

Wipe Out the Amerindians

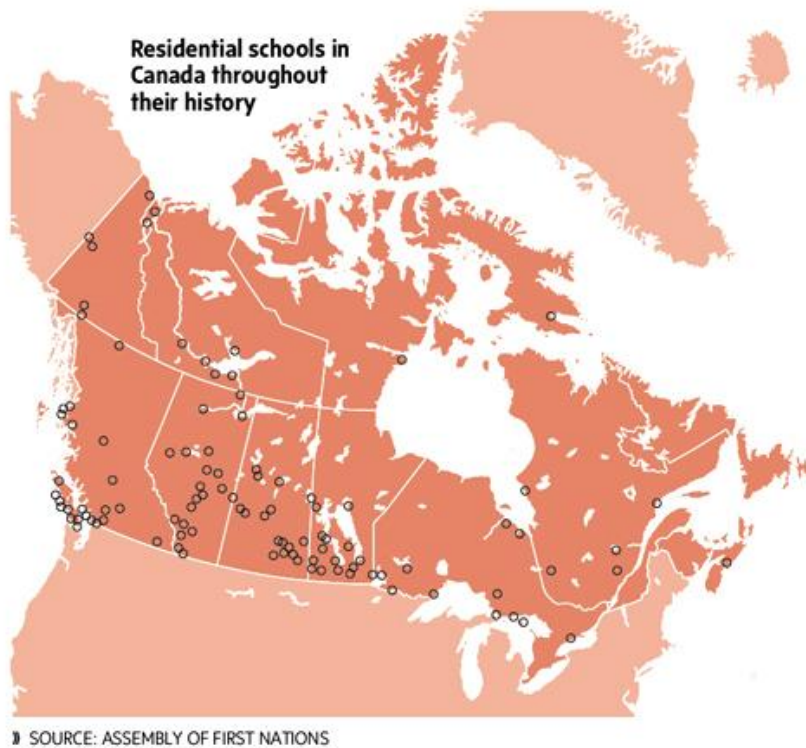


Jasper Joseph is a sixty-four-year-old native man from Port Hardy, British Columbia. His eyes still fill with tears when he remembers his cousins who were killed with lethal injections by staff at the Nanaimo Indian Hospital in 1944.

I was just eight, and they'd shipped us down from the Anglican residential school in Alert Bay to the Nanaimo Indian Hospital, the one run by the United Church. They kept me isolated in a tiny room there for more than three years, like I was a lab rat, feeding me these pills, giving me shots that made me sick. Two of my cousins made a big fuss, screaming and fighting back all the time, so the nurses gave them shots, and they both died right away. It was done to silence them. (November 10, 2000)

Unlike post-war Germans, Canadians have yet to acknowledge, let alone repent from, the genocide that we inflicted on millions of conquered people: the aboriginal men, women and children who were deliberately exterminated by our racially supremacist churches and state.

As early as November 1907, the Canadian press was acknowledging that the death rate within Indian residential schools exceeded 50% (see Appendix, Key Newspaper Articles). And yet the reality of such a massacre has been wiped clean from the public record and consciousness in Canada over the past decades. Small wonder; for that hidden history reveals a system whose aim was to destroy most native people by disease, relocation and outright murder, while "assimilating" a minority of collaborators who were trained to serve the genocidal system.



This history of purposeful genocide implicates every level of government in Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), every mainstream church, large corporations and local police, doctors and judges. The web of complicity in this killing machine was, and remains, so vast that its concealment has required an equally elaborate campaign of cover-up that has been engineered at the highest levels of power in our country; a cover-up that is continuing, especially now that eyewitnesses to murders and atrocities at the church-run native residential

"schools" have come forward for the first time.

For it was the residential "schools" that constituted the death camps of the Canadian Holocaust, and within their walls nearly one-half of all aboriginal children sent there by law died, or disappeared, according to the government's own statistics.

These 50,000 victims have vanished, as have their corpses - "like they never existed", according to one survivor. But they did exist. They were innocent children, and they were killed by beatings and torture and after being deliberately exposed to tuberculosis and other diseases by paid employees of the churches and government, according to a "Final Solution" master plan devised by the Department of Indian Affairs and the Catholic and Protestant churches.

With such official consent for manslaughter emanating from Ottawa, the churches responsible for annihilating natives on the ground felt emboldened and protected enough to declare full-scale war on non-Christian native peoples through the 20th century.

