

# Reinserting Radicalism: Canada's First National Internment Operations, the Ukrainian Left, and the Politics of Redress

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The traditional narrative surrounding Ukrainian Canadian internment during World War I, especially when written by Ukrainian Canadian scholars and community activists, has been strongly influenced by the products of the redress campaign initiated by the organized community in the 1980s.<sup>1</sup> This redress-inspired literature has been of critical value in establishing a necessary historiographical foundation. In particular, this work highlights the statistics of internment, the experiences of internees in the camps, state-sanctioned xenophobia, and the imposition of racial hierarchies in Canada. However, while this body of work has done much to establish the story of internment, rally public support, and attract government attention, it has tended to omit elements of this history.<sup>2</sup> This is somewhat problematic since this scholarship has become the main vessel through which the public has come to understand the internment operations and, more generally, the historicity of the Ukrainian experience in Canada. This leads to a related issue, namely the development of a Ukrainian collective identity centered on this particular interpretation of the past. As others have noted, the attempt to popularize history can produce monolithic and triumphalist

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<sup>1</sup> For a summary of the redress inspired literature, and its concomitant arguments, see Lubomyr Luciuk, ed., *Righting an Injustice: The Debate Over Redress for Canada's First National Internment Operations* (Toronto: The Justinian Press, 1994).

<sup>2</sup> Framing the issue in this way has, in many ways, been a strategic decision. Community activists and redress advocates have made calculated decisions about how to package information in order to achieve certain social, political, and economic goals for the community. For an overview of Canadian redress campaigns see Ian Radforth, "Ethnic Minorities and Wartime Injustices: Redress Campaigns and Historical Narratives in Late Twentieth Century Canada," in Nicole Neatby and Peter Hodgins, eds., *Settling and Unsettling Memories: Essays in Canadian Public History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

narratives that do not properly account for alternative – and even perhaps more rigorous – accounts of the past.<sup>3</sup>

But even the critics of the redress campaign have not yielded convincing counter-narratives. Some have rightfully pointed out that the Ukrainians who were interned were not innocent farmers snatched from their homesteads. Most were, in fact, young, single, and often unnaturalized labourers. Others have also pointed out that, in contrast to the idea that the Ukrainian community was irreparably fractured by internment, most 'respectable' community elite cared very little about the plight of internees both before, and after, the internment operations. In fact, most businessmen, clerics, and wealthy farmers saw the internees as an embarrassment, and viewed them with contempt.<sup>4</sup> Yet this is where the deconstruction of received wisdom ends, exposing the largely depoliticized nature of even those narratives that attempt to compliment or modify the redress literature.

Within the body of literature produced by Ukrainian Canadian scholars and community activists, Helen Potrobenko's *No Streets of Gold: A Social History of Ukrainians in Alberta* remains an exception, although it was written well before the era of redress.<sup>5</sup> Potrobenko argued that the internment operations disproportionately – if not exclusively – targeted working class Ukrainians. Members of the Ukrainian left also produced several texts that drew connections between their membership and

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<sup>3</sup> Orest Martynowych, "Re: internment of Ukrainian Canadians," reproduced in Lubomyr Luciuk, ed., *Righting an Injustice: The Debate Over Redress for Canada's First National Internment Operations* (Toronto: The Justinian Press, 1994), 65 and Frances Swyripa, "The Politics of Redress: The Contemporary Ukrainian-Canadian Campaign," in Franca Iacovetta et al., eds., *Enemies Within: Italian and Other Internees in Canada and Abroad* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 355-378.

<sup>4</sup> Peter Melnycky, "Badly Treated in Every Way: The Internment of Ukrainians in Quebec during the First World War," in Myroslaw Diakowsky, ed., *The Ukrainian Experience in Quebec* (Toronto: Basilian Press, 1994), reprinted and cited from [www.infoukes.com](http://www.infoukes.com).

<sup>5</sup> Helen Potrobenko, *No Streets of Gold, A Social History of Ukrainians in Alberta* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1977).

internment. In particular, Peter Krawchuk's *Our History: The Ukrainian Labour-Farmer Movement in Canada 1907-1991* and *The Ukrainian Socialist Movement in Canada (1907-1918)* both note the devastating effects of internment on the membership and the movement more generally.<sup>6</sup>

Outside of this work, the transformation of the academy in the postwar period also precipitated a more capacious and inclusive array of topics, and led to increased studies on ethnicity, labour, and radicalism. In time, the study of ethnic minorities and the proletariat not only became acceptable, but also entered into a minor golden age. In Canada, several studies emerged to problematize existing narratives of Canada as a multicultural, inclusive, and accepting place. Scholars began exploring various xenophobic and anti-immigrant policies that emerged in the pre-and-inter-war period. These studies were often approached from perspectives that ranged from critical and progressive to Marxist, and, in the case of the Ukrainians, reflected them through a proletarian lens.<sup>7</sup> Amongst this earlier work, Gregory Kealey's study of the impact of World War I on state repression of labour and the left stands out, as it clearly highlights the explicit political use of internment.<sup>8</sup> More recent studies by historians of

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Krawchuk, *Our History: The Ukrainian Labour Farmer Movement in Canada 1907-1991* (Toronto: Lugus Publications, 1996); Peter Krawchuk, *The Ukrainian Socialist Movement in Canada 1907-1918* (Toronto: Progress Books, 1979).

<sup>7</sup> The most prominent examples include Ivan Avakumovic, *The Communist Party in Canada: A History* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1975); John Herd Thompson, *The Harvests of War: The Prairie West, 1914-1918* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1978); Daphne Read, ed., *The Great War and Canadian Society: An Oral History* (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1978); Donald Avery, *Dangerous Foreigners: European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979); Howard Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985); Barbara Roberts, *Whence They Came: Deportation from Canada 1900 – 1935* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988); Gregory Kealey, *Workers and Canadian History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995); and Donald Avery, *Reluctant Host: Canada's Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896-1994* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1995).

<sup>8</sup> Gregory Kealey, "State Repression of Labour and the Left in Canada, 1914-20: The Impact of the First World War," *Canadian Historical Review* 3 (1992).

labour and the left have drawn even more explicit connections between political policing and internment during World War I.<sup>9</sup>

The intricacies and issues surrounding the formation of useful myth and constructed memory notwithstanding, this paper is interested in adding to, and enriching, the depiction of Ukrainians who were interned during World War I by going *beyond* the category of ethnicity. While the internment of radicals following the Red Scare of 1917 was a blatant political action, and has been noted as such, the first phase of internment (1914-1916) has long been assumed as an explicitly racial project and a lesser example of political policing. However, I argue that to conceptualize Ukrainian internment in racial terms alone obscures more than it illuminates. In contrast to the Japanese experience during World War II, where the entirety of the population was removed from the Pacific Coast to beyond the 100-mile exclusion zone, only approximately 4,000 Ukrainians, out of a total population of 170,000, were interned. By examining the activities of the Ukrainian left from 1907 to 1919, this paper elucidates the inherently political nature of the internment operations. It shows that the vast majority of even the early internees were proletarianized, if not also members of the organized Ukrainian left.

