

# Reports and Conferences

**The Contribution of Polish Legal and Scientific Thought to the Shaping of the Concept of Genocide. Rafał Lemkin and the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and the Polish Experience of Occupation by National-Socialist Germany**

**A long-term project implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, 2018–2023**

A grant awarded for a period of 5 years by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and supervised by Professor Piotr Madajczyk, which aims to examine and popularize the achievements of the sovereign Polish state in the field of law. This goal is to be achieved by presenting the work of Polish intellectuals – with Rafał Lemkin first and foremost among them – who inspired the discussion on the new paradigm of sovereignty, human rights, and international law after the Second World War, a conflict which itself was the result of an agreement (the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact) reached by two totalitarian regimes.

The project includes topical international conferences, a regular series of publications and translations, preliminary research work, official requests for the granting of access to both national and foreign archives, and comparative studies which take into consideration the different methodologies following from the interdisciplinary nature of the project.

The project is participated in by Professor Piotr Madajczyk (Project Head), Professor Marek Kornat, Doctor Joanna Lubecka, Doctor Tomasz Geran, Maciej Mazurkiewicz, and Eryk Habowski.

## The Boundaries of Totalitarianism According to Carl Friedrich – Consigned to History or a Viable Model?

Research seminar, Warsaw, 15–16 April 2019

An international and interdisciplinary research seminar devoted to a reflection on the contemporary relevance of key theses concerning the definition of the features of totalitarian states, propounded by political scientists in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

“Totalitarianism” – edited by Carl Friedrich – is a collection of essays on the political, social and psychological phenomenon of totalitarianism (Polish ed. by the Pilecki Institute, Warszawa 2019). It constitutes a specific overview of reflections on, among others, the nature of a police-totalitarian state and the quest for its essence, and also on the counterfeiting of history, accompanied by an attempt at explaining what actually happened in Europe in the years 1920–1953. The authors search for elements that would together form a comprehensive definition of a “totalitarian state”, one covering its mechanisms and methods of shaping internal and international policy. The book also serves as an introduction to a wider contemplation of the impact of ideology on the origins and “total” character of the Second World War. The project will reference later theses developed jointly by Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzeziński.

The following are the fundamental research questions of the project:

1. To what extent has the passage of more than half a century (since 1953) changed the perception of the German and Soviet totalitarisms? How did it change or broaden the source material base that could potentially prove useful for evaluating the model of totalitarianism proposed by Friedrich? Have the defined notions and terms gained in strength, or perhaps become devalued? What did the evolution of the definition of totalitarianism into the concept of the “totalitarian control circuit” look like in practice?
2. Does the state of knowledge yesterday (1953) and today (2019) have any bearing on the concept presented in the book? Is it still relevant in the present day, and if yes, then to what extent? Is Friedrich’s proposition, developed in the 1960s in cooperation with Zbigniew Brzeziński, a paradigm that can still be applied in modern political science? Or is it necessary to redefine these notions and conceptual frameworks?
3. How can we define the character and nature of wars resulting from totalitarian ideologies?

The project is intended to assist the discussion on whether in our times “Totalitarianism” belongs to the history of political science, or continues to function as a viable definitional model.

Acting in collaboration with recognized experts (among others Professor Piotr Madajczyk, Professor Paweł Kaczorowski, and Professor Marek Kornat), a group of ten or so scholars selected on the basis of an open *call for contributions* will write articles that will be subsequently developed in a separate collective publication. Participants of the seminar will also be invited to take part in the September scientific conference organized by the Pilecki Institute to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War. Their presentations will broaden the topical scope of the conference through the inclusion of aspects concerning the armed conflicts conducted by totalitarian regimes.

Should you be interested in the seminar and/or have any questions, please contact the editorial staff or send your inquiry to [pileckicenter@instytutpileckiego.pl](mailto:pileckicenter@instytutpileckiego.pl)

### Scientific conference, Warsaw, 17–19 September 2019

The 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the Second World War is an ideal opportunity to focus scholarly attention on this pivotal era of global history. Between the German invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939 and the spring of 1940, when Hitler shifted his attention to the military campaign against the West, Europe for the first time experienced a form of occupation and total war aimed specifically at the destruction of entire societies, nations, and peoples. This period, albeit relatively brief, may then serve as the point of departure for many of the issues touched upon in our research on modern history, and as the basis of our common understanding of the War.

We would like to welcome papers from all disciplines, and although our primary focus is on this initial stage of the War, we are certainly open to topics that place it in a wider chronological and/or geographical context. While the Institute attaches great importance to a study of the historical circumstances of September 1939 and the reality of economies, societies, cultures and polities at war, it is equally interested in assessing how we formulate our contemporary understanding of the subject through scholarship, museology, and education.

Should you be interested in the conference and/or have any questions, please contact the editorial staff or send your inquiry to [m.rusiniak@instytutpileckiego.pl](mailto:m.rusiniak@instytutpileckiego.pl) (dr. Martyna Rusiniak-Karwat).

## The New Dawn of Europe after the Great War: The Theory of the State and Genocide in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

Scientific conference, 3–5 December 2019

As part of the Lemkin project, we plan to hold an international interdisciplinary scientific conference which will constitute a new stage of studies into genocide and the policies pursued by totalitarian states, viewed in the context of the polities which regained their independence in the wake of the First World War.

Framework of topics and issues:

1. The foundations of modern Europe – systemic and legal changes in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.
2. Legal challenges after the Great War: new states and a new international order. From the treaties to the League of Nations.
3. Between Versailles and Yalta – definitional propositions of a state based on the rule of law.
4. The schools of law functioning in interwar Poland, a melting pot of nations, cultures and religions. People – traditions – accomplishments.
5. The origins of the thought of Raphael Lemkin.
6. A characterization of the fundamental philosophical currents and legal solutions concerning the state, elaborated in Poland and other European countries in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
7. Totalitarianisms and the law. Legal systems and the political and legal doctrines of totalitarian states in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – similarities and dissimilarities.
8. Genocide in the analyses of Lemkin and his contemporaries.
9. From Versailles to Nuremberg – the most terrible of lessons in the history of mankind. Challenges for the future.

The conference will be held in English and Polish (as the organizer, the Institute will provide interpreting services).

Should you be interested in the conference and/or have any questions, please contact the editorial staff or send your inquiry to [pileckicenter@instytutpileckiego.pl](mailto:pileckicenter@instytutpileckiego.pl)

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