

Genocidal Precedents for Canadian Concentration Camps

By Richard Sanders

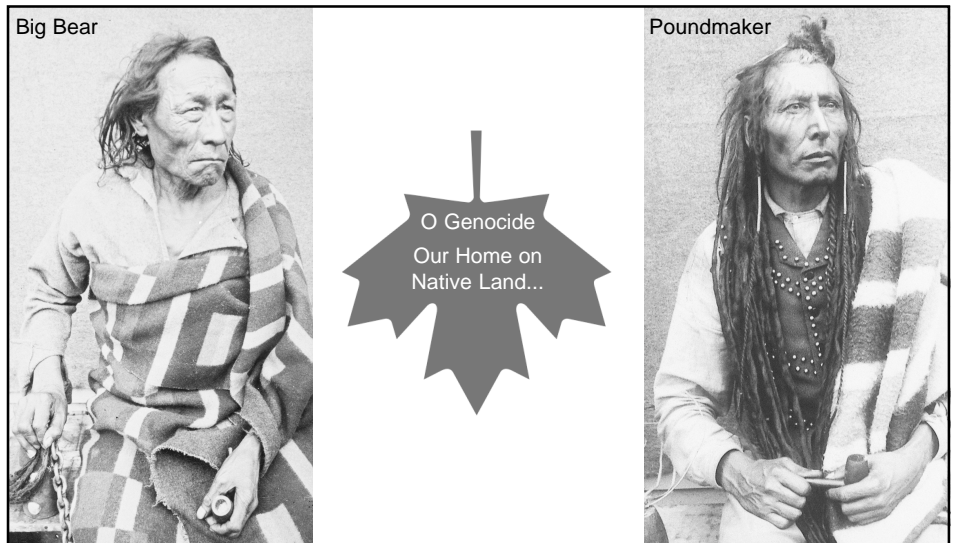
WWI was not the first time that thousands of people had been forced into captivity for threatening the “peace, order and good government of Canada.”¹ In fact, Conservative and Liberal governments alike already had a well-established *modus operandi* that used mass captivity to subjugate so-called “foreign” enemies on the homefront.

Canada’s 20th-century internment camps did not arise in a vacuum. They continued a long-standing tradition of forcing targeted populations into isolated rural locations across the country. Canada’s system of mass confinement followed the US model for segregating Aboriginals into remote ghettos, called reserves. But this was only one weapon in a multidimensional war to destroy First Nations. Besides restricting physical movements, elites used a diversity of tactics, including residential schools, to hold Indigenous people in place. They were also confined within the bounds of a genocidal legal framework that restrained religious, linguistic, social, economic and political freedoms.

Such multidisciplinary genocide cannot be committed by a few sociopaths. Large scale atrocities can only be achieved by an *institutionalised* sociopathy. Those with “Antisocial Personality Disorder” are defined by the US Department of Health as individuals with “a long-term pattern of manipulating, exploiting or violating the rights of others. This behavior is often criminal.”² When state agencies, NGOs or corporations run programs or businesses that inflict these same abuses—*albeit on a vastly more devastating scale*—they go undiagnosed, at least by those rendered prisoner by the reassuring narratives of captive institutions.

Those who are able to free themselves from the confining frames of thought and language imposed by sociopathic institutions, sometimes dare to speak out against the normalisation of antisocial policies. By trying to liberate those who remain enslaved within the narrative webs spun by abusive institutions, activists may be diagnosed as rebels, radicals, conspiracy theorists or, ironically, as psychopaths with “Antisocial Personality Disorder.”

A century ago, racist and xenophobic views were the norm in Canada. Widespread antisocial pathology was pandemic throughout the country. The largest and most highly-respected religious bodies



Following the genocidal US model of “aggressive civilisation,” Canada concentrated Indians in remote ghettos called reservations, held them captive in Christian schools, confined them with laws restricting religious, linguistic, economic & political rights, and framed them with racist narratives.

Photos: Two Cree chiefs held captive by Canada during the Northwest Rebellion, 1885

were captivated by this social illness. This is well illustrated by the Churches’ enthusiastic collaboration with government agencies to plan, conduct, justify and cover-up the genocidal programs of mass captivity inflicted on Indigenous peoples.

But long before Aboriginals were forced into the confinement of reserves and residential schools in the 1880s, Canadians happily profited from the institution of chattel slavery. For two centuries, Blacks and Indians were subjected to the “legalized” captivity and forced labour practised by British and French colonialists. While prominent members of Canada’s Catholic and AngloProtestant churches owned slaves, these institutions also helped perpetuate slavery with Biblical narratives to rationalise their antisocial pathology.

These long-standing patterns of racist, institutionalised abuse and exploitation are the sociopathic precedents for Canada’s widely-supported, mass internment of foreigners and political radicals that began with the pretext of WWI.

