

The Impacts of English Colonial Terrorism and Genocide on Indigenous/Black Australians

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Abstract

This article critically explores the essence of colonial terrorism and its consequences on the indigenous people of Australia during their colonization and incorporation into the European-dominated racialized capitalist world system in the late 18th century. It uses multidimensional, comparative methods, and critical approaches to explain the dynamic interplay among social structures, human agency, and terror to explain the connection between terrorism and the emergence of the capitalist world system or globalization. Raising complex moral, intellectual, philosophical, ethical, and political questions, this article explores the essence, roles, and impacts of colonial terrorism on the indigenous Australians. First, the article provides background historical and cultural information. Second, it conceptualizes and theorizes colonial terrorism as an integral part of the capitalist world system. Specifically, it links capitalist incorporation and colonialism and various forms of violence to terrorism. Third, the article examines the structural aspects of colonial terrorism by connecting it to some specific colonial policies and practices. Finally, it identifies and explains different kinds of ideological justifications that the English colonial settlers and their descendants used in committing crimes against humanity.

Keywords

capitalism, colonialism, terrorism, genocide, capitalist incorporation, and indigenous/Black Australians

With the expansion of European-dominated capitalist world system to the Australia continent in the late 18th century, the English settlers started terror and genocide on indigenous Australians to expropriate their economic resources and to takeover their homeland. These crimes against humanity had continued in the 19th century until the indigenous peoples were almost destroyed and the ownership of their land was entirely transferred to the English colonial settlers and their descendants. These colonial settlers and their descendants have justified their theft and robbery of the resources of the indigenous people in the discourses of race, backwardness, civilization, and modernity. This article first introduces the indigenous Australians, their cultures and social organizations that made them vulnerable to the British attack. Second, it explains how the British colonial settlers expropriated the land of indigenous Australians through terrorism and genocide, and justified their criminal actions in the doctrine of *terra nullius* (empty land), (Lindqvist, 2007). Third, it identifies and explores different mechanisms of terrorism and genocide and their impacts on different groups of indigenous Australians.

Background

The indigenous Australians occupied the continent for more than 65,000 years before the arrival of English colonial

settlers in 1788. They were hunters and food-gatherers, and survived on wild foods. While men hunted or fished, women collected vegetable foods, insects, shellfish, honey, and other small creatures; they did not have permanent settlements, and moved depending on the availability water and food resources (Cranstone, 1973). They did not keep domestic animals, except the dog. Men used weapons such as the stone axe, hunting spears, throwing sticks or clubs, shields, and boomerangs, and they were “expert at tracking and stalking game and knowledgeable about its habits, and even in open country” (Cranstone, 1973, p. 13). Indigenous women used a digging stick for digging up food resources such as grubs, roots, edible ants, and burrowing animals. Men usually traveled over higher grounds to see and hunt animals, and women walked on lowlands to collect vegetable foods (Tindale, 1974).

They changed their environment through burning, managed their resources, and reached “a possible technological peak in the ‘eel farming’” in some areas (Bultin, 1993, p. 56).

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Like other nonagricultural societies, indigenous Australians might have started some practices that might have led to the initial domestication of animals and plants, irrigation, and gardening (Tindale, 1974). According to Norman B. Tindale (1974),

Australia has one of the largest areas of territory occupied by peoples in an approximately uniform state of hunting culture differing from region to region chiefly because of the different animals and plants upon which the people depend for a living and because of the acquisition of ideas by some which have not yet spread to all. (p. 30)

Indigenous Australians produced for their own consumption or satisfaction, not for exchange; they had small group property rights in land and other assets (Bultin, 1993). As G. Bultin (1993) wrote, indigenous Australians

recognized larger kinship relations, vital to many of their social and economic practices and these larger kin groups, in turn, acknowledged property, ritual and other rights. From time to time, [they] came together physically in larger associations for special purposes. To a limited degree, they traded within and beyond these kin groups; and there were episodes of conflict between them. (p. 53)

They not only spent their times in economic activities, but they also engaged in other activities such as education, learning-by-doing, leisure, ritual and religion, order, reproduction, administration and management, warfare, and investment (Bultin, 1993). Based on customary laws and values, indigenous communities had coherence-based similar thought and communication because of their common language, common life experiences, like exchange of women between extended families, and sharing of initiation rites.

Euro-American scholars call indigenous people tribes to claim that they are primitive and less developed and call Europeans or their descents nations or ethnic groups. Tindale (1974) defines

the “tribe” as the normally endogamous unit most commonly recognized in Australia, generally known as occupying a given territory, speaking mutually intelligible dialects, having a common kinship system, and sharing the performance of ceremonial rites of interest to them all. (p. 33)

In this discussion, the term tribe is rejected as it is a modernist or racist concept. The indigenous groups prefer to be called by their ethno-national names.¹ There were between 600 and 700 cultural-linguistic groups when English settlers arrived in Australia, and there are about 250 languages in use today.²

Eleanor Bourke (1998) estimated that in 1788 there were between 300,000 and 1 million indigenous people inhabited in Australia. There are different precontact population estimates of indigenous Australians: A. R. Radcliffe-Brown

(1930) estimated between 250,000 and 300,000, and D. J. Mulvaney and J. P. White (1987) proposed about 700,000. N. G. Bultin (1993) estimated that they were between 1 and 1.5 million in 1788 and concluded that “precontact populations of 700 000, 1 or 1.5 million imply massive depopulation and widespread destruction of indigenous societies and economies” (p. 99). In 1901, however, fewer than 100,000 of them remained (Kiernan, 2007). Bultin (1993) suggested three major reasons for the societal destruction: disease episodes, the withdrawal of resources, and killing. European diseases that exposed the population lacking immunological defenses to destruction included smallpox, venereal disease (e.g., gonorrhea), influenza, measles, pneumonia, and tuberculosis. The English settlers and their descendants expropriated native land and removed the indigenous people by cutting them from their food resources, and engaged in genocidal massacres.

