

THE *KOMAGATA MARU* AND THE GHADR PARTY:

Past and Present Aspects of a Historic Challenge to Canada's Exclusion of Immigrants from India

HUGH J.M. JOHNSTON

THE EARLY HISTORY OF SOUTH ASIANS in British Columbia and Canada features two dramatic stories of lasting meaning, even though it is centred on what was an exceedingly small and marginalized immigrant community. The first concerns the Punjabi passengers of the immigrant ship the *Komagata Maru* who made a valiant but futile bid for legal admission to Canada in the summer of 1914 (Figure 1).¹ The second concerns the revolutionary Ghadr (Mutiny) Party, formed by South Asians in San Francisco in 1913, which attempted and desperately failed to instigate an Indian Army-led rebellion against British rule during the First World War.² This was a party with active support from the pioneer population of Punjabi Sikhs and other South Asians living, working, and studying in

¹ Since the mid-1970s, the *Komagata Maru* has been the subject of several authored and edited books, each with merits and limitations: I.M. Muthanna, *People of India in North America (Part First)* (Bangalore: Lutus Printers, 1975); Sohan Singh Josh, *Tragedy of Komagata Maru* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1975); Ted Ferguson, *Whiteman's Country: An Exercise in Canadian Prejudice* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1975); Hugh Johnston, *The Voyage of the Komagata Maru: The Sikh Challenge to Canada's Colour Bar* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979); Kesar Singh, *Canadian Sikhs and the Komagata Maru Massacre* (Surrey: Self-published, 1989); Malvinderjit Singh Wariach and Gurdev Singh Sidhu, *Komagata Maru: A Struggle against Colonialism – Key Documents* (Chandigarh: Unistar Publishers, 2005); Ali Kazimi, *Undesirables: White Canada and the Komagata Maru: An Illustrated History* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 2011).

² Ghadr scholarship substantially begins with Chapter 12 of Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs, vol. 2, 1839–1964* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), and this remains a valuable and succinct reference. Among the titles that have followed, Harish K. Puri, *Ghadar Movement: Ideology, Organization, Strategy*, 2nd ed. (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University, 1993) is notably well researched, balanced, and thoughtful. Puri's focus is on the essential Ghadr story – that of South Asians in North America in the pre-war and First World War era. A more recent study expands the story by identifying linkages forward, backward, and laterally that place the Ghadr Party within a historic revolutionary context. See Maia Ramnath, *Haj to Utopia: How the Ghadar Movement Charted Global Radicalism and Attempted to Overthrow the British Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).



Figure 1. The Canadian warship, *Rainbow*, forward to the right, with the *Komagata Maru* behind to the left, and spectators in an array of small craft on the eve of the emigrant ship's departure from Vancouver. *Source:* Image 6229, Vancouver Public Library.

California, Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. The *Komagata Maru* and the Ghadr Party are interconnected and illustrate major aspects of the early twentieth-century history that links India and Canada: the struggle for Indian independence, in which the North America-based Ghadr Party played a heroic though ill-planned and ill-timed role, and the campaign among Sikhs in Canada for full citizenship and for an end to Canadian regulations barring immigration from India. These regulations had been in force since 1908 and had buttressed the idea of Canada as a “white man’s country.”³

³ The claim that the Pacific Coast was “white man’s country” was then common in the press and in political dialogue on both sides of the Canadian-American border. For example, see Joan Jenson, *Passage from India: Asian Indian Immigrants in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 3–56. For consideration of the relationship between racial and economic issues in British Columbia, see the preface to Patricia E. Roy, *A White Man’s Province: Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858–1914* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1989). Roy offers a modification of the emphasis on race as a determinant of white settler behaviour, as found in Robert A. Huttenback, *Racism and Empire: White Settlers and Colored Immigrants in British Self-Governing Colonies, 1830–1910* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1976). But the discussion has not ended. A recent study of white settler, Chinese, and First Nations relations in colonial British Columbia puts race at the centre. See Marissa Mawani, *Colonial Proximities: Crossroads Encounters and Judicial Truths in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2009).

In these stories we have a reflection of the state of the British Empire in the early twentieth century, when it appeared to be at its greatest but when its days were actually numbered.⁴ The first problem for the Empire was a great contradiction in its early twentieth-century make-up – its expectation of loyalty from subjects of many races and nationalities and its philosophical and organizational inability to treat them equally. The second was the ad hoc nature of the Empire: its historic development as a collection of protectorates, dependences, and self-governing colonies with wildly differing legal regimes and no constitution or Empire-wide guarantee of common citizenship rights and no single system of law.⁵ A further problem was the continuing argument between imperialists and anti-imperialists in Britain, an argument that would turn progressively in favour of the latter after 1900 as the union movement and the Labour Party gained a greater voice in Parliament. This was a British argument that educated Indians could witness and even join, and the anti-imperial side of it was abundantly familiar to South Asians who had settled abroad in British Columbia and elsewhere. Moreover, these emigrant communities were political hothouses in which national political aspirations moved far ahead of those held by the public in India.⁶

The leaders of the South Asian community in British Columbia encouraged the *Komagata Maru* and its passengers to test Canada's immigration regulations, and they also spoke, petitioned, and organized against the subordination, or the second-class citizenship, of Indians in their own country. These leaders were all eventually vindicated in that what they aimed for came to be – but not before Indian Independence in 1947. The freedoms and equality that they sought were eventually achieved. At the time, however, neither their demand for the right to live as full

⁴ The legislative independence of Canada and the other white dominions as well as the rising nationalism of the peoples of India, Ireland, and Egypt were powerful signs of the coming end of the British Empire, as described in the following works of the last twenty years: Lawrence James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (London: Little, Brown and Company, 1994); Denis Judd, *Empire: The British Imperial Experience from 1765 to the Present* (London: Fontana Press, 1997); Piers Brendon, *The Decline and Fall of the British Empire, 1781-1997* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007); Peter Clarke, *The Last Thousand Days of the British Empire* (London: Penguin, 2007); John Darwin, *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World System, 1830-1970* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁵ For a description of the immense variety of the systems of civil and criminal law in force within the British Empire, see T. Olawale Elias, *British Colonial Law: A Comparative Study of the Interaction of English and Locals Laws in British Dependencies* (London: Stevens and Sons, 1962). James (Jan) Morris puts it succinctly on page 177 of *Pax Britannica: The Climax of Empire* (London: Faber and Faber, 1968): "Legally there was no such thing as the British Empire. It had no constitutional meaning."

