

## The Treatment of Japanese Canadians in the 1940s: A Social Work Perspective

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### Abstract

Little research has been done on early social work practice in Canada, particularly as it pertains to social workers from racialized groups. The internment of Japanese Canadians during World War II is of particular interest as seen through the lens of social work discourse. Social workers on the political left were well aware of this racially-motivated internment and lent support to organizations that sought to address their two main concerns: recognizing compensation claims for confiscated property and fighting the deportation of Japanese Canadians. Amy Leigh, a social worker who organized welfare services for the interned Japanese Canadians, expressed a more politically liberal capitalist perspective. She believed it was crucial for the public to clearly understand the work of the British Columbia Security Commission, established to manage the relocation of Japanese Canadians, in order to correct views that the Japanese were either being “ill-treated or spoon-fed”.<sup>1</sup> Leigh also encouraged the hiring of Kay (Kato) Shimizu by the BC Security Commission. A Nisei (2<sup>nd</sup> generation) Japanese Canadian social worker, Shimizu became politicized towards the left by the experience, one that was distinctly different from that of her Caucasian contemporaries in the Canadian Association of Social Workers.

### Introduction

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor and Canada declared war on Japan the next day. In the weeks that followed, close to 21,000 Japanese Canadians were uprooted, 75% of who were Canadian citizens.<sup>2</sup> Many were Issei (first generation) and Nisei (second generation) Japanese Canadians living in British Columbia

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<sup>1</sup>L.A.C. MG28 I441 Volume 7 FA 19, CASW, Vancouver Island Branch. Includes minutes. Also BC Mainland Branch’s minutes 1930-1953. March 26, 1942 Minutes of the General Meeting. BC Mainland Branch, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>L.A.C. MG30 D200 FA 7, M. Grace Tucker fonds, Japanese Canadian Manuscripts, 1942-1954, 1968. Anglican Japanese Mission Reports, 1942, 1943.

(BC). With the exception of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), BC's politicians, led by the then Minister of Pensions and Health and MP for Vancouver Centre, demanded the internment of Japanese Canadians under the guise of national security (Adachi, 1976). This reactionary racism was reflected by unofficial organizations such as the Consultative Council for Cooperation in Wartime, a volunteer group whose immediate aim was to "facilitate the exchange of information between groups who see the Japanese problem in BC as a national problem which is a challenge to citizenship, Christianity and our common humanity."<sup>3</sup> As a result of hysteria and racism magnified by Pearl Harbor, more than 1,200 fishing boats owned by Japanese Canadians were impounded by the RCMP, 59 Japanese language schools were closed, and all three Japanese language newspapers in BC were shut down as "precautionary measures"(Adachi, 1976, 200).

Considered enemy aliens, Japanese Canadians were required to register with and report to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) on a bi-weekly basis and obey a dusk-to-dawn curfew, as well as being forbidden to change residence or travel more than 12 miles (19.2 km) from their home addresses (Sunahara, 1981). Then, throughout March 1942, Japanese Canadians were relocated to the Exhibition buildings in Hastings Park, Vancouver, which had housed livestock only seven days earlier. Upon arrival at this "manning pool", where they were to await transfer, the women and men were separated. Men and boys over 12 years of age were directed to makeshift dormitories and forbidden to enter the buildings that housed their wives, mothers, and children less than 12 years. Even when the men were finally sent away to work in road camps, boys from 13 to 18 years of age who were left behind in the dormitories were still forbidden to see their mothers and younger siblings. Later, many of the women, young children and elderly were moved to distant, abandoned BC mining towns from Slocan City in the Salmon Arm-Revelstoke area to Kamloops in the interior. Towns such as Tashme, located about 115 miles (184 km) inland from Vancouver, were specifically built to contain the Japanese Canadians.<sup>4</sup>

The British Columbia Security Commission (BCSC) was the agency created to manage the relocation process, moving Japanese Canadians from coastal areas, constructing makeshift accommodations, establishing work camps, and providing

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<sup>3</sup>L.A.C. MG30 D200 FA 9, M. Grace Tucker fonds. Miscellaneous Organizations n.d. 1942-1948. Japanese Canadian Repatriation to Japan.