The indigenous Australians were oral communities and kept “their cultural heritage alive by passing their knowledge, arts, rituals and performances from one generation to another, speaking and teaching languages, protecting cultural materials, sacred and significant sites, and objects.”³ Customary laws that passed from generation to generation through values and oral discourse governed them. As N. B. Tindale (1974) noted, indigenous Australians controlled their communities

by the use of song and the powers of ridicule and rebuke in them, although in some songs the added power of the man practicing ‘death magic’ [was] also seen as a controlling force. In this regard old dances and songs, describing the fate of ancients who misbehaved and suffered for their actions were made topical, ‘pieces’ being put in to make them fit the new circumstances. (p. 34)

The British Captain James Cook who visited Australia in 1770 appreciated their egalitarian social system (Kiernan, 2007). Indigenous Australians had a loose political organization based on the authorities of elders or holders of traditions: There were situations in which

a good hunter, a man given either to sorcery or to magical practices, or even a particularly skilled fighter, could [or] sometimes has exerted some authority. There is in general no formal institution of ‘chief’ or true leader, although ever since white settlement began efforts have been made to establish some sort of leadership role, and some pretense of chiefly authority has been made by natives who have adopted white ways. (Tindale, 1974, p. 33)

Indigenous Australians were organized in families, clans, kinship networks, and ethno-national groups. According to John Mulvaney (1981), they were

organized around small social units, families and clans, which coalesced on occasions when seasonal conditions permitted or

when kinship obligations required. Hundreds of individuals often congregated for ceremonial activities such as initiation rituals, and for reciprocal gifts or marriage exchange. These larger social groupings are termed tribes. (p. 18)

The smaller social groups, such as the family, extended families, the patrilineal or matrilineal descent group, and clans were the effective economic, social, and political units (Cranstone, 1973). Indigenous Australians were not warlike people, and they did not engage in war to capture territory or to dominate others; there was small-scale fighting for reasons connected with magical killing, revenge expeditions, with disputes about women, and with trespassing on hunting grounds or sacred places (Cranstone, 1973).

Indigenous communities made decisions based on the simple family, extended families, clans and kinship systems:

Kinship influences marriage decisions and governs much of everyday behaviour. By adulthood people know exactly how to behave, and in what manner, to all other people around them as well as in respect to specific land areas. Kinship is about meeting the obligations of one's clan, and forms part of Aboriginal Law, sometimes known as the Dreaming.⁴

The Dreaming is as an aspect of indigenous beliefs that recognizes mythical beings that in the beginnings arrived in Australia fighting, hunting, and forming the natural features; these religious "myths usually conclude with the Dreamtime heroes turning into rocks or animals or going to live in water holes, and losing individual physical existence, but their non-material essence survives and they are still actively concerned with human affairs" (Cranstone, 1973, p. 24). According to some stories of the Dreaming, the spirits of ancestors had created the world and then changed into rocks, stars, trees, watering holes, and have remained in sacred sites; "the Dreaming is never-ending, linking the past and the present, the people and the land."⁵ Furthermore, some of the Dreaming stories claim that

the ancestors' spirits came to the earth in human form and as they moved through the land, they created the animals, plants, rocks and other forms of the land that we know today. They also created the relationships between groups and individuals to the land, the animals and other people.⁶

Before English colonial settlement, like preagricultural and industrial European or other societies, indigenous Australians were living simple and egalitarian lifestyles:

Their approach to life was minimalist yet nurturing of members of the group. Clothing was either not worn or minimal, shelter was easily assembled or non-permanent structures, tools were made from materials readily available on the land, there was no written language, [and] children were cared for by the extended family group and Elders were treated as respected purveyors of important spiritual and cultural formation.⁷

Although the English settlers and their descendants rejected the artistic contribution of indigenous Australians until recently, systematic archaeological investigation reveals the significance of their artistic heritage in the world (Mulvaney, 1981). Indigenous arts include carving, painting (i.e., the decoration of the body, the preparation of ritual grounds, and totem ceremonies), and visual art. Because of their capitalist technology, social organization, and the desire to acquire land and accumulate wealth at any cost, the English settlers overpowered, terrorized, and almost exterminated indigenous Australians.

Conceptualizing and Theorizing Terrorism

Considering the historical and global context in which terrorism developed and intensified, we need a more comprehensive, historical, and broader definition of terrorism. So, I define terrorism as a systematic governmental or organizational policy or strategy through which lethal violence is practiced openly or covertly to instill fear on a given population group beyond the direct victims of terror to change their behavior of political resistance to domination or the behavior of dominant group for political and economic gains or other reasons. State and nonstate actors use terrorism; the former has used it to maintain state power or to loot resources and the latter mostly to resist the oppressive and exploitative policies of states. There are also nonstate terrorist agencies that advance extremist religious and racist ideologies and practices on a subnational or international level.

As the frequency, intensity, and the volume of terrorism have increased with the development of global capitalism, a definition and theory of terrorism cannot be adequately developed without considering terrorism as an aspect of the racialized capitalist world system. Beginning in 1492, European colonialists engaged in terrorism, genocide, and enforced servitude in the Americas and extended their violence into Africa through racial slavery. Then, in the 17th, 18th, 19 centuries, they incorporated other parts of the world into this system through colonial terrorism and genocidal wars. Most scholars have avoided providing a comprehensive and critical analysis and an objective definition and theorization of this aspect of the modern world system. Even critical scholars and others who have studied the emergence, development, and expansion of the capitalist world system have primarily focused on trade, the international division of labor, exploitation, capital accumulation, political structures, development and underdevelopment, and social inequality, and did not adequately address the role of terrorism in creating and maintaining the system.