⁶ Hugh Johnston, "Faith and Politics among Sikh Pioneers in Canada," *International Journal of Punjab Studies* 9, 1 (2002): 91-112.

citizens in a British country (Canada) nor their demand that British domination should end in India was accepted, understood, or entertained by a majority of Canadians.

Reports by Canadian officials that the anti-British, revolutionary Ghadr Party was involved with the *Komagata Maru* had a strongly negative impact on Canadian public opinion, which was already unsympathetic to the passengers. The story of Ghadr involvement had a basis in fact and has continued to complicate any telling of the early South Asian experience in Canada. It was true that there were personal links between the Ghadr Party leadership and the organizers of the *Komagata Maru*; Ghadr literature did find its way onto the ship; and some men who had been on board did later become active Ghadrites. But the primary objective of the *Komagata Maru* was to open Canada for South Asian immigrants.

We should understand this as a developing history, shaped by a dynamic context, and with many individual and complex pathways for the people involved. The lives of some of the passengers are well documented and allow us to get a sense of the variations within their collective experience. For example, Gurmukh Singh Lalton was a young passenger on the *Komagata Maru* who became active in the Ghadr Party after his unhappy return to India and who was imprisoned for seven years by the British in India before escaping to the Soviet Union (Figure 2). With Moscow as his base he travelled in and out of Afghanistan and the United States for the Ghadr Party until 1934, when he was arrested in India during a surreptitious visit to Punjab, leading to his further imprisonment, which lasted until India's independence in 1947. He was a graduate of the English medium high school in the Punjab city of Ludhiana and had no record of political activity before he attempted to come to Canada. Like many Punjabi Sikh men of his age he tried to enter the British India Army; however, for medical reasons, he failed to get in. With ambitions to emigrate, he came to Hong Kong in 1913 shortly before the *Komagata Maru's* trip had been organized. Following his six months on that ship he was a confirmed revolutionary: it was what happened in the Port of Vancouver that made him so.⁷

⁷ Harban Singh ed., *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, 4th ed. (Patiala: Panjabi University, 2002); *The Ghadr Directory*, 1934, comp. director, Intelligence Bureau, Home Department, Government of India (Patiala: Punjabi University, 1997); *Struggle for Free Hindustan: Ghadr Directory*, Punjab section, 1915 (New Delhi: Gobind Sadan Institute for Advanced Studies in Comparative Religion, 1996).



Figure 2. A view of the Komagata Maru memorial, unveiled in 2012 at Vancouver's Coal Harbour. From left to right in the display photograph are Gurdit Singh, the charterer, Balwant Singh his son, Daljit Singh, the secretary, Puran Singh, the stores keeper, and half out of the frame, Gurmukh Singh Lalton. Photograph by H.J.M. Johnston.

Gurmukh Singh Lalton's example contributed to the revolutionary reputation of the returned passengers of the *Komagata Maru*. But he was not typical: in fact, he took a more extreme path than most of the others, including his schoolmate from Ludhiana, Puran Singh Janetpura. Puran Singh was a leader on the *Komagata Maru*, acting as stores keeper throughout the voyage. He was deeply affected by the bitter experience of his attempt to go to Canada, but he never aligned himself with the Ghadr Party or the militant revolutionary approach to social change.⁸ He represented many of his fellow passengers. Although they demonstrated great solidarity right up to the catastrophic end of their voyage at Budge Budge, near Kolkata (Calcutta), where most of them refused to obey police orders to board a train for Punjab and twenty were killed in an exchange of fire with police and troops. In the aftermath, the passengers made their own individual choices and developed their independent perspectives. That could mean becoming an active revolu-

⁸ My interviews with Puran Singh's grandsons, Raj Singh and Jas Singh Toor, November 2011; Government of India, *Report of the Komagata Maru Committee of Inquiry* (Calcutta: Government of India, 1914); Singh, *Canadian Sikhs*.

tionary like Gurmukh Singh, seeking Indian independence by peaceful means, or even adopting a passive, uninvolved role. Whatever action these people subsequently took once they had been turned back from Canada, one would think that their deeper sympathies must have been with the revolutionary cause.

Kartar Singh Mehli was a rank-and-file passenger on the *Komagata Maru* who never faced imprisonment, although, like most of his fellow passengers, he was confined to his village after he got back to Punjab. I interviewed him twice, thirty-six years ago, in Vancouver, when he was ninety-two. At that time he was staying in the home of affectionate Canadian Sikh relatives. He spoke Punjabi during the interviews and a family member translated. He remembered the events of 1914 with great clarity. He had been thirty years of age and had retired from the army when he left his village in November 1913. After waiting in Kolkata for other Punjabi villagers with whom to travel, he passed through Hong Kong in January 1914 on his way to North America without knowing anything about the *Komagata Maru*. His first attempt to land in North America, at Tacoma, Washington, failed when his medical exam produced negative results. He arrived back in Hong Kong in April 1914, and it was then that he learned about the *Komagata Maru*, which had already left Hong Kong's harbour. With a group of fourteen he caught up to it at Yokohama, and he was with the ship until the fateful end of its voyage at Budge Budge. He was one of the ordinary passengers: never close to the leaders, never seeking attention for himself, but quietly keeping his own council. While in Punjab, he read in the local papers of high wheat yields in the United States, and this instilled in him a desire to farm in North America.⁹ That was the ambition that made him so determined to get to Canada or the United States; and it seems that the initial ambition of most of the men on the ship was to eventually acquire land, even if it almost certainly meant starting as labourers.

For most of these men, it was both incidental and unexpected that the ship turned into a classroom on religion and politics. But that is what happened. Gurdit Singh Sarhali, the man who chartered the *Komagata Maru* and the undisputed leader on board, was an actively religious man who had a gurdwara (Sikh temple) installed in the forecastle of the spar deck. This temple had a finely carved platform and a canopy for the Sikh Holy Book, and the quality of its furnishings was comparable to what would be found in a well-maintained gurdwara in an established Sikh community. Having a granthi (Sikh priest) on board – someone

⁹ My interviews with Kartar Singh in Vancouver, 25 September 1976 and 22 June 1977.

to lead worship in the gurdwara – was as essential for Gurdit Singh as was having a doctor, and so he hired Sant Nabh Kanawal Singh from Nabha. During the voyage, the chanting of sacred verses (kirtan) from the Sikh Holy Book was a daily practice for the passengers – something that contributed to their mental and emotional stability as well as to their cohesiveness throughout their long ordeal. The gurdwara space was also a place for political meetings and lectures.

