

Ethnic Community Building and the Local Grassroots:  
the Impact of Ukrainian and Japanese Ethnic Elites  
on the Opal/Maybridge Rural Settlement  
during the 1920s and 1930s

(エスニシティーの形成と民衆:  
1920-1930年代のオパール・メイブリッジ地方に  
おける日系・ウクライナ系移民を事例に)

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**SUMMARY IN JAPANESE:** 本論文は大戦間期カナダにおけるエスニック・コミュニティの形成をウクライナ系・日系カナダ人を事例に考察する。エスニック・コミュニティは自称「グループの代表者」であるエスニック・エリートがホスト社会の差別に対処しながら、自らのグループのメンバーを、新聞や講義やその他政治的活動を通じて動員することによって形成される。ウクライナ系・日系エリートはそれぞれの拠点であるウィニペグ・バンクーバーで政治的組織を形成し、遠隔地の民衆のエスニック意識の促進に努めた。アルバータ州の中東部、カナダ最大のウクライナ系コロニーの最西端に位置するオパール・メイブリッジ地方はウクライナ系・日系移民が第二次世界大戦以前に共存した希なフロンティアの農村であり、そこで厳しい生活を営む移民にとって、ウクライナ系・日系エリートからの政治的メッセージの重要性は薄かった。さらに、ウクライナ系・日系エリートの影響力は、主流であるイギリス系に比べると弱かった。しかし、多かれ少なかれ、オパール・メイブリッジ地方の日系・ウクライナ系民衆はその地域を越えたエスニックの「想像の共同体」に属し、当地の「モザイク」的特徴を育んだのである。

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## 1. Introduction

By the end of World War I, Canada had received large numbers of immigrants from various places in the world. Many of them were seen to threaten the country's British fabric and made Canadian leaders stress the need for assimilation during the interwar period. It was also during these years that the immigrants' own ethnic (and often religious) leaders tried to raise the group consciousness of their people with some success and at the same time secure their place in Canadian society. Although these elites were politically more vulnerable than Anglo-Canadian nation builders, their ideological activities played a significant part in the evolution of a Canadian identity around the notion of a "mosaic," that eventually became a basis of the multicultural identity of Canada.

The main goal of this article is to examine the impact of the interaction between mainstream goals and ethnicity on the character of Canadian identity between the wars, concentrating on two groups, the Ukrainians and the Japanese. It can be explored through two levels of ideological interaction. The first concerns the national picture, focusing on the competing agenda of Anglo-Canadian leaders with their assimilationist sentiments and of Ukrainian and Japanese elites in Winnipeg and Vancouver respectively. The second concerns the extent to which the grassroots were conscious of and affected by the propaganda of either set of elites, focusing specifically on the Opal/Maybridge district in rural Alberta where Ukrainian and Japanese families settled side by side. Despite the general popularity of the first dimension—the interaction between the mainstream and ethnic elites—as research topics among scholars both within and outside Canada, few studies have examined the second one—how ethnic elites, coping with a British predominance in every political and economic sphere, managed to influence and mobilize the grassroots and promote their ethnic consciousness. These two spheres of ideological activity constantly interacted with each other, to determine the role of Ukrainians and Japanese in Canadian society more generally as well as the impact of "Ukrainianness" and "Japaneseness" in the Opal/Maybridge settlement.

## 2. Background

### 2-1. Immigration and Ethnic Organizations

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Canadian government saw western expansion as crucial for Canada's growth as a nation. The physical development of the West crystallized in conjunction with the Conservatives' plan to cope with the depression that started in the mid-1870s. The completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean in 1885, facilitating the mass movement to the West by both migrants from central and eastern Canada and immigrants from overseas or the United States, was accompanied by a series of land policies such as homestead and reserves. In this context, some 170,000 Ukrainian peasants came to Canada from 1880 to 1914, and 68,000 individuals between 1925 and 1930.<sup>1</sup> Mass immigration dramatically changed the ethnic composition of the prairie provinces by 1931; only about fifty per cent of the population was British in origin and some twenty per cent east European, which in later years offered Ukrainians and others a sense of importance as nation builders alongside the British.<sup>2</sup> Asians settled mainly in British Columbia, and increasingly had to contend with the Canadian government's efforts to restrict their entry by imposing a head tax on Chinese and quotas on Japanese immigrants. The Gentleman's Agreement between Japan and Canada in 1908 helped keep the Japanese population under some three per cent in the province, where those of British origin still constituted seventy per cent of residents in 1931.<sup>3</sup> Japanese immigration peaked between 1905 and 1908, when approximately 11,500 individuals arrived and engaged primarily in farming, mining, and fishing; although movement thereafter was restricted by the quota system, another 12,000 individuals came in the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>4</sup>

These immigrants settled in many local colonies and established their own ethnic worlds. While there were initially only local institutions such as Ukrainian *narodni domy* (community halls) and Japanese *kenjinkai* (countrymen's club), the 1920s and 1930s saw a dramatic increase in both Ukrainian and Japanese organizations at the national or provincial level, under the impetus of ethnic leaders increasingly acting as the self-appointed representatives of their peoples. The emergence of ethnic elites and these larger organizations beyond the local scene is crucial on two grounds. First, it symbolized the psychological crystallization and politicization of ethnic communities as Canadian and/or international phenomena with definite causes and specific programs. Second, it reflected

sharpening internal divisions within each of the Ukrainian and Japanese groups, as ideological factions propagandized and expanded their activities to win converts. The major ideological division among the Ukrainians—between nationalists and communists—solidified in the 1920s, after the collapse of the Ukrainian National Republic and the establishment of the Soviet Union. The pro-communist Ukrainians worked to protect immigrants' working conditions, fought against the exploitation of labourers in Canada, and supported the Soviet Union; they established the first nation-wide Ukrainian organization, the Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Temple Association in 1918. The nationalists, on the other hand, were dedicated to Ukrainian independence in Europe and the retention of their Ukrainian consciousness and culture in Canada, although internal divisions produced three rival organizations: the Ukrainian Self-Reliance League (1927), formed by old immigrants and backers of the new Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church of Canada (1918); and the monarchist United Hetman Organization (1924) and republican right-wing Ukrainian National Federation (1932), both emerging from interwar émigré circles.<sup>5</sup> Both pro-communists and nationalists launched various kinds of educational and cultural activities to attract the grassroots' attention, absorbing many local *narodni domy* through which people received their political messages. For example, the ULFTA was particularly influential in the bloc settlement in Alberta, which had many more ULFTA halls than the other prairie provinces by 1940.<sup>6</sup>

Unlike the Ukrainians, whose conflicting attitudes towards the homeland created ideological divisions, the primary division among the Japanese occurred in the 1930s between the *issei* (first generation) and the *nisei* (second generation), as the number of Canadian born increased. While nation-wide Japanese organizations did not appear until the post-World War II period, some provincial organizations were established (by both *issei* and *nisei*) which regarded themselves as the voice of "all Japanese" and reflected the group's heavy concentration in British Columbia. Both *issei* and *nisei* were mainly concerned with racial prejudice against the Japanese in Canada. Their approach to Japan, however, was quite different. The *issei* respected their homeland, remained loyal to the Japanese emperor, and tried to maintain their own cultural values, introducing programs such as bilingual education for the Japanese around a reorganized Canadian Japanese Association in the 1930s. The *nisei*, whose homeland was nowhere but Canada, yet who were excluded from Canadian society because of their racial background, focused on demonstrating their loyalty to Canada, lobbying for the

franchise, and promoting good relations between Japanese and other Canadians.<sup>7</sup> British Columbian whites, for their part, became increasingly cautious of the *nisei*, who started to insist on Japanese political rights in Canada. The *nisei* were in fact more militant than the *issei*, launching their own activities to fight against discrimination in Canada and to detach themselves from Japanese traditions. They established the Japanese Canadian Citizens' League in 1936 and their own organ, the *New Canadian*, in 1939.<sup>8</sup>

## 2-2. Local Community

The Opal/Maybridge area, which lies in east-central Alberta approximately seventy-two kilometres northeast of Edmonton, developed as a small rural multiethnic settlement. The physical community-building process in the district followed the three general phases which frontier settlements took: settlement, the construction of institutions by both government and settlers, and development as a railway point.<sup>9</sup> Settlement in the district started in the late nineteenth century and peaked with the construction of the Northern Alberta Railway in 1913. While settled at first only by the British, the area received many more immigrants—Ukrainian, Russian, French, and Japanese—who changed the ethnic balance and laid the basis for a multiethnic community.<sup>10</sup> By the 1920s, there were about seven Japanese families in the area, mainly around the town of Opal. Ukrainians, who settled relatively far to the north and east of the railway siding, constituted approximately forty per cent of the total population at Opal in 1931.<sup>11</sup> This area marked the western edge of the Ukrainian bloc and Ukrainian newcomers seemed to want lands surrounded by their compatriots or relatives. With the construction of the railway and influx of settlers, another phase of community building began. In 1913 Opal became a school district and in 1916 acquired a post office near the railway siding, both of which determined geographical community boundaries in the area. Maybridge, located a few kilometres southeast of Opal along the Athabasca Landing Trail, was organized as a separate school district in 1915, but otherwise shared local institutions with Opal.

