

The united states hypocrisy

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The United States hypocrisy is evident when the "land of the free and home of the brave" came at the cost of Native American cultural genocide and near physical destruction. The term genocide was first used by Polish Journalists Raphael Lemkin in his book "Axis Rule in Occupied Europe." which was published in 1944. Lemkin defined genocide as the intentional mass killing of members of a nation and/or executing acts with the intention of destroying the basic foundations of life, aiming to destroy the group as a whole.

The term "basic foundations of life" refer to the culture, language, religion, established public and social institutions, liberty and personal safety, health and dignity. After coining the term, Lemkin petitioned the United Nations to criminalize genocide, which they did in 1948. The United Nations coined their own term. Defining genocide as the intentional killing of or causing serious physical or mental harm to members of a group, deliberately inflicting life conditions calculated to bring physical destruction to a group, preventing births and transferring children forcibly from one group or another. Both definitions are broad, but the use of "intention" has led to controversy regarding Native Americans and the atrocities committed by the United States and their government.

Whether the U. S intentionally slaughtered Natives with the intention of extermination is of great controversy. Simply because there was no official decree passed by Congress calling for their demise. However, the US demonstrated genocidal mentality on multiple occasions that resulted in the massacre of hundreds of indigenous people. This mentality was exhibited by Secretary of War, Henry Knox in 1790 when he ordered the US army to "

extirpate, utterly, if possible," a group of natives refusing to cede their land in Ohio.

President Jefferson also demonstrated the same mentality a few years later when faced with the altercations with different Indians. " If we are ever constrained to lifting the hatchet against any tribe, we will never lay it down till that tribe is exterminated or driven beyond Mississippi." Later adding " They will kill some of us, we will kill all of them." Both the Secretary of State and President of the US made it perfectly clear extermination was the only option when Natives refused to give their land.

But this was not the first case of a president exhibiting such intolerant views. In 1799 the US declared war on the Haudenosaunee tribe for raids that had set back colonial settlement. " The objective of this war was " the total destruction and devastation of their settlements. " -George Washington. In this war, the US directly murdered 200 natives (Natives).

When the topic of settlers and native American interactions arise, the common legend of Smallpox infested blankets being distributed to Natives by the settlers is widely debatable due to lack of hard evidence. Some argue it never happened, but on June 23rd, 1763 Captain William Trent wrote in his journal " We gave them two blankets and a handkerchief out of the Smallpox hospital... I hope it will have its desired effects. " As a result, 60-80 Native died of Smallpox (Smallpox).

It is clear that from the early years' colonial settlement that the high ranking US officials possessed a genocidal mentality regarding the indigenous people

who resided there first. On May 28th, 1830 Congress passed the Indian removal act. This policy, was vigorously promoted by Andrew Jackson, provided the opportunity for the US to negotiate with the natives for their land with the promise of compensation. Instead of buying the land, The US used brute force to obtain it.

The five "civilized tribes", Chickasaw, Choctaw, Seminole, creek, and Cherokee initially refused to negotiate. Many members of these tribes were trying to assimilate into American society. In 1835 self-appointed representatives from the Cherokee tribe drafted the Treaty of Echota. The treaty proposed trading of all Cherokee lands East of Mississippi River for five million dollars along with relocation assistance and compensation for lost property.

The federal government agreed to these terms but most of the Cherokee felt betrayed. BY 1838 only two thousand had left for the reservation (Native), in response the government appointed General Winfield Scott and seven thousand other soldiers to handle the altercation. Their method of peace was to remove the natives and loot their homes. Afterwards, they forced the Natives to march 1200+ miles west, During this excruciating journey, they were not given foodwater or supplies. Over five thousand died from starvation, malnutrition and several flue epidemics including Whooping Cough, Typhus, Dysentery and Cholera. This journey was known as the Trail of Tears, and twenty-five per cent of these tribes died.

Despite relocating the Native Americans and seizing land, the US still possessed presenting feelings towards natives. In the 1850s California Gold

Rush natives were still being persecuted against and then enslaved. Should they not comply with treaties colonists would " make war.. which must of necessity be one of extermination to many of the tribes." stated by Californian Governor John McDougal in 1851 (Natives). A prime example of Native enslavement was exhibited on John Sutter's private mill, where gold was discovered. Sutter was one of the most influential landowners at the time, enslaving hundred of natives who resided on his property and controlling them with fear.

