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Canadian Museum for Human Rights

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Japanese Canadian redress rally at Parliament Hill, 1988.  
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# **REDRESS MOVEMENTS IN CANADA**

**Travis Tomchuk & Jodi Giesbrecht**  
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## Introduction

The past few decades have witnessed a substantial outpouring of apologies, statements of regret and recognition, commemorative gestures, compensation, and related measures on behalf of all levels of government in Canada in order to acknowledge the historic wrongs suffered by diverse ethnic and immigrant groups. A partial list, for instance, includes:

- House of Commons Apology to Japanese Canadians, 1988
- Address by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney to the National Congress of Italian Canadians and the Canadian Italian Business Professional Association, 1990
- Royal Proclamation Designating ‘Day of Commemoration of the Great Upheaval’, 2003
- Statement of Regret to Sons of Freedom Doukhobor Children by Attorney General of British Columbia, 2004
- Internment of Persons of Ukrainian Origin Recognition Act, 2005
- Agreement-in-Principle between the Government of Canada and the Italian Canadian Community, 2005
- House of Commons Apology for the Chinese Head Tax, 2006
- British Columbia Legislative Assembly: Acknowledgement and Apology for the *Komagata Maru* Case, 2008
- Africville Apology and Agreement to Commemorate the Historic Community, 2010
- House of Commons Apology for the *Komagata Maru* Incident, 2016
- House of Commons Apology for the *SS St Louis*, 2018

Although these various gestures at redress have differed with regard to the inclusion of an official apology and financial compensation, they indicate the way in which we have truly arrived in the “age of apology.” Increasingly common both in Canada and abroad, such apologies raise a number of questions about the relationship between collective memory, discrimination and exclusion, and human rights and justice today.

This booklet examines Canadian redress movements within the broader thematic framework of immigration and ethnicity. While redress and apology for issues such as forced High Arctic relocations or

for the Indian Residential School system are undoubtedly an important element of redress in Canadian history, such topics are outside the scope of the present publication. Here, we will focus on the four major redress movements central to immigration and ethnic history in Canada: Japanese Canadian forced relocations during the Second World War, the Chinese Head Tax, First and Second World War internment operations, and the *Komagata Maru* incident. For each of these four movements, we will provide an overview of the historic injustice as well as an examination of the subsequent campaign for redress.

What does it mean to seek redress for historic injustice? In its most basic sense, we can understand redress movements as campaigns launched by members of a community affected by historic injustice and their allies to seek recognition for the abuses committed against them. Redress movements may aspire to a number of aims, including an official apology, monetary or other forms of compensation, public monuments or memorials, or educational initiatives. Most redress movements share a desire to raise public awareness of historic injustice and to seek official recognition of wrongdoing and admission of guilt on the part of the perpetrator. Redress movements only sometimes result in financial compensation, and do not always lead to an official apology. Neither apology nor compensation have occurred without the lobbying efforts of citizens, typically from those communities affected by historic injustice. Communities seeking redress have employed a variety of tactics to achieve their goals. Such efforts have included direct action – lobbying and petitioning the government through letter-writing campaigns and petitions – staging public parades and protests, seeking media attention, and publishing articles in local and national newspapers. Other tactics have included launching court challenges or class action lawsuits as means of seeking redress through Canada’s legal system. Redress often involves years of activism and awareness-raising, as well as multiple tactics of mobilization.

The success of redress campaigns has often depended on a number of factors, including the particular government in power and its willingness to negotiate, the complexity of the legal process, the degree of inter-community support and public sympathy for the cause, and the tactics and persuasiveness of the claimants. Official apologies and recognition for historical injustice, then, have resulted from the interplay of vocal community organization, public interest, and political

will. Indeed, such factors have shaped the history of redress in all four major historical injustices examined in this booklet.

We will now turn to each of these four redress movements in greater detail.

## **Japanese Canadian Forced Relocation**

### ***Forced Relocation***

By 1941, approximately 95 percent of the 23,000 Japanese Canadians living in Canada resided in the province of British Columbia. Of this number, 13,000 had been born in Canada and approximately three-quarters were Canadian citizens. Japanese Canadians lived in both urban and rural centres along the coast and in the interior of the province, and worked in diverse occupations.

In daily life, work, school, and politics, Japanese Canadians faced a high degree of racist and xenophobic sentiments and actions. They were not permitted to vote and were typically prevented from holding public office, practicing law or medicine, or entering into other specific professions. Japanese Canadians even faced physical violence because of their nationality and heritage. In 1907, for instance, an anti-immigrant rally turned violent as racist mobs attacked homes and businesses in both the Japanese and Chinese districts of Vancouver, agitating for a “White Canada.”

These nativist and racist attitudes toward Japanese Canadians escalated during the Second World War. At that time, residents and politicians of British Columbia raised fears that Japanese Canadians constituted a threat to national security and lobbied the federal government to take action to contain this supposed threat. Aware that such fears were founded more on racism and xenophobia than on awareness of any actual plot to subvert the Allied war effort or sabotage national security, the Canadian government hesitated. On December 7, 1941, however, the Japanese military attacked Pearl Harbour, which goaded the Canadian government, following its wartime allies, into action. After officially declaring war against Japan, the government used the War Measures Act in order to pass legislation without the oversight of Parliament. It declared all Japanese Canadians, including both Canadian-born citizens and non-citizens, to be “enemy aliens.”

On January 14, 1942, the federal Cabinet passed Order-in-Council PC 365 which prohibited Japanese Canadian men of military age from living within 100 miles (160 km) of the coast. Japanese-language newspapers and schools were shut down, 1,800 Japanese Canadian fishing vessels were seized, and 38 Japanese nationals detained. Soon after, the RCMP arrested 720 Japanese Canadians, removing them from their homes and detaining them in internment camps. Despite these draconian measures, many British Columbians were not satisfied, believing the measures taken had not gone far enough. Led by B.C. Member of Parliament (MP) Ian Mackenzie, British Columbians pressured the government to remove and intern all Japanese Canadians regardless of age, gender, or citizenship.

In response to public agitation, the federal government passed Order in Council PC 1486 on February 24, 1942, which declared that all persons of Japanese racial origin must be removed from the coastal protective zone. This applied equally to all Japanese Canadians regardless of their age, occupation, or citizenship status. To oversee the mass evacuation and forced relocations, the British Columbia Security Commission (BCSC) was established, along with a Custodian of Enemy Property to oversee the confiscation of Japanese Canadians' property and hold the property in trust. The BCSC enforced curfews, searched homes without warrant, and confiscated property. Its actions effectively tore families and communities apart.

By mid-1942, most Japanese Canadian men had been removed from their homes and sent to work in road camps. Remaining evacuees, including women, children, and the elderly, were relocated first to the exhibition stables at Hastings Park in Vancouver, which served as a holding space until they were sent to camps in the interior of British Columbia. Families could take only what they could carry, and were limited to 150 pounds for adults and 75 for children.

The living conditions at Hastings Park were deplorable. Having been converted from a livestock barn to a human shelter in only one week, detainees slept on poorly built beds and used shoddy toilets located within open troughs. Upon their arrival, men and boys were evaluated for their capacity for physical labour and sent to one of the many road camps. From Hastings Park, women, children, and some teenage boys were sent to makeshift camps in ghost towns located throughout the interior of British Columbia, including Greenwood,



Slocan, New Denver, Sandon, and Kason. Some families were given the option to stay together if they were willing to work on sugar beet farms in Manitoba or Alberta. In total, approximately 23,000 Japanese Canadians were evacuated and forcibly located.

Single men aged 18 to 45, as well as men who were unwilling to relocate to sugar beet farms on the prairies, were sent to road camps to perform heavy labour for very little pay. Internees were under the supervision of armed RCMP special constables. It was illegal to leave the camps without permission. Detainees were oftentimes held behind barbed wire, supervised at all times, and denied the ability to work more than a few hours a day, meaning they could not earn sufficient money to send to their families. Men considered threats to national security, who resisted evacuation, or were seen as Japanese patriots, were sent to Prisoner of War camps in Petawawa and Angler, Ontario. The system was demeaning and discriminatory, and denied Japanese Canadians basic human and civil rights.

