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Jacqueline Leckie

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Our history of excluding

visible

Kiwi-Indians

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one.

The Indian Diaspora and Exclusion

On 15 March 2019, a white terrorist stormed into the Al Noor mosque in Christchurch and opened fire with a deadly arsenal of weapons, just as around 350 Muslims were about to begin Friday prayer. He then attacked worshippers at the city's Linwood Islamic Centre. A total of 51 people were killed and 49 injured. Before committing these atrocities, the attacker had posted his intentions online, along with a venomous manifesto. He then live-streamed the first massacre.

Kiwis and people worldwide reacted to the news with a range of emotions from shock and anger to empathy and love for the victims. Yet the outpouring of grief was overlaid by a collective denial that such evil lurked within the nation. True, the murderer was an Australian immigrant, but how could he commit such terrorism in peaceful and tolerant Aotearoa? Indeed, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern declared that the person who committed the racist violence 'is not us'. When she said that Muslims 'have chosen to make New Zealand their home, and it is their home. They are us,' she could have been referring to any immigrants, including Indians. Ardern's condemnation of the unprecedented actions of 15 March may have been true in spirit, but that horror pointed to the presence of white extremism and tacit or unintentional support within Aotearoa. Within six months of the killings, the vice-chancellor of Auckland

University allowed the distribution of white supremacist literature on campus on the grounds of freedom of speech.

The Christchurch massacre raised questions about what it means to belong to an ethnic and/or religious minority in a country that has experienced a very long history of underlying prejudice and racism. After all, New Zealand is founded upon colonialism, predicated by white racial domination. The concept of the nation and nationalism — which assumes a ‘singular shared identity within it and denies difference outside its borders’¹ — has remained problematic in New Zealand. The Treaty of Waitangi Te Tiriti o Waitangi, signed in 1840, ostensibly represented a partnership between indigenous Māori and the British Crown, but it did not eliminate racism towards Māori or material and cultural loss, deprivation and marginalisation. The passing of the 1975 Treaty of Waitangi Act instigated a process of reparations and ushered in recognition of New Zealand as a bicultural nation — but, again, this did not see an end to racism.²

In the aftermath of the Christchurch massacre, clinical psychologist Waikaremoana Waitoki asked, ‘Why did our country have to hit rock bottom and lose 50 lives before we asked ourselves to look inwards at the institutions that enabled racism to thrive? Alongside that introspection, did we look at our own actions, or inactions, that foster racism, not only towards Māori, but to anyone who was not Christian and Caucasian?’³ Or as lawyer and Te Tiriti specialist Moana Jackson stressed, ‘[T]he massacres in Christchurch and the ideologies of racism and white supremacy which underpinned them did not come about in some non-contextual vacuum. They are instead a manifestation of the particular history of colonisation and its founding presumption that the so-called white people in Europe were inherently superior to everyone else.’⁴

But what of the experiences of non-European migrants, specifically Indians and their descendants, in Aotearoa? Both within the negative history of colonisation and racism and, more positively, within the scope of the Treaty and biculturalism?⁵

This book adds to the story of migration and belonging from the perspective of Indians in Aotearoa New Zealand. It seeks to uncover

what Sir Anand Satyanand, a son of Indo-Fijian migrants and a former governor-general, termed the ‘dark side of history’⁶ and historian Sekhar Bandyopadhyay described as a ‘story of exclusion’ that renders Indians’ existence ‘invisible’ in our narratives.⁷ This disturbing history highlights negative and offensive white voices, but where possible it also reflects upon the pride of Kiwi-Indian migrants in their new homeland.⁸ Unlike existing publications on Indians in New Zealand, this is not a history of celebration or integration, but speaks instead of stories of resilience, while also outlining the discrimination Kiwi-Indians have faced, so that all New Zealanders can recognise and address the nation’s uncomfortable past. It can be tempting to dismiss past anti-Asian rhetoric as crackpot and belonging to a different time, but it is too easy to sweep this history under the carpet,⁹ and to do the same with contemporary racism directed at Indians.

