

A Conversation With James Pew-Canadian Friend of Israel



by Geoffrey Clarfield

Two years ago, on October 27, 2022, the elected members of the Canadian parliament (the House of Commons) voted on a motion. They did so with unanimous consent. They publicly declared that the treatment of Canadian First Nations children who had attended residential schools was a “genocide.”

Such a declaration puts this episode of Canadian history in a similar category to the exhaustively well documented genocide of more than one million Armenians by the Ottoman Turks before, during and after WWI and the German genocide responsible for the barbaric murder of six million innocent Jews a few short decades later during WWII.

And please note, by implication this motion tells a new generation of Canadians that the old generation of Canadians who fought the Nazis, were ultimately just as bad as their enemies. This is a classic Marxist way of devaluing the just wars of democracies past and present.

The Member of Parliament who introduced the motion has recently and publicly mused that denial of this Canadian government sponsored declaration on genocide may fall under the jurisdiction of an escalating series of growing and vague draconian censorship laws that Canadian legislators call "Hate crimes" and that are sweeping through the House of Commons, be soon punishable under present Canadian law.

Anyone who the government feels may have "broken" these new laws may be liable to fines or imprisonment if this recent spate of censorship legislation that is being pushed through parliament is ratified. The crime will no doubt be called "Residential School Genocide Denialism."

Before we mention the evidence (or lack thereof) behind such a bold government declaration for those in and outside of Canada we need to remember some history. Canada, like the United States was created by French and English-speaking Europeans who through their demographic advantage and at the time, advanced technology, and communications apparatus, within a few short centuries after their arrival in the New World became masters of the land, demographically, economically, and politically.

On both sides of the Canadian and American borders, different authorities and different governments slowly but surely diminished the territory and political power of the First Americans who had crossed the Bering Strait more than 20,000 years ago and settled North, Central and South America.

In some cases these First Americans created complex, militant and hierarchical empires such as the Aztec and the Inca who

almost successfully fought off their European conquerors. Eventually, all Indigenous Native Americans came under European authorities and their destinies are so diverse as to keep archaeologists, anthropologists, linguists, and historians remarkably busy.

In the 1870s American Indians, fleeing the likes of General Custer and an American government determined to subdue them, fled across the border into the new Dominion of Canada whose Prime Minister was Sir John A. MacDonald. Those were the days of the settling of the West and the attenuation of the buffalo herds that were central to the sustenance of the Plains Indians. And so the Prime Minister took the advice of a Canadian Indian, a Mohawk surveyor and graduate of Montreal's McGill University (where I once studied anthropology). In March 1886 he wrote the then Prime Minister of the Dominion of Canada saying:

Show them , or at least, allow them to be shown the principal sites and cities of Ontario and Quebec, and above all, have them visit the most prosperous Indian reserves of these provinces...Let them see how their Indian brethren are prospering in those provinces; let them understand that the Indian can subsist like the white men where there is no game; and let them know that the government do not wish to exterminate them.

And so the Indian Chiefs of Western Canada came east and agreed that Christian, Catholic missionaries would open schools for indigenous children. These included the Grey Nuns who would work with the female students at the soon to be constructed boarding or residential schools that were to be established on the Western prairies.

My Irish colleagues have many times pointed out that Catholic Boarding schools, whether they be designed for native English speakers or in this case for Indians, were difficult, traumatic and no doubt punctuated by the callous corporal

punishment that was common even in Canadian public schools well into the 1960s.

I was a good student during that time, but I received more than a few hammerings with a 12-inch wooden ruler across my knuckles for minor disciplinary misdemeanors. And yes, I cried afterwards, but it was not genocide and our WWII veteran teachers thought they were “toughening us up” for the adult world ahead.

There are now mountains of journalistic articles about this most recent alleged residential school genocide, but the suggested key piece of evidence emerged three years ago. On May 27, 2021 the Chief of what was formerly known as The Kamloops Indian Band announced that with the help of an archaeologist using GPR (ground penetrating radar) they had located the remains of 215 missing children in an apple orchard.

Based on this announcement the Canadian parliament went into a full geared moral panic and declared the entire residential school experience “genocide.” And so the Canadian taxpayer can expect that any Native Canadian who claims that he or she was mistreated at a residential school will receive generous compensation. There is a precedent here.

Around 2008 multiple claims of physical and sexual abuse by “survivors” of residential schools were handed five billion dollars in compensation from the Canadian Government paid out to about 80,000 claimants. We can expect more of the same soon. James has recommended that I read Tom Flanagan’s study published by the Fraser Institute in 2018 called, The Costs of the Canadian Government’s Reconciliation Framework for First Nations.

Flanagan has written that the TRC settlement has led to a deluge in class actions lawsuits from every type of former indigenous students – not just those who lived in a student

residence, but also day scholars, and those who lived with foster families in cities during the school year so they could attend a public school.

What is changing now is that independent researchers, not in the pay of the Canadian government (as are most journalists and academics) question the narrative, and in doing so, they may soon be fined or imprisoned.

