

# The Surveillance of Indian Nationalists in North America, 1908-1918

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Immigrants from India, most of whom were Sikhs from Punjab, discovered North America in 1903 and 1904. An immigration of young men flourished briefly until shut off by Canadian authorities in 1908 and by American in 1910. By then a small community of Punjabi labourers had established itself in the Pacific coast states and in British Columbia. Associated with this community were a number of students and entrepreneurs from Bengal and elsewhere in India. The leaders of this community were under close surveillance, so that now, eighty years later, in the archives of four countries — Canada, India, Great Britain, and the United States — we can trace their movements with remarkable precision. Most of these men were political activists who were openly critical of the British regime in India and who called for Indian self-rule, either within or outside the British Empire. It is not surprising that these leaders were watched, given the paranoia of the British regime in India and the sentiments of the anti-Asiatic lobby in the Pacific coast states and in British Columbia. As time progressed, they warranted more watching. By the end of 1913, Indians in San Francisco had organized the Ghadar or Mutiny party with links in Vancouver, Victoria, and other points up and down the Pacific coast. In the first months of the First World War, the leaders of the Ghadar party tried to stage a rising in Punjab and encouraged emigrants to return to India to take part. Their efforts were ill organized and drew little support from the Sikh population in Punjab, but the Indian government met the threat with a severity that profoundly affected the outlooks of Sikhs and other Indians and contributed to the unrest that seized Punjab after the war ended.

Canadian immigration officials in Vancouver played a key role in the surveillance of Indian nationalists in North America. This role has been recognized in previous studies of the Punjabi community in British Columbia, but the nature of the surveillance and its consequences deserve

closer examination.<sup>1</sup> The subject has a contemporary echo in the attention that the Canadian and Indian governments now pay to nationalist activity among Sikhs in Canada. The past provides a lesson for the present. Sikhs who came to Canada early in this century, like those who have come in the past twenty years, were economic immigrants, more interested in jobs than politics. The activist Har Dayal said that they were timid;<sup>2</sup> and a great many of these immigrants were uncomfortable with any community action that might be misconstrued by the government, whether Canadian or Indian.<sup>3</sup> Time and events, however, drove most of them into the hands of the activists. Surveillance was a contributing factor. A symbiotic relationship existed between the watchers and the watched: together they nurtured the ideal that political activity among Sikhs in North America was a threat to British rule in India. Each was a spur to the other. When they thought about it, Punjabi peasants had little affection for the British regime and much to resent. When they realized that they were under surveillance, even though they were far from home, they took a step towards political awareness. In this way, surveillance stimulated political activity among Indians, and political activity among Indians justified more surveillance. By tracing the ever increasing scope of Vancouver based surveillance, one can see the process at work.

At the heart of the surveillance effort was one man, a former Calcutta police inspector, W. C. Hopkinson, who surfaced in Vancouver in 1908, and who was employed as a Canadian immigration inspector in Vancouver from 1909 until 1914, when he was shot and killed by a Sikh named Mewa Singh. As part of his job, Hopkinson did the routine work of an immigration inspector, but his main responsibility, and the reason he was hired, was for police work which, in all its implications, was of far greater interest to the India Office and the Government of India than to the Canadian government that employed him. A reading of the archival record indicates that the initiative in this work lay entirely with Hopkinson. He uncovered the presence of Indian nationalist agitators on the Pacific coast, convinced the authorities (without much difficulty) of its seriousness, and obtained a special commission and employment to investi-

<sup>1</sup> See Norman Buchignani and Doreen Indra with Ram Srivastava, *Continuous Journey, A Social History of South Asians in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 25-26, 37, 51-53, 58-65, and Hugh Johnston, *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru, The Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979), 1, 7-16, 124-29, 138.

<sup>2</sup> Har Dayal, "India in America," *The Modern Review* (July 1911): 1-11.

<sup>3</sup> See the comments attributed to Husain Rahim at meeting of the Khalsa Diwan Society and United Indian League: Public Archives of Canada [PAC], RG 76, vol. 385, file 536999, Henry W. Gwyther to Malcolm R. J. Reid, 24 Feb. 1913.

gate. His original mission in Vancouver is a mystery. He was probably sent by the Indian government to report on the situation among the Sikhs, but without much advance notion of what he might find. When he first arrived, he did not come in any official capacity or report his purpose to the Canadian government.

Hopkinson was a Eurasian born in Delhi in 1880, although he maintained the pretence that he was of English birth and English parentage.<sup>4</sup> For four years, from 1904 to 1907, he served as a sub-inspector of police in Calcutta. He started at the age of twenty-four at 80 rupees a month, and by 1907 his salary had risen to 125.<sup>5</sup> In the spring of 1908 he appeared unannounced in Vancouver without any clearly defined occupation but engaged in investigative work. His first overt act was to publicize Indian nationalist activity in Vancouver by planting a story with a *Times* of London correspondent.<sup>6</sup> The article, which appeared in the *Times* on 22 May, alleged that Indians in Vancouver and Seattle were raising money, printing literature, and distributing instructions on the manufacture of bombs to support revolutionary agitation in India. In late May/early June he was interviewed by the Deputy Minister of Labour, Mackenzie King, while the latter was conducting a Royal Commission of Inquiry into oriental immigration. King, impressed, wrote a nine-page confidential memorandum based on information that Hopkinson had supplied.<sup>7</sup> This information, King concluded, provided all the more reason for controlling Indian immigration to Canada. In the next few months, Hopkinson was a fixture in and around the immigration office in Vancouver, although without regular employment. By his own account he was on leave from the Calcutta police force,<sup>8</sup> but his activities suggest that he was angling for better employment, and Canadian officials readily made use of him. "I

<sup>4</sup> When Hopkinson was first appointed as immigration inspector and Hindu interpreter, and required to complete a form for the Department of the Interior, he gave the correct birth date (16 June 1880) but the wrong birth place (Hull, Yorkshire, England). For nationality he wrote "English." See PAC, RG 76, vol. 561, file 808722, pt. 1. He must have claimed he was English consistently, because the obituaries that appeared in Vancouver newspapers after his death say that he came to India as a child. The baptismal records in the India Office Library show he was born in Delhi. He was taken for a Eurasian by people who worked with him: interview on 29 Oct. 1976 with former immigration inspector Fred "Cyclone" Taylor.

<sup>5</sup> India Office Library, *Thacker's Indian Directory*, 1904-07.

<sup>6</sup> PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 200, file 332, Report of Col. E. J. Swayne, "Information as to Hindu Agitators in Vancouver."

<sup>7</sup> PAC, RG 2/1, vol. 703, file 21, 21 July 1908.

<sup>8</sup> Affidavit by Hopkinson, 7 Dec. 1908, copied in J. B. Harkin's report, *The East Indians in British Columbia* (Department of the Interior, 1909), 31-33.

had Hopkinson spend a day among the Hindus . . . ” wrote J. B. Harkin, private secretary to the Minister of the Interior in a letter of late July to W. D. Scott, Superintendent of Immigration in Ottawa; and what is striking about the reference is that no further identification was needed: Superintendent Scott knew who Hopkinson was.<sup>9</sup>

In October and November 1908, Hopkinson was employed by Harkin as secretary and interpreter on a special delegation to investigate Indian labour conditions in British Honduras. The delegation included Harkin, Hopkinson, and two men selected by the Indian community in Vancouver, Nagar Singh, a Sikh, and Sham Singh, a Hindu. Expenses were paid by the Department of the Interior. The objective, sanctioned by the Colonial Office, was to disembarass Vancouver of excess Indian labourers by shipping them to the West Indies or Honduras under indentured contracts.<sup>10</sup> Nagar Singh and Sham Singh were taken to Belize to see the country at first hand before any of their compatriots accepted transportation there; but they returned with negative reports and accusations of attempted bribery against Hopkinson.<sup>11</sup> The Honduras proposal

<sup>9</sup> Harkin, *The East Indians in British Columbia*, 8-9.