The Opal/Maybridge area was perhaps at its most prosperous during the 1920s and 1930s in its history, as the area became incorporated into the larger Canadian economic system. Yet it remained small compared to the larger towns and villages in the Ukrainian bloc, like Fort Saskatchewan, Vegreville, Vermilion, and Lamont, which developed as commercial centres with varied businesses and services, particularly after the wheat boom in the 1920s. Larger economic, educa-

tional, and medical facilities did not appear at Opal, which never acquired village status and remained in essence an unincorporated rural community. The construction of the Canadian Northern Railway (later Canadian National Railways) line through the northern part of the Ukrainian bloc between 1917 and 1920 created competing economic points in neighbouring places like Redwater and excluded Opal from the main east-west route. The Opal/Maybridge district thus remained relatively isolated.

While government institutions and services such as the schools, post office, and railway opened the area to mainstream Canadian influences, voluntary religious and secular organizations played an important role in building bridges to the larger ethnic communities to which the settlers belonged. A Presbyterian church was built in 1911 through the monetary donations and volunteer labour of local British settlers, and a Roman Catholic church in 1915 by Polish families in Opal.<sup>12</sup> A Russo-Greek Orthodox Church, constructed by Russians and Ukrainians in 1912, was located a few kilometres north of the railway in the Eastgate district; by 1916 twenty-two families attended, although the absence of a local priest during the early period meant that services were held irregularly.<sup>13</sup> Because of the large Ukrainian population in the area, their own churches also appeared; the closest Greek Catholic churches were in Egremont (1922) and Waugh (1904, with a new building in 1939).<sup>14</sup> Holy Trinity Ukrainian Greek Orthodox parish was organized in 1925, situated just southeast of Redwater, and another Ukrainian Orthodox church was built in Egremont in 1926.<sup>15</sup> Although most local Japanese families in Opal/Maybridge were affiliated with Shintoism or Buddhism, there was no Shinto shrine or Buddhist church in the area. Some local Japanese, in the interim, had become Christian. While the Japanese had no formal secular institutions at Opal/Maybridge, Ukrainians built a *narodnyi dim* in Opal in 1919, naming it after the Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko.<sup>16</sup> It often held lectures and social events such as readings and plays, and became a cultural and political centre for local Ukrainians.

### 3. Theoretical Framework and Methodology

Psychological, physical and social networks of people are usually referred to as "communities." This article regards an imaginative or psychological tie stemming from common experiences, political institutions, press, and activities as

crucial in creating a sense of “community,” relying on a conceptual framework proposed by Benedict Anderson. His study of nations as “imagined communities” sees factors such as language and the development of print capitalism as playing important roles in making a network of people imaginable and thus capable of creating a nation or “community” that can inspire “profoundly self-sacrificing love.”<sup>17</sup> “Community” as understood in this article is a dynamic solidarity of a limited number of people who share a common spirit, values, and experiences, which can happen anywhere at any time, assisted by factors such as political institutions and activities.

Besides the theory of “community,” this article relies on two major sources other than conventional archival materials. The first is ethnic newspapers that played a significant role in conveying political messages and propaganda from ethnic elites to the grassroots. The second is interviews with Ukrainian and Japanese individuals, mainly from the second generation, who lived in Opal/ Maybridge during the interwar period.<sup>18</sup> Oral history, particularly childhood memories, can be problematic because people tend to filter past events through their subsequent experiences, to romanticize, to let the fashions of the present influence what and how they remember. Yet oral history provided by the people who actually lived in the area offers valuable insights in terms of identity and sentiment. In addition, it is the only source that tells how they responded to the larger ethnic communities, when such a small rural community, which did not even have a community newspaper, is under investigation.

#### **4. The Impact of “Anglo-Conformity” on the Local Community**

During the 1920s and 1930s, as Anglo-Canadian leaders tried to decide the role and position of non-British immigrants in national life, the notion of Anglo-conformity continued to dominate their thinking. Although they saw non-British immigrants as necessary for national development, particularly in prairie agriculture and as unskilled labour, they hardly appreciated the culture and value systems brought from the old world.<sup>19</sup> The dilemma often caused controversy as to whether Canada should receive more immigrants from overseas. Many argued that additional immigrants were no longer necessary because of the large numbers who had already settled in Canada.<sup>20</sup> The urgency of assimilating the foreign population to British-Canadian norms and to educate “uncivilized” people is

apparent in the work of James T.M. Anderson, appointed director of education for immigrants in Saskatchewan in 1918, and Robert England, who in the 1920s received a War Memorial Scholarship to teach in central European settlements in Saskatchewan for three years.<sup>21</sup> These educators did not always show hostility towards the new immigrants, but often stereotyped them from an outsider's point of view. They never doubted that they had the right to enlighten or Canadianize immigrants for their own good, justifying their attitudes towards "foreigners" in the name of "civilization." Their focus was usually on eastern Europeans, whom they thought would make suitable Canadians if educated properly, but few argued that racially visible peoples such as Orientals were assimilable. Yet Charles H. Young and Helen R.Y. Reid, who investigated the Japanese, presented a positive image, pointing out their contributions to the economy and culture and their Canadianization. While they used Anglo-Canadian standards of comparison, and saw the Japanese as racially unassimilable, their observations of the Japanese were much more objective than those of other Anglo-Canadians, who seldom saw non-whites as potential Canadians.<sup>22</sup>

While the ideology of Anglo-conformity clearly dominated interwar attitudes, other concepts such as the melting pot and the mosaic also had supporters. Advocates of the melting pot thought that Canada could create a new cultural identity and new Canadian race by blending several "good" qualities of immigrants and by intermarriage between Anglo-Canadians and other people of European origin.<sup>23</sup> Howard Palmer argues, however, that the distinction between Anglo-conformity and the melting pot was not always clear, largely because in the Canadian context the concept of a melting pot was, like Anglo-conformity, often interpreted so as not to threaten the British value system, and rejected a genuine sharing of political, economic and social power.<sup>24</sup> For example, proponents adroitly selected who could participate in the creation of a "new" Canadian identity, drawing a line between new immigrants who kept their homeland traditions and culture, and the Canadian born who had more or less acquired British values. Historian A.R.M. Lower, for example, wrote in 1930 that "the newcomer has many difficulties that the native born does not have to face, and therefore for a greater or lesser period he is not as effective a citizen as is the native born."<sup>25</sup> J.T.M. Anderson also insisted that "it should never be expected that the older people will become 'true Canadians,' and no attempt should be made to do what is an impossibility."<sup>26</sup> However, "their offspring" who were born "under the Union Jack" could be Canadians.<sup>27</sup> Selectivity in what would contribute to the



creation of a new Canadian culture, and what would not, preserved the “good” elements from immigrants’ traditions. An article advocating the concept of a melting pot emphasized the merits:

The blending of many races in a new environment, it is true, is producing a type of people different from the races from which they have sprung, but our people come from old racial stocks and inherit alike both the good and the weak qualities and characteristics of those races. . . . Those who treasure the folklore, music, story and customs of their ancestors will have the greater wealth of culture.<sup>28</sup>

Obviously, this viewpoint differed from Anglo-conformity in that it admitted the cultural merits of peoples other than the British. The basic concept of excluding non-British groups from the country’s political, economic, and power structures, however, did not change.

The emergence of the idea of a “mosaic” among Anglo-Canadians, even though it represented a minority voice, was important for its rejection of the notion that every nation and state was, or should be, homogeneous. Advocated by individuals such as Kate A. Foster, John Murray Gibbon and Watson Kirkconnell, it differed from both Anglo-conformity and the melting pot in its celebration of diversity which subsequently formed the basis of the present policy of multiculturalism. The content of the mosaic, however, was similar to that of the melting pot in picking up colourful and non-threatening cultural elements from what immigrants brought to Canada, without damaging Anglo-Canadian dominance in the political, economic, and social spheres. In general, advocates of the mosaic emphasized the superiority of British law and the British parliamentary system, while they saw other Canadians as good sources of folk culture.<sup>29</sup> John Murray Gibbon, for example, concentrated on both the folk and high cultures of Europeans—including music, food, poetry, and artefacts—in his 1938 study, *Canadian Mosaic*. The same selectivity was also apparent in Governor-General Lord Tweedsmuir’s address to a Ukrainian gathering in 1936:

You have accepted the duties and loyalties as you have acquired the privileges of Canadian citizens, but I want you also to remember your old Ukrainian traditions—your beautiful handicrafts, your folk songs, and dances and your folk legends. I do not believe that any people can be strong unless

they remember and keep in touch with all their past. Your traditions are all valuable contributions towards our Canadian culture.<sup>30</sup>

The speech well reflects the Anglo-Canadian concept of a mosaic, suggesting that Ukrainians had to fulfil "duties and loyalties" to Canada, while they could maintain only their folk culture which did not affect power relations in a Canadian ethnic hierarchy.