The Canadian government decided to close several road camps in June 1942 in apparent recognition of the camps' inefficiencies. Married inmates were permitted to reunite with their families at new camps at Slocan and Hope, while single men were sent to remaining road camps.

In early 1943, the federal government passed Order in Council PC 469, which allowed the Custodian of Enemy Property to sell Japanese Canadians' belongings – their homes, properties, businesses, and personal effects – which it had been holding in trust. The government claimed this was necessary to pay for the cost of interning Japanese Canadians.

Between 1943 and 1945, Canadian authorities gradually began to release Japanese Canadians from camps. However, they were not permitted to return to what was left of their homes and communities in British Columbia. Those who could move eastward began to do so. Young male adults sought employment in larger urban centres east of the Rocky Mountains; because of this, by 1944 most detainment camps were populated by the elderly, sick, unskilled, women and children, and others who lacked the means to relocate further east.

At the end of the war, the federal government forced Japanese Canadians to choose between two options: resettlement east of the Rocky Mountains, or deportation to Japan. The term “repatriation”

was a misnomer; many Japanese Canadians had been born in Canada and had never been to the country of their ancestors. As such, this was not a return to one's homeland but a forced deportation to a foreign country. Many Canadians protested this racist and draconian measure. An organization called the Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians took the measure to the Supreme Court of Canada, which upheld the government's position. In the face of fierce opposition from civil rights activists, media, churches, and some politicians, the government finally dropped the deportation policy. But although it lifted the War Measures Act in 1945, the government prohibited Japanese Canadians from returning home to British Columbia for another four years. Only in 1949 could Japanese Canadians finally go back to their communities and attempt to pick up the pieces of their former lives. Many chose to remake their lives in other parts of Canada.

### ***Redress***

After it lifted wartime restrictions and permitted Japanese Canadians to return to their homes in British Columbia, the federal government established the Bird Commission, under Justice Henry Bird, to investigate possible terms of compensation for losses occurred during the war. The inquiry was limited to losses due to confiscation of property and did not include damages suffered due to loss of earnings or income, violations of civil rights, psychological trauma, disruptions to education, separation of families and communities, or related issues. In 1950 Bird concluded the inquiry and recommended \$1.2 million in compensation to individuals. Minus legal fees, this amounted to \$52 per person. Some Japanese Canadians felt compelled to accept this amount, believing that it was likely the best offer they would get. Others, however, rejected the Commission's recommendations and refused to file a claim, arguing that this small sum could not begin to account for the vast loss and suffering they had endured. The National Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association was disappointed by the findings of the Bird Commission, but helped people file their claims.

The campaign for more adequate redress was galvanized in 1977, a year when Japanese Canadians across Canada celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the first Japanese immigrant to Canada. As the community celebrated its history and culture, many also debated launching a campaign for redress of wartime violations. In that same

year the National Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association established a Reparations Committee to consult with people on the issue.

An important moment in the campaign for redress occurred in January 1984 at a meeting in Winnipeg of the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC, the new name for the National Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association as of 1980). There, under the leadership of president Art Miki, members of the organization agreed to seek an official acknowledgement of the historical injustice their community had suffered through the forced relocations of the Second World War, financial compensation in the form of a community trust foundation, and a review and amendment of the War Measures Act in light of the recently entrenched *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. Soon after this meeting, the NAJC released a brief called *Equality Now!*, which included 80 recommendations to mitigate racial discrimination in Canada, and promoted the cause of redress.

The NAJC did not find then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau and his governing Liberals to be particularly receptive to their campaign. Indeed, Trudeau rejected outright the very idea of redress, saying that it was not the business of governments to rewrite history and that they should instead strive for justice in the present day. In response to the NAJC's request for an official apology and group compensation, the Trudeau government offered to make a statement of regret along with a \$5 million grant to establish an anti-racism foundation. Although the NAJC was divided over whether to accept this offer – a division that the government attempted to exploit – it ultimately rejected the proposal.

In 1984, the NAJC submitted a new brief, *Democracy Betrayed: The Case for Redress*, to the Progressive Conservative government of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney. Spokespersons from the community argued that despite the government's claim to be open to negotiations, it was acting unilaterally and neglecting to consult the community. Desiring a rapid resolution, then Minister of State for Multiculturalism Jack Murta offered an acknowledgement and \$6 million for a community-controlled educational fund. The NAJC rejected this proposal.

To strengthen its position, the NAJC undertook a study through accounting firm Price Waterhouse to assess the monetary value of losses suffered due to the forced relocations. This 1986 report, called *Economic Losses of Japanese Canadians*, estimated that Japanese Ca-

nadians had suffered no less than \$443 million in total economic loss, with \$50 million of that from property losses. The NAJC continued its efforts by writing letters to government, collecting signatures for petitions, and holding meetings with a number of groups and organizations across the country, including opposition parties, church groups, ethnocultural organizations, and others. In 1987, it organized a series of rallies in support of multiculturalism and redress. During a large rally on April 14, 1988, 500 people marched on Parliament Hill in support of redress, which was an important event in raising awareness. As the issue of redress was increasingly supported by a growing number of Canadians, the federal government backed away from its earlier threat to impose a unilateral settlement.

By June 1988 the federal government shifted its position on the issue of individual compensation, something advocated by the NAJC but previously rejected by the government. After three days of negotiation in September 1988, the National Association of Japanese Canadians and the federal government reached an agreement. Signed on September 22, 1988, the agreement included an official acknowledgment of wrongdoing by the Canadian federal government, \$21,000 in compensation for each living person who was adversely affected by wartime policies, \$12 million to be administered by the NAJC for social, cultural, and educational purposes, and \$24 million to establish the Canadian Race Relations Foundation. In addition, persons of Japanese origin who had been convicted under the War Measures Act were cleared in name, and those who had been deported or had their Canadian citizenship revoked had citizenship reinstated. \$3 million was provided to the NAJC to compensate for administration fees.

The apology agreement for Japanese Canadian forced relocations during the Second World War was a breakthrough in many regards. It was the first apology for historic injustice delivered by the Prime Minister of Canada in Parliament. It was a monumental recognition of many years of activism by an ethnocultural community. Finally, despite the challenges of negotiations with the government, the apology agreement was well received by Japanese Canadians. In many ways, the movement for redress of Japanese Canadian forced relocations served as a model for other ethnocultural groups seeking recognition and reparation for historic injustice.

## First World War Internment

During the First World War, the Canadian government introduced legislation that criminalized certain segments of the Canadian population because of their ethnicity and/or political views. This was done out of fear that the loyalty of immigrants lay with their countries of origin and not Canada. The War Measures Act, as this legislation was known, gave the Canadian government enormous powers including the right to intern individuals without due process. Xenophobia also played a role. Only in very rare cases were internees actually charged with criminal offenses. The overwhelming majority had done nothing wrong, but were thought to be potential saboteurs because they were born in countries against which Canada was at war or they belonged to cultural or political organizations made illegal during wartime by the Canadian government.

Civilian internment camps were established across Canada often in remote areas and were overseen by the military. Internees lived in barracks and often were engaged in physical labour, at low pay, for construction projects or the maintenance and expansion of the camps. The overwhelming majority of internees were men, though in some cases, wives and children of internees were allowed to reside in camp so they could be provided for during a husband or father's internment.

For the majority of internees who were not in camp with their families, it could mean years without seeing a spouse or children. The internment of a parent had a number of consequences for families: the loss of a breadwinner, spouses and children having to find work, or some children being put into orphanages because a sole parent could not afford to look after them. After release, internees tried to put their lives back together as best they could.

