

Japanese Canadians and Internment: The Role of *The New Canadian* as an Agent
of Resistance, 1941-1945

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
1. Resistance	10
2. Community	24
Conclusion	35
<i>Bibliography</i>	38

Introduction

In the summer of 1941, Takeo Nakano was enjoying his life in the coastal pulp mill town of Woodfibre, British Columbia. He had come to Canada as a sojourner, and despite later bringing his wife and starting a family, he planned to return to Japan one day. In the meantime, he worked hard at his job, putting in overtime shifts when necessary, and generally appreciated the life he had. While he maintained his Japanese identity, he also embraced the Woodfibre community along with other Japanese Canadians by participating in the company baseball team, and attending the yearly Christmas pageant.¹ His life would be forever changed by the events of December 7, 1941, when the Empire of Japan attacked the United States and Great Britain, which also brought Canada into the war. Persistent racist attitudes in British Columbia and an irrational fear of invasion on the west coast resulted in heavy-handed measures being taken against the Japanese-Canadian population. These actions included the forced removal of Japanese Canadians from the coast, the dispossession of their property, and the prohibition against Japanese Canadians returning to their homes, until long after the war was over.

Nakano's experience was typical among Japanese Canadians during the war. Ordered to be removed from Woodfibre, with his family, he was sent to work with a road camp crew in the interior of British Columbia. Although British Columbia Security Commission (BCSC) officials promised him that he would be reunited with his family in Greenwood, they sent him to Slocan, where workers were needed.² At Slocan, Nakano protested his separation from his family by refusing to work, and so he was sent to the

¹ Takeo Ujo Nakano, *Within the Barbed Wire Fence: A Japanese Man's Account of his Internment in Canada*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 4-6.

² *Ibid.*, 38.

immigration jail in Vancouver, before being sent to a prisoner of war (POW) camp in Angler, Ontario. Nakano's small act of protest was an example of the resistance of Japanese Canadians to the policies of the internment. Many Japanese Canadians resisted their oppressors during wartime, by opposing government policies, by continuing their culture, and by maintaining their community.

British Columbia had a history of trying to prevent Asian people from settling in the province. Provincial legislation aiming to prevent immigration brought confrontation with the federal government, which was responsible for immigration policy.³ Many in the province believed that Asian immigrants were unable to assimilate into Canadian society, adopted a low standard of living, partook of illegal drugs, and threatened the livelihood of other British Columbians through unfair labour and economic practices.⁴ Japanese Canadians were also assumed to harbor persistent loyalty to Japan, undermining their identity as Canadians.⁵ These long-standing beliefs in British Columbia formed the basis of hostility towards Japanese Canadians.

The violence that erupted during a September 7, 1907 Vancouver rally held by the Asiatic Exclusion League exemplified such racist attitudes. The Vancouver Trades and Labour Council established the Asiatic Exclusion league with the aim of keeping Asian immigrants out of British Columbia.⁶ On this occasion, the inflammatory rhetoric of the speakers whipped the crowd into a fervor. At some point, a part of the crowd turned

³ Patricia E. Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1989), 55.

⁴ Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 16-17, 23.

⁵ Peter W. Ward, "British Columbia and the Japanese Evacuation," *The Canadian Historical Review* 57 no. 3 (September 1976), 290.

⁶ Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 190.

into an uncontrollable mob, and headed towards Chinatown where they broke windows of businesses and ransacked shops.⁷ As the horde continued towards Powell Street, Japanese Canadians met them with clubs and protected their neighbourhood until the police were able to regain control of the streets later that evening.⁸ The riot in Vancouver illustrated that Japanese Canadians were not passive spectators, and would protect their homes and businesses threatened.

While the federal government would not permit British Columbia to establish its own immigration laws, it did implement a number of legal measures to discourage Asian immigration to Canada. British Columbia's attempts to control immigration through its own legislation succeeded in bringing British Columbia's worries about Asian immigration to Ottawa's attention.⁹ The Chinese Immigration Act, first enacted in 1885, and updated twice in 1900 and 1903, created a financial deterrent to immigration through the implementation of a head tax.¹⁰ Canada replaced this head tax with the Chinese Immigration Act in 1923, which prohibited Chinese immigration with a few exceptions for diplomats, students, and family members.¹¹ Additionally, an order-in-council required would-be immigrants to make a continuous journey from their homeland when first arriving in Canada. Canada specifically devised the continuous journey qualification to limit immigration from India.¹² The *Komagata Maru* incident, where authorities in

⁷ Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was: A History of the Japanese Canadians*, (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991), 73-74.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 73-74.

⁹ Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 55-56.

¹⁰ Patricia E. Roy and John Herd Thomson, *British Columbia: Land of Promises*, (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2005), 89-90.

¹¹ Patricia E. Roy, *The Oriental Question: Consolidating a White Man's Province, 1914-41*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), 73.

¹² Roy, *A White Man's Province*, 236.

Vancouver did not permit most of the ship's 376 passengers to land after the ship arrived in Vancouver Harbour, embodied the intent of the continuous journey requirement.¹³ In this way, the federal government used legislation and regulations to deter Chinese and South Asian immigration.

The Dominion government used diplomacy to reduce immigration from Japan. In 1907, the governments of Canada and Japan signed the Lemieux-Hayashi Agreement which limited the number of Japanese immigrants to Canada each year.¹⁴ The agreement resulted in an immediate reduction in Japanese immigration, which continued to drop as the years went by. The number of Japanese immigrants to Canada was fewer than 100 annually in the years 1935, 1938, and 1939.¹⁵ The percentage of Canadian-born Japanese Canadians increased as a consequence of the strict immigration quota.¹⁶ Thus, the Lemieux-Hayashi Agreement did not completely address the concerns of British Columbians, who wanted to completely exclude Asian people from the province. The days of sojourning had ended, and Japanese-Canadian families saw British Columbia as their home.

In the late 1930's, racialized antagonism in British Columbia focussed increasingly on Japanese Canadians. Japan's attack on China in 1937 generated outrage across Canada, but in the province, the anger was especially intense.¹⁷ In 1940 it increased once more in the context of Canadian involvement in the Second World War and Japan's continued

¹³ Ibid., 241-242.

¹⁴ Ibid., 207.

¹⁵ Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, 422.

¹⁶ Patricia E. Roy, "Educating the 'East': British Columbia and the Oriental Question in the Interwar Years," *BC Studies* no. 18 (Summer 1973), 61.

¹⁷ Ward, "British Columbia and the Japanese Evacuation," 290.

militarism in the Far East.¹⁸ The attack by Japan on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor in 1941 caused British Columbian xenophobia to explode once again.¹⁹ The rapid advancement of the Japanese Army in Malaya, the Philippines, and Hong Kong fed the fears of British Columbians, who pressed the federal government to take action against Japanese Canadians.²⁰ The federal government finally conceded to British Columbia's demands. Japanese Canadians would be persecuted by their own country for crimes they never committed.

