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RACISMS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY:

Reinterpreting the Case of East Indian Immigrants

by

Narinder K Brar, B.A. Hons.

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

in partial fulfilment of

the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

Sept 12, 1994

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Racisms in British Columbia at the turn of the Century:
Reinterpreting the Case of East Indian Immigrants

submitted by

Narinder K Brar, B.A. Hons.

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Co-supervisor

Co-supervisor

Chair, Department of Sociology and Anthropology

Carleton University

September 22, 1994

Abstract

The topic of racism against East Indians in British Columbia during the early part of this century has thus far, been given only ad hoc attention in political economy oriented 'race' relations literature under the general category of 'Anti-Asian' or 'Anti-Oriental' racism. Not only does this literature assume the various factors which contributed to the treatment and subsequent categorical exclusion of East Indians are synonymous with those which were responsible for 'Anti-Chinese' and to a lesser degree 'Anti-Japanese' prejudice in the province, it also gives primary analytic significance to economic relations. This thesis argues that although racism against East Indians needs to be studied in relation to others racisms, it must be given its own specificity. Utilizing the recent theoretical advances made by Robert Miles to the field of 'race' and ethnic relations, this thesis argues that such specificity is revealed by examining the development of British Columbia as an 'imagined community' of white settlement in the broader context of British Imperialism. It also illustrates the important role ideological and political practices, relatively autonomous to the economy, had in production of racism against East Indians.

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Introduction

Approximately five thousand men of East Indian descent, nearly all of them Sikhs, arrived at the ports of British Columbia during the first decade of this century. Like most immigrants, they came to sell their labour power and take advantage of the higher wages and standard of living offered in Canada and, more specifically, in British Columbia. The men were British subjects and thus possessed the right to travel freely without restrictions anywhere within the British Empire. In Canada, as British subjects, they were also entitled to all the rights and privileges accorded to Canadian citizens.

Upon arrival, however, the East Indians' formal status as equals was ignored. In British Columbia, where they landed and where most remained, they confronted a wide array of social and economic exclusions. In 1907, a bill passed in the legislative assembly denied East Indians their right to vote in British Columbia provincial elections.¹ The following year, this restriction was extended to include municipal elections in the province. In 1908, through an amendment to the Canada Immigration Act of 1906, the federal government effectively halted their further entry to Canada. Consequently, over the next forty years, fewer than five hundred people from India gained entry to Canada.

It was after the Second World War, with the implementation of the Canadian Citizenship Act, that East Indians became eligible to vote. In 1951, in part due to pressure from the British Commonwealth, the Canadian federal government introduced a quota system which enabled a few hundred immigrants from India, Pakistan and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) to enter each year. In 1962 new regulations to the Immigration Act were passed that prohibited 'race', colour or national origin from being used as factors in approving prospective immigrants. In 1967 the point system was introduced which, except for some discretionary power by Immigration officials, stipulates that the criteria for entry to Canada would be based 'purely' on skills and labour market conditions. Although discrimination based on 'race'² along with

many other characteristics still exists, these changes ended the explicitly racist era of Canadian immigration policy.³ Thus, it was more than half a century after people from India first began to seek entry to Canada that they were legally and officially allowed to do so.

This thesis offers an examination of the representations of, reactions towards, and exclusionary practices against the men from India who arrived in British Columbia during the first decade of this century in the hope of selling their labour power. As immigrant labour they had a lasting impact on Canada, most notably at the national level where, reacting against them, the Dominion government introduced immigration controls for people from India for the first time. Such controls also had a lasting effect on the development of the East Indian community in Canada.

Presently no comprehensive analysis of the range of responses to the entry of East Indian (male) labourers to British Columbia exists. The literature which does provide some detailed discussion about these early arrivals typically explains away the reactions of the various groups and classes in British Columbia in terms of cultural differences between two ethnic or 'racial' groups. Under emphasized is the fact that the relationship between the immigrants and those who sought and achieved their exclusion was not one between equals. The various responses must be situated within the structural relations of the British Columbian social formation, which includes class relations. Yet, the literature that examines 'race' and social exclusions based on 'race' in British Columbia as deeply embedded in the process of the historical development of capitalism for the time period of this thesis, neglects to analyze the specificity of the East Indians' situation. Instead, East Indians are subsumed under the general category of 'Asian' and identified only as an under-class of workers who functioned in the interests of capitalist accumulation in the province (or Canada at large). Here it is often taken for granted that East Indians experienced the same racisms as did Chinese and Japanese labourers who arrived earlier in British Columbia.

This thesis takes a different point of departure. It seeks to produce an understanding of racism in British Columbia in which the inequalities in ownership of power and resources

under capitalism and colonialism are identified at the same time that the East Indian case is given full specificity. In undertaking such a task, this thesis utilizes the recent theoretical advances made by Robert Miles to the study of racism. It argues that when Miles' concepts of racialization, racism and exclusionary practices are combined with an analytical framework that emphasizes "contextuality", "concreteness", and "conjuncturality", it is possible to reveal 'many determinants' of the case of racism against East Indians which have otherwise be neglected.

Chapter One

Theoretical Considerations

This chapter will introduce a set of theoretical concepts and premises which will guide in examining the research question just introduced. First, however, it is worthwhile to look in some depth to the existing literature on the topic. For the sake of conceptual clarity such literature is separated into two theoretical perspectives, ethnic studies and political economy.

1. Ethnic Studies Approaches

The majority of literature which deals specifically with the early East Indian immigrants comes from an ethnic studies orientation. Most research conducted from this orientation takes the position that each minority group who enters Canada does so in a disadvantaged position because of a lack of knowledge of Canadian culture (Anglo-Saxon) and a deficiency of skills and competencies that would enable it to compete successfully in Canadian society. It is believed that over time all minorities will learn the dominant cultural norms and become integrated into Canadian society. Members of the majority group are expected to develop prejudice in response to various features of the minority group, with higher levels of hostility generated against groups that are culturally and racially different. Racial differences are thought to produce a more intense response.

The major problem with this orientation has been its concern with assimilation and its conception of culture.⁴ Since culture may function as a barrier between an immigrant group and the host society at the same time that it is used as a coping mechanism against exclusions, cultural difference tends to become the explanation for any hostility or exclusionary practices on the part of the host society. Thus when an immigrant/minority group has not integrated into the social system within the "typical period of adjustment" or does not achieve a certain level of

social mobility, it is blamed for its 'failure'. In other words, the problem of racial discrimination gets explained away as the collective responsibility of the racialized minority.

One study of the early East Indian community in British Columbia in which their cultural attributes are solely used to explain racial hostility is that of Brij Lal (1976). Lal essentially argues that "the eventual alienation of the East Indian community was a consequence of the behaviour of the immigrants themselves" (1976:168). On the role played by the host society in determining the process of East Indian integration, Lal concludes:

The host reaction solidified and isolated the East Indian community. Due to the activities of the white exclusionist of British Columbia voluntary segregation by the Indian immigrants gave way to forced segregation. The hostility also nurtured the love of the homeland, a sentiment reinforced by communal organizations through such institutions as language, ethnic newspapers and nationalistic politics. In a very real sense, the host society, too, played an important role in the alienation of the East Indians. But it must be emphasized that the stereotypical perceptions, the discrimination and the restrictive legislation contributed to, rather than created this condition. Important as they were, they nevertheless played a secondary role. The East Indians were conscious and deliberate creators of their alienated minority ethnic status, and not simply victims of collective discrimination by the majority white society. This study has shown the East Indian acceptance and integration into the Canadian society was the result of the interplay of factors pertaining to the immigrant community and the host society, in which the former played a primary role while the latter played an important but secondary role (1976:170).

Certainly, Canadian racism has been invoked to some degree by differences in language, religion, and other components of 'ethnic' culture. However, what Lal fails to recognize is that it was not only the cultural, but also the physical attributes of the East Indians to which British Columbians were reacting. That is to say, the East Indians were identified as a 'race' biologically separate and distinct from other 'races'. The extent to which 'ethnic' culture was in fact masked by 'race' ideologies is illustrated through the method in which they were referred to as "Hindu" although the vast majority of them would culturally identify themselves as Punjabis. At no time does Lal consider that the 'markers' used to problemize the East Indian presence were very similar to those attributed to the Chinese and Japanese, despite the fact that their cultures were vastly different. There was a whole set of material conditions that existed prior to, therefore apart from, the East Indians' arrival. They cannot be held responsible for

those material conditions that were external to them - conditions over which they had little choice but to which they learnt to adapt.

R.Sampat-Mehta's work on the development of immigration restrictions against various groups who entered Canada also discusses the relationship between East Indian immigrants and the host society (1972). Unlike Lal, he does not attribute blame to the East Indians for the racist legal exclusions that were imposed on them. At the same time, however, he does not question the explanations given by the various groups in British Columbia or by the Dominion government for excluding the East Indians from Canada, and instead seeks to provide justification for the response. At one point Sampat-Mehta writes:

It was believed that Indian immigrants were not able to adjust to the climatic conditions. But it should be remembered that many Indians who came in the very beginning were quite unprepared for the situation and climate of Canada, and consequently suffered definite hardships upon arrival. Many were unable to obtain jobs because of the labour conditions, and lack of proper clothing found them quite unprepared for the cold weather in Canada. Having no money and no job to carry them through the winter months, many were left to wander the streets with no provisions and in some cases, no place to stay (1972:129).

Sampat-Mehta is correct in stating that the East Indians suffered much hardship in British Columbia. However, in not analyzing the discursive accounts or written reports on the East Indians through what Abele and Stasiulis call "the prism of anti-Asian and racist ideologies" that were prevalent at the time, he reifies certain cultural characteristics of the East Indians as a warranted explanation for unequal treatment (Abele and Stasiulis 1989:262). Again, the prevailing ideas of 'race' used by the various relatively dominant groups and classes in British Columbia to make sense of their relationships to the East Indians had autonomous effects outside of the immigrants' control.

A third study that has dealt with the topic of responses of the host society towards the East Indians specifically is Peter Ward's White Canada Forever (1978). Ward does not work entirely within the ethnic studies orientation and indeed acknowledges the harsh treatment given to East Indian immigrants by British Columbians (presented as a general category). Furthermore, in centering his analysis on some of the stereotypes held by British Columbians

about people from India, Ward departs from only focusing on the East Indians and looks critically at the host society. In 1981 Ward writes:

White British Columbia clung tightly to a series of convictions about Asians which continually emphasized their distinctiveness as an element in provincial society. . . These beliefs emphasized the perpetual inferiority of Asians and Indians and encouraged the differential, discriminatory treatment they received at the hands of successive generations of whites (1981:591).

But the problem with Ward's analysis is that it is grounded in a social psychology tradition in which a desire for homogeneity is believed to be instinctive to the human psyche. According to Ward, British Columbians had a deep psychological desire to remain racially homogeneous and reacted to anything that threatened "their capacity to perpetuate their values and traditions, their laws and institutions. . ." (1978:169). The "vital determinant much larger than all the rest" in producing "a single racist imperative" was, Ward argues, "that psychological tension which inhered in the racially plural condition" (ibid.) One of the limitations of this argument or the psychologizing approach in general is the tendency to elide the microsocial and the macrosocial, the failure to distinguish between the sphere of individual or small-group psychology and that of collective psychology and ideology. Thus racism is not only psychologized but also individualized.

If racism could be explained purely in psychological terms, then there would be no need to understand it as a social phenomenon. Moreover, this would also mean we would be helpless in eliminating it through collective action. Yet, the nature and intensity of the responses in British Columbia or Canada in general to immigrants has varied depending on their country of origin, their gender and class status upon entry, as well as the class and regional positions of the 'hosts'. This is illustrated by Vic Satzewich, who found that the various head taxes which were imposed on the Chinese, made a clear distinction between workers and merchants, as only Chinese labourers were required to pay (1989). Diplomats, students, and visitors were also except from the tax. Hence, there is no direct correlation between being identified as racially different and being exposed to a negative response.

The problem that arises from such a perspective is not only that it reduces the complexities of racism to an underlying motivational determinant, but also that Ward uses the term 'race' in the biological sense whereby human beings are classified into a certain number of 'races' on the basis of phenotypical characteristics. For Ward, 'races' are living entities with autonomous effects on social behaviour and structure. In fact, he argues that British Columbia's social structure "at least until World War II" was based on 'race' (1981:590). On the strength of genetics research however, we know that there are no scientific grounds for classifying homo sapiens according to 'race' (Montagu 1964; van den Berghe 1967; Rex 1970; Banton 1977, 1988; Miles 1982). 'Race' is an abstraction, not a real thing.

If 'races' are not, as Ward suggests, autonomous segments of a supposedly plural society, then the question becomes one of why, and under what conditions, are physical or cultural differences between groups of people given social significance (Miles 1982; Li 1990). It is here that we find the ethnic studies orientation most seriously lacking. In emphasizing cultural and political diversity as the main source of heterogeneity it has typically ignored the role and importance of economic disparities and inequalities in the production of social cleavages. It is basically in reaction to the inadequacy of this perspective to locate 'race' in the context of the economy and the larger social system in which human beings with unequal resources interact, that Marxist political economy approaches to 'race relations' have been rediscovered and reformulated in the eighties in Canada.

Before I discuss some of the work which deals with the history of racism in British Columbia from a political economy orientation, I will mention the contribution of Buchignani et al (1985). Some years ago, these writers produced a rich and insightful social history of South Asians⁵ in Canada, beginning with the time of their initial arrival to the present era (1980s). Their work is important because the histories of domination and exclusion confronted by immigrants who did not arrive in positions of power have been absent from what is presently understood to be the history of Canada. Having said this, because their book caters to a general audience, focusing almost exclusively on understanding the development of the South:

Asian community in Canada, it is not concerned with analyzing the responses towards or exclusionary policies against the East Indians in any systematic way, and hence is located very much outside the realm of literature which seeks to understand the forces behind the phenomenon of racism. Conversely, in this thesis I probe very little into the lives and experiences of the early migrants from India and instead focus specifically on understanding the emergence of racism and exclusionary practices against them. I recognize that one of the weaknesses of this type of analysis is that extraneous factors which influenced social relations involving the East Indians are given prominence and their own perspectives on what they experienced is missing. However, I justify my focus on the grounds that the various reactions and exclusionary practices in British Columbia against them tell us much about the powerful political, economic and ideological barriers to which these immigrants were exposed, and in turn make their achievements even more astonishing. Ethnicity or cultural characteristics such as language may be a resource in the making of a group's history, but the process in which a group gets racialized (that is, its phenotypical characteristics are given social significance) and treated unequally is based on the superior capacity of other group(s) to define the circumstances under which that history is made.

2. Political Economy Approaches

The predominance of concepts such as assimilation or integration is of course not restricted to literature on East Indian immigration, but is part of a much larger phenomenon that 'swept' research projects in North America in the 1960s and 1970s. In Canada, during the early 1980s this orientation was given further legitimacy through many initiatives set up by the federal state in the heyday of multi-culturalism policy.

Recently, in an attempt to break free from what is now commonly referred to as the 'race or ethnic studies problematic' (Miles 1982: 1-92; 1987: 279-282), a number of writers in Canada have begun to examine social relations involving 'race' and culture through a Marxist

political economy orientation which focuses on class structure, especially in relation to the developing capitalist economy and the various levels of the state (Abele and Stasiulis 1989).⁶

One of the first major challenges to what they felt to be a discipline heavily biased in favour of 'cultural' explanations was Racial Oppression in Canada edited by Singh Bolaria and Peter Li (1984, 1988). Their perspective is in part influenced by the work of Castles and Kosack published in the early 1970s and commonly referred to as the 'political economy of migration' (Castles and Kosack 1973; Castells 1975; Nikolinakos 1975). The main focus of this perspective is not 'race' or ethnicity per se, but the economic position of immigrants. Immigration is explained as a consequence of the uneven development of capitalism on a world scale and immigrant workers are identified as having a specific socioeconomic function found in all capitalist societies: to fill undesirable jobs vacated by members of the indigenous working class in the course of the periodic reorganization of production. Immigrants are seen as having been brought in as a reserve army of labour, to "keep wages low and profit up" (Castles and Kosack 1973:5).

Employing this perspective, Singh Bolaria and Peter Li argue that the East Indians immigrants' history of oppression should be understood in terms of their labour power which, through geographical and economic displacement, was inserted into the Canadian capitalist economy and there exploited. While it is true that racism served as a means to keep the East Indians from seeking upward mobility, it cannot be reduced, as they suggest, to the argument that it was "very much a part of capitalism" (1988:9). As they state, "although the specific historical condition under which the dominant group exploited the subordinate member varies, these racial minorities [Chinese, Japanese, East Indians, Native Canadians, Metis, and Blacks] shared the fact that their cheap labour was indispensable to economic accumulation" (ibid.).

Racial Oppression has made a major contribution to the study of 'race' and ethnic studies in that it has illustrated the importance of understanding racism within the context of the worldwide spread of capitalism, the development of imperialism and the use of cheap labour from the periphery in the core societies. Yet, used alone the perspective is not without

empirical and epistemological problems, the most serious being that the dynamics of capital accumulation whereby some sectors of capitalist production require the existence of large pools of cheap labour that can be drawn upon when needed and displaced when not, does not by itself dictate how groups of immigrants will be treated, nor does it dictate immigration policies. In other words, the relationship between the advent of colonialism and capitalism and the rise of racism is not that straightforward. There is no law that suggests immigrants from the periphery will automatically end up in the job sites that they do. A process which generally involves the state, civil society and ideologies mediates this outcome.

In his critique of Ward's analysis of 'anti-Asian' sentiment in the history of British Columbia, Rennie Warburton offers a different interpretation while still working within a political economy orientation (1981). Warburton argues that once colonialism and uneven capitalist development at the global level had created inequalities that correspond with 'race', these racialized relations of inequality became a constitutive part of capitalist social relations in British Columbia. Thus, for Warburton, the history of racism in British Columbia is best understood in terms of the socioeconomic and political conditions of the development of capitalism in that province. Warburton defines class relations as historically articulated through the processes of conflict accommodation and struggle. It is "the contradiction between the demands of higher wages on the part of workers in resource industries and the demands for cheap labour on the part of employers" which he believes allows us to grasp the phenomenon of racism or "outbreaks of racial hostility" as he calls it (1981:84).

Alan Dutton develops Warburton's argument further (1984). Dutton's work is based on a critique of the absence of a class analysis in the work of Ward (1978, 1981), Li (1978) and Chan (1982). Discussing Li's 1978 seminal piece on 'racial' discrimination against the early Chinese immigrants to Canada, Dutton argues that, by ignoring class relations in British Columbia in his analysis, Li implicates "the entire 'White community' in the racial exploitation of Asian workers" (1984:7). Dutton instead stresses the importance of recognizing that it was in the context of the emergence of the capitalist mode of production in British Columbia that

racial hostility developed. Dutton also abandons the idea that employers of Asian workers (among them he includes East Indians) consciously created a 'sub-proletariat' of menial workers in order to divide the interests of the working class and prevent the development of class solidarity between the super-exploitative Asians and European workers. Instead he believes that the logic of capitalist accumulation which seeks to drive down the price of labour needs to be emphasized. Here he adopts Edna Bonacich's split-labour market thesis which directly challenges the notion that racism within the working class is a creation of the capitalist class and instead places labour competition at the centre of the emergence of racial division(s) within the labour market (see Bonacich 1972, 1976, 1980, 1984).⁷

Bonacich has shown that, partly due to the uneven development of capitalism, different groups of workers may enter the capitalist labour market with different subsistence levels. Thus, according to the theory, groups with the lowest subsistence level are more willing to accept lower wages. The outcome of this difference is that the labour market splits along racial lines with immigrants workers, in this case Asians, being 'cheaper' than 'native' workers, in this case Europeans. Dutton argues that when industries such as coal mining, railway construction, fishing and forestry opened up in the province, capitalists began to replace white workers with Asian workers as a means to cut costs and increase profit. Hence, competition for jobs in the labour market became divided along racial lines, which created a situation where many British Columbia white (male) workers felt threatened and sought to exclude lower-priced labour from 'their' geophysical setting.

Working with Burawoy's theorization of the state⁸, Dutton situates the response of the Dominion and provincial governments' to the Asians within the context of the dynamics of the capitalist mode of production where the working class and capitalist class struggle over control and regulation of the labour process. Under such a framework, the state in capitalist society is recognized as being susceptible to the influence of labour (in this case British Columbia's white male working class). Not surprisingly, Dutton argues the immigration barriers and restrictive labour legislation against Asians were the product of political practices of white (male) workers

who were responding to economic competition from Asians in the context of class struggle (1984:32). Yet, holding the premise that the state in capitalist society is not just a set of institutions in and over which there is continual struggle" but capitalist in form, he also identifies its coherent organization for the perpetuation of capital accumulation, ie. profit (1984:27). Ultimately "state policies" which placed on Asian immigration and restrict Asian workers to peripheral sectors of the economy were, in the long term, structured by the need for the accumulation of capital (ibid.).

As much as the development of the capitalist mode of production is critical for the history of racism in British Columbia, it is mistaken to reduce the case of racism against the East Indians to terms of class struggle or 'Asian' labour exploitation. While it is true that the few East Indians who remained in British Columbia had their labour power exploited, as Satzewich correctly points out, what is particularly significant about their case was not that racism was used to justify labour exploitation but that it was used to exclude the East Indians from selling their labour power and therefore from exploitation by capitalists (1990). The point is that Dutton's approach again does not take into account the specific case of East Indians. Moreover, when arguing as state capitalism and its greater regulation and control of the labour process came about in the early 1900's a new phase of ethnic relations was inaugurated, he overestimates the extent to which organized labour increased its efforts to include minorities in trade unions and broader social reforms (1984:17). More often than not during this time period, white (male) workers organized to exclude rather than include non-white immigrant workers.

It is here that the work of Gillian Creese is significant (1984; 1986; 1988). Through a re-formulation of the concept of class, in answer to why British Columbia's working-class sought to exclude rather than include Asian workers in their attempts at political organization during a time when class consciousness among the labour movement was relatively high, she moves beyond economic determinants. Indeed, influenced by the work of the social historian E.P Thompson⁹ and his emphasis on the role culture plays in understanding the working class

in general and working class history in particular, Creese questions the a priori primacy of class and economic relations over other forms of experience.

While part of her explanation for racism within the working-class comes from the split-labour market thesis, Creese firmly rejects a purely economic definition of class, by identifying extra-economic factors as essential. One critical factor in the persistence of racism within British Columbia's working class according to Creese, was the 'non-settler' status given to Asians by the Canadian state. Creese argues that the Canadian state was largely responsible for maintaining the marginal status of Asian workers by attributing to them an inferior political status as 'non-settlers' and denying them the legal, political, and civil rights which were granted other citizens of Canada. Having less political ammunition to fight capitalists, Asians maintained a marginal status within the labour market (1988:63). Unlike Dutton who situated the role played by the Canadian state strictly in the nexus of class struggle and the capitalist mode of production, Creese locates the Canadian state's approach to Asians in its immigration policies as having an autonomous effect on class and/or other social relations in the province of British Columbia. As she correctly points out, not only was the Canadian state interested in fulfilling the needs of the labour market, it was also concerned with reproducing the nation with a white British people. Other factors identified by Creese in the maintenance of an ethnically/racially segmented labour market in British Columbia included capitalists' practices of exploitation putting 'Asian' workers in a weaker position in the labour market, and in turn reflected in the latter's exclusion from working-class political organizations, as well as white (male) workers' adherence to racist ideologies (1988:80).

Creese's work is a valuable contribution in two respects. First, she addresses that important debate surrounding the crisis of Marxism which concerns the structure/agency dilemma and the extent to which non-economic relations are linked to the structural relation of class. Creese does this by not automatically assuming human behaviour to be derived from structurally defined role expectations. Second, Creese broadens traditional economic history by providing a range of causal factors identifying politics and culture broadly conceived as

more independent factors. Having said this, there are again two reasons why Creese's work is not directly useful for understanding racism against the East Indians. First, Creese examines racism only within one class sector of British Columbian society. In this thesis I am interested in looking at the response of both workers and capitalists, among other groups, towards the East Indians. Second, but more importantly, she leaves out the East Indians from her work entirely, while still retaining the category 'Asian'. By not including the East Indians, she invariably provides a powerful hint that perhaps an analysis centered around the capitalist mode of production and the concept of class, while important, is not paramount for the East Indian case.

In sum, the recent contributions of the 'new' Canadian political economy¹⁰ to the study of racism have made it blatantly obvious that the question of host-immigrant relations is not simply about the extent to which immigrants desire to assimilate or the extent to which they differ culturally. Such factors cannot, for example, explain why, as a whole, North American Blacks in Canada are more economically disadvantaged in spite of the fact that in many cases they have been in Canada much longer and, in terms of culture, share more in common with the dominant society than most white 'ethnic' immigrants. Nor can culture explain why Natives in Canada do not fully participate in the capitalist labour market even though they were here first. In other words, empirically there are links between common-sense racial categorization and the distribution of inequality or disadvantage (class) which research focused primarily on the categories of culture or ethnicity has in the past ignored.

The studies of racism in British Columbia mentioned above conceptualize this linkage between 'race' and class, although the extent to which either is seen as a consequence of the other varies among writers. Most of the less economic approaches - in particular Gillian Creese's - have been influenced by a new wave of Marxist theorizing on 'race' that has emerged since the late 1970s. Mostly out of Britain, this literature is heavily influenced by the theoretical advances made by writers such as Gramsci on the role of the state and ideology, Althusser's concept of State apparatuses and Przeworski on class formation. My intent here is

not to discuss, compare or evaluate the various perspectives that have recently been developed within a Marxist framework and have done much to accommodate some of Marx's major theoretical premises and predictions with present-day empirical reality.¹¹ This enormous task has been carried out by many others elsewhere.¹² Instead, the objective here is simply to introduce a few key concepts that will assist in analyzing the representations of, reactions towards, and exclusionary policies against the East Indians, by attributing full specificity to their case. To this end, some of the recent contributions made by Robert Miles to the field are useful since they aid in distinguishing racist phenomena from other forms of oppression under capitalism. In order to situate Miles' work within the Marxist spectrum, it is important to begin with the landmark work of Oliver Cox.

