

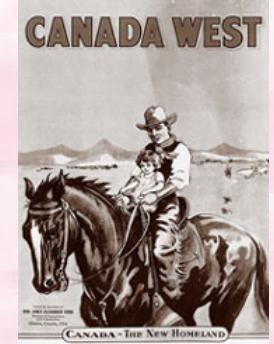
You come a long way, Canada!

UGANDAN ASIANS WERE THE FIRST NON EUROPEAN REFUGEES TO BE ADMITTED IN BIG NUMBERS TO CANADA. UNTIL 1962 IMMIGRATION TO CANADA WAS RACE-BASED, WHERE PEOPLE OF COLOUR WERE DISCRIMINATED AGAINST. THE FOLLOWING IS ABRIDGED FROM THE SITE OF

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

www.cic.gc.ca

1896-1905	Clifford Sifton, Minister of Interior (with responsibilities for immigration), energetically pursues his vision of peopling the prairies with agricultural immigrants, preferably from the US or Britain, otherwise northern Europe. Immigrants to cities were to be discouraged. "A stalwart peasant in a sheepskin coat, born to the soil for ten generations, with a stout wife and half dozen children, is good quality." Immigration of black Americans is actively discouraged on the grounds of unsuitability to the climate.
1900-03	The Head Tax on Chinese immigrants is increased from \$50 in 1885 (set in the first Chinese Exclusion Act) to \$100 in 1900 and \$500 in 1903. From 1901 to 1918, \$18 million is collected from Chinese immigrants (compared to \$10 million spent on promoting immigration from Europe).
1906	Immigration Act 1906 expands the categories of "prohibited" immigrants and gives the government legal authority to deport immigrants within two years of landing (later extended to three and then five years) on grounds such as becoming a public charge, insanity, infirmity, disease, handicap, becoming an inmate of a jail or hospital and committing crimes of "moral turpitude".
1906-1907	c. 4,700 Indians, mainly Sikhs from Punjab, arrive in Vancouver. Arrivals of Japanese and Chinese increases (more than 2,300 Japanese arrive in BC in 1907). Reaction by white British Columbians is described by the Minister of the Interior as "almost hysterical". An "anti-Asiatic parade" organized by the Asiatic Exclusion League ends in a riot, with extensive damage done to property in Chinatown and Japanese quarter.
1908	Order in Council is issued prohibiting immigrants who do not come by continuous journey from their country of origin. At that time steamships from India and Japan had to make a stop in Hong Kong or Hawaii.
1910	Immigration Act allowed the government to prohibit landing of immigrants "belonging to any race deemed unsuited to the climate or requirements of Canada, or of immigrants of any specified class, occupation or character." The Act extended the grounds for deportation to include immorality and political offenses.



UGANDA ASIANS

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1911	Census. Population 7,206,643, of which 22% immigrants (i.e. born outside Canada), 2,342 "Hindu", 5% German origins and 1.8% Austro-Hungarian. 97% European origin.	
June 1914	House of Commons MP: "How can we go on encouraging trade between Canada and Asia and then hope to prevent Asiatics from coming into our country?"	
1914	The Komagata Maru arrives in Vancouver, having sailed from India via China with 376 Indians aboard. After two months in the harbour, and following an unsuccessful appeal to the BC Supreme Court, the boat is turned back to India. Between 1914 and 1920 only one Indian immigrant is admitted.	
1919	Amendments to the Immigration Act add new grounds for denying entry and deportation (e.g. constitutional psychopathic inferiority, chronic alcoholism, illiteracy) and allow Cabinet to prohibit any race, nationality or class of immigrants by reason of "economic, industrial, or other condition temporarily existing in Canada" (unemployment was then high), because of their unsuitability or because of their "peculiar habits, modes of life and methods of holding property."	
Jan. 1923	Order in Council is issued excluding "any immigrant of any Asiatic race" except agriculturalists, farm labourers, female domestic servants, and wife and children of a person legally in Canada. ("Asia" conceived to include Turkey and Syria).	
1923	Chinese Immigration Act is enacted, prohibiting all Chinese immigrants, except diplomats, students, children of Canadians and investors. July 1 when the Act came into force becomes known as "Humiliation Day" by Chinese Canadians.	
1962	A reform is passed that eliminates racial discrimination in Canada's immigration policy. Any unsponsored person who has the necessary qualifications can be considered for immigration to Canada, regardless of skin colour, race, or ethnic origin.	
1967	The Points System is created to implement the above, using as criteria education, age, personal characteristics, fluency in French and/or English, and job opportunities in Canada. Fifty points is set as the passing threshold.	
1986	The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees awards the Nansen Medal to Canada, the first time it is awarded to an entire nation. The medal recognizes contributions made to the refugee cause.	
July 1988	The Canadian Multiculturalism Act is passed unanimously by both the House of Commons and the Senate, making Canada the first country in the world to have a national multiculturalism law.	