This book is not offered as a solution to persistent racism and discrimination. It does not address exclusion within Kiwi-Indian communities that may be based on caste, religion, status and gender, as well as economic exploitation.¹⁰ The book does not explain 15 March 2019. Rather, it hopes to shed some light on how that tragedy could happen in a nation where the extreme outcome of racism ‘is not us’. Aotearoa New Zealand’s record of the exclusion of Kiwi-Indians is one of the nation’s legacies that question whether this is an inclusive nation and if we are ‘one’.¹¹



Exclusion of Kiwi-Indians throughout New Zealand’s history was sometimes overt, but more often less sensational and more insidious. The white New Zealand immigration policy was the first hurdle Indians faced when coming to New Zealand. Most Indians also encountered other forms of discrimination, often institutional,

or racism embedded in social interactions that was more subtle and nebulous. In many instances the prejudice was colour- and race-based; a whites-only discourse where Indians were discriminated against along with all 'non-whites', including Māori. There was also widespread expression of an anti-Asian sentiment, and in New Zealand this mostly affected Indians and Chinese.¹²

Most liberal Kiwis condemn racism directed towards Asians, but the dominant perception associates this racism with the history of the Chinese in Aotearoa. Chinese faced widespread prejudice during the second half of the nineteenth century. The Chinese Immigrants Act 1881 levied an entry (or 'poll') tax of £10 on each Chinese immigrant, while ships arriving in New Zealand were restricted to one Chinese passenger per 10 tons of cargo. In 1896 this 'tonnage' ratio was reduced to one passenger for 200 tons of cargo, but the poll tax was increased to £100 (estimated to be \$20,000 today). The First Labour Government abolished these provisions in 1944.¹³ This discrimination was publicly acknowledged on 2 February 2002, when Prime Minister Helen Clark formally apologised to Chinese New Zealanders for the tonnage restriction and poll tax imposed on Chinese arrivals to Aotearoa.

Meanwhile, the history of discriminatory practices explicitly directed at Indians in Aotearoa — and moreover the complex history of Indian settlement here — has tended either to have been invisible or just not discussed. Such neglect may not be intentional but speaks to national histories written either through a white lens or with a bicultural framework of Māori and Pākehā applied; perhaps with Indians hidden in the footnotes or subsumed within the generalised past and contemporary discourse about 'Asiatics' or Asians in Aotearoa.

A key reason for this discomfort and ambivalence concerning the rights of Indians in Aotearoa is that, although considered a different race and colour, the majority were, unlike the Chinese, subjects of the British Empire.¹⁴ The pathways of Indian migration to Aotearoa were a consequence of British imperialism, formalised after 1857, on the exploitative foundations of the East India Company, which

profoundly restructured economy, society and politics on the Indian subcontinent. Landlessness, indebtedness and other economic pressures induced outwards migration which invariably followed the sea routes by which Britain operated its empire. By the late nineteenth century Indian migrants also met common exclusionary policies and practices within British settler colonies where the Indian diaspora had begun to take root. This was despite Queen Victoria proclaiming to the 'Princes, Chiefs and People of India' that she would grant 'the Natives of Our Indian Territories' the same rights as 'all Our other Subjects' and, among other things, to support religious toleration, to recognise the 'Customs of India', to end racial discrimination and to ensure that 'all shall alike enjoy the equal impartial protection of the Law'.¹⁵ By the 1920s Indians in New Zealand would regard Queen Victoria's promise of equality as null and void.



Still little known to most Kiwis is that Indians arrived in Aotearoa about the same time as Europeans and Māori first made contact on land. Todd Nachowitz has argued that it is crucial to unpack this erased history and participation of ethnic minorities within Aotearoa's history to 'help relevant minorities reclaim association in a newly formed shared national identity that has the potential to strengthen social cohesion'.¹⁶ He suggests that embedding Indian history within that of Aotearoa, and its bicultural foundation, should highlight an Indian perspective. Although the details of very early Indian encounters in Aotearoa have been lost in time, it is important to put on record evidence of an early Indian presence on these shores. Indians may have been invisible within dominant historical narratives, but they are 'equally entitled to claim their place in the history of first encounter and the exploration and settlement of New Zealand'.¹⁷

The earliest Indian visitors to Aotearoa were Indian lascars (seamen) working on European ships. In 1769, 14-year-old 'Mamouth Cassem' (probably Mahmud Qāsim), born in Pondicherry, and a Bengali named 'Nasrin' (Nasreen), aged about 16 or 17, most probably came ashore when the *Saint Jean-Baptiste* berthed in the Hokianga during 12–31 December of that year. The ship was under the command of Captain Jean François Marie de Surville, who was conducting a Pacific trading voyage on behalf of the French East India Company.

