

THE EAST INDIANS



IN CANADA

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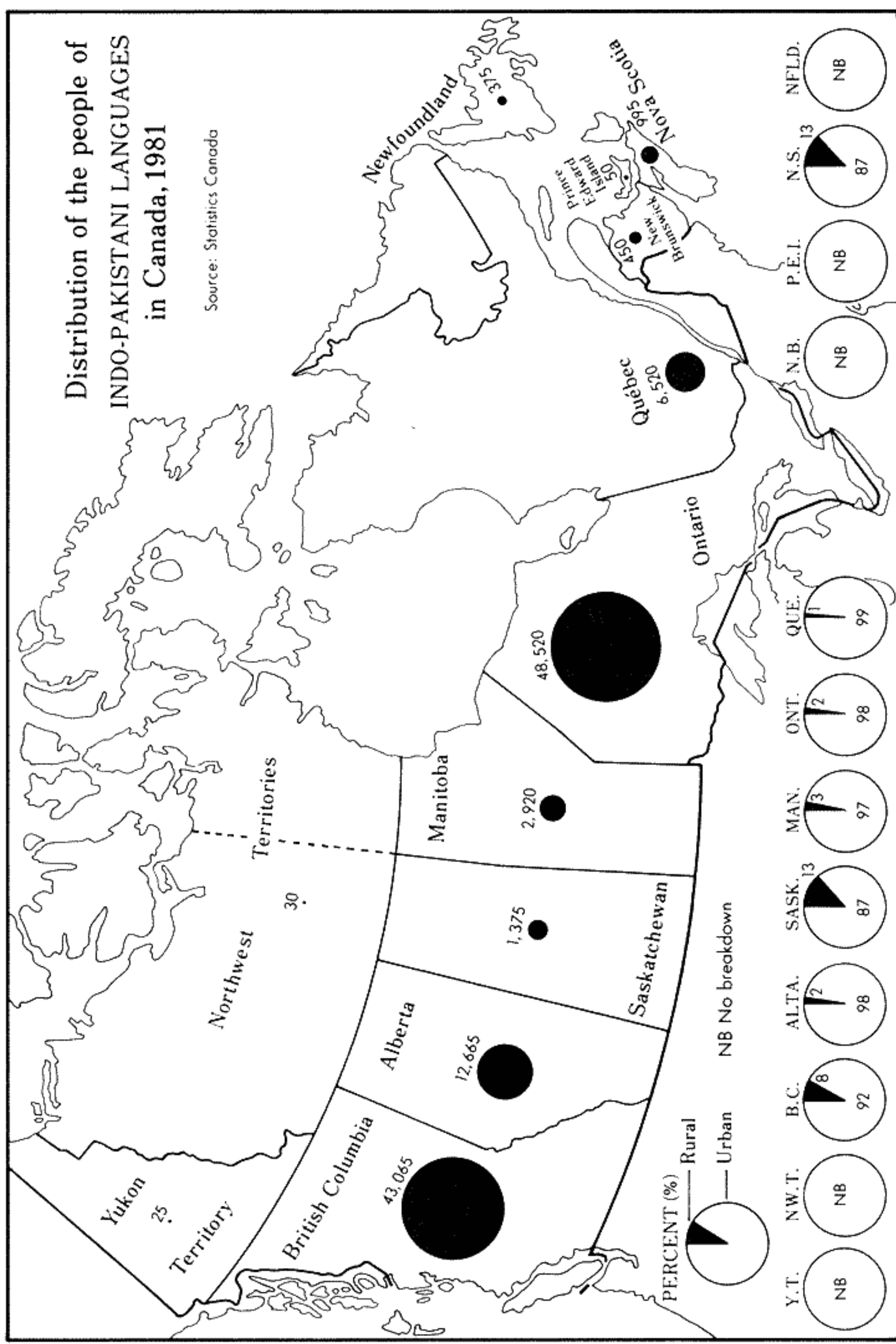
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THE EAST INDIANS IN CANADA

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Distribution of the people of INDO-PAKISTANI LANGUAGES in Canada, 1981

Source: Statistics Canada



THE EAST INDIANS IN CANADA

I — The Indian Background

When they first arrived in Canada, Indians were called Hindus, although most were not. In census reports and in other publications they were referred to as East Indians, to distinguish them from the people that Columbus met. The creation of four countries (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka), where once one existed, has led to the somewhat confusing term South Asian. And, because some immigration has been indirect rather than directly from Asia, the organization that attempts to represent all Indo-Canadians has been saddled with the cumbersome title, "The National Association of Canadians of Origins in India". Columbus complicated our vocabulary because he did not know where he was, and, to compound the problem, the Canadian context has pushed a common identity on people who are not all the same. Until recently, nearly all Indians in Canada came from one small province in Northern India, Punjab, "land of the five rivers". But with the liberalization of Canadian immigration law in the 1960s, immigrants have come from all parts of India, as well as Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. In the 1970s there was a significant migration of East Indians from Fiji and a still larger one from Africa and smaller numbers came from the West Indies, Mauritius, Europe and elsewhere.

Indians have spread around the world in the past 150 years, both as indentured labourers and as free migrants. Indentured migration, which replaced slave labour in Britain's tropical colonies, lasted from the 1830s until World War I and established populations in Mauritius, Trinidad, Guyana, Natal, Malaya and Fiji. Some free migration followed in the path of the indentured movement, but most went in other directions — to East Africa, North America, and Great Britain. The inland province of Punjab, annexed late in the history of British India, was never tapped for indentured labour but has been a principal source of free migrants and now Punjabis constitute the largest Indian community in Canada.

Modern Punjab is one of the richest states in India with the highest yields of all major crops, the longest life expectancy, the highest agricultural wages, and the best road and railway network. Emigration began in the 1870s, about a generation after the extension of British rule throughout the province, when railways at last linked Punjab to Calcutta, facilitating migration to Malaya and beyond. By 1870, an improved irrigation system, the extension of cultivation, rising agricultural prices, rising land values (made possible by a British legal framework defining land as a transferable asset), and an efficient system of taxation in cash was drawing Punjabi villagers rapidly into the money economy. In the first sixty years of British rule, a previously stable population increased by 40% or 50%, and a country of great open spaces, the domain of the black buck and the tiger, became crossed with irrigation ditches and covered with wheat and leguminous or pulse crops. Mortgages were rare at the beginning of the British regime, but by the 1920s they made up a large proportion of a vastly increased rural debt. Good years encouraged the assumption of debt — for consumer purchases and for land — and bad years made it inescapable. Because debt follows

credit, the most heavily mortgaged districts were the most prosperous and the most indebted peasants those of the comfortable middle ranks. Going out of the village to earn money to remit home was one answer to perpetual debt. Since a family without credit probably could not raise the fare for distant travel, emigration from Punjab has been an outlet for a comparatively prosperous part of the rural population — particularly the Jat Sikh community.