The gurdwara on the *Komagata Maru* was the speaking venue for three Ghadr Party sympathizers from very different backgrounds: Balwant Singh Khurdpur, a Sikh priest from Vancouver; Professor Maulana Barkatullah, an Islamic and pan-Indian nationalist; and Bhagwan Singh Jakh, a fiery Sikh and pan-Indian nationalist. Together they represented the pan-Indian (rather than exclusively Sikh) nature of the Ghadr movement. All three came on board to address the passengers when the ship was in port in Japan on its outward voyage. Balwant Singh Khurdpur – later tried and hanged by the British in India for sedition and since remembered patriotically by Sikhs in Canada and in Punjab as a Ghadr martyr – had arrived at Moji at the same time as the *Komagata Maru*, and it was then that he came on board. He was a returning immigrant, and one of special standing in Canada. He was on his way back to Vancouver from India after an absence of over a year, during which time he had functioned as a delegate for Canadian Sikhs. By the time of his departure from Moji he was known (unfavourably) at the highest levels of government in Britain and India. He had met with the undersecretary for the Colonial Office in London, with the governor of Punjab, and with the viceroy of India to protest Canada's immigration regulations. These powerful officials did not like either his manner or his message.

The other two activists, Barkatullah and Bhagwan Singh Jakh, visited the ship after it reached Yokohama. Barkatullah – soon to become a leading Ghadr activist in San Francisco – was a Muslim from Bhopal, had recently been dismissed from Tokyo University, and was the former editor of an anti-British paper known as the *Islamic Fraternity*, which, in response to British pressure, the Japanese government had shut down. Bhagwan Singh Jakh was Barkatullah's long-time guest, staying with him from the moment he arrived in Japan after he had been thrown out of Canada for anti-British political activity. They were already corresponding with Ghadr leaders in California, and, when the *Komagata Maru* reached Yokohama, they brought on board copies of Ghadr Party

publications to distribute among the passengers.¹⁰ Their brief appearance on the *Komagata Maru* needs no more explanation than that the ship was in Yokohama and that they happened to be living there. It was an easy matter to go down to the harbour to see the passengers, and, indeed, it would have been surprising if they had not.

British officials in India, when they reconstructed what happened on the outgoing voyage, including the visits by Balwant Singh, Barkatullah, and Bhagwan Singh, had little doubt that the Ghadr Party was involved with the *Komagata Maru* and that its main objective was to engineer a confrontation in Canada that would enflame public opinion in India.¹¹ They saw the purpose of the voyage as purely political. When the police in India later questioned the passengers, they wanted to know what went on during shipboard meetings and, specifically, what people like Balwant Singh Khurdpur had said as well as what the leaders among the passengers had said. The police were building a circumstantial case, but they did not have evidence of an articulate Ghadr plan involving the *Komagata Maru*; rather, what they had was a picture of a charged political atmosphere on the ship and an evolution in the way passengers saw their situation – an evolution that led some (but not most) of them to become militants.

On the *Komagata Maru*, Gurdit Singh had two secretaries, Daljit Singh and Bir Singh, young men in their early twenties both of whom came from the same part of Punjab (villages near Muktsar). They were students who were travelling together on their way to study in the United States when they stopped in Hong Kong and got involved with the *Komagata Maru*. Their presence in Hong Kong at that time was happenchance; but, once they became politically involved, they played leading roles, and Bir Singh in particular was prominent on the ship as a speaker and activist. They became confirmed Ghadrites while on the *Komagata Maru*, and when they returned to Asia, Bir Singh disembarked in Japan and took another ship to Shanghai with the intention of collecting Sikhs in Southeast Asia and returning with them to India for the Ghadr uprising. Daljit Singh stayed on the *Komagata Maru* all the way back to India and escaped arrest in the altercation with police and troops when the passengers disembarked at Budge Budge near Kolkata. In the aftermath of

¹⁰ Jaswant Singh, *Baba Gurdit Singh: Komagatamaru* (Jalandhar: New Book Co., 1965), 61; National Archives of India, Lahore Conspiracy Case 3 (Second Supplementary Case, judgment dated 4 January 1917).

¹¹ In her summary of the matter, Maia Ramnath suggests that it was the *Komagata Maru* that inspired the Ghadr Party. See Ramanth, *Haj to Utopia*, 47-49.

that tragic event, Daljit Singh found his way back to Punjab and, while working for the Ghadr Party, successfully evaded the police.¹²

In their investigation of the *Komagata Maru* episode, British imperial authorities noted – with alarm – the distribution of Ghadr publications on the ship; the appearances on the ship (in Japan) of Balwant Singh Khurdpur, Bhagwan Singh Jakh, and Barkatullah; and the reports by a few passengers of anti-British lectures during the passage to Vancouver. To imperial authorities this had all the markings of an anti-government conspiracy. But the evidence they had did not amount to proof – not even in a British Indian court. And the Lahore tribunal that sentenced Balwant Singh Khurdpur and other Ghadrites in 1917 stopped short of saying that the evidence against them constituted proof. In Balwant Singh's case, the court admitted that he was within his rights when, at public meetings in Punjab as well as on the *Komagata Maru*, he spoke of the grievances of Canadian Sikhs or agitated to have Canadian immigration restrictions removed. The members of the tribunal imagined that his language had been inflammatory and that it had strained the limits of what they considered acceptable protest, but they could not declare with certainty that what he had done up to the time he visited the *Komagata Maru* had been seditious. Instead, they judged him by what he did later. From this perspective, they saw him going from legitimate protest to intemperate language to seditious action, all within ten months during 1913 and 1914 – the time frame of the *Komagata Maru* incident.