History teaches us that different forms of political violence including terrorism have increased as different societies engaged in improved techniques of production, produced surplus wealth, developed their organizational capacities,

and improved their technological innovations. The emergence of the nation-state with the development of capitalism in the 16th century in Europe increased the organizational and technological capacity to engage in more lethal violence including terrorism. In European countries such as England, France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and the Netherlands, the 16th century was the period of the formation of the nation-state (Frank, 1978). With the formation of the nation-states, state-centered colonial terrorism expanded all over the world. For instance, Bartolome' De Las Casas, who traveled to the New World in 1502 with the Spaniards in their quest to colonize and rob the treasures and lands of the indigenous peoples of the Indies, provides an eyewitness account of the anatomy of colonial terrorism and genocide:

They forced their way into native settlements, slaughtering everyone they found there. . . Some they chose to keep alive and simply cut their wrists, leaving their hands dangling, saying to them: 'Take this letter'—meaning that their sorry condition would act as a warning to those hiding in the hills. (De Las Casas, 1992, p. 15)

Such terrorist acts were sponsored by European states or state agencies. A. P. Schmid (1991) asserts that

state terrorism can be seen as a method of rule whereby some groups of people are victimized with great brutality, and more or less arbitrarily by the state or state supported actors, so that others who have reason to identify with those murdered, will despair, obey or comply. (p. 31)

Furthermore, terrorism and war can be seen as a continuum process, and it is often impossible to draw a clear and neat boundary between political repression, state terrorism, war, and genocide. The policy of state terror can sometimes lead to genocide (Schmid, 1991). The Spaniards imposed fear through mass terror and genocide so that they could achieve their economic and political goals without any obstacle. These acts of terrorism and genocide were guided and financed by the government of Spain (see Cohen, 1969). Later, several European governments engaged in committing similar crimes. Today mainstream Euro-American scholars gloss over such crimes and refer to them as actions of "discovery" and "civilization."

Although some government elites and their apologists claim that the state provides protection from domestic and external violence, "governments organize and, wherever possible, monopolize the concentrated means of violence" such as political terror (Tilly, 1985, p. 171). Political terror and other forms of violence have always been involved in producing and maintaining structures, institutions, and organizations of privileged hierarchy and domination in society. State terrorism is a massive and extreme aspect of political violence. Those who have state power, which includes the power to define terrorism, deny their involvement in political

violence or terrorism and confuse abstract theories of the state with reality. Based on the assumption of the ideal relationship between the state and society, philosophers and political thinkers identified three functions of the state that would earn it legitimacy. According to these theorists, the state protects and maintains internal peace and order in society; it organizes and protects national economic activities; and it defends national sovereignty and national interests (Campanella, 1981). In reality, most states violate most of these theoretical principles by engaging in political repression and state terrorism to defend the interest of powerful elites, particularly when they engage in colonial expansion. Various forms of violence including political terrorism are closely related to the art of statecraft (Tilly, 1985).

As capitalism developed in Western Europe, the need for raw materials like gold and silver, markets, and free or cheap labor expanded due to the desire to minimize the cost of production and to increase the rate of profit and accumulation of capital or wealth. This need was fulfilled through colonialism, racial slavery, terrorism and genocide. "The treasures captured outside of Europe by undisguised looting, enslavement, and murder," Marx (1967) wrote, "floated back to the mother-country and were there turned to capital" (pp. 753-754). Capitalism had "witnessed the first long, sustained, and widespread quantitative and qualitative development. . . in its mercantile stage and the first period of concentrated capital accumulation in Europe" (Frank, 1978, p. 52). Western powers and some states in the Global South still engage in terrorism and hidden genocide to implement their draconian economic and political policies. "The war on terrorism is being used as a continuation of the war on social justice, as waged with the economic weapons of the international financial institutions" (Eisenstein, 2001, p. 136). Western powers, multinational corporations, and state elites in the Global South have collaborated and engaged in massive human rights violations and terrorism (Blakeley, 2009) even as Western-based human right organizations have systematically exposed such crimes.

In theorizing nonstate terrorism, scholars like Senechal de la Roche (1996) noted that the accumulation of grievances causes terrorism and "social polarization" between socially and culturally distant groups. Long-standing collective grievances and the right social geometry, such as a higher degree of cultural and religious differences, relational distance, and social inequality between the aggrieved and the dominant population groups can sometimes contribute to the development of nonstate terrorism (see Black, 2004). Jeff Goodwin (2006) advanced a theory of categorical terrorism:

The main strategic objective—the primary incentive—of categorical terrorism is to induce complicitous civilians to support or to proactively demand changes in, certain government policies or the government itself. Categorical terrorism, in other words, mainly aims to apply such intense pressure to

complicitous civilians that they will demand that 'their' government change or abandon policies that the revolutionaries oppose. (p. 2038)

Using this theory, Godwin concludes that Al Qaeda attacked the United States on September 11, 2001, because it considered Americans to be "complicitous citizens" who support the foreign policy of the United States in the Middle East.