Although Anglo-conformity, the melting pot, and the mosaic represent the principal trends in mainstream thinking during the interwar period, Canadian nation builders did not apply them equally to all ethnic or racial groups. They acknowledged the positive economic impact of European farmers, but hardly saw Asians as necessary once the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway was completed. While anti-Asian sentiment in the prairie provinces was far more moderate than in British Columbia, people generally minimized their contributions to Canada, and argued that Asians could never be assimilated because of their racial visibility.<sup>31</sup> The solution, seen in the policies of the head tax imposed on the Chinese and quotas imposed on the Japanese, was to restrict Oriental immigration. Even advocates of the melting pot and the mosaic tended to exclude any Oriental contribution from their new Canadian identity. One article, which proposed the creation of a "Canadian race," argued: "Of course, some of these stocks might be excluded. For example, discrimination might be made against the non-white races, or the whites of non-British or non-French origin whose ancestors had not contracted a legal number of marriages with the basic stocks of the country."<sup>32</sup> While outlining the potential contribution of twenty nationalities in Europe to the Canadian mosaic, John Murray Gibbon also excluded Asians.

The notion of British superiority seen in a mainstream Anglo-Canadian urban elite was sometimes transmitted to the Opal/Maybridge settlement. It played a significant role in the formation of the local elite in the area, although certain conditions—such as face-to-face contacts and the Anglo-Canadian weakness in numbers—alleviated the normal ethnic hierarchy. Despite the fact that Ukrainians dominated the population, and the local British families were not at all better off economically than the rest, even being remembered as "poor farmers," the British were also recognized as forming a "cultural" elite.<sup>33</sup> For most of the period under discussion, individuals of British origin occupied the influential positions of justice of the peace, postmaster, and registrar in the settlement.<sup>34</sup> They also had an advantage in language, which was perhaps the single most important skill.

John Hawrelko explains: "One of the things that we learned very early was that you were not always equal to the English man."<sup>35</sup> This comment suggests a social line existed between privileged British settlers and others, as both Ukrainian and Japanese remember that their interchange with individuals of British origin was not frequent.<sup>36</sup> In the process, Ukrainians and Japanese in Opal/Maybridge seem to have drawn together and developed bonds as marginal groups.

The major institution which acted as a vehicle of mainstream ideologies and propaganda was the public school. Undoubtedly, schools in the Opal/Maybridge area experienced problems such as irregular attendance because of weather and farm labour, and a lack of both equipment and skilled teachers that was common on the frontier.<sup>37</sup> Local parents, for example, complained officially on occasion about teachers' lack of skills and cancellation of classes.<sup>38</sup> But the school still maintained its role as the institution which connected Opal/Maybridge to the rest of Canada, transmitting Anglo-Canadian values—and students were encouraged to attend "as regularly as possible."<sup>39</sup> Also, teachers usually came from outside the settlement during most of the interwar period, because special efforts were made to recruit individuals of British background, in part, presumably, because a few British individuals comprised the local school board.<sup>40</sup> John Hawrelko recalls a British neighbour, the chairman of the school board, talking to his father about a Ukrainian applicant. "Andrew," he reportedly said, "I don't really think that we will hire this man, because he doesn't speak the King's English very well."<sup>41</sup> It was not until the late 1930s that people of origins other than British started to be hired at Opal and Maybridge schools. The provincial school curriculum also emphasized the use of English, English literature and the history of the British empire. Curriculum changes, which attempted to teach local students about more immediately relevant subjects, such as Canadian history and local issues, were not made until the late 1930s when William Aberhart introduced extensive province-wide reforms in education.<sup>42</sup>

Supported by a British-oriented curriculum and the local school board, ideologically motivated Anglo-Canadian teachers taught local students with what both Ukrainian and Japanese informants recall as a sense of superiority. The influence of teachers was quite strong in those days since they were educated people to whom settlers showed respect; they also played a significant role in establishing the idea of British superiority in the district. The memoirs of a Ukrainian woman, Annie Woywitka (née Andruski), refer to a teacher reminding his students that they were not Canadian and insisting that "for a foreigner to

become a Canadian, he had to be of the fifth generation."<sup>43</sup> Teasing ethnic children and making ill remarks about them by teachers also occurred in Opal/Maybridge classrooms, particularly in the 1920s and 1930s. An incident, which symbolizes the discrimination, is recalled by Josie Stepchuk:

One [British] boy, who was the teacher's son, would bother the children in the classroom . . . and on one occasion he even kicked a girl while he had his ice skates on. The children went to the teacher's shack to tell on the boy. The teacher didn't say much to the children, but the next day, the teacher and her husband came to the school. The man lectured the children on how they didn't know how to treat British people.<sup>44</sup>

Such blunt and overt prejudice decreased by the late 1930s while not completely disappearing. The major change seemed to come when local school trustees, whose number included a non-British settler, started to hire qualified teachers regardless of ethnic origin. With the appearance of local and "ethnic" teachers, the idea of respecting each other's backgrounds emerged as well. A local Polish teacher, for example, created a one-year Japanese history course on the grounds that Japanese children attended Opal school.<sup>45</sup> This indicates that the school in the district, whose primary role was to Canadianize children, did not always function as a mainstream assimilationist institution, and sometimes incorporated contrary local perspectives and reality into its activities. In addition, the local school board increasingly became involved in school reforms of its own to improve the educational environment. One of the projects begun by the trustees, and waited for with enthusiasm because the Opal school only had six books in its library, was to receive books from the University of Alberta every two weeks.<sup>46</sup> Opal school also expanded to two rooms in the 1930s, in response to local complaints that the existing building was too small.<sup>47</sup> The adjustment of Opal school to the multiethnic reality of the district and local demands suggests that the school gradually became transformed into a local community institution, reflecting parents' voices.

While the school system carried Anglo-Canadian messages to Opal/Maybridge, the Great Depression, which started with the crash of the stock market in the United States in 1929 and became a world-wide phenomenon in the 1930s, had a somewhat different impact on the district compared to other parts of Canada, especially industrialized urban centres, in terms of ethnic relations. The shortage

of jobs in Canadian cities encouraged nativist sentiments and strong prejudice against foreign workers, intensifying ethnic tensions in Canadian society. Immigrants' inability to speak English and lack of skills also became obstacles to finding employment.<sup>48</sup> The economic turmoil could be seen in the Opal/Maybridge area, and loomed large in informants' memories, but seldom caused tensions between Anglo-Canadians and others on the farm without competition over jobs. Rather, the Depression created a sense of common experience and struggle, especially in people's memories, challenging equally everyone in the district as well as other prairie farmers. The major hardship on the rural prairies was the dramatic drop in crop prices because of the introduction of high tariffs by many nations, including Canada, which decreased international trade.<sup>49</sup> Crops had no economic value, giving rise to the scenarios described by William Barabash: "When the transaction was finished, my father owed the transportation company more than what he was paid for his crop."<sup>50</sup> In some cases, farmers had to sell their cattle to make up the expense. Others lost their farming equipment. "In the fall of 1932," James Kimura wrote in his memoirs,

I remember so clear, dad was in the city to get an extension of payment till after harvest. While there they made him sign the seizure of equipment. By the time he came home the equipment was gone. A car load of men came into the yard. The sheriff, company man, and two others said they came after the machinery. I said, "You will have to wait till dad come home," so they showed me the release paper dad signed. I remember so clear they had taken all the equipment to Opal. The last equipment was the tractor and separator.<sup>51</sup>

While the drop in wheat price inflicted perhaps the most immediate economic damage on local farmers, the Social Credit government's policy on farm debt also affected small business owners in Opal, when farmers were unable to pay their bills. Allan Wachowich recalls: "The biggest problem was, of course, that my father ran the store and the Social Credit passed the moratorium. All the credits in the box were unpaid."<sup>52</sup> These problems, however, apparently did not cause conflict along ethnic lines, partly because people still grew enough food to feed their families. Memories of acute discomfort are absent, as people say: "I can't remember ever being hungry," or "We didn't have luxuries, but we did have our vegetables."<sup>53</sup> Recollections of the Depression in Opal/Maybridge do not reflect

the ethnic hostilities found in urban centres; rather, people's shared hardship contributed to the creation of collective social memory in the district, characterized by a sense of sameness and uniformity.

