

HIDDEN FROM HISTORY

The Canadian Holocaust

Through the Canadian residential school system, the Christian churches along with state authorities, the judiciary, doctors and the police implemented a policy of genocide against the native population.

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(The following is an edited extract from the report, "Hidden From History: The Canadian Holocaust - The Untold Story of the Genocide of Aboriginal Peoples by Church and State in Canada - A Summary of an Ongoing, Independent Inquiry into Canadian Native 'Residential Schools' and their Legacy", by Rev. Kevin D. Annett, MA, MDiv. The report is published by The Truth Commission into Genocide in Canada, a public investigative body continuing the work of previous Tribunals into native residential schools: The Justice in the Valley Coalition's Inquiry into Crimes Against Aboriginal People, convened in Port Alberni, British Columbia, on December 9, 1994, and The International Human Rights Association of American Minorities Tribunal into Canadian Residential Schools, held in Vancouver, BC, from June 12-14, 1998. Editor.)

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FOREWORD

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 summarises 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.

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 practised wholesale ethnic cleansing under the guise of education.

As well, such "pagans" were the subject of government-funded sterilisation 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 sterilised 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 sterilised, especially if they weren't church-goers. Hundreds of our women were sterilised 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 sterilisations at the R. W. Large Hospital were deliberately destroyed in 1995, soon after a much-publicised 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 sterilisation 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 sterilisations, but we were told to keep quiet about it. (Testimony of Christy White to Kevin Annett, August 12, 1998)

Legislation permitting the sterilisation 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 sterilisation of any native person under his charge. As their legal guardian, the principal could thus have any native child sterilised. Frequently, these sterilisations 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.

Exposure to Diseases

In 1909, Dr Peter Bryce of the Ontario Health Department was hired by the Indian Affairs Department in Ottawa to tour the Indian residential schools in western Canada and British Columbia and report on the health conditions there. Bryce's report so scandalised the government and the churches that it was officially buried and only surfaced in 1922 when Bryce - who was forced out of the civil service for the honesty of his report - wrote a book about it, entitled *The Story of a National Crime* (Ottawa, 1922).

In his report, Dr Bryce claimed that Indian children were being systematically and deliberately killed in the residential schools. He cited an average mortality rate of between 35% and 60%, and alleged that staff and church officials were regularly withholding or falsifying records and other evidence of children's deaths.

Further, Dr Bryce claimed that a primary means of killing native children was to deliberately expose them to communicable diseases such as tuberculosis and then deny them any medical care or treatment - a practice actually referred to by top Anglican Church leaders in the *Globe and Mail* on May 29, 1953.

In March 1998, two native eyewitnesses who attended west coast residential schools, William and Mabel Sport of Nanaimo, BC, confirmed Dr Bryce's allegation. Both of them claim to have been deliberately exposed to tuberculosis by staff at both a Catholic and a United Church residential school during the 1940s.

I was forced to sleep in the same bed with kids who were dying of tuberculosis. That was at the Catholic Christie residential school around 1942. They were trying to kill us off, and it nearly worked. They did the

same thing at Protestant Indian schools, three kids to a bed, healthy ones with the dying. (Testimony of Mabel Sport to IHRAAM officers, Port Alberni, BC, March 31, 1998)

Reverend Pitts, the Alberni school principal, he forced me and eight other boys to eat this special food out of a different sort of can. It tasted really strange. And then all of us came down with tuberculosis. I was the only one to survive, 'cause my Dad broke into the school one night and got me out of there. All of the rest died from tuberculosis and they were never treated. Just left there to die. And their families were all told they had died of pneumonia. The plan was to kill us off in secret, you know. We all just began dying after eating that food. Two of my best friends were in that group that was poisoned. We were never allowed to speak of it or go into the basement, where other murders happened. It was a death sentence to be sent to the Alberni school. (Testimony of William Sport to IHRAAM officers, Port Alberni, BC, March 31, 1998)

Homicides

More overt killings of children were a common occurrence in residential schools, according to eyewitnesses. The latter have described children being beaten and starved to death, thrown from windows, strangled and being kicked or thrown down stairs to their deaths. Such killings occurred in at least eight residential schools in British Columbia alone, run by all three mainline denominations.

