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**East Meets Left: South Asian Militants and the
Socialist Party of Canada in British Columbia,
1904-1914***

Abstract

The first two decades of the 20th century were full of promise for both socialism and anti-imperialist struggle. With the possible exception of Ireland, it was in India that these two related struggles came most forcefully into focus. In India, anti-colonial movements influenced by Western thought were having a significant impact on the boycott movements and the leaders of worker and peasant struggles. As Western socialists sought to incorporate anti-imperialism in India into the socialist cause, South Asian militants in both India and the West were attempting to use Western ideas to overcome religious sectarianism and unite Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus in a common struggle against the British Raj. In the years 1904-1914, the attempt of South Asian militants and Western socialists to find common ground in the anti-imperialist struggle took place on the west coast of Canada. Their "racial" and cultural differences notwithstanding, the leaders and spokespersons of these movements shared a common challenge — the education of the rank and file of their own movements, and the daunting task of fostering unity across identities. In Ghadar, the movement created by South Asian militants on the west coast of North America — among them members and supporters of the Socialist Party of Canada and the Industrial Workers of the World — we find coalesced the attempt to create a non-racialist, non-sectarian movement dedicated to ending British imperialism and creating an egalitarian society.

Résumé

Les deux premières décennies du 20^e siècle se sont montrées riches de promesses tant pour le socialisme que pour la lutte anti-impérialiste. À l'exception peut-être de l'Irlande, c'est en Inde que ces deux combats apparentés l'un à l'autre se sont manifestés avec la plus grande force. En Inde, des mouvements anti-coloniaux influencés par la pensée occidentale ont eu une incidence marquée sur les mouvements de boycottage et les chefs de file des luttes des travailleurs et des paysans. Tandis que des socialistes occidentaux s'efforçaient d'intégrer à la cause du socialisme l'anti-impérialisme qui se manifestait alors en Inde, des militants anti-impérialistes de l'Asie du Sud tant en Inde qu'en Occident tentaient de se servir d'idées occidentales pour transcender le sectarisme religieux et rassembler les Musulmans, les Sikhs et les Hindous dans une lutte commune contre le Raj, la domination britannique en Inde. Dans la période qui s'étend de 1904 à 1914, une épisode de la recherche, par des militants de l'Asie du

Sud et des socialistes occidentaux, d'un terrain commun dans le cadre de la lutte contre l'impérialisme, s'est déroulé sur la côte Ouest du Canada. Sans égard à leurs différences « raciales » et culturelles, les chefs de file et porte-parole de ces mouvements se voyaient confrontés au même défi — l'éducation des militants de la base de leurs propres mouvements et la tâche formidable de favoriser l'unité par-delà les identités. Le Ghadar, le mouvement créé par des militants de l'Asie du Sud sur la côte Ouest de l'Amérique — et à l'intérieur duquel se retrouvaient des membres et des sympathisants du Parti socialiste du Canada et des Industrial Workers of the World — offre un exemple de tentative concrète de créer un mouvement non racial et non sectaire voué à la disparition de l'impérialisme britannique et à la création d'une société égalitaire.

On the eve of the First World War, the Ghadar movement was organised on the west coast of the United States and quickly spread to Canada. Ghadar, a movement dedicated to overthrowing British rule in India and to fighting the racist and discriminatory immigration policies of Canada and the United States, united Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus inspired by their respective religions and the ideas of Western liberals and socialists.¹ Roused by Lala Har Dayal, the radical Bengali nationalist who spearheaded the formation of the movement, hundreds of Ghadar supporters sailed from Canadian and American ports in late 1914 and early 1915 for India, Southeast Asia and the Philippines determined to foment a mass uprising against British rule on the Indian subcontinent.²

The return of the Ghadarites confirmed the fears of British colonial officials alarmed about the influence of Western thought on Indian revolutionary nationalists since the 1890s. On September 2, 1897 Lord George Hamilton, the Secretary of State for India, wrote to Viscount Curzon: "I think the real danger to our rule in India, not now but say 50 years hence, is the gradual adoption and extension of Western ideas of agitation and organization."³ By 1902, Lord George had become concerned about the influence that radicals and socialists were exerting on Indian students studying in London, England.⁴ In 1909, Lord John Morley, who became Secretary of State for India in 1905, gave as one of his reasons for opposing Indian emigration to Canada the fact "that there is a socialist propaganda in Vancouver, and the consequent danger of the East Indians being imbued with socialist doctrines."⁵ Morley's fears were not unfounded, as it was indeed Vancouver which became "the first centre of seditious propaganda among Indians" in North America.⁶

Historians of the Ghadar movement, like the British colonial officials before them, have tended to generalise about the influence of Western socialists and "anarchists" on the Ghadarites, with little analysis of the actual content and extent of that influence.⁷ Doreen Indra and Norman Buchignani, for example, observe that "Ghadar's leadership was heavily influenced by IWW (Industrial Workers of the World), anarchist, and popular socialist thought, especially in its analysis of British rule in India."⁸

The use of the expression “heavily influenced” is misleading: apart from a brief period of influence on Har Dayal in California and leading South Asian militants in British Columbia in the period just before the First World War, it is difficult to identify any lasting effect the Industrial Workers of the World had on the Ghadar movement.⁹ One of the few “anarchist” influences was Emma Goldman, but Har Dayal appears to have met her only once, and they did not work together.¹⁰ Apart from the odd quotation from Tolstoy in the publications put out by South Asian militants, in Canada it is difficult to trace ideas in the Ghadar movement of anarchist origin.

Lala Har Dayal’s adoption of Marxian socialist ideas did not become widely known until the publication of his landmark article entitled “Karl Marx: A Modern Rishi” in the March 1912 issue of Calcutta’s *Modern Review*. Even at this relatively late stage in the development of South Asian militance, Har Dayal demonstrates just how tenuous his Marxism is by arguing that Marx’s ideas are “one-sided and defective,” and that “Carlyle’s theory of civilisation as a product of personal influences is much nearer the truth than that of mechanical scientific evolution advanced by Marx and Spencer.”¹¹ In British Columbia, Har Dayal’s criticisms of Marxian socialism were not likely to receive a sympathetic hearing from members of the Socialist Party of Canada (SPC), who considered themselves Canada’s leading exponents of Marx’s ideas. The membership of the SPC, organised in British Columbia in 1904-05, never exceeded 3,000 to 4,000 members, a figure roughly equal to the number of South Asians in Canada in the decade prior to the First World War.¹² Their small numbers notwithstanding, Socialist Party members were Canada’s foremost advocates of the scientific socialism that Har Dayal dismissed, and were long-standing critics of the great man theory of history espoused by Thomas Carlyle.¹³ With the possible exception of Hussain Rahim, the Hindu militant most deeply involved with the Socialist Party of Canada, there were few, if any, leading members of Ghadar more influenced by Marx’s theories than was Har Dayal. The fact that even he espoused ideas about Marxism that were anathema to the vast majority of Socialist Party members raises serious questions about the impact of Marxist ideas on South Asian militants in British Columbia.

Nevertheless, the concerns expressed by Lord John Morley and other British colonial officials about the Canadian situation were not entirely misplaced, because the South Asian militants and members of the Socialist Party of Canada shared a commitment to educating the rank and file of their respective movements. As Harish Puri points out, prominent Ghadar leaders such as Harnam Singh Sahri, Sohan Lal Pathak and Kartar Singh Sarabha, “thought of organising a mass movement on the basis of political education,” precisely what the Socialist Party of Canada was attempting to do among white workers in Canada.¹⁴ The belief in political education was influenced by Marx’s commitment to the emancipation of the working

classes by the workers themselves, an idea espoused by Lala Har Dayal and adapted to the struggle against British imperialism in India.¹⁵

It is here that we can begin to understand what happened when East met Left. It was not Marxism or socialism per se that had the greatest impact on South Asian militants, but rather this idea that the Indian people, through their own efforts, could overthrow the British Raj. This idealism was one of the distinguishing characteristics of members of the Socialist Party of Canada, men and women who could not believe that the workers, once they understood how the capitalist system actually worked, and how the workers were exploited, could fail to become socialists and work toward the demise of the capitalist system. South Asian militants shared that idealism, which led them to believe that the self-evident injustice and brutality of British rule in India made the mass of the Indian people ready to follow a dedicated band of courageous leaders. The encounter with Canadian Marxists fortified the idealist tendency among the South Asian militants, and confirmed their belief that the people of India had already committed themselves to overthrow their British rulers — they were only waiting for the militants to appear to lead them in revolt against their masters.¹⁶

The South Asian militants who returned to India and Southeast Asia to foment rebellion were overwhelmingly Sikh. Yet the fact that the great majority of South Asians in British Columbia in the years 1904-14 were Sikhs does not, in itself, explain why so many of them chose to do so. One of the leading explanations is that many of them underwent a process of secularisation while in North America. For example, Khushwant Singh and Satindra Singh suggest that Canadian Sikhs who joined Ghadar became part of a “purely secular movement.”¹⁷ Richard Fox agrees, concluding that Ghadar was characterised by an “adamant secularism.”¹⁸ On the evidence, this interpretation is difficult to accept. Many Sikh militants had little or no understanding of English: they related to the society in which they found themselves through the medium of their religious leaders and in their own language. Describing the ideas and activism of Sikh militants as “secular” fails to capture the genesis of their commitment. It will be argued in this paper that the idealism of the Sikh militants was at heart a religious, not a secular, idealism, and that socialist ideas became influential and effective when they confirmed and legitimated ideas already part of the Sikh religion. Sikh militants were influenced by members of the Socialist Party of Canada, but returned to fight on their own terms and in dedication to their own traditions.

Asian Immigration: Socialist Party Members Respond

To begin, however, we need to explain on what basis, in a working-class political culture overtly hostile to Asian immigration, BC socialists were able to forge a working relationship with South Asian militants. Ethnic and labour historians have noted the widespread existence of what David

Bercuson calls “anti-oriental paranoia” in the British Columbia working class.¹⁹ Ross McCormack describes opposition to Asian labourers as “one of the fundamental drives of the province’s labour movement.”²⁰ According to Peter Ward, the homeland of South Asian immigrants was depicted as “a land of teeming millions, of filth and squalor, of exotic, peculiar customs. The Indians seemed a lesser breed of men, given to weakness, servility, and in some cases villainy.”²¹ In effect, there seems to have been little possibility of BC socialists working with South Asian militants in a common struggle against Canada’s racist immigration laws and British rule in India.