The 'smoking gun' in this story no longer exists. Most of the government records on the internment operations have long been destroyed or remain unobtainable to scholars. Regardless, a rigorous interrogation of the Ukrainian leftist newspapers, memoirs, and documentary collections – sources traditionally ignored or underutilized by those interested in internment - can add a new dimension to this history. Indeed,

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<sup>9</sup> Michel Beaulieu, *Labour at the Lakehead: Ethnicity, Socialism, and Politics, 1900-35* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2011); Reg Whitaker, Gregory Kealey and Andrew Parnaby, *Secret Service: Political Policing in Canada from the Fenians to Fortress America* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012).

these sources make clear that the internment operations marked the genesis of the state's long interest in the left, bringing new meaning to the well-worn phrase "in fear of the barbed wire fence." Seen in this light, the internment of Ukrainians can be understood, in part, as a project of cleaving off one of the most vulnerable pieces of the organized left, utilizing the vast powers of martial law, with wartime emergency powers and xenophobia as convenient accelerants.

### **The creation of a Ukrainian socialist movement in Canada**

While Ukrainian migration to Canada began in 1891, there is no evidence of socialist-minded Ukrainians in Canada before 1896.<sup>10</sup> Initially, some individual Ukrainians in industrial centers joined local branches of political parties and trade unions upon their arrival.<sup>11</sup> Others, especially farmers, participated in reading clubs and enlightenment societies organized around their bloc settlements.<sup>12</sup> Many of these early reading clubs and enlightenment societies were radical in nature, counting amongst their membership adherents of the Ukrainian Radical Party of Western Ukraine, where Marxism had taken root as early as the 1870s. Following its formation in 1904, the Socialist Party of Canada (SPC) began organizing these Ukrainians under its authority.<sup>13</sup> Recognizing their significant utility in reaching foreign-born workers, the

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<sup>10</sup> The first known group of socialist Ukrainians to immigrate to Canada were led by Kyrilo Genyk. Genyk was politically active, having been a member of the Russo-Ukrainian Radical Party in Eastern Galicia who was jailed for spreading socialist propaganda. In Canada, Genyk organized the first Ukrainian socialist reading society in 1903. Peter Krawchuk, *The Ukrainian Socialist Movement*, 1-3.

<sup>11</sup> The most engaging political party for Ukrainian workers at this time was the American Socialist Workers' Party. The Brotherhood of Railway Trackmen also attracted immigrant workers. In 1901, it struck for increased wages and union recognition. North West Mounted Police records note that the majority of those on strike were foreigners, "mainly Galicians, and very hard to deal with." Quoted in Helen Potrobenko, *No Streets of Gold, A Social History of Ukrainians in Alberta* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1977), 43.

<sup>12</sup> James Darlington, "The Ukrainian Impress on the Canadian West," in Franca Iacovetta et al., eds., *A Nation of Immigrants: Women, Workers, and Communities in Canadian History, 1840s-1960s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

<sup>13</sup> It is unclear where the first Ukrainian branch of the SPC was established as three branches appeared almost simultaneously in Winnipeg, Portage La Prairie, and Nanaimo. There was a total of 101 members in the three Ukrainian branches. Of course, these numbers do not account for the Ukrainians who joined general branches of the Party in cities where Ukrainian branches were not available. Peter Krawchuk, *The Ukrainian Socialist Movement*, 7.

SPC quickly moved to establish three Ukrainian sections of the Party in 1906. These branches declared their commitment to organizing the Ukrainian Canadian proletariat and leading them “over the ruins of capitalism.”<sup>14</sup>

Ukrainian membership in the SPC steadily grew, with at least seven new branches appearing in 1907 alone. Concomitantly, the newspaper *Chervonyi Prapor* (The Red Flag) was founded, serving as the liaison between the SPC and its Ukrainian constituents. Printed for “that section of the Canadian proletariat which speaks the Ukrainian language,” it helped promote “a clear understanding of the international idea of socialism” and politics more generally. In addition, the newspaper sought to assist “the working masses in the fight against lawlessness, exploitation, and slavery.”<sup>15</sup>

An examination of *Chervonyi Prapor* in this period reveals both the priorities and concerns of the movement. For one, the newspaper frequently reported on the plight of disillusioned workers and farmers. Actively recruited by the Department of the Interior and the various railway and steamship companies who acted as the government’s agents in touting the advantages of the *Dominion Lands Act*, many Ukrainians did not prosper in Canada as they had hoped.<sup>16</sup> By the second-wave of Ukrainian immigration at the turn of the century, it was clear that many were not finding the freedom of yeomanry that they had been promised.<sup>17</sup> Instead, many were employed as unskilled workers in the running trades, railway construction, mining,

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<sup>14</sup> Peter Krawchuk, *The Ukrainian Socialist Movement*, 4.

<sup>15</sup> Peter Krawchuk, *The Ukrainian Socialist Movement*, 5-8. Particularly noteworthy was the circulation of the SPC platform, which, within six months, had been distributed over 8,000 times. See “Platform of the Canadian Socialist Party,” *Robochyi Narod*, 1 May 1910, Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection. The collection is a private collection under the care of Larissa Stavroff. The translation is the author’s own.

<sup>16</sup> For more on early Ukrainian settlers in Canada see Michael Marunchak, *The Ukrainian Canadians: A History* (Winnipeg: Ukrainian Free Academy of Sciences, 1970) and Orest Martynowych, *Ukrainians in Canada: The Formative Period, 1891-1924* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1991). Corroborating accounts of early Ukrainian immigration provide some insight into the difficulties of adjusting to life in a new land. See, for example, Helen Potrobenko, *No Streets of Gold*, especially 23-61 and Vera Lysenko, *Men in Sheepskin Coats: A Study in Assimilation* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1947).

<sup>17</sup> Donald Avery, *Reluctant Host: Canada’s Response to Immigrant Workers, 1896-1994* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995), 29.

lumbering, and manufacturing. Like most other workers, they faced deplorable working conditions, poor wages, insecure employment, and high injury and death rates.

*Chervonyi Prapor* was also steadfastly committed to promoting a radical consciousness amongst its readership. Its pages consistently exposed the hardships of those who “saw the injustice of capitalism,” and it frequently called for political action and the building of a strong and united proletariat army.<sup>18</sup> The newspaper was also fundamental in encouraging its readers to join local unions, including the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), the Western Federation of Miners (WFM), and the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).<sup>19</sup> Notably, these were all industrial unions espousing varying degrees of radicalism. In the case of the IWW, and to a lesser degree the WFM, the union had an overtly revolutionary project. Despite its early progress, however, *Chervonyi Prapor* shut down in 1908, a victim of the recession. The embryonic Ukrainian left seemingly could only sporadically support a newspaper in its inchoate form.<sup>20</sup> Almost immediately, the movement regrouped and, in 1909, a new newspaper, *Robochyi Narod* (The Working People), was founded.<sup>21</sup> The newspaper continued the work of *Chervonyi Prapor*, frequently reporting on the SPC’s great prospects of expansion.<sup>22</sup>

However, even within the SPC, an organization committed to revolutionary internationalism, the Ukrainian membership often felt alienated from their English-speaking

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<sup>18</sup> *Chervonyi Prapor*, 29 November 1907. Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection. This is perhaps best exposed through its call to action for May Day. See, for example, “The First of May,” *Robochyi Narod*, 1 May 1910 and “How to Commemorate 1 May,” *Robochyi Narod*, 1 May 1911. Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

<sup>19</sup> Donald Avery, *Dangerous Foreigners: European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism, 1896-1932* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979), 53-59. Indeed, the Winnipeg branch of the IWW was headed by Dmytro Stechyshyn, a Ukrainian SPC member. For more on the IWW and ethnic workers see Melvyn Dubofsky, *We Shall Be All: A History of the Industrial Workers of the World* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2000); A. Ross McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1977), especially Chapter 6; and Mark Leier, *Where the Fraser River Flows: The Industrial Workers of the World in British Columbia* (Vancouver: New Star, 1990).