3. Contribution Of Marxism To The Study Of Racism . . . Cox To Miles

Prior to the recent escalation of the debate within Marxist circles over the status of 'race' and racism in capitalist societies, for nearly three decades Oliver Cox's Caste, Class and Race published in 1948 was regarded as the standard Marxist account on the subject. Although in many respects, Caste, Class and Race represents the first attempt by a "Marxist" to systematically theorize a relationship between class structure and what he called ethnic systems, of which 'race' relations was one instance, Cox's interpretation was circumscribed by the period in which wrote. During the 1940s, very few academics in North America were acquainted with Marx's writings and the interpretation which dominated in Europe was the one brought forward by the Second International. As a very mechanical and economic interpretation, the Second International reduced all inequalities to the economic structures of the capitalist mode of production. Beginning with the position that racial divisions are socially constructed, this interpretation identified the idea of 'race' as a consciously planned creation of the dominant class the world over. The idea was then imposed on society as a means through which capitalists could serve their economic interests: that is, to divide the working-class and

justify the labour exploitation of 'coloured' workers. The following statement from the preface of Marx's Critique of Political Economy, although written at a very high level of abstraction, is frequently used in support of this claim that ideologies(sets of ideas), which exist in capitalist societies are the product of the class that controls the means of production:

. . . ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time, its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal, has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas; hence of the relationships which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance (Marx in Donald and Hall 1986:13).

Thus racism, or "racial prejudice", as he called it, was for Cox simply a "socio-attitudinal concomitant of the racial-exploitative practice of the ruling class in a capitalist society" (1970:583). Surveying the development of global capitalism and the socioeconomic position of Blacks in the United States in particular, Cox's study was principally intended to refute what he saw as the habitual problem of American academics conflating 'race' with culture. Cox went on to argue that because it was no more than a specific form of class-exploitation, racism was unworthy of analysis. According to him, the idea of 'race' was embedded in a particular phase of capitalism and produced for its continued survival. In other words, it was not only created by capitalists, but a necessary product for the emergence and expansion of the system from which they directly benefitted. It was necessary in the sense that economic exploitation by capitalists of workers had to be justified.

Of course, in this straightforward interpretation, the end of racist exploitation was bound up with the elimination of the capitalist system. Neglecting to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the mode of production or transformations within that mode which are necessary preconditions for bringing about the type of social revolution advocated by Marx, Cox recommended:

The problem of racial exploitation, then, will most probably be settled as part of the world proletarian struggle for democracy; every advance of the masses will be an actual

or potential advance for the colored people. Whether the open threat of violence by the exploiting class will be shortly joined will depend upon the unpredictable play of balance of force in a world-wide struggle for power (1970:583).

The sheer scope and extensive utilization of Marxian concepts such as class and exploitation may still make Caste, Class and Race the most substantial Marxist analysis of the role of 'race' and racism in capitalist societies; representing a very limited reading of Marx's historical materialism, however, and lacking in empirical validity it has to some degree been discredited. In the case of British Columbia, for example, as Creese has shown, the racially divided nature of British Columbia's labour market at times actually heightened the level of class-consciousness in the province, as the dominant white (male) working-class pressured various levels of government to restrict the entry of 'Asian' labourers to Canada and, failing that, restricted the occupations in which they could be employed. At times such pressure met with political success, even though it was not in the immediate interests of capitalists. Thus, racism is a contradictory phenomenon and not always 'functional' for the accumulation of capital.

The empirical and theoretical problems with Cox's work are serious and when it became clear that his otherwise sophisticated conceptual apparatus could no longer match "material social fact", Marxist theoretical projects on race were eclipsed by the mainstream sociology of ethnicity and minority group relations discussed earlier; until, that is, the recent advances of Marxist theorists like Miles.

As with all who theorize the phenomenon of racial divisions under a political economy orientation, Miles begins with the position that 'race' is a social construction. However, for him this means not only that there is no scientific basis for both systematically categorizing the human population by phenotypical and genetic factors and for imputing fixed cultural attributes to these supposedly biological groups, but also that 'race' should not be used as an analytical category. In discussing the difficulties Marxist theory has in attempting to comprehend and explain the expression and consequence of racism in its articulation with the development of the world capitalist system, Miles writes:

These difficulties originate not only in general problems 'internal' to Marxist theory (for example, the problems of economism and reduction), but also from the uncritical incorporation of the idea of 'race' into Marxist theory and the related failure to separate analytically the idea of 'race' and the concept of racism. . . Marxist theory has, by virtue of its own epistemological assumptions, necessarily developed by means of a dialectic between historical and conceptual analysis, and has therefore critically (although not consistently) evaluated the ideas and concepts thrown up in the 'everyday world' in order to establish theoretically their analytical value (1993:27-28).

As Miles elsewhere points out, because 'racial' oppression has manifested itself with the rise of the processes of colonialism and imperialism which accompanied the development of capitalism as a world economic system, Marxist writers such as Cox have taken up the argument that the idea of 'race' was necessarily functional to the expansion of capitalism. Miles argues that this leads to a reductionist and empirically flawed logic. Indeed, ample evidence now exists that the idea of 'race' has its roots in much earlier (pre-capitalist) times.¹³

As an alternative to studying the origins of the idea of 'race', Miles offers the concept of racialization and in the process shifts the research question, establishing a new agenda for Marxists. "The significance of ideology lays not in its root cause but in the fact that it is reproduced to justify and give direction to a specific policy of capitalist expansion" (Miles 1982:116). In other words, instead of discussing how the concept of 'race' emerged in European discourse, we should concentrate our attention on racialization, the social process whereby groups are singled out for unequal treatment on the basis of real or imagined phenotypical characteristics and identified as a 'race' (Miles 1989:75; Li 1990:7).

According to Miles it is only when the physical and cultural attributes of a racialized group are negatively ascribed that the possibility of racism exists. Both racialization and racism are for him ideological, that is a form of evaluation. Miles argues that if the idea of 'race' has lost scientific credibility and is false, any expression of racism must be a representational phenomenon (1989:84). For analytical purposes, as well as to eliminate what he calls "conceptual inflation", Miles also distinguishes the cognitive dimension of racism - the ideological process of negative evaluation - from the practical processes of exclusion. He uses the concept of 'exclusionary practice' to analyze all instances where a specified group is shown

to be in unequal receipt of resources and services, or to be unequally represented in the hierarchy of class relations. Explaining why this distinction is made, Miles writes:

Having demonstrated that a racialized population has been intentionally or unintentionally excluded from, for example, the labour market, it does not follow that this is a consequence, wholly or in part, of racism. Exclusionary practices may be partially or wholly motivated by or expressive of racism, but this must always be demonstrated rather than assumed to be the case (1989:77).

That Miles restricts racism to ideologies (beliefs or statements - discourse, in this narrow sense) and not practices, institutions and structures, and gives no valid analytical status to 'race', has led some writers, particularly those who begin with the race/class dichotomy, to argue that his approach suffers from an economic reductionism of the kind which he claims to overcome.¹⁴ That is to say, since Miles' central claim is that the meaning of racism cannot be understood without understanding the larger dynamics of the formation and reproduction of the capitalist mode of production, and since class is basically the privileged relation of effectivity within that domain, the phenomenon of racism is reduced to no more than mere false consciousness on the part of the working-class (1989:9).

The argument consistently made by Miles that it is not worthwhile for sellers of labour power to organize politically on the basis of 'race' or ethnic identities in order to fight racism is generally identified as evidence for his failure to give serious consideration to the realities of 'racial' oppression outside of class. In 1982, Miles wrote:

The totality of 'black' people in Britain cannot be adequately analyzed as a 'race' outside or in opposition to class relations. Rather, the process by which they are racialized, and react to the racialization, always occurs in a particular historical and structural context, one in which the social relations of production provide the necessary and initial framework (1984:233).

Again, it is because 'races' have no ontological existence according to Miles, and because the term "racism" itself has only recently been developed in the English language, such organizational endeavours are mistaken (1989:42-3). He argues that to treat the term 'race' as

something which is real is to engage in an act of recification; that is, treating what is no more than an abstraction as though it were real, legitimates its phenomenological existence.

As the above quote suggests, in his earlier work Miles was quite adamant about starting with the 'essential relations of capitalism' (the productive sphere in the narrow sense) in order to "...explain why the social world appears as it does", therefore maintaining a sharp division between base and superstructure (1987b:282). This is particularly noticeable in some of his empirical research on the role of labour migration in capitalist societies conducted with Annie Phizacklea under the framework of the political economy of migration (which is similar to the approach adopted by Bo'aria and Li in Canada). Here they take the example of post-war Britain and examine the entry of immigrants from the new Commonwealth countries (ex-colonies of Britain) into specific occupations with vacancies. These immigrant groups, they correctly argue, did not enter a neutral political and ideological environment; they were already 'racialized' by three centuries of colonialism which gave them citizenship while denying them equal rights in most other respects. However, since the authors explain this migration in the context of a massive shortage of unskilled manual labour in Britain, they argue that it was this demand, hence the need for the accumulation of capital, which was responsible for the British capitalist state's denial of full legal status to this category of migratory labour through discriminatory laws.

Focused on the dynamics of labour migration, the argument can only go so far, since many of the descendants of these racialized groups from the commonwealth are not migrants and have equal political rights, yet continue to occupy disadvantaged positions in Britain's economy. In many cases it is not in the work place where they suffer the most, but in institutions such as schools and government agencies. Moreover, the depiction of all commonwealth immigrants as migrant labour does not take into account the great heterogeneity both between different ethnic minorities and within. Thus, in this framework, the "essential relations" which include the need for cheap unskilled labour seem to explain the process of racialization and related exclusions such as the denial of political rights.

What attention was given to aspects of racism outside of the requirements of capital or the economic category of migrant labour was primarily discussed through the concept of ideological re-production. As a "distorted and misleading" representation, the ideology of racism was significant only in that it illustrated the method in which ideas are taken up in certain situations by different class fractions, and how they then undergo transformation as a consequence of the dynamics of structural change (1987b:283). Even though, by suggesting that different classes understand their material reality differently, Miles is able to argue that the working-class has reproduced the ideology of racism in its own manner to make 'successful' sense of its material world, it still remains something that needs to be explained. In other words, the processes of racialization and racism were merely descriptive by-products that covered up the underlying structural processes, whether capital accumulation at the level of the world-system, differences in the price of labour or variation in its supply and demand.

Although he still maintains that because the ideology of racism is a component part of a wider structure of class disadvantage, struggles organized around 'Black' oppression are mistaken, in his more recent work Miles attributes causal efficacy to this process. That is to say, whereas in his earlier work, "essential relations" in explaining the disadvantage of racialized groups were narrowly conceived, since 1987 he argues that the ideological process of racialization, registered in discourse, may - at certain conjunctural moments - determine economic and political relations under the capitalist mode of production. Having discussed the colonization of Kenya and the organization of production out of which 'racial' inequality was institutionalized, Miles writes:

... in this historically specific instance of primary accumulation, the labouring class was created by a dialectic between a process of material (but partial) dispossession of the means of production and the process of racialization. Consequently, racism became a relation of production because it was an ideology which shaped decisively the formation and reproduction of the relation between exploiter and exploited: it was one of those representational elements which became historically conducive to the constitution and reproduction of a system of commodity production (1989:111).

In this passage, Miles makes clear his argument that in the colonial context, racism, on the one hand, was linked to European representations of the Other, which were generated and reproduced in the course of a history of contact, and, on the other actively structured the transformation of the existing mode of production (Miles 1993:50). Better put, he now seems to acknowledge a reciprocity of determination between ideological, political and economic relations, and in so doing, makes a substantial move toward a far more complex and differentiated type of analysis of racism, without abandoning two of his major premises. The first is that the effectivity of racialization and racism is always mediated by and through other structures and social relations, the most important of which are class relations and the political reality of the nation-state (Miles 1993:12). Hence, the elimination of racism must be understood in the context of the greater, political, economic and ideological relations of capitalism. The second is that the idea of 'race' itself has no ontological status and therefore common-sense notions of 'race' cannot automatically provide the basis for a Marxist analysis of racism (Miles 1993:35).

In fact, this shift in orientation has allowed Miles to take up seriously two of the major premises of a contemporary Marxist analysis of racial divisions, first introduced by Stuart Hall in 1978, but more widely communicated through his 1980 paper, "Race, Articulation and Societies Structured in Dominance" as well as subsequent work that has come out of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham. In Racism, Miles stresses the need for an investigator to show empirically in each instance in which a racialized group occupies a disadvantaged position, that such disadvantage is necessarily consequent upon racialization. This position invariably avoids the dangers of a mono-causal explanation of racism because in searching for the reasons why a racialized population occupies a position of disadvantage, the investigator must engage in concrete analyses, enabling her or him to grasp the reality as one of 'many determinations'.¹⁵ It is precisely a multi-causal interpretation which Hall has proposed in order to fight the reductionist tendencies which accompany the high level of abstraction in Marx's writing (Hall 1980:338-42). Second, if the orientation is toward understanding racism

through concrete analysis rather than abstract theorizing, it seems to follow that the effectivity of racism is historically specific. Again, recognition of historical specificity is what Hall advocated when he stated we should be thinking of racial formations in terms of 'racisms' in the plural, and not of a singular racism with some trans-historical essence.¹⁶

However, whereas other Marxists, including Hall, who theorize the phenomena of racial oppression, do not provide a satisfactory definition of the concept of racism Miles does. Therefore, to the extent that Miles clearly defines what constitutes racialization and racism while still theoretically supporting the claim that these ideological processes in certain conjunctures of social relations may causally effect the economic and political spheres, his approach is perhaps most developed thus far for empirical analyses.

The concepts of racialization, ideology of racism, and exclusionary practices discussed above will guide me in analyzing the responses towards the East Indians in British Columbia and the various social forces which were determinant in their production. Although the historicity of the idea of 'race' suggests that the East Indians were identified as a separate 'race' in British Columbia, by employing the concept of racialization, I am forced to show empirically this constituted ideological process at work, rather than speak of 'races' strictly as naturally occurring populations as British Columbians believed them to be.

In identifying racism as ideological and separate from exclusionary practices, the representations of the East Indians may be examined for their content as partial attempts by European residents to interpret and construct their social worlds. In comparing these representations with exclusionary practices, both their contradictory nature and their effect on political and economic relations may be revealed. In analytically separating these arguments, representations and structural processes with respect to the exclusion of the East Indians (but still recognizing that empirically they are intertwined), and therefore studying the links between these processes as well as with the wider structure of class, an interpretation may be developed that contextualizes the phenomena of racism, rather than begins with strong theoretical assertions.

Since this study seeks a concrete and conjunctural analysis which focuses on different levels of determinacy, no attempt will be made to systematically analyze class relations or the mode of production more generally. Such concreteness need not, however mean a narrow confinement in terms of spatial and temporal contexts. Indeed, the concrete interpretation of racism against the East Indians in British Columbia will be placed in the broader political and ideological parameters of the British Empire.

4. Outline Of Analysis

As stated, this thesis seeks to produce an interpretation, "anchored in the economy", of the responses to the East Indians who came to British Columbia during the first decade of this century and the social forces behind the exclusionary practices that were directed against them. Like most immigrants to Canada, the East Indians were a gendered and culturally specific form of labour who came to sell their labour power at a time when the capitalist mode of production was developed and relationships were differentiated by the means of production. Hence, any analysis that wishes to maintain a materialist dimension must take into account the nature of capitalist relations of production and the economy overall, into which the East Indians entered, under which they were racialized and later excluded from further entry. But since their racialization and explicit expressions of racism against them did not occur in a vacuum, I argue it is not fruitful to present the East Indian case in isolation from some of the other racisms that existed prior to their arrival or the social, political and economic relations in which the racisms were embedded. Of particular relevance here is the fact that British Columbia, first as a colony of Britain and then a province of Canada, was one geo-political formation where from a very early date large-scale migration of non-white, predominantly male labour from regions of China (and California) and Japan (or indirectly via Hawaii) took place.

This earlier migration of labour, due to the uneven development of capitalism at the global level, was in terms of certain political and economic characteristics very similar to that of

the East Indians. Moreover, by the time the East Indians arrived, various racist discourses and exclusionary practices against the Chinese and Japanese had already taken shape and reached a point where the entry of the labouring classes of these groups had been completely halted.

Of course, such factors, in themselves, are not sufficient to warrant any additional attention to these groups relative to other people who came to sell their labour power. This is especially the case since one of the problems of some of literature on the history of British Columbia is precisely that all three groups who migrated from Asia are often lumped into one analytical category and the conditions under which their phenotypical characteristics were given social significance are taken for granted as being exactly the same, rather than verifying this through empirical investigation. Moreover, because of the extension of capitalist relations of production and the increased circulation of commodities, producing a high level of mobility, this period was one of massive global migration. Hence, the Chinese and Japanese were among many who arrived in British Columbia to sell their labour power.

However, during the period in which the Chinese and Japanese came to British Columbia, a very powerful belief existed among Europeans that human beings were divided into discrete immutable and biological entities called 'races' on the basis of differing phenotypical characteristics, the most salient being skin colour. Furthermore, Europeans believed these so-called biological 'races' could be categorized and evaluated hierarchically, with whites at the top and blacks at the bottom. Although these sets of ideas were not rigid and transformed with changing conditions, when it came to the question of how the territory that is present day British Columbia would be populated, they played an instrumental role.

As Abele and Stasiulis point out, in determining the national, ethnic, and racial composition of immigrants to Canada, one imperative of the British and their heirs was a desire to populate it with white British people (1989:241). Given British Columbia's political status vis à vis Britain, prior to its entry into Confederation, this imperative also applies to the province from the time the British decided to open it to settlement. Hence, in this respect, the large-scale entry of the Chinese and Japanese went against a shared ideological and political

'vision' of the dominant governing classes in the political entities of Britain, Canada and British Columbia.

But it is important to note that to some degree this contradiction arose because, as a territory that had adopted capitalist relations of production, British Columbia and/or Canada required that the shifting demands of the labour market be met (Abele and Stasiulis 1989:241). During certain periods in the history of the province, especially when a persistent shortage of labour was evident, such migration was in fact both encouraged and initiated by the capitalist class and all levels of the State.¹⁷ In other words, the migration of the Chinese and, to a lesser extent, Japanese labourers, due to their smaller numbers, was closely intertwined with the development of capitalism and the accumulation of capital in British Columbia.

For the purposes of the present thesis, this means that the racialization of the Chinese and Japanese needs to be considered within the context of how this contradiction was played out in the development of British Columbia as a capitalist social formation and an 'imagined community' of white (British) settlement.¹⁸ Furthermore, since the development of such a formation was only possible through access to land, the appropriation of land by the British from the original inhabitants of the territory and their subsequent displacement also needs consideration. This will be the objective of the next chapter. It will serve as a backdrop to the arrival of the East Indian migrants in British Columbia and can best be understood as an outline to the creation of British Columbia as an 'imagined community' of white (British) settlement. Although the chapter seeks to take into account the political, economic and ideological components that can best help explain the specific racism experienced by the East Indians, as well as those that were commonly held against all three migrant groups from Asia, only those historical processes and events that appear most relevant to the research question at hand will be addressed. Much of the chapter will focus on the formation of the state, the proletarianization of labour, the development of industry, the role of the Chinese and Japanese in such processes and the emergence of exclusionary practices, most notably immigration restrictions imposed by the federal and provincial governments.

The chapter concludes with the turn of the century period when, for various reasons, a general consensus was reached by a number of political and economic classes in British Columbia that the entry of 'Oriental' immigrants into the province should be completely halted. Although this consensual articulation of exclusion against the 'Orientals' represents an important historical conjuncture in accounting for the East Indian case, in order to grasp its full effect, and hence the specificity of the East Indian case, it must be placed in the context of the broader ideological relations of the British Empire. It thus becomes obvious that at the same time that a movement in British Columbia from a complex economic and political struggle between different fractions of capital and labour over the continued entry of 'Oriental' labour was giving way to a class consensus on the question, an ideology of "Anglo-Saxonism" in Britain was being revitalized. This can be seen as a consequence of an economic decline which spread throughout the Empire including Canada where it led in British Columbia to the formation of a supra-class consensus. This 'communal identity' was similar to those emerging in other white-settler colonies of Britain that had been exposed to large-scale non-white labour at approximately the same time. They contained sentiments that white settlers held a special responsibility in building a new national and provincial community that was naturally to be 'white'. In other words, around the turn of the century, co-existing with the call to rid the province of 'Orientals', a supra-class appeal to preserve British Columbia as a province for the Anglo-Saxon 'race', (as registered in the 1902 Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration) was made. It was both imperialist in its chauvinistic attachment to Britain and racist by emphasizing the biological superiority of the Anglo-Saxon 'race'. This expression of affection for Britain had always existed and therefore was not new. But the important point here is that never before had it been so powerfully articulated as to surpass class differences on the issue of continued entry of 'Oriental' labour. The strength of this communal sentiment is illustrated in the federal government's response, which was to raise the Chinese tax to such a level (\$500) that few Chinese labourers could afford to enter. In order to maintain some continuity between the more concrete events in the development of British Columbia and this

section, the entire chapter is situated in a somewhat broader context of British imperialism. Therefore, the nature of, and changes in, the relationship between British Columbia and Canada vis à vis Britain are also emphasized.

Having accounted for the essential social forces which are necessary for us to grasp the nature of the responses to the East Indian immigrants, chapter three proceeds with their entry into the white settler community of British Columbia and examines the reaction of the various groups and classes in the province as well as of the various levels of the state. This chapter attempts to refute some of the current economic explanations for the racialization and exclusion of the East Indians. It seeks to illustrate how through a conjunctural and contextualized analysis it is possible to identify which levels - ideological, political or economic - were most powerful in directing the nature of the response. It is essentially argued that the large-scale arrival of the East Indians to Vancouver occurred amidst a labour shortage and a newly emergent political battle between labour and capital over the question of the importation of "Oriental" labour. In this battle employers of such labour were advocating the temporary relaxation of immigration restrictions to meet the needs of the market and workers were fighting against any proposals that sought such action on the premise that their livelihoods would be threatened through economic competition from cheap "Oriental" labour.

Here it is demonstrated how old ideologies of an 'imagined community' derived at the turn of the century out of a consensus among class interests were reproduced and reshaped to fit a new social and political situation. Within this context, the arrival of the East Indians, in a contradictory manner, of course, was opportune in fulfilling the political interests of the working-class. Yet, it is important to note that the negative and racist nature of the perceptions of the working-class against the East Indians was shared and articulated by the province's newspapers, particular in Vancouver, civil society, the provincial state and municipalities. In other words, the reactions were clearly irreducible to class relations and concerns about economic competition. Some comments here will also be made about the powerful shift in the representation of these migrants from loyal Sikhs to "cheap Hindus".

The final substantive chapter is chapter four. Here some of the social and economic exclusions confronted by East Indians in British Columbia are discussed. Once again, economically deterministic arguments for their position in the labour market and civil society in 1906 are disputed and an alternative is provided. In the process, the initial response of British Columbia capitalists to East Indians as workers is also examined. Furthermore, the Dominion's reaction to the East Indian immigrants and the fact that they were British subjects is reinterpreted through a focus on significant conjunctural events and ideological shifts in British Columbia.

Following Satzewich's recent call for a conjunctural and cross-cultural approach (1990:258), through an empirical analysis this thesis will show that by beginning with specificity and contextuality, grounded concretely, we can grasp 'many determinants' that are not adequately clarified by an abstract theorization of concepts such as class and mode of production.

Chapter Two

British Columbia 1858-1903

In situating the development of British Columbia in the context of British imperialism an appropriate period to begin with is the middle of the eighteenth century.¹⁹ It is not only the industrial revolution in Great Britain that can be traced to this period, but also England's decisive victory over France in the Seven Years' War. In this imperialist battle consummated with the signing of the Treaty of Paris, France lost nearly all of her colonial empire. Britain, on the other hand, gained complete dominance over the Atlantic coast and North America which included the territory that is present-day British Columbia, to become, except for Spain, the largest colonial power in the world.

Once the threat from her strongest European competitor was removed, Britain set up operations against the original inhabitants of North America in order to gain access to the land. Slowly land was taken away from the Natives, and by the beginning of the nineteenth century many eastern sections of the continent were inhabited by white settlers in small colonies. In 1813, thirteen of these colonies separated from England and established an autonomous political entity to be called the United States. Regardless of this loss, Britain still had the world's largest navy and a technological capacity which was no where superior.

White settlement on the west coast of North America was to begin much later. At the turn of the nineteenth century, there were anywhere between 300,000 to 400,000 Natives engaged in subsistence practices in the territory of present-day British Columbia (Tennant 1990:3-10). Any trading activity that existed in the territory between the Native inhabitants and Europeans was over sea and involved primarily the coastal Natives and such trade items as the sea otter. The trading relationship seemed to have been reciprocal, with Native economies not initially threatened. The handful of forts owned by the North West Company that were on the territory also had little impact (Fisher 1977:34-35).

When a merger took place between the North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) in 1821, the latter with its trade monopoly was introduced to the Pacific coast for the first time. Economic trade switched almost immediately to overland and, as a result, Native inhabitants came to participate more heavily in it, indeed occupying an important position as suppliers of the extractive resources. Economic activities organized by the European fur traders were oriented to overseas markets. However, when the price and market in Europe for such items as the beaver collapsed, not long after it had begun, intense trade gave way to a new economic era.

1. British Colony Under The HBC

When in 1846 American settlers began to take up land in Oregon, just south of what is now British Columbia, Britain was forced to sign the Oregon Treaty and the southern limit of her influence became set. At this time, the HBC transferred its main office to Vancouver Island to establish a British presence in the area. Although the boundary dispute had little immediate significance for Britain, some concerns about the possibilities of American immigrants moving further North and claiming territory led her in 1848, to begin leasing the Island of Vancouver to the HBC. For a rent of seven shillings, the HBC, as Britain's only representative in the territory, assumed the obligation to administer and defend it (Roy 1889:3). Aware that the only means to guarantee protection of the territory from American annexation was by populating it with settlers, Britain also obligated the HBC to promote settlement. After the first governor resigned shortly after taking office, the Chief Factor of the Company, James Douglas, was named the governor of British Columbia in 1851.

Similar to its approach to settlements of eastern Canada, the British colonial office in England wanted the "resident colonists" of the new settlement on Vancouver Island to consist of "emigrants from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, or from its other Dominions . . ." (Ormsby 1958:98). Whereas a capitalist labour market had already formed

by the middle of the nineteenth century in eastern English Canada, the British colony of the west coast was little more than a concept. Given the great distance between British Columbia and Britain and that equal, if not better, prospects for immigrants existed in the East, attracting settlers was difficult. Because of the scarcity of land in Britain, settlers came to the colony, eager to claim ownership over the territory.

