

Canadian Sikhs

History, Religion, and Culture of Sikhs in North America

Narindar Singh

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Canadian Sikhs' Studies Institute
Ottawa, Ontario

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Contents

Prologue/xi
Foreword/xv
Preface/xix
Acknowledgements/xxi
List of Illustrations/xxiii
Introduction/xxv

1. The Sikhs: Punjab Context/1

Canadian Link/1
Historical Background/2
Geography and Climate of Punjab/3
Pre-Nanak Era/3
Bhakti Movement/3
Social Conditions Prior to Nanak/5
The Founder/6
Sikhism/6
The Sikh Panth/6
Spirit of the Faith/7
The Status of Sikh Women/8
Guru Period/10
Banda Singh Bahadur/11
Persian and Afghan Invasions/12
Sikh Empire/13
Maharaja Ranjit Singh/13
Subversion of Lahore Kingdom/14
The British Rule/14
Indian Mutiny/14
Sikhs in the British Indian Army/15
World War I/15
World War II/16
Indian Independence/16

- 2. Early Sikh Settlers/29**
 - Initial Exposure to Canada/29
 - Sikh Immigration Background/29
 - Political Climate/31
 - Pioneers/32
 - Asiatic Riots/33
 - Mackenzie King Report/34
 - Employment/35
 - Living Conditions/36

- 3. Difficulties and Challenges of Pioneers/39**
 - Solidarity/39
 - Struggle/39
 - Facing Reality/40
 - Khalsa Diwan Society/40
 - Vancouver Gurdwara/41
 - British Honduras Scheme/41
 - Challenging Exclusion/43
 - Komagata Maru Episode/46
 - Start/47
 - Detention/47
 - Deteriorating Conditions/48
 - Test Case/49
 - Force/50
 - Intimidation/51
 - Return/51
 - Massacre/52
 - String of Murders/53
 - Surveillance/56
 - Hopkinson's Role/56
 - Arrest and Execution of Nationalists/59

- 4. The Quiet Years/63**
 - Dwindling Numbers/63
 - Impact of Outside Influences/64
 - The Depression/65
 - Illegal Immigration/66
 - The Vote/67
 - Migration Pattern to 1947/68

5. Post World War II/71

- Changed Conditions/71
- Economic Support/72
- Sikh Immigration After 1947/72
- Sikh Population Distribution in Canada/74
- Global Distribution of Sikhs/75

6. Problems and Conflicts/79

- Reluctance to Integrate/79
- Racism/79
- Community Stresses/81
- Community Dispute/81
- Community Split/82
- Erosion of Sikh Values/82
- Newcomers and the Established/83
- Gurdwara-based Conflicts/83
- External Conflicts/84
- Family Problems/84
- Job Discrimination/86
- Relations With Police/87
- Media Portrayal of Sikhs/88

7. Professions and Economy/91

- Sikhs in Professions/91
- Contribution to Canadian Economy/92

8. Educational Pursuits/97

- Beginnings/97
- Understanding/98
- Family/99
- Home/102
- Education of Sikh Children/103
- Future Possibilities/105
- Sikh Conferences/106
- Chair in Sikh Studies, University of British Columbia/108
- A Sikh Chair at the University of Toronto/108

9. Development of Sikh Literature/111

Pioneers' Contribution/111

Contemporary Writings by Canadian Sikhs/112

Publications/113

10. Community Institutions/117

Canadian Record/117

Struggle to Retain Sikh Identity/118

Steps Undertaken/119

Gurdwara-Oriented Activities/121

Role of Gurdwara/122

Networks/124

Sikh Organizations/126

Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada/126

Babbar Khalsa/127

World Sikh Organization/129

International Sikh Youth Federation/130

Macauliffe Institute of Sikh Studies/131

Canadian Sikhs' Studies Institute/132

International Sikh Organization/133

11. Recent Events/135

Recovery of Guru Granth Sahib Birs (Volumes)/135

Bhinder K.S. Versus Canadian National Railways/136

Sikh Symbols Versus RCMP/137

Amelie Sikh Refugees/140

Generosity of Canadians/141

Detention/141

Chase/141

Unfair Treatment/142

Air India Flight 182/143

Current Sikh Struggle in Punjab/144

Context/144

Broken Promises/144

Economic and Language Issues/145

Golden Temple Assault/146

Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale/147

Carnage/148

Repressive Measures/149

Reassessment as Perceived by the Sikhs/149

12. Future of Sikhs in Canada/151

- Summary/151
- Core Sikh Values/152
- Contributions by Canadian Sikhs/153
- Problems of Identity/154
- The Future/155

13. Appendices/159

Appendix A The People of Punjab/161

- The Indus Valley Civilization or the Harappan Culture/161
- Vedic Age (Hindus)/162
- Buddhists/163
- Scythians/164
- Muslims/164

Appendix B Sikh Religion and Culture/169

Sikh Gurus/169

- Guru Nanak/169
- Philosophy and Teachings of Guru Nanak/169
- Guru Angad/170
- Guru Amar Das/171
- Guru Ram Das/171
- Guru Arjan Dev/171
- Guru Hargobind/172
- Guru Har Rai/172
- Guru Har Krishan/172
- Guru Tegh Bahadur/172
- Guru Gobind Singh/173
- Panj Piare and Amrit/174

Naam/175

- Naam in Sikhism/176
- Naam and Cosmology/176
- Metaphysical Implication of Naam/177
- Naam: A Human Goal/178
- Ethical and Creative Activities/179

Sikh Scriptures/180

- Adi Granth/180
- Guru Granth Sahib/180
 - Contribution/181
 - Arrangement/181
- Dasam Granth/182

Sikh Institutions/183
Sangat/183
Sadh-Sangat/183
Gurdwara/184
Langar/185
Pangat/186
Takhts/186
Amrit (Sikh Initiation)/187
Gurmatta/188
Miri and Piri/189
Manji System/190
The Concept of the Saint-Soldier/190
Miri and Piri/190
Holy War/193
Degh and Tegh/193
Significance of Sikh Symbols/194
The Golden Temple (Sikh "Vatican")/195
Punjabi Culture/197
Punjabi Language/197
Punjabi Literature/198
Contemporary Writers/199
Punjabi Drama/200
Folk Music and Dance/200
Sikh Art/200
Sikh Architecture/201
Sikh Kirtan/202

Appendix C Sikhs in the United States/205

Sikh Immigration to the United States/205
American Sikhs/207
Ghadar/209
Ghadar Ideology/213
Berlin India Committee (BIC)/214
American Well Wishers of Indian Freedom/215

Appendix D Sikh Conferences/217

Sikh Conference 1979, Toronto/217
Sikh Conference 1980, Ottawa/217
All Canada Sikh Convention 1981, Calgary/218
The Sikh Heritage Conference 1981, Toronto/218
All Canada Sikh Convention 1983, Ottawa/219
Regional Conferences at Kamloops and Toronto 1984/220

- International Sikh Convention New York City, July 27-28, 1984/220
Babbar Khalsa International Conference June 30, 1989, Montreal/221
Sikh Women's Seminar March 23, 1985, Toronto/222
Sikh Symposium May 25-26, 1985, Toronto/222
All Canada Sikh Convention 1985, Victoria/222
North American Sikh Convention 1985, Edmonton/223
Sikh Canadians: The Promise of the Challenge, A Symposium,
August 12-14, 1988, Toronto/223
Sikh Academic Conferences/223
Academic Conference on Sikh Scholarship February 13-15, 1987,
Toronto/223
Conference on Sikh Studies, California State University at Long Beach,
December 10, 1988/224
International Conference on Sikh Studies University of Toronto,
November 24-25, 1990/224
International Conference on Sikh Studies University of British
Columbia, Vancouver, December 2, 1990/225
International Conference on Sikh Studies George Washington
University, Washington D.C., December 8, 1990/225
International Conference on Sikh Studies, New York,
December 15, 1990/226

14. Glossary/227

15. Endnotes/239

16. Sources of Information/245

17. Bibliography/261

18. Index/287

Prologue

As we emerge from a world of nation states into a global society which has been termed "post modern," Canada has been a kind of laboratory of the peoples. For all the mistakes made and the misadventures that have happened, somehow some answers have been found and some mighty acts achieved. The book *Canadian Sikhs* records and takes further the history of one of the most notable and colorful of those stories, the epic narrative of the Sikhs of Canada. It tells of how a group which originated exactly on the other side of the globe in the India of centuries ago, now comes to be part of a multi-national diaspora—"seed scattered abroad" which includes groups located in South and South East Asia, East Africa, Britain, New Zealand, Fiji, the United States as well as Canada. The book demonstrates to us how an individual and a community can be thoroughly integrated in a nation as well as devoted to very specific religious and cultural ideals and while truly national succeed in bridging the barriers and misunderstandings by which nationalism has engulfed us all in wars and disasters. There is here a true reaching out into citizenship of the world.

The story is not easy to tell but Sardar Narindar Singh narrates it with vigour and drive. He soon fascinates us with the story and sustains our interest to the end. We begin with a land, the Punjab, of immense beauty and antiquity where civilization and culture achieved great heights long ago and yet there is unspoiled wilderness and a cycle of heat and cold, water and drought, benevolence yet violence of Mother Nature and her human offspring. The people are sturdy and gifted, exuberant and hard working, the language supple and capable of meeting and surpassing every situation. This land as a world crossroads inevitably attracted invaders. Every influence from the four corners flowed in. After centuries of suffering and untold oppression, a line of ten God-inspired men told forth a divine message which created the Sikhs and remains

their center for all time. Mr. Singh explains the main points in this teaching and the way of life in a way that all may grasp and receive benefit. He then goes on to outline the history of this people in the Punjab, through the terrifying eighteenth century to their political apogee in the kingdom of Punjab. By the 1840s, the British were infiltrating and then they annexed. The miracle of the Sikh resurgence and self-definition is brilliantly portrayed. The Sikh contribution to the British Empire and Commonwealth, then to the Indian Independence movement is carefully told. He tells then of Sikh survival of Partition in 1947, a catastrophe in size and intensity which even in our century must rank among the most severe. We go on then to the Sikh contribution to the survival and economic miracle of the new India. He tells the tragic story of how the days have come when many Sikhs consider the Punjab is being underdeveloped in classical colonial style. It is hard to live the memory of the unspeakable federal army attack on the Holy Places and the killings of Sikhs in Delhi, the Punjab and elsewhere.

Against this background depicted in masterly strokes, Sardar Narindar Singh places the story of the Canadian Sikhs beginning from the first phase from the 1890s to World War I. It began with so much promise of benefit to Sikhs, to Canada and the world but ended in disgrace and denial of the very best principles Queen Victoria and the British Empire and Commonwealth had so proudly promulgated. The portrayal of the life of the Sikhs in Canada in those days is poignantly set before us.

But, as ever, a martyrdom, that of Sardar Mea Singh, leads to new life and hope. In the 1960s and onwards, the Canadian Sikhs again emerge and take their increasingly important place in Canada and the world. Sardar Narindar Singh is outstanding in his grasp of what taking such a place involves. It includes arts, sports, the media, education, the culinary arts and much else.

The world today has many a diaspora, many self-conscious, self-being groups involved fully and loyally in the life of the larger community where they live in a homeland far from the original heartland. Few diasporas have what Mr. Singh has given to the Canadian Sikhs. He is by training an architect and has worked as a planner for more than twenty years in the City of Ottawa Planning Department. This book in the tradition of his community is an offering to all with love and service. It attempts to help the Sikhs of Canada to know who they are and the Canadians to learn who the Sikhs are. It in fact goes further and it speaks to us all, women and men of good-will and longing for peace and fullness of life wherever we are.

As with all pioneer works there are limitations but if we know the Sikhs at all, we can be confident there will be discussion, thousands of suggestions and in the end even more brilliant second and third editions will emerge.

Noel King

Professor Emeritus of History and Comparative Religion
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Foreword

The Sikh presence in Canada has become increasingly visible in recent years. Yet many Canadians are unaware of the religion, history and traditions of these people from India's Punjab, the land of the five rivers. Canadian Sikhs now number 300,000, about a third of whom live in the lower mainland of British Columbia.

The first Sikhs to settle here in the early years of this century met hostility. They did the dirty, difficult and dangerous jobs that are often the lot of newcomers. Living simply, separated from their families, sharing what they had with each other, working hard, these first settlers sought to stay out of the public eye. They played a vital part in developing the economy of British Columbia, especially in the forest industries.

Meanwhile, in India, Sikhs turned scrub and desert fringes in the northwest of the country into fair and fertile land, creating one of South Asia's principal food bowls. They did this despite partition, efforts to exterminate them, and two international wars across their heartland. The leadership of Sikhs in the Green Revolution is but one indication of their ability to innovate and turn wilderness into abundance. In the First World War Sikh soldiers fought with heroic endurance in France, Egypt, Turkey, East Africa and Mesopotamia. They also served with outstanding valour in Africa, Burma, Malaysia and Europe, during the Second World War, helping to defeat fascism and nazism.

Since the Second World War, many Sikh professional and business people have come to Canada to start new lives. They have contributed greatly to the development of this country through skills, entrepreneurial abilities and their willingness to work hard. The turban, one visible mark of a Sikh, is now seen in many parts of Canada and United States, although there are shaven Sikhs as well. A few years ago, controversy erupted in Canada over the wearing of a turban by a recruit to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. That particular issue

has vanished now that the Sikh officer is doing an effective job in British Columbia, accepted by both his fellow Mounties and the public by virtue of his abilities and performance as a policeman.

Sikhs have a long history of innovation, creativity and adaptability while remaining true to their religious beliefs. They also have an enduring tradition of resisting oppression and injustice. Their daily lives and behaviour are rooted in Sikhism, one of the great religions of the world. Their pride and identity are reflected in their names: Every male Sikh carries the name Singh ("lion") and every woman Kaur ("princess"). Sikhism is a religion particularly suited to bringing into daily life the best and most practical aspects of the total religious experience of humankind. It is founded squarely on the life of man and woman working together at home and at work. It has a down-to-earth spiritual self-discipline that enables its followers to go anywhere and meet every eventuality and challenge. Sikhism's principles of mutuality, equal opportunity and sharing, equal voice and vote make its followers responsible, active, optimistic, courageous and dedicated to personal and community development. The religion's holistic, organic approach emerges in art, drama, sports, economics, politics—and the totality of life, as Sardar Narindar Singh so well documents. Sikhs do not seek to make converts. They welcome all open-heartedly and generously to their services and celebrations. In their individual lives they strive to live out the universal moral and ethical ideals of the great religions, becoming active and loyal members of the communities in which they settle.

In my personal contacts with Sikhs, I have been heartened by their openness, vitality, sense of humour—and desire for learning. In our time of cynicism and despair, these are precious gifts that Sikhs bring to Canadian life.

In this book, Narindar Singh traces the history of Sikhs and Sikhism, outlining the triumphs and tragedies that have marked the odyssey of these remarkable people in Canada. *Canadian Sikhs* opens a window on a unique religion and the tenacious and remarkable people whose lives are founded on it. The book documents the many contributions Sikhs have made, and are making, to this nation's development.

This book also places the story of the Canadian Sikhs into the larger context of the world situation. A Sikh world diaspora has taken these adaptable and ingenious people to Britain, East Africa, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong and other parts of the world. Their story in these countries parallels and contrasts with their history in Canada. The author identifies a world-wide pattern by which we can begin to understand an important and little understood feature of the emerging Sikh global community—how a strong, capable, well-knit group of people with strong religious beliefs can enrich the larger community while remaining true to their own ideals.

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1966-1971.

Halifax, Nova Scotia,
October, 1992.

Preface

This study was undertaken in response to a pressing need, of national significance, to convey a clearer and more realistic understanding of Sikhs in Canada. It is becoming increasingly important for all Canadians and citizens of the world to have an improved awareness of each ethnic component of the Canadian and world multicultural mosaic. There is a growing interest amongst government departments to gain greater awareness and appreciation of Canadian Sikhs. This book is directed to the attention of Canadians and Americans and to people of goodwill everywhere. It is essentially intended to create a better understanding of the Sikh community, while simultaneously encouraging and strengthening better relationships with other members of the Canadian and world mosaic. Towards that end I have pieced together the arduous works of distinguished scholars in a manner to bring out the Sikh point-of-view. I have tried to present information as accurately as possible in order to fairly set out the Sikh perspective. Although the past experiences of the Sikh immigrants have both positive and negative aspects, I have tried to remain objective in attempting to bring out the major historical and sociological characteristics of the Sikh community.

This publication is the first of its kind to focus upon the Sikh presence in Canada. In that respect, it fulfils a long standing gap in the understanding of this small but most "visible" of visible minorities. The purpose of this book is to provide the reader with a comprehensive survey of the life of the Sikh community in Canada since its first arrival nearly a century ago, up to the present day. Despite this substantial period of Sikh presence, they remain one of the lesser understood ethnic communities in Canada. The book focuses upon their struggle for survival in a harsh environment, the prevalent racial biases which affected them, their social isolation, their successes in overcoming the barriers of language and foreign value systems, and their ability to maintain a distinct religious and cultural identity. A short description of the origins of their religion and culture allows the reader to fully appreciate the uniqueness of the

Sikh point-of-view.

The study was approached from a research perspective. Historical research methodology was supplemented with selected interviews of Sikh leaders. My research took me to Vancouver, San Francisco, London, and Washington D.C. In those cities I visited the archives of Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia Library, the Vancouver City Archives, the Vancouver Public Library, Berkeley, the University of California Library, the Library of Congress, the School of Oriental and African Studies, the Commonwealth House Library, the India Office Library, the National Library, the Library of National Defence, the British Museum and the Imperial War Museum. I was motivated to attend Sikh academic conferences in Los Angeles, Toronto, Vancouver, Washington D.C., New York, London, and San Francisco which gave me the opportunity to talk and later correspond with distinguished scholars who had written on various aspects of Sikhism.

I was persuaded by Dr. Balbir S. Dhillon to undertake writing the history of the Canadian Sikhs, an area that has not been covered from the Sikh perspective. I would consider my efforts amply rewarded, should this book generate a better understanding of Canadian Sikhs and inspire further research on this important topic.

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xxii Acknowledgements

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List of Illustrations

- i. Origin of Sikhs
- ii. Sikh Rule: 1760-1849
- iii. Present Punjab
- iv. Maharaja Ranjit Singh
- v. Sikh Troops in France 1914
- vi. First Arrival of Sikhs in Canada
- vii. Well Dressed Sikhs, on Hastings Street, Vancouver 1904
- viii. Route of Komagata Maru
- ix. Gurdit Singh Sarhali, May 23, 1914, Aboard Komagata Maru
- x. H.H. Stevens on Board the Tug Sea Lion, with Malcolm Reid and Hopkinson
- xi. The Cruiser HMCS Rainbow Guarding Komagata Maru
- xii. Vancouver Sikh Temple
- xiii. Population Distribution of Sikhs in Canada
- xiv. Global Distribution of Sikhs
- xv. Mayo Singh Industrialist 1920-1950
- xvi. Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh Holy Book)
- xvii. Front View of Golden Temple

Introduction

This book is a comprehensive account of the Sikhs who entered Canada around the turn of the century. The story of Canadian Sikhs begins in 1903, when a group of adventurous Sikhs first arrived in British Columbia. These enterprising pioneers became instrumental in launching an immigration of nearly six thousand Sikhs to Canada over the next four years. On arrival, the Sikhs asserted the identification of their heritage, and soon faced the hostility of civic authorities.

Chapter one briefly outlines the historical background and origin of Sikhs, the *Bhakti* (Devotion) movement and the social conditions prior to Guru Nanak (founder of Sikh religion), the birth and growth of the Sikh religion, the Sikh struggle, the Sikh empire, and the British rule in Punjab. Chapter two heralds the arrival in Canada of early Sikh settlers in a racially tense and hostile environment. Chapter three describes Sikhs beginning to unite. The immigration ban and discriminatory practices of Canadian authorities provoked great resentment, and Sikh pioneers resolved to fight exclusion. Chapter four deals with the "quiet years", when the Sikh population dwindled in size. The Sikhs survived the hard times of the depression years of the 1930s and won a long fight for the vote. Chapter five traces the Sikh migration pattern and population distribution in Canada as well as the immigration of Sikh professionals in the sixties and their settlement beyond British Columbia. Chapter six examines both the pro's and con's of issues from racism and discrimination to community stress as well as media portrayal. The seventh chapter describes the socio-economic achievements in the professions, the successful entrepreneurs, and contributions to the Canadian economy. Chapter eight focuses upon "educational pursuits" since the arrival of pioneers. These activities started with the setting up of night schools, and led to the initiation of journals, the setting up of scholarships, the organization of conferences, and the setting up of chairs in Sikh studies. This chapter also examines the education of Sikh children. Chapter nine reviews Canadian Sikh literature. It portrays the extensive involvement of the Sikh

community in arts and literature, including poetry and prose both in English and Punjabi. Print journalism, as well as radio and T.V. programs of popular music and Punjabi talk shows, are also discussed. A number of publications on Canadian Sikhs relating to settlement, acculturation, religious identity, and family traditions are surveyed. Chapter ten reviews the establishment of community institutions which were initiated to maintain Sikh identity by means of *Gurdwaras*, religious organizations, national organizations, institutes, schools, language classes, newspapers, television, and radio programs. Chapter eleven deals with recent events such as the Air-India tragedy, the Amelie Sikh refugees, and the current Sikh struggle in Punjab.

Appendix 'A' provides a brief background on the people of Punjab who embraced Sikhism, such as the Aryan Hindus, Buddhists, Scythians and Muslims. Appendix 'B' briefly describes the Sikh religion, the Sikh Gurus and their teachings, Sikh scriptures, Sikh institutions, and Sikh culture. Appendix 'C' depicts the life of Sikhs who settled in the United States at about the same time as the Sikhs who settled in British Columbia. How American Sikhs fared in the preservation of Sikh identity, their economic gains, and the struggle for the freedom of India are outlined here. Appendix 'D' narrates the details of several Sikh conferences.

1. The Sikhs: Punjab Context

Canadian Link

This book is intended to provide an understanding of Canadian Sikhs who came from Punjab around the turn of the century. Presently they number about three hundred thousand, which is 1.2 per cent of the Canadian population. There are third and fourth generation Sikhs in Canada, though a majority of them are recent immigrants from the early sixties onward.

More than five hundred years ago Sikhism had its birth in Punjab. Most of its followers live in this state and they speak Punjabi. Sikhs are vibrant and colourful people who have a long history, a rich culture, a strong identity, and a profoundly moralized faith. Religion has played an important role in their lives. There is a sense of Sikh pride in the way they have proven to be excellent soldiers and farmers. They have made supreme sacrifices for the past four hundred years in the defence of their faith, and were rulers of Punjab for close to a century; this is central to the understanding of Sikh life in Canada. For the past ninety years they have adapted to Canadian ways, particularly in embracing material culture, while at the same time trying to preserve Sikh values. It is the story of their struggle in Canada that the present volume will place before the Canadian audience.

The soul stirring saga of six thousand Sikh pioneers who entered Canada between 1903-08 in a comparatively unregulated immigration is of immense significance during the first two decades of their stay in British Columbia. Three thousand Sikhs crossed the border into the Pacific Coast States of United States at this time. They came in search of employment and became unwilling participants in a struggle between employers, and Canadian workers' interests which led to racial intolerance and a subsequent ban on Sikh immigration. Among the Sikh immigrants were a small group of revolutionaries, and hostility

against the Sikhs increased. The exclusionary forces fanned anti-Asiatic feeling which led to the anti-oriental riots of 1907. The government moved to stop immigration of Sikhs. In 1908, the door was shut to further immigration from Punjab, and little immigration was allowed for the next half century.

The ban on immigration and the discriminatory practices provoked great resentment among the Sikh pioneers, which was expressed in the form of a liberation struggle to free India. The Sikhs resolved to fight racial discrimination, the immigration ban, and they challenged exclusionary laws. While the Sikhs carried out the liberation struggle from Canada and United States, the British engaged in political surveillance. The uprising for the liberation of the motherland led thousands of freedom fighters to return to India, where many were tried and hanged.

Historical Background

The Sikhs originate from Punjab, a province in northern India before 1947. For thousands of years Punjab had been the battle ground of invaders who came through difficult mountain passes into the plains of Punjab. There have been four distinct cultural cycles in Punjab: Proto History (the Harapan civilization); the Indo-Aryan (Hindu); Indo-Islamic (Muslim); and Indo-British; although there had been influences from others, such as Persians, Greeks, Scythians, and Parthians. The Aryans arrived in Punjab around 1500 B.C. They defeated the Harapan and Mohanjo-daron people of the Indus valley civilization which embraced wide regions of Punjab. Islamic expansion set in train incursions into Punjab during the Ghaznavid period (A.D. 960-1000). However, India was exposed to Muslim invasions early in the eighth century. Kasim, the Arab general, captured Sindh in (A.D. 711) and marched into Multan City. It was the Sultanate period (A.D. 1000-1526) of Turkish slaves that resulted in the establishment in Punjab of a Muslim society parallel to that of Hindus.

The English conquest of India was facilitated by preventing the native princes from forming alliances with, or obtaining help from, powers beyond the mountains or sea. This enabled the British to maintain their hold with an extraordinary small force compared to the population of the Country. In the early days, when its forces were slender, British forces had been opposed by the valour of Sikhs, *Jats* of Bhartpur, Rajputs, Maharathas, and Mughals. England avoided a clash with them and instead they took on the feeble Bengalis and Madrasis. Partially due to the pressure of events set in motion by Napoleon, the British signed a treaty with Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sikh ruler of Punjab, on April 25, 1809.

Geography and Climate of Punjab

The historic Punjab derives its name from two Persian words, *panj* (five) and *ab* (water), referring to the five rivers which pass through the land of Punjab. Its boundary on the north was composed of the Himalayas, and to the west the Indus River. The eastern boundary of the Punjab, although not clearly marked, was along the Jumna river, from a point near Karnal and along the Satluj in the south. Between the five rivers, the land is monotonously flat.

The climate of Punjab ranges from biting cold in the winter to scorching heat during the summer. Extremes of temperature and the monsoons produce a variety of seasons and constantly changing landscapes. The spring starts in early February. When summer starts around the end of April, the days become warm, but the nights are still pleasant. During the day, under a hazy sky, the country burns and languishes. Whirlwinds race across the land picking up dust and dry leaves along their path. Dust storms of various colours blow out of nowhere. Near the end of June the horizon darkens one afternoon and a cool fresh wind comes up. Large rain drops begin to fall down to earth, and the rain storm lashes the hungry earth. Little rivulets run gurgling everywhere with red-brown liquid. The monsoon season lasts for two months, and in the middle of September it is cool again. The months of December and January are cold.

Pre-Nanak Era¹

Bhakti Movement

The medieval mysticism of northern India appears to be of two types: the *tantrika* mysticism of the *Siddhas*, and the devotional mysticism of *Bhaktas*. The *tantrika* mysticism dominated Indian religious culture from the eighth century to about the twelfth century, whereas *Bhakti* movement (devotional mysticism) developed into a full-fledged *Bhakti* wave only during the thirteenth century Sultanate period. The spirit of religious ferment was at work all over India. There was Saint Chaitanya (1485-1553) in Bengal; Ramananda and Kabir (1440-1518) in Uttar Pradesh; Mira Bai (born 1449) in Rajasthan; Tukaram, Trilochan, and Parmanand in Maharashtra; Vallabha Swami (born 1449) in Telengana; and Sadhna in Sindh. According to *Bhaktas* (mystics) there was only one God. He was the only reality; the rest was illusion. One should resign oneself to God's will. There were differences in the theological and social ideologies of different *Bhakti* schools. For example, Mirabai was much absorbed in religious devotion and never touched the social aspects. Kabir on the other hand challenged the *Brahmanical* order² that men were unequal by birth and stressed human equality. The *Bhaktas* directly repudiated the caste system. They conceded only religious equality and not social equality. They attacked the pillars on which the superstructure of the caste order rested.

"*Bhaktas* preached the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man, and challenged the iniquitous religious values which formed the basis of caste

system. The *Brahmin* caste was ridiculed and its prestige humbled. The repudiation of the authority of the *Vedas* (Hindu scriptures) and other related scriptures sought to destroy the religious sanctions behind caste. The ideology of *Bhaktas* had both religious and social significance. They covered the salient features of caste ideology that upheld and maintained the rigid social order. To argue that they supported human equality but were not opposed or were indifferent to the problem of caste, is to suggest that human equality and caste are compatible. They attacked the pillars of caste system, but not the system as such. That shows the ignorance of the genesis of the caste order, its structure and its functioning. It would be futile to maintain that the superstructure of the caste order could remain intact even though the pillars were demolished."

Bhaktas (mystics) had a respectful image, both among Hindus and Muslims. The main plank of the *Bhaktas* and saints was the uncompromising belief in monotheism and the means used in attaining God's Name as the sole medium of achieving His grace. The belief in one universal God is shared by the mystics the world over. In this respect *Bhaktas* were nearer to Islam than *Brahmanism*, but they were not supporters of Islam either.

The *Bhakti* movement did not have much practical social impact. Firstly, for all the people it had aroused, it did not attempt to mobilize their social aspirations for direct action. Secondly, they did not realize that it was essential to make a complete organizational break with caste society.

The *Bhakti* movement provided a golden opportunity for the development and progress of Indian languages, and *Bhakti* literature started permeating the masses. The movement aroused great hopes of delivery from the religious and social oppression of the *Brahmanical* order, at least among the lower castes. When those hopes faded, conversion to Islam from lower caste people was, by and large, voluntary. Those who were suppressed and degraded by the caste system saw an opportunity for gaining social justice. It is not surprising that *Bhakti* ideology caught the imagination of the masses because its gospel was directed against the *Brahmanical* order which enslaved them. Their message roused the expectations of the down-trodden masses, but no one attempted to fulfil those aspirations. The *Bhakti* (devotion) school failed to have any appreciable social impact primarily because it did not show the masses the way to throw off their caste shackles. Nor were they led by it to do so.

The assimilative power of Hinduism is so great that it tends even to integrate social forms considered beyond its religious borders. Religious movements explicitly anti-*Brahmanical* and anti-caste, have been in all essentials returned to the caste order unless the sect was able to abolish the caste system altogether. "None of the *Bhaktas* or their followers made a determined attempt to found a society outside the caste orbit. As soon as the pioneer savants disappeared from the scene, their theological distinctions were readily blurred and their followers relapsed into *Brahmanism*. All religious revivals in India, beginning with

Buddhism, had as one of their main thrusts the abolition of caste inequalities, and all have failed. It could not be reformed from within because its very constituent, every cell, of *Brahmanism* was built on the principle of social inequity and hierarchy."

Social Conditions Prior to Nanak

Early in the eleventh century Buddhism had completely disappeared from the Punjab. The *Brahmanical* Hindus had destroyed Buddhism in the land of its birth long before the establishment of the Sultanate. It was the inner decay of the character of the Hindus which allowed the Turks to sweep across the Indian subcontinent. The revival of *Brahmanism* was accomplished through a process of intellectual dishonesty by *Brahmanical* leaders. They were blind to the political and military movements taking shape in Central and Western Asia. Punjab became the arena of violent political upheavals, religious persecution, and cultural crusades for centuries. The Turkish conquest of Punjab led to the establishment of Muslim rule which resulted in permanent division of Indian society into Hindu and Muslim communities. The Punjab became the first Indian province where two mutually hostile communities were forced to co-exist.

Hindu society dominated by the *Brahmanical* order was showing signs of marked deterioration. Energies were spent in the pursuit of superstition, useless customs and practices, and superficial rituals. The legacy of the Hindu caste system had enormous ramifications on the people. Individuals, even groups, were helpless against the pressures and sanctions exercised by the caste system. According to Dr. Hari Ram Gupta: "The absence of education led to ignorance. Idolatry became common. Every city, every town, every village or even a home had its own deity of Gods. People looked to them for protection. Magnificent temples were built in honour of these gods. They were worshipped with great pomp and show. Superstition had gripped the minds of the people. Even trees, tombs, floods, and snakes were worshipped. The temples were usually demolished by the invaders and the rulers. Mosques were built in their places with the same material. In short, at the time of Guru Nanak's advent both the religions in India, Hinduism and Islam, had become corrupt and degraded. They had lost their pristine purity and glory. The *Vedas* (Hindu scriptures) were unintelligible. Castes had grown rigid. They had been split into numerous sub-castes. True spirit of Hinduism had disappeared. Only forms and rituals which benefitted *Brahmins* (Hindu priests) prevailed. Islam also had degenerated."

"Before the advent of Guru Nanak, there had been sixty-one foreign Muslim invasions of India. The ruler fleeced the people. Nothing was saved from their avarice and lust. In war they plundered and in peace they riffled Hindu homes and tore away their women folk. People were destroyed in cold blood on mere grumble against government, temples were destroyed and priests killed. The arts and learning were wiped out."

The Founder

Guru Nanak (1469-1539) was a mystic poet who wrote deep mystical compositions. He preached service, humility, truthful living, and meditation. Guru Nanak was succeeded by nine *Gurus*, the last of which was Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708). (For more information see Appendix B).

Sikhism

Sikhism is one of the most "ethically grounded faiths". The source of Sikh teachings is the *Guru Granth Sahib* (Sikh holy book) which comprises poetry of deep mystical intuition, blended with music as composed by six of the ten founding *Gurus*. No speculative thesis is elaborated nor, are any codified laws enunciated. The sovereign rule of life is the *Guru Granth's* basic spiritual and humanistic ideal. Faith, love, and service are its principle motives. Belief in God is the primary dynamic of Sikh living and mainspring of their national characteristics. *Guru Granth* contains a reverberating and sterling testament of trust in the Absolute. Creation is perceived as being grounded in the Divine and informed by spiritual purpose. Simple virtues of tolerance, compassion, service with lyrical devotion, and humble penitence are interspersed with high moral sentiments. Practical excellence is made an integral part of piety. Self-fulfilment is predicated upon active participation; withdrawal is disavowed. To realize God's will in daily life is the consummation of Sikh aspiration. Empty ceremonial observations are considered as being of no avail. "Truth is higher than everything, higher than truth is true living," says Guru Nanak. (For more information see Appendix B).

The Sikh Panth

The world view of the Sikh *Gurus* inspired them to accept the challenges which the unjust *Hindu caste* order, and religious and political domination posed. It became imperative to organize people in order to solve these problems. Institutions like the caste system and the oppressive political state could be replaced only by creating parallel institutions. Ignoring the challenges would not have solved these problems, and *Gurus* were left with no alternative except to take steps in this direction. The *Gurus* organized people outside the caste society to build a social system. The process of establishing the *Sikh Panth* (a distinct society) started with Guru Nanak.

For Guru Nanak everybody was primarily a man or a woman and not a Hindu or a Muslim. He rejected both the Hindu and the Muslim paths and followed what he perceived to be God's path. Radical *Bhaktas* (mystics) were not Hindu reformers. If all they rejected is taken out of *Brahmanism* (the doctrine of the Hindu caste system), there is nothing of substance left that orthodox religion could claim as exclusively its own. Guru Nanak was even more vehement in his criticism of *Brahmanism*, its scriptures and practices. He

took clear organizational steps in shaping Sikh society on separate ideological lines. He established *Dharamsalas* (religious centres) to spread his message and appointed *Manjis* (seats of preaching) for the purpose of furthering the mission. The greatest single organizational step Guru Nanak took was to select, by a system of tests, a worthy successor to lead and continue his mission. Guru Nanak started the institutions of *Dharamsala*, *Sangat* (congregation of his followers), *Langar* (community kitchen) and *Manjis*. The succeeding *Gurus* further consolidated and extended these institutions. Guru Amar Das created twenty-two *Manjis* for the extension of the mission. Persons of high religious calibre were nominated for this office.

Guru Angad invented *Gurmukhi* (script for writing Punjabi) and Guru Arjan compiled the Sikh scripture. These two steps went a long way toward establishing the separate entity of the Sikhs. The teachings of Guru Nanak were elaborated and institutionalized by succeeding *Gurus*. The growth of Sikh theology, along with historical experiences associated with *kakkar* (Sikh symbols), shaped Sikh identity. With the major ingredients of a distinct organization—Sikh institutions, separate religious centres, a separate script and scripture of their own—in place, the Sikhs became an entirely separate church and a new society. The militarization of the movement only added a new dimension to this development.

Guru Gobind Singh the creator of the brotherhood of the *Khalsa*—a body devoted to the service of humanity—made it specifically clear that the Hindu temple and the mosque are the same, and that the whole humanity was to be regarded as one. The *Gurus* detached ideology from the person of the ideologue. It was the eternal spirit, the doctrine, the tenet, or the principle which was made supreme over and above the person of the teacher or prophet. The Sikh *Gurus* were deeply committed to achieving practical social good, which prompted them to create a new path and a *Panth* to give practical shape to the programme initiated by the *Gurus*. The creation of parallel institutions to replace the anti-humanistic ones, such as the caste society and the tyrannical state, was an indispensable prerequisite. It was for this purpose the Sikh *Gurus* organized the Sikh *Panth*, which was created to serve an egalitarian cause.

Spirit of the Faith

The spirit of the faith that inspired the Sikh movement yearned for freedom and equality. That spark continued to be kindled during its revolutionary phase. Sikh history is full of supreme sacrifices and an amazing capacity to bear untold sufferings when inspired by their ideals. Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur were inspired by their faith in the Immortal Spirit. Prominent Sikhs such as *Bhai* (brother) Mati Das was sawn apart and *Bhai* Dayala was roasted alive in a cauldron of boiling oil. The *Panj Piaras* (five Beloved Ones) responded to the call of Guru Gobind Singh and offered their lives to him. They hold supreme

respect in the hearts of the people. It was obvious that the Sikh movement aimed at not only fighting religious and political tyranny, but also at capturing political power for itself. Guru Gobind Singh identified himself with the *Khalsa* and *Khalsa* stood for revolutionary ideals. The plebeian character of the Sikh movement had direct mass appeal. It attracted into its fold a large number of persons from the lower castes because it espoused the cause of the downgraded people. The revolutionary spirit, and the movement's honouring of its martyrs without consideration of caste, appealed to men even from among the lowest castes.

The behaviour of an individual did not flow from his caste origin, it arose from the quality and the depth of the revolutionary spirit imbibed by him or her. Once a person is initiated into the *Khalsa* brotherhood, he must shed all *caste* consciousness (of the social class). The *Khalsa Dal* (Sikh army) was reorganized under the leadership of *Bhai* Mani Singh (a prominent martyr). He belonged to Labana tribe and occupied the most prominent position in the *Panth* (Sikh community). He was arrested by the Mughals, and cut to pieces joint by joint. He accepted this death stoically. It is a classic example of the spirit of the faith.

The Sikh *Ardas* (prayer) asks for the boon of *Naam* (God-centredness), *Charhdi Kala* (dynamic optimism), and *Sarbat de bhala* (the welfare of all). Guru Gobind Singh, by declaring that "the *Khalsa* belonged to God, and so did its victory," hitched the wagon of the Sikh movement to God, a never-ending source of inspiration, energy, and optimism.

Poverty and hardship served a most useful purpose in uniting the Sikhs with one another in the closest ties. All differences which arise in times of peace were effaced beneath oppression. All men had become brothers and all women sisters. An iron will, an unbent spirit and unbounded enthusiasm for their faith were the rewards of this mode of living.

The Sikh revolution could not even dream of matching the military might of the Mughal Empire. The Sikh movement depended for its success entirely upon the power it derived from the masses. In revolutions, it is the people, not weapons, that are decisive in the final analysis. The ultimate victory of the Sikh revolution over the Mughul Empire was, above all, a triumph of the Sikh revolutionary spirit and morale over the Mughals. It is a remarkable feat of the Sikh movement that none of the revolutionaries, including women and children, abjured their faith in the face of barbaric tortures.

The Status of Sikh Women

The Sikh movement had comprehensive egalitarian objectives. To raise the status of women formed an essential part of its programme. Under the *Brahmanical* order (the doctrine of Hindu caste system), the women—even those of the upper caste—were assigned a low social position. In some respects women were grouped with the *Sudras* (the lowest caste grouping). The

Digambara, founder of a sect of *Jainism* (an ancient branch of Hinduism), considered that women had to be reborn as men before they could attain their ultimate liberation. The *Gurus* repudiated the prevalent notion that women were inherently evil and a temptation. They denounced celibacy and supported family life as a requirement of the Sikh religion.

The Sikh *Gurus* advocated equal status for women with men in all spheres of life. They honoured women as the symbol of domestic harmony and happiness. According to Guru Nanak, "Why call her bad from whom are born kings?" The Sikh *Gurus* admitted women into the *Sangat* (congregation) without any restriction. The women not only attended services, but also led and conducted services on equal terms with men. Guru Amar Das abolished the practice of *Purdah* (covering face) and *Suttee* (women were forced to burn themselves on their husbands' funeral pyre). Out of twenty two *Manjis* (seats of preaching) which were earmarked for high calibre individuals, some were headed by women. Birth of a son was welcome, whereas the birth of a girl was an anathema to the parents, it was not so among the Sikhs. The *Gurus* removed female infanticide and belittling of women in society. The mother of Jassa Singh (1718-1783), the prominent leader of Sikhs for the freedom of Punjab, was at one time a religious preacher.

Adultery and divorce are prohibited among the Sikhs. *Anand* marriage (Sikh marriage) ensures the equality of the bride, the groom, and their families. Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth *Guru*, administered *Amrit* (Sikh initiation) to men and women alike. When the *Guru* gave the name *Singh*, (meaning lion), to men, the women were given the name *Kaur*, (meaning princess). *Mata* (mother) Gujri the mother of Guru Gobind Singh was a great educator. After the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur she looked after the education of the nine year old Gobind and the leadership of the Sikh community at a crucial and dangerous time. She discharged her duties superbly. *Mata* Gujri holds an unenviable position as wife of a martyr, mother of a martyr, grandmother of four martyrs and herself a martyr.

Many women participated in the revolutionary struggle on equal terms with men in the Sikh movement and thus raised their status. It was *Mai* (elderly woman) Bhago who rallied the deserters from Anandpur, and *Mai* Bhago who led them in the battle of Mukatsar. During the period of guerilla warfare (1708-1798), Sikh women were imprisoned and subjected to hard labour, but they did not abandon their faith.

Rani Sada Kaur, mother-in-law of Ranjit Singh, ruled the area under the control of *Kannahya Misl*³. She led her armies in battle, and Ranjit Singh (1780-1839) (the famous Sikh ruler) owed his success in his initial struggle for supremacy to her political acumen and military help. Rani Jindan (1817-1863), wife of Ranjit Singh, one of the most remarkable of Sikh women, possessed such virtues as courage, perseverance, and sagacity. Rani Sahib Kaur was made Chief

Minister of Patiala State in 1793. She refused to leave the battlefield when pressed by Marathas⁴ near Ambala City and with a drawn sword rallied her troops to repulse the enemy. Many Sikh women have actually taken up arms to defend their habitations from the desolatory attacks of the enemy, and throughout the contest their spirit and morale has been highly praiseworthy.

Today many Sikh women are serving the community in various spheres. They have become eminent administrators, doctors, educators, business women, religious leaders, politicians, and artists. They have proved their mettle in whatever sphere they choose to serve. Even as housewives, the authority of the Sikh women, among rich and poor, is extensive. She usually controls the purse strings and decides what the family shall eat and how much her husband will spend.

Guru Period

Although Sikhism was a common people's revolution, the Sikh movement had to struggle for its existence against the armed might of the Mughal empire. It had also to face an uphill battle against an oppressive caste and social system. The process of establishing the Sikh *Panth* (distinct society) started with Guru Nanak. The tender plant of Sikhism was reared, nourished, and tested under the guidance of the ten Gurus from *Bhajan Bandgi* (recitation of hymns) to the order of the *Khalsa*⁵ in a span of two hundred thirty-nine years (1469-1708). The turning points in Sikh history during the *Guru* period were: (i) the break with the Indian ascetic tradition; (ii) the building of a new society; and, (iii) the militarization of the *Panth*. The decision to eschew asceticism was taken by Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak concluded that the unjust *Hindu caste* system⁶ that men were unequal by birth, was in need of change and he started the institution of *Langar* (community kitchen). The tenth *Guru* broke completely away from the caste society and created the *Khalsa*.

The martyrdom of *Guru Arjan*, the 5th *Guru*, on May 30, 1606, became a turning point in the history of the Sikhs. His successor and son *Guru Hargobind* donned two swords one representing spirituality and the other temporal power. Sikhs wanted to avenge *Guru Arjan's* death. *Hargobind* trained a body of soldiers and spent much of his time in martial exercises and hunting. He discussed plans of military conquests at the *Akal Takhat* (the throne of the timeless God) at Amritsar. The *Guru* had a number of clashes with the Mughal troops. This was the beginning of the belief in the right to defend the Sikh faith by force of arms. *Guru Tegh Bahadur*, the 9th *Guru* was publicly beheaded in Delhi on November 11, 1675. He deliberately made this choice to embrace a martyr's death in pursuit of his declared objective to defend Hindu *dharma* (religious duty), further kindled the spark to resort to the use of force of arms.

The tenth *Guru*, *Guru Gobind Singh* organized his army in which both Hindus and Muslims served. He wrote: "When all other means have failed, it

is permissible to draw the sword." He created a martial atmosphere and an expectancy of military action. The famous initiation ceremony devised by Gobind Singh transformed the Sikhs into a militant brotherhood of crusaders. This proclamation of Gobind's founding of the *Khalsa* took place two hundred years after Nanak announced his faith in 1499. The bulk of the converts were *Jat* peasants, a particular land owning community. The rise of militant Sikhism became the rise of peasant power in Punjab.

Guru Gobind Singh fought several successful battles, both with the caste-ridden Hindu *Rajas* (kings) and the Mughal forces in defence of *dharma*. Sometimes Mughal forces and Hindu *Rajas* joined hands to destroy the *Khalsa*. The *Guru* lost his two sons in the battle of Chamkaur, December 7, 1705, and his other two sons were immured alive. Two young Pathans⁷ stabbed the *Guru* in the tent when he was alone; he died a few days later. The Sikh movement had its martyrs and heroes. Arjan, Tegh Bahadur, and the sons of Gobind wore the crown of martyrdom; Hargobind and Gobind the halo of heroism. The movement had its hard inner core consisting of nearly a hundred thousand initiated *Khalsa*.

The emergence of a martial people inspired by the spirit of Guru Gobind Singh is vividly apparent in the ninety year period following his death and the rise to power of Ranjit Singh as a secular ruler of Punjab. This was an era in which Sikhs made enormous sacrifices for the preservation of the Sikh faith in Punjab.

Banda Singh Bahadur (1670-1716)

Banda, the chosen disciple of Guru Gobind Singh was a comparative stranger, an ascetic who had spent the preceding fifteen years of his life in a hermitage. He was commanded by the *Guru* to punish those who had persecuted Sikhs. The Sikhs gathered around Banda. He defeated the Mughal authorities of the city of Sirhind in May 1710, slew the Mughal governor of the province, and put to death those responsible for the murder of the *Guru's* sons.

Banda routed the Mughal forces of the towns of Samana and Sadhaura in November 1709 and won many other battles. He took over the administration of the conquered territories and established his own rule in parts of Punjab. Alarmed by Banda's success the Mughal emperor attacked and eventually defeated Banda. Banda was arrested and executed.

After the death of Banda in June 1716, the persecution of the Sikhs continued unabated. Mughal soldiers forced them to choose between abandoning the external emblems of the Sikh faith and death. A price was put upon the heads of Sikhs. Sikhs retreated to inaccessible hill tracts and jungles. For the period of a generation the Sikhs were scarcely heard of.

Banda was dedicated to the emancipation of his oppressed and persecuted countrymen. He was a man of valour and bravery, and he displayed coolness in

the face of death. He earned the blessings of the poor and the destitute whose cries had not been heard for centuries. He raised the lowest of the low to the highest positions under his government. He abolished the Zamindari system of the Mughals which had reduced the cultivators to the status of slaves. He had a spotless morality and led a very pure life.

Persian and Afghan Invasions

In 1738 Nadir Shah (Persian ruler) swept across Punjab and defeated the Mughal forces. The capital Delhi was plundered and its population massacred, and Nadir Shah turned homeward with enormous booty. The *Khalsa* adopted a strategy that when the invaders were superior they would let the invading force pass while they retreated to the Hills. As soon as the invader turned homeward, the *Khalsa* would plunder the invader's baggage without facing the enemy's army in open combat, and would liberate Hindu prisoners and women.

Ahmad Shah Abdali (ruler of Afghanistan) invaded Punjab nine times between (1747-1769). During each invasion he ruthlessly pillaged the cities of Delhi, Lahore and other towns on his route. He massacred innocent men, women, and children. Three times he desecrated the *Golden Temple* (the Sikh "Vatican"). On his homeward journey he carried large booty, and the Sikhs lightened Abdali's spoils and liberated thousands of prisoners he was taking to Afghanistan. With each Afghan invasion the Punjab was left with less real government. The Sikhs offered the people protection, and for all practical purposes the country came to be administered by the Sikhs. This was the first step taken by the Sikhs towards becoming the rulers of Punjab. During the fifth invasion of Ahmad Shah Abdali, Maratha and Afghan armies clashed at Panipat. The Marathas took a heavy toll but victorious Afghans also suffered heavy losses. In fact the battle fought between Marathas and Afghans was really won by the Sikhs.

The Sikhs suffered heavily at the hands of Afghans in February 1762. This massacre is known as *Vada Ghalu Ghara* (the great massacre), and fifteen thousand Sikhs lost their lives. Ahmad Shah Abdali's eighth invasion was undertaken to extirpate Sikhs. This time the Sikhs felt strong and ready to fight him in the open.

During the Persian and Afghan invasions, Sikhs were the only people who refused to have any dealings with the foreigners. Sikh horsemen would ride at full gallop towards the *Golden Temple*, take a bath and disappear. Peasants sympathized with the *Khalsa* and provided shelter to the fugitives, who suffered terrible hardships but remained defiant as ever. Sikhs displayed temerity in attacking armies much stronger than theirs and alacrity in running away when the tide of battle turned against them. The Sikhs were able to build Punjabi nationalism within the span of a century. Not only did they have outstanding leadership in men like Nawab Kapur Singh and Jassa Singh Ahluwalia who built up the *Khalsa* commonwealth, but also won back the confidence of the Muslim

peasantry. The Sikhs led the resistance against the invaders and built up the notion that Punjab would be better off if it were ruled by the Punjabis rather than remain part of the kingdom of Kabul (Afghanistan) or the Mughal Empire.

Sikh Empire

Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1780-1839)

Ranjit Singh was born on November 13, 1780, at Gujranwala, Punjab. He became an established hunter. Love for horses became his passion. His marriage brought him under the influence of his mother-in-law Sada Kaur who directed his unbounded energy toward unifying Punjab. On July 7, 1799, Ranjit Singh became ruler of Punjab at the age of eighteen. Ranjit was able to harness the dynamic energies of his people and launched a career of conquest and annexation.

Ranjit Singh employed two generals, Jean Baptiste Ventura (an Italian) and Jean François Allard (a Frenchman), from Napoleon Bonaparte's disbanded army. Dr. Honigberger, a native of Hungary, was his personal physician. Dr. Benet (a Frenchman) was surgeon general to the *Khalsa* army. Dr. Harlan (an American) was governor of Gujrat. Most of the state's conquests had been made prior to 1822 by generals such as Mohkam Chand, Hari Singh Nalwa, and Mir Dewan Chand. Even after Europeanization of the army, effective command of Ranjit Singh's *Khalsa Durbar* (*Khalsa* army) remained in Punjabi hands.

Out of the ruins of Mughal empire, Ranjit Singh built a powerful kingdom which extended from Tibet in the north-east to the Indus in the west, and along Satluj in the south. His suzerainty extended over Afghanistan and Ladakh. He was successful, in repulsing a thousand year wave of Muslim invaders from the North-West. His kingdom, although Sikh, was a secular Punjabi state in which Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs became equal before the law and possessed the same rights and duties.

Ranjit Singh excited the imagination of the people of Punjab. He loved the open country and wore plain clothes. Although he became a king, he did not lose touch with the peasant folk from whom he had sprung, and he still possessed a peasant's shrewdness and cunning. Ranjit Singh respected men of learning, and he had a profound reverence for all that was holy. This respect for all faiths contributed to his success. He forgave people who had wronged him and rehabilitated enemies he had vanquished with *jagirs* (landed property). Hating to inflict punishment, he never sentenced a man to death. He rewarded the bold and encouraged merit wherever it was found.

Ranjit Singh's court reflected the secular pattern of his state: his prime minister Dhian Singh was a Dogra (Hindu); his foreign minister Fakir Azizuddin, was a Muslim; and his finance minister, Dina Nath was a Hindu *Brahmin*. Similarly, the Muslim women he married—Mohran and Gulbahar

Begum—retained their faith, and his Hindu wives continued to worship according to Hindu faith. On June 27, 1839, exactly forty years after he became ruler of Punjab, Ranjit Singh died after a long illness.

Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Punjab had become not only the strongest regional power but also one of the most powerful states in Asia. After many centuries of domination by Pathans and Afghans, the Sikhs reversed the roles by extending their kingdom across Afghanistan and became arbiters of the destiny of the throne in Kabul (Afghanistan) thereby sealing the northwestern gate of India against invaders. They had overcome Chinese satellites in Tibet and stopped British expansion to the west. When Ranjit Singh died, however, there was no one of sufficient stature to step into his shoes and guide the destinies of the state.

Subversion of Lahore Kingdom

After Ranjit Singh's death two major factions emerged. The Hindu Dogra brothers—Gulab Singh and Dhian Singh; and the Sikh aristocracy of Sandhawalias, Attariwalas, and the Majithias. With the loosening of central authority, the governors of outlying provinces began to toy with the idea of becoming independent rulers. The Dogra ministers planned subversion in collaboration with the British. The seeds of discord, intrigue, and dismemberment of the Lahore kingdom were sown by the Dogras, among the sons of Ranjit Singh. The Dogras were already dreaming of the accession of their family to the throne of Lahore. This ultimately led to the murder of the six princes. The English began to move the troops up to the frontier and started meddling in the internal affairs of the *Durbar* (Sikh state). The British assumed guardianship of the last prince, Dalip Singh, who was an infant. In the autumn of 1845, they invaded Punjab and in a series of engagements annexed Punjab and gave Jammu and Kashmir to Gulab Singh Dogra.

The British Rule

Indian Mutiny

The *sepo*y (soldier) mutiny of May 10, 1857, was neither a national war of independence nor a fight for freedom. It was not a rising of the people. The British rulers of that time had taken over several states when their rulers failed to produce natural heirs. The grievances of *sepoys* (soldiers) were that their highest rank could only earn wages of sixty to seventy rupees per month compared to six hundred to seven hundred rupees by the British for an equivalent rank. Another factor that triggered unrest among Hindus and Muslim *sepoys* was the replacement of old brown bass musket by the more efficient Enfield Rifle. The Enfield used cartridges, that were lubricated on the top with a grease made from the fat of cows and pigs, making their use offensive to both Hindus and

Muslims. With the religious sentiments of *sepoys* inflamed, the soldiers murdered their British officers at Meerut. The mutineers then marched to Delhi to proclaim Bahadur Shah emperor of India. It soon became clear that Muslims sought restoration of Muslim rule, and Hindus wanted to put Marathas back in power.

The Sikhs never forgot that they were conquered by the British with the help of *poorbia sepoys* (Hindu troops). It was the Hindu commanders Lal Singh and Tej Singh who betrayed the Sikhs and were instrumental in destroying the independent kingdom of Punjab only eight years earlier in 1846-49. For two centuries the Sikhs had fought against the Mughals and under no circumstances would Sikhs ever be persuaded to support re-establishment of Mughal rule. The mutineers started killing large numbers of innocent people, but the Sikhs did not join them.

Instead, the Sikhs joined British forces marching towards Delhi, and Sikh soldiers were in the vanguard of the assault. On September 20, 1857, Major W. S. R. Hodson with his Sikh horsemen first captured Bahadur Shah, Begum Zeenat Mahal, and their son Jawan Bakhat. A day later they arrested the two other sons and a grandson of the emperor. In a security provided by the Sikhs, Hodson stripped three princes naked and shot them with his carbine.

Sikhs in British Indian Army

After the 1857 mutiny the decision was made to enlist Sikh soldiers into the Imperial British Army. They were permitted to keep *kakkar* (Sikh symbols) as enjoined by their religion. The proportion of Sikhs in the Imperial army was considerably higher than that warranted by the numbers of the total Sikh strength from the Punjab.

Sikhs still prefer military life to more peaceful avocations, and many of the finest regiments in the Indian army are composed of Sikhs. The British Government preferred to have the Sikhs remain a distinct force with Sikh symbols under the inspiration of their military traditions and martial creed.

World War I

The Sikhs formed a very substantial portion of the British Indian army in World War I. They fought on all fronts of the war with heroic endurance in France, Egypt, Turkey, East Africa, and Mesopotamia. They flung back the first Turkish attack on the Suez Canal. They helped stem the first German onslaught through late autumn of 1914, which ended the bitter fighting at Givenchy. They played a glorious part in the battle of Neuve Chappelle, the trenches of Flanders, the second battle of Ypres, the struggle for the Aubre ridge, the battle of Festubert, and desperate assaults of Loos—all of which claimed a heavy toll of Sikh blood. Of the twenty-two Victoria Crosses awarded for outstanding gallantry to Indians, Sikhs won fourteen.

The British held the Sikhs in high esteem for their martial qualities, and they

became important for British security in India. The Sikhs felt this was a chance to show their valour. They fought bravely, died always while advancing and were never shot running away.

In France, the stay of the Sikhs was longer, so they were able to know the French more intimately. The French welcomed the Sikhs warmly and accommodated them in their houses. They respected Sikhs and considered them descendants of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who had given positions to French Generals in his army. The French hailed the Sikhs as liberators.

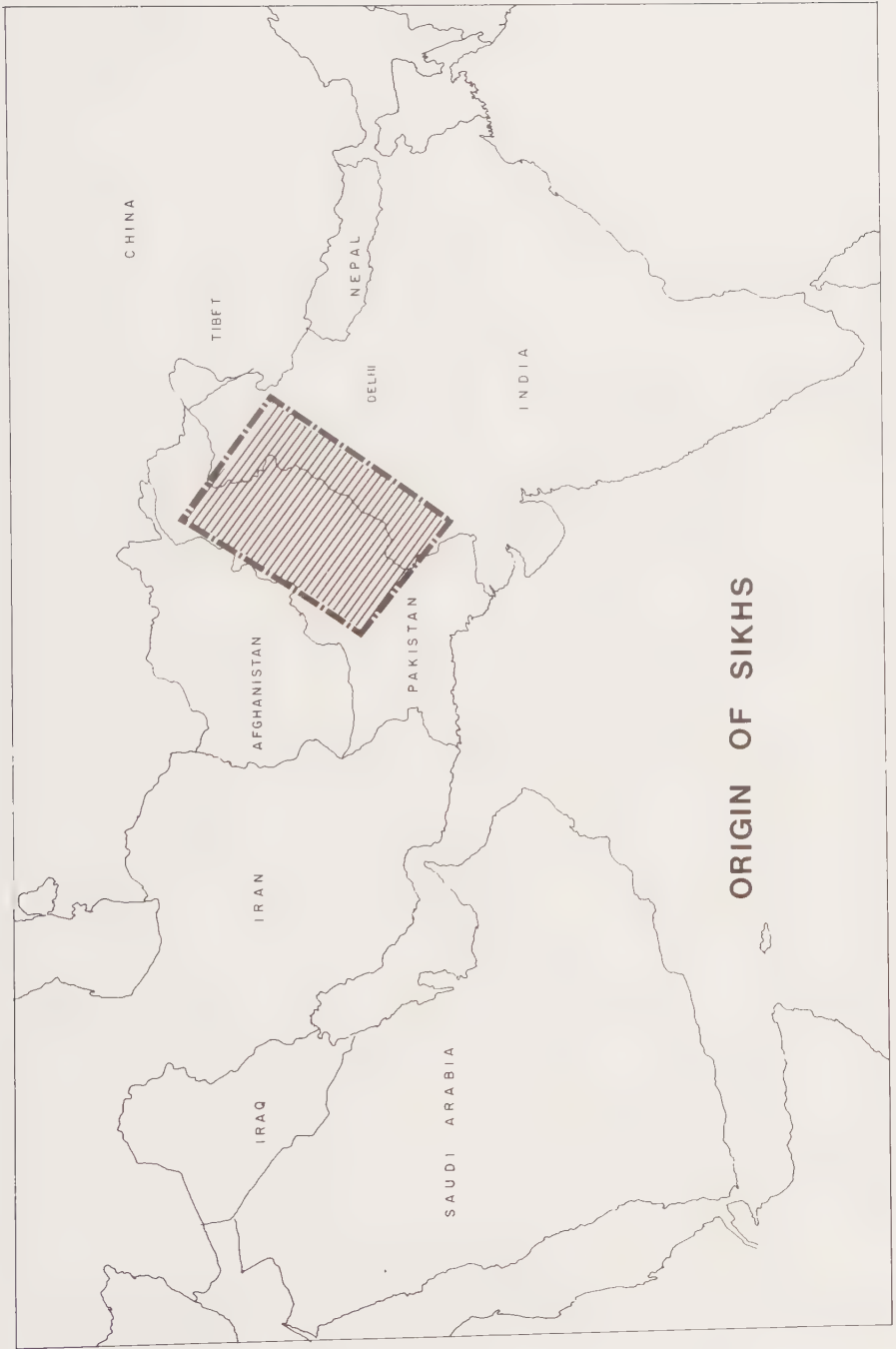
World War II

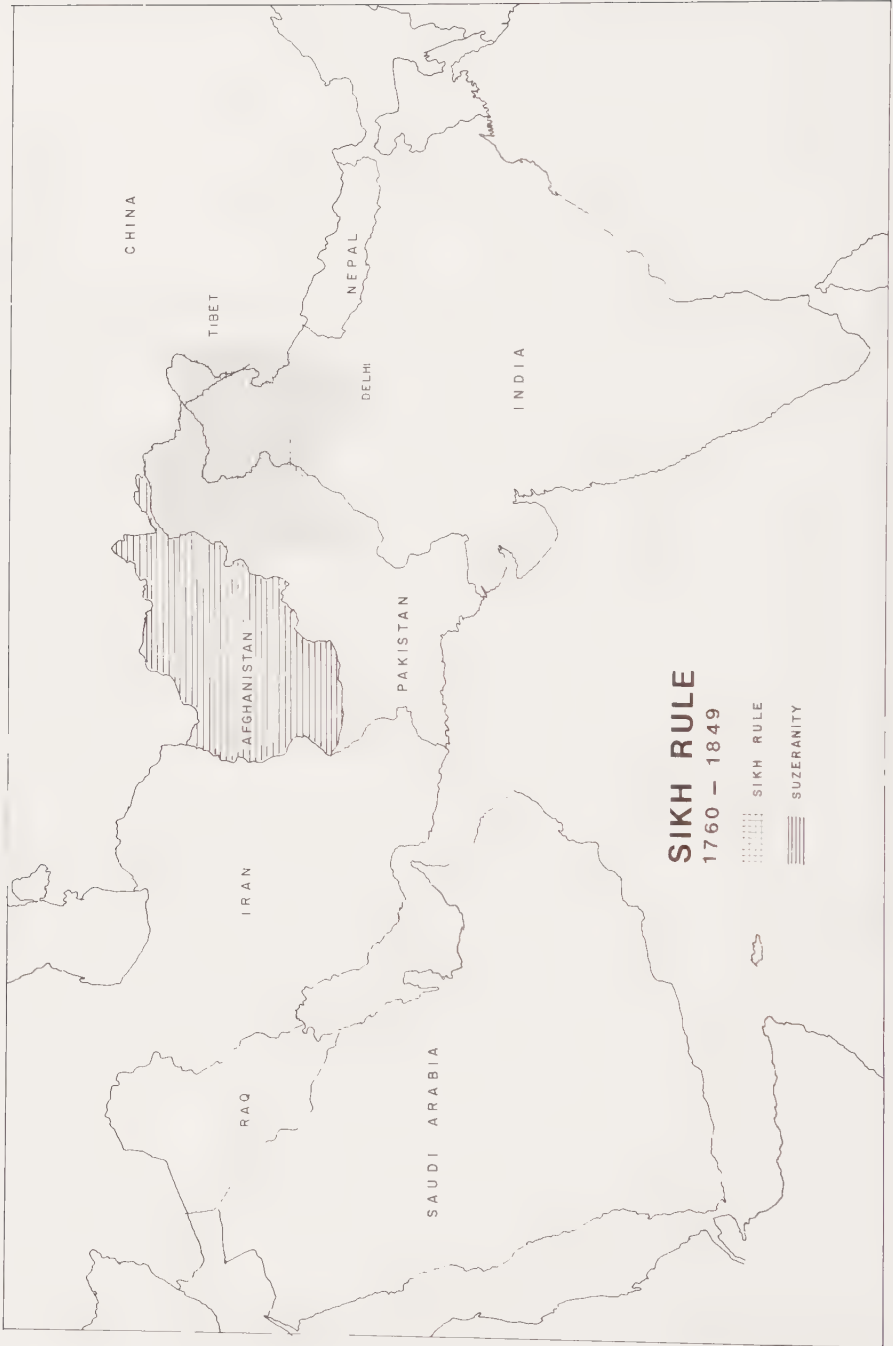
With the declaration of war by Britain on Nazi Germany, in September 1939, the British Indian Government committed India on the side of Britain. The Sikh leaders did not wish their community to lose its coveted position in the armed forces. The *Akali* Party (Sikh Political organization) agreed to help the Government and pressed for more Sikh recruitment with a view to preserve numerical strength of the Sikhs in the armed services so that when the day of reckoning came, the *Khalsa* (Sikhs) would have an army of its own.

With the entry of Italy into war the North Africa and the Mediterranean region became an active theatre of operations in which Sikh regiments were involved. The Japanese entry into the war and occupation of Burma in 1942 posed a serious threat to the security of India. The British Indian army operating in Burma retreated into India in a disorganized condition. The situation was grave. Hence it became essential for the defence of India that the Japanese be dislodged from their hold on Burma and Malaysia, and again Sikhs played a major role in that defence and won a number of Victoria Crosses for it.

Indian Independence

In 1947, independence brought the partition of Punjab. Communal violence erupted among Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs. Nearly one-third of the community was uprooted, millions of Sikhs and Muslims criss-crossed, as Sikhs from the west and the Muslim exodus from the east went, respectively, to their new homes. Sikhs became refugees and exhibited great recuperative power in re-establishing themselves. Nearly a million people died as a result.





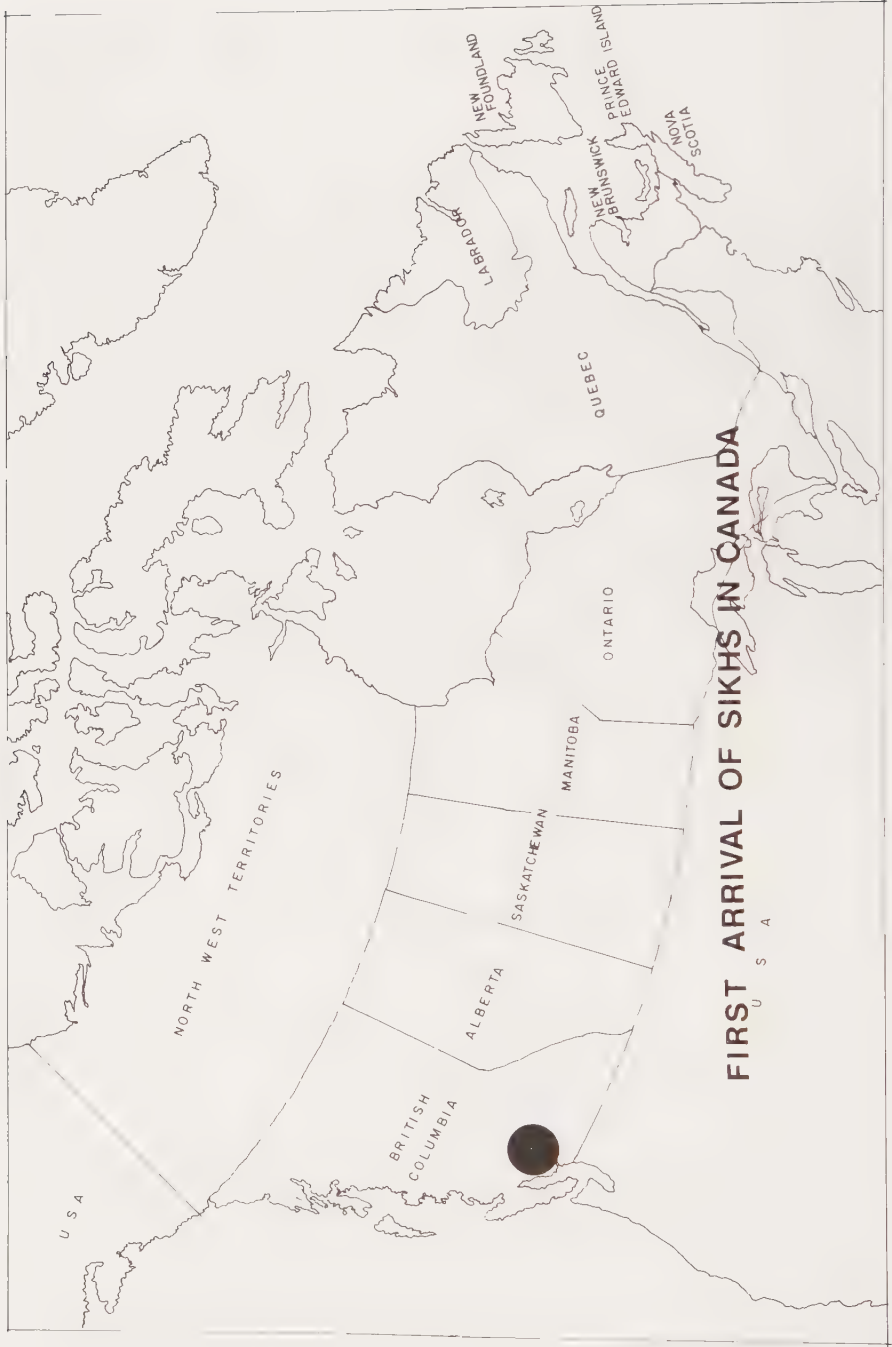




Maharajah Ranjit Singh a sketch by Narindar Singh based on cover of book History of the Punjab by Syad M. Latif.