Recently a few critical scholars have started to explore the essence and characteristics of state terrorism or colonial terrorism. These scholars include Caroline Elkins, Mark Curtis, Ruth Blakeley, Richard Jackson, Doug Stokes, Sam Raphael, and Marie Breen Smyth. Elkins (2005) explains that the British colonial government used political terror to destroy a Kenyan liberation movement known as the Land and Freedom Army (the Mau Mau) in the early 1950s through forced removals and deportations of millions of Kenyans, tortures ("a kind of public spectacle, often conducted in the open barbed-wire areas for all to see") and public rape at gunpoint for introducing public terror to the whole population. Scholars such as Blakeley (2009) and Curtis (1995, 1998) explored how the Global North or the West particularly the United States and the United Kingdom have been contributing to gross human rights violations and state terrorism in the Global South. Particularly Blakeley (2009) provides

a detailed history of Northern state terrorism, within the context of the foreign policy objectives of those states and the strategies they use to achieve them, dating back to the European colonial era, through to the practices of the US and its allies in the "War on Terror." (p. 4)

Western powerful states directly or indirectly engage in terrorism to dominate economic resources and markets in the Global South and to promote the politics of order at the cost of democracy and social justice. Generally speaking, as some states and their agencies engage in terrorist activities to promote their economic and political domination, nonstate terrorist forces use similar tactics to oppose and challenge such policies, behavior, and practices, and to advance their agendas. In this piece, I demonstrate that colonial terrorism was a form of state terrorism as it was planned and executed by colonial states and their agencies.

Terror and Genocide

The European mariners started to explore the waters of the Australian continent in the 17th century; between 1606 and 1770, about 54 European ships arrived on the coast of Australia and made contact with the inhabitants of the continent. These European explorers called the Australian continent *Terra Austalis Incognita* (unknown southern land). In the 17th century, many of the merchant ships that visited

the continent belonged to the Dutch East Indies Company. In 1606, Willem Janszoon, a Dutchman, with a ship called the *Duyfken* and his crew explored the Australian coast and met indigenous people. In November 1642, Abel Tasman reached the west coast of Tasmania with two ships known as *Heemskerck* and *Zeehaen* and named it Van Diemen's Land. Anthony Van Diemen, Governor-General of the Dutch East Indies commissioned Abel Tasman,⁸ a sea captain employed by the Dutch East India Company in 1642 to explore the unknown South Seas. Two years later, Tasman and his crew sailed along the northern coast of Australia (which later named New Holland) from Cape York to North West Cape.

Following the Dutch mariners, Lieutenant James Cook, an English mariner, in 1770 explored the Australian east coast in his ship *HM Barque Endeavour*. King George III of England instructed Cook on August 22, 1770, to claim the possession of the east coast of Australia that was later named New South Wales. Queensland was separated from New South Wales in 1859. Although French expeditions led by D'Entrecasteaus, Baudin, and Furneaux visited a few areas of Australia between 1790 and the 1830s, as the Dutch mariners did in the 17th century, the continent of Australia was totally colonized by England. The first British colonial fleet led by Captain Arthur Philip reached at Botany Bay between 18 and 20 January 1788. This fleet consisted of 11 ships and around 1,350 crew and convicts. These English colonialists found that Botany Bay was unsuitable for settlement, and hence they moved to north to Port Jackson on January 26, 1788, and camped at Cove called Cadi by the Cadigal people. They traded food with indigenous people. Richard Broome (2002) asserted that the English colonized Australia beginning January 26, 1788, when "ships containing 290 seamen, soldiers and officials and 717 convicts sailed into Port Jackson, to confront the Gamaraigal people of the Sydney area" (p. 26).

Because of the following three reasons the Gamaraigal people avoided to deal with these settlers for 2 years: The first reason was that they did not like how the British ordered convicts around and flogged or hanged them. The second reason was that they did not like the British unearthing of graves to steal the bones of indigenous people. The third reason was that the Gamaraigal people "objected to the Europeans clearing the ground around a waterhole (possibly sacred) and casting nets in the area without permission" (Broome, 2002, p. 26). The second fleet arrived in 1790 with needed food and other supplies. George Vancouver started the process of British colonialism in Western Australia in 1791 by claiming the Albany region in the name of King George III. Tasmania was occupied in 1803 and 1825, Western Australia in 1827, South Australia between 1836 and 1842, Victoria in 1851, and Northern Territory in 1825. England sent to Australia over 162,000 convicts in 806 ships between 1788 and 1850 to colonize the continent.⁹ Mathew Flinders suggested the name Australia and later it was

adopted as the name of this country. Australia emerged in 1901 as a federation of the six English colonies.

How did the English colonialists create this new country? What happened to indigenous Australians in the process of creating this country? The English settlers and indigenous people initially exchanged items such as food, cloth, artifacts, and other supplies in amicable and understanding ways. How did these relationships change? Indigenous Australians did not resist when the British invaders were arriving in Australia. Richard Broome (2002) argued,

Had they known the implications the arrival of these strangers would have for their future, they may have met the intruders more frequently with violence and less with curiosity. The irony was that the Aborigines had often helped the European explorers and the first settlers as they bumbled through the bush loaded down with equipment and plagued by inexperience. (p. 40)

Despite the fact that indigenous people never tried to harm these invaders at the beginning, the invaders turned their cooperation and friendly relationship into conflict, war, and terrorism to expropriate the homeland of the indigenous people. Gradually indigenous people realized that the English settlers were expropriating their land and other resources on which they depended and disturbed their ways of living. Consequently, between 1790 and 1810, the Eora group in the Sydney region initiated the campaign of resistance against the English invaders in a series of attacks under the leadership of Pemulwuy.¹⁰ Did other indigenous Australians engage in such resistance? How did such conflicts end? According to Michael Cannon (1993),

The white newcomers were determined that the whole continent of Australia should belong to them—the soil, the beasts and birds, the rivers and fish, the minerals and trees. A dream of total possession had taken hold of normally stolid men. Such lust for new lands ran through the whole British race that monarch and lowliest labourers alike glowed with the glory of creating a new empire. (pp. 1-2)

The more the settlers expropriated the native land and destroyed their means of survival, the more the indigenous population groups engaged in resistance. The settlers interpreted the resistance “as barbarous opposition to the enlightened forces of White civilization” (Cannon, 1993, p. 169).