### *Canada and the First World War*

As part of the British Empire, Canada's involvement in the First World War began with Britain's declaration of war. To provide for Canada's domestic security, the War Measures Act was passed in the House of Commons on 22 August 1914. It gave the Canadian government a wide range of powers and passed without any serious debate. One clause stated, "The Governor in Council shall have the power to do and authorise such acts and things, and to make from time to time such orders and regulations, as he may by reason of real or ap-

prehended war, invasion or insurrection, deem necessary or advisable for the security, defence, peace, order and welfare of Canada.” The War Measures Act gave government actions the force of law but there was no mechanism in place to limit those actions. The Act gave the government the power to do the following: arrest, detain, and deport individuals; appropriate, administer, and dispose of private property; ban political organizations deemed subversive; and suspend the publication of foreign-language newspapers.

Following Britain’s declaration of war, those individuals living in Canada or who were Canadian citizens that originated in the German, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman Empires experienced xenophobia by the larger host society. Prior to the outbreak of the First World War, “Canadians” were concerned about the number of immigrants allowed to enter Canada. This concern turned to public hysteria as immigrants from the Central Powers empires were seen as disloyal and potential saboteurs. This led to the firing of German professors from Canadian universities, vandalizing of businesses owned by German and Austro-Hungarians, and prohibition against the printing or possession of literature in “an enemy language.”

As a means of dealing with potential saboteurs, the Canadian government passed Order-in-Council PC 2721 in late October 1914. This targeted foreign-born residents who migrated from countries and empires now at war with Canada, and who had not become legal citizens through a naturalization process. Now labelled as “enemy aliens,” this group had to register with a registrar appointed by the Canadian government. Registrars could be members of provincial or municipal police or postal clerks in urban centres. Enemy aliens who lived within 20 kilometres of an urban centre with a registrar were required to report once a month. Enemy aliens were also required to always carry identification cards on their person, could not leave Canada without the permission of Canadian authorities, and had restricted access to security areas such as bridges, railways, and other important infrastructure. PC 2721 also allowed for the internment of enemy aliens who failed to register, who were considered a security threat, or destitute. In addition, enemy aliens were interned for destroying identification cards or registering under a false name.

However, it was the 1913 depression worsened by the outbreak of the First World War that resulted in most internments. Many in-

ternees were young and single men who may have been failed homesteaders unable to find work or had been fired first when the economy soured. PC 2721 also gave Canadian authorities the power to intern enemy aliens that were indigent.

During the First World War, 8579 individuals were interned with roughly 6000 being categorized as Austro-Hungarians. What has become a subject of historical debate is how many of these Austro-Hungarian internees were Ukrainians. Scholars like Lubomyr Luciuk and Bohdan Kordan have argued that the majority of civilian internees during this period were Ukrainian. Others, most notably Orest Martynowych, have noted that the Austro-Hungarian Empire included Austrians, Hungarians, Croats, Serbs, Slovaks, and Poles in addition to Ukrainians; thus, definitive Ukrainian numbers cannot be known with certainty. Yet, of these various groups, only Ukrainian Canadians have sought redress from the federal government.

### *The Ukrainian Canadian Redress Movement*

The redress movement surrounding the internment of Ukrainian Canadians during the First World War is a curious story. As with all ethnocultural groups in Canada, among Ukrainian Canadians there are splits over political alignments, periods of immigration to Canada, and levels of assimilation that make it impossible to talk about a collective Ukrainian Canadian “community.” The interest in organizing around the issue of First World War internment in Canada was spearheaded by those Ukrainians who traced their arrival (or that of their parents) in Canada to the post Second World War period. These were immigrants who had experienced life under Soviet rule, who may have been ardent Ukrainian nationalists who saw the Nazis as liberators during the Second World War, and some who may have been directly involved in atrocities against Jews during this conflict. This was in stark contrast to the Ukrainians who migrated to Canada in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and who may have actually been interned between 1914 and 1920, and those who arrived in Canada during the interwar period. There was also a current among this earlier wave of Ukrainian migrants that embraced communism and was active in that movement in Canada.

In “The Politics of Redress: The Contemporary Ukrainian-Canadian Campaign,” historian Frances Swyripa briefly outlines the rifts

within the Ukrainian Canadian community on the topic of redress. According to her analysis, Ukrainian Canadians on the left supported the Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) and its Civil Liberties Commission (CLC's) taking on the struggle for redress but they took issue with how the UCC appropriated the migrant experience of earlier waves of Ukrainian migrants as their own. They also felt the UCC had been taken over by Ukrainian Canadians who arrived in Canada after the Second World War and who had forced out members of the earlier migration waves. Rifts also occurred within the CLC itself when it charged the UCC of being dictatorial and unaccountable. This led to former members of the CLC forming the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association (UCCLA), an organization that claimed it had been "mandated by the Ukrainian-Canadian community." The UCC then established its own organization known as the Redress Committee. With two competing groups lobbying the federal government, confusion reigned.

In 1987, the CLC's Lubomyr Luciuk authored *A Time for Atonement* which was submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Multiculturalism. This brief outlined the CLC's take on the Ukrainian Canadian internment experience: the internment of women and children, the forced labour of male internees, and the seizure of personal property. The brief called on the Canadian government to apologize for the treatment of Ukrainian Canadians during the First World War and compensate them for their loss of property. It was hoped that by doing this, Canadians would never again "be subjected to such a mass violation of their human rights and civil liberties."

In September 1988, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney formally apologized to Japanese Canadians for the treatment they received during the Second World War. A month later, the UCC released another document related to the internment of Ukrainian Canadians from 1914-1920. "The Ukrainian Canadian Case for Acknowledgement and Redress" was given to then Minister of State for Multiculturalism Gerry Weiner, who had been involved in the settlement negotiations with Japanese Canadians. In this document, the UCC laid out its demands. It wanted the federal government to acknowledge that the internment of Ukrainian Canadians was wrong, have markers placed at every site of Ukrainian Canadian internment, rebuild Alberta's Castle Mountain camp, change the language of the Emergencies Act to ensure Canadi-



ans with dual citizenship could not be interned, and provide \$500,000 for research on the economic effect of internment on Ukrainian Canadians.

Many Ukrainian Canadians and Canadians in general were split over whether an apology was necessary, whether compensation should be paid, and what that might look like. Swyripa suggests that the reason for Mulroney's 1990 apology to Italian Canadians for their labeling as enemy aliens and subsequent internment during the Second World War was due to the large voting blocs this community had in Toronto and Montreal. Ukrainian Canadians, in contrast, were spread throughout the country and not as politically concentrated. Historian Ian Radforth also suggested that the stark racism framing the Japanese Canadian experience also played a factor in the lack of federal government recognition of Ukrainian Canadian attempts at redress.

The early 2000s saw the debates continue, with growing calls for "symbolic redress" – as opposed to financial compensation – whereby the government of Canada would acknowledge past actions and repair the damage done. In 2005, the Liberal government announced the creation of the Acknowledgement, Commemoration and Education Program (ACEP). This program would fund eligible projects on the experiences of ethnocultural communities affected by war measures and immigration restrictions. In addition, ACEP funded initiatives would have to highlight the contributions these affected communities made to Canada. In August of that same year, Prime Minister Paul Martin announced that an agreement in principle had been made between the federal government and the Ukrainian Canadian redress movement for some of the ACEP funding. This was seen as a positive first step by those who had been lobbying for redress.

Then, in November of that same year, Conservative MP Inky Mark's private member's bill was passed in the House of Commons. Known as the *Internment of Persons of Ukrainian Origin Act*, its purpose was to acknowledge the internment of Ukrainian Canadians during the First World War and called for negotiations between the Liberal government and members of the Ukrainian Canadian community to decide how best to accomplish this. The bill also called for Canada Post to issue a commemorative stamp or set of stamps.