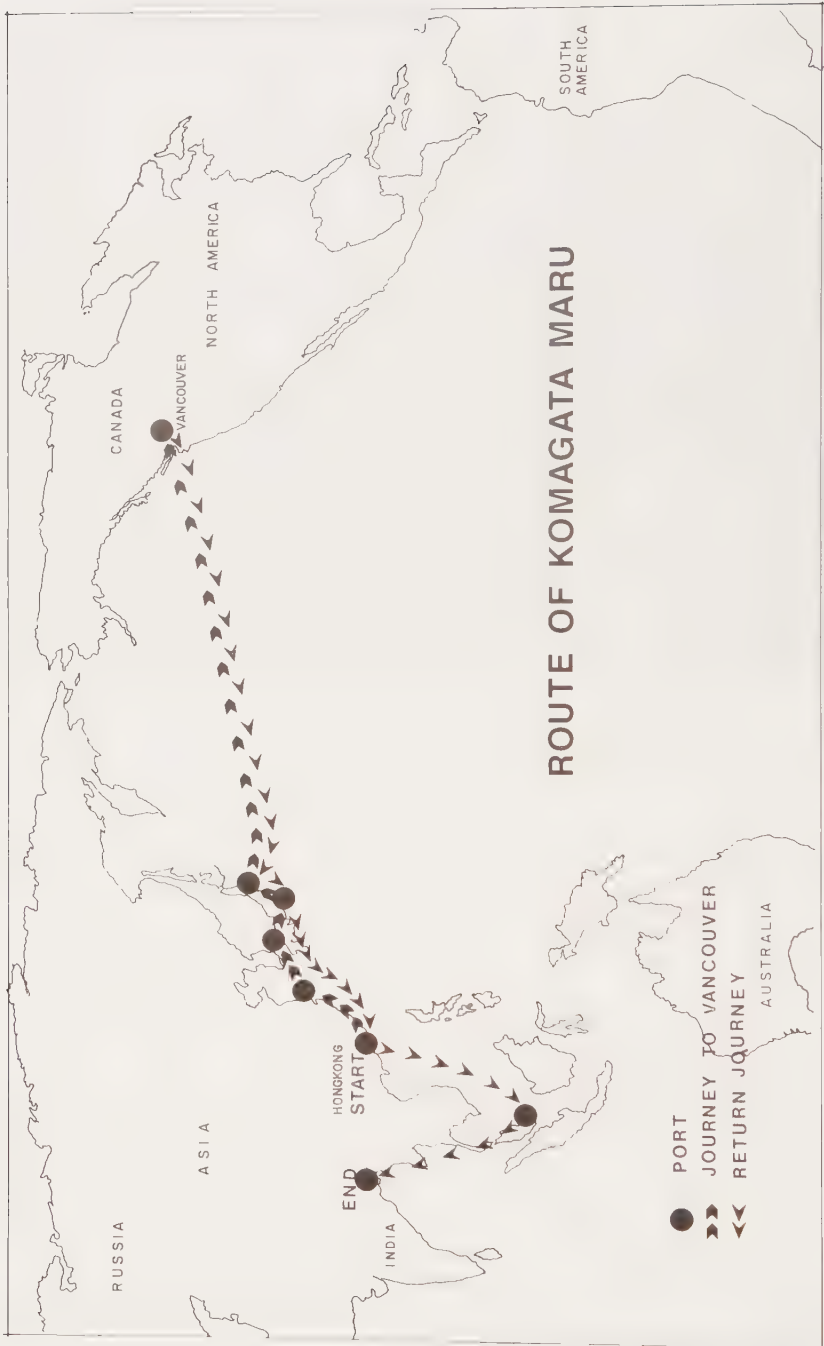


Sikh Troops in France 1914, courtesy British Museum.





Well dressed Sikhs on Hastings Street, Vancouver 1904,
courtesy Vancouver Public Library.





Gurdit Singh Sarhali, left in light suit,
with his son Balwant, May 23, 1914 aboard
Komagata Maru, courtesy Vancouver Public Library.



H.H. Stevens third from right, on board the tug Sea Lion, with Malcolm Reid third from left and Hopkinson far right, courtesy Vancouver Public Library.



The Cruiser HMCS Rainbow right guarding Komagata Maru before departure, courtesy Victoria Public Library.



Vancouver Sikh Temple, 1866 Second Avenue West, 1936,
courtesy Vancouver Public Library.

2. Early Sikh Settlers

Initial Exposure to Canada

Probably Sikh interest in Canada had been generated by Sikh troops or by shipping companies, and possibly persuaded by letters from friends and relatives. According to some accounts, they began to arrive in 1886. During Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, Sikh regiments passed through Canada, probably their impression initiated the Sikh immigration. Representatives from across the Empire came to London for the ceremony. Over one thousand two hundred Indian troops participated. In 1902, the coronation of Edward VII took place in London. A multi-ethnic contingent including Sikhs from Hong Kong also passed through Canada on its way to and from London. They arrived in Victoria on the *Empress of Japan* on June 3, 1902. Most of the soldiers were Sikhs. They received a rousing welcome on their arrival in Vancouver and were well treated during their brief stay. The Sikh soldiers travelled by train to Montréal, and embarked for England with the Canadian contingent. From England they came back to Vancouver and on September 8, left for Hong Kong on the *Empress of China*.

Sikh Immigration Background

The Chinese were the first of the oriental people to come to British Columbia. They helped build the Canadian Pacific Railway, the first transcontinental railway in Canada. The Japanese followed soon after, and then the Sikhs emigrated to Canada. In Canada's eastern parts, people of Asiatic origin such as Syrians, Armenians, and Persians were allowed to settle. In 1887, the Canadian Pacific Railway introduced a trans-Pacific passenger service from Hong Kong to Vancouver.

According to immigration sources Sikhs were lured to Vancouver by shipping companies. Sikhs were led to believe that they could obtain immediate employment at higher wages than what they could earn in Punjab. The authorities claimed that there were inaccuracies in this assumption, that there was no work for Sikhs, and that they would be unable to withstand the climate of Vancouver. The authorities soon had to admit that no shipping company offered any inducement. Work was available and Vancouver temperature was quite moderate. When Sikhs first arrived in Canada they were called Hindus. They were also referred to as East-Indians, to distinguish them from the native Indians. Almost all Sikh immigrants to Canada came from Punjab. After liberalization of Canadian Immigration Law in the 1960s, immigrants have arrived from all parts of India, as well as from Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

Punjab has been the primary source of free migrants from India, and Sikhs constitute the largest Punjabi community in Canada. Sikhs spread around the world initially as migrants to Britain's tropical colonies. Immigration started in 1870 when railways linked Punjab to Calcutta facilitating migration to Malaysia and beyond. The British developed an irrigation system that added millions of acres of arable lands to Punjab which brought unprecedented prosperity to the peasantry. Sikhs from Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur districts migrated in the thousands to cultivate new agricultural areas of western Punjab under British auspices. The prosperity was short lived. Within a few years their holdings were fragmented and became uneconomical. Rural indebtedness increased. Families particularly from the *Jat* Sikhs (a particular land-owning community) which could raise money sent their sons to seek fortunes in foreign lands. Sikh communities sprang up in Burma, Malaya, Singapore, Thailand, Cambodia, the Philippines, and China. Some more enterprising Sikhs from the Asian coast ventured across the Pacific to Canada and United States.

Before World War II, ninety-five per cent of immigrants from Punjab who came to Canada were Sikhs. Immigration mostly came from Sikh communities of Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur districts called Doaba. The *Jat* Sikhs of Doaba were the most determined immigrants. They were an enterprising, industrious, and energetic people. They held their own in accumulating land and capital and increased their strength and self-reliance. These include such personal qualities of a high degree of resolve, flexibility, adaptability, and independence. As part of British Indian army and the police force the Sikhs moved throughout the Indian subcontinent and overseas. The Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900 helped the Sikh peasants to reduce the power of money lenders over mortgaged lands. The emigration to United States and Canada contributed to their economic strength. Most of the early immigration came from the villages of Punjab. A village might consist of 150 households, with a majority of *Jat* Sikhs. However, there are a considerable size of other social classes as well. There exists kinship ties of family lineage through marriage with many other villages. The reports of those who went abroad spread rapidly in villages.

The trade with Britain and United States combined with Punjab's prosperity provided farmers the cash and credit that made distant travel possible. In 1907 the cost of a passage from Calcutta to Hong Kong and from Hong Kong to Vancouver was two hundred and one rupees (Indian currency). The Sikhs worked on farms in Australia during the 1890s until the passage of anti-oriental legislation in 1901. Their experience led them to try their luck in Canada. The Dillingham Commission estimated that eighty-five per cent of the immigrants in those years were Sikhs and ninety per cent were Jat Sikhs. Probably the first Sikh to arrive in Canada was the distinguished Prince Victor Duleep Singh, grandson of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the "Lion of the Punjab." In 1889, he joined Sir John Ross, Commander of the Imperial Forces in Canada, as aide de camp at his headquarters in Halifax. He was a second lieutenant in the first Royal Dragoons.

Political Climate

At the turn of the century in Canada, British Columbia was a province of racial conflicts and Vancouver was the heart of strife. The kind of person who was a desirable immigrant was a controversial social issue. It was a newly-formed settler society. Race and ethnicity formed fundamental establishing principles. British Columbia was explicitly marked as "white man's country" by the Anglo-Canadian immigrants. Government immigration policy was tainted by racial prejudices and economic considerations. British and Americans were considered the elite while Germans and Scandinavians were okay. They tolerated eastern Europeans on economic grounds. The ruling elite discouraged southern Europeans and in their view Asians and Africans should not enter at all. It was during this turbulent period the Sikh pioneers arrived in British Columbia. Vancouver was about twenty years old and was undergoing a tremendous period of growth.

Chinese, Japanese, and native people became the target of profound discrimination. The provincial government had disenfranchised these groups. They were paid less than other workers and were declined responsible positions. Unions refused to accept them as members. They were socially isolated and were denied access to stores and other business. Virtually, there was no sympathy for them. By 1900, British Columbia's white society was against further immigration of Chinese and Japanese, though immigration was the responsibility of the federal government. The Chinese immigrant paid a \$50.00 tax to get into Canada, which was increased to \$100.00 in 1901. It was under these difficult circumstances the Sikh pioneers found themselves when they arrived in Vancouver.

Canada's racial strife had its origins during the Caribou gold boom of 1850s when fifteen hundred Chinese hurried from the United States to pan gold. Their clannish ways and willingness to work for low wages infuriated the Canadian settlers of European extraction. During the 1890s the Japanese followed the

Chinese and Sikh immigrants came in 1903. The inexpensive Chinese, Japanese, and Punjabi labourers of the work force stirred the fires of contempt within the white community. Lumber companies, railway contractors, and fruit growers of the Okanagan wanted Sikhs but local politicians at the behest of the trades and labour councils were hostile. The press supported an offensive campaign. No level of government or charitable organization would accept responsibility for the welfare of these immigrants.

Pioneers

It will probably never be known who was the first Sikh pioneer to come to Canada. Possibly an enterprising English speaking Sikh of an adventurous nature with a few of his companions crossed the Pacific around 1903 and landed at Vancouver, British Columbia. These Sikhs became instrumental in launching an immigration of nearly six thousand Sikhs over the next five years. Few were educated or skilled. Most of them were separated at a young age from their families. Their primary objective was to earn a livelihood and amass savings to support families in Punjab. They were willing to work hard and undergo sufferings and inconveniences. Prior to their arrival in Canada many Sikh immigrants had worked as policemen; as watchmen and caretakers in Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia. They were also employed as dairymen, cart drivers, and mine labourers. A few adventurous farm workers were attracted to Australia. Similarly, there was much opposition to Sikh immigration and settlement in New Zealand, but most remarkably, a good number managed to settle, and there is a strong Sikh community surviving to this day.

The Sikh pioneers entered Canada without being noticed, since British Columbian concern was focused on the Japanese and Chinese. There was no agitation against their presence at that time. They enjoyed other advantages which were denied to Sikhs who came afterwards. Times were good and there was scarcity of inexpensive labour as a result of decreased Chinese and Japanese immigration. In 1903 and 1904 Sikhs arrived in small numbers and readily found work. During 1905 and 1906 those who followed had similar success. Subsequent to the introduction of a higher head tax on Chinese immigrants to \$500.00, a vanguard of Sikhs reached Vancouver in April 1904 on a CPR liner. The Canadian Government held CPR responsible for this new immigrant influx. Mackenzie King, then Deputy Minister of Labour who later became prime minister came to the conclusion that passenger agents were encouraging immigration from Punjab to fill the steerage space no longer taken by the Chinese.

Between 1903 and 1908 nearly six thousand Sikhs entered Canada. Approximately three thousand of those crossed into United States. The majority had travelled directly from their villages in Punjab, although some had served in Sikh regiments in the Far East. An overwhelming majority were *Jat* Sikhs and the rest, whether Sikhs of other castes, or Hindus or Muslims, came from the

same districts. Most had little education and few spoke English. Dr. D.R. Devichand, an English speaking Punjabi, was one of the entrepreneurs among these immigrants. He found work for several hundred Sikhs in saw mills in Vancouver. He raised cash bonds for indigent Punjabis and acted as an interpreter to immigration authorities as well as in saw mills.

From the moment Sikhs first landed in British Columbia, they faced the hostility of both civic authorities as well as from the Euro-Canadian labour force. The mayor and council of Vancouver attempted to forestall their entry into the city by setting up a police cordon to keep them in the dock area until they could be boarded onto trains bound for the interior. The Sikhs would shortly return to Vancouver where employers were waiting for them.

While Sikhs were arriving in large numbers in British Columbia, two Vancouver Members of Parliament went to Prime Minister Sir Wilfred Laurier to demand that they be stopped. The Colonial under Secretary, Winston Churchill, was appealed to by the mayor of Vancouver to ban further immigration of Sikhs. Somehow the Sikhs ran afoul of increasing government enmity. The newspapers characterized Sikhs as undesirable, degraded, sick, hungry, and a menace to women and children. In fact, Sikhs were not actually taking jobs from Euro-Canadians but, rather were taking those jobs which were previously filled by the Chinese and Japanese. Sikhs gradually started replacing the Chinese and Japanese in the saw mills. There were acute shortages of labour in fruit ranches and in the forest industry. According to John Norris a relatively unprejudiced observer who wrote some years later in *Strangers Entertained*: "Sikhs proved remarkably tough, resourceful, and determined. Most of them quickly found work as labourers in the lumber mills and in the logging camps." Lumber and shingle manufacturers were encouraging more immigrants from Europe to come to the West coast. By 1906 the Chinese and Japanese had been identified as unwanted immigrants, and Sikhs automatically fell into that category. In April 1907, Sikhs were denied the right to vote in British Columbia, which was, in turn, a criterion for denying them the right to vote federally. For the next forty years Sikhs remained excluded from the political process in Canada.

Unfortunately for the Sikhs, employment success in their adopted country did not solve their other problems. Discrimination against them was growing and it assumed increasingly subtle, legal forms. The British Columbia legislature passed an act in 1907, which blocked Asians from entering professions, serving on juries, obtaining government contracts, and buying property in some parts of Vancouver. Sikhs were included under this law.

Asiatic Riots

A major depression hit North America in 1907-08. Five thousand workers of European extraction lost their jobs in British Columbia while Sikh immigration continued to increase. This led to further hostility towards Sikhs,

Chinese, and Japanese who were blamed for taking jobs away from Canadians. The Asiatic Exclusion League (AEL), was formed in 1907. It was led by Herbert Stevens who became Member of Parliament in 1911. The AEL preached racism and discrimination. The League attacked Sikhs: "Canada is best left in the hands of the Anglo-Saxon race...it shall remain white and our doors shall be closed to the Asians." The exclusionists fanned anti-Asiatic feeling. They organized meetings and delivered speeches in various places in British Columbia. Within six months its spokesmen triggered the worst anti-oriental race riots of that time in Vancouver, in September 1907. The Governor General Earl Grey was convinced that Sikh immigration would have to stop. At this point the Canadian government moved fast to halt immigration from Punjab completely.

Anti-Asiatic riots erupted in Washington State across the Canadian border. A violent mob of Euro-Americans drove four hundred Sikh mill workers out of Bellingham. Canadian rioters of European ancestry went on rampage in the Chinese and Japanese quarters of Vancouver. The mob was driven back when the Japanese used guns to defend themselves. Luckily, the Sikhs were left alone, though they passed some very anxious moments during these riots. The Japanese Government sent their Ambassador to Vancouver to investigate, and to protect their nationals. The Canadian government sent a cabinet minister to negotiate an agreement with the Japanese Government to limit Japanese immigration to Canada. The Deputy Minister of Labour W.L. Mackenzie King was sent to London to arrange for limitations on Sikh immigration. King found the British sympathetic to Canada's desire to stop Sikh immigration, provided that the method of doing so did not generate problems in Punjab. Mr. King did not go to Punjab and Sikhs were neither heard nor approached by him although the interest of Punjab and Sikh self-respect was at stake. In 1908, "the continuous journey," explained on the next page, effectively barred the Sikh immigration.

Mackenzie King Report

The Mackenzie King report was essentially a legitimization of the forthcoming immigration ban. It dwelt heavily on instances where individuals had gone into debt to pay for the passage and neglected to point out that these were exceptions. It stressed the problem of unemployment though most Sikh immigrants were working with the exception of recent arrivals. It raised the spectre of new immigrants starving while the *Khalsa Diwan Society*¹ and the Hindustani Association gave cash bonds to immigration officials for any indigent Sikh. In 1908 the Canadian government required that Punjabi immigrants must have \$200.00 in their possession on arrival, while immigrants of European extraction needed only \$25.00. The government also required Sikhs to come by continuous journey from India, which was impossible because steamship companies, on instructions from the government, did not provide the service. These regulations had the desired result. The upshot of all this was that no Sikh could land in Canada until the late 1940s with the exception of wives and

children of Sikh settlers after 1919. Mr. King was more than blunt in stating that Canada's desire to restrict immigration from the orient is natural. That Canada should remain a white man's country was considered to be not only desirable for social and economic reasons, but highly necessary on political and national grounds. The Sikhs were coming and Canadians of European extraction did not like it, so the Sikhs must be stopped. Stephen Leacock writes: "Sikh immigration to British Columbia was ingeniously side-tracked by the 'continuous voyage' rule, as smart a piece of legislation as any that ever disfranchised negroes in the southern United States. The Sikhs were free to come but on 'through ships'; and there were no through ships." The justification used for shutting out Sikhs 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 required financial assistance outside the Sikh community.

Bruno Lasker, in his book *Asia On The Move* writes: "The Sikhs of Canada are a small remnant of much larger numbers attracted from Punjab in the first decade of the century—twelve to fifteen thousand by the development of the lumber industry in British Columbia. Their competition was resented by workers of European extraction and a more general opposition to them flared up during the First World War when some Sikhs took an independent stand on international affairs and suspicion of the loyalty of Sikh immigrants became wide spread. Most of them were driven out by a series of bloody encounters and through legalistic and unfair court decisions. Since they were British subjects, indirect legislation was resorted to, in order to prevent further immigration of Sikhs." The numbers quoted by Bruno Lasker have not been corroborated.

Employment

On arrival Sikhs were hired to do rough outdoor work. The largest numbers were employed by sawmills and shingle mills, particularly in the lower Frazer Valley—Vancouver region and on Vancouver Island. They were also taken on by mills in the interior of British Columbia. Sikhs did not pursue the Chinese employment areas of domestic service, laundries, hotel cooks, kitchen help, and market gardening. As part of their social customs a *Jat* Sikh felt these jobs beneath their dignity. In Singapore and Hong Kong Sikhs did police work; in Australia they worked on sugar plantations; in California they became fruit and vegetable farmers; and in Britain, they worked in factories.

It did not take the Sikhs long to adjust themselves to their new environment. The climate of British Columbia, particularly on the coast, is fairly moderate although it rains a lot unlike Punjab which has scorching heat during summer. No sooner had the Canadians found Sikhs to be hard working and efficient than they were given work on the railways, on maintenance gangs, on construction sites, in the forest industry, and particularly in handling lumber in saw-mills of Victoria, Vancouver, and New Westminster. They worked repairing tram lines,

in canneries, in the building and dairy industry, fruit picking, and on cattle farms. They did not become domestics. Because of their physical endurance they preferred arduous, rough work outdoors in clearing land full of stumps, scrubbing land, and logging. As a rule they were paid less than Canadian workers of European extraction for the same work. They were mobile and travelled large distances to earn a livelihood wherever opportunity was available. They were prepared to go farther with the encouragement of higher wages. By the summer of 1908 Sikhs were spreading rapidly through British Columbia, Washington, Oregon, and California. They were employed as railway workers and fruit pickers in the orchards of the Sacramento Valley.

Sikhs earned a reputation as strike-breakers after they were used to replace striking Italian railway workers in Tacoma, Washington. A riot by Euro-Americans in Bellingham, Washington, discouraged employers from taking them on subsequently. They did not cross the Rockies to the coal mines of the Kootnay and Crows Nest Pass regions of British Columbia and Alberta as they were stopped by miners' unions opposed to the employment of alien workers instead of Canadians. Finns, Slavs and Italian immigrant groups from the east were brought in on subsidized rates which were available only as far as Calgary. This helped to feed labour into southeastern British Columbia. It was the coastal market that offered the most employment to Sikhs.

Living Conditions

Sikhs were isolated primarily by their pattern of life, language, and culture. The reluctance to integrate with the host population was also a factor. They remained in the company of their own countrymen in bunkhouses or lodgings. Since it was an adult male population (only nine women immigrated between 1904 and 1920), their isolation would have been lessened had their families been allowed to join them. They moved from job to job to secure work in the industry. Most of them had very little education and it was difficult for them to communicate in English. They were deprived of citizenship rights and racial discrimination was rampant.

At millsite bunkhouses, accommodation was spartan and interiors cramped, sometimes damp and poorly lit. These were slummy little ghettos in Vancouver, merely ramshackle sheds on the work premises virtually covered with layers of sawdust. Each bunkhouse was partitioned into small rooms with two bunks in each. Normally one hundred Sikh workers resided in one bunkhouse, and there was only one cook to prepare meals. The cookhouse was a long shed with a huge cooking stove, containing long tables with wooden benches to sit on. The open fire burned under a barrel which supplied hot water. In the evening each worker left the mill carrying a block of wood for the kitchen stove or for the hot water fire. Their clothes would become full of sawdust. In the evening they would brush the sawdust from their clothing with their hands.

In some lodging houses, as many as ten men shared the same room for

cooking, eating, and sleeping. They endured this kind of crowding in order to save as much as possible for support of families in Punjab. Whether in bunkhouses or lodging-houses, Sikhs kept a common kitchen, pooling expenses, and eating their basic meal—*chappati* (unleavened bread), lentils and curry—together as a democratic and self-supporting social unit. Beyond the lodging and, the bunkhouse, they also gathered in the *Gurdwara* (Sikh Temple). Saint Nihal Singh writes: "The City of Vancouver has grown rapidly and the house accommodation there is insufficient. Accordingly, the Sikh immigrants on arrival have to put up with any sort of housing they can get. That most of these houses are poor, miserable shacks, ill-ventilated and badly plumbed, damp and unhygienic is unfortunately true. But for this the immigrants are not to blame."

3. Difficulties and Challenges of Pioneers

The immigration ban subsequently interfered with normal functioning of Punjabi families. This discriminatory practice provoked great resentment among Sikhs, and they resolved to fight for full Canadian rights.

Solidarity

The *Khalsa Diwan Society* (Sikh organization) in Vancouver promptly provided Punjabis with a sense of place, identity, order, continuity, and community pride. Religious institutions brought the Sikhs together and provided an organizational focus for collective action on several issues. Virtually every aspect of the ongoing battle against the immigration ban was planned, supported, and orchestrated through the *Gurdwara* (Sikh church) organization. The *Gurdwara Management Committee* was democratically elected and these members soon became outstanding secular leaders. On community issues they spoke for all Indians, not just Sikhs.

Sikh pioneers came to Canada with a strong identity. Despite hardship, discrimination, and social isolation, they rarely doubted the worthiness and correctness of their firmly held point of view. They united together under threat and went on the defensive. The Sikhs developed a strong leadership structure. Educated and highly literate, Sikhs came to Canada to assist the Sikh community during this difficult period.

Struggle

Between 1906 and 1907 some Indian revolutionaries arrived in Canada. They became a driving force against the immigration ban. At that time, the British vigorously controlled dissent in colonial India through spies, police, and restriction of political rights. As a result, a number of the Indian nationalists left India to carry on the liberation struggle from the outside.

Facing Reality

By the end of 1908 the Sikhs were politically neutralized as a voting force in Canada. Immigration had been effectively terminated. Economically, a racial line had been drawn: Punjabis were forced to become unskilled blue-collar workers if they were to work at all. They were generally the last hired and first fired. They were therefore integrated into the economy but as a subordinate labour force. Routine discrimination in all other aspects of life contributed to nearly total isolation for the Sikhs in British Columbia. In spite of their imposed isolation, the Sikhs promptly recreated a semblance of normal life. The Sikhs developed many resources to combat subordination, such as household organization, economic adaptation, community institutions, mutual aid and leadership. They formed an egalitarian community in which the strongest ties were those of kinship and village. Their political life was strong, rarely orderly and frequently divisive. They used their substantial cultural resources to better their situation. As the community turned increasingly religious and culturally homogeneous, Sikh institutions became central to community life.

Eventually, things worked out well for the Sikhs. They ate well, saved money, and usually got along with each other. Many times when men lost their jobs, the community shared their resources with the unemployed, since it did not cost that much to carry them along. As soon as the individual got another job, he paid back his debts, and in this way a kinship developed. If someone could not tolerate living with the others' there was always someplace else to stay. Men were still able to save a substantial portion of their wages after supporting their families in Punjab and after paying for their own accommodations. The lowered costs and substantial savings enabled them to pull through economic hard times while also helping the sick and the unemployed.

Khalsa Diwan Society

The Sikhs established the *Khalsa Diwan Society* in 1907. The *Gurdwara Management Committee*¹ within it played the most important role and also supervised other smaller *Gurdwaras* (Sikh churches) in British Columbia. The *Gurdwara Management Committee* was also the principal organization acting in the interest of not only Sikhs but also spoke on community concerns for all Indians. In a historic role, the *Gurdwara* and the *Khalsa Diwan Society* were the main Sikh institutions engaged in holding the Punjabi community together. The *Gurdwara* is a primary institution of the Sikhs. The Sikhs rapidly established *Gurdwaras* everywhere in British Columbia, even where there were only handful of Sikhs. At first they were in temporary rented accommodations but soon these were replaced by permanent structures. By 1920, *Gurdwaras* had been erected in Vancouver, New Westminster, Victoria, Nanaimo, Golden, Abbotsford, Fraser Mills, and Paldi.

The Canadian government did not stop at the continuous passage restriction. Instead it attempted to remove Sikhs already in Canada. In 1908, when the

Canadian government devised a scheme to recruit Sikhs from Vancouver area for indentured labour in British Honduras, the *Khalsa Diwan Society* conducted negotiations with 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 immigration laws, raised funds to fight individual cases, and focused attention on the fact that Sikhs settled in Canada should be allowed to bring their wives and children from India. In 1914, three hundred seventy-six Punjabis (mostly Sikhs) who arrived on the steamer *Komagata Maru* were declined entry and sent back to India after two months detention in Vancouver harbour. The *Khalsa Diwan Society* raised \$40,000.00 at that time to cover landing fees, legal fees, and to pay the ship owners for the voyage.

Vancouver Gurdwara

In the month in which the Canadian government imposed the ban on Punjabi immigration, the *Khalsa Diwan Society* announced the dedication of the first *Gurdwara* in North America. In less than two years Vancouver Sikhs, supposedly indigent immigrants, had subscribed \$6,000.00 toward the construction of this *Gurdwara* at 1866 Second Avenue, West Vancouver. Hundreds of Euro-Canadians were among the crowd of over one thousand who attended the dedication. Managers of two lumber companies provided the lumber for its construction at cost to keep their Sikh workers from moving elsewhere. Obviously, even in Vancouver, not all Canadians of European ancestry were anti-Sikh. The Vancouver *Gurdwara* was designed to meet functions of a meeting hall, kitchen, rooms for accommodation on the first floor, and the congregation hall on the second floor. It served as a gathering place for all Indians, Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, and all discussed their grievances and mutual problems in these meetings.

British Honduras Scheme

In 1908, Secretary of State Robert Crewe shared his continuing concern about Sikhs to Brigadier General Eric Swayne, governor of British Honduras, who was in London to discuss Honduras problems. Eric Swayne, who had commanded Sikh troops in India, mentioned that possibly the Sikhs might be moved to Honduras, where labour is scarce. Swayne offered to return to Belize via Canada. Crewe passed the suggestion on to Governor General Earl Grey and he also proposed this to Prime Minister Laurier.

The Canadian Government evolved a scheme to remove the Sikh settlers in Canada as indentured labourers to British Honduras. Mr. J.B. Harkin, assisted by William Charles Hopkinson², was assigned to approach Vancouver's Punjabi community in this regard. The Sikh community allowed to send Satnagar Singh and Sham Singh as delegates to Belize (British Honduras) under the patronage

of president Bhag Singh of the *Khalsa Diwan Society* and Balwant Singh the priest of the *Gurdwara*. They were accompanied by J.B. Harkin and W.C. Hopkinson. Mr. Harkin informed the Sikh community that the Canadian government was offering them land, a golden opportunity to better their lot in Belize instead of staying in Canada. Expenses for the delegation were paid for by the Department of the Interior.

On arrival in Belize the Punjabi delegation found the conditions were far inferior to those in Vancouver. The tropical climate of Belize, an evolving town along the ocean, was infested with mosquitos and flies. There was neither sanitary nor surface drainage system, nor adequate water supply. Malaria and yellow fever were common. For bathing and washing sea water was used. Milk was not available; only coconuts and coconut oil supplemented the vegetable diet. People lived miserably. The government offered free land grants to farmers and railway jobs to those wishing wage labour. The delegation also found thirty Indians in Belize who had immigrated as indentured labourers about a generation before—all thirty wanted to return to India.

When Eric Swayne arrived in Ottawa, he discussed the proposal with Grey and then met with Laurier, who encouraged Swayne to visit Vancouver. Swayne was concerned that any forcible return of Sikhs to India would cause serious trouble. By the time Swayne reached Vancouver, the Sikhs were already well organized.

Professor Teja Singh³, a forceful well-educated Sikh leader, had joined the Vancouver Punjabi community. He too arrived at the time when plans were being made to send Sikhs to the British Honduras. He was able to ascertain a feeling prevalent amongst his countrymen that they were against the proposed move. In his autobiography, Teja Singh writes: "the Vancouver Sikhs told me that the Canadian government is deliberately publicizing in the media, and without cause from the Sikh community, that the Sikhs are unemployed, that they don't have any sources of livelihood to fall back upon, and that they are dirty. The very fact that they have built the Vancouver *Gurdwara*, they run *Langar* (free kitchen), and that all the Sikhs there retain the Sikh symbols is a measure of their credibility. This propaganda is designed to kick Sikhs out of Canada. They added that two persons from their community have been taken on a fact finding mission to British Honduras. They believed that government has already hatched up a scheme that one way or the other the government will get their signature on a report (admitting that British Honduras is a beautiful place) and they will be herded like sheep on a ship bound for Honduras."

Teja Singh, in a bold stand, told the representatives of the Canadian government that Sikhs strongly objected to their being packed off to Central America. He urged Sikhs to band together to form agricultural communities, where they could live independently. They should foster Sikh philosophy, engage in business, real estate, mining, logging, and shipping. He came up with an idea to set up a mining trust company associated with the *Khalsa Diwan*

Society. He asked Sikhs to buy land to enable them to found a new Guru Nanak town. There, men of all races, castes, and creeds might gain admission with only a promise to refrain from smoking and drinking. Although he himself came from the discipline of law, he took the assistance of a local lawyer and got the Guru Nanak Mining Trust Company incorporated in 1908. This was a vehicle by which Sikhs could invest their savings in real estate. Teja Singh gave three public lectures in a week to contradict media stereotypes. Large audiences of Anglo and Euro-Canadians attended these lectures and were well publicized in the press.

Teja Singh organized a Samagam (a religious gathering) in which thousands of Anglo and Euro-Canadians also participated. He told the audience that Sikhs were not unemployed and hungry, but that they had bought two hundred fifty acres of land worth \$10,000.00 and have paid \$15,800.00 on a gold mine in Jacksonville. If the government still forcibly sent the Sikhs to British Honduras in spite of all this, it would clearly be a gross injustice.

After exploring the conditions in British Honduras the delegation returned with a negative report. Teja Singh persuaded Mr. Harkin to personally take the report to Ottawa, which provided the two Punjabi delegates time to meet with the community without any pressure. Teja Singh organized a special meeting of the Sikhs across British Columbia in which approximately five thousand Sikhs participated. Satnagar Singh and Sham Singh, the two Punjabi delegates, submitted their report to the full assembly at the Vancouver *Gurdwara*. The delegates accused Hopkinson of attempted bribery of \$3,000.00 in favour of recommendation to settle at Belize. The Sikhs unanimously rejected the proposal of settling in British Honduras. They refused to be indentured labourers in a colony where there were low wages, and they decided to remain free men in a democratic country like Canada. Teja Singh played a major role in convincing the Canadian Government to drop the plan. The proposal of transportation to British Honduras died a quick death.

Challenging Exclusion

The Sikh community did not expect that the "continuous passage" rule would be enforced against them. In March 1908, twenty Sikhs arrived on the *Empress of Japan*. Certain resourceful individuals with some assistance from CPR sold passage to Punjabi immigrants on a non-CPR ship to Hong Kong with a voucher for travel on the next CPR ship from Hong Kong to Vancouver. Immigration officials had to land individuals who were ticketed this way. About this time one hundred and eighty-six Sikh passengers arrived in Vancouver on the *Monteagle* from Hong Kong. The authorities attempted to deport them on grounds that they were of poor health, had insufficient funds and had not come directly from India. These passengers had left Calcutta with the explicit intention of coming to Canada. They had left India before the continuous passage rule came into effect. They were forced to travel by way of Hong Kong. However, the immigration

authorities directed that passengers should be deported. Surprisingly, the Sikhs received media and community support. Even the *Vancouver Province*, not generally a supporter of the Sikhs, argued against such an action. "To penalize them for a mistake or an act for which they are not responsible would be a monstrous injustice." Though Canadians didn't want Sikhs in Canada they still preferred them to the Japanese as they felt the Sikhs were better workers. The Sikhs held mass protest meetings and a petition was sent to the Secretary of State for India in London. The overwhelming media and public support seemingly influenced the Canadian immigration authorities and the decision was made to let the Sikh passengers to remain in Canada.

The Canadian government pressured the CPR not to accept any more Sikh passengers. The government also compelled the CPR to stop issuing 'through' tickets. The companies did not want to have problems with Canadian immigration authorities and complied. They still maintained that a journey on a through ticket by way of Hong Kong would constitute a continuous journey as per the regulations. They believed that immigration officers were not justified in requiring the Sikhs to come on a direct steamship which, at that time was impossible. It was the local immigration officers who meet their steamships and with whom they had to do business. They considered that it was not to their advantage to go over the heads of these officers.

Since shipping companies would not sell tickets to Sikhs to travel to Canada, the Vancouver Sikh community chalked out various strategies to lobby. In November, 1909, the Sikh community sent Teja Singh and Hari Singh to England to solicit the support of Liberal British circles, where Teja Singh spoke to a number of sympathetic audiences. Around this time a small party of Sikhs left for India to bring their wives and children. President Raja Singh and priest Balwant Singh⁴ of the Vancouver *Gurdwara* joined the party. They had been settled in Canada for five years. At that point, only Teja Singh and Dr. Sunder Singh had their wives with them in Canada. Balwant Singh and Raja Singh brought their wives and children along with them to Canada. They were denied entry on the basis of the "continuous passage" rule. The immigration department ruled that Balwant Singh could enter because he had established domicile in Vancouver, however, his wife and children, even though they had come on a through ticket, could not enter due to a stop in Hong Kong. Fortunately for the Sikhs, Senator Douglas and two other senators raised the matter in the senate. Balwant Singh's family was allowed to enter Canada after a delegation headed by Teja Singh went to Ottawa to plead their case. Raja Singh's family was also allowed in, but the delegation was explicitly told that this act of leniency could not be considered a precedent in anyway. The Government of Canada was not about to permit its anti-Sikh policies to be circumvented by any technicality in the law.

The immigration issue generated nationalist feelings in the local Sikh community. Anti-British sentiments arose. Taraknath Das published an edition

of *Free Hindustan* in Vancouver. It was the first Indian publication of any kind in Canada. When this English-language monthly began to appear in India it provoked a reaction. Hopkinson was prompt to react, and volunteered information that the English school for Punjabis at Millside, Seattle was in reality a centre for Indian sedition. This school was started by Taraknath Das. The *Free Hindustan* was banned from the Canadian mails.

The Canadian government imposed unbearable restrictions on Sikh immigrants who were British subjects. The forcible separation of the wives and children from their husbands and fathers annihilated Sikh immigration into Canada. This compulsory separation of families was punitive and should lawfully have been applied only to criminals. Sikhs found it impossible to comply with such a devious regulation and demanded its immediate abolition. Seeing that their efforts bore no fruit in Canada, Sikhs decided to have their case represented before the British and the British Indian government. On the 22nd of February, 1913, the *Khalsa Diwan Society* appointed Nand Singh Sihra, Balwant Singh and Narain Singh as a delegation to approach the Home government in London to help remove restrictions on immigration and further seek the cooperation of the Indian government on this matter. The delegation met with the Viceroy in Delhi on December 20, 1913, and he agreed to press for the partial removal of the continuous passage restriction only as it applied to wives and children of Sikh immigrants.

The fight for the independence of India became a great moving force in 1913. *Khalsa Diwan* leadership became actively involved in the struggle for liberation of the motherland from British rule. This new role was mostly attributed to activities of students from Bengal but some Sikh revolutionaries were also involved. The treatment of Sikhs in Canada was an effective issue around which national feelings to liberate India were aroused. On the 17th of October, 1913, fifty-six Punjabis arrived in Canada aboard a freighter from Singapore. They were served deportation orders by an immigration official. Passengers were subsequently released by Chief Justice Hunter. He declared that every citizen of India was a British subject and therefore could go anywhere he pleased in the Empire. The ruling was confined to the order in council under Canadian law. The Canadian government, however, moved at once to restrict further Sikh immigration. A new order-in-council (cabinet order) was passed stating that in view of the overcrowded conditions of the labour market in British Columbia, no artisans or labourers, skilled or unskilled could enter that province. The order-in-council, however, applied not only to those not yet in Canada; it applied as well to the families (wives and children) of those who had come to Canada legally and settled. Similarly, many Sikhs had their wives and families awaiting embarkation in Calcutta when the order was passed. The women and children were still living on such remittance from their men folk in Canada, and anxiously awaited the removal of the restrictions which would allow them to join their husbands and fathers.

Between 1913 and 1917, president Sohan Singh Bhakhna of the San Francisco based *Ghadar*⁵ Party (Mutiny Party), was active in Sikh settlements throughout California, Oregon, and Washington. The British Indian government, apprehensive of the situation, requested the cooperation of Canadian Government, and sought the assistance of their officials to keep a close watch on the movements of Indian activists in North America. The *Komagata Maru* affair highlighted the inequality of Punjabis within the British Empire, and gave a boost to the *Ghadar* movement. When war with Germany broke out, in late summer of 1914, the *Ghadar* Party urged all Punjabis to return to India to prepare for an armed uprising. Hundreds of Sikhs in British Columbia responded to the call. The Canadian immigration officials reported their departure to British Indian government in India. The Sikhs were met by Indian police on arrival in Punjab and confined to their villages. In 1915, word got back to Canada of the fate of the freedom fighters and the enthusiasm to return to India subsided.

The workers of Vancouver had greatly outnumbered the available jobs in 1913. For several weeks prior to the arrival of *Komagata Maru*, Vancouver newspapers carried stories from Hong Kong that a boat load of Punjabis were headed for British Columbia's shores. On the night *Komagata Maru* reached Vancouver, Premier McBride was quoted as saying: "To admit Orientals in large numbers would mean in the end the extinction of white people, and we always have in mind the necessity of keeping this a white man's country." Hate mongering articles began to appear in the newspapers on a daily basis.

Sikhs were aware of Canadian hostility, and they saw evidence of persecution. They were, for example, denied the right to vote. Their own British Indian government was indifferent to their plight and did not look after them. Sikh immigrants intermingled with men who preached revolution. William C. Hopkinson, a secret service man, kept tab on Sikhs, apprehended their movements and activities, and pursued investigations.

The Komagata Maru Episode

Gurdit Singh Sarhali (1860-1950), came from Amritsar, Punjab. He received very little education in his childhood. At fifty-five, in 1913, as a white bearded, turbaned, and enterprising Sikh he went to Malaysia and worked as a contractor in dairy supplying, building, and railways. He moved to Hong Kong in December 1913. While staying at the *Gurdwara*, he observed that several hundred unemployed Punjabis were looking for a ship to come to Canada. Gurdit Singh decided to lead an expedition of these Sikhs to British Columbia. His objective was both financial and patriotic. In the Hong Kong *Gurdwara* he warmly embraced the cause of the *Ghadar* movement and promised to help his countrymen. Daljit Singh, associate editor of the Sikh nationalist paper *Khalsa Advocate* in Amritsar, became Gurdit Singh's personal secretary. Gurdit Singh

then hired a Punjabi doctor and a *Granthi* (priest).

Gurdit Singh wanted to charter a vessel capable of transporting five hundred passengers. The charter was arranged from a German shipping agent with a substantial down payment and a promise to pay the outstanding \$27,000.00 when the freighter reached Vancouver. The vessel was *Komagata Maru*. The Japanese shipping company that owned the aging freighter would provide a crew, and Gurdit Singh was to supply coal, water, food, and other necessities. Gurdit Singh formed the Guru Nanak Steamship Company and named the ship *Guru Nanak Jahaz*. In early March 1914, he proceeded to sell tickets and shares for the voyage. He was a quick-witted charmer who persuaded mostly young Sikhs of limited education into this venture. He was confident that Canada's immigration laws would collapse the moment the *Komagata Maru* sailed into Vancouver harbour since in his view the voyage had complied with the requirements of the continuous passage law. Gurdit Singh believed that the \$200.00 that each immigrant was to have upon arrival could be easily raised in the Vancouver Sikh community. He envisioned that once the first trip was successfully carried out that a fleet of Guru Nanak freighters carrying passengers and cargo between British Columbia and far eastern points would operate monthly and eventually weekly.

Start

The Hong Kong colonial government had been monitoring developments and tried to frustrate the voyage. Although Ottawa had been firm behind its immigration laws, however, the officials were slow to respond. The colony's laws were insufficient to thwart the journey and on April 6, the *Komagata Maru* set sail for Shanghai with one hundred sixty-five passengers on board; one hundred eleven joined the ship at Shanghai, eighty-six at Moji, and fourteen at Yokohama. Gurdit Singh took one thousand five hundred tons of coal at Moji to sell in Canada and intended to purchase lumber from British Columbia to sell in the East. Of the three hundred seventy-six passengers aboard the *Komagata Maru*, there were three hundred forty Sikhs, twenty-four Muslims, and twelve Hindus. Balwant Singh, the priest of *Gurdwara* in Vancouver, and Bhagwan Singh Gyani⁶ along with Professor Mohammad Barkatullah⁷ visited the *Komagata Maru* in Yokohama. All three had become important members of the *Ghadar* Party. They lectured to the passengers and distributed printed *Ghadar* material. During the voyage the passengers endured appalling living conditions aboard the *Komagata Maru*. They preferred to sleep and cook on the open deck because of bad ventilation in the steerage section. There were only a few, filthy toilets.

Detention

On May 21 the *Komagata Maru* arrived in Vancouver after a dreary

seven-week voyage across the Pacific Ocean and anchored into Burrard Inlet. The Canadian government immediately placed an armed guard in a launch which continued to circle the ship day and night. Gurdit Singh stayed a prisoner, and was not allowed to make contacts with the Vancouver Sikh community. He took the stance that by virtue of being British subjects they had a right to visit any part of the British empire. When the immigration party headed by Malcolm Reid (an immigration official) went aboard, they allowed only twenty returnees to land. The rest of the passengers were to be held on board until deportation orders were served.

Gurdit Singh persuaded a Japanese crewman to take a note to the *Gurdwara* secretary Mit Singh Pandori, requesting him to secure a good lawyer. The *Khalsa Diwan Society* hired Edward J. Bird, to represent the ship's passengers. Gurdit Singh was supposed to pay \$15,000.00 balance of the charter money by June 11, or the owner would have the right to take the ship back to Hong Kong. Mr. C. Gardner Johnson, representing the owners of the *Komagata Maru*, obligingly told Malcolm Reid that he would make sure that charter money was not paid.

In response to mounting opposition to the passengers, a temple committee was formed to deal with the legal battle. Bhag Singh, Balwant Singh, Mit Singh, and Hussain Rahim⁸, (all *Ghadar* revolutionaries), were the driving force behind the fifteen member temple committee. The committee also offered to provide bail while the case worked its way through the courts, and agreed to meet the obligations of the \$22,000.00 charter debt.

The government had its own strategy to ensure deportation. Directions originated with Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden. Ninety passengers were falsely declared to have trachoma, a non-existent disease, and therefore ineligible as immigrants. Ottawa was concerned that the entire affair might become an international incident. At the cabinet level, Borden decided that the deportation proceedings of all passengers be restricted to a single test case. Under the law, however, all three hundred fifty-six passengers (since twenty were returnees) could submit individual applications to the Immigration Board of Inquiry, and if rejected, each applicant could file habeas corpus, charging he was being illegally detained. This would have generated negative publicity that the government wished to avoid. Gurdit Singh was firmly opposed to this position of a single test case, and a stalemate developed. In the meantime, the press kept the *Komagata Maru* issue on the front pages. By June 10, the Temple Committee had collected \$20,000.00 in cash for the charter of the ship.

Deteriorating Conditions

The conditions on the ship began deteriorating rapidly. There was a shortage of food and water. Many became sick and one passenger died. Passengers were on the ship for two months. Garbage had accumulated and immigration officials refused to remove it. Gurdit Singh sent messages to the king and the governor

general, and announced a hunger strike. The Sikh community staged a large rally and were joined by the radical Socialist Party of Canada. Immediately, an anti-Sikh rally was organized which was addressed by Member of Parliament H.H. Stevens, who attacked Asian immigration.

Behind Reid, pushing hard, was Stevens. He was the man making the decisions. In fact, the immigration office was run practically as an adjunct to his local Conservative association executive. The patrol boat which kept twenty-four-hour watch on *Komagata Maru* was actually hired from an active party member. Stevens kept an eye on *Komagata Maru* developments for Prime Minister Borden. He was an ardent advocate of non-white exclusion. In his election victory speech in 1911, he stated "The immigrant from northern Europe is highly desirable, the immigrant from southern Europe is much less so, and the Asiatic, and I wish to emphasize this, is entirely undesirable."

By June 20, the *Komagata Maru* had been sitting in Vancouver harbour for a month. Conditions on board continued to worsen. There was virtually no drinking water and food supplies were very low. Petitions came from the ship alleging starvation. The members of the Temple Committee were furious at the deliberate starvation of passengers by the government. Bhag Singh, Balwant Singh, and Hussain Rahim attempted to board the ship but were turned away.

There were five members in the Immigration Board of Inquiry, all immigration staff, including Malcolm Reid. The board was behaving scandalously, avoiding a clear cut verdict, perhaps trying to delay the court battle it might lose. According to Bird, "the Board of Inquiry was a travesty of justice in which the prosecutors are the judges. Malcolm Reid and his staff were being little Caesars by not allowing anyone near the *Komagata Maru*. The immigration authorities may go on board to conduct their normal duties, but that does not authorize them to have an armed patrol."

One suggested solution to the problem that was seriously considered within the corridors of power, was the idea of kidnapping the *Komagata Maru* passengers and returning them to the Orient aboard a Canadian Pacific liner, the *Empress of India*. The scheme was rejected by the Prime Minister on the grounds that it might cause bloodshed. Requests for fresh water were ignored by Malcolm Reid. Gurdit Singh in a telegram to the governor general read "Many requests to the immigration department but useless. Better to be shot than this miserable death."

Test Case

Cracks appeared on the solid front Gurdit Singh had maintained on the *Komagata Maru*. This led to the formation of a committee on the ship which agreed to the government's original proposal to select a single individual for a court test who would stand for all on board. In his book, Gurdit Singh maintains that all the passengers remained steadfast in their loyalty and respect towards him. Munshi Singh, a twenty-six year-old married farmer was chosen. In

agreeing to this arrangement, however, the passengers lost an enormous resource—delay. Three hundred and fifty such cases would have taken many months and would have given ample opportunity for defence lawyers to pick apart the immigration regulations. On June 28, the Board of Inquiry ruled Munshi Singh inadmissible. The case was unsuccessfully appealed to a panel of five judges in Victoria and, on July 5, the legal battle was over. Gurdit Singh wrote to the governor general, that a forcible return of his colleagues would lead to agitation in India. He proposed that they be allowed to settle somewhere in the prairies. There was no reply.

The failure of the legal battle gave the *Ghadarites* a required hike. Their first strategy was to delay the ship's departure. The second phase of the plan involved a mass escape of passengers by overpowering the guards and fleeing into the city. Harnam Singh Sahri⁹ and Hukam Singh unsuccessfully tried to buy five handguns in Victoria with a view to smuggle them onto the *Komagata Maru*. The lack of water, the rapidly dwindling food supplies, the nauseating stench of garbage, and utter misery caused by living in cramped, filth-ridden captivity, had produced a mutinous atmosphere among the passengers. On July 9, Malcolm Reid, accompanied by Hopkinson and some stenographers, went aboard the *Komagata Maru* to determine for himself the seriousness of the situation. He was kept hostage by the newly formed passengers Committee on board the *Komagata Maru*. He was blamed for starving the passengers for weeks and was threatened. His life was spared at the intervention of Gurdit Singh and the party was subsequently released.

Reid felt that the ship must be cleaned up lest an epidemic start. Who should pay? The government agreed to provide food and water for the return journey, but only after the ship had sailed to the three mile limit would the supplies be transferred on to *Komagata Maru*. Gurdit Singh declined the offer, suspecting it was just a ploy to get the ship out of Canadian jurisdiction. On July 17, the passengers were served with deportation orders, and the Japanese captain was ordered out of the harbour.

Force

On July 19, Malcolm Reid decided to storm the *Komagata Maru*, subdue the passengers and sail the ship out to international waters. This led to what is known as the Battle of Burrard Inlet. Around one A.M. a strike force of one hundred twenty-five police officers with revolvers, accompanied by thirty-five special immigration officers armed with rifles, boarded the tug *Sea Lion*. The contingent was headed by Malcolm Reid and Hopkinson along with a number of newspapermen. Stevens went also. The moment the *Sea Lion* reached the *Komagata Maru* they found the *Sea Lion's* deck was fifteen feet lower than *Komagata Maru*. The strike force was at a terrifying disadvantage. An attempt to board the ship was met with a solid line of Sikhs four deep that manned the

railing. Police launched the attack by tossing grappling hooks up at the ship's railing and used high pressure hose. The Punjabis responded with a hail of lumps of coal, bricks, scrap metal, hardwood, and knives from the deck. This furious defence by Sikhs caused a panic on the *Sea Lion* as the strike force fled for cover. Thirty raiders were injured. The *Sea Lion* almost capsized. This riot lasted ten minutes. Malcolm Reid ordered the *Sea Lion* to retreat. The *Sun* praised the police department's "admirable coolness and courage" and referred to Punjabis as "barbarians."

Intimidation

The Battle of Burrard was a disaster for Malcolm Reid, and Stevens and called for retribution. Prime Minister Borden concurred. He sent his agricultural minister Martin Burrell to oversee the event. Mr. Borden authorized the use of a warship, the *HMCS Rainbow*, to intimidate the Sikhs. Reid and Stevens relied on bullying and the use of force rather than negotiation, whereas Martin Burrell had a somewhat more open mind. The next day the cruiser *Rainbow* made its appearance and moved close to *Komagata Maru*. It was half of Canada's navy. Soldiers with fixed-bayonets aimed at the unarmed passengers to coerce them to leave. The spirits of the passengers were low and they were fearful. The Sikhs started recitation of the *Guru Granth Sahib* (the Sikh holy book). There were two village musicians on the ship with a *dhad* (a small two sided wooden drum), and *sarangi* (a fiddle). They sang patriotic songs which raised the passengers' spirits.

Return

In order to facilitate the negotiations, Martin Burrell allowed the fifteen member Temple Committee, including Hussain Rahim, Mit Singh, and Sohan Lal, to board the ship to meet with Gurdit Singh. Mr. Burrell also yielded to Gurdit Singh's demand that food supplies and medicine be conveyed on the *Komagata Maru* prior to departure rather than outside the three mile limit. On July 22nd, all provisions were transported on the ship. On Thursday morning, July 23, 1914, the *Komagata Maru* under the *Rainbow* convoy set sail out of Vancouver harbour after two months stay. The Naval officers stood by the hefty weapons facing *Komagata Maru*. According to O.D. Skelton, Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier's biographer, it is ironic, that the use of the Canadian navy (Cruiser *Rainbow*) against the *Komagata Maru*, was to stop British subjects from landing on British soil.

An unsuccessful attempt to smuggle arms from Washington state was made on July 17, by Bhag Singh, Balwant Singh, Harnam Singh Sahri and Mewa Singh Lopoke.¹⁰ They had crossed the border for this purpose and were met by Taraknath Das in Sumas. They bought four handguns and several hundred rounds of ammunition. Mewa Singh was caught red-handed with guns in his

possession at a custom's check-point. Hopkinson got a confession from Mewa that weapons were intended for the *Komagata Maru*, though he refused to implicate Bhag and Balwant. Hopkinson wanted Mewa to associate Bhag and Balwant with arms smuggling to *Komagata Maru* so that he could compile a dossier to justify the immigration department's deportation orders on them.

The day the *Komagata Maru* left for the homeward journey, the governor of Hong Kong requested that ship's passengers not be allowed to land there for fear that they might incite Sikh regiments stationed in the British colony. When the ship arrived in Yokohama, the passengers learned that they would not be allowed to land in Singapore either, but would be sent to India. In Yokohama they were met by Sohan Singh Bhakna who was sent by the *Ghadar* Party to provide arms to the passengers. The ship left Yokohama and reached Kobe on the 21st. Fifteen passengers landed at Kobe and two got on. It was a thirteen-day trip from Kobe to Singapore. None of the passengers were allowed to land in Singapore. Gurdit Singh had a nagging suspicion that he had not only tweaked the lion's tail in Canada but he had done it again in Japan.

Gurdit Singh in his book, *The Voyage of Komagata Maru*, claimed that he learned of the arms cache after the freighter left Singapore September 19. He gathered the weapons, throwing some overboard and restoring the remaining to the crew. He was very particular that nothing illegal should be done, that none of the passengers had anything for which they could be blamed afterwards.

Before arriving at Budge Budge, the ship was searched at Kalpi by the police and no weapons were found. On September 29, the *Komagata Maru* arrived at Budge Budge, seventeen miles from Calcutta. Gurdit Singh and the passengers were never told that the journey of the ship was to end at Budge Budge. They were not aware that the government had planned to send everyone to Punjab by train where it would be decided who would be detained and who would be set free. Before disembarking the ship the passengers became skeptical of the intentions of the Government when they saw their ship was surrounded by armed police. Gurdit Singh and the passengers were given fifteen minutes to evacuate the ship. The police started prodding the passengers in the direction of the railway station. The Sikhs did not resist and went along. Out of three hundred twenty-one passengers, forty-two agreed to board the train. The Sikh passengers, accompanied by the *Guru Granth Sahib* started reciting hymns.

Massacre

About forty yards from the depot the Sikhs sat down at the railway crossing. The police circled the passengers. Troops were also sent to the aid of police. A squad of thirty British policemen equipped with *Lathis* (long, heavy iron-bound sticks) were sent under the command of Superintendent George Eastwood who was armed with revolvers. Gurdit Singh was surrounded by three hundred and three passengers. Eastwood walked to the centre of the gathering. He attempted to arrest Gurdit Singh. The passengers circled Eastwood, a shot

was fired, and Eastwood was fatally wounded. Gurdit Singh, in an exhaustive account maintains that "The policemen opened fire. There was chaos. Bullets were hitting them, no warning had been given. I hopelessly saw my men falling dead." A serious riot erupted. The passengers ran in panic. As the encircled passengers surged forward the police and troops opened fire at will and a barrage of bullets hit the passengers. The Sikhs scattered and ran for shelter, deserting the road for streets and alleys past the station. The police and troops flushed the passengers out of shops and forced them to surrender. When it ended, twenty-six men were dead: twenty Sikhs; two British officers; two Indian policemen; and two local residents. Thirty-five people were seriously injured. With the exception of twenty-eight passengers all the rest were captured. Gurdit Singh was one of the twenty-eight Sikhs who escaped and he remained at large until 1921, when he turned himself in to authorities. He was sentenced to five years imprisonment at Lahore.

The five man commission of inquiry who looked into the cause of Budge Budge massacre blamed Gurdit Singh and the passengers for the tragedy. The commission mentioned that the majority of the passengers killed or wounded were either by the police or the troops. However, the police had not used unnecessary force. The nationalist *Ghadar* leaders termed the commission's report a "white wash" and felt that the inquiry had set out to exonerate the authorities. The government had savagely slaughtered Sikhs. News of the event created strong anti-British reaction in Punjab, Canada and United States.

Ted Ferguson in his book *A White Man's Country*, writes "Canada's treatment of the *Komagata Maru* passengers who apart from the roguish Gurdit Singh, wanted only a chance to prove their worth in a new land should have shamed us into trying to understand and accept Asian immigrants. It did not. We have held onto our prejudice as though it were a cherished heirloom that should be passed from generation to generation, and the same pro-white ideals Canadians embraced in 1914 have once again set the stage for an ugly racial confrontation."

String of Murders

Bela Singh and Harnam Singh were loyal informers of W.C. Hopkinson, who spied on the *Ghadar* nationalists fight for the liberation of India. At the commencement of World War I the Sikh community of British Columbia was split. An overwhelming majority was faithful to the crown. They offered to form a special B.C. Sikh unit to fight along side Canadian soldiers, but the federal government rejected the idea. The *Ghadarites*¹¹ enmity with the British forced them into alliance with the Germans. In the absence of Har Dayal¹² (a Hindu revolutionary) men were being recruited by other *Ghadar* leaders such as Bhagwan Singh Gyani and Professor Mohammed Barkatullah for an armed struggle to liberate India. Hopkinson was anxious to stop this flow. On August 17, 1914, Harnam Singh vanished; his body was found at the end of the

month. Three days after Harnam Singh's body was found, Arjan Singh, another spy of Hopkinson, was accidentally shot dead by a young Sikh Ram Singh, who was later acquitted.

Bela Singh was hurt badly by the death of his two protégées. On September 5, Bela Singh turned up for Arjan Singh's funeral. In the evening about fifty people gathered for the funeral services at the *Gurdwara*. Priest Bhag Singh was reading from the *Guru Granth Sahib* at the altar for twenty minutes. Later Bela entered the *Gurdwara*. Bhag Singh got up and came in front of the altar. He started offering *Ardas* (supplication). Bela shot Bhag Singh twice in the spine when the priest was kneeling forward, then systematically fired into the *Sangat* (congregation). Bhag Singh and Battan Singh were mortally wounded and seven others were shot. These killings enraged the Sikh community. Since the murders took place in the *Gurdwara* premises by Bela, a government agent, it implied that the government was behind Bela's rampage. Bela was arrested. He testified to the coroner's jury that his actions were in self-defence. Hopkinson did not take the stand at the inquest but stated that he was obligated to attest on Bela's behalf.

The trial was slated for October 21. There was concern among the Sikhs that in spite of the obvious guilt of Bela, he would be acquitted. No informer had yet been successfully prosecuted, although informers had been brought to court many times. Hopkinson publicly stated that he intended to give evidence to substantiate Bela's claim that he shot in self-defence. The bare bones of Hopkinson's impending testimony were exposed by the press who said that Hopkinson would state that while disguised as a Sikh, he had heard priest Bhag Singh planning to kill Bela Singh. In the wake of Bhag's death Mewa concluded that Hopkinson had to be stopped from taking the witness stand. Mewa Singh Lopoke volunteered to kill him. Mewa strongly believed Hopkinson and Malcolm Reid were behind the desecration of the sacred *Gurdwara* premises at the hands of Bela. On the morning of Bela's trial, Mewa caught up with Hopkinson in Vancouver court house corridors. When he was within a foot of Hopkinson, Mewa pulled a pair of .32 calibre revolvers and without saying a word he shot him dead. Mewa surrendered quietly.

News of Hopkinson's assassination spread like a wild fire. The enraged public got the fast trial they desired for Mewa. His trial was set for October 30 and lasted just two hours. Mewa offered no defence and the jury deliberated only five minutes before imposing the death penalty. Hussain Rahim, Sohan Lal Pathak¹³, Balwant Singh, and Kartar Singh were charged as co-conspirators. Mewa read the following statement in the court: "All this trouble and all the shooting Mr. Malcolm Reid and Mr. W.C. Hopkinson are responsible for. I shot Mr. Hopkinson out of honour and principle to my fellow country men and for my religion. I could not bear to see these troubles going on any longer. There is no justice issued out by the judges nor the police, not any of them, and that is why I am giving my life to show this matter up. I am a God-fearing man.

I say my prayers for an hour in the morning and half an hour at night. I know my prayers have been accepted and God knows between the right and the wrong. We cannot shut our eyes and let wrong be done."

Mewa was convicted and sentenced to be hanged on January 11, 1915. Anglo and Euro-British Columbian population was still outraged at Hopkinson's death. Retribution against Mewa Singh alone was unsatisfactory. Six of the seven Punjabis arrested following the assassination were released. The seventh, Sohan Lal Pathak, was charged as an accessory to the murder. Subsequently Bela Singh was put on trial for murder. Despite the overt and public nature of his crime, he was acquitted and set free. In the morning of January 11, when Mewa Singh was hanged five hundred Sikhs assembled outside the prison gates, praying in the ceaseless rain. When Mewa's body was brought to them, they formed a procession. With the coffin raised on shoulders they slowly started walking to the cremation ground of Fraser Mills with the accompaniment of beating *dholak* (two sided drum), clashing of cymbals, playing harmonium and hymn singing.

Mewa Singh's courageous action was a classic example of the Sikh tradition of martyrdom. He deeply believed that the very existence of Sikhs and their religion in Canada was threatened, as had been the case when the Muslims ruled India. He was willing to pay the highest price for this cause. The Ross Street Vancouver *Gurdwara* bears Mewa Singh's name and his martyrdom is commemorated annually with a religious service.

On March 18, 1915, Jagat Singh murdered Rattan Singh (a *Ghadar* Party faithful). Bela was alleged to be behind this murder. Still Bela's version was accepted by the court and Jagat was sentenced to hang on August 4. His sentence was reduced to six years. Because of Rattan's death, *Ghadarites* believed that Bela had embarked on a systematic extermination program, surreptitiously financed by government. The *Ghadarite* revolutionaries devised plans to eliminate him. The *Ghadarites* blew up the cottage where Bela was sleeping with ten sticks of dynamite. Bela and six other men escaped, but Mehtab Singh (a friend of Bela's), was killed. Bela was charged for beating a man the day after the bombing. Bela was sentenced to one year by the judge to end the feud ripping the Sikh community apart. In 1916, when Bela was released from prison, he returned to India. His passage was paid by the government, as he was tipped off that *Ghadarite* rebels wanted his scalp. After the end of World War I Bela was rewarded with one hundred and fifty acres of fertile land in the district of Montgomery. He built a large house in his native village of Jain and lived a luxurious life. The British Government of India protected him and provided him with an armed security guard. For eighteen years Bela eluded the *Ghadarites*. His enemies finally tracked him down in May, 1939. One evening on his way back from Hoshiarpur, he was trapped in a ravine outside his village of Jain and chopped to pieces.

Sikh leadership in Vancouver started disintegrating. Teja Singh,

Harnam Singh Sahri, and Bhagwan Singh Gyani had already left. Bhag Singh and Mewa Singh's death was an additional loss. Most of these leaders were closely linked with the *Ghadar* movement, with the exception of Teja Singh.

Surveillance¹⁴

The door to Canada was firmly shut against Sikhs by Canadian authorities in 1908 and by the Americans in 1910. Sikh immigration to the United States was a spill over from Canada. A small community of Sikh workers had been established in the Pacific coast states of United States and British Columbia by 1910. There were six thousand Punjabis in California. These Sikh immigrants faced constant harassment from police and Euro-Americans. A number of students and entrepreneurs from Bengal, Punjab, and other places from India had joined these communities. Most of these men were political activists. They were dedicated freedom fighters who wanted to liberate India from the British rule. The leaders of these communities were under close surveillance.

The British were engaged in political surveillance of Punjabi immigrants on the West Coast from 1908 on. They carried out vigilance either directly, through their own agents, by way of Canadian agents, or via United States officials. By the end of 1913, Indians in San Francisco had organized the *Ghadar* (Mutiny Party) with links in Vancouver, Victoria, and other points. In the first months of the First World War, the *Ghadar* Party leaders tried to stage a rising in Punjab. They encouraged immigrants to return to India and take part in the insurrection. Their efforts were ill organized and attracted little support from the Sikh population in Punjab. However, the ruling British government of India met the threat with severity. This harsh treatment profoundly affected the outlook of the Sikhs toward British.

Canadian immigration officials played a key role in the surveillance of Sikh nationalists in North America. The pioneers were economic immigrants more interested in jobs than politics. Sikhs were lovers of freedom and only fifty years prior to their arrival in Canada they were rulers of Punjab. Therefore it is not surprising that Sikhs were driven closer to *Ghadar* movement activists for the cause of independence. The watchers perceived political activity among Sikhs in North America as a threat to British rule in India. A large number of Sikh immigrants were ex-soldiers or policemen for whom loyalty to the British crown was still an article of faith, though there were a few overt revolutionaries. When they realized that they were under surveillance even though they were far from home, they took a step in the direction of heightened political awareness.

Hopkinson's Role

The refusal of the Honduras scheme in 1908, prompted the first surveillance by Canadian government. This led to the appointment of William Charles Hopkinson for vigilance by the Laurier government. Hopkinson was a Euro-Indian born in Delhi in 1880. From 1904 to 1907 he served as a

sub-inspector of police in Calcutta. In 1908, he appeared in Vancouver and was engaged in investigative work. For part of the time he went under the alias of Narain Singh, bearing a turban and a fake beard. It is possible he may have been sent to Canada by the British to watch over the radical students. He was employed as a Canadian immigration inspector in Vancouver from 1909 until 1914, though his main responsibility was police work for the British Government of India. Deputy Minister of Labour, Mackenzie King, while conducting a Royal Commission inquiry into oriental immigration, interviewed Hopkinson. King was impressed with the information supplied by Hopkinson and he concluded that Sikh immigration had to be controlled. Mr. J.B. Harkin, private secretary to the minister of interior employed Hopkinson in November 1908 as secretary and interpreter to investigate Indian labour conditions in British Honduras. He uncovered the presence of Indian nationalists on the Pacific coast and obtained special permission to investigate. He established an elaborate surveillance network within the Sikh community and watched their activities on both sides of the Canada-U.S. border. He also provided United States authorities with information on suspects entering the United States.

Brigadier General Eric Swayne, Governor of British Honduras, in his confidential report, recommended Hopkinson's appointment as a Dominion police inspector to keep watch on Sikh activists. He received an offer for the job from the Deputy Minister of Interior in January 1909. In late 1909, he secretly was placed on the Northwest Mounted Police payroll. Governor General Earl Grey saw imperial interests at stake. He kept a close watch and wanted the government to act circumspectly. He was outraged by evidence that Sikh nationalists were working against British interests. He counselled restraint in dealing with them and demanded quiet vigilance.

Hopkinson's new task was to keep watch on the Sikh community and report regularly to the Department. Only in his spare time would he be assigned ordinary immigration work. Most of the time he worked independently. He concentrated on the nationalist leaders, collected their publications, recorded their public utterances, monitored and intercepted their mail, and assiduously kept track of their comings and goings. He sent weekly reports to the deputy minister, who forwarded a copy to Governor General Earl Grey. Grey met Hopkinson in Vancouver in August 1909, and spent an hour and a half with him. Soon Hopkinson was asked to send three copies of the reports to Grey, one for himself, one for the British government and one for the director of military intelligence in Ottawa. This material found its way into the files of the Criminal Intelligence Office in India and to the Viceroy. Whenever Hopkinson wanted information he had direct access to the resources of the governor general's Office. The British ambassador in Japan provided a background of Rahim's activities in Kobe. Similarly, Scotland Yard watched activities of Teja Singh in England.