The casualties of that war were not only the 50,000 dead children of the residential schools, but the survivors, whose social condition today has been described by United Nations human rights groups as that of "a colonized people barely on the edge of survival, with all the trappings of a third-world society". (November 12, 1999)

The Holocaust is Continuing

This report is the child of a six-year independent investigation into the hidden history of genocide against aboriginal peoples in Canada. It summarizes the testimonies, documents and other evidence proving that Canadian churches, corporations and the government are guilty of intentional genocide, in violation of the United Nations Convention on Genocide, which Canada ratified in 1952 and under which it is bound by international law.



Port Alberni Catholic Cemetery

The report is a collaborative effort of nearly 30 people. And yet some of its authors must remain anonymous, particularly its aboriginal contributors, whose lives have been threatened and who have been assaulted, denied jobs and evicted from their homes on Indian reserves because of their involvement in this investigation.

As a former minister in one of the guilty institutions named in our inquiry - the United Church of Canada - I have been fired, blacklisted, threatened and publicly maligned by its officers for my attempts to uncover the story of the deaths of children at that church's Alberni residential school.

Many people have made sacrifices to produce this report, so that the world can learn of the Canadian Holocaust, and to ensure that those responsible for it are brought to justice before the International Criminal Court.

Beginning among native and low-income activists in Port Alberni, British Columbia, in the fall of 1994, this inquiry into crimes against humanity has continued in the face of death threats, assaults and the resources of church and state in Canada.

It is within the power of the reader to honour our sacrifice by sharing this story with others and refusing to participate in the institutions which deliberately killed many thousands of children.

This history of official endorsement of, and collusion in, a century or more of crimes against Canada's first peoples must not discourage us from uncovering the truth and bringing the perpetrators to justice. It is for this reason that we invite you to remember not only the 50,000 children who died in the residential school death camps, but the silent victims today who suffer in our midst for bread and justice.

(Rev.) Kevin D. Annett
Secretary
The Truth Commission into Genocide in Canada
Vancouver, British Columbia, February 1, 2001

PART ONE: *Summary of Evidence of Intentional Genocide in Canadian Residential Schools*

Article II: The intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national ethnic, racial or religious group; namely, non-Christian aboriginal peoples in Canada

The foundational purpose behind the more than one hundred Indian residential schools established in Canada by government legislation and administered by Protestant and Catholic churches was the deliberate and persistent eradication of aboriginal people and their culture, and the conversion of any surviving native people to Christianity.

This intent was enunciated in the Gradual Civilization Act of 1857 in Upper Canada, and earlier, church-inspired legislation, which defined aboriginal culture as inferior, stripped native people of citizenship and subordinated them in a separate legal category from non-Indians. This Act served as the basis for the federal Indian Act of 1874, which recapitulated the legal and moral inferiority of aboriginals and established the residential school system. The legal definition of an Indian as "an uncivilized person, destitute of the knowledge of God and of any fixed and clear belief in religion" (Revised Statutes of British Columbia, 1960) was established by these Acts and continues to the present day.

Then, as now, aboriginals were considered legal and practical non-entities in their own land and, hence, inherently expendable.

This genocidal intent was restated time and again in government legislation, church statements and the correspondence and records of missionaries, Indian agents and residential school officials (see Documentation section). Indeed, it was the very *raison d'être* of the state-sanctioned Christian invasion of traditional native territories and of the residential school system itself, which was established at the height of European expansionism in the 1880s and persisted until 1984.

By definition, this aim was genocidal, for it planned and carried out the destruction of a religious and ethnic group: all those aboriginal people who would not convert to Christianity and be culturally extinguished. Non-Christian natives were the declared target of the residential schools, which practiced wholesale ethnic cleansing under the guise of education.

As well, such "pagans" were the subject of government-funded sterilization programs administered at church-run hospitals and tuberculosis sanatoriums on Canada's west coast (see Article IId).

