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Human rights are a passion of mine. It stems from the twin belief that freedom is indispensable to human dignity and that communities, to be whole, must be mindful of the rights they hold in common. This belief is central to the story of those who arrived in Canada at the start of the twentieth century, facing as they did the enormous challenge of acceptance during a period of extreme crisis and conflict. It is not an uncommon story in Canadian history, but in the case of the Great War it is a narrative that is neither widely known nor fully understood. Many years ago, speaking publicly on the topic of internment, I was approached by a historian whose roots were in the Ukrainian community of pre–Second World War rural Alberta. He conveyed to me his skepticism about those long-ago events and their significance. He had never heard of internment and told me that there was no talk of it while he was growing up. I was utterly dumbfounded to learn that events so widely experienced and felt, and which had impinged on our constitutional make-up as a rights-bearing people, could be so lost to time and memory. I resolved then and there to devote some effort to making the history and politics of the experience more accessible. This book is a product of that resolution made so many years ago.

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