above all the shameful ignorance of the Punjab events and the callous disregard of the feelings of the Indians betrayed by the House of Lords, have filled me with the gravest misgivings regarding the future of the Empire, have estranged me completely from the present Government and have disabled me from tendering as I have hitherto whole-heartedly tendered my loyal co-operation.[35]

Gandhi continued to recognize distinctions between religious matters and political matters before 1919, as I have shown in chapter two. Gandhi had not then made the spiritual connection between India's suffering and the British system, nor had he recognized the British system as a religious category.

I will now argue that after 1919 Gandhi's spiritual awakening to the relationship between suffering and the

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[33]The Collected Works, Vol. 17, Doc. 231, p. 513.

[34]The Collected Works, Vol. 18, Doc. 73, pp. 104-106.

[35]The Collected Works, Vol. 18, Doc. 73, pp. 104-106.

violence of the British system is complete. The proof of this awakening is found in his statements after his rejection of the British in August 1920. The pattern demonstrated in his statements is this: Gandhi always links India's suffering to the "Satanic" British system using explicitly religious language of analysis couched in rigidly personal terms. Examination of two key speeches made by Gandhi in this time period (and reference to others) will demonstrate the pattern of his thoughts immediately following the events in the Punjab.

Two months after his letter to the Viceroy renouncing any interest in the British Gandhi participated in a pilgrimage to Dakore on *manektharipunam* (the full-moon night of Ashwin). On the full-moon day, October 27th, considered to be the most important day of the pilgrimage, Gandhi addressed some forty thousand of the pilgrims. His speech[36] is laced with personal commentary and religious *cum* political analysis of the British in India. Three parts of this speech demonstrate the three elements involved in the pattern of his thought after 1919.

In the first part of his talk Gandhi draws on the myths surrounding the eclipse of the moon. Here, using religious metaphor, he provides a rhetorical analysis of

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[36]Mahadev Desai, Day-To-Day With Gandhi: Secretary's Diary, Vol. III (Varanasi: Sarva Seva Sangh Prakashan, 1968), pp. 17-26. The Collected Works, Vol. 18, Doc. 217, pp. 384-391.

India's problems, which, in a word, is the British. He refers in this extract to both the attack on the Muslims through the Khilifat question and the events in the Punjab. He also refers to his own willingness to go to extremes to remove the British from Indian soil.

> An avalanche has descended upon the seven crores of Muslim brothers. A ferocious Empire is out to make mince-meat of their religion. Just as, in the sky above, the moon is eclipsed--is possessed by a demon[37] --so is Islam eclipsed today, possessed by a demon called the British Empire, and you must free it. The lunar eclipse is only a physical phenomenon and it is not in our power to free the moon. This lunal eclipse does not frighten me at all. It does not impel me to go on a fast. But I verily tremble at the eclipse that has shadowed our hearts--our souls. If fasting is the specific remedy for that eclipse, I pray to God to grant me the power to fast. If suicide is the remedy, may God enable me to commit it. The beautiful moon of India is, at present, stained with the spot called England. I have already given one reason why that is so. The Empire's sword hangs over and is about to fall on Islam. If it is Islam that is in danger today, it may be Hinduism tomorrow. How wicked must be that Empire which has played Islam foul, which, through the Punjab, has made the whole of India crawl on its belly, has compelled all the little kids of India to salute the Union Jack--and taken the lives of two little ones of six or seven as a result--and under whose regime fifteen hundred or at least one thousand innocent persons have been murdered? I cannot even conceive how thick is the darkness with which this Imperial eclipse has enveloped our land.[38]

The second extract from this speech builds on the analysis by indicating the plan of <u>action</u> to secure India's

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[37]"Reference to the hoary popular superstition that eclipses are due to the possession of the two Gods, Sun and Moon, by the two demons Rahu and Ketu. Fasting and alms-giving bring about their release. Characteristically, these are names in Hindu astronomy of the exact spots in the firmament where the sun and the moon are when they are eclipsed." The editors. <u>Day-To-Day</u>, Vol. III, p. 19.

[38]<u>Day-To-Day</u>, Vol. III, p. 19.

salvation. Gandhi had heard that pilgrims on their way to Dakore were not conducting themselves "in a becoming manner."[39] Allegations had been made that several rapes had been committed by certain pilgrims. Gandhi used the point to assert that there is no "sense" in the belief that "their sins will be washed off by a dip into the Gomtiji (a sacred big pond near the temple)."[40] He then moves from the concrete case of crimes against women to develop his answer to the British crimes against India.