The English colonizers and their descendants called indigenous Australian Aborigines by giving them a new name that had no meaning for peoples who had their own ethno-national group names. For the English settlers, the name Aborigines characterized the backwardness, inferiority, and otherness of indigenous Australians. This name was invented to create a racial boundary between White Europeans and Black Australians for dehumanizing them later. According to Bénédicte Deschamps and Michel Prum (2007),

Depriving . . . victim of their rights to life or property is the very act by which the injured party is constructed as Other . . . Naming and killing often are indeed two sides of the same coin. Naming the Other is often a way of obliterating their identity. . . This metaphorical murder of people who are marginalised by mainstream society boils down to an exclusion that can be felt by the victim as complete annihilation. (p. 1)

Once indigenous Australians were objectified and dehumanized it became easier to terrorize and kill them:

Massacres of Aborigines were usually the work of groups of settlers or colonial police, and less often military units, sometimes in a part-time or volunteer capacity. But . . . killings could occur with impunity in an ideological atmosphere that mixed expansionism, racism, and classical models with a fetish for cultivation and contempt for indigenous land use. (Kiernan, 2007, p. 252)

The Australian colonial government used eugenics and social-Darwinist ideology to legitimize a series of racist policies and colonial terrorism on indigenous Australians; to dispossess the rights of indigenous Australians to life and property, it developed “classification schemes allegedly proving the inferiority of the native populations living on the territory they conquered” (Deschamps & Prum, 2007, p. 2). Only a few of the settlers recognized the humanity of indigenous people. For instance, Tom Browne, one of the settlers, wrote that many indigenous warriors were “grandly-formed specimens of humanity, dignified in manner, and possessing . . . intelligence by no means to be despised. Why should these proud men give ground peacefully to white settlers and their abominable convict servant” (quoted in Cannon, 1993, pp. 3-4). The English settlers considered the Australian continent

a paradise on earth, for here laid one of the fairest domains ever created by nature. Permanent life-giving rivers meandered through its extensive plains; lush grasslands and forests flourished on its rich soil. The white men could scarcely believe their luck, as they penetrated further into undulating pastures and negotiable bushlands. (Cannon, 1993, p. 10)

The British settlers used the doctrine of *terra nullius* to expropriate native lands through violence; according to this doctrine, Australia belonged to no one and as indigenous people did not have concept of law of ownership, they did not have rights to land. “The continuing pressure of agrarian ideology even when actual settlement patterns were pastoral took on new virulence with spread of scientific racism,” Ben Kiernan (2007) wrote, “which justified mass murder of indigenous communities to safeguard investments in animal stock” (p. 309). As hunters and food-gatherers, the land use of indigenous people was different from a European way of land use. The British colonizers used this as pretext in confiscating the land of indigenous people calling it *terra nullius*, free wasteland for taking.

As mighty was right in colonialism, the British settlers used this ideological discourse and terrorism to extinguish all indigenous rights to land and other resources. These activities involved “multiple deliberate killings and a series of genocidal massacres” (Kiernan, 2007, p. 250). “As killing escalated, racial justification did, too”; colonial officers said, “disgrace would it be the human race to call them Men” (Rowley, 1972, p. 275). Colonial terrorism in Australia involved the destruction of essential foundation of the lifestyles indigenous people in economic, political, social cultural, biological, physical existence, religious, and moral arenas.

The English settlers confiscated land and other economic resources and destroyed or obliterated indigenous institutions of self-government by replacing them with the structures of colonial governments and by repressing cultural and knowledge systems, by reducing quality of food and depriving basic nutrients and causing physical debilitation and death, by engaging in mass killings, intellectual and resistance leaders, by destroying indigenous religions, and by undermining moral and ethical values.¹¹ Depending on their capitalist technological and organizational capacity, the English settlers expropriated more and more land to make more money by engaging in agricultural capitalism. As Cannon (1993) asserts, “Australia was suitable for rapid expansion of wool-growing. Flocks spread over all available grasslands. By the end of the 1840s, the then-amazing figure of 40,000,000 pounds of wool was being exported to Europe each year” (p. 2). To justify their crimes against humanity, the English settlers promoted the idea of a White Australia and the extinction of indigenous Australians; the native “land was declared *desert and uninhabited* later represented as *terra nullius* and the various nations declared uncivilized.” The English settlers gradually decimated indigenous population groups, obliterated their cultures, and challenged their survival and identity (Bourke, 1998, p. 40).

The British settlers expropriated the land of indigenous hunters and food-gatherers for farming and pastoral interests and destroyed their livelihood. A. P. Elkin (1951) noted,

When cultivation is associated with grazing cattle and sheep. . . ever increasing in numbers, the settlers required all the grass and must not be disturbed by hunts-men’s activities. So the native fauna must go, including the Aborigines, unless they change their ways of living. (p. 166)

Indigenous people did not understand why the English settlers expropriated their land and claimed private ownership on it. For instance in 1843, Yagan, an indigenous man, told the advocate general of Victoria the following:

Why do you white people come in ships to our country and shoot down poor blackfellows who do not understand you—you listen to me! The wild blackfellows do not understand your laws, every living animal that roams the country, and every

edible fruit that grows in the ground are common property. . . For every black man you fellows shoot, I will kill a white man. (quoted in Kiernan, 2007, p. 289)

Colonial governors granted land and ordered their troops to kill indigenous people and to kidnap their children as unpaid laborers; they ordered their troops to strike the Blacks with terror or teach them by terror (Kiernan, 2007). On a public meeting a colonial officer declared,

the best thing that could be done would be to shoot all the blacks and manure the ground with their carcasses. Cox or others recommended likewise that the women and children should specially be shot as the most certain method of getting rid of the race. (quoted in Kiernan, 2007, p. 262)

