

## At His Majesty's Service: Racial Policies, Policing, and Revolutionaries in Pacific Canada

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Article abstract

This article highlights the events that led up to the 1914 Komagata Maru incident arguing that racialized Canadian politics of migration fuelled Indian anti-colonialism on the Pacific slope. The sequence of events, from the turn of the century to 1914, is examined within the scope of Canadian race relations as a member of the British Empire. Central to the events is the systematic policing and surveillance of the racialized "Other." Of particular interest in this article, and in the implementation of Canada's Pacific system of surveillance, is the fact that the monitoring, policing, and surveillance of Indian revolutionaries in Canada was the undertaking of a single individual, William Charles Hopkinson, who was himself of Indian descendant, and therefore a racialized Other.

## At His Majesty's Service: Racial Policies, Policing, and Revolutionaries in Pacific Canada

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**RÉSUMÉ** *Cet article met en évidence les événements qui ont mené à l'incident du Komagata Maru en faisant la lumière sur les politiques de migration canadiennes. Ces politiques étaient dotées d'un racisme envers les non-blancs asiatiques et ont, en effet, alimenté le sentiment d'anticolonialisme indien. La séquence des événements, à partir de la fin du 19<sup>e</sup> siècle jusqu'à 1914, est examinée dans le cadre des relations raciales canadiennes en tant que membre de l'Empire britannique. Au centre de ces événements sont le maintien de l'ordre et la surveillance systématique de « l'Autre racialisé ». Ce qui est particulièrement intéressant à propos de cette mise en œuvre du système de surveillance dans le Pacifique nord-américain est le fait qu'il était l'entreprise d'un seul individu, William Charles Hopkinson—lui-même un « Autre racialisé » de descendance indienne.*

**ABSTRACT** *This article highlights the events that led up to the 1914 Komagata Maru incident arguing that racialized Canadian politics of migration fuelled Indian anti-colonialism on the Pacific slope. The sequence of events, from the turn of the century to 1914, is examined within the scope of Canadian race relations as a member of the British Empire. Central to the events is the systematic policing and surveillance of the racialized “Other.” Of*

*particularly interest in this article, and in the implementation of Canada's Pacific system of surveillance, is the fact that the monitoring, policing, and surveillance of Indian revolutionaries in Canada was the undertaking of a single individual, William Charles Hopkinson, who was himself of Indian descendant, and therefore a racialized Other.*

*For white man's land we fight.  
To oriental grasp and greed  
We'll surrender, no never.  
Our watchword be "God save the King"  
White Canada for ever<sup>1</sup>.*

—White Canada Forever

*You drive us Hindus out of Canada and we will drive every white man out of India<sup>2</sup>.*

—Husain Rahim (speaking to W.C. Hopkinson)

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1. "White Canada Forever", quoted in Khushwant Singh and Satindra Singh, *Ghadr 1915: India's First Armed Revolution*, New Delhi, R and K, 1966, p. 2.
  2. Quoted in Hugh Johnston, *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar*, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 9.

The conflicting statements in this article's epigraph detail the racial crux of the national sense of self in Canada, and more particularly in British Columbia at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. While this national sense of self evoked British ideals, it also sought to remain "White" as the *White Canada Forever* mantra exemplifies. These paradigms can be observed predominantly through the prism of immigration and Empire migration. In fact, the racial policies of immigration within British Columbia and present in the wider Anglo-Saxon communities, were admittedly exclusionary and effectively nurtured what sociologist Renisa Mawani termed "white settler colonialism"<sup>3</sup>. The statement made by Hussain Rahim, as he faced immigration officer William Charles Hopkinson, poignantly reflected the issues that faced the Indian diaspora, not only in? Canada but also in the wider White settler colonialist nations. Rahim, being a citizen of the British Empire, sought entry into another British dominion, Canada. Yet his entry into this nation was not contingent upon his British citizenry but rather upon his physical traits within the national White homogeneity. His appeal to Hopkinson, as the latter refused Rahim's entry into Canada, was therefore seeped with anti-colonial sentiment and decried the two-tiered migratory policies of Canada and the wider White settler colonialist situation in India. While governments of the White settler nations belittled the anti-colonial sentiment as a "Hindu conspiracy"<sup>4</sup>, it was in reality an increasingly serious rhetoric amongst Indian nationalists, academics, and intellectuals.

This essay shall look at the atmosphere of migratory policies in Pacific Canada from the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to

3. For more on the colonial practices in British Columbia see Renisa Mawani, *Colonial Proximities: Crossracial Encounters and Juridical Truths in British Columbia 1871-1921*, Vancouver, UBC Press, 2010, 269 pages.

4. According to Joan Jensen there were three stages to the creation of what is understood as the "Hindu conspiracy"—where Indian political 'agitators' were policed by the Canadian state, the interest of this essay lies in the first of these stages 1908-1914, during which time the British began surveillance of Indian nationalists on the Canadian and American Pacific slope. Joan M. Jensen, "The 'Hindu Conspiracy': A Reassessment", *Pacific Historical Review*, 48 (1979), p.70.

the *Komagata Maru* incident. It shall be argued that Canada's efforts to sedate and exclude Indian migrants conversely fuelled anti-colonialism and revolutionary uprising amongst Indians settled abroad. Indeed, racialized discourses of migration became a central case in India's call for independence and moreover encapsulated the colonial struggle of its people. Yet, the effort to sedate and exclude was the undertaking of a single individual in Canada, Officer Charles William Hopkinson. Through his actions, intersections of colonial struggles, migratory geographies, and surveillance of imperial subjects can be observed.

Mindful of the racial situation in British Columbia and the broader politics of imperial rule in India, the Canadian federal government was anxious to keep tabs on local Indian agitation, both for its own benefit and the benefit of its counterparts in London and Calcutta<sup>5</sup>. While keeping tabs meant that a secret service body would be needed, finding an agent who would be inconspicuous and abled to infiltrate Indian agitators was a difficult task. Therefore, in parallel to the Indian struggle, and central to the events leading up to the *Komagata Maru*, is the story of William Charles Hopkinson, an immigration officer turned secret agent. Hopkinson epitomized what imperial historian, Jonathan Rutherford, made regarding race, masculinity, and Empire where "his was a world in which the white, male body radiated Teutonic splendour"<sup>6</sup>, and where Whiteness specified the cultural construction of a structural position of social privilege and power in opposition to the "otherness" of non-Western

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5. Whereas Johnston and Whitaker et al. focus on Canada's historical surveillance trends, what I strive to achieve in the present article is a discussion of Indian surveillance as it intersects with racial policies of Empire, migration, and colonialism through the prism of Hopkinson.