Bill Seward of Nanaimo, BC, age 78, states:

My sister Maggie was thrown from a three-storey window by a nun at the Kuper Island school, and she died. Everything was swept under the rug. No investigation was ever done. We couldn't hire a lawyer at the time, being Indians. So nothing was ever done.

(Testimony of Bill Seward, Duncan, BC, August 13, 1998)

Diane Harris, Community Health Worker for the Chemainus Band Council on Vancouver Island, confirms accounts of the murders.

We always hear stories of all the kids who were killed at Kuper Island. A graveyard for the babies of the priests and girls was right south of the school until it was dug up by the priests when the school closed in 1973. The nuns would abort babies and sometimes end up killing the mothers. There were a lot of disappearances. My mother, who is 83 now, saw a priest drag a girl down a flight of stairs by her hair and the girl died as a result. Girls were raped and killed, and buried under the floorboards. We asked the local RCMP to exhume that place and search for remains but they've always refused, as recently as 1996. Corporal Sampson even threatened us. That kind of cover-up is the norm. Children were put together with kids sick with TB in the infirmary. That was standard procedure. We've documented thirty-five outright murders in a seven-year period. (Testimony of Diane Harris to the IHRAAM Tribunal, June 13, 1998)

Evidence exists that active collusion from police, hospital officials, coroners, Indian Agents and even native leaders helped to conceal such murders. Local hospitals, particularly tuberculosis sanatoriums connected to the United and Roman Catholic churches, served as "dumping grounds" for children's bodies and routinely provided false death certificates for murdered students.

In the case of the United Church's Alberni residential school, students who discovered dead bodies of other children faced serious

retribution. One such witness, Harry Wilson of Bella Bella, BC, claims that he was expelled from the school, then hospitalised and drugged against his will, after finding the body of a dead girl in May 1967.

Sadly, the two-tiered system of collaborators and victims created among native students at the schools continues to the present, as some of the state-funded band council officials - themselves former collaborators - appear to have an interest in helping to suppress evidence and silence witnesses who would incriminate not only the murderers but themselves as agents of the white administration.

A majority of the witnesses who have shared their story with the authors and at public tribunals on the west coast have described either seeing a murder or discovering a body at the residential school he or she attended. The body count, even according to the government's own figures, was enormously high. Where, then, are all these bodies? The deaths of thousands of students are not recorded in any of the school records, Indian Affairs files or other documentation submitted thus far in court cases or academic publications on the residential schools. Some 50,000 corpses have literally and officially gone missing.

The residential school system had to hide not only the evidence of murder but the bodies as well. The presence of secret gravesites of children killed at Catholic and Protestant schools in Sardis, Port Alberni, Kuper Island and Alert Bay has been attested to by numerous witnesses. These secret burial yards also contained the aborted fetuses and even small babies who were the offspring of priests and staff at the schools, according to the same witnesses. One of them, Ethel Wilson of Bella Bella, claims to have seen "rows and rows of tiny skeletons" in the foundations of the

former Anglican residential school of St Michael's in Alert Bay when a new school was built there in the 1960s.

There were several rows of them, all lined up neatly like it was a big cemetery. The skeletons had been found within one of the old walls of St Mike's school. None of them could have been very old, from their size. Now why would so many kids have been buried like that inside a wall, unless someone was trying to hide something? (Testimony of Ethel Wilson to Kevin Annett, Vancouver, BC, August 8, 1998)

Arnold Sylvester, who, like Dennis Charlie, attended Kuper Island school between 1939 and 1945, corroborates this account.

The priests dug up the secret gravesite in a real hurry around 1972 when the school closed. No one was allowed to watch them dig up those remains. I think it's because that was a specially secret graveyard where the bodies of the pregnant girls were buried. Some of the girls who got pregnant from the priests were actually killed because they threatened to talk. They were sometimes shipped out and sometimes just disappeared. We weren't allowed to talk about this. (Testimony of Arnold Sylvester to Kevin Annett, Duncan, BC, August 13, 1998)

Local hospitals were also used as a dumping ground for children's bodies, as in the case of the Edmonds boy and his "processing" at St Paul's Hospital after his murder at the Catholic school in North Vancouver. Certain hospitals, however, seem to have been particularly favourite spots for storing corpses.