> The present rule is no *Ramarajya*; it is *Ravanarajya*. We are groaning in slavery under that *Ravanarajya* and learning irreligion. How can we wrest our freedom from such *Ravanarajya*? By becoming irreligious ourselves to be a match for the irreligious? By entering into a contest of villainy with villains? ... Even if Hindus and Mussalmans wish to resort to wiles and might, they are too artless and weak. If we want to beat Ravana on his own ground, we must have, like him, ten heads and twenty arms. Whence to bring them? Only an astute opponent like Rama can perform the feat of killing him. And what kind of astuteness did Rama possess? He observed *brahmacharya*. He walked in the fear of God.... You will be able to defeat this Empire only if, unlike Ravana, you do not cast a lustful eye on our women, our Sitajis. If anyone has been able to overcome Satan it is God. It is He Who created Satan and He Who can overcome him. Satan cannot be defeated by human power. It is God alone Who brings about his defeat through a person who follows God's dictates like a bounden slave.[41]

The third and final extract from this speech illustrates the third primary element of Gandhi's thought--spiritual insight into the relationship between system and

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[39]Day-To-Day, Vol. III, p. 17.

[40]Day-To-Day, Vol. III, pp. 17-18.

[41]Day-To-Day, Vol. III, p. 20. See also The Collected Works, Vol. 19, Doc. 167, pp. 338-40.

suffering. In this extract we see that the point is no longer that there is an ideal British system and a failure to implement it, but, rather, that the system is evil in itself and therefore can never work. The division is now between (a) a system which is categorically evil and (b) the British people who, even though they are a part of the system, are not evil. This extract also shows Gandhi's increasing willingness to call upon his personal religious "clout" to influence the course of India's history.

> You have never drunk to the dregs, as bitter draughts of insults etc. from the Government as I have. You have not got a hundredth part of the power which I have gained by assimilating those bitter draughts. I have been given many provocations which would have infuriated me against the Government. But I have sublimated my anger. Even on this occasion I do not speak a single word in a fit of anger. I am speaking only what the still small voice impels me to say.... After serving the British Empire with all my heart for full thirty years, I have arrived at the conviction that it is not *Ramarajya*, it is *Ravanarajya*. It does not mean that because this Empire appears to me so wicked now I have any hatred for the Englishman. All my hatred is exclusively against the Empire. So long as the British Empire does not repent, does not apologise to Indian women and men, does not say, "We are only your servants and wish to remain in India if you keep us in employment", so long I am prepared to fling myself against the might of the Empire. No number of its aeroplanes and machine-guns can frighten me.[42]

Gandhi concludes his talk with a plea for the "divine weapon"[43] of non-co-operation with the Empire. "This Empire regards sin itself as righteousness," says Gandhi, "It crushes other countries in order to make itself prosperous.

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[42]Day-To-Day, Vol. III, p. 21.

[43]Day-To-Day, Vol. III, p. 22.

That is downright tyranny.... It does not say so in so many words, but its actions betray this attitude, as is evidenced in its handling of the Punjab affair. I, a worshipper of Sri Krishna, ask you to hurl into an abyss, the schools and courts of such an Empire."[44]

The pattern shown in these three extracts from Gandhi's speech to the pilgrims involves three elements: (1) There are two main issues which stand out in his mind as symptomatic of the British Empire's satanic ways, Khilifat and the Punjab. Of the two, Gandhi takes the Punjab more personally. (2) These issues and the British Empire are cast in strictly religious terms and so is the solution to the problem. (3) Unlike before 1919, Gandhi does not make a division between an ideal British system and the failure to implement it; rather, he now sees that the system is evil in itself and therefore can never work. The division is now between a system which is categorically evil, and the British people who, even though they are a part of the system, are not evil.

Between the period from August 1919 to March of 1922, when Gandhi was put in jail, this pattern repeats itself constantly. Hardly a day goes by when Gandhi is not addressing a large crowd, writing voluminous letters or

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[44]Day-To-Day, Vol. III, p. 22.

engaged in debate with British politicians.[45] Most of his time, however, is spent advancing the cause of non-co-operation[46] with the aim of securing *swaraj* in one year. One final exemplary text will suffice to show clearly that the new element in the pattern, which I have called Gandhi's spiritual awakening, was firmly entrenched in Gandhi way of thinking and acting. In this text Gandhi once again draws on the comparison of the British to Ravana which, as Mahadev Desai notes,[47] had become his favorite theme when discussing the British Empire. Pay particular attention to the distinction Gandhi makes once again between a system that is evil, and the people in the system who are not--a distinction that only becomes central to Gandhi's thought after the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre.

> I appeal to the students to think over the Punjab affairs and the condition of Islam, and if you do so, you will find that this rule is a Satanic rule, this Raj is *Ravanarajya*. If you are told that you will be given free education, even then you should not go to the schools of Ravana which are full of Satanic things. I do not call any Englishman a Satan. I love Englishmen in the same way

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[45]The result is seven volumes in The Collected Works (17-23). Gandhi's prolific writing gives some indication of how intent he was to secure India's freedom immediately following the Punjab and Khilifat affairs.

[46]The non-co-operation movement was bent on achieving swaraj in one year. See The Collected Works, Vol. 19, Doc. 129, pp. 249-57, for an example of Gandhi's preaching on the subject. It was adopted by Muslims on 1 August 1920 and by Hindus on 8 September 1920. See Majumdar, Struggle for Freedom, Chapter XII. And, B.M. Taunk, Non-Co-Operation Movement in Indian Politics (1919-1924): A Historical Study (Delhi: Sundeep Prakashan, 1978).

[47]Day-To-Day, Vol. III, p. 138.

