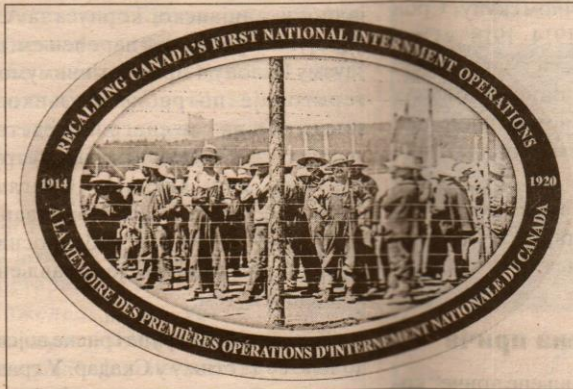


Project "CTO" memorial plaques remember interned immigrants



Friday August 22, 2014 marks the centennial of a tragic period in Canadian history. On that day 100 years ago the War Measures Act was implemented commencing Canada's first national internment operations from 1914 to 1920 when thousands of immigrants from many ethnic backgrounds who arrived on these shores with Austro-Hungarian or Ottoman passports were labeled 'enemy aliens', rounded up and interned in camps in Canada's hinterland deprived of their rights and separated from their families.

The majority of internees were Ukrainian, but among them were hundreds of Serbs confined in camps at Kapuskasing, Fernie (British Columbia), Banff (Alberta), Niagara Falls and elsewhere. The Canadian First World War Internment Recognition Fund is funding research on this period, including research on details per-

taining to Serbian internees. Thanks to the CFWWIRF and the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association 100 plaques will be unveiled at 11 a.m. on August 22 in 59 cities and towns across Canada to mark the memory of these internees. The plaque depicts internment prisoners behind a wire fence at the Castle Mountain Internment Camp in Banff, Alberta.

The Serbian community will be unveiling two plaques. In Windsor the Serbian Heritage Museum is hosting the plaque unveiling, an exhibit and a symposium about the internment. In Niagara Falls the St. George and St. Archangel Michael Church will have a similar program, both beginning at 11 a.m. on August 22. It is interesting to note that the Niagara plaque hits close to home as Nikola Yerich, the great-uncle of George Yerich Sr. and the first Yerich arrival to Canada, was among the registered Serbian internees.

Project CTO (Project STO) is not intended to take away from the valour of Canadians who gave their lives in World War I. It is intended to affirm the importance of human rights, to remember those unjustly treated and to learn about the past. Canada has come a long way since 1914.

Draga Dragasevic