Others watched by Hopkinson included: Balwant Singh, priest of Vancouver

Gurdwara; Bhag Singh president of the *Gurdwara*; Dr. Sundar Singh, editor of the *Aryan*, in Victoria; and a number of students who were enrolled in American colleges. The two prominent revolutionaries apart from the many Sikhs he investigated were Taraknath Das and Har Dayal. They attempted to organize Sikh dissent against British rule in India. Hopkinson was convinced that nationalist students were the real cause of unrest among loyal Sikhs.

For the most part Hopkinson was confined to Vancouver and Victoria. In February 1910 he identified Seattle as the headquarters of revolutionary activity. There Taraknath Das and his associates operated without fear of arrest. After June 1911, Hopkinson's field of inquiry expanded. The British suspected that during the Royal Durbar visit of King George V, Taraknath Das was planning disturbances in India. On Governor General Earl Grey's intervention, Hopkinson was allowed to investigate across the border in Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Berkeley and Stockton. There was a concentration of Sikhs in these cities. During this nineteen day tour of Pacific coast, he found out from immigration sources in Seattle and San Francisco that Indian students from Berkeley and Stanford campuses were heavily involved in revolutionary activity. He skimmed through the clippings files of the Asiatic Exclusion League. To the surprise of Hopkinson, the British Consul General in San Francisco was unaware of these activities right under their noses. Berkeley campus was a hot-bed of the Indian liberation movement.

Hopkinson received permission for another trip to cross the border into United States in November 1912. He was alerted to the presence of revolutionary Har Dayal who was connected with the bomb thrown at the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, in New Delhi on December 23. Hopkinson was able to censor Har Dayal's incoming and outgoing mail and infiltrated his circle of friends. He was sent to London to personally report to the India Office (British Indian government in London) on Har Dayal's activities. He also reviewed the situation in Punjabi settlements in North America. He started reporting directly to the British Indian government in London as well as to the deputy minister of the interior in Ottawa. Har Dayal later left the United States on his own for Switzerland.

The British considered the *Ghadar* Party so dangerous that they set out covertly to destroy it, even though it operated quite legally in the United States. Hopkinson convinced Prime Minister Borden to ban the *Ghadar* paper from the Canadian mails. British authorities had reasons to fear the *Ghadar* Party, since it had support among rank-and-file Sikhs. They had been politically awakened by their harsh treatment in North America.

Hopkinson's sphere of influence started to increase. The newly appointed governor general, the Duke of Connaught, urged a new arrangement. He described Hopkinson as a valuable officer doing work "of very considerable importance." He concluded too much rested on the shoulders of one person; if anything ever happened to Hopkinson, the intelligence system would collapse.

Also it was possible for members of the House of Commons to discover Hopkinson's expenditures. The Duke of Connaught was in favour of transferring Hopkinson permanently to the service of the British Indian government.

On August 14, 1914, Britain declared war on Germany. On the Pacific coast the *Ghadar* revolutionaries were promoting a general return of Sikh activist immigrants to take up arms against the British. With Hopkinson at the centre, the India Office and the Canadian Department of Interior had set up a reporting system. Hopkinson telegraphed lists of departures from San Francisco to the director general of Criminal Intelligence in Delhi. Meanwhile the British relied chiefly upon their war time internal security system for protection against returning Sikhs. The government planted undercover agents, opened all mail coming into India, and confiscated papers of the *Ghadar* Party. Persons carrying arms or suspicious of revolutionary activities were arrested. A number of active members of the *Ghadar* Party were subsequently arrested upon arrival in India.

The British Secretary of State for India did not consider a replacement for Hopkinson after his death. He thought the Canadian immigration department should no longer be involved in surveillance of political activity of Sikh immigrants. However, it was requested that Canadian officials pass on any information that came their way. The Canadian authorities somehow would replace Hopkinson's role. It was later discovered that the India office did keep Robert Nathan a retired top civil servant as an undercover agent. He had a budget for paid informants and messages were relayed through the governor general's office. Nathan received extensive assistance in Canada. The mail continued to be censored and this practice lasted until December 1919. Nathan was in close contact with Malcolm Reid, the former Immigration Agent. Malcolm Reid found a new function by picking up pieces of investigative work left unattended by Hopkinson's death. His investigative role developed and he continued to send material through the Vancouver immigration office. Hopkinson's Punjabi informants still turned up at the door of the immigration building. By 1916, Malcolm Reid was acting as Pacific coast agent for the Dominion Commissioner of Police and the government's press censorship service, as well as maintaining his liaison with Nathan. In this way, Malcolm Reid became the key intelligence figure in British Columbia. In 1918, the Royal Canadian North-West Mounted Police took over the security work from the Dominion Police in western Canada. The Mounties refused to employ Malcolm Reid, but as immigration officer, Malcolm Reid continued his surveillance function with British intelligence until his death in May 1936.

Arrest and Execution of Nationalists

The *Ghadar* Party sent Balwant Singh (1882-1916) to Bangkok. The plan was to use independent Siam to smuggle arms into India. Sohan Lal Pathak left Vancouver on a similar mission to Burma where he aligned himself with the principal *Ghadar* organizers, Harnam Singh Sahri and Santokh Singh. In 1915,

under *Ghadar* organization, an estimated 3,125 Punjabis from the United States, Canada, as well as other parts of the world poured into Punjab to liberate India. Many of the *Ghadar's* liberation plans met with disaster however. German efforts to supply ship loads of arms and ammunition had been bungled.

The British relentlessly and harshly extinguished every revolutionary blaze the *Ghadarites* lit. The *Ghadarite* Sikhs neither carried arms to India nor they were organized. The role of some were to turn Sikh soldiers to mutiny; others would damage property or blow up railroad tracks. When they arrived by ships they were boarded on trains for Punjab. On reaching Punjab, they were surrounded by troops, and were either locked up or confined to their villages. Balwant Singh and four other organizers were arrested in Siam, and handed over to the British. They were then deported to Singapore. Sohan Lal Pathak and Harnam Singh Sahri were captured spreading *Ghadarite* propaganda among the Indian regiments stationed in Rangoon (Burma). Sohan Lal Pathak was kept in jail for a year and then hanged in February, 1916. Revolutionaries, Jagat Singh and Kasim Mansoor, were tried and hanged. In Singapore, twenty-seven mutineer soldiers were sentenced to death and executed. Harnam Singh Sahri was held until 1916, when he was tried in the Mandalay Conspiracy Case (Burma) where he and six other *Ghadarites* were hanged. By August, 1915 most of the *Ghadar* leaders were in jail in India or Burma. At the 1915 trial in Lahore (Punjab), the tribunal sentenced twenty-four men to death, although only six were convicted of capital offenses. The Viceroy commuted the sentences of the other eighteen. Altogether, one hundred seventy-three men were tried in Lahore and Mandalay in connection with the *Ghadar* conspiracy, twenty-three were hanged, and eighty-eight received life sentences. Hopkinson's evidence was used in the trials of Balwant Singh, and Harnam Singh Sahri. Hopkinson's informants, particularly Bela Singh and Dr. Raghunath Singh were the main witnesses used to hang Balwant Singh.

Nathan's intelligence work became instrumental in launching proceedings by American government against German-Americans and seventeen *Ghadar* party leaders after the U.S. entered the war in 1917. All seventeen *Ghadarites* were convicted. The surveillance undertaken by Hopkinson and Malcolm Reid profoundly effected the expatriate Punjabi community on the Pacific coast. The police made inquiries into *Ghadarite* families in Punjab. Sikhs knew Hopkinson was responsible for these investigations. He was a personal manifestation of British oppression. The harsh treatment of the *Ghadar* Party members generated resentment among the Sikhs. The failure of India to rise in revolt forced nationalist students to search for allies elsewhere.

Out of the original revolutionary leadership of Vancouver only Mit Singh Pandori, Hussain Rahim, and Dr. Sundar Singh remained in Canada by 1917. With the removal of most of the revolutionaries from the scene, a degree of stability prevailed within the Sikh community in British Columbia. Government

spying lessened with Hopkinson's death. Canada's entry into the war distracted the government's high profile issue of Sikh immigration to a subordinate role.

4. The Quiet Years

'The Quiet Years' generally refers to the period between 1919-1947 in Canadian Sikh history. After the departure of the *Komagata Maru* in 1914, the next fifty years of Sikh history in Canada are relatively uneventful. During this period the Sikh population dwindled in size and gradually adjusted to a new culture. In this period some forms of racism persisted and Sikhs continued to fight against the immigration ban and racial discrimination. They eventually won equal rights to vote as Canadian citizens and the right to bring their families to Canada.

Dwindling Numbers

The immigration ban left Vancouver's Sikh community virtually isolated from the rest of the Sikh world. In such a situation a number of possibilities were open to the Sikhs. They could have either given up and left Canada in search of greener pastures, or remained as an isolated, predominantly-male community carrying on a bachelor-like existence. Or they could have assimilated through inter-marriage with the western society. Quite a few chose the first alternative and left. Some, however, remained and stayed as an isolated community as inter-marriage with the Anglo or Euro-Canadians was not acceptable to them.

It is hard to tell how many Sikhs left British Columbia during those quiet decades but it seems clear that some did go to the United States, while others went back to Punjab or elsewhere. The population dropped from its peak of six thousand around the First World War to about one thousand one hundred just before the Second World War. Yet, in spite of the fall in numbers, those who did remain apparently retained *kakkar* (Sikh symbols) and these, along with their brown skin, contributed towards maintaining a fairly high level of visibility. British Columbia was comparatively prosperous between 1920 to 1928, however anti-Asiatic feeling continued to prevail. Government policy was directed at diminishing the economic spheres of Sikhs and they suffered from the hostile

atmosphere. In the 1930s and 1940s Sikh fuel delivery truckers were a common sight in Vancouver until oil fuel largely replaced sawdust as domestic heating fuel. This visibility exposed the Sikhs to open forms of bias. They were called names like "raghead" and people in trams would not sit beside them. They were not allowed to attend picture shows in their native dress.

Impact of Outside Influences

At the London Imperial conference of 1921, Canada was admonished for the restrictions imposed on Sikhs. A resolution was passed affirming the right of South Asians to vote in the Dominion. Prime Minister Meighen was present and he agreed to endorse the resolution in Parliament. He was subsequently defeated at the polls and Mackenzie King became the prime minister. Though the issue was still alive, discrimination lessened by August-1922. There was very little hostility towards Sikh children by their schoolmates and social interaction with Canadians increased. Some Euro-Canadians started visiting *Gurdwaras* during major celebrations. The Sikhs were not considered a threat any more.

The *Khalsa Diwan Society* remained the strongest Sikh community organization. After the *Ghadar* revolt most of the *Ghadar* leaders had moved to the United States or returned to Punjab, and as a result, the Vancouver Sikh community emerged more homogenous.

In 1919, the British Indian Government continued suppressing the Sikhs in Punjab. The individuals suspected of participating in the *Ghadar* revolt were prosecuted, convicted, imprisoned or hanged. On April 13, 1919, General Dyer fired without warning on several thousand unarmed Punjabis gathered in the Jallianwala Bagh, walled public square, in Amritsar. Over three hundred fifty people were killed, the majority of whom were Sikhs. The Jallianwala massacre sent shock waves to the Sikh communities all over the world. The remnants of the *Ghadar* Party in California got a boost in their attempt to regroup. The Sikh community in Vancouver raised \$13,000.00 to support the families of victims as well as those who went back to India in 1914-15. Before 1921 the *Khalsa Diwan Society* had subscribed \$295,000.00 for various Sikh social and political causes.

By 1925, the *Khalsa Diwan Society* had autonomous branches in Vancouver, Abbotsford, New Westminster, Golden, Victoria, Duncan, Coombs, and Ocean Falls. They all financially supported *Ghadar*—led Indian independence movement throughout the 1920s. Spying and mail-opening resumed. The Canadian government continued to forward information about activities of Canadian Sikhs to the secretary of state for the Colonies in Britain. The surveillance of Sikhs intensified during 1926-27 as a result of the *Sikh Akali* movement in Punjab whose objective was to reclaim Sikh control of Sikh religious institutions.

The annexation of Punjab by Britain in 1849 was followed by a disbanding of the *Khalsa* army (Ranjit Singh's army), along with religious and political suppression. The British did maintain respect for the religious sensibilities of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. They knew full well that the centers of Sikh strength and inspiration were the scriptures and *Gurdwaras*. The British, therefore, made sure that Sikh *Gurdwaras* were kept in the hands of Hindu *Mahants* (managers). The *Sikh Gurdwara Prabandak Committee* (SGPC) was formed in 1920, at Amritsar. The Sikhs came into open clashes with the British Indian government, first for the liberation of their shrines, and then for the liberation of the motherland. For the Sikh, the freedom of his religion and the freedom of motherland are synonymous. They decided to free the *Gurdwaras* from the stranglehold of the British nominated *Mahants* who enjoyed British patronage. In this struggle many Sikhs were killed and imprisoned. By 1922 however, most *Gurdwaras* were secured by SGPC.

Canadian Sikhs were strongly affected by these events. The financial contribution from Canadian Sikhs continued to flow towards the *Gurdwara* reform movement in Punjab in 1921. Funds were also sent to set up schools in Punjab where Sikh children could get education outside of British influence. In 1924, a *Jatha* (organized Sikh group) of eleven Sikhs from Canada led by Mit Singh Pandori (one of the pioneers) joined the reform movement in Punjab. He carried with him at least \$5,000.00 for their assistance. Mit Singh was later arrested, tried and jailed along with many Akali leaders.

In 1924, British officials arrested all communist leaders in India. They were tried for conspiracy, which effectively silenced the movement. Britain sent Sikh troops to Shanghai when Sun Yat Sen threatened British interests there in 1926. The Akalis disapproved of the dispatch of Sikh troops to China and offered to support the Chinese struggle for independence. The British believed that Sikhs were raising funds on the west coast of Canada to support a revolution in China. Chiang Kai-shek turned on his former allies and saved Shanghai for Britain. By 1930 however, most of the Sikh concerns were with Canada rather than India. The presence of the families of Canadian Sikhs assisted them to set the pattern of Canadian ethnic mosaic which helped guarantee their survival.

The Depression

In the early years of 1930-1932 Depression, Sikhs lost over 500 jobs in British Columbia. The average wage dropped by twenty per cent. Unemployed Sikhs found it difficult to get work because Euro-Canadian job seekers were now prepared to accept Punjabi pay scales. The reputation of Sikhs as hard workers meant, however, that the Chinese and Japanese were let go before them. Sikh entrepreneurs suffered too. The Sikh-owned Mayo Lumber Company's mill burned in 1933 and was not rebuilt for two years. Small farmers curtailed their operations to virtually a subsistence level. Between 1934 to 1937 even with the

improvement in economy Sikhs were less successful than Euro-Canadians in regaining jobs. Some supported themselves in the fuel businesses, delivering firewood, coal, and sawdust, or in other small business.

An extensive system of mutual aid among Sikhs helped them survive the Depression during the 1930s. Sick and old members of the community were an additional burden. Sikhs continued to live together in camps. Most men lived in workers barracks, where conditions were poor. Sikhs maintained a cookhouse for themselves and generally hired a full time cook. Visitors were fed without charge for a week. A Sikh was never found in a soup kitchen line up; they considered it too humiliating, even if they were poor. In spite of these hardships they never went on unemployment assistance and, despite economic hard times, Sikhs pursued their fight for the removal of restrictions on their rights, the ability to vote, and the immigration ban.

Illegal Immigration

The Canadian Sikhs formed a broad coalition to fight deportation of illegal Sikh immigrants once that issue received greater attention. The unjustness of the continuous passage laws allowed the Sikhs to beat the system. The Depression made immigration more difficult. The Canadian government enacted additional restrictive immigration regulations. The landing of all Sikhs with the exception of wives and dependents was stopped.

Sikhs used such deceptions as making false applications claiming the individuals were their sons. They also continued to smuggle immigrants across the United States border. Canadian Sikhs also brought a few immigrants by acquiring false Indian papers saying that they were their relatives. The government further tightened the regulations. There were about three hundred illegal Sikh immigrants in British Columbia by 1937. Because of a passport fraud, the *Khalsa Diwan Society* raised funds and engaged a lawyer to deal with possible repercussions. Sikh industrialists Kapur Singh Sidhu and Mayo Singh were the principal contributors.

In 1938, Dr. Anup Singh Dhillon, an American Sikh with a doctorate in political science from Harvard, was enlisted by Kapur and Mayo to intervene with the Canadian authorities on behalf of the illegal immigrants. He was sent to Ottawa accompanied by Dr. Sadhu Singh Dhami. They briefly conversed with immigration authorities. In collaboration with American counterparts, the immigration authorities attempted to deport Anup Singh. Although released, he was removed from the Canadian scene. The community fought for fifty illegal immigrants with the assistance of D.P. Pandia. Since the Canadian government was negotiating with India for a preferential trade agreement, the government agreed not to deport anymore illegal Sikh immigrants. When the deadline for registration approached on January 31, 1940, two hundred twenty-four Sikhs enrolled instead of the fifty-nine originally reported by the community. They were permitted to stay on the condition that they could not apply to bring their

families. With the intervention of Lester Pearson these individuals were granted passports.

The Vote

Without the right to vote the Sikhs could not attain legal equality with Canadians of Anglo ancestry. The acquirement of franchise would be a convincing ground in overturning the continuous passage rule. Several factors helped to mature the case for the vote. By 1935, there were about three hundred Canadian-born Sikh children and several hundred immigrated children. The provincial CCF supported the Sikh vote issue. The liberalization by unions of racial policies, the active involvement of International Workers of America and the changing status of India towards independence was also a contributing factor.

In March 1943, the *Khalsa Diwan Society* sent a twelve man delegation to argue with B.C. Premier Hart for the vote. They brought with them the district president of the International Wood Workers of America (IWA), Harold Pritchert, who was a CCF member. Many Sikhs enrolled as members of the IWA which provided tangible evidence of the Sikhs commitment to Canada. Similarly the Sikh community also contributed to several hundred thousand dollars worth of war bonds. But Hart refused to act until the war ended. During World War II, the Sikhs also opposed the draft stating that a country which does not allow some of their citizens to vote could not ethically ask them to fight. The Sikh community kept up the pressure in 1943 and received strong support for the no vote no war policy from Elmore Philpott of *Vancouver News Herald*. Most Sikhs were willing to serve if the vote issue could be resolved. In early 1940, several Sikhs enlisted under surnames that appeared to be from Canadians of European ancestry.

Despite this, the Sikhs enjoyed a partial freedom from the pressures in the course of the Second World War. Probably there were too few of them to justify the formation of special units. Perhaps they were excused from compulsory military service because one hundred thousand Sikh soldiers fought along side British and Canadian soldiers on all fronts with exceptional gallantry and loyalty. A few hundred recruits from Canada would presumably not have made any difference.

Basic legal restrictions against Sikhs persisted until 1947. Sikhs continued the opposition. The *Khalsa Diwan Society* endeavoured to solicit greater public support for their cause by publicizing the kind of contribution Sikhs were making towards the war effort. A couple of *Khalsa Diwan Society* representatives visited all the Sikh communities in British Columbia. They collected information on their occupations, living standards, family composition, and their participation in the war effort. A united front was attempted with the Chinese who were also pressing for the vote. The CCF continued to provide the assistance both in legislature and media. In 1945, the Japanese, Chinese, Sikhs, and Native Canadians who served in World War II were granted provincial vote. The fact

that Sikh troops had served in World War II, had an important impact on public relations. Some members of the Sikh community also met with British Columbia's Election Committee which was sympathetic. The Committee agreed to recommend the necessary changes in the voting laws. The changes were unanimously passed by the province on April 2, 1947, which in turn, automatically brought the federal vote and ended legal restrictions on Sikhs. After fifty years, restrictions withdrawn and the jobs available, Sikhs finally achieved the rights most British subjects enjoyed on arrival.

Migration Pattern to 1947¹

The Sikh migration to Canada began in Hong Kong. They might have come and gone without observation. When substantial numbers followed directly from Punjab Sikhs became conspicuous. According to statistics thirty Punjabis arrived in 1903. They were followed by forty-five in 1904-1905; three hundred eighty-seven in 1905-1906; 2,124 in 1906-1907; and 2,623 during 1907-1908. In November 1906, over forty per cent of these immigrants reached Vancouver in contingents of six hundred ninety-six on the *Tartar*. In September 1907, nine hundred and one on the *Monteagle* and in October 1907, five hundred forty-seven on the *Tartar*.

Sikhs started arriving in British Columbia in the early years of an unprecedented economic boom that lasted until 1913 with only a one year break. The boom gathered force in 1903, when government commenced the construction of two transcontinental railway lines. The settlements expanded in the prairies with the development of the mining regions and forest industry of British Columbia. Between 1901 and 1911, the population of British Columbia increased by 120 per cent. The Sikhs enjoyed unrestricted access into Canada during 1903-1908.

On the eve of World War First in 1913, an American recession hit British Columbia. In the autumn of 1914, about half of the Sikhs left the province for Punjab. Similar movements occurred on the Pacific coast states of Washington, Oregon and California. In 1915, there remained 1,099 Punjabis in British Columbia. In 1918, out of a total population of a little over seven hundred, there were only five hundred sixty-seven Sikhs employed in British Columbia. According to 1921 census there were only 951 Punjabis in the province. In 1923 the Punjabi wage earners rose to 1,151.

Some Sikhs chose to go back to Punjab. The first two years of the Second World War generated no new opportunities. By 1941 there were hardly seven hundred Sikhs left in the province. The fluctuation in the numbers of Sikhs employed in British Columbia suggests a constant movement between Canada and Punjab during the passage of three decades. Immigration figures do not reveal the reasons. There is evidence of considerable travel to and from Punjab as early as 1911-1914. Nearly three hundred Sikhs left for Punjab in 1911 alone. Between 1930 and 1932, over one hundred men applied to bring in sons they

claimed were conceived in the course of visits home seventeen or eighteen years earlier. Many Sikhs raised their families in Punjab while working in Canada. Some went home frequently and births of their children were spread over number of years.

There were almost no Sikh women among the pioneers in British Columbia. There were only three women out of a population of 2,292 Punjabis as per the 1911 census. In the beginning the attraction was work, not life in Canada and men had no incentive to bring families. The immigration ban of 1908 equally applied to wives and children; consequently men could not bring their families for the next eleven years. In 1911, the Sikhs mounted a campaign for admission of their families. The secretary of state for India, however, pushed the Canadian government to make some concession. It was pointed that the issue was doing damage to the morale of Sikh troops. In 1918, after three years of negotiation, the government agreed to admit the wives and minor children (under eighteen) of Sikh immigrants legally resident in Canada. The new laws came into force in 1919. In the next twelve years up to March 31, 1931, however, only one hundred seventy-two women immigrated. During the Depression years up to March 31, 1941 only sixty-nine arrived.

Maintaining a family in Canada became more expensive than in Punjab. The social environment in British Columbia continued to be hostile. Between 1919 and 1941, four hundred thirty-one Sikh children and one hundred thirty-five men immigrated. Most of them were boys between sixteen or seventeen years old. The majority of men did not bring their wives. Men had accepted separation as the price of employment in Canada. The 1941 census identified 1,465 Sikhs in Canada, which included four hundred twenty-four Canadian born children, of whom three hundred fifty-six were born in British Columbia. Most of the pioneers had been between eighteen and thirty years in 1908, and around 1940 they were in their fifties or early sixties. The oldest were in their eighties. Although some men married considerably younger women, it is still evident that few pioneers lived a married life in Canada and most of the families were those of younger men.

Over half of the Sikh women who immigrated before 1950, arrived between 1924 to spring of 1931. Their child-bearing years were concentrated between 1930 and 1942. Most of their children reached school age after 1939. Some went to high school but the majority did not. The number of Sikh children attending schools increased steadily until 1948, when six hundred forty-four were enrolled. The first generation of Canadian-born Sikh children reached marriageable age only in the 1950s.

5. Post World War II

Changed Conditions

The end of World War II signalled the liberation of South East Asia. Within five years the new states of India, Pakistan, and Ceylon attained independence. Canada came out of the war freer of British influence than before. It became a major industrial nation and pursued a more active and independent foreign policy. For international credibility Canada had to change significantly her racial policies. Indian independence factor helped change the Canadian outlook.

After 1947, the Canadian government modified the immigration policy and established an annual immigration quota in 1951. Additional increase was allowed in 1957. Points system was introduced in 1962, and Canada opened its doors wider than ever on merit basis in 1967. British Columbia remained the heartland of Sikh Canadian life during the 1950s. Canadians outside of British Columbia had very little experience with the Sikhs prior to 1960 though they had been in Canada since 1903. Sikh immigrants who came to Canada after 1960 were very fortunate. The conditions in Canada had changed significantly. The pioneers had to go through a great deal of struggle. Canadians were now more accommodating and friendlier. The Sikhs who arrived after the 1960s did not face the kind of hostility that the pioneers endured.

By the 1960s Sikh stereotypes in British Columbia had generally disappeared. Majority of people were unaware of the conflict which had arisen almost sixty years ago. Sikh immigrants were now able to settle without racial bias and discrimination. Sikh settlement went smoothly throughout the 1960s. Verbal abuse was rare and racially incited physical violence against Sikhs was virtually unheard of. Relations with police were also good. Concern over prejudice and discrimination focused on cultural practices, the fairness of hiring, and promotion and access to rental accommodation.

Sikhs used all available options to sponsor their relatives. They were able to significantly broaden their background that made a difference which enabled them to bring additional members of their community into Canada. In India they maintained their traditions of resourcefulness and were dispersed throughout the economy. Their hard work and success with cash-crop agriculture provided them with the resources to become better educated and skilled. Therefore during the 1960s and 1970s, when the immigration authorities' emphasis was on professional-class immigrants, the Sikhs were able to maintain the same quantity of immigrants. No doubt prior to 1960 it had been the labour class they had sponsored.

Economic Support

In the 1970s the occupational diversity of Sikhs had transformed to satisfy requirements of immigration preferences which remained inclined towards professionals, managers, and skilled white-collar workers. Despite cultural differences the new Sikh immigrants when they settled outside of British Columbia, have been able to make a good start relatively promptly through a combination of hard work and cultural flexibility without the benefit of sixty years of community's experience.

Sikhs still continue to provide economic assistance to their close relatives or dependents in Punjab as the pioneers did ninety years ago in terms of cash remittance. These remittances have transformed the economic circumstances of whole villages in the Punjab. In many Punjab villages community projects have been undertaken using money contributed by Sikhs from Canada, United States, and Britain, along with the voluntary co-operative labour of the villagers. It has resulted in building or extending schools, constructing paved roads to the villages, building hospitals, and health centres, community halls, *Gurdwaras*, and so on. The remarkable economic progress of the Punjab state can be equally ascribed to the building of the Bhakra Hydro-electric Dam by providing electricity and water to most of the state. The development of high-yielding strains of wheat along with the inflow of earned wealth from Sikh immigrants made Punjab prosperous and created the green revolution. Sikhs continue to visit their parents and relatives in Punjab and who reciprocate with visits to Canada. This constant exchange of Sikh population that has been maintained for nearly a century injected new blood and helped them to hold onto Sikh traditional values.

Sikh Immigration After 1947¹

After negotiations with the Republic of India the Canadian government amended its immigration laws in 1951. The new regulations instituted a quota of one hundred fifty citizens a year from India. It did not include the husbands, wives, and unmarried children under twenty-one of Canadian citizens of Indian origin, these were admissible without quota restrictions. Independent immigrants

unrelated to Canadian citizens could enter under the quota as well as the admission of fiancées and relatives formerly excluded. In 1957, this quota was increased to three hundred. The Canadian government preferred professional, independent immigrants which were more acceptable and easy to integrate than the admission of general labourers as relatives of Canadian Sikh citizens. The Canadian Sikhs applied far more frequently for the immigration of brothers than for wives, of sons than for daughters. From 1951 to the end of 1956 two thirds of the quota went to sponsored relatives rather than to independent immigrants and their dependents. Prior to 1957, the Canadian Sikhs monopolized the quota, in spite of considerable activity in the immigration office in Delhi. The quota admitted many men destined for the general labour force, and comparatively few professionals. Only ten per cent of the quota places went to professionals since one in six of these professionals was a Sikh. Of the Indian immigrants who entered Canada during 1953 through 1959, less than three-quarters came from India, fourteen per cent came from the United Kingdom, and the rest came from Pakistan, Ceylon, and West Indies. In the 1950s more Sikh professionals came from these other countries than from India, and few professionals from India were Sikhs. Sikhs continued to go to British Columbia, while Ontario and Québec absorbed most of the other South Asian immigrants. The 1961 census reflected the continuous imbalance between the sexes among the Sikhs. "The dominant element in the adult population, numerically and politically, was the India born. This was the case and had been the case, although the community was sixty years old," says Dr. Hugh Johnston in the article "Patterns of Sikh Migration to Canada, 1900-1960."

In 1949, the Sikh community lobbied for the right to bring in fiancées, and from 1951 on they were able to do so. Toward the early 1950s through the sponsorship system the Canadian Sikh community still attracted the bulk of the immigration. More Sikh families came than before. Brides and grooms were brought out for partners with Canadian-born Sikhs. Only sixteen brides and fourteen grooms had reached Canada by the end of 1955. The formation of second generation Sikh families was only partially under way by the mid-1950s. They mainly headed for unskilled or semi-skilled jobs in the lumber and fuel industry. By the mid 1950s most immigrants from India travelled by air. Since the air route was via Europe, Montréal and Toronto, immigrants started searching for work in Montréal and Toronto before going to British Columbia. Britain was open to all Commonwealth citizens until 1962. It became a stop on the route from India to Canada, and many Sikhs remained in Great Britain.

By 1961, the influential members of the Sikh community were immigrants of the post war era. The Canadian-born element was young, and there were sixteen males for every ten females. During the 1950s the first generation of Canadian-born Sikh children started reaching marriageable age. Most marriages were arranged and eighty per cent arranged in Punjab. Between 1961 and 1976 Canada's Punjabi origin population rose about twenty times. This growth was

as a result of Canada's modified immigration law. The numbers of sponsorable relatives had increased while the quota system dropped in 1962. Sikhs were placed on the same footing with other citizens of Canada, and in 1967, were able to sponsor relatives.

In the 1950s, Sikhs in Britain rushed to bring in wives, children, brothers, sisters, parents, and other relatives, while they could. Many Sikhs considered moving to Canada. The changed Canadian laws particularly after 1967 made it possible. Three-quarters of the Punjabi immigrants from Britain were Sikhs. Sikhs also formed ten per cent of Punjabis coming from East Africa. Upon arrival in Canada many Sikhs moved to Toronto, Montréal, Calgary, Edmonton, and Winnipeg. Nearly 4,500 refugees were airlifted from Uganda in the autumn of 1972, and although the majority were Muslims a few hundred Sikhs also arrived with them. During 1972-1976 Sikhs also immigrated from Kenya and Tanzania.

The Sikh population of Greater Vancouver and Metropolitan Toronto rose to 30,000 each in early 1970s. It increased to more than 50,000 each around late 1970s, although figures are hard to establish as compared to 5,000 in the early 1950s and 10,000 in the late 1950s. The unrest in Punjab in the early 1980s and the suppression of Sikhs by the Government of India forced several thousand Sikh refugees to take shelter in Canada as illegal immigrants, which received considerable attention in the media.

The Sikh population of Metropolitan Toronto and Greater Vancouver peaked significantly by late 1980s, and it virtually reached over the 100,000 mark, although actual figures are hard to establish. Cities like Montréal, Calgary, Edmonton, and Winnipeg reached populations close to 15,000, 15,000, 15,000, and 10,000 respectively. In 1987, a shipload of one hundred seventy-four Sikh refugees landed in Halifax and this was highly publicized by the media.

Sikh Population Distribution in Canada

At present about 300,000 Sikhs call Canada their home. They are concentrated in cities across Canada as well as on farms in British Columbia and Ontario. Major concentrations, approximately 100,000 strong, are located in both Greater Vancouver and in Metropolitan Toronto. The rest are spread out in various communities across Canada. These communities have experienced rapid growth since the 1970s. Canadian Sikhs have settled wherever work was available in an urban context. They strongly prefer living in cities. Relatively large Sikh populations can be found in cities of any size from Vancouver to Halifax.

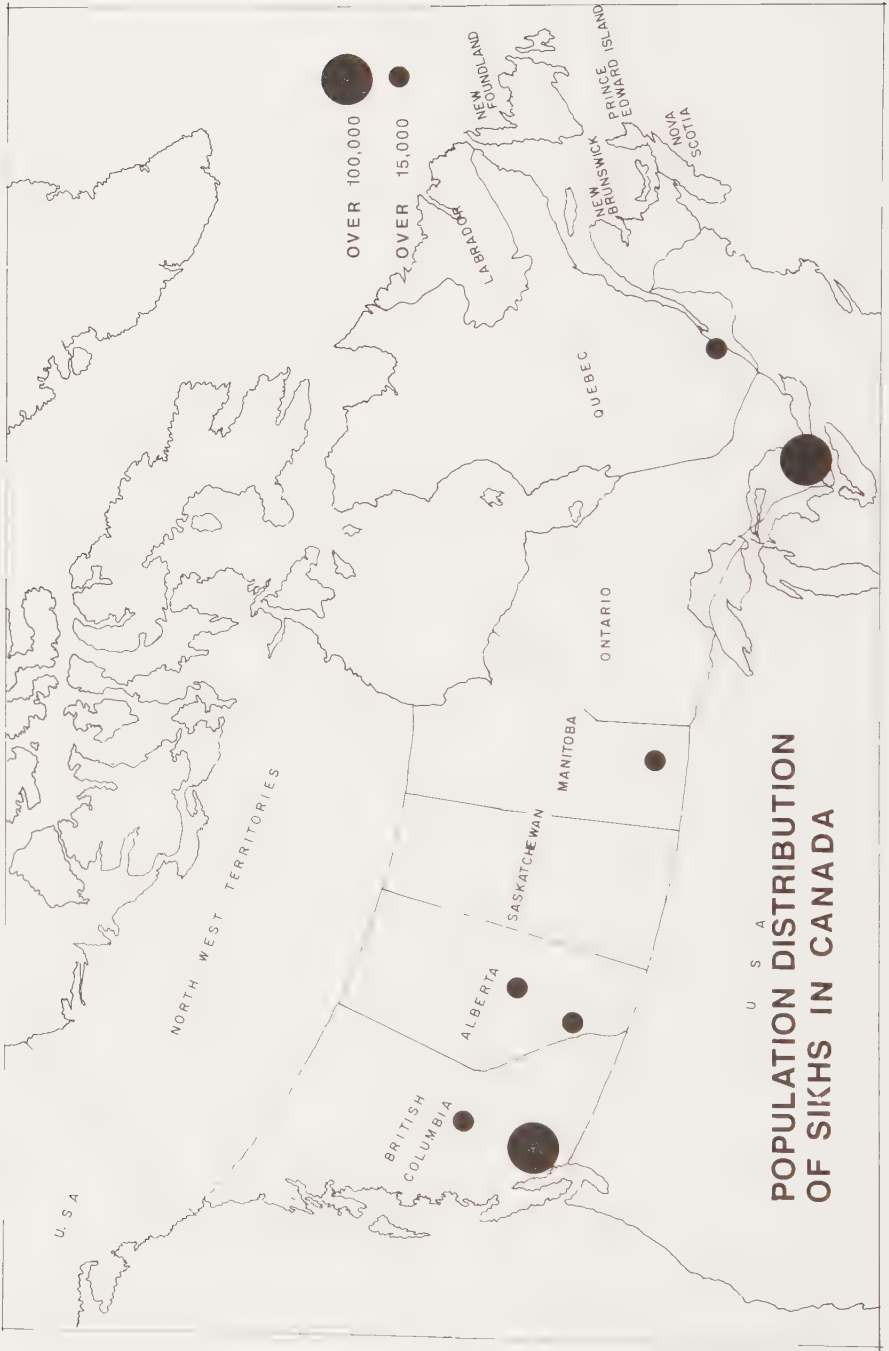
Geographical distribution can be generalized only in the absence of accurate statistics. The Statistics Canada data until the last census of 1984 only refers to East Indians and does not differentiate between Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims. In British Columbia, the population is concentrated in Greater Vancouver adjacent to the lower mainland. Sizeable Sikh population centres are also located on

Vancouver Island. Sikhs are spread over several cities across the interior of British Columbia, such as Kamloops, Kelowna and Prince George. In Alberta, it is Edmonton and Calgary. In Saskatchewan, it is Regina and Saskatoon. In Manitoba it is Winnipeg. In Québec, Sikhs are primarily concentrated in the industrial sector of Metropolitan Montréal and are part of the anglophone minority. The Maritime Sikh population is located in Halifax, Charlottetown and Saint John. Sizeable Ontario population centres are in Hamilton, Oxford, Kitchener, Guelph, London, St. Catherine, Windsor, Oshawa, Whitby, Belleville, Kingston and Ottawa, though major Sikh population is concentrated in Metropolitan Toronto.

Global Distribution of Sikhs

Modern Punjab is one of the richest states in India with the highest yield of all major crops, the longest life expectancy, the highest agricultural wages, and the best road and railway network. The numerical Sikh majority within Punjab is of recent origin. Prior to partition of Punjab between India and Pakistan in 1947, Sikhs were the third largest religious community in the Punjab. In 1911, Sikhs composed only twelve per cent of the population as compared to thirty-five per cent Hindus and fifty-one per cent Muslims. In 1961, Sikhs formed thirty-three per cent of the population of Indian Punjab, and in 1966, they constituted sixty per cent. The Sikhs became a majority only in 1966 with the advent of the Punjabi *Suba* (Province). The 1981 census, while tabulated, was not released until July 1985. The Government of India had to that point used the 1971 census data on religion. The Sikhs constituted 60.75 per cent of Punjab's population in 1981. According to the 1981 census there were 10.19 million Sikhs in Punjab and 13.07 million in India. A growth rate of 23.5 per cent is projected between 1981-91 as per the 1991 census.

Total population of Sikhs in the world is around eighteen million. Presently, there are sixteen million Sikhs in India. Thirteen million reside in the Punjab and three million live in the outlying provinces. The remaining two million are scattered all over the world. Half a million live in the United States, and another half a million reside in United Kingdom. Three hundred thousand Sikhs call Canada their home. Approximately seven hundred thousand Sikhs live in Australia, New Zealand, East Africa, Singapore, Malaysia and other countries.







Mayo Singh, Industrialist 1920-1950,
courtesy Victoria City Archives.

6. Problems and Conflicts¹

The Quiet Years revealed the dwindling of the Sikh community and how they faced the Depression years leading to the vote. The 1960s signalled the era of the arrival of the professionals who largely settled outside of British Columbia. There were professionals in British Columbia prior to 1960s but legislation did not allow them to take advantage of the opportunities.

Reluctance to Integrate

The Sikhs strongly resisted any inter-marriage with Anglo or Euro-Canadians. They married only in their own social class. Despite the lack of Sikh women for the first few decades of the community's existence almost no inter-marriage with Euro-Canadians occurred. As an exception to the rule fewer than a dozen marriages took place between Sikh boys and Canadian girls. When relations with India improved, the Sikh boys of marriageable age returned to Punjab to meet potential spouses in the Sikh community. About eighty per cent of the marriages in the immediate post-Second World War involved a tie with India, according to author Adrian Mayer.

Racism

Early in the twentieth century, when Sikh pioneers arrived in British Columbia it was a place of racial hostility. Race and ethnicity were fundamental principles and it was defined as a "white man's country." Discrimination against Sikhs increased and assumed both subtle and legal forms.

Prejudicial attitudes still showed up in community behaviour and formed part of official regulations. Until well after World War II the Sikhs were kept under a number of legal restrictions because of their race. There were various forms

of racial discrimination. There were denials of military service, for example, the government maintained racial barriers in selecting air crews. The Canadian war time job referral operation, assembled racial data and allowed employers to use it.

There soon arose a conviction that Sikhs were taking away jobs in the mills from white Canadians and were instrumental in depriving them of work. Resentment against Sikhs increased in the late 1960s. It escalated exclusively from economic complaint to a range of real and imagined Sikh cultural practices, such as aloofness, untrustworthiness, dress, and housing.

The Euro-Canadians perceived negatively the social and cultural practices of Sikhs, such as extended family system, and overcrowded households. The Canadians disapproved of their bringing over of illegal relatives, forming residential ghettos, and exploiting government services. Sikhs have been stereotyped as clannish, self-centered, arrogant, argumentative, and confrontational. There were complaints that house prices rose sharply across the country because Sikh immigration rates were so high. Unaware of how much Sikhs would sacrifice to buy a house, the Euro-Canadians believed that they came to Canada well-heeled or else manipulated the system to qualify for mortgages. Both these assumptions are mostly untrue. Many would buy homes in disrepair rather than postpone purchasing a house until they could afford something better. Once purchased, the heavy financial commitment sent many family members to work. The complaint about forming residential ghettos is again unsupported. Actual residential concentrations result generally from the local availability of suitable houses. More established families move to superior neighbourhoods.

In 1970, when Sikh immigrants came in large numbers, Canadian prejudice surfaced again, and violent attacks took place against them and their property. There was discrimination against Sikhs looking for work and accommodation. In British Columbia tensions continued to build between Sikhs and Canadians of European ancestry which climaxed in a serious brawl in Quesnel in mid-1971. Coverage of Sikh-related issues ranging from immigration to political conflicts involving Vancouver *Gurdwaras* intensified in the media. The Sikhs formed a defence committee to fight racial discrimination. Occasional violent clashes between Sikhs and Euro-Canadians broke out in Fort St. James and other places in 1973. Incidents of discrimination against Sikhs continued to spread across the country during 1974 and 1977. Euro-Canadians in Toronto kept greater social distance from Sikhs. By 1975, a clear stereotype of Sikhs had emerged and they were called "Pakis", a term used against both Sikhs and Pakistanis. The economy had suffered and jobs were hard to find. Visible minority groups were made the scapegoats. In 1975, the press started linking social and economic ills to Sikh immigrants. Vandalism and physical violence became a daily routine. The Sikhs felt that police were inadequate in controlling vandalism and physical

assaults. They decided to band together for self protection. The "Green paper" on immigration came out around this time.

Sikh complaints about property damage went up sharply in Vancouver. Vocal extremist groups engaged slogans such as "Stop non-white immigration". Harassment of Sikhs became a socially acceptable peer-group activity among some Toronto and Vancouver youths by 1976. In schools, Sikh children became common victims of name calling and intimidation, and children started changing schools to avoid racial conflict. "Paki-baiting" outside schools was more fierce in Vancouver and Toronto, and was on the rise in Edmonton, Calgary, and Montréal. Sikh homes, cars, and Sikh temples were repeatedly vandalized. To avoid vandalism Sikhs erected chain link fences around *Gurdwaras*. In 1981, a young Sikh was beaten to death in Vancouver and another young Sikh was abducted by Euro-Canadians in Vancouver.

Community Stresses

The influence of western culture on the Sikhs started taking its toll. In spite of Sikh religious traditions, many Canadians of Sikh faith began to change as they adapted to their new homeland. They removed their turbans and shaved. They took on more and more characteristics of the western culture. Despite these changes the Sikhs of Canada have by and large adhered to their faith. Sikhs remain Sikhs despite outside pressure and enticement. There was a conflict among the Sikhs in Vancouver as to what was not acceptable.

The Sikhs in Vancouver were generally either related to each other or originated from the same region of Punjab. They were familiar with the practice of the caste system. Sikhs usually married within their caste although they associated with other castes at the *Gurdwara* and at social gatherings. The marriages were arranged either between relatives or go-betweens and occurred in other villages. The immigration policy reinforced the tight little island nature of the group of Sikhs in Vancouver. Most of the Sikhs in Vancouver were *Jats* (a land owning tribe), and the other group is composed of the Rajput caste. Both are from the same districts. Each group attended the *Gurdwara* regularly and mingled freely with each other. The community was fairly well-knit and caste differences did not create any real problems, as they were familiar with the norms of each other's social group and came from two districts of Punjab.

Community Dispute

The failure to keep the *Panj kakkar* (five Sikh symbols) inevitably created the conflict in the community. The first clash occurred in 1952 when majority of the *Khalsa Diwan Society* members objected to an aging priest waving an unsheathed sword at the temple ceremonies. The decision was taken to vote and the majority voted that it should stop. The decision was painful for the traditionalists because it was the first step away from traditional Sikh values. The real breach occurred shortly afterwards. This time, the debate was whether

or not anyone who was shaven, and had therefore broken the five Sikh symbols, could serve on the *Gurdwara* executive. Once again a vote was taken. Once again the traditionalists lost. The westernized Sikhs and their point of view became dominant in the *Khalsa Diwan Society*. The traditionalists decided to split from the *Khalsa Diwan Society* and built a more traditional Akali Singh *Gurdwara*. The old *Khalsa Diwan Society Gurdwara* became a place for westernized attitudes; the new temple, a home for the traditionalists.

Community Split

A split occurred in the Sikh community between those who were trying hard to hold on to Sikh traditions and those who were being assimilated. The split deepened, and it reflected more than just disagreement of religious interpretations. The Akali Singh group included many pioneers who had helped found the *Khalsa Diwan Society*, build the Vancouver *Gurdwara*, and consolidate the community. The dominant group in the old *Gurdwara* consisted of westernized Sikhs. There was also socio-economic gap between the two. The old group presently at Akali Singh had mostly very little education compared to the new leadership of the educated professionals at the *Khalsa Diwan Society*. The westernized Sikhs provided the appearance of achievement and knowledge which gave them an aura for leadership of the Vancouver Sikh community.

The creation of a second *Gurdwara* was in no way a hindrance in the continuing liaison between the two groups, in spite of differences. Together their representatives then organized the East Indian Canadian Citizens Welfare Society which acted as spokesperson for both the groups and looked after those who needed help, irrespective of their allegiance.

Erosion of Sikh Values

At the time of the split in 1952, Vancouver's Sikh community was still relatively isolated from the rest of the Sikh world. There were of course ties with Punjab, to the village of their origin, and to same social groups. The westernized group would have been gradually assimilated in the Western Society. The *Gurdwara* would have become more a social rather than religious place. During the years after the split the westernized group controlling the *Khalsa Diwan Society Gurdwara* began to adhere less and less to traditional Sikh practices. Many of the group's followers stopped covering their head in the presence of *Guru Granth Sahib* inside the inner precincts of the *Gurdwara*. Most members of the executive became shaven and started entering the *Gurdwara* bare-headed. The Sikhs keeping *kakkar* (Sikh symbols) gradually began to dwindle in Vancouver Sikh community. They were not being reinforced by significant immigration. Removal of their long hair, beard and turbans made a difference in their visibility.

Newcomers and the Established

The year before the split, the Federal government relaxed the immigration regulations. As a result, the flow of Sikhs from Punjab increased in 1951. Apart from this, there was an unexpected arrival of Sikhs from East Africa, part of the group of Asians expelled because of racial strife. Canada agreed to allow more Punjabi immigrants in 1956, and in 1957 further relaxation occurred. However, in 1967 Canada opened its doors wider than ever on merit basis. Now the opportunity opened up to others than those nominated by relatives. The Sikh community was never again so homogeneous.

The new arrivals created new problems. More serious conflicts occurred in the Sikh community. There were clashes between the new immigrants and established residents. There were problems of discrimination as well as there was some crime. It was a difficult time for Sikhs in Vancouver.

The impact of these new immigrants was not generated by numbers alone, but was also influenced by conflicts between professionals to unskilled workers. The educated Sikhs included experienced businessmen, professionals, and teachers. The Vancouver Sikh community, which mainly consisted of two castes, *Jats* and *Rajputs*, soon became a polyglot Sikh community. There were the old originals who were unskilled and uneducated, and the new Canadianized Sikhs who adapted to western custom, shaved off their beards, and abandoned Sikh traditions. They made their way into business and professions. The new Sikh group, orthodox but also well-educated, confident of their previous success in business in Africa, were anxious to establish themselves promptly in their new homeland.

Gurdwara-based Conflicts

There were increasing problems in the *Gurdwara*. The orthodox Sikhs among the newcomers began to demand a return to orthodoxy in the *Khalsa Diwan Society Gurdwara*. They disapproved of the casual discard of head covering, and the presence of shaven members in the executive. They challenged the westernized leadership, which in their view had turned the *Gurdwara* into a social rather than a religious centre. They also accused these westernized Sikhs of making personal profit from *Gurdwara* construction contracts.

In the early 1970s the conflict deepened. The westernized Sikhs in control of the *Gurdwara* did not want to yield to the head-covering Sikh tradition. Various factors came into play. A clear difference in caste members, whether old timers, westernized, or new-comers, existed. Social and economic differences were present. Most important of all was a challenge to the established leadership by an orthodox merchant class strongly committed to traditions which attracted the support of less-educated Sikhs as well. The conflict led to physical clashes between factions. Several times the police was forced to intervene. It reached such a level that an outside mediator was needed to resolve a violent row over the election of *Gurdwara* office bearers. Similar

clashes occurred at Pape Avenue *Gurdwara* in Toronto in March 1975, where a highly-charged meeting to elect the executive was the cause of a shooting in which two men were killed.

Under the surface the feud continued to smoulder. The *Ramgarhya* group of Sikhs started organizing another society, and some of their members were on the executive of both *Gurdwaras*. There was a fear that the *Khalsa Diwan Society Gurdwara* may fall into the hands of westernized Sikhs or that the westernized group might leave the *Khalsa Diwan Society Gurdwara* and form a new Sikh social centre. The problems of the community are obviously complex. They intertwine social, economic, and caste conflict and at the heart of all is religious tradition. This complex phenomena surfaces in the form of the *Gurdwara* clashes. The stability of fifty years of assimilation and peace were obviously gone for good. It seemed obvious the nature of quarrels were religiously oriented and the Vancouver Sikh community had entered into a period of internal conflict and change.

External Conflicts

Sometimes Sikhs run into problems with the dominant Canadians of Anglo and European ancestry. Some of these problems are a result of adjustments from a village life in Punjab to that of a big city in Canada. Others are the result of cultural clashes between two different sets of social values. Some are due to harassment or deliberate discrimination. All of these generate pressures in the Sikh community that are reflected in the *Gurdwara* struggles between different groups. Canadian society puts lot of pressure on immigrants. The heads of households learn English at government expense; the children learn at school, while the women remain at home. These pressures play on Sikhs at work and on children at school. They generate conflict between old values and new customs and evoke stress in the family. The process causes re-examination of life styles and value systems. The extended family system is considered normal and natural among the Sikhs, however Canadians consider such dual family arrangement overcrowding.

Family Problems

Among the Sikhs male domination is customary. Divorce or separation is considered a disgrace to the family. The education or acculturation of women leads to conflicts between women and their husbands. As Sikh women acquire education in Canada, however, they are expected to go to work to maintain higher family standards. Sikh women also move around on their own, observing the comparatively free behaviour of the Euro-Canadian women and tend to demand equality at home. Generally speaking the relationship between Sikh men and women is cordial and they are very faithful.

Sikhs by and large still arrange marriages for their sons and daughters. Parents select matches for boys and girls. The parents are deeply concerned,

however, and leave no stone unturned in finding a satisfactory relationship for their children. The parents trace the background and history of other families. They try to assist by patching up any quarrels that might arise. Sometimes serious conflicts arise between parents and their children, particularly with female children. Whenever Sikh girls go out as they wish to participate in the Canadian society the parents object, which results in a good deal of tension. When Sikh girls go to school they observe that Canadian girls have more freedom. In school they are in a different world. It is quite rough for them, and they find themselves caught between two cultures. In school girls want to have relationships with boys. The parents say that girls are not supposed to talk to boys. They tell them that Sikh culture does not believe in dating or courting. The Sikh community is faced with this dilemma; parents do not want their children to have that kind of freedom, yet it becomes too much restrictive and the children rebel. Children start skipping school to be with their friends. Some run away from home. Others break Sikh cultural rules, some even going as far as having sexual intercourse. Then a more serious conflict arises. The girls are unable to talk to their parents because the parents would neither understand nor accept their problems. If a girl gets pregnant, she can't tell these things to her parents. If a social worker goes to the parents the family feels disgraced. Parents feel that they cannot show their face in the community. They usually plead that the matter should not be talked about. In school, teachers are unaware of these taboos. They treat Sikh children as they treat other Canadian children.

The massive challenges to traditional family notions are painful. There are strains in the extended family system, an institution which is held in high esteem in Punjab. Economic independence is the primary reason extended families are on the decline. Parents would like to have their adult children remain with them and contribute to the household, but most eventually leave. Nuclear families generally prevail. Nuclear families who support their retired parents are the most enduring. Elderly mothers and mother-in-laws are very helpful in sharing household tasks. With both parents working, grandparents provide the role of functional parents for the young children, indirectly ensuring continuity of traditional Sikh values.

The relationship between husband and wife has been put through great stress because of economic and social conditions. The struggling family is subject to several consistent changes. Traditional control of the husband over the family is weakened. Working wives are exposed to a variety of cultural influences, and they demand more authority. Husbands find their family status weakened by their low prestige-jobs and find little support for their authority within the family. Wives also find themselves in a dilemma. They work whole days outside for their livelihood and are expected to do most of the household work when they return, which is an unending workload for women. Husbands have largely accepted the responsibilities of other household duties such as lawn

mowing, snow shovelling, and household repairs. However, they rarely do the cooking, laundry, cleaning, or caring for children.

Wives now are involved in the decision-making in running the family with their husbands. Managing household finances had traditionally been the domain of wives in the Sikh families. There are consultations between husbands and wives prior to major purchases which, if not wisely carried out, could undermine the economic status of the family. There is also a marked shift away from the tradition of large families and towards family planning of two to three children. Sikhs view the Canadian values about family, marriage, unmarried couples living together, and divorce, unsuitable to their cultural values. The media impact of these values on Sikh children and youth pose a great threat to the traditional Sikh family values. In spite of the challenges of western cultural surroundings, family breakdown is less common among Sikhs than in the Canadian society as a whole. To survive in Canada also creates conflict in husband wife relations. Sometimes stress reaches the point of breaking up the family. Young couples face severe problems with traditional family expectations when the mediation role of elders is not forthcoming. Similar stresses occur between parents and children and parents are caught in a dilemma. Sikhs have high expectations of their children, and they do their best to provide appropriate education and vocational training. They trust that the children would be better equipped to face the challenges of contemporary Canadian life. They have also not abandoned the hope that their children would retain Sikh culture and its heritage.

Job Discrimination

Race relations became significantly better in 1947 despite the ongoing annoyance of a few. By the end of the war, discrimination was on the decline. Similarly union pressure, high demand for labour during the war, and changing views about the Sikhs led to the collapse of wage discrimination. The impact of forty years of structural discrimination did not, however, disappear overnight. In regard to employment, it was difficult for Sikhs to demonstrate their training and experience to prospective employers. The employers did not recognize the qualifications of Indian universities as being equivalent to Canadian universities. Employers were asking for Canadian experience. But how were they to obtain?

Concern over job discrimination was always an issue. It became more critical during the mid-1970s, when economic prospects deteriorated. In the early 1980s these concerns had increased further. Sikhs strongly believe that racial bias plays a major role in obtaining careers. They lack direct personnel connection in job selection, which is considered an important factor. Job advancement is also a constant concern. Many times companies are reluctant to promote Sikhs into positions requiring direct dealings with the public or with other businesses. Management personnel are afraid that prejudices held by their clients will result in a loss of business. Few Sikhs are in supervising positions where they are responsible for Anglo and European workers. There seems to be

no protection against such discrimination. The education of the public is important. Sikhs expect the police to do something about the problem but discrimination is not covered under any legislation. In this regard the community has resorted to work with the schools, the Human Rights Commission, and the police.

A little has been done to foster better intergroup relations. There are no assurances that new immigrants will have equal access to rights and privileges. Of those institutions which are directed at protecting Sikh rights, such as the Human Rights Commission, the police, and the legal system, few have been changed to address the mounting challenge. The visible minority groups believe that the provincial and federal Human Rights Commissions are largely weak in addressing discrimination. Human Rights Codes have been constructed in such a way that racial incidents like name-calling, vandalism, and physical assault are excluded; the latter two continue to be dealt with under the Criminal Code by the police. In the areas of job discrimination, housing, and access to services, the commission moves so slowly that cases take years to decide. The distribution of hate literature and incidents of disturbing the peace are the only types of racial incidents covered by the Criminal Code. The police are powerless to deal with the jobs or housing discrimination, which are the preserves of the Human Rights Commission. Most police forces now have community relations officers who liaise with ethnic communities. They are involved in informal mediation of intergroup conflicts. Sikh hiring by police, although improved, has been insignificant even though policing and soldiery is a Sikh tradition.

Relations With Police

During the quiet years the police looked at Sikhs with a point of view of casual awareness in Vancouver. But now the attitude has changed. Clashes between Sikhs and others, conflict within the Sikh community, and new problems of serious crime has demanded increasing police attention. Racism complaints were on the rise. One day, for example, a neighbour called a Sikh child a raghead. The father complained to the police. The police found it hard to take any action. The complainant decided to act himself. He told the neighbour "leave my children alone or I will kill you". The neighbour complained. The police came again to warn the Sikh against violence. He saw the police response as racist. In the eyes of the police the first incident of name-calling was not a crime; the second, a threat, was.

Sometimes scuffles have occurred between Euro-Canadians and Sikhs in Vancouver. Police take immediate action, by visiting the scene and warning against continuation of violence. By identifying regulars and threatening immediate arrest if more scuffles occur, the police are able to head off the more physical aspects of future relations between racial groups. Police, in consultation with the community, stepped in on surveillance measures. When Sikh temples were vandalized police promised additional patrols in the area and vandalism

eventually ceased. The statistics revealed that crimes by Sikhs against Sikhs were higher compared to crimes against Sikhs by non-Sikh Canadians. Punjabi families also appear to have been involved in a series of feuds among families and neighbours feuds often leading to violence. There is even some evidence of continuing vendettas. The police have tried to prevent violence by acting as mediators in the disputes at the *Gurdwaras*. They have also been asked to participate in a series of meetings about Sikh problems among feuding groups. The police officers have attempted a number of other tactics to help reduce problems. They have attended functions at the *Gurdwaras* and have also spoken to women's groups. Mixed teams—one Sikh, one white police officer—call on neighbours when there are complaints of harassment in some areas. Police took part in special radio broadcasts directed at the Sikh community.

Media Portrayal of Sikhs

The Canadian Sikhs have given no cause to the people or the government of Canada to feel dissatisfied with their stay in the adopted land of their choice, and the same is true about the performance of their children and grandchildren. On the other hand, the media generally has not served them well.

T. Joseph Scanlan conducted a study, *The Vancouver Sikhs*, on crime stories which were published in *The Sun* and *The Province* between 1944 to 1974. There were stories about murder, stories about marriage rackets involving illegal immigration, stories about assault, bribery, and rape. There were stories of families being evicted, stories about beatings and fights outside the *Gurdwaras*, stories on high level racial tensions in the community. What was missing was the kind of story to put this situation in context. The crime stories dealt only with crime and not with special police efforts to resolve Sikh problems. The other stories dealt with hostility, not with attempts to overcome it. There were no stories about cultural adjustment problems, no stories about how teachers were trying to learn to assist immigrant children, no stories about stress and strains in the Sikh community. The Sikhs were portrayed as a troublesome group. Mr. Scanlan arrived at two conclusions. The two newspapers appeared to have ignored a significant portion of the story of Vancouver Sikhs. Secondly, the press seems to have emphasized only one aspect of the story, the story of crime.

An analysis was carried out on twenty-three murders which took place in Vancouver between the 1st of August, 1973, and the 31st July, 1974. The media reports were checked. The analysis revealed a number of races were involved in these crimes during this period. A couple of murders involved Punjabis. Four involved Canadian native people. Four others involved immigrants from Europe, two from the United Kingdom, one from Yugoslavia, and one from the Netherlands. The variety of races offered the media a fair chance to demonstrate racial impartiality.

The media's murder coverage stretched beyond the former media check. Apart from the two daily newspapers, *The Sun* and *The Province*, it included the *CBC* and *CTV*. *The Sun* carried one hundred and three stories about twenty-three murder cases and the *Province* carried ninety-three stories. Both papers were particularly interested in one case involving a millionaire—a total of twenty different stories appeared in both papers. But race did not enter the picture. The Yugoslavian and the Dutch never got mentioned. The native Indians made it once into the paper and only in the form of a quote from an attorney in court. The reference to Sikhs in *The Sun* got extensive play. *The Sun* mentioned Sikhs several times in its coverage of murders involving Punjabis. *CBC* and *CTV* gave very little coverage—each time the race mentioned was Punjabis.

The Sikhs are very sensitive about news media treatment. They complain about inaccuracy, unfair use of Sikh identification in stories, and distortion. Scanlan observes that the media labels Sikhs in a way they do not label other racial or ethnic groups. If there is a murder by any European, they don't name the origin of his country. Headlines mentioning Sikhs cause ill-feelings among other groups in the community. It is very deplorable because it colours the whole community. The coverage of Sikh matters is blown up and distorted. There has been considerable front page coverage of Sikh activities in Vancouver in the media. The real problem is that media have not included the explanatory material that might have made these problems understandable.

The media appears to report primarily conflict, leaving out the background material necessary to an understanding of the conflict. The Sikhs have been seen linked mainly to stories of violence including criminal violence. They are being portrayed as a dangerous and violent people, one who cannot maintain order within the *Gurdwara*. Such a linkage provides strong negative reaction in the general community. Perhaps the media continues to focus on conflict no matter what the subject is.

"Canadian Sikhs have close ties of kinship with folks whom they only recently left behind in the Punjab and other parts of India. The political upheavals, uncertainties, and calamities which affect their relatives are natural causes for concern. The spiritual heart of all Sikhs is in Amritsar, Nankana Sahib, and Anandpur Sahib, the Sikh holy places. Anything that adversely affects their religious institutions is justifiably a matter of mental and physical anguish to them.

For the last few years, Sikhs have been plagued with references in the media which have given the appearance that the word 'Sikh' is synonymous with 'terrorism.' Stories are printed about incidents in which Sikhs are described as 'terrorists.' It is difficult for the readers to discern whether the references are to Canadians of the Sikh faith, or to foreigners of the Sikh faith. Many of the newspapers do not appear to take the trouble to make the distinction.

It goes to the credit of the Canadian Sikhs that they did not let the wars of India spill over to Canadian soil. If, at all, they made only vocal protests, to do

which, as Canadian citizens, they were lawfully entitled. What irked them, that the one-sided propaganda that so regularly gushed forth from India, the media went along with it. Either it did not have the courage, the resources or the ability to conduct its own enquiries about happenings in India, or it was totally insensitive to the anguish of one-sided reporting would cause to its fellow-citizens," says Dr. Preetam Singh, Q.C. in the *Sikh Messenger*.

Canadian Sikhs are deeply concerned with the persecution as well as with the constant human rights violations against them including torture and extra judicial killings of their brethren in the Punjab which strike at their very survival in the land of their origin.

"The present generation Canadian is not a proponent of the 'white man's country' ideology; that his Sikh compatriot of the 1910 vintage has forgotten about the indignities of the past. But tarring the Canadian Sikhs with Indian government propaganda brush of the present day actions of the media; failing to stand by its fellow Canadians; and failing to seek verification of Indian news reports relating to Punjab, and failing to boldly report the Human Rights Violations of India is difficult to appreciate," says Dr. Preetam Singh.

7. Professions and Economy

The Sikhs have demonstrated amazing capacity both in meeting challenges in the professions and in their outstanding contribution to the Canadian economy. Their industrious nature is quite apparent, as most of them are found to be economically secure.

Sikhs in Professions

When Sikhs arrived in Canada around 1903, most of them had very little education. These early Sikh settlers ended up as blue collar workers. Many were veterans of the British Indian army. They were industrious people with integrity. Legislation in 1907 prohibited Sikhs from entering professions in the province of British Columbia. It was only after the 1960s that the immigration authorities laid emphasis on professionals, which enabled large number of Sikh professionals to enter Canada.

Sikh immigrants tend to settle where they have friends and relatives, however, during the 1960s and 1970s a considerable number of Sikhs opted to stay outside of British Columbia. Quite independently, they started the process of achieving the socio-economic goals of life. Not only did they quickly accomplish economic security, but in due course also established Punjabi communities.

In the beginning the Sikhs would try to get some sort of work as soon as possible to tide over the initial difficult period, even if the work was unrelated to their skills. Even women who traditionally have stayed at home started working to add additional family income. Many women work in clothing manufacturing, clerical, secretarial, retail sales, and agricultural sectors. Many professional women are teachers, doctors, and civil servants.

Most Sikh professionals have children in schools, and therefore they look for a secure source of income. The administration policies of the government as an employer are considered quite fair, equitable, and secure. Working relationships

with colleagues are cordial and amiable. Older children often help support the family for as long as they live with their parents. These strategies have helped Sikh families become economically secure in a short period. One can come across Sikhs in every sector of the Canadian economy, and they are well represented in the professions. Sikhs have risen to the positions of ministers, members of Parliament and members of Legislative Assemblies. Moe Sihota is a minister in the British Columbia Government, Herb Dhaliwal and Gurbax Malhi are Members of Parliament, Ujjal Dosanjh and Harry Lalli are MLAS in B.C., and Dr. Gulzar Cheema is M.L.A. from Manitoba. The first Sikh to be appointed judge is the Honourable Judge Vali Oppal. Some of the Sikhs developed entrepreneurial skills early on in the 1920s and 1930s, and became successful entrepreneurs (e.g., Mayo Singh and Kapur Singh Sidhu). There are developers like Gurmej S. Bains in Toronto, philanthropists like Satwant S. Sanders in Vancouver, and lumber industrialists such as Herb Doman in Victoria. However, a majority of Sikhs still work on farms, in the lumber industry, mines, small business, and in transportation.

Although Sikhs have risen to the position of members of legislative assemblies, judges, presidents of corporations, professors, doctors, lawyers, scientists, engineers, and so on, they still do not have adequate representation in most decision-making processes, and are under-represented both at federal and provincial levels.

Contribution to Canadian Economy

The original immigration from Punjab to British Columbia between 1903 and 1908 had been a spontaneous movement, consisting mostly of young men from peasant families from villages in the Punjab. These men obtained a limited niche in the expanding economy of Canada, particularly in the coastal lumber industry of British Columbia. The potentiality of expanding that niche was cut off for half a century by the immigration barrier erected by the Canadian government in 1908. Through boom times (with the exception of the years 1918-22) the Sikhs share of jobs in British Columbia tended to shrink, largely because employers realized that this reservoir of labour could not be tapped any further, and looked elsewhere.

The Sikhs expressed keen interest in purchasing small lots and houses around Vancouver. By 1908, they were independently employed as real estate agents which led to the establishment of the Guru Nanak Mining and Trust Company in Vancouver. Teja Singh became its first manager. His vision of an independent, self-supporting community enabled the company to raise enough funds through share subscriptions to buy and develop large tracts of agricultural land where community members could settle.

At the outbreak of World War I many Sikhs worked in the wood industries. Since the actual logging operation was the chosen domain of the Anglo and Euro-Canadians, most Sikhs wound up in the lumber and shingle mills. They

were first restricted to manual labour. Then attempts were made to breakout of these limitations. Many Sikhs found themselves without jobs. They turned to small business ventures of their own. As early as 1908, a few Sikhs were selling scrap wood as home heating fuel in Victoria. By 1927, there were twenty-one fuel dealers in the lower mainland and about sixty in the province.

In the 1920s some Sikhs moved into farming in British Columbia, first as tenants, then as owners. The pioneers had extensive experience in agriculture, but lack of a labour source and capital severely limited their ability to farm in Canada. A few Sikh families had dairy farms in the Fraser Valley on rented land, and a couple established on Vancouver Island. By the late 1920s the number of farms had increased to about forty, with half-dozen farmers in the Okanagan Valley. By then a few Sikhs had started farming in Alberta, with one family in the Glenmore district, three near Lethbridge, and a few near Medicine Hat. Prior to 1960, there were about fifty Sikh farms in existence in British Columbia. The early successes of Punjabis were in real estate and in the ownership of lumber mills.

The 1920s brought economic changes to the Sikh community. Lumbering was perhaps the most important of all the industries of British Columbia. There arose a small entrepreneurial class primarily in the wood industries, with its capital investment under Sikh management. There was also a concentration of Punjabi workers in the lumber mills, which raised the living standards of Sikhs. This required geographical mobility, as Sikhs moved where good jobs were available. These farmers from the Punjab had adapted their skills to work in the forests, and mastered the mechanized skills of more intricate mill work. They continued to play a substantial part in the development of Canada's industry.

Between World War I and II sawdust had become an essential household fuel both for heating and cooking. This by-product of the lumber industry was formerly burned in great pits to get it out of the way. Special self-feeding funnels had been invented which could be fitted to stoves and furnaces. The Sohan Brothers in Burnaby owned thirty fuel trucks. Sikhs maintained a strong presence in the fuel industry right up to the late 1950s when the availability of cheaper alternative fuels led to its demise. Most fuel dealerships were small, single-truck, owner operations.

The Sikhs heavy involvement as lumber workers was followed by lease and purchase operation of mills and logging camps in 1914-16. Seven small mills were bought or leased by Sikhs in the Fraser Valley near Abbotsford and Chilliwack. Each was controlled in a partnership of about forty Sikhs. Owners worked along with others sharing in the profits rather than receiving wages. The labour unions associated with the lumber industry had not discriminated against the Sikhs and they took an active part in their unions.

