

Civilian Internment in Canada: Histories and Legacies edited
by Rhonda Hinthér and Jim Mochoruk

Jonathan Chan

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sion of the importance of the socialization of the Black population, highlighting the challenges faced by the communities in the face of discrimination. Their experiences with their White neighbours led to the creation of Black churches and communities, slowing, and in some cases preventing any chance of assimilation. Teelucksingh points to this, as well as the need to reconnect with family and community as underlying causes for Black departures from Canada in colonization schemes and *en masse* to the United States by the 1860s. While noting patterns of settlement of immigrant groups in any society, and that the settlement of the Black communities mirrored this process, he erroneously lays the blame of “alienating themselves” (93) on this immigrant population after having acknowledged the racism and discrimination as well as forced separation in education and religion. He also acknowledges that in some spaces, there was some degree of assimilation despite the difficulties experienced. Chapter Six seems misplaced within the manuscript. This chapter takes a close

look at the development of the Black Protestant churches in Canada, their leadership and management, as well as providing an examination of Black theology. It does seem somewhat of an afterthought when this could have provided a backdrop to the historical progression of Black churches in Canada.

Teelucksingh has provided an impressive breadth of research in *Secular, Scarred and Sacred*, accessing material across multiple archives and collections. This in some ways works against the author however, as there is a clear need to better synthesize and narrate the information he has collected. For scholars of Black Canadian history, they will be interested in his use of resources examining Blackness and religiosity. They may however find it jarring to get past the constant use of distancing and homogenizing language in reference to the Black community.

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Civilian Internment in Canada

Histories and Legacies

Edited by Rhonda Hinthor and Jim Mochoruk

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The new collection of essays in *Civilian Internment in Canada: Histories and Legacies* adeptly bridges together multiple histories of civilian internment that have previously been considered according to the experiences of individual ethnic communities. The collection challenges predominant narratives on Ukrainian Cana-

dian and Japanese Canadian internment and their relationship to redress activism, and it expands research to communities previously “ignored or lumped into an erroneous category.” (10) Many authors in the collection argue that civilian liberties were trampled by the necessity of national security during and in between the World

Wars and they illuminate how national security became the justification for more sinister racialism. Furthermore, the authors remind us of the dangers of forgetting past human rights violations based on ethnicity, religion, or political beliefs. *Civilian Internment* is an impressive accomplishment in two regards: the scholarship presented and its expert arrangement. The essays are grouped into a series of themes highlighting episodes of internment and the broader context during which civil liberties were suspended, internment experiences for both the internees and their home communities, and personal and public memory of internment. Editors Rhonda Hinthor and Jim Mochoruk bring together diverse essays in content and methodology into a collection that explore the complexities of internment and historical memory in Canada.

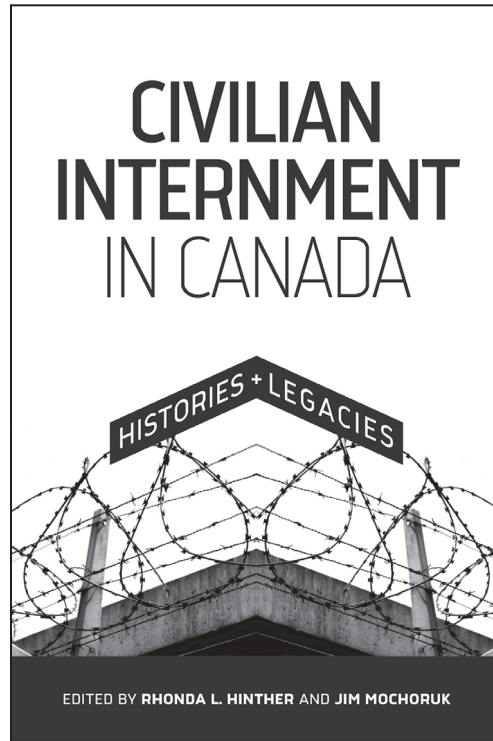
Dennis Edney's opening essay is a poignant reflection on how democratic governments have repeatedly allowed civil liberties to be sacrificed for national security. Drawing on his experiences as defence attorney for Omar Khadr, who at 15-years-old was held at Guantanamo Bay on terrorism charges, Edney stresses that Khadr's case should serve as a reminder that the rule of law should be a partner in safeguarding freedoms and not an accom-