This time frame included the outbreak of the First World War in Europe in late July 1914, and that world-shaking event dramatically and disastrously impelled the Ghadr Party leadership to move its timetable from an indeterminate future to an immediate present. To understand what the passengers and their friends and supporters planned and intended, we have to follow events as they unfolded. The founding of the Ghadr Party and the planning of the voyage of the *Komagata Maru* took place nearly simultaneously and against a background of unpredictable and changing circumstances. When the founding members of the Ghadr Party began organizing in Oregon and California in the summer and fall of 1913, they were preparing for an armed struggle for India's freedom – a struggle that they believed was still some distance away. In the beginning, their main propagandist was the Punjabi Hindu scholar and activist Har Dyal, who had arrived in the United States in 1911, had launched the *Ghadr* newspaper (he was its first editor), and had provided the intellectual foundation of Ghadr Party propaganda. At times, he

¹² *Struggle for Free Hindustan*; Singh, *Baba Gurdit Singh*, 58.

said that as much as a decade could elapse before the armed struggle would begin; however, he also said that the most opportune time for it would be the moment that Britain and Germany declared war on one another. Before that war occurred, whenever that might be, Har Dyal believed there was a lot of preparatory education and propaganda work to be carried out.

At the end of March 1914, Har Dyal was arrested and questioned, under threat of deportation, by American immigration officials. In response to questioning, he described himself as the organizer of a movement, a thinker, a philosopher, and a propagandist who understood very well that his work of preparing for a future revolution could be damaged by any immediate or indirect act of terror, whether in the United States or in India. The charge against him was that he was an anarchist and that he had concealed this fact when he came to the United States. To American immigration officials, he freely admitted he was an anarchist, but he denied that this made him dangerous. Rather than incite his associates to acts of violence, he said, he had to control them. His deportation hearing took place on Angel Island in California at the end of March 1914 – coincidentally, about the time that Gurdit Singh chartered the *Komagata Maru* in Hong Kong. The proceedings against Har Dyal stalled when the immigration department discovered that he had already been in the country for three years and that he had legal residence. However, he took no chances and left for Switzerland in May, and this took him out of the Ghadr circle. Although he was trying to protect himself from deportation during his Angel Island hearing, his answers have the ring of truth. At that point, his work and that of his closest associates in the Ghadr Party was focused on education and propaganda, not action. And, from its first appearance at the beginning of November 1913, the *Ghadr* was the centre of their efforts. Up to the time that Har Dyal left California, the Ghadr Party had no direct connection with the *Komagata Maru*.¹³

As it happens, the *Komagata Maru* had its origins in a legal campaign in Canada that had been going on for more than five years before the Ghadr Party was organized. From this perspective we can see the *Komagata Maru*'s challenge to Canada's immigration regulations as the boldest move in a struggle that had begun in 1908, when Canada first barred immigration from India. Canada's South Asian immigrant community had been contesting this policy from the start: in the courts;

¹³ Transcript of US Immigration Hearing in Har Dyal Case, 26 March 1914, copy, Library and Archives Canada (hereafter LAC), RG 7, G21, vol. 205, file 332, vol. II(b).

through delegations to Ottawa, London, and Delhi; and by seeking publicity in Canada and abroad. We can demonstrate the story with one immigrant, Behari Lal Verma, who arrived in Vancouver in early 1908 and who returned to Hong Kong in December 1913, where he attempted to charter a ship to bring Punjabi immigrants to Canada. He was an activist whose efforts led directly to Gurdit Singh's decision to hire the *Komagata Maru*.

Behari Lal Verma was a Punjabi Hindu educated in the reformed Hindu (Arya Samajist) Anglo-Vernacular High School in Hoshiarpur. He had spent four years in the police in Suva, Fiji, and was still in his mid-twenties when he, and another 182 Punjabi immigrants, came to Canada from Hong Kong on the SS *Monteagle*. These were the first immigrants from India that Canada tried to reject with its newly promulgated continuous journey regulation – a regulation originally aimed at Japanese coming via Hawaii and then used against Punjabis coming via Hong Kong. Their case went to court – with Behari Lal Verma heading the list of appellants. They won, and he and the others were landed. That did not open the way for other South Asian immigrants because the Canadian government passed new legislation to close the loophole that the court had identified. But it established Behari Lal on the west coast of North America, and, over the next few years, he moved many times to study in Seattle, Oakland, and Vancouver – and, briefly, to work in a sawmill in Portland – before settling in Vancouver as a real estate broker and court interpreter. In this time he gained intimate knowledge of leading activists in the South Asian community in California and British Columbia.¹⁴

Behari Lal was living in Vancouver and was prominent in the local South Asian community in October 1913, when the SS *Panama Maru* arrived in Victoria, British Columbia, with fifty-six South Asian passengers. This became another court case after the immigration department rejected all but seventeen (who already had Canadian domicile) and after the local South Asian community came to their defence by hiring a warmly sympathetic and politically committed socialist, Edward Bird, as their lawyer. And it became a victory that seemed to open Canada to renewed immigration from India when the judge in this case found the regulations that Canada was using to be invalid. His judgment struck down the latest version of the continuous journey regulation as well as

¹⁴ *Struggle for Free Hindustan*; Hopkinson to Cory, 27 May 1914, LAC, Governor General's Files, RG 7, G21, vol. 200, file 332, vol. 2(b); L.W. Crippen to the *Times* of London, 30 March 1908; Singh, *Baba Gurdit Singh*, 40.

a back-up money requirement that was also used to keep immigrants from India out of Canada. The judge made his ruling on very technical grounds. This meant that the South Asian community's victory was short-lived as the Canadian government immediately prepared to reissue revised regulations that met the judge's objections. Still, the community was energized by what seemed a window of opportunity, and, shortly after the ruling came down, Behari Lal left Vancouver on behalf of his countrypeople to try to hire a ship in Asia to bring more immigrants to Canada. His arrival in Hong Kong in December 1914 generated excitement among Punjabis there, and that was how the *Komagata Maru* challenge began.¹⁵

From Hong Kong, Behari Lal continued to report to the community leadership in Vancouver, but he was not able to obtain a ship, and, very quickly, the initiative passed into Gurdit Singh's hands – into the hands of a man who had never been to Canada but who had the experience and personality to put this enterprise together. Gurdit Singh was a successful businessman whose maturity, knowledge, bearing, and manner commanded respect. He had spent years in Malaysia and Singapore, with regular returns to his village in the Amritsar District of Punjab, and, for the previous several years, he had been living in his village of Sirhali. But he had come to Hong Kong on business in January 1914 and immediately became aware of the disappointment among Punjabis there who had not succeeded in getting to Canada and of the issue of finding a ship.¹⁶

Gurdit Singh, like Behari Lal Verma, soon discovered that hiring a ship for immigration purposes was difficult: British shipping agents in Hong Kong and elsewhere were unwilling to have anything to do with a venture that was so obviously loaded with political problems, given the known hostility of the Canadian and Indian governments. It took Gurdit Singh over two months to secure a ship, and he had success only when he turned to a German shipping agent in Hong Kong who provided him with a ship owned by a Japanese firm. Even then, the Japanese owners were unhappy when they fully realized what their Hong Kong shipping

¹⁵ The key features of the judicial ruling in the *Panama Maru* case have generally not been understood, but the complete text can be found in *Vancouver Province*, 1 December 1913.