From 1794 to 1801 trading ships of the British East India Company sailed between England, South Africa, India, Australia and China, and Aotearoa was part of some of these routes. Indian lascars crewed these ships, and sepoy (Indian soldiers under British or other imperial orders) were also on board. Stops ashore in Aotearoa were made to collect supplies and seal skins and to cut timber. Some lascars were at Tamatea (Dusky Sound in Fiordland) between 1795 and 1797.

Indian sailors also 'jumped ship' and settled among Māori. Reasons for this would have included the attraction of a new life, and the desire to escape poor shipboard conditions and harsh treatment from Europeans.¹⁸ In 1809, a Bengali deserted the ship *City of Edinburgh* to live with his Māori wife in the Bay of Islands.¹⁹ In 1814, six Indian sailors stole a boat and left the *Matilda*, either on the south-west coast of the South Island or at Port Daniel (Otago Harbour) in 1814.²⁰ Three were killed but three survived, probably settling near Whareakeake in Otago until 1823. One survivor, probably from Surat, spoke English and Māori and was given the name Te Anu. Bishop Selwyn said the man was living with his Māori wife and son at Potirepo (Port William) on Rakiura Stewart Island in 1844.²¹

During the nineteenth century, Indians worked throughout Aotearoa — including Te Waipounamu South Island — more than is now recalled. Many were Muslims, such as 'Butterdean' (Badrudeen) from Kashmir, who was living in Otago in 1875.²²

Other early Indian migrants were the Sohman (originally Somen) and Bussawan families. They were among 17 servants indentured to work on the Cashmere Estate at Christchurch in 1859 by a former judge in India, Sir John Cracroft Wilson. These Indians and their



John Sohman, 1916.
Somen migrated to
Canterbury in 1859 as an
indentured servant. During
the 1860s he converted to
Christianity and took the
name John Sohman.

Edward Peters: Discovered gold, died a pauper

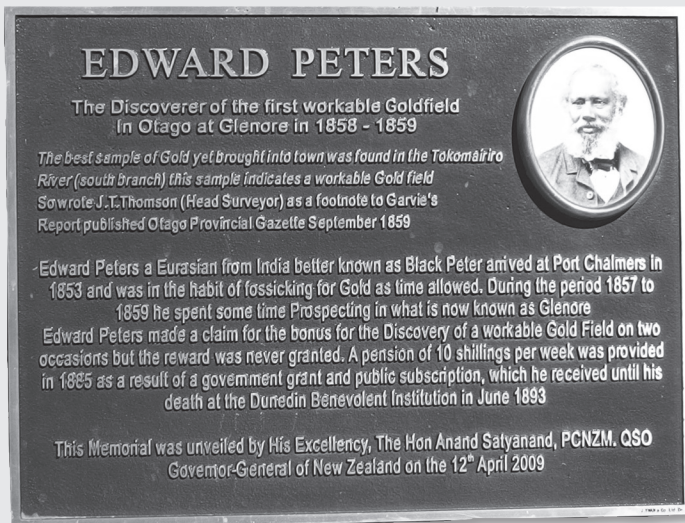
Until the unveiling by Governor-General Anand Satyanand of a memorial at Glenore on Easter Saturday 2009, Edward Peters was erased from his rightful place in Aotearoa New Zealand's history as the discoverer of gold in the Tuapeka area of Otago in 1857. Peters – variously described as Eurasian, a 'half-caste', 'native of Bombay' and a Goan (he was born in Satara, Maharashtra, which is close to Goa) – left India to work on the California goldfields. Peters signed up as a cook on the sailing ship *Maori*, which left Gravesend in England in 1853. On 31 August 1853 Peters absconded after the ship had docked at Port Chalmers. He reported to the police and was sentenced to six weeks' hard labour, after which he was free to settle in Otago. He worked as a farm labourer and gold prospector in the Tokomairiro, Tuapeka and Molyneux districts, where he was called 'Black Peter' – indicative of how his identity was racialised. Peters was denied recognition as the discoverer of the source of the Otago gold rush, and instead the accolades went to Gabriel Read, who registered a claim in 1861. Read was awarded £1000 from the provincial government for the discovery, but Peters was denied any prize. Later, the Goldfields Committee launched an appeal which granted Peters an allowance of 10 shillings a week.