plance in human rights abuses. Edney's essay shows that the neglect of civil liberties for the sake of national security is not merely a history of the World Wars, but one that continues to pervade society today.

Civilian Internment examines the experiences and impacts of internment for both the internees and their originating

communities, such as the Ukrainian, Serbian, Italian, and Japanese Canadian communities, as well as international internees "hosted" in Canada. In particular, the essays study the experiences of the Ukrainian Canadian organized left who were subject to relentless harassment from the government in their day-to-day activities. Marinel Mandres shows how the Serbian Canadian community was treated as both friendly and enemy aliens at the

same time; some members served for the First World War effort, while others were interned. Travis Tomchuk provides biographies of two Italian informants who worked against their communities, and he points to the dubious criteria the RCMP used to select informants. Some of the essays show how gender influenced internment experiences and attitudes towards activism. For example, Rhonda Hinthor shows how female activists in the organized left were treated with contempt by their male counterparts because women



did not express activism in “male forms,” and were therefore often overlooked by police and their informants.

The collection’s essays also challenge aspects of how Japanese Canadian internment has been interpreted by past scholarship. Aya Fujiwara argues that families working on Alberta’s beet farms had experiences similar to internment because their lives were dictated not only by the government but also by civilian businesses, with which they had strictly enforced contracts. On the other hand, Mikhail Bjorge challenges the “quiet compliance” narrative of the evacuation and shows how Japanese Canadian internees often used strikes and riots to improve their situation. In addition to the civilian internment of Canadians, the collection examines groups of international internees that Canada “hosted” during the Second World War. Paula Draper narrates the experiences of Jewish internees sent from Britain and Judith Kestler recounts the histories of German merchant seamen captured by Britain and sent to Canada.

After a thorough examination of internment experiences, *Civilian Internment* considers how events are remembered on a personal level, by the community, and through public commemoration. Grace Eiko Thomson offers an account of her family’s experience during the Japanese Canadian dispersion. Clemence Schultze recalls the internment experience of her father through a series of letters exchanged between her parents. Myron Momryk examines how Ukrainian Canadian internees maintained relationships via heavily censored letters, using the case study of Peter Prokopchak, a leader of the Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple Association. With regards to public memory, several authors

recount their experiences creating exhibitions about civil internment, and these displays both preserve stories and include narratives of groups previously left out of this history such as women, children, and their communities. Using a violin made by a Ukrainian Canadian internee as the focal point, Emily Cuggy and Kathleen Ogilvie describe the challenges of creating an exhibition at the Canadian Museum of History that disrupts nationalist and patriotic narratives while paying respect to feelings of national connection or pride that visitors hold. The collection closes with scholarship focusing on more recent redress movements. Art Miki discusses the processes to draw issei, first-generation Japanese immigrants, into the redress movement and the journey to obtain a proper redress settlement from the Canadian government.

Civilian Internment in Canada accomplishes its ambitious goal to bring together internment historiographies from the various ethnic communities who have experienced it. Editors Rhonda Hinthorpe and Jim Mochoruk have created a multi-faceted work that not only challenges traditional narratives of internment, but also examines the challenges and debates about how such stories should be presented to public audiences. Importantly, the collection reminds us to be cognizant that civilian internment is a human rights concern and is often the result of bypassing civilian liberties for the sake of national security. This is an important work that will remind a wide range of readers that human rights violations are not mere memories of a distant past, but they continue to shape our society today.

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