¹⁶ Singh, *Baba Gurdit Singh*, 40–51; Harban Singh ed., *The Encyclopedia of Sikhism*, 4th ed. (Patiala: Panjabi University, 2002), 142–43; Ramsharan Vidyarthi, *Komagata Maru ki Sumudri Yatra* (Mirajpur: Kramtikara Publications, 1970), 9–15; Gurdit Singh, *Voyage of Komagata Maru or India's Slavery Abroad* (Calcutta: published by the author, n.d.), 16–44; Darshan S. Tatla with Mandeep K. Tatla, *Gurdit Singh Komagata Maru: A Short Biography* (Chandigarh: Unistar and Punjab Centre for Migration Studies, 2007); Government of India, *Report of the Komagata Maru Committee of Inquiry*.

agent had done. Nonetheless, with that, the *Komagata Maru* venture was launched. The planning had taken place in Hong Kong with information and encouragement from Vancouver: Vancouver Sikhs were ready for the *Komagata Maru* and had appointed a supportive shore committee several days before it arrived.¹⁷ Gurdit Singh, who repeatedly said the *Komagata Maru* incident began as a business undertaking, can be taken at his word. He had no prior communication with the Ghadr Party, and India's Central Intelligence Department (CID) had no record of him as a revolutionary, even though it kept files on all known activists. Gurdit Singh was a nationalist and had no qualms about meeting with revolutionaries like Bhagwan Singh Jakh. But when the two of them talked on board the *Komagata Maru* in Yokohama, their conversation was about the practicality of the enterprise rather than about its political value. Bhagwan Singh, who knew what he was talking about, said that the Canadian government would not let the passengers in, but Gurdit Singh, who thought that the law was on his side, refused to believe him.¹⁸

During the months that the passengers of the *Komagata Maru* languished in Vancouver's harbour, waiting for a legal resolution of their case, Canadian officials became convinced that a core group of them was dangerously revolutionary. They passed this opinion on to the British and, ultimately, to the Indian government. Their main source of information was the ship's doctor, Dr. Raghunath Singh, who, early in the *Komagata Maru* saga, became estranged from Gurdit Singh and most of the passengers. Singh was a junior medical officer attached to the 8th Rajput Regiment stationed in Hong Kong. He had taken his position on the *Komagata Maru* during a two-month leave from his regiment, and he brought his wife and small son with him. When the ship and its passengers were detained offshore in Vancouver, he thought that he and his family should be given special permission to get off the *Komagata Maru* so they could return to Asia on their own. As the ship's doctor, he was permitted by the immigration department to go ashore in Vancouver to purchase medical supplies (while the rest of the passengers were kept on the ship), and he had a number of conversations with immigration officials and the Vancouver MP H.H. Stevens. It was on these occasions that he pressed his own case, ingratiating himself with the immigration department by describing seditious lectures on the ship and political divisions among the passengers. Eventually, he and his family were allowed

¹⁷ Gurmukhi script source: Dr. Puran Singh, sanpadak/editor, *Bhai Arjan Singh 'Chand' di Itihasak Diary* (1908-47), (Vancouver: Amarjit Singh Brar, prakashak/publisher, 2008), 66.

¹⁸ Singh, *Baba Gurdit Singh*, 61.

to disembark in Vancouver, and, after some time, he did get back to Hong Kong on a regular steamer to rejoin his regiment. His testimony, given while on the ship and afterwards, was taken very seriously by Canadian and Indian officials, who already suspected a seditious purpose behind the arrival of the *Komagata Maru*.¹⁹

Suspicion was strong on both sides because, in their time in Vancouver, the passengers of the *Komagata Maru* acquired a powerful mistrust of Canadian immigration officials, especially with regard to the latter's promises of food and water for a return journey. As for the immigration officials, their deep mistrust began with their assumption that the passengers had no regard for Canadian law and would do whatever they could to get into the country, legally or illegally. That was the starting point, and every hint that the leadership on the ship was militantly anti-Empire and fundamentally anti-British took the Vancouver immigration office to another level of antagonism and paranoia. Gurdit Singh's public statement after the ship reached Vancouver fed this paranoia in a way that he probably had not intended. When he said that what happened to the passengers on the *Komagata Maru* would determine whether or not there was peace in the Empire, Canadian officials took as a threat what was meant as a warning. His words encouraged them to think that the *Komagata Maru* was a deliberate provocation, its chief purpose being to foment trouble, while what he really wanted was to emphasize how important it was for the British Empire to conciliate public opinion in India.

In the background, the newly formed Ghadr Party was operating from its headquarters in San Francisco and publishing its emotionally worded, patriotic, and revolutionary newspaper. Canadian and British officials were becoming aware of the Ghadr Party and were unquestionably upset by its tone and potential influence. They believed – and thought they had evidence – that Ghadr sympathizers were foremost among the leaders both on the *Komagata Maru* and on the Shore Committee, which had been organized in Vancouver by the local gurdwara society to help the passengers. Immigration officials and the influential anti-Asian MP H.H. Stevens were quick to assume the worst, and this prevented them from seeing the Shore Committee for what it was: a broad-based South Asian community effort, drawing together moderates and militants;

¹⁹ Stenographic notes from conversation between H.H. Stevens and Dr. Raghunath Singh, 4 July 1914, Vancouver City Archives, Stevens Papers; National Archives of India, Lahore Conspiracy Case 3 (second supplementary case, judgment dated 4 January 1917), accused no. 3; Indian Army Quarterly List for 1 January 1912 (Calcutta, 1912), online database, <http://search.ancestry.ca/search/db.aspx?dbid=5758>.

Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims; Punjabis and non-Punjabis; and Punjabis divided by strongly distinctive regional identities.²⁰ The officials were more interested in discovering plots and political divisions in the community, which did indeed exist, than in recognizing its common cause, which was to support the efforts of the passengers to land in Canada and to find work there.

One popular story linking the Ghadr Party and the *Komagata Maru* concerned the purchase of pistols by members of the Shore Committee while they were on a brief visit to the United States. Canadian officials were sure that these men intended to slip these weapons onto the *Komagata Maru*, and they may well have so intended, but the incident caused more alarm than was called for. It occurred only a few days before the Canadian cruiser *Rainbow* escorted the *Komagata Maru* out of Vancouver's harbour to send it back to Asia. The passengers had lost their case in court and had agreed to leave Canada, but they were refusing to let the Japanese crew raise the anchor until the Canadian government had loaded provisions for the return Pacific crossing. The ship was still in the harbour when nine or ten South Asian community leaders from Canada and the United States gathered in the American border town of Sumas. Among them were prominent activists like Bhagwan Singh Jakh and Taraknath Das from California, and Bhag Singh Bhikiwind, Balwant Singh Khurdpur, and Harnam Singh Sahri (all members of the Shore Committee) from Canada. While in Sumas three of these men went into a hardware store and bought two semi-automatic pocket pistols and two cheap revolvers and ammunition. Soon after that, one of them, Mewa Singh, crossed the border ahead of the others, going through the woods to evade the regular check point only to run into a provincial constable, who found a pistol in the crotch of Singh's trousers and ammunition in his pockets. That was how this attempt to secure pistols became known.²¹

Buying pistols and ammunition in a hardware store in the United States was not a crime, and no American charges resulted. The only person liable to be criminally charged and convicted was Mewa Singh, the one who smuggled a pistol and rounds of ammunition over the border into Canada. Singh was later remembered and honoured in the Sikh community as the martyr who was hanged for shooting and

²⁰ For a discussion of identities and loyalties in the pioneering Canadian Sikh community, see: Hugh Johnston, "Group Identity in an Emigrant Worker Community: The Example of Sikhs in Early Twentieth-Century British Columbia," *BC Studies* 148 (2005-06): 3-24.

²¹ Hopkinson to Cory, 16 July 1914, Public Record Office, London, Colonial Office 42/290; Reid to Scott, 25 July 1914, Vancouver City Archives, Stevens Papers.

killing immigration inspector W.C. Hopkinson.²² But he was not given a heavy sentence for smuggling a pistol over the border, and this was because Canadian immigration officials did not consider him a major player. Still, they passed on information about this weapons-shopping expedition to the British and Indian intelligence services, building a case for Ghadr Party involvement with the *Komagata Maru*. In 1917, the Lahore tribunal that tried Balwant Singh Khurdpur for sedition saw the Sumas incident as one of the incriminating counts against him. In his defence, Balwant Singh said that he had crossed the border to see about a plot of land for a gurdwara in Seattle. And, indeed, it does seem more plausible that a large group – including the Bengali activist Taraknath Das – would get together to arrange a property transfer rather than to buy pistols, which could more easily and inconspicuously be purchased by one or two. Moreover, with the *Komagata Maru* still in Vancouver, they had much else to discuss, and pistol shopping looks like something done on impulse: the three involved had gone into the hardware store after breakfast on their second day in Sumas and after having seen pistols displayed in the window.

From the day the *Komagata Maru* arrived in Vancouver, some members of the South Asian community had repeatedly tried to buy handguns from local hardware stores only to be refused because they did not have the necessary permits from the city police magistrate. Their desire to get weapons was inspired by the Ghadr leadership, which advocated the collection of rifles and revolvers “to rain a sweet shower of guns on Punjab” to arm and train fighters for the coming revolutionary struggle. But this was looking to the future. Even in late July 1914, one could not have predicted that the moment for action was coming so soon – as mentioned, Har Dyal, for one, still imagined it to be five to ten years away. And arming the passengers of the *Komagata Maru* was not anyone’s objective. In fact, up to the first week of July, the community hoped and expected that the passengers would win their case and come ashore in Canada, freeing the ship to take on cargo as well as homeward-bound, fare-paying Punjabi passengers from the local South Asian community.

When the *Komagata Maru* was sent back to Asia, the immediate opportunity, from the Ghadr perspective, was the possibility of getting weapons back to India. With this objective, Ghadrites in San Francisco sent their president, Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna, to Japan with one or two hundred American revolvers; and these weapons were taken onto the

²² On the relationship between Hopkinson and Mewa Singh, see Hugh Johnston, “The Surveillance of Indian Nationalists in North America, 1908-1918,” *BC Studies* 78 (1988): 18-19.

Komagata Maru at night shortly after it reached Yokohama on its return journey. It was between Sohan Singh's departure from San Francisco and his arrival in Japan that war broke out in Europe. The revolvers that he carried to Japan were secreted on the *Komagata Maru* only days after the Ghadr Party's call to arms. The timing of this tells us that these revolvers were intended for use at a more distant time and that it was coincidence that put them on the ship at the dramatic moment when all calculations and considerations changed.²³ The point is that, while Ghadrites sought to make use of the *Komagata Maru*, the ship was not their enterprise: they were not the ones giving it direction.

All of the passengers, apparently, knew about the revolvers, and it is likely that very few saw anything wrong with having them on board (other than potential trouble with the police in India). But only a handful knew where they were hidden or had anything to do with them directly. What the passengers knew, the police in India – especially at the headquarters of the CID – also suspected. And now that war had begun, and now that the Ghadr Party had issued its call to arms, the police in India were more vigilant than ever and had more arbitrary power over civilians. David Petrie, the Scots-born CID officer who came from India's summer capital of Simla to Kolkata to meet the *Komagata Maru*, was in the police party that boarded the ship before the passengers landed. Searching a crowded ship with no easy way to separate the passengers from their kits, and hesitating to do anything so offensive as to remove turbans or to examine loincloths, the police found virtually nothing: no firearms and just a single copy of the *Ghadr* newspaper that one disorganized passenger still had in his kit. (Most of the handguns and literature had prudently been either hidden or jettisoned beforehand.)²⁴

Significantly – and he had been briefed beforehand by senior police colleagues in Simla – Petrie was not expecting the majority of the passengers to be hostile; and, at the end of the searches, he thought that they had been reasonably friendly. Nonetheless, he was surprised by their unity and their strong attachment to Gurdit Singh, even after their months of disappointment, trial, and privation. Petrie had expected a sharp division between a majority on the ship and a small group of radicals (or “mischief-makers,” as he called them). He thought that the police could separate the majority from this small group of eight men

²³ Puri, *Ghadar Movement*, 91-96, 167, 175, 189; *Ghadr Directory*, 1934; Sohan Singh Josh, *Tragedy of Komagata Maru*, 65; Singh, *Baba Gurdit Singh*, 68-69; Government of India, *Report of the Komagata Maru Committee of Inquiry*, 23.