<sup>10</sup> PAC, RG 7, G 1, vol. 272, Crewe to Grey, 19 Sept. 1908, telegram.

<sup>11</sup> Over the years, members of the Indian community repeatedly claimed that Hopkinson was corrupt. The case was not proved at the time and is unprovable now. In the office he held, and in the power he possessed over Indian immigrants, there was potential for abuse. On the other hand, department officials believed that charges against Hopkinson were manufactured to discredit him or to get him fired. The story that he tried to bribe the Honduras delegates seems implausible. (Nagar Singh said that Hopkinson wanted him to give a favourable report on conditions in Honduras and tempted him with a purse filled with \$3,000 in cash, but Hopkinson did not have that kind of money, and it is difficult to believe that the Department of the Interior or anyone else gave it to him for such an unprofitable and unaccountable purpose.) In May 1911 a Mr. Von Guttenberg of the Department of the Interior was sent to Vancouver to investigate charges against Hopkinson. (Among the people he talked to was an Indian named Boga who said that Hopkinson had taken \$50 from each of eight people entering from the United States.) Hopkinson was not given warning or notice of the investigation, and found out about it indirectly. None the less, he was exonerated. In October 1913, when the Indian colony was in an uproar over Immigration Department efforts to deport the priest Bhagwan Singh, Hopkinson warned his superiors that there might be more allegations against him: he had received veiled threats from leaders of the Indian colony that they would say that he had landed Bhagwan Singh for money. (In fact, Bhagwan Singh had entered the country by using the name and documents of another man who had established residence in Canada.) Norman Buchignani and Doreen Indra cite the case of Mrs. Uday Ram, who was landed in Feb. 1910, as possible evidence that Hopkinson could be bought. Between April 1908 and March 1910 only thirteen Indian men and two Indian women (including Mrs. Ram) were permitted entry to Canada as new immigrants. The landing of an Indian woman was most exceptional and one can understand the suspicion among Indians that bribery was involved. Because it was exceptional, however, it would seem that even a most venal official would have been discouraged from taking a bribe. The decision to land Mrs. Ram was not

was angrily rejected at a meeting in the Vancouver Sikh temple. None of this did any harm to Hopkinson's reputation in official quarters. Instead, the episode gave him prominence: it put him into correspondence with the Deputy Minister of the Interior and with the Prime Minister,<sup>12</sup> and, ultimately, it produced the recommendation that he be given permanent employment. Colonel E. J. Swayne, Governor of British Honduras, was in London when the idea of recruiting coolie labour in Vancouver was first raised; when he offered to return to Belize via Canada if the Canadian government paid his way, they said yes.<sup>13</sup> He arrived in Montreal and Ottawa in early December and discussed his mission, first of all with the Governor General, the 4th Earl Grey, and then with Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier and members of his cabinet. As an old India hand, Swayne was asked to look into the political as well as the labour situation among Indians in Vancouver; and before he left the country at the end of the year he submitted both written and personal reports to the government. In his confidential report, Swayne recommended Hopkinson's appointment as a Dominion police inspector to keep a watch on Indian activists in Vancouver.

According to Swayne, Hopkinson was likely to return to India at any time. Before he did, he was hired as immigration inspector stationed in Vancouver and charged with so-called Hindu work. The offer came from the Deputy Minister of the Interior, but the initiative, interest, and sense of urgency belonged to the Governor General, Earl Grey.<sup>14</sup> Grey was a popular governor general whose term, twice extended, lasted from 1904 to 1911. The office he held, although a largely formal one, still carried an

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made by Hopkinson alone, but in conjunction with the immigration agent, J. H. MacGill; and it was reported immediately to the Deputy Minister of the Interior, who watched Indian immigration cases like a hawk because the possible political repercussions were considerable. Hopkinson was loyal to British India and Anglo Canada and behaved accordingly. One does not need evidence of personal corruption to explain the part he played. On the Honduras bribe charge: affidavit by Sham Singh and diary by Sham Singh, copied in Harkin, 25-27, 29-31. On the Von Guttenberg investigation: RG 76, vol. 561, file 808722, G. D. Kumar to L. M. Fortier; and RG 7, G 21, vol. 201, file 332, Hopkinson to Cory, 6 April, 8 May & 25 May 1911. On the Bhagwan Singh case: RG 76, vol. 385, file 536999, Hopkinson to Cory, 20 Oct. 1913. On the Mrs. Uday Ram case: RG 7, G 21, vol. 200, file 332, Hopkinson to Cory, 19 Feb. 1910; and Buchignani and Indra, 49. See also RG 76, vol. 561, file 808722, MacGill to Scott, 15 July 1910. For more on the question of Hopkinson and bribes see Johnston, *The Voyage*, 143.

<sup>12</sup> Harkin, 6-7.

<sup>13</sup> PAC, RG 25, A 2, vol. 200, file 120/76.

<sup>14</sup> PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 200, file 332, Sir John Hanbury-Williams to W. W. Cory, 13 Jan. 1909, copy, and Cory to Hanbury-Williams, 18 Jan. 1909.

aura that gave him personal influence with the Prime Minister and members of his government on some issues. He had to avoid the appearance of interference in domestic matters; but he could be sure that members of the government would listen to him when he represented imperial concerns. Oriental immigration was both a domestic and an international issue; and Grey kept a close watch because he saw imperial interests at stake.<sup>15</sup> By the end of 1907, following the anti-oriental riot in Vancouver that summer, he was convinced that Indian immigration to Vancouver would have to stop. But he wanted the government to act circumspectly. He was incensed when the Minister of the Interior, during the election campaign of 1908, announced that steps would be taken against Indian immigration. The publicity was potentially inflammatory in India. He accepted the policy but not the open advertisement. Similarly, although Grey was outraged by evidence that Indian nationalists were at work in Vancouver, he counselled restraint in dealing with them and their community. In his mind the stakes were high. Quiet vigilance was wanted, and a man like Hopkinson could prove invaluable.

Hopkinson reported for duty in Vancouver on 8 February 1909 at a salary of \$100 a month. At the prevailing rate of exchange, this was equivalent to 300 rupees or 2.4 times as much as he had earned on the Calcutta police force. His job was to keep a watch on the Indian community and to report regularly to the department. When this did not keep him busy, or when there was an overload in the immigration office, he could be assigned to ordinary immigration work. These were his instructions and those given the Immigration Agent, J. H. MacGill.<sup>16</sup> For the most part, Hopkinson worked independently. He concentrated his attention on the leaders of the Indian community in Vancouver. He collected their publications, recorded their public utterances, monitored and sometimes intercepted their mail, and assiduously kept track of their comings and goings. A matter as apparently inconsequential as a \$20 money order sent to New York was grist for Hopkinson's mill. He collected what he could and sent weekly reports to the deputy minister, who forwarded a copy to the Governor General. Earl Grey had a great appetite for this material. When he stopped in Vancouver in August 1909, on his way to the Yukon, he spent an hour and a half with Hopkinson. On his return, five weeks later, he interviewed him again; and while he was in the north

<sup>15</sup> Mary E. Hallett, "A Governor General's Views on Oriental Immigration to British Columbia, 1904-1911," *BC Studies* 14 (Summer, 1972): 51-72.

