



# laetus in praesens

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## Indians? Witches? Natives? Jews? Islamists? ETs?

### Eradication as genocide -- now and then?

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[Eradication?](#)

[Threat](#)

[Language](#)

[Genocide?](#)

[Metastasis?](#)

[Historical ironies of eradication](#)

### Preamble?

**Eradication:** Upheld as the most powerful leader on the planet -- and especially of the "free world" -- we are now witness to a new commitment to eradication (*Donald Trump inauguration: President vows to 'eradicate radical Islamic terrorism' in first address to nation*, *Independent*, 20 January 2017; *Trump: We Will Completely Eradicate Radical Islamic Terrorism From Face of Earth*, *CNSNews*, 20 January 2017; *Academics and Practitioners Give Open Advice to President Trump on 'Eradicating' Terrorism*, *Georgetown Security Studies Review*, 7 February 2017).

This intention follows a campaign commitment in that regard as well as earlier military assessments, notably by US [General John Allen](#) on the [Defense One](#) website (20 August 2014):

A comprehensive American and international response now -- now -- is vital to the destruction of this threat... The Islamic State is an entity beyond the pale of humanity and it must be eradicated. If we delay now, we will pay later. (*Obama must eradicate ISIS NOW -- or pay the price later*, *The Daily Mail*, 22 August 2014)

A more general view is offered in the light of the warning of the chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, [General Martin Dempsey](#), that Islamic State was an organization with "an apocalyptic, end-of-days strategic vision":

But if the jihadists are to be eradicated rather than just contained, General Dempsey's conclusion must be accepted that strikes against them in their strongholds in Syria are unavoidable. (*Failed states pose terror threats*, *The Australian*, 25 August 2014)

The question is what is to be understood by "eradication" in contrast with previous exercises of that nature, as separately discussed (*Eradication as the Strategic Final Solution of the 21st Century?* 2014). Possibilities include:

- "eradication" is to be skillfully nuanced as has been the case with the distinction between "[enhanced interrogation](#)" and "torture".
- the focus is on the threat of Islamic terrorists -- jihadists -- rather than on Islam in general. Clarification would then be required as to the justification of attempting to ban travel of Muslims from 7 countries to the USA (but not from other Islamic countries where jihadists presumably also reside)
- careful distinction from the earlier threat constituted by witches and Native Americans in the USA, to say nothing of the more recent case of Japanese Americans (first framed by the threat of the so-called [Yellow Peril](#)) followed by that of Communism (exemplified by [McCarthyism](#)).

**Threat:** Central to the justification of eradication -- as in [just war theory](#) -- is how any such threat is framed. Of concern in this respect are:

- the considerable advantage offered by any external threat in providing an unquestionable focus to otherwise incoherent processes of governance, as previously discussed (*Promoting a Singular Global Threat -- Terrorism: strategy of choice for world governance*, 2002)
- opportunistic framings encouraged by belief systems threatened by any such otherness -- most obviously understood in terms of

US foreign policy as *you're either with us, or against us*, as separately discussed (*Us and Them: Relating to Challenging Others*, 2009). This is exemplified by Protestant Christian concern with witchcraft in the early American colonies, following on the pursuit of witches by the Catholic Inquisition in Europe

- conflicts with resident natives claiming traditional rights to the land occupied (with or without violence) by incoming colonists -- possibly with a sense of divine mandate to lay claim to a "promised land", irrespective of any previous occupants -- and especially when defined as *terra nullius*. (The possible implications of any galactic legal system in this regard can only be contemplated with bemusement)
- careful use of propaganda to exaggerate and misrepresent the nature of the threat in order to mobilize support and sympathy for eradication. Use of "alternative facts" is clearly valuable in that regard as an extension of [negative campaigning](#) and [propaganda](#) in order to frame those to be eradicated as guilty of every imaginable horror (carefully excluding reference to any equivalent horrors perpetrated by the propagandists, whether at the present time or in recent decades)
- unquestionable assumption of the right to define and determine what is currently "right" -- universally -- again carefully neglecting any reference to previous (righteous) indulgence in what is now framed as "wrong"
- a capacity, whether explicit or implicit, to frame those to be eradicated as less than human in some respect, whether as a consequence of their colour (as in the case of Afro-Americans), faith (as in the case of Jews), lifestyle and culture (as in the case of Native Americans). Use of "savage" or "subhuman" may be a feature. The tendency is all the more evident when the differences are considered radical (as in the case of witches), as may be expected with any contact with extraterrestrials much sought by science. Issues in the latter case have been insightfully highlighted by science fiction, most notably the movie *Avatar* (2009).