²⁴ D. Petrie, “Note on Budge Budge Riot,” exhibit 116, file 5028, Public and Judicial Department Records, Indian Office Library, London.

(as he counted them), but he was wrong. And that miscalculation was a major factor in the tragedy at Budge Budge.

Even the official Committee of Inquiry into the Budge Budge affair agreed with what Petrie said of the passengers. The committee had a good chance to form an opinion because it questioned most of the passengers, those who were held as prisoners in Kolkata as well as those who had been escorted back to Punjab. While predictably putting the blame for Budge Budge solely on the passengers, the Committee of Inquiry described the majority as “harmless” and focused on just thirteen leaders close to Gurdit Singh, whom it judged to be “violent and dangerous characters.”²⁵ Although the committee saw no threat emanating from the majority, they were still subject to harsh treatment – first the force used against them at Budge Budge, then their detention in the Kalighat Central Jail in Kolkata, and finally their transportation back to Punjab, where, for the next several years, they were confined to their villages.

The passengers received this treatment mainly because British India officials were afraid that, if they were free to do so, they would instigate unrest in Punjab.²⁶ That is what lay behind government actions from the moment the *Komagata Maru* arrived off the coast of India on its approach to Kolkata. And that is what lay behind the automatic control – in a country long under press censorship – of news about Budge Budge. The government shut down two native-language (Urdu) papers in Punjab after they had made strong statements about the *Komagata Maru*. To make matters worse for the passengers, moderate politicians in India were supporting the British against their German enemies in the belief that India would be rewarded with independence when the war was over. The sector of Indian-owned press that published in English struck a careful balance between mild criticism of the government and censure of the passengers for their “folly” (as one paper put it). And the leaders of the Indian National Congress, and even government-friendly Sikh and Punjabi leaders in Punjab and Kolkata, criticized the passengers. In the beginning, there was little open support in India for the passengers of the *Komagata Maru*, and this did not change until the Indian public’s attitude towards the British soured after the First World War. Only then did Gurdit Singh, having escaped arrest for seven years, come out of hiding and begin publicizing his account of the *Komagata Maru*.²⁷

²⁵ Government of India, *Report of the Komagata Maru Committee of Inquiry*, 26.

²⁶ Petrie, “Note on Budge Budge Riot.”

²⁷ The *Bengalee*, 4, 6, 7, and 14 October 1914.

Up until that time, only the Ghadr Party had publicly taken the passengers' side – praising them, condoling with them, and eulogizing them. It did so in publications that were banned in India but that were circulated through expatriate Punjabi colonies and that were kept and read in Punjabi emigrant homes for years to come. Bhagwan Singh Jakh, who had boarded the *Komagata Maru* in Yokohama, then briefly assumed the presidency of the Ghadr Party in San Francisco, and who met with Shore Committee members in Sumas, was the author of a Ghadr booklet on the *Komagata Maru* that, in 1915, was circulated in Punjabi. He wrote in emotive and heroic language, invoking the voices of the passengers in calling for patriotic action: “We have sounded the bugle call and the scattered forces are gathering. Death awaits us all, but when we know not; if it should come in heroic deeds, don't fear it. Arise. Arise.” Throughout 1914, he had been a primary link between the *Komagata Maru* and the Ghadr Party. He had met and talked with Gurdit Singh, knew the leaders on the Shore Committee, and had become an early narrator of the story of the *Komagata Maru*. Understandably, given his revolutionary aims, he identified his experience and perspective with those of the passengers so as to create a powerful image that emphasized the political meaning of the *Komagata Maru* as opposed to its meaning as a business venture.²⁸

Personal memories of the *Komagata Maru* and the Ghadr Party survived until the 1970s with a few old men – pioneers in North America or passengers on the ship. What they told the next generation has left a sharp impression on descendants still living today. But their story was almost unknown outside their community. Indeed, their community was virtually invisible anywhere in Canada outside British Columbia until the 1970s. That was because the stark consequence of the immigration barrier instituted in 1908, and unsuccessfully challenged by the *Komagata Maru*, was that, fifty years after the arrival of the first pioneers, they and their families numbered under twenty-five hundred people. Apparently they were too few to warrant attention, although the exclusion of Asian immigrants, including the relatives they wanted to bring over, might now be considered one of the great negative facts of Canadian history. That was the past. And now we witness the remarkable consequences of the lowering of barriers and the equalization of opportunities for South Asian immigrants. By 2010, the South Asian population in Canada had grown to nearly 1.3 million, and the Punjabi

²⁸ Translation of *Ghadr di Goonj No. 2*, 1915, 10–19, attached to Reid to Stevens, 20 March 1915, Vancouver City Archives, Stevens Papers.

Sikh component, which makes up 60 percent of this number, is now a political force of consequence.

The growth of Canada's South Asian population has brought fresh attention to the *Komagata Maru*; and, after persistent lobbying, Canadian Sikhs have won a degree of official recognition for the passengers, both provincially and federally (Figure 3).²⁹ Their success with the government in Ottawa has brought the community less compensation than expected, but it has included a personal apology from Prime Minister Stephen Harper as well as federal money for special *Komagata Maru* memorial projects, including publications, a museum, a website, and a monument. The monument – a joint project of the Vancouver Parks Board and the Vancouver Sikh Gurdwara – now stands beside the harbour where the passengers of the *Komagata Maru* rode at anchor during the long summer of 1914. At the unveiling on 23 July 2012 – ninety-eight years after the passengers started their sad trip back to Asia – a long line of municipal, provincial, and federal politicians took their turns at the mike. Prominent among them were a number of well-known and influential Indo-Canadians. I was in the midst of writing an early draft of this paper and found it striking, but not surprising, that not one speaker mentioned the Ghadr Party. Moreover, it was evident that, for those who knew something about the subject, leaving out the Ghadr Party was a conscious choice.