Indeed, some leading members of the Socialist Party evinced the same fear of Asian workers that characterised the labour movement as a whole.²² In a speech given by J.H. Hawthornthwaite at the Dominion Theatre on October 13, 1907, the SPC member for Nanaimo defended the exclusion of Asian workers on the grounds that Asian production would one day swamp “every white market” and threaten western civilisation.²³ W.J. Curry’s analysis was also driven by the visceral fear of Asian workers that existed in the labour movement as a whole. Curry excludes Asians from his definition of the working class, arguing that once workers — meaning “white” workers — control the means of production they will not need the “assistance” of Asian workers. Like some latter-day Moses, he proclaims to Asian workers: “Go ye back across the ocean, join the party of revolt in your country, and do as we have done.” In effect, Curry is saying that Asian labour is only needed to operate a capitalist economy, and will not be needed in British Columbia once a socialist economy based on production for use, not profit, has been created.²⁴ He sees the coming to class consciousness of Asian workers as something that should happen in their homeland, not in alliance with white workers in western countries.

Yet to simply lump members of the Socialist Party in a category labelled “racists” serves to disguise a complex set of attitudes that varied from spokesperson to spokesperson and was in the process of changing in the years leading up to the First World War.²⁵ Asian workers were perceived as a threat, but they were also defended as victims. As the Socialist Party’s paper the *Western Clarion* observed in a 1906 editorial, Asian labour was coming to Canada “through no fault of its own,” and the “unfortunate Hindus” were being used by the capitalist class “to beat down the standard of living of the Canadian workman.”²⁶ If we look beyond the obvious racist and patronizing views of the day which most SPCers shared with the wider society, we recognise a group of socialists struggling — as their Marxist beliefs dictated — to see the capitalist class, and not Asian workers, as the enemy. Individual members of the party, such as D.G. McKenzie, *Clarion* editor and member of the party’s Executive Committee, were more successful than others. In a 1909 editorial, revealingly entitled “All Slaves Together,” McKenzie commented on a recent United Mine Workers convention in Lethbridge which voted to admit Chinese and Japanese

workers: “It is a portent of evil omen to the master class when workers arrive at such a clear understanding of their position that not even the red herring of race hatred will longer serve to turn them aside from the trail of their enemy.”²⁷ McKenzie took his critique even further in the lead-up to the 1909 BC provincial election, observing that the Liberals and Conservatives would once again play the racism card in order to garner votes. McKenzie’s reaction to this “red herring” is to observe: “‘A White Canada’ will no longer serve.”²⁸ McKenzie was, of course, placing far too much faith in the ability of white workers to resist such racist appeals, but he and a number of other party members were indeed developing a conception of the working class that included, rather than excluded, Asian workers.

Historians of race in British Columbia have failed to explain why that attempt resulted in SPC members working much more closely with South Asians than with the Chinese and Japanese. There were at least three reasons for the difference. First, South Asians were fellow-subjects of the British Empire, and at times recognised as such by SPCers. Second, when SPC writers dealt with the threat of economic competition they usually focussed on China, sometimes on Japan, but only rarely on India.²⁹ Third, leading members of the SPC accepted northern India as the birthplace of European civilisation, and did not perceive South Asians as belonging to a different race. As a result, while the involvement of SPCers in fighting discrimination against South Asians was on-going and in some cases extensive, there was relatively little response to the head tax imposed on Chinese immigrants.³⁰

Sikhs in British Columbia: Background and Beliefs

Before detailing the actual relationships existing between Socialist Party members and South Asian militants, it is necessary to explore the composition, cultural and political beliefs, and political activism of South Asians in general, and Sikhs in particular, in British Columbia in the years 1904-14. More than 90 percent of South Asian immigrants to Canada were male Sikhs who tended to come from the most populous states in the Punjab — Hoshiarpur, Jullundur, and Ferozepore in particular. They were largely Jat Sikhs, members of landowning Sikh families who could be quite poverty-stricken or relatively well off. Since the mid-19th century, Jats had formed the core of the British army’s Sikh regiments in India.³¹ There was every reason to believe, therefore, that most Sikh immigrants to Canada would be loyal British subjects whose preferred mode of dealing with grievances would be negotiation and compromise. From the beginning of Sikh immigration in 1904-05 to roughly 1910 the prominent Sikh leaders were indeed “moderates,” educated men such as Dr. Sundar Singh and Teja Singh who felt that just treatment for South Asian immigrants could be had at the hands of British, Indian and Canadian officials.³² Even the moderates, however, were outspoken critics of Canada’s racist immigration laws, and after 1910, Dr. Sundar Singh worked hand-in-hand with militants such as

Hussain Rahim. By 1914, Major T.W.G. Bryan of the District Intelligence Office in Victoria was reporting to the Chief of the General Staff in Ottawa that even a “certain number” of ex-sepoys had joined the seditious movement, and that Major Bing Hall of the 88th Victoria Fusiliers believed that 30% of the South Asian population was “actively seditious,” while 10% remained loyal and 60% were “waverers or unconcerned.”³³ The militants were now predominant among politically active Sikhs, a predominance enhanced by the relatively small numbers of South Asians in British Columbia and their domicile in, or on-going connections with, Vancouver and Victoria.³⁴

It is crucial to understand that the increasing radicalism of Sikh militants did not involve a repudiation of their religious faith, and in some cases their faith was strengthened in the course of their radicalisation. Their faith was founded in the early 16th century by Guru Nanak who, although influenced by both Hinduism and Islam, rejected key elements of both religions, including the importance of the pilgrimage to Islam and the caste system to the Hindu brahmans. The teachings of Guru Nanak called on his followers to fight for the downtrodden and to foster equality among Sikhs while respecting the religious beliefs of others. In the late 17th century, the tenth guru, Gobind Singh, created the Khalsa, or community of baptised Sikhs who took the name Singh, wore turbans, carried kirpans and were unshaven. In British Columbia the embracing of socialist ideas by Sikh militants occurred in a community already firmly grounded in the values and institutions of the Khalsa Sikhs. Lala Har Dayal believed that Sikh militants in North America, far from abandoning their religious beliefs and embracing secularism, instead underwent a “revival of religious consciousness.”³⁵ Balwant Singh, one of the Sikh religious leaders most closely associated with the Socialist Party, travelled to California in February 1909 to preach the Sikh religion, and while there baptised a large number of Sikhs.³⁶ Nor did Khalsa Sikhs accept the abandonment of Khalsa customs easily. In Lahore in 1917, during the trial of the Ghadar militants, Karam Singh gave testimony to the effect that Munsha Singh, one of the nine Sikh Ghadarites in the Canadian group, was mocked by the Khalsa Sikhs for shaving his hair and beard and not going to gurdwara.³⁷

Several points need to be emphasised. First, those Canadian Sikhs who were most radical, and most closely connected to the Socialist Party of Canada, were often Khalsa Sikhs who had served in the British army and were religious leaders defending Khalsa beliefs and practices.³⁸ Second, the mocking of Munsha Singh should not be misunderstood as indicating deep-seated prejudice against non-Khalsa Sikhs. Sohan Lal, for example, played an active role in the Vancouver gurdwara and the Chief Khalsa Diwan (CKD), the central organising body of the Khalsa Sikhs. It was part of the Khalsa tradition to respect the ideas of non-Khalsa Sikhs, whose role included reading the Guru Granth Sahib in meetings.³⁹ Third, the irony of Socialist Party members thinking of South Asians as sojourners, not

citizens, is that their ideas are as a result remarkably free of attacks on Sikh religious beliefs. In fact, there is more evidence of conflict within the Sikh community concerning religious beliefs than there is between white Socialists and South Asian militants, although these conflicts were muted by the need to unite against a common enemy. As a result, association with members of the Socialist Party left Sikh militants free to maintain their religious values while adapting socialist ideas in the struggle against Canada's racist immigration laws and British imperialism in India.

The encounter of the Sikh militants with the formally atheist Socialist Party of Canada, which could quite easily have been antagonistic, resulted instead in the discovery of allies who were also outspoken critics of British imperialism in India, and whose class politics helped legitimise the values on which Sikhism was originally founded. Those values included help for the poor and disadvantaged, the rejection of prejudices based on caste and creed, and opposition to the abuses of religious hierarchies, opposition to which members of the Socialist Party of Canada wholeheartedly agreed. While Sikh criticisms of Hindu brahmans and Muslim ulamas and sheikhs had the potential to create conflicts among South Asian militants along religious lines, it also allowed alliances with both Muslims and Hindus who were seeking to validate the more egalitarian elements of their own traditions.

The Politics of Protest: Convergence and Divergence

The protests of South Asian militants in British Columbia were fed by the denial of citizenship and the passing of racist and exclusionary immigration laws. The apparent influx of South Asians in the fall of 1906 led the BC legislature, on March 27, 1907, to pass by unanimous vote a bill to disenfranchise all South Asians. In April 1907, South Asians were denied the vote in Vancouver municipal elections. South Asians were thereby excluded from serving as school trustees, serving on juries, being employed by the public service, or getting jobs on public works contracts.⁴⁰ As the year progressed the attention of South Asians was drawn to a much more immediate and potentially dangerous form of racism, the organisation of the Asiatic Exclusion League in August 1907. The League was aided and directed by like-minded exclusionists in the United States, where on September 5, 1907 over 500 white lumber workers in Bellingham, Washington attacked South Asian mill workers, evicted them from their lodgings and destroyed their property. Some of the instigators of this attack then proceeded to Vancouver, where their presence and inflammatory rhetoric helped produce the anti-Chinese and anti-Japanese riots that took place on September 7. In Vancouver few, if any, South Asians were attacked by the mob, but they were very much affected by a subsequent Order-in-Council of January 8, 1908 that required all immigrants arriving at a Canadian port to come on a continuous journey from the point of origin.⁴¹ While the legislation applied to all immigrants, the main targets

were Japanese coming to Canada by way of Hawaii, and South Asians, who were effectively barred from the country because there was no direct steamship line from India to Canada.⁴²

Commentary in the *Western Clarion* following the Vancouver riot of 1907 indicates that, while its spokespersons had not freed themselves from the politics of exclusion, they cannot simply be lumped together with other white racists:

The working class mind is being inflamed with the idea that the Japanese, Hindu or Chinese workingman coming to Canada, comes as an enemy to the white worker. As racial prejudice is one of the meanest in the category and least founded upon reason, it is one of the easiest to stir up. When stirred up it is virulent and bestial in the extreme and capable of being used to carry out the purpose, however vile, of those who know how to manipulate it and turn it to account.⁴³

A week later, another comment on the riots indicated that, while SPCers sometimes used racist language and promoted racial stereotypes, its members also demonstrated a penetrating insight into the hypocrisy of white racism:

The Japanese are coming into this Province in large numbers. They will keep on coming so long as it may be to the interest of Japanese capital to send them or white capital to bring them in. That they are not coming here with the intention of remaining a subject people is to their credit. If they are coming with the avowed purpose of seizing the country and enslaving its inhabitants the whites should in decency refrain from making a fuss about it, for the little brown man would be only following the precedent set by the white man through all history. The white man, however, is chiefly remarkable for the ability to preserve his equanimity when he is a winner and squeal like a stuck pig when a loser.⁴⁴

The focus on the hypocrisy, not the cruelty, of white racism is instructive. South Asians in British Columbia were well equipped to fight through the day-to-day racism they encountered. It was the hypocrisy that rankled, the mockery that Britain's acquiescence to Canada's racist immigration laws made of Queen Victoria's November 1, 1858 declaration that all members of the British Empire were equal citizens, regardless of caste, sex or race. While we know very little about personal contact between members of the SPC and South Asian militants, it is difficult to believe, given the extent of racism in Vancouver at this time, that white socialists could have come to this kind of penetrating insight without being influenced by the experiences and feelings of Asian immigrants.

Yet right from the early association of South Asian militants and SPC members in the 1907-08 period, there were marked differences in the ideas and approaches of the two groups. Those differences are revealed by looking at the ideas of a Bengali Hindu militant like Taraknath Das, who

was closely associated with the Socialist Party in this period. Before coming to Canada, Das had been a member of Anushilan Samiti, a revolutionary nationalist secret society organised in Calcutta on March 24, 1902.⁴⁵ Das had been involved in organising a branch of the Anushilan Samiti at Calcutta University in the midst of the nationalist agitation opposing the partition of Bengal in 1905, and had been instrumental in organising the Hindustani Association the year before. According to one historian of Anushilan Samiti, Das was among a group of members sent abroad to acquire weapons for the movement, which employed bombings and political assassinations among its tactics.⁴⁶ In Canada, however, his activities mostly involved the dissemination of ideas and the seeking of allies among the Sikhs and BC socialists. In February 1908, Das published an article entitled "Hindu Fitness For Self-Rule" in the *Western Clarion*, then under the editorship of D.G. McKenzie.⁴⁷

In his article Das commented that men "like Luther, Mazzini, Patrick Henry, Thomas Paine and other workers for the cause of humanity, were invariably in a minority at the beginning and came out victorious in the end."⁴⁸ The emphasis on the revolutionary minority reflects the tactics of the Hindu-inspired revolutionary nationalist organisations fighting against British imperialism in Bengal. It foreshadows the fact that the Ghadarites who went to India to foment revolution tended to forget that as important as a dedicated, self-sacrificing revolutionary minority was to the cause, it could not replace the political education and self-organisation of the masses which the Ghadarites themselves believed to be so important.

Das's espousal of the key role of the revolutionary minority represented a marked divergence from the revolutionary politics of the Socialist Party of Canada. While McKenzie and many other SPCers agreed wholeheartedly with Das's assertion of Indian fitness for self-government, they placed much less emphasis on the role of the revolutionary minority, and much more emphasis on the long, slow process of educating workers to the responsibilities of power. In an article that reads very much like a response to Das's February piece, D.G. McKenzie commented in May 1908:

What hope is there for the people of India? An outbreak is not improbable but what would suit the government better? The British hirelings with bayonet and gallows would soon settle the question. The Indian revolutionary movement would be drowned out in India's best blood, and the reign of "Pax Britannica" be once more established.⁴⁹

McKenzie's assessment is eerily prophetic in the way in which it describes what would actually happen to Ghadar supporters who attempted to foment rebellion against the British in India and Southeast Asia during the First World War period. McKenzie is also alerting us to the Socialist Party of Canada's basic disagreement with the tactics of the leading South Asian militants in British Columbia, such as Das and G.D. Kumar, who was an associate of Das in Calcutta.⁵⁰

In April 1908, Das began publication of the *Free Hindusthan*, the first South Asian publication of any kind in Canada. Harish Puri believes that the paper, written in English, was directed at a white audience, on the assumption that few South Asian labourers could read English.⁵¹ Hugh Johnston, on the other hand, believes that Das was attempting to reach a Sikh audience.⁵² Puri's point is well taken, but there seems little doubt that Das was attempting to influence Sikh readers, and that he had a potential audience among Sikh immigrants who had learned at least some English while serving in the British military.⁵³ In any event, the *Free Hindusthan* certainly attracted the attention of the Canadian authorities, who were as concerned with developing links with Canada's socialists as they were with the militance of the South Asians themselves. According to Sub-District Intelligence Officer W. McLeod of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, the *Free Hindusthan* was published in the press room of the Socialist Party of Canada, which also produced the party's paper, the *Western Clarion*.

The fact that both the *Western Clarion* and the *Free Hindusthan* were published in the press room of the SPC led to great concern among immigration officials and the RNWMP that Socialist influence was a significant factor in South Asian unrest. One can speak of the importance of "socialist" influence only if the word is very broadly defined. Two years after Das's article appeared in the *Western Clarion*, he based an appeal for revolution in India in his paper *The Free Hindusthan* on the ideas of Abraham Lincoln and Giuseppe Mazzini, not on those of Marx. Das quotes Mazzini: "Education and insurrections are the only methods by which we can rouse the mass of the people."⁵⁴ On the need for education and self-organisation the South Asian militants and the SPCers were of one mind. This would be a central organising idea of the Ghadar movement when it was founded on the American west coast in 1913.⁵⁵ On the other hand, South Asian militants like Das were much more attracted to the fomenting of "insurrections" led by a revolutionary minority than were the Canadian Marxists, and on this question the influence of Mazzini is of more significance than that of Marx.

Michael O'Dwyer, Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab from May 1913 to May 1919, believed that the Sikh militants, these "ignorant but sturdy men of the peasant type," had fallen under the influence of "clever intriguing Hindu revolutionaries."⁵⁶ There is some truth to his claim, because Hindu revolutionary nationalists like Taraknath Das encouraged the efforts of Khalsa Sikh veterans of the British army to forsake their allegiance to the British crown. Khalsa Sikh army veterans represented the courageous and well-trained fighters who would prove invaluable in any attempt to overthrow British rule in India. Das, in his paper *The Free Hindusthan*, appealed especially to Sikh army veterans, commenting in the September-October 1909 issue on a meeting held at the Vancouver gurdwara on October 3, 1909. At that meeting, Sardar Natha Singh presented a resolution to the effect that no member of the Executive

Committee of the gurdwara should wear “any kind of medals, buttons, uniforms or insignia which may signify that the position of the party wearing the article is nothing but a slave to the British supremacy.” Das’s paper reported that “the audience solemnly and unanimously accepted the proposal,” and Gharib Singh, an executive member, took off his medal.⁵⁷ Bhag Singh later burned his honourable discharge certificate. While Das clearly approved of this development, there is no reason to doubt, O’Dwyer’s attitude notwithstanding, that this rejection of service in the British army came from within the Khalsa Sikh community itself. Nor did the break necessarily represent any lessening of the importance of Sikh values and practices to Khalsa Sikhs like Balwant, Bhag and Hari Singh. The orthodoxy being challenged was a political, not a religious, one.

Hussain Rahim: Unity Forged, Unity Fractured

Until 1910, therefore, we can do no more than claim that the Socialist Party of Canada sympathised with the South Asian militants and shared some of their ideas, but there was little active support coming from the Canadian SPCers. The Socialist Party’s efforts to educate and organise Canadian workers were largely confined to workers born in Canada, the United States and Europe. However, a significant change in the relationship was signalled on January 14, 1910 with the arrival in Canada of Hussain Rahim. Rahim, a Hindu whose real name was Chagan Khairaj Varma, was Lohana Bania by caste. A native of Porbander State in Kathiawar, Rahim was arrested and held for deportation on October 27, 1910.⁵⁸ His confiscated effects included letters from Taraknath Das, notes on manufacturing explosives, and the addresses of Indian agitators in France, the United States, Switzerland, Natal and Egypt.⁵⁹ Rahim was resolute when faced with the possibility of deportation, responding to the interrogation by telling Royal Northwest Mounted Police agent William C. Hopkinson: “You drive us Hindoos out of Canada and we will drive every white man out of India.”⁶⁰ The application for a writ of habeas corpus overturning Rahim’s deportation order, heard before Justice J. Murphy on February 15, 1911 was granted on March 9, 1911, on the argument that Rahim was a tourist at the time of his arrival in Canada. A second deportation order was quashed on November 9, 1911.⁶¹ William Hopkinson was distressed about the negative impact on “the prestige of the Government,” noting that the two failures to deport Rahim “have so bolstered up his position in the Hindu community here as to make him a leader and a counsellor in respect to all matters concerning their community.”⁶²

Hussain Rahim’s influence was pronounced both within and without the South Asian community. In the spring of 1911 he, G.D. Kumar and Dr. Spencer, Chief of the Local Option League, formed the Hindu Temperance Association.⁶³ Rahim, along with Atma Ram, also organised the United India League.⁶⁴ By February 1912, he was involved in the free speech fights being conducted by the Industrial Workers of the World and some members

of the Socialist Party.⁶⁵ W.C. Hopkinson reported that Rahim had been assisting the IWW “by furnishing bail to release some of them arrested for creating a disturbance in the streets.” Rahim had also espoused the IWW cause at a recent meeting. Hopkinson noted that Rahim was being assisted by two Muslims, one of whom, Nawab Khan, would later become a founding member of the Hindu Association of the Pacific Coast and an important leader in the Ghadar movement.⁶⁶ The other, Baggae Khan, was one of the South Asian militants who contributed to Rahim’s fund-raising campaign for the Socialist Party of Canada.⁶⁷ While the number of Muslim militants in British Columbia at this time was quite small, and not very much is known about them, Nawab and Baggae Khan’s association with Rahim demonstrates the way in which South Asian militancy cut across religious differences and indicates the pivotal role Hussain Rahim played in bringing Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims and white Socialists together.

