CONCEPT BOOK

FOCUS ON RAFAŁ LEMKIN

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Focus on Rafał Lemkin

Pilecki Institute
Concept Book

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ISBN 978-83-66340-42-8

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We invite you to use the source material contained therein in your work.

Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of the Republic of Poland

Pilecki Institute

Dear readers,

Herein, we present you with educational material dedicated to the complex and multi-dimensional figure of Rafał Lemkin. The world knows him as the creator of the concept of genocide, an influential lawyer, and an unremitting champion for the rights of nations and ethnic groups. He still remains, however, somewhat of a mystery. Why did he forge this path throughout his life and career? What caused him to assume such an important position in the history of law? To understand him, we must first look at the wealth of history and culture which shaped him.

It is our desire to return Rafał Lemkin to the general consciousness with this publication. We hope that teachers will be able to use it to aid in telling the hero's fascinating – albeit difficult – tale.

The crux of the work is the biographical text which seamlessly transforms in the history of the creation of Rafał Lemkin's magnum opus, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Unique photographs, often unknown to the broader public, and maps help the reader in absorbing the text and may be used as teaching aids during lessons. We also give suggestions of the questions that can be put to students in order to make the fullest possible use of the material. At the end, we propose a script for a workshop on Lemkin and his convention that will aid understanding that the issues with which he battled intellectually more than half a century ago are still relevant today.

I hope your discovery of this incredible figure will be a pleasant and fruitful one and I encourage you to ask your students the most difficult questions and so help them to grow and explore the world.

Wojciech Kozłowski, PhD
Director of the Pilecki Institute

photo: Yad Vashem

Why Lemkin? In the shadow of the Age of Genocide

The world owes both the name and the stigma surrounding genocide, one of humanity's most terrible failings, to the concept and efforts of Rafał Lemkin.

This is an introduction to reflections on the historical and present-day significance of the concept inaugurated by the Polish lawyer of Jewish origin, as well as an outline of his childhood, adolescence in the Russian partition of Poland, and student years shortly after the country regained its independence in the form of the Second Polish Republic.

Through the works of educators and specialists, we present the motives that guided the young Pole who devoted his entire life to the study of human rights and who decried the "crime of all crimes" to the end of his days. Only a holistic overview of the history of the first half of the 20th century makes it possible to understand what motivated his painstaking work on the preparation of the first ever human rights treaty to condemn the crime of genocide – the Convention of 9 December 1948, more commonly called the "Lemkin Convention".

A reflection on the biography and achievements of Lemkin renders it impossible not to acknowledge his connections to pre-war Poland and its academic community. It is difficult to comprehend the genesis of Lemkin's concept – a response to the tragedies of the last century, built on the foundations of law and political philosophy – without first understanding his inspirations from the Lwów school of law and the traditions of the multinational and multicultural First Polish Republic, or his experience of confronting two totalitarian regimes in the 20th century. The adoption of the convention was preceded by meticulous negotiations and arrangements between representatives of many states and

nations. One man took it upon himself to ensure that all the players in this international concert were reading from the same sheet: Rafał Lemkin. He urged, called to mind, taught and explained, resembling in this respect one of the fathers of independence of the Second Polish Republic, Ignacy Paderewski.

Among others, he was lauded by the French Foreign Minister, Robert Schuman, a man who is considered today as one of the creators of the original concept of the European Union. Few in this group were aware that Rafał Lemkin, an advocate of one of the most important treaties relative to human rights, was a Polish lawyer, a graduate of the John Casimir University in Lwów, a student of such great lawyers of the Second Polish Republic as Emil Rappaport, Wacław Makowski and Juliusz Makarewicz, the latter of whom was called the father of the modern codification of the Polish Penal Code from the 1930s.

Lemkin's personality was forged in a multicultural country which was reborn after 123 years of partitions and which grew from the traditions of the Polish--Lithuanian Commonwealth, a vast nation that had for centuries been a haven for many nations, including Jews from all over Europe. In the 18th century, this first continental "Commonwealth" disappeared from the political map of the world following the "Treaty of the Three Black Eagles", secret agreements between the neighboring empires of Russia, Austria and a strengthening Prussia that were initiated by Löwenwolde's Treaty of 1732. This, in turn, led to the partitions in the following decades, i.e. the total seizure of the territory of the Commonwealth by its neighboring countries and the enslavement of its society. Even the insurrection – an uprising led by the auspicious Tadeusz Kościuszko, a hero of the War of Independence in the USA – could do nothing to right this wrong.