Perhaps the most alarming aspect in this history of sociopathy is that progressive, reform-minded Christians—both Protestant and Catholic—were entrapped by Canada’s mass psychosis. Although genuinely sincere in their work, missionaries were restrained by the straightjacket of a widespread, cultural pathology.

Those captured heart and mind by predatory institutions, and working within the strict confines of their myths and nar-

ratives, felt compelled to “uplift” peoples who they saw as inferior, uncivilised, un-Christian and unCanadian. Unable to perceive social reality, and blind to the horrors that their actions were having on others, well-meaning Christians were spellbound by the sociopathy of Canada’s domineering Eurocentric delusions of grandeur.

This social illness went far beyond mere racism and ethnocentrism to become an enslaving cultural narcissism. Those enthralled by the anti-social narratives of Canada’s dominant religious and political institutions were confined by arrogant hubris, an entitled sense of superiority, and a fearmongering paranoia that “strangers” are inherently inferior, dangerous and evil.

Hamstrung by myths of national exceptionalism, many Canadians took up the imperialist call of the “white man’s burden...to serve your captives’ need,” those “new-caught, sullen peoples, Half-devil and half-child.”³ Good Christians justified their genocidal efforts to rend other cultures asunder, with such altruistic goals as civilisation, education and morality. Immured by grand imperial delusions, Canadian nationalists believed that they were building a model country that was bound by destiny to lead the world. As Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier proclaimed in 1904, to cheers from Liberals and Conservatives alike, “the Twentieth Century belongs to Canada.”⁴ This nonpartisan fantasy of national superiority was ingrained, not only in the patrician psyche,

but in the mindset of mainstream citizens. The country was gripped by a widespread social malady that can aptly be called the Canada Syndrome. (See pp.2-4.)

The delusion that as a superior nation we should sow our “Canadian values” abroad, grew from an earlier narrative meme of so-called “Christian values.” George Emery, in his pioneering history of prairie Methodism, described the prevailing AngloProtestant hegemony saying Canadians believed “Christian values would be menaced throughout the dominion if the west, with its enormous material potential, were not won for Christ.”⁵ (See “Occupation(al) Psychosis...,” p.18.)

Social Gospel and Social Progress

Some of the loudest voices of Canadian nativism were leaders of the Social Gospel, a progressive strain of Christianity that prospered from the 1880s until the early 1920s. Historian Richard Allen defined this reform movement, by saying the

“social gospel rested on the premise that Christianity was a social religion, concerned ...with the quality of human relations on this earth.... [I]t was a call for men to find the meaning of their lives in seeking...the Kingdom of God in the very fabric of society.”⁶

The Social Gospel included “advocates of direct social assistance; social purists; those who advocated a change of attitude as the means to social change; state interventionists; and socialists.”⁷

Leaders of the Social Gospel were usually white, middle-class, AngloProtestant missionaries or clergymen. Driven to “uplift” the less fortunate, these reformers wanted to help inferior classes and races to deal with growing social, moral and economic problems of industrialisation.

The Social Gospel, said Mariana Valverde, was an effort to “humanize and/or Christianize the political economy of urban-industrial capitalism.” Valverde is a University of Toronto criminology professor who authored a classic text on Canada’s social purity movement. “Prophets” of the Social Gospel, she has said

“were generally moderately left of centre, but included such mainstream figures as W.L.Mackenzie King, who ... was influenced by social gospel ideas in his popular 1919 book, *Industry and Humanity*.”⁸



Anglican residential school, Moose Factory, James Bay, 1950.

Before becoming Canada’s longest-serving Prime Minister, King was “an ardent social gospeller,” said historians Douglas Francis and Chris Kitzen. King believed that his political mission on earth was divinely inspired. Calling himself “a true servant of God helping to make the Kingdom of Heaven prevail on Earth,” King explained: “This is what I love politics for.”⁹

Methodism Led the Way

Most Social Gospel leaders belonged to the Methodist Church, which adopted its “Social Creed” in 1908. Capturing the reformist spirit of the Social Gospel, it was a rallying cry for the whole progressive movement. The Creed declared it “the duty of all Christian people to concern themselves directly with certain practical industrial problems.” Among these were achieving “the right of workers to some protection against the hardships often resulting from the swift crises of industrial change,” “the abolition of child labor,” and “the abatement of poverty.” Methodists also offered a “pledge of sympathy and of help” to those “seeking to lift the crushing burdens of the poor, and to reduce the hardships and uphold the dignity of labor.”¹⁰

Canada’s Methodist Church was a powerful force in Anglocentric settler culture. Like an invasive non-native species, it spread quickly across western Canada, and had a devastating impact on Indigenous peoples. Between 1891 and 1911, Canada’s prairie population rose almost fivefold, from 220,000 to 1.32 million.¹¹ Between 1896 and 1914, during the Social-Gospel heyday, there was a tripling in the prairie Methodist fold, and its churches grew in number from 180 to 562.¹²

