

Canada's First Nations and Israel: Manipulating the Meaning of Genocide

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This month, Canada's media solemnly related "the sad truth that the country engaged in a deliberate policy of attempted genocide against First Nations people", referring to government-sponsored abuse of Native children a century ago, which Canada's Chief Medical Officer Peter Bryce exposed in 1907, but which was hushed up. Bryce was fired and the post of chief medical officer abolished in 1919.



This, of course, is a terrible crime, though the facts have long been known (the study referred to was published in 2006). A study published by Ian Mosby in May this year added fuel to the fire, revealing that from 1942–1952, the government conducted “nutritional experiments” on Native children in the infamous residential schools, where milk rations were halved for years, essential vitamins not issued, and dental services withheld as gum health was a measuring tool for scientists and any care would distort research.

The media splash was made by Phil Fontaine, former chief of the Assembly of First Nations, and Bernie Farber, senior vice-president of Gemini Power Corporation and former head of the Canadian Jewish Congress (since 2011 the Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs—CIJA). (image above)

This is not the first time that CIJA has expressed ‘support’ for beleaguered Natives. For years now, just as hundreds of Canadian MPs, MPPs, police officials, what-have-you are invited regularly on junkets to Israel by CIJA or other pro-Israeli groups, CIJA self-proclaimed “social activists” are now courting local Native groups with similar free trips. For instance, Winnipeg CIJA official Shelley Faintuch organized a 10-day Cree Youth Leadership Development Mission to Israel in 2012 and again this year with the support of Norway House Cree Nation Chief Ron Evans “to develop the next generation of First Nations leaders by looking through the lens of Israel’s inspiring story.”

Why would Canadian Jewish leaders suddenly take such an interest in Natives and support their struggle for reparations from the Canadian government for the centuries of colonial subjugation and exploitation? Is it altruism, because of the Jewish tradition of being ‘a light unto peoples’? This is what CIJA would have us believe, with its claims to “profound cultural and historical similarities”, “striving for acceptance, equal rights, rights to their own land”.

There is another, very different explanation. The Native resistance movement has continued to grow in the past half century. And anyone with even a slight awareness of how Natives in Canada were dispossessed and abused by colonial settlers can easily see the parallel between Canada’s Natives and the Palestinians, who have suffered a century of identical treatment by Jews immigrating to Palestine, which the latter arbitrarily renamed ‘Israel’ in 1948. As Natives become more aware of their common struggle with other aboriginal peoples around the world, they are bound to identify with the Palestinians and their struggle against the colonial settlers.

So it makes perfect sense for Canada’s Zionists to be proactive, to try to convince Canada’s Natives that it is the (largely European and American) Jews who are indigenous to Palestine, not the native Arabs. The story the Cree are told on their Youth Leadership Development Missions is that Israelis, like the Natives, are merely trying to reassert their legitimate indigenous rights to their land. The screaming headlines about the Canadian government “genocide” against the Natives a century ago just happen to be accompanied by self-serving lectures about the Nazi Holocaust, the ‘Final Solution’, and even allusions to the infamous Dr Mengele experimenting on Jewish victims.

This shameful manipulation of events surrounding a genuine Native tragedy is despicable. It is also a direct slap in the face for Prime Minister Harper with his fawning allegiance to Israel, as codified by one of his first foreign relations moves—the public security cooperation “partnership” with Israel signed in 2008. Does Farber have no allegiance to Canada’s prime minister? Isn’t his sudden embrace of Native resistance just a tad duplicitous?

Gemini Power’s VP is not only a corporate fat cat, but a self-proclaimed “social activist” who according to Wikipedia “works in partnership with First Nations to help develop sustainable business”. This translates into: convince the Natives to sell out to resource-hungry corporations like Gemini Power and their government lackeys, intent on building such wonders as liquefied natural gas terminals on the west coast, chromite mining and smelting projects in the James Bay, and tar sands oil production in Alberta.

Is it possible that before Farber published his article in the Toronto Star 19 July, he had a pow wow with Chief Harper, apologizing for the comparison of Canadian government officials to Nazi genocidal maniacs, but explaining that it was all part of a larger win-win plan for them both to defraud the hapless Natives of their resources? What are a few ‘slings and arrows’ between a corporate honcho and his government lackey?

Harper can use all the help he can muster these days, given that the bulk of the Native community is supporting not Israel, but Idle No More, which has declared war on the Conservatives’ attempt to replace the government’s treaty obligations with market mechanisms in Bills C-45 and C-38.

Farber failed to mention the fact that Israel itself conducted similar ‘Dr Mengele’ experiments on its own Jewish citizens—north African and Ethiopian Jews, who swallowed

the Zionist propaganda and fled their traditional homes and cultures to live in the 'Jewish state'. According to the documentary "100,000 Radiation" shown on Israeli TV in 2003, starting in 1951, the American army paid the Israeli Health Ministry to radiate children to test for side effects of radiation. An entire generation of Sephardi youths were unwittingly used as guinea pigs.

Yet another Israeli TV documentary aired in 2012 revealed that until recently, Ethiopian Jews were forcibly injected with Depo-Provera, a drug to make them sterile, before they were allowed to immigrate to Israel.

Is Zionist media control so all-powerful as to prevent Canadians and especially Canadian Natives from seeing through the bald-faced lies that Israel and its lobbyist tell, and the truths they hide?

It isn't just Harper who is being duped. Cree Chief Ron Evans personally suffered under the 'Dr Mengele' experiments, which were conducted on the Norway House and Le Pas Cree beginning in 1942. But instead of putting two and two together, Evans was coopted by CIJA's Winnipeg affiliate to sponsor the Cree 'Missions to Israel', where he pronounced the Jewish people "the true, historic indigenous people of Israel".

Then there are the Ontario Natives with their 'great white hope' Bob Rae, a strong supporter of Israel whose wife was a VP of the CJC. Rae left the NDP in 2002 for refusing to embrace globalization and open markets, and is now the Natives' negotiator with the mining interests in the James Bay 'ring of fire'. However nice elder statesman Rae may be, his common interests—economic and political—with Farber remain, and there can be no doubt that at best the Natives will get lots of millions of dollars, but you can be sure that the option of "No to chromite mining!" is not on the table.

Clearly, the Natives need a new deal with corporate Canada. That is what Idle No More is all about. But the option of "No!" must be on the table, not just "How much money will we get to let the corporations destroy our land?"

There are hints of what a new dispensation might entail, and the suddenly pro-Native Zionist supporters like Farber and Rae have nothing to contribute to it. The 1987 Gwaii Haanas National Park and Haida Heritage Site allows Haida to regulate logging and maintain their sacred forests, permitting sustainable use of some natural resources. Thomas Berger calls for re-tribalization of lands: "As long as the land is a corporate asset, it will be vulnerable."

Eric Walberg is author of [From Postmodernism to Postsecularism: Re-emerging Islamic Civilization](#)

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