Hugh Johnston, "The Surveillance of Indian Nationalists in North America, 1908-1918," *BC Studies*, 78 (1988); Reg Whitaker, Gregory S. Kealey and Andrew Parnaby, *Secret Service: Political Policing in Canada from the Fenians to Fortress America*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2012, 720 pages.

6. Jonathan Rutherford, *Forever England: Reflections on Masculinity and Empire*, London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1997, p. 12.

subjects<sup>7</sup>. Indeed, to understand his work at a micro level, we must understand issues of British colonial practices with regards to race and migration.

Yet, what remains most interesting about this individual, and at once revealing about the policies of the British Empire regarding race, is his vehement denial of his heritage and false claims that he was born in Hull, England. He was in fact born in India, of Brahmin descent, and fluent in Punjabi, Hindi, and other Indian languages—in other words he was a racialized “Other”. When interviewed by historian Hugh Johnston, author of the *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar*, Fred Taylor, who at one time shared an office with Hopkinson and who was also the first to meet the passengers of the *Komagata Maru*, stated that Hopkinson was Indian; Johnston asked how he knew and Taylor replied, “you could see it by looking at him”<sup>8</sup>. What could therefore be observed of Hopkinson was the institutionalization of what Frantz Fanon argues is the epidermalization of inferiority where “White civilization and European culture forced an existential deviation on the Negro [for] it is from within that the Negro will seek admittance to the white sanctuary”<sup>9</sup>. According to British historian, Richard Popplewell, his reports show clearly that as a naturalized Canadian citizen Hopkinson personally approved of his new country's strict immigration policy, which the Government of India wished to see relaxed<sup>10</sup>. This monolithic vision of ethnic immigration would, over the years, generate a strong opposition from the Indian community established in Canada towards both his entrepreneurialism as a secret agent and immigration officer. His surveillance would in a way stimulate political activity among Indians, and political activity would justify more surveil-

7. Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*, Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1993, p. 1.

8. Johnston, *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru...*, p. 142-143.

9. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markman, London, Pluto Press, 2008, p. 6-37.

10. Richard James Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence: British Intelligence and the Defence of the Indian Empire 1904-1924*, London, Frank Cass, 1995, p. 153.

lance<sup>11</sup>. The murder of Hopkinson on October 21, 1914 in front of a Vancouver courtroom by Sikh loyalist Mewa Singh, would signify the end of the first phase of the “Hindu conspiracy” in North America, but would imply the beginning of a greater movement towards Indian independence.

#### RACIAL POLICIES AND WHITE SOLIDARITY

Between 1885 and 1914 the North American Pacific Slope was transformed. During these thirty years British Columbia matured as an industrial and commercial society. Each of the province's major resource industries—fishing, mining, and lumbering—each put down firm foundations<sup>12</sup>. Correlating with this rise in economic prosperity was an influx in immigration—mostly, Asian émigrés looking for economic opportunities. Despite this social import, fundamental changes in the demography of British Columbia had little impact on White perceptions of Asian immigrants. Drawn by the promise of work and wages in the industrializing West, Indians arrived at a time of intense anti-Asiatic agitation. Between 1904 and 1908, about 5 200 Indians, most of whom were Sikhs from Punjab, immigrated to British Columbia, a minuscule proportion of the 2.5 million immigrants who came to Canada during those years<sup>13</sup>. Nearly all Indians had travelled as directly as possible from their villages. The official immigration statistics show 45 Indian immigrants in 1904-05, 387 in 1905-06, and over 2 000 in each of 1906-07 and 1907-08<sup>14</sup>. Yet, by the time over 1 300 immigrants had landed in late 1906, Vancouver's two members of parliament, James Buckham Kennedy and Robert George Macpherson, had gone to the Prime Minister, Sir Wilfred

11. Johnston, “The Surveillance of...”, p. 4.

12. W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Toward Orientals in British Columbia*, Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978, p. 53.

13. Andrew Parnaby and Gregory S. Kealey, “The Origins of Political Policing in Canada: Class, Law, and the Burden of Empire,” *Osgoode Hall Law Journal* 41 (2003), p. 223.

14. Hugh Johnston, *The East Indians in Canada*, Ottawa, Canadian Historical Association, 1984, p. 6.

Laurier, to demand that the “Hindus be shut out”; the mayor of Vancouver also appealed to the Colonial Secretary to “prevent further shipment”<sup>15</sup>.

The riots in Vancouver in the summer of 1907 were the culmination of several years of growing hostility toward Asians on the part of British Columbians. Armed rioters under the name of the “Asiatic Exclusion League”, an organization transcending the borderland of Canada and United-States, shouted racist slogans and went on a rampage, vandalizing shops in Vancouver’s Chinatown and Japantown<sup>16</sup>. As a result, the riots marked the beginning of Canadian government investigation into the whole question of Asiatic immigration into British Columbia. These riots followed rioting in the United States and were seen as an act of self-protection, attempting to secure the racial and political integrity of the nation-state. The issue of these riots was, according to Kornel Chang, part of imperial movements of transnational white-working class formation and connected proletarian racism in the Washington-British Columbia borderlands to similar movements in Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa<sup>17</sup>.

Although it is often stated that anti-Asiatic sentiment was largely rooted in economics—for Japanese and Chinese migrants would work for a significantly lower wage than White workers of Australasia and the Pacific Slope. Historian Peter Ward directly confronts this argument and states that such racism in British Columbia was fundamentally a problem in the “social psychology of race relations”<sup>18</sup>. Moreover, this psychological problem of race relations was, according to Marilyn Lake and Henry Reynolds, “born in the apprehension of imminent loss” for Whites

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15. *Ibid.*

16. *Ibid.*, p.7.

17. See Kornel Chang, “Circulating Race and Empire: White Labor Activism and the Transnational Politics of Anti-Asian Agitation,” in *Pacific Connections: The Making of the U.S.-Canadian Borderlands*, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 2012, p. 89-116.

18. Ward, “preface” in *White Canada Forever*, p. ix.



of Empire<sup>19</sup>. However, for the ruling Liberal party in Canada in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the outright exclusion of Indian immigrants was somewhat more difficult to pull off, for unlike the Chinese and Japanese, they were British subjects and possessed all the rights and freedoms associated with that status.