The Natives were used for labour and as a makeshift militia to protect Sutter's 50, 000 acres and trading centre. Sutter treated the native people horrendously. He was friendly at first but began to interfere with tribe customs and marriages. A former employee, Heinrich Lienhard accused Sutter of forming a Harlem and molesting young native girls. His method of control was fear. He was not hesitant to whip or kill noncompliant natives. Visitors noted " Sutter keeps 600-800 Indians in a complete stage of slavery", feeding them leftover bread wheat from troughs while they slept in locked rooms without furniture. (Jeffery).

The use of Native labour during the gold rush was common, even more so was the sale of indigenous people between farmers. Enslavement was a popular form of oppression during the gold rush, but it was not the only ordeal Native Americans faced. One particularly revolting act was Californian Governor John B Wells rendering funding for the Eel River Rangers. The Eel River Rangers was a group of twenty or so white men who hunted down and slaughtered Indigenous women and children. (Natives)The State

government of California provided finances needed to take the lives of innocent women and children.

Of course when discussing homicidal acts perpetrated by the United States one cannot forget the Indian Wars. The Indian Wars were U. S army campaigns that targeted smaller groups of tribes to send a message to the rest of the population. The U. S army intentionally slaughtered hundreds of Natives on three separate occasions. The first massacre occurred near Preston, ID in 1863. Named the Bear River massacre an estimated 384 Shoshone Indians were open fired on.

The second massacre occurred January 28th, 1870. Two hundred natives, mostly women and children, were murdered. The issue pertaining to their deaths was the altercation between Malcolm Clarke and Owl child when Clarke accused Owl Child of stealing his horses and whipping him brutally as a punishment. After the whipping, Owl Child gathered several allies and they murdered Clarke, fleeing afterwards.

This issue led to a massive outcry and the federal government appointed Major Eugene Baker to retaliate. When looking for Owl Child and his allies, baker and his men came across a band of peaceful Indians. The band consisted of women, children and elderly men. When informed this was the wrong tribe Baker replied: " That makes no difference, one band or another, they are all Piegans (Blackfeet) and we will attack them." On that day 37 men, 90 women and 50 defenseless children were open fired on.

Additionally, Baker captured 140 woman and children as prisoners. But when finding that the majority were infected with smallpox he abandoned them with no food or other supplies (Olster). Baker was clearly more focused on seeking revenge than bringing justice to the guilty. He was not concerned with what was right or wrong. He deliberately massacred defenceless people, knowing their innocence, because he despised natives. This genocidal mentality proceeded by Owl Child's cries resulted in their demise. As revolting as Baker's actions were, they were still considered mediocre to the Wounded Knee Massacre. On December 15, 1890, colonists attempted to arrest Cheif Sitting-Bull.

A fight erupted and Cheif Spotted elk led the band of natives to the Pine Ridge Reservation. On December 28th natives encountered a US cavalry that escorted them to Wounded Knee Creek. After being disarmed the natives commenced a " Ghost Dance", a ceremonial dance that they believed would protect them from the American's bullets. This agitated the US cavalry. Attempting to stop the natives resulted in a scuffle in which more than 60 women were killed. US cavalry suffered casualties of 31 dead, 333 wounded out of 500. (Olser).

These massacres were messages to the larger population. Attempts to disrupt and destroy smaller members of a nation to cripple or at least communicate the homicidal intentions that would be met with further resistance or retaliation. The massacres exhibited the immense hatred the colonists possessed by slaughtering innocents as reparations for the guilty. In all cases, natives were disarmed, defenceless and completely innocent

of violence against colonists. By attacking communities instead of armies the US army demonstrated intentions of destroying basic foundations for life within the nation.

When examining Native American oppression and the US government it is crucial to note the direct action US Congress took against the indigenous people. In this case, the United States established Native Americans on conditions precalculated to result in their deaths. On November 29th, 1864 Chief Black Kettle and Chief Niwot led their band to Fort Lyon in compliance with provisions of a peace treaty established earlier that year in September.