You come a long way, Canada:

Government apologies for the Komagata Maru incident in 1914

Adapted from *Wikipedia*, the free encyclopedia

The Komagata Maru was a Japanese steam liner that sailed from Hong Kong to Shanghai, China, Yokohama, Japan, and then to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, in 1914, carrying 376 passengers from Punjab, India. The passengers were not allowed to land in Canada and the ship was forced to return to India. The passengers consisted of 340 Sikhs, 24 Muslims, and 12 Hindus, and all were British subjects. The refusal to let the ship dock was because the ship was judged to be in breach of the rule Jan. 1923 in Canada that immigration had to be "continuous voyage" from one's country of birth. The rule was a subterfuge to bar Indian immigrants, the authorities going so far as to shut down Canadian Pacific line's route between Calcutta and Vancouver. In contrast to this in 1913 Canada admitted 400,000 immigrants from Europe - a figure that remains unsurpassed to this day. The voyage of the Komagata Maru was meant as a challenge to the continuous journey regulation and open the door for immigration from India to Canada. The ship sailed into Burrard Inlet, near Vancouver, on May 23. "This ship belongs to the whole of India, this is a symbol of the honour of India and if it was detained, there would be mutiny in the armies" a passenger told a British officer. The Indian Nationalist revolutionaries Barkatullah and Balwant Singh met with the ship en route. Balwant Singh was head priest of the Gurdwara in Vancouver and had been one of three delegates sent to London and India to represent the case of Indians in Canada. Ghadarite literature was disseminated on board.

Komagata Maru (furthest ship on the left) being escorted by the HMCS Rainbow and a swarm of small boats

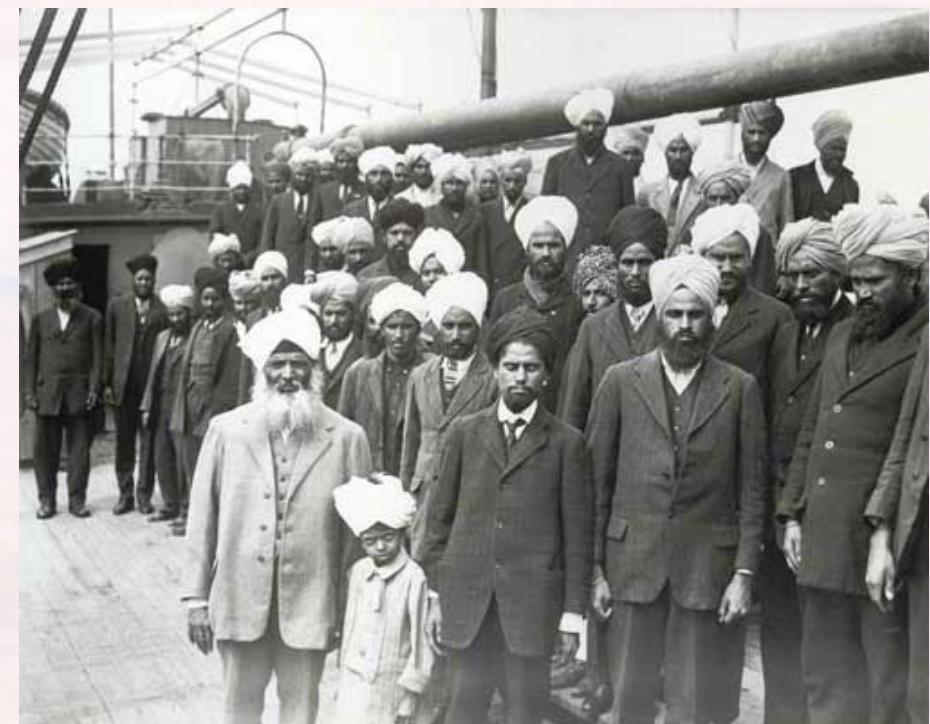
On arrival in Vancouver the Conservative Premier of British Columbia, Richard McBride, gave a categorical statement that the passengers would not be allowed to disembark. Meanwhile a "shore committee" had been formed with Hussain Rahim and Sohan Lal Pathak. At a protest meeting in Dominion Hall, Vancouver, it was resolved that if the passengers were not allowed off, Indo-Canadians should follow them back to India to start a rebellion (or Ghadar). The shore committee raised \$22,000 as an installment for the return trip. In responding to a test case the full bench of the Supreme Court gave a unanimous judgment that it had no authority to interfere with the decisions of the Department of Immigration and Colonization. The Japanese captain was relieved of duty by the angry passengers, but the Canadian government ordered the harbour tug Sea Lion to push the ship out to sea. On July 19, the angry passengers mounted an attack. The next day The Vancouver Sun reported: "Howling masses of Hindus showered policemen with lumps