The Canadian government's first attempt to reduce the Indian migration issue on its Pacific coast was through enticing Indians to settle elsewhere in the British Empire. Indeed, in attempting to respond to the crisis occurring in the west, the Canadian government decided to sponsor and send a delegation to British Honduras (now Belize) with the hopes that Indians would voluntarily migrate there henceforth, due to its "appropriate climate". As Gurdit Singh—who would later on commission the *Komagata Maru*—described this endeavour, Indians were being sent to "Hell" and objected to leave Canada and their Canadian properties<sup>20</sup>. Though sociologists Gurcharn Basran and Singh Bolaria state that this solution expressed the Canadian government's will to act diplomatically in the face of British Columbia's demands<sup>21</sup>, we are to consider that their solution belittled the Indian condition and offered slight economic opportunities, poor living conditions, and unstable political situation. The monitoring of Indians in British Columbia by Canadian officials was therefore born out of the Indian refusal to relocate to British Honduras in the early spring of 1908<sup>22</sup>. Canada's Governor General, Albert Gray, and Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier, thought that because of the current unrest in India they ought to watch for events in Canada which might be exploited by "agitators" in India. They ordered the Department

19. Henry Reynolds and Marilyn Lake, *Drawing the Global Colour Line: White Men's Countries and the International Challenge of Racial Equality*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2008, 371 pages.

20. Gurdit Singh, *Voyage of the Komagata Maru or India's Slavery Abroad*, Chandigarh, Unistar and Punjab Centre for Migration Studies, 2007, p. 60.

21. Gurcharn S. Basran and B. Singh Bolaria, *The Sikhs in Canada: Migration, Race, Class, and Gender*, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 95.

22. Seema Sohi, "Echoes of Mutiny: Race, Empire, and Indian Anticolonialism in North America", PhD diss. (History), University of Washington, 2008, p. 125.

of the Interior to keep them informed on Indian affairs in British Columbia. We should highlight the fact that the initiative in the surveillance of Indian agitators on the Pacific coast at this time came entirely from the Canadian side and not from India, let alone from the British government in London<sup>23</sup>.

Later that year, the federal government furthered their anti-Indian position by endorsing an Order-in-Council that prohibited the entry of immigrants who did not travel by a “continuous journey” from their country of birth to Canada, a voyage that was all but impossible to undertake from the Indian subcontinent because steamship companies, on instruction from the government, would not provide the service. As Enakshi Dua states, this regulation would openly distinguish British subjects while allowing Canada to ban the entry of Indians<sup>24</sup>. Furthermore, Indians who were able to secure a transit from their country to Canada, required an additional 200\$ in their possession on arrival (while European immigrants needed only 25\$).

Federal intervention to prohibit Asian immigration to Canada through the imposition of quotas on Japanese emigration—most notably the Gentlemen’s Agreement<sup>25</sup>, the renewed enforcement of laws against the Chinese and the infamous continuous voyage regulations were all the outcome of the 1907 riots. The riots and the exclusion of Indians through the “continuous journey” provision served to politicize Indian migrants who began drawing explicit links between racial discrimination in North America and colonial subjugation in India. As one migrant recalled, after the riots “it dawned upon the Indian immigrants that they were slaves... everywhere they were insulted and despised. In hotels and trains, parks and theatres, they

23. Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence...*, p. 151.

24. Enakshi Dua, “Le passage de sujets à étrangers: les immigrants indiens et la racialisation de la citoyenneté canadienne”, *Sociologie et sociétés*, xxxi, 2 (1999), p. 154.

25. The Gentlemen’s Agreement with Japan in 1907 and 1908 permanently limited the number of passports issued to Japanese coming to Canada to 400. See Chang, *Pacific Connections...*, p. 81-82.

were discriminated against”<sup>26</sup>. This Asian sense of self would be further crystalized through civic demands made by organizations such as the Asiatic Exclusion League and policies enacted by elected officials.

Conceiving the Canadian nation within the British Empire at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century required federal political leaders to consider notions of nationhood within a globalized “Anglo-Saxon” solidarity. The politics of Asian exclusion not only engendered deep ideological ties between White workers but, more importantly, between immigration authorities and elected officials across the Canadian-American border as well as the broader Pacific world. What was formerly a poorly coordinated amalgam of customs officers and local deputies had, according to historian Kornel Chang, evolved into “a complex web of institutions and practices” which included courts, detention centres, border patrolmen, and immigration inspectors<sup>27</sup>.

Paradoxically this *coup de force* by Anglo-Saxon governments conduced a reciprocally greater Indian solidarity, one that had trouble establishing itself prior to, and ultimately increased bitterness towards “high-handed” Imperial rule. Faced with racialized hostility on the North American continent, and legislative discrimination, Indians quickly organized to protect their mutual interests. Indeed, Indians took a growing interest in their politics and by 1908 radicals within the community were calling for national revolution in India<sup>28</sup>. By the turn of the century, pockets of collective action, increasingly dedicated to Indian self-determination, had emerged at home and abroad.

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26. Seema Sohi, “Race, Surveillance, and Indian Anticolonialism in the Transnational Western U.S.—Canadian Borderlands,” *The Journal of American History*, 98, 2 (2011), p. 426.

27. Kornel Chang, “Enforcing Transnational White Solidarity: Asian Migration and the Formation of the U.S.—Canadian Boundary,” *American Quarterly*, 60 (2008), p. 672.

28. Ward, *White Canada Forever*, p. 81.

## REVOLUTIONARIES AND EXCLUSIONARIES

In response to the Canadian project of rule, within the wider Imperial network, intellectual revolutionaries arriving from India onto the North American Pacific Slope began circulating anti-colonial publications. As Seema Sohi argued, Indian transnational anti-colonial resistance was a reactionary movement against transnational anti-Asian and anti-radical practices, political repression, and calls for Indian exclusion<sup>29</sup>. An observation of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Indian publications emanating from North America revealed the vehement hatred towards Imperial rule; most notable of these anti-colonialist papers were the *Ghadr* (operating in San Francisco and edited by Har Dayal) and *Free Hindusthan* (operating from Vancouver). *Ghadr's* first publication in 1913 enunciated its nationalistic and revolutionary aims:

A new epoch in the history of India opens today...because today there begins in foreign lands, but in our country's language, a war against the English Raj...what is our name? Mutiny. What is our work? Mutiny. ... Because the people can no longer bear the oppression and tyranny practiced under British rule, and are ready to fight and die for freedom... The time is soon to come when rifle and blood will take the place of pen and ink... Soon the fate of the tyrant will be decided on the battle-field"<sup>30</sup>.