<sup>16</sup> PAC, RG 76, vol. 561, file 808722, W. W. Cory to J. H. MacGill, 3 Feb. 1909, copy; Cory to Hopkinson, 3 Feb. 1909, copy; MacGill to Cory, 8 Feb. 1909.

he insisted that Hopkinson keep him up to date by sending reports via Skagway.<sup>17</sup> It was not long before Grey wanted three copies of Hopkinson's reports: one for himself; one for the Home 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 by one of two routes. Regularly it went from the Governor General via London (the Colonial Office and the India Office) to the Viceroy; irregularly it went from Military Intelligence Ottawa to Intelligence Branch, Simla.<sup>18</sup>

When he wanted information, Hopkinson had the resources of the Governor General's Office to draw on; and he could count on enthusiastic and expeditious action. Housain Rahim, who emerged as a leading figure in the Indian community in Vancouver, entered the country in 1910 via Honolulu and Japan. At Hopkinson's request the Governor General obtained reports through the British Ambassador in Japan on Rahim's activities in Kobe, where he was manager of the firm of Varma & Co.<sup>19</sup> When Hopkinson wanted information about Guran Ditta Kumar (whose business card read "Punjabi Buddhist" and "Worker in the cause of Temperance and Vegetarianism"), he suggested a trace by the Commissioner of Police in Calcutta. When he wanted to know what Teja Singh was doing in England, he recommended a watch by Scotland Yard.<sup>20</sup>

Teja Singh was a Khatri Sikh who had arrived in Vancouver in September 1908 by way of Montreal and New York. He had immediately assumed a leadership role in Vancouver's Sikh community; and in 1909 and 1910 he absorbed much of Hopkinson's attention. The Punjab Government identified him as a former resident of Gujranwala city in Punjab, a graduate of Government College in Lahore and an M.A. from Punjab University.<sup>21</sup> He had also passed the intermediate law exam and had taught as headmaster of a school in the Shahpur District and at Khalsa College, Amritsar, where he had temporarily acted as principal. For a time he had been a pleader or advocate in Rawalpindi. His father, who

<sup>17</sup> PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 200, file 332, Hopkinson to Cory, 5 Aug. and 9 Sept. 1909, copies.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., Captain Bruce Hay to Major the Earl of Lanesborough, 15 March 1910.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., vol. 201, file 332, Claude M. MacDonald to Grey, 2 Sept. 1911, enclosure. On the co-operation of the Japanese police in watching Indian nationalists, 1914-1918, see Grant K. Goodman, "Japanese Sources for the Study of the Indian Independence Movement," in Sisir K. Bose ed., *Netaji and India's Freedom* (Calcutta: Netaji Research Bureau, 1975), 76-108.

<sup>20</sup> PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 200, file 332, Hopkinson to Cory, 12 Aug. and 6 Nov. 1909, copies.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., Crewe to Grey, 15 March 1909, enclosures.

had been either an assistant surgeon or a hospital assistant, had died, and, with a large share of the estate at his disposal, Teja Singh had gone abroad to study natural science at Cambridge. In the summer of 1908 he had come to North America, and, although he had not yet taken his Cambridge exams, he had reportedly enrolled as a graduate student in education at Columbia. On his politics, the government of India relayed contrary assessments. By the first, his views were "not dangerous but fairly moderate." By the second they were "bigoted."<sup>22</sup> He made no public statements that would brand him an extremist; and when he did undertake a series of lectures in Vancouver, his subject was theosophical: the principles of Buddhism. Hopkinson, however, had no doubt that he was subversive.<sup>23</sup> In March 1910 Teja Singh returned to Vancouver after a six-month absence. Hopkinson heard that he had had a meeting with Gandhi. "Gandhi," Hopkinson explained in his report, "is a prominent man in South Africa and is purported to be connected with some Hindu trouble in that country, and from what I can learn is at present in jail serving a sentence."<sup>24</sup>

Others watched by Hopkinson included Balwant Singh, millworker and priest in the Vancouver Sikh Temple, Bhag Singh, president of the temple management committee, Sundar Singh, self-styled doctor and editor of the *Aryan*, published monthly in Victoria, and a number of students — Behari Lal Varma, Harnam Singh, Surendra Mohan Bose, and others — who were enrolled in American colleges but who appeared from time to time in Vancouver. Most important, aside from Teja Singh, was Taraknath Das, a Bengali student enrolled at the University of Washington in Seattle. He was a graduate of Calcutta University who had arrived in North America in 1906. For a time he was employed as an interpreter by the U.S. immigration office in Vancouver. In 1908 he opened a school for Sikh immigrants; and it was this school that was exposed by Hopkinson and subsequently closed by the authorities. Part of the case against Das was guilt by association: he "was acquainted with" Arabindo Ghose, Professor of History and Political Science at National College, Calcutta, who was prosecuted for seditious journalism (and acquitted) in Calcutta in August 1907. He "knew" Surendranath Banerji, editor of *The Bengali* and a powerful voice in the 1905 agitation

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.; and vol. 199, file 332, Lord Hardinge to Viscount Morley, telegram, 17 Dec. 1908, copy.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., vol. 200, file 332, Hopkinson to J. B. Harkin, 4 Jan. 1909, copy.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., Hopkinson to Cory, 7 March 1910, copy.



against the partition of Bengal.<sup>25</sup> Part of the case lay in the content of *Free Hindustan*, which Taraknath Das published between 1908 and 1910, attacking British rule in India on every page and drawing attention to unfair treatment of Indians in British colonies overseas.<sup>26</sup>

The men that Hopkinson watched were constantly on the move. For the first two and a half years of his employment, Hopkinson was comparatively immobile. In November-December 1909 he toured the lower Fraser valley and the Kootenays; and subsequently he made occasional quick trips into the interior; but, for the most part, he was confined to Vancouver and Victoria. With this he was not satisfied. In February 1910 he identified Seattle as the headquarters of revolutionary activity. There Taraknath Das and his associates could operate without fear of arrest. "If enquiries should ever be directed and a strict watch be kept on their doings, there is no doubt whatever evidence would be forthcoming. . . ."<sup>27</sup>

After June 1911 Hopkinson's field of inquiry expanded. He was told by informants that Taraknath Das was trying to speed up his application for American citizenship. The application had been pending for some time. Now rumours circulated about a meeting of Indians in Seattle who had resolved to send Taraknath Das and Kumar back to India. There was a motive behind this, Hopkinson thought, and that was for Taraknath Das to return home with the protection of American citizenship to create a disturbance during the royal Durbar, the visit of the new King, George V, and Queen Mary, to India that December.<sup>28</sup> Lord Grey was alarmed and promptly telegraphed the Colonial Office. In the doldrums of summer, it took several weeks for this message to work its way through the Colonial Office and India Office bureaucracies, and by September the matter had become one of urgency and high priority. Hopkinson was asked for more information for use in a diplomatic approach to the Americans to get Das's application stopped. He replied that he could produce what was wanted only if he were allowed to make an investigative foray across the border to Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, Berkeley, and Stockton, cities in which there were concentrations of Indians and which Das regularly

<sup>25</sup> Report of Col. E. J. Swayne.

<sup>26</sup> Extracts from *Free Hindustan* can be found in James Campbell Ker, *Political Trouble in India*, confidential publication (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, 1917), reprint (Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1973), 119-22. Comments on *Free Hindustan* are given in Mackenzie King's *confidential memorandum of July 1908*, in Col. Swayne's report and in Hopkinson's report of 10 Feb. 1910. There is a copy of the first issue of *Free Hindustan* in PAC, RG 2/1, vol. 163.

<sup>27</sup> PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 200, file 332, Hopkinson, "Report Re Hindus," 10 Feb. 1910, copy.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 201, file 332, Hopkinson to Cory, 29 June 1911, copy.

visited. He had to do it himself, Hopkinson said, because there were practically no educated Indians on whom he could rely. Permission came immediately on the personal instructions of Lord Grey.<sup>29</sup> Go at once, Hopkinson was told; and he set off on a nineteen-day tour of the Pacific coast.