In the spring of 1912, Rahim launched a challenge to British Columbia’s racist voting laws, which prohibited South Asians from voting, by getting his name placed on the voters’ list for the provincial election held on March 28. Not only did he vote, but he also served as a scrutineer for the Socialist Party in the Ward Four Polling Station, which was in the Vancouver City Hall. When William Hopkinson found out about Rahim’s activities, he tracked him down and had him arrested, then had his house searched. The search turned up a substantial quantity of SPC and IWW literature, a newspaper clipping dealing with the preparation of bombs, and evidence that Rahim had solicited more than \$100 from South Asians for the Socialist Party and IWW. Hopkinson was clearly disturbed by this evidence, and commented:

The Hindus have up to the present never identified themselves with any particular Political party and the introduction by Rahim of the socialist propaganda into this community is, I consider a very serious matter, as the majority of these people are uneducated and ignorant and easily led like sheep by a man like Rahim. The danger to the country is not here but the question is what effect will all these Socialistic and Revolutionary teachings have on the people in India on the return of these men primed with Western methods of agitation and Political and Social equality.⁶⁸

Hopkinson’s assessment of the danger to the British Empire is both insightful and misleading. He is right in arguing that the real threat would occur in India, not in Canada. He is wrong, however, in believing that the threat lay in the militants adopting “Western methods of agitation” — they already had their own methods, methods which the Socialist Party of Canada rejected.

In the April 1, 1912 letter in which he reported on Hussain Rahim’s activities William Hopkinson also informed Ottawa that leading South Asian activists were subscribing money to the Socialist Party of Canada. The supporters included Muslim militants such as Baggae Khan, and

“moderates” such as Dr Sundar Singh, as well as prominent Khalsa Sikhs such as Bhag and Balwant Singh.⁶⁹ In June 1912, Hopkinson reported that Rahim and at least 12 other South Asians, including Bhag Singh, Balwant Singh and Gharib Singh, had formed a local of the Socialist Party of Canada in order to translate SPC and IWW literature into Indian languages.⁷⁰ Again, however, one must be cautious in assessing this evidence.⁷¹ First, while it may be true that Rahim had a commitment from the Sikh militants to form a local, there is no actual evidence that the South Asian local ever functioned as such. Second, Balwant Singh’s feelings about Hussain Rahim raise questions about their ability to work together. During his testimony at the Second Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Trial in 1917, Singh observed that Rahim had attempted to convince the Khalsa Sikhs to cut their hair, shave their beards, “and to become like himself.”⁷² It may be the case that as early as 1909 Balwant Singh had “imbibed Western ideas of liberty and socialism,” but his willingness to join the Socialist Party and support Hussain Rahim’s fight against racist immigration laws and British imperialism did not involve the repudiation of his identity as a Khalsa Sikh, or mean that socialism had replaced his religion as the basis of his beliefs and politics.⁷³

While the Khalsa Sikhs remained on the periphery of the Socialist Party, Hussain Rahim became one of the party’s leading members. Sometime late in 1912 or early in 1913, Rahim became a member of the Vancouver-based Dominion Executive Committee (DEC) of the SPC. This is a significant development: no historian of the Socialist Party has recognised that a person of colour ever attained such an influential position in the party. Rahim’s importance to the party emerged in a meeting of the Dominion Executive Committee held on February 13, 1913. At that meeting the DEC reacquired ownership of the party’s paper, the *Western Clarion*. The paper, the lifeblood of the Socialist Party, was not published between November 1912 and March 1913. The party was in bad shape at this time following the defection of the great majority of its Manitoba and Ontario members to the Social Democratic Party in 1910-11. The timing of Rahim’s involvement seems to indicate that he played a major role in putting the *Clarion* and the party back on its feet. At the February 13 meeting, he offered the SPC office room and free rent at 516 Main Street, the offices of the Canada-India Supply Company, where the DEC held its meetings until late in 1914.⁷⁴

Hussain Rahim’s involvement with the Socialist Party of Canada was doubly significant. As manager of the Canada India Supply and Trust Company Limited, which traded in real estate, Rahim was a *petit bourgeois* attempting to organise and mobilise Sikh workers who worked for wages.⁷⁵ In Vancouver, therefore, Rahim was engaged in the same process as Ghadar members would be in the Punjab, “the process of an attempted bridging of the gap between the political orientation of the *petit bourgeois* intellectuals and the peasant masses.”⁷⁶ On February 22, 1913, nine days after Rahim offered free office space to the Dominion Executive Committee of the

Socialist Party, he spoke at a meeting in the Dominion Hall in Vancouver organised by the Khalsa Diwan and the United India League. In a ringing condemnation of the Canadian Immigration Department, Rahim identified Asian immigrants with the working class. He claimed, according to a correspondent to the local immigration agent, that “it was no new thing this persecution of the working classes, they had at all times been fooled and down trodden: but although this had always been the case, it could only be temporarily, the working class would always win out.”⁷⁷ By identifying South Asian workers as members of the working class, Rahim was cutting directly against the white racism of even some members of his own party, who joined in the general chorus of racism and exclusionism in British Columbia at this time, an exclusionism that did not see workers of colour as fellow members of the working class.⁷⁸ Rahim was that most dangerous of agitators, an educated *petit bourgeois* appealing to the “illiterate” masses, and a socialist attempting to build bridges between white and South Asian workers.

The task of building those bridges faced daunting obstacles, including cultural and linguistic differences, and the racism of white workers. The task was made even more difficult by Rahim’s own conception of the working class. Hussain Rahim was not really talking about the Indian working class he knew, or the Canadian working class he lived among. If his working class had a historical reality, it was the European working class Marx talked about. In a sense Rahim’s working class, like that of many “white” members of the Socialist Party, was the working class that ought to be, not the working class as it actually existed. Like Lala Har Dayal, who observes that the “educated classes of India have no idea of the horrible destitution of the mass of the people in Europe,” Rahim almost suggests that the workers and poor of Europe are in greater need than the workers and poor of India.⁷⁹ Har Dayal and Rahim were not so much arguing from the actual material reality of the Indian and European working classes on the eve of the First World War, as they were arguing from Marx’s impassioned description of the working class of his own day.

The great majority of white workers in British Columbia on the eve of the First World War were more concerned with protecting their own jobs than they were with seeking solidarity with their Asian brothers. By 1913, unemployment in British Columbia had become a serious problem, and the British Columbia labour movement was concerned with wages, working conditions and protecting jobs, a task that was perceived to include the exclusion of competitors from India, China and Japan. Hussain Rahim and other members of the Socialist Party fighting for the rights of South Asians were increasingly at odds with the trade union leadership and the majority of rank and file white workers in the province. Rahim’s idealised conception of the working class was difficult for Sikh workers to accept, facing as they did the often prejudiced thoughts and actions of the white working class among whom they actually lived and worked. Concerns with

wages and working conditions notwithstanding, it was Canada's racist immigration laws and British rule in India that continued to be the focus of Sikh anger and protest.

The Ghadar Revolt: Meetings and Partings

In the fall of 1913, hundreds of South Asians rallied behind Bhagwan Singh when he was charged with entering Canada under a false identity. Singh, a native of Amritsar, was granthi of the Sikh temple in Hong Kong in the years 1910-13. He left Hong Kong in May 1913, calling himself Natha Singh, and became known in North America for "preaching sedition."⁸⁰ Arrested and ordered deported on September 30, Singh was finally forced out of the country on November 19, in spite of two writs of habeas corpus filed by defence lawyer and Socialist Party of Canada member J. Edward Bird.⁸¹

The more public efforts and influence of socialists such as J. Edward Bird should not be allowed to overshadow the reality that, in these times of crisis, Sikh militants themselves turned to their religious beliefs for inspiration and strength. Just how powerful and central this motivation was appears in a letter written in Gurmukhi by an unknown Sikh resident of Berkeley, California to Lall Singh, the jemadar of police at Hong Kong who had jailed Bhagwan Singh prior to his departure for Canada. The author writes:

Do you think that Guru will call you a Sikh now? No, he will never call you a Sikh ... Why have you become a slave to the British, and an enemy to your country? The guru made us uproot oppression not countenance ... You remember, the oppression just now against a man, who has not killed your children ... Why do you give shame to your ancestor, Guru and parents and oppress your own people? ... Do you not feel shame? Reflect what your Guru did for you and what you are doing?⁸²

Although not identified, the author is in all probability a Sikh student attending the University of California at Berkeley, where Lala Har Dayal and the Ghadar supporters actively recruited followers. The influence of Canadian socialists notwithstanding, the ideas expressed here more accurately reflect the primary motivation of Canadian Sikh supporters of Ghadar. In 1914, Hussain Rahim would note that "there are half a dozen preachers connected with the Sikh church who today may be preaching from the pulpit of the church and next day handling lumber."⁸³ Rahim would have had much more difficulty finding half a dozen Sikh lumber handlers capable of addressing an audience on Marxist theory.