This thesis contributes to discussions of Japanese-Canadians resistance to the policies of internment. Historians have often depicted Japanese Canadians as passive victims of the internment.²¹ This portrayal of Japanese-Canadian passivity worked its way into the narratives told by Japanese Canadians, as in this example by Ken Adachi:

Most Japanese did not resist evacuation but co-operated with a docility that was almost wholly in line with their background and their particular development as a minority group. The Japanese were inclined to follow lines of least resistance since their cultural norms emphasized duty and obligation as well as the values of conformity and obedience.²²

This characterization is contradicted by the early work of Forrest La Violette, who noted that some Japanese Canadians "were exceedingly hostile towards the government" during the internment."²³ They misled government officials in order to receive additional financial benefits, and sent anonymous threatening letters to employees in the Welfare

¹⁸ Ward, "British Columbia and the Japanese Evacuation," 292-293.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 297.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 305.

²¹ Mona Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence: Japanese Canadian Women, Memory, and the Subjects of the Internment*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 50-51.

²² Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, 225.

²³ Forrest E. La Violette, *The Canadian Japanese and World War II: A Sociological and Psychological Account*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948), 106.

Department.²⁴ Mona Oikawa argues that any perceived passivity is a consequence of the internment itself, and was not a characteristic of Japanese Canadians:

I would emphasize here that the possibilities for speech for racialized peoples are limited within a liberal framework wherein the ability to speak and be heard is clearly connected to power. That the silence of survivors of the Internment is often associated... with what is perceived as their "cultural/racial difference" further signals that the notion of speech is pinned to relations of power.²⁵

After internment ended, many Japanese Canadians chose to remain silent about their wartime experiences, which contributed to the passive stereotype.²⁶ Postwar narratives that attempted to justify internment as a necessity of war reinforced feelings of confusion and shame among the *Nisei*, many of whom reacted by remaining silent about their experiences.²⁷ Nonetheless, scholars such as Oikawa and Sunahara have emphasized that the stereotype of passivity does not fully reflect Japanese Canadian responses to the policies of the 1940s, while others have argued that the appearance of civility could be deliberately deceiving.²⁸ Since the stereotype of passivity does not accurately describe Japanese Canadians, this thesis seeks out evidence of active behaviour that could be called resistance.

In the context of the Second World War, it is challenging to draw parallels between Japanese-Canadian resistance and contemporary European resistance movements. In seeking out examples, I briefly looked to historical work done on Jim

²⁴ La Violette, *The Canadian Japanese and World War II*, 106.

²⁵ Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence*, 50.

²⁶ Keibo Oiwa, *Stone Voices: Wartime Writings of Japanese Canadian Issei*, ed. Keibo Oiwa, (Montréal: Véhicule Press, 1991), 17.

²⁷ Ann Sunahara, *The politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians During the Second World War*, (Toronto: James Lorimer and Company, 1981), 149.

²⁸ Jordan Stanger-Ross, "Telling a Difficult Past: Kishizo Kimura's Memoir of Entanglement in Racist Policy," *BC Studies* no. 181 (Spring 2014), 57.

Crow era United States. Robin Kelley includes labour strikes, singing, and silence as examples of "unorganized, evasive, [and] seemingly spontaneous actions," that I would include in my broad definition of resistance.²⁹ Kelley describes such everyday acts of resistance as infrapolitics, less visible than conventional political resistance, and often going unnoticed.³⁰ An employee who leaves work early or steals from his employer is engaged in a type of resistance that can be contrasted with the worker who signs a union card, and takes to the picket line. By expanding our understanding of resistance to include infrapolitics, one can accept that resistance can take on different forms, varying from one situation to another. In Nazi Germany, the Jewish resistance group *Chug Chaluzi* worked to maintain Jewish culture and identity, through organized sports, studying Hebrew, and the observance of Jewish holidays.³¹ Without directly comparing any of these situations, it appears that there are similarities between Japanese Canadians and other victims of racial ersecution. The subtle qualities of African-American resistance and the cultural nature of Jewish resistance suggest areas to research when investigating Japanese-Canadian resistance. Without knowing what exact form resistance will take, we should keep an open mind as we encounter evidence of the everyday action that takes place within oppressed societies.

This thesis builds on important previous work. Forrest La Violette's *The Canadian Japanese and World War II* is the oldest, dating from 1948, but it is still useful

²⁹ Robin Kelley, "'We Are Not What We Seem': Rethinking Black Working-Class Opposition in the Jim Crow South," *The Journal of American History*, 80, no. 1 (June 1993), 75.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 77.

³¹ Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany*, (New York: Oxford University Press), 1998, 213.

as a contemporary look at internment from the viewpoint of an outsider.³² *The Enemy That Never Was*, by Ken Adachi, provides more context for the racial discrimination that defined the internment, from the perspective of a victim of the internment. *The Politics of Racism* by Ann Sunahara provides a comprehensive look at the policy of internment from its earliest days up to the 1980s, when Japanese Canadians finally received compensation. It is notable that Sunahara could use official government records, whereas the earlier books by La Violette and Adachi were hampered by wartime censorship and postwar limitations on accessing these records.³³ Finally, Mona Oikawa's recent *Cartographies of Violence* takes a critical look at the social memories of the internment through interviews with Japanese-Canadian women, pairs of mothers and daughters, who are survivors of the internment. She challenges readers to look beyond the traditional narratives and see the long-term impact that internment had on the Japanese-Canadian community. Adachi, Sunahara, and Oikawa, in particular, have laid excellent groundwork, and I consider these authors to be required reading for any research into internment studies. Sunahara and Oikawa also investigate into the varied ways Japanese Canadians resisted internment, which is the topic of my research. Thus, the existing scholarly work provided me with sufficient contextual knowledge to pursue my research, and introduce me to suitable primary sources.

My research led me to primary sources created by Japanese Canadians themselves. Memoirs, such as Takeo Nakano's *Within the Barbed Wire Fence* and Muriel Kitagawa's *This is My Own*, provide a narrative through the authors' own words and

³² Forrest La Violette, *The Canadian Japanese and World War II: a sociological and psychological account*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1948).

³³ Ann Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*, 2.

experiences. The narratives of Japanese Canadians after their forced removal from the coast contain numerous perspectives on the diverse experiences of internment. People moved to the eastern cities of Montreal and Toronto. Some worked on beet farms on the prairies. Some remained in the British Columbia interior until the end of the war. A few hundred were imprisoned in Prisoner of War (POW) camps in Ontario.

I also read *The New Canadian*, the sole Japanese-Canadian newspaper that was permitted to publish throughout the war. *The New Canadian* was, according to the text on the front page of every issue, a newspaper written specifically for the second generation of Japanese Canadians. The fact that it is written in English implies that its target audience was not immigrants from Japan, but those who spoke English well enough to read and understand the newspaper. This focus on the second generation does not necessarily exclude other Japanese Canadians amongst its readership. At the urging of my supervisor, I delved deeper in *The New Canadian* and made it the centre of my research.

This essay investigates Japanese-Canadian resistance by first looking at the role of *The New Canadian* as a community newspaper during the internment. Wherever possible, examples of defiance towards internment policies are highlighted. The newspaper's motive, in reporting and encouraging resistance is also explored. The concern for the well-being of the community forms the basis for the second part of this essay. The maintenance of the community, its unity and cohesion, was itself an example of resistance to internment policies. The study of this form of resistance centers around cultural activities, especially sports, and the typical life events such as weddings and births which were commonly announced in the pages of *The New Canadian*. Contrary to the passive stereotype prevalent in some post-war narratives, Japanese Canadians defied internment

policies, and were active agents in their resistance to the internment. *The New Canadian* was a critical component of Japanese-Canadian resistance to the internment.