It was in Vancouver's Gurdwara that Bhagwan Singh, *Ghadr's* leader, began lecturing at weekly meetings. The Gurdwara, being the place of worship and religious centre for Sikhs for the past three centuries, played a central role in the community's adaptation and survival in Canada<sup>31</sup>. There, Singh urged listeners to adopt the *Bande Mataram* (hail mother) greeting of the Bengali

29. Sohi, "Race, Surveillance, and Indian Anticolonialism...", p. 422.

30. First issue of *Ghadr* published in Urdu, edited by Har Dayal, November 1, 1913, quoted in Kalyan Kumar Banerjee, *Indian Freedom Movement: Revolutionaries in America*, Calcutta, Jijnasa, 1969, p. 9-10.

31. Kamala Elizabeth Nayar, *The Sikh Diaspora in Vancouver: Three Generations amid Tradition, Modernity, and Multiculturalism*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2004, p. 158.

extremists as a mark of unity with other Indians. “The Sikhs in Canada,” he said to activists in the Gurdwara, “should go back to India to join in the struggle against the British”<sup>32</sup>.

The circulation of anti-colonialist publications consequently reinforced the already-established solidarity amongst Anglo-Saxon nations. The triangular relationship between Canadian-American-British governments operating to sedate Indian revolutionaries abroad demonstrated the racial policies of Empire. What incidentally glued together this triangular solidarity was the employment an Indian police officer by the Canadian government; William Charles Hopkinson, Calcutta police officer, turned immigration officer, turned secret agent. “I do not think that a better man than Mr Hopkinson of the Calcutta police could be found for this work,” Colonel Eric J. Swayne, Governor of British Honduras stated, recognizing the importance of having an Indian man on the job: “I suggest Mr Hopkinson be appointed as Dominion police officer on special duty at Vancouver, for the special purpose of this enquiry, and the Government of India be asked to place him in official communication with the head of the Calcutta police in order to further this work”<sup>33</sup>. According to the Governor General of Canada, the entire policing system was dependent on Hopkinson; “If anything happens to Mr Hopkinson, the work would automatically collapse”<sup>34</sup>. As argued by Parnaby and Kealey, Canada’s early experience in the realm of intelligence and security matters, as in other areas of political life, was shaped decisively by its status as an outpost of the British Empire<sup>35</sup>. Incidentally Hopkinson was provided

32. Johnston, *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru...*, 17.

33. Swayne’s Memorandum, *supra* note 27, quoted in Parnaby and Kealey, “The Origins of Political Policing in Canada...” p. 229-30. As Parnaby and Kealey state, Swayne was aware of wider, global patterns of political violence linked to radicalism and nationalism, including the Fenian bombing campaigns that took place in Britain in 1881 and 1884 and the nationalist agitation that had been destabilizing parts of India on and off for decades.

34. Whitaker, *Secret Service...*, p. 51.

35. Parnaby and Kealey, “The Origins of Political Policing in Canada...”, p. 211.

with the resources of the Governor General's Office and could accordingly count upon enthusiastic and expeditious action<sup>36</sup>.

Hopkinson was born in Delhi in 1880, his father was a sergeant instructor of volunteers at Allahabad, and he grew up in northern India speaking the local languages. In 1903 or 1904, he became an inspector of police in Calcutta and to the Department of Criminal Intelligence (DCI) of the British Indian government. He arrived in Vancouver in 1907 or early 1908 to help the Canadian government surveil the Indian population in its territory. His fluency in Hindustani and Punjabi, made him an irreplaceable resource for Canadian immigration officers, who hired him as an interpreter<sup>37</sup>. Hopkinson was said to be a mysterious individual, keeping his private life sheltered from his professional duties. He also undertook a peculiar methodology to infiltrate anti-colonialist circles posing as Narain Singh, a "penniless labourer from Lahore"<sup>38</sup>. His main assistant, Bela Singh, also declared before a Canadian court in 1914 that "[Hopkinson] used to dress in a turban with a false beard and moustache and old clothes and go to the temple"<sup>39</sup>. He attended meetings at the local Sikh temples, paid other Indians to tell him about the activities of immigrants he suspected, and for at least six years acted as an undercover agent in the immigrant community<sup>40</sup>.

As the revolutionary dogma intensified in Vancouver, Hopkinson's role grew more important for the governmental offices in Ottawa, Washington, London, and Calcutta. Indeed an early report by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) indicated in 1908 that it was "clear that the advantages of America

36. Johnston, "The Surveillance of Indian Nationalists in North America...", p. 9.

37. Ali Kazimi, *Undesirables: White Canada and the Komagata Maru, an Illustrated History*, Toronto, D&M Publishers, 2011, p. 66.

38. Joan M. Jensen, *Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1988, p. 164.

39. Quoted in Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence*, p. 153.

40. Tapan K. Mukherjee, *Taraknath Das: Life and Letters of a Revolutionary in Exile*, Calcutta, National Council of Education, Bengal, Jadavpur University, 1998, p. 14.

as a training ground for revolutionaries are well recognized by the Indian agitators”<sup>41</sup>.

Whereas immigrant communities, such as the Chinese had intermediaries—“brokers” who led in the brokerage relations between their communities and Anglo institutions<sup>42</sup>—the work of Indian brokers was more complex due to the threat they posed under the so-called “Hindu Conspiracy.” Though Indians did in fact have brokers in North America such as Har Dayal or Gurdit Singh, officers such as Hopkinson continuously undermined their work. Hopkinson was sent on a temporary assignment in the United States that year to check on *Ghadr*'s Har Dayal and his alleged seditious activity. There, he attended a lecture given by Dayal but left before its conclusion because he deemed his “surroundings were composed of a very questionable class of humanity”<sup>43</sup>. Even though Hopkinson was himself an Indian, he was expressing his sense of Teutonic superiority in his reports to his superiors, demonstrating that he was above their class of humanity. In fact, by using secret informants and infiltrating Indian meetings, his work would be effective in both, the retention of effective brokerage and dismantling of anti-colonial rhetoric.

Moreover, immigration officers read anti-colonial publications as part of the wider Bolshevik revolution taking place during this era. As Har Dayal stated in a student journal at the University of California, Berkeley, “Empires are relics of barbarism and must

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41. British Library, Asia, Pacific, and Africa Collection (APAC), Indian Office Records (IOR), L/PJ/12/1, '[Confidential] Note on the anti-British Movement among Natives of India in America', 1908, quoted in Whitaker, *Secret Service...*, p. 38.

42. Analysis of brokers' work offers a new view of the boundaries between the migrant communities and Anglo worlds, and the political interactions between them.  
Lisa Rose Mar, *Brokering Belonging: Chinese in Canada's Exclusion Era, 1885-1945*, Toronto, Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 3-4.