<sup>20</sup> Peter Krawchuk, *The Ukrainian Socialist Movement*, 9.

<sup>21</sup> *Robochyi Narod* proclaimed itself the only Ukrainian periodical on this continent published by and for the working class alone. The title page featured the slogan: “write for a sample and hand it to your Ukrainian neighbor. It will do him good.” *Robochyi Narod*, 1 May 1910. Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Krawchuk, *Our History*, 6. New branches were formed in Edmonton, Calgary, Hosmer, Brandon, Montreal, Vancouver, Cardiff, and Canmore.

comrades. In 1909, *Robochyi Narod* included an appeal pertaining to the “tactlessness of some of the more prominent English comrades.” The Ukrainian leaders condemned the Party for relegating Ukrainian members to the background despite them paying “ten cents a month in party dues which are used...in propaganda and literature for the English community.” Concurrently, “thousands of [Ukrainian members] live in illiterate darkness and our newspaper...must shorten its life!”<sup>23</sup> Troubled by their increasingly marginal role, the Ukrainian branches severed their ties with the SPC. On 20 July 1910, they united with the Social Democratic Party of Canada (SDPC) under the designation of the Federation of Ukrainian Social Democrats (FUSD).<sup>24</sup> More branches of the FUSD continued appearing, especially in rural farming communities.

### **Nativism, ethnic radicalism, and the Great War**

Despite the organizational strife that characterized the early years of the movement, the FUSD was thriving by 1910. In addition to its 23 branches, the Party utilized *Robochyi Narod* to reach the nearly 150,000 members of the Ukrainian-speaking proletariat in Canada. The organization promoted a working class consciousness amongst its membership and remained dedicated to changing the material conditions of workers' lives.<sup>25</sup> Of significant concern at this time was the growing public outcry over Canada's 'dangerous foreigners.' While Frank Oliver's Immigration Acts were instituted to seemingly appease Anglo-Canadians and control immigrant demographics, business and political interests ensured that these policies were lightly enforced. The west was being settled, new mineral resources were being discovered, and the building of two new transcontinental railways and innumerable western branch lines was underway. Large

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<sup>23</sup> *Robochyi Narod*, October 1909. Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

<sup>24</sup> For more on the break from the SPC see Peter Krawchuk, *Our History and The Ukrainian Socialist Movement*.

<sup>25</sup> For example, *Robochyi Narod* published a series of pamphlets, including “Socialism: Utopian and Scientific,” “The Basic Principles of Communism” by Engels, “Who are the Socialists and What Do They Want?” by Kolontai, and “The History of the Red Flag,” by Popovich. The newspaper also printed the full text of “The Communist Manifesto” as well as speeches and articles by Lenin.



numbers of immigrants were needed now more than ever. As one mining authority noted: “What we want is brawn and muscle, and we get it.”<sup>26</sup>

The presence of Ukrainians and other ‘foreigners’ had long elicited considerable hostility from the Anglo-Canadian mainstream.<sup>27</sup> Oliver expressed his displeasure of the attempted assimilation of “strange people.” For Oliver, the intermarriage of Anglo-Canadian children with “those who are of an alien race and of alien ideas” was considered miscegenation.<sup>28</sup> Even the most sympathetic of Anglo-Canadian elites believed in the need to quickly assimilate foreigners. J. S. Woodsworth noted that it would be “a wise policy to scatter the foreign communities amongst the Canadian, in this way facilitating the process of assimilation.”<sup>29</sup> These ideas were upheld by the newspapers. In a letter to the editor in the *Ottawa Anglo-Saxon*, C.P. Wolley criticized Sifton’s immigration policies, asserting that the country would be spoiled by the “reckless admixture of the scum. The dogs may pick up the crumbs which fall from the children’s table, he continued, “[but] there is no reason as to why they should be asked to sit at that table, mix blood with and share the heritage of the children.”<sup>30</sup> The editor of Belleville’s *The Intelligencer* noted that Galicians did not make “splendid material for the building of a great nation.” These “disgusting creatures caused many to marvel that beings bearing the human form could have sunk to such a bestial level.”<sup>31</sup>

Many Anglo-Canadians were also troubled by what they saw as the social deviance of immigrant workers. The nativist conflation of radicalism and foreignness was particularly intense

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<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Donald Avery, *Reluctant Host*, 33.

<sup>27</sup> Donald Avery, *Dangerous Foreigners: European Immigrant Workers and Labour Radicalism in Canada, 1896-1932* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1979); Howard Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985); Barbara Roberts, *Whence They Came: Deportation from Canada 1900 – 1935* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1988).

<sup>28</sup> Lubomyr Luciuk, *Searching for Place: Ukrainian Displaced Persons, Canada, and the Migration of Memory* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 13.

<sup>29</sup> J.S. Woodsworth, *Strangers Within Our Gates: Or Coming Canadians* (Toronto: F.C. Stephenson, 1909), 280.

<sup>30</sup> *Ottawa Anglo Saxon*, 9 June 1899. Quoted in Jaroslav Petryshyn, *Peasants in the Promised Land: Canada and the Ukrainians* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, 1985), 98.

<sup>31</sup> “Belleville Intelligencer,” cited in *Halifax Herald*, 18 March 1899. Quoted in Petryshyn, *Peasants in the Promised Land*, 100.

during the first decade of the century. This period saw the rise of socialist industrial unions and widespread labour unrest, some of which was organized - or participated in - by foreigners.<sup>32</sup> In fact, Royal North-West Mounted Police (RNWMP) records indicate that by 1900, they had already established significant contact with Ukrainian settlers. The RNWMP frequently reported on growing labour problems in western Canada, stressing the tendency of foreign workers to carry weapons and resort to violence. Of particular concern to the RNWMP was their inability to obtain informants to apprehend labour agitators, as many in the community viewed the police as the enemy.<sup>33</sup>

These concerns extended to organized labour. As international capital was cemented in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the need for inexpensive migrant labour was commanded by business.<sup>34</sup> As David Goutor notes, labour leaders were deeply concerned with the use of immigrants by the state to drive down wages and break strikes.<sup>35</sup> Conservative craft unionists in particular strove to protect the working class against 'uncivilized foreigners.' While the most vicious attacks targeted Asian immigrants, southern and eastern Europeans were nonetheless seen as a menace to the wages and job security of Anglo-Canadians.<sup>36</sup>

The leadership of the FUSD was well aware of the xenophobia and nativism running rampant in Canada. These conditions increased the hopelessness of many Ukrainians who, shunned from mainstream Canadian socio-political life, began to participate with increasing enthusiasm in the FUSD. Capitalizing on its popularity, the FUSD moved to transform itself into

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<sup>32</sup> Howard Palmer, *Patterns of Prejudice: A History of Nativism in Alberta* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1982), 54.