According to an eyewitness, Ethel Wilson of Bella Bella, BC, a United Church missionary doctor, George Darby, deliberately sterilized non-Christian Indians between 1928 and 1962 at the R. W. Large Memorial Hospital in Bella Bella. Ms Wilson, who is now deceased, stated in 1998: *Doctor Darby told me in 1952 that Indian Affairs in Ottawa was paying him for every Indian he sterilized, especially if they weren't church-goers. Hundreds of our women were sterilized by Doctor Darby, just for not going to church. (Testimony of Ethel Wilson to International Human Rights Association of American Minorities [IHRAAM] Tribunal, Vancouver, BC, June 13, 1998)*

According to Christy White, a resident of Bella Bella, records of these government-funded sterilizations at the R. W. Large Hospital were deliberately destroyed in 1995, soon after a much-publicized police investigation was to open into residential school atrocities in British Columbia. Ms White stated in 1998: *I worked at the Bella Bella hospital, and I know that Barb Brown, one of the administrators there, dumped sterilization records at sea on two occasions. Some of the records were found washed up on the beach south of town. That was just after the cops opened their investigation into the schools, in the spring of 1995. They were covering their tracks. We all knew Ottawa was funding sterilizations, but we were told to keep quiet about it. (Testimony of Christy White to Kevin Annett, August 12, 1998)*

Legislation permitting the sterilization of any residential school inmate was passed in BC in 1933 and in Alberta in 1928 (see "Sterilization Victims Urged to Come Forward" by Sabrina Whyatt, Windspeaker, August 1998). The Sexual Sterilization Act of BC allowed a school principal to permit the sterilization of any native person under his charge. As their legal guardian, the principal could thus have any native child sterilized. Frequently, these sterilizations occurred to whole groups of native children when they reached puberty, in institutions like the Provincial Training School in Red Deer, Alberta, and the Ponoka Mental Hospital. (Former nurse Pat Taylor to Kevin Annett, January 13, 2000)

Of equal historical significance is the fact that the Canadian federal government passed legislation in 1920, making it mandatory for all native children in British Columbia - the west coast of which was the least Christianised area among aboriginals in Canada - to attend residential schools, despite the fact that the same government had already acknowledged that the death rate due to communicable diseases was much higher in these schools and that, while there, the native children's "constitution is so weakened that they have no vitality to withstand disease". (A. W. Neill, West Coast Indian Agent, to Secretary of Indian Affairs, April 25, 1910)

That is, the Canadian government legally compelled the attendance of the most "pagan" and least assimilated of the native peoples in residential schools at precisely the time when the death rate in these schools had reached their pinnacle - about 40%, according to Indian Affairs officers like Dr Peter Bryce. This fact alone suggests a genocidal intent towards non-Christian aboriginals.

Article II (a): *Killing members of the group intended to be destroyed*

That aboriginal people were deliberately killed in the residential schools is confirmed by eyewitness testimonies, government records and statements of Indian agents and tribal elders. It is also strongly suggested by the bare fact that the mortality level in residential schools averaged 40%, with the deaths of more than 50,000 native children across Canada (see Bibliography, inc. the report of Dr Peter Bryce to Department of Indian Affairs Superintendent Duncan Campbell Scott, April 1909).

The fact, as well, that this death rate stayed constant across the years, and within the schools and facilities of every denomination which ran them - Roman Catholic, United, Presbyterian or Anglican - suggests that common conditions and policies were behind these deaths. For every second child to die in the residential school system eliminates the possibility that these deaths were merely accidental or the actions of a few depraved individuals acting alone without protection.

Yet not only was this system inherently murderous, but it operated under the legal and structural conditions which encouraged, aided and abetted murder and which were designed to conceal these crimes.

The residential schools were structured like concentration camps, on a hierarchical military basis under the absolute control of a principal appointed jointly by church and state, and who was usually a clergyman. This principal was even given legal guardianship rights over all students during the early 1930s by the federal government, at least in west coast residential schools. This action by the government was highly unusual, considering that native people were by law the legal wards of the state, and had been so since the commencement of the Indian Act. And yet such absolute power of the school principal over the lives of aboriginal students was a requirement of any system whose killing of aboriginals had to be disguised and later denied.

The residential schools were constructed behind this deception in such a way that the deaths and atrocities that constitute genocide could be hidden and eventually explained. In the Canadian context, this meant a policy of gradual but deliberate extermination under a protective legal umbrella, administered by "legitimate and trusted" institutions: the mainline churches.

It should be clarified from the outset that the decisions concerning the residential schools, including those which caused the deaths of children and resulting cover-ups, were officially sanctioned by every level of the churches that ran them and the government which created them. Only such sanction could have allowed the deaths to continue as they did - and the perpetrators to feel protected enough to operate with impunity for many years within the system, which they universally did.