### **5. Ethnic Community Building and the Rural Grassroots**

At the same time as a large-scale economic crisis and attitudes on the part of the host society determined the environment within which crystallizing ethnic elites in major urban centres launched their political activities, the latter not only responded to mainstream ideologies and phenomena but also offered their own vision of how their people should relate to both Canada and the ethnic group. One purpose of ethnic elites was to gain political and socioeconomic recognition in Canadian society as fellow citizens. But because of their uncompetitiveness and the discrimination they faced, this goal could only be achieved by elevating, uniting, mobilizing, and leading their people in a form acceptable to mainstream Anglo-Canadian society.<sup>54</sup> It was only natural, then, that the messages of Ukrainian and Japanese activists—delivered through public lectures, a variety of organizations, and newspapers—often paralleled many mainstream sentiments. However, it should also be noted that Ukrainian and Japanese leaders did not always react to Anglo-conformity, the melting pot, and the mosaic in the same way as either the Anglo-Canadian mainstream or each other. Differences between these two ethnic groups, and internal divisions within them, determined which concept was most acceptable and expedient.

In general, Ukrainian and Japanese elites rejected the notion of Anglo-conformity, which did not allow them to maintain their ethnic identity and assumed Anglo-Canadian superiority in the economic, political, and social spheres. Nevertheless, in the interests of "progress," ethnic elites tried to adopt what they valued and needed from Anglo-Canadians, such as education, materialism, and ideals of democracy. What they meant by "progress" was the elimination of their backward image and second-class status connected with their ethnic origins in order to participate equally in all aspects of Canadian society—without, however, sacrificing their Ukrainian and Japanese identities. They thought that education and North American technology, which meant abolishing impractical beliefs, customs, and superstitions, would preserve their ethnic consciousness while modernizing where necessary for upward mobility. Both Ukrainian and Japanese

leaders called for the necessity of ethnic organizations which offered concrete programs and activities in order to promote their culture and ethnic identity, create a base of collective power, and come to understand political goals.<sup>55</sup> They urged their respective peoples to catch up with the "English" and conform to Anglo-Canadian norms, criticizing "unenlightened" behaviour and cultural practices as primary causes of prejudice and discrimination. An article in *Ukrainskyi holos*, for example, argued that Ukrainians never ran out of alcohol at home, yet their children went barefoot and wore dirty clothing.<sup>56</sup> In their press, Japanese leaders lamented that their people were "greedy," "slave-like," "insensitive," and "uneducated."<sup>57</sup> As a solution, both Ukrainian and Japanese leaders strongly recommended education, encouraging young people, particularly the second generation, to go to school, obtain higher education, and adopt the ideals of democracy and materialism which could offer them equal treatment in Canada.<sup>58</sup> In this process, ethnic leaders were understood by themselves and others to have a great duty as their people's "servants" to guide and encourage them, which strengthened their status in the Ukrainian and Japanese communities.<sup>59</sup>

The strong emphasis on the necessity of education seemed to reach settlers in the Opal/Maybridge area. Informants indicate that many parents believed that attending school was most important for their children's future in Canada, despite the fact that many Ukrainians and Japanese did not receive high school education. John Hawrelko explains: "For the Ukrainians, in particular, education was the only real hope. I think it was typical of original settlers, including the Japanese."<sup>60</sup> Some parents tried to send their children to high school, but they did not always succeed. "My mother wanted me to continue school," James Kimura wrote in his memoirs, "but I quit."<sup>61</sup> One obstacle was that the district itself did not have a high school, and it was a hardship to go to other surrounding centres, especially without transportation or the money to board. William Barabash and Lucy Takahashi note that instead of sending their children to nearby places, their parents decided to leave the area entirely and move to Edmonton so that their children could secure higher education and find better jobs.<sup>62</sup>

While Ukrainian and Japanese elites, in general, rejected the idea of Anglo-conformity, which always embraced the superiority of Anglo-Canadians, some of them liked the notion of a new "Canadian race" as it gave their groups a purpose and validity alongside the British and French population. Their concepts of a melting pot were similar to the Anglo-Canadian vision with respect to the creation of a new people, blending their many heritages, but the Japanese idea

differed from the other two in its inclusion of Asians. The Ukrainian elite, like Anglo-Canadian leaders, seems to have excluded Asians. For example, the New Canadian movement they supported, including New Canadians' Allegiance Day, intended to celebrate the contribution of "all" new Canadians but included only selected European nationalities.<sup>63</sup> In general, both Ukrainians and Japanese had political purposes other than the creation of a new Canadian identity in promoting the melting pot. While Anglo-Canadian leaders gave the term "melting pot" a meaning very close to "Anglo-conformity," ethnics' definition differed significantly in claiming their rights as people who had already become part of Canada, contributing to its material wealth and cultural richness, and who did not deserve the status of "foreigners." In other words, they sought political and socioeconomic integration, but they did not want to lose their ethnic identity to the extent that they could not be distinguished from Anglo-Canadians. The sense of belonging and of right to belong was expressed by the adoption of the term "new Canadians" on the part of many ethnic groups, and in the 1930s both Ukrainian nationalists and Japanese *nisei* separately published newspapers entitled *New Canadian*. The Ukrainian publication explained its philosophy as follows:

Should there be any barriers dividing the two classes of Canadians, our paper will do its most to remove them! Should any gap of racial prejudice and ignorance exist between the New Canadians and the British Canadians, then our publication will span it with a better understanding and cement it with the spirit of friendship. After all, we all are striving to be good and loyal citizens of Canada, all contributing to the making of a Canadian nation and enriching its culture with the gifts from the inherited treasuries of many a nation.<sup>64</sup>

Not surprisingly, the Japanese newspaper made a similar statement:

To the future greatness of Canada and the part of the Canadian born Japanese, in this future we pledge our sincere effort and endeavour . . . we ask that he share the vision that fires us, gird his loins with courage, and fight on till we are recognized as worthy citizens in the national life of the country of our birth—Canada.<sup>65</sup>

This idea seemed to be particularly consistent with the interwar *nisei* cause, offering a new meaning and identity to the Canadian-born generation which could



not completely identify with either Anglo-Canadians or their own ethnic/racial group. Because of their birth in Canada, the *nisei* basically wanted assimilation or integration into Canadian society, but they could not change their physical features or easily escape the Japanese community and control by the *issei*. At the same time, the mainstream society saw few differences between immigrant and Canadian-born generations of Japanese in terms of political and related rights. Young *nisei* leaders, for their part, were always searching for an identity different from the *issei* who, they thought, were creating a negative image of the Japanese community, adhering to their old traditions.

Conforming to Anglo-Canadian standards, or claiming collective rights as new Canadians, however, did not always represent or satisfy specific ethnic goals. By the 1920s, both Ukrainian and Japanese ethnic groups had already developed their own set of interests, which, unsurprisingly, often created internal divisions. Ukrainian nationalists, for example, insisted on maintaining their language and ethnic consciousness in Canada, rather than become simply "Canadians," in large part because of their people's statelessness and oppression in Europe. Similarly, Japanese *issei*, who still had strong roots in Japan, could not easily forget their homeland. Therefore, both they and Ukrainian nationalists searched for a way to fulfil two contradictory purposes, continued identification with the homeland and participation in Canadian society. In the world views of Ukrainian nationalists and Japanese *issei*, the idea of a mosaic as understood by Anglo-Canadians found favour, providing good grounds for them to take part in Canadian society without losing their ethnicity. The mosaic did not seem to attract Japanese *nisei*, who always suffered from unwanted racial visibility, or Ukrainian communists, who identified first with the international proletariat rather than nationality.