43. Home department, Political B, *Proceedings*, nos. 62-66, November 1913, NAI, quoted in Emily C. Brown, *Har Dayal: Hindu Revolutionary and Rationalist*, Tuscon, University of Arizona Press, 1975, p. 132.

disappear too in the course of a social evolution”<sup>44</sup>. Capitalist-led “Anglo-Saxon” communities were therefore concerned that such an (r)evolution would take place within their states—a concern that seemed all the more tangible due to the increased migration of Indians. In November 1909 Hopkinson wrote to the Deputy Minister of the Interior, William W. Cory, to state his concerns related to the political agency of Indians in British Columbia. He wrote about his knowledge concerning the exclusion of Indian suffrage in British Columbian elections, but warned of their ability to vote in federal elections due to their status as British subjects within the Empire:

Some provision should be made to keep these people out of politics, for if they ever had a voice in the matter it would result in a lot of corruption. These people are—in the major part—uneducated, and very susceptible to influences and corruption...To identify themselves with politics and be able to vote in this country would give the agitators in India a new plank in their platform, and a further incentive to carry on their propaganda. Now, this scheme could only be formulated by those who have the Indian agitation at heart, and among these are [sic]Teja Singh Tarak Nath Dass and G.D. Kumar, and a few others who have already voiced their sentiments in this country<sup>45</sup>.

In 1910, another revolutionary—Husain Rahim, arrived on the shores of British Columbia. Suspecting that Rahim was not on a vacation to Canada (as he had claimed), Hopkinson ordered his immediate deportation. Rahim’s deportation case was nevertheless thrown out when the court ruled that immigration officers had not followed due process<sup>46</sup>. Evidently Hopkinson and his

44. Har Dayal, “The Hindu National Movement”, editorial in the student journal at University of California, Berkley, quoted in Brown, *Har Dayal...*, p.135.

45. Canada. Governor General. “[William C. Hopkinson, Immigration Inspector, to William W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Interior. Copy]. Page 1-3”. Komagata Maru Journey. November 15, 1909, [online], <http://komagatamarujourney.ca/node/11781>.

46. Sukhdeep Bhoi, Ghadar: *The Immigrant Indian Outrage Against Canadian Injustices, 1900-1918*, M.A. Thesis (History), Queen’s University, 1998, p.83-84.



department of immigration were eager to act upon the intelligence they collected; their complacencies were nevertheless not above the law in Canada nor Empire, and would inadvertently intensify the anti-colonial rhetoric amongst Indians who were made aware of these corrupt practices.

In 1911, as Taraknath Das was seeking to secure an American citizenship, Hopkinson was asked to produce intelligence concerning Das's motives. Hopkinson replied that he could produce what was asked of him only if he were allowed to make an investigative foray in Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Berkeley, and Stockton; he justified this by claiming that there were no reliable and educated Indians who could do this mission, other than himself<sup>47</sup>. In San Francisco he met with inspectors who expressed their concerns to the fact that the British authorities were not paying attention to the anti-colonial doctrine circulating at Berkeley and Stanford. Accordingly, Hopkinson stated that the danger remained that Indians were too ignorant to make informed political decisions, and that this same ignorance could lead to a socialist revolution:

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<sup>48</sup>.

47. Johnston, "The Surveillance of Indian Nationalists in North America...", p. 11-12.

48. Canada. Governor General. "[Extract from William C. Hopkinson, Immigration Inspector, to William W. Cory, Deputy Minister of the Interior. Copy]. Page 4-5". Komagata Maru Journey. April 1, 1912, [online], <http://komagatamarujourney.ca/node/11847>.

Significantly, Hopkinson's preoccupations were not simply in the community's commitment to the "liberty, equality, and fraternity of the Hindustani Nation", but increasingly with this cross-fertilization of socialist and anti-colonial politics<sup>49</sup>.

In stark comparison to Hopkinson's policing of Indian activists, are the events that occurred in the summer of 1912 where a large number of Greek and Italian immigrants illegally crossed the borderland from Bellingham, Washington, to Steveston, British Columbia. Hopkinson was dispatched to investigate the situation, and upon reaching Steveston, discovered the group of unauthorized migrants working in one of the canneries. He promptly arrested them on the grounds that they had violated immigration laws by entering Canada without inspection—they were later convicted of the charge and levied a fine of 5\$. However, though the men were undocumented immigrants, Hopkinson recommended that they be allowed to stay in British Columbia: "the men in question, appeared to be fair class of fishermen, and because it was impossible for their employers to secure white men of this type in this Province, I have no hesitancy in recommending that they be permitted to proceed with their seasons contract, and so have taken no steps securing their deportation"<sup>50</sup>. Border practices such as this one served to distance and distinguish ethnic Europeans, meaning non-Northern Europeans such as Italians and Greeks, from the so-called status or category of "illegal aliens", thereby facilitating their national and racial assimilation, what Daniel Coleman has coined as "white civility"<sup>51</sup>. According to Chang, the role of transpacific and transborder labour recruitment, White labour activism, racial politics, and state practices and regulations in the construction of the

49. Parnaby and Kealey, "The Origins of Political Policing in Canada...", p. 223.

50. Letter to Superintendent of Immigration W. D. Scott, March 1, 1912, NAC, quoted in Chang, "Enforcing Transnational White Solidarity...", p. 692-693.

51. Daniel Coleman identified the naturalization project of Anglo-Saxon nations as a "specific form of whiteness based on a British model of civility" for all citizens, regardless of ethnic makeup, a *fictive identity* he terms *White Civility*. Daniel Coleman, *White Civility: The Literary Project of English Canada*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 2006.

U.S.-Canadian boundary “highlights the contested and contingent history of border-formation in the Pacific Northwest, as well as the transnational context in which it took shape”<sup>52</sup>.

With a mutual interest in maintaining the boundaries of race and nation, the two countries engaged in collaborative transnational policing and enforcement of Asian immigration policies. The *Vancouver World* declared that the “Asiatic invasion” represented the “most serious attack on this continent” and threatened both “Republic and Dominion alike”<sup>53</sup>. Consequently, Canadian immigration officer Malcolm Reid boasted that “the utmost harmony prevails between the United States Immigration officers and our own officials, not only in Vancouver but throughout this whole district, especially in Oriental matters as it seems to be realized that the Oriental question is a menace both to the United States and Canada, hearty cooperation is necessary to deal with this momentous question adequately”<sup>54</sup>. Indian migrants were therefore extremely critical of cooperation between British officials and Canadian and American immigration authorities. They were most particularly hostile towards Hopkinson, who was consistently attacked at *Ghadr* meetings and whose sole presence ultimately indicated, according to members of *Ghadr*, the close relations between White governments and the repression of the anti-colonial movement<sup>55</sup>.

