

20 June 2020

◆ marks the ◆
**100th anniversary
OF The end of
Canada's first
national internment
operations**

On this day we remember them.

During Canada's first national internment operations of 1914-1920, thousands of men, women and children were branded as "enemy aliens," forced to do heavy labour for the profit of their jailers, disenfranchised, and subjected to other state-sanctioned indignities - not because of anything they had done wrong but only because of where they had come from, who they were.

Women and children at Spirit Lake (Library and Archives Canada/PA-170620)



Born in Montreal, Mary Manko was just six years old when her family was sent to the Spirit Lake internment camp, in Quebec's remote Abitibi region. Nellie, her younger sister, died there. Reflecting on her experiences, decades later, Mary said:

I was one of the thousands of Ukrainian Canadians rounded up as 'enemy aliens' and put in concentration camps ... Canada's Ukrainians were not disloyal. Our imprisonment was wrong. We were Canadians. Those who, like my parents, had come from Ukraine to Canada, came seeking freedom. They were invited here. They worked hard. They contributed to this country, with their blood, sweat, and tears. A lot of the latter. What was done to us was wrong. 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.

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