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# **SECTION 4: WHAT IS GENOCIDE?**

(2002)

### **HISTORY, SOCIAL STUDIES**

### **MAIN IDEA**

Ever since there was contact with Europeans there was genocide. Residential schools are the most obvious form of genocide to Indigenous People of North America. The following lesson will deal with many different definitions of genocide and how genocide still effects us today; how it effects our Aboriginal youth who are trying to find and reclaim their identity. Ever since there was contact with Europeans there was genocide. Residential schools are the most obvious form of genocide to Indigenous People of North America. The following lesson will deal with many different definitions of genocide and how genocide still effects us today; how it effects our Aboriginal youth who are trying to find and reclaim their identity.

## **LEARNING OJECTIVES:**

- Student will have a chance to come up with their own definition of genocide.
- Student will become more aware of genocide and its effects on Indigenous peoples of North America.
- Students will learn about how genocide is connected to residential schools and how those
  effects were passed on from generation to generation.

### **ACTIVITIES**

- 1. Ask students what their definition of **genocide** is? Have them write their definition on a larger piece of paper with a marker) and have each student one-by-one read their definition to the class.
- 2. Tell the students what the definition of genocide is according to www.dictionary.com

**Genocide:** The systemic and planned extermination of an entire national racial, political or ethnic group.

- 3. Share with the students **Young American Indians: The Need to Reclaim Identity**.
- 4. Read the following as a class or individually:
  - Genocide by Provisions of the Convention of the United Nations in Dec.
     1948 is Defined as
  - Dead Indians, Live Indians, and Genocide
  - · Genocide of the Mind
  - Genocide in Residential Schools "Some examples, just to name a few"



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- 5. Explain to the students how genocide is connected to residential schools and how the effects of genocide are passed on from generation to generation.
- 6. After the students have been taught the above, have them choose one of the options below. This will allow them to express their feelings regarding what they have learnt:
  - Draw or paint a picture (make sure they provide a written description to go along with their picture).
  - Write an essay (there are no guidelines as to what they should write about, it can be feelings, emotions, responses, a reflection, etc.).
  - Write a poem.
  - Write a story.
  - Or let them come up with their own idea, but it must be approved by the teacher.
- 7. EXTENSION: Ask students to respond to the following:
  - Mascot or Racist Symbol? Should Aboriginal images be used as mascots? Why
    do you think yes or no?
  - Have an open discussion or have them do a written response.
  - As a class you can brainstorm all the different Aboriginal/Indian images that are used in society/media today.

### **ASSESSMENT**

Formative: Assignment, class participation.

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#### READING

### YOUNG AMERICAN INDIANS: THE NEED TO RECLAIM IDENTITY

"Today's Indian youth are often faced with the temptation of defining themselves in relation to stereotypes and misjudgments. Culturally relevant opportunities to express themselves can play a definite part in allowing youth to avoid these temptations. Many reservations are now incorporating culturally based programs into their curriculums to ensure their youth have opportunities to carry on the language, traditions, and values of their people. But what of those of American Indian ancestry who do not live on reservations? Who either were not born into a tribal situation, or have left, for one reason or another. Dot they have the tribal identities and opportunities to learn of their heritage? Televisions bring in the hype of commercials designed to deflate the spirit and inflate the ego into many households, providing a constant challenge of blending the old with the new. Many youth are torn between the need of extended family and values based on material gain for the self. Many get caught in the spirit-stealing seduction of drugs and alcohol.

Some have managed to survive this dichotomy, holding on to traditional teaching as they live in non-traditional settings. Some have given up entirely and decided to denounce their "Indianness." some are still caught in the middle, striving to survive with their integrity intact. All know what it means to exist between two worlds, trying to belong to both." (*Moore, p.63, 2003*)

Source: Moore, Marijo. 2003. <u>Genocide of the Mind.</u> Thunder's Mouth Press/Nation Books An Imprint of Avalon Publishing Group, Inc. NY: New York



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### READING

# GENOCIDE BY PROVISIONS OF THE CONVENTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN DEC. 1948 IS DEFINED AS:

"Any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, and include five types of criminal actions: killing members of the group; causing serious or bodily or mental harm of members of the group; deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about it's physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; a forcibly transferring children of the group to another group."