While anti-colonial publications represented a strong and violent discourse, their pan-Indian dream of independence lacked cohesion due to their multiple languages (papers were published in English, Hindu, Urdu, or Punjabi), and above all, the movement lacked the same cohesion that the colonial officers boasted. In February 1914, a few months prior to the *Komagata Maru* incident,

52. Chang, “Enforcing Transnational White Solidarity...”, p. 673.

53. *Vancouver World* (August 26, 1907), quoted in *Ibid.*, p. 689.

54. Report of Malcolm Reid, April 1, 1914, City of Vancouver Archives (hereafter CVA), MSS. 69, 509D7, File 1. Quoted in *Ibid.*

55. Sohi, “Echoes of Mutiny...”, p. 136.

the *Ghadr* was supplemented by a leaflet entitled, *Declaration of War: A Bugle Call for the Ghadr Army*:

The Feringhees have taken possession of our dear country, have spoiled its civilisation and morality, have carried off the Koh-i-Noor to England, and have spread famine, plague and malaria in India... they have leagued themselves with the Governments of Australia, Canada, and Africa to prevent Indians from entering these countries, and now wish to ask the American Government to prohibit Indians from coming to America<sup>56</sup>.

It is against such a background that the *Komagata Maru* incident must be studied, where the cohesion between White settler governments reinforced a solidarity that was based on racial policies of exclusion.

#### KOMAGATA MARU AND THE AFTERMATH

Under the leadership of Gurdit Singh—who argued that because they were travelling to Canada from Hong Kong the passengers would be staying within the jurisdiction of the British Empire, the Japanese steamship *Komagata Maru*, along with its Japanese crew, set sail in April 1914 containing 376 passengers from Punjab. In the weeks that followed, British spies, Canadian immigration officials, and Indian informers monitored Indians in Washington and British Columbia and claimed that the *Komagata Maru* voyage was a revolutionary plot with political motivations. Hopkinson warned that Indian agitators were under the impression that such political occurrences would “lead to the consummation of their plans namely a mutiny in India to which end they have for some years been at work”<sup>57</sup>. It was thought that, in essence, Indians boarded the “ship of revolution” and were leading it across the Pacific “with the object of being able to use the refusal to land in

56. James Campbell Ker, *Political Trouble in India 1907-1917*, Delhi, Oriental Publishers, 1973, p. 126.

57. Sohi, “Race, Surveillance, and Indian Anticolonialism...”, p. 432.

Canada as the ground for agitation against British rule in India”<sup>58</sup>. This sentiment from the authorities should also be seen as part of the so-called Hindu Conspiracy, a term used by governments to discredit Indian revolutionaries’ insidious global conspiracy; whereas “Hindu” was a common term of opprobrium, and “conspiracy” signified confused ideological and legal issues<sup>59</sup>.

There is however no evidence that the men had planned the trip as an Empire-breaking or specifically political challenge to British India. Instead the voyage had been planned to challenge the Canadian laws. Nevertheless, the two months of waiting ashore on the Pacific coast, along with the treatment by Canadian officials, the presence of undercover spies and legal manipulation, left the men in a hostile mood<sup>60</sup>. This twist had the effect to conversely stoke the anti-colonialist rhetoric and revolutionary discourse against Empire. As Kalyan Kumar Banerjee aptly states, the *Komagata Maru* incident was “symptomatic of the misunderstanding, suspicion and hostility that characterizes Indo-British relations for the major part of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century”<sup>61</sup>.

During its time in Canadian waters, the ship’s passengers had minimal contact with the outside world. The conditions aboard the ship were stifling as well. Drinking water was a scarce commodity aboard the ship. The passengers wrote to Inspector Reid, “Take pity on our wretched condition, otherwise we shall be compelled to get shore to quench our raging thirst”<sup>62</sup>. Another account by Gurdit Singh stated that, “One day a child... fainted due to thirst. His mother began to weep. It was a heart-rending scene. I hastened to the cabin of the captain... and brought a bottle of beer. As soon as a few spoons of it were put into his mouth, the child began to regain his senses. But the

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58. *Ibid.*, p. 433.

59. Jensen, “The ‘Hindu Conspiracy’...” p. 66-67.

60. Jensen, *Passage from India...*, p. 136.

61. Banerjee, *Indian Freedom Movement...*, p. 5.

62. Singh, *Voyage of the Komagata Maru...*, p. 93.

Japanese felt very much offended at my bringing the bottle of beer from their captain's cabin"<sup>63</sup>.

The incident indeed placed the Canadian government in an unwanted position where they had to take a stance on the matter of immigration policies and turmoil on its Pacific coast, while considering issues of Imperial unity. Initially reluctant to intervene on the matter, the federal government evaded the issue of racism and the case of India's British citizenry through prolonged proceedings in the hopes that the migrants aboard the *Komagata Maru* would leave the Canadian shores<sup>64</sup>. M. Olivier also maintained in the parliament that the issue was one which threatened the nation's existence, "Ce n'est pas ici un différend ouvrier, ce n'est pas une question de race; c'est une question de prédominance et d'existence nationales"<sup>65</sup>. The federal government therefore took measures to defend such motives. These measures would in fact be attempts to circumvent the British concept of *habeas corpus*, seeing as these migrants were regarded as unlawfully detained in their ship. This would be done through the domestication of immigration issues—no longer an imperial issue, curating the influx of immigrants—labourers would no longer be permitted entry in British Columbia<sup>66</sup>, and restrictions of diplomatic ties with Asian governments and immigrants (Japan, China and India).

In the end when the ship finally sailed back to Asia on July 23, it seemed that the worst had been averted and the immediate results were minimal damage to the Canadian and wider Empire polity. Generally, there are two factors evoked for the result of peaceable departure. One was the presence of the *Rainbow* (the Canadian navy ship), which the immigration authorities had sent for; the other was the conciliatory handling of the situation

63. *Ibid.*

64. *Compte rendu officiel des débats de la chambre des communes du Canada*, 20 mai au 12 juin 1914, p. 4478 and 4738-4745.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 4743-4744.

66. "Le gouvernement canadien prohibe l'immigration d'ouvriers dans les ports de la colombie anglaise", *Le Prix Courant* (February 6, 1914).

by the minister of agriculture and only cabinet minister from British Columbia Martin Burrell<sup>67</sup>. While one displayed an exemplification of strength, the other demonstrated that negotiation was the best virtue to avoid using said strength. According to Ali Kazimi, as a British national, Martin Burrell was aware of the geopolitics of the Empire, and was therefore able to give a perspective on the events to the prime minister that differed from the “personal agendas” of Reid and Hopkinson<sup>68</sup>.