Resistance

There is no single narrative of how Japanese Canadians reacted to internment. The stories are so diverse as to make every experience seem unique. What is common to their experiences is the way their reactions were measured in a way that limited widespread backlash. As mentioned in the introduction, the restraint of Japanese Canadians was often confused with acquiescence. In fact, there were numerous examples of Japanese Canadians resisting the internment by challenging policies through legal means, through civil disobedience, and by protesting labour conditions. *The New Canadian* played a role in reporting incidents of Japanese-Canadian resistance to internment policies, either as a warning or an encouragement, depending on the risk to the broader community.

Disruptions in the lives of Japanese Canadians began well before the federal government put internment measures into place. In the spring and summer of 1941, even before Canada was at war with Japan, The Canadian government subjected Japanese Canadians to mandatory registration.³⁴ After the war with Japan began, the RCMP immediately arrested 31 Japanese citizens. The RCMP also obtained an agreement from the Secretary of the Japanese language schools, Tsutae Sato, to close the schools and the Japanese language newspapers.³⁵ The Royal Canadian Navy confiscated the fishing boats

³⁴ Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was*, 191-192.

³⁵ Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*, 23-24.

of Japanese-Canadians, leaving many without a livelihood. Apart from registration and the seizure of fishing boats, these early measures affected a small number of people, and the message in *The New Canadian* was for Japanese Canadians to affirm their loyalty "to the country that has given us birth, protection and sustenance."³⁶ For the most part, Japanese Canadians could go about their lives as they had before the war.

As the year 1942 began, *The New Canadian* was less concerned with how to resist these disruptions than with the uncertainty which hung over the future. An editorial stated that "minor restrictions such as those dealing with cameras, radios and the sale of gas can be cheerfully accepted without bitterness."³⁷ The broader concern in *The New Canadian* was for the complete disruption of life that would ensue if they were forcibly removed from the British Columbia coast.³⁸ Not everyone was comfortable with the immediate effects of government policies, though. Japanese-Canadian fishermen were troubled by the damage to their vessels caused by the Navy, and the rampant theft that occurred, despite the boats being kept under guard.³⁹ The seizure of fishing boats, and the upheaval that this event caused in the lives of fishermen and their families, hinted at future broad actions that the state would take to disrupt the lives of Japanese Canadians. As these broader actions took shape in the weeks that followed, the tone of the newspaper changed from one of loyalty to one of apprehension.

Japanese Canadians enrolled at the University of British Columbia (UBC) experienced an early example of disruption. Like many Japanese Canadians, these

³⁶ "A Greater Task," *New Canadian*, December 12, 1941, 1, newspapers.lib.sfu.ca/tnc-collection.

³⁷ "The Government's Decision," *New Canadian*, Jan. 16 1942, 4.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Licence Issue Undecided – Deny Boats To Be Taken Over," *New Canadian*, December 31, 1941, 1.

students felt bound to the obligation of Canadian citizenship, which included a mandatory six hours of military training as part of the Canadian Officers' Training Corp (COTC).⁴⁰ In January 1942, the university senate prohibited Japanese Canadian students from participating in military training. The protest was mild, and the students aimed to have their grievance on record, rather than to affect change.⁴¹ Public opinion was strongly against Japanese Canadians, and the students were caught in a difficult situation, wanting to defend their rights as citizens and participate in their country's defence. Conversely, they did not want to protest too forcefully, lest they be accused of opposing the university administration and even the Canadian government.⁴² In this case, resistance was limited to the denunciation of UBC through the student newspaper, *The Ubysey*, and articles published in *The New Canadian*.

Once it became clear that the government would forcibly remove Japanese Canadians from the coastal region, *The New Canadian* expressed alarm. On February 6, 1942, *The New Canadian* published an editorial that echoed the worries of the community, and stated that the newspaper "[knew] no details of the government's plan, other than those officially revealed on January 14."⁴³ In the next issue, published three days later, *The New Canadian* pointed out the unfairness of holding individuals responsible for the actions of another due solely to their race:

Nevertheless, it remains true that to hold any individual for an indefinite length of time, without a hearing of some kind, is a very drastic and far-reaching step. Certainly it is not in accord with basic principles of justice, even in time of war.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ Elaine Bernard, "A University at War: Japanese Canadians at UBC During World War II," *BC Studies* no. 35 (Autumn 1977), 37-38.

⁴¹ "I Didn't Think The University Would Do A Thing Like That," *New Canadian*, Jan 7, 1942, 1.

⁴² Bernard, "A University at War," 37-38.

⁴³ "What's Going to Happen...", *New Canadian*, Feb 6, 1942, 2.

⁴⁴ "A Question of Justice", *New Canadian*, Feb 9, 1942, 2.

The newspaper was published three times in as many days between February 24 and 26, with news that the government was confiscating radios, cameras and firearms⁴⁵, and enforcing a curfew⁴⁶. After the government issued an order-in-council ordering the removal of all Japanese Canadians from the British Columbia coast, *The New Canadian* declared that "[n]o reasonable individual can deny that there are grounds enough here for several thousand people, whose only crime is their race, to feel bitter and betrayed."⁴⁷ The newspaper fulfilled a responsibility to its readers by passing on information on internment measures as it became available, but it also performed a secondary duty of arguing against these same measures on behalf of the community. According to *The New Canadian*, there was no justification in the measures taken against Japanese Canadians. The decision to forcibly remove them from the coast was the catalyst for the change in the editorial tone of the newspaper. To be clear, *The New Canadian* did not incite its readers to act against internment measures, but it clearly stated its opposition to Canadian government policy, a stance that contrasted with the message of loyalty that it had espoused just two months prior.

During the first few months of the internment, *The New Canadian* urged Japanese Canadians to respond with legal challenges. In January 1942, the newspaper reassured its readers that Canadian law and the democratic principles of the state would guarantee the rights of Japanese Canadians.⁴⁸ A pattern also emerged where the newspaper indirectly pointed to examples of resistance in the United States. Throughout

⁴⁵ "RCMP Checking Short-Wave Radios," *New Canadian*, Feb 24, 1942, 1.

⁴⁶ "Ottawa Orders Dusk To Dawn Curfew," *New Canadian*, Feb 26, 1942, 1.

⁴⁷ "Grounds for Questioning," *New Canadian*, Mar 3, 1942, 2.

⁴⁸ "Safeguarding Democratic Principles," *New Canadian*, Jan. 28, 1942, 4.

the internment, the newspaper examined court cases brought against the U.S. government challenging the authority of military officials to forcibly remove Japanese Americans from the west coast.⁴⁹ News articles from the United States reprinted in *The New Canadian* reported that Japanese Americans were enlisting in the United States Army, and that they had formed their own combat unit for deployment in the war against Germany.⁵⁰ *The New Canadian* advocated challenging the internment through the courts, as was happening in the United States. Japanese Canadians could emulate the American experience and resist the policies of internment through the institutions which provided constitutional safeguards for Canadians.

In fact, Japanese Canadians did attempt to use to legal measures to resist internment policies. After the government ordered the liquidation of their property, Japanese-Canadian property owners in Kaslo responded by forming a committee to investigate whether they could take legal action to prevent this dispossession of property.⁵¹ The test case on behalf of three property owners first had to petition Secretary of State Norman McLarty before they could advance to the Exchequer Court.⁵² This turned out to be a long process, and it is not until October that *The New Canadian* announced that the property owners had the right to sue the federal government.⁵³ In December 1943, the property owners requested that the Custodian of Enemy Property suspend the sale of property pending the outcome of the court case, since the next sitting

⁴⁹ "Court Suit Tests U.S. Evacuation," *New Canadian*, June 13, 1942, 3.