There was, however, always a difference between Anglo-Canadians and other ethnic groups in their definition of "mosaic." While the former were interested only in the cultural merits of the latter, ethnic elites interpreted the notion of a mosaic politically as well. For ethnic leaders, the mosaic meant the retention or even revival of ethnicity, including not only political rights in Canada but also loyalty to their respective homelands. Immigrants' traditional culture was thus regarded as a symbol of national distinction or pride and as a significant part of their Canadian identity. Ukrainian nationalists argued that every ethnic group which contributed to the Canadian mosaic deserved "recognition" and "respect" in Canada at the same time as it was also obliged to "know and enrich" its own culture.<sup>66</sup> They criticized the great majority of Ukrainians in Canada, whom they

claimed were ignorant of their heritage, and insisted that "genuine Ukrainians" were always conscious of their origins.<sup>67</sup> In 1937 *Ukrainskyi holos* quoted Lord Tweedsmuir's remark, "You will all be better Canadians for being also good Ukrainians," adding that "Canada does not need national traitors" who abandon their own countries.<sup>68</sup> Despite the fact that Tweedsmuir only mentioned innocuous cultural contributions, his speech was interpreted as giving Ukrainians permission, even telling them, to maintain in their daily lives all those elements the nationalist elite saw as an important part of their ethnic identity and distinctiveness.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, the Japanese *issei* saw the concept of a mosaic as useful in appealing to their people's ethnic pride without sparking anti-Japanese sentiments. Although Anglo-Canadian nation builders generally had negative attitudes towards Asian immigrants, Japanese leaders adroitly picked up Anglo-Canadian statements applauding Japanese foods, folk songs, and *kimono* (clothing).<sup>70</sup> They argued that "Canada as a new country needs old traditions," and thus "retaining and enriching Japanese culture would, after all, contribute to Canadian culture."<sup>71</sup> Unlike the Ukrainians, the Japanese did not need to fight for national survival, but the concept of a mosaic was valued by the *issei* as a stop to the decline of Japanese consciousness among the *nisei*, offering them an important role as a bridge between Japan and Canada. The *issei* saw the complete loss of the Japanese spirit, the so-called *Yamato-damashii*, as embarrassing.<sup>72</sup> Educational problems, which they labelled the "*nisei* issue," became an everyday topic among *issei* intellectuals. *Nisei* students were strongly encouraged to study in Japan, to acquire the Japanese way of thinking, and to practise traditional customs, because all three would also make them good Canadian citizens.<sup>73</sup>

At the same time as they supported the idea of a mosaic, Ukrainian nationalists and Japanese *issei* searched for other ways to demonstrate their achievements in Canada—a sign that they had already established roots in the new land. Although the mosaic offered them a chance to express their contributions as ethnic groups, it was obvious that the Anglo-Canadian interpretation, which only celebrated cultural diversity, was not enough, and they still faced problems in obtaining full recognition in Canadian political life. Ukrainian nationalists, for example, frustrated by the conviction that they were not competitive in elections, often called for unity around talented candidates with "higher education and intellect."<sup>74</sup> Japanese *issei*, on the other hand, always faced the fact that they had no voice at all, because the great majority of Japanese did not have the franchise. The strategy which these two ethnic elites adopted to cope with and hopefully change

the situation was to demonstrate how they were part of Canadian history, setting down roots and discharging their duties alongside the British and French in Canada. Their role in nation building, particularly their participation in the Great War and western economic development, they thought, demonstrated their contributions as concrete fact, not rhetoric.<sup>75</sup> Both Ukrainian nationalist and Japanese *issei* newspapers, for example, publicized the soldiers who fought in the Canadian army during World War I.<sup>76</sup> In the 1930s, they began to feature their respective founding stories, particularly in conjunction with major anniversaries of settlement. Ukrainian nationalists described the hard lives of homesteaders on the prairies as evidence of Ukrainians' contribution to Canadian nation building, while Japanese *issei* argued that Japanese people had founded fishing villages and farms in British Columbia and become an active part of the Vancouver economy.<sup>77</sup> In this way, participation in the common Canadian experience, coupled with roots in specific places such as the prairies and British Columbia, which emphasized the "Canadian" side of Ukrainian and Japanese identity, were publicized alongside their ethnicity.

Although political strategies based on ethnic contributions helped reduce negative images of ethnic groups, Japanese immigrants could not easily erase overwhelming anti-Japanese prejudices stemming from their colour. In other words, the racial issue always had to be treated independently. Given the fact that Japanese national authority via the consulate or the Anglo-Japanese alliance hardly secured their status in Canada or even moderated discrimination, the Japanese elite saw the notion which regarded the white race as superior as a major problem, and had to deal with racism alongside ethnicity.<sup>78</sup> Because race was basically different from nationality or ethnicity, Japanese spokespersons needed to find other answers to the notion of "the Yellow Peril." The desire to be white produced a number of racial myths. Evoking scholarly works, some argued that the Japanese race, originating in the northern part of Japan, was considered to be "the white race."<sup>79</sup> Others held that "the Canadian environment changed people's appearance" and thus "physical assimilation" was not impossible.<sup>80</sup> Yet others insisted that "no intellectual differences can be identified between the white and the yellow."<sup>81</sup> Japanese Canadians also found their racial roots in Canada, arguing that "the native population" had descended from Asian immigrants.<sup>82</sup>

The political messages of Ukrainian and Japanese elites reached Opal/Maybridge through ethnic newspapers, sporadic lectures, and a few organizational initiatives. It must also be stressed that there were great differences in the extent to

which Ukrainians and Japanese received such messages. Settled on the western edge of the largest Ukrainian colony in Canada, Ukrainians in the Opal/Maybridge area were easily targeted by a distant urban elite. The Japanese families in the district, in contrast, were remote from the great majority of their fellow Japanese. Geographical remoteness from the ethnic heartland along the West Coast and small numbers became serious barriers to including the Opal/Maybridge Japanese in the larger Japanese-Canadian community. Although physical distance and their small population made local Japanese families less important psychologically, the *issei* elite in Vancouver still considered Japanese elsewhere as “their” people, and in 1922 sent a delegate to find them; he identified the Kimuras, Nakamuras, and Watanabes in Edmonton, and the Yamauchis in Opal.<sup>83</sup> *Tairiku Nippo* of 1 March 1923 also insisted that all Japanese should participate in Japanese cooperatives so that they could increase their collective power. In addition, while Ukrainians possessed their own reading club in Opal, the Japanese settlers had no formal ethnic activities. In this sense, local Ukrainians constituted a natural part of a coalescing national Ukrainian community, particularly in the elite’s mind, but the Japanese families were only marginal to their British Columbia-focused community, and often excluded from collective Japanese-Canadian memory.<sup>84</sup>

Despite the difference between the Ukrainian and Japanese situations, connections between their respective urban centres and Opal/Maybridge helped incorporate local residents into larger ethnic communities. While Ukrainian and Japanese settlers in the district developed a sense of community based on geographical place and personal or formal interaction, ethnicity, as a political phenomenon, sometimes drew lines between them. All this does not mean, however, that Ukrainians and Japanese in Opal/Maybridge shared either the political interests or the tensions of their respective elites. Because they were not always actively part of the larger ethnic community, or aware of the complications of both international and domestic political situations, divisions imported from the outside could be simplified or blurred. The Ukrainian reading hall, for example, was pro-communist during the 1920s, and perhaps boasted the only distinctive political label in the Opal/Maybridge settlement. It invited speakers once or twice a year, showed movies, and staged dramas, which usually carried the typical communist propaganda that “working people of the world” should unite.<sup>85</sup> Therefore, every Ukrainian activity was sometimes regarded as somewhat suspicious, and the Ukrainian hall at Opal was once inspected by the police.<sup>86</sup> Local Ukrainians,

however, did not always grasp or accept the ideological propaganda and goals of communist leaders. As John Hawrelko remembers, people rather understood the message to be “we are all equal,” and hardly identified themselves as communists, regarding hall activities such as poetry readings, plays, and concerts as education or entertainment. Josie Stepchuk also suggests that her father, who was involved in the Ukrainian hall from the outset, was never an active communist.<sup>87</sup> Still, the local Ukrainian settlers who erected the Opal hall were labelled communists by other settlers.<sup>88</sup> Although the Japanese in Opal/Maybridge did not have organized political activities, it does not mean that they were totally isolated from Japanese political issues or influences. For example, in 1938 *Tairiku Nippo* called for the registration of all Japanese in Canada so that the newspaper could identify individuals not only in British Columbia but also in other provinces, and send them messages. During the 1930s, Opal/Maybridge was visited by members of the Japanese intelligentsia, including the president of the Agricultural Association of Japan, Jiro Kumagaya, who came to inspect Japanese farming life in Canada.<sup>89</sup> In another case, the Japanese in Opal/Maybridge collected donations for the great Kanto earthquake of 1923, to help Japanese victims whom they never saw.<sup>90</sup> These activities were quite limited, but they both acknowledged the Japanese presence in the area and encouraged a Japanese ethnic consciousness, as people recall “a sense of community” that existed among the settlers.