In Seattle he went straight to the U.S. immigration office and found the inspector who knew the most about the local Indian community. Similarly, in San Francisco, he started with the immigration office and with F. H. Ainsworth, the inspector who specialized in Indian immigrants. Ainsworth painted a dark picture of the activity of the Indian students on the Berkeley and Stanford campuses and expressed surprise that the British had paid no attention to it. From the immigration office, Hopkinson proceeded to the Asiatic Exclusion League and spent some time going through their clipping files. He also found an informant in Swami Trignatiti, teacher of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, minister of the Hindu Temple on Webster St., a disciple of Swami Vivekananda and affiliated with Vivekananda's Ramakrishna Mission in Calcutta. Taraknath Das had joined the Vedanta Society and briefly lived with Trignatiti; but the Swami did not like his activism and accused him of using the society to recruit a political following, not just among Indian students but also among some of the white women attracted to the study of Indian philosophy. There had been a falling out, and the Swami happily gave Hopkinson copies of publications and letters he had received from Das and his associates.

Late in his stay in San Francisco, Hopkinson called at the office of the British Consul General. He found the staff there unaware of the menace (as he saw it) under their noses. His reports were to change that. He believed that he had uncovered enough to show that Das was the chief agent infecting Indian students and labourers with revolutionary propaganda and that this should be sufficient to deny Das his application for citizenship. Berkeley, San Francisco, and Seattle were the focal points of the agitation that Das was leading. The Berkeley campus in particular (which enrolled scarcely three dozen Indian students) was for Hopkinson a hotbed of intrigue: the situation there was far more serious than he had anticipated. What was needed, he recommended, was the appointment to the consular staff of a man knowledgeable about activity in the Indian community both in Canada and in the U.S.<sup>30</sup> It was a not too subtle case

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., Cory to D. O. Malcolm, 25 Sept. 1911; Malcolm to Cory, 26 Sept. 1911, copy.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., Hopkinson to Cory, 13, 16 and 23 Oct. 1911, copies.

of writing up a job description to fit oneself; but for the moment nothing came of it.

In October 1911, while Hopkinson was in California, Lord Grey's term as Governor General ended, and that of His Royal Highness the Duke of Connaught began. Hopkinson's role was not affected; and the new Governor General acquired, in time, a high opinion of him and placed no small value on what he was doing. Nevertheless, in the months that followed, Hopkinson made noises about resigning from the Canadian immigration service. He was unhappy with his salary which, he argued, did not compensate him for the danger of his work. He had been paid \$100 a month from February 1909 until March 1912, when he received a \$25 increase. He wanted another \$25.<sup>31</sup> During the summer of 1911 he had acted as Immigration Agent in the absence of J. H. MacGill; but when MacGill, a Liberal, was dismissed a few months after the Conservative election victory of 1911, the position went to another political appointee, Malcolm Reid. In November 1912 Reid tried to get Hopkinson a further increase, convinced he would resign without it. What happened in the next two months pushed that thought far from Hopkinson's mind.

A year after his first visit to California, Hopkinson asked for and received permission for another trip across the border;<sup>32</sup> and it was while he was in Seattle and San Francisco in November 1912 and January 1913 that he was alerted to the presence of Lala Har Dayal, a still greater danger, in his mind, than Taraknath Das. Hopkinson had not heard of Har Dayal before. He came across the name when he went to Seattle in November 1912, but attached no special significance to it and first described Har Dayal as "apparently a wealthy Hindu" who had offered a \$500 scholarship for Indians studying at Berkeley.<sup>33</sup> (The information was inaccurate: the money for six scholarships had been pledged to Har Dayal by a Sikh farmer in the Stockton, California area, Jawal Singh). When Hopkinson reached San Francisco in January 1913 and presented his credentials to Andrew Carnegie Ross, the new British Consul-General, he was told a story of great consequence: Har Dayal was connected with

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 206, file 332, Joseph Pope to Governor General's Secretary, 5 Nov. 1914; RG 76, vol. 561, file 808722, Malcolm Reid to W. D. Scott, 5 Nov. 1912; Scott to Cory, 20 Feb. 1912. As of 5 Nov. 1912, in addition to his department salary of \$125, Hopkinson received a retainer of \$25 a month, for interpreting, from the U.S. Immigration in Vancouver; and he was paid \$4.00 a day when required by the police or the Provincial Court.

<sup>32</sup> PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 202, file 332, Hopkinson to Cory 17 Nov. 1912, copy.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, Hopkinson to Cory, 16 Nov. 1912, copy.

the bomb thrown at the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge, in New Delhi on December 23.<sup>34</sup> One source was a twenty-one-year-old student from Madras who had come to Berkeley five months previously with the promise of one of Har Dayal's scholarships. The money for the scholarship had not materialized, but he had stayed and was living in a house or hostel with Har Dayal and a number of Punjabi and Madrasi students. In that house he inevitably overheard many conversations. He said that Har Dayal was the secretary of a Radical Club whose members included Russian and Polish socialists. On the 23rd of December, when news was received in Berkeley of the bomb thrown at Lord Hardinge in Delhi, Dayal called up many members of the club and in each instance said "Have you heard the news? What one of my men have done in India to Lord Hardinge?" For Hopkinson this was a statement of complicity. On the 25th of December, Har Dayal celebrated the attempted assassination by giving a party for fifteen or twenty Indian students from Berkeley. This news burned the wires to Ottawa within forty-eight hours of Hopkinson's arrival in San Francisco. With a little digging he found out that Har Dayal was born in Delhi, had been a student at St. Stephen's College, Delhi, studied at Oxford, spent some time in France and had arrived in the U.S. about a year and a half before.

Har Dayal's biographer, Emily C. Brown, shows that, while he arrived in the U.S. a fervent nationalist, he was unfocused in goals or activities: a student of Buddhism at Harvard, a recluse in Hawaii, a lecturer in Indian Philosophy at Stanford — roles assumed and dropped in the brief time he had been in the country.<sup>35</sup> Once Hopkinson had discovered him, he came under close scrutiny. From Assistant Commissioner Edsall of the U.S. immigration service at Angel Island, San Francisco, Hopkinson obtained a letter of introduction to Clayton Herrington, special agent of the U.S. Department of Justice; and with Herrington's assistance he was able to place a watch on incoming and outgoing mail by paying \$3 a day to a confidential clerk in the Berkeley Post Office and a little less to a letter carrier. After he had recruited agents to take notes at Har Dayal lectures and to try to infiltrate his circle of friends, Hopkinson insisted on coming back to Ottawa to report in person. "When you hear what I have to say," he told the deputy minister, "you won't consider it a waste of time and money."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., vol. 203, file 332, Hopkinson to Cory, 11 Jan. 1913, copy.

<sup>35</sup> Emily C. Brown, *Har Dayal: Hindu Revolutionary and Rationalist* (Tucson, Arizona: The University of Arizona Press, 1975), 85-117.

<sup>36</sup> PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 203, file 332, Hopkinson to Cory, 15 Jan. 1913.