The Story of Black Peter.

AN APPEAL.

There is a man living amongst us who may fairly claim to be the Father of Gold-mining in New Zealand. His name is Edward Peters, native of Bombay, better known, perhaps, as "Black Peter" by old residents. He was the first man to demonstrate, by actual discovery, the existence of payable gold-workings in Otago; but he was poor, humble, and ignorant, and did not know how to turn his discoveries to profitable account. Wherefore he has been neglected, and the value of his work has been ignored except by the few who are acquainted with the facts; and the honours and the rewards that should have been his have been awarded to others.

Otago Witness 5 December 1885



Courtesy, Jacqueline Leckie

Peters was aged in his sixties when he died in 1893 as a pauper in Dunedin's Benevolent Institution. But he left behind friends who vowed that his contribution to Otago's history should not be erased. Mrs C. R. Mitchell of Balclutha wrote in Peters' obituary that 'he was naturally very, intelligent and observant; and had the advantages of a good education and good moral training fallen to his share, Peter would have been above the average class of people one meets with in everyday life. He was always gentle and kindly to animals, and very tender over young children. How he first discovered gold in Otago is well known to the reading public; also how another won the renown and reward that should have been his. 'Black Peter' another of our pioneers has passed away, and his name must ever be associated with the early history of Otago.'²³

Stories about Peters continued to be passed down within local families, and in 2009, farmer and historian Alan Williams and the Glenore Manuka Trust finally made sure that Peters was commemorated. So, too, did Edward Ellison, a kaumātua of Te Rūnaka o Ōtākou. Williams suggests that Peters was a victim of local politics as he was not part of the powerful social networks in which Read very likely participated.²⁴

descendants either died or married Māori and Europeans.²⁵ John Sohman and his family settled in Oxford, north of Christchurch, where he and his daughter were active within the Salvation Army. We will return to John's story later in the book, when the Registrar of Pensions tried to cancel his old-age pension in 1907.

By the late nineteenth century the roots of New Zealand's Indian community were laid when chain migration began from the Punjab and also separately, by the early twentieth century, from Gujarat.²⁶ (When some pioneers settled in Aotearoa they sent news back to their villages for relatives and friends to join them overseas. The latter in turn repeated the process — hence the term 'chain migration'.) Gujaratis and Punjabis already had emigrated to South Africa, Australia, Canada and elsewhere (including Burma, Singapore, Brazil and Argentina), but New Zealand became a sought-after destination once immigration restrictions and discrimination against Indians set in within other white settler colonies during the early twentieth century. Another reason for this southernmost Indian diaspora was because ships with passenger migrants (the name for those who were not indentured migrants) destined for Fiji stopped in Auckland, and some Indians tried to disembark there. Other non-indentured Indians who had originally decided to work in Fiji learned about better opportunities further south.

The sustained waves from the two centres of the Indian diaspora in Punjab and Gujarat to New Zealand were also part of the massive transformations within rural India which pushed global emigration, including to the South Pacific. During the colonial years the cash economy swept through much of Punjab and Gujarat, inducing rural indebtedness, higher taxation, land shortages and environmental degradation, as well as increasing the commercialisation of agriculture and customary services. Cultural pressures, such as expenditure on weddings, houses and other markers of social and religious status, exacerbated the drive for extra income. By the early twentieth century emigration was an accepted practice from villages in Punjab and South Gujarat — and New Zealand was part of this diaspora.



top. Dr Mutyala Satyanand addresses the Auckland Indian Association at a celebration of India's independence, 1947. On his right is Devjibhai Patel and on his left is Mrs Pickett.

bottom. Jasmine, held by her father, Jagdish Patel, and Kamal, carried by Mrs Patel, with Mr and Mrs Mahendra Thaker, New Zealand's first sponsored Asian refugees from Uganda, at Wellington Airport.