<sup>4</sup>L.A.C.. MG30 D200 FA 7. Grace Tucker fonds. Japanese Canadian Manuscripts, 1942-1954, 1968. Anglican Japanese Mission Reports, 1942, 1943.

employment, health and social services. Initially, administrators with the Commission planned to bolster private industry with unpaid internee labour, but the federal government instead implemented the road camp program in February 1942. The men, many whom had never done hard physical labour in their lives, were paid 25 to 35 cents per hour, less than the going rate in BC to build roads. Since each road camp was staffed by four armed RCMP constables the camps were, in fact, prisons with hard labour. By January of 1943, internees that agreed to move east of the Rocky Mountains were released from the road camps. Many moved in hopes of keeping their families together, becoming a ready labour pool that eased the acute shortage of workers being experienced by beet farmers in southern Alberta and Manitoba.

The operation at Hastings Park raised many ethical issues. In the March 26, 1942 minutes of the BC Mainland Branch of the Canadian Association of Social Workers (CASW) meeting, the contingency plan for Hastings Park was noted: "Should matters run smoothly, the organization of the Park could be largely internal and self-sustaining. Should there be any incident, the set-up would change to that of an internment camp." Yet, according to the Geneva Convention, Nisei could not legally be interned because internment was only applicable to aliens. As a result, the Nisei were not officially referred to as interned, but rather "were detained at the pleasure of the Minister of Justice", at that time, Louis St. Laurent (Sunahara, 1981, p. 66). However, Hastings Park appears to have been an internment camp in all but name. At its peak, it held as many as 3,000 people a day (Sunahara, 1981). Property confiscated from internees was used to pay for lodging and food and personal mail was censored.<sup>5</sup> Internees slept in hastily fashioned dormitories that contained rows of bunk beds built three feet apart with straw mattresses. Open troughs served as toilets and 10 showers served 1,500 women (Sunahara, 1981). The following first-person account graphically describes the deplorable conditions.

As for the bunks, they were the most tragic things there. Steel and wooden frames with a thin lumpy straw tick, a bolster, and three army blankets ... no sheets unless you bring your own. These are the "homes" of the women I saw ... these bunks were hung with sheets and blankets and clothes of every hue and variety - all hung in a pathetic attempt at privacy ... An old, old lady was crying, saying she would rather have died than have come to such a place (Sunahara, 1981, p.184, n.25).

The army-style food fed to the internees contained saltpeter that created immediate health issues, particularly for infants and the

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<sup>5</sup>Retrieved June 21, 2009 from <http://www.canadiannikkei.ca/blog/japanese-canadan-timeline/>

elderly. Much of the work to sustain the internees in the manning pool was done by the inmates themselves who also worked tirelessly to mitigate the distress experienced by new arrivals. The Japanese Liaison Committee consisted of three Issei appointed by the BCSC. This committee had some success in bringing about improvements in diet and privacy, creating separate dormitories for the younger and older boys, and removing racist and unprofessional Caucasian workers (Sunahara, 1981).

### Social Work Interventions with Interned Japanese Canadians

Social welfare services were provided by the BC government to prevent “needless irritations among the Japanese, and to give them decent treatment in the hope of preventing reprisals.”<sup>6</sup> Social workers employed by the Welfare Department of the BCSC helped internees to adjust. They provided individual support through casework, along with group activities designed to produce a “Canadianizing” influence.<sup>7</sup> The emphasis on individual casework reflected the individualism promoted by the ascendent liberal capitalism occurring on a national scale. The use of group activities was perhaps predictive that the group work method, previously associated with radical social workers, was in the process of being co-opted.