⁵⁰ "U.S. to Form Nisei Combat Unit," *New Canadian*, Feb 6, 1943.

⁵¹ "United Action of Evacuees Sought To Aid Test Case," *New Canadian*, April 10, 1943, 1.

⁵² "Owners Must Prepare For Highest Court: Three Petitions Forwarded," *New Canadian*, July 24, 1943, 1.

⁵³ "Property Owners Win Right To Sue Ottawa in Exchequer Court," *New Canadian*, October 23, 1943, 1.

of the Exchequer Court in Vancouver was scheduled for September 1944.⁵⁴ After the case was heard, Justice J.T. Thorson delayed three years before deciding in the government's favour, and meanwhile the sale of Japanese-Canadian properties continued unabated.⁵⁵ While Japanese Canadians used the legal framework available to resist internment policy, they limited their resistance to challenging the dispossession of their property, rather than their forced removal from the coast. Considering the time that it took to get their case heard before the Exchequer Court, and the delay in getting a decision, there is little reason to conclude that additional legal challenges to internment measures would have been more successful.

Two and a half years after it encouraged resistance through the courts, *The New Canadian* critiqued the inaction of Japanese Canadians. In 1944, *The New Canadian* commented on the U.S. test cases that went before the Supreme Court by declaring that "[i]t is rather curiously tragic and noteworthy that in Canada no question or doubt whatsoever is raised on the legal validity of parallel order... without due process of law to establish individually... guilt or innocence."⁵⁶ This appraisal was unfair, given the differences in the experiences between Japanese Americans and Japanese Canadians. As previously mentioned, the students at UBC protested their removal from military training. Property owners joined together to bring a test case against the confiscation of their property. These are measured responses, to be sure, but they indicate an opposition to internment policies, as well as action taken to resist them. The court case challenging the forced sale of property was a test case, and it was not successful. The U.S. court cases

⁵⁴ "Property Owners Review Situation," *New Canadian*, December 18, 1943, 2.

⁵⁵ Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*, 95.

⁵⁶ "Is Detention Legal?" *New Canadian*, October 28, 1944, 2.

were unsuccessful too, so the discretion displayed by Japanese Canadians in challenging the internment in the courts was appropriate given the lack of success achieved in either country.

A small number of people resisted internment policies during the Spring of 1942, when the government was in the process of removing Japanese Canadians from the coast. Some Japanese Canadians did not depart when they were supposed to, ostensibly due to problems with transportation and baggage arrangements.⁵⁷ A few men simply ripped up their train tickets, rather than leave their homes for the road camps.⁵⁸ Japanese Canadians who violated the dusk-to-dawn curfew faced up to six months in prison.⁵⁹ Sunahara notes that "[d]efiance had become popular, although the reasons for supporting it varied from person to person."⁶⁰ *The New Canadian*, however, observed that "Canadian residents of Japanese stock have been a conspicuously industrious and law abiding element in the Canadian community."⁶¹ The newspaper took this argument further, when it warned that "any heedless act by one of us will be taken out on our innocent fellow sufferers."⁶² This attitude was echoed by The Naturalized Canadian Japanese Association, which urged "cooperation with the government in the evacuation of Canadian citizens of Japanese origin."⁶³ The message delivered in the articles was that it behooved Japanese Canadians

⁵⁷ "Naturalized Citizens Make Statement," *New Canadian*, Apr 10, 1942, 2.

⁵⁸ Robert K. Okazaki, *The Nisei Mass Evacuation Group and P.O.W. Camp 101; The Japanese-Canadian community's struggle for justice and human rights during World War II*, trans. Jean M. Okazaki and Curtis T. Okazaki, (Scarborough: Markham Litho Limited, 1996), 8.

⁵⁹ Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*, 59.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁶¹ "A National Problem," *New Canadian*, April 6, 1942, 2.

⁶² "A Record of Dignity," *New Canadian*, March 5, 1942, 2.

⁶³ "Co-operation With Govt. Only Course To Protect Welfare of People," *New Canadian*, April 10, 1942, 3.

to continue their legacy of obeying the law and follow the regulations to the best of their ability. *The New Canadian* endorsed cooperation as a strategy that would benefit the community. Besides the personal consequences for Japanese Canadians, there was the possibility that transgressions of the curfew could result in even stricter measures being taken against the entire community.

A more serious example of resistance was the riot that occurred at the immigration jail in Vancouver. The guards treated the prisoners harshly, served them poor quality food, and denied visitation rights, while the military and the BCSC refused to address these conditions. The situation erupted in great anger, with the prisoners using furniture to damage walls and windows, and anything else they could reach.⁶⁴ The army responded by surrounding the building with armed soldiers, and firing bullets and tear gas.⁶⁵ The memoirs of Japanese Canadians describe this event in elaborate detail. *The New Canadian*, however, briefly mentions the event, and describes the prisoners as if they were common vandals set on causing damage.⁶⁶ It must be noted that the riot occurred during a time when the BCSC directly controlled *The New Canadian*, which explains the subdued coverage of an event which is widely covered in other sources.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, at this time *The New Canadian* expressed sympathy for the prisoners when it acknowledged

⁶⁴ Okazaki, *POW Camp 101*, 21.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁶⁶ "Soldiers On Patrol At Immigration," *New Canadian*, May 14, 1942, 1.

⁶⁷ *The New Canadian* was the official method of BCSC dissemination of information between April 21 and June 27, 1942, and therefore any articles published during this time should be challenged on the basis that they are not true reflections of the views of the editors. The article "Soldiers On Patrol At Immigration", however, covers a unique event in internment history. This article is useful to my essay because of its muted reporting of what I consider to be an important feature of Japanese Canadian resistance.

that the rule forbidding visitors was an injustice. The separation of families was a significant catalyst of early resistance to internment.

The resentment surrounding the separation of families extended to those already in the work camps. Japanese-Canadian workers at two road camps went on strike after a fight occurred between the workers and camp staff. The fight released an outpouring of grievances including the frequent delay in receiving pay, and the separation of families. The consequences for the ringleaders were severe, resulting in their removal from the work camps, and internment at POW camps in Ontario.⁶⁸ The integrity of the family unit was important to Japanese Canadians, and was the most common cause of resistance in the early days of internment. The reaction by Japanese-Canadian men to separation was to either ignore the embarkation orders, to riot in response to the lack of visitation rights at the immigration jail, or to go on strike when they eventually arrived at the road camps. In all cases, the punishment was severe - internment in a POW camp.

There were other occasional strikes by Japanese-Canadian workers during the summer of 1943. Authorities planned to remove Japanese Canadians from the city of Kelowna after the farm season was over. Workers went on strike there, demanding some element of stability and normality in their lives.⁶⁹ In Jasper, road crew workers went on strike over the quality of food that the contractors provided to them.⁷⁰ The authorities limited the duration of work stoppages by withholding the men's pay, while continuing to charge them for room and board.⁷¹ Road workers in Princeton protested their low wages,

⁶⁸ "Camp Unrest Flares Into Geikie Strike," *New Canadian*, June 27, 1942, 1.

