The First World War had an enormous impact on Ukrainian workers in Canada. Massive layoffs by resource and industrial companies swelled the ranks of the unemployed ….

At the start of the war there was also agitation [urging] from prominent western Canadian businessmen and local government officials for the mass internment of all “idle” and impoverished aliens for humanitarian and security reasons. The Dominion government, however, was not prepared to implement [carry out] a mass internment policy, largely because of the prohibitive cost of operating internment camps ….

Anglo-Canadian hostility toward militant European workers increased after the … 1917 Russian Revolution and the wave of industrial strikes of that year. In some regions, the label “alien” became synonymous with [the same as] traitor and revolutionary ….

But why did the Canadian state launch such a campaign against Ukrainian and other immigrant workers who were designated as “radical aliens?” One explanation would be to regard this … as merely an intensification of pre-war bias. Before 1914 negative stereotypes of east and south European immigrants were widespread.