Meanwhile, any social work trainees with Japanese heritage were being supervised by the Commission social workers with plans that they would eventually replace the Caucasian staff, of course with careful supervision.<sup>8</sup> Ideally, a Japanese Canadian social worker would work in each community. When this was not possible, a carefully selected woman would be supervised by a Caucasian social worker.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>L.A.C. MG28 I441, Volume 27 FA 19, CASW, Vancouver Island Branch. Includes Minutes. Also BC Mainland Branch’s minutes 1930-1945. March 26, 1942 minutes of General Meeting of BC Mainland Branch.

<sup>7</sup>L.A.C. MG30 D200 FA 9 M. Grace Tucker fonds. Japanese Canadian Manuscripts, 1942-1954, 1968. Miscellaneous Organizations n.d. 1942-1948. Japanese Canadian Repatriation to Japan. British Columbia Security Commission Welfare Policy. Vancouver, B.C. July 15, 1942.

<sup>8</sup>L.A.C. MG30 D200 FA9, M. Grace Tucker fonds. Japanese Canadian manuscripts, 1942-1954, 1968. Miscellaneous Organizations n.d. 1942-1948. Japanese Canadian repatriation to Japan. British Columbia Security Commission Welfare Policy. Vancouver, B.C. July 15, 1942.

<sup>9</sup>L.A.C. MG30 D200 FA9, Grace Tucker fonds, Japanese Canadian manuscripts, 1942-1954, 1968. Miscellaneous Organizations n.d. 1942-1948, Japanese Canadian Repatriation to Japan. British Columbia Security Commission Welfare Policy. Vancouver, B.C. July

Amy Leigh, Director of Social Services for the city of Vancouver (Sunahara, 1981), was the social worker loaned to the BCSC, specifically to organize the welfare services. She believed it crucial to have the Commission's work clearly explained to the public and stressed "the necessity of correcting the extreme view held by some citizens that the Japanese were either being ill-treated or spoon-fed."<sup>10</sup> CASW member Martha Moscrup believed that social workers at large could conclude that, "the humane treatment accorded the Japanese at this time would strengthen the loyalties, and would be conducive to the further Canadianization of the purely national groups."<sup>11</sup> Such comments reveal the politics of exclusion at work, as well as a lack of awareness of the Nisei and Issei's own conception of Canadian loyalty and citizenship, concepts that would be better understood by a Japanese Canadian social worker.

#### Social Worker from Within: Kay (Kato) Shimizu

Kay (Kato) Shimizu was a Japanese Canadian social worker handpicked by Leigh to be hired by the BCSC to help with the adjustment of Japanese internees. Kay Kato was born near Kingcome Inlet, a First Nations village in British Columbia. Her step-father's experience with the welfare system "led him to feel that society, the ways systems worked, were to the disadvantage of the poor and vulnerable" and so there was intense interest on his part, and for other radicalized Japanese Canadians, to organize co-ops and labour unions.<sup>12</sup>

In 1941 at the age of 21, Kay (Kato) Shimizu graduated from the University of British Columbia (UBC) with a Bachelor of Arts Degree. Before beginning her studies in social work at UBC in the fall of 1941, she spent the summer working for the Vancouver Japanese Welfare Federation (VJWF). This agency provided various types of social welfare services for Japanese Canadians and also acted as a voice to assure the Canadian public of their loyalty. The Executive Secretary of the agency, Kunio Shimizu, later became Kay Kato's

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15, 1942.

<sup>10</sup>L.A.C. MG28 I441 Volume 27 FA 19, CASW, Vancouver Island Branch. Includes minutes. Also BC Mainland Branch's minutes 1930-1953. March 26, 1942 Minutes of the General Meeting. BC Mainland Branch, p. 2.

<sup>11</sup>L.A.C. MG28 I441 Volume 27 FA 19, CASW, Vancouver Island Branch. Includes minutes 1930-1953. March 26, 1942 Minutes of the General Meeting. BC Mainland Branch, p. 2.