Therefore, though they were British citizens and had been journeying within the Empire, they were not allowed to step out of the boat until September 27<sup>th</sup> after they had been ordered back to India and harboured in Budge Budge outside of Calcutta—over five months since they had first set sail. Once there, they were met by a British gunboat and placed under guard. The British government wanted the ship’s passengers under the watchful eyes of officials to ensure they were kept isolated and thereby unable to spread word of their mistreatment in British Columbia. While 62 of the 321 passengers complied with authorities, the remainder began to march toward Calcutta under Gurdit Singh’s leadership—the same businessman who had chartered the *Komagata Maru*’s voyage towards Vancouver. Halted by police, the passengers forcefully resisted; twenty Sikh passengers, and two British and two Indian policemen were killed<sup>69</sup>. By the end of the incident, three riots had occurred—one in which 22 police officers were injured and the captain of the Vancouver police suffered two broken ribs<sup>70</sup>.

In the aftermath of the events, the so-called return to peace would be short lived on the Pacific coast. In the late summer of 1914 the *Ghadr* party urged all Indians to return to India to

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67. Eric W. Morse, *Report of the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Historical Association / Rapports annuels de la Société historique du Canada*, 15 (1936), p. 107.

68. Kazimi, *Undesirables...*, p. 125.

69. Sohi, “Race, Surveillance, and Indian Anticolonialism...”, p. 433.

70. Ker, *Political Trouble in India...*, p. 241.

prepare for an armed uprising<sup>71</sup>. A crisis was therefore unfolding in British Columbia. Late in August, Canadian Indians began to eliminate the British surveillance structure by “using a response they had found effective and popular against police spies in India—assassination”<sup>72</sup>. Indian radicals were systematically murdering informants for Hopkinson’s Immigration Department; two of Hopkinson’s informers were found dead, their heads severed by a razor. In fact, within the span of four months, 4 individuals were shot or slashed to death, while 7 others were injured. The seriousness and violence of the situation was exemplified in internal intelligence memo:

Between the middle of October 1914 and the following January no fewer than thirty-three serious crimes, including five murders and several raids by large and well-armed gangs, were definitely traced by the government of India to the “*Ghadr* incitement”. During the same period a comprehensive scheme was unearthed for provoking a mutiny among the native troops in India. Seditious pamphlets were specially circulated, emissaries were sent to nearly all cantonments in upper India and at Meerut ten bombs were taken into the lines of a cavalry regiment (Vishnu Ganseh Pingley, a recent arrival from the USA, was arrested and hanged in this connection) with the avowed objects of starting a revolt by the massacre of Europeans<sup>73</sup>.

One of the suspects thought to have been masterminding this plot was Gurdit Singh, the leader of the *Komagata Maru*. After the murder of Bhag Singh, police officers searched his Vancouver house and found twelve revolver cartridges, 8 dynamite capes, 9 feet of fuse, a packet of powder and a small unfilled bomb,

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<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>72</sup> Jensen, *Passage from India...*, p. 191.

<sup>73</sup> Secret, Foreign Directorate of 27.8.1915, D. October 1915, n°. 43, quoted in Arun Coomer Bose, *Indian Revolutionaries Abroad: 1905-1927 (Select Documents)*, New Delhi, Northern Book Centre, 2002, p. 83.



besides test-tubes, crucibles and other apparatus<sup>74</sup>. However, Gurdit Singh had returned to Punjab along with the *Komagata Maru* and could not be prosecuted<sup>75</sup>.

Hopkinson's *modus operandi*—the reading of seditious publications, the tracking of suspected agitators—was the stock and trade of political policing. But Hopkinson was not simply an undercover agent, he was an immigration inspector as well, and this dual role was fraught with both tension and danger, especially at a time when Ottawa was making use of its wide-ranging discretionary powers to curtail immigration from Asian countries. In this important respect, Hopkinson was not only deeply lodged in the day-to-day controversies surrounding the enforcement of the landing restrictions for South Asian immigrants, but conversely, “his very actions in this regard helped to stoke the unnerving anti-British sentiment that prompted the federal government to hire him in the first place”<sup>76</sup>. For Hopkinson, carrying out this dual role would in the end prove deadly. The Sikh community was enraged by a number of killings which had allegedly been carried out by one of Hopkinson's informants, Bela Singh. Singh had apparently been caught in crossfire between loyalist Sikhs and Hopkinson's informants who were seen as dissidents. In fact, the community believed that the government was behind these killings, acting as instigators to these shootings<sup>77</sup>. On the 21<sup>st</sup> of October 1914, as Hopkinson waited in a corridor of the provincial court house in Vancouver during Bela Singh's trial, he was shot five times by Mewa Singh<sup>78</sup>. Singh defended

74. The test-tubes were examined and were found to have traces of picric acid and other explosives; also of importance when Singh was trialed one of his pillows was produced in court and cut open to reveal its contains—350 rounds of automatic pistol ammunition and 20 feet of fuse. Ker, *Political Trouble in India...*, p. 248.

75. Upon return to Punjab he joined the Congress Party in 1921 and fought against British colonialism. Barsan and Bolaria, *The Sikhs in Canada...*, p. 100-101.

76. Parnaby and Kealey, “The Origins of Political Policing in Canada...”, p. 232.

77. Nayar, *The Sikh Diaspora in Vancouver...*, p. 249-250.

78. Mewa Singh was a man well-known to Hopkinson for, he had been arrested along with three others by Hopkinson in July of that year for the possession of revolvers which had been purchased in the United States.

his actions in a long speech stating, "If the police and administration join together in perpetrating injustice, somebody must rise against it. You may hang me. What more can you do?"<sup>79</sup> He was eventually convicted and sentenced to death. Before being executed, Singh left a confessional statement with the priest of the Vancouver Gurdwara:

My religion does not teach me to bear enmity with anybody, no matter what class, creed or order he belongs to, nor had I any enmity with Hopkinson. I heard that he was oppressing my poor people very much. I made friendship with him through his best Hindu friend to find out the truth of what I heard. On finding out the fact, I—being a staunch Sikh—could no longer bear to see the wrong done both to my innocent countrymen and the Dominion of Canada. This is what led me to take Hopkinson's life and sacrifice my own life in order to lay bare the oppression exercised upon my innocent people through his influence in the eyes of the whole world... I shall gladly have the rope put around my neck thinking it to be a rosary of God's name. I am quite sure that God will take me into His blissful arms because I have not done this deed in my personal interest but to the benefit of both my people and the Canadian government<sup>80</sup>.