According to the Royal Proclamation of Oct. 1763 the rights to the land belonged to the Natives. These rights had to be extinguished by the British officials, in this case the HBC, before land could be owned by the settlers. Extinction of Native peoples' title to the land could only occur through treaties and allocation of reserve lands. There is evidence that some attempts were made by Douglas to extinguish these rights of Natives via treaty, but overall the project was abandoned. Native societies on the Island were geographically dispersed, highly diverse and many of them still isolated from contact with Europeans. As a people who had inhabited the territory for hundreds of years, the Natives were hostile to Europeans infringing on their way of life. In total, fourteen purchases (treaties) were made by Douglas between 1850 and 1854 involving only some 358 square miles, about 3% of the area of Vancouver Island (Tennant 1990:19).

Without signing a treaty with the original inhabitants, the company began to prepare the land for settlers to purchase. Yet desiring ownership over an acreage sufficient to permit the development of agricultural commodity production, new settlers were sometimes left disappointed. Generally, they disapproved of the HBC's economic and political monopoly and made their complaints known to the British colonial office (Naylor 1989:356). Since Britain itself was moving away from holding trading-companies due to their expense and because of pressure from the new industrial class in England to open up colonized regions for free trade, the colonial office in London was sympathetic to concerns of British Columbia settlers. Indeed, the necessity of maintaining the HBC was debated in the British House of Commons on more than one occasion (ibid:357).

The contradiction between the company's primary interest of maintaining the fur trade, created out of the mercantile economy, and the idea of settlement and economic diversification could no longer be ignored. Pressure from the approximately seven hundred settlers to end HBC's monopoly and to introduce British political traditions centered around the concept of liberal democracy, led to the establishment of a partially representative legislative assembly by the colonial office in 1856 even though there were only forty-three people in the colony who owned the twenty acres necessary to exercise the franchise (Barman 1991:60; Akrigg and Akrigg 1977:80-81). The new assembly consisted of seven members, ironically almost all of whom were in one way or another associated with the company (*ibid.*).

However, the slow course of events changed abruptly and forever in 1858 with the onset of the first gold rush. The gold rush served as the impetus to end the HBC's hold on power for two reasons. First, gold was located on the mainland, a part of British territory that had not yet been opened up for settlement (Malcolmson 1988:11) and second; the rush brought with it a population, albeit only a temporary one, whose size was beyond the company's administrative capacity (Phillips 1988:39). On Aug. 2, 1858, the British proclaimed the mainland a second colony open for settlement. John Douglas, Governor of the Island was offered governorship of the new colony as well, on the condition that he end his connections with the HBC.

2. Gold Rushes And The Arrival of Chinese

News of large quantities of gold in the British Colony broke out throughout North America in April of 1858. Within four months, the territory with a population of less than 2,000 non-Natives, most of them living on the Island, witnessed the arrival of some 25,000 to 30,000 prospective gold miners. The vast majority of the new arrivals were men of European origin from California, who had either entered overland crossing the American border via Washington or came by boat from San Francisco through Victoria.

By the time the gold rush hit British Columbia, Chinese, mostly males, had been migrating to California for nearly a decade (see Saxton 1971). In 1858 there were anywhere between 11,000 and 25,000 (of them) residing in California. Having also heard rumors of the gold discovery, Chinese merchants in San Francisco immediately made travel arrangements with a shipping company for their fellow countrymen in California to be sent to the British territory. Soon a recruitment system was established whereby 'miners' could come directly from China. Most of these Chinese immigrants were male peasants from rural parts of China. Generally lacking sufficient funds to pay for the trip, they purchased tickets, usually from a company in Hong Kong, under the condition they were bonded to the purchaser until they could return the fare plus extra services (see Li 1978, 1988b). By the summer of 1860 the total number of Chinese on the Mainland was estimated to be 4,000, most of them from China (Tan and Roy 1988:6).

3. European Miners' Relations With Chinese

The first Chinese to arrive in the British territory, however, were free miners from California. At this time, with the capital and skill required limited, gold mining was a fairly accessible economic activity.²⁰ If enough gold was in the trench, anyone with access to picks, shovels, and a bar, along with endurance could 'ideally' fare well. In fact, initially some Chinese miners were highly successful.²¹ Overall, however, American miners who outnumbered all other groups, tended to apply the 'racial' and cultural stereotypes which they brought with them from California in order to control the way digs were distributed in the British territory. There were reported instances of 'racial' violence between American and Chinese miners,²² and some Chinese even left the territory on account of it.²³ 'Racial' segregation among Chinese and European miners intensified as Chinese miners from California were replaced by those who came directly from China. Unfamiliar with mining, they were generally found in digs left by Europeans due to their low profitability. One place thirty miles

upstream from Fort Yale, for example, became known as "China Bar" due to its high concentration of Chinese miners (Wynne 1978:112).

But as much as Euro-American miners at times resented the fact that Chinese were able to extract a profit from digs they had left behind, new sites of opportunity and exaggerated rumors of rich diggings led them to quickly forget about the marginal successes of the "poor Chinaman". In other words, because of the Euro-Americans' lack of attachment to the territory, which, in part, is due to the high mobility of this type of independent commodity production, 'racial prejudice' did not give way to an organized movement to deprive the Chinese from mining opportunities or exclude them from the British territory altogether.

4. Chinese Merchants In The British Colony

During this period of the gold rush, in addition to the miners, Chinese merchants also arrived in the colony, most initially settling in the city of Victoria on Vancouver Island. Few in numbers, they were either owners of companies that supplied provisions to the gold fields, functioned as labour contractors, or operated service oriented businesses such as laundries and restaurants (Wickberg 1982:16). Again, like in the mines, 'racial' and cultural stereotypes kept this small community in Victoria socially and geographically segregated. However, Governor Douglas who had recently changed his perspective, and the new white business class in Victoria had great expectations of seeing the colony become an economically viable component of the Empire.²⁴ First appearing in the London Times and later reprinted in the Weekly Victoria Gazette in 1859, (one of the two newspapers that were established in the city that year) the following article conveyed their hopes clearly:

In days to come, when the Pacific coast is under Anglo-Saxon dominion from the frozen Sea to the Isthmus of Panama, when China and the whole of Eastern Asia are penetrated by the enterprise of English - speaking races - the region now known as British Columbia will most assuredly rank among the most prosperous and most powerful (May 28, 1959).

Once Victoria was declared a free port in 1860, the business class in the city was of the opinion that free trade was the best possible avenue toward economic wealth and sought to develop commercial links with the Orient. As a consequence, Chinese merchants were commonly praised for their initiative in consigning vessels laden with labourers and commodities. In fact, one newspaper article even suggested that the day was not too distant when San Francisco would miss her Chinese merchants to the point where California would draw her supplies from the free ports of Vancouver Island and all goods not destined for America would find their best market at Victoria (Wynne 1978:116). Hence, at a time when expectations of wealth in the British territory overrode all other concerns, the response to Chinese merchants was positive. The entry of capital and industry into the colony was the only means through which high standards of living and wealth could be obtained. What the 'white' settlers would trade was not yet determined, but they were nevertheless enthusiastic to establish commerce in the colony.

5. Capitalist Relations Of Production

Prior to the completion of the railway line in the province in 1886, capitalist relations of production, adopted as early as 1855, were largely confined to the province's coal industry of Vancouver Island (Philips 1988:37). The main reason coal mining developed a system of wage labour was the considerable reserves of capital required to cover the initial costs of technology and machinery. In the few coal mining communities that existed during these early years European men were generally employed. Conflict with employers was intense in the industry and the most common complaints among workers were "(l)ow wages, long hours, poor working conditions and inadequate housing" (ibid:42).

With the discovery of gold many European workers left the Island to work the fields in the hopes of 'striking it rich'. In the process, they were replaced by Chinese immigrants newly arriving from China who had come with the intent of reaching 'ginshan' (gold mountain), but

in part due to intimidation tactics of the Europeans were driven away. Thus, to use Edna Bonacich's expression, a racially split labour market developed since Chinese workers were willing to accept a lower wage for labour than that paid to European workers for equal work.²⁵ Indeed, employers hired Chinese workers at anywhere from one-half to one-third the wage of white workers for equal work.

Although wage levels and available resources differed between Chinese and Europeans, such differences are not sufficient to produce a situation where the higher priced labour, in this case Europeans, would feel threatened and seek to exclude 'cheaper' priced labour, in this case the Chinese workers; competition within the labour market is also necessary. Two factors heighten the potential for such competition. First, when the supply of labour exceeds the actual positions available; and second, when employers resort to rule and divide tactics beyond simply reducing the wages of all workers.

Nearly depleted by the mid 1860s, gold could not have provided long-term economic prosperity for the white population on both Vancouver Island and the Mainland. At this time, Natives who worked in the fields reverted back to their traditional subsistence practices, whereas American miners returned to the United States. While in sharp contrast to the estimated 30,000 that once entered the Fraser and Cariboo river valley in search of gold, the figure of 6,000 non-Natives in the province in 1866, almost all of them men and approximately half of them of Chinese origin, was nevertheless higher than the number before the gold rush began (Anderson 1991:35). Hence, without any considerable profit in small scale gold mining and having no other alternatives, many miners were now turning towards wage labour.

The second factor, employers' exploitative practices was also as much evident in the mining sites in Nanaimo, owned by the Dunsmuirs at this time, as anywhere else in Canada. Employers and management were concerned first and foremost with cutting the costs of production and increasing profit. To this end, when workers sought higher wages or better conditions, capitalists used Chinese workers as strike breakers in some of the most violent and disruptive disputes. Such exploitative practices were justified using racist ideologies shared by

all Europeans about the biological inferiority of non-whites. It is important to note that the contract-system under which the Chinese arrived further placed them in a weaker position relative to white workers and employers. Being indebted to a contractor or shipping company placed an extra burden on Chinese workers, which made them more susceptible to exploitation by employers. Antagonism by whites against Chinese workers was evident as early as 1867 when a sea of protest arose from white workers at the coal company at Nanaimo as Chinese were hired. Two months later when Chinese workers organized a strike, they did so alone.

Just imagine a John Chinaman who, at home, works for five cents per day and finds his own 'lice' striking for an increase of wages! At Nanaimo, on Monday, the Celestial gentlemen w^ho load the cars with coal at the mouth of the pit, actually struck for a dollar and a half a day, instead of one dollar, their former wages. John has caught the 'striking fever' from the white colliers, and he cannot well be replaced even at the advanced rate, it is probable that his demands will be complied with, although we're of the opinion that white labour at \$3 a day is more profitable than Chinese at \$1.50. In consequence of the 'strike', the Emily Harris, which was loading from this place, was detained for some hours (British Colonist 24 July, 1867:3)

6. British Colony To British Columbia

By the time the second rush in the Cariboo region came to an end, not only was the economy in a slump and many men without work, but the two colonies were also in a financial crisis. Most of the revenue that was generated by the gold rush through customs duties and mining licenses was swallowed up in large-scale construction projects, some that would never be completed. The accumulated combined public debt for the Island and the mainland had reached nearly 1.3 million pounds (Lai 1988:27). In order to cut administrative costs in November of 1866, Britain merged the two colonies into one, naming it the United Colony of British Columbia. In the absence of any significant economic revival after this last ditch effort, white settlers of the British colony reluctantly entered confederation. The decision allowed Britain to maintain a modified form of control over the west coast area, while the Dominion took over the colony's debt (Malcolmson 1988:15).

Although economic issues, such as how to counter stagnation and attract a large settler population, played the central role in the question of entry into confederation, other issues were also allied with this transfer in political status. Regardless of the fact that the assembly consisted partially of elected representatives, throughout the 1850s and until 1864, at which time Douglas retired from his position as governor, the old elite of the HBC at Fort Victoria and the governing officials in the colonies were one and the same men. During the 1860s in the context of the declining role of the fur-trade and the presence of the HBC overall, concerns about the assembly's failure to be responsible to "its people" which were voiced by a handful of active liberal reformers exposed to the democratic institutions in eastern Canada, found a new arena (Ormsby 1976:102; Shelton 1967:14; Woodcock 1975:98). Thus, when the question of the future of the territory came up in 1866 persisting until 1870, the idea of creating a fully-elected assembly was vigorously pushed and debated.

7. Denial Of The Franchise

Since prior to confederation the only requirements to exercise the franchise were ownership of property and age, certain members of the Chinese resident population were permitted to vote for the legislative councilors of the colonial assembly (Roy 1981:151). In 1871, when British Columbia held its first provincial election, some Chinese men actually voted (*ibid.*). Moreover, since the federal government used the province's voter lists, this also meant that Chinese were permitted to vote for the twenty-five members in the confederation election. In fact, throughout the period in which Douglas was governor, colony representatives like Judge Bergie took pride in the fact that, unlike the Americans, British Columbians had established a justice system which was based on "British" principles of law, order and equality and had made a conscious effort to treat all suspected offenders the same regardless of 'race'(Roy 1989:5).

In the first session in 1872, after British Columbia entered confederation, the provincial legislative assembly passed an amendment to the Qualification and Registration of Voters Act so as to exclude "Chinese" and "Indians" from the franchise (S.B.C 1972: C.2, S.3). Hence, all male British subjects over the age of twenty one were entitled to vote. Since this amendment left uncertain the position of Chinese who had registered to vote before the legislation was passed, a number of Chinese voted in an 1874 by-election (Roy 1981:151). So as to remove any further uncertainty, in 1875 the legislature passed another amendment to the Act imposing a fine on any collector of votes who failed to strike the name of "every Chinamen now on the list of voters" (S.B.C. 1975: C.2, S.2). The following year, the provincial legislature denied the Chinese (men) the right to vote in municipal elections.

Seventy-three percent of the approximately seven thousand five hundred non-Natives in British Columbia in 1870 were male and one third of them (roughly 1,500) were of Chinese origin (Barman 1991:369). Given the large proportion of Chinese workers in the racially divided labour force, and that the right to vote is fundamental in a society developed around liberal democratic traditions, there is a tendency among writers to reduce disenfranchisement to a deliberate attempt by capitalists and the ruling elite to oppress a certain sector of the working-class so their labour power could be further exploited.

True, Chinese were denied the right of citizenship for the next forty years at which time they regained the right to vote. During this period Chinese workers suffered a vast array of other legal exclusions, further impeding their prospects for social mobility (see Bolaria and Li 1988:107; Anderson 1988:354). Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to argue that the drive to accumulate capital was the basis for their disenfranchisement. Individuals below the specified age, Native peoples (representing an estimated seventy percent of all the inhabitants in the province in 1871), along with women implicitly, were also denied the right to vote (Barman 1991:363; Ward 1979:Appendix Table 1).

Instead of attributing causal efficacy to the economy, that is, capital accumulation, the denial of the franchise to the Chinese, as an exclusionary practice, should be understood in the

context of an increasing articulation of the idea of British Columbia as a community of white (British) settlement. As early as 1858, it was loudly proclaimed in The Vancouver Island Gazette that "(t)he destiny of England is to colonize and lay the foundation of Empire in distant lands, to raise up flourishing cities under the shadow of primeval forests, and enrich the earth with settlements of English speaking men" (28 July, 1958:1). Hence, when the moment arose to institutionalize social relations in the "new" political entity, the dominant European ideology of 'race' and gender structured the process. The twenty European men who sat in the legislative assembly believed, as did all politicians in Britain, that Chinese, Native peoples and women were incapable of exercising the right to vote and therefore should be excluded. A bill introduced in the assembly in 1874, which was supposedly intended to "universalize" the electoral process demonstrates the extent to which the denial of the right to vote to certain groups cannot be reduced to a question of labour exploitation or class interests. Abandoned was the notion of property rights as a pre-requisite so that all European men would be eligible to vote. Furthermore, even though at this time, Chinese merchants were appreciated by most politicians for their economic contribution in the territory, they were also excluded. The symbolic nature of the Act which years down the road would have serious repercussions, is suggestive of the fact that, for most residents, including Chinese merchants, the policy went unnoticed.

8. Province Of Canada 1871-1885

As part of its offer to British Columbia to join confederation, the Dominion government in 1871 also promised to build a transcontinental railway that would link the west coast province to eastern Canada within a period of ten years. When the project finally got underway in 1878, after years of financial drawbacks, the total white population for the provinces of Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia was short of 25,000 (Sage 1980:65). This figure, too small to provide the necessary labour for such a massive project, led the federal government to deploy a strategy of importing Chinese labour. Between May 1880 and July

1885 as many as 18,000 Chinese labourers were brought to western Canada, predominantly British Columbia to work on the railway (Chan 1983:63). Andrew Onderdonk, the chief railway contractor hired by the federal government, was alone responsible for importing 15,000 Chinese labourers (ibid.).

At the same time, a couple of politicians, known as liberal reformers, from the city of Nanaimo, the largest coal mining community of Vancouver Island and one ridden with class conflict and recognized for the use of Chinese workers as strike breakers, initiated a wave of exclusionary bills in provincial legislative assembly against the Chinese.²⁶ In 1878 two bills were passed which sought to regulate the movement of Chinese in the province. The first barred Chinese from being employed in public works and the second instituted a "head" tax. The latter was declared *ultra vires* by the British Columbia supreme court and disallowed. Given the flimsy nature of these exclusionary bills, it has been argued that they were little more than expressions of British Columbia politicians' frustration with the federal government's delay in starting construction of the railway (Munro 1971:43). The explanation for what was the motivating force behind these bills, however, should not dismiss the saliency of the extent to which the question of access to, and immigration of, Chinese labour was by this time embedded in the conflict between labour and capital in the province, as is indicated by the differing response to these bills.²⁷

9. The Dominion, The Railway And Chinese Labour

The Dominion government shared with politicians of British Columbia the belief that Canada's most distant province should be populated by a thoroughly white and preferably British people (Creese 1984, 1988; Abele and Stasiulis 1989). Hence, in contrast to European immigration, no efforts were ever made to bring Chinese immigrants to Canada as settlers (Avery 1977:24).²⁸ The belief that the Chinese could never become part of the Canadian fabric was officially institutionalized at the national level in 1885, when the Chinese were

disenfranchised from federal elections. "The Chinese", Prime minister Macdonald told parliament, "are foreigners", who have "no British instincts or British feelings or aspirations . . ." (Canada Debates 1885:1582).

The Dominion was also responsible for making sure the demands of the labour market and capitalist development were met. The co-existence of these two imperatives in the Dominion's immigration policies were communicated by the Prime Minister in a speech in the House of Commons as he attempted to appease British Columbian politicians who were demanding the importation of Chinese labour be stopped:

I share very much the feeling of the people of the United States and the Australian Colonies against a Mongolian or Chinese population in our country as permanent settlers. I believe that it is an alien race in every sense, that it could not and could not be expected to assimilate with our Aryan population, and therefore, if the temporary necessity had been overcome and the railway constructed across the continent with the means of sending European settlers and labourers into British Columbia, then it would be quite right to join to a reasonable extent in preventing the permanent settlement in this country of Mongolian, Chinese and Japanese immigrant. . . at present it is simply a question of alternatives: either you must have this labour or you cannot have the railway (Canada Debates 1882:1477).

Setting aside the long-term imperative to populate the nation-state with a white population in order to absorb the short-term benefits of "cheap" labour was not seen by Sir John A. Macdonald to be a contradiction. Indeed, as part of Macdonald's nation-building policies which also included the protective tariff and the settlement of the west, the transcontinental railway was calculated to impart solidity and substance to Canada and to make it an auxiliary 'white' kingdom within the Empire (Berger 1970:4). However, in British Columbia, where this contradiction had been played out at the economic, class conflict, and political levels, it was not easily reconciled. The issue of Chinese immigration continued to be politicized in the province, even though the Prime Minister asked British Columbians to be patient, because after the railway was completed, economic prosperity and "a flow into the Province of our own race" would alleviate the "difficulty in supplying the wants of the labour market" (Canada Debates 1884:1287). Since the Chinese had not brought their wives he also

argued "there is no fear of a permanent degradation of the country by a mongol race" (Canada Debates 1887:643).

Frustrated by the inaction of the Dominion in 1883 the British Columbia Legislative Assembly appointed its own Select Committee on Chinese Labour and Immigration. Of the thirty-one recommendations made by the committee, three anti-Chinese Acts were passed in the province in February 1884. One of them, the Chinese Immigration Act, made it unlawful for any Chinese person to enter the province and imposed a penalty on those who did. Again, under federal jurisdiction, the Dominion government through an order in council promptly disallowed the Act on April 12, 1884. After it was passed for the second time, in addition to disallowing it, the federal government initiated a Royal Commission on Chinese immigration which was "to make enquiry into . . . the whole subject of Chinese immigration, its trade relations as well as the social and moral objections taken to the influx of the Chinese people into Canada" (1885 R.C.:8).

10. Royal Commission On Chinese Immigration (1885)

Between the period of its entry into confederation and the 1885 Royal Commission, at least three structural changes had taken place in British Columbia. First, Chinese workers became a very substantial proportion of the workforce in a number of new resource industries, such as salmon canning, that required large amounts of unskilled and low-cost labour (Li 1979:327). A high concentration of Chinese workers were also reported in laundry, domestic services, coal mining, road construction, market gardening and farming. Everywhere Chinese workers were employed, they were still paid anywhere from one-quarter to two-thirds less than what unskilled white men received for performing the same tasks (Canada 1902:64-211).

Second was the increasing size of the labour market. As railway construction came to an end both Chinese and white workers were released. As well, European (male) workers

from other parts of the country moved west immediately after the railway was completed; 11,000 alone entering the province between June 1883 and November 1884 (Creese 1988:61). As had occurred at the end of the gold rush, the number of men seeking to sell their labour power after the completion of the railway outstripped the number of jobs available. Thus, with the racially divided labour market in place, the result was considerable competition for jobs and anti-Chinese agitation among workers and provincial politicians.

Finally, the generalization of commodity production in British Columbia, which meant that production was increasingly organized around the purchase and sale of free wage labour and directed to the market, had brought to the province large-scale labour organizations accompanied by a general increase in organizing of the working class (Warbuton 1988:269). The impact of this process upon the political climate and culture of the province was nothing short of profound.

11. Working-Class Representations Of Chinese Labourers (1885)

The Knights of Labor, initially formed in Philadelphia in 1869, was the first large-scale industrial labour union to enter the British Columbia scene in 1883 (Phillips 1967:13).²⁹ The majority of British Columbia workers who were organized in the local assemblies of the Knights consisted of lumber and wood workers, teamsters, miners, longshoremen, and general labourers. Again, given the racially divided labour market in which white workers competed with Chinese workers for jobs, it comes as no surprise that the Knights made the issue of Chinese exclusion the hall mark of the labour movement platform in provincial politics. Such a platform included policies that sought to end Chinese immigration, restrict the places where Chinese could work, deny Chinese entry into labour organizations, and encourage the replacement of Chinese labour by white labour.

In their official statement presented at the 1885 Royal Commission hearings, the Knights of Labor depicted Chinese workers in a negative manner. The Knights of Labor by

referring to them as a "low, degraded, and servile type" and, unlike "free white labor", the "willing tools" through which "grasping and tyrannical employers grind down all labor to the lowest living point" claimed Chinese workers were "dangerous competitors in the labour market" (Creese 1986:18). As Satzewich has recently pointed out, when considered analytically, this representation illustrates an element of truth (1989:317). That is to say, it was the qualitatively distinct position of Chinese workers from their 'European' counterparts in production relations resulting from the contract system, to which organized labour referred (ibid.). This differentiation illustrates that certain sectors of the labour movement had been sold on the idea that a labour market in which workers circulate freely is somehow "fairer" than one in which workers are obligated to a contractor. Overall, the opinion expressed by white organized labour at the Royal Commission hearings, in the words of the Nanaimo Trades Association, was that measures be taken to "stop the influx of Chinese to our shores" (1885 R.C.:121).

12. Political Practices Of Organized Labour 1885-1895

The Knights of Labor initially attempted, with little success, to gain electoral support in 1887. They were slowly replaced by craft unions. The labour movement in general, however, continued to grow as did the anti-Chinese and later, with the arrival of the Japanese, "anti-Oriental" policies and practices. In 1890, two men, both from the Nanaimo area, running as independents but union supporters nonetheless, were elected in the provincial election. That year, the legislative assembly passed a resolution which called for the Chinese head tax to be increased to \$100. Meanwhile, a delegation from the Vancouver Trades and Labour Council also met with the Prime Minister, Sir John. A. Macdonald, to press for an increase in the Chinese head tax from \$50 to \$500 (Creese 1989:31). In 1893, a similar resolution was transmitted to the federal government. Both were ignored in Ottawa. Then, just prior to the 1894 election the assembly accepted without much debate an amendment introduced years

earlier to include "no Chinese" clauses in two private acts which incorporated mining companies. It is also worth noting that the labour vote was significant in the 1894 election and that the labour party centered in Vancouver elected three MLAs (Robin 1972:69). In the same year a bill was again unanimously passed to increase the head tax even though several MLAs observed that the province needed Chinese agricultural labourers, miners, and cannery workers. As Bonacich argues, while the existence of a "cheap" labour pool creates an obvious incentive for capitalists to lower wages and thus boost their profits, the resistance of dominant labour to these tactics forces them into accommodation they would otherwise not choose to make (1976:44). Her argument is relevant here. There can be little doubt that the increasing political power of labour was influential in passing the laws and regulations which restricted the movement of Chinese workers in the labour force.

13. Capitalists' Perceptions Of Chinese Labourers (1885) And The First Chinese Head Tax

At the Royal Commission hearings of 1885, in contradistinction to labour, British Columbia capitalists argued that few, if any, restrictions should be imposed on the entry of Chinese labourers to the country. They described Chinese workers as industrious, sober, frugal, and reliable. According to the wealthiest and the largest employer in British Columbia at the time, the Chinese were an asset to the province because they performed "labor in coal mines which others refused to perform, at wages that made such mining pay" (1885 R.C.:129). Dunsmuir explained:

Without them this department of the mining industry would have had slower and less important development in this province, and the export trade of this product would have been infinitely less, because it would have been impossible but for their labor to compete in this respect in foreign markets (1885 R.C.:xv1).

Clearly despite the growing popular opinion against Chinese immigration capitalists wanted continued access to their labour.

