

An Open Letter from Concerned Canadians

15 September 2014

Mr. Stuart Murray, CEO
Canadian Museum for Human Rights
Victory Building
269 Main Street
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 1B3

Re: Recalling Canada's First National Internment Operations, 1914 to 1920

Dear Mr. Murray,

We, the undersigned, are profoundly dismayed by the lack of a meaningful portrayal of Canada's first national internment operations of 1914 to 1920 at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights (CMHR).

We will be asking our affected communities to refrain from partaking in the opening ceremonies or any subsequent activities at the CMHR until this matter is resolved fairly.

While we welcome the development of a national museum outside the capital region, it is regrettable that the CMHR's exhibits were developed without sufficient attention being given to key Canadian stories. An enlarged photograph and one short film clip buried in a documentary film does not, in our view, constitute an acceptable treatment of Canada's first national internment operations.

If your goal is to have a truly inclusive national museum then you must reflect the nation's multicultural history. The insignificant attention given to First World War era internment operations represents a slight to all of the internees, enemy aliens and their descendants, including Canadians of Ukrainian, Hungarian, Croatian, German, Austrian, Polish, Slovak, Czech, Serbian, Slovene, Bulgarian, and other origins.

Quite recently, the Honourable Jason Kenney, commenting on the 100th anniversary of the War Measures Act and the start of Canada's first national internment operations observed: "the Government of Canada is committed to recognizing and educating Canadians about the experiences of those pioneers who overcame such heavy burdens. Their experiences mark an unfortunate period in our nation's history. We must ensure that they are never forgotten." We fail to understand why the CMHR has largely ignored a profoundly Canadian story in a national museum dedicated to human rights.

We, the undersigned, represent many of the affected communities and internee descendants, as represented by organizations like the Ukrainian Canadian Foundation of Taras Shevchenko; Ukrainian Canadian Congress; Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association; Canadian-Croatian Chamber of Commerce; German-Canadian Congress; Canadian Polish Congress; and Internee Descendants among others.

We are making our views publicly known, and in advance of the CMHR's opening, so there is no confusion: the CMHR does not enjoy the endorsement or support of our communities. Furthermore, we do not believe that the limited consultations held with stakeholder communities about the contents of this museum were given serious attention.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Hladyshevsky'.

Andrew Hladyshevsky
President of the Ukrainian Canadian Foundation of Taras Shevchenko

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'O. Grod'.

Olya Grod
Ukrainian Canadian Congress

Roman W. Zakaluzny

Roman Zakaluzny
Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association



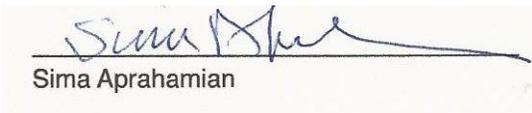
Borys Sydoruk
Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Foundation



John Marion, President
Canadian-Croatian Chamber of Commerce

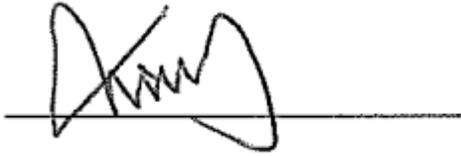


Ludwik Klimkowski
Canadian Polish Congress



Sima Aprahamian

Armenian Community



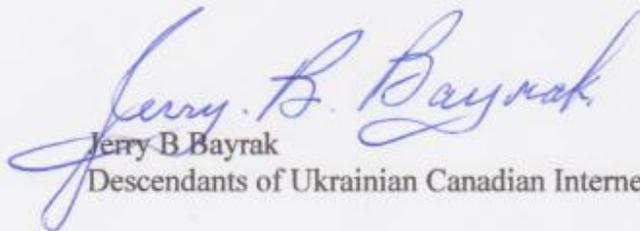
Suleyman Guven
Kurdish/ Alevi Community



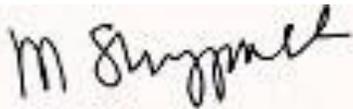
Antony Bergmeier
German-Canadian Congress
National President



Diane Dragasevich
Serbian National Shield Society of Canada



Jerry B. Bayrak
Descendants of Ukrainian Canadian Internee Victims Association (DUCIVA)



Marsha Skrypuch
Internee Descendant



Christopher Adam
Editor-in-chief, Kanadai Magyar Hirlap (Canadian Hungarian Journal)