In addition to the above considerations, the degree of threat merits particular attention in terms of considerations such as:

- threat to life: This merits clarification in terms of the relative number of deaths from "terrorism" (for example) compared to deaths from other causes currently excluded from the definition of terrorism (homicides, traffic accidents, industrial accidents, infrastructure failures, and the like).
- indirect threat to life: The inquiry can be extended to include the threat to resources essential to life, as may be a consequence of [structural violence](#). It may be further extended to include the constraints on freedom preventing a fulfilling life
- threat to emotional comfort: This calls for careful clarification given the degree to which exposure to threat and shock is increasingly indistinguishable from entertainment -- whether media violence, extreme sports, or circus rides.
- threat to intellectual life: This is characteristic of exposure to any alternative way of modelling or framing reality -- typically evident in the problematic relation between political ideologies and academic disciplines as argued by [Nicholas Rescher](#) (*The Strife of Systems: an essay on the grounds and implications of philosophical diversity*, 1985).
- threat to spiritual life: This is typically implicit in the arguments of religions against those of alternative persuasion, variously perceived as fundamentally "wrong" and essentially "evil". It may be articulated through reference to non-negotiable values, however these are to be understood.

**Language:** How might current "language" regarding Islamic radicals and their acclaimed terrorism be applied to those framed as a terrifying threat to civilization in the past: Indians? Witches? Natives? Jews? Islamists? Will a similar framing be applied to ETs -- if and when they become apparent? Might ETs apply some such language to human inhumanity, as separately explored (*Writing Guidelines for Future Occupation of Earth by Extraterrestrials -- Be done by as you did ?* 2010).

How similar is that framing to that employed by radical Islam with respect to the values and practices of Judeo-Christian civilization? How distinct is it from the framing by any political ideology in a western democracy -- of any opposition to its preferred agenda and mode of governance? Whilst evident to some degree within a country (notably with the threat of populism), it is especially evident between countries (*Which world leaders have (not) been labelled "evil"?* 2015).

**Genocide?** The [Abrahamic religions](#) have a well-developed historical tradition of engaging in forms of genocide against each other. In living memory this has been evident in the case of the Holocaust -- perpetrated by self-acclaimed Christians against the Jews, under the banner *Gott Mit Uns*. The engagement of Christian civilization with Islam has been more recently framed as a [crusade](#) against [jihadists](#), whether or not the implicit ambition is to be understood as some form of genocide.

As a "final solution", to what extent is the intention to eradicate radical Islam now to be understood as a form of genocide? How will the future frame this ambition -- whatever its consequences?

**Genocide** is an intentional action to destroy a people (usually defined as an ethnic, national, racial, or religious group) in whole or in part. As with aggression and terrorism there is no universally agreed definition.

Confusion is evident in whether the killing of witches is meaningfully to be considered genocide (Greg Laden, *How many people were killed as witches in Europe from 1200 to the present?* *ScienceBlogs*, 2 December 2012; Adam Jones, *Case Study: The European Witch-Hunts, c. 1450-1750 and Witch-Hunts Today*, *Gendercide Watch*, 2002; B. A. Robinson, *The "Burning Times": the extermination of witches and other heretics*, *Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance*, 1999). Cited as one of the most notorious cases of mass hysteria, the [Salem witch trials](#) have long been a point of reference in American history. More recently the traumatic preoccupation with satanism has been framed in terms of [false memory syndrome](#) (Clyde Haberman, *The Trial That Unleashed Hysteria Over Child Abuse*, *The New York Times*, 9 March 2014).

Within the culture of the USA, the confusion over the meaning of genocide is indicated by any reference to so-called [Indian massacres](#). The term is ambiguously used to refer both to the killings of [Euro-Americans](#) by [Native Americans](#) (Indians) as well as to killings of [Native Americans](#) by [Euro-Americans](#) (and/or by other [Native Americans](#)).

Conveniently it remains a matter of debate whether the massacres by Euro-Americans constituted genocide ([Guenter Lewy](#), *Were*

*American Indians the Victims of Genocide?* History News Network, September 2004; Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *Yes, Native Americans Were the Victims of Genocide*, History News Network, 12 May 2016). Has it been part of the larger pattern of the [genocide of indigenous peoples](#)? The latter link notably includes reference to [Indian Removal and the Trail of Tears](#), [American Indian Wars](#), and [Colonization of California](#).

Lewy cites a reference to the reduction of the North American Indian population from an estimated 12 million in 1500 to barely 237,000 in 1900 as representing a *vast genocide...the most sustained on record*. He then argues that *American Indians suffered horribly is indisputable. But whether their suffering amounted to a "holocaust", or to genocide, is another matter*.