Emery described prairie Methodists as “part of the predatory white settler population”¹³ that did not lament the devastation of the Aboriginal population. In

fact, he points out that: “During the 1870s and 1880s Methodist missionaries acted as advance agents for the white settler society. They favoured the slaughter of the buffalo herds, the government’s native treaties and...the reserve system.”¹⁴

To aid in this genocide, the church was happy to cozy up to Canada’s economic elites. As political scientist Kenneth McNaught said, “the Methodist church in the 1880’s and 1890’s was consolidating itself as a church of the well-to-do.”¹⁵ Methodists were later central in forming the United Church of Canada (UCC). In 1925, when Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches merged, the UCC took over the fifteen Methodist and nine Presbyterian residential schools.¹⁶

Teaching “The Three Cs”

As Methodists and other Christians spread across the Canadian prairies in the 1880s, they brought a growth in residential schools. Rather than imparting the traditional “Three Rs,” church schools targeted Aboriginal children with “The Three Cs,” Civilise, Christianise and Canadianise.

Of the sixteen Methodist residential schools built between 1838 and 1975, all but two were in the West. Their earliest efforts to “uplift” Indian children began with two Ontario schools in 1838 and 1848. Its first three residential schools in western Canada began in the late 1870s. Six more were founded there in the 1880s, two in the 1890s, another two in 1900, and their last one opened in 1919.¹⁷ Using opening and closing dates of these well-meaning, but genocidal, Methodist schools, we can calculate that each school operated for an average of 66 years. Cumulatively then, the 14 Methodist residential schools in western Canada inflicted the “Three Cs” for a total of 925 years. The toll on Indian lives is still being felt.

Among the Methodists who lavished praise upon missionaries for their fine efforts to Canadianise, civilise and Christianise the Indians under their control, was Rev.J.S.Woodsworth. In his Social-Gospel classic *Strangers Within Our Gates* (1908), Woodsworth noted that:

“Much missionary work, evangelistic, educational, industrial and medical, has been done among the Indians. Many are

devout Christians living exemplary lives, but there are still 10,202 Indians in our Dominion, as grossly pagan as were their ancestors, or...half civilized, only to be debauched.”¹⁸

Strangely enough, Woodsworth’s book on “strangers” and “newcomers” to Canada included a section on Indians. It relies heavily on two tracts from the Methodist Department of Missionary Literature: *Indian Education in the North West*, by Rev. Thompson Ferrier, and *The British Columbia Indian and his Future*, by Rev. R. Whittington. Ferrier’s work concluded:

“The *Indian problem* is not solved, but it must not be given up, and it need not be deserted in despair until there is a proper and *final solution*. I believe it possible to civilize, educate and Christianize the Indian.”¹⁹ (Emphasis added.)

Rev. Whittington, who led the Methodist Indian Missions in BC, also praised his Church’s residential schools by speaking of “the noble band of teachers, who daily and quietly are really laying the foundations of the future in the souls as well as the minds of our Indian children.”²⁰

The rapid population growth of prairie settlers and the boom in churches and residential schools, benefitted the imperial project known as Canada. Westward expansion of Canadian “civilisation” was a national crusade of Biblical proportions. Methodists, like Woodsworth, with their blessed rage for Social Gospel progress, took themselves and their godly mission far too seriously. “[I]n concert with other Protestants, Methodists were the self-appointed guardians of Protestant Christian values in society,” said Emery. “[T]hey assumed that the perpetuation of Protestantism was vital to the nation-building process.”²¹ As prominent Presbyterian Social Gospeller Rev. Charles Gordon proclaimed in 1909, “it is the Christian Church ...more than all other forces put together, that has to do with the making of a nation.”²²

The Methodist Church, Emery wrote, also exhibited “an aggressive nationalism” that “opposed the penetration of the west by rival cultures from French Canada and Europe.” The church fought hard for English-language public schools because it was preoccupied with assimilating Francophones and other nonAnglo aliens. Methodists also created missions to “Protestantize the Europeans.”²³ These were tasked with assimilating east Europeans, mostly Ukrainians, in the so-called “Austrian Missions” of northern Alberta, and Winnipeg’s All People’s Mission²⁴ where Woodsworth worked (1908-1913).

