
The cultural genocide in Canadian society

Residential schools were created by the Canadian government in an attempt to assimilate indigenous children into the language and culture of Canadian society. These schools were run by churches and were created in the 1880s and lasted until 1996, when the final residential school was closed. Through the process of assisting the Indigenous youth to integrate into Canadian society, residential schools introduced many problems in Indigenous communities and caused irreversible long-term problems. These problems would never have occurred if past Canadian leaders had not introduced residential schools in the society of Canada. Past Canadian leaders should be indicted for the crimes against humanity and the long-term issues that developed from residential schools as they were directly responsible for the assimilation of the Indigenous culture through the use of the residential school system. The crimes against humanity committed at residential schools include cultural genocide, child labour as well as many forms of abuse, all of which developed into irreversible long-term problems in Indigenous communities.

Throughout the 19th century, Indigenous children were taken from their homes and put into residential schools in order to assimilate them into the Canadian society. The end goal was to remove all aspects of Aboriginal culture from these children at a young age so that they could not pass on their language and culture to future generations, ending the Indigenous way of life. In his article, John A. Macdonald was the real architect of residential schools, Sean Carleton states that “Macdonald laid out the aim of the schools in the House of Commons. He argued, “When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and though he may learn to read and write his habits, and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write.

The Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men””. This quote from John A. Macdonald demonstrates the goal of residential schools, which was to take Indigenous children from their homes and put them into residential schools where they would be forced to forget their language and culture while integrate into the Canadian culture, which would be passed on to the next generation ending the “Indian Problem”. Additionally, in his article, The Residential School System, Erin Hanson explains that “Because the government’s and the churches” intent was to eradicate all aspects of Aboriginal culture in these young people and interrupt its transmission from one generation to the next, the residential school system is commonly considered a form of cultural genocide”. This further explains that because the Aboriginal culture would be removed from these children, the Aboriginal culture would not be able to be

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passed on from generation to generation, resulting in the cultural genocide of the Indigenous culture.

The fact that cultural genocide was the goal for the former Canadian leaders, such as John A. Macdonald, when introducing the Residential Schools System explains why former Canadian leaders should be indicted for the crimes against humanity committed at residential schools, as they were responsible for the attempted extermination of the Indigenous culture through the use of residential schools. In order to eradicate the Indigenous culture, residential schools used a set of strict rules to follow which had extreme consequences if broken.

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