⁶⁹ "Workers Go On Strike – Protest Against Order," *New Canadian*, July 3, 1943, 4.

⁷⁰ "Japanese Road Camp Strikers Settle Dispute," *New Canadian*, June 12, 1943, 3.

⁷¹ "Japanese Road Camp Strikers Settle Dispute," *New Canadian*, June 12, 1943, 3.

but Ottawa refused to give them a raise. Instead, the workers were given assurances that they could move elsewhere and take on other employment if it was available.⁷² These protests, which were about quality of life issues such as stability and pay, contrasted with the resistance which had occurred the year before, which was focused on the separation of men from their families. There were certainly strong parallels, since both circumstances affected the welfare of families, but the strikes by workers acquired more immediate material concessions, rather than sentimental ones.

Japanese-Canadian labour would continue to assert its agency throughout the war. In Alberta, workers employed on beet farms successfully opposed their work conditions and benefits. Early in 1945, they asked the government to remove the restrictions on their movement so that they could seek out better-paying employment elsewhere.⁷³ Two months later they requested a wage increase, which they received.⁷⁴ Ultimately, *The New Canadian* recognized the agency and solidarity of Japanese-Canadian beet farm workers in Alberta, and used it as an model that workers across Canada could follow:

On the record, it should be obvious to organized labor in Alberta that Japanese Canadian evacuees will not willingly accept a lower standard of wages or conditions of slave labor. The steady rise in wages paid to sugar beet workers... is the indisputable proof of this fact.⁷⁵

⁷² "Princeton Road Workers Assured Of Freedom to Move to Other Jobs," *New Canadian*, March 18, 1944, 1.

⁷³ "Albertans Seek Squarer Deal," *New Canadian*, February 24, 1945, 1.

⁷⁴ "Alberta Resettlers Seek Increased Wage Rates For Sugar Beet Work," *New Canadian*, April 28, 1945, 1.

⁷⁵ "Organized Labor in Alberta," *New Canadian*, April 28, 1945, 8.

Beet farm workers were not as vulnerable as the road crew workers, who were not only separated from their families, but were under the authority of the BCSC which directly controlled the workers' livelihood and living conditions. The agency of road crew workers to initiate labour action was thus much more restricted than the farm workers. Generally, where strikes did occur, the workers cooperated to achieve a desired result, such as improved food, increased wages, or the freedom to seek employment elsewhere. This contrasted with earlier resistance by Japanese Canadians, such as violating the curfew, and refusing to depart for the road camps. The earlier resistance tended to be ad hoc and defined by a lack of coordination with other resisters.

As the war continued, further resistance was applied by labourers. Several young men in Tashme neglected to show up for the jobs assigned to them by Selective Service, and were arrested. The excuse provided by the men was that they had forgotten about the work because they had gone skating, but the article points out that "B.C. born Japanese men [were] particularly adverse to leaving their native province."⁷⁶ Another man proceeded on a week's leave after he was assigned a job with a railway section crew. The police arrested him and he was fined fifty dollars by a magistrate.⁷⁷ These incidents occurred later in the war, and suggested that there was a vein of ideological resistance to internment among Japanese Canadians. This resistance was consistent with the pattern of defiance noted by Sunahara, mentioned earlier in this chapter.⁷⁸ It seems unlikely that these men simply forgot to report to work. At the same time, the articles did not register

⁷⁶ "Tashme Boys Went Skating – Missed Date With Selective Service Man!" *New Canadian*, December 4, 1943, 1.

⁷⁷ "Slocan Youth Fined On Failure To Go To Assigned Work," *New Canadian*, January 6, 1945, 8.

⁷⁸ Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*, 59.

any complaints of work conditions on the part of the men. This contrasted with the situation with the road crew and beet farm workers, who protested the material conditions of their labour and living conditions, without directly challenging the policies of internment. *The New Canadian* focused on the consequences of these actions. The men were punished by the state for their acts of resistance, and their punishment was material in the sense they had to pay monetary fines.

As mentioned earlier, the federal government sent any resisters to POW camps in Ontario. The most tenacious resisters in the POW camps were known as the *gambariya*⁷⁹, whom *The New Canadian* criticised as being old-fashioned and stubborn.⁸⁰ Even towards the end of the war, the *gambariya* still held out hope that Japan's ultimate victory would be even greater due to the setbacks Japan had faced. Furthermore, they believed that a defeated Canada would be forced to compensate them for the hardships they had endured.⁸¹ For the *gambariya*, Japan was their homeland, and they were reluctant to turn their backs even when defeat was imminent.⁸² The POW camps represented the limit of the power of the state to persecute individuals. Resistance in British Columbian work camps could get a person sent to Angler Ontario, but the POW camp was the limit of official punishment during the internment.

Generally, inmates were well behaved and the experience in the POW camps was not characterized by violence. A typical violation of the rules included the manufacture

⁷⁹ *gambariya* is sometimes spelt *Ganbari*, *ganbari-ya*, and *Ganbaru*. I elected to use this spelling as it was the most consistent. The term refers to one's tenacity during tough times, but here it was applied to persistent loyalty to the Empire of Japan during the war.

⁸⁰ "Nisei's Only Course," *New Canadian*, Apr 15, 1942, 2.

⁸¹ Nakano, *Within the Barbed Wire Fence*, 66.

⁸² Okazaki, *POW Camp 101*, 115.

and consumption of illicit alcohol.⁸³ On another occasion, the inmates stole a radio from the camp guards with the intention of listening to the news, but instead found comfort in hearing music for the first time in many months.⁸⁴ The experience of resistance cannot be defined solely by the experience of the *gambariya*. Violating the regulations in trivial ways, such as stealing a radio, were modest examples of resistance, but without a well-defined goal. Brewing alcoholic beverages did not serve anyone's ideology. The purpose of these acts seems to have been to simply relieve boredom.

The use of POWs as a source of cheap labour sometimes led to resistance. At Petawawa, the inmates are offered ten cents a day to work, but after the inmates discovered that prisoners at another camp were getting twice as much, they demanded equal pay. The camp commander refused their demands, and they ended up working for free.⁸⁵ Similarly, the inmates refused to participate in wood-cutting duty, because of a general refusal to cooperate with the army. In response, the camp commander threatened to cut off their fuel supply, but the men stood their ground, and the supply of fuel to the prisoners continued.⁸⁶ There were few material consequences to refusing to work, other than the loss of their already-low pay. The prisoners thus had little to lose in the POW camps by resisting camp authorities.

On rare occasions, the camp authorities threatened prisoners with physical violence and death. This was the situation at Petawawa, when warning shots were fired at

⁸³ Marlatt, *Steveston Recollected: A Japanese-Canadian History*, (Victoria: Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1975), 67.

⁸⁴ Okazaki, *POW Camp 101*, 71.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 77.

prisoners who were outside their huts after curfew.⁸⁷ The situation escalated to the point where inmates refused to fall in for roll call without receiving an explanation of the guards' actions that evening.⁸⁸ The inmates inferred that some of them would be shot for refusing to obey orders, but one of their number, a Mr. Tanaka, reminded the camp commander that prisoners could not be executed without some sort of a trial. The camp commander finally relented, which defused the situation, and the prisoners resumed roll call three days later.⁸⁹ A compromise was not reached, causing prisoner Koichiro Miyazaki to later reflect that "people are not very strong when threatened with direct action."⁹⁰ The inmates had pushed the soldiers about as far as they dared, but the soldiers demonstrated their hegemony by firing warning shots.