Nation-Building Myths

The role of religious narratives in Canada’s nation-building experiment is explored by Douglas Francis and Chris Kitzen. In *The Prairie West as Promised Land*, they show how Biblical illusions were used to express and structure the narrative myths of Anglo settlers. The “Promised-Land” image that they fabricated “became the dominant perception of the region during the formative years,” from 1850 to WWI.²⁵

Francis and Kitzen see three main versions of the Christian mythology that captured Canadian settlers’ imagination:

(1) The “myth pictured the Prairie West as an Edenic paradise” that was “flowing with milk and honey,”

(2) “Social gospellers believed that the Prairie West was destined to be a New Jerusalem,” where “virtuous and morally upright” settlers could establish their “Kingdom of God on Earth,” and

(3) The prairies were a “land of opportunity” “free of the limitations of privilege and traditions that hampered advancement.” They saw it “as a *tabula rasa*—a blank sheet—upon which each individual could write his or her own destiny of success, wealth and happiness.”²⁶

Trapping Natives & Nativists

But all was not perfect in the Social Gospel paradise, especially for Aboriginals. While building a “New Jerusalem” paved the way for Christianity to be writ large across the “empty” prairies, it was a death knell for First Nations. Long before Anglo-Protestants turned their bigotry against east Europeans in WWI, they had pegged Indians as the needy targets of uplift. Penned as primitive savages and heathens, Aboriginals were the first nations to be forced into mass captivity by Canadian settlers.

From the first visits of Europeans to what they came to call Canada, Indigenous people had been kidnapped, enslaved and converted. European monarchs and their churches authorised imperial agents to conquer and control the human and natural resources of the new-found lands. Forced to relocate their communities, confined to reservations, coerced into residential schools and bound by the Indian Act, Aboriginal people have been held physically, socially and legally captive throughout Canadian history.

But members of Canada’s captor society were also held hostage. Trapped within the narrow-minded confines of a racist worldview, many settlers were bound by the nativism that riddled Canada’s larg-

est religious, economic and political bodies. Among the leading advocates of this xenophobia were the Social Gospel’s top influence peddlars. Their bigotry against Indians was as boundless as the prairie sky. Thus shackled, Social Gospellers mounted no resistance to Canada’s genocide of Aboriginals. They saw no need.

In fact, these progressives were bound and determined to administer the very injustices that they should have been protesting. Brimming with good intentions, many well-meaning souls stepped forward to clear the path toward what they saw as heaven on earth. But instead, they forged a genocidal road to hell for all Indigenous peoples standing in their way.

By the late 1800s, Canada’s crusade to expand Britain’s imperial vision across the prairies, was in full swing. To implement this plunderous policy, which dispossessed Indians of their land, Canadian authorities imposed severe restrictions on Aboriginal mobility and culture. Churches and state institutions united to impose genocidal programs of physical captivity and cultural assimilation that could only succeed with the willing participation of many, well-intentioned Canadians.

Bound by Legal Fictions

The ludicrous idea that western Canada was an empty slate, devoid of humanity, was a restatement of the ancient “Discovery Doctrine.” For 400 years, this legal fiction justified the genocidal conquest of the Americas for the profit of European monarchs and Church authorities.

The Discovery Doctrine was grounded in a much older legal fiction, called *terra nullius*. Originally used by lawyers in ancient Rome, this Latin legalese refers to empty, barren or vacant territory belonging to no one. During the “Age of Discovery,” the Catholic Church redefined *terra nullius* to encompass new lands coveted by European monarchs. As the Manitoba Justice Inquiry, noted:

“*terra nullius* was expanded...to include any area devoid of ‘civilized’ society. In order to reflect colonial desires, the New World was said by some courts to fall within this expanded definition.”²⁷

Stretching this term’s boundaries began a litany of new crimes to enclose and capture Aboriginals. This framing of Indigenous peoples was aptly described by Canada’s Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, as a “restrictive constitutional circle drawn around First Nations by the governance sections of the Indian Act.”²⁸

Imprisoned on Reserves

Erased from the metaphoric map, like chalk dust from the supposed *tabula rasa* of the prairies, Aborigines were swept off the land in an ethnic-cleansing campaign that confined them to reserves. These were Canada's first POW concentration camps. Corraling Indians into captivity kept them out of the way of European settlers who were then being poured into the prairies.

As James Daschuk said in *Clearing the Plains: Disease, Politics of Starvation, and the Loss of Aboriginal Life*: "Reserves became centres of incarceration as the infamous 'pass system' was imposed to control movements of the treaty population." And, as Sir John A. MacDonald told Parliament, we "are doing all that we can by refusing food until the Indians are on the

verge of starvation, to reduce the expense."²⁹

More than a century later, the Canadian government finally admitted:

"The notorious pass system was never part of the formal Indian Act regime. It began as a result of informal discussions among government officials in the early 1880s in response to the threat that prairie Indians might forge a pan-Indian alliance against Canadian authorities. Designed to prevent Indians on the prairies from leaving their reserves, its immediate goal was to inhibit their mobility. Under the system, Indians were permitted to leave their reserves only if they had a written pass from the local Indian agent."³⁰

To the Mounties, the blatant illegality of enforcing mass internment was irrelevant. Under the Indian Act, Indians were not even allowed to hire lawyers to challenge

the Canadian government's crimes.