He was right. On 28 February he was dispatched by steamer from New York to London so that he could report personally to the India Office on Har Dayal's activities and more generally on the situation in the Indian colonies in North America. He had recommended that someone (himself) should be posted in San Francisco for six months of the year.<sup>37</sup> Ottawa was convinced and so was London. As a consequence, the India Office began paying him a stipend of £60 [\$300] plus £60 expenses in addition to his \$1,500 annual salary as an immigration inspector,<sup>38</sup> and he began reporting directly to an agent of the Indian government in London as well as to the Deputy Minister of the Interior in Ottawa. The Indian government agent was the Superintendent of Police in Bombay, J. A. Wallinger, who had been deputed to London for intelligence work; his correspondence with Hopkinson commenced in April 1913 when Hopkinson arrived back in Ottawa on his way home to Vancouver.<sup>39</sup>

So began a campaign to get Har Dayal deported from the United States. At the diplomatic level, the British Ambassador approached the State Department; and in June 1913 the U.S. immigration officials on the Pacific coast were instructed to go to any lectures that Har Dayal gave and to take notes. At a subterranean level, Hopkinson sought evidence to make a case for the U.S. immigration department. Diplomatic pressure secured the sanction of the U.S. Department of Justice for the assistance of special agent Herrington.<sup>40</sup> Hopkinson knew that he had to build a case that would stand up in an American immigration inquiry: that is, a case with more to it than allegations of nationalist, anti-British or anti-imperial activities; so he sought evidence of anarchist leanings, connections with the IWW (the Industrial Workers of the World) and with the anarchist lecturer Emma Goldman. He spent the winter of 1913-14 in the San Francisco area, bringing his wife and two children with him, and rented a furnished house in Oakland for \$45 a month (\$35 of which was paid by the Canadian government).<sup>41</sup> On 25 March 1914 U.S. immigration officers arrested Har Dayal at the conclusion of a Socialist meeting at Bohemian Hall in San Francisco, charging that he was an anarchist and therefore an illegal immigrant. The event was well covered in San Francisco newspapers; and, to American journalists, Har Dayal appeared quite

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, J. W. Holderness to Undersecretary of State, Colonial Office, 22 July 1913; Hopkinson to Cory, 11 Dec. 1914; vol. 204, file 332, Holderness to Undersecretary of State, Colonial Office, 21 Jan. 1914, copies.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 202, file 332, Cory to Governor General's Secretary, 23 April 1913.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. 203, file 332, Joseph Pope to Governor General's Secretary, 17 Nov. 1913.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, Hopkinson to Cory, 14 Nov. 1913, copy.

unruffled. "For many months," he was quoted as saying, "I have been spied upon by British secret service operatives, but have gone about my affairs openly and have not turned my statements or moderated my declarations because of their presence. My arrest was not a surprise; I had been expecting it for a long time."<sup>42</sup> He was not deported, but released on bail, because the American immigration officials discovered, to their embarrassment, that he had been in the country for three years and was safely landed. He argued, moreover, that, if he could be called an anarchist now, he was not one when he arrived: his ideas had developed since then. They had confused his records with those of another Indian, a labourer named Hur Dial; as a consequence they had kept his case pending for too long. One straw grasped at was the story given to Hopkinson by informants in Vancouver that Dayal had spent time in Honolulu and Suva (Fiji) since coming to the United States (and therefore did not have continuous residence); but it could not be authenticated.<sup>43</sup> In May Hopkinson went to Washington and discussed the Dayal case with the U.S. Commissioner-General of Immigration, Anthony Caminetti, who concluded that on the evidence available his department could not act.<sup>44</sup> Later that summer Caminetti received a letter from Har Dayal mailed from Geneva. He had decided to leave on his own.<sup>45</sup>

In hindsight, the effort to have him deported appears counterproductive. If anything, it gave Indian revolutionaries in North America greater purpose and determination. In the year and a half beginning with Hopkinson's discovery of Har Dayal and ending with Dayal's departure for Switzerland, the revolutionary movement on the Pacific Coast flowered. In May 1913 Har Dayal organized the Hindu Association of the Pacific Coast, of which the Ghadar party was an outgrowth; and in November 1913 the first issue of the Ghadar newspaper appeared. What distinguished the Ghadar movement from earlier organizations was its espousal of violence. No one in the India Office or in the Government of India was inclined to minimize what was going on. On 11 May 1914 C. R. Cleveland, the Director of Criminal Intelligence in Delhi, wrote: "I look on the rabid discontent of the Sikhs and other Punjabis on the Pacific Coast as one of the worst features of the present political situation in India."<sup>46</sup> Yet,

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., vol. 205, file 332, clipping from *Los Angeles California Times*, 29 Mar. 1914.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., Hopkinson to Cory, 4 April 1914; Samuel W. Backus to Hopkinson, 1 April 1914; Hopkinson to Cory, 7 April 1914, copies.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., vol. 204, file 332, Hopkinson to Cory, 3 May 1914, copy.

<sup>45</sup> Brown, 166.

<sup>46</sup> PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 205, file 332, Supplementary Note to Draft Circular, Criminal Intelligence Office, Simla, April 1914, copy.

ironically, the Ghadar phenomenon occurred subsequent to Hopkinson's first report on Har Dayal. The alarm had been sounded before the fire. Without this kind of attention, the Ghadar party could not have made the mark it did.

Cleveland considered sending agents to California to counter Ghadar propaganda among the Sikhs, and he discussed the matter with army authorities, the Punjab government, and the Home and Commerce and Industry Departments of the Government of India.<sup>47</sup> Hopkinson saw a reference to this in a secret Criminal Intelligence Office circular he received from Wallinger. He thought it a bad idea, called it a missionary undertaking, and said that it would not work and would be dangerous for those involved. Instead, he promoted a Canadian based secret intelligence organization in which, it went without saying, he would play a large part.<sup>48</sup> His sphere was increasing. He had suggested regular trips to New York to see U.S. immigration authorities there and check arrivals from Europe; and he had been authorized to go. Now he had two coasts to cover; and he was spending more money — \$1,100 for his winter in San Francisco and \$350 on one trip to New York. On 20 May 1914 the Governor General, the Duke of Connaught, urged a new arrangement. In a secret dispatch to Lewis Harcourt, the Colonial Secretary, he described Hopkinson as a valuable officer doing work "of very considerable importance."<sup>49</sup> Connaught identified two problems. First, he thought that too much rested on the shoulders of one person; and if anything ever happened to Hopkinson his intelligence system would collapse. Second, he observed that the government of Canada was paying most of the cost for investigations that were of imperial, rather than Canadian, concern. A lurking danger was the possibility that members of the House of Commons might discover Hopkinson's expenditures. If they made an issue of the matter, the publicity would jeopardize his work. The solution Connaught had in mind was to transfer Hopkinson permanently to the service of the Indian government and for that government to give him the means to set up a systematic intelligence organization.

Hopkinson spent a few days in Ottawa just before that dispatch was written; and one can presume that he had been putting his case to the Governor General.<sup>50</sup> For the next two months he had little opportunity to renew the campaign, although he occupied centre stage in a drama that

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> RG 7, G 21, vol. 205, file 332, Hopkinson to Wallinger, 27 June 1914, copy.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., vol. 204, file 332, Connaught to Harcourt, 20 May 1914, copy.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., Hopkinson to Wallinger, Ottawa, 14 May 1914, copy.

commanded the attention of all concerned with the relations between India and Canada. From 21 May until 23 July 1914 he was occupied with the *Komagata Maru*, the shipload of Punjabi immigrants who unsuccessfully sought entry at the port of Vancouver; and he served the Canadian and imperial governments well in doing what he could to avert a violent encounter between officials and immigrants which would have given Indian nationalists the *cause célèbre* they sought. Less than two weeks after the *Komagata Maru* was ushered out of Canadian waters, Hopkinson's presence assumed a new importance. On 4 August Britain declared war on Germany. On 11 August Hopkinson reported that revolutionaries on the Pacific coast were promoting a general return of Indian immigrants to take up arms against the British while they were at war in Europe.<sup>51</sup> It was a campaign organized without much secrecy. Hopkinson was first alerted by a story in a Portland, Oregon newspaper saying that half of the Indians employed at the Hammond Mills in Astoria had left by train or boat for San Francisco and that the other half were preparing to go to take part in the expected revolution. Within days, the India Office, the British Foreign Office, and the Canadian Department of the Interior had set up a reporting system with Hopkinson at the hub. Lists of departures from San Francisco were sent by the British Consul General there, Carnegie Ross, to the Canadian Governor General, so they could be scrutinized by Hopkinson and then telegraphed to India.<sup>52</sup> He was now in direct correspondence with Sir Charles Cleveland, Director General of Criminal Intelligence, Delhi.<sup>53</sup> His letters and telegrams identified a good many of the most active members of the Ghadar party who were subsequently arrested on arrival in India.