Those who took the stage spoke emphatically, as one would expect, against the wrongs committed by the Canadian government in 1914; but they avoided the subject of the revolutionary Ghadr Party because they sensed a controversy – an argument about the legitimate purpose of the *Komagata Maru*. It is often easier to tell a truncated story and not to delve too deeply. That was evident in 2008, when Stephen Harper made his apology for the treatment of the passengers of the *Komagata Maru*, describing it as “a sad chapter in our [Canada’s] history.” He kept his statement brief, mentioning only the “detention” and “turning away” of the passengers, the “hardship” they experienced, and the fact that for some the voyage ended in “terrible tragedy.” Ironically, he made no reference to Ghadr Party involvement, although it would have been known to many in his audience, given the setting in which he chose to speak.³⁰

²⁹ On the provincial side, see *Debates of the Provincial Assembly of BC (Hansard)* 34, 4, Legislative Session, 23 May 2008, morning sitting.

³⁰ *Globe and Mail*, 14 May 2008; CBC News, 3 August 2008 (<http://www.cbc.ca/news>); Harsha Walia, “*Komagata Maru* and the Politics of Apology,” *Dominion*, 11 September 2008; Rattan



Figure 3. Names of passengers of the *Komagata Maru*, cut through a wall of rusted steel plate at the Komagata Maru memorial in Vancouver. One can see sunlight and vegetation through the letters. Photograph by H.J.M. Johnston.

Harper delivered his apology at a Sikh festival in Surrey, British Columbia, held in honour of Ghadr Party patriots and martyrs, including several from Canada who were closely involved with the *Komagata Maru*.³¹ This was the annual Gadri Babian Da Mela, then in its thirteenth year, and, while it was significant that Harper should appear and speak at the Mela and not mention the Ghadr Party or Ghadrites, it was also understandable – as it was at the later unveiling of the Vancouver Parks Board monument. The Ghadr story would have complicated the inclusive and upbeat message that framed Harper’s brief apology, which was tailored for all Canadians. So he kept his account simple and simply left that story out. He was walking a narrow path, simultaneously avoiding the wider attention of a formal apology

Mal, *Asian Journal*, 18 May 2012; *Indo-Canadian Link*, 2 June 2012; *World Sikh News*, 16 July 2012.

³¹ For opinions in British Columbia regarding such an apology, see: Daphne Bramham, “Let’s Not Go Overboard on Apologies and Redress,” *Vancouver Sun*, 9 June 2007; Balwant Sanghera, “Ottawa Must Atone for this Injustice,” *Vancouver Sun*, 12 June 2007; Sachi Kurl, “Apologize Now, and Likely Apologize Later,” *Vancouver Sun*, 29 May 2008; Martin Collacot, “Are Apologies in Order?” *Vancouver Sun*, 7 March 2013; Jerry Lee, “Apologizing for Historical Wrongs ‘Tears Societies Apart’: Dosanjh,” *Vancouver Sun*, 9 March 2013; Douglas Todd, “When Political Apologies Divide Us,” *Vancouver Sun*, 12 April 1913.



Figure 4. Raj Singh Toor, of the *Komagata Maru* Descendants Society, who immigrated to Canada in 1976 and who lives in Surrey, BC. He holds the most iconic photograph of the passengers of the *Komagata Maru* (taken on the morning of their arrival) in which his grandfather, Puran Singh Janetpur, stands in the front fourth from the left. Photograph by H.J.M. Johnston.

on the floor of the House of Commons in Ottawa – which some Sikhs continue to demand – and seeking to deliver his apology to a targeted Sikh audience in a BC constituency whose support depended on Sikh votes. Harper and his advisors were aiming at maximum political benefit and minimum political loss (which proved hard to achieve), and, in their miscalculation, they provoked the immense and immediate ire of much of their Surrey Sikh audience, including members of the *Komagata Maru* Foundation and the Descendants of *Komagata Maru* Society. As a consequence, the apology issue has not been put to rest. Sikhs carry on campaigning for a statement in Parliament, and the New Democratic Party and the Liberal Party are now lending them support. In this public discussion, however, the Ghadr connection continues to be left out. No one of any national political stature has corrected or supplemented Harper on this issue.

The matter is given a different emphasis in India, where the *Komagata Maru* is remembered as a chapter in the freedom movement that led to India's independence from British rule. It has long been a subject of slight regard because the master account of the independence movement has featured Mahatma Gandhi, the All-India Congress, and non-violence, with little mention of militant nationalists like the Ghadrites. It has required time for this to change. It was not until a quarter of a century after independence that the Government of India agreed to legislate a pension for the families of freedom fighters, including Ghadrites. Some time after this pension was established, a Sikh scholar, Professor Malwinder Jit Singh Waraich of Chandigarh (the capital of Punjab), began petitioning the courts to officially recognize the passengers of the *Komagata Maru* as freedom fighters – something that would make their families eligible for government pensions (Figure 4). The Government of India at first rejected the claim out of hand, but Waraich has been persistent, and, by stages, he has nearly reached his goal. The Freedom Fighter Division of the Home Ministry of the Government of India now accepts the place of the *Komagata Maru* in the freedom movement, and Waraich's remaining objective is to get the families onto a pension list. When he started his campaign, the Home Ministry told him flatly that the passengers were economic emigrants, not freedom fighters. But he has successfully insisted that Canada's treatment of them transformed them into revolutionaries and that reverberations from their experience shaped the independence struggle in Punjab.³²

At present, the Ghadr connection is not mentioned in the memorialization of the *Komagata Maru* in Canada; however, it is officially accepted in India. This is how history is constructed: answering the requirements of the moment and being subject to revision with the passage of time and shifts in perspective.

³² "Reinventing History: *Komagata Maru's* Role Denied," *People's Democracy*, 14 March 2004; Vikas Kahol, "Preserving the Past: A Labour of Love for Him," *India Today*, 16 July 2011; "Centre Told to Produce List of 267 Eminent Freedom Fighters," *Times of India*, 16 December 2011; "H.C. Seeks Centre's Reply on Freedom Fighters Pension," *Daily Post Chandigarh*, 22 February 2012.