<sup>33</sup> Myron Momryk, "The Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Surveillance of the Ukrainian Community in Canada," *Journal of Ukrainian Studies* 28 (2003), 1.

<sup>34</sup> For more on recruiting industrial workers from within immigrant communities see Donald Avery, *Reluctant Host*, especially 29-36.

<sup>35</sup> David Goutor, *Guarding the Gates: The Canadian Labour Movement and Immigration, 1872-1932* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007). Goutor is primarily interested in the organizations that were affiliated with the Trades and Labour Congress (TLC). As A. Ross McCormack notes, the TLC was a national labour organization dominated by the larger, more conservative eastern unions. See A. Ross McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries*. For more on strike breaking and immigrant labour see Donald Avery, *Reluctant Host*, 35.

<sup>36</sup> David Goutor, *Guarding the Gates*, 5.

a broad based social and political organization. While this was not yet fully realized in this period, the leadership had, in theory, agreed that the organization should expand to provide social, cultural, and educational outlets to its membership in addition to building and focusing the class struggle. When the Ukrainian Social Democratic Party of Canada (USDP) was formed, it prioritized organizational activity in order to properly address the economic crisis with its membership.<sup>37</sup> The USDP established relief programs for downtrodden workers in case of illness, accident, or injury at work. The organization came out against predatory lending, the problem of personal debt, and taxes on the working class. It also demanded an increase to the minimum wage and the institution of the 44-hour work week.<sup>38</sup> These demands, plus the ongoing struggle of workers against their capitalist employers, were highlighted in the pages of *Robochyi Narod*.<sup>39</sup> As the recession took hold, the newspaper acutely covered the growing issue of unemployment.<sup>40</sup> Updates on local branches frequently made reference to workers leaving to “find work for the summer (if not longer).”<sup>41</sup> In 1913, the editors of *Robochyi Narod* rhetorically asked why, “in today’s economic system,” there were still unemployed workers. The newspaper attacked employers “who care only about profit,” pointing to the rise in bankrupt merchants and closed banks and factories as signs that the system was not working. “Millions of workers are left without employment,” the article noted; “families are falling apart.”<sup>42</sup>

By 1914, with a world war looming, the USDP, alongside the mainstream Canadian

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<sup>37</sup> Peter Krawchuk, *The Ukrainian Socialist Movement*, 43.

<sup>38</sup> Peter Krawchuk, *Our History*, 17.

<sup>39</sup> For example, updating the readership on national strikes remained critical. For example, “Strike!” 1 April 1911; “Strike in Cobalt,” 8 May 1912 and “Strike in Toronto,” 14 May 1913. Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection. The newspaper would also report on the working class experience more generally. “Police Shoot Innocent Man,” 21 May 1913; “Bad Times,” 13 July 1913 and “Catastrophe in Hillcrest, AB,” 8 July 1913. Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

<sup>40</sup> “Voices of the Tired” and “Unemployment in Calgary,” *Robochyi Narod*, 8 July 1913.

<sup>41</sup> “Winnipeg, Man.,” *Robochyi Narod*, 1 April 1911. Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

<sup>42</sup> “Why are there unemployed workers?” *Robochyi Narod*, 2 April 1913. Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

labour movement, reinforced its long held anti-war position.<sup>43</sup> The USDP frequently published articles in *Robochyi Narod* urging workers to unite against militarism.<sup>44</sup> Meanwhile, the Trades and Labour Congress (TLC) reiterated its policy of launching a national general strike in case of Canada's involvement in a global war.<sup>45</sup> Whereas the TLC quickly reneged on its promise when the call to war came, the USDP and *Robochyi Narod* were far more resolute. "The horrible indigence and hunger of workers has not ended," wrote the author of one article. "Now there is an all-European war, which will further the hunger and poverty of workers, claim many victims, and fill the rivers with worker's blood."<sup>46</sup> Three days later, the newspaper published an obituary for Jean Jaures, and declared that the French socialist and anti-militarist was killed because he protested the war.<sup>47</sup> The newspaper also began reprinting the statements of the few international socialist leaders who had not fallen under the spell of nationalist war chauvinism, including Karl Liebknecht, Clara Zetkin, and Sen Katayama. These actions culminated with a resolution that asserted that the First World War was an imperialist war. "We declare that we continue to stand by the principles of international socialism," stated the declaration. "We censure all socialists who support the war in principle and call on the world proletariat to establish a Third Revolutionary International on the ruins of the Second International."<sup>48</sup> The USDP had solidified its position on the war and was mobilizing its membership against it.

### **Rounding up Canada's 'dangerous foreigners'**

Despite being citizens of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Ukrainian Canadians had little to fear when the war broke out. The government had issued a series of proclamations that exposed all citizens of enemy countries to threats of arrest and internment, but noted that as

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<sup>43</sup> The organization had long made its anti-militarism and anti-war position known. For example, articles had previously appeared in *Robochyi Narod* condemning capitalist aggression in the Balkans. "The Socialists and the War," *Robochyi Narod*, 27 November 1912. Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

<sup>44</sup> "Away With War!" *Robochyi Narod*, 19 September 1914. Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

<sup>45</sup> A. Ross McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries*, 119.

<sup>46</sup> "The proletariat and the war," *Robochyi Narod*, 2 September 1914. Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

<sup>47</sup> "The Murder of Jean Jaures," *Robochyi Narod*, 5 September 1914. Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

<sup>48</sup> Peter Krawchuk, *The Ukrainian Socialist Movement*, 56.

long as people “quietly pursued their ordinary avocations” they would be protected.<sup>49</sup> However, when the *War Measures Act* was passed on 22 August, it gave the government emergency powers to administer the war without accountability to either Parliament or extant legislation. This included basically unlimited power to arrest, detain, deport, and censor.<sup>50</sup> As a result, between 1914 to 1921, 8,579 “enemy aliens” were interned across the country. An additional 80,000 others were issued identity papers and ordered to report regularly to their local police authorities.<sup>51</sup> According to General William Otter, who led the internment operations, only 3,138 of those interned could be classified as genuine prisoners of war. These prisoners were segregated from the other internees and placed in ‘first class’ camps. The remaining 5,411 were sent to work camps in remote areas of Canada.<sup>52</sup> PC 1501 had given the government the power to apprehend and intern ‘enemy aliens’ found impoverished and without work. While PC 1501 was ostensibly justified because it protected ‘enemy aliens’ from rising levels of patriotically inspired xenophobia, it was more than likely instituted as a means of allowing municipalities, in charge of relief, to rid their rolls easily. In fact, these policies disproportionately targeted the immigrant working class.