One English juror called indigenous Australians “a set of [monkeys] and the earlier they are exterminated from the face of the earth better” (Kiernan, 2007, p. 286). Nobody exactly knows how many indigenous people were exterminated. Indigenous people were

shot down like dogs while sleeping round their fires, their women taken from them to gratify the lusts of white men, hunted and persecuted in all directions, and in fact looked upon as savage beasts of the forest, whom it was necessary to get rid of, no matter how. (quoted in Kiernan, 2007, p. 278)

For instance, in colonial Victoria, in 1834, Blacks were estimated between 5,000 and 10,000, but by 1886, only 806 of them survived (Kiernan, 2007). Tasmania’s Blacks were reduced from an estimated 4,000 or more to under 2,000 by 1818; “settlers would shoot on sight. . . killing the men and taking the children from the women”; the settlers would often “chase the mother through the bush until she had to leave her children, then make a selection” of child labor (Rowley, 1972, pp. 44, 120).

The Tasmania indigenous people were also terrorized and destroyed. The genocide of indigenous Tasmanians was considered “the only true genocide in English colonial history” (Hughes, 1987, p. 120). The genocide of the early 19th century in Tasmania “directed and organized by the government substantially eliminated the indigenous population” (Bultin, 1993, p. 134). Similarly, in the colony of Queensland, the settlers’ inroads were “marked with blood, the forests were ruthlessly seized, and the [Blacks] hunted down like their native dogs” (quoted in Kiernan, 2007, p. 303). Between 1824 and 1908, the settlers killed approximately between 8,000 and 10,000 Blacks in Queensland (Kiernan, 2007). According to Kiernan (2007), the

roaring expansion [between 1850 and 1900] produced a crescendo of genocidal killings that exceeded all previous Australian catastrophe. What the governor termed a ‘steady, silent flow’ of pastoral settlement included a series of large-scale massacres of Aboriginal communities. (pp. 303-305)

Mechanisms and Discourses of Terror and Genocide

The English settlers used several mechanisms of terrorism and genocide against indigenous Australians, and justified them with a racist discourse. These mechanisms included shooting, burning, disease, rape, ethnocide, or cultural destruction. According to A. Dirk Moses (2004), terrorism and genocide or “indigenocide” involved five elements:

the intentional invasion/colonization of land; the conquest of the indigenous peoples; the killing of them to the extent that they can barely reproduce themselves and thereby come close to extinction; their classification as vermin by invaders; and the attempted destruction of their religious systems. (p. 27)

Raymond Evans and Bill Thrope created a new term called *indigenocide* to explain the extermination of the indigenous population in Australia: *Indigenocide*

is a means of analyzing those circumstances where one, or more peoples, usually immigrants, deliberately set out to supplant a group or groups of other people whom as far as we know, represent the Indigenous, or Aboriginal peoples of the country that the immigrants usurp. (Moses, 2004, p. 27)

The English settlers shot indigenous people and divided them to turn them on one another. The colonial government created the “Native Police Force” by providing food, money, uniforms, horses, and guns to motivate some opportunistic elements to fight against and kill their own people (Broome, 2002, pp. 48-49). Furthermore, diseases like smallpox, measles, and tuberculosis killed several thousands of indigenous people. The settlers used food poisoning to kill Blacks; they distributed poisoned flour to commit premeditated murder (Broome, 2002). Biological warfare was also used in colonies such as New South Wales, particularly at Port Jackson in 1789, in the form of affecting the White settlers. According to Jan Kociumbas (2004),

The British had at their disposal “variola matter in bottles,” but though written accounts from the period describe with wonder and sometimes horror the number of corpses strewn around the harbor, none mention the use of the variola, even for the purposes of inoculating the newly-born white children who, though particularly susceptible to the disease, nevertheless appeared to have survived. (pp. 80-81)

The colonialists and English scholars tried to minimize the effects of colonial shooting and poisoning on indigenous Australians; they argued that indigenous Australians died out because of their inability to adapt to a changing socioeconomic environment. Jan Kociumbas (2004) asserts,

By dwelling on smallpox and other infectious diseases as faceless killers, colonialists and historians directed attention away from

more overtly murderous acts such as shooting and poisoning. In particular, the 1789 epidemic laid the foundation for the notion that Aboriginal people were not killed outright, but owing to their own personal weaknesses and cultural flaws, sadly just “faded away.” It was as if smallpox was nothing more than the first stage in the tragic but necessary workings of evolutionary law, annihilating all species slow to “adapt.” (p. 82)

In their political discourses, the colonialists and their apologists blamed the conflicts among indigenous people, lack of healthy conditions, and the behavior of indigenous people for the destruction of indigenous communities.

While openly advocating and engaging in exterminating indigenous people, the settlers and their descendants were also arguing that “indigenous society was not destroyed by the Europeans, but collapsed under the weight of its own pathologies” (Moses, 2004, p. 15). In other words, they suggested that it was not the English settlers and their violence that destroyed indigenous communities, but the indigenous communities themselves that caused their own destruction: “Coupled with emphasis on intertribal killings, alcoholism, unhygienic living conditions and, more recently, deaths in police custody, the result has been to blame the victims of their own demise” (Kociumbas, 2004, p. 82). In reality, the British settlers and their descendants declared their intentions to exterminate indigenous communities and translated them into actions through different mechanisms although they tried their best not to take responsibility for their crimes against humanity.

