

National Affairs by Claire Hoy ? It wasn't really ?cultural genocide?

Here we are, having reached another birthday for Canada ? our 148th ? but rather than celebrate our impressive accomplishments, much of the news these days is smothered in horror stories about our apparent failures.

No country ? like no person ? is perfect. But if there's a country anywhere which has done a better job than Canada of providing for its citizens in a generally peaceful and respectful way, I'd like to know where it is.

But good chunks of the mainstream media ? along with the usual suspects in academia, civic activism and opposition parties ? appear to have little time for lauding Canadian virtues and endless time for overstating our failures.

We are told constantly, for example, that Canada's middle class is worse off than ever. Not true. They're better off. We are warned that the growing gap between the very rich and the very poor is a recipe for civic collapse. More nonsense. To be sure, the rich are getting richer. But so are the not-so-rich. Not at the same rate, of course, since those with a lot of money have more chance of making a lot more than those without a lot of money. But what the issue boils down to, fed by the unhealthy rise of hatred and envy against success, is we are supposed to believe that people only succeed at the expense of everybody else. That too is not true.

But the most outrageous manifestation these days of Canada-the-failed-state is all the hoopla flowing from the recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) claim that the residential schools represented a case of ?cultural genocide.?

That same view had been expressed ? quite inappropriately for somebody in her position of alleged legal neutrality ? by Supreme Court Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin, the most politically activist judge ever inflicted upon our citizens.

Whatever the faults of the residential schools ? and there certainly are many, not the least of which is taking children away from their families and their surroundings ? it does not meet the standard of a ?genocide,? culturally or any other way.

To abuse such an incendiary term so cavalierly only serves to cheapen real genocides, such as Hitler's genocide against Jews and Stalin's genocide in the Ukraine, to name but two real genocides.

The government of the day (and, despite what you've read, Stephen Harper was NOT in government in the early 1900s) however misguided they may have been, did not set out to eradicate Native Canadians in the way that Hitler did his best to murder the Jews. Yes, horrible things happened in those schools. Children were deprived of the joy and love of their own families. Many were sexually and physically abused. Harper made those points a couple of years back when he officially apologized for a program which he and most living Canadians had no part in.

The aim of the program wasn't genocide, it was to equip these children to prosper in what the politicians more than a century ago saw as the only way for them to escape the poverty and deprivation that prevailed on the reserves and, sadly, still does today.

This is not to excuse the abuses. But if the TRC had looked at the program from both sides, rather than dissing it completely from the outset, they might have mentioned some of the positive outcomes, the fact that many Native Canadians, some of whom have said so publicly, would not have achieved the university educations and ultimate adult success they did without it.

No, we musn't even hint anything good came of this flawed experiment in social manipulation. Instead, we must all hang our heads in shame, as if any of us had anything to do with the program, and reduce our history to the cesspool of Hitler or Stalin or Mao.

The same overwhelmingly negative attitude also prevails on the subject of climate change. Home-grown critics ? many of them heavily financed by big unions and wealthy American-based anti-oil groups ? want you to believe that Canada is a major player in global warming, despite the fact our current contribution amounts to a couple of percentage points on the world scale.

Rather than celebrate the opportunities our natural resources afford us, the dooms-dayers would rather shut everything down, declare a moral victory, and ride off into the sunset in search of their next Evil Empire.

As a Canadian, and a proud one, I'm tired of all those who see only Canada the Bad, while ignoring the vast reservoir of good things about our country.

On Canada Day, this Canadian will be giving thanks that he happens to live in the best place on earth. Scoff if you will, but people around the world would love to be here celebrating along with us.