By 1920, with changes to immigration laws, the curtain fell, excluding almost all Indian immigration to Aotearoa, except where family relationships with Kiwi-Indians already existed. This meant that most Kiwi-Indians until the 1980s originated from Punjab or Gujarat. Immigration exceptions were granted to Anglo-Indians and to a few Indian students and professionals — such as Dr Mutyala Satyanand and Tara Satyanand, who arrived from Fiji during the 1940s — and later to guest workers from Fiji. From 1972 through to 1973, 244 refugees of Indian heritage from Uganda (out of 60,000 expelled from Uganda under President Idi Amin's regime) were relocated to New Zealand, although even this small number attracted controversy and opposition to accepting Indian refugees.²⁷

The demographic patterns of Kiwi-Indians radically shifted during the late 1980s with new waves of Indian immigration from Fiji, India and other countries. The 1987 Immigration Act opened the way to immigrants with required skills, qualifications or capital to invest, rather than cultural background and nationality. With race no longer grounds for exclusion, new flows of migrants increased from the wider Indian subcontinent. Many new settlers were professionals or business investors. Since the 1980s Indians also came to New Zealand as guest workers, working on market gardens and orchards in Pukekohe, Ohakune, Hawke's Bay, Hamilton and Nelson.

The composition of the local Indian population changed when thousands of Indian Fijians migrated to New Zealand to escape the civil unrest, economic hardship and discrimination that followed the South Pacific's first military coup d'état in Fiji in May 1987, and the subsequent coups in 2000 and 2006.³³ Indo-Fijians were directly targeted, especially after 1987 and 2000, and thousands fled to New Zealand, Australia, Canada and the United States.³⁴ Before 1987, some Indo-Fijians had studied in New Zealand; a few permanently settling there. Between 1967 and 1987, other Indo-Fijians had been contracted through the Fijian and New Zealand governments to work in New Zealand under various schemes, mainly in agriculture, forestry and halal slaughtering.

Phuman Singh Gill

Phuman Singh Gill, along with his brother Bir (Weer) Singh Gill, was one of the first Sikh and Punjabi settlers in Aotearoa around 1890.²⁸ He was not the first Punjabi to settle here,²⁹ but his remarkable life highlights the mixing of diverse cultures in earlier times. An initial encounter in Auckland was, however, traumatic. He was accosted on the street and his turban was unravelled to reveal his hair, which was kept long according to Sikh custom. After this insult, Phuman Singh cut his hair short. A Muslim in Auckland taught Phuman Singh how to make and sell confectionery, and he later went into business with another Muslim in Whanganui. In 1897 Phuman Singh married fellow immigrant, Margaret Ford, an English nurse. The couple established a confectionery and ice-cream business, Abraham Singh & Co., Indian Lolly Manufacturers, with Charlie Abraham. Phuman Singh opened another shop



Wedding of Phuman Singh Gill and Margaret Ford, 1897.

called Eureka, a name given to businesses he set up in New Plymouth and Palmerston North. In 1898, in Whanganui, Margaret gave birth to Ranjit Singh and later to Dhuleep, Esive and Madge. In 1928 Madge married another prominent Sikh immigrant, Santa Singh. Weer Singh Gill married a Māori woman and during World War I he briefly worked as a cook at Trentham Military Camp.

Aotearoa's Muslim community: Indian origins

Muslims from the Indian subcontinent were working in Aotearoa since lascars sailed here in 1769, but the first Muslim family to call this land home was probably that of Mahomet and Mindia Wuzerah, among the Indian servants that came with Sir John Cracroft Wilson to Lyttelton in the mid-nineteenth century. Abdullah Drury's historical research suggests the Wuzerahs were a 'distinctly Muslim family consistently treated and regarded in a respectful manner'.³⁰ There are several other reports of Indian Muslims working and living throughout New Zealand during the nineteenth century.

During the early twentieth century, three Gujarati men arrived who would help establish the Muslim community in Aotearoa New Zealand. Ismail Bhikoo, from the village of Manekpore, arrived in Auckland in 1911; Joseph Moses (known also as Esup Musa or Mussa) came to Auckland from Sitpon in 1912; and Mohammad Kara from Adada arrived in Christchurch in 1907. They were later joined by their families, including two early Indian women immigrants to Aotearoa: Mariam Bhikoo and Bai Bibi Musa.