As vocal as it was, labour was unable to convince commissioners that economic competition was a serious issue. Rather, in accordance with the views of employers, the "intelligent minority", as commissioner Grey described them, the Royal Commission recommended that a \$10 head tax be imposed on all Chinese labourers entering Canada. As Commissioner J.A. Chapleau pointed out, the sparsely populated west-coast province of British Columbia could fully achieve her great economic potentials through the use of the "living machines" which China did and would provide in developing its "fertile resources" (1885 R.C.:70-5).³⁰ However, once the C.P.R. line had been completed, the first federal restriction on Chinese immigration was implemented. After January 1, 1886 all Chinese labourers entering the country were to pay a \$50 tax. As well, ships were restricted to bringing only one Chinese immigrant per fifty tons tonnage (Wynne 1978:375).³¹ The next time the federal government took action on the issue of Chinese immigration was in July of 1900, when the head tax was raised to \$100. Two months later, the Governor General appointed another Royal Commission to deal with Chinese immigration, and the newly arrived Japanese.

14. Japanese Immigration

The 1890 census did not include any Japanese and in 1893 there were fewer than one hundred in Canada (Robin 1972:32). Three years later, in 1896, their number had increased tenfold to approximately 1,000 (Roy 1989:92). Like the Chinese labourers, the Japanese were exclusively young men who came to Canada to sell their labour power. Many of them were general labourers and employed under direct service contracts in which they were formally bound to a contracting company (Adachi 1976:28-9). Aside from the boat-building industry, where they fulfilled semi-skilled tasks, the Japanese, like Chinese labourers, were concentrated in menial jobs and paid anywhere from one-half to two-thirds of what unskilled white workers earned in the same industries. At the turn of the century, most Japanese labourers could be

found in coal mines, the lumber mills, the fruit and the fishing industry (see 1902 R.C.: 340-397).

In the 1898-1899 fiscal year the number of Japanese in the province nearly tripled as 1,875 additional men arrived. In the following fourteenth months, between 1 July 1899 and 30 August 1900, 11,272 Japanese arrived at Canada (B.C.) ports (Roy 1989: 92, 103).³² The majority were destined to the United States and only stopped over at the Canadian ports because they were travelling on Canadian Pacific steamships, which had more adequate facilities for immigrants' accommodation than had American ships. Therefore in 1901 only 4,738 Japanese were reported to be residing in Canada - 97 per cent in British Columbia (1902 R.C.:327). Nevertheless, there was strong hostility against them. Thus, in March 1900, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs for Japan instructed the local governors that the number of emigrants to Canada (and the United States) who would pass through each emigration agent should be limited to five per month (Sampat-Mehta 1972:200). This voluntary restrictive measure on the part of Japan brought immediate results. Between July 1900 and June 1901, only six Japanese were reported to have entered Canada (Adachi 1976:412). The Japanese Consulate reported a total of only 447 passports issued to Japanese going to Canada for 1901-4 (Cheng 1931:115). Indeed, from July 1901 to June 1905 only 354 Japanese were reported to have entered Canada (Adachi 1976:412). Since virtually all remained in British Columbia, their number in the province throughout this period remained constant at about 5,000.

15. Royal Commission On Chinese And Japanese Immigration (1902)

Although the entry of Japanese labourers into British Columbia was immediately stopped through voluntary restriction, the intense migration of Chinese and Japanese to Canada at the turn of the century and its accompanying political pressure led in 1900, as mentioned earlier, to the appointment of another Royal Commission. However, the 1902 Royal Commission (1902 R.C.) differed significantly from its predecessor, since it became evident

during the hearings that for the first time a general consensus prevailed among all classes and groups in British Columbia regarding the question of Chinese and Japanese immigration.³³ At the hearings and in written testimonies, virtually all British Columbians agreed that the further entry of "Oriental" immigrants should be completely halted. This general political consensus represents an important historical conjuncture, in view of the fact that at the 1885 Royal Commission, the Commissioners still attributed positive qualities to Chinese labourers and capitalists still argued that they could not do without an abundant supply of cheap labour. Although rare and temporary in the life of a society, a consensus should not be overlooked. It often represents a special moment in which a number of social forces join together for a common purpose, and, as happened in this case, produced a 'new' discourse on the question of "Oriental" immigration in British Columbia.

There are at least three political and economic factors that were vital in bringing the consensus about. First, as Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, his colleagues in Ottawa and politicians in British Columbia anticipated, the railway brought with it waves of immigrants to western Canada. The easing of European restrictions on emigration and the implementation of the Dominion government's vigorous policy which sought to take advantage of such developments also aided in this process. Between 1881 and 1901, British Columbia's non-Native population increased three-fold, from 13,431 to 81,946, with much of this increase taking place after 1886, the year the CPR line was completed (McDonald 1981:377; Ward 1981:590). It is important to note that in 1901 three-fourths of the non-Native population in the province were still male (Barman 1991:369). Thus, rather than attracting families who would build homesteads and engage in agricultural production, British Columbia and its resource extraction, construction and transportation sectors appealed to male immigrants of working age. All arrived with the legal-political status of settlers and some were skilled workers and thus differently positioned in British Columbia's labour market. Nevertheless, the increased size of the labour pool did reduce the dependency among capitalists on the 'cheap' labour of Chinese and Japanese workers.

The second important factor concerns the substantial gains made by the labour movement and its "anti-Oriental policies" in the provincial political arena. One fundamental component of these gains was the election of 1898, in which a total of five labour representatives were elected to the legislative assembly as against three seats in the previous 1894 election (Robin 1972:60; Phillips 1967:30).³⁴ For an assembly in which the governing group held only seventeen seats against the opposition groups' nineteen, this is a significant increase as labour representatives found themselves in a position where they held the balance of power. This situation persisted until 1900, at which time the government split into two factions, precipitating another election. However, since no party line existed until 1903, it was quite easy for politicians to change sides on an issue. Indeed, they were reported as doing so.³⁵ As a result, during this two year period labour was able to get passed through the legislative assembly a number of bills, representing working class interests. These included the Coal Mines Regulation Act which prohibited employment of "Orientals" underground and a bill which implemented the eight-hour day in the metal mines, along with other minor, but still significant bills. Since the bills placed restrictions on the kinds of work Chinese and Japanese could perform, the access of employers to "Orientals" became more limited. As the Chinese, due to the higher head tax became more expensive to import, employers became less and less resistant to the idea of completely halting the entry of "Oriental" labour to the province.

Finally, economic competition between European and Chinese and Japanese workers had reached into the merchant and independent commodity producing classes, such that these groups were also calling for an end to "Oriental" immigration. At the time of the 1885 Royal Commission, nearly all Chinese in the country occupied working-class positions as unfree labour and only approximately 1.9 per cent were merchants, traders and shopkeepers (Li 1978:327). By 1901, 18.5 per cent belonged to the petite bourgeoisie while the remaining 81.5 per cent continued to occupy working-class positions (*ibid.*). In some cases self-employment was a means to escape discrimination in the wage system and job sites but in others it was due to cultural specific forms of specialization (Li 1978:328, Roy 1981:664).

The growth of Chinese laundries and restaurants during this period, for example, could be viewed as survival adaptations on the part of the Chinese to develop alternative economic opportunities amidst a hostile labour market (Li 1978:328).

Certainly, cultural specific specialization seems to have been responsible for the concentration of Japanese men in the fishing industry. Prior to 1896 comparatively few Japanese were engaged in fishing. In that year, of the 3,533 fishing licenses, 452 were granted to Japanese (1902 R.C.:355). By 1901, out of a total of 4,722 licenses, 1,958 were granted to Japanese (ibid.). James Henry, the chief of the Squamish Indians, made a request to the Commission that he be heard on the matter of Chinese and Japanese immigration:

The Japanese come to this country, they come too thick altogether. . . My people have no chance to making a living. Can't make bread and butter; no chance to go to work; they are all over; they work for nothing. . . The Japanese can live on a tablespoonful of rice and a little perch. We are not the same. I think the Indians and whites as good as the Japanese. . . The Japanese work for nothing. The Indians want to get fair wages. This is our country, not a Japanese country (1902 R.C.: 346-347).³⁶

As he indicated, the issue was not merely the employment of Japanese in the fishing industry. Since the price which fishermen received for their catch did not vary between different "racialized" groups, fishing had been one occupation in which, in theory at least, everybody received the same remuneration. However, compared to others, Japanese did not, by any means, enjoy the same opportunities. They were bonded to the contract system and hired by fishing companies (1902 R.C.:340-357). Ironically, as a consequence of political pressure from other fishermen, they were also restricted to specific "areas" where they could fish. Due to these structural conditions the fish caught by the Japanese went for a lower price than those caught by other fishermen. It was the existence of economic competition that led Native independent commodity producers, among others, to appeal to the idea of "fair" wages and the need to make a reasonable "living".

16. The Turn Of Century: An Important Historical Conjunction

Hence, by the turn of the century, the structural conditions were present for the working-class, independent commodity producers, small merchants and capitalists in British Columbia to support a policy of ending "Oriental" immigration to the province. As pointed out earlier, this degree of unity is unique among those who occupy different relations to the means of production. It is also rarely achieved in a social formation without altering ideological and political relations as well. The supra-class coalition calling for the exclusion of "Orientals" was partly the result of changes in social and economic relations in which the Chinese and, to some degree, the Japanese were involved. However, it is significant to note that East Indians did not begin to arrive in sizable numbers in British Columbia until 1906, hence, at a time when the class alliance had already been formed. Thus, in order to give the East Indian case its full specificity, the ideological and political outcome of this class alliance needs to be accounted for in order to comprehend the various reactions against them.

A number of authors have identified the turn of the century as an important historical conjunction beyond the transformations in the mode of production and class relations mentioned above. In her recent work, Patricia Roy, for example, examines white attitudes towards "Asians" in early B.C. history. Although not using the concept class, she argues that economic competition of Chinese and Japanese workers and merchants had by the turn of century transformed "anti-Oriental" agitation in British Columbia "from being the business of a few demagogues and workingmen to a broadly held fear that became part of the provincial identity" (Roy 1989:viii). According to Roy, "White Man's Province", a political slogan repeatedly used throughout the early decades of this century, was a common rallying cry for a province that was "immature, uncertain of its future, and internally fragmented" (ibid:268). In this context, legal exclusions corresponding to such rhetoric are identified as revealing British Columbians' "fears that they could not maintain their status or improve their standards of living if the Chinese and Japanese continue to enter" (Roy 1989:x).

Rather than employing either an economic or ideological explanation, Patricia Roy has attempted to combine them. However, she does not elaborate how they are related. Instead, from explaining "racial" antagonism through economic competition she moves to an argument of social psychology similar to Ward's. However, while Ward attributes such antagonism to an internal desire to "remain white", for Roy it was fear of the 'Asian' that resulted in the exclusionary practices. While her argument certainly attempts to root racist stereotypes in an historical and social context, in many respects, it does not go much beyond a mono-causal explanation. Moreover, since she does not firmly adhere to the premise that 'race' is a social construction, Roy neglects to address the central question of how economic competition came to be structured along 'racial' lines. At times she seems to state that it was competition between two or more 'races' rather than racialized social categories of groups of people occupying distinct positions within the capitalist mode of production, whose existence has become racialized which were responsible for the hostile reactions. Not surprisingly, apart from the concept of class, the concept of mode of production is also not used in her analysis. By not adequately theorizing the mode of production, she is left with a political and ideological definition of "classes" which are then too easily treated as being equated with the main 'racial' groupings.

Walter Sage and other historians argue that by 1901 British Columbia had undergone Canadianization (Sage 1980). In terms of the large numbers of settlers arriving from eastern Canada, as well as the influx of capital, it could certainly be argued that the links between British Columbia and the rest of Canada increased greatly. However, those who use the notion of Canadianization do not seem to simply refer to demographic change, but to the emergence of some form of nationalist sentiment, whereby British and American 'influences' were overcome by Canadian ones. I share Sages' argument to the extent that the turn of the century is identified as a significant period, one marked by ideological transformation(s) in the history of British Columbia. However, it is not enough to claim British Columbians underwent a process of Canadianization without also examining the contents of the "new" ideological expressions.

Moreover, it is equally important to explain how this ideological transformation(s) affected the attitudes in British Columbia toward the issue of Chinese and Japanese immigration.

In my opinion, the specific structural, political and ideological relations of British Columbia's social formation at the turn of the century have to be placed within the broader context of the British Empire. This is a fruitful way of grasping the political and ideological relations which were manifest in the articulation of the exclusion of "Oriental" immigration and which in turn aid our understanding of the racism specific to the East Indians. Hopefully, by situating the development of British Columbia in the context of British imperialism, the various political, ideological and economic links between the province, Canada, as a self-governing colony of the Empire and Britain will become evident.

17. The British Empire At The Turn of Century

The extent to which there were different phases, or 'new eras' in British colonial policies is a subject of much debate (Kennedy 1984:1-38). Nevertheless among the number of 'turning points' identified by historians, one of the most widely accepted is the 'break' between the period prior to, and after, 1870. Commonly recognized as the phase of "new" imperialism, the years after 1870 differed from earlier ones in that a sense of awakened nationalism emerged in Europe which was accompanied by expansionist drives producing intensive rivalries in the international arena. In Britain, this led to a growing climate of dissolving certainties as her power became challenged. By the last decade of the century, this loss of confidence precipitated an anxiety as to whether Britain would remain the world's greatest exporter of goods and whether she could fulfill her imperial role.

In the context of Britain's declining hegemony in the world order, the governing class in England appealed to the ideology of Anglo-Saxonism within the nation-state to regenerate feelings of confidence (MacDougall 1982; Mackenzie 1984:1-14 and Rich 1989). Since by the beginning of the nineteenth century Anglo-Saxonism had been subsumed under the idea of

biological superiority, any appeal to the myth of common origins of the "Anglo-Saxon" people also assumed that those who were not a part of this in-group were biologically inferior (Banton 1977:47).³⁷ Moreover, in its German origins, dating back as far as the fifth century, Anglo-Saxonism supposedly contained notions of freedom, a capacity for governing, rationality and justice. This meant that with the development of a deterministic notion of the Anglo-Saxon "race", these attributes were believed to be inherent in the British, producing a sense of biological superiority (Baumgart 1982:47-55; Bolt 1984:126-147; Huttenback 1976:13-25).

While the ideology of Anglo-Saxonism and the need to maintain the imperial 'race' was nationalistic and served an explicit political objective in Britain, namely to bring about national regeneration and the revival of a supra-class sense of superiority, it was not confined to England. Out of a need to strengthen alliance, and, therefore, neutralize the threat of rivals, a similar appeal to common origins was made by Britain to the United State and the self-governing colonies (Pieterse 1989:263-80). The articulation of unity and 'commonness' within the Empire was vividly evident at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee which took place in London in June of 1897, and which brought together representatives from all the self-governing colonies including Canada's newly elected Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier. The following excerpt from a speech made by Joseph Chamberlain, secretary of state for the colonies at the closing of this historical event, provides a sense of the emotions expressed:

I desire at the outset of these proceedings to offer to you on behalf of Her Majesty's Government, a hearty and cordial welcome. You will have seen in your short visit to this country that all parties, and all classes, are animated by the most affectionate feeling of regard towards our Colonial fellow subjects. I think that you may also feel that the main object of your visit has already been to a great extent accomplished. The great pageant to which you contributed so interesting a feature has shown to this country, to the Colonies, and to all the world, the strength, the power, the resources, and the loyalty of the British Empire. It was, I think we shall all agree, a most remarkable and absolutely unparalleled demonstration of personal loyalty to the Sovereign and of the essential unity of the Empire (Colonial Office:5).

18 Linking Anglo-Saxonism And Empire With Canada And British Columbia

Given the link with Britain, the appeals to Empire and the need to maintain the strength of the Anglo-Saxon 'race' would have considerable impact within Canada. True, in English eastern Canada, a downturn in the economy during the late 1880s and early 1890s created a mood of failure and pessimism over the country's future. To alleviate this situation, the Dominion government considered a number of options, including annexation to the United States (Brown and Cook 1974:28). However conceived during this period of doubt and uncertainty, the idea that the imperial system was the vehicle through which Canada would attain nationhood, did not evaporate as a swift momentum of economic development and settlement after the mid 1890s. In fact, for many of Canada's political and intellectual elite the return of economic prosperity and self-confidence pointed towards the need for closer co-operation with Britain and the Empire (Berger 1970:4-5). Some, like Principal Grant of Queen's University, went as far as arguing that "in order to be Canadian we must be British" (Brown and Cook 1974:28). This growing appeal was an enormous stimulus for the Dominion government to lower the tariff against British manufactured commodities in 1897, and dispatch Canadian troops to fight in the Boer War in 1899, even though in 1885 Macdonald refused the option (Naylor 1989:495). Indeed, so highly aroused were the imperial sentiments of Anglo-Canadians by the outbreak of the Boer War in 1899 that a total of 7,300 Canadians took part in the war-either as members of the Royal Canadian Regiment or as individual enlistments in the British army (Cannizzo 1989:25). According to Carl Berger the rise of imperialist sentiment, predominantly among elites and the governing class in Canada, was one variety of Canadian nationalism, for it provided the country with a certain understanding of its history, its character and a national mission (Berger 1970:9).

As elsewhere in Canada, Britain's appeal to the Empire and the preservation of the Anglo-Saxon 'race' would have a significant effect in British Columbia, particularly given the manner in which it was received. Unlike other parts of the country, where much of the 'cheap'

labour needed to fill the needs of the growing capitalist labour market was imported from Europe, however, in British Columbia this role had been performed by Chinese and later Japanese workers. Indeed, in 1901, even with the recent massive increase in Europeans, "Oriental" labour still accounted for approximately 1/4 of the labour (male) force (Canada 1911).³⁸ Given this specific feature of social relations in British Columbia, the appeal to Anglo-Saxonism was interpreted quite differently in the province compared to the rest of the country.

19. Linking Anglo-Saxonism And Empire With Non-White Immigration To Self-Governing Colonies

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the idea that the world was divided into distinct groups called "races" which could be graded along some scale with Anglo-Saxon whites on the top and others below them was dominant among Europeans. Yet, influenced by nineteenth century liberal humanitarianism, Britain proclaimed at the same time that the Empire should be equal, where all subjects were treated the same regardless of 'race'. Of course, the contradiction between the principle of equality regardless of 'race' and the sense of a natural superiority felt by Europeans was played out in all of Britain's colonial policies, including those affecting colonized India and friendly territories of the Empire such as China. However, at this particular historical conjuncture it was in the self-governing colonies which received large-scale immigration from these countries, that this contradiction came to surface with the strongest force. By the last decade of the nineteenth century, the governments of Britain's self-governing colonies of South Africa, Australia and New Zealand which had imported "non-white" labour for capitalist development, had begun to initiate immigration policies to curtail the entry of such labour to their respective jurisdictions.³⁹ The most publicized debates about the introduction of restrictive measures against the immigration of non-white British subjects took place in Australia where it was the dominant issue up to the turn of the century.

The question of immigration from either friendly territories of the Empire or India was raised by Chamberlain during a meeting with the premiers of the self-governing colonies at the 1897 Jubilee:

... I wish to direct your attention to certain legislation which is in process of consideration, or which has been passed by some of the Colonies, in regard to the immigration of aliens, and particularly of Asiatics.

I have seen these Bills and they differ in some respects one from the others, but there is no one of them, except perhaps the Bill which comes to us from Natal, to which we can look with satisfaction. I wish to say that Her Majesty's Government thoroughly appreciate the object and needs of the Colonies in dealing with this matter. We quite sympathise with the determination of the white inhabitants of these Colonies which are in comparatively close proximity to millions and hundreds of millions of Asiatics that there shall not be an influx of people alien in civilization, alien in religion, alien in customs, whose influx, moreover, would most seriously interfere with the legitimate rights of the existing labour population. An immigration of that kind must, I quite understand in the interest of the Colonies, be prevented at all hazards, and we shall not offer any opposition to the proposals intended with that object, but we ask you also to bear in mind the traditions of the Empire, which makes no distinction in favour of or against race or colour: and to exclude, by reason of their colour, or by reason of their race, all Her Majesty's Indian subjects, or even all Asiatics, would be an act so offensive to those peoples that it would be most painful, I am quite certain, to Her Majesty to have to sanction it . . . (Colonial Office:13-14).

Hence, at the ideological level the colonial office agreed with the objects of the exclusionary laws which the various self-governing colonies had passed against non-white immigration. However, against the background of changing international relations, the Secretary of State for the Colonies held concerns about the need to maintain imperial relations and trade. Britain's loss of hegemony in East Asia to the Russians had already led her to a strategic military and commercial alliance with Japan, who was emerging as an important imperial player (Woodsworth 1941:54).⁴⁰ As a means to deal with the political crisis, Chamberlain encouraged the white settler colonies to be creative. Since it was an Act passed within the Empire that explicitly excludes one from entry on the basis of "colour" or "race", which "Her Majesty" disapproved, exclusionary legislation that fulfilled the same purpose but made no reference to such criteria was acceptable. Chamberlain explained:

What I venture to think you have to deal with is the character of the immigration. It is not because a man is of a different colour from ourselves that he is necessarily an undesirable immigrant, but it is because he is dirty, or he is immoral, or he is a pauper, or he has

some other objection which can be defined in an Act of Parliament, and by which the exclusion can be managed with regard to all those whom you really desire to exclude (Colonial Office:13-14).

"Dirtiness", "immorality" or possibly "pauperism" attributed to potential immigrants were soon to become powerful euphemisms for denying them entry into the borders of the nation-state of a number of the self-governing colonies including Canada. Interestingly, as Valverdre points out, although there was a strict legal definition of pauperism in the Poor Law, by the beginning of the twentieth century the term "pauperization" was interpreted more broadly, when it became indeed associated more with drinking, irregular work habits, sexual laxity, and infrequent bathing than with low wages and poor housing (Valverdre 1991:26).

The ideas of the Natal formula, a more formal method of exclusion especially with respect to non-white immigrants, caught Chamberlain's attention. Named after Natal, the British colony in southern Africa, the formula was a language test that limited Asian immigration by requiring potential immigrants to pass an examination in a European language. Determined to foster at any cost a new spirit of imperial brotherhood and impressed by the virtues of the Natal Act, Chamberlain encouraged the Australian premiers to use the test rather than continue with developing explicitly racist restrictions. Following his advice, in the months proceeding the conference of 1897, four of the Australian colonies subsequently passed versions of the "Natal formula". That in Australia a white British subject had rights not enjoyed by a non-white British subject had never been made so blatantly clear.

20. Empire And British Columbia

Politicians in British Columbia were fairly knowledgeable about the methods which the various self-governing colonies had been using to deal with the problem of non-white labour in their respective locals. Throughout the nineteenth century, the issue of the treatment of non-whites in the Empire retained a saliency in debates about "Orientals" in British Columbia. After Australians had implemented their racist exclusionary policies in 1878 without encountering

any immediate Imperial impediment, protesting the presence of the Chinese in British Columbia, Dos Cosmos, the former premier of British Columbia, for example, sent a copy of the Act with a letter to Prime Minister Macdonald.

This is not say, however, that British Columbian politicians were always of the opinion that the exclusionary immigration policies of the self-governing colonies should be adopted in the province. Speaking as a witness at the 1885 Royal Commission hearings, Dr. Helmcken, for example, a resident and prominent political representative of the province during the early days when the HBC held the reigns of power, explained that British Columbians "occupy a different position to the Australians" (1885 R.C.:55). Because the province "expects to have a large trade with China", he argued communication with the Chinese was necessary. It was his belief that "some evil must be endured for the good" and "if the two classes (Chinese and white workers) could understand each other they would get along better" (ibid.:57). Moreover, commissioners still favoured continued immigration even though the United States had already passed in 1882 an Act which specifically identified the Chinese as aliens and ineligible for entry and nearly half of the 1885 Report of the Royal Commission was devoted to assessing the effect Chinese immigration had on social and economic conditions in California (Lee 1989:376). In other words, during periods when "cheap" labour was not sufficient to meet demand, the issue of 'racial' friction in places like the United States or Australia was overlooked. In this respect, the political economy of British Columbia is of primary importance in explaining how racist ideologies and exclusionary practices in other white settler societies were interpreted in the province.

However, since, as discussed earlier, the complex economic and political struggle between different fractions of capital and labour in British Columbia over the question of the continued entry of "Oriental" labour had given way to a political consensus, it could be argued that the ideological impact of the recent developments within the Empire concerning non-white immigration were extraordinary. That is to say, unlike previous times, once a supra-class consensus about "Oriental" immigration had developed, there were no economic and political

barriers to prevent these influences from penetrating the British Columbia social formation at the ideological level.

That Australia had closed its doors to non-white immigration in 1901 was repeatedly mentioned at the 1902 Royal Commission hearings. William J. McAllan, who had worked in the 'Old Country', New Zealand, and Australia prior to coming to British Columbia and who was appointed by the inspector of mines to inquiry into the danger of employing Chinese labour in the mines, had the following to say:

I am opposed to the further immigration of Chinese. I object to them because they can never become part of the nation. We should not admit any people to our shores with whom we cannot intermarry and who will not become a part of the nation. . . . These riches might better be left in the ground. It tends to two classes, the rich and the coolie labour. I don't think we should have a servile class. It must have a weakening effect. It undermines the nation. The backbone of any nation is its toiling people. I am opposed to further immigration. This applies equally to Japanese.

I think the action taken in the colonies of Australia and New Zealand entirely does away with the agreement that you require Chinese labour. No cheap labour is employed in Australia in the mines or on the surface. I never saw a native or Chinese employed in a mine in Australia or New Zealand (1902 R.C.:81).

Such opposition to "Oriental" immigration was strong enough that James Dunsmuir, the province's largest capitalist and famous for employing Chinese as strikebreakers when European workers struck, seemed to have undergone a 'conversion' on the question of whether the province needed Chinese or Japanese labour. At the 1902 Royal Commission hearings, Francis Dean Little, General Manager of the Wellington Colliery Company, owned by Dunsmuir, spoke of recent changes in the company:

We employed them (Chinese) underground at one time in all other mines. We employed them in the Extension till last year. It was an experiment on Mr. Dunsmuir's part. He appeared to think he could run as cheaply without them as with them; not a very good result financially. The expense was increased. . . . The intention was to exclude the Chinese here. It is better the way it is financially. I would not change. Mr. Dunsmuir wants to change. I do not agree with this idea of his.

We brought out two hundred Scotch miners, and they were no good. We have twenty left. . . . Very few paid their passage. They were supposed to pay \$70 each for the passage, but never did. Many of them went to Seattle at once. They never came here at all. Mr. Dunsmuir spent \$15,000 on them. I do not think he got \$3,000 back. I paid \$3 a day for a \$1 day's work to some of them. I was longing for the Chinamen (1902 R.C.:77).