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Several of the Pilecki Institute's scientific and popularization projects are linked to Rafał Lemkin.

The foremost of these is the scientific project "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 five-year grant awarded by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education and supervised by Professor Piotr Madajczyk.

The aim of the project is to examine and disseminate the scale of the achievements of independent Poland in the field of international law by presenting the work of Polish intellectuals, with Rafał Lemkin at the forefront, which translated into a discussion on new paradigms of sovereignty and human rights, as well as the shape of international and legal order after the catastrophe of World War II, a war resulting from the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact signed between the two totalitarian regimes.

One of the most important projects of the Pilecki Institute which presents this extraordinary lawyer is the exhibition entitled "Lemkin. Witness to the Age of Genocide" – the first exhibition in Poland to be devoted entirely to Rafał Lemkin. Photos, documents and audiovisual materials from American archives were used, most of which had never been presented in Poland before. The life and work of Lemkin, a hero of the 20th century, was presented against the backdrop of the drama of the German and Soviet occupation and subsequent enslavement of Poland and East-Central Europe. The exhibition was also presented at the headquarters of the United Nations in New York.

Another example is the book *Nieoficjalny. Autobiografia Rafała Lemkina* (orig.: *Totally Unofficial. The Autobiography of Raphael Lemkin*), edited by Donna--Lee Frieze, the first Polish edition of the lawyer's autobiography. In 1959, the publication of an almost finished work in English was interrupted by the author's unexpected death. He collapsed at a bus stop on 42nd Street on the day he was to agree the details with the publisher from the Curtis Brown Agency on Madison Avenue in New York. He died shortly thereafter. This remarkable publication (described as "part autobiography, part biography, part memoirs, and part report") takes the reader not only on a journey through the life of one of the most important lawyers of the 20th century, but also contributes to a discovery of the origins and history of the creation of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in one of the most difficult moments in human history.

It is primarily on the basis of this publication and the aforementioned exhibition that the present educational publication has been created.

The convention lay covered in dust and forgotten for decades. In the 1990s, however, an event occurred that confirmed Lemkin's fears. The darkest of crimes, the greatest flaw in human civilization, once more reared its head, this time during the war in former Yugoslavia and the ethnic conflict in Rwanda, and the words of the Polish lawyer once again rang true: "It [genocide] was made an international crime. This means the condemnation by world society must also follow. The peculiar moral degradation that accompanies this crime against innocent people will help to articulate this condemnation and to mold world conscience."

Today, our challenge is to prevent the atrophy of memory of the tragic events of World War II, especially in the face of new conflicts in which new technologies are used, as well as the need to protect human dignity and identity.

Eryk Habowski

Late in the evening of 6 September 1939, with the Luftwaffe bombing Warsaw, Rafał Lemkin rushed along Kredytowa Street towards the railway station to catch the last train which could get him out of the city. He had with him only a light coat and some toiletries. Just like countless other buildings in Warsaw, the fancy tenement in which he lived and worked had been bombed. All around him, buildings were burning and collapsing. Rubble fell from the houses which were still standing. Bent forward slightly, Lemkin covered his head with his right arm. He had to hurry. The streets had descended into absolute chaos – people were calling out from under the rubble, crying for their loved ones, and screaming with fear. Others ran around nervously – some had fled from burning apartments, and many were frantically looking for their families. It was the sixth day of the German invasion of Poland. Unprepared for defense, Warsaw had been the main target of the German Air Force since the very beginning of the invasion. Obedient to the order given to all able-bodied Polish men who could fight, Lemkin was leaving his beloved city. Born into a Jewish family, he spoke Polish with a distinct eastern accent. He wanted to join the fight and defend Poland. There were many others just like him.

Adolf Hitler welcomes German military at Aleje Ujazdowskie in Warsaw, 5 October 1939, photo: Hugo Jager, National Digital Archives

The German invasion of Poland

Poland was attacked on 1 September 1939 without any declaration of war. A week before the assault, Germany assured itself of consent to act from the Soviet Union, with which it concluded a Treaty of Non-Aggression (known as the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact) in Moscow. Its secret protocol provided for the division of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland and, partially, Romania between the contracting powers. In Poland, the Germans launched a concerted Blitzkrieg offensive against both military and civil targets from the land, sea and air. Air raids conducted by the Luftwaffe claimed the lives of thousands of defenseless civilians. The aerial bombardment of Wieluń became a symbol, and is frequently compared to that of Guernica. It resulted in the deaths of over 2,000 residents, while more than 70% of the town was destroyed. Already during the first days of the attack the Germans implemented a policy of terror against the civilian population, an element of which was the extermination of the elites.