The Nanaimo Tuberculosis Hospital (called The Indian Hospital) was one such facility. Under the guise of tuberculosis treatment, generations of native children and adults were subjected to medical experiments and

sexual sterilisations at the Nanaimo Hospital, according to women who experienced these tortures (see Article IId). But the facility was also a cold storage area for native corpses.

The West Coast General Hospital in Port Alberni not only stored children's bodies from the local United Church residential school; it was also the place where abortions were performed on native girls who were made pregnant at the school by staff and clergy, and where newborn babies were disposed of and possibly killed, according to witnesses like Amy Tallio, who attended the Alberni school during the early 1950s.

Irene Starr of the Hesquait Nation, who attended the Alberni school between 1952 and 1961, confirms this.

Many girls got pregnant at the Alberni school. The fathers were the staff, teachers, the ones who raped them. We never knew what happened to the babies, but they were always disappearing. The pregnant girls were taken to the Alberni hospital and then came back without their babies. Always. The staff killed those babies to cover their tracks. They were paid by the church and government to be rapists and murderers. (Testimony of Irene Starr to Kevin Annett, Vancouver, BC, August 23, 1998)

Article II (b): Causing serious bodily or mental harm

Early in the residential schools era, the Indian Affairs Superintendent, Duncan Campbell Scott, outlined the purpose of the schools thus: "to kill the Indian within the Indian".

Clearly, the genocidal assault on aboriginals was not only physical but spiritual: European culture wished to own the minds and the souls of the native nations, to turn the Indians it

hadn't killed into third-class replicas of white people.

Expressing the "virtues" of genocide, Alfred Caldwell, principal of the United Church school in Ahousat on Vancouver Island's west coast, wrote in 1938:

The problem with the Indians is one of morality and religion. They lack the basic fundamentals of civilised thought and spirit, which explains their child-like nature and behaviour. At our school we strive to turn them into mature Christians who will learn how to behave in the world and surrender their barbaric way of life and their treaty rights which keep them trapped on their land and in a primitive existence. Only then will the Indian problem in our country be solved. (Rev. A. E. Caldwell to Indian Agent P. D. Ashbridge, Ahousat, BC, Nov 12, 1938)

The fact that this same principal is named by eyewitnesses as the murderer of at least two children - one of them in the same month that he wrote this letter - is no accident, for cultural genocide spills effortlessly over into killing, as the Nazis proved so visibly to the world.

Nevertheless, Caldwell's letter illuminates two vital points for the purpose of this discussion of mental and bodily harm inflicted on native students: (a) the residential schools were a vast project in mind control, and (b) the underlying aim of this "re-programming" of native children was to force aboriginals off their ancestral lands in order to allow whites access to them.

To quote Alberni survivor Harriett Nahanee:

They were always pitting us against each other, getting us to fight and molest one

another. It was all designed to split us up and brainwash us so that we would forget that we were Keepers of the Land. The Creator gave our people the job of protecting the land, the fish, the forests. That was our purpose for being alive. But the whites wanted it all, and the residential schools were the way they got it. And it worked. We've forgotten our sacred task, and now the whites have most of the land and have taken all the fish and the trees. Most of us are in poverty, addictions, family violence. And it all started in the schools, where we were brainwashed to hate our own culture and to hate ourselves so that we would lose everything. That's why I say that the genocide is still going on. (Testimony of Harriett Nahanee to Kevin Annett, North Vancouver, BC, December 11, 1995)

It was only after the assumption of guardianship powers by the west coast school principals, between 1933 and 1941, that the first evidence of organised pedophile networks in those residential schools emerges. For such a regime was legally and morally free to do whatever it wanted to its captive native students.

The residential schools became a safe haven - one survivor calls it a "free fire zone" - for pedophiles, murderers and brutal doctors needing live test subjects for drug testing or genetic and cancer research.