The settlers and indigenous communities have exactly known who were responsible for the crimes that were committed in Australia. For example, Dalaipi, a Queensland Black, in the late 19th century said:

We were hunted from our ground, shot, poisoned, and had our daughters, sisters and wives taken from us. . . What a number were poisoned at Kilcoy . . . They stole our ground where we used to get food, and when we got hungry and took a bit of flour or killed a bullock to eat, they shot us or poisoned us. All they give us now for our land is blanket once a year. (quoted in Broome, 2002, p. 55)

The settlers raped women or slaughtered and massacred women, children, and the aged (Broome, 2002). They also kidnapped young children to satisfy their demand of labor for housework and harvesting (Kociumbas, 2004). As there were no rich mines and manufacturing industries in Australia, “the settlers had never wanted much from Aboriginal people except their women and their land; for labor the settlers mainly depended on convict labor and imported coolies” (Kociumbas, 2004, p. 92).

Rape was also used as a mechanism of terror to destroy indigenous families and communities. Some settlers held indigenous women and small girls and used them for sexual gratification. According to Richard Broome (2002),

The violence took sexual forms as well . . . Reverend Threlkeld . . . in 1825 wrote that he was tormented “at night [by] the shrieks of girls, about 8 or 9 years of age, taken by force by the vile men of Newcastle. One man came to see me with his head broken by the butt-end of a musket because he would not give up his wife.” Some of the worst abuses occurred in Tasmania, where Aborigines were allegedly flogged, branded, castrated and mutilated by convicts. (p. 45)

The use of sexual violence is a tactic of terrorism and genocide that a dominant society practices in destroying the dominated communities. Terrorism and genocide studies ignore

the full extent of the humiliation of the ethnic group through the rape of its women, the symbols of honor and vessels of culture. When a woman’s and [or a girl’s] honor is tarnished through illicit intercourse, even if against her will, the ethnic group is also dishonored. The after affects of rape—forced impregnation, psychological trauma, degradation, and demoralization—go beyond the rape victims themselves. (Sharlack, 2002, p. 107)

Some English settlers and their descendants captured indigenous women and small girls from their husbands and families without any fear and repercussion because colonial governments sanctioned these actions. Such inhumane activities were sanctioned to demoralize, destroy, and to show that the English settlers and their descendants had power to do any thing on indigenous families and communities. Explaining such abuses Catharine MacKinnon (1994) says,

It is . . . rape unto death, rape as massacre, rape to kill and to make the victims wish they were dead. It is rape as an instrument of forced exile, rape to make you leave your home and never want to go back. It is rape to be seen and heard and watched and told to others: rape as spectacle. It is rape to drive a wedge through a community, to shatter a society, to destroy a people. It is rape as genocide. (pp. 11-12)

In addition to raping small indigenous girls and women, the English settlers and descendants killed them whenever they wanted.

Genocide can occur in many ways:

The end may be accomplished by the forced disintegration of political and social institutions, of the culture of the people, of their languages, their national feeling and their religion. It may be accomplished by wiping out all [bases] of personal security, liberty, health and dignity. When these means fail the machine gun can always be utilized as a last resort. (quoted in Moses, 2004, p. 21)

The English colonial settlers and their descendants in Australia used all these mechanisms of terrorism and genocide. They used the discourse of racism to hide their crimes against humanity. As the brutal dispossession of land increased in the early 19th century in the continent,

colonialists and scholars started to theorize, “indigenous survivors were not really people at all” (Kociumbas, 2004, p. 96). Colonial officials justified the total extermination of indigenous people by calling them nonhuman beings. They proclaimed that “let us at once exterminate these useless and obnoxious wretches” (Moses, 2004, pp. 15-16).

The English settlers engaged in trade in body parts of indigenous people for scientific purposes. Medical schools and scientific societies in Europe were interested in living and dead specimens; they purchased skeletons and skulls too (Kociumbas, 2004). According to Jan Kociumbas (2004),

The fact that Australia’s indigenous people were so extensively dismembered and exhibited as scientific freaks made for a particularly virulent form of racism, which rendered it increasingly impossible for even model, educated Aboriginal people to find acceptable in settler society. Men became extremely vulnerable to capital conviction of rape against white women, though white men continued to rape Aboriginal women virtually as a right. (p. 98)

It is disturbing to realize that one human group used modern education, technology, and legal means to hide crimes against humanity:

What is unique about genocide in Australia is not its violence, but its apparent legality and above all its modernity. It was modern technology that made possible the pace and effectiveness of the killing, and modern law that provided the judicial niceties that condoned it. [I]t was modern education, not colonial ignorance that helped create the conditions where official silence and legally-sanctioned cover-ups could prevail. (Kociumbas, 2004, pp. 98-99)

Conclusion

The English colonialists and their descendants had used capitalist technology and social organization and engaged in violent crimes against humanity in the Americas, Australia, Africa, and Asia. They perfected their acts of terrorism and genocide in the Australian continent to benefit the English settler community at the cost of indigenous Australians. Ward Churchill (1997), the indigenous American activist-scholar, considers the English as

global leaders in genocidal activities, both in terms of overall efficiency—as they consummated the total extinction of the Tasmanians in 1876—and a flair for innovation embodied in their deliberate use of alcohol to effect the dissolution of many of North America’s indigenous peoples. (p. 405)

But most of the English descendants still refuse to accept the moral, economic, and political responsibility for the crimes committed against humanity in Australia despite the fact that they enjoy the economic and political benefits of these crimes that resulted in destruction of indigenous communities. According to Michael Cannon (1993),

The whole white community [has] benefited economically from the development of productive enterprises on the European model. However, it may now be accepted that these enterprises were established on land seized by force from an almost defenseless race of people, and that most of the population is still benefiting from that original seizure. If the Australian ideal of 'fair play' has any meaning at all, it is surely time to redouble efforts to give descendants of the Aboriginal race a better chance in life. (p. 265)

While boasting about dominating the world and spreading English civilization, modernity, Christianity, and commerce, the descendants of English colonialists, like others who have committed similar crimes against humanity, do not want to deal with the crimes of the past and they prefer to be silent in Austria and other continents. As Jürgen Zimmerer (2004) notes,