<sup>12</sup>L.A.C. Karen Hill fonds, *Oral History of Social Workers in Canada Series*. Interview with Kay Shimizu by Karen Hill, December 10, 1983, p. 9.

husband and after their marriage she assumed his family name (Irving, Parsons & Bellamy, 1995). The VJWF was interested in hiring the young woman once she completed her social work education<sup>13</sup> but her family was strongly opposed for fear that she would become co-opted by the establishment. In their view, as expressed by Shimizu in a 1983 interview, “the way to help the poor was not to work with the establishment but to work outside the establishment ... to radicalize and politicize people into understanding how systems exploited the poor and the weak.”

It was difficult for Shimizu to be accepted into the UBC School of Social Work at a time when many professions were closed to non-Caucasians. To gain admittance, she secured her own field placements, convincing both Tuberculosis (TB) Social Services and the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) to accept her in advance.<sup>14</sup> As a student, she was not exempted from restrictions applied to all Japanese Canadians over 21 years-of-age. She was fingerprinted and photographed, had to carry identification at all times, and was also subject to a strict curfew. Since her field placement at the YWCA was in the evenings, she had to shift her placement schedule to Saturday mornings.<sup>15</sup> She would not have been able to attend social events had her classmates not smuggled her to parties at times by covering her with a blanket in the back seat of a car.

In May 1942 Leigh approached the UBC School of Social Work to see if Shimizu could work for the BCSC. Leigh was a highly regarded social worker who recruited Japanese Canadian volunteers for the welfare work at Hastings Park and was known for screening Caucasian volunteers carefully (Sunahara, 1981). Although Leigh hired supervisors who were easy to work with, Shimizu experienced “sheer helplessness” to think that she would be expected to help married women with children who were living in such terrible conditions. She vividly recalled “walking through this dorm [with] the terrible stench, mixed with bleach and the children screaming and hanging onto their mother’s skirts and the women trying to create

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<sup>13</sup>L.A.C. MG30 D200 FA 9. Grace Tucker fonds. Japanese Canadian Manuscripts, 1942-1954, 1968. Miscellaneous Organizations n.d. 192-1948. Japanese Repatriation to Japanese. British Columbia Security Commission Welfare Policy.

<sup>14</sup>L.A.C. Karen Hill fonds. *Oral History of Social Work in Canada Series*. Interview with Kay Shimizu by Karen Hill, December 10, 1983, p. 10.

<sup>15</sup>L.A.C. Karen Hill fonds. *Oral History of Social Work in Canada Series*. Interview with Kay Shimizu by Karen Hill, December 10, 1983, p. 11.

some sense of privacy by hanging blankets between the stalls.”<sup>16</sup> Still a student, Shimizu occupied the children with games to afford the mothers some private time to clean their living spaces and to be with their thoughts. When Leigh obtained special permission for Shimizu to return to the UBC campus in 1942 for a summer course, Shimizu found that she was the only Japanese Canadian on campus since all other Japanese Canadian students had been forced to leave the university by March 1942. Then, in June of 1942, Leigh sent Shimizu to the internment community of Kaslo to establish a welfare office, and her work also took her to similar communities in New Denver, Slocan and Tashme. Since Shimizu’s family found it difficult to accept her working for the Security Commission, she felt forced to make a break with her family. “They were so upset”, she recalled, “They just felt when I started working for the B.C. Security Commission that I was a ‘stool pigeon’, an *inu*, a dog. If taking social work meant that I would sell myself to the government, they were not going to have anything more to do with me (Sunahara, 1981, p. 57). Though Shimizu felt that there was important work for her to do, in April of 1943 she stopped working for the BCSC.<sup>17</sup>

Shimizu resigned from her position and accepted employment as a domestic worker in Toronto. Backed by the national YWCA, the BCSC was providing grants for the placement and supervision of Japanese girls as domestics in Toronto, Montréal and Winnipeg. Young women were encouraged to join YWCA groups to enhance their sense of belonging and to prevent possible sexual exploitation.<sup>18</sup> However, the position Shimizu expected was filled before her arrival, leaving her to find other employment. She worked as a camp assistant for the YWCA until being offered a position at University Settlement in September 1943. She worked in Toronto until 1948 when her husband was offered a position in Ottawa and they moved. Starting in 1954, Shimizu worked at the Children’s Aid society as a field worker and then as a supervisor for the next fifteen years.