The two examples above demonstrate that there were limits to state persecution of individuals. On both these two occasions when the inmates refused to cooperate with camp authorities, they stood their ground against the threat of physical violence, and succeeded. These were very real threats, with uncertain outcomes, and probable retaliation, yet Japanese Canadians stood up against the power of state authority and won a minor victory. They gained neither freedom, nor any meaningful benefit, but their resistance helped define how far the state could go. What is noteworthy is that the two narratives by Robert Okazaki and Koichiro Miyazaki are quite consistent in their details. These events never appear in the pages of *The New Canadian*. It is difficult to say why they are absent, except that overt resistance in a POW camp could have been censored by

⁸⁷ Ann Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*, 78.

⁸⁸ Koichiro Miyazaki, "The Story of a Diehard," in *Stone Voices: Wartime Writings of Japanese Canadian Issei*, ed. Keibo Oiwa, (Montréal: Véhicule Press, 1991), 59.

⁸⁹ Okazaki, *POW Camp 101*, 39-42.

⁹⁰ Miyazaki, "The Story of a Diehard," 60.

the government. Another explanation, though, is that *The New Canadian* was still promoting some level of cooperation among Japanese Canadians, and preferred to report on legal forms of resistance.

Resistance to the internment was not characterized by widespread violence. Instead, Japanese Canadians exercised discretion in their resistance, and negative consequences were limited to individuals or families. Violence occurred in specific, limited circumstances, such as during the riot at the immigration jail, and at the POW camp in Petawawa, and these incidents were exceptional in the context of Japanese-Canadian resistance. At the beginning of the war, *The New Canadian* counselled the community to either cooperate with the BCSC to limit repercussions. As time went on, the newspaper reported on the legal measures available, and pointed to specific examples of resistance, especially the success of labour in challenging the policies of internment. Throughout the internment, the newspaper recommended that Japanese Canadians adopt a cautious approach, to avoid repercussions that could affect the broader community.

Community

Newspapers can be vital links for members of any community, and *The New Canadian* performed a cultural duty by being a common link for members of the Japanese-Canadian community. The government policy of forced removal seriously threatened the integrity of the community, and Japanese Canadians struggled to stay connected with one another. *The New Canadian* often used the common culture of Japanese Canadians to encourage a congruent sense of association during the time of dispersal. Throughout the internment, families published engagement, marriage, and birth

notices in the newspaper. Indeed, it is rare to find an edition of the paper which does not contain at least one notice in each category. The continuance of a Japanese-Canadian community, in the context of racially based exclusion and persecution, was itself a form of resistance to internment.

The role of a newspaper to a community's identity is especially important when the community is dispersed. Royden Loewen's analysis of the *Menninitische Post*, a Canadian-based newspaper that linked 65,000 members of the Mennonite community spread across the Americas, helps to illuminate the role that newspapers can play within dispersed communities.⁹¹ Key similarities between the newspapers were that their communities had been dispersed across a diaspora, there was an intent on the part of the newspapers to establish links between members of the community, and both newspapers revealed a divide within the community they served.⁹² In the case of the *Menninitische Post*, the divide reflected ethno-religious subgroups that existed within the community, whereas the divide among Japanese Canadians was partly linguistic, but mostly marked by the generational divide between the *Issei* (the first generation of Japanese Canadians), and the *Nisei* (the second generation of Japanese Canadians).⁹³ Loewen illuminates the important role that a newspaper plays in closing the gaps within a dispersed community.⁹⁴ In the case of Japanese Canadians in the 1940s, too, a community newspaper united subgroups within the population and assisted its members in identifying the common interests that they shared.

⁹¹ Royden Loewen, "Competing Cosmologies: Reading Migration and Identity in an Ethno-religious Newspaper, *Histoire sociale / Social History*, 48 no. 96 (May 2015), 88.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence*, 237.

⁹⁴ Royden Loewen, "Competing Cosmologies," 97-98.

In the weeks ahead of the removal, young Japanese-Canadian couples continued their journey along their life course by getting married. There were 13 wedding announcements in April 1942, two in May, and none in June. The April 2 edition alone had seven announcements.⁹⁵ These numbers compare favourably with 1941, which claimed ten announcements in April, four in May, and two in June. This period in 1942 was a time when *The New Canadian* not under their direct control, but Japanese Canadians still maintained their connection to the community through the newspaper. These numbers are not official statistics, though, and it is possible that there are other weddings which were unannounced in *The New Canadian*. What was significant about these marriages was that when faced with the spectre of the forced removal from their homes, Japanese Canadians continued to participate in significant life events and announced this fact in the public forum of a community newspaper.

The wedding announcements continued as people resettled across the country. In July, a wedding was held in Regina,⁹⁶ and in October, there was a wedding in Manitoba.⁹⁷ Most of the announcements were quite detailed, as exemplified by the announcement of a 1945 Toronto wedding between Hiroko Matsubuchi and Hiroshi Ogaki:

Two former Cumberland families were united when Hiroko, second daughter of Mr. and Mrs. T. Matsubuchi of Montreal, P.Q., became the bride of Mr. Hiroshi Ogaki, third son of Mr. and Mrs. A. Ogaki of Tashme, B.C., at the Church of All Nations in Toronto, Ont., on March 3. Given in marriage by her brother Mr. Hiromu Matsubuchi, the bride was supported by Mrs. G. Ogaki. Mr. Shinya Tateyama acted as a best man. The ceremony was conducted by Rev. J.L. Smith. Following the wedding a reception was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. G. Ogaki. After spending a few days visiting Toronto, the happy couple will take up

⁹⁵ "Weddings in Wartime," *New Canadian*, April 2, 1942, 3.

⁹⁶ "Regina Nuptials," *New Canadian*, July 15, 1942, 2.

⁹⁷ "Wedding Bells Peal For First Nisei Nuptials In Manitoba," *New Canadian*, October 7, 1942, 3.

residence at 64 Charlton Ave. West, Hamilton Ont. The *baishakunis* for the occasion were Mr. and Mrs. Tsutomu Higaki.⁹⁸

Not every wedding announcement was as elaborate as this example, but neither was this exceptional. A common trait of these announcements was the origin of the wedding parties. The geography of the internment can be traced through these announcements, as is the case here with Tashme, an internment site, being mentioned with Montreal and Toronto, both common relocation sites in eastern Canada. The mention of these locations revealed the extent that the community had been dispersed, and the continued importance of *The New Canadian* in rebuilding connections that would allow young couples to meet and get married. Weddings created bonds between families, and detailed announcements, published in the community newspaper, illuminated the links that existed between families, sometimes separated by great distances.

The mention of *baishakunis* in the wedding notice above is equally interesting. It is not obvious from the announcement whether Japanese-Canadians commonly employed these matchmakers to help young people meet one another, or if the use of matchmakers was merely ceremonial. The use of a go-between to facilitate marriage predated the war, with three out of the seven wedding announcements in the April 4, 1941 edition of *The New Canadian* mentioning the use of *baishakunis*.⁹⁹ Wedding announcements often mentioned *baishakunis*, and whatever their purpose, their recognition was evidence of the maintenance of cultural identity among Japanese Canadians. These weddings indicated that social life was normalized at some locations and that young Japanese Canadians continued along a life course that was typical for the time. Whatever disruptions had

⁹⁸ "Personal Notes," *New Canadian*, April 7, 1945, 8.

