



The Butcher of Amritsar: Brigadier-General Reginald Dyer

By Nigel Collett

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On April 13, 1919, General Reginald Dyer marched a squad of Indian soldiers into the Jallianwala Bagh, an enclosed public space in the holy city of Amritsar, and opened fire without warning on a crowd gathered to hear political speeches, leaving over 200 dead. To some, Dyer was the savior of India, responding decisively to threatened insurrection, but to many in India, including Gandhi and Nehru, his action proved the moral bankruptcy of the British Empire. The bitter debate that followed the shootings, the worst atrocity perpetrated by the British in the twentieth century, almost brought down the Liberal Government and was a decisive turning point in India's march to independence. *The Butcher of Amritsar* is a definitive account of the massacre and a biography of Reginald Dyer, a man whose attitudes reflected many of the views common in the Raj.

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"A superb biography" The Mail on Sunday, 1 May 2005 "Precise and comprehensive" Sunday Times, 24 April 2005 "This excellent new biography" BBC History, May 2005 "Thoroughly researched, well-written and insightful account" The Spectator 16 April 2005 "An engrossing human story that casts a calm and steady light on the history of British imperialism, on the Raj, and on Dyer" The Literary Review "Thorough reconstruction of the events and a convincing study of their perpetrator" Independent 1 May 2005

About the Author

Lieutenant Colonel Nigel Collett earned his MA for the University of Buckingham and completed it with distinction in September 2002. He is the author of *A Grammar, Phrase Book and Vocabulary of Baluchi* and *A Course in Baluchi*.

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