The Jats are a landowning caste or tribe whose origins probably go back to a pastoral group that first appeared in Punjab between the seventh and ninth centuries. Within Punjab, they are distinct, not only from trading, artisan, and menial castes, but from other landowning castes. In 1911 they made up about one-fifth of the Punjab population and were divided by religion, so that in eastern Punjab Jats were Hindus, in the west (or what is now Pakistan) they were Muslims and in the central districts they were Sikhs. Emigration has run predominantly from the Sikh communities and particularly from two districts, Jullundur and Hoshiarpur, which lie between the Beas and Sutlej rivers, in an area the Sikhs call Doaba, which is comparable in size to four or five Ontario counties or to Cape Breton Island. Although Jullundur has been the most densely populated district of Punjab since the beginning of the century and Hoshiarpur among the more densely populated districts, by the 1920s the burden of debt was significantly less in these districts than in surrounding districts because of the remittances sent home from family members overseas.

Jat Sikhs constituted a majority of the population in Jullundur and a minority in Hoshiarpur and were the most determined emigrants in both districts. Within rural Punjabi society they have been a conspicuously enterprising, industrious, and energetic people, less inhibited by caste rules and religious prescriptions than other landowning castes. These characteristics appear to have roots in their Jat origins as a tribe that has risen in status over a long period of time, and in the Sikh religion, which has contributed to the cohesion of their community while allowing flexibility in coming to terms with the outside world. The Rajput farmer, if he was true to tradition and birth, did not plough or accept the help of his wife in his fields. The Saiyyid could borrow money, but could not take interest on a loan. While the progress of rural debt, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, promoted the transfer of land ownership out of the hands of traditional landholding castes, the Jat Sikhs more than held their own, accumulating land and capital and turning readily to money lending and trade.

Not all Sikhs are Jats, but Jats are the dominant element in the Sikh community. Although the ten Sikh gurus, beginning with Guru Nanak (1469-1539), were all Khatri, an urban trading caste, and most of the early adherents were Khatri, the rural Jats were open to Khatri teaching and the Sikh doctrine of equality of all men was attractive to them because their position within the caste hierarchy was uncertain. By the eighteenth century, most Sikhs were Jats. By that time, as well, a devotional cult had become a militant religious brotherhood. Sikh historiography places the moment of this transformation precisely at 30 March 1699 when Guru Gobind Singh, the last of the ten gurus, founded the Sikh Khalsa brotherhood. Yet the militancy that he taught was natural to the Jats who had taken up the sword many times before they were converted, and the external symbols of the Khalsa brotherhood, notably the uncut hair, were characteristic of all Jats, whether Hindu, Sikh or Muslim.

After a long resistance to the Mughals, Sikhs emerged as rulers of the Punjab. When their kingdom fell to the British, and the Khalsa army was disbanded in 1849, some of the advantages of an open adherence to Sikhism disappeared. Although British observers predicted the dissolution of Sikhism, the Sikh community has gained in vitality during the past century. Sikhs became, along with Gurkhas, favoured recruits into the British Indian army, with their own regiments in which the uncut hair, turban, and other symbols of the Khalsa brotherhood were required dress. Military service, colonization of the western Punjab under British auspices, and emigration contributed to the economic strength of the Sikh community, which has grown faster than any other element of the Punjab population. The success of the Sikh community, and the advantages that it enjoyed under British patronage, also encouraged Hindus to take up Sikhism and lapsed Sikhs to return to the Khalsa brotherhood. In the census of 1881, fewer than two million Sikhs were counted; in 1971 there were over eight million. For the first time, Sikhs now form a majority within their own state. In 1911, the population of Punjab was 12% Sikh, 30% Hindu, and 51% Muslim. In 1947, the India-Pakistan border cut through the Sikh homeland and forced the evacuation of Hindus and Sikhs from the west and Muslims from the east. By the census of 1961, Sikhs made up 33% of the population of Indian Punjab. In the new and smaller Punjab state in India, as constituted in 1966, they possess a majority (60% by the census of 1971).

Rather than weakening the Jat Sikh community, emigration has contributed to its strength. In the early years, any random selection of Sikh emigrants would have represented almost as many villages as individuals because of the organization of Punjab society. A village might contain 150 households, with a majority of Jat Sikhs but a significant proportion of other castes. Since the rules of marriage required the choice of a bride or groom from within the same caste, but from outside the same family lineage and the same village, the inhabitants of one village always had kinship ties with many other villages, some a great distance away, and reports of those who went abroad spread quickly over a wide area. Although the pattern has changed in the past 20 years, the typical Sikh emigrant was a single man for whom the decision to leave was not an individual choice, but a family matter. A study of the village of Vilyatpur, Jullundur, has shown that, in households with one adult male, emigration was seldom considered, because if he did not return, the family line in the village would not survive. On the other hand, the families most likely to retain and increase their properties have been those that have received remittances from family members abroad.

II — The Pioneers

By the 1890s, Sikh villagers were travelling great distances in search of employment. Service in Sikh regiments provided footholds in East Africa and the Far East. In Hong Kong, Singapore, and Malaya, Sikhs were used as policemen, watchmen, and caretakers and, in Malaya, as dairymen, cart drivers, and mine labourers. Comparatively high wages for farm work attracted a few adventurous men to Australia until the passage of anti-oriental immigration legislation in 1901. In 1891, the C.P.R. introduced a trans-Pacific passenger service from Hong Kong to Vancouver and on 1 April 1904 the vanguard of a Sikh

influx reached British Columbia on a C.P.R. liner. Their arrival coincided suspiciously with a temporary halt in Chinese immigration, when the Canadian government raised the head-tax on Chinese immigrants to \$500. In his 1907 inquiry into oriental immigration, Mackenzie King, then Deputy Minister of Labour, came to the conclusion that passenger agents were encouraging immigration from India to fill the steerage space no longer taken by the Chinese. However, given the trans-Pacific steamer service, and the fact that Australia had closed its doors, Sikh migrants were bound to find North America on their own.

Between 1904 and 1908, more than 5,000 Indian men landed in British Columbia. About 3,000 crossed into the United States. According to American statistics, 96% were between the ages of 14 and 44, and most were between 20 and 29. Perhaps 40% were married, but had left their wives in India. Nearly all had travelled as directly as possible from their villages, although a small number had served in Sikh regiments in the Far East. An overwhelming majority were Jat Sikhs and most of the rest — whether Sikhs of other castes, or Hindus, or Muslims — came from the same districts in the central Punjab. Most were illiterate and few spoke English. Their own testimony was that they had been induced to come to Canada by letters from friends and relatives. The official immigration statistics show 45 Indian immigrants in 1904-5; 387 in 1905-6; and over 2,000 in each of 1906-7 and 1907-8.

Among these immigrants were a few entrepreneurs. Particularly active was Dr. D.R. Davichand, an English-speaking Punjabi Hindu who found work for several hundred men in saw mills in the vicinity of Vancouver. For men who arrived indigent, he put up cash bonds, and he acted as an interpreter both in the immigration shed and the saw mills. He charged those who got work through him \$1.00 a month (they earned about \$1.25 a day), while his nephew operated a store for Sikh mill-workers. By 1908, a handful of Indian professionals, students, and businessmen in Vancouver and Victoria were engaged both in providing goods and services to the Sikhs and in trying to organize them politically. Most of them were educated Hindus from Bengal, Oudh and the North West Frontier Province. Although they constituted a very small element in the Indian immigrant population, they played an important role in relations with the host community.