That is a real possibility for since this initial evidence of a mass unmarked grave was announced by the Kamloops Chief, during subsequent excavations no bodies have been uncovered. That does not mean that they may not find them, but even if they do find graves near residential schools, the students may have died from diseases such as Tuberculosis.

One would think that among the more than seventy university departments that teach anthropology in Canada there would arise an archaeological and historical team that would take on such a daunting forensic and document exploration, but they are missing in action. Expect that millions if not billions more taxpayer's dollars will be given to any claimant of residential abuse or alleged abuse. An elected government in the Anglo sphere has voted on it and decided, "It was a genocide."

And so, to get a different perspective on such an important public issue I made some inquiries whether any independent researchers were doing what Canada's anthropology departments should have done more than two years ago. I came across a book published by True North and Dorchester Books that included journalists and researchers who often write for or read True North.

The book is called Grave Error: How The Media Misled Us (And the Truth About Residential Schools) by Tom Flanagan and Chris Champion, Dec. 3, 2024. The seventh chapter of the book is written by a young independent Canadian researcher and writer

named James Pew who curates a newsletter called Woke Watch Canada.

I managed to contact James over Zoom at his home, and this is what he told me of how he became a contributor to a rational exploration of one of the great national moral panics that is sweeping Canada. James is a young man, in his late forties. We spoke for about an hour and here are some of the things that he told me:

He did not start out as a journalist or a researcher. That came later in his life. He was fortunate to have been born with the talent and intelligence enabling him to succeed in most of the projects he has taken up.

These consist of a surprising and diverse array of creative endeavours. As a young teenager he was fascinated by all and every aspect of music and particularly Jazz, which has a formal history and in the last few decades has mixed and merged with so many other genres. And so he looked around for a good program and studied Jazz at Humber College. He found the teachers talented and dedicated and enjoyed sharing his ideas and enthusiasm with other students. He adds:

There was one thing that the staff at Humber could not help young aspiring musicians with and that was how to make a living in the field. They solved it by teaching and getting paid for it, but the ecology of teaching ensures that now in the GTA there is and has been an overproduction of good musicians, actors, and dancers. Canadian media cannot absorb this growing number of talented youngsters so either they go south and try their luck in the USA or, stay here and teach singing and classical guitar.

At this point James temporarily changed directions and became an accountant working on Bay Street, but was soon overcome with boredom. The entrepreneurial bug seems to be a condition acquired at birth, and so instead of a career in finance, he

became a recording studio nut.

I do not just mean someone who mastered the software and sequencing necessary to successfully record musicians and give them a demonstrably good recording that they can market, but he got deep into the electronics and studio design of the hardware and architecture of modern studios.

He built a state-of-the-art commercial studio near his home and made a good living out of it for some time. He and partners also designed and built most of the audio electronics used in their recordings. He was the envy of most of his colleagues and even some of his former teachers. Simply put, he made as good a living as can be expected from the Canadian independent music economy as an enterprising studio owner and music producer in the GTA (greater Toronto area).

Near the end of James' music business adventures he twice became a father, and with the bottom line being so important in an era of rising costs and rising inflation, he decided to turn his attention to a more lucrative entrepreneurial pursuit: home renovations.

Because he had previous experience working as a skilled artisan for general contractors and had built his own impressively elaborate state-of-the-art audio recording studio, it was an easy transition into the renovation business. Within months of launching his company, James had a full crew booked on multiple job sites.

Beyond financial concerns there were other more personal reasons why James began to distance himself from musical friends who, almost to a man and woman, had been indoctrinated into the soft Marxism of the hip music community in and around the GTA.

He felt surrounded by fashionable leftists, hipsters, who do not understand that it is only the competitive and sometimes cutthroat music business in a free enterprise culture that may

allow them to attain wealth and fame, or any modicum of success that they dream of. No socialist state allows for this.

James is critical of the arts funding in Toronto suggesting that many musicians receive development grants who will never develop anything of economic or cultural value. He feels that the government literally burns a sizable portion of arts funding on artists who do not have the discipline to master a craft or produce anything worthwhile. He told me, "The entire ecosystem keeps artists in a state of want, always pursuing the next grant, never innovating the way an entrepreneur who lacks government funding, is forced to do by market forces. It is a culture of dependency."

When COVID struck, James renovation business had been successfully chugging along. During this period, he began to feel concerned that Canada seemed to be leaving behind its Judeo-Christian values and Anglo-French legal traditions. It was disturbing emails that he began getting from the Peel District School Board that alerted him. His partner was a Jamaican Canadian woman and so their children were classified as "bi racial." They seemed to be the object of special interest and concern by the principal and school administration who sent many apparently kind, caring and concerned emails to make sure that his kids felt "included."

James noticed that this new use of the term "inclusion" began to adopt an anti-Western and anti Judeo Christian world view suggesting that Canada was an inherently racist and colonialist society. This included an inability of James children's teachers to reasonably connect Holocaust education to support for the just cause of the State of Israel and at the same time to suggest that Anglo Canadian treatment of Canada's Indigenous peoples was similar to Nazi treatment of Jews before and during the Holocaust.