Particular schools, such as the Catholic one at Kuper Island and the United Church's Alberni school, became special centres where extermination techniques were practised with impunity on native children from all over the province, alongside the usual routine of beatings, rapes and farming out of children to influential pedophiles.

Much of the overt mental and bodily harm done to native students was designed to break down traditional tribal loyalties along kinship

lines by pitting children against each other and cutting them off from their natural bonds. Boys and girls were strictly segregated in separate dormitories and could never meet.

One survivor describes never seeing her little brother for years, even though he was in the same building at the Alert Bay Anglican school. And when children at the schools broke into each other's dormitories and older boys and girls were caught exchanging intimacies, the most severe punishments were universally applied. According to a female survivor who attended the Alberni school in 1959:

They used the gauntlet on a boy and girl who were caught together kissing. The two of them had to crawl naked down a line of other students, and we beat them with sticks and whips provided by the principal. The girl was beaten so badly she died from kidney failure. That gave us all a good lesson: if you tried having normal feelings for someone, you'd get killed for it. So we quickly learned never to love or trust anyone, just do what we were told to do. (Testimony of anonymous woman from the Pacheedat Nation, Port Renfrew, BC, October 12, 1996)

According to Harriett Nahanee:

The residential schools created two kinds of Indians: slaves and sell-outs. And the sellouts are still in charge. The rest of us do what we're told. The band council chiefs have been telling everyone on our reserve not to talk to the Tribunal and have been threatening to cut our benefits if we do. (Harriett Nahanee to Kevin Annett, June 12, 1998)

The nature of that system of torture was not haphazard. For example, the regular use of

electric shocks on children who spoke their language or were "disobedient" was a widespread phenomenon in residential schools of every denomination across Canada. This was not a random but an institutionalised device.

Specially constructed torture chambers with permanent electric chairs, often operated by medical personnel, existed at the Alberni and Kuper Island schools in British Columbia, at the Spanish Catholic school in Ontario, and in isolated hospital facilities run by the churches and Department of Indian Affairs in northern Quebec, Vancouver Island and rural Alberta, according to eyewitnesses.

Mary Anne Nakogee-Davis of Thunder Bay, Ontario, was tortured in an electric chair by nuns at the Catholic Spanish residential school in 1963 when she was eight years old. She states:

*The nuns used it as a weapon. It was done on me on more than one occasion. They would strap your arms to the metal arm rests, and it would jolt you and go through your system. I don't know what I did that was bad enough to have that done to me. (From *The London Free Press*, London, Ontario, October 22, 1996)*

Such torture also occurred at facilities operated by the churches with Department of Indian Affairs money, similar to the sterilisation programs identified at the W. R. Large Memorial Hospital in Bella Bella and the Nanaimo Indian Hospital.

Frank Martin, a Carrier native from northern BC, describes his forcible confinement and use in experiments at the Brannen Lake Reform School near Nanaimo in 1963 and 1964:

I was kidnapped from my village when I was nine and sent off to the Brannen Lake school

in Nanaimo. A local doctor gave me a shot and I woke up in a small cell, maybe ten feet by twelve. I was kept in there like an animal for fourteen months. They brought me out every morning and gave me electric shocks to my head until I passed out. Then in the afternoon I'd go for these X-rays and they'd expose me to them for minutes on end. They never told me why they were doing it. But I got lung cancer when I was eighteen and I've never smoked. (Videotaped testimony of Frank Martin to Eva Lyman and Kevin Annett, Vancouver, July 16, 1998)

Such quack experimentation combined with brutal sadism characterised these publicly funded facilities, especially the notorious Nanaimo Indian Hospital. David Martin of Powell River, BC, was taken to this hospital in 1958 at the age of five and used in experiments attested to by Joan Morris, Harry Wilson and other witnesses quoted in this report. According to David:

I was told I had tuberculosis, but I was completely healthy; no symptoms of TB at all. So they sent me to Nanaimo Indian Hospital and strapped me down in a bed there for more than six months. The doctors gave me shots every day that made me feel really sick, and made my skin all red and itchy. I heard the screams of other Indian kids who were locked away in isolation rooms. We were never allowed in there to see them. Nobody ever told me what they were doing to all of us in there. (David Martin to Kevin Annett, Vancouver, November 12, 2000)

A recurring and regular torture at the residential schools themselves was operating on children's teeth without using any form of anaesthesia or painkiller. Two separate victims of this torture at the Alberni school describe being subjected to it by different dentists, decades apart. Harriett Nahanee

was brutalised in that manner in 1946, while Dennis Tallio was "worked on by a sick old guy who never gave me painkillers" at the same school in 1965.