Shimizu’s accounts illustrate how one racialized professional can have a qualitatively different experience than those from a dominant group (Christensen, 2003). For her, the internment of Japanese Canadians was personal because her employment with the VJWF, and then the BCSC, jeopardized her relationship with her

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<sup>16</sup>L.A.C. Karen Hill fonds. *Oral History of Social Workers in Canada Series*. Oral Interview with Kay Shimizu by Karen Hill, December 10, 1983, p. 12.

<sup>17</sup>L.A.C. Karen Hill fonds. *Oral History of Social Workers in Canada Series*. Oral Interview with Kay Shimizu by Karen Hill, December 10, 1983, p. 15.

<sup>18</sup>L.A.C. Karen Hill fonds. Oral interview with Isabel Russell by Karen Hill, p. 13. *Oral History of Social Workers in Canada Series*.

family. Although initially she felt that there was something important that she could do, after working for the Commission for less than one year, she became politicized against what she considered to be unethical government policies, realizing that her family was right to remain outside the establishment.

### Social Workers and the Political Left

During WWII, individual Canadian social workers on the political left were apt to explicitly name the racist processes they saw at work. Some social workers bemoaned the lack of political will to even attempt to distinguish between friendly and enemy aliens (Hathaway, 1942). As a result, many social workers on the left offered their support to Japanese organizations. Margaret Gould was a socialist social worker who was active in the Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians (CCJC), the Canadian Civil Liberties Association of Toronto and the Committee For the Repeal the of the Chinese Immigration Act (CRCIA). Her editorials for the Toronto *Star* critiqued the deportation of Japanese Canadians (Irving, Parsons and Bellamy, 1995). Clare McAllister, CASW member in the Victoria branch, remarked that "...our feeling of shock was very great that this could happen to people, particularly that their valuable fishing boats and homes and personal things ... not only [were they] ... deprived of them but they were sold for ridiculous prices."<sup>19</sup> Ruth Penner, a Communist and social worker, recalled a May Day parade in Vancouver where people marched with banners that read "Slap the Yap off the Japs" and later noted that the CCF was the only political party with an election platform that spoke to the injustices perpetrated on Japanese Canadians (Ruth Penner, personal communication, June 28, 2004). A CCF flyer entitled, *Liberty Must Live*, read: "The CCF is the only important political party in Canada that states that the Japanese shall and will be given the liberty that is accorded every honest citizen and you may be sure that Canada will be a democracy, socially and politically, when the CCF is the government (emphasis in original)."<sup>20</sup> Shimizu also had a deep commitment to the CCF party.<sup>21</sup> Ann Gomer Sunahara recalled that the provincial CCF Party as a

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<sup>19</sup>L.A.C. Karen Hill fonds. *Oral History in Social Work in Canada Series*. Interview with Clare McAllister by Karen Hill, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup>L.A.C. MG30 D200 FA 8 M. Grace Tucker fonds. Articles re Japanese Evacuation and Repatriation 1942-1945.

<sup>21</sup>L.A.C. Karen Hill fonds. *Oral History of Social Work in Canada Series*. Interview with Kay Shimizu by Karen Hill, December 10, 1983, p. 18. When her children were young she devoted much effort to mobilizing women in the CCF and later in the NDP Party to promote day care legislation.

whole did not publicly address the Japanese situation publicly in 1942 and 1943 but noted that Grace MacInnis, a CCF party member and the daughter of J.S. Woodsworth, did speak out, as did Communist party member, former social worker and poet Dorothy Livesay (1981, p. 189, n.71).