Events in contemporary Ukraine and Japan were always of great interest to Ukrainian and Japanese elites in Canada, particularly Ukrainian nationalists who strove for the liberation of Ukrainian lands from Soviet and Polish control especially, and Japanese *issei* who still regarded themselves as part of the Japanese empire. The attitudes of these two circles towards their respective homelands played an important role both in providing them with great causes and points of identification and in determining the mental boundaries of “community” through obligation and loyalty to countries other than Canada. The resulting politicized Ukrainian and Japanese identities existed alongside a multitude of informal and personal ties which people maintained with their homelands. Ukrainian nationalist and *issei* attitudes also drew a line between themselves and Ukrainian communists and the *nisei*. On the grounds that Ukrainian Canadians had an “obligation” to help their homeland, Ukrainian nationalists rejected ideological “diversity among Ukrainian Canadians” as undesirable. And because “blood origins” and not interests determined this obligation, individuals concerned only with their lives in the new land or the class struggle like the communists were regarded as outsiders to

the ethnic community.<sup>91</sup> A strong attachment to their homeland also gave Japanese *issei* a different perspective from other ethnic groups and the *nisei*, building on a common feeling that Japanese emigrants were part of a world-wide Japanese empire. The *issei* elite reminded their people of their ties with and duties to Japan. As Japan became increasingly imperialistic in the late 1930s, expanding its territories and international role, a "Japanese spirit" and "loyalty to the Japanese emperor" were considered significant elements of belonging to the Japanese community.<sup>92</sup>

Ukrainian and Japanese settlers in the Opal/Maybridge area did not exhibit the same politicized vision of their homelands as their respective elites, yet they maintained personal contacts and roots in their places of origin. There was also a difference between Ukrainian and Japanese people in the district in terms of a sense of belonging to Canada or the old country. Because of their marginal political, social and economic role in Canada, and the relatively short distance between Canada and Japan, Japan was still a part of life for the Japanese immigrants. According to Florence Shikaze, the Japanese in Opal/Maybridge called Japan the "mother country. They were very loyal and they felt much part of it."<sup>93</sup> Many thought that their stay in Canada was temporary. "Papa [her husband] and I had promised Father we would return in three years' time to take up our family duties," Mary Kiyoshi Kiyooka stated in her memoirs, "but things just didn't work out. I know Papa felt badly about that broken promise even though he had long ago made up his mind to become a Canadian."<sup>94</sup> A sojourner mentality could also be seen in the common practice of leaving one's children or sometimes wives in Japan. For example, Harry and Mary Kiyooka and Toyomatsu and Kuni Kimura left their oldest children in the care of their parents in Japan, because they were busy working and moving around in Canada; the Kimuras' child never joined his parents, while the Kiyookas' daughter came to Canada after World War II.<sup>95</sup> Ukrainian settlers seem to have developed local or "Canadian" roots more quickly than the Japanese. Because they usually immigrated as family units or groups of villagers, and because few had any intention of going back to the homeland, Ukrainians' identification with their ancestral villages was not as sharp or sustained.<sup>96</sup> Looking back, William Barabash says that contacts with their former countrymen soon died out; a high illiteracy rate making letter writing difficult, and the absence of common topics or interests, were the reasons. Barabash also claims that between the wars local Ukrainian settlers tended not to identify themselves with a specific nationality.<sup>97</sup>

The Ukrainians and Japanese at Opal/Maybridge also inhabited distinctive religious worlds that simultaneously created local divisions along ethnic lines and absorbed the settlers into “imagined” spaces linking them with co-religionists elsewhere. Religious boundaries often overlapped with ethnicity, as the local Roman Catholic church was erected by Polish families, but not exclusively identified with it, and the Presbyterian church had a predominantly British congregation. Although neither Ukrainians nor Japanese had their own religious institutions in the immediate area, which reduced contacts with their religious leadership and weakened cohesiveness to a certain extent, the settlers by and large retained their religious identifications. For example, even those Japanese families such as the Nishimotos and Yamauchis who converted to Roman Catholicism for practical reasons still adhered to their traditional Shinto beliefs and did not change inside. Her parents, Lucy Takahashi contends, “were more or less forced into it [Catholicism] because they were in a Roman Catholic settlement. It was for necessity, because they were restricted from a lot of things.”<sup>98</sup> Florence Shikaze describes how her mother turned to the comfort of Shintoism when her older brother had a serious accident:

He was kicked in the back of his head by a little colt, a little horse, so he went into a coma. And, of course, there was no doctor as well, so they looked after him as best as they could. Mr. Watanabe said he must have been kicked in the motor part of his head, because he could not walk and could not move really. So what my mother had done was—I don’t know if you have heard of it, but in Japan they said that when you hit rock bottom, women cut their hair—she washed the hair and then wrapped it up and sent it to the shrine in Japan. When my father came home, she said, “Would you send this to Japan?” She had her head covered with what we used to call a dust cap. He said “Oh.” He couldn’t say anything. He sent it. Did you hear what else they do? In the darkest part of the night, you went to the well, took three buckets of water, and poured it over any part of your head. She did that for twenty-one days. And she said that there were nights when it was so dark, all of a sudden you just bumped against it [the well]. And there was a night when the moon was so bright, in the full moon, she was afraid that somebody would see her. She fulfilled her belief and before long my brother did get up and walk with no ill effects or brain damage.<sup>99</sup>

Florence Shikaze's story shows that her mother not only maintained her faith and her strong ties with the shrine in Japan, but also was slightly self-conscious about rituals outsiders might not understand or appreciate. The Kimura family also kept personal connections with Buddhist churches in both British Columbia and Japan.<sup>100</sup> For example, they obtained a *homyo* (Buddhist name for a dead person which usually changes after death), still kept in the shrine on the Kimura farm in 1999, from the Buddhist church in British Columbia whenever family members passed away.<sup>101</sup> They also made donations to the Steveston church "in spite of their hardship" on the farm.<sup>102</sup> Because Buddhism and Shintoism did not put as much emphasis on worshipping communally as Christianity did, their adherents in Opal/Maybridge did not necessarily need a sacred place in the area. As Frank Kimura recalls, "they had church services at home. They had shrines at home."<sup>103</sup>

Similarly, Ukrainians tended to identify with their own faiths, Ukrainian Catholicism and Greek Orthodoxy. While some Ukrainians attended Roman Catholic services, many others, whether Catholic or Orthodox, preferred going to Eastern-rite churches in surrounding centres, such as the Russian Orthodox church at Eastgate and the Ukrainian Catholic churches at Waugh and Egremont. Language, the official split between Roman and Greek Catholics, and differences in rite or form seem to have kept many Ukrainians away from the Roman Catholic church. For example, John Hawrelko recalls his father going to the Russian Orthodox church even though he was Ukrainian Catholic. Josie Stepchuk also remembers a Roman Catholic priest who preached that "you were better than others, ours were better than yours." Ukrainian dissatisfaction with the Roman Catholic church, on the grounds that it only did "spiritual teaching" and did not "help" people, is corroborated by the instance in which the local Roman Catholic priest refused to bury a Japanese boy in his cemetery. In addition, the money which they had to pay for priests tended to determine who were welcomed to church services.<sup>104</sup> The Ukrainian settlers in the district, without their own churches, tended to seek out surrounding Eastern-rite churches over unfamiliar Roman Catholic practices, developing a sense of ethno-religious community and circles of friends beyond the local settlement.



## 6. Conclusion

Mainstream political concerns and ideologies often determined the role Ukrainian and Japanese groups were destined to play in Canadian society. While the dominance of Anglo-conformity throughout the interwar period forced the leadership of both groups to reconcile themselves to the status of second-class citizens, they simultaneously adopted a variety of strategies to promote or to achieve their own goals. But whether the objective was full participation in Canadian society and/or involvement in homeland politics, they needed to unite their respective peoples around shared duties and loyalties. As the Opal/Maybridge example shows, the campaign to involve the grassroots in their agenda met with limited success. Neither Ukrainian nor Japanese settlers necessarily shared the political interests or biases of their leaders, and geographical remoteness often prevented the messages of an urban elite from reaching rural settlements. As a result, tensions and hostility based on ethnicity, or ethnicity augmented by religion, were relatively moderate in Opal/Maybridge. Nevertheless, to a greater or lesser degree, local Ukrainians and Japanese were incorporated into larger ethnic communities and mental spaces that existed outside the narrow world in which they lived.