The start of the journey

A snapshot from *Feuertaufe*, a German film about the Luftwaffe's activities in the September campaign, photo: National Digital Archives

The city of Wieluń after the bombing by the German Air Force on 1 September 1939, photo: wikipedia.org

exercise

Who could have taken these photographs? For whom were they intended? What purpose could they have served? What is the role of the media in a situation of armed conflict?

Childhood and adolescence

But in order to get to better know and understand Rafał Lemkin, we have to travel back in time to a distant place: let's take a map and look up Bezwodne (now Bezvodno) – the small town in present-day Belarus where Lemkin was born in 1900. Now, several centimeters to the left you will find Ozierisko, the village where he spent his early childhood. At the beginning of the 20th century, when Lemkin was a small boy, these lands belonged to Tsarist Russia. Earlier still, they had been a part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which was erased from the map of Europe in 1795 by the three neighboring powers – Austria, Prussia and Russia. Poles have often referred to this area as the Eastern Borderlands. Their inhabitants – mainly Belarussians, Ukrainians, Poles, Germans and Jews – lived side by side in harmony. Orthodox churches were erected right next to synagogues, Catholic churches and Protestant temples. Languages, cultures and religions mixed together, creating a unique cultural melting pot.

Our protagonist was born into an Orthodox Jewish family which observed the traditions of both Polish and Russian culture. He grew up in the countryside – which was quite unusual for a Jewish boy – on a farm leased by his father. Rafał was a very sensitive, curious and intelligent child, spending his days playing with his two brothers and the children of his father's farmhands in the garden or in the nearby forests. He helped out with the animals and participated in village life, inherently based around folk customs. He also paid close attention to the changing seasons and to the cycle of nature, which came to hold a special place in his heart. "Our lives on the farm moved in accordance with the rhythm of nature. We were part of her indeed. The farm supplied the basic ingredients of my personality and made me a combined product of the life energies of my parents and the elements of nature in whose command I was released into this world," Lemkin noted in his autobiography, written towards the end of his life. This love of nature proved very important in the process of formulating the mission which he chose as an adult.

Rafał Lemkin with a group of gymnasium classmates and professors (second from the left in the back), photo: The New York Public Library and National Yiddish Center

exercise

Why did Jewish communities attach such importance to the early commencement of education and religious schooling?

What is the role of religion and tradition in social integration?

A Torah scroll from the collection of the Borderlands Museum in Lubaczów, photo: public domain

A Jew reading the Torah, photo: National Digital Archives

When Lemkin and his brothers were a little older, they were taught Hebrew in a cheder, with a group of other Jewish boys. The teacher imbued Lemkin with love and respect for the language of his forefathers, and also with admiration for the wisdom of the Torah. Just like in any other Orthodox Jewish household, the mother was a very important figure in the young boy's childhood. In the evenings, Bella *née* Pomeranc – highly intelligent and erudite – read Aesop's and La Fontaine's fables to her children. She also sang poetry. The Pentateuch, along with the poems and tales recited by his mother, taught Lemkin about mercy and shaped his sense of justice.

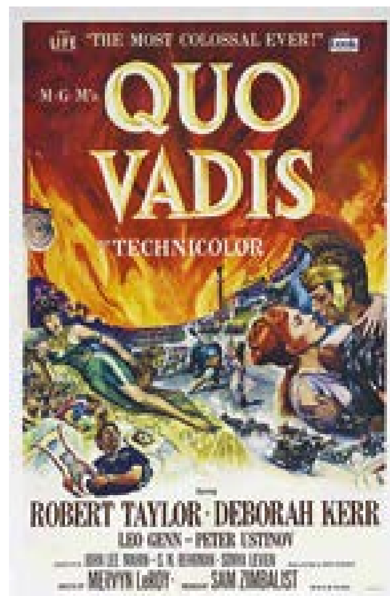
His idyllic life in the village of Ozierisko was occasionally disrupted by news from a distant world. Lemkin was only a few years old when he heard about the pogroms of Jews in Białystok in June 1906. Seven years later, when he was much more mature, his whole family was shocked to hear about the trial of Menahem Beilis – a Russian Jew who had been wrongfully accused of the ritual murder of a Christian child. The hostility and aggression towards Jews which was fueled by the case in Russia made a mark on Lemkin. For the rest of his life he remembered how his community, fearing a pogrom, would be overcome with the tension and fear. It was his first direct encounter with hatred severe enough to lead to a crime. The next occurred over 25 years later, when Nazi Germany invaded Poland.