Between 1916 and 1923 most mills were sold because of shortage of local wood. The owners moved to Vancouver Island where timber was more accessible. Soon a Sikh Company at Ladysmith and the Mayo Lumber Company

at Duncan became operative. Other mills sprang up in Coombs. The Kapoor Mill started up on the famous site of Barnet Mill. By 1930 the Kapoor Lumber Company employed three hundred fifty men, one third of whom were Sikhs. Similarly, Mayo Mill which was under Sikh management, employed seventy-three Euro-Canadians, one hundred eighty-one Chinese, forty-one Japanese, and ninety-seven Sikhs in the same year. Mayo Mill was built in the heart of heavy timberland, and it is based on the pattern of a small town. The development accommodates such facilities as its own school, store, community center, church, and homes for workers, and its own power system.

The population of the Sikh community received a significant boost from the rise of these mills on Vancouver Island. In 1920 only about two hundred fifty Sikhs lived on Vancouver Island, as economic opportunities were better on the mainland. The Sikh community prospered in wealth and influence with the increase of the lumber industry. By 1930, the Sikh economic elite such as Kapur Singh Sidhu and Mayo Singh became visible community leaders partially replacing the revolutionary leadership.

In view of the small size of the Sikh community left in Canada from the earlier strength of approximately six thousand, the number of Sikh entrepreneurial activities was quite high by the 1920s. They owned and operated considerable number of businesses in the area of logging camps, lumber companies, shingle factories, grocery stores, fuel dealerships, and farms. By 1924, ten per cent of the Sikh population was self-employed. The occupational concentration in lumber mills helped them to consolidate their economic position. Sikhs had also established a reputation for hard work in the mills, which allowed them to remain continuously employed, although they were still paid ten per cent less than the Anglo and Euro-Canadians. They were still denied positions of responsibility. Sikhs were able to save sixty per cent of their income and with their savings they supported their families in Punjab. By the late 1920s their foothold in Canada was considerably more firm.

Sikhs have had success with driver-owned taxis in the areas of greater Vancouver, Metro Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary, Montréal, and Winnipeg. This fixed-cost investment offers flexible hours and is sometimes shared by family utilization. Taxi companies have become exploitive. They encourage people to buy cabs and join the company. However, the taxi companies gain their income from fees paid by the operators for the use of their name and dispatching services, not from the fares. For survival in Canada a taxi driver is required to work a minimum of sixty hours a week. Other drawbacks of taxi driving include the lack of a pension, dental, or, drug plan. Many Sikh drivers who have joined the transit system of each city work on a forty hours a week basis and get overtime after normal hours with the usual benefits of pension, medical, and dental plans. Sikh bus drivers of various transit commissions approached the authorities to allow them to wear Sikh symbols while on duty. Persistent

pleading and media tactics persuaded the Toronto Transit Commission and others to accept Sikh workers with Sikh symbols.

Some Sikh professionals, such as doctors, lawyers, and accountants have set up firms. Some have done well in real estate development. Sikh entrepreneurs in the lumber industry, however, remained unsurpassed. Those entrepreneurs who concentrated on Punjabi clientele diminished the range of their business. In the area of goods and services Sikhs have thrived. The most significant operations are grocery stores offering Punjabi food stuffs which have spread across the country since the 1970s. Sikhs have maintained their traditional recipes, and ingredients for these are not available at ordinary Canadian stores. They stock a range of lentils, spices, vegetables, and fruits from India and Pakistan at these shops. Popular Indian music cassettes, video-tapes of Indian movies, and household items are also stored. Cloth shops have been opened across Canada too.

Sikhs have purchased farms which produce vegetables, berries, and dairy products in the Fraser Valley. They faced a shortage of farm labour. To solve this recurring problem some Sikh entrepreneurs in 1970 started contracting farm labour. Labour contractors gathered women, adolescents, old people, and the unemployed and brought them to these farms in the lower Fraser Valley as migratory workers, paying minimal wages. They oversaw their work and brought them home. This practice extended to non-Sikh farms and became instrumental in providing employment to thousands of people. Socially conscious Sikhs organized farm workers into a union, thus ensuring their improved working conditions and wages.

8. Educational Pursuits¹

This chapter examines Sikh educational pursuits since the arrival of the pioneers. Sikhs started night schools, initiated journals, set up scholarships, sent funds for education in Punjab, and educated adult members of the community. Some were poets² and orators, and also freedom fighters. They used *Gurdwara* platforms to communicate with Sikh audiences. In the last decade Sikhs organized conferences, set up chairs of Sikh studies, organized youth camps, and arranged language classes for the children. The education of Sikh children and the teacher's understanding of the upbringing, religion, and culture will also be examined in considerable detail in this chapter.

Beginnings

Though Sikhs have been in Canada since the turn of the century, few had been fully assimilated into Canadian society. For nearly half a century the Sikh population remained small and isolated. A concentrated mass of Sikhs did not form until after the 1960s, and as a result a few Canadian-born Sikh scholars could emerge. Now the population is made up of recent immigrants. As early as 1908 Professor Teja Singh urged Vancouver Sikhs to set up a university for Sikh children. Although a sizable parcel of land was identified for the university campus, there was no one of stature locally available to organize such a huge task. There were Sikhs in the United States who had already set up scholarships at University of California Berkeley for higher education of Sikhs.

Sikhs demonstrated again and again their concern for education in Canada. In 1911, Sikhs in Victoria raised over \$1000.00 for a night school and sent \$6000.00 back to Punjab to assist in the education of Sikhs. From 1921-1952 the Sikhs donated almost \$300,000.00 to philanthropic causes with half of this amount earmarked for educational and religious institutions in British Columbia and Punjab. The concern for education in Punjab since the earliest years of immigration had been given special attention by British Columbian Sikhs. A

strong appeal was made under the auspices of the *Khalsa Diwan Society* for education among the Sikhs in an article by President Raja Singh in 1914. He asked the British Columbian Sikh Education Committee to lend its full support to get schools established in the Punjab.

Kartar Singh, a distinguished teacher, journalist, and editor in Punjab spent his entire career involved with education both in his native land and in British Columbia. When he arrived in Vancouver in 1911, he put his talents to work. He initiated three separate Sikh journals, and lectured and taught at night schools as a member of the *Khalsa Diwan Society*. His journals were short lived, but he used them in sounding the call for education among Sikhs throughout British Columbia. Not everyone emulated the remarkable Kartar Singh. He devoted his energies to the task of educating the adult members of the community. However, the great majority had shared his experiences through those associations.

Sikh newspapers and publications were effective as educational instruments. The close association of almost all Sikhs in the *Gurdwaras* and particularly the influence of the *Khalsa Diwan Society* played a complementary role. For a time *The Hindustani*, *The Aryan*, and later *The Canadian Sikh*, contributed in educating Sikhs about the Canadian way of life, such as amusement at night cafes, comments on commercialized vice despite strict monogamous laws, and high unemployment. *The Canadian Sikh* saw as part of its mission the need to educate non-Sikhs in the truth about Sikhism. The paper emphasized that priority be given to teaching *Gurmukhi* (script used for writing Punjabi), not only because it appears at all religious functions but also because it opens the way for deeper appreciation of Sikh religion, history, and culture. The editor called for the establishment of a school where university students could have the opportunity to learn the Hindi, Urdu, as well as Punjabi languages. As a group, Sikhs had no substantial exposure to the public system of education in the province until recent years.

Understanding

With the Sikh immigrants who arrived after 1960s, there was an emphasis on the professional class. They brought their wives and children with them. For the education of Sikh children of recent arrivals from Punjab, there is a need for teachers to obtain an understanding about Sikh children and their way of life to carry out their duties effectively. A teacher should acquire more than a superficial understanding of the teachings of the Sikh religion, history, and folklore. There is fairly substantial literature available on the background of Sikh immigrants.

The basic attitudes and beliefs of the Sikhs, on religious matters like *Akal Purakh* (Supreme Being), the nature of the Absolute, the meaning of *Naam* (Will or Word), the function of the *Guru Granth Sahib* (Sikh holy book), and on social and moral matters like the idea of the family, the privileges and duties of its

members, and the relationship between parents and children are very delicate matters, and are part of the personality of each child. A teacher who has some understanding of these can sometimes help a child to come to terms with conflicts and anxieties. Teachers need to reconsider both what they teach and the way they teach when they deal with multi-racial children.

Family

The most important element in Sikh communities anywhere in the world is the family. Family means the extended family, which is the principal social unit in Punjab. Home is, in a very real sense, the family home in Punjab. For the *Jat* Sikh land holding is his main capital and security. The strength of family ties provide emotional support to the individual. A mother is regarded as the anchor of the family and considered a very strong factor in the character of Sikh men. The link between mother and daughter is equally strong. One frequent consequence of this is tension between wife and mother-in-law. The wife longs for her father's home while the husband's loyalties are strained between his wife and his mother. This is a recurrent theme in Punjabi stories and folk songs. There is strong affection and reverence for grandfather and grandmother in Punjabi culture, and a strong bond of affection between brother and sister. In legend, the tragedy of Mirza Sahiban turns on Sahiban's agonizing choice between the lives of her brothers and her lover who has to die. A special bond of affection exists between a woman and her brother's children.

Sikh children in Canada are being brought up in ways their mothers learnt from their mothers in Punjab. These are increasingly modified by the differences in the environment -- the house, food, health considerations and so on, and, perhaps, by the absence of the extended family. Teachers, especially those in nursery schools, who are responsible for an increasing number of local-born Sikh children, need to know something of the life of these children in their formative years, especially the way the parents look after, and raise their young children.

The strong social and religious traditions of *Jat* Sikhs encompass the whole cycle of human life, constituting a kind of sacramental progression. The presence of older women in the extended family is a great help to Punjabi women when her children are born, especially during her first confinement, when she may go to her own mother for care and sympathy. This sort of help is not usually available to Sikh woman in Canada. Doctors and midwives cannot replace the emotional support it gives. After a baby is born, the baby's name is generally chosen by opening the *Guru Granth Sahib* at random when parents first attend Sangat (religious congregation). Nicknames are a feature of Punjabi life, and babies are always given a simple name. These names are used within the family throughout childhood.

Young children are always close to the mother. Once little children can walk and talk, they are free to wander around the home, expecting and receiving kind attention, finding adults and older brothers or sisters ready to play with them and

talk to them. Little children are encouraged to inquire, explore, and ask questions. They learn to speak to adults politely but confidently, and they learn valuable skills of making clear what they want, explaining themselves and seeking information at the same time. Their ability to interpret language and situations, and solve problems is thus developed.

Teachers involved with Sikh children should try to understand the culture of the Sikh home in all its manifestations, and the way Sikh parents are trying to bring up their children. Some of the literature on the Sikh religion should certainly be studied by anyone working with Sikh children in Canada. It contains a very refined and elevated conception of the Absolute, an idea explored in the profound poetry of Guru Nanak's *Japuji Sahib*. Sikh morality requires that human beings should play an active part in society, raising a family, and doing useful work. The Sikh is expected to take an active part in democratic institutions, and take responsibility for improving the lot of his or her fellow beings to the best of an individual's ability. This is a Sikh's *Dharama* (religious duty). Everything that a Sikh does is a significant part of Sikh *Dharama*. Certainly duty to the family and community, including maintenance of traditions, is essentially a *Dharama*. It should form part of the education imparted to Canadian Sikh children.

Religion is important in the life of Sikhs. In the house, *Guru Granth Sahib* (Sikh holy book) is kept in a room which is set aside for religious purposes. The pictures of the *Gurus* and events in their lives and places associated with them decorate the walls of nearly all Sikh homes. Conventional work of artists at the courts of Sikh *Maharajahs* (Great Kings), are distinctive features of the home environment of Sikh children. They are important elements in their developing imagination, and the stories they illustrate are factors in their early emotional and social growth. Words or phrases in ornamental *Gurmukhi* (script used for writing Punjabi), are used as wall plaques or painted on front doors. The symbol of collections of weapons appears on calendars, books, and artifacts, and on the yellow *Nishan Sahib* (the Sikh banner) that flies over every *Gurdwara* (Sikh church). It consists of a *Khanda* (the broad, double edged sword) used in *Khanda di pahal* (the Sikh initiation) ceremony, a *chakra* (a sharp edge steel discus), flanked by two crossed swords (scimitars). The young Sikh grows in his or her home environment where he or she takes such things for granted, along with long hair, *kara* (steel wrist band), and the way he or she greets his or her parents, "*Sat Sri Akal*" (Truth is Timeless). These are distinctive features of the Sikh community.

Religious observances continue to play a fairly important part in the life of Sikh parents, which exert considerable influence on their children. Religious consciousness starts developing in the Sikh child through verbal interaction, and the growing child also learns by imitating of his or her parents. Religious education is seen as the duty of the family, who pass on the reservoir of

information. Young children are expected to conform to the norms of social behaviour without question. Their parents tend either to insist on rigid adherence to conventions and traditions, or to be content with letting them drift.

The basic element in Sikh moral teaching is *Sewa* (service done without desire or reward). In a symbolic form it is the voluntary work done at a *Gurdwara*—by preparing and distributing the *Karah Prasad* (sacramental food) and the free *Langar* (community kitchen), cleaning, mending, decorating, looking after the congregations' shoes, and so on. In daily life, it is an ideal of selfless service to the community, and above all doing one's *Dharama* (duty) in one's own family and immediate circle. Thus there is emphasis on obligations to others and the values of group-membership rather than the value given in the west to individual initiative and personal independence.

Attempts have been made to balance the influence of the non-Sikh 'majority culture' by organizing classes for children, either at the *Gurdwara* or at schools where teaching facilities are available on Saturdays and Sundays. These are quite popular with the children. They are sympathetically taught and are not driven hard. These classes concentrate mainly on Punjabi language and script and on learning by heart portions of the *Japuji Sahib* (daily prayer), *Shabads* (hymns), and religious poems. Good learners have opportunities to recite what they have learnt at Sunday morning *Sangats* (religious congregation). "If Sikh children are to have self-confidence and pride in being what they are, it will not be enough for them to keep their hair long and learn *Shabads* (hymns) by heart -- they will need to understand the spirit of the Sikh religion, especially those aspects of the *Guru's* teaching that are most relevant to the problems of living in a complex industrial society," says Alan G. James, author of *Sikh Children in Britain*.

To take *Amrit* (Sikh initiation), a young Sikh is supposed to have reached an age of discretion (about eighteen years old), often when they are about to marry, or soon after marriage. The features that distinguish the *pakka Sikh* (initiated Sikh) from the *pattit* Sikh ('fallen') is not the *Pahal* (initiation), but the wearing of the five symbols, and of course, *Kes* (unshorn hair) is the most conspicuous and the one to which they attach most importance. Boys and men keep their hair tied in a *jura* (top-knot) held in place by a small *Kanga* (curved comb), another of the five Symbols—men cover it with a *pag* (turban). The *pag* may be tied in various styles; there is no special significance either in the styles or the colour. Boys generally cover their *juras* with a small *rumal* (hanky). Women in Punjab keep their hair long. Girls keep their heads uncovered, often using a *chuni* (light scarf) thrown back over either shoulder. Married women keep their heads covered when strangers are present, but are not required to veil their faces. In Canada very few Sikh women have cut their hair.

Having long hair obviously has its inconveniences for children. It certainly makes them stand out from other children. In schools where there are few Sikh

children, they are likely to get teased for this. It requires much more attention in the way of washing and dressing, and necessitates wearing a bathing cap for swimming lessons. Moreover, teenage Sikhs are likely to regard it as a symbol of conformity to communal norms. Sikh children often meet with hostility and discrimination, especially after they leave school. They fall back on their families and communities, and begin to assert their distinctiveness with all the enthusiasm of converts in a "revival".

At first only sons of strict Sikhs kept long hair, but *Kes-dhari* (initiated) Sikh boys in schools have increased, and a great many Sikh boys born in Canada have not had their hair cut. A few Sikh girls have had their hair cut, but this is rare. Wearing Kes (unshorn hair) would be for them a symbolic act of pride in being different. After the assault on the *Golden Temple* in June 1984, the world Sikh community experienced a religious revival. One consequence of this revival was that a large number of shaven Sikhs grew hair and beards again. Women and girls attending the *Gurdwara* wear the Punjabi *kamiz* and *shalwar*. The *kamiz* is a tunic, generally brightly coloured (usually only one colour) and embroidered. *Shalwar* (loose trousers gathered at the ankles), is designed to disguise the shape of the female body. Although Sikhs feel that a woman should keep her legs covered, they do not mind tight-fitting *shalwar* and western trousers, and suits are quite acceptable, at least for girls. Even shaven Sikhs generally wear the *kara*, men wear quite thick ones. A *kara* must be made of pure steel.

Home

Religious practices are indistinguishable from social customs, and every day, homely matters like dress or food become important marks of the community. Sikhs in Canada have met substantial changes in their way of life in response to the pressure of the surrounding environment, in the hours and types of work, home furnishings, sanitary arrangements, and so on. Most Sikh families live in 'mixed' areas, where the population has remained fairly stable; inside there is still a certain 'Punjabi' character to it. For example the television is covered when not in use with an embroidered cloth. There are pictures of the *Gurus* or of family elders decorated with tinsels, and there are even "fairy lights" over the mantle piece. One feature of home life that Sikhs have not changed to any great degree is their Punjabi food. They attach great importance to the *Guruka Langar* (community kitchen), where food is prepared and eaten by people irrespective of caste.

Older Sikh children pass their time playing with other children, helping mother or father, dressing, eating, sleeping, going shopping, visiting relations and so on. The most important element for the child in all this is imagination. His or her developing imagination feeds on stories told by mother or teacher, seen on television, or read in comics, and on imitative play, on ritual, in religious observances and in games, and in songs and music. In the folk psychology of Punjab the child's imagination and feeling dominates reason. The children are

heirs to a rich and flourishing Sikh culture. The stories of the *Gurus* and the *Janam Sakhis* (legendaries) of Guru Nanak are told in *Gurdwaras* (Sikh churches) by preachers. There are anecdotes of incidents with the Mughal emperors. Romances and tragedies in folk stories include Heer Ranjha, Sassi Punnu, Sohni Mahiwal, and Mirza Sahiban. Also told are Rup and Basant, story of Dhru *Bhagat* (the pole star), and anecdotes and fables of Kikkar Singh the wrestler and Bhagat Singh, a Sikh freedom fighter.

Education of Sikh Children

Sikh children are, in general, well motivated and show genuine enthusiasm for all that is done in the classroom. The unfamiliar language as well as the unfamiliar ways of behaviour towards adults and other children are part of the activity and richness of things that a child experiences in a good nursery or classroom. It is with Sikh parents that the child learns to interpret the environment and to acquire the practical skills needed to live in human society. The norms, morality, good manners, religious belief, politics, even the choice of job and marriage partner, are taken for granted as essential functions of the family life and the community. Sikh parents do not expect schools to have much to do in these respects, except to reinforce what is taken for granted.

The two most important elements in nursery and infant education are 'play' and the active use of language—both being necessary for a child to come to terms with his or her physical and social environment. Sikh parents regard these as things to be done at home, and the school is a place where children learn to read. As they grow older, they are expected to devote more and more time and energy to 'study'. Teenagers are expected to be at home in the evenings, studying, or attending classes, and if they stay out late with friends, this is frowned upon. Some parents employ private tutors.

Success in school depends on many things besides ability in rote-learning, notably skills with language. Still traditional ways of bringing up young children do, to some extent, encourage initiative, inquisitiveness, and the urge to explore. Even Sikhs with relatively little formal education have proven themselves capable of adapting to the requirements of a society very different from their own.

Sikh parents with enthusiasm for the education of their children are pleased when they see the results of good teaching. They are appreciative if they feel that their offspring are in the hands of a teacher who is interested in the child as an individual. They expect their child to be taught systematically and trained in the construction of good English sentences and in the expansion of vocabulary. It is necessary to give children the means of expression and understanding they need to make choices. Contact with parents is most important in the home or at school, which establishes a bridgehead between the two worlds.

The Sikh child grows up to become more and more aware of the distinctiveness of such features, but the most important is the environment in

which he or she develops his or her language. These children have to master two and sometimes three (French) completely different languages. It amounts to three different conceptualizations of the human environment. The ability of children to understand and learn in school depends largely on the kind of language-training and the experience they had as babies. Moreover, it is the means whereby the child comes to communicate with other people, and understand and function in society.

The children are with the mother all the time, and there is plenty of verbal play, talking to baby, stories, nursery rhymes, or lullabies. But the language is, of course, Punjabi. The implications of this are very important. Punjabi is, for these children, the language of their baby talk, the language in which they communicate to their mothers for their most basic needs and feelings. The "mother tongue" is likely to remain for them the most vivid and eloquent way in which they can express their deepest emotions. From an English standpoint, the need to know and use the language of the larger community seems so obvious and overriding that its limitations are overlooked. For a Sikh child, Punjabi is the code that he or she needs in order to function in his or her immediate environment and family community.

However, they are very much dependent on others to interpret between them and the public services. Children are growing up with the role of interpreter for their mothers. The English language should develop a whole new element in their consciousness and in their personalities. If they are to succeed in school, they will need to use English as an instrument of reasoning. It will be a handicap for them if they have to think things out in a language different from that of their teachers. In effect, they have to learn not just a new language, but new, more sophisticated, uses of language.

Sikh parents have shown considerable enthusiasm for the nursery education of their children. Nursery classes and playgroups give these children excellent opportunities for play and for more contact with other children and adults than the home can offer. The typical child grows up in a stable, secure environment in which he or she has plenty of encouragement and opportunity to learn. The nursery schools help the Sikh children to achieve the 'survival' level of competence in English providing them with enough of the 'content of words' to enable them to 'survive' in the company of English speaking children and adults.

The Punjab is an exciting place that enjoys remarkable progress in agriculture and in light industries. In history it was a meeting place of civilizations. The *Golden Temple* (Sikh "Vatican") at Amritsar is an object of striking architectural beauty. The Sikh religion is worthy of serious consideration amongst the great religions of the world. It has a wealth of story, music, dance, costume, and cuisine that are elements in the home life of Sikh children. Yet many of these children attend schools where these things are never mentioned.

The study of world history and comparative religion, the fairer treatment of the developing countries, the introduction of Punjabi music, cookery, dressmaking, stories and festivals would all enrich the life of the school. Remove some hoary preconceptions, and enable Sikh children to feel that they have something to give and be proud of, instead of always receiving and "being helped". There are opportunities here to enrich the lives of all children in Canadian schools as well as of the entire community with the rich, living culture of the Sikh community. There are some basic conflicts between the expectations and values of Sikh parents and values inscribed in Canadian schools. The Canadian schools, with their tradition of "humane", "liberal" education place high value on individual initiative, independent decision making, and privacy. These ideas can directly conflict with *sewa* (selfless service). There have been demands for separate religious instruction which might help young Sikhs have pride in their community's traditions.

Future Possibilities

The Punjabi-born teenage Sikh immigrants were old enough to retain some memories of Punjab. As time goes on they will be outnumbered by those born in Canada. A steady, inexorable process of Canadianization is expected by the rising generation. The elders see their children growing away from them. They expect the young to fulfill the ambitions of their parents and remain identifiable members of the Sikh community. The more eager the Sikh parents are that their children should "succeed" in the parents terms, the more they have to entrust the upbringing of the children to non-Sikh agencies, especially school, college, and the work place. There is nothing set up to impart education in the environment of Sikh cultural values. The tensions between young and old are the product of the rapidly changing, complex, and varied society in which we live.

There is a communication gap between young and old, but for the Punjabis it is aggravated since the language at home is totally different from that of school and work. Canadian-born Sikh children are not fluent in Punjabi because English has played an important role in their lives at an early age. The conversations of their parents and relatives as it relates to their religion and culture are literally meaningless to them. The media promotes a lessening of moral attitudes and a closely knit family faces fundamental threats to social life. Even the indoctrination of Sikh religious teachings cannot shield children from the influence of television, and from the fact that young people can have economic independence.

"It is wrong to pretend that there is no fundamental difference between the Sikh religion and way of life, and the basic ideals and values of other traditions. A tradition such as has been described earlier, with its emphasis on *Dharama* and *Sewa* is in real conflict with a culture that places highest value on freedom, individual initiative, and privacy. This conflict sets Sikhs versus the rest. The important teachings of the Sikh *Gurus*, about the nature of man, the purpose of

life, moral duty, and so on, rather than their teaching about what one should or should not wear, are not explained to the young people, and the religion will seem to them a meaningless jumble of superstitious observances. If the creeds and moral codes are presented to them in school, through the media or by their non-Sikh friends, in a more intelligible and attractive manner, they may feel that their parents' religion has nothing to offer them. The wearing of long hair, turbans, bangles or *shalwar* are just more pointless impositions inflicted by an older generation desperately frightened of 'losing' their children," says Allan G. James, author of *Sikh Children in Britain*.

The reasons for conforming to the ways of Canadians seem so obvious that it is regarded as a foregone conclusion, that the second, and the third generations will move inevitably towards total 'Westernization'. To many Sikh parents, too, the outside influences on their children's behaviour seem so powerful that they feel unable to counter their effect, and they are driven either to resignation, accepting the 'Westernization' of their children as inevitable, or to drastic measures such as sending them back to India, which is not feasible with the current prevailing situation in Punjab.

Sikh Conferences

The first scholarly Sikh conference was held in 1976, at Berkeley in collaboration with the Sikh Foundation highlighting the theme of comparative perspectives on changing traditions. Canadian Sikhs were always conscious that certain steps were required to preserve Sikh identity and heritage in their adopted land. A group of Toronto intellectuals endeavoured to bring the Sikh community of the Eastern region together under the auspices of the Sikh Social and Educational Society. It was the outcome of these efforts that led to the convening of the First Canadian Sikh Conference in 1979 at Toronto which focused on ways and means to realize the objectives.

The credit for organizing the conference and bringing it to successful conclusion goes especially to Dr. Jarnail Singh. The Sikh community is grateful to him for rendering this pioneering service that set in motion a chain of Sikh conferences in Canada. This led to the formation of a Sikh national organization, the Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada in 1981.

The objective of the Sikh conferences in the beginning was to communicate and coordinate religious activities among the Sikhs in Canada and interact with the Canadian government at various levels on community-related issues. The Indian army's assault on the *Golden Temple*, in 1984, shifted the emphasis of Sikh conferences in the direction of taking strong measures against the Indian government. From 1987 onwards, the focus of conferences was on Sikh academics, concerning the methodology of religious studies and critical examinations of certain recent writings and Sikh art and literature. The messages conveyed through these conferences are:

- a. Evolutionary interest in Sikhism

- b. Harmonizing community feelings
- c. Raising consciousness to preserve Sikh identity
- d. Attempt to develop an organizational infrastructure
- e. To interact with government
- f. To identify fundamental issues in Sikh studies
- g. To counter disinformation of Sikh religion
- h. To deal with problems facing the Sikh youth
- i. To be able to relate Sikh studies to modern issues relevant to North America
- j. To highlight the interest of media and to educate various media people about the true character of Sikhism
- k. To keep abreast of events facing our brethren in Punjab and to assist in their cause.

The following Sikh Conferences were held: Conference on Sikh religion and history in North America 1976 at Berkeley by Sikh Foundation; Sikh Conference 1979, Toronto, by Sikh Social and Educational Society; Sikh Conference 1980, Ottawa, by Ottawa Sikh Society; All Canada Sikh Convention 1981, Calgary, hosted by Calgary Sikh Society; The Sikh Heritage Conference 1981, Toronto, hosted by Sikh Social and Educational Society; All Canada Sikh Convention 1983, Ottawa, hosted by National Sikh Society Ottawa; Regional Conferences at Kamloops and Toronto, by the Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada, 1984; International Sikh Convention New York City July 27-28, 1984; Babbar Khalsa International conference, hosted by Sikh Temple Association Montreal, June 30, 1989; Sikh Women's seminar, Sikh Social and Educational Society, March 23, 1985, Toronto; Sikh symposium by Sikh Social and Educational Society, May 25 and 26, 1985, Toronto; All Canada Sikh Convention 1985, Victoria, federation of Sikh Societies of Canada; North American Sikh Convention 1985, Edmonton by International Sikh Youth Federation; Academic Conference on Sikh Scholarship February 13-15, 1987, University of Toronto, Toronto; Sikh Foundation hosted an international Sikh Conference in 1987 at Berkeley; Sikh Canadians: The Promise of the Challenge a Symposium by Macauliffe Institute August 12-14, 1988, Toronto; Conference on Sikh Studies hosted by Sikh Community of North America, California State University at Long Beach, December 10, 1988; Sikh Educational Council of U. K. hosted International Conference on Sikh Studies, November 17-18, 1990, London; International Conference on Sikh Studies by Canadian Institute of Sikh Studies, University of Toronto November 24, 25, 1990; International Conference on Sikh Studies by the Canadian Study and teaching Society, University of British Columbia Vancouver, December 2, 1990; Sikh Foundation hosted International Conference on Sikh Studies, December 5, 1990. Sikh Religious Society Chicago, held International Conference on Sikh Studies, December 7, 1990; International Conference on Sikh Studies hosted by Guru Gobind Singh Foundation and Guru Nanak Foundation, George Washington University,

Washington D.C. December 8, 1990; International Conference on Sikh Studies hosted by Sikh Cultural Society New York and the Sikh Community of Tristate Area New York, New York, December 15, 1990; Sikh Art and Literature Conference, hosted by Sikh Foundation, Asian Art Museum San Francisco, November 28-29, 1992. United Sikh Association hosted a Sikh youth Conference at Berkeley, november 26-27, 1992; Conference on the Sikh Diaspora convened by the Southern Asian Institute, Columbia University, April 3, 1993; Vaisakhi Conference hosted by United Sikh Association at Columbia University, New York, April 10-11, 1993. For details of Sikh Conferences see Appendix D.

Chair in Sikh Studies, University of British Columbia

Early in 1983, the author along with three members of the Executive of the Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada, travelled across Canada to meet members of several Sikh societies to solicit views which could then be incorporated for discussion in the forthcoming Sikh Convention. While in Vancouver, the members of the executive were approached by Sikh students Raj Mohindar Singh, Harbhajan Singh, Balbir Kaur, and Kamaljit Kaur of the University of British Columbia with the suggestion that the Federation explore the feasibility of setting up a Chair of Sikh Studies at the University. The University of British Columbia authorities were quite receptive to such a proposition by the Federation. Tentative enquiries were then initiated to learn about the mechanism of setting up such a program with both Provincial Ministries of Education and the Secretary of State-Multicultural Directorate. It was discovered that Government of Canada could contribute financial assistance on a matching dollar basis up to \$350,000.00, under the endowment assistance program.

The Federation approached the Government of Canada to sponsor the setting up of the Chair at U.B.C. This request of the Federation was accepted by the government, and Sikhs were officially "in the line" for the funding of the Chair. The Canadian Sikhs raised a sum of \$350,000.00, and the Federation, on behalf of the Sikh community, signed a formal agreement with the President of the University of British Columbia in regard to establishing a Chair in Punjabi Language, Literature and Sikh Studies. In 1985, Honourable David Crombie, Minister of Multiculturalism, announced the setting up of the Sikh Chair.

A Sikh Chair at the University of Toronto

In 1984, a dedicated group of Sikhs who were seriously interested in Sikh studies got together to address Sikh community affairs in this direction. It was the same group who set up the Macauliffe Institute of Sikh Studies. This group also supported the 1987 Sikh Conference at the University of Toronto. Notable members of the group are Gary Singh, Amrik Singh, Suresh S. Bhalla, and T. Sher Singh.

The group approached the head of the Department of South-East Asian Studies at the University of Toronto about the feasibility of starting classes in Sikh studies at the University. He agreed to set up a professorship in Sikhism provided the community could raise \$30,000.00 a year. The group sought financial assistance from Sikh entrepreneurs and individuals in this worthy project. Notable contributors are Gurmej S. Bains, Herb Doman, Kapur S. Sidhu and Satwant S. Sandher. Presently the University hires a professor for part of the year. There are undergraduate courses on Sikh religion taught at the University and a few students are enrolled in the Ph.D. program.

9. Development of Sikh Literature

Extensive literature has been written by Sikhs and on Sikhs in Canada since their arrival. The pioneers wrote poetry, published newspapers, journals, articles, and presentations were made on the *Gurdwara* stage. Sikhs have set up educational societies and publications. They have written poetry, short stories, novels, and drama in English as well as in Punjabi.

Pioneers' Contributions

The involvement of the Sikh community in arts and literature is extensive. Writing Punjabi poetry and prose began when Sikhs arrived in Canada around the turn of the century. Some of them were freedom fighters for the Indian independence movement. They were full of zeal and patriotic fervour. Bhagwan Singh Gyani was a poet and orator. Naranjan Singh Pandori composed revolutionary poetry. Active publication of newspapers and pamphlets started immediately yet they did not last long, sometimes not more than two years. Many times authorities stopped the publication. The papers were written in vernacular Punjabi and *Urdu* to facilitate the pioneers who could not read English. Some papers were in English. The newspapers lacked financial support. As early as 1910, Harnam Singh Sahri published *Swadesh Sewak* (servant of the country), a monthly written in *Gurmukhi* (script for writing Punjabi). Taraknath Das started *Free Hindustani* from Seattle. *Aryan*, an English monthly, was published by Dr. Sundar Singh in 1912 in Victoria. Dr. Sundar Singh was also editor of *Sansar*, a fortnightly newspaper published both in English and Punjabi. Talwindar Singh Hundal was also co-editor of *Sansar*. The *Ghadar* newspaper, published from San Francisco, was the brain-child of Kartar Singh Saraba. Most of the writings by patriots such as Harnam Singh Tundilat and Munsha Singh Dukhi were published in *Ghadar* and directed at

Punjabi workers. Hussain Rahim was editor of *The Hindustani* in 1914. Articles by Saint Nihal Singh between 1908-20 depict a different point of view of conditions of Sikhs in Canada. Professor Teja Singh in his autobiography *Jivan Katha Sant Attar Singh ji Maharaj* vividly describes the condition of Sikhs in Canada between 1908-1912. Gurdit Singh has written a vivid account of the ill-fated Komagata Maru steamship.

During the "Quiet Years"(1919-47), immigration dropped very low. The population was a little over a thousand. The community was faced with the retention of their ethnic identity. They went through the struggle of unequal pay for equal work and ineligibility to vote. The continuity of traditions was their primary task. Literature was fostered through an increasing number of *Gurdwaras*, publications (newspapers and journals), and cultural organizations. Singing and music being an integral part of Sikh religious practice meant poets had their works included in musical presentations. The practice of poetry reading on the *Gurdwara* stage helped poets and writers address the audience.

Contemporary Writings by Canadian Sikhs

For the last thirty years a number of educated Punjabis with literary consciousness have arrived in Canada, some of whom were well known writers, having published poems and stories in Punjab. Once in Canada they continued to write and set up organizations such as the *Watno Dur* (away from home) Foundation in Vancouver. *Watno Dur* also is a regular publication. The Sikh Educational and Cultural Society in Toronto have their own journal, *The Sikh News & Views*. Newspapers are also printing and publishing outlets. The Canadian Sikh Study and Teaching Society has recently been established in Vancouver. It publishes *Sikh Marg* and conducts literary activities.

The Sikh community has committed teachers, professional performers, artists, and writers. They are agents of cultural continuity. Some have established a number of schools. Many have managed to earn a living solely through performing, teaching, and writing. Sikhs are publishing scores of newspapers in Punjabi and English, mostly aimed at a wider audience, but none of them have achieved financial stability. They mostly voice concern of issues in Punjab, with less on local issues. They too suffer from insufficient support. There are English-language monthlies and weeklies which cover mix of Indian events such as *World Sikh News*, *The Sikh Review*, *Sandesh*, *The Link*, *The Sword*, and *The Truth*. There are a number of Punjabi weekly newspapers such as *Awaze Quom*, *Ranjeet*, *Chardi Kala*, *Sanjh Savera*. A majority of newspapers are supported by advertisements rather than subscriptions.

Some writers are engaged in writing poetry, short stories, novels and dramas. The poems can be placed under three categories: a) those with Canadian content, b) those with exclusively cultural heritage content, and c) those with a mixed Canadian and cultural heritage content. The immigrant experience is the

central theme in English language poetry, and most of the Punjabi poetry as well. Dhanjal's poem "Search for Meaning" is revolutionary inspiration.

The contemporary Punjabi Canadian poetry has been published in literary magazines such as *Watno Dur*, *Ranjit* in Vancouver, *Asia Times* and the *Pardesi Punjab* (bi-weekly) in Toronto, *The Indo-Canadian Times* (weekly), *Jeewan Sanjhan*, *Nawin Dharti*, as well as in *Parivartan* and *Canada Di Punjabi Kavita* (Punjabi poetry of Canada), which is an anthology.

Some stories, both in Punjabi and English, deal with immigrant experience. Several stories deal with life in the homeland. Canadian context stories deal with life in North America, violence, problem children, inter-ethnic love relationships, racism, culture conflict, immigrant working class life, and getting around the law to stay in Canada.

There is only one novelist writing in Punjabi in Canada, and all his works are historical. Some English-language novels deal with life in Canada—some of immigrant experience, and others with mainstream Canadian life. The dramas are translations from Punjabi and there are full length plays as well.

Print journalism is rather weak however radio stations in Vancouver and Toronto have been presenting programs of popular music and Punjabi talk shows since the early 1970s. These have been followed by similar programs in other cities across Canada. Access to cable television facilities has enabled community-produced programs to be aired on a wide range of topics.

Publications

There are a number of publications on the Sikhs in Canada, particularly on their migration and their problems of settlement, acculturation, religious identity, and family traditions. However, very few studies exist on subjects like their religion, literature, and Punjab background. Hugh Johnston of Simon Fraser University has contributed significantly with works such as: "The East-Indians in Canada," (Ottawa: *Canadian Historical Association*, 1984), "The Surveillance of Indian Nationalists, in North America 1908-1918," (*B.C. Studies—Summer*, 1988), "Patterns of Sikh Migration to Canada, 1900-1960," *Sikh History and Religion in the Twentieth Century* (University of Toronto, 1988), and his crowning work, *The Voyage of Komagata Maru, The Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar*, (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979), is a captivating narration of the account of *Komagata Maru* episode. Norman Buchignani of the University of Lethbridge (Alberta), who has written "A Review of the Historical and Sociological Literature on East-Indians in Canada," (*Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 11.1, 1979) provides much information on the Sikh immigrants, their descendants, and their problems. His book *Continuous Journey: A Social History of South Asians in Canada*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), has given good coverage to Sikhs, though a major portion is devoted to the other peoples of the Indian subcontinent. Another notable piece is by Ted Ferguson,

A White Man's Country: An Exercise in Canadian Prejudice, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1975), which depicts vividly the *Komagata Maru* episode. Isabell Ross Broad wrote a book entitled *An Appeal for the Fair Play for the Sikhs in Canada*, (Victoria: Victoria Society of Friends of the Hindu, 1913). The Sikh protest first took a legal form, and later a revolutionary turn (*Ghadar* movement).

Sociological and anthropological studies of Punjabis were undertaken during the 1960's and 1970's. Michael Ames and Joy Inglis wrote on family life in British Columbia in "Conflict and Change in British Columbia Sikh Family Life" (*British Columbia Studies* 20, 1973-74). Nash Gill dealt with a similar subject in his book entitled *The East-Indian People of B.C.*, (Vancouver, 1973). Media reactions to ethnic settlements were highlighted in T. Joseph Scanlan's *The Sikhs of Vancouver: A Case-Study of the Role of the Media in Ethnic Relation* (Carleton University, 1975). The problems of schooling of Punjabi children were mentioned in Mary Ashworth's book *Immigrant Children and Canadian Schools*, (Toronto: McClelland, 1975).

G.S. Pannu's "Sikhs in Canada," a treatise written for the University of British Columbia (1970), details the changes in Sikh way of living. Another piece of research is by James Chadney, *The Vancouver Sikhs: An Ethnic Community in Canada*, (Michigan State University, 1976). James Chadney's other work is *Demography, Ethnic Identity and Decision Making: The case of Vancouver Sikhs*, (1977). Another book on a similar subject is S.K. Jain's *East-Indians in Canada*, (the Hague Moulton, 1971). G.S. Mansukhani's article on his "Impressions of the Canadian Sikhs," is in the *Sikh Review* (September 1970). Michael Graeme Campbell in his Masters thesis "The Sikhs of Vancouver: A Case Study In Minority-Host Relations," University of British Columbia (September 1977) has critically examined relations between Sikhs and the host community.

More information on immigrant Sikhs is available in Ganda Singh's "The Sikhs of Canada and California: A Bibliography" (*Punjab Past and Present* October, 1970). Dr. Darshan Singh Tatla's annotated bibliography *Sikhs in North America*, (Greenwood Press, 1991), is a comprehensive guide to literature on Sikhs in the United States and Canada. Jane Singh's *South Asians in North America: An Annotated and Selected Bibliography* (University of California, Berkeley, 1988), is another good reference for material about Sikhs in North America. Another work available on the same subject, is Bruce La Brack's mimeographed bibliography on *The Sikhs in United States and Canada*. Then there is Anthony Richmond's book *Immigrants and Ethnic Groups in Metropolitan Toronto* (1969). Another work is Gurcharn Singh Basran's university research on "East-Indian Canadians, (a preliminary check-list)" (*Canadian Ethnic Studies*, 5: 1-22, 1976).

Among recent studies on the Canadian Sikhs and the multi-cultural pattern is Gordon Hirabayashi and Victor Ujemoto's book *Visible Minorities and*

Multiculturalism: Asians in Canada, (Toronto; Butterworth, 1980). A somewhat different study of children and schools is Janet Rosenstock and Dennis Adair's *Multiculturalism in the Classroom, a Survey of Inter-racial Attitudes in Certain Schools* (Toronto, 1976).

Many informative articles on Canadian Sikhs are to be found in journals like *Punjabi Affair* (Toronto), *Canadian Indian Star*, *Canadian Ethnic Studies* (Calgary), *Journal of Comparative Sociology and Religion* (Ottawa), and the *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* (Calgary). *The Search For Meaning: The Literature of Canadians of South Asian Origin*, by Suwanda H.J. Sugunasiri (January 1988) also deals with creative Punjabi writing in poetry and prose. On the subject of Punjabi-Canadian women, Joseph Naido has contributed a number of papers to the *Asian Canadian in Multicultural Society*, (1979).

Publications by Canadian Sikh scholars on Sikh religion and tradition are few. Amarjit Singh Sethi's *Universal Sikhism* (1972), relates Sikh teachings to present day social problems and offers a stimulus for the moral and spiritual growth of man. Another work edited by Sethi is *Comparative Religion* (1979), which contains articles on Sikhism. His later work on Sikh meditation is an innovative comparative presentation of the subject. Dr. Jarnail Singh has produced an English translation of Kahn Singh's book *Hum Hindu Nahi*, (Sikhs We are not Hindus) Willowdale, September 1984. He has also translated the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* into French, which is yet to be printed. Nirmal Singh Kalsi's unpublished work *Iko Beej Mantar Parkash*, or (Sikh Creed of Philosophy) in Punjabi is an original idea. He demonstrates through research that the word *Ik Oankar* (Supreme Being) is not the composition of two letters, instead, it is one unique letter or word Ikooooo---.

The English translation of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, by Gurbachan Singh Talib in consultation with Bhai Jodh Singh, (3 vols. Punjabi University, Patiala, 1991), is an outstanding contribution on Sikh religion. It speaks about the composition of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, its contents, language, and the Sikh teachings. Dr. Pashaura Singh's Ph.D. Thesis "The Text and Meaning of the *Adi Granth*," is a comprehensive study which confirms the Kartarpur manuscript as the final text of the *Adi Granth* compiled by Guru Arjan (Toronto University, 1991). Dr. Hari Sharma of Simon Fraser University has conducted interviews and recorded the oral history of earlier immigrants on tapes which are stored in the archives, (*An Indo Canadian Oral History Project*, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver). The University of British Columbia started a course in Punjabi language and Sikh studies in September 1987, as a part of South Asian Studies Department. Two courses, one in the teaching of Punjabi language and another in Sikh studies are offered at the first degree level. Simon Fraser University in Vancouver has recently started a course in Sikh History. The University of Toronto offers facilities for research in Sikh studies at the Department of South Asian Studies in Toronto. A few students have been enrolled for the Ph. D.

Degree in Sikh studies. Besides these university courses, classes in Punjabi language and Sikh religion are held by almost all Gurdwaras across Canada. In 1989, The Canadian Sikh Study and Teaching Society, Vancouver, initiated a teaching program in Punjabi and Sikh studies, where discussions are also held on Sikh themes. They organized a seminar on *Promotion of Sikh Studies*, on 21 January 1989, in Vancouver. *ANKUR (A New Beginning)* is a quarterly magazine about culture, art, and social and political issues of concern to the Indo-Canadian community. It is published in Vancouver by Sath Literary and Cultural Society.

Kashmeri and McAndrew, the authors of *Soft Target* (1989) state that there was a strong support for the *Khalistan* (Sovereign Sikh State) movement among the 300,000 Sikhs in Canada. The only way India could disrupt support for the *Khalistan* movement in Canada was by disgracing the Sikhs in the minds of Canadians. After Operation Bluestar, the Indian plan was to hijack the Sikh separatist movement abroad. With the tragedy of Air India flight 182 crash on June 23, 1985, India maliciously tried to tarnish the image of Canadian Sikhs saying that the crash was the result of Sikh terrorists. Kashmeri and McAndrew conclude that CSIS investigators became convinced that the Indian intelligence service may have played a role in the bombing of Air India.

10. Community Institutions

Canadian Record

Although Sikhs have been in Canada for ninety years, few have been assimilated into Canadian society. Sikh professionals and workers in practice have left an imprint as a result of their work ethics, which speaks volumes about their agility and admirable adaptation to the adopted country. Non-Sikh and Sikh Canadians have influenced and often creatively adapted to each others value system. Sikhs have continued to instill their culture in their children. Third and fourth generation Sikhs still understand Punjabi. Punjabi is the spoken language at home, and is backed by the strong religious conviction of parents and well-established religious institutions. Children generally become believers of the Sikh faith. The Sikh social network enables children to find important reference groups. Parents, community, and religion establish a unique sense of identity in children.

The evolution of the Sikh community in Canada did not allow the voice of the Canadian-born Sikh ever to become dominant. Sikh children as a rule did not separate themselves from the world of their parents. Sikh parents have been conscious of differences in outlook between themselves and their children raised in North America. They feared the influence of North American cultural values which conflict with Sikh values. They have expected their children to marry within their own community and have continued to search for marriage partners in the Punjab. Accordingly it is expected that the process of acculturation and assimilation will be prolonged.

Struggle to Retain Sikh Identity

The Sikhs struggled hard to maintain their ethnic identity through community institutions such as *Gurdwaras*, religious organizations, national organizations, institutes, schools, language classes, newspapers, television and radio programs, community-oriented business, arts, and ethnic associations. North American culture predominates at work, in the schools, in government, and in the media. Community institutions are the only organizational responses to the non-Sikh cultural values to which the growing child is exposed. In the past, Sikhs have faced formidable obstacles, and they have been successful. It is imperative that all Sikhs work together to create relevant institutions to solve the problems facing the community. There are not going to be any quick solutions. But one thing is certain— at this juncture the community ought to have already laid the ground work for their children.

Democratically elected Sikh religious organizations have existed in Canada for more than four generations, whereas the federal government's multicultural program was created only in 1971. The first Sikh *Gurdwara* (Sikh church) was built in 1908, in Vancouver. Now there are close to seventy *Gurdwaras* across the country. There are numerous Sikh organizations with more being founded all the time. Virtually every local group now supports some kind of society. A number of factors have contributed to this organizational growth. Federal and provincial government expectations are partly responsible. The federal multicultural directorate has encouraged the development of community organizations so that it can represent their membership to the government. The aspiring spokespersons gain community status through associational affiliation. This is also an incentive to obtain project funding and financial support for the organization. Organizations also become vehicles for people to remain in touch with each other. People look to these organizations as a means of maintaining culture, language, religion, and links with their place of birth. Provincial funding for language promotion has been of great benefit to the community. A wide range of programs aimed at cultural promotion and its preservation are direct results of government policy. In 1981, Sikhs were able to set up a Sikh national organization, the Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada, and received the federal funding for its activities.

Religious organizations are the most strongly supported by followers of the faith, and normally there is no dearth of funding. Donations continue to flow for religious cause. For Sikhs, the establishment of religious institutions is quite an accomplishment. They were able to establish the institutions on their own, without the help of any external Canadian source. The *Gurdwara* is the primary institution of the Sikh faith. The functions of other Sikh institutions identified in Appendix B could be carried out within the precincts of the *Gurdwaras*.

Only communities with strong, well articulated religious and moral foundations can survive. The Sikh community in Canada should identify the

similarities it shares with other new-comers to Canada, as well as what differentiates them. If not, Sikhs will be lumped together with about fifty other groups—as "East Indians"—and will be reduced to abstract categories. Gurdit Singh, the organizer of the voyage of *Komagata Maru* was an extremely creative and innovative individual who was opposed by an inflexible, uninformed government. Today, Gurdit Singh would be seen as someone with the qualities to create new jobs instead of being viewed as an intruder.

Government grants can create dependency and be terminated in arbitrary ways, given the shifting priorities of governments. For example, the Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada's funding was cut off. Many organizations receiving government grants turn into bureaucracies or dissolve into anarchy.

Mediating structures in community development can provide security to members and encourage risk-taking, creativity, and innovation. Successful mediating structures have three functions. They scan and screen inside and outside the community to identify forces that will influence its future; manage community resources to secure the best returns for the least effort; and identify options for personal, organizational, and community development. Successful community organizations have a sound financial basis and a focus of fidelity. Lasting communities retain their identity and integrity by focusing inwards—and outwards—and strengthening the sense of trust and interdependence. The members avoid separation and assimilation. "When caribou fight and tangle their antlers, they die as they struggle to break free of each other. On the Tundra where the animals could not disengage from each other they died as a result of their conflict. Musk oxen form a circle, horns pointing outwards, when attacked. This deterred wolves from attacking the group. The very existence of this life form offers an indication of how different cultures, different peoples, different communities can live together in harmony, creating something unique, maintaining their own identities and integrities, avoiding conflict and confrontation and enhancing co-operation in all its many forms," writes Jim Lots.

Steps Undertaken

Parents have few resources to ward off the impact of those Western values which are incongruent with Sikh values on Sikh children, with the exception of teaching at home and weekend schooling. At home, parents attempt to establish parent-child relationships on traditional lines, such as strict obedience to their authority, and try to keep their children from social situations that could threaten Sikh values, particularly the girls from dating. The dating restrictions are enforced rigidly. Most children marry along traditional lines in arranged marriages, and virtually all daughters do so. Even sons marry within their parents' expectations. To many it appears that inter-racial marriage would signal the end of the family line. Sikhs have started administering *Kirtan* (devotional singing) through music classes in *Gurdwaras* or community centres. Parents

facilitate better understanding of subjects by teaching children at home. Two to three week youth camps provide religious orientation ranging from history of the Sikh Gurus, to history of Canadian Sikhs, fundamentals of Sikh religion, music, *Kirtan*, Punjabi sports, and several motivating incentives to the Sikh children and youth. Many young Sikhs have taken *Amrit* (Sikh initiation). *Khalsa* (Sikh) schools are being set up for Sikh children. Chairs of Sikh studies have already been set up at the University of British Columbia and at the University of Toronto. A chair at the University of Michigan is in the process of being set up. Several Sikh Studies conferences were organized in the past four years in North America. Sikh students have set up a world-wide computer network for communications among themselves. Punjabi fonts have been developed with commercially available word processors.

Sikhs must set up additional community institutions to impart religious and cultural values in order to ensure the survival of the Sikh community in North America. There is not much choice. Sikh identity is worth fighting for. The range of activities pursued by the community to preserve Sikh identity is merely the measure of awareness of a long struggle ahead for generations to come. It is not going to lead them successfully through the stormy ocean when odds against survival are enormous. The future, although challenging, has many promising notes. They must set up additional community institutions, not only to impart religious and cultural values but also in the area of training professionals. Additional endeavours in educational pursuits should be initiated, inroads ought be made into the political system and bureaucracy in order to ensure survival of the Sikh community in North America. We must further strengthen existing institutions and ensure that all Sikh children go through this process.

Several community-based programs aimed at language retention, religious instructions, Punjabi music, and dance have had a major impact on inculcating Sikh values in the sphere of religion and culture on Canadian-born Sikh children. Sikhs are conscious of their ethnicity and heritage, and they know that they are a visible minority. In spite of rigorous indoctrination of their children, there is a strong feeling that in the long run their cultural values would be difficult to preserve in North America. They are fighting against enormous odds. In their heart of hearts Sikhs also strongly believe that they will be able to retain their traditional language, religious practice, culture, and ethnic identity. Sikhs are reinforcing their belief by vigorously maintaining cultural practices including religious celebrations, and food practices to achieve the goal. Major festivals are celebrated at the *Gurdwara* with an *Akhand Path*¹. Some festivals are *Gurpurbs* commemorating the births and deaths of the *Gurus* and other important events along with whole range of community institutions which constantly remind them about Sikh heritage.

Gurdwara-Oriented Activities

In the development of Sikh institutions Sikhs have remained very dedicated and committed. Even if there are only ten Sikh families in a town, they will start holding Sunday religious services in rotation in the homes of each family. When the number of families grow to about twenty, they will consider forming a Sikh society to administer religious functions. Sikhs have been able to build both temporary and permanent *Gurdwaras*, even when the community formed less than one hundred people. *Gurdwara* planning is immediately undertaken once a sizeable number of people can support it. This objective is vigorously pursued, and Sikhs donate generously towards this institution.

Apart from religious services, *Gurdwaras* are used for multi-community activities which include, social, cultural and political events. Out of town visitors could stay for a few days, as free lodging and boarding is provided. Weekly Sunday services allow community members to remain in contact with each other. Newcomers become involved in the social life. After the services, *Langar* (free meal) is served to all who are present at the function, Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike. The management committee organizes lectures, *Kirtan* (devotional singing), and *Katha* (exposition). In many *Gurdwaras* services are offered daily, both in the morning and evening.

Depending upon the size of the community many *Gurdwara* management committees provide a range of educational and cultural programs. The introduction of Punjabi language classes for children ensures capacity to read and write Punjabi, which is vital for children's retention of Sikh religion and culture. Language being the great reservoir of cultural meaning, the Sikhs lay great stress in learning *Gurmukhi* (script for writing Punjabi), since religious texts are written in *Gurmukhi*. Some societies provide Sunday schools where formal instructions in the tenets of Sikh faith are imparted to children. Some groups support the teaching of arts such as music and folk dance, and some groups support Sikh charitable and political causes. The teaching of music which involves learning to play the *harmonium* (a box-like reed blown instrument), the *dhad* (a small, two-sided wooden drum), the *sarangi* (a fiddle), and the *tabla* (a pair of drums), as well as voice training, is offered in virtually all *Gurdwaras* across Canada.

All *Gurdwaras* in Canada remain independent of each other. They are always supported by the local community. Where there are more than one *Gurdwara* in a city, they usually get along well with each other. Across the country they also remain in contact with each other. Sikh religious preachers from Punjab, the U.K. and East Africa can often be found making rounds of Canadian Sikh temples. Sometimes big societies in the country sponsor eminent preachers, leaders and singers from Punjab. They are then generally directed from one *Gurdwara* to another, and the *Sangat* (religious congregation) derives great benefit from their rich discourses. The host *Gurdwara* pays for the travel expenses from one city to another, and takes care of their lodging and boarding.

Usually a small honourarium is also paid to help these preachers. Thus Sikhs remain fully aware of religious and political events in Punjab.

The teaching and practice of music and dance is currently prevalent among Sikh children. Sikh families consider it important that their children learn Punjabi music and acquire proficiency in the singing of basic *ragas* (Indian musical measures). The practice of *Kirtan*, *bhangra* (male folk dance), and *gidha* (ladies folk dance) motivates children to attend cultural classes. The Sikhs value traditional folk songs and music. Some of the visiting artists attract large audiences. They have strong poetic song traditions. The community organizations also sponsor social events such as sports and picnics which help bring people together.

In larger concentrations such as Metropolitan Toronto and Greater Vancouver, there are several *Gurdwaras* (twelve *Gurdwaras* in Toronto and ten in Vancouver). Other major cities such as Montréal, Calgary, Edmonton and Winnipeg have four *Gurdwaras*. Throughout Canada, Sikhs have contributed millions of dollars in building magnificent structures for holy congregations which rivets them to the area. Social, economic, and political matters are openly discussed in the *Gurdwara* premises, frequently at *Langar* time. The children are expected to retain Sikh faith when the fundamentals of Sikh religion are poured on their growing souls.

Role of Gurdwara

A *Gurdwara* (Sikh church) is the Home of the *Guru* (God), that is a place where the *Guru Granth Sahib* (Sikh holy book) is installed. It is a public place and anyone who wishes to enter at anytime is generally admitted. It is a school for learning spiritual wisdom where all persons are considered equal. Lodging for travellers and *Langar* (a free kitchen) is provided for anyone who wants, and it serves as a centre for religious, social, charitable, and educational work. Attendance in the *Gurdwaras* is an indication of their sense of being Sikhs and of wishing to associate with a distinct community. There is a *Granthi* (reader) who acts as a caretaker and who is versed in reciting *Gurbani* (Divine poetry). He has to keep the *Gurdwara* clean and admit any visitor. He recites the daily prayers at appropriate times, and anyone can join him in these.

A *Sangat* (an assembly for purposes of worship) is held generally every Sunday at the *Gurdwara* premises. The *Sangat* receives religious instructions and matters of communal interest are deliberated. There is no special reason why *Sangat* should take place on Sundays. In fact the *Gurus* thought all days were equally important. The Sikhs use the local holiday for this purpose, and as such *Gurdwaras* expect larger *Sangats* on that day. On Sunday, a Sikh family, along with parents if they are residing with the family, are likely to attend. Most Sikhs attend major festivals, as well as weddings of friends and relatives.

The *Gurdwara* depends on voluntary contributions for its income. Anyone entering is expected to bow to the floor before the *Guru Granth Sahib*, and make some offering, which is usually a token sum of money. The ingredients for *Karah prashad* (sacramental food), *Rumala* (cloths to cover the *Guru Granth*), and other things needed in the *Gurdwara* are also offered. More substantial sums of money are handed over to the treasurer with a receipt, and announced towards the end of the *Sangat* (though donations are supposed to be anonymous). Contributions are quite generous.

The music of the *Gurdwaras* is related to Punjabi secular music, but is more bound by traditional forms of *ragas* (musical measures), and vigorously emotional. It is generally accompanied on the *tabla* and the *harmonium*. The same percussion instruments form the backbone of religious and secular music. *Tabla* and *dholak* (side drums) are played with the palms of the hands. Melody in religious music is generally provided by *harmonium*. Traditional stringed instruments and pipes are played by some Sikhs, such as the *sarangi* a fiddle played with a convex bow and stopped with finger nails, which produces a shrill, haunting sound with a "drone" on sympathetic strings. The *thumba* and *thumbi* are small one stringed instruments, held horizontally and plucked, or bowed like a *sarangi*. The *bansari* is a simple flute and the *langoja* is a pair of end-blown pipes played simultaneously.

The sacred places are built with awe and reverence for the Almighty. Once these are built the power of the sacred force takes control over builders and visitors alike. The *Gurdwara* becomes an agent that arranges an audience with God. *Gurdwaras* vary in layout from a square to a rectangular building. In the prayer-hall, the *Guru Granth Sahib* is installed on a dias on the central axis closer to the wall. The *Guru Granth Sahib* is installed on cushions under the *palki* (a carved wooden canopy). When it is not being read, the *Guru Granth* is kept shut, under *rumala* (silk cloths) which are donated from time to time by members of the congregation. People enter from the opposite side, and after making obeisance to *Guru Granth Sahib*, they sit, women to the left and men to the right facing the dias, in a semi-circle leaving room for people to come and go. To the right of the *palki* on the dias singers and temple officers sit and preacher speaks on the left. Microphones are connected to loudspeakers. The *palki* is decorated with flowers and streamers and there are strip lights.

The *Granthi*, not a priest in any sense, sits behind the *Guru Granth* waving a *chauri* (fly-whisk), a sign of respect. The post can be occupied by any man or woman who is an initiated Sikh and able to recite *Gurbani*. *Kirtan* (devotional singing) is interspersed with *katha* (exposition) ranging from brief explanations of the contents of a stanza to full—scale sermons. Any man or woman who wishes may sing a *shabad* (hymn) or other religious songs, or recite a poem, and children are encouraged to take part. All speeches and recitations are begun and ended with Guru Gobind Singh's salutation, "*Waheguruji ka*

Khalsa: Waheguruji ki Fateh ("The God's *Khalsa*: The God's Victory"). For closing a *Sangat*, the first five stanzas and the last from a hymn of Guru Amar Das known as the *Anand Sahib*, a remarkable song of religious ecstasy, are usually sung. Then the entire *Sangat* stands and sings a verse in praise of the *Gurus* and the *Granth Sahib* and afterwards a *Granthi* recites the *Ardas* (Sikh prayer). All bow to the floor and stand again to recite a verse which ends with "*Raj Karega Khalsa, Akhi Rahe na Koe*" ("The *Khalsa* shall rule, there shall be no slaves"). "*Bole so nihal, Sat Sri Akal*" ("Who hears this shall be saved—Truth is Timeless"). All bow toward the *Guru Granth*, then sit again while another *wak* (random reading from the *Guru Granth Sahib*) is taken.

Throughout the *Sangat*, people are coming and going, children are allowed to run out and play when they get bored, and they come in and go out quite freely. Babies are brought in by their mothers. The atmosphere is that of a jolly family occasion, and there is no hushed solemnity required. The children are not expected to pay much attention to the songs and sermons, and it is not expected that they will understand much of what is going on, though they are trained to bow to the *Guru Granth Sahib* and make an offering when they enter, and to take part in the *Ardas* (prayer). As they get older, they might learn songs and poems to recite, and are duly rewarded by their parents. The *Sangat* ends with the distribution of *Karah Prashad*, and a full scale meal is served from *Guru ka Langar* (the *Guru's* kitchen.)

Networks

When Sikhs came to British Columbia around the turn of the century, they were able to lower expenses by providing a system of social welfare while living together. Sikhs organized the *Khalsa Diwan Society* in 1907 and built the Vancouver *Gurdwara* in 1908. A night school was set up in 1911, and a few journals published. Support of community institutions paid dividends in modifying immigration regulations and helping to remove legal restrictions. Union membership assisted in acquiring equal wages. Community relations partially compensated for their separation from families. The Sikhs by nature cultivate relations mainly with those whose class, age, sex, and social status are similar to their own. Community ties are generally voluntary. It is through community links that the word passes about jobs, local events, and surrounding conditions. The community also functions as a moral force. Mediation by respected community members in solving family conflicts is common. The community sets up various institutions such as *Gurdwars* and societies, and organizes formal get-togethers, cultural performances, sports activities, youth camps for children, and religious institutions.

Sikhs in the Vancouver area are generally related to each other. Kinship plays an important role in developing social interaction between relatives and provides rationale for association, but it is not a guarantee. There is a good deal

of cultural, economic, and social affinity among immigrant kins. In Punjab people are very conscious of wealth, power, and status, and there is little interclass mobility. Members of the elite associate with members of the elite.

After 1960s it did not take Sikhs very long to settle. They started sponsoring their parents who soon joined them and took a secondary role in family affairs. Their social life remained within the circles of the family, close friends, and the *Gurdwara*. Most adults were married and their friendships were confined to a couple to couple basis within the Sikh community. Because of their traditional role, the network of men is considerably wider. Visiting between couples is generally sexually segregated. The separation of sexes at get-togethers is a cultural tradition.

Sikhs have frequently run for political offices, and they have become members of Parliament and members of legislative assemblies. Beyond their own community, they received a strong support from other Canadians, and this is a significant departure from the past. This is now the primary communication network for gaining redress of political wrongs.

"It is often said that ethnic awareness follows a three generation cycle. The first generation immigrant is vitally concerned with ethnicity, the second generation rejects it, and the third generation goes back to look for their ethnic roots." Faced with enormous cultural losses the Sikhs of the 1970s have established dense ethnic networks of *Gurdwaras*, associations, and community institutions across Canada.

The post-war immigrants—particular after 1960—have made a dramatic, rapid, and successful adaptation to Canadian life. This is distinctively creditable, since many are pioneers in their own right, founding new Sikh communities as they laid ground work for their personal and family lives. A notable element is the establishment of large inter-locking networks of kins, friends, and acquaintances with their ethno-cultural groups, and Community institutions such as organizations, associations, *Gurdwaras*, institutes, businesses, and newspapers, radio and T.V. shows. Attempts to retain Sikh identity, religion, language, and arts have been substantial. The Sikh religious and national groups are an important addition to the Canadian cultural mosaic, and their cultural influence is increasing swiftly. More and more Canadians are getting exposed to Punjabi food, music, and dance and gaining a greater awareness of their Punjabi origin. Sikhs are now an integral and important part of Canadian society. Those who have arrived more recently have reaped the fruits of the struggle of Sikh pioneers a century ago. They in turn, are doing the same for their children and those immigrants who will arrive in coming years.

Sikh Organizations

Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada

A Toronto group of dedicated Sikhs attempted to bring the Sikh community of the eastern region together. The proposal led to the holding of the first Sikh Conference in 1979. The regional concept was broadened to take the form of a national organization. A task force was set up to organize the 1980 Sikh Conference in Ottawa, with a mandate to develop a concept for the national body of Canadian Sikhs.

The Task Force presented a draft proposal for the new organization and named it Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada. This was adopted by the delegates of about forty Sikh organizations across Canada. An ad-hoc committee representing all regions was set up to develop the constitution of the Federation. The Calgary Sikh Society offered to host the 1981 Sikh Conference. The All Canada Sikh Convention held in 1981 at the Calgary session unanimously approved the constitution of the Federation, with some modifications. The ad-hoc committee was then dissolved, but the members of the committee were asked by the general body to carry on as the executive of the Federation until elections were held at the next convention.

The main objectives of the Federation were to promote, preserve, and maintain Sikh religion, culture, and heritage; to speak on behalf of the Canadian Sikhs at all levels of government; and to promote Sikh interests and to teach the Sikh way of life. The Federation actively presented Sikh issues and concerns at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels of government, took the issues to Canadian Human Rights Commission, made aware sister ethnic organizations, and educated education boards, and library councils. Federally, the Federation made strong presentations by submitting briefs and borne witness to the Macdonald Commission, Abella Commission, and all parties parliamentary committees on a) visible minorities, b) employment and immigration, and c) equality rights. Submissions were also made on various issues to the Canadian Human Rights Commission, and to the Ministers of Revenue, Justice, Manpower and Immigration, Multiculturalism, the Treasury Board, the Department of Transport, the Solicitor General of Canada, External Affairs, Elections Canada, and Canadian Radio and Television Corporation. Numerous briefs and presentations were made on the issues of *Kirpan* (sword) and *Pag* (turban). The Federation made a presentation at the United Nations Human Rights Committee in New York because Sikhs were being arrested, tortured, and even killed while in police custody in the Punjab.

A landmark case for the Sikhs brought before Justices of the Supreme Court of Canada was the turban issue of K.S. Bhindar (for details see Chapter 11). The chair in Sikh studies at the University of British Columbia (for details see Chapter 8) was in the process of being established. When the project matured

the Chair was the crowning jewel of the Federation. The Federation actively pursued the case of refugees on humanitarian grounds with the minister of Employment and Immigration. The Federation met the premier of British Columbia and sought his support in the retrieval of the volumes of *Guru Granth Sahib* (Sikh holy book) which were owned by the courts and his support to raise a monument to mark the first arrival of Sikhs in Canada, and to erect a memorial in honour of the passengers of "*Komagata Maru*." The Federation presented a *Kirpan* (sword) to Prime Minister Trudeau, on April 12, 1984. The Federation started the publication of a newspaper *The Nation*, that voiced the Sikhs concerns. After the assault on the *Golden Temple* by the Indian army, the Federation, being a national body, was obliged to voice the anguish and anger of the Canadian Sikhs. Strong measures against the Indian government were advocated by the executive.

Babbar Khalsa

The Babbar Khalsa movement was established in 1922 in the long tradition of freedom fighters such as Baba Ram Singh whose followers were blown up by guns, revolutionaries like Ajit Singh, and many others who laid down their lives for the freedom of India. It was under Kishan Singh Gargaj (1891-1926) and Master Mota Singh that a *Jatha* (military detachment) of Babbar Akali Dal² was organized. Many of the followers were drawn from the *Ghadar* party and soldiers on leave. They advocated the use of arms for freedom from British rule. Kishan Singh was elected president of the Babbars. He was called *Gargaj* from his powerful manner of speaking. The organization brought out a revolutionary paper. The fearless Babbars fought with intensity but the movement was short lived. They were unsuccessful in securing arms and were rendered ineffective by the members inability to remain secretive and their tendency to allow personal grudges to mingle with revolutionary zeal. The British Indian government put up a prize of two thousand rupees on the head of Kishan Singh. He was arrested and jailed in 1923. He was tried and sentenced to die. In 1926, at the age of thirty-five, he was hanged. In 1978, during a mob confrontation in Amritsar the Nirankaris, a renegade and heretic sect of the Sikhs, shot dead twelve Sikhs. This massacre was an abhorrence to the Babbars. Sukhdev Singh remained the commander of the Babbars organization in Punjab until his death through an encounter with Indian forces in 1992. During the Indian army attack on *Golden Temple* the Babbars fought side by side with Bhindranwale troops against the Indian army in defence of the "Sikh Vatican."