It is perhaps not surprising that Gould, McAllister, Penner and Livesay had all been 'red-baited', accused of being a communist, at some point in their careers. Being named as a communist or sympathizer could result in being blacklisted or screened without having full knowledge of the nature or source of the accusations or the ability to refute them. Gould was red-baited in two newspaper articles after she hosted the first meeting of the Toronto Provisional Peace council. An article in the December 5, 1948 issue of the *Toronto Globe and Mail* asked if she was a communist or communist sympathizer,<sup>22</sup> while the March 14, 1949 issue of *The Telegram* reported that Gould was barred entry into the United States, to which she retorted, "that's news to me."<sup>23</sup> Ruth Penner grew up in a home where the telephone was tapped because her father, Jacob Penner, was one of the founders of the Communist Party of Canada (CPC). Throughout her adult life she was red-baited, culminating in being barred from entering the United States in the 1970s.<sup>24</sup> Clare McAllister reported that she was refused a position in 1946 because she had been a CCF candidate when she contested the Oak Bay Constituency in the October 25 provincial general election of 1945, even though she had been told by the Deputy Minister that she was better qualified than the average applicant.<sup>25</sup> Dorothy Livesay was labelled a Communist for attending International Writers' Conferences held in the Soviet Union and Soviet Bloc Nations (Newcombe, 1984). Also not surprising was the perspective they shared with political social workers in the United States who were well aware of the racist processes in their own country that motivated the forced relocation of those defined as 'enemy aliens'.

The public rhetoric of World War II promised an expansion of democratic entitlements that liberal and political activists on the left put to the test. Edith Fowke's publication *They Made Democracy*

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<sup>22</sup>L.A.C. MG30-C130, Volume 63 FA 1320. James Endicott and Family fonds. "Are you a Communist? Peace Councillors reply, 10 No, 1 Yes Irate" by Mary Fraser. Attacks on the Peace Movement, n.d.; 1948-1958.

<sup>23</sup>L.A.C. MG31-K9 Volume 15 FA 237. Frank and Libbie Park fonds, Clippings March 1949.

<sup>24</sup>Interview with Ruth Penner by Laurel Lewey, June 28, 2004 in Montréal.

<sup>25</sup>L.A.C. MG28 I441 Volume 27 FA 19. CASW. Vancouver Island branch.

*Work: The Story of the Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians*<sup>26</sup> depicted the range of organizations that lent some degree of support to Japanese Canadians. These organizations included the CASW, the Canadian Welfare Council, the YM/YWCA, the Canadian Jewish Congress, the National Council of Women, the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, various civil liberties associations, unions and religious organizations; and university student organizations from all the major Canadian universities. The Victoria Society of Friends (Quakers) also spoke out about the unjust deportation practices that were occurring.<sup>27</sup> The CCJC had branches in Vancouver, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Calgary, Toronto, Guelph, Brantford, Hamilton and London, and fought the courts for more just treatment of Japanese Canadians (Sunahara, 1981, p.196, n.16). However, Japanese Canadians were the ones whose suffering underwrote the legal challenges with respect to deportation, internment and confiscation of property.

Although the National CASW was one of the many organizations cited as supportive of the CCJC in Fowke's publication, evidence has yet to emerge which shows that the CASW took a strong stance with respect to the treatment of Japanese Canadians. The Vancouver Island Branch of CASW seems to have been the most vocal, stating that "the Japanese should be treated as any other group would be treated in regard to the Deportation Laws of Canada" and urged "just consideration for the Japanese."<sup>28</sup> Individual branches entertained speakers who kept them informed of developments both in Canada and in the United States. Minutes of the February 13, 1946 meeting of the Montréal Branch of the CASW record that a Mrs. Dechin spoke about the Welfare program she headed at Tule Lake, a segregation camp in the western U.S. She revealed that 100,000 Japanese Americans were uprooted, two thirds of whom were American citizens. At the segregation camp, 8,000 evacuees were held and were served by 300 of the administration staff. Thirty-five case aids were given in-service training to use casework techniques to

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<sup>26</sup>L.A.C. MG30 D200 FA 13. M. Grace Tucker fonds. Japanese Canadian Manuscripts, 1942-1954, 1968. Printed Material 1944-1946. Japanese Canadian Citizenship. Edith Fowke was a member of the editorial board of *The Canadian Forum* in November, 1949 (*The Canadian Forum*, Vol. XXIX, No. 346, November, 1949,170).

