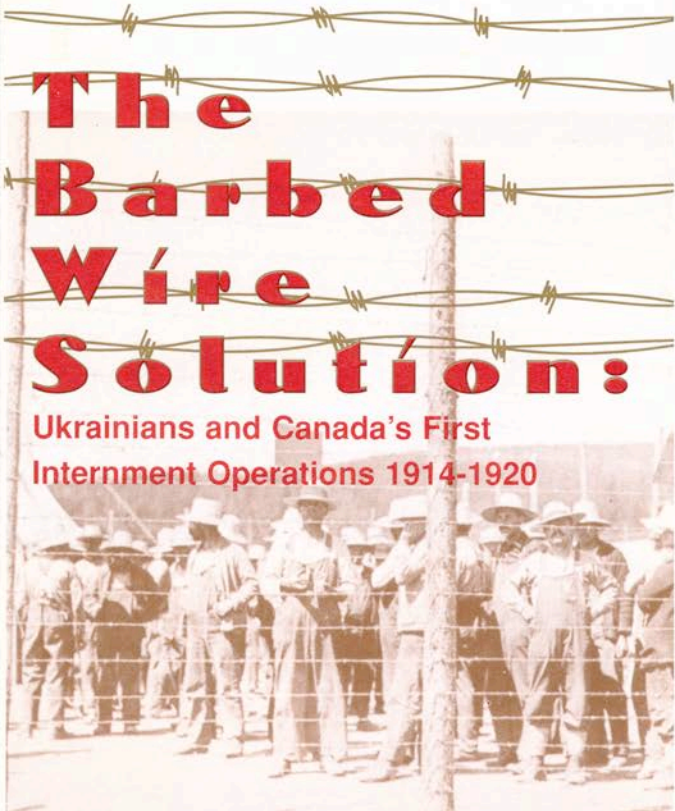


Ukrainian Canadian
Research and
Documentation Centre

presents

a travelling exhibition



The Barbed Wire Solution:

Ukrainians and Canada's First
Internment Operations 1914-1920

In recognition of the
80th anniversary of
the First Internment
Operations in Canada

During World War I and after, between 1914 - 1920, the Canadian Government used the War Measures Act for the first time to intern over 8,000 men, women and children, the majority of whom were Ukrainians. This act also declared over 80,000 persons to be "enemy aliens", forcing them to register with authorities, carry identification documents, report to police on a regular basis and refrain from travel outside the country.



After this episode, Canada used the War

Measures Act twice again. During World War II it interned thousands of Japanese, German, Italian and other Canadians. In 1970 citizens of Quebec were also arrested and jailed.



In the late 1800's as the frontier moved farther west, Ukrainians responded to Canada's promise of free land with many eager immigrants becoming pioneers of the prairies.

As the type of immigrant changed from the farming to that of the migratory worker, the depression of 1913 hit hard. Job scarcity encouraged an anti-foreigner and "hire Canadian" sentiment.



When war broke out, Canada, as part of the British Empire, fought alongside Britain against Austria and Germany. Those Ukrai-



nians from Austria who had not yet become British subjects, were in a vulnerable position. In August 1914, Canada passed its first War Measures Act restricting movement, forcing registration and thereby cutting important civil liberties. Failure to comply made these persons liable to arrest and incarceration in one of 24 internment camps set up across Canada.

Most of the prisoners were civilians, who without military training found it difficult to deal with incarceration. Conditions varied in different camps but generally they were harsh with overcrowding, isolation, fatigue and desperation being the norm.

Cold winters, long working hours of hard manual labour, inadequate shelter, clothing and food were hard both on the prisoners and their guards.



By 1916 Canada again experienced a shortage of labour, and the Federal Government decided that the men in internment camps could be used to do the work. Many of the internees were paroled to individuals and corporations.

...I realized all the time what marvels you can do if you had the labour... We had plenty of labour. Anybody who asked us to do anything, we provided the slaves.

*Colonel Anderson-Whyte
(former camp guard)*



Thousands of people were imprisoned in all areas of Canada for-
ging a permanent part of the history of these municipalities and their provinces. For decades, this regrettable part of Canadian history, buried in obscure records has received only a cursory mention in history books and courses.



As the war neared to an end, the Wartime Elections Act disenfranchised most naturalized Ukrainian Canadians until 1919 when the act lapsed.

The Internment camps at Vernon and Kapuskasing were still operating sixteen months after the declaration of peace. They were not closed until 1920.



For Ukrainian immigrants who had been caught in Canada's first internment operations, the immediate loss was emotional, financial, medical and social. It took generations for the Ukrainian community to get over the feeling of deep injustice, humiliation, denial and fear.



The exhibit is a great idea, not merely as a reminder of those who suffered the hardships and humiliations of internment, but particularly because of a message it gives all Canadians now...this historical reminder has to go out to all Canadians, not to invite them to condemn dead ancestors, but to ask themselves ... whether they too pass cruel judgements on strangers they do not know.

Desmond Morton
Director
McGill Institute for
the Study of Canada

...What was done to us was wrong. And, because no one bothered to remember or learn about the wrong that was done to us, it was done to others again, and yet again. Maybe there's an even greater wrong in that...

Mary Manko Haskett (a former internee)

The following individuals and institutions have shared their collections to make this exhibition possible:

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Army Museum
Canadian Forces Base Petawawa
Military Museum
Canadian Museum of Civilization
Canadian National Exhibition Archives
City of Beauport
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Department of National Defence
Fort Henry

Glenbow Museum Archives
Greater Vernon Museum and Archives
Jasper Yellowhead Museum and Archives

Kelowna Museum

Kordan, B.S.
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National Library of Canada
Oseredok Ukrainian Cultural
& Educational Centre

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