The Babbar Khalsa movement in Canada is carrying out the traditions of these freedom fighters. They promote and preach Sikh fundamentalism. The Babbars are initiated Sikhs and are dedicated workers. *Naam Simran* (to practice discipline of *Naam*), *Kirtan* (devotional singing), and the narration of *Gurbani* (*Gurus* compositions) to invoke the name of God is constantly practiced by the

followers. Spiritually Babbar Khalsa seeks an ultimate merger with *Akal Purakh* (the Creator). They are devout believers in the service of *Akal Purakh's* creation. They believe in righteous deeds. It is mandatory on their part to live by honest means. This self-imposed discipline manifolds moral courage in the Babbar and he becomes fearless.

After Talwinder Singh Parmar returned from Punjab in November 1981, he soon established himself as the *Jathedar* (soldier priest) of the Babbar Khalsa organization in Canada. He set up Babbar Khalsa chapters across Canada and raised funds for the organization's activities. During his travels abroad Talwinder was arrested in Holland and spent a year in prison at the behest of the Indian government. After his release he returned to Canada. By this time the assault on the *Golden Temple* had taken place. The Sikhs were outraged. Many of Talwinder's supporters rallied around him. These adherents were initiated through *Amrit prachar* (preaching of Sikh initiation). He preached openly against the Indian government in the *Gurdwaras* and motivated Sikhs to take revenge for the desecration of the *Golden Temple*.

During the fund-raising campaign for the chair of Sikh studies at the University of British Columbia the Babbar group accompanied the author to many households and to most of the *Gurdwaras* in Montréal and Toronto for fund collection.

In May 1986, five Babbar Khalsa members in Montréal were charged with conspiracy to commit terrorism by plotting the bombing of an Air India jet leaving from New York. Santokh Singh Khela and Kashmir Singh Dhillon were convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment in a sting operation organized by the RCMP. A crook code-named Billy Joe with a criminal record and an informer made contact with the Babbars through Darshan Singh Anand's son Maninder. Kashmeri and McAndrew, in the Book *Soft Target*, write: "According to Billy Joe, the Babbars told him that they were planning to blow up an Air India plane." Billy Joe approached the Quebec Provincial Police (QPP) offering that in return for the waiving of a jail sentence against a friend, he would turn in the Babbars. The QPP and the RCMP accepted the offer. An FBI agent was brought in from New York to work the sting operation and recorded the discussions, the kinds of statement needed to convict the two Babbars. "Billy Joe was never identified and did not testify at the trial, thus robbing the defence of its ability to discredit the sting. The RCMP claimed that Billy Joe had disappeared, but the force did live up to its end of the bargain. The police intervened with the National Parole Board on behalf of Billy Joe's imprisoned friend." It may not, therefore, be out of place to mention (assessing fairness of "the prosecution" towards the Sikhs): "The cases of Kashmir Singh Dhillon and Santokh Singh Khela, and Arsine Henry and Gerard Thericault, both of the Confederation of the National Trade Unions, also of Montréal, who have been sentenced to three year term for participating in bombings at Sté-Foy and

Chicoutimi, and two year term for conspiracy to bomb and for possessing a fire-arm, respectively. In both cases, the informer of the RCMP/CSIS gave evidence. In the case of Montréal Sikhs, however, the informer was not produced. The differences in the treatment of the two parties are such that it is impossible for the bias against the Sikhs to be denied. Their offence is hypothetical and alleged to be conspiracy to be effected in a foreign country in the future," says Dr. Preetam Singh, Q.C.

The head Babbar Chatter Singh Saini, of the Montréal Chapter and Gurcham Singh Banwait who were also charged in Montréal, and spent a month in custody, but were released for lack of evidence. Within two weeks of the Montréal arrests seven Babbars including Talwinder Singh Parmar were arrested in Hamilton with a conspiracy to commit terrorist raids in India. Charges were based on RCMP tape-recorded conversations. After spending ten months in jail they were set free because Justice David Watt refused to admit the evidence of wiretapped conversations, because the prosecution would not give the defence full access to the information. Simultaneously the RCMP carried out raids in the homes of Jassa Singh Dhillon, Harbhajan Singh, Piara Singh, Balwant Singh Sidhu, and Ajit Singh in Montréal but nothing was found that could link them to conspiracy. In 1992, Talwinder Singh died fighting with Indian security forces in Punjab.

World Sikh Organization

The need to form an International Sikh Organization was considered at the All Canada Sikh Convention in 1983 in Ottawa. A resolution was adopted at the Convention to set up an ad-hoc committee of representatives from Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States to prepare the constitution of the International Sikh Organization. The storming of the *Golden Temple* by the Indian army hastened the process to form this organization. General Jaswant Singh Bhullar from India appeared at the Kamloops conference. He was interested in organizing such a body. It was here the initial contacts with the Federation leadership were made which paved the way for further meetings in Ottawa. After a few days Bhullar joined the Federation leaders in Ottawa to thrash out a constitutional frame-work for the International Sikh organization. It was tentatively agreed to present the outline of the constitutional frame-work at the July 28, 1984, International Sikh Convention in New York.

General Bhullar arrived in the United States just a few days before the assault on the *Golden Temple*. A group of dedicated American Sikhs such as Amarjit S. Ahluwalia, Gurmeet S. Aulakh, Ganga Singh Dhillon, Baldev Singh, Karamjit S. Rai, Rajinder S. Bajwa, Sulakhan S. Dhillon, and Didar Singh Bains joined hands with Bhullar and formed the World Sikh Organization (WSO). The representatives of the Federation contacted the executive of the World Sikh

Organization in New York and it was agreed to call an International Convention of the Sikhs under the aegis of the newly formed World Sikh Organization.

A meeting of the group was held one day before the convention. General Bhullar was named for the powerful position of General Secretary with a mandate to develop the concept and constitution of the World Sikh Organization. More than a million dollars were raised to launch the World Sikh Organization by North American Sikhs. On July 28, 1984, about two thousand five hundred Sikhs mostly from United States and Canada of all affiliations converged at Madison Square Garden Centre, New York City. The atmosphere was highly charged. The majority of the speakers directed fire at the Indian government. The author was present in the audience. The assembly of Sikhs sanctified the World Sikh Organization by acclamation.

On January 12-13, 1985, a conference to consider the constitution of the World Sikh Organization was held in Los Angeles in which only invited delegates could participate. The delegates approved a constitution with individual as well as institutional members. A particular clause included in the constitution is that the "World Sikh Organization shall strive through peaceful means the establishment of *Khalistan*."

Since its inception in January 1985, the World Sikh Organization has concentrated on lobbying both in the United States and in Canada, primarily on Sikh issues as they relate to Punjab. In Canada WSO has lobbied on behalf of the Sikhs to the Human Rights Organizations, to parliamentary committees such as justice, employment and immigration in support of Sikh refugees. The WSO has made representations to the Workers Compensation Board of British Columbia. The Organization keeps abreast Simranjit Singh Mann the (Sikh leader) in Punjab of its activities. WSO has written to village *Sarpanchs* (heads of the village councils) and senior police officers in the Punjab that they bring to the attention of the judiciary the oppression against Sikhs and to document murders for future trials. The Organization is working for the retention of Sikh symbols, and is heavily involved in *Gurdwara*-oriented activities. The Organization's major competitor is the International Sikh Youth Federation.

International Sikh Youth Federation

The International Sikh Youth Federation (ISYF) was established after June 5, 1984, by Jasbir Singh Rode in England following the invasion of the *Golden Temple*. The Federation's name is quite similar to All-India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) which has been in existence since 1944 as a youth wing of the *Akali Dal* in Punjab. It had been closely associated with Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale³, and was led by *Bhai* Amrik Singh along with Harminder Singh Sandhu who also played a major role during the assault on the *Golden Temple*. The AISSF was banned by the Indian government. Harpal Singh Ghuman who played a key role in establishing ISYF was its organizing secretary

and oversaw its growth in Canada. At the start of operation Bluestar (code name for assault on the *Golden Temple*) he fled the *Golden Temple*. Lakhbir Singh Brar, nephew of Sant Bhindranwale, was brought from the United Arab Emirates to head ISYF. Ghuman came to Canada, claiming refugee status, and became one of its leading spokesman.

The ISYF comprises of dedicated Sikhs in the service of Sikh *Panth*. They are devoted to Bhindranwale's Sikh fundamentalist movement, and are committed to the freedom of the Sikh sovereign nation. In Canada ISYF is the torch bearer of Bhindranwale's freedom movement. The organization supports promotion of Sikh sovereign state among Sikh *sangats*. A number of dedicated Canadian Sikhs went to India to offer martyrdom. They played a major role in the defence of the *Golden Temple* during the Indian army's assault on the supreme emblem of the Sikhs. A number of dedicated Sikhs offered martyrdom and went to India. ISYF is heavily involved in *Amrit Prachar* (preaching Sikh initiation). The ISYF renders financial assistance to the victims of oppression and their families in Punjab, provides assistance to soldiers who deserted the Indian army during the assault on the *Golden Temple*, and provides help to freedom fighters. ISYF dissuades youth from drugs and crime. The major involvement of the ISYF is in Punjab.

Macauliffe Institute of Sikh Studies

Early in 1985, a group of dedicated Sikhs who were interested in doing serious scholarly work on Sikh studies got together to set up the Macauliffe Institute of Sikh Studies. Notable among them were T. Sher Singh, Suresh Bhalla, Manjit Singh, and Garry Singh. The group later expanded to include about forty people. In the beginning, the group undertook to inform the school boards and police force in Toronto as to who Sikhs are and what is Sikhism. The Institute supported the University of Toronto in its endeavours to organize the 1987 Sikh Conference and brought it to a successful conclusion. In 1988, the Institute organized the conference "Sikh Canadians: The Promise and the Challenge" in Toronto. The objective was twofold: to get the constitution of the Institute approved from the membership and promote the Sikh image. This was done in a professional manner. The reception was attended by a high profile cabinet minister.

In 1990, the Macauliffe Institute funded by the Ministry of Multiculturalism was given the mandate to develop a model for a Sikh organization. The Institute conducted a series of meetings with several Sikh groups assisted by Joe Stern, a consultant provided by the Ministry. In the second phase an ad-hoc committee was formed which is expected to develop the constitution of the organization. There was generally a negative reaction from the community to the setting up of another Sikh organization. The new organization is called National Alliance of Canadian Sikhs.

Canadian Sikhs' Studies Institute

There was a need for a Sikh organization where issues concerning Canadian Sikhs could be intelligently conceived, rationally considered, and objectively pursued rather than just reacting to situations, which had been the case with most of the Sikh organizations. For nearly two years, Dr. Balbir Dhillon and the author had deliberated on this subject at several sittings prior to the formation of the Institute. In the month of May, Pritam Aulakh of Vancouver was in Ottawa soliciting Federal presence at the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of *Komagata Maru* episode on July 23, 1989, in Vancouver. It was strongly felt that if a group from Ottawa were to pursue the issue with the Federal government, the organization should be set up now, and the *Khalsa Diwan Society* should authorize the Ottawa group to approach the government on their behalf.

Dr. Bakhshish S. Samagh, Dr. Balbir S. Dhillon, Pritam S. Aulakh, and Bhupinder S. Sandanwalia and the author gathered in Ottawa and established an organization called "Canadian Sikhs' Studies Institute." Since its inception in May 1989, the Institute has made the following contributions:

1. Presented a research paper "Canadian Sikhs" to Members of Parliament.
2. Organized and facilitated the Federal participation during the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of *Komagata Maru* episode in Vancouver 1989.
3. Made a presentation to Solicitor General, Right Honourable Pierre Blais, on the RCMP turban issue in February 1990.
4. Organized a symbolic signature campaign on the RCMP turban issue from *Gurdwaras* across Canada in which five thousand signatures were obtained. The signatures were presented to Solicitor General, Right Honourable Pierre Blais.
5. Made a presentation to Members of Parliament: an address and a slide show at a seminar that was hosted by the Speaker of the House, Right Honourable John Fraser, 1990.
6. Organized the prize distribution ceremony and an address to Vancouver Sikh Community at the Sports International Tournament by Right Honourable John Fraser, Speaker of the House.
7. Participated in international conferences on Sikh studies in Toronto, Vancouver, Washington D.C., and New York, in 1990, and London England in November, 1991, San Francisco, in November 1992, Los Angeles, in September 1993, and Columbia University, New York, in April 1993, and Toronto University, in February 1994, and York University, Toronto, in April 1994.

International Sikh Organization

The International Sikh Organization (ISO) was formed on June 7, 1986, to provide a voice for the Sikhs in Washington, D.C., United States. The goal was to make the world aware of Sikh demands and eventually attain *Khalistan* (Sovereign Sikh State). There were to be two branches of ISO, one in the United States and the other in Canada. The organization never became a force to be reckoned with. It was overshadowed by the creation of the "*National Council of Khalistan*" in Punjab which led to the formation of *Panthic Committee*, and they selected Gurmeet Aulakh to be the president of the "*Khalistan Council*" with offices in Washington, D.C.

11. Recent Events

Some recent events in Canada, particularly the Air India crash, the Amelie Sikh refugees, and the current Sikh struggle in Punjab had considerable impact on Canadian Sikhs.

Recovery of Guru Granth Sahib Birs (Volumes)

The Holy volumes of the *Guru Granth Sahib* (Sikh holy book) were being used for swearing-in purposes in Canadian courts. This practice is contrary to Sikh faith. The Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada at the All Canada Sikh Convention 1983 in Ottawa passed a resolution demanding that the practice of swearing-in, being contrary to the faith, should be stopped forthwith and volumes of the *Guru Granth Sahib* should be returned to the nearest *Gurdwara* or to the Federation for safe custody.

Some members of the executive of the Federation (including the author) visited the federal citizenship courts in Vancouver, Victoria, Surrey, Williams Lake, Prince George, and Kelowna. It was found that these places did not have copies of the *Guru Granth Sahib* but had several copies of *Sunder Gutkas* (selected compositions from *Guru Granth Sahib* and *Dasam Granth*). All these have now been collected. In Victoria, members of executive met the officials of the Office of Attorney General of British Columbia to determine the status of the position of the Attorney General in regard to the volumes of the *Guru Granth Sahib*. It was learned that a judge of the Province of British Columbia was reviewing a request on the subject.

It was later learned that the courts of British Columbia had several *Birs* (volumes) of the *Guru Granth Sahib* in their possession. The *Khalsa Diwan Society* Vancouver wrote to the Attorney General on the subject of recovery of the volumes. The *Jathedar* (commander) of *Akal Takhat* (seat of temporal

authority) Amritsar was requested to intervene on this subject. After prolonged negotiations with the Attorney General, thirty-six volumes of the *Guru Granth Sahib* were returned to the *Khalsa Diwan Society* for safe custody.

Bhinder K.S. Versus Canadian National Railways

Mr. Bhinder K.S., an employee of the Canadian National Railway since April 1974, had worked for more than four years as a maintenance electrician in its Toronto coach yard servicing the turbo train between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. Bhinder, a son of a captain in the British army, was trained as an electrician in England. On November 30, 1978, Canadian National adopted a policy which required all employees in the Toronto coach yard to wear a hard hat when at work in the interest of employee safety. Bhinder, a Sikh forbidden by his religion to wear anything on his head except a turban, refused to wear a hard hat. The Canadian National Railway terminated his services on December 5, 1978.

Bhinder filed a complaint with the Canadian Human Rights Commission on December 7, 1978. The Human Rights Tribunal rendered a decision on September 22, 1981, and awarded Bhinder compensation for loss of salary in the amount of \$14,500 and ordered his reinstatement with the Canadian National Railway with an exemption from the hard hat requirement. Canadian National applied to the Federal Court of Appeal for a judicial review to set aside the decision of the Human Rights Tribunal. On April 13, 1983, the Federal Court of Appeal allowed the application to set aside. The case was then appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada by the Canadian Human Rights and Bhinder. On December 17, 1985, in a split decision the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that K.S. Bhinder was not discriminated against when he was required by his employer, the Canadian National Railway, to wear a hard hat.

"The majority of the Court found that the hard hat requirement is a bona fide occupational requirement, and the special circumstances of an individual should not be taken into account once it is established that an employment rule is a bona fide occupational requirement. There is no duty to accommodate where there is a bona fide occupational requirement."

"The Court repeats its findings in *O'Malley vs Simpsons-Sears Ltd.* that it is not necessary to show an intention to discriminate in order for there to be a violation of Human Rights Legislation. Although the hard hat rule was imposed in good faith and not in order to discriminate against members of the Sikh religion, the rule nonetheless has a discriminatory effect on members of the Sikh religion. The hard hat rule is saved, however, because it is a bona fide occupational requirement."

"Dickson C.J. and Lamer J. dissenting, find that section 14(a) of the Canadian Human Rights Act, the bona fide occupational requirement provision was not intended to obliterate the duty to accommodate. A requirement which has the effect of discriminating against an individual is not bona fide within the

meaning of section 14(a) unless not imposing it would create an undue hardship on an unemployed."

"In addition, Dickson and Lamer J. find that federal legislation is inoperative to the extent that it conflicts with the Canadian Human Rights Act. The fact that the wearing of safety helmets is provided for in the Canada Labour Code does not mean that the labour code provisions create an exception to the Canadian Human Rights Act. On the contrary, the wearing of hard hats by Sikhs, because of its discriminatory effect, is governed by the Canadian Human Rights Act. The appeal is dismissed."¹ The Sikhs lost the hard hat case. It will not be out of place to mention that Sikhs are not required to wear hard hats in the United States.

Sikh Symbols Versus RCMP

The Sikh presence in Canada goes back nearly one hundred years. They have been attempting to seek employment with the RCMP as initiated Sikh officers with the force, a traditional role that Sikhs have carried out for centuries. Sikhs have donned turbans and Sikh symbols in police forces in the U.K., Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Hong Kong, and India. Sikhs in turbans have served in the British Indian Army in World War I and World War II, and in the United Nations Peace-keeping Force. For those of the Sikh faith, the wearing of the turban, growing a beard, keeping unshorn hair and other Sikh symbols are essential part of their religious requirement and tradition. Any initiated Sikh was unable to join the RCMP if he was not allowed to wear the turban. Therefore, the existing dress code became an infringement of their rights under the Charter.

Around mid-1987 the RCMP Commissioner, Norman Inkster, came up with recommendations for necessary dress code changes to RCMP uniform to facilitate entry of initiated Sikhs into the force. By the time the commissioner's recommendations to allow turbans formally reached Solicitor General Pierre Blais in June 1989, it had provoked three Calgary sisters, Dawn Miles, Geneivie Kantelberg and Kay Mansbridge, who were connected with RCMP officers and their families, to initiate a strong anti-Sikh campaign, and they mustered two hundred thousand signatures. Much of the opposition came from Western Canada where Mounties provided security that was vital to the establishment of frontier communities.

The RCMP is a fine Canadian institution and Canadians are justifiably proud of this force. However, it would be totally wrong to suggest that the fond feelings toward RCMP are attributable to their colourful ceremonial attire. The RCMP is a highly trained and dedicated professional organization and their reputation is a result of years of commitment and service to the nation. But their important traditions have little to do with fashion. RCMP uniforms, like other Canadian police and military apparel, have changed over the years in the interests of practicality.

Respect for authority, reluctance to use violence, neighbourliness, assistance in family disputes, civility, and sensitivity to the needs of all parts of society are the RCMP traditions that should be preserved. The institution of the RCMP must not only be retained, it must be broadened, strengthened, and modernized. While selection and recruitment should be based on skill and merit, it must be representative of the society it serves. It must also reflect the prevalent social ideology.

Many opponents of the proposed change have said, the "RCMP is a part of real Canada" and it must be preserved intact. What about three hundred thousand Sikhs living in Canada? They are "real" people. They pay taxes, they cast votes that go towards electing officials for the Canadian institutions, and have contributed towards Canadian economy. Since the early 1870s, after several name changes, role changes, mergers, dress changes, and at least one close encounter with the organization's demise, it continues to serve a useful role in Canadian society. To be effective in its role and to continue to be a national institution, in a true sense, it must reflect the changing realities of Canadian society. If Sikh turbans have become a part of Canadian society, it would be patently unjust to bar turban-wearing Canadians from becoming a part of the organization. The RCMP has, in the past, accepted numerous changes and adapted to these changes very professionally and gracefully. Sikhs turbans pose absolutely no threat to the traditions, functional effectiveness, respect, esteem, and goodwill of the RCMP.

Some critics of the proposed change have publicly stated that a Sikh RCMP officer responding to a call will be easily recognized as a Sikh and may not get the respect, help, or cooperation of the people involved in the situation. This argument came from the people who wanted to maintain the status quo. In October 1989, Barbara Sparrow, the Tory MP from Calgary tabled a petition in the House of Commons bearing the names of sixty-eight thousand five hundred eighty-two people, mainly from Alberta, who were demanding that the RCMP dress uniform be retained. Calgary became the hotbed of the anti-turban controversy; some people sold pins, depicting a Sikh wearing a turban in RCMP uniform with a line drawn across the figure, and the words, "Keep the RCMP Canadian." A racist anti-Sikh calendar which made its way from Alberta after the sale of racist pins was sold in Winnipeg bars by roving salesmen. The pins in Manitoba showed a black man, a Sikh and an oriental looking at a European man and featured the caption—"Who is the minority in Canada?"

The question arises "Who is a Canadian?" The message implies that a Sikh cannot be a Canadian, even if he and his parents were born in Canada. Such suggestions present a very serious threat to our society, particularly the RCMP as a "colourful Canadian institution." Honourable John Fraser, the Speaker of the House, assured the members of the Canadian Sikh's Studies Institute when they met him in his office that the government will support the Sikhs wearing

turbans as RCMP officers. Some conservative MP'S spoke out strongly against the activities supported by Barbara Sparrow.

Liberal Leader Sharon Carstairs expressed concern in Manitoba Legislative Assembly about the sale of racist pins and calenders. She wrote to the Prime Minister and Solicitor General suggesting that Sikhs be allowed to wear turbans as RCMP officers on duty. Dr. Gulzar Cheema, Liberal MLA from Kildonan, Manitoba, urged people not to purchase anti-Sikh calender and T-shirts. Later, Justice Minister Jim McCrae added that those selling anti-Sikh calender could face prosecution in Manitoba.

The publicity surrounding the marketing of lapel pins depicting visible minorities angered the Calgary and Winnipeg Sikhs who felt the attack on their community was derogatory. The pin evoked a tremendous racial bias which was targeted against Sikhs and subjected the Sikh community to willful racism and hate propaganda.

In 1986, the Metro Toronto Police permitted Sikh police officials to wear their turbans, and other Sikh symbols while on duty with the force. Initiated Sikh youths found inspiration and filed their applications seeking careers in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police; Baltej Singh Dhillon was one of the successful ones who applied.

All Canadian Sikhs of different affiliations were united on the RCMP turban issue, and they joined hands toward successful realization of this objective. On February 1, 1990, the Canadian Sikh's Studies Institute presented five thousand signatures to Solicitor General Pierre Blais in support of the RCMP decision that Sikhs be allowed to wear turbans and other Sikh symbols while serving as RCMP officers on duty. The signatures were obtained by the Institute in a symbolic campaign from *Gurdwaras* in Canada, from coast to coast, in which a range of people from professionals to labourers participated.

The Solicitor General received a delegation of four including Bikar S. Dhillon and Iqbal Sara from Vancouver, and Dr. Balbir Dhillon and the author from Ottawa. Through a constructive dialogue, the Sikh point-of-view regarding Sikh symbols was placed before the minister, enabling him to arrive at a future decision. In the afternoon of the same day, the Institute made a presentation to the members of parliament in Ottawa on the Canadian Sikhs, their background, beliefs, and aspirations. The seminar was hosted by the Speaker of the House, the Honourable John Fraser, and a large number of M.P.'s and their staff participated. Prominent among them were former Solicitor General Bob Kaplan, former premier of B.C. Dave Barrett and Moe Sihota MLA, presently a minister in British Columbia.

A few days later Prime Minister Brian Mulroney expressed his sentiments in support of the Sikhs on the turban issue. On March 14, 1990, the Canadian solicitor general declared in the House of Commons that the Canadian Sikhs would be able to serve in the RCMP without having to compromise their religious requirement to wear turbans and Sikh symbols. On May 11, 1991,

Baltej Singh Dhillon an initiated Sikh, made history when he was decorated as an RCMP officer wearing a turban and other Sikh symbols at a colourful graduating ceremony from the Regina Police Academy.

Amelie Sikh Refugees

Sikh refugees had flooded into West Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium since 1984, following their suppression and persecution by the Indian government in the Punjab. Wealthy Sikh businessmen living in Europe began a discreet campaign to enlist passengers with promises of a golden life in Canada for a passage price of \$2,000.00. Some would-be passengers sought assistance from relatives in Canada. Rolf Nygren agreed to find a vessel to transport the refugees to Canada, and accepted an amount of \$10,000.00. On June 23, 1987, the *Amelie*, slipped out of Rotterdam harbour, without informing port authorities of her destination. The passengers boarded the vessel along the Belgian coast and at northern European ports. M.V. *Amelie*, a rusty 190 foot cargo ship with one hundred seventy-four passengers aboard, left the Netherlands on a nineteen day voyage to Canada. The passage across the Atlantic was rough, and the passengers had an appalling voyage. They were thrown in the dirty hold in cramped quarters. Some slept close to the hole in the deck that served as a toilet. Only for five minutes a day a light bulb was turned on when food was thrown down to them.

On July 11, the *Amelie*, under Castor Lasalle's command, a deputy to Nygren, nosed through thick fog off the southwest coast of Nova Scotia. He threaded a treacherous course between rock ledges and freak tidal currents. Shortly after midnight in the early hours of Sunday morning, July 12, 1987, the *Amelie's* crew unloaded one hundred seventy-three men and one woman at Charlesville, a small community of about fifty people on a rocky beach 220 km southwest of Halifax. Most of them were Sikh refugees from the Punjab. They believed that Canadian immigration laws, are less restrictive, and would allow them easy entry into the country.

The refugees spent their first two hours on Canadian soil drying out, destroying evidence, and smartening up their appearance. It was still dark and foggy as the group went inland, following a circuitous route of desolate, boggy grassland to the nearest road. An hour later the neatly dressed, turbaned Sikhs gathered on the highway and on front lawns and asked for transportation to the nearest city. They were surprised when told that they were three thousand km from Toronto, and a taxi to Halifax would cost \$300.00. Local residents called the RCMP, and the Mounties arrived about 5:00 a.m. They drove the refugees onto the lawn of Tim Malone to avoid obstruction of the highway. The RCMP called the Wood's Harbour Volunteer Fire Department asking for the use of their hall to get the refugees out of public eye. The refugees were moved to the hall.

Generosity of Canadians

Rosalie Stoddard, wife of fireman Darrel Stoddard, was alone inside the hall running the kitchen for the fire department. RCMP officers told her that the refugees were being taken to Halifax at 11:00 a.m., which is a three hour drive from Charlesville. This meant that they would probably not be fed before 5:00 p.m. She decided to feed the refugees. Learning that they were vegetarians, she first offered them tea and Kool-aid. She went outside where there were about one hundred people standing around and asked if the women who lived close could make some sandwiches. Ella and Shirley MacDonnell, Susan Nickerson, and Natalie Pierce volunteered. Grace Nickerson, whose husband owned a local store, opened the store to get supplies. The RCMP officers allowed a few extra women to help make sandwiches. They were Kay Goreham, Ginny Ross, Toby Walker, Carrie Baer, and Norma Cameron. Some women from local churches brought in sandwiches. The sandwiches were simple peanut butter and jam. With just two hours, Rosalie had no time to plan and cook for one hundred and seventy-four people, "but nothing was left on the plates. They asked for garbage bags and cleaned up after themselves when they left. A lot of the refugees came to the kitchen and thanked the ladies. They were very mannerly and some of them helped out with the serving of tea, water, etc. They certainly left us with a good impression of their conduct," says Rosalie. Just after 11:00 a.m., a convoy of five chartered buses took them to Halifax.

Detention

The refugees were housed in a gymnasium on the grounds of Canadian Forces Base Stadacona. It became a detention camp for the Sikh migrants. For two days all Sikhs were detained without a hearing and without access to lawyers. The RCMP and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service suspected that the *Amelie* passengers might have among them Sikh militants fighting for *Khalistan* (independent Sikh state) in the Punjab and that a Canadian group might have planned their landing.

Military cooks provided a vegetarian diet to conform to Sikh religious dictates, and military physicians examined each refugee. Under the Canadian Immigration Law, an individual claiming to be a refugee faces a lengthy examination. Few carried identification documents, and the process was stalled. Later officials declared their intention to hold hearings. Several Sikh organizations and *Gurdwaras* offered to provide bonds which would enable the detainees to be released.

Chase

Within hours of the migrants' landing, police and Coast Guard searchers moved swiftly and arrested Rolf Nygren, a Swedish mariner, and Jasbir Singh Rana in Halifax on July 12. The next morning, an armed patrol aircraft spotted and identified the M.V. *Amelie* steaming in the direction of the Canary Islands.

An RCMP assault team boarded the vessel later in the day and arrested three more men. Nygren, Rana, and Lasalle pleaded guilty to the violation of the Canadian immigration law. They received jail sentences and fines.

Immigration Minister Benoit Bouchard took a hard-line and proposed a crackdown on migrants who arrive without documents. He bluntly declared that he was prepared to detain some of the refugees as long as necessary to confirm their identities. The three hundred thousand Canadians of Sikh faith regarded the one hundred seventy-four Sikh detainees as legitimate refugees and demanded their immediate release. Several Sikhs offered to assist the new arrivals and were willing to cover all would-be immigrants' settlement costs. Immigration adjudicators offered to release one hundred sixty-five of the new arrivals if sponsors posted performance bonds ranging from \$3,000. to \$7,000. Some passengers were detained as security risks. Meanwhile immigration officials had asked the RCMP, the Canadian Security Intelligence Services (CSIS), Interpol, and British, Dutch, and German Security Agencies for additional information on the Sikh refugees.

Unfair Treatment

Civil libertarians were troubled by the zeal of security investigations. A group of prominent lawyers called for an independent federal inquiry into the immigration departments' treatment of refugees. They argued that the government violated the Charter of Rights and Freedoms when it detained the Sikhs for two days without a hearing and without access to lawyers. The Charter guarantees "everyone" the right to counsel and the right not to be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned. There was a storm of public protest over immigration laws that will allow one hundred seventy-four Sikh refugees to remain in Canada for up to five years until the claims for refugee status are processed. Canadian Sikhs were offended by the depth of public outrage and lack of public sympathy. Some of the refugees had suffered imprisonment and torture in their home country. The authorities deliberately violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms when they sent their names, finger prints, and photographs to the Indian authorities who had originally persecuted them. The law was denied, lawyer's were disallowed, and the request to hold their identification from the government of India was brushed aside. Toronto Sikh lawyer T. Sher Singh, who was allowed to meet the refugees inside the detention camp, said that majority were genuine refugees.

Canadian officials, on the basis of a tip from unidentified sources, were alerted that a Dutch fishing trawler, the M.V. *Walvis*, was carrying Sikh passengers who planned to claim refugee status in Canada. On July 31, 1987, Minister Bouchard ordered a full air and sea search for the vessel *Walvis*. After four days, British authorities spotted the ragged ship anchored off Torbay in the English Channel. There were no passengers and Captain Godfrey Roberts was

stunned to learn that he was suspected of smuggling. The full scale four day search cost one million dollars daily.

Alarmed by the depth of public reaction about Sikh refugees, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney ordered a recall of Parliament to deal with the perceived abuse of Canada's refugee system. Under the current law, refugee claimants can work up to seven years in Canada while their case proceeds through claims process. The government introduced a new legislation to deal with the refugee abuses. The new proposal compressed Canada's seven stage process for claiming refugee status to three stages. This would weed out sixty-five per cent of refugee claimants at the border. This legislation was viewed by several MP's as an attack on legitimate refugees. The federal government was determined to impose stiffer penalties for smuggling refugees, and swift deportation for those considered security risks.

Most of the Sikh refugees settled in Toronto and Vancouver. The hard working refugees soon established themselves and became self supporting. Roselie Sotddard had won the hearts of Canadian Sikhs. She has been invited to several Sikh functions across Canada. On July 23, 1989, at the commemoration of 75th anniversary of *Komagata Maru* in Vancouver she was honoured by thirty *Amelie* refugees to whom she had served peanut butter sandwiches. She was delighted to know that some of them had hired Anglo-Canadians to work for them.

Air India Flight 182

Bombay-bound Air India Flight 182, which started from Toronto with a stop in Montréal, was flying across the Atlantic on June 23, 1985, into Irish air space when it suddenly disappeared from Shannon Airport's radar screens. The Boeing 747 jumbo jet went down in heavy seas ninety miles off the coast of Ireland killing all three hundred twenty-nine people aboard. It was the worst airline disaster at sea in history. Observers speculated the possibility of an explosive device placed on board by Sikh extremists. Suspicion was focused on Sikhs since they were engaged in bloody reprisals after the attack on the *Golden Temple* by the Indian army, and the massacre of Sikhs in the wake of Indira Gandhi's assassination. Almost simultaneously another bomb blast at Narita Airport outside Tokyo claimed the lives of two workers unloading baggage from C.P. Air Flight 003 from Vancouver to Tokyo. The luggage was being carted to Air India Flight 301 to Bangkok. Japanese forensic experts found the explosives had been packed inside a stereo tuner contained inside a suit case. Canadian officials moved swiftly to implement more restrictive regulations. The tragedy sent shock waves around the world but the grief was deeply felt among Canadians of Indian origin, many Sikh passengers perished in this tragedy. Kashmeri and McAndrew, write in *Soft Target*, that "The CSIS investigators became convinced that the Indian Intelligence Service may have played a role in the bombings. The Indian consulate continually fed information

that Sikh terrorists were the source of bombs. The disinformation campaign made the public look upon Sikhs as a menace and the separatist groups as the obvious culprits responsible for the bombings." The media virtually put the Canadian Sikh community on trial day in and day out for years, and tarnished its image. Those were difficult days for Canadian Sikhs, yet they endured the stigma.

Current Sikh Struggle in Punjab

Context

Presently there are eight hundred and fifty million Indians in India, out of which one hundred and seventeen million are Muslims, sixteen million Sikhs, seventeen million Christians and a quarter million *Parsis*. That leaves some seven hundred million who by law are "Hindus," but in fact at least fifty per cent (or three hundred and fifty million) are "untouchables," *Jains*, and Buddhists (followers of Buddha). The Indian constitution declares all persons who are not Muslims, Christians, or *Parsis* (followers of Zoroaster), to be "Hindus." The untouchables have long declared themselves as *Ad Dharmis*. They have stated: "We are the original people of this Country (India) and our religion is *Ad Dharm*. The Hindu *qaum* (nation) came from outside and enslaved us. Separate us and make us free. We are not Hindus." The indigenous people were rigidly kept out of the fold of Hinduism for 3,500 years. They were thus known as "untouchables."

Broken Promises

During the partition of Indian subcontinent in 1947 more than a million Sikhs and Muslims died in riots as the two criss-crossed to their new homes. In the pre-independence era the Congress Hindu leaders Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru had solemnly promised to Sikhs a homeland in North India, if they sided with the Congress in the freedom struggle. Although Sikhs were less than two per cent of the Indian population, during the freedom movement sacrifices made by the Sikhs were eighty per cent. Out of a total of one hundred and twenty-one martyrs, ninety-three were Sikhs. Out of 2,646 of those sentenced for life 2,147 were Sikhs; seven hundred and ninety-nine out of the 1,302 gunned down at the Jalinwala Bagh massacre; sixty-seven out of the one hundred and thirteen killed at Budge Budge Ghat; ninety-one out of the ninety-one killed in Kooka movement; and five hundred out of the five hundred were Sikhs killed in the struggle for the emancipation of the *Gurdwaras* during the period of the last fifty years of British rule. Sikhs decided to throw their lot with India and did not press the British government for an independent Sikh state at the time of partition. After the country achieved independence, promises made earlier by the Congress leaders were promptly forgotten.

In July 1946, Nehru declared that: "The brave Sikhs of Punjab are entitled to special consideration, I see nothing wrong in an area and a set up in the North wherein the Sikhs can also experience the glow of freedom." On January 5, 1947, Nehru declared, "That the various territories of the Union of India would be autonomous units with residuary powers. Adequate safeguards would be provided for minorities this is a pledge and an undertaking before the world, a contract—in the nature of an oath, which we must keep."

In the light of the promises and assurances, the Sikh demand for an autonomous Punjabi-speaking state within the Indian union was a legitimate expectation and not a secessionist move. When the constitution of India was drawn up in 1950, Sikhs were declared Hindus. Both Sikh members of the constitution committee refused to append signatures on the document.

Economic and Language Issues

Soon after the British left India, the plundering of Punjab began. Seventy-six per cent of Punjab river waters and hydro power resources were unconstitutionally allotted to non-riparian Hindu majority states of Haryana, Delhi, and Rajasthan, thus draining rupees 40,000 crore (sixteen trillion dollars) worth of water and hydro power up to 1968. The control and future expansion of river projects which should have been with Punjab as per the Indian constitution was illegally taken over by the central government. Punjab is basically a farming state and the government of India increases the price of agricultural inputs regularly, but the price of farm produce is deliberately kept low. Sikh farmers contribute seventy per-cent of the country's wheat and rice to the central pool but are cheated by the Indian government by fixing the so-called support price of these two commodities much lower than the prevalent market price and by imposing unofficial control over the movement of grains outside Punjab. This results in an annual loss of rupees 2,385 crores (nine hundred and fifty billion dollars) to Sikh farmers.

Sikhs fear that unless their rights are constitutionally recognized as a separate identity, they will be absorbed by the Hindu majority. Sikhs believe that the Hindu majority is out to eliminate them religiously, ruin them economically, enslave them socially, finish them politically, and if possible liquidate them physically. Whenever Sikhs have formed a ministry in Punjab, it has been dismissed by the Indian government within a short period for one excuse or another.

Sikh farmers suspect that the government of India is scheming to convert Punjab into a wasteland, to break the backbone of the Sikhs, and convert Rajasthan and Haryana states into greenfields. Since 1966, the Government of India has illegally usurped the state powers to legislate, control, use, and distribute energy and water from Punjab rivers in order to give unfair advantage to non-riparian states of Haryana, Delhi, and Rajasthan.

Before partition in 1947, Sikhs made up over thirty per cent of the Defence Services. Farming and soldiering are the two professions which command great respect among Sikh masses, both of which are being gradually denied to them. Farmers are being squeezed out by limiting the size of land holdings, denial of water rights, increasing the price of agricultural input, and keeping agricultural prices deliberately low. So far as the services are concerned, the Government of India has made the policy of curtailing the recruitment of Sikhs according to their population which has decreased Sikh recruitment to 1.5 per cent. This is a deliberate denial of employment to Sikh men.

In 1947, the Das Commission was set up to examine and recommend the desirability of carving linguistic provinces on popular demand. The Commission recommended carving out Andhra, Karnatka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu, but refused to consider the Sikh demand for *Punjabi Suba* (Punjab province). The refusal to apply linguistic policy in the case of Punjab made Sikhs suspicious. The Sikh demand for *Punjabi Suba* was stonewalled. The Hindus of Punjab rejected *Punjabi* language and culture. Although Hindus speak *Punjabi*, they have disowned that they were *Punjabis*, thus Sikhs alone became champions of *Punjabi* language and *Punjabi Suba*. Approximately thirty per cent of *Punjabi*-speaking areas were unjustly merged with neighbouring Hindu majority states so that Sikhs remain weak and divided as national hostages. The new states of Haryana and Himachal were carved out of Punjab province at the cost of the Sikhs. Sikh leaders resorted to a fast unto death, carried out intensive agitation, and courted arrests for eighteen years before even the present lame, truncated *Punjabi Suba* was conceded reluctantly and gracelessly. Even then, Chandigarah, the Punjab's capital, was awarded to Haryana against earlier ruling and precedent.

Sikhs have seen the Indian constitution working to their disadvantage. They have been robbed of their river waters, farm produce and hydro energy, made weak and divided territorially and discriminated against in public services. The sanctity of their shrines have been violated and their religious freedom curtailed. Thousands of Sikhs have been arrested and thousands tortured while in jail. Sikhs have exhausted all democratic means of protest within and outside India. Not being satisfied with the economic distress, the government of India offered the ultimate insult to the Sikhs, by mounting an unprecedented military attack on the *Golden Temple*.

Golden Temple Assault

The reverberation of Sikh outrage at the assault on the *Golden Temple* sent shock waves throughout India and around the world. The mounting of blatant attacks by the Indian army: on the supreme emblem of the Sikhs, the destruction of the sacred *Akal Takhat* (the Timeless Throne), the temporal seat, and the desecration of seventy-four important *Gurdwaras* in the Punjab between June 4 to 7, 1984, stunned the Sikhs. *Akal Takht* was reduced to ashes. The Sikh

Research and Reference Library which housed historic documents of Sikh history was deliberately set on fire. The principal attack of Operation Blue Star took place on June 5, 1984, on the anniversary of Guru Arjan Dev's martyrdom (a day when the government knew that Sikh pilgrims would be crowded inside the *Golden Temple* complex). Thousands of Sikh pilgrims, men, women and children who were trapped around *Parkarma* (circumambulation) within the complex were brutally slaughtered.

The defenders, led by Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, held out in the *Akal Takhat's* basement. His loyal followers took up positions which they had been fortifying with sand bags. Some Sikh members of the attacking units defected, while other Sikhs donned army uniforms in an attempt to infiltrate and disrupt the front line troops. When Indian troops finally stormed the defences on June 5, Tuesday evening, they met heavy resistance. Army troops called for reinforcements of tanks and artillery. When the army troops stormed the basement, they found the bullet-riddled bodies of Sant Bhindranwale and his two top lieutenants, General Subeg Singh and Amrik Singh. Ignoring curfew laws, thousands of Sikhs rioted in the Punjab. They caused havoc in a number of cities. Every Sikh demanded Bhindranwale's body for cremation and vowed to keep his legend alive. Sikhs in Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom protested vehemently, burning Indian flags and demanding *Khalistan* (Sikh sovereign state).

The massacre at the *Golden Temple* was like a bolt of lightning that jolted the Sikhs. Sikhs who had never condoned secession could not justify the army action. Sikhs mourned all over the world and Bhindranwale became a hero. Bhindranwale's death took its place in the proud warring tradition of Sikhism. The crisis had come to a head during an effort to press home the Sikhs' demand for religious and regional autonomy. Mrs. Indira Gandhi (Prime Minister of India) felt that if she gave in to the Sikh demand for political autonomy, she would risk a Hindu backlash.

Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale

The defiant and charismatic Bhindranwale, known to his followers as "the guiding light" emerged in 1978 as the most radical of the Sikh leaders. He possessed mystical sense of his own destiny and claimed from an early age that he was destined to lead the Sikhs in their struggle for autonomy. Operation "Blue Star" was closely tied up with the saint-soldier Bhindranwale, who promoted Sikh fundamentalism. He preached that Sikhs were entirely separate religious people apart from Hindus and Muslims with a divine destiny to rule themselves. He and his devout followers laid down their lives at the *Akal Takhat* during the assault on the *Golden Temple*. Born in 1947, he began his ministry with the mission of *Amrit Prachar* (preaching Sikh initiation). He first set demands for greater autonomy in Punjab, and eventually became head of the

Khalistan independence movement. He gradually distanced himself from the moderate *Akali Dal*. In 1981, Bhindranwale began using holy places as sanctuaries and as military training grounds for training Sikh fundamentalists rallying around him. The tall, lean leader always wore a sword as well as a .38 revolver loaded with silver bullets. As militancy grew, he took up residence in the *Golden Temple* complex in 1982 and died there.

Carnage

On October 31, 1984, within five months of the attack on the *Golden Temple*, two Sikh guards of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi shot her to death to avenge its desecration. Within hours, Indira's son Rajiv Gandhi was sworn in as prime minister. Following Mrs. Gandhi's assassination, savage massacres of Sikhs occurred in Delhi, Kanpur, Bokaro, and other places for three bloody days. Nearly ten thousand Sikhs fell victim to this carnage. It was a systematic attack on the Sikhs and their economic base. Shops were burnt and looted, Sikh factories were burnt to cinders. Sikhs were dragged out of trains beaten and burnt alive.

"There was an infrastructure and a technology of terror in place from the days of emergency rule of 1975. *Goonda* (miscreant) leaders and the more numerous lumpens mounted the violence and carnage, and these mercenaries carried out the killings and arson. It was a criminal hatchet job carried out by known perpetrators with the connivance of the authorities. Individuals at the helm of power provided sanction and legitimacy to those who indulged in communal violence and torture, and higher-ups prepared the groundwork and planned it."

"Almost everywhere where killings took place, there was first a mob attack with iron rods rendering the victims unconscious after which kerosene, petrol and other combustible fuel were used to burn the bodies. In case of trucks the attempt was to set them ablaze through piercing the fuel tanks, burning fully both the truck and the driver."²

"The brutal killings occurred much more in the poorer colonies where women were on the whole spared but were forced to witness in full the torturous methods—pulling out limbs and eyes, tearing off hair, beards being set on fire, piercing of bowels and kidneys with sharp weapons—through which their menfolk were put to death. There is evidence that soon after Operation Blue Star, a plan of retaliation by identifying Sikh targets ranging from households to commercial establishments to *Gurdwaras* had been undertaken. The police were either actively encouraging the carnage or even participating in it. The army stood by helplessly with no specific orders to bring the situation under control. Mr. Rajiv Gandhi must also take the blame for the bloody revenge that took place following his mothers assassination. He knew it, he allowed and condoned it, indeed he took great advantage of it"³ says Rajni Kothari.⁴

Repressive Measures

For the past ten years, it is reported that the Indian government has instigated and actively orchestrated a systematic disruption of the social services, economic, cultural, and religious life of the Sikhs in Punjab by continuously surrounding the *Golden Temple* complex with its military and police forces. The government has virtually put a stranglehold on their financial resources. Through the constant deployment of the military in the countryside and harassment of the population, the government disrupted the only source of economic wealth which the Sikhs have. By circulating misinformation that the Anandpur Sahib Resolution of 1978 was a demand for secession from India, the government ensued with repressive laws and actively encouraged chaos and anarchy to flourish. By its internal propaganda, and by controlling overseas news distribution, the government made the whole Sikh community of India notorious as terrorists and lawless people. It also distinguished some as moderate and others as extremists. This is a complete distortion of facts.

Reassessment as Perceived by the Sikhs

The Sikhs are a peace loving people, devoted to their families and their occupations. They have never envisioned such genocide for any people and, in the prevailing unpleasant relationship, it is time for them to rethink over their political affiliation with India.

This reassessment, it seems, has been made more imperative by the post-Indira Gandhi assassination massacres of thousands of Sikh men, women, and children by the Hindus. The government's stubborn refusal to bring culprits to justice further reinforces this view. The Sikhs believe that they are looked upon as enemies and aliens rather than fellow citizens. Many Sikhs feel that all efforts at reconciliation have been exhausted, and that they should sever the relationship with India.

12. Future of Sikhs in Canada

Summary

Around the turn of the century the Sikhs arrived in Vancouver in search of livelihood and entered a tense racial atmosphere. Their industrious, adaptive nature and willingness to work hard enabled them to find work quite easily. They were soon absorbed into the Canadian labour force, but this did not last very long.

Sikhs ran up against racial intolerance, discrimination, and legal barriers. They faced problems of cultural conflict, difficulties within their own community, and with their neighbours. Soon the exclusionist forces were successful in shutting the door against Sikh immigration into Canada. There was an era of relative tranquillity when Sikhs were accepted and tolerated, though as inferior members of the community.

Gurdit Singh's bold attempt to bring the *Komagata Maru* to Vancouver on May 23, 1914, threw the Canadian bureaucracy in disarray. The ship was turned back from Vancouver, and forced to return to Asia. When the passengers were ordered to board a special train to take them to Punjab they refused, were fired at, and a massacre ensued.

Euro-Canadians have been hurting the Sikhs in quieter, more subtle ways since the *Komagata Maru* departed seventy-nine years ago. They have perpetuated the unjust impression that all Sikhs were disloyal to the British Empire during World War I. Until 1943, Canadian newspapers carried stories suggesting Germany had financed the *Komagata Maru* expedition as a plot to embarrass the Canadian Government. The German connection, the *Ghadarite* terrorism in India and its neighbours, the Vancouver murders and riot unfairly stigmatized British Columbia's Sikh community for years after World War I ended. The Sikhs of the *Ghadar* movement period were mauled badly and

ill-treated, though it was a sincere patriotic movement by a small number of people to liberate India.

Sikh soldiers established a sterling record on European, Turkish, and African battlefronts. One hundred thousand Sikhs donned army uniforms and fought with loyalty and exceptional gallantry along with Canadian and British soldiers against Germany in World War I. Sikhs won fourteen Victoria crosses. Yet these examples of gallantry and loyalty were somehow obscured: Anglo and Euro-Canadians have tended to focus on outrages committed by a minority. The present generation of Canadians of the Sikh faith fully express their gratitude that, although it took a considerable time, there has been a great improvement in their treatment as compared to the indignities suffered by the pioneers. The disloyalty stigma and continuing high unemployment particularly, during the Depression (when most Sikhs found employment), prompted the federal government to retain its anti-Sikh immigration policy. For a quarter century between 1920 to 1945 only six hundred seventy-five Punjabis entered Canada.

In the post-war era the construction in Vancouver brought more liberal attitudes towards Sikhs. There were jobs aplenty. Though not relishing their presence, British Columbians showed more tolerance. Immigration restrictions lessened around 1951, soon after India became independent. In 1962 the introduction of the points system replaced the highly discriminatory quota method. In 1967, Parliament permitted foreigners to come here as visitors and apply for landed immigrant status from within the country. This enabled thousands of Sikhs to enter Canada legally that year.

Canadian Sikhs had a turbulent past in the first two decades of their arrival. Events in Punjab always exerted strong influences, and dominated Sikh activities in Canada. The religion of these innovative and dynamic people imbues all their actions. In spite of difficult times, they retained a strong Sikh identity. Sikhs have been assimilated into the social fabric without losing their distinctive values and way of life.

Core Sikh Values

Many Sikh values are identical with the values of non-Sikh Canadians. Canadians believe in freedom, democracy, non-violence, peace, religious identity, family life, hard work, advancement, and human rights. These Canadian values are an integral part of Sikhism. The Sikhs of British Columbia strongly resisted the Canadian government scheme to remove them to British Honduras in 1908. They preferred to stay in democratic Canada rather than to become indentured labourers in British Honduras. Sikhism teaches truthful living, and emphasis is laid on selfless service, compassion, tolerance, love, contentment, humility, equality, and humbleness. The key Sikh work ethics are *Kirat Karni* (earn a living by one's own labour), *Wand Chhakna* (share one's income with others) and *Naam Japna* (practice the discipline of Naam). These work ethics are in accord with Canadian values. They form part of the fundamental Sikh principles

which mould the Sikh attitude to work. The outward signs of *kakkar* (Sikh symbols) signify deeper spiritual values. Unshorn hair is ancient symbol of spirituality. The comb represents cleanliness. Breeches denote self control and chasteness. The steel bracelet is the symbol of the link with the Creator, and a reminder of God's presence. The sword stands for fearlessness. The institution of *Amrit* (Sikh initiation) is the signing of a covenant with God that the *Amritdhari* Sikh (initiated Sikh) shall uphold Sikh values, the higher path of ethical and spiritual conduct laid down by the Sikh Gurus.

A Sikh is spiritual to the core. The goal of a Sikh is not only the spiritual uplift of the individual through *Sewa* (selfless service), but the advancement of all of humanity. Sikhs are deeply devoted people with unflinching faith in the Creator. Their strongest asset is an immense reservoir of spiritual energy, displayed in the many crisis that occurred during the history of their existence. The essential soul of Sikhism is non-violent. This is attested by the martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Tegh Bahadur, and of thousand upon thousand of Sikhs in Mughal and British times. But deeper than non-violence is the Sikh inmost characteristic of upholding and preserving the good and the true. If the good and the true are persistently attacked despite all patience and warning, then it is Sikh nature to defend and protect the innocent and the oppressed by every means possible. As always in Sikhism, the same essential quality manifests itself in every facet of life—the *degh* (free kitchen) and the *tegh* (sword), the *miri* (temporal) and the *piri* (spirituality), the *sant* (saint) and the *sipahi* (soldier). The valiant freedom fighter and the uncomplaining martyr are the same person.

The ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur, laid down his life to protect human rights and freedom of conscience. The Sikh *Gurus* created parallel institutions to fight the unjust caste system and replace the oppressive political state. Maharaja Ranjit Singh created a secular state and promoted Punjabi nationalism where people of other faiths and cultures shared power. The truth is high but higher still is truthful living. Selfless and virtuous conduct is urged. Moral living is stressed, since the ideal in life is "to carry out the Will of God." These Sikh values are components which will fit in the Canadian mosaic.

Contributions by Canadian Sikhs

Sikhs have contributed significantly in virtually every sector of Canadian economy. Family incomes are above the national average. Sikhs have risen to the position of ministers and members of legislative assemblies. Honourable Moe Sihota is a cabinet minister in British Columbia. Herb Dhaliwal and Gurbax Malhi are Members of Parliament. Ujjal Dosanjh and Harry Lalli are members of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia. Dr. Gulzar Cheema is a member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. Honourable Judge Vali Oppal is a judge in the High Court of British Columbia. Dr. Balbir Dhillon, Professor at Ottawa University, is author of fourteen books. Dr. Sadhu Singh Dhani, who came to Canada in 1922, has written a number of books on the

experiences of Sikh Pioneers. Sikhs are educators, doctors, engineers, scientists, accountants, economists, and architects. Some Sikhs became successful entrepreneurs in the 1920s and 1930s. Notable among them were Mayo Singh and Kapur Singh Sidhu. Both gave better treatment to their workers than most entrepreneurs. They did not discriminate against employees because of their races and had mixed work forces. By 1930, Kapur Singh Sidhu and Mayo Singh became community leaders. These leaders were instrumental in closing the gap between the host society and the Sikhs. They became involved in community affairs, and this had a significant impact on the Canadians. Mayo Singh became a philanthropist. He contributed substantially toward handicapped children and the hospital in Victoria. He would pay the entire hospital expenses for the day when a Sikh child was born. They both also supported local schools and *Gurdwaras*. The two daughters of Kapur Singh who were born and brought up in Vancouver studied medicine at the University of British Columbia. They became medical doctors and founded hospitals in Punjab. Many Sikh families sent their children through high school, and some of the adults who came to Canada with little or no education attended night schools. One Canadian-born Sikh became a pilot in the Royal Canadian Air Force.

Presently developers like Gurmej S. Bains are presidents of corporations, and philanthropists like Satwant Sanders, industrialists such as Harb Doman and Asa Johal have contributed not only to the Canadian economy but have also donated considerably to charitable institutions. Satwant Sanders alone has donated one hundred million dollars to worthy charitable causes such as hospitals and schools. These distinguished Canadians of the Sikh faith had the welfare of Canadians and service to the community in the back of their mind. Sikhs have set up chairs of Sikh studies at the Universities of British Columbia and Toronto. On May 11, 1991, Baltej Singh Dhillon, an initiated Sikh, made history when he was decorated as an RCMP officer. These kinds of contributions will surely continue in the future.

Problems of Identity

Sikhs in Canada are constantly fighting for the retention of their identity. Canadian Sikhs would like to retain Sikh values. The youth feel disturbed and confused by the conflict of cultures. They need a sense of identity. They are being bombarded constantly with images of violence, sex, crime, etc. through the mass-media. Sikhs have a strong identity, an ethically-grounded faith, a rich culture and a sense of their own being. Religion is a vital factor, an innate strength of the Sikh community, and at stake is the preservation of Sikh culture and identity.

In Canada Sikhs undertook defensive measures against racism by erecting chain-link fences when *Gurdwaras* were vandalized. They educated School Boards, Police authorities and parliamentarians about basic Sikh norms and the problems they face. The situation improved. Despite some difficulties Sikhs

have rarely doubted the worthiness and correctness of their ethnic pursuits in Canada. There is a reasonable chance of survival of Sikh identity in Canada, as they have already demonstrated for the past four generations. Sikhs would like to ensure that their religious sanctity is not trampled upon in future.

Sikhs are humans possessing both weaknesses and strengths. They are called upon to follow the higher path of ethical and spiritual conduct provided by the Sikh *Gurus*. They are basically honest, peace-loving, and family-oriented people devoted to their occupations. Their identity is being threatened not only in Canada, but also in their ancestral home of Punjab. Sikhs are alarmed at the Indian government's persecution of Sikhs in Punjab. They are concerned about rampant human rights violations, including torture and extrajudicial killings of Sikhs, and the very survival of their faith in the land of their origin. The Canadian media has not treated fairly Canadian Sikhs as their fellow citizens. The controversy over Khalistan has been blown out of proportion.

The Future

It is vital that Sikhs generate authentic material on their history, their traditions, and their present way of life, and ensure that it is widely distributed, through the mainstream media and by public information strategies.

Within the Canadian Sikh community, Sikh professionals are better placed to discern, screen, and develop strategies and to find plausible solutions to the problems facing the community. They can play a constructive role in all walks of community's life, particularly in the preservation of Sikh identity and heritage. Sikhs need to develop democratic institutions to ensure Sikh children are appropriately moulded, groomed, equipped with Sikh cultural values. Simultaneously they must fully appreciate non-Sikh Canadians and participate in their activities. Sikhs will then be ready to shoulder the responsibilities of Canadian power structure. This would involve developing mechanisms to identify and articulate problems affecting the whole community. Once problems are defined, solutions proposed and democratically accepted, the whole community will have to join hands to realize its success.

Social networks are part of adult lives, and community social organizations do not necessarily forebode a bright future for them. Adults are immigrants but their children are not. The future lies with those children. How much of what parents have built up will the second generation retain as they mature? Kinship will remain the major support but those ties will be weaker than the first generation's. Many Sikh institutions are developing firm footings. Religious events alone will not bring them close together. Recent immigrants are the ones who are going to take over the control of *Gurdwaras* and not the Canadian-born Sikhs, because it is the immigrants who created these institutions and they generally reflect their interest. Should control over these institutions eventually pass to the Canadian-born, they could become important vehicles to overcome certain problems the immigrants would continue to perpetuate. Sikh ethnicity has

been grounded on identity. Assimilative and acculturative forces will inevitably have effects on Sikh identity in future generations. What it means to be a Canadian Sikh will differ considerably from what it means to their parents. Their identity may not necessarily be weaker, but it will reflect more the interests of the Canadian-born. Despite good relations, prejudice and discrimination persists, and we must continue to sensitize Canadians to the fact that Sikh ethnicity demands close association and participation in Sikh institutions.

Sikhs should become politically involved in Canada. They should involve themselves in ridings and in parties of their choice across the country in a highly organized and coordinated fashion. Provided they are seen as a strong and reasonable political force to be contended with, most of the issues concerning Sikhs will be dealt with in a more serious manner at all levels of government. They should build communication channels within the community and with non-Sikh Canadians.

In order to ensure that the Sikh voice will be heard, Sikhs need to penetrate the power base of the Canadian society and persuade politicians and the bureaucracy to share political power. Sikh community institutions should aim at the harnessing of Sikh talents. The community should endeavour to direct its resources for creating positive environments. Such conducive conditions will attract the Sikh youth to play a constructive role that will make a difference. Niches should be created not only in the government structure, but in all walks of Canadian society. They need to set up such institutions that would train Sikh youth as lawyers, writers, politicians, academics, and other professionals who are expected to form vital components of the Canadian power structure. Sikhs should also become intensely involved in Canadian society. Let them feel they are part of the larger society so that Anglo and Euro-Canadians can feel they can rely upon Sikh support and cooperation. On top of this, Sikhs should be able to retain Sikh values which should be the essence of a Canadian Sikh.

Sikhs need to set their own house in order. Let them make sure that their institutions, particularly *Gurdwaras*, are models of decorum and not arenas for the battle of personal egos. "Sikhs should work for the welfare of all without distinctions," says Guru Gobind Singh.

Young Canadian Sikhs also need to adjust to the life of wider Canadian society without sacrificing their pride in being what they are, or underrating the contribution of their parents' culture and traditions. There are deep-rooted traditions of participatory democracy amongst the Sikhs, displayed in self-governing *Gurdwaras*.

There is a pressing need in Canada to undertake additional constructive work in education and other areas. There is a need for a resurgence in Sikh studies. Selfless, dedicated Sikh workers should organize to devote their energies towards the enormous task of building the Sikh community on a solid footing. These activities would, of course, require very large finances involving careful and strategic identification of the priorities.

Sikh scholars should develop the intelligent rational of the spirit of Sikh religion for the purpose of imparting it to Sikh children, and also for training competent teachers, who should form part of the education system of Canada. They should be entrusted with educating Sikh children and should become the nucleus of an excellent foundation for Canadian-born Sikhs. In every city Sikh education committees should be set up. Their representatives should coordinate with School Boards to facilitate improvements in the education of Sikh children.

The Sikh religion needs to be made more meaningful to young Sikhs in Canada, and the Punjabi language needs to be taught more effectively. More knowledgeable members of the community could give all kinds of assistance to parents and children to anticipate and help to resolve the tensions that are bound to develop. Non-political Sikh organizations are better suited for this purpose. Unfortunately they are always in danger of being drawn into the quagmire of communal politics and used by would be "leaders" as instruments of their political ambitions.

To ensure the survival of the Sikh community in North America, Sikhs must set up additional community institutions to impart religious and cultural values while making judicious adjustments to Canadian social, economic, and political activities as active participants. Community institutions must ensure Sikh identity, pride in being a Sikh, and the knowledge and practice of the essentials of the faith. The Sikh community may organize moral instructions and divinity classes, which could take the form of competitions in elocution and essay-writing on Sikh themes. Experts could deliver special lectures on Sikh themes, on important doctrines and practices of Sikh religion at seminars and workshops. Libraries and reading rooms should be set up. Scholarships and grants should be awarded to deserving and to needy students. Sikh interaction with the host society should commence with participation in interfaith activities, and practice of the Sikh concern for fellow beings. Sikhs should institute free kitchens, set up hospitals, and render humanitarian services to the elderly, the disabled, and the homeless in line with the traditions of the Sikh faith. They should establish old peoples' homes in every city. Sikhs should fight for freedom and equality for all, and against oppression everywhere.

The present youth camp system should be further strengthened, and the community must ensure that all Sikh children go through this process. A central Sikh organization should coordinate the activities of youth camps, and standardize texts and curriculum. There is a need for English newspapers and magazines dealing with Sikh history, religion, and socio-political issues. *Khalsa* schools should be set up and eventually Sikh colleges and Universities—thereby realizing the dream of Professor Teja Singh, who in 1908 thought of setting up a Sikh University in Vancouver, and of founding a Guru Nanak town. "There, men of all races, castes and creeds might gain admission with only a promise to refrain from smoking and drinking." Apart from lack of information there is actually a great deal of disinformation about Sikhs and Sikh religion. Sikhs must

therefore set up institutions where facts and relevant data can be collected, information disseminated, and erroneous propaganda challenged. They should establish prestigious Sikh journals of international standing in North America, not only to correct baseless allegations, but to provide facts and figures and promote the education of Sikhism.

13. Appendices

Appendix A: The People of Punjab

The Indus Valley Civilization or the Harappan Culture

The grandeur of ancient Punjab was the Harappan culture. Harappa and Mohanjo-daro are unique by other contemporary civilizations. Recent discoveries have shown that Harappan culture was not an isolated phenomenon. The Punjab region embraced a wide area of Harappan sites, with antiquities being found at Kalibangau, Chandigarh, Ruper, Kotla Nihang, Sanghol, Daulatpur, etc. The Mohanjo-daro culture is placed between 2500 B.C. - 1500 B.C.

The Punjabis of the Harappan period were peace-loving people. They lived in magnificent mansions and enjoyed considerable comfort and prosperity. They sailed to Sumaria and Babylonia for commercial exchanges, and fell easy prey to the Aryan (Hindu) forces advancing under the banner of *Indra* (the symbol of Aryan force). The skeletons of these city dwellers have been found lying in a disorderly and unburied manner in groups in the streets of Mohanjo-daro, indicating that they had been killed while running and left unburied.

Further explorations revealed that a pre-Harappan culture flourished widely. Mature Harappa is characterized by town planning, careful layouts of streets, elaborate drainage systems, organized municipal government and urban life. Establishment of brisk trade and commerce, developed arts and crafts, as well as distinct socio-religious traditions are apparent. The notion that the Aryans (Hindus) were the torch bearers of urbanized civilization in India has been called into question by the discoveries at Harappa, Mohanjo-daro, and many other places. According to Wheeler¹, "the skeletons of victims of men and women of the massacre perpetrated by the (Hindus) at the time of their occupation Mohanjo-daro bears witness to the violent end of Mohanjo-darons". More than

seventy-five per cent of the culture and civilization of India is non-Aryan, according to the editors L.M. Joshi and Fauja Singh, "*History of the Punjab*," vol. 1.

Whether Harappans spoke Dravidian language is not certain, but philologists maintain that Dravidian race-culture-language was dominant in pre-Aryan India. For example, the word *puja* (worship) and the sacred 'pipala' tree which was venerated in historic Buddhism as the holy Bodhi Tree are of Dravidian origin. *Yoga* (the practice of self discipline) and *dhyana* (meditation) is already evident in Harappan sculptures. The doctrine of *Karma* (rebirth and transmigration) is of non-Aryan, origin and possibly Dravidian. The *Munis* (ascetics) and *Yatis* (hermits) are of non-Vedic and pre-Aryan origin and closely related to *Buddhistic* monks. The most enduring contribution of the Indo-Aryan is *Sanskrit* language, and the socio-political system based on fourfold classification of society.

Vedic Age (Hindus)

The most important aspect of Hinduism is the philosophy and poetry of *Vedas* (Hindu scriptures), and the commentaries written about them. The sacred texts remained inviolate. The hymns of the *Vedas* gave spiritual sustenance, the *Upanishads* (Hindu scriptures) the philosophical justification, and the classical epics the ethical code of behaviour to the Hindu masses. *Brahman* is the power behind gods and *Vishnu* is the most prominent of the deities. *Brahman* is that from which the universe proceeds, in which it has its being, and to which it returns.

The security, material prosperity, and welfare of the people were the main duties of a ruler. He must be impartial and fair, and strive to do good and protect the people from all calamities. He must be strong and firm to realize all these ideals. The King, in return could claim one-sixth of the income and the spiritual merit of the people. The crimes punishable by death were robbery, theft, treachery, adultery, incest, the killing of man and the killing of embryo, etc. The penalty for theft was the cutting off of the hands, and the criminal's caste determined the severity of the punishment.

In *Brahmanism*, (the doctrine of Hindu caste system) there were four stages in a Hindu's individual life:

1. *brahmcarin* (the stage of a student of *vedas*);
2. *grahastha* (the stage of a householder);
3. *vanprastha* (the stage of a hermit);
4. *barunyasim* (the stage of an abandoner of worldly concerns).

The Aryan social organization had developed a four class system: *Brahmins* (priests, teachers) *Ksatriyas* (warriors); *Vaisyas* (peasants, traders, cattle raisers, artisans, and labourers); and the *Sudras* (serfs, slaves, clients doing menial work).

The origin of caste system has been extensively debated. Tradition claims a divine and natural origin of the system. Modern writers attribute it to the divisions of labour, and racial discrimination. The *Brahmins*, standing for spiritual knowledge, were held pre-eminent. The *Ksatriyas*, standing for the will that governed in accordance with moral order, came next, while the *Vaisyas*, representing economic values, came last. The *Ksatriyas* were entrusted with the supreme power of governance but were subject to the law, and became little more than a military class. On the origin of *Sudras*, there are different views. They are either the defeated pre-*Aryan* people, or Dravidians, or the aboriginals of India enslaved. The *Sudras* do not have an ethnic connotation. They were probably people belonging to a low social status, or a level of culture following unesteemed professions. The other view is that they were not slaves or serfs, but rather they worked as labourers.

The basic pattern of family life was an extended family system wherein parents, sons, and brothers lived together which provided emotional support. There was a common holding of landed property.

In 326 B.C. Greek armies under Alexander the Great crossed the Indus and swept on as far as the river Beas and left a permanent impression on the face of Punjab. By the first century B.C., a series of foreign invasions from central Asia by Persians, Greeks, and Scythians took place. Hindus were compelled to fight for the survival of the society. The invaders from central Asia came as conquerors. Their domination humiliated the Hindu order. The Hindus called them *Melechhas* (unclean).

Buddhists

Gautama Buddha (622 B.C.-548 B.C.) founded Buddhism. Buddhism stood in striking contrast to *Vedic Brahmanism*. It did not recognize the religious authority of *Vedas* (Hindu scriptures), rejected the sacrificial ritualism of *Vedic* texts, and indirectly rejected the very basis of *Brahmanism*. The sages of *Vedic* traditions lived householders lives, and sought health, wealth, longevity, and offsprings through sacrifices and the singing of hymns. The Buddhist *munis* (ascetics) renounced the household life, and sought *mukti* and *nirvana* (transcendental peace and spiritual liberation). Buddhism emphasized *brahmacharya* (celibacy) which included morality, chastity, humility, freedom from greed and enlightenment.

