

The Aftermath of the Holocaust and Canada's Residential School System: On Canadian Human Rights Awareness

Many scholars have recognized and studied the links between the end of World War Two, the emerging recognition of the Holocaust, and the development of a discourse around universal human rights grounded, of course, in the United Nations. However, less critical attention has been paid to Canada's initial abstention in adopting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Political scientist David B. MacDonald, has bucked this trend in pointing out that Canada's reluctance is directly related to its post-war treatment of Japanese-Canadians and fundamental incompatibilities between the UDHR and political status of Indigenous-Canadians under the *Indian Act*.

Kwakwaka'wakw educator Bob Joseph has pushed this relationship further, suggesting a stronger link between the Holocaust and the experiences of Indigenous Canadians. More specifically, Joseph claims that the human rights awareness ushered in by the conclusion of World War Two led to an increase in pressure from the Canadian public to end the Canadian Indian Residential School System (IRS).

In this paper I propose to explore texts grounded in the immediate post-war in Canada. My exploration will not only assess the accuracy of Joseph's claim, but also seeks to develop a deeper knowledge of the influence of the Holocaust on Canadian understandings of human rights in the post-war context. Moreover, my paper will demonstrate the viability of a comparative approach to the study of the both the Holocaust and the IRS which clarifies the mechanisms by which both genocides took place.