As the war dragged on, conversations about unemployment were exacerbated within the USDP. Massive layoffs as a result of the recession almost always targeted ‘dangerous foreigners’ who were let go for “patriotic reasons.”<sup>53</sup> *Robochyi Narod* reported on the growing

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<sup>49</sup> See, for example, “Proclamation respecting immigrants of German or Austro-Hungarian nationality, 15 August 1914,” in Frances Swyripa and John Herd Thompson, eds., *Loyalties in Conflict: Ukrainians in Canada During the Great War* (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1983), 171-173.

<sup>50</sup> Surviving records of the internment operations indicate numerous reasons for internment. This included refusing or failing to register, breaking parole, destroying registration cards, travelling without permission, registering under a false name, writing to relatives in Austria, and status as a foreign reservist. Other less tangible reasons included acting in a “very suspicious manner,” showing “a general tendency toward sedition,” using “seditious” or “intemperate language,” and being generally “unreliable,” “of a shiftless character,” or “undesirable.”

<sup>51</sup> Lubomyr Luciuk, *Without Just Cause: Canada’s first national internment operations and the Ukrainian Canadians, 1914-1920* (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2006), 9.

<sup>52</sup> Lubomyr Luciuk, *In Fear of the Barbed Wire Fence: Canada’s First National Internment Operations and the Ukrainian Canadians, 1914-1920* (Kingston: The Kashtan Press, 2001), 14.

<sup>53</sup> Donald Avery, *Dangerous Foreigners*, 67.

feelings of bitterness and frustration amongst Ukrainians. “Hundreds of unemployed Ukrainian workers,” one article noted, “groan from the blow of hunger, and those who have luckily found work suffer unheard of cruel treatment and mockery from employer benefactors.”<sup>54</sup>

The USDP was integral in persuading Ukrainian workers to join the protests of unemployed workers demanding jobs and bread.<sup>55</sup> In fact, the Party planned many of its own protests. The Winnipeg branch was particularly active in the fight against unemployment during the early years of the war. In 1914, it called a mass meeting to begin agitation for a free kitchen and sleeping quarters for the unemployed.<sup>56</sup> These types of protests culminated on 14 May 1915, when 900 unemployed workers began a march towards the U.S. border. Some were arrested immediately, while others – approximately 200 - were stopped when they reached the border. *Robochyi Narod* reported that the government weeded out those who they considered to be “enemy aliens” and interned them in Brandon. Others were sent to Winnipeg, “where they have the right to die of starvation.”<sup>57</sup> The arrest and internment of protesters is clearly political in nature. Moreover, that it was the USDP behind these protests indicates the political sympathies of those interned.

By contrast, the government was seemingly disinclined to suppress those Ukrainians who made up the economic, political, and religious elite of the community. For example, efforts to stop Ukrainians protesting the end of bilingual education in Manitoba was superficial at best, with vague threats of arrest and internment. When both regional and the chief press censors voiced their concerns over this same group of Ukrainians, government officials were once again

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<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Donald Avery, “Ethnic and Class Tensions in Canada, 1918-20: Anglo-Canadians and the Alien Worker,” in Frances Swyripa and John Herd Thompson, eds., *Loyalties in Conflict*, 80.

<sup>55</sup> Peter Krawchuk *Our History*, 18. The IWW was similarly active in organizing unemployment marches. In Edmonton, approximately 600 workers (eighty percent of which were Slavs) took to the streets in 1914. As a result of another protest, thirteen “foreigners” were arrested for eating a restaurant meal and not paying for it. See Helen Potrobenko, *No Streets of Gold*, 93-95 and David Schulze, “The Industrial Workers of the World and the Unemployed in Edmonton and Calgary in the Depression of 1913-1915,” *Labour/Le Travail* 25 (1990).

<sup>56</sup> *Robochyi Narod*, 28 October 1914. Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

<sup>57</sup> *Robochyi Narod*, 19 May 1915. Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

unwilling to impose any consequences, reminding the censors that these Ukrainians were Canadian citizens.<sup>58</sup> Curiously, these standards did not apply across the board. Throughout 1915, the USDP repeatedly reported that its Canadian-born and naturalized members were being interned for protesting.<sup>59</sup> Perhaps the most notable example of this double standard was Nykyta Budka, the first bishop of the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Canada. Before Britain's entrance into World War I, Budka issued a Pastoral Letter urging Ukrainians in Canada to return home to defend Galicia. When Britain entered the war a month later, Budka retracted his statements.<sup>60</sup> While Budka was spared – twice exonerated by authorities – less prominent Ukrainians were not so lucky.

Ukrainians, amongst others, were also affected by extreme patriotism and the conflation of radicalism with foreignness, which, as aforementioned, extended to organized labour. Throughout the war, the executive of the TLC embraced so-called 'patriotic dismissals'.<sup>61</sup> Some unions even actively campaigned against "enemy aliens." In the coal mining regions of Alberta and British Columbia, UMWA locals were particularly aggressive. With the outbreak of the war, some of its membership demanded the dismissal of all 'Austrian' workers. Eventually, threats of strike and violence convinced the mining companies and the federal government to dismiss - and consequently intern - over 300 "enemy aliens" in the spring of 1915.<sup>62</sup> In Coal Creek, English and Italian miners refused to return to work until all "enemy aliens" were dismissed by

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<sup>58</sup> Peter Melnycky, "The Internment of Ukrainians in Canada," in Frances Swyripa and John Herd Thompson, eds., *Loyalties in Conflict*, 6, 7. The editor of the Ukrainian newspaper that catered to community elites was warned that continued agitation would lead to the suppression of Ukrainian newspapers. These threats were never actually implemented.

<sup>59</sup> Peter Krawchuk, *Our History*, 24.

<sup>60</sup> Stella Hryniuk, "Pioneer Bishop, Pioneer Times: Nykyta Budka in Canada," *CCHA: Historical Studies* 55 (1988), 34-35.

<sup>61</sup> The TLC often campaigned on behalf of English workers who spoke out against the war. For example, John Reid, a socialist from Calgary, was sentenced to 15 months hard labour for sedition. Following extensive protest from the TLC, he was released. This was not the case for foreign workers. See Helen Potrobenko, *No Streets of Gold*, 110.

<sup>62</sup> Donald Avery, "Ethnic and Class Tensions in Canada," 80.

the Crow's Nest Pass Coal Company.<sup>63</sup> 370 USDP members were eventually fired, arrested, and interned in Fernie and Michel, all targets of incensed Anglo-Canadian union members.<sup>64</sup> In Nanaimo, another 150 members of the USDP were interned, while reports from Hillcrest suggested its membership met a similar fate.<sup>65</sup>

While these cases represent some of the most explicit incidents of targeted attacks on 'foreign' workers, other Ukrainians were interned without such clear-cut reasoning. In his memoir, one USDP member from Toronto recalled how he was randomly stopped on the street by a police sergeant who asked him where he was from. When he replied "Austria," the officer immediately arrested him and delivered him to the Stanley Barracks. A week later, on Christmas Day, he arrived at the Kapuskasing camp, where he remained for three years.<sup>66</sup> Definitive reasoning as to why he - and not some else - was interned remains unclear. The RNWMP was not randomly asking Torontonians their respective nationalities, so to pick one man - a socialist and a Ukrainian - out of a crowd perhaps speaks to more than mere luck.