Hundreds of years after the death of Buddha, his teachings swept Hinduism off its feet and spread across northern India. At the birth of Christ and for seven hundred years following, the predominant faith of India was Buddhism. Buddhism continued to flourish in the Punjab throughout the rule of the Mauryas² particularly Asoka³. After the decline of the Mauryan empire, Pusyamitra of the Sunga dynasty persecuted the Buddhists, killed their monks, and destroyed Buddhist monasteries in Punjab.

Scythians

The Scythians appear to have originated from central Asia, around the highlands of the Black Sea and the southern steppe of Russia. They came to Punjab between (50 B.C.) and (A.D. 50). It seems probable that the Scythian ancestors of the Sikh-*Jat* entered the Sindh Valley between (100 B.C.) and (A.D.100). Scythians were a proud, self-willed people, and they led the life of stock breeders, the first horse tamers and farmers.

Muslims

Arabs, under Muhammad Bin Kasim, (A.D. 711) overran the whole of the Indus Valley and conquered Sindh and Multan. An uncertain number of Indians—landlords, peasants, and members of the menial class—were converted to Islam. These were forcible conversions of Hindus to Islam, and non-Muslims were persecuted. Islam believed in monotheism and was virulently opposed to idol-worship. Islam was a missionary religion and its votaries propagated their faith with intense zeal, supported by the might of the state.

Punjab came under the Muslim influence beginning in the eighth century (A.D. 711). Islam was established by the Turkish Sultanate (A.D. 1000-A.D. 1526) when Turkish slaves came into power in Ghazni. Mahmud (A.D. 1000-A.D. 1026) was the first Turkish Sultan of Punjab. In the train of invaders were men of peace who came with the specific purpose of spreading the gospel of Mohammad. To equip themselves for the task, they studied Indian languages, cultures, religions, and ways of life. These men were known as *Sufis* (saints). Many *Sufis* gained renown as scholars and godly men. *Sufism* was a mystical system akin to the devotional mysticism of the Indian saints of medieval India.

That the people of Punjab should have so quickly and in such large numbers become Muslim suggests that it looked neither novel nor strange to the masses. This does not erase the fact that there were also forcible conversions of the people of Punjab. Hindu society's endless superficial rituals and customs, the tightening of the caste system, and innumerable social taboos, probably contributed to conversion.

Sayad Muslims were considered to be descendants of Bibi Fatima, daughter of prophet Mohammad and were held in great esteem. The Turks, Arabs and the Afghans were a high class Muslims. The *Ahl-i-Teg* Muslims were engaged in the affairs of the state, and the *Ahl-i-Saif* were experts in swordsmanship. The *Ahl-i-Kalam* Muslims were comprised of *Ulemas* who were a learned class of religious leaders, and the *Qazis* who dispensed with justice.

The real power was in the hands of Turks and the Afghans. Turkish Pathans had a great abhorrence of the Mughals on the grounds that even after their conversion to Islam, the Mughals continued to mount attack after attack against the Islamic Indian Empire. Those Mughals who had come to India before conversion to Islam also became Muslims.

The ethnic pattern of Punjab changed with every new conquest. The Punjab, being the main gateway into India, became the perpetual field of battle and the first home of all conquerors.



Guru Granth Sahib, Sikh Holy Book,
photograph by Manvir Kaur Mann.



Front view of Golden Temple from the book
The Golden Temple by P.S. Arshi.

Appendix B: Sikh Religion and Culture

Sikh Gurus

Guru Nanak

The founder of Sikh Religion, Guru Nanak, (1469-1539) was a mystic poet who composed deep mystical hymns. He was born in Talwandi (Nankana Sahib), now part of Pakistan, on April 15, 1469, in a *Bedi* family of *Ksatriyas*. As a child, he was a favourite of both Hindus and Muslims. At Sultanpur, at the age of thirty, (1499) he had a vivid, mystical experience which is described as a direct communion with God—a revelation. Blessed with the revelation, Nanak evolved a completely new faith, "Sikhism", in which lay the seeds of a vital religious and social revolution. The pangs and afflictions of the time touched his compassionate heart. He presented to the people his discerning vision of an ideal faith of spiritual deliverance, human equality, and justice. The word "Sikh" means "learner" or "disciple" and is derived from the Sanskrit word *Shishya*. The term Sikh came to be used for the disciples of Guru Nanak and his nine spiritual successors.

Guru Nanak travelled inside and outside India with his Muslim associate, Mardana, spreading the message of Sikhism. He was a contemporary of the Mughal emperor Baber, who imprisoned and later released him. He set up the institution of *Langar* (community kitchen) which represented brotherhood, equality, and humbleness. It became a means of social reform by integrating different castes. Even different Hindu castes never eat together. Thus *Langar* annulled the caste. There was also a spirit of *sewa* (self giving service).

Philosophy and Teachings of Guru Nanak

"There is *Akal Purakh* (One Absolute Being). He is truth eternal. He is the creator of all things. Yet He does not remain apart from His creation. He is the

pervasive Reality. He is without fear. He is without rancour. He is not limited by time. Yet He is the one form that exists. He is not subject to birth and death. He is perennially self-existent. He can be realized only through the grace of the *Guru*. The Supreme Being is one, but what He has created has reality. He is without attributes as well as with attributes. There is light in all and that light is He. Through light, everything is illuminated. He is formless and yet pervades all forms. He is never incarnated, nor can any image contain Him."

"All human beings are God's creation. False is the caste system and false are worldly titles. The One Supreme Lord sustains all. Know men by their worth and do not ask their caste. There is no caste in the next world. Women are not to be treated as inferior. The entire creation depends on *hukam* (command, cosmic moral force, God's Will). This *hukam* is the principle of all life. The creation is the outcome of the Will of the Conscious Being. He is the first cause."¹

Hukam is the fundamental principle of God's activity and it is the principle of all activity. To break the wall of falsehood is to "Walk with *hukam*" (the Divine Will). The Divine Reality sustains the world. The human soul is permanent. The spark of divinity gives consciousness to the body. The soul lasts even after the destruction of the body.

Haumai (ego) is primary cause of man's bondage which separates Primal Reality and dims the divine spark within him. With passions and instincts, man cannot break loose from the stranglehold of the five evils—*kama* (sensuality), *karodha* (anger), *lobha* (avarice), *moha* (attachment), and *ahankara* (pride). *Haumai* is the cause of suffering. By overcoming *haumai*, therefore, the truth is realized. This is the way to achieve union with the Eternal One. Attainment of the union with the Eternal One is the ultimate purpose of man. Thus is the cycle of death and rebirth ended. *Hukam* is not arbitrary. There is also room for the Eternal One's *nadar* (grace).

Although the body is subject to destruction, it is not to be disregarded. It is the shrine of the indwelling spirit. "The body is the palace, the temple, the house of God. Into it He hath put His light eternal," says Guru Nanak. Since man is of divine lineage, he is essentially good, not evil. Special emphasis is laid on *sewa* (self-abnegating deeds of service). "*Kirat karni, Wand chhakna, and Naam japna*," is the duty of every true Sikh. He or she must earn his or her living by his or her own labour, share with others the fruits of his or her exertion, and practice the discipline of *Naam* (Will or Word).

Guru Angad (1504-1552), was chosen by Guru Nanak from amongst his disciples to carry on his teachings. Light passed from one body to another, one flame kindling another and they revealed in continuum the same truth. In the Sikh system, the word *Guru* is used only for ten spiritual prophets from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh, and for no others. Now this office is fulfilled by

the *Guru Granth Sahib* (the sacred Book which was apotheosized by the last *Guru*, Guru Gobind Singh), before he passed away. The *Guru Granth* is their continuing visible manifestation. Guru Angad popularized *Gurmukhi* letters, which gave Punjabi a distinctive script. This marked the beginning of written literature in the language.

Guru Amar Das (1479-1574), was the third *Guru* who inherited Guru Angad's light, and was his senior in age by twenty-five years. The life of Guru Amar Das was an example of humility and devotion. He laid down simple ceremonies and rites of birth, marriage, and death. The *Guru-ka-Langar* (community kitchen) became more renowned in his time. The *Guru* expected every visitor to partake in food before seeing him. Even the Mughal Emperor Akbar had to eat in the *Langar* before seeing him. Guru Amar Das composed verses of vivid spiritual insight.

Guru Ram Das (1534-1581), was chosen the fourth *Guru* by Guru Amar Das. In 1577, he purchased a site where he dug a pool called *Amritsar*—the place of Immortality. This historic place is the most sacred place of Sikhism. He preached a religion of loving devotion and service to humanity.

Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606), the fifth *Guru*, was the youngest son of Guru Ram Das. Under him, Sikhism became more firmly established and a stable economic base was secured. Guru Arjan gave Sikhism its scripture, the *Granth Sahib*, and its main centre of worship, the *Amritsar* shrine. He taught humility and sacrifice. He was the first martyr of the Sikh faith.

He compiled the works of the first four *Gurus* and arranged the hymns in different *ragas* (musical measures). The compositions of the *Gurus* are followed by those of *Bhaktas*, and gave the scripture *Granth Sahib* a definite form. The volume was written in the hand of Bhai² Gurdas (Sikh theologian 1551-1637), and it became a permanent repository of the *Gurus'* message, the revealer of Divine Truth.

Guru Arjan completed the pool of immortality and, on October 15, 1588, he asked the famous Muslim *Sufi* Mian Mir to lay the foundation stone of the *Harimandar Sahib* (*Golden Temple*) in the middle of the pool. By the time of Guru Arjan, the Sikh faith had gained a large number of adherents. Jahangir, the Mughal emperor, was alarmed at its growing influence. Many Muslims also became fascinated by the *Guru's* teachings. Complaints were made to the Mughal emperor that the Holy Book was derogatory to Islam. He came to feel that either the *Guru* should be brought into the fold of Islam, or he should put an end to this false traffic. Guru Arjan was arrested and subjected to physical torture. He was seated on red-hot iron plates and burning sand was poured over

him. He was then taken to river Ravi for a dip of cold water. He passed away there in meditation.

Guru Hargobind (1595-1644)

Guru Arjan's martyrdom marked a turning point in the history of the Sikh faith. His son, Guru Hargobind, became the sixth Guru. He wore a warrior's equipment of two swords at his succession ceremonies, declaring that one represented the symbol of spiritual authority and the other his temporal investiture.

He foresaw the use of sterner methods to fight the growing oppression of Mughal rulers. Guru Hargobind gave a martial turn to the Sikh community. He instituted the *Akal Takht* as a symbol of temporal authority. Guru Hargobind laid the foundation stone of *Akal Takht*, and Bhai Buddha³ (1506-1631) and Bhai Gurdas completed the construction. This was the sanctity attached to *Akal Takht* (which was destroyed by the Indian army on June 6, 1984). Guru Hargobind devoted most of his time to strengthening the Sikh faith and to devotional aspects. He resisted tyranny and intolerance.

Guru Har Rai (1630-1661), the seventh Guru, was the grandson of Guru Hargobind. The Sikh faith continued to gain strength during his period. He appointed disciples to preach in different regions of the country. Guru Har Rai chose his younger son, Har Krishan, to be his successor.

Guru Har Krishan (1656-1664), was younger in years and mature in wisdom. He had a rare ability to explain passages from the Holy Granth. Guru Har Krishan fell ill and passed away on March 30, 1664.

Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-1675), the ninth Guru, was the youngest of the five sons of Guru Hargobind. He was placed under the instructions of Bhai Buddha and Bhai Gurdas and developed a deeply mystical temperament. He wrote superbly sublime poetry that is preserved in the *Guru Granth*. His virtues included unsurpassed forbearance, and he could suffer and endure enormously. He lived a strictly holy life in meditation, and preached the virtues of forgiveness. Guru Tegh Bahadur's only son was Gobind Rai.

The Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, a pious man in his personal life, was an orthodox Muslim and cherished the ambition of purging the infidels to make India a fit land for Islam. He demolished Hindu shrines and converted them into mosques. He issued orders to destroy the Hindu temples of Somnath and Mathura (Cities). The emperor's aim was to suppress faiths other than Islam and make forcible conversions.

On May 25, 1675, approximately five hundred *Pandits* (Hindu learned) and pious men reached Anandpur to see Guru Tegh Bahadur. They apprised the *Guru* of their suffering and atrocities at the hands of Aurangzeb, who forced

them not to practice their religion. The *Guru* sat absorbed in thought. Gobind Rai, seeing his father in a pensive mood, asked the reason for his deep preoccupation. He answered that if a truly worthy person would come forward to sacrifice his head, distress will be wiped out and happiness ushered in. "None could be more worthy than yourself for such a noble act," remarked Gobind Rai, then barely nine. Guru Tegh Bahadur asked his visitors to convey to the emperor that if he (Tegh Bahadur) is converted, that they would all voluntarily accept Islam.

Orders for his arrest were issued by Aurangzeb. The *Guru* was physically tortured. His followers were cruelly put to death by splitting their bodies open and pouring in boiling water. Guru Tegh Bahadur was publicly beheaded in Delhi on November 11, 1675.

The *Guru* laid down his life to protect human rights and freedom of conscience. This martyrdom was of immense magnitude. A comprehensive genius of the age undertook to answer the challenge of the time. A response of spiritual insight and discipline of the highest order was brought forward which symbolized ideals of faith, love, compassion, and humility. The choice was deliberately made to embrace a martyr's death in pursuit of his declared objective to defend *dharma* (religious duty).

Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708), the last of the ten *Gurus*, was born on December 22, 1666, at Patna in Bihar. By his assiduous training, he gained unique facility in the use of arms. Besides Punjabi, he acquired extensive knowledge of *Sanskrit, Persian, and Braj*.

Although born a prince, he chose to remain a mendicant, a saint throughout his whole life. The circumstances of the time made him a warrior, yet he ever remained a saint at heart. He captured transcendent vision and inspired a spirit of courage and heroism. He created a new metaphor of the sword—the sword as symbol of *Akal* (God) Himself, and God a *Sarbloh* (All Steel). He battled and won but did not acquire an inch of territory. His fusion of the devotional and the martial was superb. He was a spiritual leader and harbinger of a revolutionary impulse. He was a poetic genius. His verses are notable for their sublimity of style, mystical ardor, and energy. His works reveal the power of his poetic imagination, mystical intuition, and a wide range of knowledge. Poetry was a means of revealing the divine principle. His hymns are full of *vir rasa* (the elixir of heroic element). The glorification of the sword itself was to secure fulfillment of God's justice.

Guru Gobind Singh maintained a royal court where eminent poets and thinkers were engaged in enriching Indian culture. He was a patron of the arts and at one time had up to fifty-two poets in his court. He gave the people a concept of nationhood. He became a *Guru* who others sought to worship as God, but he denounced this cult of personality. Son of a martyr and great-grandson of a

martyr, he laid at the altar of the Supreme not only himself, but all his sons, his mother, and whosoever called him his very own. He abolished succession by heredity, and restored to the people both spiritual and temporal sovereignty. He abolished privilege by caste, birth, station, creed, and raised the lowest equal to the highest in all ways. He maintained that without political power or governing authority the *Panth Dharma* (Sikh religion) could not flourish and survive of its own.

Panj Piare and Amrit

On March 30, 1699, on the festival of *Baisakhi* at Anandpur where Sikhs gathered in full strength, Guru Gobind Singh stood before the assembly and declared that his sword wanted a head. His words numbed the audience. Daya Ram arose and said with humility that his head was at his disposal, and walked with the *Guru* to a nearby tent. The *Guru* returned with his sword dripping with blood, and demanded another head. Dharam Das was the second disciple who came forward. The *Guru* made three more calls and three more devotees—Himmat Rai, Mokam Chand, and Sahib Chand, came forward.

The *Guru* led the five Sikhs back from the tent, decked in saffron coloured robes with neatly tied turbans. The five walked deferentially behind their Master. The *Guru* introduced his companions to the audience as the *panj piare* (the five devoted spirits beloved of the *Guru*). He performed the ceremony of initiation by preparing *Amrit* (the nectar of immortality), and gave it to the *panj piaras* to drink. The *Guru* hailed them as the order of *Khalsa*⁴.

These five Sikhs formed the nucleus of the self-abnegating, martial, and casteless fellowship of Guru Gobind Singh. They were given the surname of *Singh* (meaning lion) and were forever to wear *panj kakkar* (the five emblems of the *Khalsa*): *kes* (unshorn hair); *kangha* (a comb) in the *kes* to keep it tidy; *kara* (a steel bracelet); *kachh* (short breeches) worn by the soldiers of that time; and *kirpan* (a sword). They were enjoined to succour the helpless and fight the oppressor, to have faith in one God, and consider all human beings as equal, irrespective of caste and creed. The *Guru* asked the five initiated Sikhs to prepare the *Amrit* as he had done, and besought them to initiate him. He told them that the order of the *Khalsa* had been created under the direct command of *Akal* (God). The *Guru* must be one of them; then there would be no difference between him and the *Khalsa*. He created the *Khalsa* in his own image. The *Khalsa* was his embodiment, his alter ego, and his beloved ideal. Gobind Singh himself was the master as well as the disciple.

The inauguration of *Khalsa* was the realization of Guru Gobind Singh's divinely inspired vision, a grand creative deed of history conceived to bring about a revolutionary change in the minds of men and women, and arouse their dormant energies for positive and altruistic action.

Sikhs must never cut or trim their hair and beards, nor smoke tobacco. A Sikh must not have sexual relationships outside the marital bond, nor eat the flesh of an animal killed slowly in the Muslim way. Sikhs are forbidden to worship images, kill their daughters or countenance *Suttee* (Hindu women were forced to burn themselves on their husbands funeral pyre). They must assist one another in time of need, live by the toil of their hands, never beg for charity, and contribute one-tenth of their earnings for common purposes of the community.

The alchemy of *Amrit* (the baptismal nectar) and the metaphysics which culminated in this regenerative principle touched the hearts of people. The weaklings of Indian society were transformed into stout warriors and the *Guru* transfused life into the inert body of India. The *Guru* decided to abolish the *masands* (heads of *Sangats*) of religious congregations in various parts of the country. They were mostly corrupt—they took offerings from the Sikhs and misused them. The *Guru* called the *masands* to Anandpur and those found guilty were punished.

The free egalitarian society created by the *Guru* evoked hostile reaction from the aristocrats of Shivalik hill states of Punjab. Several of them joined hands and, aided by Mughal troops, made successive attacks on Anandpur. *Guru Gobind Singh* was finally forced to leave Anandpur on December 5, 1705. At Chamkaur, December 7, 1705, three of the *panj piare* and two of the *Guru's* sons were killed while bravely fighting. The two younger sons of the *Guru Gobind Singh* were immured alive for their refusal to renege their faith.

At Damdama Sahib, *Guru Gobind Singh* added the compositions of his father, *Guru Tegh Bahadur* to *Granth Sahib* (Sikh holy book) but none of his own. His writings were subsequently collected by *Bhai Mani Singh* (a prominent martyr), who compiled everything into what came to be known as the *Dasam Granth* (The Book of the Tenth Master).

Emperor Bahadur Shah was friendly with the *Guru*. Two Pathans, members of Pathan tribe of Muslims of Afghanistan, followed the *Guru* to Nander in disguise. One night, as the *Guru* was resting, one Pathan stabbed him in the heart. The *Guru's* wounds healed. He stretched a powerful bow soon after, the wound broke open and bled profusely.

At the age of 42, on October 6, 1708, he called his disciples into his presence and told them that the supreme *Guru* of the Sikh faith would be the *Granth Sahib* and no human being should hold office after him, thereby investing authority in the *Granth Sahib*. Thus, the *Guruship* (line of succession) passed to the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The *Guru Granth* was acknowledged as the medium of the Divine revelation.

Naam

Naam is the summary expression for the whole nature of God. God's Name is of crucial importance. The Name is the sole medium whereby the Lord may

be approached. It is the only visible form of the Creator available to the devotee. The concept expresses the nature of the Creator with all aspects and inherent qualities attached to the Divine Name. *Naam* is the Dynamic Immanence of God, a reality sustaining and working through the manifest world by force and form. Guru Nanak's fundamental doctrine has also introduced the word *shabad* (Word). The Creator is revealed through His Name expressed as the "Word." Through constant remembrance of His Name and by overcoming *haumai* (ego) the union with the Eternal One is achieved.

Naam in Sikhism⁵

The concept of *Naam* (Will, Word, *Shabad*) is fundamental to the gospel of the *Guru Granth* and entire structure of its theology. In fact, Sikhism has often been called *Naam Maarga* or (the way of *Naam*). The salient features and implications of this concept holds the key to the understanding of the message of Sikh *Gurus*, their religious and social ideas, and their world view. The Sikh *Gurus* have given the word *Naam* a distinct and significant meaning:

- i) "*Naam* sustains all regions and universes, all thought, knowledge and consciousness, all skies and stars, all forces and substances, all continents and spheres. *Naam* emancipates those who accept it in their heart. He, on whom is His Grace, is yoked with *Naam* and he reaches the highest state of development."
- ii) "*Naam* is the Creator of everything. To be divorced from *Naam* is death. All is created by *Naam*. *Naam* gives form to everything and through *Naam* comes all wisdom or Light."
- iii) "*Naam* extends to all creations. There is no place or space where *Naam* is not."
- iv) "*Naam* is the Nine Treasures and *amrita* (nectar). It permeates the body."
- v) "*Naam*, the immaculate is unfathomable, how can it be known? *Naam* is within us, how to get it? It is *Naam* that works everywhere and permeates all space. The perfect *Guru* awakens your heart to the vision of *Naam*. It is by the Grace of God that one meets such an Enlightener."

Naam and Cosmology

"The self-existent God manifested Himself into *Naam*. Second came the Creation of the Universe. He permeated it and it revels in His creation. God created the world of life, He planted *Naam* in it, and made it the place for righteous action."

God created the world and in His immanent aspect, as *Naam*, is informing and working it. Only one entity, namely God is envisaged and the world, in time and space, is His creation, the same being supported and directed by *Naam*.

"Before He created Form, He was Formless; before He was Immanent, He was Transcendent only; and yet all immanence, expression, creativity, were inherent in Him and so was His Word, in essence."

"In the region of Truth is God where He perpetually creates and watches the universe with His benevolent eye, deliberating and directing accordingly as He Wills. In the region of Creativity only God's Power or Force is at work. Of the region of construction or effort, the medium of expression is form. Here most fantastic forms are fashioned, including consciousness, perception, mind, intellect. Innumerable creations are fashioned, myriads are the forms, myriads are the moons, suns, regions."

God is the Sole Entity, who in His creative urge has produced the Cosmos, which He permeates in His immanent aspect. *Naam* is sustaining vigilantly and directing benevolently, according to His Will. While the world is Real and is directed by an Immanent God, at no stage is the separate independent existence of matter accepted directly or by implication.

Metaphysical Implication of Naam

God created Himself and *Naam* (Will, *Shabad*, Word) first, and second, He created the universe. This universe is being sustained and directed by God as *Naam* or by His Immanent aspect.

This concept of God being the sole Entity, the Creator God, is so fundamental in Sikh theology that it is mentioned in the very opening line of the *Mool Mantra* (the seed formula of Sikh creed) of the *Guru Granth* and in the beginning of almost every section and sub-section of it. Both the doctrine of *Naam* and the *Mool Mantra* clearly defines the theology of Sikhism as being monotheistic.

In the Sikh tradition two things are firmly established. They have the sanction of the *Gurus*. Every ceremony, religious or social, ends with an '*ardas*' or supplication to God, invoking His Grace. Secondly, at the time of *Amrit* ceremony (initiation ceremony) a Sikh is enjoined to recite or hear daily *Jap(u)*, *Jaap(u)*, ten *Sawayaas*, *Sodar(u) Rahraas* and *Sohilaa*, besides reading or hearing *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* as per the *Sikh Rahit Maryada* (Sikh code of discipline of the *Khalsa*). This Creature/ Creator relation is never forgotten. The human being is not and can never be God, though he can be His instrument.

In Sikhism the idea of the *hukam* (*razaa*, Will) of God in relation to the created world is as fundamental as it is in other theistic religions, like Christianity and Islam. Will and *Naam* are virtually synonymous, both being the Immanence of God. In Sikhism the highest ideal for a human being is to "carry out the Will of God" or to link oneself with *Naam*. Nothing happens without God's Grace and man's assessment will be entirely according to his deeds. Final "approval will be only by God's Grace."

Nature is the creation of God, whereas God is Self-Existent or Self-Created and not His emanation or extension. While everything in nature is changing, God is never born. That is the reason that in Sikhism the doctrine of incarnation *avatarhood* (God taking human form) is strictly denied, and is considered heretical.

In Sikh theology the highest form of being is *bhagat* (the mystic). These God-conscious or God-filled beings are only up to the Region of Creativity, but never beyond it, that is not in the Region of Truth or God, *Sach Khand vase Nirankar* (the Supreme Being Lives in the Region of Truth). The Universe is the creation of God, but not identical with God.

The *Gurus* have clearly emphasized the transcendental character of God by saying that the world was created in time and space. The Transcendent God existed prior to the world's uncreation, when God's immanent character was unexpressed. It is also stated that the World was in God when there was no universe or form. *Naam* was prior to the creation of Universe; "God manifested into *Naam* and at the second place the world was created." God's Immanence has been given separate names that is of *Naam*, Will and Word; and almost invariably been called His *Naam*, His Will, His Word. "He informs everything and yet is separate too. Having created the world, He stands in the midst of it and yet is separate from it." In the *Guru Granth* truthful living or conduct has been declared higher than Truth itself. Man's final assessment and approval before God will depend entirely on his deeds in this world. Selfless and virtuous conduct is urged, *Naam* being the treasure of all virtues. Moral living is stressed, since the ideal of life is "to carry out the Will of God".

"God created the world of life and planted *Naam* therein, making it the place of righteous activity. God created the world and permeated it with His light." Since *Naam*, God's Immanence has not only created the world but is also supporting, controlling, and directing it—the same cannot be unreal or illusory. In fact, *Naam's* immanence guarantees its being a place of righteous activity and not a fruitless, unwanted, or capricious creation. "The human body is the temple of God. Living in this world is not a *bandhan* (bondage) but a great privilege and opportunity. Not only is God benevolently directing the world in which He is immanent, but each one of us is yoked to His task and each is assigned a duty to perform."

Naam: a Human Goal

"To be imbued with *Naam* is the essence of true living." Egoism is the cause of all pain, suffering, and conflict which hinders development towards the goal. "Destroy evil and you become a perfect human being. Give up evil, do right, and you realize the essence of God."

"With the help of other God-conscious persons, I shall help man to remove his alienation from *Naam* and God and assist him to cross the difficult hurdles in life

by carrying out His Will, and executing God's mission of creating a society of god-centered men. The God-human being achieves the goal and makes all others do so." That is exactly the reason why the *Gurus* have likened themselves to a "servant of God, a soldier in God's Legion."

There is a continuing process of development, evolution, and progress in the empirical world, and to point out the further progress from animal-human beings to enlightened human beings or God-centred-human beings is not only possible but the ultimate goal of all people. There is an ascending order of creation. "God created you out of a drop of water and breathed life in you. He endowed you with the light of reason, discrimination, and wisdom...From a sinner He made you virtuous and the lord of all beings. And now it is up to you to fulfill or not to fulfill your destiny." "Among eighty-four *lakhs* (8.4 million) of species, human being is assigned the supreme position, whosoever misses the opportunity, suffers the pain of transmigration. Human birth is precious. You have obtained the privilege of human body, now is your lone opportunity to meet God." Hence the ideal is not only to be *Gurmukh* (an enlightened person) oneself, but, with the help of other enlightened persons, to convert all human beings into enlightened human beings. This stage can be reached in this world only by removing human alienation caused by the *haumai* (ego), which is opposed to *Naam*, and which can be removed only by creative and altruistic living.

In the *Gurus'* times there were two malignant growths—the caste system and a tyrannical political system. The *Gurus* never bypassed social—political conditions as being too mundane to concern themselves with. Regarding both these matters, the *Gurus'* role has been revolutionary. In their hymns they have forcefully condemned these institutions: "The pride of caste leads to multifarious evils. Distinction of high and low caste and colour, and the hell and heaven introduced by *Vedas* (Hindu scriptures) are misleading. Kings are like tigers and courtiers like dogs and they prey upon peaceful citizens. The Kings' employees tear up innocent persons and the dogs lick up the blood that is shed. The Mughals are made the instrument of death. The people have suffered intensely, O God, art thou not moved?...If the strong mauls the strong, I grieve not. If the lion attacks the sheep, the master of the flock must answer."

"Man is blessed with the light of reason and discrimination. One, in fear of God and discriminating between good and bad, appears sweet to God. We know right from wrong and yet fall into the well with torch in hand."

Ethical and Creative Activities

Only moral deeds in the field of human activity are acceptable to God's interest in this development of human being. This can be gauged from the fact that "He takes cognizance of and rewards even an iota of good deeds, it being His innermost nature to help the erring. Love, contentment, truth, humility, and

other virtues enable the seed of *Naam* to sprout. With self-control and discipline, we forsake vice and see the miracle of human being becoming God. Drive out lust and anger, be the servant of all, and see the Lord in all hearts. Control your evil propensities and you become a perfect human being. Control cravings and the light of wisdom will come; then fashion this wisdom into deeds. He knows the way who earns his living by hard work and shares his income with others. That is the training of man has to be in life and for life. My whole being, body and consciousness, are imbued with *Naam*. True living is living God, in life."

Sikh Scriptures

Adi Granth

The *Adi Granth*, the sacred scripture of the Sikhs was compiled by the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev in (1603-04), at Amritsar. Apart from the compositions of Guru Nanak and other *Gurus*, he also invited some contemporary saints to submit their compositions for a selection of hymns to be included in the *Adi Granth*. He rejected the compositions of some Indian mystics with whose ideology he did not concur. He accepted only those compositions which were in conformity with his own principles of monotheism, universal brotherhood, service of humanity, and devotion to God. When all the material had been collected, he finally began to dictate to Bhai Gurdas (Sikh theologian). This compilation is written in the hands of Bhai Gurdas, and is known as "*Kartarpur Vali Bir*." A hundred years later the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, compiled a final revised version in which he inserted the compositions of his father the ninth Guru, Teg Bahadur. Guru Gobind Singh conferred *Gurudom* (the line of succession) on the *Adi Granth* just before his death in 1708, and renamed it *Guru Granth Sahib*.

Guru Granth Sahib

Most of the compositions are written in the Punjabi language, the language of the people of Punjab, and *Sant bhasha* (the language of Saints), although a few hymns are in *Sanskrit* and Persian. The scripture is like Catholicism in its range of spiritual concepts, its vision of cosmic order, and its exhortation to higher life. Primarily it is a collection of devotional poems, a poetry of spiritual experience that speaks about *Naam* (summary expression for the whole nature of God), the Will or Word of God, a repository of the *Shabad* (Divine Word). It also speaks about *Mul Mantra* (the seed formula of Sikh creed) by expressing various aspects of the Supreme Being: Transmigration process, *Karma* (destiny, doctrine of the retribution of deeds), Grace, *Hukam* (command, Divine Will), *Bhakti* (devotion), Mysticism, *Sahaj* (ultimate state of mystical union), *Grihasta* (householder's life), Yoga, Social conscience, *Sewa* (selfless service), *Mukti* (liberation), suffering, and *Guru* the Holy preceptor. It throws light on other schools of

thought such as *Vedantism*,⁶ *Vaishavanism*,⁷ Islam and *Sufism*. All hymns are addressed to the Supreme Being and often related to devotee's aspirations and yearnings.

Guru Granth Sahib's spiritual poetic form intensifies its appeal to the masses. All compositions embody supplication in praise of the *Akal Purakh* (Supreme Being). It is a reverberating and sterling testament of trust in the Absolute. This *Gurbani* (divine poetry) is a spiritual revelation of deep mystical intuition. It speaks about the thing-in-itself; the eternal, changeless Reality; the ultimate reality of things. It is divine light, divine music, and a meditation on Divinity. It is intuitional experience. It is spiritual presence. It is an eternal spiritual flame that constantly emits the fragrance of the *Akal Purakh*'s attributes. This spiritual reservoir is the source and inspiration of Sikh teachings and Sikh culture. "In this spiritual dish are placed Truth, Contentment, and Wisdom which are seasoned with *Naam* and whoever eats and digests this food shall be liberated," says Guru Arjan. That is why the *Guru Granth Sahib* is perceived by the followers of the faith as the embodiment in visible form of a living *Guru* and that is why so much reverence and sanctity is attached to it.

Contribution

The *Adi Granth* comprises a total of 5894 hymns. The contributors were Sikh *Gurus*, Hindu *Bhaktas*, and Muslim *Sufis* and *Bhatts* (Bards). Out of the *Gurus*, the contribution came from the first five *Gurus* and the ninth Guru Tegh Bahadur. One *Sloka* (couplet) is attributed to Guru Gobind Singh. The largest number of contributions (2,218) are by Guru Arjan, followed by Guru Nanak (974), Amar Das (907), Ram Das (635), Tegh Bahadur (115), and Angad (62). Hymns from sixteen *Bhaktas* and *Sufis* are in the *Granth* and they are by Jai Dev (2), Farid (134), Nam Dev (60), Trilochan (4), Parmanand (1), Sadhna (1), Beni (3), Ramanand (1), Dhanna (3), Pipa (1), Sain (1), Kabir (541), Ravidas (41), Bhikan (2), and Sur Das (1). The compositions by *Bhatts* (123), Mardana (3), Satta and Balwand (8), and Sunder (6).

Arrangement

The *Gurus* arranged the hymns *raga*-wise (by musical measure) through music to emphasize the path of *Naam-marga* (the way of *Naam*) as the best means of attaining the state of bliss which results from communion with God. Those *ragas* which aroused passions of any kind were omitted. *Meg* and *Hindol* were not used because of their jubilant tone; *Jog* and *Dipak* were rejected for their melancholy. Out of 1,430 pages of the *Granth Sahib*, 1,339 pages are set to Indian music. *Gurmat Sangeet* or *Kirtan* (devotional music) is the contribution of the *Gurus*. Another contribution of the *Gurus* is folk music, which includes *vars*. There are some *ghorian* (folk wedding songs) and some *alhanian* funeral hymns. The line preceding the word *rahau* (pause) presents the central thought

of the hymn, and, as such, it constitutes the *asthai* (repetitive line), while the other lines form the *antra*. *Rahau* has been used in compositions set to music. There is a *ragmala* (a composition listing of different ragas) at the end of *Granth Sahib*.

Dasam Granth

Dasam Granth, the second Holy Book of the Sikhs, is a collection of writings attributed to Guru Gobind Singh. It comprises the following eighteen works: Jaap Sahib; Akal Ustat; Bachitra Natak; Chandi Charitra 1; Chandi Charitra II; Chandi-di-Var; Gyan Prabodh; Chaubis Avtar; Mehdi Mir Budh; Brahma Avtar; Rudra Avtar; Shabad Hazare; Sri Mukh Vak Swaiyae; Khalse-di-Mehima; Shastra Naam Mala; Pakhyan Charitra; Zafar Nama, and the Hikayats. These works are written in four different languages: Braj; Hindi; Persian; and Punjabi.

The compilation can be conveniently divided into four parts: mythological, philosophical, autobiographical, and erotic. The largest number of writings are mythological and are devoted to Hindu mythology, which includes Chandi Charitra, Chandi-di-Var, Chaubis Avtar, Mehdi Mir Budh, Brahma Avtar, and Rudra Avtar. The Jaap Sahib, Akal Ustat, Gyan Prabodh, Shabad Hazare, and some hymns are philosophical and devotional. Bachitra Natak and Zafar Nama are autobiographical. The Pakhyan and Hikayats are fables of women in a corrupt society.

Most of the literary activity of Guru Gobind Singh took place at Paonta Sahib. There were fifty-two poets in Guru Gobind Singh's court engaged in creative writing and translation. Although most of the *Dasam Granth* was compiled at Anandpur, some portions were produced at Dam Dama, which came to be known as the *kashi* of the Sikhs. After the death of Guru Gobind Singh his disciple and companion Bhai Mani Singh (a prominent Sikh martyr), spent nine years at the task of sifting through the material, and he finally compiled a volume known as the *Dasam Granth* (The Book of the Tenth Master) in 1721.

There are many compilations in existence. Three versions are better known than the others. These are Bhai Mani Singh's *Bir* (volume), the Patna Sahib *Bir*, and the Sangrur *Bir*. The version authorized by the *Singh Sabha*⁸ is the version ascribed to Bhai Mani Singh. Scholars are divided in their views on the authentic version of *Dasam Granth*. A majority of scholars, including Dr. Ashta, Dr. Trilochan Singh, and Dr. Mohan Singh feel that the entire writing of *Dasam Granth* should be ascribed to Guru Gobind Singh. However, Macauliffe, Cunningham, Narang, and Bannerjee are of the opinion that only certain compositions are by Guru Gobind Singh.

There is both secular and sacred music in the *Dasam Granth*. The musical notes are at times martial and at other times peaceful and soothing. The poetic genius of the Tenth Guru combined with sublimity of musicology and singing created the melodious patterns of spiritual compositions.

Sikh Institutions⁹

Over a period of time the *Gurus* developed Sikh institutions wherein followers of the Sikh faith could practice tenets of a successful spiritual life. These are: *Sangat*; *Sadh Sangat*; *Gurdwara*; *Langar*; *Pangat*; *Takhts*; *Amrit*; *Gurmatta*; *Miri* and *Piri*; and *Manji System*. *Gurmatta* was introduced after the birth of the *Khalsa*.

Sangat

The *Sangat* is an assembly of men, women, children and holy men who recite or listen to the recitation of the *Gurus'* hymns in praise of God. The *Sangat* gathers in a *Dharamsala* (place for the practice of Dharma), a *Gurdwara*, or any other place where the *Gurus'* *bani* (hymn) is sung in profound devotion. The *kirtan* (devotional singing) proceeds to create a sweet rhythm among the singers and listeners, a spiritual atmosphere which brings them into a holy communion. Such a congregation of Sikhs work in a corporate manner for overall development of the community. The *Sangat* should concentrate on God and the meaning of the hymns. The minds of the *Sangat* should be free from worldly affairs. Every Sikh is expected to attend the *Sangat*. Everyone sits together on the floor, anywhere they like.

The Sikhs believe that the *Guru* lives in the *Sangat*. In the midst of holy company, the disciple learns the service of the community. In association with the *Sangat* the individual loses his sense of selfishness and learns to work in a democratic set up. There are no priests or clerical orders in Sikh religion, and as such all disciples are equal. They pray and eat together. They offer voluntary service for community development. During the *Guru's* times *Sangats* built resthouses, dug wells for the benefit of the masses, and looked after the needs of the poor and the disabled. It was their lead in voluntary social work which attracted many people to Sikhism. They established *Dharamsalas*. Such hospices catered to the needs of visitors, pilgrims, and the homeless.

With the creation of the *Khalsa* Brotherhood, the *Sangat* became equal to the status of the *Guru*. The Tenth *Guru* affirmed the supremacy of the *Khalsa* and obeyed them. Ultimate power and privilege rested in them. In a tribute to the contribution and achievement of the *Khalsa*, *Guru Gobind Singh* declared: "It is through the actions of the *Khalsa* that I have won all my victories. It is through their aid that I have attained such eminence, Otherwise there are millions of unknown mortals like me." (DG, 716).

Sadh-Sangat

The concept of *Sadh-Sangat* is pivotal to the spiritual growth of a Sikh. It implies association with the virtuous and the holy. According to *Guru Nanak*: "The holy congregation is an assembly where nothing but the Name of the Lord is recited." He further explains: "Such is the nature of the truly holy that they,

like the scented sandal-wood, impart their fragrance to all around them." In the company of spiritual people, the individual learns the way of true living. "The relish of God's name is obtained in the holy congregation." Man finds the inspiration of the Lord in the Company of pious people. Guru Ram Das calls *Sadh-Sangat* "a school where one is instructed in the Lord's virtues." Guru Arjan says: "In the company of the saints, man's sins are washed off." Bhai Gurdas compares *Sat-Sang* (congregation of pious Sikhs) to a river which takes one to the ocean (merger with the Lord). Guru Nanak affirms that holy company is essential for overcoming worldly temptations and that their company transforms the nature of man. By and by, the neophyte absorbs the virtues of the guild of saints.

Gurdwara (Sikh Church)

The place where the Holy *Granth Sahib* is installed and the *Sangat* sits and prays is called the *Gurdwara*—the abode of the *Guru*. It also means "through or from the *Guru*." Generally the congregation offers prayers or performs *Kirtan* every morning and evening in the *Gurdwara*. *Gurpurbs* (Sikh festivals commemorating the births and deaths or special events in the lives of the *Gurus*) and ceremonies are held in the *Gurdwaras* at appropriate times. The exposition of the Scripture called *katha* and the singing of hymns known as *Kirtan* are essential parts of Sikh worship in the *Gurdwara*. Guru Gobind Singh freed the Sikhs from the snares and baits of so-called *Gurus* and self-appointed religious preceptors, and linked Sikhs directly with the *Shabad Guru* (Supreme Being). When the Sikh's mind goes deep into the significance of the Holy Word, the individual attains serenity and equipoise. This enables the individual to keep a cool head and a sense of detachment and purity in the midst of the impurities of the world. The *Guru Granth Sahib* occupies the central place in the *Gurdwara*. The Sikhs draw inspiration from its message and the congregation prays for the gift of the Holy Name.

For a religion, scriptures and temples are essential. A religion without one or the other becomes extinct. According to Guru Gobind Singh, religion can not survive without governing power. In the beginning, Guru Nanak's congregations were held in a *Dharamsala* where followers flocked to listen to the *Guru's* hymns. During the period of the first four *Gurus*, the Sikh temple was called a *Dharamsala*. Guru Arjan named it a *Harimandar* and Guru Hargobind called it a *Gurdwara*.

With the passage of time, the *Gurdwara* became the forum for discussion and resolution of important problems facing the Sikh community. Suitable punishment or penances are awarded for infringements of the Sikh code of conduct. When such infringements consisted of minor offences called *Tankhah*, which is a euphemism for a salary or reward, the offender stands before the congregation and admits his mistake and offers to make amends as directed by

the *Sangat*. Then the congregation refers the matter to the *panj piaras* (five Sikhs selected by the *Sangat*) who deliberate and take a decision. They convey the decision to the *Sangat* which confirms it by a shout of *Bolay so nihal, Sat Sri Akal* (Who hears this shall be saved, Truth is Timeless). The punishment, being the decision of the *Sangat*, is accepted by the Sikh without hesitation, protest, or grudge.

Langar

The *Langar* or a "free kitchen", which is a part of Sikh temples, is a unique institution of the Sikhs. Man lives by bread, but not by bread alone. The *Gurus* combined worship and bread. The *Gurdwara* is a temple of bread as well as of worship and prayer.

The *Langar* was not only a means of social reform, but also a revolutionary step against the caste system. It demolished social and professional barriers. *Langar* was a means of social cohesion and integration. It was a step towards improving the lot of the untouchables and for better treatment of the poor and the underprivileged. It was a practical lesson in equality and a symbol of dignity of the common man.

Moreover, *Langar* provided avenues for *sewa* (selfless service), through the collection of fuel and rations, cleaning of grains, cutting of vegetables, cooking of food, distribution of meals, serving of water, washing of utensils and dishes, and the cleaning of dining halls. It is a practical demonstration of hospitality and love of human beings, and also a fulfillment of the Sikh's obligation to *wand chhakna* (to share his food with others). The Sikh says in his prayer: "Food and water belong to God and desire to serve the people gives pleasure to the Sikh". Guru Nanak initiated the *Guru's Langar* in a common Temple of Bread, where the bread of God was given free to the children of man. "Let none be hungry where the spirit of God prevails. The *Guru's* people and the *Guru* were one home and one family." Guru Amar Das made it a rule that every visitor should dine in the *Langar* before seeing him. Even Emperor Akbar was requested to follow this practice, and he cheerfully did so.

In order to ensure a permanent source of food-grains and income for the maintenance of *Langars*, many land-lords and ordinary farmers made adequate provisions for the kitchens attached to historical *Gurdwaras*. Maharaja Ranjit Singh (Sikh ruler) made endowments of lands and properties and often cash grants for this purpose. There was yet another source of funds, namely *Daswand* (tithe) which was obligatory for the *Khalsa* for ensuring regular assistance to charities and religious purposes. Even today, many Sikhs contribute funds on a periodic basis for the running of free kitchens attached to important *Gurdwaras*. This is an obligation for the whole community, and is discharged with great humility and devotion. The *Langar* provides us with a glimpse of real Sikhism at work, both in theory and practice.

Pangat

The word *Pangat* literally means a group of people sitting in a line without any distinction, and this practice was popularised by Guru Amar Das. The rules of the *Langar* require that all should sit in the same row and partake of the same food without any distinction of high or low, rich or poor, and prince or peasant. This is the arrangement for feeding people in the *Langar*. The community mess-refectory is a place for training in service and for the practice of philanthropy and equality. The sharing of worship and food is an important part of the Sikh faith.

Takhts

Takht literally means a throne and a seat of authority. The establishment of *Takhts* is the result of historical growth of Sikhism. There are five *Takhts*, one established by Guru Hargobind, and the remaining four are dedicated to the memory of Guru Gobind Singh. Each has a magnificent building. These *Takhts* are centres of religious authority, and appeals are made to them for obtaining decisions regarding the correctness of Sikh ceremonies.

Guru Hargobind established *Takht Sri Akal Takht Sahib* at Amritsar. He believed that purely religious congregations should be held at the *Harimandar Sahib (Golden Temple)* while political and secular matters should be considered at another forum, and he therefore built the *Akal Takht* in 1609 in the area facing the *Darshani Deohri* (entrance gateway) of the *Golden Temple*. Here he held discussions on military and other matters, and organised the training of soldiers and the planning of strategy. This is the most powerful seat of authority vested with political and religious sovereignty. Matters of interest to the entire *Panth* (the Sikh Community) as a whole are decided here.

The present site of *Takht Sri Patna Sahib* at Patna was originally a *Dharamsala* where Guru Tegh Bahadur lived with his family for some time.

The tenth Guru established the *Khalsa* Brotherhood at *Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib* (Anandpur) on the *Baisakhi* festival day in 1699. He prepared *khande-de-Amrit* (nectar stirred with double edged sword) and gave it to the *panj piaras* (five beloved ones). Then he himself took *Amrit* from their hands.

The sacred *Gurdwara* of *Takht Sri Hazur Sahib* in (Nander) Maharashtra state was built in memory of the death of Guru Gobind Singh. It was here that the *Guru* declared the *Adi Granth* as the perpetual *Guru* of the Sikhs. Later, Maharaja Ranjit Singh built a fine structure.

Guru Gobind Singh did literary work at *Takht Sri Damdama Sahib* (Talwandi Sabo) during his stay in 1706. He compiled the recension of the *Adi Granth* on which he conferred *Gurudom* later at Nander. He also wrote some of his own compositions at this place.

Amrit (Sikh initiation)

Guru Gobind Singh initiated the practice of *Amrit* or *khanday-di-pahal* (water stirred with the double edged sword) in 1699. This was the origin of the *Khalsa* Brotherhood. The *Amrit* ceremony as performed currently has been laid down by the Sikh *rehat-maryada* (code of discipline) declared by the *Shromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee* (SGPC) in 1945. Generally a person who wants to be initiated as *Khalsa* must follow the Sikh way of life for some time. The ceremony is performed by five practicing *Amrit-dhari* (initiated) Sikhs. They must possess the *panj kakkar* (five Sikh symbols), must be devout Sikhs, and physically perfect (not handicapped). Initiated Sikhs who have committed one or more of the prescribed *kurahits* (misdeeds) must offer the penance prescribed by the *panj piaras* (five beloved ones) before they become eligible for a new initiation.

The *Amrit* ceremony is held in the presence of the *Guru Granth Sahib*. The candidates listen to the instructions of the *Jathedar* (leader) of the *panj piaras* and signify their acceptance. Then *ardas* (prayer) is offered for the preparation of *Amrit*. After the *hukam* (command), the *panj piaras* kneel around the iron-vessel containing some water and sugar-puffs, and stir it as they recite the five prescribed *banis* (holy compositions). This recitation takes about two hours. When the *Amrit* is ready another *Ardas* is offered. After that, one by one, the candidates come forward and kneel before the *panj piaras*. Each one says: *Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh*, (The God's *Khalsa*: The God's victory) and is then given five handfuls of *Amrit* to drink. His eyes and hair are sprinkled with *Amrit* five times. The *Amrit* left in the pot is drunk by the candidates one by one until the last drop is gone.

Then comes the second part of the *Amrit* ceremony. The candidates are told by the leader of the *panj piaras* that hereafter their parents are Guru Gobind Singh and his wife Mata Sahib Kaur. They must vow to offer five daily prayers, vow to pay their *Daswand* (tithe), and keep the *panj kakkar*. Then he or she tells them about the rules of conduct and belief.

- i) There are five Beliefs: in God; the *Guru Granth Sahib*; Greeting *Waheguru ji ka Khalsa, Waheguru ji ki Fateh*; the oneness of the ten Gurus; and *chardi kala* (dynamic optimism).
- (ii) There are the *panj kakkar* (five Sikh symbols): *kes* (unshorn hair); *kara* (steel wrist bracelet); *kachh* (under-pants); *kangha* (comb); and *kirpan* (sword of any size).
- (iii) There are four Injunctions, namely, not to cut one's hair, not to smoke, not to eat *halal* (Kosher) meat, and not to commit adultery.
- (iv) There are five Deliverances, namely, *dharam-nash* (freedom from previous religion), *karam-nash* (freedom from past deeds), *janam-nash*

(freedom from family-influences), *sharam-nash* (freedom from hereditary professional taboos), *bharam-nash* (freedom from superstition and ritual).

- (v) There are four Rules of Conduct: To offer prayers before undertaking any task; to lead a virtuous life; to not covet another's property; and to serve the *Panth* (Sikh community).
- (vi) There are five *kurahits* (misdeeds) which negate *Amrit*, namely, removal of hair, eating Halal meat, committing adultery, using tobacco in any form, taking alcohol or drugs. There is also *Tankhah*, which are minor lapses. After taking these vows, an *ardas* (prayer) is offered. The candidates have to add *Singh* (lion) in the case of a male, and *Kaur* (princess) in the case of a female to their names or get a new name in place of the old one.

The *Khalsa* must wear a turban and keep the *panj kakkar* (five Sikh symbols), plus the inner discipline of heroism, meditation, humility, piety, and social commitment. Guru Gobind Singh had defined the *Khalsa* thusly:

"He who meditates on the ever-radiant Light day and night and rejects all else but the one Lord from his mind. He decorates himself with perfect love and faith and believes not in fasts, tombs, crematoriums, and hermit-cells, even by mistake. He knows none except the one Lord in the performance of acts of pilgrimage, charities, compassion, austerity, and self-control. Such a person whose heart shines with the full divinely-radiant Light is a true and pure *Khalsa*."

Gurmatta

Gurmatta literally means the *Guru's* decision, but in fact it is a resolution passed by the Grand Convention according to the *rehat-maryada* (Sikh code of conduct) and it involves "all decisions" affecting *Panth* (the whole Sikh community). The decisions are taken to clarify and support the fundamental principles of faith concerning the position of the *Gurus*, the *Adi Granth* (Sikh holy book), the purity of ritual, and public organization. *Gurmattas* are binding on all Sikhs. Other questions such as political, social, or educational matters may be decided by a *matta* (resolution). Appeals against local decisions can be made to the *Akal Takht*, in Amristar. The essential conditions for the validity of a *Gurmatta* are as follows:

- (i) The *Gurmatta* must be taken at *Takht* (throne) in the presence of the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*.
- (ii) The persons participating in it must have no hatred or enmity against one another, and must forget all mutual differences.

(iii) *Panj piaras* (five beloved ones), including the *Jathedars* (commanders), are to be elected by the participants on the basis of merit and religious talent.

(iv) The *Gurmatta* has to be unanimous. There can be no *Gurmatta* by a decision of a majority of votes.

(v) The subject of the *Gurmatta* must be of *Panthic* importance and must have value for all the Sikhs and must not pertain to the welfare or interest of a group or section of the Sikhs. It is related to the interest of the Sikh Commonwealth or the country as a whole. Its content may be social, political, or religious.

(vi) It is the duty of every Sikh, though he may not agree personally with the *Gurmatta*, to honour and implement it.

In short, the *Gurmatta* is "the symbol and form of the supreme authority of the collective will of the people duly formulated." As it has the community's sanction behind it and is taken in the presence of the *Guru Granth Sahib*, its rejection or violation is regarded as sacrilege. The continuity of the *Guru's* message along with the capacity to adjust to the needs of changing society is ensured through the institution of *Gurmatta*.

The origin of *Gurmatta* goes back to the days of Guru Gobind Singh. The tradition grew with the bestowal of sovereignty on the *Khalsa Panth* by the Tenth Guru. The *Gurmatta* became a popular mode of decision-making in the eighteenth century in the critical times after his death.

The regional *Takhts* made decisions regarding the matters within their territorial jurisdiction. Although Maharaja Ranjit Singh abolished the custom of *Gurmatta* on political issues, because he regarded himself as a secular monarch, it is not within the power of any Sikh or organisation to abolish *Gurmatta*. The reason behind the Maharaja's decision was political. He did not like to place his subjects of different faiths under the fear of orders issued as *Gurmattas* by the *Akal Takht* because it has a religious and not a political sanction behind it.

Miri and Piri

The word *Piri* is of Muslim origin. *Pir* means a holy person or religious head. The word is also associated with a prophet, as Bhai Gurdas (a Sikh theologian) called the Sikh *Gurus Pirs*. But the idea of *Pir* changed with times. According to Guru Gobind Singh *Pir* meant something worthy of respect; the weapons were his *pirs* because the use of the sword to oppose injustice. *Miri* stands for power, rulership, and establishment of court.

Miri and *Piri* (temporal and spiritual power) took a formal shape when Guru Hargobind, at the time of his accession to the *Gadi* (throne) in 1606 donned two swords—One of *Piri* (spiritual power) and the other of *Miri* (temporal power).

The sword of *Piri* was to protect the innocent and the sword of *Miri* was to spite the oppressor. Guru Hargobind combined saintliness and warriorhood in his personality. He was an ascetic within and prince without *Batanu Fakiri*, *Zahar Amiri*. He denounced *Maya* (attachment, lure of the world) but not the world. *Piri* and *Miri* represent the Sikh ideal of *Degh* and *Tegh*. *Degh* is the free kitchen, a symbol of *Piri*, while *Tegh* (sword) is a symbol of *Miri*. *Piri* cannot flourish without *Miri*. The union of both is essential. The combination of the qualities of *Miri* and *Piri* led to the creation of the Saint-soldier concept of Guru Gobind Singh. Bhai Gurdas says: "Just as a fence is necessary to keep away stray cattle from the farm, just as the *Kikkar* (a thorny tree) guards the orchard, just as the snake protects the sandal-tree, just as the dog guards the house against strangers, in the same way, the man of God must protect himself with the sword."

Manji System

Manjis were areas of jurisdiction for the purpose of preaching. Guru Amar Das created this new order of preaching by establishing a *Manji* System. Various *Sangats* (religious congregations) had sprung up all over while he generally remained at the headquarters. He quite often found himself cut off from the *Sangats*. He appointed devoted Sikhs, men and women of high character, to the establishment of the new order. They were to give an exposition of the *Guru's* hymns and to provide their own *charan-amrit* (foot wash) for initiation into Sikhism. They also served as a link between the *Guru* and the *Sangat*, and were regarded as the *Guru's* agents in their region. In the course of time, twenty-two devout Sikhs were granted a *Manji*, each for the extension of missionary work during 1552-1574. The *Manji* was awarded for spiritual attainment and the capacity for missionary work, and was not a territorial or temporal assignment. The *Manji* holders initiated the followers and taught them Punjabi. They paid periodical visit to Guru Amardas at Goindwal. The *Manjis* were neither permanent nor hereditary.

The Concept of the Saint-Soldier¹⁰

Miri and Piri

The objective of a saint-soldier is that his means should be as noble as his end. The saint-soldier concept had its origins in the *Miri Piri*. The concept of *Miri* and *Piri* (temporal and spiritual) power took a formal shape when Guru Hargobind, at the time of his accession to the *Gadi* (throne) in 1606, donned two swords, one for *Piri* (spiritual power) and the other for *Miri* (temporal power).

He declared: "My rosary shall be the sword-belt and on my turban I shall wear the emblem of royalty." He adopted all the kingly paraphernalia—a throne, a royal court, a golden umbrella, and a retinue of trained soldiers. He built the *Akal Takhat* (the throne of the timeless God) where he received dignitaries and planned military strategy. He also built a small fortress called Lohgarh (the castle of steel) in Amritsar. He spent much of his time hunting and playing martial sports. Even before Guru Hargobind, the spirit of *Piri* and *Miri*, of *Bhakti* (devotion) and *Shakti* (power), the celestial and the worldly, the spiritual and the secular, was evident in the life and actions of the previous *Gurus*. Though it did not assume the form of revolt or open conflict, it expressed itself in fearlessness and non-conformity.

Guru Nanak's message was aimed at the political set up. People were demoralized. There was degeneration of spiritual, cultural and political values. He wanted to bring about a revolutionary change by creating social awareness. He used the medium of *Gurbani* as a vehicle for the system of change. He inspired them to awaken and reminded them of their inner strength to face the cruel tyrannical political system and the unjust Hindu caste system. He used the concept of *Sachiara* (the enlightened, emancipated individual) to create a future world order, which became the desired symbol of change simultaneously invested with divine qualities. It is the saint-soldier concept of Guru Gobind Singh - an individual who combines moral and physical discipline and is in tune with the Supreme Being.

The *Gurus* brought the wind of change to the closed society of medieval India. Guru Nanak's modernity cut across the entire caste system's stratification of the society. Guru Nanak criticized the formalism and ritual of the *Brahmins* (Hindu priests). No religious teacher since Buddha had been as concerned with the upliftment of the suppressed classes and women as Guru Nanak. Guru Gobind Singh broke the monopoly of the *Brahmins* when he gave his Sikhs precedence over himself. When the *Brahmins* wept over the loss of their authority, Guru Gobind Singh consoled them with the thought that if it was the loss of material benefits that caused them agony, they would be compensated. But let the *Brahmin* keep in mind for all time to come that Sikhs and other free people of the world would never again bend before a priest, or allow a priest to exercise sway over a free man's mind and destiny. With one stroke the *Guru* lit man's inner light, which was to guide him hereafter.

Guru Nanak wanted his Sikh to be *Sachiara* transformed into a saint-soldier - internally solid, standing on moral principles and thereby attaining supremacy in other areas of life. The external reality had undergone tremendous change from the time of emperor Baber to the time of Jahangir when repression against the Sikhs erupted into violent unrest. Hence the weapon of sword was added to the weapon of morality. The basic objectives and the basic weapons remained unchanged. The Sikhs won most battles through moral force alone.

Guru Nanak admonished the *Lodhis* (Sultanate rulers) for not defending the country. He rejected a present of *bhang* (hemp) made by Mughal emperor Baber, and called him a tyrant. Similarly Guru Angad, when he faced the sword of Mughal emperor Hamayun, told the latter that he should have used it against *Sher Shah Suri* (a ruler in India) and not have run away from the battle field. Guru Amar Das refused to see the Mughal emperor Akbar until after he had taken food with the common men in the *langar* (free kitchen). Guru Amar Das spurned the offer of a *Jagir* (landed property) made by emperor Akbar. The Fifth Guru Arjan Dev rejected Diwan Chandu's¹¹ matrimonial alliance, knowing well that it would generate Mughal hostility. His last order to his son Guru Hargobind was to wear arms. The sixth Guru fought four pitched battles against the Mughal forces and routed them. The *Gurus* who succeeded Guru Hargobind manifested the same spirit. The seventh Guru did not attend the Mughal court in spite of a royal summons and kept armed guards. The ninth Guru defied Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (accession 1659-1707) and gave up his life, but not his faith. The Tenth Guru maintained all the royal paraphernalia—*ranjeet nagara* (drum), a jewelled *shamiana* (canopy), *parsadi hathi* (elephant), mace-bearers, standard bearers, battalions of trained soldiers, and a treasury. Arms were meant to defend and preserve religious and moral values. This spirit of opposition to evil generated courage among the Sikhs. The example set by the *Gurus* proved inspiration to the whole Sikh community.

Miri stands for *Sardari* (leadership), *Badshahat* for (rulership). But only when it is intended to establish a just state. This kind of state can only be established on the basis of moral and ethical principles. The spirit of *Miri* (secular power) is not opposed to the concept of an egalitarian society. The Sikh *Gurus* regarded all men as equal. There are no chosen people and no chosen prophets. Caste was a man-made institution; it prevented social interaction and individual development. Originally it was Guru Nanak who raised the banner of revolt against the Hindu caste system and class tyranny. Guru Angad brought about a mass renaissance through literacy, and so broke the control of the *Brahmins* and *Mullahs* (Muslim priests) over the world of learning. Guru Amar Das established social equality by seating high and low together in the *Sangat* and *Langar*. Guru Arjan demonstrated the equality of differing religious traditions by including the hymns of low caste *Bhagats* (mystics) and Muslim saints in the *Adi Granth*. Guru Hargobind destroyed the myth of martial classes by recruiting soldiers from all sections of society, and then, with their assistance, defeated the Mughal forces. Guru Gobind Singh broke the monopoly of the fighting castes by declaring that the initiation of *Amrit* destroyed the divisiveness of caste, class, and profession.

Holy War

Guru Gobind Singh's idea of a "holy war" *Dharama yudh* was a war that made possible a freedom of religious belief. It strengthened the principle of "right is might"; that power could also be used for securing justice and fair play. Force should be used only as a last resort, when all peaceful means had failed. This became the essential condition before starting a war to right wrong. The use of force to protect religion was an exercise of self-defence. Guru Gobind Singh's holy war was absolutely free from fear and hate. He used gold-tipped arrows in war to enable the person he killed to compensate for funeral expenses. Guru Gobind Singh waged a war against the forces of evil and tyranny. He fought against Mughals and Hindu Rajas. Both Hindus and Muslims fought at his side, shoulder to shoulder with Sikhs. He inspired devotion among his soldiers. He sacrificed his father, his four sons, and himself in holy wars against religious intolerance and tyranny.

Guru Gobind Singh opposed forcible conversions and the persecution of non-Muslims by Muslims. He had no ambition to convert any one by force of arms, nor any desire for a kingdom or territory. He wanted to remove the obstacles that lay in the way of the practice of religious freedom. His wars with the Mughal forces were thrust upon him. His small, ill-equipped army, as opposed to the might of Mughal forces, did not deter him from standing against them. Sikhs followed humanitarian ethics and moral codes on the battle front. They fought for a noble cause; as the war was against evil and tyranny. The Sikhs were forbidden to loot or molest any women, even in war time.

Degh and Tegh

Piri and *Miri* represent the Sikh ideal of *Degh* and *Tegh*. *Degh* (the free kitchen) is a symbol of *Piri*, while *Tegh* (sword) is a symbol of *Miri*. *Degh* stands for service and humility and *Tegh* stands for self reliance and power. The idea of *Degh* made the Punjab the granary of India whereas the concept of *Tegh* made Punjab the sword-arm of India. Maintenance of an efficient *Langar* was as important as *Tegh* according to Guru Gobind Singh. He urged his followers to stay away from the kind of undivided attention their fathers had given the plough, the loom, and the pen, and instead to regard the sword as their principal stay in the world. The concept of *Sant-Sipahi* (saint-soldier) is a corollary of the ideal of *Miri* and *Piri*. According to Cunningham, a *Khalsa* is one "who combats in the van, who gives in charity, who protects the poor, who remembers God, who mounts the war horse, who is ever waging battle, and who is continually armed."

Just as no state can survive without police or an army, saintliness cannot survive against evil forces if it does not have a source to fall back on. The decline of Buddhism in India is an example of the need for an inbuilt mechanism to ensure the strength and survival of any organization. Spirituality or physical

force on their own are not enough to endure. *Piri* cannot flourish without *Miri*. The union of the two is essential. Saints without defence are at the mercy of tyrants and hooligans; similarly warriors without goodness will become ruthless. It was the combination of these two great qualities that produced the saint-soldier of Guru Gobind Singh. They became the guarantee against ruthless exploitation by political masters and an instrument for overcoming the obstacles that lay in the path of virtue and godliness. The use of the sword was restricted to times of emergency and for the purpose of defence.

Another important characteristic of *Miri* is the sword. Steel held a place of honour in Guru Gobind Singh's life and philosophy. To him God is *Sarba loh* (All Steel). He is the sword. *Amrit* (the nectar of immortality) was prepared in a steel pot and stirred with a *khanda* (double edged sword). The *kara* (steel bracelet) and *kirpan* (sword) are two articles of steel prescribed for the *Khalsa*. The sword was a symbol of the *Dharma* (religious duty) of God, of love and light of the soul in this dark world. The sword is the weapon which cuts at the root of ignorance.

Significance of Sikh Symbols

Guru Gobind Singh laid down a *rehat* (a code of conduct) of *panj kakkar* (the five Sikh symbols) for the *Khalsa*. Each symbol is either related to *Miri* or *Piri*, *Shakti* (power) or *Bhakti* (devotion). *Kes* (unshorn hair) stands for *Piri*, as it is an ancient symbol of spirituality for *Rishis* (God-men). The *kanga* (comb) is a symbol of *Piri*, as cleanliness is next to godliness. *Kachha* (breeches) also are a symbol of *Piri*, of self-control or moderation in sex and chasteness. The *kara* (steel bracelet) is a symbol of *Piri*, of a link with God and a constant reminder of God's presence. The *kirpan* (sword) is a symbol of *Miri*. It stands for fearlessness and the enthusiasm for the use of arms or *Dharam yudh-ka-Chha* (enthusiasm to fight in the cause of rightness). The *chakara* (a sharp edge steel discus) and the *khanda* (a double-edged sword) of the *nishan sahib* (Sikh flag) is an embodiment of *Miri*, and an assemblage of arms befitting a fortress. It is a salute to the Sikh *Panth*. The laying of arms in front of the *Guru Granth Sahib* represents the symbols of *Miri*, also the displaying of arms during *Hola Mohalla* represents the spirit of *Miri*.

As Guru Gobind Singh approached the end of his life, he passed on the twin aspects of his *Gurudom* (line of succession) to two allied successors; the *Guru Granth Sahib* and the *Khalsa Panth*. *Piri* he passed on to the *Guru Granth Sahib*, and *Miri* to the *Khalsa Panth*. *Piri*, based on fundamental universal values, is immutable and unchanging, whereas *Miri*, or policy, has to change with times. *Miri* and *Piri* can be equated with *jugat* (wisdom) and *jot* (divine light) respectively. The *jot* is eternal while *jugat* can be modified. The *Khalsa Panth* is an embodiment of the *Guru*, and it makes its decisions through *Gurmatta* (*Guru's* decision). "The *Khalsa Panth* represents an uncrystallized

constitution of some future world order. The prophetic utterance by Guru Gobind Singh that 'the *Khalsa*—the pure in heart—will ultimately rule the world,' will eventually bring about the fulfillment of a dream for the Tenth Guru. The traditions of *Miri* and *Piri* that would usher in a new and benevolent world order," says Dr. Gobind Singh Mansukhani.

The Golden Temple (Sikh "Vatican")

The sacred *Golden Temple* of the Sikhs is an object of striking architectural beauty. In (1577-1581) the fourth Guru, Guru Ram Das, started constructing the pool of nectar at Amritsar. His successor, Guru Arjan conceived of building a sacred shrine for the followers of the faith. He envisioned that the *Golden Temple* would become a repository of Sikh religion, and would reflect its resoluteness, and strength. It would become the sacred symbol of indestructibility of the Sikh faith. Because of the emphasis on the spiritual aspect, Guru Arjan chose to build a small structure in the centre of the pool of nectar as a shrine. He named it *Harimandar* (the temple of the Lord). Guru Arjan invited Mian Mir *Sufi* (a Muslim saint) to lay the foundation stone of the *Golden Temple* in 1588. The sacred pool of immortality was already under construction by the time the Temple's foundation stone was laid.

The plan conceived for the *Golden Temple* was designed to reflect the simplicity and clarity of the Sikh movement. The location of this spiritual jewel in the centre of the pool symbolized the synthesis of spiritual and temporal realms of human existence. Hindu temples and Muslim mosques are usually constructed on a high plinth. Guru Arjan kept the plinth of the *Golden Temple* at a lower level than the surrounding buildings to emphasize the inner strength provided by the Sikh faith. The *Golden Temple* provides four entrances implying that all the people (i.e., the members of all four castes) as well as members of different faiths have equal access and they are all partners in divine instructions. Many Sikhs participated in building this magnificent edifice. This universal participation took the form of *sewa* (voluntary self-abnegating deeds of service) at the site, and a donation to support the construction. This tradition of *sewa* and donation towards the upkeep and building of new *Gurdwaras* has remained unchanged since the time *Golden Temple* was built.

Although the complex evolved over the centuries, Guru Arjan's idea of a sacred shrine remained central to the realization of the *Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple)*. Ironically the Sikhs underwent great savagery and calamities, and the shrine they revered was frequently destroyed. Each time it was rebuilt, its magnificence and embellishment increased.

The pool of immortality is almost an exact square, measuring 510'x490'. The depth of the pool is 17 feet. Surrounding the pool on all four sides is the *Parkarma* (circumambulation) paved with marble which takes devotees around the sacred waters. Steps go down into the pool for bathing. The pool is built

over aqueducts. A marble causeway forms an approach to the shrine from one side of the *Parkarma*. Bordered around the *Parkarma* are many fine mansions owned by the Sikh chieftains.

