

# **WLU's decision to remove the statue of John A. Macdonald is cowardly and disgraceful**

Canada is suffering from a prolonged pandemic of moral self-flagellation promoted by hemophiliac bleeding hearts and militant native agitators. The latest outburst of it is the recent decision of the governors of Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ont., to withdraw from an arrangement to erect statues of all 22 of Canada's former prime ministers on the campus, as part of the observation of the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation. There is something uniquely and disgracefully Canadian about such a decision. The statues' project, intended originally for one of the municipal parks in Waterloo, was taken up by the university when some civic opposition to it arose. As a fine bronze statue of the first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, was sculpted and unveiled, municipal opposition metastasized into the faculty of the university, which displayed academia's usual granite-like resistance to spurious intimidation from complainant groups.

The university senate predictably folded like a \$3 suitcase. It struck a special committee to go through the motions, which played its role as scripted, rejecting the statue plan altogether. Frightened puppets of the cowardice and dishonesty of the plaintiff groups, they also required the removal of the Macdonald statue.

The petition of the initial opponents of the plan claimed that "It is politically insensitive, (if not offensive) to celebrate and memorialize all Canadian prime ministers in the form of bronze statues on land that traditionally belongs to the ... Anishnaube and Haudenosaunee peoples (in a) large-scale public art installation that will ... transform the cultural

landscape of the Waterloo campus. ... It flies in the face of what contemporary universities are about."

This piercing tocsin was the product of petitioner Jonathan Finn, a Laurier professor, and the sentiment has prevailed. If it is inappropriate to put statues of all the leaders in the history of the only trans-continental, bicultural, parliamentary confederation in history, at a university named after one of the greatest of those leaders, it must be equally so to have statues of many of them around the Parliament buildings of Canada and some of the provinces also. One of Canada's greatest virtues and strengths is that it has had the benefit of many of the best British and French traditions and has, partly for that reason, attracted people from everywhere and welcomed them comparatively generously.

Finn is rending the flesh on the backs of caucasian Canadians on behalf of the native people with a cat-o'-nine-tails of collective moral putrefaction. He himself has obviously succumbed to the blood libel that we as a country and culture have a shameful history because of treatment of the native people. This is a monstrous falsehood. Unless we acknowledge that the area of Canada (a native word) was entirely populated by the hundred thousand or so natives who lived here as nomads when the Europeans set down durable roots here more than 400 years ago, and that we are all invaders and trespassers with no moral right to be here, we have a perfect right to honour the democratically elevated leaders we have had in these nearly 150 years of national history as an autonomous state.

Even if, in docile subservience to the Finns teeming among us, we climb to this pinnacle of collective guilt and self-hate, we could not confine it to ourselves, as practically all nationalities have invaded, migrated, or otherwise subsumed into themselves previous occupants of the same geography. We must all punish ourselves in unison. Canada has no right to aspire to the moral conceit of being the only nationality that so purifies itself.

Nor could we honourably and with moral consistency confine our self-revulsion to our prime ministers. All who served in their governments, or in their parliamentary caucuses, who elected them, or acquiesced in their wickedness and failed to take up arms against them; the native people themselves for insufficient ferocity in their disaffection, must share the shame and opprobrium. It is unjust to assault only the memory of John A. Macdonald by allowing him to be the only person whose statue is removed.

Finn and his colleagues must now demand that the statues of the other prime ministers be made and unveiled, and then removed in a spectacle of degradation, with dunce caps on their bronze heads, reviled, and urinated upon, like the statue of George Washington at the foot of Wall Street which was so treated by anti-Vietnam War demonstrators in the late 1960s (causing construction workers, who had at least retained their sanity, to expel the demonstrators physically from the area in, to say the least, peremptory fashion). And the heinous offence of insensitivity must not be permitted for an instant to be monopolized by Wilfrid Laurier University; it is a failing almost everyone sometimes is guilty of, and we must all surrender, including Finn, to the scourge we have earned by insensitive acts and even thoughts.

Obviously we could carry this reasoning to illimitably absurd extremes, but they would be no more irrational and unjust than what has already occurred at Wilfrid Laurier University. Canada has its failings, as do all its leaders and people, and all other people who have ever lived; we are proverbially all sinners. But Canada is relatively just and tolerant and free, has not suffered more than 200 deaths in civil violence these 149 years, only participated in six wars, always with distinction, and in pursuit of a just cause. Very rarely have its armed services been guilty of severe misconduct, and Canada is, in moral terms, if not in panache or excitement (though we have had more moments there than we give ourselves

credit for), a country that incites comparative pride.

Of course the vexed issue of treatment of the native people includes some discreditable and tragic aspects, more by the French and British colonial governments than by Canada as an autonomous country. There is today a widespread recognition that we have to do better and try to make amends for past wrongs. But we must not be morally terrorized, nor allow the native agitators to escalate their complaints to the point of Finn invoking little-known native groups as displaced occupiers of a university campus who cannot be subjected to the indignity of having statues of our principal historic public figures unveiled there.

It is not for the likes of Finn to tell us what "contemporary universities are about." They are supposed and mandated to be about what universities have always been about: providing advanced study and promoting research and expanded knowledge of all academic fields, and the promotion of intellectual and moral courage.

John A. Macdonald was enlightened in his time, the times of Disraeli (an ethnic Jew who greatly expanded the voting franchise), Gladstone (champion of the Armenian victims of Turkish genocide), Lincoln (emancipator of the American slaves), and even Bismarck (unifier of Germany, and founder of the welfare state). Macdonald was a champion of the rights of women and of the right of native people to vote, as well as the principal founder of this country. Every public place in Canada or anywhere would be honoured to have his statue in it.

And we must deter the self-flagellators from propagating this ghastly fraud that we were ever guilty as a country of genocide. Militant native leaders have recited to me ad nauseam the United Nations definition of genocide (of which I was already aware): "Acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group;" and the UN resolution recites examples. Some of the

misconduct specified was inflicted upon some native people in Canada, as well as some other groups, but never with an intent to destroy those groups. This is a lie that has been steadily inserted into the media and academic conventional wisdom of the country. Even the chief justice of Canada has represented Canada as a former slave-holding jurisdiction guilty of operating concentration camps during the Second World War, connoting Nazi or Soviet-level criminality, and of committing cultural genocide against the native people (there is no such offence – the suffix “cide” invariably refers to physical extinction). These are all vertiginous exaggerations.

In other times and places, the judiciary and the academy would be precisely the places we would look to as defenders of the truth, of balanced judgment, of condemnation where it is merited, and it is merited in many areas of policy toward native people. But we also have the right to expect the bench and the professoriat to avoid hysterical excess. They have largely failed this country, and have been complicit in what amounts to a public misinformation and anti-patriotic campaign. That campaign more closely resembles in its mindless fervour the Reign of Terror of the Committee of Public Safety in Revolutionary France, the Nazi Nuremberg Laws, the Stalinist purge of the “rootless cosmopolitans” (Jews), America’s McCarthyite persecutions, and the Chinese Cultural Revolution of the late 1960s, than the mistakes and occasional malice of Canadian officials against Canada’s native people constitute genocide, cultural or otherwise.

Somewhere resistance must arise against the politically correct executioners in this country before they are able to reduce us all to a Dante’s Inferno of frenzied cultural and moral oppression.

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