### - Lymens Legters -

"The American Genocide"
Policy Studies Journal, vol. 16, no. 4, summer 1988.
http://www.nemasys.com/ghostwolf/Native/genocide.shtml

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### READING

## DEAD INDIANS, LIVE INDIANS, AND GENOCIDE

As per America Holocaust, Columbus and the Conquest of the New World, David Stannard, Oxford University Press, ISBN 0-19-507581-1 the term "genocide" was coined by Raphael Lemkin in his book, "Axis Rule in Occupied Europe, published in 1944. His thinking is summarized by Frank Chalk and Kurt Jonassohn. pp. 279-280:

Under Lemkin's definition genocide was the coordinated and planned annihilation of a national, religious, or racial group by a variety of actions aimed at undermining the foundations essential to the survival of the group as a group. Lemkin conceived of a genocide as 'a composite of different acts of persecution or destruction.' His definition included attack on political and social institutions, culture, language, national feelings, religion, and the economic existence of the group. Even nonlethal acts that undermined the liberty, dignity, and personal security of members of a group constituted genocide if they contributed to weakening the vitality of the group. Under Lemkin's definition, acts of ethnocide-a term coined by the French after the war to cover the destruction of a culture without the killing of its bearers-also qualified as genocide.

Lemkin stated that "Genocide has two phases: one, destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group: the other, the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor." This has most certainly been the case as regards the First Nations.

American Holocaust, pp. 279. United Nations General Assembly resolution, 1946:

Genocide in the denial of the right of existence to entire human groups, as homicide is the denial of the right of existence shocks the conscience of mankind, results in great losses to humanity in the form of cultural and other contributions represented by these groups, and is contrary to moral law and to the spirit and aims of the United Nations. Many instances of such crimes of genocide is a matter of international concern. The General Assembly Therefore, Affirms that genocide is a crime under international law which the civilized world condemns, and for commission of which principals and accomplices—whether private individuals, public officials or statesmen, and whether the crime is committed on religious, racial, political or any other grounds-are punishable.

Source: http://www.dickshovel.com/DeadIndians.html

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### READING

## **GENOCIDE OF THE MIND**

"As a man and a student of history, I would also learn that cultural genocide begins when one people robes the religious views of another people through indoctrination and fear, and how the practitioners of Christianity made every effort imaginable to impose their anthropomorphic God on Indian children, stealing our future of the most precious and vital view of life and of the world and of the universe." (Moore & Horn, p. 66, 2003)

"Are you a real Indian? How much Indian are you? What kind of Indian are you? You can't be full Indian. These questions and statements dogged me then and they dog me now. Only forty years ago they snapped and nipped away at a boy's identity even as he headed for the path of heart. Like so many young Indians then and today, I was only a kid trying to find a niche in the world and escape the government of self-inflicted cultural genocide that one day in the not too distant future may show the Indian on paper as not existing at all." (Moore & Horn, p. 67, 2003)

"How much Indian are you? He asked. It was a question designed to demean. It was a question that I would discover as a writer and teacher haunted the minds and hearts of too many young Indians all across America..." (Moore & Horn, p. 71, 2003)

"I responded the way I thought most clear, "I'm half," I said, my brown eyes squinting defiantly at my young enemy...Having been so proud I thought it up, I answered again, "I'm half." (Moore & Horn, p. 72, 2003)

"As I look back at my life now, I am certain that other degrading images and names of Native people, like Redskins, had already filtered through my mind and self-image when I was so small I could not yet walk, but then, that is an effect of cultural genocide. However, it was Savvy Seminole who really made me knowingly ashamed, aware, and angry at the philosophy and the people that created and accepted him...Savvy Seminole was how civilized white and black people living in America thought of Indians then, and still in many ways choose to think of Indians now. The rationalization of cultural genocide is simple. Americans need to have these images and names in order to deny their history, for a history wrought with genocide and a democracy riddled with an evil must be denied or the foundation of the United States would crumble. American images such as Chief Wahoo and Savvy Seminole enable the oppressors more easily to accept the stealing of a people's continent and inflicting genocide upon its Native inhabitants. When I think to forty or fifty years ago, those images and names pained me in ways I cannot even know now. What I do know is that I became aware that this was how I feared the white man's world would always see me even thought at the same time what I still longed to be more that anything else was an Indian like my elder Uncles." (Moore & Horn, p. 68-69, 2003)



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# READING GENOCIDE OF THE MIND continued...

