

Voice of Canadian Serbs

ENGLISH SECTION

SERBS IN CANADA

History of Serbs in Canada is Fascinating Story; Another Installment of Book Appears Below Today.

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Olga B. Markovich

All time not only the history of the first Serbs in a new land but their contribution to their adopted country as well. Miss Markovich needs no introduction to "Voice" readers, as all are familiar with the many interesting articles of hers printed earlier on these pages. Miss Markovich is the daughter of Mrs. Milica Markovich and the late Bozidar Markovich, of Scarborough. She earned her bachelor's degree majoring in journalism from Ryerson Polytechnical Institute and is an editor for a large publishing house in Toronto.

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"I would estimate that 150 persons attended this first Serbian Day in Canada. For those days and circumstances that was a large number. The spiritual and material success was also great. Especially when the donations for Serbian orphans are considered — there were individuals who gave donations of \$10 which was a large sum in those days.

"The festivities were opened by Peter Micevich and the main speaker was Father Kosomora, the parish priest in Hamilton. He was quite an orator and his speech, after so many years, still remains in my memory. It was a pleasure to both listen and watch him. His every word was accompanied by hand gestures and applause. This was the liveliest Serbian activity and the greatest moral success of that era. We even danced kolo and sang our patriotic songs . . ."

PIONEER JOURNALISM

Newspapers in their own language are very important to immigrants. In the beginning their knowledge of English is minimal and these papers, especially in the early days of immigration, serve as their only news source of current events in both their new homeland and old country. The editorial columns of the newspaper very often serve as a forum for new national, cultural and social ideas, which lead to the formation of new organizations and activities.

The paper also reports on the activities of fellow Serbs in other colonies and this keeps one abreast of various social activities and meetings.

The first Serbian language newspaper in Canada, published in Cyrillic type, was the *Kanadski Glasnik-Canadian Herald*. The newspaper, a weekly, was published in Welland, Ontario. The first issue is dated July 15, 1916.

One of the initiators and backers of the newspaper was Gajo Vasiljevich. He contacted Michun M. Pavicevich, member of the Montenegrin Parliament, who

was in the United States at this time. Pavicevich agreed to come to Welland to be the editor of this Serbian newspaper.

At the same time arrangements were made with Spiro Hutlarevich to be the publisher and owner of the *Canadian Herald*.

Dr. Louis Blake Duff, who was publisher of the *Welland Telegraph* at the time rented the *Telegraph's* printing presses to the *Canadian Herald*.

The newspaper, which served as the organ of the Srpska Narodna Odbrana, had a circulation of 1,750 and was distributed throughout the Niagara Peninsula, Hamilton, Toronto and upper New York State.

The SNO, which ceased its activities after the end of the war in 1920, outlived *Kanadski Glasnik*. The newspaper ceased publication after two years because of financial difficulties.

The paper's publisher, Spiro Hutlarevich, was appointed representative of the Serbian War Mission in Winnipeg where he recruited many volunteers for the Salonica Front. He later became an official of the Consulate of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in Montreal. Hutlarevich and his family eventually moved to the United States. He died in California a few years ago.

The paper's editor, Michun Pavicevich, returned to New York at the beginning of 1918. There, he and several distinguished Montenegrins, formed the Montenegrin Committee for National Union.

TRIALS AND TRIBULATIONS OF THE IMMIGRANTS

Many thousands of immigrants were living in Canada when World War I was declared. Many of them had emigrated from the Central Power countries — Austria-Hungary, Germany, Turkey and Bulgaria — which were now at war with Canada. Hence, Canadians looked at all foreigners with scorn and regarded them as enemies. Many persons who were accused of being against the Allies were imprisoned in military detention.

At the beginning of the war all foreigners residing in Canada had to register and show proof that they came from an allied country. All of those who were born in countries which now comprised the Central Powers had to renew their registration and get their so-called parole cards signed every 30 days.

One of the duties of the Srpska Narodna Odbrana in Canada was to shield its members, especially those born on Austro-Hungarian territory, from harassment. These Serbs, although born in Austro-Hungary, hated the Central Powers and regarded the Allies and Canada as their saviours.

Thus, this compulsory registration greatly insulted their spiritual, national and patriotic feelings. They were especially incensed at this registration process which classified the mass "enemy aliens" along with Germans, Hungarians and Austrians who they regarded as their enemies and oppressors.

The Srpska Narodna Odbrana on March 25, 1917, sent a delegation—Michun Pavicevich and Mile Korce—to the Serbian minister in Washington — Ljubomir Mihailovich. They asked him to appeal to the Canadian government, on behalf of the SNO members who were born in Austria-Hungary, so that these SNO members in good standing would be exempt from registering every month.

On registering many foreigners stated that they were from an allied country even if this was not the case. Therefore, stricter measures were undertaken. A new order, issued in May, 1918, stated that any foreigner who does not have a passport of the country of his origin, should obtain documents within 14 days from his country's official representative proving his place of origin. Failure to do so carried a fine of \$50 or jail until the necessary documents were obtained.

The Serbs didn't pay much attention to this order because of poor knowledge of the English language and the fact that there was no Serbian consul or representative in Canada at this time. They also took it for granted that since they were Serbs and allies they didn't need any documentary proof. So, the majority did not even attempt to get the necessary papers.

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SERBIAN-CANADIAN CLUB OF TORONTO, ONTARIO

Serbian Radio Program "SUMADIA" - heard every Sunday Morning over CHIN FM 9-10 a.m.

SYNOPSIS OF THE TWELVE SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Program No. 1
Nov. 25, 1973 - Tape 1A

History of the Serbian immigration to Canada. Part one. First immigrants, in Serbian colonies in Vancouver B.C. Klondike gold rush days. Serbian colonies in: Regina, Shumacher, S. S. Porcupine, Timmins, Montreal, Niagara Falls. History of the noted Serbian organizations such as "Serbian National Shield Society in Canada" and the "Serbian National Federation", - first Serbian newspaper in Canada. Serbian volunteers from Canada in the First World War.

Program No. 2
Dec. 23, 1973 - Tape 1B

Cont. of the History of the Serbian immigration to Canada and Serbian colonies in: Windsor, Toronto, Hamilton, - short history of other noted Serbian organizations in Canada such as: Serbian Brother's Help (SBP), Serbian National League, Serbian Youth Club "Stazilovo", Serbian Choral Societies in Canada. District 3 of the Serbian Singing Federation; Serbian soccer club "White Eagles".

Program No. 3
Jan. 20, 1974 - Tape 2A

Back to the "old country". Beginning of the history on the South Slavs and particularly the Serbs. Arrival on the Balkan peninsula in 6th century. Social organizations of the old Serbian state. Paganism as the faith of all slavic people at that time. First Serbian State and first rulers: "Visheslav and Vlastimir", the Missionaries St. Cyril and St. Methodius. Christianization of Serbs, Serbian rulers: Mutimir, Caslav Klonimirovich. Samuel Macedonian leader, other Serbian state "Zeta" and first rulers: Vlastimir (Kosara), Mihajlo, Bodin.

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