Dunbar-Ortiz refers to the the UN [Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide](#) as an essential tool for historical analysis of the effects of colonialism in any era, and particularly in US history. In the convention, any one of five acts is considered genocide if "committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group":

- (a) killing members of the group;
- (b) causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;
- (c) deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;
- (e) forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

The followings acts are punishable:

- (a) genocide;
- (b) conspiracy to commit genocide;
- (c) direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
- (d) attempt to commit genocide;
- (e) complicity in genocide.

Will the eradication by the USA of radical Islam, framed as engaging in terrorism, come to be understood as genocide -- *Gott Mit Uns?* As with the intervention in Iraq, will this come to further characterize the "special relationship" with its closest allies, typically with their own highly controversial history of genocide against indigenous peoples?

**Metastasis?** As with the quest for any "final solution", there is however a technical challenge of feasibility. The track record of US engagement in the many "virtual wars" (alcohol, drugs, crime, etc) is remarkable for its failures ([Review of the Range of Virtual Wars: strategic comparison with the global war against terrorism](#), 2005). These failures follow from those of a long succession of Popes attempting to eliminate the threat of those forms of Christianity which reject Catholicism.

The challenge is further emphasized where "eradication" is the preferred metaphor, especially given the case of disease and most notably cancer. The latter offers the further metaphor of [metastasis](#), now recognized as the problematic outcome of any apparent strategic success in the case of terrorism, as discussed separately ([Pyrrhic victory and metastasis?](#) 2015).

**Historical ironies of eradication:** Strangely the most successful initiative with respect to disease has been the [eradication of smallpox](#), the very disease (brought by Europeans) which is held to have been so significant to the eradication of Native Americans -- whether inadvertently or otherwise (Melissa Sue Halverson, [Native American Beliefs and Medical Treatments During the Smallpox Epidemics, Varsity Tutors](#); [Genocide and Intent of the Infected Blankets](#), *Native American Netroots*, 8 August 2007). Any complicity in that genocide can be said to have been effectively eradicated from collective memory, with Native Americans subsequently featuring in popular cowboy movies and as icons of nature wisdom.

Ironically, despite being the bane of Christianity in its Catholic and Protestant forms, and the focus of efforts at eradication, witchcraft is now acclaimed as a success story (Michael Snyder, [The Fastest Growing Religion in America is Witchcraft](#), *The Truth*, 30 October 2013). Whilst America was founded by those fleeing Catholic persecution for the "evil" they represented, it is now a preferred destination of those fleeing American efforts to eradicate radical Islam elsewhere -- for the "evil" it represents.

Known as "abolition", the [eradication of slavery](#) in America is appropriately recognized as a success, although the continuing inequalities to which their descendants are systematically exposed continue to constitute a blight in American society with no foreseeable resolution. As noted by [Daina Ramey Berry](#): *African-Americans have been free in this country for less time than they were enslaved... The elephant that sits at the center of our history is coming into focus. American slavery happened -- we are still living with its consequences* ([Slavery in America: back in the headlines](#), *The Conversation*, 21 October 2014).

Curiously the present period is witness to a massive extinction of species -- now recognized as the [sixth mass extinction of plants and animals](#). Although not framed as "eradication", this is understood to be a consequence of human activity, especially the deliberate destruction of habitats and the release of toxic chemicals. This has been strangely exemplified by the virtual eradication of the [American bison](#) as a direct consequence of [bison hunting](#). In the 16th century, North America was host to an estimated 25-30 million buffalo. Less than 100 remained in the wild by the late 1880s. At the time of writing, much has been made of the return of 10 "to the wild" ([Bison return to Banff national park in Canada](#), *BBC News*, 6 February 2017). Subsequent to any successful of eradication of millions of Islamists, is it possible to imagine that the future will see the return of a similar number "to the wild"?

Speculative reference has been made above to the perceived future threat of "ETs". In that mode, framed otherwise, are all non-human species to be recognized as a potential threat to be eradicated -- as "terrestrial extras", or even as "environmental terraists"? There is even the more challenging threat of ETs as "epiterrestrials", as separately argued ([Sensing Epiterrestrial Intelligence \(SETI\): embedding of "extraterrestrials" in epistemic dynamics?](#) 2013).

The most deliberately systematic effort at eradication is arguably that of Hitler's [Final Solution of the Jewish Question](#). Here the irony is

the central role now played by Israel in the dynamics of the Middle East as a consequence of that Nazi initiative. What ironic outcome might be anticipated as a consequence of Trump's "final solution"? Concern is currently expressed at the possibility of nuclear war -- eradication of humanity through irradiation of humanity, or might that be eradication?

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