There are records of other Muslims, especially from Punjab, working and settling during these early years in Aotearoa, but Gujarati Muslims were proactive in establishing the formal associations of both Muslims and Indians. When Aotearoa's Islamic community was small, Gujarati Muslims strongly identified with the wider Indian community: Mohammad Kara was one of the founders of the Christchurch Indian Association in 1937, and Ismail Bhikoo's son, Esup, served as president of the Waikato Indian Association from 1949 to 1951.³¹ In 1950, Indian Muslims, along with Muslims of other nationalities, established the New Zealand Muslim Association in Auckland; Suliman Bhikoo (son of Ismail Bhikoo) was the first president, and Ismail Ali Moses (Musa) the first secretary. In 1960, Maulana Ahmed Said Musa Patel arrived in New Zealand to become the country's first *mullah*. By 1963 Auckland Muslims had purchased a house in Ponsonby that would become New Zealand's first *masjid* (mosque); Suliman Bhikoo poured the

foundations for Al-Masjid Al Jamie on 30 March 1979 (below).

Meanwhile, Indians were pioneers among the Christchurch Muslim community. In 1977 Suliman Ismail Kara (grandson of Mohammad Kara and active in the Christchurch Indian Association) was the first president of the Muslim Association of Canterbury. This association was one of several groups throughout the country that formed the Federation of Islamic Associations of New Zealand (FIANZ) in 1978. By then the ethnic origins of Aotearoa's Muslims were widening, and included many Muslim immigrants of Indian heritage from Fiji. In New Zealand's 2018 census, 57,276 people of highly diverse ethnicities proclaimed their faith as Muslim. But the establishment of Islam in Aotearoa owes much to the quiet and persistent observance and gentle advocacy of the Indian families that settled in Aotearoa during the early twentieth century.³²



Suliman Bhikoo lays the foundation stone for the Al-Masjid Al Jamie, 30 March 1979.

During the twenty-first century, another pathway for Indians to migrate to New Zealand has been through education. The lucrative international student market has become New Zealand's fifth-largest export category. Students from India make up the largest grouping within the non-university tertiary sector, many studying in private institutions. In 2015, 28,505 Indian citizens were full-fee-paying students within New Zealand tertiary institutions. Indian students in New Zealand often work in casual employment, especially within the hospitality industry. There have been cases of exploitation both within New Zealand and from unscrupulous immigration agents in India.³⁵



Anti-Asian sentiments and actions thrived within the predominantly white settler colonies of Australia, Canada and South Africa, where a conviction of racial superiority underpinned imperial domination.³⁶ Joseph Chamberlain, the British Secretary of State for the Colonies, declared in 1895, 'I believe that the British race is the greatest of governing races the world has ever seen.'³⁷ (To be clear, he was referring to white Britons.) As Lala Lajpat Rai, an Indian freedom fighter and early leader of the Indian National Congress, observed when living in exile in the United States, 'Wherever we look around the Pacific and the Indian ocean — New Zealand, Australia, California, Canada, South Africa — we see the English-speaking faces filled with disquiet raising their defensive walls higher and higher.'³⁸

By the late nineteenth century Indians faced discrimination of varying degrees within the colonies of South Africa:³⁹ having to carry a pass in Natal; paying a poll tax in Transvaal; and in other areas facing restrictions such as curfews over hawking, ownership (of property, retail, liquor), voting, and even walking on footpaths. In 1888 a law in Natal classified Indians as an uncivilised race. Most

famously in 1893 in Natal, Mohandas Gandhi, then a lawyer, was ejected from a train. So began his experiences that spurred the non-violent fight against injustice and inequality. In 1907 Gandhi termed this movement *satyagraha* ('holding firmly to truth'), in opposition to the Asiatic Registration Act of 1906 (the Black Act) in Transvaal, which made it compulsory for Indians to be fingerprinted and carry registration documents.

With emigration to South Africa either blocked or made difficult by restrictions, the South Pacific became a destination for Indian migrants. Some migrants first ventured to Africa but returned disillusioned to India. Bhana Chhiba, who would eventually operate several successful fruit and vegetable shops in New Zealand, initially tried to sell produce in Johannesburg during 1906–7, but found the costs of hawkers' licences, and the risk of imprisonment for not paying them, too severe. He returned to Gujarat before sailing to New Zealand in 1913. Other prospective Indian emigrants, such as Jelal Natali and Dayal Wallabh, had permits for South Africa, but changed their minds about migrating there after they learned more about the discrimination Indians faced. They were also deterred by the advent of World War I. During the subsequent decades, Indian residence and movement in South Africa became severely curtailed under apartheid legislation, such as the Group Areas Act 1950, which partitioned racial groups into different urban zones.