"I wonder sometimes, though, how many times this heart can be broken. I know so many young Indian women who have given birth while still teenagers. I know that they give their children birth names like Donald, Raymond and Robert and Rebecca rather then Native names that could help guide the children in the Circle of Life. Of course, giving a child an Indian name would require responsibility and selflessness on the part of the parents. I know Indian males still in their teens who have three or four children with as many young girls. Just as giving birth does not define a mother, neither does seeding life define a father, so another generation of Indians whose greatest treasure was always the children becomes further fragmented and removed from its heritage.

Attending urban powwows, or even returning to the reservation for powwows, cannot fulfill these urban Indians when their own people pause to honour an American flag circling the arena while a dancer in uniform of the oppressor holds it, dancing. Neither can the Indian gangs find fulfillment hanging around outside the circle selling dope, or just hanging around looking for something they cannot define.

And what can be even more threatening to our future is that too often, greedy tribal governments, not wanting to open tribal roles to share tribal responsibility, do not recognize many of theses children, who are often born in urban hospitals, as Indians. Neither does the federal government, leading me to think that our own people have joined the government and now take part in this kind of paper genocide. But what is and Indian anyway? Simply having Indian blood computed on an ID card does not define an Indian. Of this I can be certain. Then perhaps, with children being born in urban areas to Indian teenagers with little understanding of motherhood and fatherhood, and with paper genocide continuing among tribal officials, we have assumed the role of our oppressor and carry out genocide against ourselves.

Perhaps the real in-my-face awareness of our genocide occurred not too long ago when my uneducated and unemployed teenage nephew pulled over to say hello to me. He was driving his new Cadillac. He had showed the car to me once before. It had a TV set mounted to the dash along with a CD changer hooked up to stereo with speakers occupying the entire rear of the car. Eminem rap rattled the car's grille as the dark power window slid father down, revealing a kid I loved but who was too confused himself even to know who he was. I could see a designer logo across his t-shirt, while on his head he sported a Cleveland Indians baseball cap.

My heart squeezed and my breath seemed momentarily suspended. Perhaps on some way he was I and I was my uncle. He was the future now, and this time I was the link to the past. I guess every age has its situations. Every age has its challenges. I shook my head slowly as my lips tightened. Then I forced a smile. "Ah-neen," I said, greeting him in the language of our ancestors.

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# READING GENOCIDE OF THE MIND continued...

I know that genocide reminds the most perverse human act. It eradicates entire peoples. It annihilates whole cultures. It rips beauty, wisdom, and understanding from the world and robs a people of its identity.

Thus, when it comes to the act of genocide, I also know there can be no alternative to finding ways to fight for life. As long as there are those among us who believe in the old ways of seeing and being, there can be no surrender to genocide. Ever!" (Moore & Horn, p. 73-75, 2003)

Source: Moore, Marijo & Horn, Gabriel. 2003. <u>Genocide of the Mind.</u> Thunder's Mouth Press/Nation Books An Imprint of Avalon Publishing Group, Inc. NY: New York

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#### READING

# GENOCIDE IN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS "SOME EXAMPLES, JUST TO NAME A FEW"

#### Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group:

• Aboriginal children in North America were forcibly removed from their communities without permission from their parents and were brought to Residential schools.

## Causing serious bodily or mental harm of members of the group:

- While at Residential school many children, but not all were either physically abused, sexually abused or both.
- While at Residential school all children were mentally harmed as the were told that they were not allowed to practice their Native culture or speak their Native language.
- Native children suffered bodily harm due to inadequate food and rigid discipline.
- Children missed their families and some never saw their families again because some children were adopted out to non-Native families, some ran away, and some even died while at residential school.
- Mentally harmed as they had to deal with loneliness, sickness, confusion and abuse on their own.
- Mentally harmed because they were separated from their siblings and were not allowed to communicate with them.

#### **Attacks on Culture and Language:**

- Residential schools disrupted the transmission of beliefs, skills and knowledge from one generation to the next.
- They were not allowed to practice their Native culture or speak their Native language.
- They were also told that Native Spirituality was from the Devil and that it was Evil.

#### Ethnocide-destruction of a culture without the killing of its bearer:

• Trying to assimilate Native children at residential school by forcing Christian and European beliefs on them.