The deportation of Bhagwan Singh occurred at precisely the time when the first issue of *Ghadar* was published in the United States. Bhagwan Singh quickly became both a hero and a martyr to Ghadar supporters in Canada and the United States, and word of what was happening in North America rapidly spread across the Pacific. Gurdit Singh Sanhali, a native of

Amritsar District currently living in Hong Kong, decided to challenge the passing of Order-in-council 2642, which prohibited “the landing at any port of entry in British Columbia” of “Artisans” and “Labourers, skilled and unskilled.”⁸⁴ He did so by chartering a ship, the Komagata Maru, which left Hong Kong on April 4, 1914 with 165 passengers on board. Stops in Shanghai, Moji and Yokohama brought to 376 the number of passengers on board — 340 Sikhs, 24 Muslims, and 12 Hindus — including two women and three children. On May 23, the ship anchored off Vancouver, but its passengers were not allowed to land.⁸⁵

In response, a temple support committee was established by Bhag Singh, Balwant Singh, Mit Singh and Hussain Rahim, all Ghadar supporters. On May 31, 600 South Asians attended a protest meeting in Vancouver’s Dominion Hall addressed by Balwant Singh and Hussain Rahim. William Hopkinson’s account of this meeting indicates the extent to which it was based on an appeal to the Sikh martial tradition and the Sikh religion. In seeking support for the people on board the Komagata Maru, Balwant Singh hearkened back to the “Sikh warriors” who had fought against the British in the Sikh Wars of the 1840s, telling his audience that they, like their forebears, should not submit to English tyranny. Balwant Singh, Sohan Lal and Ojagir Singh as well, appealed to the “religious sentiments” of the audience, not to socialist ideas, in asking for donations.⁸⁶

On June 21, 1914 the South Asian community joined with the Socialist Party of Canada to stage an even larger rally at the Dominion Hall. According to the Vancouver *Sun*, the meeting was attended by 800 Hindus and 200 whites. Several Hindu speakers “raised the red flag.” Chairman Hussain Rahim introduced Socialist Party member J. Edward Bird as someone who had “ever been a friend of the working man.” Following a brief history of the Orders-in-council excluding Asian immigrants, and attempts made to overturn those Orders-in-council, Bird talked of South Asians as fellow socialists and challenged white workers who would exclude South Asians from the ranks of the working class:

I have heard from time to time that these men are anarchists and they are all bad, all Socialists. I have myself the honour of belonging to the Canadian Socialist party for years and I have never seen a Socialist yet who was not a decent man ... don’t believe all these stories that you hear about the Hindus. I believe there is no finer race physically or mentally than the Sikh ... Physically they are our superiors and mentally our equals ... to own up frankly is it not that we are afraid of these men, because they are our competitors, because they are coming here for the purpose of competing with us, is not that the fact? We talk about keeping this a white man’s country — and see if that is not prejudice in your heart.⁸⁷

While it was not uncommon in this period for “white” Canadians to speak in glowing terms about the religiosity, intelligence, resourcefulness, courage

and capacity for hard work of the Sikhs, it was quite uncommon for a speaker to directly confront white workers and condemn their racism.⁸⁸

H.M. Fitzgerald followed Bird, and began his direct address to South Asians in the audience by saying that he did “not know of any collection of human society that did not have an Asiatic origin.” Echoing the politics of the South Asian militants, Fitzgerald said that because of the opposition expressed between sect and sect in India “a little tin pot people in the north-east part of the Atlantic can go into your country and dominate you,” and in spite of the fact that “your heroism has been extolled the world over ... I say to you now if the white men of the British Empire keep you from moving within that Empire it is up to you.” Fitzgerald described India as “a country from which civilization flowed out over the entire world when we members of a bull-dog breed were wandering around the swamps of Germany.” Shifting Bird’s emphasis somewhat, Fitzgerald advised his Asian audience not to waste its time on the Komagata Maru, but to “get back to your own land filled with the spirit of revolt and sweep the country, and then fight the people that we Socialists of North America are fighting.”⁸⁹

H.M. Fitzgerald’s speech provides a crucial insight into the contradictory nature of the Socialist Party of Canada’s racial attitudes and relationship with South Asian militants. On the one hand, his praise of the Indian militants, and the argument that South Asians held the power to overthrow British imperialism, set him apart from the white racists of his political culture, and served to inspire South Asian militants. On the other, his advice to “get back to your own land” echoes W.J. Curry’s December 1908 directive to “Go ye back across the ocean.” Fitzgerald’s advice demonstrates the continuing failure of even the most sympathetic Socialist Party spokespersons to fully accept South Asians as future citizens of Canada. Where the fate of the Ghadar movement is concerned, however, the important consideration is that Fitzgerald’s call to arms serves to validate a decision that has already been made by many Sikh militants in the audience.

On the question of socialist influence, it is worthy of note that Fitzgerald’s ideas are not Marxist in any decided way. He praises Indian civilisation, denigrates the West, and validates the struggles of South Asian militants as the travails of a people who had created a great civilisation laid low by British imperialism, a people who through their own efforts could be great once again.⁹⁰ There was nothing specifically Marxist about this position: it was consistent with the views of James Mill and Edmund Burke, and was espoused by revolutionary nationalists in India. In British Columbia, Sikh militants brought their own understanding to this call for a return to Indian greatness, looking to the Sikh heroes of the wars of the 1840s against the British, not to the Sikh heroes of the Indian Mutiny who had fought as allies of the British in suppressing the sepoy revolt. Canadian Sikhs were influenced by socialist ideas, and did identify with revolutionaries fighting to overthrow oppressive regimes in Ireland,

Mexico and China, but those socialist ideas buttressed religious goals and commitments that came out of the Sikh religious experience. Fitzgerald's placing of responsibility for overthrowing the British Raj on the Sikh rank and file is, however, consistent with the Socialist Party's Marxist-based advocacy of self-education and self-organisation. It is also instructive that Fitzgerald counsels overthrowing British rule and then engaging in the class struggle with India's capitalists, when the class struggle was first, last, and always the focus of SPC spokespersons when addressing white workers. This shift in focus is significant, because critics of the Socialist Party have traditionally condemned its members for collapsing the race question into the class question. Here, Fitzgerald's acceptance of the "politics of exclusion" notwithstanding, is an example of an SPC spokesperson placing race ahead of class.

Ironically, while H.M. Fitzgerald was on the public platform exhorting the militants to return to India, J. Edward Bird was attempting to get the passengers on board the *Komagata Maru* into the country. On June 29 and 30, 1914, in the Court of Appeal at Victoria, Bird launched a defence in the case of Munshi Singh, one of the passengers from the *Komagata Maru*, in a test case concerning the legality of the exclusion order. Bird failed, but he failed in part because of the very effectiveness of his argument, an argument that struck right to the heart of claims made by white racists and exclusionists. In the course of his defence, Bird contested contemporary uses and understandings of the concept of "race" in order to expose the absurdity of Canada's immigration laws. Bird stated: "We are identically of the same race as the Hindus, that is of the Arian race and they are a branch of the Caucasian race and ethnologists state we are of just the same Asiatic race as they are." Bird quoted from the *Hindu International Encyclopedia* to demonstrate that "99 per cent of applicants for admission to Canada are broadly speaking of Asiatic origin," and followed this argument with the assertion that there "is no such thing as an Asiatic race," and that the word race itself is "incapable of any understanding."⁹¹

In the decision rendered on July 6, 1914, in which a writ of habeas corpus was denied, the final argument advanced by the judges was to claim that Munshi Singh was of Asiatic, not Aryan or Caucasian race. Judge J.A. McPhillips quoted several sources, including A.H. Sayce, an Oxford Assyriologist, and the 11th edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*, in order to prove that the term Asiatic race was employed by reputed ethnologists, and was not just a popular usage. In doing so, McPhillips reversed the argument the judges had made during the appeal hearing, when they argued that the popular usage was of more importance than the ethnological terminology. It was a meaningful moment in the history of Canadian "race relations." Bird had exposed the fallacy of race-based exclusion laws, and put the agents of the Canadian state on the defensive. McPhillips was forced to side-step Bird's argument by appealing to cultural, rather than racial, differences as a legitimate basis for excluding South Asians. He argued that

it was evident that “the Hindu race, as well as the Asiatic race in general, are, in their conception of life and ideas of society, fundamentally different to the Anglo-Saxon and Celtic races, and European races in general.”⁹²

The fact that BC socialists and South Asian militants were already in the process of giving the lie to McPhillips’s assertion of fundamental differences in their ways of thinking — while of great significance — proved to be of little help to the passengers on board the *Komagata Maru*. Following an unsuccessful attempt by authorities to board the ship, the *Komagata Maru* was forced to set sail on July 23, 1914, while thousands of Vancouver residents stood on the docks and cheered. On September 29, 1914 the ship landed at Budge Budge, 14 miles south of Calcutta, after being denied entry to Hong Kong, Kobe, Yokohama and Singapore. In the evening, an attempt to capture Gurdit Singh resulted in the deaths of 20 Sikhs, two European officers, two Indian police, and two local residents. Gurdit Singh escaped, but gave himself up to authorities in 1921.⁹³

The *Komagata Maru* incident was the last straw for many Sikh militants, their tolerance already stretched to the limit by the intrusive activities of William Hopkinson and his Sikh informants. On August 17, 1914 Harnam Singh disappeared and was later found dead.⁹⁴ Arjan Singh, another of William Hopkinson’s informants, was executed by Ran Singh, an elderly religious man. On September 5, following the cremation of Arjan Singh, Bela Singh shot Bhag Singh, Badan Singh and a number of other worshippers inside the Vancouver gurdwara. Bhag Singh and Badan Singh died as a result of their wounds. Wilfred Gribble, in an article in the *Western Clarion* written in the midst of these events, decried the killings and rejected the “methods of the assassin, the bravo and the swashbuckler.”⁹⁵ Gribble’s criticism is, if anything, more directed at the militants than at Hopkinson’s informants, and is the same kind of critique members of the Socialist Party directed at white socialists and anarchists who engaged in essentially individualist, rather than collectivist, modes of action. It is also instructive that Gribble’s critique is carried out entirely without racial or religious allusions. Wilfred Gribble in 1914 was espousing the same politics D.G. McKenzie had espoused in 1908: once again the socialists and South Asian militants found themselves divided, not by race, religion or ideas, but by tactics.⁹⁶ They continued to share a commitment to the education and organisation of the rank and file, and continued to be idealistic about the willingness of the oppressed to overthrow their oppressors, but the SPCers were not willing to join the South Asian militants in embracing armed struggle.

As Bela Singh’s trial approached, Mewa Singh was either delegated, or volunteered, to assassinate William Hopkinson. On October 21, 1914 Singh calmly and deliberately shot Hopkinson to death in the corridors of the Vancouver Court House. He then gave himself up. He was indicted two days later, and the trial set for October 30, with Hussain Rahim, Sohan Lal, Balwant Singh, and Kartar Singh, all Ghadar supporters, named as

co-conspirators.⁹⁷ After a two-hour trial, and a jury deliberation of five minutes, Mewa Singh was condemned to be hanged on January 11, 1915.⁹⁸ Sohan Lal was brought to trial and acquitted, whereupon the charges against Rahim and Balwant and Kartar Singh were dropped.