On 21 October 1914, Hopkinson was shot and killed by a Sikh, Mewa Singh. This was no ordinary murder, but a political act. The shooting occurred in a public place, the Vancouver Court House; the assailant made no attempt to escape and pleaded guilty at his trial. A shot in a dark alley would have been as deadly; but Mewa Singh sought martyrdom, and he was granted it twelve weeks later when he was executed by hanging. The police charged several other men with complicity in Hopkinson's murder, and then failed to obtain a conviction. If Mewa Singh did act on

<sup>51</sup> PAC, RG 76, vol. 388, file 536999, Hopkinson to Cory, 11 August 1914, copy.

<sup>52</sup> PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 205, file 332, Pope to Governor General's Secretary, 15 Aug. 1914; telegram, British Ambassador, Washington, to Governor General, 31 Aug. 1914.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., vol. 206, file 332, Hopkinson to Cleveland, 16 Oct. 1914, copy.



his own, he still understood the value of his deed for the community.<sup>54</sup> Hopkinson was his chosen target, not just for what he did, but for what he represented — the British regime in India. In the eyes of Sikhs and other Indians in Vancouver, he was the most appropriate target available. By shooting him, Mewa Singh sacrificed himself in a way calculated to affect the hearts and minds of his countrymen. His deed can be seen against the background of the Ghadar Party call to arms, as a moral lesson for Sikh emigrants who were being exhorted to return to India to fight the British. It was also one of a series of murders involving Hopkinson's informants and their enemies: an act of retribution following a shooting outrage in the Sikh gurdwara seven weeks earlier when one of Hopkinson's informants went berserk, killing two men and wounding seven others. It may as well have been an act of expiation, a supreme attempt by Mewa Singh to rehabilitate his reputation, after he had given information against three leading members of his community to avoid a long prison sentence for smuggling a revolver across the Canada-U.S. border earlier that year.<sup>55</sup>

The news that Hopkinson had been killed was relayed from the Canadian to the British and Indian governments. "Murder is the outcome of work done for India," the Secretary of State for India told the Viceroy by telegram on October 26.<sup>56</sup> Eventually, Hopkinson's widow received £500 (\$2,500 Canadian) from the Indian government, paid out of the Secret Service Fund so that it would not have to be disclosed. Initially, the Viceroy expressed reservations about making such a payment, especially after he had read a parcel of newspaper clippings from Canada. He could see that Hopkinson's relationship with the Indian government had not been hinted at, either in press speculation or in the evidence brought forward at Mewa Singh's trial. Canadian newspapers connected the assassination with Hopkinson's immigration work, particularly with the immigrant ship, the *Komagata Maru*. The theory was plausible, the Viceroy suggested. Also, he thought that it might be unwise for the Indian government to compensate the family of a Canadian immigration officer and leave itself open to the charge that it supported Canada's exclusion of Indian immigrants. He was inclined to be cautious even though the payment would be made out of a secret fund and not disclosed. The reply

<sup>54</sup> See Mewa Singh's address to the Khalsa Diwan Society of Stockton, California, printed in "Khalsa Shamchar" and translated for the immigration department by A. H. Burton: PAC, RG 7 G 21, vol. 206, file 332, copy.

<sup>55</sup> See Singh's statement at his trial: PAC, RG 13, vol. 1467, Rex vs. Mewa Singh, 30 Oct. 1914; and his statement of August 1914 concerning the purchase of revolvers: City Archives of Vancouver, H. H. Stevens Papers.

<sup>56</sup> India Office Library, Home Dept. Proceedings (Political A), Jan. 1915, No. 3.

from London did not equivocate: "India was . . . under obligation to Hopkinson."<sup>57</sup> With that the Viceroy quickly gave his assent: "We have already said that Hopkinson's family has every title to consideration."<sup>58</sup> The Canadian government, not as generous, offered Mrs. Hopkinson a stenographer's position in the Vancouver immigration office at \$1,000 a year — but no lump sum payment.<sup>59</sup>

The day following Hopkinson's murder, the Governor General asked what was being done to replace him. The reply from the Deputy Minister of the Interior, W. W. Cory, was that he assumed that the India Office would find an individual with similar qualifications and equal rank in the Indian service, although there had not yet been any correspondence on the subject: "Mr. Hopkinson was originally obtained by us from that service."<sup>60</sup> Cory was the deputy minister who appointed Hopkinson in 1909; and his words might be construed to mean that the Indian government sent Hopkinson to Canada. On 4 November the Secretary of State for India replied that there would be no replacement and that the Canadian immigration department should no longer be involved in surveillance of political activity among Indian emigrants, although he asked Canadian officials to pass on any information that came their way. The India Office had decided that an immigration officer was too visible a target to do the work that Hopkinson had done; and there were no objections from the Canadian immigration branch. They had come to the same conclusion. Yet Canadian officials still assumed that he would be replaced in some way.<sup>61</sup> Further queries from Ottawa produced the following messages from the Colonial Secretary, Lord Harcourt, to the Governor General:

(21 January, 1915) "... The Government of India are not prepared at present to initiate any new system for watching seditious Indian movements on the Pacific Coast. . . ." <sup>62</sup>

(10 April, 1915) "... Lord Crewe [Secretary of State for India] has requested that it be made clear that the Government of India do not contem-

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., Nos. 4 and 5, Viceroy to Secretary of State for India, telegram, 11 Dec. 1914, and Secretary of State to Viceroy, telegram, 26 Dec. 1914.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., no. 6.

<sup>59</sup> PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 207, file 332, Joseph Pope to Governor General's Secretary, 27 April 1915.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., vol. 206, file 332, Cory to A. F. Sladen, 23 Oct. 1914.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., Cory to Governor General's Secretary, 28 Dec. 1914, Cory to A. L. Jolliffe, 23 Feb. 1915, copy, and Connaught to Harcourt, 27 Feb. 1915, copy. PAC, RG 76, vol. 352, file 379496, Reid to Cory, 26 Nov. 1914.

<sup>62</sup> PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 206, file 332, Harcourt to Connaught.

plate the appointment, during the war, of any official agent on the Pacific coast. . . ."<sup>63</sup>

These messages ought not to be taken at face value. In February 1915 there had been an abortive rising in Punjab led by emigrants returned from North America and inspired by revolutionary activists based in San Francisco, Vancouver, and Victoria.<sup>64</sup> In the words of the Colonial Secretary, this event "confirmed the value of Hopkinson's work."<sup>65</sup> And it was not finished. The trials of those apprehended began on 26 April 1915; and the government of India were amassing every scrap of evidence they could. They wanted to know how many more Indian emigrants in North America intended to return and which of these were dangerous.<sup>66</sup> They also wanted to know what the Germans were up to. Late in 1914 the German consulate in San Francisco made contact with the Ghadar party by locating Taraknath Das.<sup>67</sup> By the summer of 1915 Canadian officials were aware that Germans were spending money in North America to foment revolution in India.<sup>68</sup> The India Office and the government of India were far from indifferent about surveillance in North America.

Between 1916 and 1918, the archives yield traces of the undercover agent that the India Office did have in place. His name was Robert Nathan. He was a retired, top-level civil servant with twenty-six years of experience in India. His appointments had included those of private secretary to the Viceroy and chief secretary to the government of East Bengal and Assam.<sup>69</sup> His channel in London was the same J. A. Wallinger with whom Hopkinson had communicated.<sup>70</sup> He had a budget for paid informants; and his messages to and from his informants and Wallinger

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., vol. 207, file 332.

<sup>64</sup> G. S. Deol, *The Role of the Ghadar Party in the National Movement* (Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1969), 108-48.

<sup>65</sup> PAC, RG 25, series G 1, vol. 1156, file 40, Harcourt to Connaught, telegram, 19 April 1915.