<sup>27</sup>L.A.C. MG28 I441 Volume 27 FA 19. CASW. March 26, 1942 minutes of the General Meeting. B.C. Mainland Branch. Vancouver Island Branch. Includes minutes. Also B.C. Mainland Branch's minutes 1930-1953.

<sup>28</sup>L.A.C. MG28 I441 Volume 27 FA 19. CASW. April 25, 1946 letter to Joy Maines, Executive Secretary of C.A.S.W. from the Vancouver Island Branch. Vancouver Island Branch.

enable the evacuee, “to achieve a certain level of emotional stability despite the many negative factors in this abnormal situation. Thus he, freer to clarify his thinking, was able to give help to others”. At the same meeting, the Chairman of the Montréal Committee on Japanese Canadians discussed the racism inherent in the decision to deport Japanese Canadians and highlighted the high costs of court proceedings for a test case to prove the invalidity of the deportation order.<sup>29</sup> However, not all branch members felt they were informed about the real situation. Isabel Russell commented that the Victoria branch of CASW first learned about the evacuation of Japanese Canadians in 1942 and “got something in our association of the injustices of what had happened, where innocent people were uprooted.”<sup>30</sup> Similarly, Jean Shek noted that the treatment of Japanese Canadians was not something that was very well publicized in Toronto at the time, but that it became clearer to some people at a later date what was happening (Jean Shek, personal communication, January 29, 2004).

#### Japanese Canadian Political Organizations

Two organizations were formed in direct response to the internment of Japanese Canadians to secure compensation and fight deportation. The Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians (CCJC) emerged in 1943 and was a significant organization that responded to two main concerns caused by the evacuation: gaining recognition for compensation claims for confiscated property and fighting deportation.<sup>31</sup> The Japanese Canadian Committee for Democracy (JCCD) was formed to defend the human and civil rights of Japanese Canadians. The CCJC assisted with citizen claims to the federal government and worked to combat legislative injustices and provided funds that were raised mostly from Japanese Canadians, for legal fees in Supreme Court and Privy Council. It also provided funding to the JCCD to conduct an Economic Loss survey of British Columbia evacuees on a nation-wide scale<sup>32</sup> and printed 25,000 copies of the

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<sup>29</sup>L.A.C. MG28 I441 Volume 29 FA 12. CASW. Minutes of the Montréal Branch of the C.A.S.W.

<sup>30</sup>L.A.C. Karen Hill fonds. *Oral History in Social Work in Canada Series*. Interview with Isabel Russell by Karen Hill, p. 13.

<sup>31</sup>L.A.C. MG30 D200 FA 10. M. Grace Tucker fonds. Memoranda: Japanese Canadian Organizations, 1946-1950. National Japanese Canadian Citizen's Association. On letterhead of the Japanese Canadian Committee for Democracy, Toronto, November 30, 1946. NAC, Ottawa.