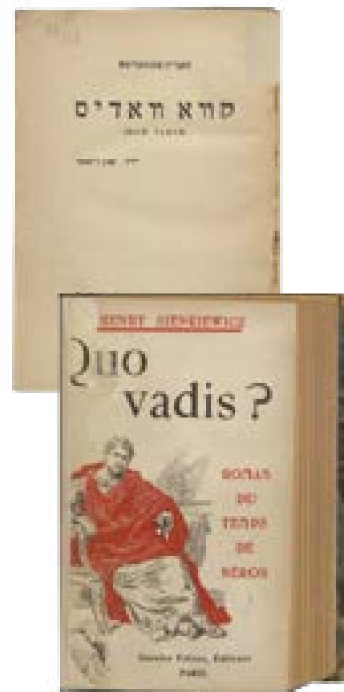
Cheder

A Jewish school in which boys read the Torah (the Pentateuch) and learned Hebrew and the principles of their faith. In Jewish culture, education commenced very early in life, sometimes even at the age of three. Jewish households normally spoke in Yiddish (the tongue of European Jews, based on a German dialect) or in the local language (Polish, Belorussian, etc.).

Christian Dirce*, 1897, painting by Henryk Siemiradzki from the collection of the National Museum in in Warsaw, photo: Piotr Ligier*

He started reading on his own at a very young age – his imagination was drawn especially to historical novels. Lemkin was deeply moved by the tale of the Christians persecuted under Nero (in the 1st century AD), described by Henryk Sienkiewicz in ***Quo Vadis***. Evil and cruelty aroused in him an authentic moral protest, and he contemplated the helplessness of the persecuted victims. For the first time in his life, Lemkin pondered the nature of evil. Years later he recalled that this book had started him on the path to his calling, i.e. the introduction of legislation aimed at punishing the destruction of national, ethnic, cultural and religious groups.





Quo Vadis *in various translations, photo: polona.pl*

A poster promoting a Hollywood blockbuster from 1951 based on Henryk Sienkiewicz's prose, photo: public domain

exercise

For the young Rafał Lemkin, a reading of Quo Vadis *was sufficiently poignant and disturbing to inspire him to a lengthy study of similar events in history.*

Which book has made an exceptional impression on you? Why?

Is pop culture a good tool for passing on knowledge about the past?

Quo Vadis

A novel by Henryk Sienkiewicz, who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1905. In it, he described the persecution of the Christians in the Roman Empire during the reign of Nero (1. century AD), set against the backdrop of a love story. The depictions of Christians – falsely accused of having set fire to Rome – being crucified and burned alive were the inspiration for Rafał Lemkin's interest in the issue of genocide. The book was a great success, being translated into more than 50 languages. Sienkiewicz gained considerable fame by writing historical novels which were published in instalments in the daily press. For Poles, the most important of his works is the trilogy: With Fire and Sword *(1884),* The Deluge *(1886), and* Fire in the Steppe *(1888), in which he presented the wars waged in the 17th century by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Being published at a time when Poles were deprived of statehood, it strengthened their sense of community, gave them hope of regaining independence, and increased their pride in the history and traditions of their nation.*

Lwów

When Lemkin was about to start his school education, the family moved to the nearby village of Wołkowysk, and then to Białystok, where the boy graduated from secondary school. He was a gifted student and had a knack for foreign languages, which later proved immensely useful in his academic work and international contacts.

Stepping into adulthood, Lemkin moved to the city of Lwów, famous for its vibrant academic, cultural and artistic life. In 1921, he began studying law at the Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów. A young person's mind, sensitivity and way of thinking are shaped by their family home, the atmosphere around them, the first books they read, and by their personal mentors. Lemkin met his at university. He attended a seminar taught by one of the most eminent Polish lawyers and a co-creator of a then innovative school of criminal law, Professor Juliusz Makarewicz. That's where Lemkin was able to flourish – he engaged in discussions on the philosophical and sociological aspects of law, and developed his intellectual interests.

The Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów

Interwar Lwów was an important center of science and teaching. Among others, it became home to the famous Lwów school of law. Its most eminent representatives included Ludwik Ehrlich, a Judge of the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague, and Hersch Lauterpacht, the co-author of the Charter of the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg and the author of the concept of "crimes against humanity". The Lwów school of mathematics, grouped around Stefan Banach, gained similar renown, and the proofs and theorems which it developed revolutionized mathematical thinking for the next one hundred years. Philosophers and mathematicians from Jan Kazimierz University also contributed to the establishment of the Lwów-Warsaw school, which prided itself on its achievements in the fields of logic and philosophy. Lwów's fame as a center of intellectual and cultural life was irrevocably terminated with the outbreak of World War II. Many of the University's professors were murdered by the Germans in July 1941.

A group of Lwów students, 1929–1933, photo: National Digital Archives

The Armenian genocide

His youthful years and intellectual exploration at university were largely influenced by two major events which occurred during these turbulent times. Lemkin was deeply shaken by the tragedy of more than a million of Armenians who were murdered by the Ottoman Turks under cover of the Great War. He was haunted by the fact that the perpetrators were never punished while their victims were forgotten. In 1921 in Berlin, the Armenian revolutionist Soghomon Tehlirian shot dead Talaat Pasha, the former Grand Vizier of the Ottoman Empire and the main initiator of the Armenian Massacre. Tehlirian's trial, which was followed closely across Europe, revealed the scale of Turkish crimes against the Armenians and led Lemkin to question the legitimacy of punishment for a murder committed in revenge and as a form of justice for previous unpunished crimes. Equally disturbing to him was the trial of Sholom Schwartzbard, a Ukrainian Jew who killed the former commander of the Ukrainian Army, Symon Petliura, in 1926. At trial, the defendant maintained that he wanted to avenge his parents, who had been killed in a Jewish pogrom eight years earlier. He accused Petliura, the then head of the Ukrainian government, of introducing policies promoting anti-Semitism. Both assassins were considered by the respective courts as guilty of committing the acts with which they were charged, however both were let free. While Schwartzbard was simply acquitted, the Parisian jury concluded that Tehlirian had "acted under psychological compulsion." For Lemkin – a lawyer with a strong moral compass – these two men symbolized a particular impotence of the criminal code when faced with individuals who had broken the law in order to – as they saw it – restore justice. Further, he saw with growing clarity a completely different problem: the lack of criminal procedures and terminology for crimes committed not by individuals, but by governments.

Soghomon Tehlirian with his wife, photo: Collection of the Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute

exercise

What is your oppinion on the acts of the two assassins: Soghomon Tehlirian and Sholom Schwartzbard?

Are there situations in which actions infringing the established legal order are justified?

Borders of Poland, reborn after World War I

The regaining of independence

In 1795, Poland was partitioned by its three neighboring states – Prussia, Russia and Austria – and disappeared from the map of Europe. For more than one hundred years, Poles strove to regain their statehood, among others by organizing national uprisings. Despite the partitions, they maintained their national culture and traditions both at home and in exile, and taught their children Polish language and history. During the Great War, Poles were forced to fight in the armies of the partitioning powers, oftentimes facing each other. Poland was reborn in 1918 as the result of concerted diplomatic, political and military efforts. Its existence was guaranteed by the Versailles Treaty which ended World War I. The country's borders were finally determined through local wars which raged over the next few years.

The Codification Commission

A body appointed by the Sejm (Parliament) following the regaining of independence by Poland with the objective of drafting acts of law for the newly organized state. In 1918, necessity forced the reborn country to use the legal systems of the three former partitioning powers: Germany, Austro-Hungary and Russia. The Commission was faced with the difficult task of unifying legislation and elaborating additional draft acts, with the ultimate goal of creating a comprehensive and cohesive set of laws. It comprised the most eminent Polish lawyers. The Criminal Code which it authored (the so-called Makarewicz Code) is considered as one of the most important achievements in the history of world law. The Commission's work was interrupted by the German invasion of Poland in 1939.

