

A Country Soiled in Blood: The Genocide of Innocent
Native Americans

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Is Ethnic cleansing and Genocide truly understood within the United States?

Genocide is an international crime, and any atrocities committed on a larger scale fall short of the legal definition. Violent crimes, for instance, crimes against humanity, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and mass killing may be accounted as partisans of genocides. Before 1944, the term genocide did not even exist. Raphael Lemkin, a Jewish lawyer, used the term to characterize the Nazis' systematic extermination of European Jews during the Holocaust. On December 9, 1948, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution called the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. By signing this document, each country commits to preventing and punishing genocide. Avoiding genocide, the treaty's second most crucial commitment is challenging for governments, institutions, and people.

Since then several genocides have occurred globally and have been documented. For instance, after declaring independence in 1776, the U.S. Department of War forcibly removed approximately 17,000 Cherokee to Indian Territory (which is now known as Oklahoma). Cherokee authorities estimate that 6,000 men, women, and children died on the 1,200-mile march called the Trail of Tears. Even after that time, thousands of Native Americans were killed, their land taken, and other atrocities committed. This goes to show, that ethnic cleansing and genocide are not truly understood in the United States because of the lack of discussion of innocent Victims, Discrimination, and Minority Rights. Innocent victims have no role in the chain of circumstances that resulted in their suffering (Haas, 2008, p. 122). We can clearly see this with the Trail of Tears, where

an innocent group of people had no choice but to leave their homes behind, all because of their ethnicity. Discrimination is treating people differently and unjustly because of who they are or their appearance (Oxford, 2022). Minority rights are considered to protect all individuals equally, regardless of whether they are a part of the majority or the minority (Haas, 2008, p. 125).

Mass killings, genocides, and other human rights violations rank high on the list of the most perplexing and sad events in recent history. Documentations and accounts show that genocides, ethnic cleansing, and other forms of mass crime are being committed in numerous parts of the world. The innocent victim often suffers the consequences of someone else's actions or decisions (Haas, 2008, p. 122). During the Holocaust (1939–1945), history's most notorious and well-recorded killing, Hitler intended to eliminate all 'undesirables' from his Third Reich, which around thirty-five European nations fought against in World War II. Over six million Jews, Roma, Slavs, homosexuals, disabled, and religious dissidents suffered because of the Holocaust. As a result of ethnically motivated mass atrocities, opponents suffered a tremendous degree of death and damage, including the slaughter of innocent civilian noncombatants. Haas argues that an army commits crimes against living people, through genocide, slavery, exile, and murder, to profit off their bodies after their deaths (Haas, 2008, p. 135). This is evident with Indigenous people who were pushed out by colonial powers for resources. However, many individuals could not get their heads around what had happened because many innocent people were killed only because of who they were.

Disciplinary regimes have steadily degraded human rights in several nations throughout history (Haas, 2008, p. 127).

Genocide has a close association with discrimination. An example of cultural genocide fueled by prejudice is the closing of boarding schools and the elimination of Greek minority students' access to education in Albania in 1933 (Haas, 2008, p. 144). Discrimination occurs when people's identities are seen to be distinct from those of the majority (Haas, 2008, p. 123). According to Louis Edgar Esparza, several groups and people in the United States may collaborate to rescue their fellow residents (Esparza, 2010, p. 54). However, are they protected by human rights? In what ways does the justice system counter their democratic rights? The law considers genocide to be the worst possible crime. There are good grounds for classifying genocides as an aggravated crime against humanity.

Human rights violations against civilians caused by repressive regimes include, for instance, the mass killings of Filipinos by American troops during their brutal occupation of the Philippines at the turn of the 20th century, the starvation deaths of civilians during the British blockade, the rape and murder of defenseless Chinese in and around Peking in 1900, and the atrocities committed by Americans in Vietnam. These atrocities reveal lapses. The statement, "The family is a natural and important aspect of society that must be preserved by society and the state" is included in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 2). However, human rights have been grossly abused, and genocides have been committed in the aforementioned situations. In particular, many kinds of intolerance of innocent victims can lead to ethnic cleansing, which can cause innocent people to be killed because of discrimination.

Additionally, genocides occur when a revolutionary government exterminates all or part of a human group to create a new social order. Discrimination occurs when individuals from a certain group are treated differently or denied opportunities because of their membership (Gellately & Kiernan, 2010, p. 15). If discrimination is the core cause of all genocides, the question should be how the community can solve its impending danger. Gellately & Kiernan (2010) look at how revolutionary methods require the creation of new men and women for mass population politics to work (p. 59). The United States is not immune to revolutionaries. As a result of the recent murders in the U.S., leading to the deaths of Floyd and Taylor, the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement once again began receiving attention throughout the globe. BLM is bringing awareness that systematic anti-Black racism still exists in the United States. It is a terrible violation of human rights made all the more obvious by the disproportionate mortality rates among Black and other colored individuals. From what we know about the past, it is clear that these kinds of discriminatory policies led to the end of marginalized groups. Article 7 of the UDHR guarantees everyone protection under the law. Yet, ongoing injustices cast doubt on the legitimacy of human rights and the efficacy of the judicial system. This discrimination calls for a review of how minority rights can counter-help to stabilize the situation.

It is still debatable why the United States waited so long to ratify the treaty to protect people against genocide and other human rights violations. Still, there is disagreement about whether the US has been able to stop genocides and other forms of ethnic cleansing. The concept of minority rights has not adequately safeguarded minority populations. Minority rights make sure that members of a

linguistic, national, or ethnic minority can openly participate in culture, speak their native language, and practice religious activities unique to their group (Haas, 2008, p. 125). States' efforts to manage diversity and assure nondiscrimination, as well as minorities' pursuit of equality and participation, are all guided by UDHR (Frezzo, 2010, p. 32). Pursuant to Article 1 of the UDHR, the government must ensure and promote the national, ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic identities of minorities within their boundaries (UDHR, 2). Representation of minorities has failed. For instance, throughout American cultural history, the image of the "Vanishing Indian" has been prevalent. This figure represents an Indigenous erasure in which the existence of indigenous people, cultures, and polities is minimized or eradicated by colonial civilizations.

It should be noted that the colonizers' goal was to diminish the number of indigenous people in the Americas so that they could more easily control the territory and exploit its resources (Gellately & Kiernan, 2010, p. 120). This hypothetical situation demonstrates the eroding support for further resources and self-governing privileges among indigenous Americans, the oppressed minority group. Racism is the primary motivating factor in all genocides. In this line, the colonial invasion unquestionably caused much carnage and suffering. The Genocide Convention's wide proposition includes ethnic cleansing and cultural genocide, along with the international community's responsibilities in response to these atrocities (Gellately & Kiernan, 2010, p. 139). When the subject turns to indigenous people, as a marginalized minority group, historical events are brought up. People in the United States pay more attention to victims and their pain. This makes it less useful to

focus on the heroic parts of an event. However, minorities still experience discrimination and exclusion despite having unquestioned citizenship.

In the end, writing about genocide is important because it shifts the focus to teach readers about how the colonial process was focused on exploiting and colonizing newly discovered places by killing the people who lived there first. Many authors, like Esparza (2010), Haas (2008), Frezzo (2010), and Gellately & Kiernan (2010), whose works are mentioned in this essay, have different ideas about how society is falling apart and human rights are being violated. Using the BLM as an example, the U.S. government needs to stop acting hypocritically and with two different sets of rules regarding human rights issues and start taking the huge racial problems and crimes in its country seriously.

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