This is the essence of left wing moral equivalence and when

taken to extremes has resulted in the Canadian governments double standard in cancelling arms shipments to Israel to defend itself against Hamas Jihadis.

Given the tsunami of hatred of Israel that has permeated Canadian institutions of higher learning since Oct. 7, James told me that he clearly saw the early signs of this now entrenched institutional, anti Semitic, anti Zionist prejudice taking over mainstream Canadian media and educational institutions.

James was then particularly sensitive to what I now realize was a woke onslaught on parents and schools desire to take over their children's education, sexual orientation, and political world view right under the noses of their parents. As he told me,

My ancestors are Anglo Canadian. My grandfathers fought for Canada during WWII and other ancestors in WWI. I must have been about ten years old at the time, at an extended family dinner and I asked my grandfather about WWII. What he told me seemed like an adventure, as I didn't really get the horrors of war. However, at another family event some months later, my step father and I got into a conversation about Nazism. He must have decided that it was time to tell me about the Holocaust. I have read much academic literature on this topic since then but for one evening he set it out simply and factually without too much emotion.

I was shocked, disturbed, and fascinated. I punctuated his explanation with statements like, 'That's impossible, or 'how could that have happened?' 'How could this be?' I asked myself. Ultimately it was the blend of both my grandfather's adventurous military exploits delivered in a War veteran narrative, and my step-fathers polite and matter of fact explanation of the dark truth of the Holocaust, that vaccinated me against the anti-Westernism that has become so commonplace, and against the antisemitism and hatred of Israel

that has become so fashionable in today's Canada. That vaccination had a delayed effect on me as it didn't really start working until much later in life.

Once I became established and comfortable as an entrepreneur, and had read a bit of history, I quickly realized that a good part of today's antisemitism is also driven by nasty resentment of a culture that inculcates a love of learning in its children and a work ethic worth imitating.

And so, some of my most recent writing such as my series of long-form essays on Israel – the first in that series being “The Case for Israel” – has been driven by my fascination with Jewish and Israeli history and in particular the ideologies and historiography on how this story is told and sometimes misinterpreted or misrepresented by today's historians and journalists (see: <https://jamespew.substack.com/p/the-case-for-israel>)

Inevitably, the entire process of moving from left to right, transitioning from independent music producer and studio owner, to home renovation business owner, led me to read contributors to True North, the National Post and then, in typical entrepreneurial fashion, I opened a Substack newsletter called Woke Watch Canada (which now takes up the lion share of my time).

I was so tired of the overly subsidized legacy media who are so addicted to the financial largesse of the Liberal Party and simply cannot honestly investigate a contentious story like that about Residential Schools, for fear of insulting someone from a protected, visible minority class.

If I may say one thing before we sign off. This inability of Canadian academics to look objectively at the facts of the matter which are explored in our book, Grave Error, (<https://www.amazon.ca/Grave-Error-Misled-Residential-Schools/dp/B0CP465ZPP>) is part of a larger assault on the notion of Canada as a Western democracy.

Today in Canada the ruling media and political elites (with a weak opposition) would like to argue the way Canadians treated its native peoples was the same way that Germans treated the Jews during the Holocaust, so they can drown in oceans of liberal guilt and hand over our hard-won freedom to ideologues from the United Nations and "Controligarchs" like Klaus Schwab of the WEF in Davos and his publicly acclaimed acolytes such as our current Prime Minister. This is unacceptable.

Oh yes, one more thing. I do not work solo. I read a lot of academic studies and since our universities and the media will not do their due diligence, I work with a range of experts in a variety of fields. The Internet allows me and others like me to put together groups of serious researchers who are 'Virtual Think Tanks'. We do our due diligence even when we disagree with the 'experts'. We can argue intelligently about primary sources.

At the end of the day I have come to the conclusion that we can only protect the hard-won democratic freedoms that Canadians once took for granted if we fight for them, exercise them, and tell the truth about our own and other's history. I still believe in 'The True North Strong and Free'. We are losing it to the same Woke onslaught that has diluted and diminished my children's public-school studies. And yes, before we sign off. I will send you a copy of the book.

As a native born Torontonionian, I have been watching with growing alarm how the Toronto District School Board, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, (OISE), my alma maters, University of Toronto and York University have become radical and Woke. (Oh yes, the Federal Government of Canada has now ruled that Kosher slaughter will be illegal. But you are still allowed to hunt wild animals in Canada's hinterlands).

Until quite recently I have feared that I may not find a group of younger Canadians who oppose this massive almost

Stalinistic onslaught on Canadian civilization. After my talk with James, I left the conversation in a much better mood than when I entered it.

Clearly there are a growing number of younger “legacy Canadians” and their multi ethnic fellow citizens, who are trying to recapture the democratic Canada that I had come to love and respect as a young man. It is worth fighting for and I wish them luck. May it return soon.

Long life to Woke Watch Canada.

First published in the [*Times of Israel*](#).