Besides using the "Pass System" to arrest Indians caught "off the reservation," Mounties also jailed them for trespassing and for vagrancy. This was appreciated by leading Methodist Social Gospellers like J.S. Woodsworth. In *Strangers Within Our Gates* (1909), he used a five-page quotation from L.M. Fortier, Chief Clerk of Canada's Immigration Department. Speaking of the Mounties, he said: "Colonizing the North-West would be a very different matter without the aid of this splendid organization." Using his racist wit to lump together crooks with all Indians found guilty of being "off reserve," Fortier said Canada's Mounties kept a "sharp lookout" for "smugglers, horse thieves, criminals, wandering Indians, and such like gentry."³¹

The Occupation(al) Psychosis of Empire-Building Missionaries

By Richard Sanders

The Canadian mission to expand the British empire was a springboard for spreading "Christian values" around the world. Capturing the Canadian west was seen as a moral exercise to build the religious muscles of civilisation. Fixated on their Social-Gospel mission, progressives took up the "white man's burden" to uplift heathens and inferior races wherever they could be found.

"[I]f Prairie society were given Christian foundations, Canada could become a mighty base for exporting the Christian evangel on a global scale," said historian George Emery, so that "Canada could participate fully in the Anglo-Saxon mission to bring about the Kingdom of God on earth."¹ As its "Board of Missions" reported in 1908, "the mission of the Methodist Church is to save Canada, that through Canada we may do our part toward saving the world."²

By 1919, Canada's Protestant churches supported 768 overseas missionaries in ten countries, at a cost of about \$2 million (\$25.5 million in 2015). This, said historian Robert Wright, "rendered Canada the greatest missionary nation in Protestant Christendom on a per-capita basis."³ This global "missionary enterprise," he continued, "owed much ...to the generosity of wealthy Canadian businessmen in the Layman's Missionary Movement." Much of this largesse came from the pockets of "executives, brokers and lawyers" in Toronto's three richest churches.⁴ Besides their devotion to spreading "The Word," these businessmen were avid promoters

(and beneficiaries) of empire. Being enslaved by their blind faith in both religion and capitalism, Canadian businessmen and missionaries shared an inability to see beyond the shackles of their cultural programs.

In 1918, when economist/sociologist Thorstein Veblen⁵ coined the phrase "trained incapacity," he applied the term to capitalists, critiquing their "habitual addiction to pecuniary... considerations." Arguing that businessmen have a "trained inability to apprehend any other than the immediate pecuniary bearing of their manoeuvres," he said their "habitual employment... holds them more rigorously and consistently to...pecuniary valuation."⁶

Veblen's book also described how religion provides "national strength" to "predatory cultures," which were "essentially... parasitic..., despotic, and, with due training, highly superstitious..." Religion, Veblen maintained, "fosters the national pride of a people chosen by the Most High," and "trains the population in habits of subordination and loyalty."⁷

Veblen's idea of "trained incapacity" has been widely adapted. In 1931, philosopher/psychologist John Dewey applied it to ethnology and created the phrase "occupational psychosis." In 1935, literary theorist Kenneth Burke used Veblen and Dewey's work to explain many maladaptive beliefs and behaviours. In 1937, Belgian sociologist Daniel Warnotte applied it to his study of "professional deformation" in bureaucracies. US sociologist Robert Merton added to the idea in 1949 when studying dysfunctional "overconformity" and inflexibility in large institu-

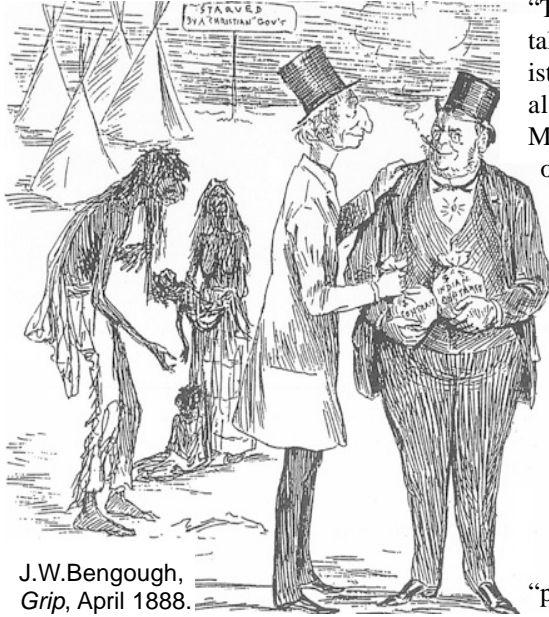
tions. Recently, theology professor Birgit Herppich has tried to use the idea of "occupational psychosis" to reduce "cultural bias in missionary education."⁸ Using the "trained incapacity" theory to improve missionary success rates reveals a learned inability to see that "missionary education" is, *in itself*, a clear form of "cultural bias."