All the while, military authorities in Regina, Calgary, Edmonton, and Winnipeg were informing ethnic newspapers that they would be suppressed if they "incited feelings against Great Britain." This was justified by the observation that the newspaper kept immigrants "in a state of unrest."<sup>67</sup> Beyond the writing in *Robochyi Narod*, the activities of the USDP had long worried Anglo-Canadian elites and government officials. Three months into the war, J.A.M. Aikins, a Winnipeg millionaire, prominent Tory, and future Lieutenant-Governor of the province, warned Prime Minister Borden that "the foreigners in the North End" might take advantage of the war "for the destruction of property, public and private...and other crazy wicked things."<sup>68</sup> This, and other warnings, did not go overlooked. Some USDP leaders, otherwise employed and

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<sup>63</sup> See Wayne Norton, "Remembering the History of Interned Miners," *The Free Press*, 1 June 2015.

<sup>64</sup> "News," *Robochyi Narod*, 23 June 1915. Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

<sup>65</sup> Peter Krawchuk, *Our History*, 24.

<sup>66</sup> "In Camp Kapuskasing," Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

<sup>67</sup> Quoted in Helen Potrobenko, *No Streets of Gold*, 108.

<sup>68</sup> Quoted in Donald Avery, "Ethnic and Class Tensions in Canada," 80.



innocent of any wrongdoing or explicit dissent, were interned in 1915. The hardest hit hub of USDP activity was Winnipeg, where all but one member of the Executive Committee was arrested and interned. In fact, the situation became so dire that the organization had to form a temporary emergency executive to conduct its affairs.<sup>69</sup>

Indeed, the organizational structure of the USDP was deeply affected by internment. In July of 1915, the temporary Central Executive Council of the USDP and the Administrative Committee of *Robochyi Narod* met to discuss the future of the movement. "In view of the fact that the Western branches have been broken up by the mass arrests of the comrades by the military authorities," they resolved, "it is impossible at this time to move [*Robochyi Narod*] to the west" as had been planned.<sup>70</sup> Instead, the leadership decided that the Eastern branches, less affected by internment, would take over running the newspaper. However, following a referendum, the branches agreed to move the newspaper to Winnipeg, but decided that it would become a monthly instead.<sup>71</sup> After just one year of the internment operations, it became clear that the Ukrainian left had been significantly damaged by the incarceration of its members and leaders, the sustained attacks on its press, and the continued articulations of nativism and xenophobia. As one provincial police report noted: "From a police point of view, there has been less trouble amongst them since the beginning of the war, the fact that several of them were sent to internment camps at the beginning of the war seemed to have a good effect on the remainder."<sup>72</sup>

By 1915, reports of widespread internment of USDP members became commonplace in the pages of *Robochyi Narod*. The newspaper noted that USDP members could be found in various camps across the country, including Brandon, Vernon, Lethbridge, Kapuskasing, and Spirit Lake. Yuri Drobey, a USDP member, informed the Party that in the Spirit Lake internment

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<sup>69</sup> Peter Krawchuk, *The Ukrainian Socialist Movement*, 58.

<sup>70</sup> Peter Krawchuk, *The Ukrainian Socialist Movement*, 59.

<sup>71</sup> Peter Krawchuk, *The Ukrainian Socialist Movement*, 59.

<sup>72</sup> Quoted in Donald Avery, *Reluctant Host*, 73.

camp alone, there were over 800 incarcerated Ukrainian workers.<sup>73</sup> Some members were interned in other locations unbeknownst to their family and friends. *Robochyi Narod* ran Missing Persons ads between in 1914 and 1915; ads that were exclusively for young, single men missing from the industrial hubs of Canada. That the ads were being run in the pages of *Robochyi Narod*, as opposed to any other Ukrainian-language newspaper, reveals something about the sympathies - and even political affiliation - of the missing men and their families.

### **Resistance and organizing in the camps**

Daily existence in the camps was difficult for the internees.<sup>74</sup> Not only were they expected to construct their own camps, but they were also required to work on land-clearing, road-building, woodcutting, and railway construction projects. For many, internment took a physical toll. Altogether, 107 internees died – 69 of them ‘Austrians.’ Watson Kirkconnell, who served at both Kapuskasing and Fort Henry, observed that amongst the internees there were “few on whom the long years of captivity had not left their mark.”<sup>75</sup> Word of camp conditions spread quickly among readers of *Robochyi Narod*. On 28 August 1915, one internee asked: “Who built the railroads and cultivated this wasteland where formerly only wind howled? We, the victims, he continued, who today are being tortured. Make our cause known so that all Ukrainians and all the nations of the world might see how the blind, ‘civilized’ English chauvinists and their Canadian hangers on treat foreigners.”<sup>76</sup> In September, the newspaper printed an update from the internees in Castle Mountain. One internee wrote that “the conditions of Canadian slavery...are not just shameful and inhumane – they are worse than hell. Hell is

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<sup>73</sup> Peter Krawchuk, *The Ukrainian Socialist Movement*, 58.

<sup>74</sup> For an overview of life in the internment camps see Lubomyr Luciuk, *In Fear of the Barbed Wire Fence and Without Just Cause*.

<sup>75</sup> Quoted in Lubomyr Luciuk, *A Time for Atonement: Canada’s First National Internment Operations and the Ukrainian Canadians 1914-1920* (Kingston: The Limestone Press, 1988), 20.

<sup>76</sup> Cited in Orest Martynowych, “The Ukrainian Socialist and Working Class Movement in Manitoba” (unpublished paper, 1973, in the Provincial Archives of Manitoba), 25.

nowhere near as bad as the captivity that we are experiencing.”<sup>77</sup> In October, Dmytro Tkachyk wrote to the newspaper that men were being driven at bayonet point, chained, and fed a diet of bread and water for insubordination. Yet another internee described their mistreatment when they were too sick to work, noting that a guard struck him with his rifle and “called [him] a son of a bitch.”<sup>78</sup> General Otter confirmed suspicions of mistreatment when noted that the various complaints of prisoners regarding the rough conduct of the guards “is not altogether without reason and is, I am sorry to say, by no means an uncommon occurrence.” Samuel Reat, a US Consul in Calgary, wrote that incidences of mistreatment “are not only proved but admitted by the authorities. Guards have cuffed prisoners on the slightest provocation and the conduct of some sergeants has been extremely reprehensible.”<sup>79</sup>

In several internment camps, ill treatment and exploitation was often answered with insubordination and resistance.<sup>80</sup> In 1915 alone, there were several escape attempts from the Brandon internment camp, and, in the spring, three Ukrainians successfully broke out of the camp. It was not until February of 1916 that one of them was finally discovered hiding in Stuartburn, Manitoba. In May, another internee escaped by jumping from a second-floor window. He managed to get within nine miles of the American border before being apprehended. Later that month, two more internees also fled the camp. In June, the camp witnessed yet another escape attempt by seventeen Ukrainians, which resulted in the fatal shooting of one and the pitchforking of several others.<sup>81</sup>

Noncompliance was especially common in Kapuskasing. As one of the largest

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<sup>77</sup> “From the captive prisoners in Castle Mountain,” *Robochyi Narod*, 28 September 1915. Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

<sup>78</sup> Quoted in Bill Waiser, *Park Prisoners: The Untold Story of Western Canada’s National Parks, 1915-1946* (Saskatoon: Fifth House Ltd., 1995), 21.