> as I love Mr. Shaukat Ali and Mr. Das. But what I say is this, that this Administration is Satanic. If God gives me enough power, I will rectify this Government or end it; I will not rest until I have mended this Government. I know full well that today I am violating the Seditious Act [sic] of the Government--I am a loyal subject of this Government and I am also its loyal friend and as such I tell the Government to reform itself or be destroyed. I will take part in its destruction and I invite you, too, to join with me. Either we will mend this Government or destroy it. I cannot live to see the black disgrace by Englishmen with impunity--I want to meet Englishmen in the open field and tell them that we, too, do possess the same amount of strength as they do.[48]

There can be no doubt that Gandhi was a changed person after the events of 1919. Furthermore, the changes in Gandhi's attitude to the British primarily had to do with a spiritual awakening to the depths of systemic violence. "Shaking the Manes"[49] of the British Lion became Gandhi's sole concern. He made it clear that the change in his outlook was permanent.

> The rice-eating, puny millions of India seem to have resolved upon achieving their own destiny without any further tutelage and without arms.... No empire intoxicated with the red wine of power and plunder of weaker races has yet lived long in this world, and this "British Empire", which is based upon organized exploitation of physically weaker races of the earth and upon a continuous exhibition of brute force, cannot live if there is a just God ruling the universe.... I am aware that I have written strongly about the insolent threat that has come from across the seas, but it is high time that the British people were made to realize that the fight that was commenced in 1920 is a fight to the finish, whether it lasts one month or one year or many

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[48] The Collected Works, Vol. 19, Doc. 75, p. 123.

[49] The title of one of Gandhi's "seditious" articles which eventually resulted in his internment, March 1922. The Collected Works, Vol. 22, Doc. 187, p. 457.

months or many years and whether the representatives of Britain re-enact all the indescribable orgies of the Mutiny days with redoubled force or whether they do not.[50]

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[50]The Collected Works, Vol. 22, Doc. 187, p. 458.

Conclusions

I have argued throughout this thesis that Gandhi underwent a significant spiritual change because of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. My analysis began from C. Wright Mills's proposition which emphasizes the dynamic relationship between biography and history. I have argued that "for Gandhi to see with clarity and to know with certainty the true nature of suffering and violence required a dark hour." My thesis has been that Gandhi's dark hour came with the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the Martial Law which followed.

My study of Gandhi's spiritual life has also been a study of his growing political, economical and social awareness. Given his understanding that religion and politics are two sides of the same coin, I have asserted that Gandhi's political awakening is actually the other side of his spiritual awakening. I have also asserted that if a distinction must be made between religion and politics for analytical purposes, then spiritual matters must be given preference when studying Gandhi.

I have provided substantial evidence to support my thesis that Gandhi moved from being a supporter of the colonial power to an anti-colonialist because he was

awakened in a spiritual way to suffering and in a political way to systemic violence. In chapter two I argued that Gandhi's views on the relationship of British education, language, economics, and so on to religio-political concerns such as *satyagraha*, *ahimsa*, *swadeshi* and *swaraj* reflects his continued reliance on the idea of an ideal British system that could be made to work. This resulted in Gandhi not recognizing that the system itself was evil, or to use his word, satanic, and therefore could never be actualized on the Indian sub-continent.

In chapters three and four I have described the principle events of 1919. I have argued that these events, viewed from a perspective similar to Gandhi's, were the catalyst for Gandhi's spiritual recognition of British Imperialism as an evil system. A close scrutiny of these events allows the reader to verify the credibility of Gandhi's reactions for herself or himself.

My final chapter demonstrates the change in the pattern of Gandhi's thoughts about the British system. I have argued that the pattern now shows Gandhi's awakening to systemic violence and its antidote, the universal principle of nonviolence rooted in a willingness to enjoin self-suffering for spiritual salvation. Gandhi understood salvation to mean both personal salvation and collective freedom for the Indian people from British rule.

I concluded chapter one with two questions: (1) Why did Gandhi change after the events of April 1919? (2) What is it about Gandhi that changed? We are now in a position to give an answer to these questions.

(1) A careful reading of Gandhi's opus, from the time of his return to India in January of 1915 and his internment in March of 1922, clearly shows that Gandhi saw the 1919 Punjab atrocities as symptomatic signs of an evil system embodied in the British Empire. Gandhi changed in 1919 because the actions of O'Dwyer and Dyer revealed to him the evil of systemic violence, a veritable spiritual awakening.

(2) Gandhi's understanding of the relationship between the religious category of personal and corporate suffering and the political category of systemic violence came together, after the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre and the Martial Law which followed, in his personal spiritual insight into the universal applicability of nonviolence as an all encompassing morally based strategy for social transformation.

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Note: Very often in reading through anthologies I found material that would be of use to me in writing my thesis. For the purposes of consistency and chronological accuracy I have made every effort to find each text in The Collected Works. Only on rare occasions have I not succeeded, at which point I used my own judgement as to the use of the text. Hence, I go ahead and place these anthologies in my bibliography to acknowledge the work done by numerous scholars who have gone before me.

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