In June 2006, the Conservative government announced the creation of the Community Historical Recognition Program (CHRP) which

replaced Martin's ACEP. The CHRP budget contained \$25 million to help fund commemorative or educational projects by ethnocultural communities who had experienced oppression or injustice by the Canadian government. However, leaders of the redress movement were angered by this announcement since, under the previous program, it was understood that the representatives of the Ukrainian Canadian community would be paid a lump sum to control as they saw fit. In June 2007, the UCC rejected the CHRP and demanded that Prime Minister Harper abide by the *Internment of Persons of Ukrainian Origin Act*. As a result, the Canadian government established a \$10 million endowment fund in May 2008 – now known as the Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund – to fund projects that explore the First World War experiences of communities targeted by the Canadian state. Other outcomes of the endowment were the placement of twenty plaques at various sites across Canada including the locations of former internment camps. In November 2011, the Spirit Lake Camp Interpretive Centre was opened at the site of the old camp and two years later an exhibit opened in Banff, Alberta, site of the Castle Mountain internment camp.

## **Second World War Internment**

During the Second World War, the Canadian government again used internment as a means of dealing with civilian populations deemed a threat to national security. The various amendments made to the War Measures Act during the First World War were revised in the interim and became known as the *Defence of Canada Regulations* (DOCR). The DOCR was introduced in September 1939, prior to Canada's formal declaration of war against Germany. As Italy and Japan joined the conflict as part of the Axis, these regulations affected Italian Canadians and Japanese Canadians in addition to German Canadians. Under the DOCR the Minister of Justice had the ability to intern any individual suspected of acting "in any manner prejudicial to the public safety or the safety of the state." In the case of German and Italian Canadians, involvement in a fascist organization could be the grounds for internment. But, being a member of a German or Italian cultural organization that was not fascist was often enough to raise the suspicions of the

RCMP. Since Canadian authorities had been placing more resources towards the surveillance of communist groups, which were seen as the more dangerous threat prior to the Second World War, RCMP informants, some with dubious motives, could name an individual as a fascist and have them interned. Under the DOCR, *habeas corpus* and the right to a fair trial were suspended. These regulations also required German Canadians and Italian Canadians who had not been interned to register with authorities and to report on a regular basis. Japanese Canadians, as we have seen, were either forcibly relocated to parts of Canada *en masse* or interned in camps.

Internment camps for male civilian internees were located at Kananaskis, Alberta, Angler and Petawawa in Ontario, and the Ripples Camp outside of Fredericton, New Brunswick. Women internees were held at the Prison for Women in Kingston, Ontario. Roughly 850 German Canadians and almost 600 Italian Canadians were sent to internment camps. Of these totals, 12 German Canadian and four Italian Canadian women were interned.

The redress initiatives of Japanese Canadians have been explored above. As of writing, German Canadians have yet to mount a redress movement for their treatment during either of the world wars. Italians, on the other hand, have made a few attempts to seek redress from the Canadian government.

### ***Italian Canadians***

In the late 1940s, there were two apparently separate attempts at redress by Italian Canadians who were interned during the Second World War. In both cases, ex-internees tried to get financial compensation from the federal government for lost wages, loss of business, and emotional stress among other reasons. The first attempt, which appears to have begun in 1947, was spearheaded by Hamilton's Nicola Masi, who was interned at Petawawa for one and a half years. Masi contacted Senator Arthur W. Roebuck, who was also a lawyer, on behalf of thirty former internees who were trying to build a case against the Canadian government. The majority of them were from Hamilton, Guelph, St. Catharines, Thorold, and Brantford in Ontario. At least two of the internees from this group were residents of New Waterford, Nova Scotia.

Each internee of the Masi group compiled a document outlining the financial difficulties they and their families faced as a result of in-

ternment. Hamilton's Raimondo Parisi, for instance, owned and operated the Bayview Hotel. As a result of his arrest, Parisi had to put his brother-in-law, Baldasaro Spatazzo, in charge and pay him \$25 a week in wages and an additional \$25 a week to pay for the lodging of Spatazzo's family. This amounted to \$50 a week for eleven months of internment. Parisi argued that his hotel was boycotted as a result of his internment and, after his release, he was forced to sell his business because he was "maltreated ... and threatened to be sent to the [Pet-awawa camp] again by ill-informed people." The Bayview Hotel was sold for \$12,000 though Parisi maintained it was valued at \$30,000. He also wanted \$700 in legal costs covered for hiring a lawyer to help with his release from camp as well as the \$150 he "paid to the Custodian [of Enemy Property] to look after my interests; interests that were not looked after at all." In closing, Parisi wrote, "Now I appeal to the Canadian Government to take my case into consideration on the ground that ... I have been hand-cuffed [sic], forced to live among common criminals at the jail, my name stained and the loss of about \$30,000.00."

Senator Roebuck brought the matter to the attention of Minister of Justice J.L. Ilsley. In a letter to Roebuck dated 2 April 1948, Ilsley stated, "The only position I can take with regards to the informal positions forwarded by you is that the Government is not in any way liable at all and cannot give favourable consideration to claims of this kind." A second group, this time from Montreal, sought redress from the Canadian government in 1948 but was also unsuccessful. In the late 1980s, there was renewed lobbying by the National Congress of Italian Canadians (NCIC). Formed by activists in Toronto's Italian Canadian community in 1974, the NCIC's mandate was to build relationships between Italian Canadians and the wider Canadian population, encourage Italian Canadian participation in public affairs, and act as a mediator between Italian Canadians and the federal government. The NCIC was comprised of Italian Canadians who immigrated to Canada before the 1930s as well as those who came after the Second World War. At the time redress lobbying efforts began, the NCIC was headed by Annamarie Castrilli, a Toronto-born lawyer. Castrilli, whose family immigrated to Canada following the Second World War, had not heard of the internment of Italian Canadians during that conflict until hearing a lecture on the subject in 1989. Motivated by the successful

redress movement of Japanese Canadians, the NCIC began to actively seek redress for themselves.

The NCIC presented a brief to the federal government in January 1990. In *A National Shame: The Internment of Italian Canadians*, the NCIC chronicled the events of the Second World War, assessed the harm done to Italian Canadians during the conflict, and made the case for redress in order to resolve “a difficult chapter in the history of Canada.” Within the brief, the NCIC also wanted the government to acknowledge the contributions of Italian Canadians to Canada and promise that no other Canadians would be discriminated in a similar manner in the future. At this point, the NCIC was not interested in financial compensation.

Eleven months after the NCIC presented its brief, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney was in Vaughan, Ontario giving an apology. In front of 500 members of the NCIC, he said, “On behalf of the government and people of Canada, I offer a full and unqualified apology for the wrongs done to our fellow Canadians of Italian origin during World War II.” Mulroney was given a standing ovation.

The federal government’s apology to Italian Canadians happened very quickly. Annamarie Castrilli believed this was a result of the lobbying efforts of Italian Canadians, the support of the media, and the previous success of the Japanese Canadian redress movement. But this could also have been an attempt by Mulroney to gain crucial Italian Canadian votes in urban centres. It was also an easy apology to make because the NCIC was not asking for money. But on 5 November, the day following Mulroney’s apology, the NCIC demanded the federal government pay \$13,000 to each surviving internee and provide collective compensation for all Italian Canadians who were considered official “enemy aliens.” The NCIC then organized a Redress Committee that held public hearings in Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. At the hearings, surviving internees and their families gave testimonies on their experiences during the Second World War. They also discussed compensation with the members of the NCIC Redress Committee. However, no federal money was forthcoming.

In May 1993, the federal government offered to remove the names of internees from existing legal records, place commemorative plaques at the locations of internment camps, and establish a “Nation-Builders Hall of Records” at the national archives. But these offers were firmly

rejected by the NCIC. As Castrilli stated at the time, “It makes me wonder, why disparate treatment between us and the Japanese community? We too suffered the same injustices, so why deny us the compensation afforded the Japanese?” With no significant progress on the financial compensation front, the NCIC ended its redress campaign in 1994.

