How we memorialize the past

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t he most recent racist configuration in the United States was ignited, ostensibly, by the removal (or threatened removal) of Confederate monuments and statues. We say ostensibly because it seemed some people were just itching for a fight and this issue popped up. Each community, or each society, must determine who and what it commemorates. It is understandable that African-Americans, among others, would be offended by statues and other historical monuments that adorn those who defended slavery in the U.S. Civil War. Those who decry their removal as an “erasing of history” seem to be unfamiliar with the concept of libraries and museums, which are among the foremost repositories of history. Remembering history is different from venerating it. For example, a statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee in front of a courthouse is an affront to equality before the law. The same statue in a museum could provide an opportunity for reflection and discussion.

Outside Budapest is a cute outdoor museum featuring Holocaust-era artifacts. It is a kitschy museum but it invites guests to ponder the propaganda of that terrible time and the evil that defined it, but for the opposite reason: to ensure that future generations face the reality of that history and respect people to seek a better future. Content is crucial.

While Americans battle their demons, some Canadians have taken issue with our history and how it is commemorated. The government of Sir John A. Macdonald, Canada’s first prime minister, was against the anti-semitic tropes pushed on the residential schools system, a past with which most Canadians are only now beginning to grapple. Last week on Canada Day, a former elementary school union said Macdonald’s name should be stripped from the nine schools in that province that are named for him. By that logic, we would eliminate his visage from our $10 bills and remove his statues and other likenesses from our public spaces.

Antisemitism among anti-racist racillers

Editor:

I attended the rally to protest WCAI (Worldwide Coalition Against Islam) as did hundreds of other, angry, white supremacists were outnumbered and drowned out by the love-in crowds. At the same time, I remarked the presence of antisemitism among some leftist groups in the crowd, and how this form of racism is generally tolerated on the left. One group held up a sign with the words “End the Occupation!” Recognizing these as watchwords of the anti-Israel movement, I approached the group. They asked us how they could support Hamas, which calls for the destruction of the Jewish state and commits acts of terrorism, and be against racism.

One guy started a rapid-fire rant, calling out Zionism for committing genocide against Palestinians. When I said that there is no Palestinian genocide (check your definitions and facts), a woman next to him turned and how how he had been widely accepted by the left. Anti-Zionism has become the new form of antisemitism.

I left the rally wondering how many of the good people in attendance would actually defend us Jews against the anti-Semitic tropes pushed on the left today. Certain types of racism go unchallenged on the left, either by ignorance or fear of going against the stream. Anti-Zionism has become the new form of antisemitism.

On camera the movie also couldn’t be unbearably long, so we had to cap at a certain number of individuals. But, we felt that allowing even a vital part of storytelling, is part of the fun of it. But, hopefully, the film helps to keep the school and the community on the right track.

It certainly kept Adam on track, making “sitting through hundreds of anti-Zionist rant, calling out Zionism for committing genocide against Palestinians” a place for you. That’s an institution worth talking about and one worth fighting for.

That’s not to say that it’s perfect. Nothing is, and the movie doesn’t shy away from that. This movie being a vital part of storytelling, is part of the fun of it. But, hopefully, the film helps to keep the school and the community on the right track.

Another thing that interested me about VTT Onward was that I was honouring my family roots.

– Adam Bogoch