## Notes

- 1 For the first immigration, see, for example, John C. Lehr, "Peopling the Prairies with Ukrainians," in *Canada's Ukrainians: Negotiating an Identity*, ed. Lubomyr Luciuk and Stella Hryniuk (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 30-51. For the second immigration, see, for example, Myron Gulka-Tiechko, "Ukrainian Immigration to Canada under the Railways Agreement, 1925-30," *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 16, nos. 1-2 (1991): 29-60.
- 2 William Darcovich and Paul Yuzyk, eds., *A Statistical Compendium on the Ukrainians in Canada, 1891-1976* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1980), Series 20.1-11.
- 3 *Ibid.*, Series 20.24-27.
- 4 Masako Iino, *Nikkei Kanadajin No Rekishi* (Tokyo: University of Tokyo Press, 1997), 6.
- 5 See, for example, Ol'ha Woycenko, "Community Organizations," in *A Heritage in Transition: Essays in the History of Ukrainians in Canada*, ed. Manoly R. Lupul (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 173-194; Michael H. Marunchak, *The Ukrainian Canadians: A History*, 2nd ed. (Winnipeg and Ottawa: Ukrainian Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1982), 395-410; Oleh Gerus, "Consolidating the Community: The Ukrainian Self-Reliance League," in Luciuk and Hryniuk, *Canada's Ukrainians*, 157-186; and Orest T. Martynowych, "Introduction," in *Prophets and Proletarians: Documents on the History of the Rise and Decline of Ukrainian Communism in*

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- Canada, ed. and trans. John Kolasky (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1990), xv-xxviii.
- 6 On the expansion of the ULFTA halls, see, for example, Ukrainian Pioneers' Association of Alberta, *Ukrainians in Alberta* (Edmonton: Ukrainian Pioneers' Association of Alberta, 1975), 149-180; and Robitnycho-farmerske vydavnyche tovarystvo, *Almanakh TURFDim, 1918-1929* (Winnipeg: Robitnycho-farmerske vydavnyche tovarystvo, 1930).
- 7 Charles H. Young and Helen R.Y. Reid, *The Japanese Canadians* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1938), 110.
- 8 Ken Adachi, *The Enemy That Never Was* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1976), 166.
- 9 John W. Bennett and Seena B. Kohl, *Settling the Canadian-American West, 1890-1915: Pioneer Adaptation and Community Building* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 115.
- 10 By 1936, the Opal/Maybridge district had 3318 people. The ethnic composition in 1936 was as follows: Ukrainian, 1451, 44%; British, 595, 18%; French, 521, 16%; Poles, 511, 15%; Japanese, 27, 8%. Dominion Bureau of Statistics, *Quinquennial Census of the Prairie Provinces* (Ottawa, 1936).
- 11 Martynowych, "Ukrainian Block Settlement in East Central Alberta," in *Continuity and Change: The Cultural Life of Alberta's First Ukrainians*, ed. Manoly R. Lupul (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies Press, 1988), 53.
- 12 Audrey Hrynychuk and Jean Klufas, eds., *Memories: Redwater and District* (Calgary: D.W. Friesen and Sons Ltd., 1972), 52.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 5; also see Russian Orthodox Church History Book Committee, *Patriarchal Parishes of the Russian Orthodox Church in Canada, 998-1988* (Edmonton: Friesen Printers, 1988), 55-56.
- 14 Episkopskyi ordynariat, *Propamiatna knyha z nahody zolotoho iuvileiu poselennia ukrainskoho narodu v Kanadi, 1891-1941* (Yorkton: Episkopskyi ordynariat, 1941), 254, 257.
- 15 Konsystoriia Ukrainiskoi hreko-pravoslavnoi tserkvy v Kanadi, *Zbirnyk materialiv z nahody iuvileinoho roku: 50-littia Ukrainiskoi hreko-pravoslavnoi tserkvy v Kanadi, 1918-1968* (Winnipeg: Konsystoriia Ukrainiskoi hreko-pravoslavnoi tserkvy v Kanadi, 1968), 74-76, 107-108.
- 16 Josie Stepchuk, "The Social Development of the Immigrant Settlement of Opal, Alberta, 1900-1939," unpublished memoirs, n.d., personal collection of Josie Stepchuk.
- 17 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, rev. ed. (London and New York: Verso, 1983), 5-7, 141.
- 18 Six Japanese and five Ukrainians were selected for interviews. The use of real names is approved by the interviewees in academic articles published by the author only. The recorded tapes, transcripts, and signed release and consent forms are kept by the author, as required by the Ethnic Review Committee of the Faculty of Arts, University of Alberta.
- 19 Howard Palmer, "Reluctant Hosts: Anglo-Canadian Views of Multiculturalism in the Twentieth Century," in *Readings in Canadian History*, ed. Douglas Francis and Donald B. Smith (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, 1990), 196. For a discussion of immigration from an economic perspective during the interwar period, see Charlotte Whitton, "The Immigration Problem

- for Canada," *Queen's Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (May 1924): 388-420; Duncan McArthur, "What is The Immigration Problem?" *Queen's Quarterly* 35, no. 2 (Autumn 1928): 603-613; Robert England, "British Immigration," *Queen's Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (Winter 1929): 131-144; and Robert England, "Continental Migration," *Queen's Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (Autumn 1929): 719-728.
- 20 See, for example, Editorial, *Saturday Night*, 30 June 1928, 4; Editorial, *Saturday Night*, 19 January 1929, 4; A.S. Whiteley, "Can We Afford Immigration?" *Saturday Night*, 18 May 1929, 37, 44; A.D. Fraser, "A Quota System for Canada?" *Saturday Night*, 14 June 1930, 31, 38-39; E.C. Drury, "Our Population Problem—Two: Why We Are Not Getting More People," *Maclean's*, 15 September 1928, 3-5, 67; A.R.M. Lower, "Can Canada Do Without the Immigrant?" *Maclean's*, 1 June 1930, 3-4, 70-71; and "Immigration: Artificial Stimulation and Alternative," *Canadian Forum*, August 1924, 328-329.
- 21 See James T. M. Anderson, *The Education of the New Canadian: A Treatise on Canada's Greatest Educational Problem* (Toronto & London: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1918); Robert England, *The Central European Immigrant in Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1929); and Robert England, *The Colonization of Western Canada: A Study of Contemporary Land Settlement, 1896-1934* (London: P.S. King & Son, 1936).
- 22 See, for example, Young and Reid, *The Japanese Canadians*. For anti-Asian sentiment in British Columbia, see W. Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Toward Orientals in British Columbia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978); Patricia E. Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants, 1858-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1979); and Ann Sunahara, *The Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War* (Toronto: Lorimer, 1981).
- 23 For melting-pot ideas prevailing during the interwar period, see, for example, Sherwood W. Fox, "How the Melting-Pot Melts," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 32, ser. 3 (May 1938): 1; E.L. Chicanot, "Moulding A Nation," *Dalhousie Review* 9 (1929): 237; and Frederic Griffin, "Made to Measure," *Toronto Star Weekly*, 24 November 1928, 1.
- 24 Palmer, "Reluctant Hosts," 153.
- 25 Lower, "Can Canada Do Without Immigrants?" 70.
- 26 Anderson, *Education of the New Canadian*, 9.
- 27 *Ibid.*, 55.
- 28 "The New Canadian Festival: Some Facts and Fallacies Concerning the Growth of Population in Canada," *Country Guide*, 1 August 1928, 14, 17.
- 29 See, for example, John M. Gibbon, "European Seeds in the Canadian Garden," *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada* 17, sec. 2 (May 1923): 119-129; John M. Gibbon, *Canadian Mosaic; The Making of a Northern Nation* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 1938); Kate A. Foster, *Our Canadian Mosaic* (Toronto: Dominion Council of the YWCA, 1926); George Elmore Reaman, "Canadianization of the Foreign-Born," *Canadian Magazine of Politics, Science, and Literature*, 54 (October 1922): 445-450; and L. Hamilton, "Foreigners in the Canadian West," *Dalhousie Review* 17 (1938): 448-460.
- 30 Address by Lord Tweedsmuir, 21 September, 1936, cited in Gibbon, *Canadian Mosaic*, 307.