Andre Brydon, manager of the Dunsmuir Extension Mine, gave a similar account at the hearings:

About twelve months ago we employed about one hundred Chinese below ground. The reason of their removal was because Mr. Dunsmuir promised to put them away. . . They don't employ Chinese in the mines at all in Australia. Our demand for white labour arose because we dismissed the Chinese. White labour is not always easily obtainable (ibid.:80).

Dunsmuir's conversion can certainly be attributed to a number of factors, including the growing political power of labour which led to greater restrictions on the areas where Chinese labour could be hired, as well as his own political ambition. In order to appease working class voters he seemed to have changed his mind just prior to the provincial election of 1900 in which he was elected premier. Nevertheless, there is symbolic significance to the changes in Dunsmuir's perspective and hiring practices which previously has not been acknowledged. That is to say, although social scientists have recognized that Chinese and Japanese labourers were negatively evaluated, this evaluation has not been contextualized at the political and ideological levels. However, without such contextualization the contents of this articulation cannot be fully understood. If the appeal to the ideology of Anglo-Saxonism has produced a positive sense of Empire and the idea of the need to reproduce the imperial "race" in eastern Anglo-Canada as well as in Britain, then there is no reason why a similar sentiment would not be expressed in British Columbia. However, it is important to note that such positive sentiments about British Columbia's role in the preservation of the Anglo-Saxon "race" were aroused precisely at the same historical conjuncture as the powerful supra-class appeal to end "Oriental" immigration. Thus, they meshed and produced a "new" discourse in which it was argued that the future of the province as a strong "white settler" society was dependent on the end to "Oriental", and in particular Chinese immigration. The "new" discourse was most forcefully articulated at the hearings of the 1902 Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese immigration. The following excerpt from the final report of the commissioners demonstrates

how the idea of a "homogeneous" province of "white" people who will "to defend the country in case of attack" was made use of in British Columbia:

Situated as this province is, upon the seaboard, it should possess a stalwart, homogeneous and united population, capable and willing to defend the country in case of attack. In this regard the Chinese are a real source of weakness. It is incredible that British Columbia, admittedly one of the richest countries in the world in natural resources, - with its vast forests, unsurpassed fisheries, minerals of all kinds, and large tracts of delta and other lands suitable for agriculture, - cannot be developed without the assistance of Chinese labour. Your Commissioners believe that it is impossible for the province of British Columbia to take its place and part in the Dominion as it ought to do, unless its population is free from any taint of servile labour and is imbued with a sense of the duties and responsibilities appertaining to citizenship.

This class of immigration falls short of that standard so essential to the well being of the country. From a Canadian standpoint it is injurious, and in the interest of the nation any further immigration ought to be prohibited. The great industries will not suffer. There is a surplus of this class of labour at the present time ready to enter any avenue of unskilled labour at the present time ready to enter any avenue of unskilled labour that may open. If no more were admitted the supply is equal to the demand for years to come, and the change will be so gradual as to be almost imperceptible. There are more Chinese today in Victoria and adjacent thereto, than in the whole State of Washington. The Chinese labourers who are already in the country will be benefited by the change. Trade with China will rather be promoted than otherwise, by removing a cause of friction, as has been found to be the case in the United States in their trade with China since the Exclusion Act. The interests of the Empire can best be served by building a strong and united Canada, able not only to defend herself, but afford help if need be to the Mother Country. Whatever permanently weakens British Columbia weakens the Dominion and the Empire and no material gain to individual interests ought to weigh for one moment against this injury to the nation (1902 R.C.:278).

Whereas at the 1885 hearings witnesses and commissioners exhibited a particular curiosity about the Chinese, it is interesting to note that in 1902 there were few elaborate discussions about the cultural character of the Chinese or the "Orientals" in general. In 1885, references were commonly made to the Chinese being addicted to opium, to the high degree of prostitution and other so-called cultural 'habits' associated with the province's 'Chinatowns'. While all these "markers" imputed to Chinese were full of negative meanings, there was, nonetheless, a debate about whether they were 'good' for the province. Similarly, as far as the Chinese workers' political status was concerned, although all witnesses who testified at the hearings or submitted written statements shared the position that they should not settle permanently in Canada or be granted the political rights of citizenship, such a position was not accepted without comment.⁴¹ In 1902, debates were absent. Indeed, a number of witnesses

suggested to commissioners that the Chinese and Japanese should not be given the right to vote even though the former had lost the right to vote at the time of the province's entry into confederation and the Japanese in 1896. The absence of any debate and this rather superfluous recommendation indicate that a consensus existed on the part of citizens to deny the "Orientals" rights which had already been implemented by commissioners. The comments also demonstrate, the very deterministic nature of the concept of 'race' as implying innately inferior and, an increasing concern on the part of British Columbians with the status of their 'imagined' community. In other words, between 1885 and 1902 there was an general shift away from a preoccupation with the living conditions or 'habits' of the "Orientals", towards a concern about the political and economic future of the province.

"Oriental" immigration was repeatedly linked with the moral degeneration and the decline of the nation. As quoted above, the commissioners' rhetoric that Chinese are a "class of immigration [which] falls short of that standard so essential to the well being of the country", and that they are a "real source of weakness;" and "injury to the nation" is consistent with the fears of the degeneration of the imperial 'race' expressed in Britain during this period. The question was no longer whether Chinese were a benefit to the economy, but whether their presence would actually contaminate the 'imagined community' to such an extent that the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon "race" could no longer be maintained.

First articulated by the British state, the argument that it was the responsibility of the self-governing colonies to help alleviate some of the concerns about "degeneration" by accepting emigration from England, also found its place in British Columbia. Such emigration was to assist the economic development of the Empire and give many of the numerous poor working class in Britain an opportunity to start a new life. Commissioners of the hearings encouraged the idea that British Columbia fulfill its role in this respect:

No one who has the privilege which we have had during our tour could fail to be struck with one all-prevailing and pressing demand- the want of population. Even in the oldest of our colonies were abundant signs of this need, - boundless tracts of country yet unexplored, hidden mineral wealth calling for development, vast expanses of virgin soil ready to yield profitable crops to the settler; and these can be enjoyed under conditions

of healthy living, liberal laws, free institutions, in exchange for the overcrowded cities and the almost hopeless struggle for existence which, alas, too often is the lot of many in the old country. But one condition, and one only, is made by our colonial governments, and that is - send us suitable immigrants. I would go further and appeal to my fellow countrymen at home to prove the strength of the attachment of the motherland to her children, by sending them only of her best. By this means we may still further strengthen, or at all events pass on unimpaired, that pride of race, that unity of sentiment and purpose, that feeling of common loyalty and obligation which, knit together, along can maintain the integrity of our Empire (R.C.:278).

The important point which should be emphasized is how this positive affirmation to the Empire and of the province's future role meant simultaneously an end to "Oriental" immigration.

Joseph A Sayward, for example, a witness at the hearings and engaged in the lumbering business in Victoria, stated that "the Chinese are detrimental in every way, in their mode of living, and in keeping whites from coming in here" (1902 R.C.:119). Similar comments were made by Stephen Ramage, a saw-filer in Heap's Shingle Mill, Vancouver. Speaking about the Chinese and Japanese he stated:

I think it would be a benefit if more restrictions were put on. It would tend to stop the immigration. There are sufficient here now to supply the demand for some years to come. The Japanese are a greater menace to whites than Chinese. They are abler-bodied men. They adopt our mode of living more readily. The Japanese and Chinese deter men from coming here. Very few of the Japanese and Chinese have a family. My principal reason would be to save the country for my own race. I would not object to Europeans. I object to Asiatics. I hope they will not assimilate with our people (1902 R.C.:131).

The extent to which the idea that British Columbia must do without "Oriental" immigration had come to be linked with British Columbian's affirmation about the future of their province can be illustrated by other events during this period. Only months after he was elected premier, Dunsmuir read a letter from S. Shimizu, the Japanese Consul in Vancouver, to the legislative assembly which stated that effective 30 July 1900, Japan had instructed its local authorities to prohibit emigration to Canada and the United States. Three weeks later, on August 30, 1900, following Chamberlain's suggestion, the provincial government passed an Immigration Act based on the "Natal formula".⁴² The legislation made it unlawful for "any persons the terms of whose entry into Canada have been fixed, or whose exclusion from Canada had been ordered by any Act of the Parliament of Canada" to immigrate to British

Columbia if that person failed to fill out an application "in the characters of some language of Europe" when asked to do so by an government officer (S.B.C.1900, C.11). The legislation was drafted to avoid any conflict with Dominion legislation. Since the Dominion had set the terms of entry for Chinese immigrants by imposing head taxes, Chinese immigrants were not subject to the terms of the B.C. Immigration Act.

The final report of the Royal Commission on Chinese and Japanese Immigration, presented to Parliament in February 27, 1903, recommended that "the further immigration of Chinese into Canada ought to be prohibited and that while the most effective and desirable means to attain this end is by treaty supported by legislation until this can be obtained, in the meantime, the head tax should be raised to \$500" (Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs 1907:335). Within weeks, the federal government announced it would raise the tax to five hundred dollars. The penalty for a contract employer who allowed a Chinese labourer to land without a permit was also raised from \$200 per violation to \$500. The new tax law was not put into effect until January 1, 1904 due to a special request by Canadian Pacific Railway to delay the tax increase in order to reduce the "serious effect" on its trans-Pacific shipping business. But equally important, although it persuaded the government to delay implementation, it also agreed that the five-hundred-dollar head tax was a "political necessity" (Patricia Roy 1989:156). The effect of the increase in the head tax on Chinese immigration was as devastating as the voluntary restriction was on the Japanese. Whereas 4,847 Chinese were reported to have entered British Columbia in 1904, in 1905 this number had dropped to 77 (Woodsworth 1941:287). In 1906, 168 Chinese were reported to have entered and in 1907, two hundred and ninety one. With 2,234 entering, their numbers increased substantially in 1908 (ibid.).

Chapter Three

East Indian Immigration to British Columbia

In 1904, approximately one year after the federal government announced it would raise the Chinese head tax to \$500, immigrants from India, virtually all of whom were male and Sikh by religious affiliation,⁴³ began to arrive in British Columbia. Like most Chinese and Japanese immigrants, they came as general labourers in the hopes of selling their labour power. Due to the introduction of a change to the 1906 Canadian Immigration Act, in 1908, the East Indians' further entry was effectively halted. Thus, between 1904 and 1908 a total of 5,195 East Indian men arrived in British Columbia (see p.73).

Using the theoretical advances made by Miles for the study of racism, this chapter will examine the East Indian case at the most concrete level of analysis. In his earlier work, Miles' seems to have used racialization and racism purely in a descriptive sense, as ideological processes that cover up the underlying structural processes that organize the capitalist mode of production. Here the role of class and production relations in the reproduction of racism was clearly prioritized. More recently, however, he has included the ideological and political spheres in those sets of wider structural relations within which the process of racialization and racism take shape. Furthermore, Miles now identifies the relationship between the broader ideological, political and economic relations as reciprocal in the sense that at specific conjunctures ideological and/or political relations may become the guiding force in the production and reproduction of racism. Any attempts to represent the "process of determination as one in which either the economic or the ideological factor was the sole 'cause'" are for Miles' "mistaken because they fail to appreciate the complex totality of economic, political and ideological relations. . ."(Miles 1989:94).

By using Miles' concepts of racialization and racism, this chapter will attempt to demonstrate that the social forces which surrounded the initial reactions to the unexpected arrival of the East Indians in British Columbia are best explained in terms of a combined effect

of ideological and political relations rather than as direct effects of economic relations.

Ideological relations here are understood as the sentiment which sought to keep the province a "white man's" country and which emerged at the turn of the century as a result of the political, economic, and ideological transformations in British Columbia. Political relations refer to the social relations between British Columbia's labour movement, local politicians, provincial newspapers, white settlers and capitalists. In this context the chapter will also demonstrate the importance of taking a long-term conjectural approach with a focus on the "concrete" in arriving at a comprehensive analysis of racism.

1. Racialization Of The East Indians

According to Miles' definition, racialization consists of "those instances where social relations between people have been structured by the signification of human biological characteristics in such a way as to define and construct differentiated social collectivities" (Miles 1989:75). Again, if during this period the prevailing ideology in European and more specifically British thought divided human beings hierarchically on the basis of differing biological characteristics into discrete biological entities called "races" with whites as the most superior at the top and blacks, like the Chinese and Japanese, at the bottom, one would expect the East Indians to be racialized even before they began to migrate to British Columbia. This, in fact, was the case. The first significant contact between East Indians and British Columbians seems to have occurred during a visit by Sikh soldiers to Canada in 1902. Somewhere between fifteen and twenty-three Sikh soldiers, originally from the Punjab were included in a British Army regiment of eighty men stationed in Hong Kong which visited Canada on its way to London to participate in the coronation of Edward VII.

As the soldiers passed through British Columbia and stopped briefly in the urban centres of Victoria and Vancouver in June of 1902, the small contingent drew much attention.⁴⁴ In a front page article of Vancouver's Daily News-Advertiser, the arrival of this "military spectacle" was reported as follows:

This week the citizens of Vancouver have been favored by having accorded them the privilege of seeing representative bodies of the military forces of several countries, men of varied colors, speaking varied languages, but all upholders of the British Empire and defenders of the Union Jack. . . (10 June 1902)

In Victoria "fourteen men from the Punjab" had been put through a rifle drill by an officer named Subadar Major Kadi Bahadur "to the delight of the spectators". The Colonist, Victoria's foremost newspaper, found the "automatic precision with which they went through their drill" as "something marvelous to behold" (The Colonist 4 June 1902:6). It seems that the squad drill provoked a "great deal of applause" from the crowds, which the newspaper thought was "well merited". The crowds were equally awed by the Sikhs' physical and religious attributes that accompanied their martial skills:

when in undress their appearance, was even more spectacular, for then their thickly braided hair which framed their dark faces was partially covered by navy colored turbans of many designs. . .

To the extent that along with specific symbols of the Sikhs' religious dress the British Columbia newspapers used certain phenotypical characteristics, the most salient being skin colour, to identify them as a distinct and separate collectivity, the East Indians were racially signified upon contact. The important point, however, is that white settlers attributed positive meanings to the Sikhs' real and imagined martial characteristics.⁴⁵ Described by The Colonist as "splendid looking. . . well-developed fellows", the East Indians were admired for their military prowess and exotic costumes (ibid.). Overall, as visiting representatives of the Empire their presence in British Columbia was appreciated.

2. East Indians Arrive As Settlers

Not surprisingly, the first East Indians to migrate to British Columbia as settlers were ex-military men who had spent time in south eastern parts of China and Hong Kong. Apparently, they were becoming disillusioned with the British army and their treatment within it. The opportunity to settle in Canada was more tempting than returning to the tough conditions at home. The army veterans had some knowledge of English and, through their military connections with certain British Columbians, were able to move quickly into work sites. It is likely the soldiers wrote to family and friends back home encouraging them to come. This important but informal 'pull' factor in the Sikhs' large-scale migration was aided by several factors.

The activities of Canadian steamship companies in India were one factor. In his 1907 inquiry into "the methods in which Orientals were induced to come to Canada", the then Canadian Deputy Minister of Labour, Mackenzie King, revealed evidence that passenger agents connected with Canadian steamship companies had been advertising the opportunities in Canada throughout many of the rural districts of northern India.⁴⁶ According to King, this was a means for the companies to fill their steerage which had become empty since the decline in wheat exports. More significantly, it was also a means to compensate for the curtailment of "Oriental" immigration as a result of the increased head tax of \$500 imposed on Chinese and Japan's volunteer restrictions imposed on its emigration.

Economic conditions in the Punjab, the state in India from which most immigrants came, were another contributing factor. During this period, farming families were being forced into debt by the British government's land policies which had implemented taxes and consolidated land as a means to transfer the subsistence economy to a commercial one. Consequently, the idea of sending either the younger or more economically marginal male members of the household out of the village to earn money that could be remitted home came to be seen as a viable solution to the perpetual debt. Some Sikh men from the Punjab had already

travelled great distances outside India in search of employment. Hence, with a pattern of emigration already established, once the trans-Pacific steamer service was introduced, it was only a matter of time until Sikhs would migrate to North America to find jobs that would allow them to send money back to stop the fragmentation of land, or perhaps, to increase the land base of their families.

Slowly, as the word of opportunities in British Columbia spread in northern India, migration directly from Punjab came to dominate. Most of the arrivals were Jats, members of a landowning caste whose origins probably go back to a pastoral group that first appeared in Punjab between the seventh and ninth centuries.⁴⁷ While not all Sikhs are Jats, generally all Jats are Sikhs.⁴⁸

Table 1. East Indian Immigration to Canada

Fiscal Year	Adult Males	Adult Females	Children	Total Number
1903-1904	-	-	-	0
1904-1905	36	4	15	45
1905-1906	377	8	2	387
1906-1907	2120	2	2	2,124
1907-1908	2620	-	3	2,623
1908-1909	5	1	-	6
1909-1910	9	1	-	10
1910-1911	4	-	1	5

Source: July 1904 to June 1908, Canada, Report of the Royal Commission, 1908:75; Canada Yearbook, 1911; Das 1922:4. July 1908 to June 1911. Canada Yearbook, 1920: 125. Figures in Age and Sex categories from PAC, Immigration Branch RG. Vol. 384 Pt 2. Frank Oliver, Minister of Interior to Governor General October 29, 1907.

Table 2. East Indian Immigration to Canada Jan. 1905 to Sept. 1907

<u>1905</u>		<u>1906</u>		<u>1907</u>	
January	8	January	10	January	21
February	4	February	50	February	10
March	6	March	10	March	51
April	3	April	80	April	98
May	15	May	89	May	90
June	9	June	36	June	108
July	12	July	203	July	54
August	2	August	588	August	160
September	16	September	265	September	901
October	14	October	242	October	N/A
November	43	November	711	November	N/A
December	15	December	33	December	N/A

Source: Frank Oliver, Minister of Interior, to Governor General, 29 October, 1907. PAC, Immigration Branch. RG 76. Vol. 384. Pt 2.

As table 1. illustrates, East Indian immigration reached its peak between July 1, 1906 and June 30, 1908 with 90 per cent arriving during this period. It was the summer of 1906, when migration from the Punjab shifted from being sporadic to more routine. Only ten had arrived in March of that year, and approximately eighty in both April and May. After the month of June, in which thirty-six entered, the numbers arriving doubled and then tripled; two hundred and three came in July and five hundred and eighty eight in August. It was also during this historical conjuncture that the reactions towards the East Indians were publicized.

3. Reactions To East Indians: 1906

According to Miles, racism is present when meanings are attributed to phenotypical and/or genetic characteristics of people in such a way as to not only create a system of categorisation, but "attributing additional, negatively evaluated, characteristics to the people sorted in those categories" (Miles 1989:9). When East Indians began to arrive in significant numbers in 1906, to the extent that the newspapers in British Columbia described them in derogatory terms using expressions such as "Hordes of Hindus", the reaction to them was racist. In Vancouver, both the politically conservative Province and the liberal leaning World, portrayed their arrival in fundamentally stigmatic fashion.

Hordes of Hindoos continue to come
Since the imposition of the \$500 poll tax on Chinese, the number of celestials coming here has fallen off to some half dozen a year, but equally as bad, if not worse, are the hordes of Hindoos who come to Vancouver on every Oriental liner.
(World, 27 August 1906:1)

Hindoo Hordes Make Themselves at Home Annex Choicest Part of the City
Motley Crowd with Pots and Pans, Turbans and Trunks
Invade Vancouver
Mayor Buscombe Wires Ottawa for Help
(Province, 1 September 1906:1)

The phrase 'MADE BY VANCOUVER IN VANCOUVER AND FOR VANCOUVER' also appeared in bold letters on the front page of the September 1, 1906 edition of The World in protest of the arrival of a C.P.R. steamship into Vancouver's harbor with 265 East Indians on board the previous night. Mr. Buscombe, the mayor of Vancouver, at one point in August, told newspaper reporters the East Indians were "unsanitary, and careless" and "every bit as undesirable as immigrants as other Orientals". Accompanying Buscombe as they looked at a "crowd of the jabbering Orientals" Alderman Morton explained to reporters he too wanted to state officially: "any Government that allows such hoboes to come to its shores ought to be heartily ashamed of itself" (The Province 23 August 1906:1). Both officials announced they

intended to meet with Vancouver Solicitor McEnvoy to order to devise a plan to "prevent the invasion" of "Hindus".

However, it is important to note that, portrayed as chaotic carriers of dangerous and foreign diseases, the East Indians' specific negative representations by local politicians and newspapers could not have emerged out of a vacuum. Given British Columbia's and Canada's link to the Empire, these representations must have been based on some familiarity with the images of India, as they prevailed among British imperialists.

An example of the influence of this previous knowledge is the manner in which the East Indians were referred to as 'Hindus' when they arrived without their imperial military symbols but only with their turbans, beards, and uncut hair in 1906. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the "Hindu" had come to symbolize for the British everything that had gone wrong in India since, and including the mutiny of 1857 (Porter 1975:27-47). The "Hindu" came to represent the 'weak' and 'docile' indentured labourer who had travelled to British colonies, the parasitic native Indian bureaucrat unaccepting of his innate social status, or one of the 'teeming' millions, so often referred to by Kipling as the 'white man's burden' (Bolt 1984:126-147; Miles 1989:83; Mohanty 1989:28). In contradistinction to the negative meanings attributed to the term "Hindu", the Sikh, because of his enlistment into the Indian army, was almost always equated by Britain with the image of loyal soldier, a soldier who had defended the British flag within India at a time of the mutiny and since then in Britain's imperial expansion (Beaumont 1977; Cohen 1971:44; Fox 1985:140-159; Heathcote 1974:38-40; MacMunn 1980:139,161,162). Hence, when arguing these immigrants (East Indians) are unable to assimilate with 'white people' and should not be allowed to enter the province, it is understandable why the newspapers would label them as Hindu/Hindoo and not Sikhs, which they were.

Amidst the web of images and symbols, that made up the many expressions of anti-East Indian prejudice, the dominant perception of East Indians in 1906, however, was that they were part of the Asiatic 'race' and, as such, part of the "Cheap Asiatic labour" problem.

Referring to them as the "latest menace to white workers" (News-Advertiser, 28 August, 1906:5), the newspapers commonly accused the East Indians of taking away jobs and accepting lower wages. Articulated in economic as opposed to purely racial and/or cultural terms and postulating a material relationship between the men from India and white workers, this particular representation cannot be taken for granted. Again, not having been developed out of nothing, the process in which the East Indians came to be defined as "cheap Asiatic labour" needs to be empirically tested.

4. Reactions Of Organized Labour In British Columbia

Organized labour in British Columbia showed no hesitation in drawing a distinction between themselves, as the insiders, and the "Hindoo", as the outsider, and thus placed them in the general category of "cheap Asiatic labour". At its meeting of July 25, 1906, the Victoria Trades and Labour Council unanimously passed a resolution stating that the council wished:

... to place on record an emphatic protest against the proposed introduction into this Province of Hindoo laborers, and call on the working men of British Columbia to assist by every means in their power, in preventing this further attempt to flood the country with cheap Asiatic labour (emphasis added.)⁴⁹

A few weeks later on August 17, the resolution was again introduced and passed when both the Victoria and Vancouver Councils met during their annual convention in Vancouver. The issue was also raised when the Trades and Labor Congress of Canada held their annual meeting in Victoria from September 17 to 21, 1906. The delegates of the Victoria Trades and Labour Council presented the following resolution which would later to be accepted:

That the Hindoos by reason of their caste prejudices, peculiar religious convictions, loathsome habits and obnoxious manner of living, can never assimilate with white people or perform the duties of desirable citizens of this Country.

That the country from which they come has long been recognized as a hotbed of the most virulent and loathsome diseases such as Bubonic plague, Smallpox, Asiatic Cholera and the worst forms of Venereal diseases, and however strict the medical

examination of our ports may be - there is a constant danger of these people being the means of transmission of diseases to our people.

That the introduction of this class of Cheap Labour will be the means of excluding the very class of labour that is most essential for the progress and prosperity of the country - i.e.... white workers, who if paid a fair living wage come to settle here, maintain homes and rear families and thoroughly fulfil the duties of citizenship. At the present time a number of our large employers employ cheap coolie Labour for the reason that it is cheap, and if this supply of cheap Labour is increased the possibility of any addition to our white population from outside sources becomes greatly lessened. . . .

If the positions of British Columbia now filled by Asiatic were filled by White working at living wages then from amongst the families of these workers there would soon grow up a sufficient supply of youthful labor for farmers, fruit growers, canneries and for domestic service and if the progress of the country in the future demands the introduction of labour from outside sources, we are of opinion that the government should look to the crowded centres of population in Great Britain for the additional labour to assist in building up the country in preference to allowing the admission of a race of people who can never be of any use to Canada as citizens and whose very existence amongst our people, would be a menace to the wellbeing of the community.⁵⁰

On the basis of what was articulated in the resolution, two important points can be made with respect to organized labour's reaction towards the East Indians. First, given the references to the caste system in India, the religious customs and dress of the immigrants -ironically markers which in 1902 had provoked much curiosity and enthusiasm among white settlers, but now labelled "peculiar" by organized labour - it is clear that, strongly influenced by British imperial discourse, some general ideological matrix must also have affected the way in which labour organizations interpreted their world.

Secondly, given that it was only in 1906 that negative meanings were first attributed to the East Indians' physical and cultural characteristics, suggests that the reactions must also have been influenced to some degree by the existing material relations in British Columbia at the point of their arrival. In other words, working class racism should not be interpreted merely as a product of free-floating images of the Hindu stored in British imperial discourse or, for that matter, some conspiracy on the part of capitalists. British Columbia's working class was not oblivious to the effects which imperialism and the tyranny of the capitalist system had on India. Indeed, similar to the manner in which newspapers in the province attributed positive qualities to the Sikhs during their 1902 visit, some sectors of British Columbia's working class identified the workers in India as "fellow-beings". The following article appeared in 1902 in

The Independent, a working class newspaper influenced by socialist doctrine and published in Vancouver.

Sixty million of our fellow beings in India are suffering from famine and thousands are perishing daily. . . Since the last famine surplus grain and other products of native labor have been stripped out of the Empire many times over sufficient to meet the present distress, and every day deeply laden steamships are bearing the wealth away. . . Famine is the result not of caste, but the exploitation of native labor and the vampires of usury-profit (7 April 1902, p.4).