The *Darbar Sahib* complex is planned on a courtyard system, with a pool in the middle an indigenous built element of the semi-hot arid region of the Punjab. The immediate surroundings capture the air that is cooled by outgoing radiation. The pool of nectar, a fairly large size for the complex, helps create an eddy from the movement of air currents and produce humidity during the period of extreme dry heat. The dust laden winds are filtered and cooled, thereby achieving air handling through natural application to create a micro climate.

The *Golden Temple* complex demonstrates the urban design character of a public square. The focus is the *Harimandar* shrine. The surrounding buildings do not dominate, but play a complimentary role. The complex performs spiritual, religious, social and cultural functions. The location of the complex in the heart of the walled city is adequately linked to various parts of the city with narrow lanes.

The primary source of water for the pool was taken from the river Ravi through the Hansali Canal in 1778. Currently, *Darbar Sahib Wali* Canal feeds the holy pool. This new channel 3 feet wide and 2.3 feet deep takes water from the Upper Bari Doab Canal.

The *Harimandar* shrine (*Golden Temple*) is a square edifice of 40'.4"x40'.4", erected on a 66'.4"x66'.4" square platform in the centre of the pool of nectar. It is a three story cubical structure with an additional two stories half hexagon shape building appended to the back. The main building is surmounted by a central domical structure. A seventeen foot square opening provides double height to the hall below. There is space around the opening for circumambulation.

The design of the *Harimandar* respects directness and simplicity, which are the chief characteristics of the Sikh faith. The architecture of the *Harimandar* is a lively blend of Mughal and Rajput architectural styles. It is an outstanding specimen of Sikh religious architecture. The gilding, marble, mirror, and in-lay work are later additions of the nineteenth century during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and reflect the pride, power, and wealth of the Sikh empire.

The lower stories of *Harimandar* are faced with marble panels which are in-laid with a wide range of exuberant designs and motifs. The in-lay work provides rich embellishment of the surfaces. The upper stories are surfaced with copper panels gilded with gold. For the decorative part, gold, silver, copper and brass have been used. The entrance is composed in bas-relief. The wealth of detail on vaulted ceilings, doors, and archways is quite captivating. Golden domes, and fluted arches are in Mughal style architecture. The *Darshani Deorhi* is a richly ornamented entrance gateway through which all must pass to reach or leave the causeway to *Harimandar Sahib*. The *Darshani Deorhi* walls are

covered with marble panels, and the first floor walls are gilded with copper sheets. The massive doors of the gateway are of silver panels.

Two tall towers on the periphery of the *Darbar Sahib* were built by Jassa Singh Ramgarhya (a chieftain) in 1808. In 1830, Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Bhangi Misl¹² contributed towards paving the *Parkarma* with black and white marble.

The *Guru Granth Sahib* is installed in the centre of the *Harimandar*. *Kirtan* (devotional music) is held without a break for about twenty hours every day. The *Gurbani* (Gurus' compositions) vibrations not only purify the atmosphere but are also absorbed by the pool of nectar. A spiritual environment of divine presence prevails within the complex. The moment a devotee steps to the level of the *Parkarma*, the first glance of *Darbar Sahib* provides a striking view of the *Harimandar's* domes and cupolas amidst the mystifying openness of the complex. The clockwise circumambulation of *Harimandar* gives devotees a profound experience at the fountainhead of their faith, and allows time for contemplation. The prevailing ambience uplifts the devotees to a state of spiritual consciousness, and mystical union with *Akal Purakh*.

The *Harimandar* was conceived as the seat of spiritual power of the Sikh faith and the *Akal Takht* as the seat of its temporal authority. The *Akal Takht* building ranks just a fraction below the *Harimandar* in the order of significance in the *Darbar Sahib* complex. The *Akal Takht* was raised to five stories and had a gold-leafed dome at the top.

Guru Arjan Dev's martyrdom turned Sikhs to military pursuits. The torture of Guru Tegh Bahadur convinced Sikhs that they could not live with dignity under despotic rule. After the desecration of the *Harimandar* on December 1, 1764, by Ahmed Shah Abdali, (ruler of Afghanistan), the Sikhs thought it was the last time. However, the sacred pool had known many vicissitudes. More than once slaughtered cows were thrown into the holy water by Muslims. The desecration of the *Golden Temple* by the Indian army in June 1984 finally convinced the Sikhs that nothing less than a sovereign Punjab would protect the sanctity of Sikh faith.

Punjabi Culture

Punjabi Language

The Sultanate period (1000-1526) occupies an important place in the development of Punjabi language and literature. Sikandar Lodhi (1488-1517), being a scholar, was fond of poetry and literature. During his rule, language, poetry, and literature saw much progress, and in general received special efforts. However, the then prevailing Indian languages of Indo-Aryan origin were evolving into their own distinctive forms. The poetry of Sheikh Farid (1175-1266) is an eloquent testimony to the development of Punjabi prior to

Guru Nanak. It was during this period that the budding Punjabi infant started growing up.

The works of Guru Gorakh Nath *Yogi* (the one who practices self-discipline), and Abdul Rehman, the author of *Sandesh Rasak*, had provided creative literature previously. There is a marked similarity between ancient Punjabi and old Sindhi and Rajasthani.

The city of Multan was the original center of Punjabi literature. Sheikh Farid also made his abode at Pakpattan, which became an asylum for *sufis* (Muslim saints) and Muslim men of letters. The *sufis* turned to Punjabi as a literary medium for the dissemination and expansion of their religion. Damodar was the first poet to write Punjabi romanticism and made *Lahanda* a literary dialect for writing his ballad, *Heer and Ranjah*. The *sufis* adopted it as a powerful medium of literary expression. The *sufis* also contributed to forms of verse such as *kafi*, *bara-mah*, and the *siharfi*. *Vars* (heroic ballads) were composed during Muslim invasions. Compositions of Khusrau and Chand Bardai are specimens of old writings in Punjabi and so are Gorakh Nath's, Charpat Nath's and Kabir's compositions. The old *vars* (odes) belong to the pre-Nanak period, prior to 1469.

Punjabi Literature

The second distinctive link unfolds itself in Punjabi folk literature in the form of songs, tunes, folklores, and so on. The origin of many can be traced to Sanskrit, Prakrit or Apbransh literature, and to the peasants' mode of life. Sheikh Farid, who was imbibed with deep religious leanings, can be called the father of traditional *sufi* poetry in Punjabi. Parts of his compositions are included in the *Adi Granth* (1604). Sheikh Farid was a highly learned man and had intimate knowledge of the religion of Islam. Farid and Guru Nanak enriched the treasure of spiritual literature and also composed poetry in the shape of *vars* in Punjabi.

Almost two centuries after Farid there appeared an illustrious individual in the person of Guru Nanak (1469-1539), a poet under whose influence Punjabi literature touched the highest watermark of achievement. Nanak possessed a wealth of knowledge and a deep commitment to social reform. He did not hesitate to criticise prevailing taboos and contemporary institutions. He preached in the language of the masses. The essence of his philosophy is revealed through the liberality of his religious views, and is the product of the same social order which gave birth to the *Bhakti* movement (devotional mysticism). Yet his compositions have their own special distinctiveness. Guru Nanak's rich contributions gave birth to a new spirit, and through his sublime compositions he forged a new link between the life of man and his aspirations. He was a conscientious poet and introduced a new form of musical poetry. In his use of imagery he used the common scenic beauty of the Punjab, along with scenes

from the social and corporate life of the people. His verses of *Baramaha* (twelve months) are not merely lyric descriptions of panoramic beauty, but also represent the moods of a mystic longing for God's vision. The *Arti* (a composition) is full of gems of scenic beauty.

Guru Arjan's compositions are melodious and full of longing for the Lord. His celebrated works are *Bawan Akhri* and *Salok Sanskriti*. The popular *Sukhmani* embodies the basic concepts of Sikhism in poetry. The compositions of Guru Gobind Singh are full of vigour and martial spirit, which inspired the people to face the challenge of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb¹³ (1618-1707). Bulhey Shah (1680-1758) and Warris Shah (1735-1798) wrote verse in romantic and mystic Punjabi poetry. Bulhey Shah's *Kafis* and Warris Shah's *Heer Ranjha* are popular romantic tales and are sung in every village of Punjab. Hasham presented the love stories of Sassi-Punnu and Shirin Farhad.

Punjabi language had no distinctive script until 1539 when Guru Angad created a script for Sikh religious literature, although scholars still dispute the origin of *Gurmukhi* script. Research indicates that the thirty-five letters of the alphabet (known as *Painti-35*) now called *Gurmukhi* were current a long time before the *Gurus*. Writer Pritam Singh is of the opinion that *Gurmukhi* script was derived from *Brahmi* letters which were in use at the time of emperor Asoka (3rd Century B.C.). For centuries the Muslims had used Persian, which the Sikhs continued to use as their court language. Persian, however, continued to flourish as the language of culture and communication. Educated Punjabis before 1947 were bilingual, speaking Punjabi and reading and writing Urdu. The British brought Urdu with them from the United Province and Delhi, and supplanted Persian. At the same time they brought English and from that time onwards education was imparted in Urdu, English, and in Persian, along with Sanskrit and Arabic.

The culture of Punjab finds expression in music and dance, stories and handicrafts, and in intellectual forms of novels, poetry and paintings.

Contemporary Writers

Notable among contemporary Punjabi writers is Bhai Vir Singh (1872-1956) who wrote fiction, poetry, biographies, and commentaries on the sacred text. His novels, *Sundari*, *Satwant Kaur* and *Baba Naudh Singh* express themes of heroism and chivalry. *Rana Surat Singh* is a long poem. Puran Singh (1881-1931) and Dhani Ram Chatrik (1876-1954) also deserve mention. Puran Singh wrote both in Punjabi and English whereas Dhani Ram wrote Punjabi verse. Mohan Singh's *Save Patr* (green leaves) and poetess Amrita Pritam's poems have a slightly different connotation. She is a poetess of freedom of India. The massacre of partition of 1947 stirred her to write memorable poems. Rajinder Singh Bedi has written in Urdu. His novel "*ik chadar maili si*" (the soiled sheet) on Punjabi village life was applauded. Nanak Singh is a prolific novelist who has dealt with

many current issues. Kartar Singh Duggal, Kulwant Singh Virk and Sant Singh Sekhon have captured daily life through Punjabi short-story writing.

Punjabi Drama

Through his stories and characters, I.C. Nanda exposed the social evils of the time. Balwant Gargi brought new technique to the Punjabi stage. His themes and dialogues are modern. Sheila Bhatia's Punjabi opera—*Heer Ranjha and Prithviraj Chauhan*—achieved a measure of success on the Delhi stage.

Folk Music and Dance

Punjabi music is based on traditional Indian *ragas* (musical measures) and *talas* (rhythmic patterns of Indian music), but also contains strong influences from successive waves of invaders who have crossed through Punjab for centuries. It is vigorous and direct, with flowing rhythms and matching dramatic lyrics. It is a vehicle for the uninhibited expression of joy and grief. The most notable examples are the rhythmic songs that accompany the folk-dance *Bhangra* and *Gidha*. These were originally harvest rituals. *Bhangra* is a men's dance, and the music is generally provided by drums played with sticks, but in *Gidha*, the girls' clapping replaces the drumming. The dancers in either case form two rows, or a circle or half a circle in the centre. Pairs of dancers sing and gesture dramatically. Leading the dance, one of the leaders sings a solo line, to which the chorus responds as they dance around, and the leaders change after each verse. There is no limit to improvisation in the lyrics, gestures, and steps. The *Bhangra* song is about sowing and harvesting, and the *Gidha* is the women's call, "Wake up, farmer, the corn is ripe." *Bhangra* dancers wear *Chadar and lahnga* (brightly-coloured cloths wrapped around their waists and flapping over both legs). They have straps of bells on their ankles and streamers on the wrists, and the ends of their turbans flap loose. *Gidha* dancers sometimes wear *lungi* (skirts), pleated and flared, instead of *shalwar*, and arrange their scarves in little peaks, looking very colourful. *Bhangra* has penetrated into the film world. These days *bhangra* is performed at marriage parties and on occasions of rejoicings.

Punjabi folk songs are generally played on the *dholak* (side drum) according to the requirements of the occasion. The *lori* is a sort of lullaby; the *ghori* is a wedding-song. Some of the popular songs are based on the theme of love—the love of Ranjha for Heer or that of Punnun for Sassi. Besides *boli*, *tappas* are quite popular.

Sikh Art

With the Sikhs' rise to power a Sikh school of painting came into existence. Maharaja Ranjit Singh commissioned artists to do portraits and frescoes. He engaged them to do decorative work in the *Golden Temple*. *Golden Temple*

represents Sikh art in all its distinctive features. The contribution of *Golden Temple* to the art of fresco painting lies in the preservation of native tradition. It is also an extension of art of the kangra and allied schools. The adaptation of the Hindu, the Persian and the Mughal motifs emphasize the sublime spiritual and secular character of the Temple. Wall paintings and murals depicting *Gurus* illustrate interesting themes in *Gurdwaras*. Kehar Singh, a court painter, created a school of *naqasies* (craftsmen) who worked on the *Golden Temple*. His portraits of *Nihangs*, *bhagats*, and caricatures are outstanding. Amrita Shergil's (1911-41) early work reflects the influence of French masters. However, her Sikh paintings depict the style of the *Rajasthani* and *Kangra* schools. Out of the contemporary artists, Sobha Singh and S.G. Thakur Singh are notable for their paintings of Sikh *Gurus* and their themes of Punjabi folklore and landscapes. Kirpal Singh and Jaswant Singh also deserve a mention. *Gyani* Gian Singh's frescoes on the temple walls, known as *Mohra Qashi* are distinguished. Kirpal Singh's paintings dealing with the persecution of the Sikhs such as *Bhai* Matidas, *Bhai* Mani Singh and *Bhai* Taru Singh by the Mughals are quite good.

Sikh Architecture

Sikh architecture is a lively blend of Mughal and Rajput architectural styles prevalent at the time the *Golden Temple* was built (around 1600). The ribbed domes, fluted arches, in-lay work, and fresco paintings are attributed to Mughal style architecture, whereas embowed or oriel windows, eaves supported on decorative friezes, chhatris (kiosks), cupolas, balconies, kalasas (finials) are from Rajput architecture. Sikh architecture is essentially eclectic in nature. It expresses the characteristics of the Sikh spirit, its inviolable freedom and aesthetic magnificence, in the form of sculptured skyline, variegated wall treatment, disposition of recesses and bold projections. The use of light and water as an element has been frequently exploited in Muslim and Hindu architecture, but it achieved its highest level in Sikh architecture in the *Golden Temple*. The *Golden Temple* is an outstanding specimen of Sikh religious architecture. It is in the *Golden Temple*, that this soul stirring spiritual expression has been realized. The sublime building is divine music, frozen in space and time, which serenely rests in the centre of the pool of nectar like a lotus flower.

The *Golden Temple's* architectural style formed the basis of Sikh architecture. Various *Gurdwaras* across India adopted *Golden Temple*-style architecture with minor variations. Apart from religious buildings, Sikh architecture encompasses forts, palaces, *bungas*, museums, libraries, colleges, etc.

The architectural forms that became the Sikh tradition are the elements which have been used extensively in the *Harimandar (Golden Temple)* and other *Gurdwaras*. Sikh temples by and large are commemorative buildings connected with the *Gurus*, or places and events of historical significance. Sikh shrines

cover a wide spectrum of structures from the simple and austere to the richly embellished. There are over 500 *Gurdwaras* in India. The form of *Gurdwaras* vary from square, rectangular, and octagonal to the cruciform. Guru Arjan set the precedent in the *Harimandar* by selecting the simplest geometric forms of a square, cube, and rectangle to demonstrate simplicity and equality.

The dome, generally, is the crowning feature of a *Gurdwara*. The dome usually springs from a floral base and has an inverted lotus symbol-top, from which rises the *kalasa* (an ornate finial). Apart from large central dome, there are often four cupolas, one on each corner. The parapet may be embellished with several turrets or strings of *guldastas* (bouquets), or other similar elements. Minarets, as symbols of royalty, are seldom used in a *Gurdwara*. Pointed, semicircular, elliptical arches, with or without cusps, and ogee arches, are ubiquitous elements of Sikh architecture. The division of the facade into a square with rectangular shapes as per the requirements of embellishment are common. Typical features which adorn the parapet are a multiplicity of *Chhatris* (kiosks), or pavilions. There is invariable use of fluted or ribbed domes. Generally these are covered with brass or copper gilt. There is the frequent use of oriel or embowed windows with shallow elliptical cornices which are supported on carved brackets. All arches are lavishly enriched by means of foliations. The *jaratkari* (in-lay work), *gach* (plaster-of-paris), *tukri* work (pieces of coloured glass in-laid into *gach*), and fresco-painting are the techniques used for embellishment of exterior surfaces as well as interior decoration. The military fortifications have their own individuality. There is a multiple use of gateways, a series of battlemented enclosures, and the placement of the structure on top of a strategic point or hill.

Sikh Kirtan¹⁴

Kirtan is the devotional singing of the praises of God in melody and rhythm. It is also the singing of the glory of God through words, mind, and action to draw spiritually closer to Him. The compositions are generally sung in classical *raga* (musical measure) with the appropriate *tala* (a cyclic arrangement of rhythms). Each *raga* is intended to produce a particular devotional mood. In *Kirtan* the feeling of love and devotion of the disciple is more important than the musical elements. *Kirtan* is the noblest of Sikh fine arts. It appeals more the inner consciousness than the hearing faculty.

Whoever chants or listens to *Kirtan* has his or her evil consciousness removed says Guru Arjan. *Kirtan* washes away the accumulated filth of mind, and the human being becomes holy. *Kirtan* is regarded as the soul's nourishment and the prop of life. It is a divine blessing and an aid to holy living. It is particularly suitable to a householders way of life because it produces a kind of detachment in the midst of family life. *Kirtan* purifies the mind and leads to a virtuous life. The *Gurus* regarded *Kirtan* as an invaluable gem. The holy word

combined with poetry and sacred music not only uplifts the mind but magnifies its emotional appeal. A fountain of bliss springs up in the individual. The *Kirtan* of *Gurbani* (divine light) is the divine nectar which illuminates the heart. It offers spiritual nutrition and transport man's soul into a realm of ecstasy. *Kirtan* removes the fear of death and cuts the chains of transmigration which ends the cycle of birth and death. As a means of liberation *Kirtan* enables the individual to attain salvation.

The *Gurus* advocated the performance of *Kirtan* in the congregation. It is an indication of divine grace that people gather to participate in the *Kirtan*. The congregation is generally held in the *Gurdwara*. According to the Sikh faith, God is present in the congregation. *Kirtan* performed in chorus by the *Sangat* present in the *Gurdwara* amounts to an appeal of a deputation of the devout to God. Such a supplication is generally approved by the Lord.

There is no need of celibacy, self-mortification, austerity, penance, or pilgrimage according to Guru Amar Das. It is the singing of the Lord's name that brings the greatest fruit, spiritual fulfillment through *Kirtan*. The *Gurus* had an insatiable thirst for *Kirtan*. "Just as fish cannot survive without water, similarly, the devotee cannot survive without *Kirtan* or the Holy Name," says Guru Ram Das. It is not enough to understand the theme of the *Shabad* (hymn). It is equally essential that we enter into its spirit and partake in the spiritual experience of the *Guru* when he composed and sang that hymn. It induces spiritual experience, and brings the individual into a state of *anand* (bliss).

Rasa (aesthetic delight) belongs to the realm of poetry and music. The *Naam* or *Amrit Rasa* (the feeling of transport or ecstasy) is the highest form. The *Gurus* called *Kirtan Har-rasa* (Divine bliss) and *Amio-rasa*. He who drinks this nectar becomes the denizen of a mystic world.

The sacred music has two aspects, the outer and the inner. The outer side is the arrangement of words and notes which delights the ear and the intellect. The inner side of this music is its mysterious process which opens the vista of inner consciousness, stabilizes the wandering mind, and brings spiritual pleasure and peace.

Kirtan is a natural way of expressing love for divinity. *Gurbani* is the path of *sahaj* (a way of realization and spiritual ascent). According to Guru Amar Das, "God's love inevitably leads to detachment and a state of desirelessness not through renunciation, but through an attitude of non-attachment to material things". Through constant remembrance and imbibing some of God's attributes through *Kirtan* the individual becomes closer to the Supreme Being. *Gurbani* is the divine light, and it is through God's grace that it comes to abide in the mind. The *Gurus* regarded a Sikh's love for *Kirtan* as a sign of benefaction. Only a rare and spiritual individual feels attracted to the singing of the praises of God.

Appendix C: Sikhs in the United States

This chapter surveys the life of American Sikhs who settled in the United States around the same period as Canadian Sikhs. It allows the reader to compare Canadian Sikhs with their counterparts across the border in terms of condition of life, job opportunities, and retention of Sikh values.

Sikh Immigration to the United States

Sikh immigration began in 1903 when twenty Sikhs entered California. There were no laws to exclude Punjabis at that time. Sikhs started to look to the Pacific Coast of America for jobs. Wages were higher there and men could emigrate as free workers. They came from districts of Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur. Most of these men were in their twenties. A few were married and left their wives and children with their parents in Punjab. Between 1903 and 1908 about six thousand Sikhs entered British Columbia and nearly three thousand crossed into the United States. Two hundred and fifty-eight Sikhs arrived in 1904 and one hundred and forty-five entered in 1905. During 1906, six hundred applied for admission, mostly from Vancouver, and several hundred were rejected.

In 1905, Sikhs continued to work on the Western Pacific Railway in Northern California. Two thousand Sikhs worked on a seven hundred mile road from Oakland to Salt Lake City. Some worked at Palermo in a lumber mill. In November 1906, four hundred Sikhs who arrived on the *Tartar* ship in San Francisco were admitted. Between 1907 and 1909 Sikhs were responsible for the construction of a large number of bridges and tunnels. Several hundred workers worked in the lumber mills and logging camps of Oregon, Washington, and California. Some political activists also entered along with the workers, which gave rise to concern by the British that they might be able to enlist support from Americans in the cause of Indian independence.

The American contact with the Sikhs goes much farther back. American advisers were employed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, for example. During the famine of 1897, Americans shipped large quantities of food to India. When the British government spent one hundred million dollars on Jubilee ceremonies, American newspaper editors were quick to point out that the British were interested in the economic exploitation of India.

Several hundred Sikh workers had moved across the border into Bellingham because of rising anti-Asian sentiments in Canada. Mill owners were interested in steady labour supply, and Sikhs could be depended upon to show up every morning. On the night of September 5, 1907, a mob of six hundred lumber jacks of European ancestry raided the living quarters of Sikh mill workers in Bellingham. Sikh possessions were thrown into the street and their valuables were stolen. A few Punjabis leaped out of windows in an attempt to escape the crowd. Many others were dragged out of their beds half-naked, whipped, and forced into the street. Some Sikhs fled across the border into Canada, and about four hundred were jailed. There were no fatalities. The police allowed the mobs to expel Sikhs from certain areas although they did protect individuals from beatings. The press and the general public was unsympathetic to the plight of the Sikhs.

The employers welcomed the Sikhs and used them to undercut the organizing efforts of Euro-American workers. Punjabis became strike-breakers. The American workers organized to drive the Sikhs away. Sikhs were pushed out of Oregon, Washington, and Northern California. The Asiatic Exclusion League (AEL) was formed in 1908. The AEL leaders were also leaders of the organized labour movement. By 1910, the AEL became successful in imposing immigration restrictions on Sikhs.

Sikh immigration to the United States was primarily a spill over from Canada when Canadian authorities firmly shut the door in 1908. By then, a small community of Punjabi labourers had established in the Pacific Coast states. There were six thousand Sikhs in California by the end of 1910. Sikhs established the *Khalsa Diwan Society* in 1909, and, by 1912, the first United States *Gurdwara* was built in Stockton. The growing network of interstate railroad lines brought increased agricultural activity to large areas of Northern California. Sikhs, therefore, began to move into farming jobs in Fresno. By 1910, the agricultural business expanded swiftly and Sikhs started getting higher wages because of their traditional agricultural expertise. In Canada Sikhs remained in lumber industry.

Punjabi settlements began in farming lands in Sacramento and San Joaquin Valley in California, and in the Imperial Valley. In this valley most Sikhs worked for the next few years and some established permanent homes. Some worked in the Vaca Valley Orchards. Five hundred were living in New Castle, picking and hoeing orchards. In 1909, four hundred worked in the beet fields in Hamilton, Oxnard, and Vasalia. Most eventually settled in these places.

In Fresno, Sikhs were considered reliable in financial dealings by the ranchers. By 1919, about sixty per cent of the Imperial Valley was owned by non-residents. Nearly eighty-eight per cent of all ranches were run by tenant farmers by 1924. They were able to provide regular profit from the land without supervision. Sikhs were not content to remain labourers, and they started pooling money to lease land. Then they started seeking loans. By this time they had acquired some capital, and their reputation as hard workers was already established. They were viewed reliable borrowers. The Sikhs decided to stay in the Imperial Valley. After 1917, many Sikhs married and settled down.

American Sikhs

After 1925, the majority of Sikh immigrants settled down on farms, while some did manual labour, and students entered the professions. Because of the restrictive immigration laws, the males could not bring their wives and families. Many Sikhs married Mexican women and lived close to the Mexican border. By 1946, there were four hundred Sikh families in California. Virtually eighty per cent involved Mexican women and Punjabi men. Culturally, it was tough. Mexican women were young and insisted on raising the children in their own culture. They brought them up as Catholics and taught them Spanish or English. Although the Sikhs were tolerant of their wives, they tried to reassert their traditional family control. The cultural conflict saw at least twenty per cent of the marriages end in divorce. The women received custody of the children. Most of these children married among the Anglos or Hispanics. The Sikhs achieved a surprising degree of economic success in California. They evaded the alien land laws and used the American legal system and a network of American businessmen to obtain control of farmland.

Around 1930s many Sikhs crossed the border illegally to Canada along the unguarded frontier. Many *Ghadarites* crossed the Mexican border on their way to Panama. By 1931, California's criminal investigation bureau had infiltrated the *Ghadar* Party. The Punjabi community knew who the British informants were. Between 1927 and 1931, more than twenty-five murders occurred in the Punjabi community. Most of those murders were attributed to *Ghadarites*. Some of the murders were retaliation against the undercover agents, while others were the result of private feuds. The *Ghadar* Party continued to support Indian independence, and, when it disbanded in 1947, it turned all its assets over to the new Indian government.

Jagjit Singh, who arrived in the United States in 1926, became president of the newly formed India League of America in 1938. He was an importer of Indian goods in New York and developed a wealthy clientele. He started acting as an official lobbyist for India and Indians. He succeeded in obtaining TIME Magazine's support for the Indian nationalists, and he cornered congressmen and diplomats. A number of Punjabis fought for restoration of citizenship which they had lost in 1910, but Congress balked at it. The outbreak of World War II

combined with the struggle of Indian nationalists finally reversed the discrimination. For the United States, an independent India was an attractive proposition. In 1944, when American troops were stationed in India, President Roosevelt assured Indians that American troops were there to defeat the Japanese. Although Americans kept out of Indian politics, Indians remained concerned about foreign designs, since Americans had established air bases and support infrastructures there. In 1945, when the war ended, Indians rioted against American troops stationed in India.

Jagjit Singh was instrumental in convincing some Democrats in congress to restore rights and citizenship for Indians. But it was not until 1946 that congress passed a bill granting naturalization and immigration quotas for Indians. Independence annihilated Punjab. The partition uprooted millions of Sikhs; bloody riots erupted and hundreds of thousands of people were killed. In America, Sikhs were deeply disappointed with the events in Punjab.

Sikhs moved fast into the political mainstream of America. Dalip Singh Saund, who farmed land for many years, rose to become the first Indian American congressman. Born in an uneducated Sikh family in Punjab, he came to the United States in 1920, and eventually earned a Ph. D. in mathematics from Berkeley. He worked as a foreman on a cotton farm, and then became a farm owner in the Imperial Valley. By 1928, he married an American woman and together they got involved in civic activities. He organized the Indian National Congress Association of America. Saund was elected a judge in 1953, and a congressman in 1956.

After 1965, immigration laws were modified to admit more Indians. In 1968, a large number of Indians were allowed to immigrate into United States, and a considerable number of these were Sikhs. These Sikhs brought their families with them. A large number were professionals. These professionals found high paying jobs in academic institutions, hospitals, and corporations. Both husbands and wives worked, and were able to invest in land, houses, and businesses. They worked long hours, and made many sacrifices to succeed. When they tried to move into administrative positions, they encountered discrimination.

American life-style threatened traditional Sikh values. Economic independence for women concerned husbands, for example. Working wives could not provide traditional care for their children since they lacked the support of parents and relatives who normally looked after the children when husband and wife were at work. Between 1966-1975, more than eight thousand Sikhs became American citizens. Some women retained their Indian citizenship to keep open the option of returning to Punjab. There was uneasy truce between the old and the new immigrants. By 1985, the Sikhs formed a community of more than three hundred thousand.

From the time the first several thousand Sikhs arrived on the west coast between 1900-1910, the pressure by American workers led to a ban of Sikh

immigrants. The exclusion of Punjabis led to the admission of Mexican immigrants to fill labour requirements. The injustice done to Sikhs was championed by many intellectuals, but no major political party supported their case.

Ghadar

In and around San Francisco a small group of Indian intellectuals arose to become the nucleus of a revolutionary independence movement. The vehicle for this was the *Hindustan Ghadar* Party. Though it originated in the United States, it was also active in Canada since the time it was established. What distinguished the *Ghadar* movement from earlier organizations was its espousal of violence.

Har Dayal arrived in the United States on February 9, 1911. At Berkeley, he associated himself with campus radicals and lectured in Indian philosophy at Stanford. In January 1912, with the help of Jawala Singh, a rich Sikh nationalist farmer from Stockton, Har Dayal instituted Guru Gobind Singh scholarships at the University of California. The Scholarship Committee included Teja Singh, Har Dayal, Taraknath Das, and Arthur Pope. Some of the students who became the beneficiaries of these scholarships were luminaries such as Nand Singh Sihra, who headed a three-man deputation to London and India on behalf of Canadian Sikhs, Gobind Behari Lal, and Darisi Chenchiah. Har Dayal lectured on the platform of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) movement. He had assumed the leadership of nationalist students. Being a political mentor of Punjabi immigrants, he penetrated the Sikh community. A dual leadership grew up: effective control of organization remained in the hands of the largely semiliterate Sikh workers. Since the immigrants had to deal with lawyers and government departments, they had to have spokesmen who could speak English. Friction between Hindu intelligentsia like Har Dayal and Sikh workers such as Sohan Singh Bhakhna was inevitable.

Since the vast majority of immigrants were Sikhs, the earliest immigrant organizations centred around *Gurdwaras*. The difficulties faced by Sikhs put them in the lap of revolutionaries. The traditional Sikh response against domination was to fight back. Since *Gurdwaras* were the only public places where Punjabis could meet, they became the storm centres of political activity. The *Khalsa Diwan* Society and other organizations began to publish tabloid papers in *Gurmukhi*, Urdu, and English. A large number of Sikh immigrants were ex-soldiers. It was only after they failed to attain any redress that they began to lend an ear to radical counsel.

Jawala Singh and Har Dayal took the initiative to organize the immigrants at Stockton and created a body entitled Hindustani Workers of the Pacific coast in May 1913. Sohan Singh Bhakhna¹ (a lumber mill worker at Oregon) and Har Dayal were elected president and secretary, respectively. Jawala Singh remained behind the scene, but provided most of the funds, including scholarships for

Indian students. In November, the *Ghadar* Party was formally organized to promote national independence of India. The first issue of the *Ghadar* newspaper appeared on November 1913. The party purchased premises in San Francisco and began publishing a weekly paper called the *Ghadar* (revolution) in Urdu, and later in Punjabi. Kartar Singh Sarabha² was the brains behind it. The first run printed and mailed twenty-five thousand copies to every Punjabi community in North America, India, Europe and the Far East.

Although the *Ghadar's* membership was primarily Sikh, it was not a Sikh religious organization. *Ghadarite* publications compared Indian poverty with the wealth extracted from India by the British. This "drain" theory was a powerful propaganda weapon among disenchanted Sikhs. Political feelings in the community were further inflamed when it became known that a delegation sent to India on their behalf had failed. Suspected of revolutionary activity, Nand Singh Sihra, a member of the delegation, was not allowed to return to Canada. He later joined the *Ghadar* movement in California.

Ghadar leaders in America started organizing a revolt in India. Several ships were commissioned to transport Sikh revolutionaries to mainland India from the United States, Canada and several other countries from the Far East. Germany came forward to render substantial financial assistance and arms to the *Ghadarites* for their rousing a revolt in India. The *Ghadar* revolutionaries carried with them large quantities of propaganda literature while sailing in different ships towards India. Shortly thereafter, the Berlin India Committee (BIC), under the leadership of Viren Chattopadyaya, was set up in Berlin to establish a republican form of government in India.

A series of Public gatherings were addressed by Bhagwan Singh Gyani and Mohammed Barkatullah on the west coast. Several thousand Sikhs volunteered. There was rush to catch ships for India. Bhagwan Singh Gyani prepared a proclamation of war (the *Ghadarite* rebellion) for wide circulation. Soon after the declaration of War by Britain on August 14, 1914, important *Ghadar* leaders left the United States shore to engage their fight in different countries. Bhagwan Singh Gyani was deputed to go to Japan, Philippines, China, and Hong Kong to persuade Sikhs residing there to fight for the cause of revolution. Santokh Singh, Sohan Lal Pathak, and Harnam Singh Sahri operated between Shanghai, Siam, Malaysia, Singapore, and Burma. Tehal Singh organized a strong force in Shanghai and Siam to transport them to India. Jawala Singh and Sohan Singh Bhakhna enlisted for revolutionary service in India. In the absence of leading *Ghadarites* the leadership of *Ghadar* Party in California fell into the hands of Ram Chandra, a *Brahmin* from Peshawar.

By December 1914, nearly one thousand *Ghadarites* had arrived in Punjab. The number of revolutionaries rose to several thousand by early 1915. Jawala Singh headed a group of sixty-two *Ghadarites* on the *S.S. Korea* from San Francisco, on August 29, 1914. At the farewell address volunteers were told

to stir up the rebellion in every part of India and that arms would be provided on arrival in India. They could also easily plunder police stations for arms. About one hundred fifteen volunteers joined the *Korea* at Canton, and in Hong Kong the number rose to three hundred. As soon as the *Korea*, docked at Calcutta (India) the ring leaders, including Jawala Singh, were arrested by the police, and the rest returned peacefully to their villages in Punjab. The *Ghadarites* continued to arrive in batches from the United States, Canada, Shanghai, Hong Kong (China), Malaysia, Borneo, Indonesia, Japan, and the Philippines. On the way they made contact with Indian troops stationed in Rangoon (Burma) and Singapore (Malaysia) and the plan remained confined to the distribution of propaganda material. When the Japanese ship *Tosha Maru* with two hundred volunteers reached Calcutta, it was searched by the police. Leaders were arrested, and the passengers were escorted to Punjab.

The *Ghadar* Party's participation in the German game plan was confined to: a) the shipping of arms to destinations in India; b) developing Siam as a base for the military training of Indians for intervention in India; and c) the printing of anti-British, pro-German propaganda material for distribution among British Indian soldiers outside India. As a result of the propaganda a few regiments were reported to have refused to fight the Germans. Germans were in command of all these projects. The *Ghadar* leaders' readiness to cooperate with Germans compromised the character of the *Ghadar* movement in the United States. "The die was cast," said Gobind Behari Lal (a *Ghadarite* revolutionary).

On arrival in India the *Ghadarites* discovered to their chagrin that the Indians were not conducive to revolution. Indian National Congress¹ leaders were sympathetic to the British cause. Punjab was sending soldiers to the front to help the British. In Punjab the Chief *Khalsa Diwan* reiterated its loyalty to the British crown. The Sikh priests of important Sikh shrines denounced the *Ghadarites* as renegades. Rash Behari Bose, a Hindu from the Bengal Province took up the leadership of *Ghadar* revolution in Punjab. Contacts were made with the 23rd Cavalry at Lahore, 26th Punjabis at Ferozepur, the 28th pioneers, and the 12th Cavalry at Meerut. They all agreed to mutiny. February 21, 1915, was fixed for a general rising. The carefully laid plans were foiled by the police. The revolutionaries waited in vain for troops to come out, and then the revolutionaries dispersed and fell into the net of the police. Disaffected regiments were disarmed, suspects were court marshalled and executed. The *Ghadar* uprising was smashed. The *Ghadarites* had wide links with the masses of the peasantry from whom the bulk of the British-Indian army was recruited. This is what terrified the British rulers and it explains the brutal massive repression launched against the *Ghadarites*.

The *Ghadarites* contacted the 5th Light Infantry, a Muslim unit posted at Singapore (Malaysia). The Muslim soldiers overpowered the local reservists on guard duty at the military prison and took possession of the fort. Seven hundred

mutineers marched toward the town. They clashed with the Sikhs of the Malaya State Guides stationed at Singapore. The clash took a communal turn, and in the ensuing fight forty-four men died. Later one hundred twenty-six men were tried, thirty-seven were sentenced to death, and forty-one got transportation for life.

Germany first tried to arrange arms for the *Ghadar* revolutionaries by chartering the *Henry S.* from the United States. Five thousand revolvers were placed on board the ship. The ship was subsequently captured by the British navy. On April 1915, the tanker *S.S. Maverick* sailed for the Socorro Islands to receive a consignment of arms from the schooner *Annie Larsen* which was loaded with huge quantities of fire arms, and then it was to sail to Batavia (Djakarta). The rendezvous at Socorro never took place. British and American warships searched the *Maverick*. Later the cargo of *Annie Larsen* was seized when it docked at Aberdeen. The *Maverick* sailed to Batavia without any arms.

By the end of 1916, the Berlin India Committee (BIC) noted that the *Ghadar* movement could not be successful. Because of the jealousies within the *Ghadar* leadership the situation had deteriorated enormously. The fiasco of ships carrying arms cooled German interest with respect to *Ghadar* revolutionaries. With the approval of the German Foreign Office, Dr. Chandar Kant Chakraberty, a Bengali Hindu, was sent to America with large amounts of money contributed by the Germans. Chakraberty, in turn, misappropriated the funds to his personal use.

Ram Chandra, the *Ghadar* leader in California managed the *Ghadar* party affairs in an autocratic manner. Ram Chandra also had received an abundant supply of funds from Germany, primarily for printing literature, and the national fund of forty thousand dollars contributed by the Sikh community went into his own pocket. The propaganda material did not suit the German interests. He was ordered to stop. His refusal to stop intensified the conflict. Ram Chandra was accused of pushing thousands of Sikh patriots into the hands of enemy without ensuring their safety and success.

Lajpat Rai (1865-1928), a Punjabi Hindu independence leader, on his experiences of revolutionaries states in his autobiography: "Most of the Bengali revolutionaries I found absolutely unprincipled both in the conduct of their campaign and in obtaining and spending of funds. Their patriotism was tainted by considerations of gain or profit. I have had genuine respect for M.N. Roy. Among the Punjabis the worst case was of Ram Chandra. The Sikhs on the whole proved to be purer, more unselfish and disciplined. The worst possible case among them was of Bhagwan Singh Gyani but even he was infinitely superior to Ram Chandra or Chandarkant Chakraberty. He did spend a certain amount of money on luxuries but he never embezzled or misappropriated or saved money for the future use. On the whole I believe him to be honest, sincere, brave, selfless, and patriotic. I have not yet come across a single Sikh

revolutionary whom I considered guilty of misappropriation or misuse of revolutionary funds."

Many revolutionaries like Bhagwan Singh Gyani and Santokh Singh were bitterly critical of Ram Chandra and Dr. Chandar Kant Chakraberty. There were allegations that Ram Chandra might have been working as a spy of the British Government. Ram Chandra's failure to account for the funds split the Party into two factions in California. Gradually the two factions grew apart. After returning to the United States, Bhagwan Singh Gyani took over the leadership of the group opposed to Ram Chandra.

The British had been pleading the United States for the arrest of Indian revolutionaries and it maintained persistent pressure. When the United States decided to join the war as an ally of Britain against Germany, Attorney Preston arrested Ram Chandra and other *Ghadarites* in San Francisco. Chakraberty was arrested in New York with other revolutionaries.

During the Hindu-German Conspiracy Trial in November 1917, the charge against *Ghadar* revolutionaries was violation of neutrality throughout 1911-1917. British agents put together a lot of evidence. The trial revealed that leading revolutionaries like Ram Chandra and Chakraberty were grafting money. The disclosures were terribly damaging. There was hardly one man who came out unscathed and untainted. On the last day of the California trial Ram Singh, a co-accused, shot Ram Chandra dead in the court chamber. Ram Singh was then instantly shot dead by the marshal of the court.

Ghadar Ideology

Har Dayal was the dominant player of the *Ghadar* movement and derived his inspiration from Hindu nationalism. His agenda highlighted the drainage of Indian wealth to England, excessive expenditure on armed forces and wars of imperial extension, high rates of taxation, recurrent famines and high death tolls, and neglect of education, sanitation and public health. British rule was maintained through restrictions on civil liberties, administrative high-handedness, arrest of opposition political leaders, and detentions without trial.

The *Ghadar* leaders condemned the mendicant approach of the Indian National Congress (in India) and attacked the moderates for misleading the nation. The *Ghadar* ideologues had a three stage plan of action. The first stage was moral and intellectual uplift, with an emphasis on virtue and wisdom. The second stage was war. The third stage involved reconstruction, consolidation, and finally independence. They were of the opinion that they must place a clear issue before the people: "Such is your state, this is the cause, remove the cause."

The goal of the *Ghadar* movement was outlined as "nothing less than the establishment of a republic, a government of the people, by the people, and for the people of India." Curiously, a major factor which contributed to the founding of the *Ghadar* movement in USA was the oppression and discrimination of Punjabi immigrants, yet there was hardly any reference to it in *Ghadar* issues.

Har Dayal not only avoided any criticism of American people or authorities, but also frequently acclaimed the support Americans gave to the cause of India's freedom. He emphasized that patriotic soldiers from the British Indian army were expected to participate. Since the majority of Sikh immigrants in USA and Canada were ex-army men and had connections in the British Indian regiments, they could win over a large part of the Indian army to turn their weapons against the British at a crucial time. Once Britain's main body of armed forces were engaged on various fronts in Europe it would be most opportune to launch rebellion in India.

The ideas advocated in the *Ghadar* were mainly directed towards the thousands of semiliterate Sikh labourers and farmers settled abroad. Most of the ideas were contained in passionate poetical compositions, in *Gurmukhi* by leaders such as Bhagwan Singh Gyani, Harnam Singh Tundilat, and Munsha Singh Dukhi. They were later printed in booklets entitled *Ghadar di Goonj* which became a major source of emotional appeal. *Ghadar* writings asserted that Punjabis had been robbed of everything, their *izzat* (self respect) above all. The only answer to meet the situation was to draw the sword. "Deputations are of no avail," wrote the poets, "take in your hand the sword and the shield." Bhagwan Singh Gyani explained that the history of the world showed that no people had gained freedom except through armed struggle. Sikhs constituted a majority in the movement, some of their leading figures had been Sikh priests, and *Gurdwara* gatherings became centres of *Ghadar* propaganda. There was hardly any concern with the promotion of Sikh religion. This movement was the first purely secular movement, which aimed at liberating India by force of arms.

Berlin India Committee (BIC)

At the urging of Germany great revolutionaries like Taraknath Das, Mohammed Barkatullah, Bhagwan Singh Giani, Har Dayal, V.N. Dutta, Ajit Singh, and Basant Singh converged on Berlin. The Berlin India Committee (BIC) was set up under the leadership of Viren Chattopadhyaya, to establish a republican form of the Government of India with the tacit approval of the German government. German foreign ministers promised all sort of help to the revolutionaries. Chattopadhyaya (Chatto) and Har Dayal were held in high esteem by the German officials.

German general staff had already approved the sending of weapons to India in November 1914. The German aim was to wear down Britain through disturbances in India and Egypt. The British rushed Indian troops to safeguard the Suez Canal and the Persian oil fields, when Turkey joined Germany on October 20, 1914.

The Berlin India Committee was to coordinate the activities of the revolutionaries in different regions of Canada, United States, Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, and several other countries. The BIC had a four stage plan of revolution. First, a group of students from America would take information

with them to India. The second group would go with revolutionary instructions. A third group would arrive with small sums of money. A fourth group would arrive willing to fight for the cause. Germany was able to secure arms for the *Ghadarites*. These weapons were to be shipped to Kabul (Afghanistan) and smuggled into Punjab.

The plan was to capture and hold a portion of land in India and establish a military government. Then a provisional government would be established in Berlin and accorded diplomatic recognition. Chatto asked for a written assurance from Germany for the independence of India, and a pledge that Germany would have no other interests other than commercial and cultural relations. The German government agreed.

American Well Wishers of Indian Freedom

The cause of Indian freedom received articulate support from American intellectuals. However, the pro-India movement was not successful enough to persuade the United States government to change British policy. Most Americans in influential government positions were indifferent on this issue. There was growing awareness by American liberal intellectuals. Andrew Carnegie of the Anti-Imperialist League urged that India gradually be moved toward independence. William Jennings Bryan denounced British imperialists for impoverishing India by legalized pillage. Rev. Javez T. Sunderland joined in the creation of a new organization, the Society for the Advancement of India. American sympathizers emphasized that self-rule was better than foreign rule.

Lajpat Rai was able to create a network within the liberal intelligentsia sympathetic toward the nationalist cause. Walter Lippmann, an associate editor of the *New Republic* criticized the imperialist treatment of Indian people. He believed that "natives" should be encouraged to have pride in their own cultures instead of trying to imitate the west. Professor Arthur Pope of Berkeley, Henrietta Rodman, founder of the feminist alliance, gave Rai wide access to academics, social workers, and socialists. Rai was able to communicate the nationalist cause to a widening audience of Americans. Rai's book *Young India* was moderately received.

American liberals joined in the creation of two special organizations; the Indian Home Rule League of America (IHL), and the Friends of Freedom for India (FFI) which was helped by American revolutionary Agnes Smedley. The Indian Home Rule League was founded in October 1917, and Rai was named the president. Agnes Smedley also joined Lajpat Rai in the pro-India cause. She introduced the nationalists among the New York intelligentsia and feminists.

Americans had a long tradition not only of harbouring political revolutionaries but also of refusing to deport them. Handing over a political offender often meant death, for which American officials were reluctant to take responsibility. The labour department had used deportation in 1918 against

Punjabi workers on the west coast. In March 1917, some Punjabis were arrested on charges of conspiracy to violate neutrality laws. The libertarians feared that deportation would result in the execution of revolutionaries.

In 1919, the labour department intended to deport Punjabis arrested during the war. Critics of the Wilson administration condemned the rush to deport Punjabis as unjustified. Meanwhile, Punjabis continued to attract American reformers to support Indian independence. In 1918, the labour department intended to deport Bhagwan Singh, Santokh Singh, and Gopal Singh. The Friends of Freedom for India was able to muster support against deportation. Several newspapers wrote favourably and argued that if these men are deported they would be executed in India. Smedley also wrote against the deportations. Momentum against deportation continued to grow. Assurances were given that the Punjabis would get adequate defence opportunities. Eamon Da Valera, Irish Republican leader, offered support for Indian independence and the deportation proceeding against Bhagwan Singh, Santokh Singh, and Gopal Singh were dismissed.

Friends of Freedom for India discovered that the alien bill legislation, which would allow deportation of all aliens convicted of revolutionary activities during the war had slipped through congress unamended, and without any publicity also passed through the senate. The government began a wholesale round-up of Punjabis for deportations. Approximately a hundred Punjabis were deported but none of them were political offenders.

Appendix D: Sikh Conferences

Sikh Conference 1979, Toronto

The First Canadian Sikh Conference, held in Toronto 1979, was an attempt to bring the Sikh community together. The participation was mainly from Ontario and Québec. The chief objective was to determine ways and means to preserve Sikh identity and heritage in Canada. A wide range of issues such as Sikh identity, education of Sikh children, Sikh professionals, Sikhs and their relations with other communities, communication among Sikhs, Sikh women, and Sikh meditation were discussed at the conference. Ottawa Sikh Society offered to host the next Sikh conference.

Sikh Conference 1980, Ottawa

A planning group and a task force was set up to organize and broaden the scope of the Ottawa Sikh Conference from a regional to a national level and to attempt to form a federation of Sikh societies in Canada. It was decided that a draft constitution of the proposed federation would be presented at this conference. More than forty Sikh organizations from across Canada sent delegates to the conference. In the presence of three hundred Sikhs, the draft constitution of the proposed federation was agreed upon. An ad-hoc committee was established to draft the constitution of the federation. The main objective of the conference was to set up a mechanism so that Sikhs from all over Canada could communicate and coordinate various religious, cultural, and educational needs of the community. The Federation would serve as a forum for presenting the views of all Sikhs in Canada and promote a better understanding among them. The Federation would interact with other ethnic communities, and with all levels of government. A diverse range of papers were presented at the conference. The themes were: "The Hindustan Ghadar"; "Sikh Studies in

Canada"; "From Ethnic Enclosure to a Dynamic Warrior"; "Philosophic and Spiritual Concepts of Sikhism"; "Mystical Consciousness in Sikhism"; "Growth and Survival of Sikh Culture in North America"; "*Chardi Kala* (dynamic optimism)"; "Heritage of Sikh Culture"; "Sikhs as Leaders of East Indian Community"; "Legal and Social Conflicts of Sikh Religion in Canada"; "Status of Sikh Women in Canada"; "The Problems of the Sikh Youth"; "Dynamics of Sikh Organizations"; "Teachings of Sikhism"; "The Practical Aspects of Sikh Institutions"; "Sikh Children and Their Education"; and "Implications of Not Teaching Punjabi to Sikh Children in Canada". The Calgary Sikh Society offered to hold the 1981 Sikh Conference.

All Canada Sikh Convention 1981, Calgary

The ad-hoc committee started soliciting comments and developing consensus. All members of the committee presented the views of the organizations in their respective regions. Every aspect of the constitution was fully considered. The draft constitution was unanimously approved, with some modifications, by thirty-five Sikh organizations in Canada.

At the Calgary convention, the delegates meeting was disrupted. The keynote speaker was not allowed to address the convention. Credit goes to the Calgary *Sangat* who let the deliberations of the constitution proceed and the Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada became a reality. The general body authorized the existing ad-hoc committee members to form the executive of the Federation and carry on the work of the Federation until the next convention.

The Federation executive represented the interests of Canadian Sikhs at the federal, provincial and local level. The Federation started writing letters to the prime minister, all premiers, solicitor-general, the Canadian Human Rights Commission, and sister ethnic organizations. The Federation was consulted by the Department of Immigration. Briefs were submitted to the Canadian Human Rights Commission regarding Sikh requirements for dietary and religious practices while in the hospital; to the solicitor-general (federal and provincial) on the sanctity of *Gurdwaras* versus police behaviour; for presentation to the United Nations Organization regarding treatment of Sikhs in India. A follow-up of the K.S. Bhinder vs C.N.R. case was pursued. Several other issues concerning the Sikh community were dealt with. Ottawa offered to hold the 1983 All Canada Sikh Convention.

The Sikh Heritage Conference 1981, Toronto

The All Canada Sikh Convention of August-1-2, 1981, held in Calgary gave the Canadian Sikhs a national body (Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada). Only fifty days after the Calgary Conference, "The Sikh Heritage Conference" was planned in Toronto for September 19-20, 1981. The author attended both of these conferences, and presented a paper "Preservation of Sikhism in North

America", prepared jointly by Iqbal Jaswal and the author at the Sikh Heritage Conference.

The Toronto group, which was instrumental in organizing the First Sikh Conference, strongly believed in the concept of developing regional bodies, which could later form a national federation of autonomous organizations. They felt that the Ottawa group adopted their idea, and virtually demolished the regional concept during the formation of the Federation. Serious differences developed between the Toronto and Ottawa groups. Under the guise of the Sikh Heritage Conference the Toronto group was seeking approval for the constitution of the Ontario Regional Body. This amounted to the establishment of a parallel organization against the Federation, and, as such, it was perceived a threat to the Federation. The constitution of the regional body was deferred at that point, but approved sometime later. A couple of years down the road no one was interested in the regional body.

The Conference was organized around six workshops, each dealing with a specific subject. One workshop was devoted to the exposition of the fundamental values of the Sikh faith. Others dealt with the position of Sikhs in the Canadian mosaic; the response of the community as a responsible constituent of the mosaic; stereotypes about the community; difficulties faced by the community to maintain Sikh symbols and traditions; and aspiration of the community to have its own community centre.

All Canada Sikh Convention 1983, Ottawa

Since the formation of the Federation in Calgary in 1981, specific resolutions took the form of projects for the first time. The 1983 Convention also highlighted the future role of the Federation in evolving the Canadian Sikh community. The keynote speech addressed some of the problems faced by Sikhs in Punjab. In the workshops issues such as Sikh practices; media; law and rights; multiculturalism; racism; and Sikhs as an international community; were discussed. The following resolutions were unanimously approved: that the turban and the Sikh symbols are integral and vital parts in the preservation of Sikhism; that a strong protest be registered against the actions of those agencies which extended discriminatory treatment to Sikhs wearing *kirpan* (sword); that *Guru Granth Sahib* should not be used for swearing-in purposes; that the Federation will assist in the establishment of the Chair in Sikh studies at the University of British Columbia; that the Federation should form an ad-hoc committee of representatives from Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America for preparing a constitution of the International Sikh Organization; that the Government of Canada should legislate measures to protect Sikhs against racist attacks; and that the Federation should respond to negative coverage of Sikhs by the media. The elections for the office bearers of the executive committee of the Federation were held at this convention.

Regional Conferences at Kamloops and Toronto 1984

The attack on the *Golden Temple* by the Indian army struck the Sikh world like a thunderbolt. All shades of Canadian Sikhs came together at the desecration of the supreme emblem of their faith. The Canadian Sikhs expected the Federation to provide an appropriate response. The executive decided to take the Canadian Sikhs into confidence on the kind of action required by holding regional conferences (because of a shortage of time). Consequently, two regional conferences were hastily organized, one at Kamloops on July 1, 1984, and the other in Toronto on July 22, 1984. The Kamloops Conference was attended by representatives of most of the Sikh societies from western Canada and the Toronto Conference was attended by the societies of the eastern region. The Calgary Sikh Society, which was not on good terms with the Federation, provided unqualified support for any action the Federation recommended.

Nelson A. Riis, the Member of Parliament from Kamloops, addressed the conference and it was here that General J.S. Bhullar from India made the first appearance on the Canadian scene. The wrath of the Sikhs was directed at the Government of India for desecration of the *Golden Temple* and massacre of thousands of Sikhs. The executive met on the night of the 30th of June in Kamloops, and the author sat as an observer at the meeting. The mood of the executive was to take strong measures against the Indian government. The Federation did not have a choice. If the Federation leadership had not gone along with the mood of the Canadian Sikhs, the Sikhs were ready to set up an alternative organization at this crucial juncture of historic importance.

The Conference recommended: that the Federation will work to establish a Sikh homeland; that the damaged *Akal Takhat* should be left unrepaired to remind Sikhs of the desecration by the Government of India, and the decision to carry repairs should be left to the *Panth*; that Canadian Sikhs boycott all functions of the Indian diplomatic missions; that media, especially ethnic media which published anti-Sikh material, should be warned suitably to desist from harming the Sikh community; and that a trust-fund be established to provide pensions to the next of kin of the martyrs.

International Sikh Convention New York City July 27-28, 1984

The Convention was held in the wake of the tragic happenings of June 5 and 6, 1984, when the Indian army stormed the *Golden Temple* complex in Amritsar. A group of Sikhs in New York formed an ad-hoc International Sikh Organization to represent Sikhs interests. They called themselves the World Sikh Organization. The objectives of the Convention were: 1) to send the strongest possible message to the Government of India that Sikhs of India and abroad will not forget its actions, 2) to inform the international community in the clearest possible terms of Sikh aspirations and of the Indian government's perfidy, 3) to chart a course of action that the Sikhs can unitedly follow in order to make their own destiny and be responsible for their own future.

On July 27, 1984, the following topics were discussed in the workshops at the Convention: 1) "International Sikh Organization -Necessity, Objectives, Structure, Organization; and Finances"; 2) "contribution of Sant Jamail Singh Bhindranwale in Sikh renaissance and Sikh struggle for justice"; 3) "Sikh martyrs and their dependents"; 4) "Legal remedies and international institutions"; 5) "developing media and public relations"; 6) "role of Sikh youth in the present challenge"; 7) "the Sikhs: individual behaviour and Panthic expectations"; 8) "the Sikh Homeland." About two thousand five hundred Sikhs from the United States and Canada assembled at the Madison Square Garden Centre to formalize the creation of World Sikh Organization.

Babbar Khalsa International Conference June 30, 1989, Montreal

Babbar Khalsa organization in Canada held its first conference in Montréal to commemorate the Sikh martyrs who had laid down their lives for the cause of the Sikh nation. The devout Babbars urged Sikhs to observe memories of their courage annually. About five hundred Sikhs attended the conference, and the speakers accused the Indian government of systematic killing of Sikh youth in the Punjab. The contents and the message conveyed at the conference is summarized as follows:

"Since Indian independence, during the past forty-two years, the Government of India has used force, repression, and judicial manipulation against the Sikhs, depriving them of a peaceful existence. The following will substantiate these charges and conclude with a request to the Government of Canada to change its treatment of the Sikhs. The strength of the *Khalsa* emanates from its commitment to both religious and martial values and the Government of India has deprived the Sikhs of their freedom to honour these values.

In 1947, at the time of partition, the Punjab (Homeland of the Sikhs) was intentionally dissected by the government of the day to deprive the Sikhs of their homeland. Indian leaders left the Sikhs bleeding profusely, resulting in a mass movement of penniless Sikh refugees from Pakistan into refugee camps in India. When the majority of Indian provinces were reorganized on linguistic lines, the efforts of Sikhs were frustrated for at least sixteen years before founding of Punjab province. In the end, however, the Government of India reduced the Punjab to a few districts.

The worst crime was desecration of *Harimandar Sahib the Golden Temple* at Amritsar along with the destruction of the *Akal Takhat* in 1984 by the Indian army. Tens of thousands of Sikhs were slaughtered.

A glaring example of the dishonest intentions of Indian rulers towards minorities is that, since independence, no heavy industry has been set up in the Punjab. This was a deliberate move on the part of the government to deprive the Sikhs of a self-sufficient industrial base for the Sikh Homeland.

The persistent violation of Human Rights continues unabated in India despite international condemnation. International bodies like the United Nations Human

Rights Commission and Amnesty International should be asked to enter the Punjab to see for themselves how thousands of Sikh youths have been tortured and thrown into jails.

Canadian Security Agencies continue to harass the members and families of the Babbar Khalsa in Canada. This has resulted in disrupting the social life of their families, and children have suffered the most."

Sikh Women's Seminar March 23, 1985, Toronto

The seminar's objective was to bring the Sikh women together, whereby they could discuss various issues facing the community. There was a need for such a forum where Sikh women could assemble, deliberate, and contribute toward the development of programs for the Sikh youth. The following papers were presented at the Seminar: "A Portrait of South Asian Canadian Women"; "Role of Women in Sikh Society"; "What is Leadership"; "Role of Sikh Women in Canadian Society"; "Role of Women in Sikh Leadership"; and "Participation of Sikh Women in Community Life".

Sikh Symposium May 25 and 26, 1985, Toronto

The objective of the symposium was to provide an opportunity where the Punjab situation could be analyzed, basic issues explored, and hopefully strategies could be developed to bring a sense of realism in the community, in the wake of tragic happenings in the Punjab which affected the Sikhs all over the world. The papers presented at the symposium covered a wide range of subjects: "Together-Reflections"; "Sikh Identities"; "Obstacles to Render Aid to Sikhs"; "Sikhs Since 1947"; "Responsibility of the Sikh Diaspora"; "Sikhs and Poles"; "Cultural Restraints on Sikhs in India"; "Economic Restraints on Punjab"; "The Khalsa its Universality"; "Psychology of Violence"; "Role of Media"; "Unspeakable"; and "What Went Wrong".

All Canada Sikh Convention 1985, Victoria

Victoria, British Columbia was the venue of this convention which was hosted by the Victoria *sangat* on November 9 and 10, 1985. Although the Federation had been in existence for the past five years, the Sikh Community had passed through challenging times since the last Convention of 1983. A host of activities had been undertaken by the Federation such as "Chair in Sikh Studies," the presentation of a *Kirpan* to the Prime Minister Trudeau, the *Kirpan* case, the turban case of K.S. Bhinder, numerous briefs on these were presented. Assistance went to Sikhs seeking refugee status, and they worked on negation of false propaganda against Sikhs generated by Air India crash. The Federation had also been publishing *The Nation* paper. The objectives of the convention were to establish the decision making process at the national level, to devise strategic planning for the involvement of the Sikh community, to review progress of the activities of the Federation, to address social, cultural and religious concerns of

Sikh women, and to allow a forum for the Sikh youth to articulate problems, concerns, and issues on the religious and cultural development of Sikh youth.

Apart from Federation business there were three workshops: a) Community Development; b) Women's Issues; and c) the Concerns of Youth. The recommendations from each workshop were adopted at the Plenary Session.

North American Sikh Convention 1985, Edmonton

The North American Sikh Convention was hosted by the International Sikh Youth Federation, (ISYF) and held in Edmonton on September 1, 1985. The contents and the message conveyed at the convention is summarized as follows: According to (ISYF) sources "More than forty-five thousand innocent Sikh men, women and children were slaughtered in the Punjab as a whole since June 6, 1984. About two thousand Sikhs attended the conference. The speakers lashed out at the Indian government for the massacre of Sikhs. There was a total news blackout of Punjab, foreign correspondents were expelled to hide heinous crimes. After the Operation Bluestar, the Indian army continued its presence in civilian clothes in the *Golden Temple* Complex, and desecration persisted. Thousands of Sikhs and Sikh soldiers who had deserted the Indian army were tortured and languished in Indian jails."

Sikh Canadians: The Promise of the Challenge A Symposium August 12-14, 1988, Toronto

The Symposium was organized by the Macauliffe Institute of Sikh Studies on August 12-14, 1988, in Toronto. The objective of the Symposium, apart from promotion of Sikh image among Canadians and lobbying various levels of government, was to approve the Constitution of the Institute by the Sikhs gathered at the Symposium. A Cabinet Minister participated at the reception which was very well organized. Subjects discussed at the workshops were: Being Visible; Networking; Media Relations; and New Directions in Sikh Studies.

Sikh Academic Conferences

Academic Conference on Sikh Scholarship February 13-15, 1987, Toronto

This conference was organized under the auspices of the University of Toronto, the first of its kind after the assault on *Golden Temple*. Many renowned scholars from United Kingdom, India, United States, and Canada participated. Papers were presented on selected topics on Religion and Culture; History and Politics: India; History and Society: Diaspora; and Comments on Recent Events. "Legacies of the Sikh Past for the Twentieth Century"; "A Sikh

Theology for Modern Times"; "Ethical and Spiritual Aspects of *Naam Simaran*"; "Patterns of Pluralism: Sikh Relations with Radhasoami"; "The Secular Heritage of the Sikhs"; "Religious and Secular strains in Twentieth-Century Punjabi Poetry"; "Some Observations on the Evolution of Modern Standard Punjabi"; "Bengali Perceptions of the Sikhs: The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries"; "From Ritual to Counter Ritual: Rethinking the Hindu Sikh Question, 1884-1915"; "Sikh Politics in British Punjab prior to Gurdwara Reform Movement"; "Akali Struggle: Past and Present"; "Fox and the Lions: The Akali Movement revisited"; "The Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and the Politicisation of the Sikhs"; "The Crisis of Sikh Politics (1940-1947)"; "Sikh Minority Attitudes in India's Federal System"; "Conceptions of Sikh Culture in the Development of a Comparative Analysis of the Sikh Diaspora"; "Patterns of Sikh Migration to Canada, 1900-1960"; "Ethnicity Confounded: Punjabi Pioneers in California"; "Punjabi Sikhs and Gora Sikhs: Conflicting Assertions of Sikh Identity in North America"; "Sikh Identity in England: Its Changing Nature"; "The Presentation of Sikhs in Recent Children's literature in Britain"; "The Sikh Diaspora: Its Possible Effects on Sikhism"; "The Sikhs and the Challenge of the Eighties"; "Sikhs at the turn of the New Century"; "Postscripts: Comments from Toronto". The proceedings of the conference are compiled into a book titled *Sikh History and Religion in the Twentieth Century*.

Conference on Sikh Studies, December 10, 1988, California State University at Long Beach

The Sikh Community of North America, headed by dedicated Sikhs such as Dr. Jasbir Mann, organized the Conference on Sikh Studies held in December 1988, at California State University. He decided that fundamental issues concerning the Sikh religion should be discussed academically and clarified objectively. Eminent scholars from India, the United Kingdom and the United States, and specialists in each field participated. The carefully selected topics were: The Methodology of Religious Studies; Sikh Ideology; *Guru Granth Sahib* the Sikh Scripture; the Sikh Ethics and *Rehat Maryada*; Social and Historical Aspects of the Sikh Movement; and a critical examination of some recent writings on the Sikh Religion and its Institutions. Daljeet Singh, the distinguished Sikh scholar, was the primary force behind the success of the conference.

International Conference on Sikh Studies University of Toronto November 24, 25, 1990

In continuation of the Los Angeles Sikh Studies Conference, Dr. K.S. Mann, secretary of the Sikh Studies Institute Chandigarh, travelled to Toronto four months prior to the conference to organize a series of Sikh Academic Conferences in North America. It was a huge task undertaken to lay down ground work for seven major conferences. Dr. Jasbir Mann played an

outstanding role in convening of these conferences in such a short time. The Ontario Sikh leadership was taken into confidence at this meeting and community support was solicited.

Apart from education of the Sikh community the emphasis at the Toronto Conference was on the participation of Western scholars. Again distinguished scholars from India, United Kingdom, and United States took part and presented papers on diverse topics concerning "*Dasam Granth* a Critique of Two Views"; "Revelation and Reason in *Guru Granth*"; "Guru Nanak's Ideology"; "Guru Arjan Dev, Apostle of Peace"; "Sikhism a Faith Misunderstood"; "Sikh World View—Its Eternal Relevance"; "Concept of *Chardi Kala* in Sikhism"; "Origin and Development of Sikh Studies"; "*Gurbilas Patshai* 10, An Eighteenth Century Sikh Literature"; "In the Company of Lions—the Sikh Community in Canadian Mosaic"; "Concept of *Miri Piri*"; "The Sikhs and the British"; "Context of World Religions"; and "World Centre for Sikh Studies". About three hundred fifty people attended this Toronto conference which was the second of seven during the months of November and December 1990. The eminent Sikh scholar Sardar Daljeet Singh was the soul of this conference and the Sikh community is indebted for the services he rendered. The author attended four of the seven conferences.

International Conference on Sikh Studies University of British Columbia Vancouver, December 2, 1990

The Canadian Sikh Study and Teaching Society was instrumental in organizing and hosting the conference. Most of the scholars of the Toronto conference participated at the Vancouver Conference. Additional topics covered include: "Fundamentalism;" "Enlightenment of Mind;" "Sikhism as a Tortume Quid"; "Sikh Culture"; From Ritual to Counter Ritual in A Critical Analysis, "Role of Reason in Sikhism"; "*Guru Granth Sahib* and Modern Science"; and "Creation of the *Khalsa*—a non-Sikh Indian Perspective"; Need for World Institute of Sikhism, and "Sikh Identity a Continuing Feature". More than seven hundred people attended this Sikh Academic Conference, a befitting tribute to the Vancouver Sikh community.

International Conference on Sikh Studies George Washington University, Washington D.C. December 8, 1990

Five more scholars in addition to nearly all the scholars who took part at the Toronto Conference presented papers at Washington D.C. Conference. The additional topics covered at this conference were: "Sikh Fundamentalism and Punjab Problem"; "Western Approaches to the Sikh Tradition"; "Sikh Mysticism"; "Sikhs in America—Stress and Survival"; "Sikhism and Modern Technology"; and "Evolution of Sikh Philosophy and Misinterpretation of Sikhism in Western Writings". Nearly two hundred people attended the conference.

International Conference on Sikh Studies New York, December 15, 1990

Most of the scholars addressed the topics of earlier conferences. An additional topic presented at the conference in New York was: "Devi Worship—An Unauthentic Addition".