<sup>32</sup>L.A.C. MG30 D200 FA10. M. Grace Tucker fonds. Memoranda: Japanese Canadian Organizations 1946-1950. National Japanese

leaflet *Japanese Canadians: Citizens, Not Exiles* in 1946.<sup>33</sup>

The CCJC persisted in its efforts to secure compensation for claims on behalf of 1,300 Japanese Canadians long after the forcible deportation had ended.<sup>34</sup> In 1947 its news bulletin exposed the extent of property losses that had occurred in the interval between the order for evacuation and the Order-in-Council PC 2483 (March 27, 1942) that vested power for the Management of Property with a Custodian. During that time, stocks, businesses and properties had been sold at sacrifice prices. According to the Office of the Custodian of Enemy Property in January, 1943 the value of confiscated property was estimated to be \$11,525,000 (Sunahara, 1981, p.191, n.38). The nearly 1,000 Japanese farms that had been purchased so cheaply by the Canadian government were later sold at bargain prices to returning WWII veterans. Contrary to this Canadian practice, the American government did not sell the property of Japanese Americans and Congress provided compensation for any losses that resulted from the evacuation orders.<sup>35</sup>

Although many Issei and Nisei knew that their contributions and loyalty to Canada were beyond question, the government policies of exclusion and persecution made their marginalized outsider status painfully clear. Civil rights were not restored to Japanese Canadians until 1949, five years after the war had ended, making Shimizu 29 years old when she voted in an election for the first time. In 1975 she and her husband, Kunio Shimizu, were instrumental in the establishment of the Japanese Community Association that sought formal redress from the Canadian government. Although this was finally achieved in 1988, Carole Pigler Christenson (2003) referred to the settlement as “token”.

## Discussion

Although literature reviews yield little information about the activities

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Canadian Citizen's Association.

<sup>33</sup>L.A.C. MG30 D200 FA 5. M. Grace Tucker fonds. Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians News Bulletin, No. 9, May 1, 1947.

<sup>34</sup>L.A.C. MG30 D200 FA 10. M. Grace Tucker fonds. Japanese Canadian Manuscripts, 1942-1954, 1968. Letterhead of the Japanese Canadian Committee for Democracy, Toronto, dated November 30, 1946. Memoranda: Japanese Canadian Organizations. 1946-1950. National Japanese Canadian Citizen's Association.

<sup>35</sup>L.A.C. MG30 D200 FA 5. M. Grace Tucker fonds. Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians. News Bulletin No. 9, May 1, 1947. Japanese Canadian Manuscripts, 1942-1954, 1968. Cooperative Committee on Japanese Canadians: News Bulletins 1946-1948.

of non-Caucasian social workers, social work researchers must be cautioned not to assume that the history and nature of social work in Canada and the experience of Euro-Canadian social workers is one shared by social workers from marginalized and racialized groups. The historical narrative referenced in this paper points to the need for methodological and interpretive considerations that acknowledge not only the goals of social work, but also the experiences of social workers from marginalized groups and how these differed qualitatively from what is defined as normative social work practice.<sup>36</sup>

The comments made by individual social workers about the WWII treatment of Japanese-Canadians are reflective of their ideological perspectives and illustrative of how the cause/function debate in social work played out at this historical juncture. While Amy Leigh did the best she could, given the circumstances, it appears that the prevailing liberal ideology prevented her from a fundamental questioning of the actions of the Canadian government. Martha Moscrup's comment that strengthening loyalties would advance the Canadianization of purely national groups shows even less sensitivity toward the victims. On the political left, Gould, Livesay, Penner and McAllister more clearly revealed their socialist and communist perspectives through their critical analysis of the actions of the provincial and federal governments.

The discourse of difference is apparent in archival documents that reveal a liberal ideology among mainstream social workers. Casework skills were applied not only to help Japanese Canadians adjust to their circumstances but also to forestall reprisals through the provision of selected social welfare services. The emphasis on individualism in the application of casework and group work skills obscured the racially motivated relocation that was the reason why Japanese Canadians became the object for adjustment in the first place. Sadly, the hidden agenda in the group work method exposes the assumption that first and second generation Canadians were legitimate targets and that may have prevented social workers from fundamentally questioning the treatment afforded this particular group of Japanese Canadian citizens.

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<sup>36</sup>See John Stanfield II. (1994). Ethnic modeling in qualitative research. In Norman Denzin and Yvonna Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (175-188). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

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