5. Construction Of East Indians As "Cheap Asiatic Labour" By Organized Labour

As previously mentioned, in order to explain the significant role played by British Columbia's labour movement in the social, political and economic exclusion of Asian workers, political economists have used the split labour market theory to argue that what appeared as ethnic and 'racial' antagonisms is actually rooted in an initial difference over the price of labour. It may well be true that British Columbia's labour movement was a driving force behind the exclusion of East Indian. However, when the representation of the East Indians as "cheap Asiatic labour" is placed in the concrete conditions under which it was articulated, it becomes obvious that the racist response of organized labour can not be attributed primarily to economic encounters between white workers and East Indians at various sites of production. A number of labour organizations had already passed various resolutions calling for the exclusion of 'Hindus' before a few hundred East Indians had even landed in the province of British Columbia. The Victoria Trades and Labour Council itself had to admit in a letter to the Prime Minister asking for his government's assistance to this "new Oriental problem", that there were no actual instances of competition from the "Hindus". The Council informed Laurier that based on "their general appearance, as well as reports from those who claim to know", the East Indians are "not a desirable element for our country".⁵¹

Moreover, although the Trade and Labour Councils of Vancouver and Victoria representing at least since the turn of the century a large body of workers, the sawmills on the

out-skirts of Vancouver, New Westminster or in the surrounding areas which would employ most of the East Indians were not unionized (Conley 1986:211-212).⁵² In other words, the Trade and Labour Councils never spoke on behalf of white sawmill workers. Rather, as recently pointed out by Robert McDonald, the labour movement in Vancouver (and Victoria) was dominated by 'moderate labourism' with skilled (white) craft-workers holding much of the power and less skilled workers playing a peripheral role (1986:48). Thus, since the link between the economic activities of the East Indians in the sawmills and skilled workers was at best weak, economic competition between organized white workers and East Indians cannot, objectively speaking, be considered "the" determinant factor in organized labour's negative reaction.

The historical legacy of relations between Chinese and Japanese workers and 'white' workers certainly played a crucial role. A number of factors precluded the labour movement from extending its consciousness of a common working class interest to include Chinese and Japanese workers. These include the facts that Chinese and Japanese workers were accorded an inferior status as non-settlers by the state, that they were hired by contractors or bosses as well as the prevailing racist ideology (Creese 1986, 1988). These factors placed Chinese and Japanese workers in a position of disadvantage relative to white workers within the work place and civil society. This disadvantaged position along with the lower subsistence level of Chinese and Japanese workers resulted in a situation where a policy of "Oriental" exclusion became a 'hallmark' of British Columbia's labour movement. Labour spokesmen alleged that because they were willing to accept lower wages, to work for long hours under unhealthy and unsafe conditions and to act as strikebreakers during industrial conflicts, the "Orientals" threaten the health and standard of living of white workers, as well as reducing the power of labour in general.

As the last chapter has shown, over the years the white (male) working class had used collectively being "white" as a legitimate discourse by which to identify itself positively. In doing so, it had de facto exteriorized and excluded those who did not possess this positively

evaluated characteristic. Given that East Indians workers were non-white, and that their placements in the labour market were structurally similar to those of Chinese and Japanese labourers, it is not surprising that, through an ideological process, they were put in the same category and incorporated into the organized labour's exclusionary policy. However, the important point here is that at the level of the concrete East Indians were constructed negatively by organized labour, prior to any objective economic competition. This means, in effect, that the construction was articulated at the political level and that, in terms of causal efficacy, relative autonomy has to be attributed to it. However, this argument provides only part of the explanation. To determine the level at which ideology has been produced, not only the use of its content has to be studied but it must also be linked up with the concrete and immediate conditions under which it was articulated. The concrete political and economic conditions under which East Indians began to arrive in significant numbers need, therefore, to be examined.

6. Political And Economic Conditions In British Columbia: 1906

During the first decade of this century until 1907, when a severe depression struck the province, British Columbia enjoyed a relatively high degree of economic prosperity (McDonald 1981:49; McDonald 1986). The strong state of the economy was directly reflected in the province's finances. Overall between 1902-1903 and 1906-1907, British Columbia's revenues had more than doubled, and for the first time in its history, there seemed to be a surplus in the government's account. New production records had been set in the mining industry in both 1906 and 1907, while the approximate cut of lumber in the saw mills increased two-and-one-half fold between 1903 and 1907 (Robin 1972:17). A similar assessment applies to the fisheries and fruit-growing industry on the mainland. This prosperity was particularly evident in Vancouver which had become the province's metropolitan centre for commerce, lumber manufacturing, transportation and business services (McDonald 1986:35).

Given that the rapid economic growth in industry and finance coincided with the dramatic end to the entry of Chinese and Japanese labour and with the number of European workers entering the province remaining stable, it was only a matter of time until the number of available workers would decline and capitalists would complain that this decline drove up wages, slowed the influx of capital and made their local products uncompetitive. Powerful evidence that by 1906 labour market conditions had shifted such that "cheap" labour was becoming scarce may be found in the willingness of Chinese workers to withdraw their labour in an attempt to extract concessions from bosses. In 1906 three strikes, one of which ended successfully, were initiated by Chinese workers in and around Vancouver.⁵³ Considering that in the first decade of this century, only a total of ten strikes involving Asian male workers were reported in the greater Vancouver area, 1906 represents a year of relatively favourable labour conditions for Chinese workers.

In the urban centers, the shortage of labour was particularly acute in domestic occupations such as housekeepers, laundrymen and restaurant workers. As the following comments from an article published on 21 July, 1906 in The World newspaper, entitled 'Serious Shortage of Domestic Help' suggests the issue was not only one of scarcity but also the fact that Chinese workers could not be obtained for the wage that the urban upper-classes had been accustomed to pay:

The head tax of \$500 which is now imposed on all celestials coming into the country has had the effects of making them rather scarce, and many of them disdain to work in a kitchen. Those who do work in houses demand such high wages that it is almost beyond the reach of the average householder to employ them (p.18).

At one point in 1907, the upper class women of Vancouver even circulated their own petition to repeal the \$500 Chinese head tax (Creese 1989:33).

The idea of repealing the head tax was actually first introduced in the summer of 1906, when the problem of labour scarcity had reached crisis proportions and employers of "cheap" labour were concerned about the prospect of losing profit. Employers were quite frank in explaining why a more open 'Oriental' immigration policy was necessary. Members of the

Fraser River Cannery Association, for instance, a powerful employers organization which comprised owners from some of the largest canneries, complained during a general meeting held on Aug. 6 1906, that because of labour scarcity, "the wages have so increased as to make the work of putting a pack together much more expensive than heretofore" (Nanaimo Free Press 9 August 1906). With specific reference to the Chinese labour, it was argued that "owing to the excessive head tax, no Chinamen have come here within recent years. . . consequently the rate of wages to Chinese labourers has increased about three-fold." To alleviate the situation the Association passed a resolution recommending that the tax be reduced to \$100 until economic conditions changed. Justifying such strong measures the Association pointed out that while canners were finding it "impossible to procure the necessary hands", so too were "farmers, fruit growers, householders". Certainly, in the sawmills, where a substantial proportion of the labour force was of Chinese origin, the lack of available labour resulted in what owners and managers described as the inability to meet contracts. In order to cope with the crisis many companies introduced in the summer of 1906 methods which would increase the productivity of the existing 'production runs'. The large sawmills at Chemainus, for example, resumed a night shift (Nanaimo Free Press, 31 July 1906:4). In the hope of catching up with orders, the Elk Lumber Co. was seriously considering a similar tactic (The World 19 July 1906:6).

While employers were anxious to have the doors opened to "Oriental" labour, it was clear they did not want them to enter as settlers. Another powerful interest association, the Kootenay Fruit Growers' Association, for example, passed a resolution at a special meeting in August 1906, which called for Chinese agricultural labourers and domestic servants entering Canada to be exempt from the head tax but stipulated that the government supervise the entry of these workers to ensure that they did not engage in other kinds of work. In other words, it was the employers' intention that "Oriental" immigration should be regulated to ensure that the workers were 'docile' and that no more entered than was necessary for the economy.

As a result of such resolutions, a strong lobby movement developed, which was organized by employers of "Oriental" labour from the resource sector of the provincial economy, including mining, forest, salmon canning and the fruit farming industries and which sought a temporary relaxation of the \$500 head tax imposed on Chinese labour (Daily News 21 November 1906, The World 10 August 1906, Nanaimo Free Press 6 Feb 1907 and The Province 26 January 1907). The lobby movement enjoyed the support of powerful central Canadian manufacturing and transportation interests such as the Montreal Board of Trade Company, seen as connected with the CPR and the Canadian Bank of Commerce, anxious for a closer trading relationship with the Orient (Roy 1989:180). Powerful political figures, such as the premier of Saskatchewan, were also associated with the movement (Columbian, 10 August 1906). Incidentally, speaking before the Canadian Club in Vancouver, Mr. Walker, the general manager of the Bank of Commerce, was quoted as saying that "the country could stand a quarter of a million Chinese" before it was worthy for citizens to consider the threat of Chinese domination (The Lumberman and Contractor, Vol. 3 (11) October, 1906).

7. Contextualizing Organized Labour's Reaction Within The Broader Structural Relations

Unlike earlier periods, such as after the gold rush or the completion of the CPR when the supply of labour outstripped demand, economic conditions in the summer of 1906 were favourable to workers (McDonald 1981, 1986). Hence, contrary to what most social scientists emphasize, the initial arrival and settlement of the East Indians did not coincide temporally with economic and social changes which may be attributed to the decline of capitalist production. That is to say, there was no overflow in the labour market that can directly account for working class racism.

In fact, the arrival of East Indians coincided with a labour shortage and the increasing articulation by capitalists that "Oriental" labour needed to be brought in the province. It is in this context that the response of organized labour toward the East Indians should be interpreted.

It is suggested that while the "anti-Oriental" movement organized by labour unions in British Columbia originated primarily, but not only, in the economic sphere, where the threat posed by Chinese labour actually facilitated class formation among white (male) workers, the movement's extension to include East Indians under the banner of "cheap Asiatic labour" was politically motivated. Due to the virtual cessation of Chinese immigration through the imposition of the head tax and of Japanese immigration with Japan's voluntary restraint, the "cheap Oriental labour" argument which had been used by British Columbia labour organizations since the 1880s to mobilize workers and gather public support, had by 1905, lost much of its momentum and vigor among politicians. In other words, the problematization of the question of "Oriental" immigration had faded in the political sphere within British Columbia for the last years as public sentiment over the issue had been satisfied, as it were, at least for the time being.

The idea of importing large-scale Chinese labour signified to 'white' workers a return to conditions which were not in their economic interests. However, since the new immigrants were East Indians yet part of the "Asiatic" people who had already been defined as inferior, organized labour utilized their presence, and a highly visible one at that, to ignite old fears about the "Oriental" menace among the public. The act of signifying the East Indians as "cheap Asiatic competition" was a political strategy, albeit mistaken, to help secure the legitimacy of labour's resistance to the calls by British Columbia's largest employers for a relaxation of the Chinese head tax, which had begun to surface.

Such was the representation of the East Indians by the working class, but is it fair to say that because the "cheap Asiatic competition" rhetoric was the most strongly articulated, racism in British Columbia was spearheaded by organized labour? In order to answer this

question, the political developments with respect to the labour storage and a movement on the part of capitalists calling for a more open immigration policy for the Chinese provide some important insights.

8. Political Developments On The Question Of Chinese Head Tax

Certainly, when seeking support for their proposals for a temporary elimination in the Chinese head tax, capitalists frequently complained that political pressure imposed on the newspapers and local politicians by the labour movement was a serious hindrance to their campaign. Thus, in an article which was published in the October edition of The Lumberman and Contractor, a journal catering to owners and managers of perhaps the largest industry in the province, the argument was made:

There is a strong movement on foot here in favor of admitting a certain number of Chinamen into the province to fill the labor ranks. Cheap labor is very badly needed in the woods and in the mill yards and orchards, and it is proposed that for a certain time the head tax be removed. The local papers are diffident about echoing the sentiments of those in favor of such a move for fear of antagonizing the labor unions, and many public men are similarly situated; but when conditions prevail where it is an absolute benefit to the country to admit cheap labor without affecting the welfare of labor already employed in the country, labor unions should not be consulted as to what should or should not be done. At the present time it is doubtful if twenty-five per cent. of the merchants and manufacturers in British Columbia would be averse to admitting Chinamen into the country to fill the labor ranks and supply the want of cheap labor, and there is no doubt that the Government would promptly yield to the wishes of the vested interests of the entire province in this respect if they did not fear to antagonise the union vote. Of one thing they could be certain, that the skilled laborer would not suffer, for cheap laborers would make it possible to open up propositions putting millions of dollars into circulation that cannot now be operated, and skilled labor would thus greatly benefit. It was recently proposed to start a campaign and to this end it was suggested that volunteers stump the country and secure signatures to a monster petition to present to the Government. Outside the unions the whole country is in favor of this move. Will unionism prevail? Will politicians in power yield to the labor vote and retard the progress of the country? That is the question (p. 25).

Since about the turn of the century the white (male) working class was indeed well organized in trade unions and had achieved some political success in electing labour candidates or allied independents to the provincial legislature and in federal elections. Shortly after the provincial

election in 1903, for example, which brought the Socialist Party victory in two Nanaimo area constituencies, labour again held the balance of power enabling it to get a number of working class concessions from the Premier, Robert McBride. The labour movement had also played a critical role in bringing about exclusions against the Chinese and Japanese, including restricting their right to work in certain sectors of the economy and the progressively more stringent immigration restrictions and taxes (see chapter two; Creese 1984, 1988). Hence, as the above article argued, the labour movement in British Columbia had, in many respects, secured some hegemonic influence on the question of "Oriental immigration". However, amidst a severe labour shortage where capitalists were potentially faced by declining profits and called for a reduction of the Chinese head tax, it is difficult to believe that the political influence of organized labour in British Columbia alone could have been the dominant factor in the resistance of newspapers and politicians.

Partly due to concerted efforts by the labour movement, a supra-class consensus had been reached in the province around the turn of the century. The consensus coalesced around the argument that British Columbia's future could only be secured if it remained a "white man's province" and did so without importing Chinese and Japanese labour. Although this political consensus was only one historical moment in the evolving social relations in British Columbia, with the suspension of "Oriental" immigration and an expanding economy, there was a general sense permeating the every-day life world of white settlers in the province that the issue which had "for years occupied a prominent place in the political programme of every Provincial party" was finally and forever over (Province 4 March 1903:1; News-Advertiser 14 March 1903:1). Indeed, economic prosperity, and the availability of jobs for all who wanted them, only triggered higher expectations about the possibility of attaining even greater success without an "Oriental" problem.

Transformations in the economic sphere, such as new markets and higher production levels, which required an ample supply of "cheap" labour, were now 'forcing' employers concerned about their material interests to propose a more open immigration policy for the

Chinese. Because such a position was diametrically opposed to what employers had articulated some years earlier, it threatened to 'rupture' the fragile consensus which had been formed in 1902 and since been maintained. In this sense, contrary to what capitalists argued, the resistance on the part of newspapers and politicians against employers and their proposals to reduce the Chinese head tax cannot be attributed primarily to the influence of labour. Rather, it should be seen as a social force responding to a potential break-down in the prevailing hegemonic ideology on the question of immigration from the "Orient". Furthermore, the discourse in which the resistance was articulated, actually re-worked ideological traces which were deposited in British Columbia's social formation at the turn of the century as a result of the political alliance concerning "Oriental" immigration, an alliance in which capitalists, among other classes, actively participated. This discourse appealed to notions of community and the maintenance of the Anglo-Saxon "race". The following extracts from a lengthy letter that first appeared in the Nelson News, but was later reprinted on the front page of the Nanaimo Free Press on August 25, 1906, represent the dominant ideological rhetoric found during the months of the crisis of the labour shortage.

PLAIN SENSE WANTED IN DEALING WITH SCARCITY OF LABOR PROBLEM

... does any sane man propose to flood this country with 50,000 Chinamen in order "to promote the fruit growing industry," ... they will set up in opposition to the white man on every end (fruit growing and trucking among the foremost)- down will come wages and, enjoying equal privileges with the Canadian-the taxpayer and his father before him, who had dug and chopped this country out of the wilderness and made it what it is ...

I know that I will be met with assurances that here is no intention to admit yellow labor as free citizens of Canada, but rather to have the whole of the immigration under government inspection and control - in short to admit them only as indentured laborers. The argument probes on old sore. The theory has been advanced and put to practice before now, and from what I can learn of the lessons as taught in the Transvaal during the past two years, it is a mode of evading labor difficulties which it would be well to leave alone ...

To seek such relief as this - if it were to be successful appear to me as an insult to the British flag which we have been brought up to regard as the token of bravery and freedom. I would rather see the Chinaman in the country as a free man, than in bondage - such a suggestion seems to take us back to the conditions existing in the country to the

south of us prior to the civil war and to alleviate and amend which, rivers ran red with blood.

New Zealand, the British colony which had made more real progress along the lines of sound government and economic legislation than any other, can and does get along better than our possessions which insist on diverse experiments in "cheap" labor.

Then comes the question of supply. Those who have troubled to look in the matter at all must know that there is as much available material in England as in any other country - sufficient at all events to meet all the requirements of Canada for many years to come . . . There are thousands of them in England and one must get to the country to find the most desirable class.

There is no question, however, that this is a matter for the government to take up and they cannot do it too soon or too earnestly. We are willing to admit the scarcity of labor, and it is among the very foremost questions that confronts the dominion today. Marked effect can only be had by direct contact with the source of supply . . .

It takes so very little, less indeed than we are apt to think, to decide a man to just what colony he will migrate - an attractive advertisement a kindly enthusiastic word, a friendly slap on the back being quite sufficient 90 times out of 100 to turn an emigrant's steps from one country to another. That is just what is required in England.

In the place of agents - general for the dominion and provinces, sitting in gorgeous offices in Victoria street, and smoking expensive brands of cigars, and waiting for enquires to come to them, let them get out and "hustle," as we say, (or employ others to do it who may well be a great deal better fitted to discriminate between a good and a bad settler), get out among the "unemployed," which is causing our home government so much anxiety, and the result will soon be evident to all.

Immigration offices must be opened and agents of the government move about among those men and explain details and if need to give assistance to transport men and whole families out to this country. Appropriations for such substantial work would be the most valuable and long lasting that could be affected, but in most cases emigrants would be quite willing to refund part or all of this out of their first year's wages.

The question requires taking hold of by associations and societies the country through, as well as by government, and ways and means will soon be found, and the present trouble wholly or in part relieved. We can readily understand, however, that the class of settler which I have referred to above is not the man whom our friends the landsharks and Chinese promoters are after. They have not capital enough to please them, but nevertheless they are the very best class of settlers that can come into the community today.

As sons of Britain and patriots it is incumbent upon us to first exhaust the labor supply of our own country, and then of our own subjects, before we invite the Orient to participate in the future destinies of this Glorious Dominion.
Let us awake! Let us see what we can do to help! (emphasis added)

It is ironic that "the Canadian - the taxpayer and his father before him" should be identified as persons "who had dug and chopped this country out of the wilderness and made it

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what it is" considering that Chinese labour represented at one time and, at least until 1900, one-third of the province's labour force. Nonetheless, the claim exemplifies the sense of common history which had been developing in British Columbia among 'white' settlers.

As the above letter shows, the idea was never more evident that this was a period of crisis and efforts would have to be made to fight the political battle. Although willing to admit that "the labor market is scantily supplied" and that "(m)en are scarcer than ever", The World was "(d)ecidedly in favor" of "exhausting all available means to obtain a supply of labor in Eastern Canadian and European quarters before encouraging immigration from any Oriental country" (8 August 1906:4). According to the newspaper, "Orientals. . . cannot be wielded into that homogeneity which the white races can reach". On another occasion The World, also warned: "Our public men and labor associations and those news papers that will not yield to the temptation of the yellow metal in the hands of the Yellow Peril must be on the alert" (26 August, 1906:4).

Newspapers and ordinary citizens were not the only ones to suggest labour be brought from elsewhere. Consider the Victoria Trade Labour Council resolution once more:

If the positions of British Columbia now filled by Asiatic were filled by White working at living wages then from amongst the families of these workers there would soon grow up a sufficient supply of youthful labor for farmers, fruit growers, canneries and for domestic service and if the progress of the country in the future demands the introduction of labour from outside sources, we are of opinion that the government should look to the crowded centres of population in Great Britain for the additional labour to assist in building up the country in preference to allowing the admission of a race of people who can never be of any use to Canada as citizens and whose very existence amongst our people, would be a menace to the wellbeing of the community.⁵⁴

It is usually argued that whether it was 'Asians' arriving on their own resources or the urban poor of the Old Country sent by benevolent societies, an influx of unskilled labour was perceived by labour unions in British Columbia as a threat to their job security and living standard of settled white workers.

Ultimately, the argument that settlers from Britain should be sought instead of 'cheap Oriental labour' overdetermined at this particular conjuncture other divisive boundaries in the

'imagined' community of British Columbia. The re-emergence at the political level of some form of collaboration across class boundaries had much to do with a deep commitment, which referring to the idea of the nation, Benedict Anderson calls 'horizontal comradeship', was clearly demonstrated by the employers' withdrawal of their proposals for a removal of the Chinese head tax. For instance, the three boards of trade in British Columbia urban centres who had discussed the Montreal circular for relaxation of head tax, concluded in the end that "local circumstances overrode any kind of common business consensus on the question" (Roy 1989:180). As an alternative to implementing a relaxation of the Chinese head tax, the Vancouver Board of Trade organized a "fairly representative" group of wholesale merchants, salmon canners, Fraser Valley farmers and fruit growers, and "ladies of Vancouver, who suffer great inconvenience for want of domestic help" to ask the provincial and dominion governments "to facilitate suitable immigration" (Roy 1989:166). The B.C. Lumber and Shingle Manufacturers argued they would take a similar route out of the crisis.

Incidentally, in November of 1906, reports were made public of an agreement under negotiation between the British Columbia government and the Salvation Army, in which suitable immigrants would be brought to British Columbia from the old country (Victoria Times 1 November, 1906). Citizens of the province were informed by newspaper sources that British Columbia was going to receive an army of three to four thousand immigrants out of the twenty-five to thirty thousand that the Salvation Army expected to bring to Canada in 1907. While it was known the majority of immigrants who were to be brought in "were unskilled labourers, the group that had the smallest chance of a livelihood in Britain", newspapers described them as "desirable settlers" and the plan a great achievement. The Colonist, for example announced: "Salvation Army to Solve the Labour Problem" (18 November 1906:10).

The Premier himself assured fellow MLAs that "British Columbia could take care of thousands of newcomers" and that if the negotiations were successful, "the country would have no reason to regret the move".⁵⁵ The resolution by the Kootenay Fruit Growers' Association, which had stimulated lively discussion throughout the province, in the end was

only supported by the Vernon Farmers' Institute. Due to the lack of support, on September 28, 1906, at a meeting of the Kootenay Fruit-Growers' Association in Nelson, a resolution was passed with a vote of 22 to 13, in which the motion "calling for the abatement of the Chinese head tax" was rescinded (The Province, October 2, 1909:7; Nanaimo Free Press, October 2, 1906:7).

8. Reinterpreting The Initial Reaction To East Indians In British Columbia

Just as appeals by local politicians and newspapers for 'commonality' on the basis of 'race' must be seen as a social force which was intended to counteract the threat of a breakdown in the supra-class consensus, so too much of the negative response towards the East Indians cannot be attributed to the working class but instead should be seen as having emerged from the prevailing political ideology of the period. Indeed, as early as Sept. 15 1904, at which time a total of 57 East Indians were reported as having landed in British Columbia, Thomas McGuigan, Vancouver's city clerk, on behalf of the city council, had already sent a letter to the federal superintendent of immigration, W.D. Scott asking that exclusionary measures be taken against them. McGuigan wrote:

It has been brought to the attention of the civic authorities that a large number of East Indians are being brought to this city from the Orient by transportation companies, and many of them afterwards became a charge on the city and Province. It is stated that they were brought here from under false pretences and are led to believe that they can secure immediate employment at wages far beyond the dreams of an Oriental in his own country. It is felt by the City that some steps should be taken by the proper authorities to disillusion these people, and if possible, to punish those who are the means of bringing them here. I have been instructed to write to you with that object in view, and trust you may devise some plan to shut out this element who are naturally unfitted to stand this climate which is so different from their own, and which rapidly incapacitates them for manual labour, even if there were abundance of it.⁵⁶

Clearly, this negative evaluation of East Indians as settlers by the local state could not have been spearheaded by organized labour but can only be attributed to the articulation of the politically charged "white man's country" discourse. Such a discourse would have

determining effects into 1906, regardless of the labour storage. Informing his seniors in Ottawa of the situation with respect to the East Indians, Scott Munro, Immigration Agent of the Dominion stationed in Vancouver, wrote:

The scarcity of domestic labor is becoming a serious problem here, and nothing is sight to relieve the situation. The farmers and fruit growers are suffering accutely from the scarcity and labor, not cheap labor, but labor at any price. Farmers are offering \$2.50 to \$3.00 per day and board, and can't get help enough to gather in their crops . . . There is a growing agitation in this Province by the great majority of the people, for a better class of laborer than is now coming in, and unless some marked relief is obtained soon, the industries and development of the country will suffer very materially . . . (emphasis added) I order to prevent the entrance of an undesirable class of Immigrant such as I believe the Hindoo to be, I think it would be well if the Government would enact that each must be possessed of the minimum sum of \$100.00 each upon arrival here. This would keep out a great many of the riff-raff, and would lessen the total number considerably.⁵⁷

The important point here is not so much that the response in 1906 was negative. However, what is important is to understand the social forces behind the East Indians' signification as well as the level of determinacy at which the response and the exclusionary practices were played out. Both the social forces and the level of determinacy can only be appreciated by combining a long-term approach which examines historical periods "conjuncturally" and accounts for the migration of, and subsequent reactions to, the Chinese and Japanese with an analysis of the "concrete", that is the specific economic, political, and ideological contexts in which the arrival of East Indians took place.

In this chapter an attempt has been made to show that it is determinacy at the political level which best explains the reactions of the various groups and classes in British Columbia against the East Indians. By being thrown into the representational category of "degenerate Hindu", East Indians were imputed with negative markers by organized labour, newspapers and local politicians from the moment of their arrival in 1906.