Hussain Rahim's arrest had an immediate impact on the Socialist Party, which had taken a prominent role in aiding South Asian protest concerning the *Komagata Maru*. Rahim appears to have attended his last meeting of the Dominion Executive Committee of the SPC on October 23, 1914. On November 21, the *Western Clarion* reported that the Dominion Executive Committee had acquired new headquarters at 513 Hamilton Street.⁹⁹ Rahim did not return to take his position on the DEC after his arrest and release. Although the pages of the *Western Clarion* hold no clues, other than Wilfred Gribble's article, to these events, there can be little doubt that leading members of the Socialist Party came to the conclusion that the organisation's association with the militants now threatened its very existence. The Socialist Party was willing to support South Asian protest against Canada's racist immigration policies, and also willing to condemn British imperialism in India, but it was not willing to support, or appear to be supporting, tactics with which it was in fundamental disagreement, and which could attract the unwanted attentions of the police and government authorities.

Critics of Ghadar have been justified in pointing out that the movement was poorly organised, not well armed, and so infiltrated by British intelligence that it had virtually no chance of success. That assessment is borne out by the fate of leading Ghadarites. Balwant Singh, tried as part of the Canadian group in the Second Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy trial, was executed. The death sentence of Kartar Singh Chand Nau was later commuted to forfeiture of property and transportation for life. Hari Singh, another religious leader among the British Columbia Khalsa Sikhs, was tried as part of the Canadian group and sentenced to forfeiture of property and transportation for life. Harnam Singh Sahri and five other Ghadarites were hung in 1916 in the Mandalay Conspiracy Case.¹⁰⁰ By 1917, Hussain Rahim was one of the few members of Ghadar still in Canada.¹⁰¹

The Shared Legacy of East and Left

The fall of 1914 brought a parting of the ways for East and Left. The Socialist Party's attention was now fully drawn to the First World War and the effort to maintain socialist internationalism in a world given over to nationalism and imperialism. The SPC's class politics found a more fitting adversary in the capitalist profiteers who made fortunes from the labour of the working class and the Canadian state's attempts to crush labour militancy and silence its socialist allies than in the faraway rulers of British India. The struggle for Indian independence faded into the background as the struggle to unite workers in industrial unions and break down craft

divisions in the labour force led to the formation of the One Big Union and the Winnipeg General Strike in 1919.¹⁰² Yet it must not be forgotten that the character of the industrial union movement in Canada was shaped by South Asian militants like Hussain Rahim, whose valiant struggle to win South Asians the vote alerted white socialists to the marginalisation of Asian workers in British Columbia, and laid the groundwork for the greater willingness of labour organisers to include South Asians in the industrial union movement of the First World War period. The broadening and deepening of worker solidarity in Canada in the First World War period is one of the legacies of Hussein Rahim and other South Asian militants.

The parting of the ways should not blind us to the quite remarkable convergence of ideas that characterised this encounter of East and Left. Like the Ghadarites, members of the SPC spent little time thinking about the “alternative social and political order” they would create after the revolution, and in their thinking “little attention was given to a critical analysis of existing social formations.”¹⁰³ Like members of the SPC, Ghadarites tended to assume that the “objective conditions” corresponded to their “subjective desires.”¹⁰⁴ As Harish Puri points out, the members of Ghadar spent little time considering their revolutionary strategy, one of the strongest and most widespread criticisms of the Socialist Party of Canada members who were directly involved in the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919.¹⁰⁵ This shared weakness had a common source, an enduring belief in the self-organisation and education of the working class that was the key idea in Marx’s thought espoused by Har Dayal. Socialists like H.M. Fitzgerald encouraged South Asian militants to believe that they held their fates in their own hands by arguing that it was only their own sectarianism, only divisions among Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, which prevented the overthrow of British imperialism in India. This was not a new idea to South Asian opponents of British imperialism, but one that went back at least as far as the Indian Mutiny of 1857-8, which was brought on by the realisation among the rebel leaders that native troops in India greatly outnumbered European troops, and that the time had seemingly come to destroy British power in India. The role of the Canadian socialists was to validate and give new meaning to ideas that already existed in the thinking of the South Asian militants.

The commitment to education and organisation of the masses lived on into the 1920s and 1930s. Even as some Sikh Ghadarites joined the Communist Party, read Lenin and Trotsky, and became advocates of the vanguard party, the concern with education and “liberating the working class from bourgeois ideology,” as J.S. Grewal puts it, continued to be an important element in their thinking.¹⁰⁶ The idea that the workers and peasants had to free themselves from the yoke of their oppressors by committing themselves to self-education and self-organisation remained. In the Punjab, in organisations like Kirti Kisan, the educational emphasis of the Socialist Party of Canada lived on. As Harish Puri points out, there was

even “a certain anticipation of Ghandi in the thinking of these simple men that if all Indians withdrew their support to the government, the British rule in India would have no legs to stand on.”¹⁰⁷

This common commitment to the education and organisation of the oppressed, and the idealistic belief that they had only to point the way and the masses would follow, should not serve to disguise the fact that Sikh militants entered the struggle on their own terms, and that Sikh protest was emerging from the Sikh religious and historical experience itself. British colonial officials, Khalsa Sikhs loyal to the British raj, and historians who honour Sikh Ghadarites as heroic contributors to the Indian independence movement have all tended to downplay the role of religious motivations. The fact that it was a constant struggle to build and maintain gurdwaras in a hostile environment, or that a small number of Sikhs turned to alcohol to numb the loneliness of being separated from family and friends, or that Khalsa Sikhs opposed proselytising within the Ghadar movement itself in no way negates the commitment of Sikh Ghadarites to remaining committed to the core values of their faith. If, as the leaders of the Khalsa Diwan claimed, they were “fallen Sikhs,” it was because they had become the enemies of British rule in India, not because they had ceased to be dedicated Sikhs.¹⁰⁸ In Canada they found a cause, and the support they needed, to return to the values upon which the Sikh religion was founded, and to the heroism of the Sikh battles against, not for, the British invaders. They were not just appealing to religious sentiments for secular ends, as J.S. Grewal argues, an analysis that assumes that ending British imperialism was a “secular,” not a religious, goal for the Sikh members of Ghadar.¹⁰⁹ It is true that Mewa Singh saw himself as “the servant of all nations.” Yet Mewa Singh did what he did “in the name of one God,” not in the name of socialism, and he called for victory “to the army of the Guruji,” not to the international working class or the people of India.¹¹⁰ The co-operation that existed in Ghadar in Canada among Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims was not so much based on the abandonment of religious principles as it was based on their affirmation.

Leading members of the Socialist Party of Canada, who belonged to a party legendary for its vitriolic denunciations of anyone and everyone who disagreed with them, and who attacked Christians, trade union leaders, middle class women reformers and other socialists, took a leading role in supporting and defending South Asian militants in Canada, a support that came without overt attempts to change their beliefs. It was members of the Socialist Party such as D.G. McKenzie, J. Edward Bird and H.M. Fitzgerald, orthodox Marxists who are now considered among the most close-minded and intolerant thinkers in Canadian history, who fought for and with South Asian militants in a political culture dominated by racists and exclusionists. They were not able to jettison the politics of exclusion, but their ideas were remarkably free of the racist attitudes so prevalent in the political culture of British Columbia and Canada. For South Asian militants

already committed to returning to India to free an enslaved people, H.M. Fitzgerald's exhortation to return to India and overthrow the British Raj was experienced as a call to empowerment, not a racist attack. When East met Left the historic result was a shared legacy of commitment to disciplined, dedicated and idealist struggle to educate, organise, and free the oppressed.

Notes

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1. On Ghadar in the United States, see Joan M. Jensen, *Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988); Anil Baran Ganguly, *Ghadar Revolution in America* (New Delhi: Metropolitan, 1980); L.P. Mathur, *Indian Revolutionary Movement in the United States of America* (Delhi: S. Chand & Co., 1970). On Canada, see Norman Buchignani, Doreen M. Indra, with Ram Srivast[a]va, *Continuous Journey: A Social History of South Asians in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985); Hugh Johnston, *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979); and Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs, Volume 2: 1839-1964* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1966), 174-81.
 2. For Lala Har Dayal (1884-1939), see Emily C. Brown, *Har Dayal Hindu Revolutionary and Rationalist* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1975).
 3. Quoted in B.N. Pande, "Trends in Muslim Indian Politics, 1857-1918: The Role of Aligarh and Deoband," in Pande, ed., *A Centenary History of the Indian National Congress (1885-1985): Volume 1* (New Delhi: All India Congress Committee(I)/Vikas Publishing House Private Ltd., 1985), 267.
 4. Michael O'Brien, "Multiculturalism and the Politics of Identity in the British Empire, 1902-1914," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association, St. John's, Newfoundland, June 6, 1997.
 5. Quoted in Harish K. Puri, *Ghadar Movement: Ideology, Organisation & Strategy* (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University Press, 1983), 31.
 6. Puri, *Ghadar Movement*, 51.
 7. When British colonial officials and writers on India used the term "anarchist" they were not referring to the ideas of Bakunin, Kropotkin, Tolstoy or Goldman. Rather, they meant any outspoken opponent of British rule in India who spoke positively of Indian — usually meaning Hindu — civilisation. James Campbell Ker, *Political Trouble in India, 1907-1917* (Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1917), xi-xii; J.N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1915), 363-4.
 8. Buchignani and Indra, *Continuous Journey*, 52.
 9. Organised in Chicago in June 1905, the Industrial Workers of the World sought, by means of the direct action of workers at the point of production, to create one big union of workers capable of bringing down the capitalist system by means of the general strike. For the IWW in the United States see Melvyn Dubofsky, *We*