Missionaries are preoccupied with the task of educating nonbelievers. This is not a mere job, career or *occupation*. It is a self-righteous calling or mission that can seize, capture, take over or possess those who occupy this field of work. Trained in the business of conversion, missionaries may become so engrossed, fixated or occupied by their task that they are blinded to its harmful effects. For example, being incapable (or unwilling) to see that residential schools were the tools of cultural genocide, missionaries gave glowing tales to bless their efforts to educate heathens.

Such narratives were blindly taken as gospel by many who, though outside the missionary field, professed Christianity. Because political and economic elites, occupying many professions, adopted missionary beliefs, the vocation's trained incapacities spread widely and infected many huge institutions. The missionary mindset, having escaped its professional confines, was able to seize settler culture as a whole.

On a social level, missionary attitudes were central to Canada's colonial *occupation*, that political habit of seizing, occupying, controlling and profiting from lands already settled by others. Missionaries rendered progressive-sounding narratives to justify the containment of Indians, atheist socialists and other threats to

Although racism was the norm in Woodsworth's circles, it was opposed by radicals, not just with words but with actions. In 1906, when local 526 of the anarchist Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) was formed in Vancouver, it was led by Squamish First Nation activists. Though mostly Indigenous, this Lumber Handlers' union also had Chinese, Ha-



J.W. Bengough,
Grip, April 1888.

“Christian Statesmanship”

Sir John: Indians starving? Oh, well.... I'll see you don't come to want...Mr. Contractor.”

[Note: Sign reads “Starved by a Christian Gov't”]

the status quo. This Christian evangel has now been replaced with the Good News that global salvation can be found by spreading “Canadian values.”

References/Notes

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waiian, Anglo and Chilean members.³²

Capitalism and religion were under attack by atheist radicals like Jack London. In *The Iron Heel*, published one year before Woodsworth's xenophobic tract, London's hero was Ernest Everhard. In arguing with a well-meaning but naive Bishop, he said the “Indian is not so brutal and savage as the capitalist class” and noted “The Church condones the frightful brutality and savagery with which the capitalist class treats the working class.” London also quoted Presbyterian, Baptist and Methodist leaders to prove the “Church's outspoken defense of chattel slavery.”³³

London was influenced by US Socialist Party leader Eugene Debs,³⁴ an atheist cofounder of the IWW. He compared the state's control of unions with their control of Indians. Capitalists, he said in 1906, tolerated organised labour “so long, only, as it keeps within ‘proper bounds,’ but ... put [it] down summarily the moment its members, like the remnants of Indian tribes on the western plains, venture beyond the limits of their reservations.”³⁵

By keeping Indians within their “proper bounds,” Canada's pass system contributed to genocide on every level: physical, economic, religious, social, psychological and political. Confinement to reserves cut off access to food and other resources, blocked trade and commerce, stopped travel to religious and social events, prevented the building of alliances, and stopped parents from visiting children kidnapped and held in government-financed, church-run residential schools.

Penned in by Education

Residential schools were seen as essential to progress. To Social-Gospel reformers on the cutting edge of Canada's western frontier, the “Three Cs” were the key to teaching Indians about the culture of their superiors. As UBC Political Science professor Barbara Arneil has said, the “driving force” behind this education was “to foster ‘civic virtue,’ to ‘morally uplift,’ and to build ‘civilization’ through the progressive vehicle of education and the *social gospel*.”³⁶ (Emphasis added.)

While the government and its religious agents sometimes differed on how to impose the “Three Cs,” they collaborated well. John MacLean, a Methodist missionary in Alberta, who became a public school inspector,³⁷ wrote in 1899 that the government wanted residential schools to “teach the Indians first to work and then to pray.” MacLean however said mission-

aries wanted to “christianize first and then civilize.”³⁸ Either way, the Three-C process was genocide. While First Nations were dispossessed of land and culture, Canada succeeded in expanding the boundaries of the British empire. To political, economic and religious elites, it was a win-win-win solution to the “Indian problem” that they saw as a major obstacle to “progress.”

Whatever their differences, church and state agreed on the value of residential schools in destroying the symbolic core of Aboriginal cultures, their languages. MacLean became the Methodist Church's chief archivist and chief librarian at the Social Gospel's Wesley College in Winnipeg (1922-1928). (See p.26.) He said that: “It is the desire of the Government and the missionaries that the English language should become the only medium of communication.”³⁹ In *Canadian Savage Folk* (1896), MacLean further remarked that:

“There can be no legitimate method of stamping out the native language except by a wise policy of teaching English in the schools, and allowing the Indian tongue to die out.”⁴⁰

Canada's religious schools for Indians were a major weapon in the all-out war to exterminate Aboriginal cultures. During the 1880s, Canada engineered a “Perfect Storm” to wash the prairies clean of First Nations and to usher in a golden age for European settlers. As the government's Truth and Reconciliation Commission noted in 2012:

“From 1883 onward, the federal government began funding a growing number of industrial schools in the Canadian West. It also continued to provide regular funding to the church-run boarding schools. The residential system grew with the country. As Euro-Canadians settled the prairies, BC, and the North, increasing numbers of Aboriginal children were placed in residential schools.”⁴¹