<sup>66</sup> Harcourt to Connaught, 10 April 1915.

<sup>67</sup> Karl Hoover, "The Hindu Conspiracy Case in California, 1913-1918," *German Studies Review*, May 1985, 252.

<sup>68</sup> For example: PAC, RG 6, E 1, vol. 571, file 251, Maj. R. O. Montgomery to Sir Richard McBride, 27 July 1915, copy.

<sup>69</sup> *The India Office List for 1917*.

<sup>70</sup> PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 207, file 332, paraphrases of cypher telegrams exchanged by Connaught and Harcourt containing messages between Nathan and Wallinger. The first in the file is dated 31 August 1916, but it mentions arrangements made in January. M. R. J. Reid's reference to "a mutual friend" in a letter to E. J. Chambers, 9 Jan. 1918, probably means Nathan. See PAC, RG 6, Series E, vol. 524, file 150-D.

were regularly relayed in code through the Governor General's Office. To Canadian officials who co-operated with him, he was "our mutual friend." "I do not like to mention his name," Chief Press Censor Ernest J. Chambers explained to Malcolm Reid, Nathan's official contact in Vancouver.<sup>71</sup> A year later, less cautiously, writing to the general manager of the North Western Telegraph Company, Chambers justified the interception of "Hindu" telegrams by citing the authority of "a very high official of the India Office who happens to be on the Coast at the present moment."<sup>72</sup> The assistance Nathan received in Canada was extensive. Beginning in 1916, telegraph companies were intercepting every telegraph message filed or received in Vancouver to or from any Indian in British Columbia or elsewhere. They were also intercepting Chinese telegrams.<sup>73</sup> Copies were passed on to Nathan as well as the Chief Press Censor and the Dominion Police Commissioner. Most of these messages appeared to be of no interest whatsoever. They chiefly concerned labour recruitment or job opportunities: "Let me know if you get job. What wages. I am alone," or "Come to Wardner quick. Have job for you and Jagat Singh," or "Yourself and Dhampol come quick. Mill starts Monday."<sup>74</sup> When the Dominion Police Commissioner suggested that these messages were not worth collecting, he was told that Nathan found them valuable; and the practice continued until December 1919 — more than a year after the war ended.<sup>75</sup> It would have carried on longer if the wartime censorship system had remained in force.

Nathan was in close contact with Malcolm R. J. Reid, former Immigration Agent at Vancouver, who had been removed from that position in January 1915 and reappointed as Dominion Immigration Inspector for British Columbia.<sup>76</sup> The move had the appearance of a demotion, and

<sup>71</sup> RG 6, Series E, vol. 524, file 150-D, Chambers to Reid, 8 Aug. 1916, Copy; Reid to Chambers, 22 Aug. 1916.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., Chambers to Geo. D. Perry, 6 Nov. 1917, copy.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., Chambers to Perry, 19 Jan. 1916, copy.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., Reid to A. P. Sherwood, 18 April 1916, copy.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., Chambers to Reid, 8 Aug. 1916, copy; Reid to Chambers, 22 Aug. 1916, copy; Chambers to John McMillan, 29 Dec. 1919, copy.

<sup>76</sup> Reid was replaced by A. L. Jolliffe on 31 Dec. 1914, although he continued to sign correspondence as Immigration Agent until 17 January 1914. His removal was recommended 3 Dec. 1914. See W. D. Scott and E. B. Robertson to Dr. W. J. Roche: PAC, 76, vol. 561, file 808722. Reid's salary had been \$2,400 since September 1912 and he was kept at the same salary after his reappointment as an inspector. His successor, A. L. Jolliffe, was raised to \$2,000 from the \$1,200 he had been earning as an inspector; in 1919-20, Jolliffe received \$3,000 while Reid remained at \$2,400 and by 1923-24 Jolliffe was earning \$3,600 to Reid's \$2,520: Auditor General's reports in *Sessional Papers, Canada*, 1915-25.

Reid later complained that the man who recommended it, E. Blake Robertson, Assistant Superintendent of Immigration, was against him because "I had sat tight on the Oriental Question."<sup>77</sup> Still, Reid found a new function by picking up the bits and pieces of investigative work that Hopkinson's death left unattended. He had been involved in this work in the past when Hopkinson (his subordinate) had been absent from Vancouver; and he had pursued it with great relish. In 1911 Hopkinson had obtained, through the Deputy Minister of the Interior, a badge and a commission as a constable in the Dominion Police force (a small, unarmed federal force which depended heavily on other agencies in carrying out its intelligence gathering and other specialized responsibilities); Reid had angled for an appointment for himself as well because he found an allure in Hopkinson's secretive world.<sup>78</sup>

His role now developed despite instructions that, in light of what had happened, immigration officers should stick strictly to immigration work. The opportunity came because Vancouver immigration officers were also told to pass on any information that came their way. This they did, sending three copies of each item: one for the Department, one for the Governor General, and one for London. As a legacy from Hopkinson, they were receiving prohibited Indian newspapers that had been intercepted by the Post Office and reports from Andrew Carnegie Ross, the British Consul General in San Francisco. In August 1914 Ross had been instructed to send passenger lists to Vancouver for Hopkinson's scrutiny, and he continued to send Indian material through the Vancouver immigration office (rather than through the British Embassy in Washington).<sup>79</sup> Similarly, Hopkinson's Indian informants still turned up at the door of the immigration building.<sup>80</sup> In these ways the surveillance activity continued, and Reid took it over. His position did not come under the supervision of the new Immigration Agent, A. F. Jolliffe, but he worked in the same building in a small second floor office at the head of the back stairs. The location suited him — although he complained it was cramped — because the back stairs allowed inconspicuous entry for his clientele.<sup>81</sup> By 1916 he was

<sup>77</sup> Vancouver City Archives, Stevens Papers, Reid to H. H. Stevens, 29 Feb. 1916.

<sup>78</sup> PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 204, file 332, vol. 10 (B), Reid to Cory, 30 Dec. 1913.

<sup>79</sup> PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 205, file 332, paraphrase of cypher telegram, Sir Cecil Spring Rice to Connaught, 31 Aug. 1914; see also correspondence in vol. 206 (1915).

<sup>80</sup> PAC, RG 76, vol. 385, file 536999, Reid to Scott, 10 Aug. 1915, with copy of letter from Baboo and Bela Singh to Reid, 20 July 1915; RG 7, G 21, vol. 207, file 332, Sir Joseph Pope to Governor General's Secretary, 27 May 1916, enclosures.

<sup>81</sup> PAC, RG 76, vol. 352, file 379496, Reid to Scott, 6 June 1916.

acting as Pacific coast agent for the Dominion Commissioner of Police and the press censorship service as well as liaison with Nathan;<sup>82</sup> and the watch he maintained on Indians and Chinese — which took him up and down the coast from British Columbia to the Mexican border — was extended to include radical labour unions. In this way, Reid became the key intelligence figure in British Columbia with a somewhat haphazard operation run out of his immigration office and his home. In 1918 the Royal Canadian North West Mounted Police took over security work in western Canada from the Dominion Police. The Mounties refused to employ Reid, despite the lobbying of his political patron, Vancouver MP H. H. Stevens. They wanted Reid's files, but they did not want him.<sup>83</sup> As an immigration officer, Reid seems to have continued his work with British Intelligence until his death in May 1936. His surveillance operation became formalized as the Vancouver Special Agency of the Immigration Department. In 1923-24 it had a budget of \$7,927.28, which paid Reid's salary and expenses plus the salaries of two stenographers, a full-time Chinese interpreter, and a part time "Hindu."<sup>84</sup>