These relations were not good. Before more than 45 or 50 Sikhs had landed in B.C., and while they were arriving at a rate of only two or three a month, the city clerk of Vancouver complained to Ottawa about the large numbers. By the time 1300 had landed, Vancouver's two M.P.'s had gone to the Prime Minister, Sir Wilfred Laurier, to demand that the "Hindoos" be shut out; and the mayor of Vancouver had appealed to the Colonial Secretary, Winston Churchill, to "prevent further shipment". The newspapers in Vancouver and Victoria described Indians as undesirable, degraded, sick, hungry, and a menace to women and children. All of this excitement — which officials in Ottawa at first underestimated — began in a period of high employment. Sikhs were not taking jobs from white men, but jobs that previously had been filled by Chinese and Japanese. In the forest industry, and on fruit ranches, there were acute shortages of labour, and the British Columbia Lumber and Shingle Manufacturers Association was agitating for changes in the C.P.R. rate structure, to encourage

more emigrants from Europe to come to the West Coast. Hostility towards the Sikhs, at least in 1904-6, was not caused by the short-term economic situation. It did have a basis in a long-standing perception of trade unionists — particularly in the mining industry — that oriental labour undercut their position. But antipathy towards orientals was expressed by clergymen as well as by trade unionists, and in many ways that had nothing to do with jobs and wages. Racial exclusiveness and cultural homogeneity were widely shared values in British Columbia (and elsewhere). The Chinese and Japanese had already been identified as unwanted immigrants, because they were foreign by culture and by race, and Indians fell automatically into the same category.

In 1907, the British Columbia economy took a tumble (throwing 5000 whites out of work in Vancouver alone), while oriental immigration continued to increase. The Prime Minister and other government spokesmen in Ottawa had been saying that Canada probably did not have the power to exclude Indians because they were British subjects, but a series of events in the autumn of 1907 caused them to toss that concern aside. Within the space of seven days a violent mob of whites drove 400 Indian mill-workers out of Bellingham, Washington, across the Canadian border; white rioters went on a rampage through the Chinese and Japanese quarters of Vancouver; and 900 Indians arrived on a single C.P.R. steamship. In 1908 the Canadian government required that Indian immigrants have \$200 in their possession on arrival (while European immigrants needed only \$25) and that they come by continuous passage from India (which was impossible because steamship companies, on instruction from the government, did not provide the service). These regulations had the desired result: Indian immigration stopped. As a consequence, the men who had landed between 1904 and 1908 composed the bulk of the Indian population in Canada until the 1940s.

A justification used for shutting out Indians was that climate and culture made them unfit for work in Canada and likely to become public charges. In fact, even in the midst of a recession, most found employment and none went on the dole. Sikhs did not follow the Chinese into other areas of employment — domestic service, laundries, hotel cook and kitchen help, and market gardening — and this created the impression that what they could do, or would do, was

TABLE I: EAST INDIAN IMMIGRATION
TO CANADA, 1900-1950

	Total East Indian Immigrants	% of Total Canadian Immigration
1900-10	5,195	0.38
1910-20	112	0.006
1920-30	488	0.04
1930-40	254	0.1
1940-50	390	0.09
Total	6,439	

limited. In Punjab there were jobs that, by custom, a Jat Sikh did not touch, but when Sikhs went abroad, they seized the best opportunities open to them. In Singapore and Hong Kong they did policework; in Australia they worked on sugar plantations; in California they became fruit and vegetable farmers; and in Britain, they worked in factories. In British Columbia most found work in the forest industry, particularly in handling lumber in the sawmills of Victoria, Vancouver, and New Westminster. They did not become domestics or kitchen help, because they preferred arduous or rough work outdoors, if it paid well. The goal was money; to earn it they travelled great distances and they were prepared, with the slightest encouragement, to go farther. As free emigrants, they were more mobile than those among the Chinese and Japanese who came out under contract. The Indian government entered into agreements with various British colonies regulating indentured emigration, but there was no agreement with Canada and no indentured emigration of Indians to Canada. The Sikhs therefore spread rapidly through British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and California and ignored the less lucrative unskilled work.

Constantly in the company of their own countrymen — at work and in their lodging or bunkhouses — Sikhs were isolated by their pattern of life as well as by language, culture, and the attitude of the host population. Family life, with children going to school and contacts with neighbours, would have reduced that isolation, but this was an adult male population since only nine Indian women immigrated between 1904 and 1920. At millsite bunkhouses, accommodation was spartan and interiors sometimes damp and poorly lit. In some lodging houses, as many as ten men shared the same room for cooking, eating, and sleeping, putting up with the crowding in order to save as much as possible. Whenever there were more than one Sikh in the same lodging house or bunkhouse, they kept a common kitchen, pooling expenses, and eating their basic meal — chappati, pulse, and curry — together, as a democratic and self-supporting social unit. Beyond the lodging house or bunkhouse, there was the *gurdwara*. In the Sikh tradition the *gurdwara* is a public building, open to anyone who wishes to enter. The Vancouver *gurdwara*, completed in 1908, was designed to fill the same functions as a village *gurdwara* in the Punjab. On the first floor was a meeting hall, a kitchen, and rooms for accommodation for whoever might require it; and, on the second, the temple. The Victoria *gurdwara*, built two years later, was similar. Until recently, in Canada the *gurdwara* served as a meeting place for all Indians — Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh. In the absence of family life, it played an essential role in holding the Indian community together.

The immigrants formed an egalitarian community in which the strongest ties were those of kinship and village, and in which leadership, as in Punjab, was assumed through force of personality and initiative, and not through status or wealth. Their political life was, as a consequence, robust — seldom orderly and frequently divisive. By far, the most important organization was the *gurdwara* management committee, or Khalsa Diwan Society, founded in 1907. This society had, as its primary responsibility, the management of the Sikh *gurdwara* in Vancouver, and the overall supervision of the other, smaller, *gurdwaras* in British Columbia. It was also the principal organization acting in the interest of Indians in Canada. Other organizations had brief lives — the United India

League, the Hindustanee Association, the Canada-India League — but probably involved only a few people. When in 1908, the government promoted a scheme to recruit Indians from Vancouver for indentured labour in British Honduras, the Khalsa Diwan conducted negotiations with a representative of the Minister of the Interior and provided a forum at which the idea was emphatically rejected. To prevent the authorities from using vagrancy as an excuse to deport Sikhs, the Society ensured that unemployed Sikhs were looked after. From 1910 on, it led an agitation against the immigration laws, raising funds to fight individual cases, and focussing attention on the position of men settled in Canada who were unable to bring in their wives. In 1914, when 376 Indians (mostly Sikhs) on the steamer *Komagata Maru* were refused entry and sent back to the orient, after two months' detention in Vancouver harbour, the Khalsa Diwan raised \$40,000 for their cause. Also associated with the Khalsa Diwan Society was the Guru Nanak Mining and Trust Company, incorporated in 1908 as a vehicle by which Sikhs could invest their savings in real estate.