After the 2008 announcement of CHRP, a number of Italian Canadian institutions and organizations applied for funding for a wide variety of educational projects related to the Second World War experience of Italian Canadians. The most recent attempt to secure a federal apology and funding specifically for Italian Canadians came in 2009 when Massimo Pacetti, then Liberal MP for the Saint-Léonard-Saint-Michel riding in Montreal, introduced a private member’s bill. Known as Bill C-302, it called for the prime minister to apologize in Parliament to Italian Canadians in addition to creating a fund with \$2.5 million to underwrite projects related to Italian Canadian history and a commemorative stamp about the internment of Italian Canadians. However, due to the 2011 federal election, the bill did not go through all the necessary stages to become law.

Attempts at redress for the internment of Italian Canadians during the Second World War have seen mixed results. A public apology was made by a prime minister and federal funding available for projects dedicated to the subject of Italian Canadian internment. Yet, those who were separated from their families and experienced economic hardship were never compensated.

## **The Chinese Head Tax**

### ***Chinese Immigration and Exclusion***

Chinese immigrants began arriving to Canada in significant numbers during the gold rush in British Columbia in the late 1850s and 1860s. Some arrived after having tried their luck in California, while others arrived from southeastern regions of China, where war and population growth placed increasing pressure on available land and resources and forced many poor peasants to seek opportunities elsewhere. A second wave of Chinese immigration began in 1879 with the construction of the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR),

when 17,000 workers were brought to Canada by railway construction contractors to perform the dangerous and difficult labour of railway construction. When the CPR was completed in 1885, Canadian politicians and civilians decided Chinese were no longer welcome, despite the indispensable, backbreaking labour they had provided.

As a means of restricting Chinese immigration and settlement, the Canadian government under Prime Minister John A. MacDonalD instituted a head tax in 1885. This was a fee that nearly all Chinese immigrants had to pay in order to enter Canada and which remained in effect until 1923, at which point Chinese immigration was prohibited altogether with few exceptions. The head tax was the result of racism and xenophobia, as well as fears over economic decline and job loss in Canada. The Chinese Immigration Act of 1885 stipulated that persons of Chinese origin entering Canada must pay \$50. In 1900 the head tax was raised to \$100, and in 1903 it was raised again to \$500, a prohibitive amount. Between 1885 and 1923, approximately 81,000 Chinese immigrants paid the head tax. Students, teachers, missionaries, merchants, and diplomats were exempt from paying. No other national, ethnic, or racial group seeking entry to Canada faced these restrictions.

The head tax did not end Chinese immigration, provoking the Canadian federal government to pass the Chinese Immigration Act in 1923, which effectively prohibited Chinese from immigrating to Canada altogether. The head tax and subsequent prohibition on Chinese immigration imposed massive hardship on Chinese Canadian families and communities. It meant that families were separated for long periods of time; Chinese districts within Canadian cities became known as “bachelor societies” because of the scarce numbers of women and children. Around the turn of the century, Chinese men outnumbered women by almost 28 to 1. The intergenerational impact of familial separation, as well as severe racism and discrimination experienced within Canada, was profound. The Act was finally repealed in 1947.

### ***Redress***

In 1983 Dak Leon Mark, a Chinese Canadian man who had paid the head tax, approached his MP in Vancouver, Margaret Mitchell, and requested a refund for the \$500 he had paid to enter Canada. Mitchell raised the issue in the House of Commons. Over the course of the

next 20 years, the Chinese Canadian National Council (CCNC) registered the claims of an additional 4,000 head tax payers who sought redress, lobbied the federal government, held community meetings to raise awareness of the issue, made public presentations, and published a number of research reports. The CCNC sought parliamentary acknowledgement and apology, as well as symbolic financial redress.

Others sought redress through the courts. One high profile case, *Mack v. Attorney General of Canada*, was a suit that included the claims of three plaintiffs, Shack Jang Mack, who had paid the head tax, and Quen Ying Lee and Yew Lee, the widow and son of a deceased man who had also paid the head tax. The lawsuit, initiated on behalf of the 4,000 people who brought their claims forward, sought \$1.2 billion in damages for head-tax payers and their descendants, to compensate for the amount of tax paid as well as for the hardships imposed by familial separation, stigma, and related issues. An Ontario court ruled in 2001 that the federal government had no legal or constitutional obligation to compensate head-tax payers. It argued that, since the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* did not exist when the head tax was in effect, it could not be applied retroactively. The court also ruled that the government's compensation of Japanese Canadians for the loss of property and hardships endured during the forced relocations of the Second World War did not set a legal precedent. Subsequent appeals were unsuccessful.

Although the court had ruled that the Japanese Canadian redress agreement did not set a legal precedent, the 1988 apology and compensation for the Second World War forced relocations did give a boost to Chinese Canadians' campaign for head-tax redress. In 1993 Prime Minister Brian Mulroney offered to build a "Nation Builders Hall of Record" to recognize the contributions of a number of ethnic groups to the Canadian nation. Most Chinese Canadians, similar to Ukrainian Canadians and Italian Canadians, considered the offer insufficient and rejected it, continuing to press instead for an official acknowledgement and redress. The CCNC continued to meet with various government officials, though the governments of Jean Chretien and Paul Martin were not open to negotiations. In December of 2002, federal MP Inky Mark introduced Bill C-333 in the House of Commons, which proposed an apology accompanied by funds for anti-racist educational projects.



Not all Chinese Canadians supported the cause for redress, and divisions also remained over the desired form of redress. Some community members stated that they were thankful their ancestors had the opportunity to come to Canada and make a better life for themselves, discriminatory policies notwithstanding, and did not wish to claim redress. Others said there were so few head-tax payers still living and so many descendants that the practicalities of redress were too challenging. Whereas some, such as the Chinese Benevolent Association of Vancouver and the National Congress of Chinese Canadians, desired an apology and community funds for educational initiatives, others, such as the CCNC and the British Columbia Coalition of Head-Tax Payers, Spouses and Descendants, sought compensation in the form of individual payments adjusted for inflation plus interest.

Despite these divisions, the community maintained its tactics of lobbying and organizing to raise awareness. They created a broad coalition with other ethnic groups, labour unions, and political actors. In 2003 they launched what they called the “last spike campaign,” traveling across 11 Canadian cities with the famous railroad spike found by Pierre Berton as a tangible reminder of Chinese Canadians’ key role in building the transcontinental railroad – a symbol of the very coming together of Canada as a nation.

In 2004, in response to community mobilization, Doudou Diene, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, investigated the issue of the head tax and redress. Diene concluded that the Canadian federal government should provide redress for the hardships and suffering that Chinese Canadians had endured as a direct result of the head tax.

In the lead up to the federal election of 2006, the New Democratic Party and the Bloc Québécois made clear their respective parties’ support for apology and redress, while the Conservative Party under Stephen Harper similarly promised to work with the community toward a redress agreement. After winning that election, the Conservatives held a series of consultations with community members.

On June 22, 2006, Prime Minister Stephen Harper offered an official apology as well as a compensation package for head-tax payers or their spouses, who were each entitled to \$20,000. Although few Chinese Canadians who immigrated prior to 1923 were still alive – only about 20 – nearly \$16 million in compensation was paid out. One year

after the federal apology, the province of Ontario marked June 22 as Chinese Canadian Head Tax Redress Day, while the city of Vancouver similarly observed this as a municipal day of commemoration.

The redress package has not been received with unanimous approval by Chinese Canadian individuals and organizations. Some believe that the amount of compensation included in the agreement is not sufficient to account for the degree of intergenerational trauma experienced as a result of the head tax. They argue that payments and the apology should have also included children of head-tax payers rather than being limited solely to head-tax payers or their spouse, given that most were deceased at the time of the settlement. In 2007, the National Anti-Racism Council of Canada submitted a report to the United Nations Commission on the Elimination of All Forms of Racism on the subject, arguing that payments for the head tax were not inclusive or broad enough to truly address the topic. Although the federal government has not expanded the scope of individual forms of compensation, it has supported a number of public commemorative and educational initiatives to raise further awareness of historical injustices such as the Chinese head tax.