The main chapter in this story of surveillance ended in 1918. By August 1915 most of the Ghadar leaders were in jail in India or in Burma, and hundreds of emigrants who had returned from North America and the Far East were confined to their villages. German efforts to supply shiploads of arms and ammunition had been bungled. The Ghadar episode was over. What remained was a series of conspiracy trials in Lahore, Mandalay, San Francisco, and Chicago between 1915 and 1918. There had been little organization or co-ordination among the cells of the Ghadar party in North America and the Far East. The return of Ghadar sympathizers to India had been rash and ill concealed; and most of the Ghadar leaders had been arrested on arrival in India. In spite of this, Sir Michael O'Dwyer called the Ghadar conspiracy the most menacing threat to security he faced as Lieutenant Governor of Punjab.<sup>85</sup> He and

<sup>82</sup> PAC, RG 7, G 21, vol. 207, file 332, Chambers to Sir Joseph Pope, 20 Feb. 1916, copy. Between 1 May 1916 and 30 April 1918 Reid employed a Hindustani interpreter, A. H. Burton, apparently in connection with his work with Nathan. As Reid explained in a letter to the deputy minister, Burton was not employed by the Immigration department. His salary was paid out of a special appropriation by "those friends interested in Hindu work." Reid was careful not to mention Nathan's name; and "those friends" looks like a reference to Nathan or to his superiors. See PAC, RG 76, vol. 388, file 536999, Reid to Cory, 4 Aug. 1919.

<sup>83</sup> S. W. Horrall, "The Royal North-West Mounted Police and Labour Unrest in Western Canada, 1919," *Canadian Historical Review*, LXI, 2 (1980): 177.

<sup>84</sup> *Sessional Papers, Canada*, 1925, no. 2, H, 28.

<sup>85</sup> Sir Michael O'Dwyer, *India as I Knew It, 1885-1925* (London: Constable and Co., 1925), 190.

his officials reacted accordingly. In the 1915 trial in Lahore the tribunal sentenced 24 men to death although only six had been convicted of capital offences. The Viceroy did not want "a holocaust of victims" and commuted the sentences of 18; but he was conscious that his clemency was unpopular among Anglo-Indians.<sup>86</sup> Altogether, 173 men were tried in Lahore and Mandalay in connection with the Ghadar conspiracy: 23 were hanged and 88 received life sentences.

The cases of two of the hanged men, Balwant Singh, former priest in the Vancouver Sikh temple, and Harnam Singh, who owned a grocery store in Victoria, show how North American evidence was used in these trials. Harnam Singh was deported from San Francisco in September 1914 and subsequently arrested in Burma. The principal evidence against him had been uncovered by Hopkinson during the investigation of two Sikhs in Victoria who were caught with explosives. The evidence consisted of letters about the manufacture of bombs as well as items such as a measuring glass and ten inches of fuse seized by Hopkinson during a search of Harnam Singh's store and house.<sup>87</sup> The Indian government wanted a witness who could identify the letters in court. Hopkinson was dead; but his report mentioned Victoria detective Ezra Carlow. At the request of the Indian government arrangements were made to send Carlow to Burma.<sup>88</sup> There had been no prosecution in Canada; but the evidence was enough to hang Harnam Singh in Rangoon. In the other case, Balwant Singh left Canada in December 1914. The Siamese police arrested him in Bangkok in August 1915 and deported him to Singapore. From Singapore he was removed to Alipore jail in Calcutta and finally brought to Punjab in July 1916. He was charged with "waging war" or "abetting" or "attempting to wage war" in Moji, Yokohama, Victoria, Vancouver, Sumas, San Francisco, Honolulu, and Bangkok. The main witnesses against him were informants who had helped Hopkinson and Reid in Vancouver, and who had since returned to India, particularly Bela Singh and Dr. Ragunath Singh. What hanged Balwant Singh was their testimony that he had given seditious speeches to Sikh audiences in

<sup>86</sup> Charles (Lord) Hardinge, *My Indian Years, 1910-1916* (London: John Murray, 1948), 130.

<sup>87</sup> PAC, RG 76, vol. 388, file 536999, Hopkinson to Cory, 17 Sept. 1914.

<sup>88</sup> RG 7, G 21, vol. 207, file 332, Pope to Governor General's Secretary, 22 Feb. 1916; paraphrase of cypher telegram, Colonial Secretary (Andrew Bonar Law) to Governor General, 26 Feb. 1916; paraphrase of cypher telegram, Home Department, Delhi to Governor General, 12 March 1916; Reid to Scott, 6 March 1916, copy; Cory to E. A. Stanton, 14 March 1916.

Japan, British Columbia, and California.<sup>89</sup> Again, what did not warrant prosecution in Canada became a capital offence in the judgement of a tribunal in India.

After the U.S. entered the war in April 1917, the American government responded to British pressure by launching proceedings against those involved in the German-Ghadar plot.<sup>90</sup> They included Franz Bopp, the German Consul General in San Francisco, a number of Germans and Americans, and seventeen Ghadar Party leaders. Nathan's sleuthing had contributed to the arrest in March 1917 of Chandra Kanta Chakravarty, the leader of the Ghadar party in the U.S. since December 1915.<sup>91</sup> Chakravarty talked, and that led to further indictments. In June the British government brought seven prisoners from India to Canada as witnesses for trials in San Francisco and Chicago. These men came under Indian police escort. They were met by Malcolm Reid, placed in the custody of the immigration department, and escorted by rail from Vancouver to Regina, where they were held until the trials. In Regina the prisoners could be isolated from other Indians but made available to American prosecutors. Thirty-five defendants stood trial in San Francisco for five months from November 1917. Four were tried in Chicago. At San Francisco, much of the evidence concerned activities from 1912-13 and earlier which Hopkinson's reports had brought to light. All seventeen Indians were convicted. One of the longest sentences — twenty-two months — went to one of Hopkinson's original discoveries, Taraknath Das, who had returned voluntarily from Japan to face charges.<sup>92</sup> A name that figured large in all the evidence was that of Har Dayal, who was relaxing at the expense of the German government at the best of German spas, far from the reach of American or British justice.<sup>93</sup>

The surveillance undertaken by Hopkinson and carried on by Reid was obtrusive; and it profoundly affected the expatriate Indian community on the Pacific coast. Early on, members of this community realized that, as a result of their activities here, police were making inquiries of their families

<sup>89</sup> National Archives of India, Lahore Conspiracy Case III (Second Supplementary Case, Judgement dated 4 Jan. 1917), accused no. 3, pp. 56-67.

<sup>90</sup> Hoover, "The Hindu Conspiracy Case," 245-61; Kalyan Kumar Banerji, "The U.S.A. and Indian Revolutionary Activity: Early Phase of the Gadar Movement," *Modern Review* (Feb. 1965): 99-100. Giles T. Brown, "The Hindu Conspiracy, 1914-17," *Pacific Historical Quarterly* (Aug. 1948): 307-08. Don K. Dignan, "The Hindu Conspiracy in Anglo-American Relations During World War I," *Pacific Historical Review* (Feb. 1971): 57-76.

<sup>91</sup> PAC RG 7, G 21, vol. 207, file 332, vol. 15 (a).

<sup>92</sup> Goodman, "Japanese Sources," 92-96.

<sup>93</sup> Brown, 214.



at home. They knew that Hopkinson, as long as he lived, was responsible. He was highly visible, a personal manifestation of British oppression and a focus for anti-British feeling. Through his own activities and those of his informants he helped to politicize and factionalize the local Sikh community. His assassination and a series of associated murders and shootings were a result. There is no doubt that the more he searched the more serious, from his perspective, the situation became. When his reports reached the government of India, that government was quick to believe the worst. Men like Har Dayal did seek the overthrow of the British regime and did applaud acts of terrorism. Their first challenge, however, was to raise the political consciousness of peasants who had emigrated in search of work. In drawing attention to Har Dayal and others, Hopkinson became as much an author as an investigator of the agitation on the Pacific coast.