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- 31 For Albertan attitudes towards the Japanese, see Howard Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 86-87.
- 32 Burton Hurd, "Is There A Canadian Race?" *Queen's Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (Autumn 1928): 620.
- 33 Edward Wachowich, interview by author, tape recording, Edmonton, AB, 9 November 1998.
- 34 While exhaustive lists of justices of the peace, postmasters, and registrars do not exist in the Provincial Archives of Alberta, only British names can be identified. See Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton, Inquest Files from the General Administration Office of the Department of the Attorney General, 1910-1928, 167.172/1186 (Opal); Justice of the Peace Files From the Department of the Attorney General, 1894-1926, 69.210/1299, 2325, 2657 (Opal); and Justice of the Peace Files Index, 1897-1927, Department of the Attorney General, 31 July 1969, 69.210.
- 35 John Hawrelko, interview by author, tape recording, Redwater, AB, 9 July 1998.
- 36 *Ibid.*
- 37 Studies of prairie communities indicate that schools on the frontier did not always function as their metropolitan counterparts in Canada, being affected by differences in physical, economic, and social conditions. See, for example, Paul Voisey, *Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 176; and C.A. Dawson, *Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces: The Social Side of the Settlement Process* (Toronto: Macmillan Company of Canada Ltd., 1940), 182-186.
- 38 Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton, "B.B. Etting to Chief Inspector of Schools," 18 November 1937, Opal School District, 79.334/911.
- 39 Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton, "Chief Inspector of Schools to B.B. Etting," 30 November 1937, Opal School District, 79.334/911.
- 40 The Opal and Maybridge schools seem to have been slower in hiring teachers of non-Anglo-Canadian origin than other centres in the Ukrainian bloc. For example, at least six Slavic teachers were appointed in Smoky Lake (approximately 80% Ukrainian) between 1919 and 1925, while Opal and Maybridge schools had none. Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton, Teachers' Index, 1919-1925, 75.502. Although the list of members of the Opal/Maybridge school boards is incomplete, only British names could be identified; Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton, Opal School District, Opal, 84.37/2154.
- 41 Hawrelko, interview.
- 42 Voisey, *Vulcan*, 180.
- 43 Annie Woywitka, "Bridging Two Worlds," unpublished memoirs, November 1985, personal collection of Josie Stepchuk, 54.
- 44 Josie Stepchuk, interview by author, tape recording, Edmonton, AB, 21 August 1998.
- 45 Edward Wachowich, interview.
- 46 Stepchuk, interview.
- 47 Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton, "A. Schofield to Inspector of Schools," 31 May 1933, Opal School District, 84.37/2154.
- 48 Palmer, "Reluctant Hosts," 154-155.
- 49 R. Douglas Francis, Richard Tones, and Donald A. Smith, *Destinies: Canadian History Since Confederation*, 3rd. ed. (Toronto: Harcourt Brace & Company Canada, 1996), 261.

- 50 William Barabash, interview by author, tape recording, Edmonton, AB, 24 October 1998.
- 51 James Kimura, "Life and Times of a Young Japanese Immigrant," unpublished memoirs, n.d., personal collection of Chizuko Kimura.
- 52 Allan Wachowich, interview by author, tape recording, Edmonton, AB, 16 November 1998.
- 53 Barabash, interview; and Florence Shikaze, interview by author, Edmonton, AB, 15 June 1998.
- 54 Karl Peter, "The Myth of Multiculturalism and Other Political Fables," in *Ethnicity, Power, and Politics in Canada*, ed. Jorgen Dahlie and Tissa Fernando (Toronto: Methuen Publications, 1981), 56-67.
- 55 See, for example, *Tairiku Nippo*, 20 October 1929, 5; 21 June 1930, 4; 1 January 1932, 1; 29 September 1934, 2; 31 October 1934, 3; 1 November 1934, 8; 26 October 1935, 4; 1 October 1936, 3; and *Ukrainskyi holos*, 11 August 1926, 32; 28 January 1931, 4; 15 January 1936, 5.
- 56 *Ukrainskyi holos*, 20 June 1928, 25.
- 57 *Tairiku Nippo*, 9 July 1920, 1; 9 September 1920, 1; 10 September 1920, 1; 8 April 1923, 1; 9 April 1923, 1.
- 58 See, for example, *ibid.*, 25 November 1919, 1; 24 April 1920, 1; 17 December 1921, 3; and *Ukrainskyi holos*, 22 July 1919, 30; 22 April 1925, 16; 11 August 1926, 32.
- 59 *Ukrainskyi holos*, 3 February 1926, 5.
- 60 Hawrelko, interview.
- 61 James Kimura, memoirs.
- 62 Barabash, interview; and Lucy Takahashi, interview by author, tape recording, Edmonton, AB, 6 July 1998. See also Shikaze and Allan Wachowich interviews.
- 63 *New Canadian* (Toronto edition, Ukrainian), 1 June 1938, 1.
- 64 *Ibid.*, 2 December 1937, 1.
- 65 *New Canadian* (Vancouver edition, Japanese), 15 August 1939, 1.
- 66 *Ukrainskyi holos*, 12 February 1936, 7.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 13 June 1928, 24.
- 68 *Ibid.*, 21 July 1937, 29; see also 5 February 1936, 6.
- 69 Frances Swyripa, *Wedded to the Cause: Ukrainian-Canadian Women and Ethnic Identity, 1891-1991* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 159.
- 70 *Tairiku Nippo*, 24 November 1919, 5; 12 April 1920, 3; 24 June 1925, 3.
- 71 *Ibid.*, 1 October 1925, 5.
- 72 See, for example, *ibid.*, 11 February 1931, 1; 4 March 1935, 3; 25 January 1938, 3.
- 73 *Ibid.*, 13 February 1928, 1; 2 March 1935, 3; 4 March 1935, 5.
- 74 *Ukrainskyi holos*, 30 September 1925, 39.
- 75 For the various strategies taken by ethnic elites to assert their rights in Canada, particularly after World War II, see, for example, Frances Swyripa, "Ethnic Loyalists and Selkirk Settlers: Ukrainians Rewrite Canadian History" (paper presented at the Canadian Ethnic Studies Association Biennial Conference, Winnipeg, Manitoba, October 1991); and Franca Iacovetta, "Manly Militants, Cohesive Communities, and Defiant Domestics: Writing about Immigrants in Canadian Historical Scholarship," *Labour/Le Travail* 36 (Fall 1995): 217-252.
- 76 *Tairiku Nippo*, 20 March 1920, 1; 10 December 1931, 1; and *Ukrainskyi holos*, 13 August 1919,

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- 33; 10 May 1922, 19; 5 November 1941, 45.
- 77 For example, *Tairiku Nippo* started to publish the pioneer story on Steveston on 10 July 1931. See also, *ibid.*, 1 January 1936, 1, 4; and *Ukrainskyi holos*, 19 February 1919, 8; 3 August 1927, 31; 30 July 1930, 5; 12 December 1931, 52.
- 78 For anti-Japanese sentiment, see, for example, Ward, *White Canada Forever*, 91-117.
- 79 See, for example, *Tairiku Nippo*, 15 August 1921, 4; 3 January 1929, 1; 29 October 1929, 3.
- 80 *Ibid.*, 10 June 1920, 3.
- 81 *Ibid.*, 14 August 1928, 4; 14 February, 1931, 5.
- 82 *Ibid.*, 11 March 1923, 4; 10 November, 1923, 5.
- 83 *Ibid.*, 16 February 1922, 1.
- 84 Yoko Urata Nakahara, who investigated ethnic identity among pre-World War II Japanese immigrants (including those who settled in Alberta after the war) and their descendants based on questionnaires in Edmonton in 1988, suggests that ethnic identity generally declined. She points out the difference between highly and less educated people. While highly educated people had less access to traditional Japanese culture such as food, art, language, and martial arts than those with less education, they were more ethnically conscious. See her "Ethnic Identity Among Japanese Canadians in Edmonton: The Case of Pre-World War II Immigrants and Their Descendants" (Ph.D. diss. University of Alberta, 1991).
- 85 Hawrelko, interview.
- 86 Stepchuk, interview.
- 87 *Ibid.*
- 88 Hawrelko, interview.
- 89 Chizuko Kimura, interview by author, tape recording, Redwater, AB, 25 June 1998. While his visit was recorded only in a picture taken on Kimura's farm, an agricultural technician by the name of Jiro Kumagaya can be identified in Iwate prefecture in northern Japan; he was also a member of the board of directors in prefectural agricultural cooperation (see Nihon tosho senta, *Shouwa Jinmei Jiten*, Vol. 2, Tokyo: Nihon tosho senta, 1987, Iwate 7).
- 90 Takahashi, interview.
- 91 *Ukrainskyi holos*, 19 January 1921, 3; 10 August 1921, 32; 27 June 1928, 26.
- 92 *Tairiku Nippo*, 1 January 1935, 1; 1 January 1936, 1; 1 January 1938, 1.
- 93 Shikaze, interview.
- 94 Roy Kiyooka, *Mother talk: Life Stories of Mary Kiyoshi Kiyooka*, ed. Daphne Marlatt (Edmonton: NeWest Press, 1997), 114.
- 95 *Ibid.*, 141; and Chizuko Kimura, interview.
- 96 Hawrelko, interview.
- 97 Barabash, interview.
- 98 Takahashi, interview.
- 99 Shikaze, interview.
- 100 Chizuko Kimura, interview.
- 101 *Homyo*, Fairview Buddhist Church, 6 October, 1939, personal collection of Chizuko Kimura.
- 102 Chizuko Kimura, interview.

103 Frank Kimura, interview by author, tape recording, Edmonton, AB, 11 July 1998.

104 Stepchuk, interview.