### **The *Komagata Maru***

On 4 April 1914, the *Komagata Maru*, a Japanese steamship, left Hong Kong on its way to Canada. The ship had been contracted by Gurdit Singh, a Sikh businessman, with the aim of challenging a racist immigration policy in Canada. The policy, known as the ‘continuous journey,’ was introduced in 1908 to curb Asian and South Asian migration. The regulation stated that anyone travelling to Canada from Asia could only land if the ship on which they sailed came directly from an Asian port to Canada without any stops along the way. In 1914, this was impossible as all ships would be required to refuel at some point. Those aboard the *Komagata Maru* were largely Sikhs from India’s Punjab region, who numbered 340, and were joined by 24 Muslims, and 12 Hindus. Singh had been approached by a number of hopeful Sikh migrants who wanted to travel to Canada. He was able to secure passage on the *Komagata Maru*, which would also be transporting a shipment of coal to Vancouver.

Those on board the *Komagata Maru* had reason to be optimistic when they embarked on their voyage to Canada. In 1913, the *Pana-*

*ma Maru* transported 39 Indians to Canada. After their arrival, the migrants were brought before a Board of Inquiry and ordered deported by Canadian immigration officials. This decision was successfully appealed by J. Edward Bird, the lawyer representing the Indians, who was able to argue that the Order-in-Council (the ‘continuous journey’) was not a valid means to limit Indian immigration to Canada. In direct challenge to Canada’s ‘continuous journey’ legislation, the *Komagata Maru* landed at Shanghai, China, after leaving Hong Kong, and then stopped at both Moji and Yokohama, Japan, before crossing the Pacific Ocean to Vancouver.

The *Komagata Maru* arrived on the B.C. coast on 22 May 1914. Canadian immigration authorities did everything in their power to make sure the ship’s passengers did not disembark. This was largely due to the racist regulation used to prevent those aboard from landing at Vancouver. But there were also concerns on the part of some Canadian authorities that armed members of the militant Ghadr (Mutiny) movement, who sought the overthrow of British rule in India, were on the *Komagata Maru*. Those onboard were not allowed access to members of Vancouver’s Sikh community or the media. Canadian authorities also wanted to insure that Gurdit Singh could not land in the city. This would prevent him from selling the coal in the *Komagata Maru*’s hold or gaining access to banks to pay the balance on hiring the ship. As the passengers waited to learn whether they would be able to land, meagre supplies provided by the Canadian government had to be rationed, which, at times, led those on board to go without food or water for days at a time.

The passengers’ lack of access to the wider Sikh community of Vancouver did not prevent the local Sikh community from once again hiring lawyer J. Edward Bird to mount a legal challenge on their behalf. Immigration officials were well aware of Bird’s successful legal challenge the previous year and did what they could to prevent a repeat. As long as the *Komagata Maru* passengers did not leave the ship, it was easier for Canadian immigration authorities to hinder their ability to challenge their situation. If those aboard the ship landed in Vancouver, there was no legal means that immigration authorities could employ to detain them. And, once detained, a migrant was entitled to legal representation. Canadian authorities also prevented Bird from visiting the passengers though he was entitled to meet privately with

each of them as he was their lawyer. In court, Bird argued that it was illegal to discriminate against British subjects because of their race and that the civil rights of the passengers were being violated.

Bird and the Canadian government were able to come to a compromise: a passenger would be selected for a test case and, whatever the outcome, the decision would stand for the rest of the *Komagata Maru's* passengers. Munshi Singh was selected by Bird because he had a small amount of money and would be representative of the rest of the ship's passengers. Unfortunately, the court's unanimous decision went against Munshi Singh's admission to Canada, which meant that the ship would have to return to India. In the end, only 22 of the *Komagata Maru's* passengers were allowed to land at Vancouver because they could prove they had lived in Canada prior to the enactment of the continuous journey regulation.

The lack of adequate provisions for the *Komagata Maru's* return to India deeply angered the ship's passengers and they seized control of the ship. When Vancouver police tried to board, the ship's passengers successfully repelled local authorities. And, though the Canadian Navy and soldiers were at the ready, the Canadian government did not want a violent end to the situation due to the political ramifications this would have in both India and Canada. In the end, the Canadian government agreed to pay for enough provisions for the *Komagata Maru's* return journey. On 23 July, after two months of being anchored off of the coast of Vancouver, the *Komagata Maru* was escorted out of Canadian waters by the *HCMS Rainbow*.

The First World War had begun by the time the *Komagata Maru* arrived in India. British authorities suspected that those who travelled aboard the *Komagata Maru* were members of the Ghadr movement and had returned to British India to fight for Indian independence. The ship and its passengers were searched for smuggled weapons. A disagreement occurred between some of the *Komagata Maru* passengers and British authorities with regard to where the ship's passengers could travel. Before a government official could arrive to hear the grievances of the *Komagata Maru's* former passengers, shots were fired by both soldiers and passengers. When the fighting stopped, 22 people were killed, 16 of whom had been passengers. More than 200 of the *Komagata Maru's* passengers were imprisoned.

### **Redress**

Efforts to seek a federal apology regarding the *Komagata Maru* incident began in the late 1990s. The Professor Mohan Singh Memorial Foundation (PMSMF) was one of the early groups that formed to lobby the federal government for an apology. The first action carried out by the PMSMF was collecting signatures for a petition that was presented to the Canadian government in 2002. The PMSMF also held events to commemorate the arrival of the *Komagata Maru* in Burrard Inlet as they did on 23 May 2006. The PMSMF continued its work on the issue while the Descendants of the *Komagata Maru* (DKM) formed and also sought an apology from the federal government. In 2012, the organization had 15 families involved. It is not clear how closely the PMSMF and the DKM worked with one another, however both groups spurned financial compensation. Instead, they simply wanted the federal government to apologize officially in the House of Commons for the treatment of the *Komagata Maru*'s passengers.

As Alia Somani has argued, "To deliver an apology in Parliament means to officially document and record that apology, or permanently inscribe it in the nation's historical record. Thus, what the activists are implicitly demanding is that the state remember precisely what it wishes to forget, that it break away from the economy of forgetting that characterizes official multiculturalism, and, in doing so, grant the South Asian Canadian diaspora a more meaningful recognition and inclusion in the nation."

The PMSMF continued to hold ceremonies or vigils on the anniversaries of the *Komagata Maru*'s arrival in Canada or on its departure from Canadian waters. It also collected signatures for petitions that were submitted to the Canadian government. In addition, the PMSMF consulted with the wider Indo-Canadian community for input on seeking an official apology from the federal government. According to the PMSMF website, the findings from the consultations were given to Jason Kenney on 27 May 2006 while he was Parliamentary Secretary to Prime Minister Stephen Harper. That same year, Harper attended the Mela Gadri Babiyan Da, an annual Sikh festival held in British Columbia and organized by the PMSMF. He addressed those in attendance, acknowledging the work of the PMSMF in publicizing the *Komagata Maru* tragedy, and stated that the federal government

would be consulting with Indo-Canadians on how best to recognize this dark moment in Canada's history.

After almost two years of inactivity on the part of the federal government, in 2008 the PMSMF wrote to Jason Kenney, now Secretary of State for Multiculturalism and Canadian Identity. The letter stated, "that the community is expecting an apology in regards to the *Komagata Maru* tragedy. Any other measures will not suffice, including any monetary funding for monuments/projects. Any measures taken by the government without an apology will be viewed an attempt to 'buy' votes from the community and it will be strong [sic] condemned by the community and our organization." In response, Kenney wrote that his government was "working toward an official apology for the *Komagata Maru* incident."