⁹⁹ "Matrimony Seems To Be The Rage," *New Canadian*, April 4, 1941, 5.

occurred due to the dispersal, there was a community in existence that allowed for people to pursue normal social relationships with one another. *The New Canadian* filled a vital role as a central link to dispersed members of the community by publishing these announcements. These marriages and their announcements supported the stability and integrity between Japanese Canadians by continuing to normalize the social conditions that existed before the war.

The frequent birth notices in *The New Canadian* reinforced the bonds within the Japanese-Canadian community. Oikawa notes that Japanese Canadians gave birth to approximately 2,500 babies during the internment.¹⁰⁰ The steady stream of announcements during this time demonstrated the desire of new parents to share the news with the broader community, even while that community was being uprooted. What was notable was the number of births which occurred during the winter of 1942. *The New Canadian* had eight birth announcements for December 1942, although these did not appear in the newspaper until early January.¹⁰¹ Couples conceived these children during a time when it would have been apparent that an uncertain future lay ahead. Regardless, the children were conceived and born, and this is evidence of a community where couples were starting families. Birth notices tended to be more abbreviated than the examples of wedding announcements:

Born to Mr. and Mrs. Mickey Maikawa of Blind Bay, B.C. on July 27th at the Salmon Arm Hospital, a daughter, Bonnie Akiko.

The first Nisei birth at McGillivray Falls, B.C. was recoded as Mr. and Mrs. Genichi Konodo became the proud parents of a baby boy, Masaru.

¹⁰⁰ Oikawa, *Cartographies of Violence*, 132.

¹⁰¹ *New Canadian*, January 9, 1943, 3.

Born July 13 to Mr. and Mrs. T Miyagawa (nee Joyce Kudu, formerly of Mission) of Diamond City, Alta, a daughter, Jo Ann.¹⁰²

Birth notices occasionally included small flourishes such as "a bouncing 8 pound baby boy," and "[t]he stork paid a visit," but generally they were succinct.¹⁰³ Similar to the previously mentioned wedding announcements, the birth notices indicate a progression of dispersal throughout the internment. The notices indicating where the babies were born sometimes contrasted with where the parents had been relocated from. It should not be inferred that the simple act of having children was an act of resistance, but within the context of the internment, these public announcements tied a community together and preserved links to a common past. The preservation of the community, in the face of government efforts to dismantle and disperse it, was an act of resistance. The announcements were a way of publicly declaring the community's determination during difficult times.

As the community was dispersed, *The New Canadian* assisted its readers who were trying to reconnect with one another. Authorities sometimes gave only a few hours' notice to people to pack their belongings and leave their homes.¹⁰⁴ Throughout internment, notices in the paper called out to lost friends:

Calling Mrs. TOSHIO SHUTO and daughter KAZUKO, formerly of E. Georgia Street, Vancouver! Anxious that you, or anyone knowing your whereabouts, write to her immediately is MRS. K SUZUKI, R.R. No. 1, Box 50, Marquette, Manitoba.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰² "Blessed Events...", *New Canadian*, September 4, 1943, 7.

¹⁰³ "Something New Has Been Added...", *New Canadian*, May 12, 1945, 2.

¹⁰⁴ Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism*, 51.

¹⁰⁵ *New Canadian*, July 15, 1942, 2.

As was the case with the wedding announcements, these notices continued to be published during the Spring of 1942, when *The New Canadian* was under the control of the BCSC, indicating that Japanese Canadians still used the newspaper to connect with one another during this time.¹⁰⁶ As the internment continued, the community members relocated further eastward, with Ontario and Quebec receiving increasing numbers of Japanese Canadians. *The New Canadian* published the names of these people *en masse* including both the name of the receiving city, and the name of the interior B.C. town from which they had departed.¹⁰⁷ The messages ensured that people could be kept aware of where their friends and family had been relocated. *The New Canadian* published these notices as part of the broader goal of maintaining community links during internment.

The messages of greeting in the Christmas issues of *The New Canadian* dominated those editions, which sometimes ran as high as 28 pages, whereas most regular editions had only four or eight pages. Even before the war with Japan, prominent members of the community, and Japanese-Canadian owned businesses placed small advertisements in the newspaper wishing a happy season its readers.¹⁰⁸ This continued after the dispersal of the community during the internment, and the 1942 edition differed from this pattern in three significant ways. First, there were very few businesses left to place advertisements. Second, many of the notices were bilingual, or in Japanese only, whereas before the war English was dominant. Third, people now included addresses where they could be contacted, whereas before only their names were printed.¹⁰⁹ *The New*

¹⁰⁶ "Further Transfers from Camp," *New Canadian*, June 4, 1942, 2.

¹⁰⁷ "Relocee Record," *New Canadian*, September 16, 1942, 8.

¹⁰⁸ *New Canadian*, December 25, 1940, 2-24.

¹⁰⁹ *New Canadian*, December 26, 1942, 2-16.

Canadian thus took on a new role as community directory. These notices were published with a goal of allowing the community to stay connected during a difficult and confusing time when its members were dispersed. Even if it were known that a neighbour had moved to an interior town, for example, there was no way to know if they had moved on to another city without some sort of community directory. The addresses published with the notices revealed that people did not only want to wish each other the best of the season, they indicated that people desired to stay in contact with one another. *The New Canadian* became a hub in the social network of the Japanese-Canadian community.

Sports were an integral part of Japanese-Canadian life before the war. Baseball was especially popular, with the Vancouver Asahis being mentioned in the sports section of *The New Canadian* on a weekly basis. In July 1941, the coverage included two pages of league standings, box scores, and even a little tennis coverage.¹¹⁰ The sports reporting was consistently upbeat and partisan to the Japanese-Canadian community, as this example from a badminton tournament in January 1941 demonstrated:

Playing true to form, the Nippon's men's doubles proved too classy for the cellar-position church group and had no difficulty in making a clean sweep of their series. Mat Matsui-Tommy Iwasaki and Jonny-Ernie Arikado made up the strong men's doubles.¹¹¹

The writing in the sports section was certainly colourful, and clearly indicated who represented the community by mentioning the players by name. Sports were an important part of the Japanese-Canadian community, and was a prominent feature within *The New Canadian*.

¹¹⁰ "Asahis Head for Second Slot As Suga Shuts Out Angelus, 3-0," *New Canadian*, July 11 1941, 8.

¹¹¹ "GVAA League," *New Canadian*, January 10, 1941, 8.

While the sports section attempted to concentrate on Japanese-Canadian athletes and local athletic events, even this section of the newspaper was not immune to the realities of internment. In February and March 1942, the pending removal of Japanese Canadians from the coast forced sports leagues to conclude their seasons early. The Nisei Men's Bowling League decided to disband due to the difficulty of arranging matches that would not violate the curfew law. The league voted to use the prize money to "stage a windup banquet at the Fuji [restaurant] instead of trying to split the pot among the top four teams."¹¹² This light tone present in earlier editions gave way to a more editorialized sports column which lamented the removal order:

The axe has finally fallen! That impending threat which we Niseis have felt hovering wickedly over our paths for some time, the pressure, which we had a hard time in believing, has finally burst its bounds and polished off everything we've been working for.¹¹³

Even more telling was the proclamation in the same edition that sports "has given [Japanese Canadians] diversion to keep up whatever morale that was left in us, to keep us from shrivelling from the disappointment, the worries of discrimination and persecutions."¹¹⁴ Sports were more than a pastime for Japanese Canadians. They bound the community together in a common purpose. The fact that sports could be a diversion does not mean that Japanese Canadians completely forgot about the persecution they were experiencing, but perhaps they could forget about it for a short while. It is unclear from the newspaper how many people attended these events as spectators, but the abundant

¹¹² "Keglers Wind Up With Banquet," *New Canadian*, March 3, 1942, 3.