In 1884, after a report contracted by Sir John A. MacDonald, Canada began pouring money into the Churches' existing program of residential schools. The report, written by Nicholas F. Davin, a poet/playwright/lawyer and newspaperman-cum-Tory MP, urged the Canadian government to copy the assimilation plan of the US government's euphemistically-named “Peace Commission.” He said this US program, “known as... ‘Aggressive Civilization,’ had been “amply tested” since 1869. Its “principal feature,” he said, was the “industrial school.” The “chief thing to attend to in dealing with the less civilized or wholly barbarous tribes,” Davin said, “was to

separate the children from the parents.”⁴²

Another feature of “Aggressive Civilization” was the concentration and confinement of Indians. As Davin said, “the Indians should, as far as practicable, be consolidated on few reservations.” Canada’s Aboriginal policies were soon dominated by mass captivity, both physically on reserves, and culturally by church schools. Christianity was absolutely central to the genocidal plan. Europeans, said Davin, were “civilized races whose whole civilization...is based on religion.” Praising their “patient heroism,” he said the “first and greatest stone in the foundation of the quasi-civilization of the Indians ...was laid by missionaries.” Davin extolled their schools as “monuments of religious zeal and heroic self-sacrifice.”⁴³

After Davin’s report on “Aggressive Civilization,” the state boosted funding to church-run Indian schools in the western Canada from \$962 in 1877, to \$53,000 in 1886, and \$226,000 in 1906.⁴⁴ (In 2015 figures, this was \$39,000, \$2 million and \$5.4 million, respectively.) These church schools were cheap yet effective bricks in the apartheid wall that kept Aboriginals out of the “Peaceable Kingdom.”

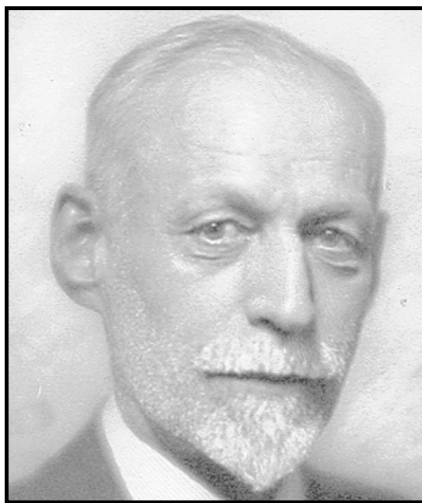
Davin may not have identified himself a Social Gospeller, but he did have a “progressive” side. In 1895, he introducing a bill to allow women (white ones, at least) to vote. Although unsuccessful, Davin’s bill sparked the only full-fledged Commons’ debate on (white) women’s suffrage between the 1880s and WWI.⁴⁵

Davin was influenced by his lover Kate Hayes, with whom he had a long affair and two children. Like other Social Gospellers in the “social purity” movement, Hayes used religion, class and ethnicity to belittle others. She believed, said York professor Kym Bird, that “non-Anglo-Canadians were a godless impure breed that required assimilation and civilization into middle-class Anglo-Canadian values.”⁴⁶

These “Canadian values” taught citizens not only to ignore the genocide of residential schools, but to see them as proof of the Church’s benevolence towards godless savages. But, as David Langtry, the Acting Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission stated:

“Wilful blindness to the horrors of the schools was government policy. Dr. Peter Bryce, hired by the...government in 1907 to report on health conditions at residential schools in western Canada, found that in Alberta the mortality rate was a staggering 50%.

“Ottawa’s response was to fire



Bryce, abolish the position, stop reporting and repress the facts. Shortly afterwards, it became mandatory for all Aboriginal children to attend residential schools.”⁴⁷

Bryce is now being celebrated by progressive Canadians for exposing the negligent, if not deliberate, spread of TB through the schools. However, this narrative turns a blind eye to Bryce’s overt support for cultural genocide. The “wandering bands of Indians would still have been savages,” said Bryce in 1907, “had it not been for the heroic devotion of those missionaries.” His report also stated that the “story” of Canada did not sufficiently credit Europeans for “transforming the Indian aborigines into members of a civilized society and loyal subjects of the King.”⁴⁸

Occupied and Preoccupied

First Nations were defrauded in one of the largest land grabs in the history of imperial civilisation. Central to this Canadian success story was a social-engineering scheme that imposed severe limits on Aboriginal mobility, while promoting a massive influx of European immigrants.

Newcomers, including many east Europeans, were shifted onto the prairie playing field like so many little pawns in the “Great Game” of empire. This achieved Canada’s nation-building goals by:

- (1) Removing First Nations’ peoples from their traditional territories,
- (2) Displacing them with new Canadian settlers whose presence imposed a false sovereignty over the stolen land, and
- (3) Using other newcomers as a menial labour class to be exploited on farms, and in mines, lumber operations and huge infrastructure projects like railways.