THE VANCOUVER SUN

of coal and bricks... it was like standing underneath a coal chute".

The government also mobilised the HMCS Rainbow, a former Royal Navy ship under the command of Commander Hose, with troops from the Royal Irish Fusiliers, 72nd Highlanders, and the 6th DCOR regiments. In the end, only 24 passengers were admitted to Canada. The ship was turned around and forced to depart on July 23 for Asia.

The Komagata Maru arrived in Calcutta on September 26. The ship was diverted 17 miles to Budge Budge, where the British intended to put the group on a train bound for Punjab. The passengers dissented and marched on the city in a demonstration. They were fired upon by the police, killing 20 and wounding nine others. This incident became known as the Budge Budge Riot.



Aboard Komagata Maru, Vancouver harbour, 1914

Significance

The *Komagata Maru* incident was widely cited at the time by Indian groups to highlight discrepancies in Canadian immigration laws and in India's struggle for independence. As a rallying point to recruit members for the Ghadar movement, most notably in support of promulgating plans to coordinate a massive uprising in India.

Memorials and depictions

In 1951, the newly independent government of India erected a monument at Budge Budge to commemorate the massacre there. A plaque commemorating the 75th anniversary of the departure of the *Komagata Maru* was placed in the Sikh gurdwara (temple) in Vancouver on July 23, 1989. A plaque commemorating the 80th anniversary of the arrival of the *Komagata Maru* was placed in the Vancouver harbour in 1994. In 2004, Ali Kazimi's feature documentary *Continuous Journey* was released, the first in-depth film to examine the events

surrounding the turning away of the *Komagata Maru*. *Continuous Journey* has won over ten awards, including the Most Innovative Canadian Documentary at DOXA, Vancouver 2005, and most recently, Golden Conch at the Mumbai International Film Festival, 2006.



Government apologies

In April of 2008, Dr Ruby Dhalla, MP for Brampton-Springdale, tabled Motion 469 (M-469) in the House of Commons which called upon the Canadian Government to apologize to the individuals and families impacted by the *Komagata Maru* Incident. On May 12th 2008, the Conservative Government concurred and publicly apologized to the Indo-Canadian community for the *Komagata Maru* Incident. The Government of British Columbia also previously apologized in May 2008.

Clockwise:
 1. BC and Federal government officials come to visit. Notice the lone Sikh keeping vigil (white turban).
 2. Ship-to-shore and vice versa, for urgent reasons.
 3. *Komagata Maru* in English Bay (background)
 4. The massacre at Budge Budge, India.