Chapter Four

Practices of Exclusion

The last chapter showed how the East Indians were perceived negatively when they began arriving in 1906. The dominant representation of East Indians during this initial period of large-scale immigration was that they were "cheap Asiatic labour" and "a menace to white workers in the province" (News-Advertiser 28 August, 1906:5). Although reflective of the political strength of the labour movement in British Columbia, it was argued that this representation, due to its lack of a material base and due to the "concrete" conditions under which it emerged, was played out primarily at the political level. Moreover, it was demonstrated that racism against the men from India was not spearheaded by the working class, but shared by British Columbia newspapers and local politicians. In this chapter a modest attempt will be made to shed light on the exclusionary practices which accompanied the ideological process of racism against East Indians.

According to Miles, 'exclusionary practice' refers to all instances where a specified group is shown to be in unequal receipt of resources and services or to be unequally represented in the hierarchy of class relations (Miles 1989:77). Since under capitalism many structural inequalities and unequal access to resources have little to do with the process of racialization or racism, Miles argues that the link between racism and exclusionary practices "must always be demonstrated rather than assumed" (ibid:84).

In general, in one form or another, biological characteristics were mentioned as a rationale for denying the East Indians certain rights, resources and entry to the province. For example, on September 16, 1906 it was argued on the front page of The Colonist: "they are not naturally, that is to say physically or by training or experience, well fitted for the task of laborers in this country. That is so obvious as not to require argument." Even the "cheap Asiatic labour" representation, which was articulated in economic terms, made some reference to the physical attributes of the East Indians. The following excerpt from a letter written by

Dr. Munro to Dominion officials in Ottawa is an example of one the earlier 1906 accounts of the East Indians in British Columbia:

The demand for labor is, however so great that the wages these people get at the sawmills average from \$1.75 to \$2.00 per day. Compared with the Japanese and Chinese they are much inferior, as they will only do certain kinds of labor such as handling lumber at the mills, and street work, whereas the Chinese and Japanese will work equally well at domestic, agricultural or any labor work. Although tall in stature and presenting as a rule a fine appearance they are not nearly as strong or so well fitted to perform arduous work as the other classes . . . As competitors of white labor they are the most dangerous we have . . . Their food and mode of living does not allow the same advantages as that of the other races employed in this country who in this particular time readily assimilate themselves with the Europeans here, and fit them for the work that is demanded of them in a new country like this. The Hindoo is fitted more for the position of Policeman or Watchman, which duties they have been employed in China and the far West . . .⁵⁸

On the one hand the doctor described the East Indians as "much inferior to the Japanese and Chinese" and expressed reservations about their availability to "perform arduous work" like the "other classes". On the other, as "competitors of white labor" he found them to be "the most dangerous". Given the high demand for labour and the lack of "competition" from the East Indians at the time, the inconsistency embedded in this evaluation is clearly evident.

However, arguments that the East Indians were biologically "degenerate" and "unfit" resulted in their segregation from civil society. Occupying a status of untouchables, most East Indians had difficulty purchasing necessary goods such as food. The most serious and chronic problem they faced, however, was acquiring sufficient housing facilities. Landlords constantly denied accommodation to East Indians and at times forcibly ejected them from houses they had already rented (Lal 1976:111; The Province 23 November, 1906). The result was that some East Indians ended up living in temporary shelters or in tents, further perpetuating the stereotypes. Reporting to his superiors in Ottawa, Munro, the Dominion Immigration Inspector at Vancouver wrote that "they (East Indians) all have money in their pockets to pay for whatever they get, but the trouble is they can't get it".⁵⁹ According to Munro, "on average" the Hindoos had "forty dollars each" on them when they arrived, which was approximately the same amount European immigrants brought with them (The World, 4

September, 1906:1). Similar comments were made by a former British admiral in a letter written in mid-November 1906 to London:

Some have as much as thirty pounds or more. Hundreds wandering the streets about in clothes quite unsuitable for the climate. They are a stout, able-bodied set of men. A large proportion are ex-soldiers. Their conduct has been exemplary.

The advent of these men has, as may be expected been vehemently opposed by the whole labour element of this country, whose hostility to these immigrants has sensibly affected their chances of employment. A campaign of calumny and vituperation has been, and continues to be engaged against them, to which the politicians who seek to maintain the labour vote are forced to submit. This action bars the Punjabis from much employment.⁶⁰

An example of exclusionary activities which this campaign was instrumental in producing is the reaction of the Vancouver municipality to the arrival of 125 East Indians off the Empress of Japan on October 15, 1906. After the Empress had landed, passengers were sent to the immigration sheds to be checked by Dominion officials. At the time of their release, Buscombe⁶¹, the mayor of Vancouver, ordered the police to guard the sheds so that "not a single Hindu be allowed access to the city" (The Busy Man's Magazine June, 1907:55). The mayor demanded that the C.P.R., which owned the passenger ship, send all the 'Hindus' back "from where they came". In a telegram sent to Ottawa he warned, that "the city of Vancouver will not stand for any further dumping of Asiatics". He also made clear to Ottawa, the city would seek its own "active preventive measures", unless the Dominion would provide definite assurance that the "importation of these undesirable immigrants" would be prohibited. The same evening the Vancouver city council held an emergency session. Frustration over the Dominion's inaction led the council to communicate its concerns about East Indians directly to British authorities. The following telegram was sent to Winston Churchill, Colonial Secretary at London, and the colonial secretary in Hong Kong:

East Indians are being shipped to British Columbia in large numbers under misrepresentations respecting state of labor market. Feeling very acute against people responsible, as liable to be large mortality among destitutes. Please take such action as you deem necessary to prevent further shipments.⁶²

Incidentally, Vancouver city officials were unable to convince the C.P.R. to return the East Indians to Hong Kong where they had boarded the Empress of Japan. According to the general superintendent, the company had not engaged in any illegal activities, since the passengers had complied with immigration laws and passed government inspection. The refusal was not an act of good will on the part of the C.P.R. Returning the Indians would have been at an economic cost to the company, not to mention setting a precedence, which would literally end the opportunity to profit from such immigration. However, city authorities must have had some influence for it was revealed the morning after a Dominion immigration officer released the East Indians from their detention that C.P.R. ran a train to Hastings, an area on the outskirts of Vancouver with many "Hindus" aboard (World 19 October 1906:1). The purpose, according to the newspaper source, was to "liberate them in the woods". It seems the East Indians returned to Vancouver a day or two later; thus, the front page headline: Vancouver Alive with Hindus.

1. Exclusionary Practices And The Dominion

Since it was because certain political and economic factors in British Columbia came together at the turn of the century that the penetration of the Anglo-Saxon ideology led to an exclusionary "white man's country" discourse, such a discourse was regionally specific. That is to say, government officials in Ottawa did not have the same degree of determination to keep Canada's westernmost province "white".⁶³ Indeed, when the East Indians first arrived to sell their labour power, Dominion officials could not comprehend the local reaction. Upon receiving the 1904 letter from Vancouver city council, W.D. Scott, the Dominion Superintendent of Immigration, commented he was "rather surprised to hear the complaint" since he did not see any mention of them in British Columbian newspapers. Once the issue was passed over by Scott to his superiors in Ottawa, the matter was handled by M.G. Paramelee from the office of the Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce. Conducting his

own inquiry on the issue, Paramelee found McGuigan's claim to be grossly exaggerated.⁶⁴

Explaining why he was not "greatly impressed by the complaint", Paramelee wrote to Scott:

... Perhaps, I might add in connection with this that this class of people, though it is just possible that they are not fitted for as cold a climate as Canada, have been found to be most desirable in warm climates - for instance at present moment the populations of British Guiana is more than 50% East Indian - probably the population of the most progressive island in the West Indies, Trinidad, is from one - quarter to one - third East Indian, and the complaint there is to effect that they cannot get enough of them. They no doubt have their peculiarities, but they are industrious and will work where the native inhabitants will not and it is largely owing their industry that Trinidad and British Guiana are today enjoying a prosperity far beyond that of any of the other West Indian Colonies ...⁶⁵

In the same letter that Paramelee wrote he was not impressed by Vancouver's official's concerns, he also admitted a few lines earlier that he too was "somewhat surprised that even that many (East Indians) landed" and that it never occurred to him "that more than an occasional few came in." By expressing his surprise about the number of arrivals and by not questioning the racist undertones of the complaint from the Vancouver municipality, the Dominion official assisted in defining the entry of East Indians to Canada as a potential problem. By delaying any initiatives such as legislation to prevent their entry until 1908, the government indirectly encouraged the development of exclusionary practices at the local level in British Columbia. Moreover, although he agreed that "under the circumstances there is nothing to prevent their coming" since East Indians were "are not excluded under the terms of any exclusion act", Paramelee assumed that they belonged to the same group or caste from India as those who were sent as temporary labour to plantation colonies.⁶⁶ In other words, Dominion officials shared the view with all politicians in the country that non-whites were an inferior 'race'. Thus, they could not help but consider the East Indians, regardless of their British subject status, as "cheap" labour and not permanent settlers.

In 1906 Ottawa was generally passive to the pleas of British Columbia's labour organizations, MPs and the Vancouver municipality to stop East Indian immigration. Yet, when circumstances arose which required some type of concession on its part, the Dominion

government's evaluation of the 'worth' of the East Indians was not very different from that of the exclusionists in the province. Approximately seven hundred East Indians disembarked from the Tartar when it docked in Victoria's port on November 16, 1906. Hostility from citizens and local officials was so severe that the immigrants had nowhere to turn. Nearly half were forced to continue their journey to Washington in search of work. Superintendent of Immigration, W.D. Scott, requested some assistance from Ottawa for constructing an immigration building where they could be housed, until some other arrangements could be made. Scott explained to Minister of Interior Frank Oliver that the citizens of Vancouver were "hostile" and refused to sell the East Indians any food and fuel. He was of the opinion that the building was "absolutely necessary".⁶⁷ Oliver's reply: "if Hindus are liable they must be deported".⁶⁸

The correspondence between the Dominion, local and provincial state officials indicates that federal officials were more concerned with making sure the law was appropriately applied and that the 'Hindus' did not become a charge to the Dept. of the Interior than with what could be done to improve their situation in British Columbia. According to section 28 of the 1906 Immigration Act, any immigrant who was "likely to become a public charge; and any person landed in Canada who, within two years thereafter, has become a charge upon the public funds, whether municipal, provincial or federal, or an inmate of or a charge upon any charitable institution" could be deported by an immigration officer.⁶⁹ Following this rationale, Minister of Interior, Oliver sent a cable to Dr. Munro, the Medical Inspector in Vancouver:

Your have no authority to rent building for Hindoo immigrants. If you have closed least it must be for or at cost of Department. . . As soon as any Hindoo immigrants are reported as becoming public charges under sections twenty-eight and thirty-two of Immigration Act report facts to Department and the necessary instructions will be sent to deport.⁷⁰

2. From Regional Specificity To Class Specificity

One of the most important contributions made by recent Marxist writing on 'race' and racism is the recognition that the expression of racism need not be pervasive within a given nation-state dominated by the capitalist mode of production. Satzewich has recently argued: "differential relationships to the means of production" also have a bearing on "the life experiences and contradictions . . . groups of people face . . . within a particular nation-state" (1989:312). The statements presented at the 1885 Royal Commission of Chinese immigration in which British Columbia capitalists and workers, represented by organized labour were divided on the question of whether Chinese labourers should continue to be allowed to enter the province were perhaps the best illustration of this difference. Hence, just as it could not be taken for granted that the Dominion government's reaction to the East Indians was identical to that of the local state in Vancouver (regional specificity), so too we cannot assume that capitalists perceived East Indians negatively and opposed their entry to British Columbia.

What is particularly significant about the East Indians, however, is that, for the most part, they were destitute in 1906. Newspaper headlines such as the following were quite common:

STARVING COOLIES ROAM IN STREETS- Menace to Women and Children- Homeless and Destitute Wanderers Camp in Park and Beg Their Food. (World, Sept. 1, 1906:1)

What this means is that East Indians were not only completely excluded from civil society but from the economy as well. Hence, the question invariably arises as to why capitalists did not seize the opportunity to employ them as 'cheap labour'. In other words why, despite the fact that 'cheap labour' was desperately needed and that capitalists called for a reduction in the Chinese head tax, were East Indians left destitute? In answering this question it is worthwhile exploring the reaction of the owners of sawmills where most of the East Indians would in the long-term be employed.

3. Capitalists' Reaction To East Indians

From the very early days sawmills employed a large number of Native and Chinese labourers, the latter typically under the contract system. With the completion of the railroad, additional Chinese but also European workers became available for employment. Thus, also in the sawmills, the existing racial split in the labour force became more pronounced with the major division forged between white and Chinese workers. At the turn of the century, Japanese labourers began to be employed. Most Japanese workers were recruited through a 'boss' system, in which a member of their ethnic community was given duties similar to those of a broker. In 1902, some 500 Japanese workers were employed under this system in the sawmills. They accounted for almost a quarter of the total work force and outnumbered Chinese workers at a ratio of almost two to one. The Japanese sawmill worker was also reported to receive between one half to two-thirds of the pay of white workers in British Columbia sawmills (see 1902 R.C.:360).

Since the major division in the workforce was between white and "Oriental" workers, the sawmill owners frequently assessed the East Indians' suitability as labourers by using what was considered to be the "Asian" standard of work performance. In such a comparison, the East Indian rarely measured up to this standard. They were described as "tired", "slower to learn" (The Lumberman and Contractor, Vol.3 (12):20) and going "about their work awkwardly, as if they did not understand it"(ibid:21). In fact, at the Emerson Lumber Company which employed a thousand Chinese under contract in shingle work, management went as far as to say the "Hindu" was so inferior as a worker that such a comparison was impossible to make.

In explaining why they believed that the East Indian workers were inferior to "Oriental" as well as to the white workers, both cultural and biological arguments were often used. Interviewed on the quality of 'Hindu' labour, one mill owner, for instance, commented that "too many generations of vice; too many generations of birth from immature mothers, no

douce of strength from birth" are the reasons why the "Hindu has no stamina" and "could not speed up with a Pole or Swede" (Agnes 1913:34). Although it was generally agreed that they looked "intelligent and big", employers suggested their intelligence or strength was not exhibited in their work habits. The fact that they "were not meat eaters, but lived on dough" was one explanation given for why they were not good "work men" (The Lumberman and Contractor, Vol 3 (12), 1906:20). Their "peculiar religious customs" were also considered a hindrance for it kept them away from working near grease (The Busy Man's Magazine June 1907:57).

Although they hired East Indians, capitalists rarely gave any overt positive evaluation to them as they did to Chinese workers. In fact, a number of sawmill owners even argued they had lost money on the men from India. Others argued that sheer compassion was the motive behind why East Indians were on the pay-roll. In November of 1906, Mr. T.F. Paterson, secretary of the Canadian Pacific Lumber Company stated that, since "hundreds of these poor, half-fed immigrants have practically thrown themselves on the city [Vancouver], and are being housed by the civic authorities" he was willing to give them a "fair show".

4. Contextualizing Capitalists' Representations Within The Broader Structural Relations

Just as working class representations could not be dismissed as false consciousness, the statements made by sawmill owners should not be dismissed as capitalist propaganda. Most likely, East Indians did not arrive in the best health and consequently had difficulty adjusting to the climate. Certainly, that illness was reported as the grounds for deporting all one hundred "Hindoos" from British Columbia ports between January 1 to October 31, 1906, seems to lend some credence to labour organizations' claim that "there is a constant danger that these people (East Indians) being the transmission of diseases to our people".⁷¹ Furthermore, the argument that the 'Hindu' was biologically inferior to the Caucasian found its ready verification in scientific theories by medical experts. Dr. Moore, a medical practitioner from

the Canadian Anti-Tuberculosis Society, told British Columbians, when visiting the city of Vancouver in September of 1906, that if steps were not taken to stop the entry of the East Indians, the province would soon have a second "Chinese flood" on its hands (News-Advertiser 20 September, 1906). Yet, Dr. E. H. Lawson, a surgeon in charge of the Canadian Pacific Railway ships gave a very different account of the East Indian's state of health upon arrival:

It was my duty to make a thorough physical examination of each immigrant at Hong Kong, and although at first I was strongly prejudiced against them, I lost this prejudice after thousands of them had passed through my hands, and I had compared them with white steerage passengers I had seen on the Atlantic. I refer in particular to the Sikhs- and I am not exaggerating in the least when I say that they were 100 percent cleaner in their habits and freer from disease than the European steerage passengers I had come in contact with. . . . (Broad 1913 n.p.)

In the absence of available data, the East Indians' state of health and the incidence of diseases among them are difficult, if not impossible, to document. In this context, it is only important to point out that such allegations were part of the racializations East Indians were exposed to. Indeed, it should also be mentioned that as late as 1945, when overt references to 'race' were no longer made, "difficulties in adjusting to Canada's climate" were used as a pretext for excluding non-white immigrants.

Hence, although capitalists' evaluation of the East Indians as workers provide further evidence of the fact that the men from India were not high in demand, an examination of discourse alone does not suffice. It is important to contextualize what they were saying within the wider sets of material conditions. There are a number of historical and social structural contexts with respect to the migration of East Indians which need to be emphasized in order to better understand why they were not picked up by capitalists.

First, prior to the visit of the Sikh soldiers in 1902, no Sikh migrated from the Punjab to North America. True, East Indians, mostly men, from the southern provinces of India travelled, as indentured labourers, to South Africa and other countries (Huttenback 1976:175). Nevertheless, no such labour migration ever took place from the Punjab. In fact, migration to

places like California, and Oregon occurred subsequent to the arrival of East Indians in British Columbia. A total of only 15,000 immigrants, practically all male, departed the Punjabi for North America during the first two decades of this century, most of whom would eventually return to India (Fox 1985:46).

Secondly, in contradistinction to much of the Chinese immigration to Canada, East Indians did not arrive under the contract-system, nor did they subscribe, as the Japanese did, to a 'boss' system (Ward 1978:81). In other words, East Indians arrived in Canada as free labour.

In part, the explanation for why the East Indians did not establish a contract-system soon after arrival has to be found in Sikhism. Sikhism developed as a religious reform movement which stresses the importance of equality. Sikh philosophical teachings center around the concept of brotherhood and thus reject the validity of the caste system with its structural link to occupation. Furthermore, as the Punjab was annexed late by British India, the region had never been tapped for indentured labour. Thus, the possibility of establishing an elaborate system of contract labour among these immigrants was remote. These two structural aspects, namely, that there was no pre-established community in British Columbia nor a network of agents in Victoria or San Francisco waiting to bind them to a contractor meant that East Indians were forced, in a hostile climate, to fend for themselves in search for employment and accommodation. As well, the East Indians' skills or job preferences were another factor which made it difficult for them to accept whatever jobs were available. They were inexperienced in occupations such as domestics, garment workers, tailors, or restaurant workers, which were primarily dominated by the Chinese, and thus concentrated in jobs demanding heavy manual labour. Yet from this very concentration it was often wrongly interpreted that East Indians were only interested in high paying jobs. Ironically, it can be argued that a specific placement system, at the conjunctural level, might have proved useful for the East Indians' ability to commodify their labour power.

Since capitalists were not eager to employ East Indians, does this mean they were left without access to "cheap labour" during a period when there was a strong demand for it? Interestingly, when East Indian immigration in 1906 is situated within the context of the 'Asian' immigration, we find that Japanese immigrants were also beginning to arrive in British Columbia in the fall of the same year. In fact, approximately the same number of Japanese and East Indian workers entered in 1906, 1,900 of the former and between 2,100 and 2,300 of the latter (Cheng 1931:117). Both the East Indians and Japanese would enter the mills. However, the mills had an extensive "boss system" at least since the turn of the century. In fact, the dominant language at the Hastings Mills outside Vancouver was Japanese and employee records were maintained in Japanese (Yamashita 1942:154). Thus, it can be argued that it was the lack of elaborate networks controlled by a boss or contractor which could explain why East Indians in many cases were found to be homeless and starving, since such conditions were rarely found among the Japanese. Indeed, despite repeated efforts by the legislature to control their movement, the ease with which Japanese seemed to enter the province was one of the reasons why labour spokesmen denounced the Japanese as a more serious threat to the working classes of British Columbia than the long abused Chinese (Avery and Neary 1977:27).

5. Linking Material Conditions With Exclusionary Discourse

If capitalists' short-term need for 'cheap' labour in 1906 was served through the employment of Japanese as opposed to East Indians, does this not imply that the classic political economy perspective of Bolaria and Li which maintains that East Indians served as a reserve army of labour to sustain expansion and to divide or weaken the working class is inaccurate? On the basis of the material conditions under which the East Indians arrived, and the slots they received in the labour market, from a long-term perspective the answer has to be in the negative. Those East Indians who remained in Canada did have their

labour power exploited for capitalist development. However, the important point is that such privileging of the economy is most useful in analyses that address the question of why inequality is structured along racial lines at the broadest level of abstraction. Yet, because such abstract theorizing tends to overlook causal efficacy of political and ideological relations, in terms of an analysis which is concerned with "multidimensionality" and "concreteness", it is too simplistic. Indeed, although Bolaria and Li interpret racist exclusionary practices such as restrictive immigration policies of the state, as being functional for the reproduction of the subordinate position of East Indians in the Canadian labour market, that the East Indians were effectively stopped from entering Canada within a eighteen month period after they initially began to arrive in sizable numbers and that by 1911 only approximately 2,000 remained in the province makes this argument difficult to sustain (Canada 1911).

Yet, over-generalization can not account for all political economy studies which tend to reduce the case of racism against the East Indians to the economic level. Dutton's analysis of racism against the 'Asians' for example, consists of a fairly comprehensive account of social relations in British Columbia during the period of the East Indians' entry. Dutton writes:

Soon thousands of East Indians were arriving in the province (Sandborn, 1980). In the eighteen months between June, 1906 and December 1907 approximately 5,000 East Indian entered B.C. In the same period 10,000 Japanese arrived. In 1907, there were approximately 35,000 Asian workers in B.C. including the 20,000 Chinese already in the province. . . To add to the problems posed by thousands of new arrivals who in many cases were destitute, the economy once again plunged into recession. As a result wages went down and unemployment went up (1984:53-54).

In addition to Dutton, a number of other political economists (Sharma, 1982, Bolaria and Li, 1984, 1988) as well as mainstream writers (Harkin 1909; Sugimoto 1972) have turned to the argument of a slow-down in British Columbia's economy to explain the East Indian case. Bolaria and Li, for example, state the East Indians "arrived in the midst of a severe economic depression, a general slowdown in the resource industry, and high unemployment" (Bolaria and Li:170).

It is not inconceivable that the East Indians were arriving in Vancouver during a period when there was high unemployment amongst the male labour force, given the boom-bust nature of British Columbia's resource industry, which produces endemic fluctuations in labour demand. However, as it has been shown, for the greater part of 1906 when these men were experiencing the brunt of racist exclusionary practices, the economy was booming.

The question then becomes why "economic depression", and/or "high unemployment" are the explanations most frequently given for 'racial' antagonism against the East Indians? In part this may be due to the fact that by the winter of 1906 the social and economic conditions in British Columbia had changed. Overall, spring, summer and early fall tended to be the working seasons for the resource industries which dominated the province's economy, whereas in the winter, operations closed down. As a terminal city, it was Vancouver where workers flocked to after their labour was no longer needed, making it a "mecca of the unemployed" (McDonald 1986:39).

Consequently, exclusionary discourse that had previously been articulated at the political level acquired a 'new' validity to it. For example, in its resolution of November 26, 1906, the Vancouver City Council argued that, because of a "lack of accommodation" in the city and because in "winter seasons there is plenty supply of labour", the men from India should not be allowed entry.⁷² Although racist, such arguments could no longer be identified as pure rhetoric.

Futhermore, in addition to discourse from the past being reconstituted in the 'new' economic context, changed material circumstances also stimulated the formulation of a 'new' dominant representation. By December of 1906, the "cheap Asiatic labour" representation was supplanted with the argument that it was in best interests of the Indians themselves if they were to remain in their 'own country' for in British Columbia their state is a "pitiful" one. In an official statement of the Victoria Trades and Labour Council to the Minister of Interior, Hon F. Oliver, of December 17, 1906 it was argued:

... the condition of the Hindus arriving here is rendered miserable by a variety of circumstances, the other among which is the complete separation in sentiment and habits between them and the people of the Province. Limited funds, in some cases approaching destitution, lack of personal effects, light or unsuitable clothing and difficulty in finding or retaining employment contribute in a large measure to the condition that, for a superficial view, is considered by all as a most pitiable one ...⁷³

Hence, the winter of 1906 was one particular historical conjuncture where 'common-sense' representations such as "lack of personal effects" and "difficulty in finding or retaining employment" met with empirical validity. Given that East Indians continued to migrate to British Columbia in 1907 and that during this time a province-wide recession broke out in which access to resources such as accommodation and jobs became scarce, it is easy now to see why social scientists would focus on the economy in explaining the social and economic exclusion of the East Indians. However, absent from such accounts are the racist discourses and exclusionary practices of the local state, white settlers, the media, politicians and organized labour, which, significantly, played out in British Columbia prior to any economic slow-down.

6. Conclusion

I hope that in my undertaking this analysis and making use of the concepts of racialization, racism and exclusionary practices, it has become clear to the reader that the point of departure to a comprehensive study of reactions towards and exclusionary practices against the East Indians should be the 1902 visit by Sikh soldiers. During this encounter, the East Indians, with their British medals and uniforms provided a representation of the power and glory of British imperialism. Thus, the 1902 visit represents a documented "moment" at which the East Indians had undergone the ideological process of racialization, but not racism.

In comparing the context within which this ideological process occurred with that of 1906, when large-scale East Indian immigration became publicized, it is obvious that the critical factor in understanding the negative reaction of 1906 was that the East Indians were

now arriving as settlers. Yet, only in having adopted a long-term historical perspective, and having examined 'Asian' migration to British Columbia, was it possible to link this negative reaction to the economic level without engaging in reductionism. Finally, by having recognized the importance of the "conjuncturality" within such a long-term historical perspective, was it possible to explain why the negative reactions were supra-class; that is beyond class interest, without reducing the argument to 'racial' or 'cultural' difference.⁷⁴

Concluding Remarks

The task of this thesis was to produce an interpretation of racism in British Columbia which took into account both the inequalities in ownership of power and resources under capitalism and colonialism and gave full specificity to the East Indian case. In undertaking this task, Miles' concepts of racialization, racism and exclusionary practices were combined with an analytic approach that emphasized "contextuality", "concreteness" and "conjunctuality". In so doing, it was possible to grasp 'many determinants' of the reactions towards, and exclusionary practices against, the men from India in British Columbia which are not adequately clarified by abstract theorizing of concepts such as 'class' and 'mode of production'.