He was hanged on 11 January 1915 and has since then been revered as a martyr by the Indian community in Vancouver. His portrait still appears in some of the older Sikh temples in British Columbia<sup>81</sup>, and every year he is celebrated by Indians in Canada as Shahidi Din, or martyrdom day<sup>82</sup>.

79. Official report of a debate in the Canadian House of Commons on Asiatic immigration, quoted in Radhika Vivas Mongia, "Race, Nationality, Mobility: A History of the Passport", *Public Culture*, 11, 3 (1999), p. 550.

80. Quoted in Malini Sood, "Expatriate Nationalism and Ethnic Radicalism: The Ghadar Party in North America, 1910-1920", PhD diss. (History), State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1995, p. 266.

81. Kazimi, *Undesirables...*, p. 141.

82. Sood, "Expatriate Nationalism and Ethnic Radicalism...", p. 266.

Hopkinson on the other hand received “one of the greatest funeral processions the city had ever seen”<sup>83</sup>. For five years Hopkinson had been a one-man agency defending British Columbia from any seditious Asiatic activities, his activities effectively helping to define the homogeneity of province’s population. Hopkinson’s work was the only extensive British intelligence “system” operating in North America at that time. This system, would evolve between 1914-1918, thereby surviving the death of its creator, and mutated accordingly to events unfolding with the onset of the Great War. Regardless of his work and legacy, Hopkinson remained a junior officer until his death—never attaining the ranks of seniority. Popplewell argues that this may have been due to his lack of “clubbability”, which seemed to have been considered an essential make-up of senior secret service officers<sup>84</sup>. Could Hopkinson’s lack of clubbability within the circle of Canadian officers be linked to his race? His *Otherness*? Indeed, it is important to remember that the system of surveillance in Canada at this time was based upon the fact that Hopkinson was himself Indian (looking), and as such perhaps the same could be said of his lower ranking; yet, the matter remained that his work related to intelligence gather provided significant contributions to the “Hindu Conspiracy”.

Central to the decade-long racial affair between 1904-1914 is secret agent William Charles Hopkinson. Hopkinson was a production of his time, where in the collective imagination the “Englishman with his stiff upper lip and masterly control over world affairs was invented during another era of uncertainty, in the years between 1870 and the outbreak of the First World War”<sup>85</sup>. His title as secret agent, immigration and intelligence officer, demonstrated how intermediaries during this time period

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83. More than 2 000 marched—militia, police, and firemen, immigration and custom officials, men from the United States immigration service, C.P.R. employees, and a strong contingent from the Orange Lodge to which Hopkinson had belonged.

Johnston, *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru...*, p. 128.

84. Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence...*, p. 158.

85. Rutherford, *Forever England...*, p. 12.

played a crucial role in defining the future of immigrants. Yet, unlike brokers who sought to further the place of a community within the establishment, Hopkinson was preoccupied with proactively policing their activities and furthermore distancing himself from the Indian community. His refusal to identify as anything other than British demonstrates his epidermalization of inferiority and allegiance to the Empire's colour line. By "wearing" the *Imperial Mask* he endured hatred by "disloyal Sikhs" of the Empire who realized that he upheld the immigration laws<sup>86</sup>. After news broke that Hopkinson had been murdered, the Secretary of State for India told the Viceroy by telegram, "Murder is the outcome of work done for India"<sup>87</sup>.

Yet, we are to ask what kind of work was being built in India? Was it a process that would benefit Indians, or exclusively serve to solidify the Empire's hold upon the territory—and moreover, what was Canada's stake within this transnational ordeal? According to Johnston, Hopkinson had been as much of an author as an investigator of the agitation on the Pacific coast<sup>88</sup>—demonstrably, through his incessant surveillance, local Indians would increase their anti-colonial doctrine. Yet, it is important to keep in mind that Canada was a facilitator of the colonial practice and that other actors were responsible for the inflamed doctrine in the latter years. Indeed, by situating Canada within the Imperial context, we can historicize this episode and gain knowledge as to how the nation was socio-culturally constructed during this time-period. Bound by their colonial commitment, the government of Canada worked in collaboration with American and British authorities to construct and maintain a homogeneous identity. This identity would be at the expense of Asian immigrants and notably Indian migrants.

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86. Popplewell, *Intelligence and Imperial Defence...*, p. 153.

87. India Office Library, Home Dept. Proceedings (Political A), January 1915, n° 3, quoted in Johnston, "The Surveillance of Indian Nationalists in North America...", p. 19.

88. *Ibid*, p. 27.

From the perspective of Indians, the entire *Komagata Maru* incident simply reinforced their belief that a toxic combination of fear, loathing, and racial hatred was at the core of both Canadian immigration policy and the broader Anglo-Saxon society that sanctioned it<sup>89</sup>. The status of Indians migrating to Canada was a poignant revelation for their sense of self as political subjects, not only in North America, but more important throughout the Empire. If they could not be free in the United-States, Canada or elsewhere in the Empire, and India being part of this Empire, where could they find relief? The reluctance to act and respond to the *Komagata Maru* issue by the elected officials justified what had been perceived by Indian migrants and moreover demonstrated the delicate contentions at hand. The incident, though very local and restricted to Vancouver's urban area, brought to light numerous issues with which Canadian authorities had to grapple including national unity, empire unity, and diplomacy—thus illuminating transnational dimensions of migration laws, national race-making, and surveillance. After almost a decade of subordination and what appeared to be fruitless battles against the Pacific Slope's political leaders, revolutionary ideas gained a strong foothold.

In 1914, the same year as the *Komagata Maru* Incident, Canada founded its monument to world culture, the Royal Ontario Museum, in which artworks from India formed a part of its growing Asian collections. Deepali Dewan's 2015 article "We'll Take Your Artifacts but Not Your People", details how the passage of time traces on the one hand, how far Canada has come in embracing its multicultural population as a core of national identity, and on the other, that same passage of time demonstrates how fraught with tension this sense of nationalism continues to be. As Benedict Anderson states in his seminal work *Imagined Communities*, nation-states locate themselves somewhere in the space between the competing interests of the state as an institution and the nation as a participatory society. Though Canada

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89. Whitaker, *Secret Service...*, p. 53.

has evidently evolved towards an inclusive standard regarding migrants, immigrants, and refugees alike, certain agendas still demonstrate what types of incoming peoples are deemed acceptable within the Canadian mosaic. Indeed, if an exclusionist rhetoric fuelled anti-colonial and violent uprisings at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, why would the backlash be any different in an increasingly globalized world during this century?