In the first years, the leadership of the Khalsa Diwan Society was controlled by moderates. By 1913, it had passed into the hands of men who sought the violent overthrow of British rule in India. To some extent, this change can be attributed to the activities of students from Bengal and elsewhere in India, who had come to North America to study. More important, however, was the influence of men within the Sikh community, particularly one or two revolutionaries who had been involved in disturbances in western districts of the Punjab in 1907. The treatment of Indians in Canada was an effective issue around which anti-British feeling could be mobilized among Sikhs in North America and in the Punjab. Between 1913 and 1917, the San Francisco-based *Gadr* (Mutiny) party was active in Sikh settlements through California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia (as well as Hong Kong, Malaya, and the Philippines), and the leading members of the Khalsa Diwan Society in Vancouver were thoroughly committed to its goals. The Indian government took a serious view of this situation and, with the cooperation of Canadian officials, kept a close watch on the movements of all Indian activists in North America. The *Komagata Maru* affair, which highlighted the inequality of Indians within the British Empire, served the *Gadr* purpose well. When war with Germany broke out in the late summer of 1914, the *Gadr* party urged all Indians to return to India to prepare for an armed uprising. Hundreds of Sikhs in British Columbia responded. Some were involved in an abortive rising in the Punjab in 1915. However, since their departures were reported by Canadian immigration officials, most were met on arrival by Indian police and confined to their villages. By 1915, word had got back to Canada, and the rush to return ended. Nonetheless, an Indian population that had numbered 2342 in 1911 was reduced to 1016 by 1921. The exodus stripped the community of its more activist element, and the failure of the *Gadr* rising left the party without much impetus, although the memory of the events of 1914-15 remained important to Sikhs in Canada.

III — The Development of a Canadian-born Population

The men who stayed in Canada were slow to establish families here, and the majority never did. They had come to Canada to earn money to secure and

enhance the position of their families in India. As places to live, they preferred their native villages. In the pre-war period, British Columbians had vehemently objected to any suggestion that Indians should be allowed to bring in wives, because a community with women would be permanent. Without women, and without further immigration, it was predicted that the Indian community would gradually disappear. After World War I, the Canadian government changed its position on the admission of wives and children in response to pressure from Britain, which argued that Canada's policy was damaging to the British position in India. After 1918, Indian men resident in Canada, were allowed to bring in wives and their children under eighteen. The door was also opened for students, tourists, and other non-immigrants. Yet only two women came in the first year and, on average, about 11 a year over the course of the next two decades. It was, of course, more expensive to maintain a family in Canada than in India, but culture was as much a factor as economy. In British Columbia, the Sikhs stayed apart from all other groups. When Sikhs married, they married in India, but their wives and families usually stayed there, except a son who might come out before he was 18. Between 1904 and 1944, there were only three marriages between Sikh men and Canadian women outside the Sikh community. In Southern California, a different pattern emerged. By 1923, more than 30 marriages had taken place between Sikh men and Mexican-American women, and this affinity continued, leading to some assimilation to Mexican-American culture, and some loss of Sikh culture. What happened in California was determined in part by the American law on lost domicile. An Indian could not go out of the country for more than six months without losing his right to return. Canadian authorities allowed Indians, who had registered when they left, to return after absences of three to six years. A married man could work in Canada for some time, and then spend an extended period with his family. An unmarried man had more than enough time to go back to find a wife.

Much of the migration between British Columbia and Punjab was beyond the control of the immigration authorities. In 1939, as a gesture towards public opinion in India, in time of war, the Canadian government decided to wipe the slate clean for all illegal immigrants in the Indian community, expecting them to number about 50. Instead, 218 came forward out of a total Indian population of fewer than 1500. Most had entered with false documents; others had crossed the border from the United States. Nearly all came from the same villages and districts in Punjab as the men already in Canada. By 1941, there were only 165 Indian women over nineteen years of age in Canada — and 747 men. A majority of these men were pioneers, immigrants from before 1908, now in their fifties, sixties, seventies, and even eighties. The sex and age structure of the community told its history; there were more old men than children. The Canadian-born population was very young. The children numbered two or three per family and most were under ten years old. Some of the boys, whether Canadian-born or Indian-born, knew both countries because they had travelled with their fathers. For these children, the images of two continents were real.

As a very small and barely visible community, the Sikhs attracted very little attention all through the inter-war period. Anti-oriental sentiment found its targets in the much larger Chinese and Japanese populations. The Sikhs were few in number and they were dispersed through at least 40 localities in British

Columbia. Although a majority lived in Vancouver and Victoria, they did not live in any concentrated areas. When they purchased homes, real estate values and distance to work were more important than proximity to other Sikhs. This wide geographical distribution meant that the small Sikh population supported six *gurdwaras* in British Columbia.

In many respects, Sikhs made unremarkable neighbours. Their children did well in school, encouraged by their parents. Adults and children wore western dress, although a little more than half of the men kept their beards and turbans and the women wore *dupattas* (scarves) as head coverings. In lumber camps where they worked with other men, Sikhs ate the standard bunkhouse fare. In their own homes, indistinguishable in appearance from other homes, and in their own camps, they had traditional food. They were adjustable. Most of them, however, had not been able to break out of the lumber industry, although, within that industry, some had done well, so that, by the early 1920s, six sawmills and two shingle mills in British Columbia were owned and operated by Sikhs. Many Sikhs had gone into business as suppliers of fuel, bidding for waste wood and sawdust from sawmills and delivering to private residences. Some became involved in importing tea, and a few owned farms. But most worked for wages in sawmills. During the depression, when the lumber industry was particularly hard hit, there was little other work and a number of Sikhs returned to India.

By law and by practice, Sikhs were kept out of many areas of employment in British Columbia, including any kind of municipal or provincial government job, or any work with a contractor on a public works project or with a timber operator cutting on crown land. They could not obtain hand-logging licences, were discouraged from obtaining commercial licences, and were excluded from craft unions. By federal law, as British subjects long resident in Canada, most were Canadian citizens, but in British Columbia the provincial and municipal elections acts denied them the right to vote.

At Imperial Conferences through the 1920s and 1930s, the delegation from India repeatedly raised the question of the franchise for Indians in Canada, but were put off with bland promises to look into the matter. Although outside pressure helped, Indians in Canada needed the political support of other Canadians, and that was woefully lacking until the 1930s, when the small C.C.F. party took up the Asiatic cause. Attitudes shifted more significantly in the aftermath of the Second World War, as North Americans became more sensitive to charges of discrimination. In 1946, the American Congress conceded a small immigration quota to Indians, and restored naturalization rights to Indian residents. Under these circumstances, Canadian policy became less tenable. The Khalsa Diwan Society pressed the issue quietly, but effectively, until victory was achieved in 1947, when Indians and Chinese received the right to vote in British Columbia. With this reform, other disabilities fell away. Immigration regulations, however, did not change until 1951 when, in the interest of improved relations with the now independent Commonwealth countries of South Asia, Canada agreed to accept a token number of unsponsored immigrants, symbolically ending an era that had begun in 1908. Annual quotas of 150, 100, and 50 were established for India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka over and above the sponsored immigration category, which was extended to include elderly parents as well as spouses and children under 21. The Khalsa Diwan Society had been asking for the right

to bring in relatives as freely as could other residents of Canada, but, the government judged that Canadians were not prepared for greater concessions. In 1957 and in 1958, the new Conservative government of John Diefenbaker opened the immigration door a couple of more cracks, but Canada remained a difficult country for Asians to enter.