Glossary

ab: Water

ad dharm: The religion of the untouchables of India.

ad dharmis: The untouchables of India (the lowest Hindu caste), scheduled caste.

adi granth: The first granth. The Sikh scripture as compiled by Guru Arjan Dev the fifth *Guru*.

ahankara: Pride.

ahl-i-kalam: Learned class Muslims who performed the functions of preachers and teachers.

ahl-i-teg: Those Muslims who were engaged in the affairs of the state.

ahl-i-saif: (Experts in swordsmanship).

akal: (Timeless One)

akali: "A devotee of *Akal* (Timeless One)". It signifies a member of the *Akali Dal*. Sikh warrior noted for bravery during the eighteenth century.

akal purakh: "The Timeless Being", God, The Supreme Being.

akal takht: "Throne of the Timeless", Seat of Temporal authority of the *Guru*. It is located in the *Golden Temple* complex at Amritsar.

akhand path: An unbroken reading of entire *Guru Granth Sahib* generally carried in relays.

alhanian: Funeral hymns.

amio-rasa: Divine bliss.

amrit: "The nectar of immortality", that which immortalizes, water stirred with sword used in the Sikh initiation ceremony.

amrit-dhari Sikh: Initiated Sikh.

amrit pahal: "Nectar of immortality" water stirred with sword used in the Sikh initiation ceremony.

amrit prachar: Sikh missionary activity for initiation to the *Khalsa* fold.

anand: Bliss

- anand karaj:** "Bliss" + "ceremony" generally referred as *Anand* (Sikh marriage).
- anand sahib:** A hymn composed by the third Guru Armar Das.
- antra:** Second or subsequent portion of composition of hymns.
- arabic:** Language of the Arab countries, because of Muslim influence in Punjab, Arabic language had its impact among the Muslim population.
- ardas:** Prayer, supplication or petition. The daily Sikh congregational prayer.
- arti:** A composition by Guru Nanak, it is full of gems of scenic beauty.
- ashram:** Spiritual commune.
- asthai:** Repetitive line of the composition of hymns.
- atma:** The individual self.
- avatarhood:** God taking human form. Incarnation of a deity.
- baba:** Grandfather, a term of affection and respect used for holymen.
- babbar:** "Lion" Sikh militants.
- babbar akali:** "Lion" among the Akalis a variant Sikh militant.
- babbar khalsa:** A Sikh militant organization.
- badshahat:** Rulership.
- baisakhi:** A Spring festival, it is also the birth of the *Khalsa*.
- bandgi:** Recitation of hymns.
- bandhan:** Bondage.
- bani:** Sacred utterances or compositions of the *Gurus* enshrined in *Guru Granth Sahib*.
- bansari:** A simple flute.
- bara-maha:** "Twelve months" are lyrical descriptions of panoramic beauty by Guru Nanak and Guru Arjan Dev, representing the moods of a mystic longing for God's vision.
- bawan akhri:** Guru Arjan's celebrated work.
- bedi:** A Khatri sub-caste.
- bhagat:** A mystic, saint, a devotee.
- bhai:** "Brother", a title accorded to Sikhs of acknowledged learning.
- bhajan:** Hymn, popular devotional and religious song, a hymnal composition.
- bhakta:** A mystic; an exponent of bhakti; a devotee.
- bhaktas:** Mystics.
- bhakti:** "Devotion", the popular Indian religious tradition, emphasizing love, faith and self-surrender. Adoration of God.
- bhang:** Hemp.
- bhangra:** Punjabi male folk dance.
- bharam-nash:** Freedom from superstition and ritual.
- bhasha:** Language.
- bir:** Volume.
- biraha:** A separated beloved from her lover. The language has been used to depict devotee's love for the Creator.
- bodhi tree:** Pipala tree venerated by the Buddhists.

- "bole so nihal, sat Sri akal":** ("Who utters this shall be saved, Truth is Timeless")
- bolian:** A form of a folk composition.
- brahmanism:** Refers to the doctrine of the Hindu caste system.
- brahman:** The Absolute, The Supreme Being without attributes.
- brahmanical:** Refers to the doctrine of Hindu caste system. There are four castes: *Brahamins, Ksatriyas, Vaisiyas* and *Sudras*.
- brahmcarin:** Stage of a student of *Vedas*.
- brahmcharya:** Celibacy.
- brahmi:** An ancient Indian script.
- brahmin:** Hindu priest, teacher.
- buddhists:** followers of Gautama Buddha or Buddhism.
- buddhism:** Religion propounded by Gautama Buddha.
- caste:** Social classes of Hindus and Sikhs.
- caste system:** The Hindu caste system, social classes of the Hindus. These are (*Brahamins, Ksatriyas, Vaisiyas* and *Sudras*)
- chadar:** Cloth, sheet.
- chakra:** A sharp edge steel discus.
- chamar:** An outcaste, the caste of leather-workers, "scheduled" caste, the untouchable.
- charan-amrit:** Foot wash or initiation.
- charan pahal:** Water touched with *Guru's* toe, pre-*khalsa* form of ritual for initiation.
- chardi-kala:** Dynamic optimism.
- chhattri:** A kiosk with four, six or eight pillars, generally with a cupola roof.
- chau:** Enthusiasm.
- chuni:** Scarf.
- council of khalistan:** Governing body of *Khalistan*, Independence movement of the Sikhs in Punjab.
- dal khalsa:** The combined forces of the *Khalsa* misls during the eighteenth century.
- darbar:** Royal Court.
- darshani-deohri:** Entrance Gateway, it serves as an access to the causeway leading to the *Golden Temple*.
- dasam granth:** The sacred writings attributed to the Tenth *Guru Gobind Singh*. The book of the Tenth Master.
- daswand:** "Tithe" to pay one tenth of income to charities.
- deg:** Free kitchen.
- dhad:** A small two sided wooden drum with a narrow waist also called *damaru*.
- dhadi:** Minstrel.
- dharma or dharam:** Moral and religious obligation, duty, the assertion of righteousness.
- dharam-nash:** Freedom from previous religion.

- dharamsala:** A place of worship, religious centre, a room or building for devotional singing and prayer.
- dharama yuddh:** To fight in defence of *Dharama* or rightness.
- dholak:** Two sided drum.
- dhyān or dhyāna:** Meditation.
- doaba:** Plains of Punjab bounded by rivers Satluj and Beas. Area between two rivers.
- dravidians:** Pre-Aryan Indian people.
- gach:** A surface treatment of paste formed by crushed gypsum to etch out floral designs.
- gadi:** Throne, cushion.
- gargaj:** Powerful manner of speaking.
- ghadar:** Mutiny.
- ghadarites:** *Ghadar party* members and leaders.
- ghar:** House, household.
- ghee:** Clarified butter.
- ghorian:** Folk wedding songs.
- gian:** Knowledge, wisdom, knowledge of Sikh scriptures.
- gidha:** Ladies folk dance.
- gora:** White male, person with fair complexion.
- gori:** White female, person with fair complexion.
- got:** Clan or zat.
- grahastha:** House holder's life.
- granth:** Religious scripture, e.g. *Guru Granth Sahib* or *Adi Granth*.
- granthi:** A reader of *Guru Granth Sahib*, the functionary in charge of *Gurdwara*.
- gurbani:** Divine poetry, *Guru's* word. The compositions of the *Gurus*, also called *Bani*.
- gur-chela:** The teacher and the disciple. *Guru* (teacher) and *chela* (disciple).
- gurdwara:** The Sikh place of worship. Where Holy *Granth Sahib* is installed and the *Sangat* sits and prays. The Sikh Church.
- gurmat:** "The view of the *Guru*," the sum total of *Guru's* teachings, the Sikh doctrines.
- gurmat sangeet:** The *Gurus* music, *Kirtan*, devotional singing.
- gurmatta:** The will of the eternal *Guru* expressed in a formal decision made by a representative assembly of Sikhs.
- gurmukh:** Enlightened person. One facing towards the *Guru*, a person of deep spiritual yearning and vision. A follower of the divine, of the *Guru*.
- gurmukhi:** "From the mouth of the *Guru*." The script used for writing Punjabi.
- gurpurab:** Commemoration of birth and death anniversaries of Sikh *Gurus* and special events in their lives.

- guru:** The Holy Preceptor, Guide, Teacher, the significance of the *Guru* as the spiritual guide. The *Guru* is no ordinary mortal, he is a divinely inspired being, completely attuned to the Supreme Being.
- gurudom:** Line of succession, it is another name for *Guruship*.
- guru granth sahib:** Honorific title of the *Adi Granth*. Guru Gobind Singh conferred *Gurudom* on the *Adi Granth* just before his death.
- guru-ka-langar:** Community kitchen.
- guruship:** The line of succession of the *Gurus*.
- gyani:** A learned person, versed in Sikh scriptures.
- halal:** Meat of animals slaughtered in a gradual process, the Muslim way of doing meat, opposite *Jhatka*.
- harimandar:** The Temple of the Lord. It is the sacred *Golden Temple* of the Sikhs at Amritsar. (Sikh "Vatican").
- harmonium:** A reed blown instrument with mechanical bellows and keyboard and has the appearance of a box.
- haumai:** I-ness, my-ness, ego, self-centeredness.
- hukam:** Command, order, Divine Law, Cosmic moral force for the operation of the law of retribution and law of grace governing the entire universe.
- hukamnama:** Directive, decree, the decree issued by *panj-piaras* from the *Akal Takht*, considered authoritative and binding on the entire *Panth*.
- islam:** Muslim faith.
- izzat:** Prestige, self respect.
- jaap(u):** Daily prayer, composition by the Tenth Guru Gobind Singh.
- jagir:** Landed property.
- jagirdar:** Landlord, grantee.
- jainism:** A sect of Hindus.
- janam-nash:** Freedom from family influences.
- janam sakhis:** Legendaries, birth anecdotes, a traditional biography, hagiographic narrative.
- jap(u):** Daily prayer, composed by Guru Nanak founder of Sikh religion.
- jat:** A particular land-holding caste of Punjab.
- jatha:** Military detachment, organized Sikh group unit.
- jathedar:** Commander, leader of a Sikh band.
- jhatka:** Meat prepared by killing the animal with one stroke, only *Jhatka* meat is approved by the Sikhs.
- jot:** Divine light.
- jugat:** Wisdom.
- jura:** Sikh boys and men keep their hair tied in a top-knot.
- kabadi:** Punjabi village game.
- kachh:** Pair of shorts (a mandatory attire for all members of the *Khalsa*).
- kafi:** A *Raga*, a form of poetical composition.
- kakkar:** Sikh symbols. These are kes, kangha, kirpan, kara, and kachh.

kal: Time.

kama: Sensuality, desire.

kamiz: Tunic.

kangha: Comb, one of the five Sikh Symbols which members of the *Khalsa* are required to wear in their *kes*.

kara: Steel bracelet, one of the five Sikh Symbols, which members of the *Khalsa* are required to wear.

karah prashad: Sacramental food made of flour, sugar and *ghee* (clarified butter).

karma or karam: The destiny, fate of an individual. Transmigratory process into which all creation is involved, to this is tied the doctrine of the retribution of deeds. Grace.

karam-nash: Freedom from past deeds.

karodha: Anger.

kartar: Creator.

ksatriyas: Warriors. A social class of the Hindu caste system.

kashi: Holy place of the Hindus.

katab: Muslim scripture.

katha: Exposition.

kaur: Princess, name given to the female members of the *Khalsa*.

kes: Unshorn hair, one of the five Sikh symbols, which members of the *Khalsa* are required to keep.

kesdhari: Hair-bearing, Sikhs who keep their hair intact.

khalistan: The land of the pure. The proposed name for an independent Sikh state.

khalsa: The Sikh order, the community of the pure, brotherhood, those Sikhs who dedicated themselves to the call of Guru Gobind Singh. Also refers to *Guru's* "own" community.

khanda: Double edged sword.

khande de pahal: Initiation of the double edged sword i.e. *Khalsa* initiation.

khatri: Merchant caste groups from whom have come the Sikh *Gurus* as well.

kho-kho: Punjabi village game.

kikkar: A thorny tree.

kirpan: Sword worn by the *Khalsa*.

kirat karni: Earn ones living by his or her own labour.

kirtan: Devotional singing of hymns in praise of God in melody and rhythm.

kooka, kuka or namdhari: Namdhari a Sikh religious and social movement started in 1799, their members led simple and pure lives. In 1872 at Malerkotla (Ludhiana) fifty-one of their members were blown away with guns by the British Indian government. They also gave loud shrieks at the time of devotional chanting.

- kurahits:** "Misdeeds", there are five *kurahits* for the initiated Sikh which negate Amrit, removal of hair, eating *Halal* meat, committing adultery, using tobacco in any form, and taking alcohol and drugs.
- kutha:** Meat of animals slaughtered in a gradual process, the Muslim way of doing *Halal* meat, opposite *Jhatka*.
- lahanda:** Ancient literary dialect of Punjabi.
- lahanga:** A loose male dress.
- langar:** A free community kitchen part of every *Gurdwara*, a unique Sikh institution. A refectory.
- langoja:** A pair of end blown pipes.
- lathis:** (Long, heavy iron-bound sticks), these are normally used by the Indian police to disperse crowds.
- lobha:** Avarice
- lori:** A sort of lullaby.
- lungi:** Skirts.
- mahant:** Chief, superior of religious institution. Custodian of *Gurdwaras* before *Gurdwaras* act of 1925 in India.
- maharaja:** Great king or sovereign.
- maha rasa:** Supreme elixir.
- mai:** Old woman.
- manjis:** Seats of preaching, areas of jurisdiction designated by Guru Amar Das. A small string bed.
- masands:** Heads of *Sangats*.
- mata:** Mother.
- maya:** Is the mutable principle of material existence in Sikhism, it refers to materialism, ungodly urges, unethical tendencies. (attachment, desire, sin, illusion.)
- melechhas:** Unclean.
- miri:** Temporal.
- miri-piri:** *Miri* (temporal) and *Piri* (spiritual) authority.
- misl:** Equal, Sikh military band of the eighteenth century in Punjab also a Sikh principality in that century.
- moha:** Attachment.
- mohra qashi:** Frescoes.
- moksha:** Liberation, salvation. It is liberation from the cycle of birth and death (transmigration).
- morcha:** "Facing the enemy", organized political campaign.
- motif:** The dominant or distinctive feature on element of a design.
- mukti:** Liberation, salvation. It is liberation from the cycle of birth and death (transmigration).
- mullahs:** Muslim priests. A teacher of the law and doctrines of Islam.

- mulmantra:** Is a string of sentence phrases, each expressing an aspect of Supreme Being; His eternity, immanence, timelessness, freedom from birth and from rancour, along with His being uncreated, self-existent. This seed formula is the corner stone of Sikh belief.
- munis:** Ascetics.
- muslims:** The followers of prophet Mohammed.
- naam:** The divine Name, the summary expression for the whole nature of *Akal Purakh* (God). The manifestation of the Divine Reality, Will or Word.
- naam japna:** To practice the discipline of *Naam*.
- naam maarga:** The way of *Naam*.
- naam simaran:** "Remembering the Name" meditating on the Supreme Being, refers to a way of life that encompasses both spiritual and ethical conduct according to the teachings of *Guru Granth Sahib*.
- nad:** Primal sound or resonant sound.
- nadar:** Grace, sight, glance.
- naqasies:** Craftsmen.
- nawab:** A title normally attributed to a leader.
- nirankar:** Supreme Being, Akal Purakh, God, Creator, Formless.
- nirankari movement:** (1849-1947) A Socio-Religious Sikh Reform Movement, now a separate sect. The followers believe that after Guru Gobind Singh the *Guruship* was passed on to their leader Baba Dayala (1783-1855) who was born 75 years after Guru Gobind Singh's death in 1708.
- nirvana:** Salvation, liberation. It is liberation from the cycle of birth and death (transmigration).
- nishan-sahib:** Sikh flag flown over a *Gurdwara*.
- operation blue star:** A code name for the operation of Indian army's attack on the *Golden Temple* on June 5, 1984.
- order of the khalsa:** Refers to the doctrine of Sikh initiation, the community of the pure, those Sikhs who dedicated themselves to the call of Guru Gobind Singh.
- pag:** Turban.
- pakka sikh:** Initiated Sikh.
- pandit:** A Hindu learned person. A mode of address used for *Brahamins*.
- pangat:** A group of people sitting in line regardless of caste or creed to share a common repast in the communal dining hall.
- panj:** Five.
- panj kakkar:** Five k's, Sikh symbols each starting with letter 'K' *kes* (unshorn hair) *kangha* (wooden comb), *kirpan* (sword), *kara* (steel bracelet), *kachh* (under shorts).
- panj piare or panj piaras:** Five beloved ones, the five offered their lives for Guru Gobind Singh.

- panth:** The distinct Sikh society, the Sikh *Gurus* organized the people outside the Hindu caste system. The Sikh community. Path, way.
- pathan:** A member of Muslim tribe of Afghanistan and neighbouring countries.
- panthic:** Relating to *Panth* (the Sikh community as a whole).
- panthic committee:** Governing executive committee under Sikh *Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee* Amritsar.
- parsadi hathi:** *Hathi* (elephant), *Parsadi* (a given name).
- parsis:** Followers, of Zoraster.
- patit:** "Fallen" One who having accepted the *Amrit*, no longer follows *Rehat* the Sikh code of Ethics.
- persian:** Persian language. Because of Muslim influence in Punjab, Persian was court language of the Sikh Empire.
- pipala:** Name of a tree venerated by the Buddhists.
- pir:** A Muslim holy person, the head of a Sufi order; a Sufi saint.
- piri:** Spiritual.
- pothi:** Volume.
- prachar:** Sikh missionary activity.
- puja:** Hindu worship, idol worship.
- punjabi suba:** Punjab province.
- pardah:** Covering face.
- qazis:** Learned Muslims who dispensed with justice. A Muslim judge, administrator of Islamic Law.
- qaum:** "A people who stand together," a nation.
- raga:** Indian musical measure, a particular arrangement of notes on which a melody is based.
- ragmala:** A composition listing of different *ragas* (musical measures) in ornate classical style is added as an appendix in the *Guru Granth Sahib*. This is not the composition of the *Gurus* but a poet Jodh.
- ragi:** A Sikh devotional singer (musician) who sings hymns in the *Gurdwara*.
- rahau:** "Pause." The line preceding the word *Rahau* presents the central thought of hymn, as such it constitutes *Asthai* (repetitive line), while other lines form the *Antra*. *Rahau* has been used in compositions set to music.
- raja:** A king.
- raj karega khalsa:** The *Khalsa* shall rule.
- "raj karega khalsa, aki rehe na koe":** ("The *Khalsa* shall rule, there shall be no slaves.")
- ramgarhya:** A caste of Sikhs.
- ranjeet nigara:** *Nigara* (drum) *Ranjeet* (given name.)
- rasa:** Elixir, emotional affect or aesthetic delight of a *raga* (musical measure).
- rehat:** The *Khalsa* code of conduct.
- rehat maryada:** The code of discipline of the *Khalsa*.
- rishis:** God men, holymen.

rumal: Hanky.

sach khand vase nirankar: Supreme Being lives in the Region or realm of truth. *Sach Khand* (Region of Truth); *vase* (lives); *Nirankar* (Supreme Being).

sachiara: An enlightened emancipated individual, internally solid standing on moral principles and simultaneously invested with divine qualities. One who lives a truthful living.

sadh-sangat: "The holy congregation is an assembly where nothing but the Name of the Lord is recited." According to Guru Nanak, it is the association with the virtuous and the holy.

sahib: Master, Lord.

sahaj: Ultimate state of mystical union. It is the process of realization and spiritual ascent. The path of devotion that involves no forced process of self-purification but through spiritual contemplation, devotion and the performance of beneficent actions.

sahajdhari: A person who affirms allegiance to Guru Nanak and his successors but has not yet accepted the *Khalsa* initiation.

saloka: Couplet or stanza.

salok sanskriti: Guru Arjan's celebrated work.

samagam: A religious gathering.

sanjog: Union of the individual self with the Absolute.

sangat: A gathering, an assembly, religious congregation who listen to the recitation of *Gurus* hymns in praise of God.

sant: "Saint" spiritual person, holyman.

sant bhasha: The languages of the saints or *Bhaktas* coming from different language regions have employed predominantly the idiom of their respective regions.

sant-sipahi: Saint-soldier. One who combines the spirituality of a (sant) with the bravery and obedience of a true soldier.

sanskrit: An ancient Indian language.

sarangi: A fiddle played with convex bow.

sarbat de bhala: The welfare of all.

sarbat khalsa: The entire body of the Sikhs of the *Khalsa*.

sarbloh: "All steel." Guru Gobind Singh refers to God as "All Steel."

sardar: Chieftain, leader of a *misl*. Sardar is a title of address for all Sikh males.

sardari: Leadership.

sarpanch: Head of the village council.

sat sri akal: "Truth is Timeless (or immortal)," the Sikh greeting.

satsang: Spiritual fellowship, a congregation of pious Sikhs.

savism: A branch of Hinduism to reform *Brahmanism* from within.

scythians: A race, majority of Sikhs, the *Jats*, a particular land owning caste are followers of Sikh faith.

- sewa:** Self-abnegating deeds of service, selfless service.
- shabda or shabad:** Literally, Word, the holy Word, Will, *Naam*, the divine self-communication. It bears deep mystical signification. *Gurus Bani* (hymns) of *Guru Granth Sahib* is popularly known as *Shabad*. Expression of the Word in a hymn.
- shabad guru:** Supreme Being.
- shakti:** Power. The energy or potency of a god expressed in feminine counterpart.
- shalwar:** Loose trousers gathered at the ankles.
- shamiana:** Canopy.
- sharam nash:** Freedom from hereditary professional taboos.
- siharfi:** A *raga*, a form of poetical composition.
- sikh:** A "learner" or disciple. The followers of the Sikh faith. The disciples of Guru Nanak and his nine spiritual successors.
- sikhi:** "Discipleship," Sikhness, characteristics of Sikh identity.
- singh:** "Meaning Lion," used as a name by male members of the *Khalsa*.
- singh sabha:** A movement co-ordinated by the *Chief Khalsa Diwan*, dedicated to religious and educational reform among Sikhs.
- sudras:** (Serfs, slaves, clients doing menial work) the lowest Hindu caste, untouchables, scheduled caste.
- sufis:** "Sages" Muslim saints. *Sufism* was essentially devotional mysticism.
- sufism:** Devotional mysticism of Muslim sages.
- sukhmani:** Guru Arjan's celebrated work.
- sunder gutkas:** Selected compositions from *Guru Granth Sahib* and *Dasam Granth*.
- suttee:** Hindu women were forced to burn themselves on their husbands funeral pyre.
- tabla:** A percussion instrument of two drums.
- takht:** Literally means a throne and a seat of authority. Sikhs have five seats of authority at Amritsar, *Patna*, *Nander*, *Anandpur*, and *Damdama*.
- tala:** A cyclic arrangement of rhythms in Indian music.
- tan:** A musical phrase sung on vowels or syllables in a particular extemporisation of a *raga*.
- tankhah:** Minor offenses.
- tappa:** A love song of Punjab with strong rhythm and fast tempo.
- tegh:** Sword.
- thumba and thumbi:** Small, one stringed instrument.
- tukri:** The pieces of coloured and mirrored glass are cut and inlaid into *gach*, to form patterns.
- ulemas:** The learned class religious leaders of Islam.
- urdu:** A vernacular language of India.

- vada ghalu ghara:** (The great massacre, holocaust,) of Sikhs occurred on February 5, 1762, at the hands of Ahmad Shah Abdali mostly of women, children and old men at the village of Kup.
- vaisnavism:** A branch or school of Hinduism to reform *Brahmanism* from within.
- vaisyas:** Peasants, traders, artisans, labourers. Form part of Hindu Caste system.
- vanprastha:** Stage of a hermit.
- var:** A form of composition in praise of God or heroes, a ballad or a heroic ode of several stanzas recounting praise of warriors.
- vedantism:** A branch of Hinduism.
- vedas:** Hindu scriptures.
- vedic:** Relating to *Vedas* (Hindu scriptures.)
- vishnu:** A prominent Hindu deity.
- wak:** A random reading from the *Guru Granth Sahib*.
- waheguru ji ka khalsa: waheguru ji ki fateh:** (The God's *Khalsa*: The God's victory). The greetings of the initiated Sikhs.
- waheguru, wahguru:** "Wonderful Lord", refers to the Supreme Being, God. It is commonly used by the Sikhs.
- wand chhakna:** Share with others the fruits of ones labour.
- yatis:** Hermits.
- yoga:** *Yoga* has numerous varieties, the practice of self discipline ranging from breath control to the attainment of miraculous powers.
- yogi:** The one who practices self discipline, also belongs to one of the sects of *Yoga*.
- zat:** Endogamous caste grouping.

Endnotes

Chapter One

1. On Pre-Nanak Era principal contents are from Jagjit Singh's book *The Sikh Revolution: A Perspective View*.
2. Refers to the doctrine of Hindu caste system. There are four castes: Brahamins, Ksatriyas, Vaisiyas, and Sudras.
3. A Sikh principality, Sikh military band of eighteenth century in Punjab.
4. The forces of Maharashtra State.
5. The doctrine of Sikh initiation: the community of the pure, those Sikhs who dedicated themselves to the call of Guru Gobind Singh.
6. The Aryan Hindu social organization had developed four class system of *Brahmins* (priests), *Ksatriyas* (warriors), *Vaisyas* (peasants), and *Sudras* (serfs, slaves). For detail see Appendix A. Vedic Age (Hindus).
7. Members of Muslim tribe of Afghanistan and neighbouring countries.

Chapter Two

1. The Sikh pioneers faced with the hostility of Canadians and immigration ban established *Khalsa Diwan Society* in 1907, to look after the interests of the community.

Chapter Three

1. *Gurdwara Management Committee* was an elected body of *Khalsa Diwan Society* to deal with several issues facing the community apart from running the day to day affairs of the Gurdwara.
2. For more information on William Charles Hopkinson, Hopkinson's Role.
3. Professor Teja Singh, a Khatri Sikh who later in life became a highly respected saint, arrived in Vancouver in September 1908, by way of New York and Montréal. Teja Singh was a resident of Gujranwala city in Punjab. He had a Master's Degree from Punjab University in law. His father was an assistant surgeon. In the summer of 1908, he came to North America and enrolled himself as a graduate student in education at Columbia University. He came to Canada from the United States as a visiting lecturer and specifically to help out the local Sikh community,

bringing with him his wife and two children. The British government of India relayed their assessment that his views were "not dangerous but fairly moderate." On arrival he made no public statements that would brand him an extremist. Later he undertook a series of lectures in Vancouver on theosophical subjects. Being a Sikh, Teja Singh was able to rally the community behind him and used unfair treatment as a point to unite Punjabi Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs. Teja Singh, an intellectual giant, was not only able to muster the community opinion against the move but persuaded the Canadian government not to proceed with the British Honduras scheme. He was the inspiration behind the building of Sikh Temple at Victoria, British Columbia and Stockton, California.

4. Balwant Singh was born in 1882, in the village of Khurdpur, Jalandhar District. He joined the army, and then left and proceeded to Canada in 1906. He helped raise the first *Gurdwara* in Vancouver and was also elected its first priest. Under his stewardship the fight to challenge the exclusionary laws of Sikh immigration began, followed by the freedom struggle for the motherland. He went to England along with Teja Singh to lobby the liberal British to relax exclusionary policies. In 1911, he toured India accompanied by Bhag Singh and Sunder Singh to enlighten the Indian public about the plight of Sikh immigrants in Canada. In 1913, Balwant Singh headed a deputation to London to meet with the Minister of Colonial Affairs and to plead with the Indian government to take up their cause with the Canadian authorities on exclusionary policies. The delegation included Narain Singh and Nand Singh Sihra. They met the viceroy on December 10, 1913, about the removal of the continuous passage restriction. Balwant Singh had met the *Komagata Maru* passengers in Yokohama when passengers were on their way to Vancouver. When passengers were denied permission to land he was convinced that India must be freed before any redress could be achieved for them in Canada. Balwant Singh was sent by the Ghadar Party on a mission to Shanghai, Siam, Burma, Singapore and Malaya. In Shanghai, he plunged into revolutionary activities. Although ill, he was arrested in Bangkok by the Siamese police in August, 1915, and deported to Singapore. He was brought to Punjab and tried at Lahore in July, 1916, and hanged.
5. A small group of Indian intellectuals around San Francisco set up the *Ghadar* Party (mutiny party) to liberate India. It became revolutionary independence movement and espoused violence to achieve its objective. They had set up the *Ghadar* newspaper as well. Har Dayal, an intellectual, was the key figure of the Party. Sohan Singh Bhakhna was the first president of the *Ghadar* Party. *Ghadarites* also came to be known as nationalists in the United States and Canada.
6. He was a poet and orator who lived in Victoria. He was deported in 1913 and he moved to San Francisco. Later he became president of the *Ghadar* Party.
7. He taught at Tokyo University and later became vice president of the *Ghadar* Party.
8. Hussain Rahim alias Chagan Khairaj Varma was a revolutionary who arrived in Canada in 1910 via Honolulu and Japan. He lived in Japan for a number of years and was editor of *The Hindustanee*.
9. Harnam Singh Sahri hailed from the village Kahri Sahri of District Hoshiarpur. At the age of sixteen he joined the military service, and after a year's service he resigned. In 1907 he arrived in Canada and joined an educational institution in

Vancouver and studied for three years. He published *Swadesh Sewak* a monthly newspaper from his residence along with G.D. Kumar. Suspected of political activities he was threatened with immediate deportation by the Immigration authorities. The order was rescinded and he was allowed to return to Canada.

In 1911, Sahri joined Berkeley for higher education. He completely identified with the aims and objectives of *Ghadar* newspaper and frequently contributed articles to it. He actively assisted the passengers of the *Komagata Maru* and held secret parleys with them. The *Ghadar* Party sent him on a mission to Shanghai, Siam, Malaya, Singapore and Burma to train Sikh volunteers for revolutionary work in India. He was captured in Burma spreading *Ghadarite* propaganda among the Indian regiments stationed in Rangoon. He was tried in the Mandalay Conspiracy Case and was hanged on August 14, 1916.

10. The first Sikh martyr in Canada, Mewa was a very religious person. He was hard working, well behaved, and a dedicated individual. He was arrested in Sumas. Mewa was outraged when two of his friends Bhag Singh and Battan Singh were mortally wounded by Bela Singh in the *Gurdwara* congregation. He undertook the task of assassinating W.C. Hopkinson who in his view was harming the Sikh community in Canada.
11. *Ghadar* leaders.
12. A Hindu revolutionary, (1884-1939). Har Dayal had a brilliant academic career. In 1911, he lectured in Indian Philosophy at Stanford. He attracted many disciples. In 1913, he launched the *Ghadar* Party and organized Sikh dissent in pacific coast states against British rule. He moved to Berlin and joined Berlin Indian Committee.
13. A Hindu Brahmin revolutionary (1883-1916), he was attracted to the National Liberation Movement. In Vancouver he actively participated during the *Komagata Maru* episode to assist the passengers. He was sent by the *Ghadar* Party to persuade Indian soldiers to revolt in Singapore and Burmah. He was tried in Mandlay and hanged in 1916 along with Harnam Singh Sahri, Jagat Singh and Kasim Mansoor.
14. On surveillance principal source of contents is Dr. Hugh Johnston's article "Surveillance of Indian Nationalists in North America."

Chapter Four

1. Principal source of contents are papers by Dr. Hugh Johnston: "The East-Indians in Canada", and "Patterns of Sikh Migration to Canada, 1900-1960".

Chapter Five

1. Principal source of contents are papers by Dr. Hugh Johnston: "The East-Indians in Canada", and "Patterns of Sikh Migration to Canada, 1900-1960."

Chapter Six

1. On this Chapter of Problems and Conflicts the principal source of contents is the Study by T. Joseph Scanlan. *The Sikhs of Vancouver: A Case Study of the Role of Media in Ethnic Relations*.

Chapter Eight

1. On Educational Pursuits primary sources of Contents is the book by Alan G. James *Sikh Children in Britain*.
2. One of the pioneers Bhagwan Singh Gyani was a poet, and orator, Naranjan Singh Pandori composed revolutionary poetry. For more information see chapter 9. Pioneers Contribution.

Chapter Ten

1. An unbroken reading of entire *Guru Granth Sahib* generally carried in relays.
2. A militant Sikh organization.
3. A militant Sikh leader who died during Indian army assault on Golden Temple. For more information on Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale see chapter 11.

Chapter Eleven

1. Supreme Court of Canada Decision under Canadian Human Rights Act, December 17, 1985. Canadian Human Rights Reporter Vol. 7, Decision 488, January, 1986.
2. "Gangster Rule: The Massacre of the Sikhs" *Manushi, A Journal About Women and Society*, No. 25, 1984.
3. Kothari, Smitu; Sethi, Harish. "Voices from a Scarred City: The Delhi in Carnage," *Lokayan Delhi*, 1985.
4. A prominent Hindu social worker and writer of India.

Appendix A

1. The author of "Harappa 1946: The Defences and Cemetery R37," *Ancient India* No. 3, 1947.
2. Chandra Gupta Maurya 323 B.C.-299 B.C. the founder of Mauryan Empire.
3. Asoka grandson of Chandra Gupta Maurya ascended the Mauryan throne, 269 B.C.

Appendix B

1. Quotations are from *Japuji, Guru Granth Sahib*, from the book by Harbans Singh, *The Heritage of the Sikhs*.
2. *Bhai* means "brother" a title accorded to Sikhs of acknowledged learning.
3. Bhai Buddha was appointed the first Granthi (priest) of Harimandar Sahib in 1604, by Guru Arjan Dev.
4. Refers to the doctrine of Sikh initiation: the community of the pure, those Sikhs who dedicated themselves to the call of Guru Gobind Singh.
5. Abstracted from an article "Naam in Sikhism" by Daljeet Singh *Advanced Studies in Sikhism*. The quotations in B.2 are from *Guru Granth Sahib*.
6. A branch of Hindu religion.
7. *Ibid*.
8. The Sikh movement dedicated to religious and educational reforms among Sikhs.
9. On Sikh institutions primary source of contents are books by Dr. Gobind Singh Mansukhani.
10. The principal source for contents of the Saint-Soldier Concept is books by Dr. Gobind Singh Mansukhani.

11. A Hindu Minister in Mughal Emperor Jahangir's court.
12. Misl-a Sikh military band of eighteenth century, also a Sikh principality.
13. Aurangzeb was crowned in 1658 and he died in 1707.
14. Sikh Kirtan is abstracted from Dr. Gobind Singh Mansukhani's book *Indian Classical Music and Sikh Kirtan*.

Appendix C

1. Sohan Singh Bhakna (1872-1968) was an outstanding stalwart from the ranks of the *Ghadar* Revolutionaries. He was one of the founding members of *Ghadar* movement. Coming from the peasant stock from Punjab he emigrated to the United States and he found work in the lumber industry in California. When Canadian authorities refused to let Punjabi immigrants into Canada, he realized that had India been independent his countrymen would not have met discrimination at the hands of Canadians.
 Sohan Singh became the first president of the *Ghadar* Party in California. He took an active part in organizing the revolt and participated in the liberation struggle. He met the *Komagata Maru* passengers in Yokohama, and apprised them with the message of the *Ghadar* Party. He returned to India, and was immediately arrested. Sohan Singh was tortured in jail. He was sentenced to death and later the sentence was changed to transportation for life.
 He remained loyal in word and deed to the *Ghandar* Party when *Ghadarites* turned toward socialism. In the mid-1930s when Sohan Singh stepped out of prison, he immediately plunged into political activity and started working for the Communist Party. After his release in 1943, until his death for the next twenty-five years, he worked singlemindedly for the *Kisan Sabha*. He had nearly lived a century when he passed away in December 1968.
2. An ardent young nationalist, Kartar Singh Sarabha (1896-1916), arrived in San Francisco in 1910, at the age of fourteen. The *Ghadar* newspaper was actually his brain child and he bore the whole burden. During the height of the *Ghadar* movement he was sent on a mission to India to organize revolt. He was arrested and charged with sedition. Because of his tender age the judge advised him to modify his statement, but Kartar Singh made even more uncompromising statements. He was sentenced to death and hanged in 1916 at the age of twenty.
3. A national organization in India founded in 1885.

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Index

- ab, 3
Abdali Ahmad Shah, 12, 13, 197
Ad Dharmis, 144
Adi Granth, 180, 181, 186, 188, 192, 198
Afghanistan, 12_14, 175
Afghans, 12_14, 164
Africa, xv, 152
Ahankara, 170
Ahluwalia Jassa Singh, 9, 12
Air India Crash, 135
Air India Flight 182, 143
Akal, 173, 174
Akal Purakh, 98, 128, 169, 181, 197
Akal Takhat, 10, 135, 146, 147, 172, 186, 188_190, 197
Akali Dal, 130
Akali Singh Gurdwara, 82
Akali party, 16
Akali leaders, 65
Akalis, 65
Akbar, Emperor, 185, 192
Akhand path, 120
Alexander the Great, 163
Alhanian, 181
All-India Sikh Students Federation, 130
Amar Das, Guru, 7, 9, 124, 171, 181, 185, 186, 190, 192, 203
Ameli Sikh refugees, xxvi, 135, 140, 141, 143
Amelie, M.V., 141
American Sikhs, xxvi, 66, 129, 130, 205, 207 also see Appendix C Sikhs in United States
Amrit, 9, 101, 120, 153, 174, 175, 177, 183, 186_188, 192, 194, 203
Amrit Prachar, 128, 131, 147
Amrita Shergil, 201
Amritdhari, 153, 187
Amritsar, 10, 46, 64, 89, 104, 136, 171, 180, 186, 188, 191
Anand, 203
Anand marriage, 9
Anand Sahib, 124
Anandpur, 9, 89, 174, 175
Angad, Guru, 7, 170, 171, 181, 192, 199
Ardas, or Sikh Ardas, 8, 54, 124, 177, 187
Arjan, Guru, 7, 10, 11, 147, 153, 171, 172, 180, 181, 184, 192, 195, 197, 199, 202
Aryan Hindus, xxvi
Aryans, 2, 161, 162

- Asiatic Exclusion League, 34, 58, 206
- Asiatic riots, 33
- Asoka, 163, 199
- Attariwalas, 14
- Aurangzeb, 172, 192, 199
- Australia, 31, 75
- Avtarhood, 178
- Azizuddin, Fakir, 13
- Babbar Khalsa, 127, 128
- Baber, 191, 192
- Baisakhi, 174, 186
- Bandhan, 178
- Banis, 187
- Bansari, 123
- Barkatullah, Mohammed, 47, 53, 210, 214
- Barrett, Dave, Premier, 139
- Battle of Burrard Inlet, 50, 51
- Belize, 41_43
- Bellingham, 206
- Benet, Dr., 13
- Berkeley, 58, 97, 106, 209
- Berlin India Committee, 210, 214
- Bhagat, 178, 192
- Bhago, Mai, 9
- Bhajan Bandgi, 10
- Bhaktas, 3, 4, 6, 171
- Bhakti, xxv, 3, 4, 180, 191, 194
- Bhakti ideology, 4
- Bhakti literature, 4,
- Bhakti movement, 3, 4, 198, see also Chapter 1
- Bhakti school, 3, 4
- Bhakti wave, 3
- Bhang, 192
- Bhangra, 122, 200
- Bharam-nash, 188
- Bhinder K.S., 126, 136
- Bhindranwale, Jarnail Singh Sant, 130, 131, 147
- Bhullar, General Jaswant Singh, 129
- Bird, Edward J., 48, 49
- Blais, Pierre, Solicitor General, 132, 137, 139
- Bole so nihal, Sat Sri Akal, 124, 185
- Bonaparte, Napoleon, 2, 13
- Borden, Sir Robert, 48, 49, 51, 58
- Bose, Rash Bihari, 211
- Bouchard, Minister Benoit, 142
- Brahman, 162
- Brahmanical Hindus, 5
- Brahmanical leaders, 5
- Brahmanical order, 3_5, 8
- Brahmanism, 4_6, 162, 163
- Brahmins, 4, 5, 162, 163, 191, 192
- Braj, 173
- Britain, xi, xvi, 16, 31, 35, 64, 65, 72_74, 214
- British, 2, 14_16, 31, 45, 48, 51, 52, 56_60, 65, 67, 68, 71, 91, 136, 142, 199, 205, 214
- British Columbia, xv, xvi, xxv, xxvi, 1, 29, 31_36, 40, 43, 45_47, 53, 56, 59, 60, 63, 66_69, 71_73, 75, 80, 91_93, 97, 98, 124, 127, 135, 151, 152, 205
- British Empire, xii, 46, 48, 51
- British Honduras, 41_43, 57, 152
- British Honduras Scheme, 41, 56
- British Indian Army, 30, 211, 214
- British Indian Government, 16, 45, 46, 55_59, 64, 65, 127
- Buddha, 191
- Buddha Bhai, 172
- Buddhism, 5, 162, 163, 193
- Buddhists, xxvi, 144, 162
- Budge Budge, 52, 53, 144,
- Bulhey Shah, 199
- Burma, xv, 16, 30, 59, 60, 210, 211
- Burrell, Martin, 51
- Calcutta, 30, 31, 43, 45, 52, 57, 211

- California, 35, 36, 64, 68, 205_207, 212, 213
- Cambodia, 30
- Canadian Sikh literature, xxv,
- Canadian Sikhs' Studies Institute, 132, 138, 139
- Canadian Sikhs, xi, xii, xv, xvi, xix_xxi, xxvi, 1, 64_66, 73, 88_90, 106, 108, 115, 120, 126, 127, 131, 132, 135, 139, 143, 144, 152, 155, 156, 205, 209
- Chair in Sikh studies University of British Columbia, 108
- Chairs in Sikh studies, xxv, 120
- Chaitanya, 3
- Chakara, 100, 194
- Chakraborty Dr. Chandar Kant, 212, 213
- Chamkaur, 11
- Chand, Mohkam, 13
- Chand, Mirs Dewan, 13
- Chandra, Ram, 210, 212, 213
- Chandu Diwan, 192
- Chappati, 37
- Charhdi Kala, 8, 187
- Chauri, 123
- Chief Khalsa Diwan, 211
- China, 30, 65, 210
- Chinese, 14, 29, 31_35, 65, 67, 94
- Chuni, 101
- Churchill, Winston, 33
- Community institutions, 117, see also Chapter 10
- Connaught, Duke, 58, 59
- Continuous journey or voyage rule, 34, 35, 43, 44, 66, see Chapter 2
- Crombie, Hon. David, 108
- CSIS, 129, 142, 143
- Da Valara Eamon, 216
- Darbar Sahib, 195_197
- Darshani Deohri, 186, 196
- Das Bhai Mati, 7, 201
- Das, Taraknath, 44, 45, 51, 58, 111, 209, 214
- Dasam Granth, 135, 175, 182
- Daswand, 187
- Dayal Har, 53, 58, 209, 214
- Dayala Bhai, 7
- Degh, 153, 190, 193
- Delhi, xii, 10, 12, 15, 58, 59, 73, 145, 199
- Devichand, Dr. D.R., 33
- Dhad, 51, 121
- Dhami, Dr. Sadhu Singh, 66, 153,
- Dharam-nash, 187
- Dharama Yudh, 193, 194
- Dharamsalas, 7, 183, 184, 186
- Dharma, 10, 100, 101, 105, 173, 194
- Dhillon, Dr. Anup Singh, 66
- Dhillon, Baltej Singh 139, 140, 154
- Dholak, 55, 123, 200
- Dhyana, 162
- Digambara, 9
- Dillingham Commission, 31
- Doaba, 30
- Dogras, 14
- Dravidian, 161, 163
- Durbar, 14
- Dyer, General, 64
- East Africa, xi, xv, xvi, 15, 74, 75, 83, 121
- East-Indians, 30
- Eastwood, George, 52, 53
- Educational pursuits, xxv
- Egypt, xv, 15, 214
- English, 209
- Europe, xv, 152
- Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada, 126, 135
- Fiji, xi
- France, xv, 15, 16
- Frazer, John, Speaker of the House Hon., 132, 139

- French, 16
 Gadi, 190
 Gandhi, Indira, Prime Minister, 147_149
 Gandhi, Mahatma M.K., 144
 Gargi Balwant, 200
 Gaznavid, 2
 Germans, 3, 15, 31, 47, 53, 60, 211, 212, 214
 Germany, 16, 46, 59, 152, 210, 212_215
 Ghadar, 47, 53, 56, 58_60, 64, 111, 209_211, 214, see Appendix C for details
 Ghadar issues, 213
 Ghadar leaders, 53, 60, 210, 211, 213
 Ghadar leadership, 212
 Ghadar movement, 46, 56, 151, 211_213
 Ghadar party, 46, 47, 52, 56, 58_60, 64, 127, 207, 209_211
 Ghadar party leaders, 56
 Ghadar revolutionaries, 212, 213
 Ghadar writings, 214
 Ghadarite families, 60
 Ghadarites, 50, 53, 55, 60, 151, 207, 210, 211, 213_215
 Ghorī, 200
 Ghorian, 181
 Gidha, 122, 200
 Goindwal, 190
 Golden Temple, 12, 102, 104, 106, 127_131, 143, 146_149, 195_201
 Golden Temple Assault, 146
 Grahasta, 162
 Granthi, 47, 122_124
 Greeks, 2, 163
 Grey, Earl, 34, 41, 42, 57, 58
 Gujri, Mata, 9
 Gulbahar Begum, 13
 Gurbani, 122, 123, 127, 181, 191, 197, 203
 Gurdas Bhai, 171, 172, 180, 184, 189, 190
 Gurdwara Management Committees, 39, 40, 121
 Gurdwara stage, 111, 112
 Gurdwaras, xxvi, 37_42, 46_48, 54, 58, 64, 65, 72, 81_84, 88, 89, 97_103, 105, 112, 116, 118_125, 128, 130, 132, 135, 139, 141, 144, 146, 148, 154_156, 183, 184, 195, 201_203, 206, 209, 214
 Gurmat Sangeet, 181
 Gurmatta, 183, 188, 189, 194
 Gurmukh, 179, 214
 Gurmukhi, 7, 98, 100, 111, 121, 171, 199, 209
 Gurburbs, 120
 Guru Granth Sahib, 6, 51, 52, 54, 82, 98_100, 122_124, 126, 127, 135, 136, 171, 172, 175_182, 184, 187, 189, 194
 Guru Nanak Jahaj, 47
 Guru Nanak Mining Trust Company, 43, 92
 Guru Nanak Town, 43, 157
 Guru Gobind Singh scholarships, 209
 Guru Nanak Steamship Company, 47
 Guru period, 10
 Guru's bani, 183
 Gurudom, 180, 186, 194
 Gurus, 6, 7, 9_11, 100_103, 120, 122, 124, 170_175, 177_181, 183_192, 194, 199, 202, 203
 Guruship, 175
 Hadringe, Lord Viceroy, 58
 Halal, 187, 188
 Halifax, 31, 74, 75, 141
 Har Krishan, Guru, 172
 Har Rai, Guru, 172

- Harappa, 161
 Harappan culture, 161, 162
 Harappan civilization, 2
 Hargobind, Guru, 10, 11, 172, 184, 186, 190, 192
 Harimandar Sahib, 171, 184, 186, 195_197, 201, 202
 Harkin, J.B., 41_43, 57
 Harlan, Dr., 13
 Harmonium, 55, 121, 123
 Hart, Premier, 67
 Haumai, 170, 176, 179
 Himalayas, 3,
 Hindi, 98
 Hindu caste order or system, 5, 6, 10
 Hindu prisoners, 12
 Hindu nationalism, 213
 Hindu Rajas, 11, 193
 Hinduism, 4_6, 162, 163
 Hindus, 2, 4_7, 10, 12_16, 30, 32, 65, 75, 144, 145, 147, 149, 162_164, 169, 193, 201
 HMCS Rainbow, 51
 Hodson, Major W.S.R., 15
 Hong Kong, xvi, 29, 31, 32, 35, 43, 44, 46_48, 52, 68, 137, 210, 211, 214
 Honigberger, Dr., 13
 Hopkinson, William Charles, 41_44, 46, 50, 52_61
 Hoshiarpur, 30, 55, 205
 Hukam, 170, 177, 180
 Hunter, Chief Justice, 45
 Imperial Valley, 207, 208
 India League of America, 207
 India, 2, 16, 30, 41_46, 50, 52, 53, 55, 56, 59, 60, 65, 67, 71, 75, 79, 89, 90, 131, 137, 145, 152, 161, 162, 193, 206, 210, 214
 Indian Independence, 16
 Indian Independence movement, xii
 Indian Mutiny, 14
 Indo Aryan, 2
 Indo British, 2
 Indo Islamic, 2
 Indonesia, 211
 Indus river, 3
 Indus Valley civilization, 161, 164
 Inkster, Norman, RCMP Commissioner, 137
 International Sikh Organization, 129, 133
 International Sikh Youth Federation, 130
 Islam, 4, 5, 164, 171_173, 177, 181
 Islamic expansion, 2
 Italy, 16
 Jagirs, 13, 192
 Jainism, 9
 Jalandhar, 30, 205
 Jallianwala Bagh, 64, 144
 Jamu, 14
 Janam Sakhis, 103
 Janam-nash, 187
 Japan, 52, 210, 211, 214
 Japanese, 16, 29, 31_34, 44, 47, 65, 67, 94, 207
 Japuji Sahib, 100, 101
 Jatha, 65, 127
 Jindan, Rani, 9
 Kaplan, Bob, Solicitor General, 139
 Kartarpur Vali Bir, 180
 Kashmir, 14
 Kasim, 2, 164
 Katha, 121, 123, 184
 Kaur, xvi, 9, 188
 Kes, 101, 102, 174, 187, 194
 Kes-dhari, 102
 Khalistan, 130, 133, 141, 147, 148, 155
 Khalsa, 7, 8, 10_13, 16, 120, 174, 183, 185_189, 193_195

- Khalsa Advocate, 46
 Khalsa army, 13
 Khalsa commonwealth, 12
 Khalsa Dal, 8
 Khalsa Diwan Society, 34, 39_42,
 45, 48, 64, 66, 67, 81_84, 98, 124,
 132, 135, 136, 206, 209
 Khalsa Durbar, 13
 Khalsa Panth, 194
 Khalsa schools, 157
 Khanda, 100, 194
 Khanda-de-Amrit, 186
 Khande di pahal, 100, 187
 King George V, 58
 King, Mackenzie, 32, 34, 35, 57,
 64
 Kirat Karni, 152, 170
 Kirpan, 126, 127, 174, 187, 194
 Kirtan, 119_123, 127, 183, 184,
 189, 197, 202, 203
 Kobe, 52, 57
 Komagata Maru, 41, 46_53, 63,
 112, 114, 119, 127, 132, 143, 151
 Ksatriyas, 162, 163
 Kurahits, 187, 188
 Ladakh, 13
 Lahore, 12, 14, 53, 60
 Lal, Gobind Behari, 209, 211
 Lal, Sohan, 51, 54, 55, 59, 60,
 210
 Langar or Guru Ka Langar, 7, 10,
 42, 101, 102, 121, 122, 124, 169,
 171, 183, 185, 186, 192
 Langoja, 123
 Lathis, 52
 Laurier, Sir Wilfred, 33, 41, 42,
 51
 Lipmann, Walter, 215
 Lodhi, Sikandar, 197
 Lodhis, 192
 Lohgarh, 191
 Lori, 200
 Lungi, 200
 Macauliffe Institute of Sikh
 Studies, 131
 Mahants, 65
 Maharathas, 2, 8, 12, 15
 Mahmud, 164
 Majithias, 14
 Malaya, 30, 212
 Malaysia, xv, xvi, 16, 30, 32, 46,
 75, 137, 210, 211
 Manji system, 183, 190
 Manjis, 7, 9, 190
 Mann, Simranjit Singh, 130
 Masands, 175
 Maya, 190
 McBride, Premier, 46
 Meerut, 15
 Meighen (Prime Minister), 64
 Melechhas, 163
 Mesopotamia, xv, 15
 Mir, Mian Sufi, 171, 195
 Mira Bai, 3
 Miri Piri, 153, 183, 189_195
 Moha, 170
 Mohammad, 164
 Mohanjo-Daro, 161
 Mohanjo-Daron, 2,
 Mohran, 13
 Moji, 47
 Mool Mantra, 177, 180
 Mughal empire, 8, 10, 13
 Mughal emperor, 11, 103, 171
 Mughals, 2, 8, 10_12, 15, 164,
 175, 179, 192, 193, 196, 201
 Mukatsar, 9
 Mukti, 163, 180
 Mullah, 192
 Mulrony, Brian, Prime Minister,
 139, 143
 Multan, 2, 164, 198
 Munis, 162, 163
 Muslims, xxvi, 2, 4_7, 10_16, 32,
 41, 47, 55, 65, 74, 144, 147, 164,
 169, 172, 175, 192, 197, 199

- Muslim invasions, 2, 5
 Naam, 8, 98, 170, 175_181, 203
 Naam Japna, 152, 170
 Naam Maarga, 176, 181
 Naam Simran, 127
 Nadar, 170
 Nanak, Guru, xxv, 5_7, 9_11, 42, 100, 169, 176, 180_185, 191, 192, 198
 Nander, 175, 186
 Nankana Sahib, 89
 Nath, Dina, 13
 Nath, Gorakh Yogi, 198
 Nathan, Robert, 59, 60
 National council of Khalistan, 133
 National Alliance of Canadian Sikhs, 131
 Nehru, Jawahar Lal, 144, 145
 New Zealand, xi, xvi, 32, 75
 Nirankaris, 127
 Nirvana, 163
 Nishan Sahib, 100, 194
 Operation Blue Star, 147, see also Recent Events
 Oregon, 36, 46, 68, 205, 206
 Pag, 101, 126
 Pahal, 101
 Pakka Sikh, 101,
 Palki, 123
 Pandits, 172
 Pangat, 183, 186
 Panipat, 12
 Panj, 3
 Panj Kakkar, 81, 174, 187, 188, 194
 Panj Piaras, 7, 174, 175, 185_187, 189
 Panth, 7, 8, 10, 186, 188, 189, 194
 Panth Dharma, 174
 Panthic, 189
 Panthic Committee, 133
 Parkarma, 147, 195_197
 Parthians, 2
 Pathans, 11, 14, 175
 Pattit Sikh, 101
 Permanand, 3
 Persian, 173, 180, 199, 201
 Persians, 2, 3, 12, 29, 163
 Philippines, 30, 211
 Pipla, 162
 Piri, 153
 Pirs, 189
 Poorbia sepoys, 15
 Pope, Arthur, 215
 Puja, 162
 Punjab, xi, xii, xv, xxv, 1_3, 5, 9, 11_16, 30_36, 40, 46, 53, 56, 60, 63_65, 68, 69, 72_75, 79, 81_85, 89_92, 94, 97_99, 102, 104_107, 112, 117, 121, 122, 125, 126, 128_131, 140, 145_152, 154, 155, 161, 163_165, 175, 193, 195, 197, 199, 200, 205, 208, 210, 211, 215
 Punjabi background, 113
 Punjabi children, 114
 Punjabi community, 40, 42, 60, 91, 207
 Punjabi culture, 99, 197
 Punjabi families, 39
 Punjabi food, 95, 102, 125
 Punjabi fonts, 120
 Punjabi immigrants, 34, 56, 74, 83, 213
 Punjabi language, 197
 Punjabi life, 99
 Punjabi literature, 198
 Punjabi men, 207
 Punjabi music, 120, 122, 200
 Punjabi Nationalism, 153
 Punjabi poetry, 111, 113
 Punjabi settlements, 206
 Punjabi Suba, 75, 146
 Punjabi talk shows, xxvi, 113
 Punjabi women, 99
 Punjabi workers, 112, 216

- Punjabis, xxvi, 1, 12_14, 30, 32, 34, 39_47, 51, 55_60, 64, 65, 68, 69, 73_75, 83, 88, 89, 93, 95, 98, 99, 101, 102, 104, 105, 108, 111_117, 121, 123, 125, 145_147, 151, 152, 161, 171, 173, 180, 197_201, 205_207, 209_212, 214, 216
 Purdah, 8
 Pusyamitra, 163
 Queen Victoria, xii, 29
 Radical Bhaktas, 6
 Ragas, 122, 123, 171, 181, 202
 Ragmala, 182
 Rahau, 181, 182
 Rahim Hussain, 48, 49, 51, 54, 57, 60, 112
 Rai, Lajpat, 212, 215
 Rajkarega Khalsa, Akhi Rahe na koe, 124
 Rajputs, 2, 81, 83, 173, 180, 199, 201
 Ram Das, Guru, 171, 181, 184, 195, 203
 Ramanand, 3
 Rangoon, 211
 Rasa, 203
 Recent Events, 135
 Reid, Malcolm, 48_51, 54, 59, 60
 Rishis, 194
 Roosevelt, President, 208
 Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), xv, 128, 129, 132, 137_142, 154
 Royal Durbar, 58
 Rumal, 101, 123
 Sach khand vase Nirankar, 178
 Sachiana, 191
 Sacramento Valley, 36, 206
 Sada, Kaur Rani, 9, 13
 Sadh Sangat, 183, 184
 Sadhna, 3
 Sahaj, 180, 203
 Sahib Kaur, Mata, 187
 Sahib Kaur, Rani, 9
 Saint-Soldier concept, 190
 Samagam, 43
 San Francisco, 210, 213
 Sandhanwalias, 14
 Sangats, 7, 9, 54, 99, 101, 121_124 183, 185, 190, 192, 203
 Sanskrit, 162, 169, 173, 180, 199
 Sant, 153
 Sant Bhasha, 180
 Sant-Sipahi, 193
 Sarangi, 51, 121, 123
 Sarba loh, 173, 194
 Sarbat de Bhala, 8
 Sarpanchs, 130
 Sat Sri Akal, 100
 Satluj, 3, 13
 Saund Dalip Singh, 208
 Scythians, xxvi, 2, 163, 164
 Sen, Sun Yat, 65
 Sepoy, 14, 15
 Sewa, 101, 105, 153, 180, 185, 195
 Shabad, Guru, 184
 Shabadas, 10, 123, 176, 180, 203
 Shah, Bahadur, 15, 175
 Shah, Nadir, 12
 Shah, Warris, 199
 Shakti, 191, 194
 Shalwar, 102, 106, 200
 Shanghai, 47, 65, 210, 211
 Sharam-nash, 187
 Sheikh Farid, 197, 198
 Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, 187
 Siam, 60, 210, 211
 Siddhas, 3
 Sihota, Minister Moe , 139
 Sihra, Nand Singh, 45, 209, 210
 Sikh academics, 106
 Sikh activities, 89, 152
 Sikh Akali movement, 64

- Sikh aristocracy, 14
 Sikh aspiration, 6
 Sikh attitude, 153
 Sikh audiences, 97
 Sikh blood, 15
 Sikh boys, 79, 102
 Sikh Chair at the University of Toronto, 108
 Sikh child, 154
 Sikh children, 64, 65, 67, 69, 73, 81, 85_87, 97_100, 102_105, 117, 119_122, 155, 157
 Sikh community, xxv, 9, 30, 32, 35, 39, 41_44, 49, 53_55, 57, 60, 64, 67, 68, 73, 79, 82_88, 93, 94, 99, 100, 102, 105, 106, 108, 111, 112, 117, 118, 120, 125, 126, 139, 144, 149, 151, 154_157, 172, 184, 192, 209, 212
 Sikh concerns, 157
 Sikh conferences, xxvi, 106, 107, for details refer to Appendix D, 217
 Sikh contribution, xii
 Sikh cultural values, 105, 155
 Sikh culture, xxvi, 85, 86, 103, 154, 154, 181
 Sikh demand, 145, 146
 Sikh detainees, 142
 Sikh drivers, 94
 Sikh educational pursuits, 97
 Sikh Empire, xxv, 13, 196, see also Chapter 1
 Sikh ethnicity, 155, 156
 Sikh extremists, 143
 Sikh faith, 10, 11, 81, 89, 117, 118, 121, 122, 137, 142, 152, 154, 157, 171, 172, 175, 183, 185, 195_197, 203,
 Sikh families, 73, 86, 92, 93, 102, 121, 122, 154, 207, 208
 Sikh family values, 86
 Sikh farmers, 145
 Sikh functions, 143
 Sikh fundamentalism, 127, 147, 148
 Sikh fundamentalist movement, 131
 Sikh girls, 85
 Sikh groups, 131
 Sikh Gurdawara Prabandak Committee, 65
 Sikh Gurus, xxvi, 6, 7, 9, 105, 120, 153, 155, 169, 176, 189, 193, 201
 Sikh heritage, 120
 Sikh hiring, 87
 Sikh history, 7, 10, 63, 115, 147, 157
 Sikh horsemen, 12, 15
 Sikh identity, xxvi, 7, 106, 107, 120, 125, 152, 155_157
 Sikh images, 131
 Sikh immigrants, xix, 1, 32, 34_36, 45, 46, 56, 59, 66, 69, 71, 80, 91, 98, 105, 113, 207, 209, 214
 Sikh immigration, 1, 29, 32, 34, 35, 45, 56, 57, 61, 80, 151, 205, 206
 Sikh institutions, xxvi, 7, 40, 118, 121, 155, 156, 183
 Sikh interests, 126
 Sikh issues, 126, 130
 Sikh journals, 98, 158
 Sikh Kirtan, 202
 Sikh leaders, xx, 16, 146, 147
 Sikh leadership, 55
 Sikh life, 1
 Sikh literature, 111
 Sikh living, 6
 Sikh Maharajas, 100
 Sikh masses, 146
 Sikh matters, 89
 Sikh men, 84, 99, 146, 149
 Sikh migration, xxv, 1, 68

- Sikh militants, 141
 Sikh movement, 7_11, 195
 Sikh nature, 153
 Sikh newspapers, 98
 Sikh norms, 154
 Sikh organizations, 126, 131, 132, 141, 157
 Sikh outrage, 146
 Sikh Panth, 6, 7, 10, 131,
 Sikh parents, 100, 103_106, 117
 Sikh passengers, 44, 52, 142, 143
 Sikh patriots, 212
 Sikh perspective, xix, xx
 Sikh philosophy, 42
 Sikh pilgrims, 147
 Sikh pioneers, xxv, 1, 2, 31, 32, 39, 79, 125, 154
 Sikh point-of-view, xix, xx, 139
 Sikh population, xxv, 56, 63, 72, 74, 75, 94, 97
 Sikh presence, xix, 137
 Sikh pride, 1
 Sikh priests, 214
 Sikh principles, 152
 Sikh problems, 88
 Sikh professionals, xv, xxv, 73, 91, 95, 117, 155
 Sikh Rahit Maryada, 177, 187, 188
 Sikh recruitment, 16, 146
 Sikh refugees, xxvi, 74, 130, 140, 142, 143
 Sikh regiments, 16, 29, 32, 52
 Sikh religion, xxi, xxv, xxvi, 9, 98, 100_105, 107, 109, 115, 116, 120_122, 126, 157, 169, 183, 195, 214
 Sikh religious organizations, 118
 Sikh response, 209
 Sikh resurgence, xii,
 Sikh revolution, 8,
 Sikh revolutionaries, 210
 Sikh rights, 87
 Sikh ruler, 2,
 Sikh sangats, 131
 Sikh scholars, 97, 115, 157
 Sikh scriptures, xxvi, 7, for details see Appendix B
 Sikh settlements, 46, 71
 Sikh settlers, xxv, 29, 35, 41, 91
 Sikh society, 7, 121
 Sikh soldiers, xv, 15, 29, 60, 67, 152
 Sikh sovereign nation, 131
 Sikh strength, 15, 65
 Sikh struggle, xxv,
 Sikh struggle in Punjab, xxvi, 135, 144
 Sikh students, 120
 Sikh studies, 97, 107, 109, 115, 116, 126, 128, 131, 154, 156
 Sikh survival, xii
 Sikh symbols, 15, 42, 82, 94, 95, 130, 137, 139, 140
 Sikh system, 170
 Sikh talents, 156
 Sikh teachings, 181
 Sikh terrorists, 144
 Sikh themes, 116, 157
 Sikh theology, 7, 177, 178
 Sikh traditions, 82, 83, 87, 177, 201
 Sikh troops, 29, 41, 65, 68, 69
 Sikh values, 1, 81, 82, 85, 117, 119, 120, 152_154, 205, 208
 Sikh voice, 156
 Sikh women, 9, 10, 69, 79, 84, 99, 101
 Sikh workers, 36, 41, 56, 95, 156, 206, 209
 Sikh world, 63, 82
 Sikh youth, 107, 139, 156
 Sikh-jats, 164

- Sikhs, xi, xii, xv, xvi, xix, xxv, xxvi, 1, 2, 7_16, 29_36, 39_47, 50_60, 63_113, 117_131, 136_170, 174, 175, 180, 183_193, 195, 197, 199, 205_212
 Sikhism, xx, xxvi, 1, 6, 10, 11, 98, 107, 109, 131, 152, 153, 158, 169, 171, 176_178, 183, 185, 190, 199
 Sikhs in United States, 205
 Sindh, 2, 3, 164
 Sindhi, 198
 Singapore, xvi, 30, 32, 35, 52, 60, 75, 137, 210_212, 214
 Singh, Ajit 127, 214
 Singh Balwant, 42, 44, 45, 47_49, 51, 52, 54, 57, 59, 60 see also endnotes
 Singh, Banda Bahadur, 11
 Singh Bela, 53_55, 60
 Singh Bhag, 42, 48, 49, 51, 52, 54, 56, 58
 Singh Bhagwan Gyani, 47, 53, 56, 111_214, 216
 Singh Bhai Amrik, 130, 147
 Singh Bhai Mani, 8, 175, 201
 Singh Bhai Taru, 201
 Singh Bhai Vir, 199
 Singh Dalip, 14
 Singh Dhian, 13, 14
 Singh, Duleep, Prince, 31
 Singh, Gargaj, Kishan, 127
 Singh Giani Gyan, 201
 Singh, Gulab, 14
 Singh, Gurdit Sarhali, 46_53, 112, 119, 151
 Singh Guru Gobind, 6_11, 123, 156, 170_175, 180_195, 199
 Singh, Harnam Sahri, 50, 51, 56, 59, 60, 111, 210
 Singh, Harnam Tundilat, 111
 Singh, Jagjit, 207, 208
 Singh Lal, 15
 Singh, Mayo, 66, 92, 94, 154
 Singh Mewa Lopoke, xii, 51, 52, 54_56
 Singh, Mit Pandori, 48, 51, 60, 65
 Singh, Munshi, 49, 50
 Singh, Nalwa Hari, 13
 Singh, Naranjan Pandori, 111
 Singh, Nawab Kapur, 12
 Singh, Maharaja Ranjit, 2, 9, 11, 13, 14, 16, 31, 65, 153, 185, 186, 189, 196, 197, 200, 206
 Singh, Santokh, 159, 210, 213, 216
 Singh, Sohan Bhakhna, 46, 52, 209, 210
 Singh, Tehal, 210
 Singh, Teja, 15, 42_44, 55_57, 92, 97, 112, 157, 209
 Sipahi, 153
 Sirhind, 11
 Smedley, Agnes 215, 216
 Stanford, 58
 Stevens, Herbert, 34, 49_51
 Stockton, 206, 209
 Stoddard, Rosalie, 141, 143
 Sudras, 8, 162, 163
 Sufis, 164, 198
 Sufism, 164, 181
 Sultanate, 2, 5, 164
 Sundar Gutkas, 135
 Surveillance, 56, 57, 59
 Suttee, 9, 175
 Swayne, Eric, 41, 42, 57
 Tabla, 121, 123
 Takhats, 183, 186, 188, 189
 Takht Sri Akal Takhat Sahib, 186
 Takht Sri Damdama Sahib, 186
 Takht Sri Hazur Sahib, 186
 Takht Sri Kesgarh Sahib, 186
 Takht Sri Patna Sahib, 186
 Tala, 202
 Tantrika, 3
 Tappas, 200
 Tegh, 153, 190, 193

- Tegh, Bahadur, Guru, 7, 9_11,
 153, 172, 173, 175, 180, 181, 186,
 197
 Temple Committee, 49, 51
 Thailand, 30, 137
 Thumba, Thumbi, 123
 Tibet, 13, 14
 Trilochan, 3
 Trudeau, Prime Minister, 127
 Tuka Ram, 3
 Turkey, xv, 15, 214
 Turkish, 5, 15, 152, 164
 Turks, 5
 Upanishads, 162
 Urdu, 98, 199, 209
 Vada Ghalu Ghara, 12
 Vaishavanism, 181
 Vaisyas, 162, 163
 Vallabha, 3
 Vancouver, 29_36, 39, 41_47, 49,
 51, 54_59, 64, 67, 74, 81, 83,
 87_89, 92, 94, 98, 108, 112, 116,
 118, 122, 124, 135, 143, 151, 152,
 154, 157, 205
 Vancouver Gurdwaras, 41_44, 55,
 80, 82, 124
 Vancouver Island, 75, 93
 Vancouver Province, 44
 Vancouver Sikh Community, 44,
 47, 48, 63, 64, 82_84, 132
 Vancouver Sikhs, 41, 42, 88, 97
 Vedantism, 181
 Vedas, 4, 5, 162, 163, 179
 Victoria Crosses, 15, 16, 152
 Victoria, 35, 40, 50, 56, 58, 64,
 93, 111, 135, 154
 Vir rasa, 173
 Vishnu, 162
 Waheguruji ka khalsa:
 Waheguruji ki Fateh, 123, 124,
 187
 Walvies, M.V., 142
 Wand Chhakna, 152, 170, 185
 Washington, 36, 46, 51, 68, 205,
 206
 World Sikh Organization, 129,
 130
 World War I, xii, xv, 15, 35, 55,
 56, 63, 92, 93, 137, 151
 World War II, xv, 30, 63, 67, 68,
 71, 79, 93, 137, 207
 Yatis, 162
 Yoga, 162
 Yokohama, 47, 52
 Zamindari system, 12

The Sikh community of Canada has many distinctions. In Mr. Narindar Singh's book they now have a handbook about their history and who they are and who the Sikhs as a whole are, which will be of vital interest to readers world-wide. It is meticulously researched, straight-forwardly stated, written with strength and enthusiasm and eminently balanced. The author is at all times aware of the new global civilization which is emerging in our world. In this context he looks over the past and present of a community which emerged from the old Panjab, with its continuous civilization as old as the pyramids, and met the twentieth century head on in "the uttermost parts of the west" of "the New World." The Sikhs of Canada survived and today exemplify to all how a small and distinct community based on a way of religion and spirituality can become an integral and fully identified part of a multi-community whole, providing vigour, leadership and prosperity for all.

This book will be of service throughout the world.

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