



FREEDOM STRUGGLE II
ROWLETT ACT & NCM

ROWLETT ACT

- **Sedition committee or Rowlett Committee** in 1917.
 - ❑ Under chairmanship of **Justice Sydney Rowlett**.
 - ❑ To investigate 'revolutionary crime' in the country.
 - ❑ To recommend legislation for its suppression.
 - ❑ Submitted its report in April 1918.
- Government drafted two bills and presented them to Imperial Legislative Council on February 6, 1919.
- Government maintained- '*the bills were temporary measures*' which aimed at preventing seditious crimes.
- **Bill's provisions:**
 - ❑ Trial of offences by a special court consisting of 3 High Court judges.
 - ❑ No provision of appeal against decision of this court which could meet in camera and take into consideration evidence not admissible under the Indian Evidence Act.
 - ❑ **Proposed to give authority to government to search a place and arrest a person without a warrant.**
 - ❑ Detention without a trial for maximum period of two years. Means suspension of Habeas Corpus, which had been the foundation of civil liberties in Britain.
- New bills attempted to make war-time restrictions permanent.

Movement

- Gandhi opposed not just the content of the bills, but also the manner in which they were foisted in the country without regard to public opinion.

- Gandhi formed '**Satyagraha Sabha**' on February 24, 1919 in Bombay.
- **Those opposed Gandhi's move of satyagraha.**
 - ❑ **Sir D.E. Wacha, S.N. Banerjee, T.B. Sapru, Srinivas Shastri.**
 - Reason:-** They felt the Satyagraha would hamper reforms.
 - ❑ **Annie Besant** on the grounds that nothing in the act to resist civilly.
- **Those supported:**
 - ❑ Younger and radical elements of Besant's Home Rule League. They formed the main cadre of Satyagraha.
 - ❑ Certain Pan-Islamic leaders, particularly **Abdul Bari** of Firangi Mahal Ulema group at Lucknow and some radical members of Muslim league.
- **Passage of Bills in Legislative Council**
 - ❑ One of the two bills namely **Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act** passed on March 21, 1919.
 - ❑ **Every single Indian member of Central Legislative Council opposed it.**
 - ❑ **Jinnah** too opposed the Rowlett Bill.
- **Inauguration of Satyagraha:**
 - ❑ By observing a day of '**hartal**' when *business should be suspended and people should fast and pray as a protest* against Rowlett bill.
 - ❑ **Date for Hartal:** initially 30 March, later changed to 6 April.
 - ❑ **Day for Hartal:-** Sunday
 - ❑ Arya Samajist leader **Swami Shradhanand's suggestion for a no revenue call.** Gandhi rejected it.
 - ❑ Gandhi urged **D.E. Wacha** to accept his programme.

- ❑ **Satyagraha Sabha**, the specific organization for the movement, concentrated on:
 - ◆ Publishing propaganda literature
 - ◆ Collecting signatures to Satyagraha pledge.
 - ❑ Gandhi himself toured extensively: visited Bombay, Delhi, Allahabad, Lucknow and a number of South Indian cities between March and April, 1919.
 - ❑ Gandhi left Bombay on 8th April for Delhi and Punjab; but was removed from the train at *Palwal near Delhi* and was taken back to Bombay.
 - ❑ **Congress as such was not in the picture at all** - had no machinery for real agitation politics.
 - ❑ Signatories to Satyagraha pledge numbered only 982 in mid-march; 397 in Bombay city; 400 in Gujarat, 101 in Sind and only 84 outside Bombay presidency.
- **Movement: Area wise description:**
 - Punjab:**
 - ❑ **Most affected**
 - ❑ Most affected places: **Amritsar, Lahore, Gujranwala** and a no of smaller towns.
 - Amritsar:**
 - ❑ Hartals of 30 March and April 6 were peaceful but massive affairs.
 - ❑ **9th April Ramnavami procession showed Hindu-Muslim unity.**
 - ❑ Local leaders **Saifuddin Kitchlew and Satyapal** were deported the same evening (April 9).
 - ❑ Gandhi restrained from entering Delhi and Punjab.
 - ❑ **Police firing near Hall Bridge** on April 10.
 - ❑ In reaction symbols of British authority were attacked; a *white woman insulted in Kuchakou Chianwalla Lane.*
- ❑ **Martial law in Amritsar clamped down on April 11.**
 - ❑ **Jalianwala Bagh Massacre on April 13, 1919.**
 - ◆ A large crowd gathered to protest the arrest of *Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr Satyapal.*
 - ◆ Officer responsible:- **General Dyer**, military commander of Amritsar.
 - ◆ No of killed:- 379 (official estimates).
 - ◆ **Hunter Commission** appointed on October 29, 1919 to enquire.
 - ◆ Indian members to Commission:
 - ❖ **Sir Chiman Lal Sitalvaad**
 - ❖ **Shahzada Sultan Ahmad**
 - ❖ **Jagat Narayan**
 - ◆ Commission submitted report in 1920.
 - ◆ **Indian National Congress** also formed a 3 member **enquiry committee** under chairmanship of **Madan Mohan Malviya**; other two members were **Moti Lal Nehru** and **Gandhi**.
 - ❑ Martial law enforced in whole Punjab on 13th April.
- Lahore:**
 - ❑ On 10th April, violent clash with police, Reason:- Gandhi's externment, Amritsar events.
 - ❑ Muslim artisans and workers particularly violent.
 - ❑ **Rambhuj Dutt** tried to control the crowds.
 - ❑ On April 11, **strikes at Mughalpara railway workshop** (employing 12000)
 - ❑ Enormous **rally at Badshahi mosque** endorsed the **Formation of People's Committee**, which virtually controlled the city from 11th to 14th April.