Nonetheless, the permitted level of immigration was greater than before, and sufficient to overwhelm the established Indian population. It was not easy to qualify under the quota system, and a large population of those who did were professionals. They were not necessarily Sikhs or from Punjab and, with their families, they settled across the country, particularly in the major cities, often without establishing any ties with other Indians in Canada. However, the Sikh community in British Columbia, through the sponsorship system, still drew the bulk of the immigration. More Sikh families came than before. Brides and grooms were brought out for matches with Canadian-born Sikhs, but the largest element continued to be single men or married men without their families — more likely to have trade skills or education than in the past, but generally headed for unskilled, or semi-skilled work in the lumber, forest, and fuel industries.

By the mid-1950s, most immigrants from India to Canada were travelling by air. Since the air route was via Europe, Montreal and Toronto replaced Victoria and Vancouver as the ports of arrival. The country now opened up from the east, and, for some men, it made sense to hunt for work there before going to British Columbia. Britain, which was open to all Commonwealth citizens until 1962, was a stop on the route from India to Canada and a Canadian financed emigration contributed to a growing Sikh settlement in Great Britain. The village of Jandiali in Jullundur, for example, had sent a number of emigrants to British Columbia before World War II. After 1950 almost all Jandialians went to Britain. If Canada had been as free of immigration restrictions as Great Britain, the pattern might have been different.

By 1961, the most numerous and most influential members of the Sikh community in Canada were immigrants of the post-war era; and, although Sikhs had been in the country long enough to have produced two or three generations, the Canadian-born element was young, and the disproportion between the sexes was great (about 16 males for every 10 females). In the 1950s, the first generation of Canadian-born children were reaching marriageable age. While Sikh parents were generally progressive people who valued education and technical innovation, there was much that they disapproved of in Canadian culture, particularly the standards of family life and the behaviour of Canadian women. They also held to the view that one should marry within one's own tribe and saw the selection of a marriage partner as a parental responsibility. Sikhism rejects caste hierarchy, but its teachings are not necessarily at odds with the preservation of tribe or caste identity and, for the parents of the first generation of Canadian-born Jat Sikhs, it was important that their children should marry other Jats.

The values of the parents were, as a rule, accepted by young Sikhs. There were a few love-matches between Canadian-born Sikhs, and a very small number of marriages between Sikhs and other Canadians — marriages so strongly disapproved of that they led inevitably to the separation of the individuals involved

from the Sikh community. But most marriages were arranged, and 80% were arranged in India. There were simply too few candidates in Canada, given the size of the Sikh population and the factors taken into consideration (caste, clan, village of origin, status and reputation of the bride or groom's family, as well as his or her general appearance and suitability). It became customary to send young men of marriageable age back to India for a year or more, while, for young women, it was usual to ask the family in India to select a possible husband, and then to bring him out. There were recognized problems of adjustment for husband and wife, when one had been raised in a traditional setting and the other in North America. One reason why Canadian parents thought Indian-born girls were better for their sons was that they were less assertive and more retiring when outside the immediate family circle. A conscious objective, in seeking brides and grooms in India, was the strengthening of Sikh culture in Canada. But experience also showed that, when the right partner was chosen, ideally a man with some education, a Canadian-born girl could be very helpful to him as he learned Canadian ways.

While tension between cultures did not seriously disrupt Sikh family life in Canada, the community as a whole experienced a major schism. Within Sikhism, there have always existed those who followed the *Nanakpanth*, the teachings of the first Sikh guru, but who never accepted baptism into the Khalsa, the militant order of the tenth guru. They are known as *Sahajdhari*, or slow adopters, and have included a high proportion of Khatri and other non-Jat castes. In addition, many Khalsa Sikhs have not considered it necessary to maintain the external symbols of their order. Reformist movements, the Singh Sabha and its successor, the Akali party, have insisted on conformity to the Khalsa discipline, but without universal success. In Canada where the pressure on Sikhs to shave and to abandon the turban is greater than in India, the dispute about what makes a good Sikh has created sharp division. In 1952, a faction left the Khalsa Diwan Society to form the Akali Singh Society with its own *gurdwaras* in Vancouver and Victoria. An ostensible reason for the split was the issue of conformity to the Khalsa discipline — particularly the wearing of beard and turban. The final rupture followed the election of a clean-shaven man to the Khalsa Diwan Society executive after the Akali Singh faction had objected. An element in the division was disagreement between different generations of immigrants, since the Khalsa Diwan Society was still run by the old men, the pioneers of the pre-1908 era. The new security of the Sikhs in Canada, following the achievements of 1947 and 1951, had removed some of the incentive to preserve unity. In a sense, conformity was more critical in Punjab, where a clean-shaven Sikh, especially if he was not a Jat, was readily taken for a Hindu, and easily began to think of himself as one. In Canada, however, almost half of the men had cut their hair and shaved their beards without any loss of identity.

After 1952, the Khalsa Diwan Society could no longer speak for the whole Sikh community and a new organization, the East Indian Canadian Citizens Welfare Association, with representatives from both the Khalsa Diwan and the Akali Singh, was formed to present a common front in dealings with the government. In the 1950s, the old leadership gave way to men who had immigrated since the Second World War. These men were better educated than their predecessors, reflecting the rising level of education among immigrants; and

they were more interested in finding points of contact with other Canadians. But they, and the other immigrants of their period, did not see assimilation as a goal, and there was no weakening of ties with Punjab.

IV — Recent Immigration

Between the census of 1961 and the census of 1976, Canada's Indian-origin population increased about 20 times. From a national perspective, that figure appears dramatic only if one forgets how few people of Indian origin there were in Canada in 1961 — 6,774 or 0.037% of the total Canadian population. Growth has come as a consequence of changes in Canada's immigration regulations. In 1958, the right to sponsor immediate relatives, previously confined to those who were citizens, was extended to Asians permanently resident in Canada. In 1962, there were a few additions to the list of sponsorable relatives, and the quota system was dropped. In 1967, Asians were placed on the same footing as all other residents of Canada — able to sponsor or nominate relatives of any degree. While these were changes that the Indian community had sought, they came about because the Canadian government was conscious of a much larger political constituency which included those Canadians who were of neither French nor British ancestry and because public attitudes now supported a policy that declared no discrimination according to race or country of origin. In the United States immigration policy was moving in the same direction, but in Great Britain, reaction to the influx of Asians and West Indians led to a tightening up of immigration regulations. One commonwealth country became more difficult to enter as another reduced its barriers.

