

Genocide deniers ask: Where are the bodies of the residential schoolchildren?



This call for the bodies of residential schoolchildren is nothing more than a racist rant bordering on genocide denial.

Where is the actual evidence of the 215 bodies discovered at the grounds of the former Kamloops Indian Residential School? This question has recently been posted in a national newspaper by a popular columnist, and then later tweeted about, repeatedly, by another columnist.

And then it has gained enough momentum to go viral, especially with those more right-leaning personalities, such as a trendy YouTuber who mocked the evidence. At this time, the video has 155,000 views. Harmful like a virus, this doubt is spreading, infecting minds and re-traumatizing those who are the victims of our Canadian genocide.

Most of us know where the bodies are. The search at the Kamloops site that once was an orchard was prompted because of a discovery of a child's rib bone. This gruesome find was not a surprise to those whose memories of being woken up in the middle of the night to dig graves were a part of witness testimonials — similar to most testimonials — about the evils that befell Indigenous people.

After Kamloops, dozens of sites called for similar inquiries. This week, a geophysical examination at the former St. Joseph's Mission Residential School observed 93 "reflections" through ground-penetrating radar.

I wonder if the word "bodies" has now been changed to "reflections" possibly because such findings have been called into question by the aforementioned commentary. In turn, this commentary was most likely spurred by published articles, including one by a university professor, and social media postings that challenge the validity of the evidence.

This kind of questioning is the status quo of what Canada has nurtured for the better part of 200 years — the idea that the Indigenous people's existence, but mostly their disappearance at the hands of settlers, is something that can be flamboyantly denied.

At least 150,000 Indigenous children were taken and forced to attend the schools. As early as the 1900s there were reports by Peter Bryce, the chief health inspector for the Department of Indian Affairs, who detailed the abuse, malnutrition and death due to disease. Until the Kamloops discovery, the official numbers of deaths were more than 3,000. (However, former Truth and Reconciliation Commission chair Murray Sinclair has always estimated that number to be much higher — 6,000 at least).

In June and July of 2021, those estimates were as high as 15,000 and growing.

But. Where. Are. The. Bodies?

They are where they were buried — in those secret or official graves. At this point, nobody is going to be digging up those children to satisfy a bunch of white settlers' points of view as to what we should be doing with our tragically deceased little ones.

Currently, we don't have protocols in place *yet* (that I'm aware of) on how to sensitively deal with the graves. However, we are taking our cultural beliefs into consideration, which go against unsettling rest spaces. This call for bodies is nothing more than a racist rant bordering on genocide denial.

How far will a denier go? When no longer able to refute the absurdly massive physical evidence, Holocaust deniers started to appeal to more "scientific" data. For example, they claimed that the chemical analysis of hydrogen cyanide compounds showed the amounts were not sufficient enough to kill people in gas chambers. Posing as tourists, these "scientists" would gouge chunks of plaster from the walls of gas chambers to send them for analysis.

What happened in residential schools is not about the evidence. This kind of trolling is part of genocide, as are the actual crimes. Gregory H. Stanton, an expert on crimes against humanity, described [10 stages of genocide](#); extermination is not the final step. Rather, its final stage is denial that it happened — such as high-profile commentators' demands to see bodies.

I quote from Operation Broken Silence's writing on the stages of genocide to answer: "They overlook deliberate imposition of conditions that destroy part of a group ... demanding 'proof beyond a reasonable doubt,' when prevention only requires action based on compelling evidence."

From the Toronto Star article written by KJ McKusker

<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/contributors/2022/01/28/genocide-deniers-ask-where-are-the-bodies-of-the-residential-schoolchildren.html>