- Shall Be All* (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1969); Joseph Conlin, *Bread and Roses Too* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Publishing Corporation, 1969); and Salvatore Salerno, *Red November Black November: Culture and Community in the Industrial Workers of the World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989). For the IWW in Canada see Mark Leier, *Where the Fraser River Flows: The Industrial Workers of the World in British Columbia* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1990).
10. Brown, *Har Dayal*, 138-9.
 11. The quotations are taken from a reprinting of Har Dayal's article in P.C. Joshi and K. Damodaran, *Marx Comes to India* (Delhi: Manohar Book Service, 1975), 65, 66. As Emily C. Brown points out, Har Dayal was as much or more impressed by Marx's self-sacrifice than he was by his ideas. See her *Har Dayal: Hindu Revolutionary and Rationalist*, 99-100.
 12. On the Socialist Party of Canada, see A. Ross McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries: The Western Canadian Radical Movement, 1899-1919* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1977); Norman Penner, *The Canadian Left: A Critical Analysis* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1977); Martin Robin, *Radical Politics and Canadian Labour, 1880-1930* (Kingston: Queen's University, 1968); Ian Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks* (Montreal: Vanguard Publications, 1981); Bryan D. Palmer, *Working-Class Experience: Rethinking the History of Canadian Labour, 1800-1991*, second edition (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1992); Janice Newton, *The Feminist Challenge to the Canadian Left, 1900-1918* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995); Gerald Friesen, "'Yours in Revolt': The Socialist Party of Canada and the Western Canadian Labour Movement," *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 1 (1976), 139-57; Linda Kealey, "Canadian Socialism and the Woman Question, 1900-1914," *Labour/Le Travail*, 13 (Spring 1984), 77-100; David Frank and Nolan Reilly, "The Emergence of the Socialist Movement in the Maritimes, 1899-1916," *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 4 (1978), 85-113; Ross A. Johnson, "No Compromise—No Political Trading: The Marxian Socialist Tradition in British Columbia," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of British Columbia, 1975).
 13. See, for example, J.A. McDonald, "The Need of Leaders," *Western Clarion*, March 1917.
 14. Puri, *Ghadar Movement*, 132.
 15. Joshi and Damodaran, *Marx Comes to India*, 71.
 16. G.S. Deol argues that one of the reasons the Ghadar rebellion failed was the "Indian habit of regarding the ideal as an accomplished fact." See his *The Role of the Ghadar Party in the National Movement* (Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1969), 182.
 17. Khushwant Singh and Satindra Singh, *Ghadar 1915: India's First Armed Revolution* (New Delhi-1: R & K Publishing House, 1966), 57.
 18. Richard G. Fox, *Lions of the Punjab: Culture in the Making* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 117-18.
 19. David Bercuson, *Fools and Wise Men: The Rise and Fall of the One Big Union* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1978), 22.
 20. McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries*, 10.
 21. W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Toward Orientals in British Columbia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), 82.

22. While in agreement with Mark Leier that a number of prominent SPC spokespersons were *petit bourgeois*, not working class, I have found no evidence to suggest that the class position of SPC members had an effect on how their ideas were received by South Asian militants. Leading South Asian militants like Hussain Rahim were themselves *petit bourgeois*. See Mark Leier, "Workers and Intellectuals: The Theory of the New Class and Early Canadian Socialism," *Journal of History and Politics/Revue d'Histoire et de Politique*, vol. 10 (1992), 87-108.
23. *Western Clarion*, October 19, 1907.
24. W.J. Curry, "The Asiatic Invasion: Its Cause and Outcome," *Western Clarion*, December 5, 1908.
25. Gillian Crease notes the importance of distinguishing between trade unionists, labour leaders and socialist spokespersons who favoured "the politics of exclusion" from those who opposed Canada's racist immigration laws. See her "Exclusion or Solidarity? Vancouver Workers Confront the 'Oriental Problem,'" *BC Studies*, No. 8 (Winter 1988-89), 24-49, especially 37-8.
26. "The Hindu Invasion," *Western Clarion*, October 27, 1906.
27. *Western Clarion*, February 13, 1909.
28. *Western Clarion*, June 26, 1909.
29. See, for example, Roscoe Fillmore, "The Awakening: World Fears Competition of Industrious Chinamen," *Western Clarion*, January 21, 1911.
30. While the head taxes were imposed before the formation of the Socialist Party, the \$500 tax had been instituted as recently as January 1, 1904, and remained in force during the period under study. See Patricia Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989), 156.
31. See T.G. Fraser, "The Sikh Problem in Canada and its Political Consequences, 1905-1921," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 7, No. 1 (October 1978), 36; and Hugh Johnston, "Patterns of Sikh Migration to Canada, 1900-1960," in Joseph T. O'Connell et al, eds., *Sikh History and Religion in the Twentieth Century* (Toronto: Centre for South Asian Studies, 1988), 299.
32. Teja Singh, a native of Amritsar, was educated at Lahore, Cambridge and Oxford. In Vancouver, he helped organise relief for South Asian workers and founded the Guru Nanak Mining and Trust Company. Sundar Singh, also a native of Amritsar, was a ship's surgeon who studied medicine at Glasgow College. In Vancouver, he worked as a real estate agent, and edited the *Aryan*, an English-language paper that appeared for a short period in 1911. He also helped organise the Hindu Friend Society of Victoria. Johnston, *Voyage of the Komagata Maru*, 12-13; National Archives of Canada (NAC) Reel B-2882, British Colonial Office Papers, CO42, Vol. 959, File 19140, *Board of Special Enquiry Held 1 November 1910 by the United States Immigration Service*, Vancouver BC.
33. NAC Reel B-3097, CO42, Vol. 981, File 35834, Major T.W.G. Bryan, District Intelligence Office, Victoria BC, to W. Gwatkin, Chief of the General Staff, Ottawa Ontario, August 31, 1914.
34. Deputy Minister of Labour W.L. Mackenzie King, in his 1908 report on Asian immigration to Canada, found that a total of 5,179 South Asians had come to Canada between June 30, 1904 and March 31, 1908. Many of these immigrants did not remain in Canada, and only 2,342 South Asians were enumerated in the Canadian census of 1911. W.L. Mackenzie King, *Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Inquire into the Methods by Which Oriental Labourers*

- Have Been Induced to Come to Canada* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1908), 75.
35. Quoted in Brown, *Har Dayal*, 90.
 36. NAC, Reel B-3259, CO42, Vol. 1004, File 33672, *Second Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case: Evidence*.
 37. Munsha Singh was the son of Nihal Singh, of Jandiala, Jullundur District. He arrived in Vancouver in 1911, and worked in British Columbia as a sawmill and farm labourer. He returned to India in September 1914 and was interned in January 1915. He was sentenced to transportation for life on January 5, 1917. NAC, Reel B-3259, CO42, Vol. 1004, File 33672, *Second Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case: Judgment*, 110; *Evidence*, 2, 208, 220-1.
 38. Balwant Singh, secretary of the Khalsa Diwan and granthi of the Vancouver gurdwara in 1912-13, had been a Lance Naik in the 36th Sikhs. Bhag Singh, secretary of the Khalsa Diwan, had served in the Tenth Bengal Lancer Regiment for more than five years. Hari Singh was granthi of the Vancouver gurdwara in 1911, and of the Victoria gurdwara in 1914. NAC Reel B-3097, CO 42, Vol. 1004, File 33672, *Second Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case: Evidence*, 133, 140, 205, 218, 231. Ker, *Political Trouble in India*, 230.
 39. N. Gerald Barrier, "Sikh Politics in British Punjab Prior to the Gurdwara Reform Movement," in O'Connell et al, eds., *Sikh History and Religion in the Twentieth Century*, 173-4, 179-80. The Granth Sahib is the Sikh holy book.
 40. Buchignani and Indra, *Continuous Journey*, 21.
 41. Buchignani and Indra, *Continuous Journey*, 23; Howard Sugimoto, "The Vancouver Riots of 1907: A Canadian Episode," in Hilary Conroy, ed., *East Across the Pacific* (Santa Barbara, California: American Bibliographical Centre – Clio Press, 1972), 92-126. As Khushwant Singh points out, "Canadian and British government officials knew there was no direct steamship line from India to Canada, and that immigrants had to change ships, often at Hong Kong or Shanghai. The regulation effectively slowed South Asian immigration to a trickle." Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, 171-2.
 42. Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 76; Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 212.
 43. *Western Clarion*, September 14, 1907.
 44. *Western Clarion*, September 21, 1907. See Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 173-4 for the kind of anti-Japanese racism the author is satirizing.
 45. Niharranjan Ray, "From Cultural to Militant Nationalism: The Emergence of the Anushilan Samiti," in Buddhadeva Bhattacharyya, ed., *Freedom Struggle and Anushilan Samiti* (Calcutta: D.C. Ghatak, 1979), 23.
 46. Pradyot Kumar Ghosh, "The Revolutionary Movement During World War I," in Bhattacharyya, ed., *Freedom Struggle and Anushilan Samiti*, 101.
 47. McKenzie's interest in British imperialism in India would appear to derive from the fact that he was born there, but there is no evidence on which to base even speculation about his relationship with Das. *Western Clarion*, February 1918.
 48. Taraknath Das, "Hindu Fitness For Self-Rule," *Western Clarion*, February 29, 1908.
 49. McKenzie, "The Brightest Jewel In England's Crown," *Western Clarion*, May 2, 1908.
 50. G.D. Kumar is one of those South Asian militants in Canada whose politics and "identity" are difficult to define. In November 1908, he described himself as a Sikh. By 1911, however, he was carrying a card that read: "G.D. Kumar, Punjabi Buddhist Worker in the cause of Temperance and Vegetarianism and Member of