¹¹³ "Sport Spot," *New Canadian*, February 26, 1942, 3.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

column space dedicated to sports suggests that they were of significant interest to the community.

Japanese-Canadian sports writing did not die with the removal of the community from the coast, coverage continuing even after Japanese Canadians were dispersed across the country. In July 1942, articles detailing the creation of baseball leagues in the interior of British Columbia appeared.¹¹⁵ An article a few weeks later seemed almost poetic in its description of a baseball league in Alberta:

The intense heat of mid-summer is now felt at our work camp in Decoigne. But lowering our eyes from the last lingering traces of snow upon the towering peaks of the Seven Sisters, we can see the gentians blooming all over the plateau at our feet. Their beauty brings a sense of comfort to harried minds.¹¹⁶

While it is not explicitly stated, one can infer that the reason the players' minds are "harried" is due to the internment. Later that summer, workers formed an inter-camp baseball game in Princeton. The article which covered the game, with the reporter referring to one team as "our boys" in a sympathetic way that reminds readers of the pre-internment reporting of sports coverage.¹¹⁷ This type of reporting encouraged solidarity between players and readers, strengthening inter-personal bonds in these small communities. The article also singled out star players for its readers' appreciation:

Outstanding player of the afternoon was catcher Yasui, whose brilliant performance, it is felt, will outshine any other player around these parts. Kawamura and Murata of our camp, too, are showing signs of star material.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁵ "Chatham Camp Sports," *New Canadian*, July 15, 1942, 2.

¹¹⁶ T. Nakano, "Baseball Interest Running High," *New Canadian*, July 25, 1942, 2.

¹¹⁷ "Sports Programme," *New Canadian*, September 2, 1942, 1.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

The sports pages of *The New Canadian* linked Japanese Canadians who were geographically separated through the shared appreciation of sport. By mentioning star players by name, the newspaper created a personal connection between the reader and the athlete. As was the case before the war, upbeat sports coverage contributed to the morale of Japanese Canadians. The details of baseball tournaments, and their results, may not have directly affected the lives of Japanese Canadians far removed from the event, but this reporting reminded people that they still held a connection with one another.

A newspaper can hold a special role within the community it serves. This was the case with *The New Canadian*. Throughout the internment, the newspaper became a hub for Japanese Canadians to stay in contact with their community. No one imposed this role of community leader on to *The New Canadian*, and it seemed to be more of a spontaneous reaction to internment that developed as internment measures became more grievous. Through the simple act of living their lives, Japanese Canadians resisted the policies of internment that had forced them from their homes. Although dispersed, they continued to thrive in communities across Canada. During internment, Japanese Canadians got married, had children, and proudly announced these events in *The New Canadian*. This newspaper was no longer a local paper, since its readers were dispersed across the country, but by printing these notices, *The New Canadian* fulfilled a social responsibility to maintaining links between members of the Japanese-Canadian community. The nearly uninterrupted sports coverage performed a similar duty by focusing on community events that bonded far-flung communities. By reporting on these small, amateur tournaments and leagues, *The New Canadian* normalized one aspect of

internment, reminding Japanese Canadians of life before the war, and maintaining the bonds between scattered community members.

Conclusion

The stereotype of Japanese Canadians was they were passive victims of the internment. This is sometimes reflected in the writing of Japanese Canadians themselves, as evident in Adachi's book *The Enemy That Never Was*. Later scholarship by Sugiman and Oikawa, however, reveals a spirit of defiance that exemplified Japanese-Canadian resistance. Other authors contribute to the discussion of resistance by expanding its definition beyond its violent implications to include the everyday, unorganized, and spontaneous responses to injustice by victims. Primary sources written by victims of the internment also provide historians with models of Japanese-Canadian agency which repudiated the passivity myth. *The New Canadian* highlighted examples of resistance to internment policies that threatened the Japanese-Canadian community and was itself an agent of resistance during the internment.

At the beginning of the internment, *The New Canadian* strongly discouraged resistance as a response. In the issues following the attack by Japan on Pearl Harbor, the newspaper counselled that the only viable option was for Japanese Canadians to affirm their loyalty to Canada. As the forced removal of Japanese Canadians commenced, the newspaper recommended that people cooperate with authorities, both to demonstrate their acquiescence to lawful authority and to prevent further measures from being taken against

the community. *The New Canadian* took on an additional responsibility by extending the reach of the newspaper to Japanese-language speakers in the community by publishing internment announcements in both English and Japanese to ensure they reached the widest audience possible. Throughout the war, *The New Canadian* continued to serve all Japanese Canadians by including English and Japanese sections, indicating its importance to the wider community.

The New Canadian focused on articles important to the Japanese-Canadian community. This included the progression of internment policies detrimental to everyday life: the forced removal of people from their homes, the separation of families as men were sent to road camps, the dispossession of their property, and the labour issues that arose. Throughout the war, *The New Canadian* was critical to the maintenance of community ties. Frequent sports coverage reconnected people with their pre-internment lives, when local teams represented the Japanese-Canadian community in local sports leagues. Marriage announcements and birth notices were a weekly reminder that people continued to live their lives with as much normality as they could. Occasional announcements in the newspaper let friends and family know when people moved to eastern Canada. At Christmas, the newspaper was filled with dozens of personal notices wishing one another good fortune in the new year, while simultaneously informing readers about the whereabouts of their friends, relatives, and former neighbours.. In this way, *The New Canadian* served as a bulletin board to link the community together.

There were significant gaps in *The New Canadian's* reporting. The newspaper tended to under-report incidents of violent resistance. The newspaper mentioned the riot at the immigration jail in Vancouver only briefly, with the focus being the consequences of

this type of action. Other articles also warned Japanese Canadians that some types of resistance threatened the future of individuals, and the collective welfare of the community. Incidents of resistance at POW camps were entirely absent from the newspaper, although in this case it may be wartime censorship limiting the availability of news. The one incident about POW camps that is mentioned is when some of the prisoners are released back in to society, to take on employment in Ontario. Even this event spoke to the theme of maintaining the bonds of a community through family cohesion. *The New Canadian* encouraged Japanese Canadians to protest the internment through prescribed methods, such as legal challenges and labour protests, but the newspaper saw no benefit to having men spend time in a POW camp as a form of protest. The implication was that conforming to Canadian internment policies would be rewarded with reintegration into Canadian society, and a reunion with one's family, which was of benefit to the greater Japanese-Canadian community.

The legacy of *The New Canadian* is the service it provided to a vulnerable community during a time of great upheaval. As a newspaper, it reported and encouraged resistance by Japanese Canadians. As a community institution, it ensured that important links between its members were maintained during their most vulnerable period, and contributed to the continuation of the Japanese-Canadian community.

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