In 1976, historian Robert Huttenback wrote that 'Australia was as determined as South Africa to arrest the coloured cancer that lack of vigilance had permitted to grow upon the continent'.⁴⁰ This condemnation came only a few years after Australia legally ended the rigid White Australia policy. The 1901 Immigration Restriction Act had imposed a stringent dictation test in any European language that effectively banned almost all Indian immigration to Australia for over 50 years,⁴¹ a barrier that led to many Indians moving to New Zealand. For example, Pal Singh Rijji told Karam Singh that Australia's doors were closed and suggested New Zealand as an alternative destination. In 1920, Karam Singh and a fellow villager, Milki Ram Fermah, sailed to New Zealand.⁴²



'A Hindoo Lodging House' Victoria. Cartoon by G. Ashton.



Sikh passengers
aboard the
Komagata Maru in
Vancouver, 1914.

Australia's severe immigration restrictions also affected Indians transiting between India and New Zealand. Shipping companies became reluctant to provide passage to Indians because of the penalties levied for passengers who might abscond. Although Harnam Singh had been a resident of Australia and of Spring Creek, Blenheim in New Zealand for over 25 years and was married to an English woman, he was refused passage through Australia. Instead, he had to travel the circuitous route to India via Argentina and London.⁴³

Indians were also excluded from Canada during the early twentieth century. An Immigration Act in 1910 required Indians to pay a \$200 bond to land there. Further restrictions were introduced in 1913 with an order-in-council that prohibited the landing at any port in British Columbia of any Indian immigrant who was an artisan, skilled or unskilled worker. In 1914, another order-in-council prohibited the landing of any immigrant who had not made a continuous journey from the country of emigration on a single boat with a through-ticket. Since there was no direct steamship service from India, Indians were excluded from Canada. In 1914, when a group of Indians on the ship *Komagata Maru* attempted to emigrate to Canada, most had to return to Calcutta (Kolkata), where the venture ended in tragedy: when a crowd resisted the arrest of the leaders, police opened fire and 20 Sikhs were killed.⁴⁴

Although the United States had a reputation for open immigration, most Indians were excluded through the Naturalization Act of 1906 and the Immigration Act of 1917, the latter excluding people who came from the 'barred zone' of the Asia-Pacific.⁴⁵

Clearly there were huge discrepancies between Indians' status as British subjects and their treatment within the white dominions. In 1922, politician, Indian independence activist, and international statesman, V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, on behalf of the government of India, toured Australia, Canada and New Zealand to investigate the conditions of Indians in the white dominions. This followed a resolution from the 1921 Imperial Prime Ministers' Conference 'that there is an incongruity between the position of Indians as an equal member of the British Empire and the

existence of disabilities upon British Indians lawfully domiciled in some parts of the Empire'.⁴⁶



Sir Keith Sinclair, who wrote a foundational history of New Zealand in 1959, famously posed the question as to why race relations in New Zealand were better than in South Africa, South Australia or South Dakota.⁴⁷ Any such validation to the popular hypothesis of New Zealand's superior record of race relations was radically overturned within later national histories.⁴⁸ Erik Olssen, for instance, recently labelled Prime Minister Richard Seddon and his supporters as 'open racists' towards Indians — and Chinese and Syrians — whom they saw as posing a moral and genetic threat to the purity of New Zealand British stock.⁴⁹ While most historians' revisionism focused on Māori-Pākehā relations — saying little about the exclusion of other minorities, let alone Indians — differing assessments of a white New Zealand can shed light on the blemishes in New Zealand's history of race relations and treatment of Indians.

As already discussed, the appropriation of indigenous land and resources was part of the wider imperial project. Nigel Murphy has shown how nation-building and national identity in Aotearoa New Zealand rested upon both the dispossession of Māori and incorporation of Māori (especially through the Treaty, and by conferring an Aryan identity on Māori).⁵⁰ He explores how the flip side to nation-building and national identity was imposing borders, notably against the 'Asiatic hordes' or 'Yellow Peril', which by the turn of the twentieth century also included Indians. 'Concepts of whiteness and empire were therefore used to bind a disparate community and create a national identity for New Zealand, and this identity was to be White, British and imperial.'⁵¹ Murphy also notes that '[t]he fear of pollution, both moral and racial, and