As Indo-Canadian activists awaited a federal apology, British Columbia's government made a formal apology in the legislature on 23 May 2008. Yet, the federal Conservative government did not apologize officially in the House of Commons. Instead, Prime Minister Harper appeared at the 3 August 2008 Mela Gadri Babiyan Da to convey the *Komagata Maru* apology to BC's Indo-Canadian and Sikh communities. Harper's address spoke to the important contributions South Asian newcomers had made to Canada, gave a very brief account of the *Komagata Maru* incident, and talked about a motion already passed in the House of Commons recognizing the injustices of the *Komagata Maru* tragedy and apologizing to those directly affected. Harper then told the crowd he was present to convey this apology.

The reaction to Harper's "apology" was immediate and angry. Members of the South Asian community who had actively lobbied the federal government for an apology took to the stage to express their disappointment. One activist waved his fist in the air and yelled, "We do not accept this apology at all. We were ashamed in 1914 by the government and today the government again has ashamed us [sic]." Jaswinder Toor, of the DKM then spoke to the crowd, saying "Prime Minister, we clearly told your representatives yesterday that this apology will only be accepted if it will be done in Parliament."

The PMSMF continued to lobby the Canadian government for an apology for the *Komagata Maru* tragedy. In the fall of 2009, the group delivered a petition to Jack Layton, then leader of the federal New Democratic Party, who presented the petition in the House of Com-

mons in the spring of 2010. Layton called on the Conservative government to meet the demands of the petition – to formally apologize for the treatment of the *Komagata Maru* passengers in the House of Commons.

The PMSMF continued to hold candlelight vigils, support motions calling on the federal government to make an official apology, and consult with the wider Indo-Canadian and South Asian community. The organization received assurances from both NDP leader Tom Mulcair and Liberal leader Justin Trudeau that if their respective party were to win the 2015 federal election, a formal apology in the House of Commons would be forthcoming. Finally, on 18 May 2016, those who had lobbied the Canadian government for an official apology got what they had waited nearly two decades for, when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau apologized in the House of Commons for the *Komagata Maru* tragedy. For Montreal’s Gurjinder Kaur Gill, who travelled to Ottawa to be present for the apology, it felt like closure. As she stated, “It shows that Canada is inclusive to everyone.”

In the past, Canadian governments apologized to Japanese Canadians for their forced relocation, internment, and seizure of property; to Chinese Canadians because of the head tax; and Indigenous peoples for Indian Residential Schools. When a federal government apologizes for an injustice committed upon its citizens, having deemed the grievance serious enough to warrant such action, this recognition results (or gives the appearance of resulting) in that aggrieved population being included fully as Canadians.

Ali Kazimi, however, is skeptical of public apologies. He states that most Canadians and South Asians do not know about the *Komagata Maru* tragedy and questions what an apology is supposed to accomplish. As Kazimi has noted, it was not as if an apology for the events surrounding the *Komagata Maru* would translate into a new approach for treating so-called “irregular arrivals” in Canada. This term is used to describe foreign nationals who arrive in Canada before they can be properly vetted by immigration authorities, and who are often treated like criminals. Kazimi pointed to the treatment of 492 Tamils who arrived in British Columbia aboard the *MV Sun Sea* in August 2010 as an example. Though those aboard the ship were fleeing violence in Sri Lanka, the Conservative government of the time labelled those who operated the ship as human traffickers and its passengers as members

of the Tamil Tigers, a group the Canadian government considers a terrorist organization. All crew and passengers were put into immediate detention. As the case of the *MV Sun Sea* demonstrates, little has changed in Canada's attitude towards boats filled with people from South Asia.

## **Redress Movements and Historical Understanding**

The history of redress movements and federal apologies in Canada, as we have seen, is a complex narrative. Community mobilization and political opportunism have intersected in diverse ways with evolving debates concerning identity, inclusion, pluralism, justice, and human rights, ensuring there is no singular experience of redress in Canadian history. Efforts to secure redress have been challenging, difficult struggles for many ethnic communities, who have spent great effort and resources, faced racism and discrimination, and often failed to achieve their objectives. Why, then, have they persisted? Why is the history of redress such an important dimension of Canada's historical memory?

Redress is significant for a number of reasons. The first, and perhaps most obvious, is that it provides a means of seeking financial compensation for damages suffered on account of historical violations of rights and freedoms that have resulted in individual, familial, or communal harm. The amount paid by Chinese immigrants as a head tax, the loss of property of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War, the loss of freedom for internees, and the enduring, inter-generational effects of such losses are examples of the kinds of damages for which redress is intended to compensate.

Most redress movements, however, are motivated not by a desire for financial compensation but by a need for some form of recognition, admission of wrongdoing, and apology on the part of the state. Recognition serves as an acknowledgement of the injustice and hardships suffered by individuals and communities. Redress movements thus have the potential to serve the purposes of restorative or reparative justice, functioning as symbolic yet profoundly significant admissions of wrongdoing, accompanied as they often are by pledges to never again commit abuses of fundamental human rights and freedoms.



Redress movements are most effective when they provide space for people to tell their stories of injustice and to share their community's experiences, when such narratives challenge conventional understandings of Canada's national history, and when they are able to raise awareness about the many forms of discrimination and inequality that have been and continue to be disproportionately suffered by minority groups. Redress movements have the potential to draw attention to the human dignity and worth of all Canadians, to provide moral recognition of persisting inequalities, to foster empathy, and to promote reconciliation as a means of moving toward a more just and equitable society. The many educational and anti-racist initiatives resulting from continued efforts of ethnic communities to seek recognition serve as examples of the potential of redress to enact genuine and progressive change. And the study of redress movements constitutes a potentially radical form of historiographical practice, one that seeks to mobilize historical knowledge to enhance the rights and freedoms of all Canadians.

Redress movements are not effective, however, when they encourage a kind of comparative politics of suffering or attempt to revise histories of injustice into celebrations of immigrant and ethnic groups' contributions to the nation of Canada. Some contend that by shifting the focus of commemorative projects away from injustice and onto the contributions of ethnic and immigrant communities to the Canadian nation, the ways in which inequality continues to shape social and political structures in the present day is downplayed, as is the state's structural culpability as the perpetrator of injustice. In other words, when redress initiatives fail to enact a politics of anti-racist, redistributive justice, they may foreclose, rather than facilitate, contemporary understandings of historic abuses, blunting the force of those advocating a redistribution of resources in equitable ways and challenging dissent into state-sanctioned celebrations of diversity.

Redress is similarly problematic if it is used by state or other actors as a means of 'moving on' from the past. If apologies are deemed hollow or opportunistic, what might have otherwise constituted a genuine effort to take responsibility for historical wrongs instead becomes a self-effacing tactic of exculpating the state from its complicit role in perpetrating the abuse. The problem with framing apologies as a means of moving on is that collective memory, historical understand-

ing, and challenges to enduring inequality are prevented from having real impact on structural injustice in Canada. Similarly, if an apology is perceived as inauthentic or as provided on account of political opportunism, it fails to truly recognize hardships suffered and becomes a mere gimmick for public gain.

In sum, the history of redress movements in Canadian immigration and ethnic history brings together myriad conversations on civil and human rights, racism and inequality, pluralism and identity, and historical consciousness and collective memory. Issues surrounding reparations, recognition, and reconciliation can and should continue to frame historical understanding of past and ongoing human rights abuses. One can only hope that the kinds of redress movements examined in this booklet will in the future constitute examples of historical efforts at seeking justice as opposed to ongoing tactics of mobilization for rights and freedoms.