Dr Josef [Mengele](#) is reputed by survivors of his experiments to have worked out of Cornell University in New York, Bristol Labs in Syracuse, New York, and Upjohn Corporation and Bayer laboratories in Ontario. Mengele and his Canadian researchers, like the notorious Montreal psychiatrist Ewen Cameron, used prisoners, mental patients and native children from reserves and residential schools in their efforts to erase and reshape human memory and personality, using drugs, electric shocks and trauma-inducing methods identical to those employed for years in the residential schools.

Former employees of the federal government have confirmed that the use of "inmates" of residential schools was authorised for government-run medical experiments through a joint agreement with the churches which ran the schools.

According to a former Indian Affairs official:

A sort of gentlemen's agreement was in place for many years: the churches provided the kids from their residential schools to us, and we got the Mounties to deliver them to whoever needed a fresh batch of test subjects: usually doctors, sometimes Department of Defense people. The Catholics did it big time in Quebec when they transferred kids wholesale from orphanages into mental asylums. It was for the same purpose: experimentation. There was lots of grant money in those days to be had from the military and intelligence sectors: all you had to do was provide the bodies. The church officials were more than happy to comply. It wasn't just the residential school principals who were getting kickbacks from this:

everyone was profiting. That's why it's gone on for so long. It implicates a hell of a lot of top people. (From the Closed Files of the IHRAAM Tribunal, containing the statements of confidential sources, June 12-14, 1998)

Such experiments and the sheer brutality of the harm regularly inflicted on children in the schools attest to the institutional view of aboriginals as "expendable" and "diseased" beings. Scores of survivors of 10 different residential schools in BC and Ontario have described under oath the following tortures inflicted on them and other children as young as five years old between the years 1922 and 1984:

- tightening fish twine and wire around boys' penises;
- sticking needles into their hands, cheeks, tongues, ears and penises;
- holding them over open graves and threatening to bury them alive;
- forcing them to eat maggot-filled and regurgitated food;
- telling them their parents were dead and that they were about to be killed;
- stripping them naked in front of the assembled school and verbally and sexually degrading them;
- forcing them to stand upright for more than 12 hours at a time until they collapsed;
- immersing them in ice water;
- forcing them to sleep outside in winter;
- ripping the hair from their heads;
- repeatedly smashing their heads against concrete or wooden surfaces;
- daily beating without warning, using whips, sticks, horse harnesses, studded metal straps, pool cues and iron pipes;
- extracting gold teeth from their mouths without painkillers;

- confining them in unventilated closets without food or water for days;
- regularly applying electric shocks to their heads, genitals and limbs.

Perhaps the clearest summary of the nature and purpose of such sadism are the words of Bill Seward of Nanaimo, a survivor of the Kuper Island school:

The church people were worshipping the devil, not us. They wanted the gold, the coal, the land we occupied. So they terrorised us into giving it to them. How does a man who was raped every day when he was seven make anything out of his life? The residential schools were set up to destroy our lives, and they succeeded. The whites were terrorists, pure and simple. (Testimony of Bill Seward to Kevin Annett and IHRAAM observers, Duncan, BC, August 13, 1998)

Editor's Note:

To obtain a copy of "Hidden From History: The Canadian Holocaust", contact The Truth Commission into Genocide in Canada, c/- 6679 Grant Street, Burnaby, BC V5B 2K9, Canada, telephone +1 (604) 293 1972, email kevinannett@yahoo.ca or kevin_annett@hotmail.com, or visit the website: <http://annett55.freewebsites.com>. See review, NEXUS 9/01.