<sup>79</sup> Quoted in Lubomyr Luciuk, *Without Just Cause*, 7, 8.

<sup>80</sup> Peter Melnycky, “Badly Treated in Every Way: The Internment of Ukrainians in Quebec during the First World War,” in Myroslaw Diakowsky, ed., *The Ukrainian Experience in Quebec* (Toronto: Basilian Press, 1994), reprinted and cited from [www.infoukes.com](http://www.infoukes.com).

<sup>81</sup> Peter Melnycky, “The Internment of Ukrainians in Canada,” 9.

internment camps in Canada, it hosted approximately 1,300 “enemy aliens.” The most frequent acts of defiance included slowdowns, sabotage, and work interruptions. This involved breaking tools, throwing axes into the river, and hiding in the woods during work hours.<sup>82</sup> However, there were also more serious confrontations between the internees and the guards. Three months after the opening of the camp, 100 new prisoners were transported from Toronto. The next morning, these prisoners refused to go to work, noting that they did not come to the camp to willingly work. When the commandant informed them that they had to work because they had been provided with clothing, these internees took off their camp-issued clothes. As punishment, they were ordered on to the ice, where the soldiers forced them to march. Those who fell were hit with clubs.<sup>83</sup>

A particularly egregious incident in Kapuskasing involved internees refusing to pledge their obedience to the commandant. When they refused, their barracks were stripped of all possessions and their food was thrown in the river. The internees were then herded into their barracks, guarded by armed soldiers. Every few hours, one by one, each internee was called to the commandant’s office where they were asked if they would now be obedient. The longer they refused, the longer they were deprived of food and water. This exercise was repeated until every internee conceded. In 1916, a full-scale riot broke out after 1,200 internees refused to work on a religious holiday. The conflict culminated with camp guards opening fire. Fortunately, less than a dozen internees were seriously injured.<sup>84</sup> On the day of the feast of the Virgin Mary, another religious holiday, the internees rioted again after they were denied the right to observe the holiday. Deprived of food and forced to march, the internees exerted what little control they had by insisting on praying and singing as they marched.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> “In Camp Kapuskasing,” Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

<sup>83</sup> “In Camp Kapuskasing,” Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

<sup>84</sup> Peter Melnycky, “The Internment of Ukrainians in Canada,” 9.

<sup>85</sup> “In Camp Kapuskasing,” Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

As the practice of internment was an intrinsically political activity, it concentrated activists and new recruits for the cause into compact locations. This centralization had the predictable effect of allowing organizers to practice their trade in a greenhouse-like environment. Although internees came from different geographic areas, political backgrounds, and work sites, their common experiences in the camps surely made for quick and easy organizing. A miner from British Columbia had a tremendous amount in common with a rail worker from Northern Ontario even when outside of the camps, but within, their mutual interests were magnified a thousand-fold. Indeed, reporting to *Robochyi Narod* from the Brandon internment camp, USDP members noted that the 820 Ukrainians interned there were increasingly turning to political organizing and radical thought. Of particular significance was the ability of USDP members to organize reading clubs, which they noted served as the basis for organizing and consciousness building in the camps.<sup>86</sup>

### **The First Red Scare**

While some remained imprisoned, the end of the war saw the release of the majority of internees because the task of caring for them was becoming burdensome – and expensive. Those who were physically fit, and deemed not dangerous, were paroled to work for private businesses, the government, and railway companies who turned to the internees to solve their labour shortages. Nonetheless, hostility towards “enemy aliens” remained. This was, in large part, the result of the Russian Revolution, which heightened the perception of Ukrainians as radical “aliens.”<sup>87</sup> This perception, however, was not entirely without foundation; the revolution was widely celebrated within the USDP, and even helped revitalize its demoralized constituents.

The Russian Revolution was significant to the membership of the USDP for a variety of reasons, including freedom from tsarist oppression, the national liberation of Ukraine, and,

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<sup>86</sup> “News from the interned,” *Robochyi Narod*, 28 September 1915. Stavroff-Krawchuk Collection.

<sup>87</sup> For more on the Red Scare see Daniel Francis, *Seeing Reds: The Red Scare of 1918-1919, Canada's First War on Terror* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2010).

perhaps most significantly, because it served as inspiration for potential future revolutions.<sup>88</sup> The Party marked the occasion with a series of meetings and events meant to regenerate *Robochyi Narod* and serve as the first steps of expanding the social and cultural components of the Party.<sup>89</sup> But the transformation of Ukrainians, and others, into radical “aliens” was also part of a larger pattern of worker militancy that had peaked in 1919.<sup>90</sup> Canadian workers, increasingly troubled by the deterioration of wages and the threat of unemployment, had also turned to militant industrial unions to protect them.<sup>91</sup> Unlike the early years of the war when radicalism could be blamed on German and Austrian enemy agents and propaganda, rising worker militancy shifted the blame on to Canada’s working class more generally.

The RNWMP and the Dominion Police were acutely interested in investigating radical elements within the union movement. Prime Minister Borden commissioned Montreal lawyer C.H. Cahan to recommend ways to suppress Canada’s more radical elements.<sup>92</sup> Two months later, Cahan reported on the “widespread unrest and discontent throughout Canada, which finds expression in labour agitation and strikes, in attempts to avoid the Military Service Act, in mutterings against food prices, in criticism of the treatment of returned soldiers, in the prevalent suspicion that discrimination is shown in the collection of federal taxes, and in general discontent with the administration of the federal departments.” More so, he noted that the “mental unrest” experienced by ethnic radicals was “directly attributable to the dissemination in

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<sup>88</sup> The Winnipeg branch released the following statement to mark the occasion: “We, Ukrainian workers....send fraternal greetings to the Russian worker-revolutionaries on the occasion of the world victory of the revolution over autocratic tsarism and the breakup of the prison house of nations which, without a doubt, will also liberate the 30-million strong Ukrainian people. We are convinced that our Russian comrades will not stop at this change of the political order of Russia, but will continue their struggle to complete victory of the working people over all their enemies.” Peter Krawchuk, *Our History*, 26.

<sup>89</sup> Peter Krawchuk, *Our History*, 26-28.

<sup>90</sup> See, for example, Gregory Kealey, *Workers and Canadian History* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1995), especially Chapter 9 and Craig Heron, ed., *The Workers’ Revolt in Canada 1917-1925* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998).

<sup>91</sup> A. Ross McCormack, *Reformers, Rebels, and Revolutionaries*, especially Chapter 8.

<sup>92</sup> The story of Cahan has been well documented by historians. See, for example, Reg Whitaker, Gregory Kealey, and Andrew Parnaby, *Secret Service: Political Policing in Canada from the Fenians to Fortress America* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 71-80.