The Chiefs and their people were asked to relocate with the threat of their safety. To demonstrate friendliness to any Americans they may encounter the Natives hung a large American flag and a smaller white flag beneath it. John Chivington led the attack against the natives. Claiming " They were of the same tribes with those who had murdered many persons and destroyed valuable property on the Platt and Arkansas Rivers." (Olster).

Estimated casualties in this massacre vary, Chivington claimed " 500 -600 warriors were killed." But John S. Smith, an eyewitness general under Chivington's command estimates 135 deaths, 105 being woman and children. Smith also accounted for the scalping of women and infants and further mutilation for the deceased. The Cheyennes lost many women and children. Chiefs White Antelope, Yellow Wolf, Big Man, and a number of others, many who advocated for peace with the colonists, were killed.

Chivington had no legitimate reason to believe these natives a threat. They had flown an American Flag and the universal flag for peace yet he still chose to slaughter them. His actions expose the premeditated murder of these people. Chivington had no intention of letting the natives escape, these conditions resulted in the inevitable deaths of innocent indigenous people. From scalping women and infants to completely abolishing their millage and even murdering Smith's "Half breed" son Jack, Chivington displayed no compassion. Instead, he demonstrated brute force and barbarism towards natives.

Unfortunately, the Sand Creek massacre wasn't the finale occurrence of premeditated lethal conditions. On September 28th, 1862 the American Government tried 392 Indian prisoners, sentencing 303 to death and giving 16 prison terms. Because this trial was a military trial President Lincoln reviewed the commissioner's findings and found that 303 deaths seemed to be genocidal. So he revised the criteria for the death penalty to those who had been convicted of rape, which lowered it to two. This number was still unsatisfactory so the criteria changed to those who had participated in the civilian massacres.

December 26th, 1862 39 natives were sentenced to death. 38 were hanged and one was given a reprieve at the last minute. What makes this event so heinous was the conditions in which the trial was executed. The trial was conducted in English, the natives were unrepresented and unfamiliar with court proceedings. Also, the war that prompted these "war crimes" occurred in a sovereign state and those men who have surrendered were entitled to

treatment of such. The disadvantages of the hearing completely abolished any chance of the natives having a fair trial and the possibility of them being found innocent.

By placing them in that biased, tainted courtroom the American Government sealed their fate with no chance to defend themselves. The reason for the war? Two years prior to the trial the US failed to meet treaty obligations. In retaliation, Dakota warriors raided stole food and killed five settlers. After the sentencing and executions, it was found that two natives had been hung by mistake and a letter written by Cheif Wabasha stated the Americans had promised no innocent natives would be punished if they followed the advice of General Sibley (Trials). The Us clearly deceived the Natives, placing them in a premeditated, biased courtroom with less than fair trial conditions that would ultimately result in their deaths.

In 1887, the American Government passed the Dawes Act. A policy that aimed to "safely guide natives from the night of barbarism to the fair dawn of Christian civilization." Assimilation consisted of natives converting to Christianity, learning and speaking English, wearing western clothes and hairstyles, and living a typical American lifestyle. The act also stated that Indian Reservations were to be distributed to individuals and that land could not be sold for 25 years, land left over from distribution could be sold to outsiders. This allowed native land to be purchased by Americans as if Americans didn't have enough already.

And it doesn't stop there. In 1930 the Supreme Court ruled that Congress could disperse native land without Indian consent. And in 1924 The

Citizenship act was passed. This Act granted citizenship to all Native Americans. Unfortunately, the desired effects were not seen as natives were forced to send their children to boarding schools for their education. In these schools children are often taught false information and censorship reigns supreme. Other nasty consequences of this act were the denial of rights to vote and extreme poverty. Most Indigenous people residing in inadequate housing with limited healthcare.

While the United States failed in completely exterminating all Native Americans, no one can deny they had the mentality to do so. And this mentality, combined with artillery support led to the demise of hundreds of Natives. But even the slaughter of their people wasn't enough. Not only did we take their lives and their land, but we also stole their culture. Demanding them to replace their customs with our own or face death and discrimination. The United States failed in physical genocide but was successful in the demise of a cultural genocide.