Labour History Project Working People: A History of Labour in BC



**Buck Suzuki**

Film Summary: The subject of this film is Tatsuro "Buck" Suzuki,  a fisher and early environmentalist on the Fraser River in British Columbia who also played a key role in the return of interned Japanese Canadians to the coast after the Second World War.

**Curriculum Application:**

Social Studies 10 and Social Justice 12

**The Essential Question:**

How did the Japanese Canadian community face increasing racism prior to the war and what challenges did they face reintegrating back into the workforce and society?

What historical factors

**Summary of the Lesson Activities**

1. Focus questions for the vignette provides a short lesson option. ( 15 Minutes )
2. Small group activity/discussion to better understand the racism faced by Japanese Canadians and the impact it had on their lives.
3. Activities to better understand the role that unions and labour organization provide for activism in social justice and environmental issues.
4. Individuals or small groups of students work on creating newspaper style articles on the issues presented in the vignette and supporting print materials.

Learning Standards

1. To be able to describe the consequences of social injustice based on race and ethnicity.

(**cause and consequence**)

1. To analyze the role of individual citizens in promoting social justice in Canada. (**significance**)
2. To understand how Japanese internment impacted lives during and after the Second World War. (**continuity and change**)
3. To be aware of how individuals can provide leadership as agent for change in such matters as environmental policy. (**significance**)

**Materials and Resources Provided**

* [“Buck Suzuki” Episode 3-](https://cdnapisec.kaltura.com/index.php/extwidget/preview/partner_id/1454421/uiconf_id/26824312/entry_id/0_t4tx0xej/embed/dynamic)

[Working People – A History of](https://cdnapisec.kaltura.com/index.php/extwidget/preview/partner_id/1454421/uiconf_id/26824312/entry_id/0_t4tx0xej/embed/dynamic)

[Labour in British Columbia](https://cdnapisec.kaltura.com/index.php/extwidget/preview/partner_id/1454421/uiconf_id/26824312/entry_id/0_t4tx0xej/embed/dynamic)

Lesson Activity 1: Backgrounder and discussion questions.

**Additional Suggested Materials**

[The Fishermen’s Strike of 1900](https://teachbcdb.bctf.ca/list?q=Fishermen&p=1&ps=25&topic_facet=Labour+History)

[Nikkei National Museum & cultural centre](http://centre.nikkeiplace.org/)

[JapaneseCanadianHistory.net](http://www.japanesecanadianhistory.net/home_page.htm)

<http://www.bucksuzuki.org/about-us/t-buck-suzuki/>

<http://gulfofgeorgiacannery.org/learn/resources>

On the Line: A History of the British Columbia Labour Movement pages 117-119

**Lesson Activities**

1. Students may need a brief discussion as to why the lesson plan and student materials refer to “fishers” and the vignette yet to fishermen.
2. Students can read the brief biography (Lesson Activity 1) prior to the viewing of the vignette, Buck Suzuki and then proceed to the discussion questions contained in the lesson activity individually or in small groups.
3. The teacher may wish to create an extended activity around the Essential Question of the Vignette exercise. Question 5 of the Lesson Activity provides 4 possible inquiries into this investigation.

**Vignette Questions**

1. What kept Japanese Canadian fishers from joining a union in the early years of the 20th century?
2. What event in 1941 ended Buck Suzuki’s attempts to harmonize the races in a United Fishermen’s Union?
3. How did the Canadian Government treat Japanese Canadians when war broke out with Japan?
4. How did Buck Suzuki demonstrate his Canadian patriotism during the Second World War?
5. In order to create a full union including Japanese Canadian fishers what pledge did they have to take with the UFU?
6. How can Buck Suzuki be considered an environmentalist for his work in the Salmon industry?

Credit: Teaching Activities and Lesson Plan developed by Scott Parker