Unfortunately, from the viewpoint of political economy, the study of historical racism(s) in British Columbia has been dominated by an emphasis on class relations, capital accumulation, and understanding displaced immigrants only in terms of their labour power. Accompanying this approach is an undervaluation of or silence on the role ideology or political action plays in structuring patterns of immigration into social formations and in allocating agents to sites in production relations. Conversely, this thesis argued that in the case of East Indian racism, ideological and political relations were not only influential but determinant in the negative reactions they confronted when they began to arrive in British Columbia as settlers. It was also demonstrated, however, that causal efficacy of political and ideological relations could only be revealed by contextualizing the arrival of East Indians within the formation of British Columbia as an 'imagined community' of white settlement. That is to say, in order to locate the level of determinacy at which racism initially played against the East Indians, the processes of migration and subsequent settlement of earlier non-white groups, in this case Chinese and Japanese, needed to be taken into account, in the background of the development of the capitalist mode of production in British Columbia and changes in the political power structure on a world scale. Furthermore, and above all, this contextualizing required an awareness of

the historical variability and complexity of the concrete; in other words, sensitivity to important conjunctural "moments" in which dramatic shifts in political, ideological and economic relations take place in such migrations.

NOTES

1. The East Indians' right to the vote was lost in March of 1907 through a bill passed in the provincial legislature. A month later, through a change in the Municipality Incorporation Act, 18 East Indians lost the vote in Vancouver. The lack of franchise meant not only disqualification from participation in elections or holding civic office but also exclusion from certain professions such as law, pharmacy and the sale of crown timber.

2. Race is placed within quotation marks to signify that 'race' is a social construction rather than a biological division within humankind. Marxist writers such as Miles also follow this convention in order to make the point that race is an ideological category which requires explanation and thus cannot be used for either analytical or explanatory purposes.

3. Gender and political affiliation are two examples of the many other characteristics upon which immigration policy discriminates. In a recent article entitled 'Racism in Canadian Immigration Policy', K.W Taylor examines the question of whether the Canadian immigration bureaucracy has been transformed from a racist exclusion agency to an egalitarian admission agency (1991).

4. Cultural relativism was for a long time very popular in North American Ethnic Studies. Under such a paradigm, cultural differences are viewed as innate properties of naturally occurring ethnic groups. Hence, ethnicity or culture is seen as an objective inventor of characteristics. But the problem is that people's affiliations to ethnic groups cannot be assumed or deduced from differences of skin colour, language, religion, and other markers people use to place themselves and each other in descent groups.

5. Buchignani et al (1985) use the term South Asian to refer to groups in Canada whose ultimate roots are in the peoples and cultures of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka.

6. Although many writers like van den Berghe (prior to his more recent interest in social biology) identify 'race' as a socially constructed category, and Weberians like John Rex also focus on social class in explaining racism (van den Berghe 1967; Rex, 1970, 1973, 1986; Rex and Tomlinson, 1979), a political economy orientation is markedly different. For Weberians it is enough for people to believe that biological differences (real or imagined) are of significance, despite the fact that such a belief has no foundation in scientific fact, to take up and use their categorizations as key conceptual tools for 'race relations' analysis (analysis of social action). Conversely, Marxist political economists are concerned with understanding why and under what conditions the major structural division in capitalist social formations based on the ownership of productive forces and differentiated by class get defined in terms of 'race'. In other words, the task of the social scientist is to study the forces which have led to the construction of 'race relations'.

7. Edna Bonacich developed the theoretical foundation for split labour market analysis in a series of articles beginning in 1972. Three key classes or class fractions are involved in split labour markets: capital or individual capitalists, higher priced labour, and cheaper labour. The distinction between higher priced and cheaper labour often corresponds to that between native (indigenous) and immigrant populations or, put another way, to members of dominant and subordinate racial/ethnic solidarities, although it is clear that neither 'race', as a biological concept, nor ethnicity, referring to the cultural heritage of peoples, is the root cause of the differences. Immigrant populations frequently lack many of the resources available to native workers - often as a consequence of past core/peripheral relations - and consequently are in a disadvantaged position in the labour market. Subordinate racial/ethnic solidarities (i.e., earlier immigrant populations with a history in the core geopolitical formation) are similarly disadvantaged because of institutionalized patterns of discrimination.

Capitalists would prefer to hire the cheapest labour available and, left to their own devices, would entirely displace higher priced labour with cheaper labour. Naturally, higher

priced labour (native labour or workers from the dominant racial/ethnic population) attempts to resist this to the best of its ability. While theoretically this resistance could take the form of class unity and a united working class struggle against capital, it quite frequently takes the form of attempts to restrict capital's ability to use cheap labour - often by attempting to exclude cheaper labour from the geopolitical formation, from industry, or from certain occupations. In a paradoxical fashion, we may view these attacks on one segment of the proletariat against another as part of the class struggle in that they are indirect actions taken by labour against capital. Attempts to exclude cheap labour from the scene are, in effect, efforts to remove one weapon that capital may use against labour and thereby increase labour's relative power position. This may constitute a short-sighted strategy but it is, nevertheless, a strategy designed to strengthen labour and weaken capital. Class struggle is a interactive process. Not only does labour organize in response to capital's preference for cheaper immigrant labour, but capital's preference for cheaper immigrant labour is often a response to labour's earlier organizational successes.

8. See M. Burawoy (1976, 1981).

9. See E.P. Thompson (1984, 1978).

10. For a review of 'race' and ethnic relations research in English Canada written from a political economy perspective see F. Abele and D. Stasiulis (1989).

11. This literature is now so extensive that in the words of John Solomos, there exists "a spectrum of competing schools of thought ranging from economic determinism to more sophisticated explanatory models which fully recognize the centrality of human agency and collective action" (1987:87).

12. For example, see Floya Anthias (1990); Paul Gilroy (1987); Robert Miles (1982) and M. Omi and H. Winant (1986).

13. For example, van den Berghe (1967) has shown that the biological notion of 'race' was partly related to Darwinism and the development of science in western societies. Meanwhile, other historical accounts locate the origins of racism in the way the English constructed Black Africans in the sixteenth century after their first contacts with them. W.D. Jordan for instance, argues that the colour Black was already imputed with negative associations with heathenism, savagery and sexual prowess, during the period of Protestant reformation (1968).

14. For example, Floya Anthias argues that "Race has an ontological status and validity outside that of class, considerations of political economy or its contextualization within other social relations" (1990:20). Writers who identify 'race' as a valid concept that can be applied analytically include John Gabriel and Gideon Ben-Tovim (1978, 1979), Gilroy (1987), John Rex (1979, 1986) and A. Sivanandan (1973, 1976, 1982).

15. In 1978 Hall stated:

We cannot assume an express relation of 'necessary correspondence' between them (the premise of historical specificity). These are, as Marx put it, 'a product of historical relations and possess their full validity only for and within these relations'. In essence this means the emphasis should be on 'concrete articulations' of racism, that is beginning with their actual conditions of existence (1978:25).

16. Frantz Fanon was one of the first writers to argue that we should be speaking of racisms not racism (1963). Arguing this point years later Hall states:

There have been many significantly different racisms - each historically specific and articulated in a different way with the societies in which they appear. Racism is always historically specific in this way, whatever common features it may appear to share with other social phenomena. Though it may draw on the cultural and ideological traces which

are deposited in a society by previous historical phases, it always assumes specific forms which arise out of the present - not the past - conditions and organization of society (1978:26).

17. Gillian Creese's work shows how the contradictory nature of these imperatives, institutionalized in Canadian immigration policy, had a determinant role in organizing 'Asian' immigrants into the lowest sectors of the British Columbia working class and in shaping the political practices of white workers (1989:26). She accurately points out that the Canadian state, responsible for the re-production of the 'nation', never considered non-white and non-British 'Asians' as suitable settlers for Canada. At the same time, out of recognition of the short-term economic advantage of having cheap labour in the west (1988:61), the federal state practiced a policy in which 'Asians' were given an inferior 'entry' status as permanent "foreigners," and denied political rights to citizenship. This racist state policy is an essential component to Creese's explanation of racism within British Columbia's working-class.

18. The term of 'imagined' community is taken from Benedict Anderson (1983).

19. While there are no definitive points in history which represent a 'new' period that is unaffected by what has occurred before, a convergence of developments during this period, despite many qualifications, delineate a new stage of European expansionism, and the emergence of Great Britain as the most successful empire-builder.

20. Placer mining involved the recovery of free gold, washed out of ore-bearing rock by erosion, from alluvial deposits along the river and creek beds. It is usually associated with "panning" for gold, though panning was more commonly a prospecting technique and placer mining was usually done with rocker cradles and riffle boxes.

21. For example, a local newspaper correspondent having interviewed some returning Chinese in 1859, wrote:

The American bark Sea Nymph Stege sailed yesterday for Hong Kong . . . with a cargo of lumber and twelve Chinamen, homeward bound passengers from this port. These passengers are stated to have had each from \$400 to \$500, the proceeds of their labour in the mines of B.C. One of the above-mentioned happy-go-lucky Johns, informed us that with the \$500 in cash, he could live in China for five or six year . . . Two of the Johns intended returning in the spring, bringing their families of female Johns and demi-Johns with them and they all speak of a rush from China to this country is sure to occur, during the months of February, March and April of next year (Lai 1988:16).

22. On Aug 27, 1858, for example, it was reported in the Victoria Gazette that a Chinese was found dead outside of the town "with five balls in his body".

23. On May 21, 1861 it was reported in the British Colonist that eighty-nine Chinese left British Columbia, a number of whom stated they had been driven from their claims by white miners. The newspaper ran a special editorial in which it urged that hostilities against the Chinese be stopped.

24. It seems after being given the Governorship for the second time in 1858, Douglas came to recognize the need for settlement. According to Chan:

Douglas was not opposed to the influx of agricultural settlers; on the contrary he positively encouraged it. He thought that without "the farmers aid, British Columbia must forever remain a desert", and accordingly he gave consideration to governmental measures to encourage settlement. It was particularly important to Douglas that colonization should be fostered in a way that would result in a preponderance of the "English element" (Douglas to Newcastle October, 1859 quoted in Chan 1983).

25. For discussion of Edna Bonacich's split-labour market theory applied to the U.S context see Boswell 1986; Cheng and Bonacich 1984.

26. Both Arthur Bunster, Nanaimo's first member of parliament and John Robson, editor of the British Columbian and the city's first member of the legislative assembly introduced legal exclusions in the provincial legislature in the early 1870's against the Chinese. While some of their earlier attempts were unsuccessful, in 1875, Robson did manage to get the agreement the Victoria City Council to a proposal that no Chinese labour be hired on city works (Wickberg 1982:46).

27. On the one hand, popular politicians like the former editor of The Colonist and the province's first premier, Amor de Cosmos (a member in parliament) responded to the political movement in Victoria and New Westminster, by presenting to the House a petition with 1,497 signatures demanding that Chinese labour be excluded from railway construction; that a tax on all resident Chinese; that British subjects of Chinese extraction be disenfranchised; that Chinese be excluded from leasing Crown land and from working on Canadian ships or any ships in Canadian waters; and that restrictions on Chinese immigration be placed (Wickberg 1982:48). Letters luminating the devastating effects of the head tax would have on their respective business, on the other hand, were sent by owners of canneries in the province. Senior politicians in the province allied with capitalists also protested the discriminatory nature of the bill, as did Chinese merchants (ibid:47).

28. While the Dominion paid bonuses to steamship lines for each European immigrant brought to Canadian shores, offered free to farmers and gave railway companies huge grants of land to resale to immigrants, the Dominion commissioned no agents, distributed no promotional literature and made no plans for agricultural settlement of non-whites.

29. After its initial entry into the British Columbia work place, the Knights of Labor, along with affiliates across Canada expanded fairly rapidly. Two assemblies of the Knights of Labor were formed in the New Westminster district of British Columbia in 1884; one in Victoria and another in Nanaimo (Phillips 1976:13). At least twelve local assemblies existed in the province, although not simultaneously in the ten to fifteen years that the Knights were in British Columbia. According to Phillips, the union were interested mostly in advocating social change through struggles at the political level, that is within existing political institutions and structures, rather than industrial action. For more discussion on the early history of the labour movement in British Columbia see Loosemore 1954; McCormack 1977; Pentland 1977 and Schwantes 1979.

30. In making his recommendations, Commissioner J.A. Chapleau, his Secretary of State also stated:

British Columbia has a great opportunity, by welcoming Chinamen, and thus securing not only cheaper labour than California, but conciliating the good will and fixing the attention of a people, from the vast resources and wealth of whose country the veil is only just being drawn aside, whose commerce is a great value, and in the competition of the Canadian Pacific Railway may be of incalculable value. British Columbia has many features in common with California. It is a country which needs local railways; it is a mining country; it is a fruitgrowing country. It possesses, besides, enormous resources in timber lands and fisheries. If, therefore British Columbia were to decide that the undoubted evils of Chinese immigration were largely counterbalanced by other considerations, what would happen is this: She would by vigorous legislation secure that her mines would be worked on a large scale, the riches of the country being thus enormously increased and her treasury swelled; she would engross nearly all the coal and timber trade and much of the fruit trade of the Pacific Coast, while her fish would largely supply the markets of the eastern and central parts of the continent, and even with Europe no insignificant commerce would be within her grasp, her wealth positively and above all relatively to California would develop at a ratio not short of mathematical, she

would literally shoot ahead as one of the great seats of commerce and industrial activity, and, her position achieved, she could then apply herself to the political and social problem, and by the aid of the Dominion Parliament deal with that (1885 RC:xxxii).

31. Funds collected from the Chinese head tax went to the Dominion government. British Columbia, however, received a quarter of the revenue from the tax at the end of the fiscal year (Wickberg 1982:48). Once again, the extent to which the presence of Chinese labourers in Canada was seen by the federal government as an economic issue associated with the 'nation-building' project, can be seen in how the Dept. of Agriculture was given administrative jurisdiction of the Act and not the Dept. of Immigration (Sampat-Mehta 1972:64-65).

32. Chinese immigration had been on decline since the \$50 head tax was imposed in 1886. However, in 1900 this trend seemed to have ended as 4,279 Chinese entered. The Chinese population of British Columbia grew from 8,910 in 1891 14,628 in 1901. The bulk of the increase occurred in the years 1899 and 1900 when over 8,000 entered, possibly to avoid the anticipated increase in the head tax (Roy 1989:92, 103; Ward 1978:170).

33. Although in the end the Chinese head tax only applied to Chinese labourers, at the hearings, British Columbia settlers made few distinctions between merchants, visitors, students and labourers.

34. Ralph Smith and R.E. McKechnie, both pro-labour candidates and from Nanaimo joined Robert MacPherson, F.Carter-Cotton and Joseph Martin, the three labour supporters from Vancouver, to create a total of five labour representatives in the provincial legislature (Robin 1972:69).

35. At the beginning of a session in the assembly, when the Alien Labour bill was being introduced, Dr. Walkem, a well known labour supporter actually accused Mr. Adams of "trimming his sails for the general election" (*The Times*, 19 March, 1997:2).

36. James Harry was just one of the seven Indians chiefs from different Native tribes in the province who had requested to speak at the hearings.

37. The scientific, predominately biological theories of 'race' that emerged at this conjuncture made two specific claims. First, that human species could be divided into a number of discrete biological types which determined their social position and behaviour of individuals, and which therefore explained the cultural variation of the human species. Second, it was argued that the 'races' of which the world's human population was composed could be ordered hierarchically (Banton, 1977:47). The significant point here is that scientific racism created a deterministic link between biology and cultural variation/expression.

In England, this meant the earlier myth of Anglo-Saxon origin which was based on cultural origins to be subsumed in an idea of 'race'. In other words, since Anglo-Saxonism was the defining feature of England, when the idea of 'races' as biologically determinant entities was developed, it came to be used to explain the origin of the English 'nation' (see Miles 1987b). Thus when the ideology was Anglo-Saxon superiority was invoked during the last years of the nineteenth century by the ruling-class in Britain it with a positive appeal of self-identification to a 'race'.

38. In 1901, 14,885 Chinese and 4,597 Japanese were reported to be residing in British Columbia (Ward 1978:170-171). According to the 1911 Census of Canada, Vol VI, there were 76,582 males in the province's labour force in the same year (1901).

39. For an excellent account of the events which occurred in the self-governing colonies during this period, see Huttenback 1976 and/or Price 1974.

40. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance lasted formally from 1902 until 1923. The Treaty of Commerce and Navigation between Great Britain and Japan was signed on July 16, 1894, and renewed in 1905 and 1911. According to Article 1 of the treaty, it provided that "(t) the subjects of each of the two High Contracting Parties shall have full liberty to enter, travel, or

reside in any part of the dominions and possessions of the other Contracting Party, and shall enjoy full and perfect protection for their persons and property" (Woodsworth 1941:54).

41. For example, when Commissioner Gray asked Senator Cornwell at the 1885 Royal Commission hearings, whether he thought "it would be in the public interest to prohibit them (Chinese) from settling in the Dominion", Cornwell responded with "No, I do not; not to prohibit them from coming into the Dominion." Yet immediately thereafter when asked if he thought "they (Chinese) ought to be allowed to settle in the Dominion as permanent settlers", the Senator stated that while he did "not object to their coming in" he felt they should not be allowed to hold land. The Senator argued he did not think that "a people who will not perfectly assimilate with a western population ought to be allowed as settlers on land-as permanent residents of the country; to own lands on equal terms with people of other nationalities" (1885 R.C.:xiii).

42. In maintaining that "Her Majesty's Government" interests and those of the Government of British Columbia with regard to "the object aimed at by these laws" were the same, at the turn of the century, Chamberlain suggested that if "any real prospect of a large influx of Japanese labourers into Canada," should emerge, the Canadian government should pass legislation similar to the Natal Act which was likely to be adopted in Australia (Huttenback 1976:169).

43. It is generally well known that aside from a handful of Muslims and Hindus, virtually all of the Indian immigrants were turbaned Sikhs (Canadian Annual Review of Public Affairs 1907:285; Indra 1979:167 and Ward 1978:79).

44. Despite its size two-thirds of British Columbia's population by 1901 lived within one hundred miles of Victoria and Vancouver, giving the province a distinctly urban character (Schwantes 1976:51).

45. According to Robert Miles, the delineation of group boundaries, and the attribution of social significance to supposedly inherent and/or biological (usually phenotypical) characteristics does not necessarily imply the presence of racism. It is when negative meanings are attached to signification that racism is present.

46. King reported two agents, one Jardine Matheson and Company and the other, Gillander Arthuthnot and Company, both from Calcutta as having distributed notices throughout parts of the Punjab on behalf the Canadian Pacific Railway (Canada 1908b). Incidentally, C.P.R. had introduced a trans-Pacific passenger service from Calcutta in 1891.

47. Since a family without credit probably could not raise the fare for distant travel, by Indian standards these early male immigrants were rather well off consisting of the most prosperous and the most indebted peasants in the Punjab (Indra 1979:167-68; Johnston 1984:4).

48. The immigrants were primarily from the Sikh communities that made up the districts of Jullundur or Hoshiarpur in an area of the Punjab commonly known as Doaba (Johnston 1982:4).

49. Victoria Trades and Labour Council to the Prime Minister, August 25, 1906. Laurier Papers.

50. Victoria Trades and Labour Council to the Prime Minister, October 15, 1906. Laurier Papers.

51. Victoria Trades and Labour Council to the Prime Minister, August 25, 1906. Laurier Papers.

52. Overall, the lumber industry was not unionized. In 1900, a union of shingle weavers was organized, but it was limited to skilled white sawyers and fillers. The union sought "the preservation of the single industry for the whites as against cheap Oriental labour" (Colony 1986:212). The hostility of mill owners, the weakness of the union, and above all its inability to protect white workers from the low-wage competition of Chinese and Japanese

workers led to its demise by 1905, and a successor in 1912 lasted no more than three years. In the sawmills all attempts to organize white sawmill workers were unsuccessful, and there was practically no collective action for their redress.

53. The first strike took place in January of 1906 when Chinese mine workers at the Cumberland coal mine, demanding a daily wage increase of twenty-five cents stopped work. Because the workers had little support, management did not appear to even be interested in negotiating with the strikers and the demand was refused as soon as it was presented (Vancouver Province 11 Jan 1906). Another strike involving Chinese workers occurred in the spring of 1906. According to a report in the Vancouver Province 8 May 1906, Chinese laundrymen were negotiating with laundry owners in the city for better working conditions and an increase in wages. The laundrymen had formed Sai Wah Tong, The Chinese Laundryworkers' Union in May, claiming a membership of one hundred and twenty-four workers. A constitution was drafted with the help of several local whites. The strike was supposed to have commenced on May 13, 1906, but there was no account on its outcome in the press (Province 12 May, 1906). A strike by Chinese laundry workers in New Westminster for a wage increase in November of that year, did end in success (Creese 1986:315).

54. Victoria Trades and Labour Council to the Prime Minister, October 15, 1906. Laurier Papers.

55. British Columbia Legislative Assembly sessional clipping books: newspaper accounts of the debates 1891-1972. March 12, 1907.

56. Thomas. F. McGuigan to Honourable W.D. Scott, September 15, 1904. PAC, Immigration Branch RG 76 Vol. 384. File 536999, Pt 1.

57. Dr. A.S. Munro to Honourable W.D. Scott, August 16, 1906. PAC, Immigration Branch RG 76 Vol. 384. File 536999, Pt 1.

58. Dr. A.S. Munro to W.D. Scott, August 16, 1906. PAC, Immigration Branch RG 76 Vol. 384. File 536999, Pt 1.

59. Dr. A.S. Munro to W.D. Scott, October 15, 1906. PAC, Immigration Branch RG 76 Vol. 384. File 536999, Pt 1.

60. Colonel Frank Warren to London Royal Artillery, Nov 22, 1906. PAC, Immigration Branch RG 76 Vol. 384. File 536999, Pt 1. The Admiral's assessment of the East Indians is important for it touches on a point made by Miles; that the expression of racism is not synonymous with the communication of racism (Miles 1989:133). In other words, despite the fact that the dominant discourse in British Columbia when the East Indians arrived was that there should be no more 'Oriental' immigration to the province, and despite the generally negative response of the local state, organized labour, newspapers and white settlers toward the East Indians as settlers in 1906, not all British Columbian's endorsed this negative evaluation. Gender, region and class differences play an important role in how individuals under capitalism experience their 'lived realities' and consequently, not all in a society hold the prevailing 'common sense' ideologies. In the case of the admiral, it would make sense that his life experiences were shaped by the army and therefore were vastly different from those of most British Columbians. Moreover, as a former officer, he may well have been familiar with the role of the Sikhs in the military project of the British and that the new immigrants in British Columbia were Sikhs.

61. As the president of the Pacific Coast Lumber Mills, the mayor might have been expected to favor Asian immigration as a source of cheap labour. Although a native of England, he had lived over forty years in Canada, fifteen years of that time in Vancouver, and had a good ear for local politics. The attitudes of Euro-American Vancouverites made his stand a political necessity.

62. Fred Lockley, "The Hindu Invasion" in The Pacific Monthly Spring 1907:589.

63. When Prime Minister Wilfred Laurier increased the Chinese head tax to \$100 from \$50 in 1900, he qualified his governments actions by stating that the particular bill was a "legitimate concession to the aspirations of the people of British Columbia, who upon this question, entertain views peculiarly their own, views which are not shared by the people of the east" (House of Commons, Debates, June 25, 1900:8185-86).

64. In Ottawa, Parmelee, the Deputy Minister of Trade and Commerce responded to McGuigan's complaint by conducting his own inquiry. James A. Smart, Deputy Minister, Dept. of the Interior reported to Parmelee that he had found there to have been a total of 57 East Indians who landed in British Columbia to date (J.A. Smart to M.G. Parmelee October 19, 1904. PAC, Immigration Branch RG 76 Vol. 384. Pt 1). According to Smart, ten of the total number of East Indians arrived in British Columbia in 1903, five in Vancouver and five in Victoria. Parmelee also questioned C.P.R. officials. The Passenger Traffic Manager of C.P.R. denied any active recruitment of East Indians. He informed the federal government that only 28 East Indians had arrived on C.P.R. shipping vessels in 1904 and "they have paid full fare, and that so far as our company is concerned we have had nothing to do with them beyond ticketing them at regular rates as we would any other passenger" (Robert Kerr to J.A. Smart, November 16, 1904. PAC, Immigration Branch RG 76 Vol. 384. Pt 1).

65. M.G. Parmelee to W.D Scott, October 19, 1904. PAC, Immigration Branch RG 76 Vol. 384. Pt 1.

66. Before the advent of large-scale, organized migration of Indian workers, East Indians had been migrating abroad in small numbers, primarily as artisans and merchants. However, a systematic export of East Indian labour began with the abolition of slavery in 1833-34. The need for such labour arose out of the demands of British capitalists for a cheap and amply supply of workers and an easily controlled labour force. For discussion on the migration of East Indian indentured workers during the nineteenth century see Tinker 1974 and/or Kondapi 1951.

67. Dr. A.S. Munro to Hon F. Oliver, Minister of the Interior, November 16, 1906. PAC, Immigration Branch. RG 76. Vol. 384. Pt 1.

68. Telegram from Hon F. Oliver, Minister of the Interior, to W.D. Scott, November 26, 1906. PAC, Immigration Branch. RG 76. Vol. 384. Pt 1.

69. House of Commons Debates, November 28, 1906:234.

70. Telegram from Hon F. Oliver, Minister of the Interior, to Dr. A.S. Munro, November 27, 1906. PAC, Immigration Branch. RG 76. Vol. 384. Pt 1

71. House of Commons Debates, November 28, 1906:234.

72. A.W. McEnvoy (Vancouver City Clerk's Office) to the Prime Minister, November 27, 1906. Laurier Papers.

73. Victoria Trades and Labour Council to Hon F. Oliver, Minister of the Interior, December, 17, 1906. PAC, Immigration Branch. RG 76. Vol. 384. Pt 1.

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