Members of Canada’s mainstream society aided and abetted not only the genocide of Indigenous peoples but the rapid assimilation of nonAngloSaxons. But be-

J.S.Woodsworth’s Social Gospel classic, *Strangers Within Our Gates* (1908) dealt with Canada’s “motley crowd of immigrants.” In his section on Indians, whom he called “savages,” he praised the Churches’ “missionary work, evangelistic, educational, industrial and medical,” and reported that although many Indians

“are devout Christians living exemplary lives,...there are still 10,202 Indians in our Dominion, as grossly pagan as were their ancestors, or...half civilized, only to be debauched.”

cause good, decent, ordinary people do not generally want to collaborate in callous anti-social enterprises, the nefarious nature of Canada’s imperial project had to be kept hidden. Canadians had to be convinced that their grand national project was not only morally justified, but essential to human progress. The narratives that evolved to rationalise and cover up Canadian crimes, relied on the entitled sense of superiority that preoccupied AngloProtestant thinking.

Canada’s nation-building myths were built on the firm bedrock of religious and political delusions. The self-image that possessed the prevailing public mindset was of a new nation, rich not only in “Christian values” but in Britain’s hallowed, constitutional monarchy. Accepting this mirage required a studied ignorance of imperialism. Besides turning a blind eye to the empire’s many wars, believing in the fictive Peaceable Kingdom meant blissfully ignoring the savage treatment of Indians and Canada’s slave-like exploitation of aliens, especially nonAngloSaxons.

Out of Sight, Out of [One’s] Mind

Behind the rich, dream-like mirage of a Heaven-on-Earth paradise that the Anglo-Protestant mainstream believed they were creating in Canada, there lurked the reality of a living hell for First Nations. Although reserves were places of captivity, torment, deprivation and starvation, this truth was largely hidden from mainstream Canadian consciousness. Being geographically removed from the dominant settler society, reserves—and those trapped on them—were easy to ignore. Other than Mounties, missionaries, and other agents of government, few from the AngloProtestant community ever visited reservations.

So, keeping Aboriginals confined to reserves not only facilitated European occupation, it also swept natives under a

mental rug. Keeping Indians hidden—out of both sight and mind—helped settlers to avoid unsettling qualms of conscience. Just *seeing* the living conditions of those forced onto reserves, let alone *hearing* their disturbing narratives of genocide, might have upset some settler's blind faith in the powerful national mythology that building Canada was a God-inspired enterprise.

Hiding Indians on reserves shielded European settlers from the mental disease that might arise if they realised their complicity, witting or not, in Canadian crimes against humanity. Cognitive dissonance was also avoided by non-physical means. The physical *boundary lines* drawn around reserves were not as effective in segregating Aboriginals from European settlers' as the *storylines* of superiority that separated Indians from mainstream Canada. The official narratives of church and state created virtually insurmountable walls of apartheid between the cultural worlds inhabited by Canada's two main solitudes.

First Nations have also been held in place with linguistic weapons. Canada's religious and political institutions not only penned Aboriginals in place with such slurs as "primitives," "heathens" and "savages," they also framed them as "strangers" within the "Peaceable Kingdom."

Old Narratives, New Enemies

Canada's largest political and religious institutions developed effective myths and narratives to rationalise their use of structural violence against Indigenous peoples. During the 20th century, lessons learned from the physical, social and legal segregation of Aboriginals—and the old narratives that had evolved to justify these diverse forms of mass captivity—were put to use against a whole new set of enemies. With WWI and the Russian Revolution, east Europeans and particularly "Reds" soon replaced the "Red Man" as the chosen enemy of both church and state. New wine was placed in old bottles.

Although the "foreign" enemy had changed, symptoms of Canada's Settler Syndrome—that mass hysteria which possessed mainstream Anglo-Protestant culture—remained intact. The racist and xenophobic belief systems that permeated the country's leading institutions continued unscathed, as did the popular narratives and myths of Canadian exceptionalism.

While the vivid, social pathology of Canadian narcissism continued to capture the imagination of Conservative- and Liberal-Party elites, it was also the norm

within Social Gospel circles. Even those heroic trendsetters on the vanguard of this reformist Christian movement, like Rev. J.S. Woodsworth, were shackled and enslaved by Canada's national delusion.

Canada's dominant culture believed it was their noble mission to civilise and Christianise those seen as their inferiors. Citizens on the right, left and centre all believed that they could not stand idly by while Canada was besieged by Indians, east Europeans, "Reds" or other "foreign" threats to the national good. Enslaved by narratives of "Christian values" and west European superiority, captives of the so-called "Peaceable Kingdom" suspended their disbelief in Canada's fictive myths. In doing so they were able to keep calm and carry on imposing the audacious felonies of their self-righteous imperium.

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