- Dev Samaj.” Ker, *Political Trouble in India*, 230. For Dev, or Deva, Samaj, see Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, 173-82.
51. Puri, *Ghadar Movement*, 42. Puri takes the same position on the question as James Campbell Ker, *Political Trouble in India*, 226, who says that “few of the Sikhs could read a word of English.”
 52. Johnston, *Voyage of the Komagata Maru*, 8.
 53. There can be no doubt about the influence of G.D. Kumar’s paper, *Swadesh Sewak*, a Punjabi-language paper written in the Gurmukhi script. Johnston, *Voyage of the Komagata Maru*, 7; Ker, *Political Trouble in India*, 230-1.
 54. Quoted in Ker, *Political Trouble in India*, 122.
 55. For example, the following statement concerning British rule in India appeared in the January 6, 1914 issue of *Guddre*: “It is our own fault if we are under the power of the Government. If we try we can easily be free.” NAC, RG7, G21, Vol. 204, File 332, Part 10, translation of *Guddre*, #10.
 56. Sir Michael O’Dwyer, *India As I Knew It, 1885-1925* (London: Constable & Company Ltd., 1925), 190.
 57. Gharib Singh would be one of the Sikh militants involved in the formation of a South Asian local of the Socialist Party in 1912. In 1910 he was president of the Khalsa Diwan. NAC, Reel B-3259, CO42, Vol. 1004, File 33672, *Second Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case: Evidence*, 205.
 58. In the summer of 1910 Rahim stated that his “home” was in Delhi, where his father ran a dry goods business. It was the sale of this business that had given him the money with which to travel. See NAC, RG7, G21, Vol. 201, File 332 Part 4, W.D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration, to the Department of the Interior, Ottawa, July 12, 1910.
 59. For an in-depth analysis of the surveillance of South Asian militants in British Columbia in this period see Hugh Johnston, “The Surveillance of Indian Nationalists in North America, 1908-1918,” *BC Studies*, no. 78 (Summer 1988).
 60. NAC, RG7, G21, Vol. 201, File 332 Part 4, J. H. MacGill to W.W. Cory, October 28, 1910. W.C. Hopkinson was born in Delhi in 1880, the son of a British army officer whose mother was likely Indian. In 1903 or 1904, he became an inspector of police in Calcutta. He came to Canada in late 1907 or early 1908. In February 1909, he was hired as an immigration inspector and interpreter, and later became chief assistant to the Canadian inspector of immigration. See Johnston, *Voyage of the Komagata Maru*, 1; and Ker, *Political Trouble in India*, 251.
 61. Law Society of British Columbia (LSBC), *British Columbia Reports: Vol. 16* (Victoria: Colonist Printing and Publishing Company, 1912), 469-72.
 62. NAC, Reel B-2881, MG11, Vol. 959, File 13153, W.C. Hopkinson to W.W. Cory, March 26, 1912.
 63. NAC, RG7, G21, Vol. 201, File 332, Part 5, W.C. Hopkinson to W.W. Cory, May 9, 1911. South Asians involved in the Temperance Association were becoming concerned about South Asian men who, separated from their wives and families for long periods of time, were turning to alcohol as a way of coping with their situation.
 64. Buchignani and Indra, *Continuous Journey*, 40.
 65. On the free speech fights, see Mark Leier, *Where the Fraser River Flows: The Industrial Workers of the World in British Columbia* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1990), 74-85, and “Solidarity on Occasion: The Vancouver Free Speech Fights of 1909 and 1912,” *Labour/Le Travail*, 23 (Spring 1989), 39-66.
 66. NAC, RG7, G21, Vol. 202, File 332 Part 6, W.C. Hopkinson to W.W. Cory, February 22, 1912.

67. NAC, RG7, G21, Vol. 202, File 332 Part 6, W.C. Hopkinson to W.W. Cory, April 1, 1912.
68. NAC, RG7, G21, Vol. 202, File 332 Part 6, W.C. Hopkinson to W.W. Cory, April 1, 1912.
69. NAC, RG7, G21, Vol. 202, File 332 Part 6, W.C. Hopkinson to W.W. Cory, April 1, 1912.
70. NAC, RG76, Vol. 384, File 536999, Part 5, W.C. Hopkinson to W.W. Cory, June 11, 1912.
71. Hugh Johnston argues that the “orthodox” Sikhs were little inclined “to follow the lead of outsiders,” while at the same time pointing out that the Sikhs attempting to form a Socialist Party of Canada local were executive officers of the Khalsa Diwan. Johnston, *Voyage of the Komagata Maru*, 11. Johnston, one presumes, is using “orthodox” as a synonym for loyalty to the British Crown, and not as a religious designation. Johnston, and Khushwant Singh as well, suggest that what defines an “orthodox” Sikh in this period — in effect, a “good” or “true” Sikh — is not adherence to the core religious values of Sikhism, but rather loyalty to the British Empire.
72. NAC Reel B-3097, CO 42, Vol. 1004, File 33672, *Second Supplementary Lahore Conspiracy Case: Evidence*, 234.
73. NAC, RG7, G21, Vol. 200, File 332, Part 3, W.C. Hopkinson to W.W. Cory, October 30, 1909.
74. *Western Clarion*, March 1, 1913.
75. NAC, RG7, G21, Vol. 201, File 332, Part 4, J.H. MacGill to W.W. Cory, October 28, 1910.
76. Puri, *Ghadar Movement*, 8.
77. NAC, RG7, G21, Vol. 203, File 332, Part 7B, H. Gwyther to Immigration Agent, Vancouver, February 24, 1913.
78. In the American context, David Roediger has argued “that working class formation and the systematic development of a sense of whiteness went hand in hand for the US white working class.” See his *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (London and New York: Verso, 1991), 8.
79. Lala Har Dayal, “Karl Marx: A Modern Rishi,” in Joshi and Damodaran, *Marx Comes to India*, 50.
80. Ker, *Political Trouble in India*, 238-9.
81. Johnston, *Voyage of the Komagata Maru*, 16-20.
82. NAC, MG 27 III B9, Vol. 172, *H.H. Stevens*, File: Immigration: Correspondence & Clippings (Hindu) 1914.
83. NAC, MG 27 III B9, Vol. 171, *H.H. Stevens*, File: Hindu Immigration Incident (1), copy of *The Hindustanee*, April 1, 1914.
84. NAC, Reel B-2951, MG11, Vol. 971, File 1115, “P.C. 2642,” signed by Rodolphe Boudreau, Clerk of the Privy Council, at the Government House at Ottawa, December 8, 1913.
85. Johnston, *Voyage of the Komagata Maru*, 24-37; Ker, *Political Trouble in India*, 239-41.
86. NAC Reel B-3096, CO42, Vol. 979, File 58, W.C. Hopkinson to W.W. Cory, June 1, 1914.
87. NAC Reel B-3096, CO42, Vol. 980, File 25955, “Minutes of a Hindu Mass Meeting Held in Dominion Hall, Vancouver, British Columbia, on Sunday, June 21st, 1914,” 1, 10-11.

88. For defences of the Sikhs see NAC, RG7, G21, Vol. 201, File 332 Part 5, Walter W. Baer, "The Problems of Hindu Immigration into Canada," no date; NAC Reel B-2234, CO42, Vol. 912, File 6178, Colonel Falkland Warren to Colonel Hanbury-Williams, January 8, 1907; and NAC Reel B-2954, CO42, Vol. 975, File 23958, "The Hindu Population in British Columbia," June 2, 1913.
89. NAC Reel B-3096, CO42, Vol. 980, File 25955, "Hindu Mass Meeting," 15-16, 18, 20.
90. For this "saving hypothesis" of the course of Indian history, see M.P. Cowen and R.W. Shenton, *Doctrines of Development* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 42-4.
91. NAC Reel B-3097, CO42, Vol. 980, File 34012, "In the Matter of the Immigration Act and in the Matter of Munshi Singh," 40, 51-2.
92. LSBC, *British Columbia Reports, Vol. 20* (1915), 289-90.
93. Buchignani and Indra, *Continuous Journey*, 60.
94. This Harnam Singh should not be confused with Harnam Singh Sahri, the Ghadar leader.
95. Wilfred Gribble, "As To Morals," *Western Clarion*, August 29, 1914.
96. Wilfred Gribble was a British-born carpenter active in Toronto labour circles. In 1909, he conducted a major organising tour of the Maritimes for the Socialist Party of Canada. For Gribble see Wayne Roberts, "Artisans, Aristocrats and Handymen: Politics and Trade Unionism among Toronto Skilled Building Trades Workers, 1896-1914," *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 1 (1976), 97; and for his Maritime tour see Frank and Reilly, "The Emergence of the Socialist Movement in the Maritimes," 92, 94-6, 101-02.
97. Kartar Singh was the son of Sunder Singh, Jat, of Chand Nau, Ferozepore District. Michael O'Dwyer considered him "one of the most active leaders of the *ghadr* movement in Canada." His importance has been overlooked in the literature on Ghadar because he has not been distinguished from Kartar Singh Akali, who published the *Khalsa Herald*, a Gurmukhi monthly begun in Vancouver in 1911. Later he moved to Toronto, where he edited the *Theosophical News*. He should also not be confused with Kartar Singh Sarabha, son of Mangal Singh, the American-based founder of the Ghadar movement who was executed at Lahore in 1916. NAC, Reel B-3259, CO42, Vol. 1004, File 33672, "Order by Lieutenant-Governor on Petitions from Persons Convicted in the Lahore Second Supplementary Conspiracy Case," 4; Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, 175n17; Brown, *Har Dayal*, 140; Fauja Singh, *Eminent Freedom Fighters of Punjab* (Patiala 1972), 151-3.
98. Johnston, *Voyage of the Komagata Maru*, 125-8; Ker, *Political Trouble in India*, 247-8.
99. *Western Clarion*, November 21, 1914.
100. Deol, *Role of the Ghadar Party in the National Movement*, 211-13.
101. On the fate of Ghadar supporters in India and Southeast Asia, see Khushwant Singh, *History of the Sikhs*, 181-6; Buchignani and Indra, *Continuous Journey*, 63-4; and Ganguly, *Ghadar Revolution in America*, 54-88. Rahim was one of the Socialist Party's most knowledgeable members on the topic of Freudian psychology and the impact of Freud's ideas on working class thought. In the early 1920s, he was still writing reviews of books on topics related to psychology for the *Western Clarion*. In 1921, Rahim published a slender volume on psychology, a book intended to be the first of a series. Bill Pritchard, the only SPC member from British Columbia imprisoned for his role in the Winnipeg General Strike, wrote the introduction.

102. For the labour revolt of 1919, see Gregory S. Kealey, "1919: The Canadian Labour Revolt," *Labour/Le Travail*, 13 (Spring 1984), 11-44. For the One Big Union see Bercuson, *Fools and Wise Men*.
103. Ross Johnson is too categorical, but near the truth, when he states that the Socialist Party made "no attempt to develop Marxist ideology to suit the economic situation in British Columbia or Canada." See his "No Compromise-No Political Trading," 17.
104. Puri, *Ghadar Movement*, 125.
105. See, for example, Angus, *Canadian Bolsheviks*, 56.
106. J.S. Grewal, *The New Cambridge History of India: The Sikhs of the Punjab* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 166.
107. Puri, *Ghadar Movement*, 124.
108. Puri, *Ghadar Movement*, 85.
109. Grewal, *Sikhs of the Punjab*, 166.
110. NAC, MG27 III B9, *H.H. Stevens*, Vol. 177, File: Immigration: Correspondence & Clippings (Hindu) 1915, translation of an address written by Mewa Singh and sent to the Stockton, California Khalsa Diwan; forwarded by Malcolm J.R. Reid to H.H. Stevens, February 23, 1915.