In the 1950s, Sikh immigrants to Britain, as to Canada, were mostly men. When restrictive legislation appeared on the horizon, Sikhs in Britain rushed to bring in wives, children, brothers, sisters, parents, and other relatives, while they could. The stampede to Britain created an atmosphere in which it was natural to consider moving to Canada and the changed Canadian regulations made that possible, especially after 1967. Near and distant relatives of Canadian residents have made up a majority of immigrants from India over the past 15 years and the Sikh population has grown and consolidated as a complete community, no longer predominantly male. However, since 1967, immigrants from other parts of India and from Pakistan, Fiji, and Africa have also gained entry to Canada. Unlike the Sikhs, most of these people have come from urban settings, because, without relatives in Canada to sponsor them (at least in the first phase), they came as independent immigrants and needed to have advanced education or special job skills to qualify for entry. Like other immigrants, they have headed for Canada's major metropolitan areas, which in the past 20 years, has meant Toronto ahead of Vancouver, although Vancouver well ahead of Montreal, Calgary, and Edmonton. In the process, Indians have again become a visible minority in Canada.

Within this minority, those closest to the Sikhs on the economic scale are the Fijians. A small number of Fijian Indians entered Canada in the 1960s. In the 1970s the movement became sizeable, and by 1976 almost 9000 had entered the country, settling initially in Toronto and Vancouver and subsequently spreading to other major centres. Although the population of Fiji is approximately half In-

TABLE II

IMMIGRATION TO CANADA, BY COUNTRY OF LAST PERMANENT RESIDENCE 1951-1979
(including all immigrants regardless of ethnic origin)

	India	Pakistan	Bangladesh	Sri Lanka	Fiji	Mauritius	Kenya	Uganda	Tanzania	Total	% of Total Canadian Immigration
1951-57	1,387	250	—	108	—	—	—	—	—	1,745	0.14
1958-62	2,512	334	—	120	—	—	—	—	—	2,966	0.62
1963-67	10,331	2,040	—	485	956	92	548	153	242	14,847	1.93
1968-73	33,859	7,085	257	1,285	3,963	668	2,769	7,447	3,211	60,544	6.57
1974-76	29,745	6,653	341	1,131	4,934	786	6,073	564	5,511	55,738	10.03
1977-79	15,518	3,885	285	455	1,776	261	844	94	1,630	24,748	5.47
Total	93,352	20,247	883	3,584	11,629	1,807	10,234	8,258	10,594	160,588	

TABLE III
PEOPLE OF EAST INDIAN ORIGIN IN CANADA

	Male	Female	Total East Indian Population in Canada	% of Canadian Population
1911	2,315	27	2,342	0.032
1921			1,016	0.012
1931			1,400	0.013
1941	1,059	406	1,465	0.013
1951	1,427	721	2,148	0.015
1961	4,122	2,652	6,774	0.037
1971	35,435	32,490	67,295	0.312
1981*			121,445	0.504

Source Statistics Canada

* The total number of people of East Indian origin given for 1981 is based on a census survey of one family in five (the long form census material) and may well be low.

dian and half Melanesian, almost all of the Fijians in Canada are Indians. Most came from families that had been in Fiji for 60 to 100 years, part of a population imported to Fiji as indentured labour, principally from the Hindi-speaking regions of Bengal, Bihar, and Uttar Pradesh, but also from the Tamil and Tegulu areas adjacent to Madras. Most Fijians who have come to Canada were born on farms, but the majority had already made the transition from farm to town before emigrating. If they had not had town-learned job skills and education (among the men, at least 10 years of schooling), they would not have gained entry. Yet few have been able to use their previous experience or special qualifications in Canada. Economic necessity and subtle forms of discrimination have driven them to take the first jobs they could get, usually in non-union, small manufacturing plants and in the service industry. Income, rather than occupational status, has been a priority. In many households, all of the adults go out to work and the women, with less education, have accepted janitorial positions or found jobs as sales clerks.

Employment has taken Fijians out into the general Canadian community, and they have not, as a rule, worked for other Indians. As individuals, they have not identified with Sikhs, nor do they see any reason why others should so identify them. Unlike the Sikhs, they have no strong community focus in their religion. Most are Hindus: some nominal, some orthodox, and some members of the reformist Arya Samajist sect. But their Hinduism has lost its roots in the double transfer to Fiji and then to Canada. Caste barriers disappeared among Fijians because the first generation in Fiji was recruited from many different localities in India and all did the same work in Fiji. Other aspects of the Hindu social and religious system have been similarly affected because Hinduism is a religion with an immense variety of local forms. When Hindus have joined together in Canada to worship, they have had to make concessions both to their North American situation and to the fact that they come from many different tradi-

tions. Among the 15% of Fijians who are Muslims, religion plays a more important community role. In the Canadian context, it has drawn them into association with Pakistanis and other Muslims. For the group as a whole, however, the strongest identity is that of Fijian, and that identity does not stand in the way of a rapid integration into Canadian society.

Such integration has already been achieved by recent immigrants from East Africa, so far at no cost to their cohesion or sense of identity. In Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, where Indians were part of a small but economically important minority, their situation appeared increasingly unfavourable in the 1960s, after the achievement of African majority rule. The emergency air lift of 4,420 refugees to Canada in 31 flights in the autumn of 1972, when Idi Amin gave the Asian population of Uganda abrupt notice to get out, engendered a following, larger immigration, as families were reunited, and as Indians from Kenya and Tanzania, denied free entry to Britain since 1968, turned towards Canada. Of the refugees selected by Canadian immigration officers in Uganda in 1972, 60% were of the Ismaili sect, although Ismailis constituted no more than 20% of the people under order of expulsion. That result was not accidental. Only those people who could qualify under the immigration department's points system were accepted. In fact, some Canadian officials boasted that they had taken the cream off the top.

The Ismailis, a Shia Muslim sect, were the most progressive Asian community in East Africa. They had made a remarkable adjustment to western culture in the twentieth century under the third Aga Khan, their *imam* or spiritual leader from 1885 to 1957, who issued a series of edicts instructing his followers to adopt western dress (a difficult step for women who had always been fully covered); to teach English in schools in place of their own language, Gujarati; and to identify fully with the country in which they lived. The Ismailis were originally Hindus of the Lohana caste in the Kutch and Kathiawar regions of Gujarat, who had converted to Islam between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries, and who had later migrated to Bombay. From Bombay, they had established themselves as merchants in Zanzibar by the middle of the nineteenth century and, as the British penetrated the interior of Africa in the 1880s, they had followed. By the time of Idi Amin's edict, they had few ties with India and were thoroughly committed to Africa. Unlike other Asians, they all took out Kenyan, Ugandan, or Tanzanian citizenship after independence.

