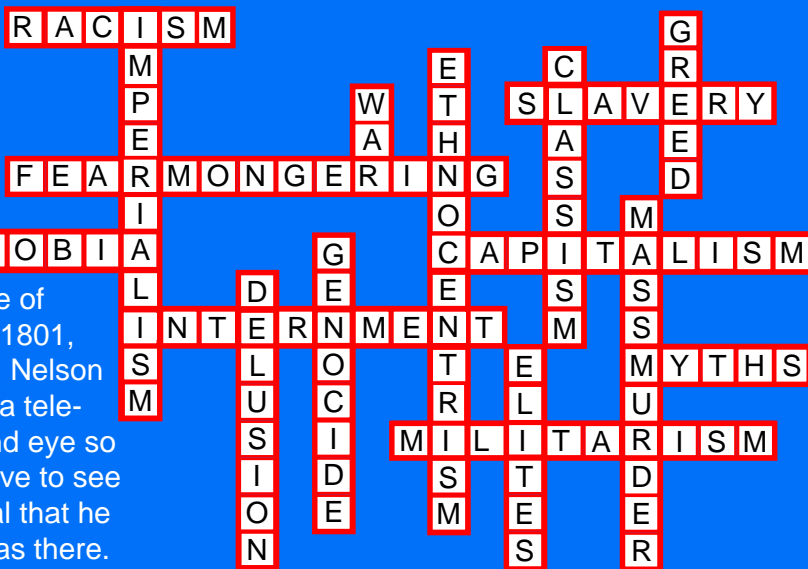




Turning a Blind-eye

I really do not see the problem

During the Battle of Copenhagen in 1801, Britain's Admiral Nelson deliberately put a telescope to his blind eye so he would not have to see the retreat signal that he already knew was there.



The Canada Syndrome

Only by turning a blind eye to Canadian history, can we ignore the fact that this country is built on a foundation of ethnic cleansing, land plunder, genocide, slavery, xenophobia, imperialism, militarism and—perhaps above all—mass delusion and self-deception.

Throughout Canada's ongoing history, complex national narratives have been required to convince good, well-meaning citizens not only to overlook these horrendous crimes, but to help plan and administer them in the name of social progress and civilisation.

Many Canadians are still captivated by the self-righteous illusion that their blessed "Peaceable Kingdom" is based on the principles of multiculturalism, justice, democracy and human rights. These sacred "Canadian Values" form the basis of a narcissistic fantasy of exceptionalism that is so out of touch with reality that it constitutes a national disorder of mythic proportions.

Imperial Psychosis

Canadians are not alone in this madness. The Canada Syndrome is like other settler psychoses that evolved to justify colonial occupations in Australia, the US, South Africa, Israel and elsewhere. All such societies have imposed tight restrictions on Indigenous peoples, framing them with laws, penning them in place with language and education, and containing them geographically and in prisons. Once made publicly acceptable, the practice of rendering certain people captive has been reapplied to control other social groups deemed to threaten the establishment.

Complementing the fences and walls of brute captivity, are the banal narratives of revered institutions that render whole societies prisoner. The guards and gatekeepers who extol and run such systems of mass captivity are also held hostage by the same fictive beliefs.

The Canada Syndrome is the Stockholm Syndrome on cultural steroids.

The Struggle Continues

While unearthing the imperial roots of the Canada Syndrome is disturbing, it is a radical process that may help us to escape from the false narratives that continue to bind us. By exposing such national delusions, we may succeed in stopping history from repeating itself.

For progressives in Canada's social democratic movement, this means facing flaws in our "Social Gospel" tradition and revising our narratives about CCF heroes like Rev. J.S. Woodsworth.

Many peace, human rights, development groups, and the NDP, now believe they are doing the right thing by building public confidence in such imperial projects as the "Responsibility to Protect" (R2P). This UN doctrine justifies US/NATO-led wars as if they were humanitarian missions. Hopefully, in 100 years, mainstream society will look back on today's R2P advocates and say: "They should have known better." However, by then, it may be too late.

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