The question of colonial genocide is disturbing, in part because it increases the number of mass murders regarded as genocide, and in part, too, because it calls into question the Europeanization of the globe as a modernizing project. Where the descendants of perpetrators still comprise the majority or a large proportion of the population, and control political life and public discourse, recognition of colonial genocides is even more difficult, as it undermines the image of the past on which national identity is built. Australian conservatives, for example, have difficulties recognizing the genocide of the Aborigines. (p. 51)

It is impossible to bring national reconciliation between White and Black Australians without recognizing and dealing with the crimes of the past and present adequately on the latter by the former. According to Bruce Elder (1988),

The blood of tens of thousands of Aborigines killed since 1788, and the sense of despair and hopelessness which informs so much modern-day Aborigine society, is a moral responsibility all white Australians share. Our wealth and lifestyle is a direct consequence of Aboriginal dispossession. We should bow our heads in shame. (p. 200)

There are White politicians in Australia who would like to use the discourse of the ignorance of past generations without explaining their inhumane behavior and the consequences of their criminal acts: Some contemporary politicians in Australia claim that their European ancestors acted to the "standards of the time," and the present generation does not need to acknowledge, apologize, and compensate for the crimes committed on the indigenous Australians. In 1999, Prime Minister John Howard announced that

present generations of Australians cannot be held accountable . . . for the errors and misdeeds of earlier generations . . . To apply retrospectively the standards of today in relation to their behaviour does some of those people who were sincere an immense injustice. (quoted in Deschamps & Prum, 2007, p. 3)

The indigenous communities deserve apologies and reparations. By taking such actions, governments and dominant societies recognize that there are always prices to be paid for the crimes committed against humanity and learn how to avoid such in humane acts in present time. According to Bénédictine and Michel Prum (2007),

Portraying colonisers' atrocities or the systematic victimisation and extermination of specific groups by a dictatorship provides a mirror which is essential not only to the understanding of the dark pages of a country's history, but also to addressing past governments' errors, abuses and misconduct. Only in this way can the malfunctions of the present be acknowledged and a just future constructed. (p. 3)

Successive Australian White governments not only exterminated indigenous Australians and refused to recognize the crimes they committed against them, but they also attempted to commit ethnocide on the survivors. They kidnapped those mixed children of the settlers and indigenous mothers to Anglicize them and distance them from their Black mothers:

Assimilating communities by trying to wipe out differences through what could be called an ethnocide has been the common policy of the various Australian governments. While authorities have sought to achieve aboriginal conformity to a national culture modeled on white values, thus forcing the indigenous population into an uncalled-for sameness, this has meant trying to negate their historical specificity as a colonial group, and play the card of "sameness" to reduce them to the status of "disadvantaged minority." Paradoxically, then, the inclusion of Aborigines into the wide spectrum of a "diverse Australia" is a way of excluding them once more, by depriving them of a past that not only constitutes a part of their identity but also entitles to reparation in today's society. Indigenous people are currently involved in a judicial battle, and demand compensation for the abuse of human rights they have endured. (Deschamps & Prum, 2007, p. 2)

The settlers and their descendants attempted to totally eradicate the culture of the surviving of indigenous people. "Obsessed by the need to impose on [the survivors] their own kind of organization," Michael Cannon (1993) writes, "Anglo-Australian settlers could visualize no other end but that the black people should behave like white people or die out" (p. 253). Once governments and dominant societies commit crimes against humanity, unless they realize and change their criminal policies, they continue to engage in gross human rights violations in an attempt to hide the injustices committed in the past and present by attacking cultural diversity in the name of "national culture" and the politics of the sameness.

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1. These names include Airiman, Ajabakan, Ajabatha, Alawa, Alura, Alyawarre, Amangu, Amarak, Amijangal, Anaiwan, Andakerebina, Andinyin, Andyamathanha, Anguthimri, Ankamuti, Anmatyerre, Antakirinja, Araba, Arabana, Arakwal, Arrernte, Arnga, Atjinuri, Awabakal, Awarai, Awinmul, Awngthim, Baada, Badjalang, Badjiri, Baiali, Baijunga, Bailgu, Bakanambia, Balardong, Banbai, Bandjigali, Bandjin, Barada, Baranbinja, Baraparapa, Barbaram, Barimaia, Barindji, Barkindji, Barna, Barunggam, Barungguan, Batjala, Beriguruk, Daii, Dainggati, Darambal, Darkinjang, Darug, Dharawal, Diakui, Dieri, Duwala, Eora, Erawirung, Ewamin, Gaari, Gadjalivia, Gambalang, Gandangara, Gia, Goeng, Ilba, Idindji, Iwaidja, Ingura, Iningai, Irukandji, Ithu, Iwaidja, Jaadwa, Jaako, Jaara, Juburara, Jadira, Jadliaura, Jagara, Janda, Jeidji, Jiegara, Kaantiju, Kalali, Kamilaroi, Kamor, Kandju, Koa, Kula, Laia, Larrakia, Madoitja, Nakako, Nana, Ngalea, Oitbi, Ola, Pini, Rakkaia, Tagalag, Taior, Ualarai, Wadere, Wik, Yolngu, and Yuin.
2. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Indigenous_Australian_group_names; http://wiki.answers.com/Q/How_many_different_aboriginal_tribes_in_Australia; <http://australia.gov.au/about-australia/australian-story/dreaming>
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 2.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. <http://pals.dia.wa.gov.au/beforeEuropean.aspx>
8. Tasmania was named after Abel Tasman.
9. See <http://www.ulladulla.info/historian/ffstory.html>
10. See <http://www.cultureandrecreation.gov.au/articles/australia/history/>
11. R. Lemkin (1944/1973) raises similar issues in explaining the consequences of terrorism and genocide.

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