Following the advice of the fourth Aga Khan, who was aware of the economic basis of much racial tension, the Ismailis made a determined effort in the 1960s to shift their emphasis from trade to the professions — teaching, nursing, engineering, economics, and accounting. Sons and daughters were encouraged to go overseas for higher education, mainly to Great Britain, as they had been doing in smaller numbers for many years. However, events moved too swiftly to allow many of these people to pursue their professions in Africa. Until late August 1972, the Ismailis believed they had a future in Uganda and they were possibly less prepared than other Asians for what happened. In early September, Canadian immigration officers began interviewing, and the speed of their arrival, as well as the selection process, were factors in sending a high proportion of Ismailis to Canada.

The Asian population in East Africa also included two smaller Shia Muslim

sects, the Bohras and the Ithna Asaris — more conservative than the Ismailis, and more closely connected to communities in India. Up to 1972, however, 70% of all Asians in East Africa were Gujarati Hindus, mostly of two castes, Lohana and Patel. There was also a small community of Shahs from the Jamnagar region of Gujarat, followers of Jainism, an ancient religion that forbade the taking of microbic life and left no occupation open to its adherents but trade, in which, paradoxically, they became wealthy. In East Africa, a handful of Shahs and Lohanas, major industrialists and employers, occupied the top of the economic pyramid. Beside these various Gujarati people, there was a much smaller Punjabi element — also divided by religion and caste — who had been employed principally in government service or in work dependent on the government, and who had felt immediate uncertainty with African independence. Among the Punjabis were Sunni and Ahmaddiya Muslims, Rajput Hindus, and Sikhs of both the Jat and Ramgarhia (carpenter) castes. In East Africa, the Ramgarhia Sikhs outnumbered the Jats, but were not as prosperous and maintained separate *gurdwaras*. This segregation was characteristic of the whole Asian population. Each group — Ismaili, Bohra, Ithna-Ashari, Sunni, Ahmaddiya, Shah, Patel, Lohana, Rajput, Jat and Ramgarhia — constituted an independent and distinct community which, with the exception of the Ismaili, had created a mini-India for itself in Africa, constantly reinforced by communication with the home community in India. Between communities there was socializing, among the Punjabis and among the Gujaratis, but virtually no inter-marriage. At the same time, the young adults — in contrast to their parents — were western-educated, so they possessed both a modern outlook and a strong sense of traditional identity.

Nearly all of these communities were represented in the immigration to Canada, although not in proportion to their populations in Uganda or East Africa. For the Ismailis, who came in the largest numbers, and who were the most tightly organized, it has been easiest to transport a complete community structure to a new country. With their own constitution, their own trust funds, and building societies, their own well-attended mosques or *jamatkhanas* (which, unlike the Sikh *gurdwaras*, are not open to outsiders), and a degree of organization and commitment that has seen a high rate of participation in special Gujarati classes for Canadian-educated children, the integrity of their community in Canada seems secure.

In Canada, Asians from Uganda found a promising economic as well as political environment, and their reports have induced a subsequent migration which has brought the Ismaili population alone to an estimated 25,000 in 1982. Toronto and other manufacturing centres in Ontario have tended to draw the technically skilled, while Vancouver, Calgary, and Edmonton have attracted professional people and entrepreneurs who found, in the expanding economy of western Canada, opportunities like those they knew in Africa. A number of emigrants went to Great Britain but discovered few business openings and have since moved to Canada. Others have immigrated directly from Kenya and Tanzania, especially in the period from 1972 to 1976; and 2,000 French-speaking Ismailis have come from France, Zaire, Ivory Coast, and Madagascar to settle in Montreal. All this has added an important business element to the Indo-Canadian population.

Over the past 20 years, Pakistan has been almost as important a source of immigrants as East Africa, and the Pakistani Muslim community is now comparable in size to the Ismaili, although the two communities differ in other respects. A few Pakistani families have roots in Canada going back to 1904, and have always had friends among the Sikhs, who speak the same language, who came from the same districts, and who are now defined as nationals of a different country only because Sikh and Muslim people on either side of the India-Pakistan border were relocated in 1947. However, most Pakistanis have immigrated since 1967, and, because a majority entered as independent immigrants, at least until 1971, their pattern of settlement and integration has not followed that of the Sikhs. A large proportion arrived in Canada, either having completed their higher education or in pursuit of it, and they have tended to go to Ontario, Quebec and Alberta, rather than to British Columbia. According to a 1971 survey, 50% were professionals, including a good number of teachers (especially in the Ontario school system), doctors, and university professors. Other professions have been harder to enter. The same survey showed that 99% were proficient in English, and that 20% had married British, Canadian, American, and European wives — figures indicating a thorough integration into Canadian society. This picture has changed somewhat over the past ten years as relatives and brides (frequently chosen by the family in Pakistan and married by proxy) have been brought out by the first wave of immigrants. Nonetheless, Pakistanis in Canada have been far from insular. Islamic centers in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Edmonton, and Vancouver have brought Pakistanis together with Sunni Muslims from the Middle East and elsewhere, and the ties between Pakistan-Canada Associations and associations for the larger Sunni Muslim community have been close.

India, like Pakistan, has been a source of professionally qualified immigrants, some from Punjab and others from Gujarat, Maharashtra, and elsewhere. While nearly all the men had at least a secondary school education in India, the nature of the job market in Canada and a determination to start working as soon as possible led the majority to take unskilled work. This situation has become more pronounced as sponsored and nominated immigration has increased since 1967. Nearly every Sikh who has come to Vancouver in recent years has stayed with friends or relatives on arrival. A development of the 1970s, reflecting the difficulty in finding jobs in factories and mills, has been the employment of several hundred Sikh men and women as migratory farm workers, for minimal wages, in the Lower Fraser valley. At the same time, the community has become more complex, with a number of major employers and professional men, an intermediate group of small businessmen, salesmen, and clerical workers, as well as the large body of unskilled workers. The differences in economic status and security are great.

In Vancouver, the immigration of the past 15 years has created what did not exist before, an obvious concentration of Sikhs in one area, South Vancouver, where many are employed in mills and where, since 1970, the Vancouver *gurdwara* has been located. Older, established Sikh families and Sikh professional people have moved into suburban areas, sometimes losing contact with the Sikh community. At the same time, Vancouver's Sikh population has been equalled or surpassed by that of Toronto, which was estimated at between 25,000

TABLE IV
DISTRIBUTION OF PEOPLE OF EAST INDIAN ORIGIN IN CANADA

	Total No. (and %)					
	Atlantic Provinces	Quebec	Ontario	Prairies	British Columbia	Northern Territories
1941	15 (1.0)	29 (2.0)	21 (1.4)	57 (3.9)	1,343 (91.7)	—
1951	26 (1.2)	61 (2.8)	76 (3.5)	47 (2.2)	1,937 (90.2)	1 (-)
1961	86 (1.3)	483 (7.1)	1,155 (17.0)	521 (7.7)	4,526 (66.8)	3 (-)
1971	2,405 (3.6)	6,510 (9.7)	30,920 (45.9)	9,230 (13.7)	18,526 (27.5)	70 (0.1)