Canada of the Socialistic doctrines, espoused by the Russian Revolutionary element, and more recently by the Bolshevik Party in Russia.”<sup>93</sup> Cahan recommended that all Bolshevik propaganda and political organizations be aggressively suppressed, and all Russian, Finnish and Ukrainian nationals be treated as if they were “enemy aliens.” Bulletins in *Robochyi Narod* confirmed that Cahan’s recommendations were being implemented, as police raids and arrests were being made almost daily. The bulletins also revealed that more USDP members had been interned in Kapuskasing, Lethbridge, Brandon, and Vernon. Some of these internees remained in the camps until 1920.<sup>94</sup> Despite these alarming developments, the newspaper urged USDP members to not lose heart over persecution for socialist ideas because “such acts were [now] taking place all over the world.” Nonetheless, it recommended that its members be careful by carrying their registration cards everywhere and being “absolutely careful in conversations, especially when they are not acquainted with the people around them.”<sup>95</sup>

Eventually, the federal government banned the printing of any publications in an ‘enemy language,’ fourteen organizations including the USDP, and all public meetings in Ukrainian.<sup>96</sup> On 28 September 1918, *Robochyi Narod* informed its readers that if they did not receive their paper, “it is a sign that the above-mentioned law has been put into effect.”<sup>97</sup> After nearly ten years of propagating socialism amongst Ukrainian-speaking workers, this would be the final issue of *Robochyi Narod*. In 1919, a list of “Chief Agitators in Canada” was released, which included many former USDP members. Many were arrested for possessing objectionable literature, belonging to unlawful associations, and attending illegal meetings, and were interned

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<sup>93</sup> Quoted in Reg Whitaker et al., *Secret Service*, 74.

<sup>94</sup> The last internment camp to close was Kapuskasing on 20 February 1920.

<sup>95</sup> Peter Krawchuk, *The Ukrainian Socialist Movement*, 87.

<sup>96</sup> Myron Momryk, “The RCMP and the Surveillance of the Ukrainian Community in Canada,” 93, 94.

<sup>97</sup> Peter Krawchuk, *The Ukrainian Socialist Movement*, 90.

in the final phase of the internment operations.<sup>98</sup>

When the USDP was banned, the movement carried on, albeit in a different, if crippled, form. Luckily for the movement, the 1917 talks to establish a broad-based socio-cultural and educational society had already materialized in Winnipeg at the time that the USDP had been outlawed. Through the Ukrainian Labour Farmer Temple Association (ULFTA), former members of Winnipeg's USDP continued the work of the organization, including the construction of the first Ukrainian labour temple.<sup>99</sup> The ULFTA spread to other cities and towns and, by 1919, its official organ, *Ukrainski Robotnychi Visty* (Ukrainian Labour News), had been established. However, the transformation of the organization into the ULFTA did not take the heat off of them. When the Winnipeg General Strike commenced on 15 May 1919, several thousand Ukrainian workers participated, with the Ukrainian labour temple serving as a base for labour action. Eventually, the authorities raided the labour temple and arrested, interned, or deported a number of individuals. As a result, the mark of "enemy alien" only intensified, with the state and its allies amongst the business elite eager to take advantage of widespread fear of Bolshevism. Deportation was a real concern amongst members of the Ukrainian left. Many saw the deportation associated with the Winnipeg General Strike as a terrifying precedent. Within the camps, camp commanders were asked to identify prisoners who were bitter against Canada and Great Britain, agitators, strike fomenters, and troublemakers, members of the IWW, and even those who were "decidedly eccentric." Some 1,964 "enemy aliens," 302 of which were 'Austrian,' were deemed guilty and deported.<sup>100</sup> Real or imagined deportation only increased the flow of Ukrainians into the ULFTA and related radical organizations.

## Conclusion

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<sup>98</sup> "Chief Agitators in Canada," in Gregory Kealey and Reg Whitaker, *RCMP Security Bulletins: The Early Years, 1919-1929* (St. John's: Canadian Committee on Labour History, 1995).

<sup>99</sup> The ULFTA was initially known as the Ukrainian Labour Temple Association (ULTA).

<sup>100</sup> Peter Melnycky, "The Internment of Ukrainians in Canada," 16. Before it was banned, the USDP had specifically protested the classification of Ukrainians as enemy aliens, criticized the naturalization of restrictions, and called for the establishment of employment bureaus.



The internment operations left a lasting legacy on members of the Ukrainian left. For one, the internment operations triggered the creation of the ULFTA; the organization was a clear outcome of the USDP's premonitions of continued government suppression and eventual destruction. The founders hoped that the ULFTA would become a broad-based organization that could dialectically use culture as a recruitment tool and a shield from the pressure of the state. Its mandate to accept all Ukrainians, regardless of whether or not they had yet accepted revolutionary and socialist ideas, actually offered the ULFTA an opportunity to expand the movement.<sup>101</sup> As Matthew Popovich, a leading figure in the organization, noted: "It became obvious that [the organization] must take this opportunity to organize a mass cultural-education association, which would attract those workers who until now have not joined our existing organizations but have shown great interest in the building of a Ukrainian labour temple." To turn these people away, he added, "would be a crime against our movement."<sup>102</sup>

Attracting Ukrainians into the new organization was a relatively easy task. For those already invested in revolutionary and socialist politics, the period of 1917 to 1919 saw the increasing normalization of progressive and socialist thought in Canadian society, even as the propaganda of the Red Scare militated against it. Moreover, the quadrupling of union membership provided the ULFTA with a huge number of potential recruits. For progressive and socialist Ukrainians, then, the ULFTA served as a timely vehicle for their hopes and dreams, and as a vector for organized activity. For those who did not hold revolutionary or socialist politics, continued resentment over state-sanctioned censures, wartime xenophobia and widespread anti-immigrant sentiments, profiteering scandals, inflation, and anti-worker rhetoric pushed them towards embracing the politics of the left. Indeed, the ULFTA became an outlet for socio-economic complaints, a cultural and educational cornerstone, and a vessel for radical

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<sup>101</sup> The balance of both socio-cultural and political identities is best expressed in the founding constitution of the ULTA, which pledged "to give moral and material aid to the Ukrainian working people and to the labour cause in general."

<sup>102</sup> Peter Krawchuk, *Our History*, 35.

change. The organization advanced the interests of workers and, perhaps most importantly, provided its membership with a sense of community and dignity. The ability of the organization to continue this work in the face of continued discrimination accorded it tremendous legitimacy within the community and, eventually, the opportunity to publicly represent what being a Ukrainian in Canada meant - and looked like. This deeply influenced the way in which many Ukrainians came to understand their relationship with Canada, each other, and even themselves.

The internment operations also illuminate the relationship between the state and Ukrainian Canadians, and the left more generally. That the ranks of the internees were drawn mainly from workers and members of the USDP enhances the claim that this was an organized, institutionalized, and systematic attack. An examination of the strength of pre-war socialist and revolutionary thought within the Ukrainian community, the campaign to arrest and intern “enemy aliens,” the sympathies and activities of those interned, the resistance and organizational life in the camps, and the eventual eradication of the USDP further solidifies this notion, and leaves little imaginative room as to the ultimate goals of the internment operations during World War I. With this in mind, the connection between this early period and later state interventions, including the Winnipeg General Strike, the Workers’ Revolt, the haunting specter of Section 98, the internment of ULFTA members during World War II, and state surveillance well beyond becomes ever more clear.