## For Further Reading

The *Righting Canada's Wrongs* series of books published by James Lorimer & Co. provide excellent synopses of historical injustices as well as campaigns for redress. Books relevant to the present publication include a number authored by Pamela Hickman, *Righting Canada's Wrongs: Italian Canadian Internment in the Second World War* (2012), *Righting Canada's Wrongs: Japanese Canadian Internment in the Second World War* (2011), and *The Komagata Maru and Canada's anti-Indian Immigration Policies in the Twentieth Century* (2014). Arlene Chan's contribution to the series is equally valuable; see *The Chinese Head Tax and anti-Chinese Immigration Policies in the Twentieth Century* (2014). For a more scholarly collection of articles on redress and reconciliation in Canada, see Jennifer Henderson and Pauline Wakeham, eds., *Reconciling Canada: Critical Perspectives on the Culture of Redress* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013) as well as Matt James, "Degrees of Freedom in Canada's Culture of Redress," *Citizenship Studies* (2014), and Ian Radforth, "Ethnic Minorities and Wartime Injustices: Redress Campaigns and Historical Narratives in Late Twentieth-Century Canada" in *Settling and Unsettling Memories: Essays in Canadian Public History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 369-415.

### ***Japanese Canadian Forced Relocation***

A number of books have been published that document various aspects of Japanese Canadian experiences of forced relocation and internment. These include Ken Adachi, *The Enemy that Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), Mary Taylor, *A Black Mark: The Japanese-Canadians in World War II* (Ottawa: Oberon Press, 2004), Ann Gomer Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians During the Second World War* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1981), and Mona Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence: Japanese Canadian Women, Memory, and the Subjects of the Internment* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012). Additional sources include Stephanie Bangarth, *Voices Raised in Protest: Defending Citizens of Japanese Ancestry in North America, 1942-1949* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2008), The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's collection of audiovisual material in its digital archives entitled "Relocation to

Redress: The Relocation of Japanese Canadians ([http://archives.bbc.ca/war\\_conflict/second\\_world\\_war/topics/568](http://archives.bbc.ca/war_conflict/second_world_war/topics/568)), and the *Landscapes of Injustice* Project ([www.landscapesofinjustice.com](http://www.landscapesofinjustice.com)).

Several authors have compiled wartime writings and reflections from Japanese Canadians who experienced forced relocation and detention. These include Keibo Oiwa, *Stone Voices: Wartime Writings of Japanese Canadian Issei* (Montreal: Vehicule Press, 1991) and Murial Kitigawa, *This My Own: Letters to Wes & Other Writings on Japanese Canadians, 1941-1948* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1985). Joy Kogawa, whose family was relocated and interned in B.C. and Alberta during the war, wrote a fictional story of internment in the award-winning novel *Obasan* (Toronto: Penguin, 1981).

For detailed information into the heart of the campaign for redress, Roy Miki's *Redress: Inside the Japanese Canadian Call for Justice* (Vancouver: Raincoast Books, 2004), Roy Miki's and Cassandra Kobayashi's *Justice in Our Time: The Japanese Canadian Redress Settlement* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1991), Art Miki's *Japanese Canadian Redress Legacy: A Community Revitalized* (Winnipeg: National Association of Japanese Canadians, 2003), and Audrey Kobayashi's "The Japanese-Canadian Redress Settlement and its Implications for 'Race Relations,'" *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 24 no. 1 (1992) provide in-depth examinations of the various stages of the redress campaign.

Throughout the campaign for redress, the National Association of Japanese Canadians published or commissioned several important documents and pamphlets, including *Democracy Betrayed: The Case for Redress* (1984), the Price Waterhouse report, *Economic Losses of Japanese Canadians After 1941* (1986), and *Justice in our Time: Redress for Japanese Canadians* (1988). For contemporary activities of the National Association of Japanese Canadians and the Canadian Race Relations Foundation, visit their websites at [www.najc.ca](http://www.najc.ca) and [www.crrf-fcrr.ca](http://www.crrf-fcrr.ca).

### ***Ukrainian Canadian Internment during the First World War***

Academic inquiry into the First World War experiences of Ukrainian Canadian began with the publication of two articles in *Loyalties in Conflict: Ukrainians in Canada during the Great War* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1983): Peter Melnycky's "The Internment of Ukrainian in Canada" (1-24) and Frances Swyripa's "The Ukrainian Image: Loyal Citizen or Disloyal Alien" (47-68).

Publications created specifically for making the case for redress began to appear in the late 1980s. These include Lubomyr Luciuk's *A Time for Atonement: Canada's First National Internment Operations and the Ukrainian Canadians, 1914-1920* (Kingston 1988); *In Fear of the Barbed Wire Fence: Canada's First National Internment Operations and the Ukrainian Canadians, 1914-1920* (Kashtan Press: Kingston, 2001); and *Without Just Cause: Canada's First National Internment Operations and the Ukrainian Canadians, 1914-1920* (Kashtan Press: Kingston, 2006); Bohdan Kordan's *Prisoners of War: Internment in Canada during the Great War* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002) and *A Bare and Impolitic Right: Internment and Ukrainian-Canadian Redress* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004) the latter of which was co-authored by Craig Mahovsky. The above-mentioned works did face some criticism regarding historical accuracy, most notably in historian Orest Martynowych's "A Plea for a Rational Discussion of the Internment of Ukrainians in Canada, 1914-1920," published in *Ukrainian Weekly* in 1988, and Frances Swyripa's "The Politics of Redress: The Contemporary Ukrainian-Canadian Campaign," appears in *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 355-378.

### ***Italian Canadian Internment during the Second World War***

Two important first-hand accounts of the Italian Canadian Second World War experiences are: Mario Duliani's memoir *The City Without Women: A Chronicle of Internment Life in Canada during the the Second World War* (Toronto: Mosaic Press, 1994) and Filippo Salvatore's *Fascism and the Italians of Montreal: An Oral History, 1922-1945* (Toronto: Guernica, 1998). The edited collections *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000) and *Beyond Barbed Wire: Essays on the Internment of Italian Canadians* (Toronto: Guernica) explore different facets of this period of Italian Canadian history

### ***The Chinese Head Tax***

While few materials have been published solely on the Chinese Head Tax, several works are available on Chinese Canadian immigration and history more generally. See Peter S. Li, *The Chinese in Canada* (Toron-

to: Oxford University Press, 1988) and Evelyn Huang and Lawrence Jeffery, *Chinese Canadians: Voices from a Community* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1992). Kay Anderson's *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada, 1875-1980* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991) and Peter Ward's *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Toward Orientals in British Columbia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978) provide overviews of the ways in which racism in Canada affected Chinese Canadians.

For critical analyses of the Chinese Head Tax redress movement, see Stephen Winter, "The Stakes of Inclusion: Chinese Canadian Head Tax Redress," *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 41 no. 1 (March 2008): 119-141, Matt James, "Recognition, Redistribution and Redress: The Case of the 'Chinese Head Tax,'" *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 41 no. 1 (March 2008): 119-141, and David Dyzenhaus and May Moran, *Calling Power to Account: Law, Reparations and the Chinese Head Tax Case* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005).

### ***The Komagata Maru Redress Movement***

For books on the historical context and events of the *Komagata Maru* please see Hugh Johnston's *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989), Peter Ward's article "The *Komagata Maru* Incident" in *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy toward Orientals in British Columbia* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 79-93, and Ali Kazimi's *Undesirables: White Canada and the Komagata Maru* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2011). Two books that include primary documents related to the *Komagata Maru* incident include Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich's *Komagata Maru: A Challenge to Colonialism* (SAS Nagar: Unistar Publishing, 2005) and Guradita Singha's *Voyage of the Komagata Maru or India's Slavery Abroad* (SAS Nagar: Unistar Publishing, 2007). Very little has been published on the *Komagata Maru* redress movement, likely owing to the recent 2016 apology by the Canadian government. Alia Somani's article "The Apology and its Aftermath: National Atonement or the Management of Minorities?" in *Postcolonial Text* 6.1 (2011): 1-18 and her dissertation "Broken Passages and Broken Promises: Reconstructing the *Komagata Maru* and Air India Cases" (University of Western Ontario 2012) touches on redress

as well as the meaning ascribed to apologies. Another important resource for the activities of the *Komagata Maru* redress movement is the *Professor Mohan Singh Memorial Foundation* website (<http://www.profmohansinghmemorialfoundation.ca/>).

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