TABLE V
DISTRIBUTION OF PEOPLE WITH INDO-PAKISTANI MOTHER TONGUES IN CANADA

	Total No. (and %)						
	Atlantic Provinces	Quebec	Ontario	Prairies	British Columbia	Northern Territories	Total
1971	1,250 (3.8)	2,380 (7.3)	12,105 (37.2)	3,585 (11.0)	13,220 (40.6)	20 (-)	32,555
1976	1,280 (2.2)	3,550 (6.0)	27,045 (46.3)	6,680 (11.4)	19,850 (34.0)	20 (-)	58,415
1981	1,870 (1.6)	6,520 (5.6)	48,525 (41.5)	16,950 (14.5)	43,070 (36.8)	55 (-)	116,990

and 50,000 in 1982, and there has been significant growth in other cities, particularly Edmonton and Calgary. Increased immigration made Sikhs conspicuous again, and, after 1970, they received greater attention in the press. In reporting crimes of violence, newspapers have tended to draw attention to ethnic identity if an Indian was involved, when they would not have done so otherwise, and in this way have distorted the picture presented. There were, nonetheless, tensions within the community caused by the influx of new people, which reached such a pass that, on several occasions in 1973 and 1974, the police were required at the Vancouver *gurdwara* to adjudicate between contending groups. At the Pape Avenue *gurdwara* in Toronto in March 1975 a highly charged meeting to elect the executive was the occasion of a shooting in which two men were killed.

Of greater concern to the general community was the evidence of animosity directed against Sikhs and other Indians, ranging from racist signs and bumper stickers to acts of vandalism, assaults on individuals and, in a couple of instances, minor riots. In Vancouver, the problem of vandalism against Sikh property was most acute in the period 1972 to 1975 and sufficiently serious, in the assessment of the Vancouver police, to warrant the creation of special neighbourhood patrols. In Toronto and in Calgary, the public, press and civic officials, responding to a parade of individual complaints by Indians, began to address the issue of racism in 1976 and 1977. In these developments there have been echoes of the intolerance that characterized the earliest period of Indian immigration to Canada. But there have been important differences: a more open attitude on the part of the general public; a non-discriminatory legal and institutional framework; and the efforts of the police, the educational system, and other agencies to promote understanding and accommodation.

V — A Comparative Perspective

Although Indians have been in Canada for about 80 years, few have been fully assimilated into Canadian society. Discriminatory legislation kept the population small and isolated for years. Now it is made up of recent immigrants. Any speculation on the experience of Indians in Canada must take these facts into account.

In its initial phase, Sikh emigration was comparable to that of other rural people — Italian, Portuguese, Chinese, or even French Canadian — who moved from a traditional setting to a foreign urban or industrial environment. Unlike much emigration from rural England to rural Canada, fear of economic and social change was not a determining factor. The motive was money and the first Sikh emigrants, like Italian emigrants of the same period, intended to return, and they frequently did. They left their families behind; they saved with great determination; and their remittances home were sizeable. With each group this pattern eventually gave way to permanent settlement and the emigration of whole families, but the evolution of the Sikh community was arrested for an exceptionally long time — because immigration was restricted, and because many Sikh men did not see Canada as a suitable place for their families.

Their experience was closest to that of the Chinese who also came from a single, localized, heavily-populated, rural area; who were subject to an equally

imposing immigration barrier; and who, similarly, remained a predominantly male population until the 1950s. Transience marked both communities and the return migration was heavy. Men adapted pragmatically to Canadian conditions, but Canada was not home. The Sikhs, with a much smaller population, had fewer cultural amenities in Canada, and a less complex community organization. They were also, with the exception of the period 1904-1914, less noticed by the general population. That does not fully explain why in their response to prejudice and discrimination, the two communities followed different strategies. The generalizations frequently made in the white community about the Chinese — that they did not claim a position of equality, that they wanted peace at any price, that they were quiet and law abiding — were not applied to the Sikhs who had the advantage and disadvantage of coming from a country under British rule. The disadvantage was that Sikhs met Europeans on an unequal footing both at home and abroad. The advantage was that they were more familiar with British institutions. Even among the uneducated who spoke no English, a degree of acculturation had taken place. For example, the Punjabi language had been invaded by English words like office, agent, school, paper, and committee that traced the penetration of the English world into Punjab. And for the educated, the British intellectual world was entirely accessible. Indian demands for full citizenship rights were, therefore, well articulated from the beginning. Nonetheless, until these rights were conceded, the Sikhs, like the Chinese, were an isolated community on the margin of Canadian society. As with the Chinese, the absence of any sizeable Canadian-born population, along with cultural and legal barriers, retarded integration. After 50 years in Canada, the social system of the Sikhs remained much as it was.

As restrictions have been lifted in stages since World War II, Sikh immigration has resembled Italian and Portuguese — a chain migration of friends and relatives from rural villages and small towns — but it has been smaller and its growth has come later. The arrival of more Sikhs destined for the unskilled labour market — a development running contrary to the over-all trend in Canadian immigration — has further delayed the process of assimilation; and the Sikh community has so evolved that the voice of the Canadian-born has never been dominant. Nor have Sikh children, as a rule, separated themselves from the world of their parents, although the second generation of other ethnic groups have found that social and economic advancement is most easily achieved this way. Nonetheless, Sikh parents, like other immigrant parents, have been conscious of differences in outlook between themselves and their North American children, and they fear the influence of North American morality and individuality. Like members of many other ethnic and religious groups, they have expected their children to marry within their own community, but distinctively, they have continued to search for marriage partners in Punjab. As a consequence, one cannot expect the process of acculturation and assimilation to proceed as it would if each generation were further removed from India on the side of both mother and father.

For immigrants of Indian origin who, unlike the Sikhs, began to settle in Canada after 1962, the parallels are not with the Italians or Portuguese, but with other Asian immigrants of the post-war era. Chinese immigrants, for example, drawn increasingly from urban Hong Kong, and in rising numbers after 1962,

included a large proportion (as much as 50%) of university educated people. While many accepted jobs below their qualifications, as a group they were well distributed through the Canadian occupational structure and thoroughly assimilated economically, although socially cohesive. This has been true of Indo-Canadians other than Sikhs. For these people, the image of Indo-Canadians is a matter of concern. They have not reacted like Ulstermen of nineteenth-century Canada who flooded the ranks of the Orange Order, wanting no one to mistake them for poor Irish from the South. But the psychology of the situation is similar. The Ismailis have avoided any formal association with Indo-Canadian organizations and wish to be identified as a religious rather than an ethnic community. Most other Indo-Canadian organizations have supported the National Association of Canadians of Origins in India (Nacoi) since it was founded in 1976, but they have done so, in part, to combat the stereotyping of Indians in Canada.

Education, command of English, and economic integration have not necessarily been translated into complete assimilation. Indians in Canada, whatever their occupation, have tended to find their friends among other Indians, and to view critically North American family values (or the lack of them); and Sikhs are not the only parents to look to India when it is time for their children to marry. But, while these things are shared, there are great differences — organizational, historical, and religious — between Indo-Canadian communities, and these differences will have a bearing on their future adjustment in Canada.

Suggestions for Further Reading

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