He discussed the significance of these issues with his peers and professors. During these conversations, his adolescent presentiments and intellectual intuitions gradually permuted into a cohesive and specific vision of his future work: "[...] my worries about the murder of the innocent became more meaningful to me. I didn't know all the answers but I felt that a law against this type of racial or religious murder must be adopted by the world," wrote Lemkin years later in his autobiography.

His inquisitive mind was further developed by a journey across Western Europe that he took while at university. He attended lectures on law and the social sciences in Heidelberg, Berlin, at various universities in Italy, and at the Sorbonne in Paris. In 1926, Lemkin received a doctorate from Jan Kazimierz University in Lwów, and soon after moved to Warsaw – the capital of restored Poland. At the University of Warsaw, with its Faculty of Law recognized as second only to that of Lwów, he enrolled in the seminar offered by Prof. Wacław Makowski. Thanks to his university connections, he was given a position on the Codification Commission of the Polish Republic. Its members, comprising the finest Polish lawyers, were tasked with preparing draft legal acts for the newly established Polish state, which, initially at least, was no more than an amalgam of regions that had functioned for over a century within three completely different legal systems. Working on the Commission, Lemkin was able to observe first-hand the process of reestablishment of Polish statehood.

exercise

What other problems might have the newly reestablished Polish state faced in 1918 apart from unifying its legal system?

What are the key roles of the state in the life of a nation?

Warsaw

At the same time, he was serving a court apprenticeship and working hard on developing an academic career, focusing on translations and analyses of source documents, and – more importantly – conducting comparative research into the criminal codes functioning in the contemporary world. Lemkin had a particular interest in the legislation of the newly emergent totalitarian systems of the Soviet Union and Fascist Italy.

The USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics)
A Communist totalitarian state existing in the years 1922–1991. The USSR was established through the merger of the Russian Federal Soviet Socialist Republic (itself created in 1918, a year after the October Revolution), the Belorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, and the Transcaucasian Federal Soviet Socialist Republic. All power in the state was held by the Bolshevik Party, which in accordance with Communist ideology assumed complete control over industry and agriculture, commenced the persecution of religion, and used its extended police apparatus to control all spheres of life. The main tool of terror and repression was the secret state police (evolving from the Cheka, its most widely recognized incarnations were the GPU, NKVD and KGB), which persecuted both actual and imagined opponents of Communism. State-organized repression included the system of forced labor camps, mass resettlement campaigns, and large-scale arrests. The Soviet political system claimed countless victims in the USSR and around the world. Their number is tentatively estimated at several dozen million.

17 September 1939, the The Soviet Union invades Poland, photo: public domain

Years later, he described this period as his attempt at making a mark for himself in the legal community in order to gain approval for his idea in specific milieus. Literature and mentors shaped his unique approach to law, which he saw primarily as a tool enabling the restoration of the natural moral order stemming from the harmony of the universe that he observed so passionately and intently as a child on his father's farm. The choice to practice and create law was a result of his profound idealistic longing for spiritual justice. Lemkin wanted to change the world.

Thanks to his talent, perseverance and indeed stubbornness, he was appointed Deputy Prosecutor at the District Court in Warsaw. In the second half of the 1930s, however, he resigned from this post and set up his own private legal practice in a prestigious part of Warsaw. Through his participation in academic conferences, he involved himself in the intellectual life of the international legal community. He observed first-hand the helplessness of this milieu in the face of the terrible atrocities committed during the Great War and the virtual immunity of their perpetrators. Some members of the elites speculated that the world would experience further acts of self-destruction if such evil were to remain nameless and unpunished. Numerous specialist conferences aimed at unifying international criminal law – many of which Lemkin attended as a representative of Poland – were organized under the auspices of the League of Nations. Tragically, no conference could save the world from what was coming. When at the end of the 1930s Poland was faced with the very real threat of war, Lemkin had already attained the status of an acclaimed expert in his field, with a host of acquaintances among lawyers and politicians in various countries around the globe.

The interior of the house at Kredytowa Street 6, where Lemkin's office was located until the outbreak of the war, "Arkady" 1939, R. 5, No. 4, photo: RU-AN

Pre-war Warsaw. View of Kredytowa Street, photo: National Museum in Warsaw

The League of Nations (Fr. Société des Nations)
An international organization established in the wake of World War I. Its objective was to maintain the global balance of power established by the Versailles Conference of 1919. In essence, it constituted a platform for international dialog and the amicable resolution of disputes. The initiator of the League was American President Woodrow Wilson, and Geneva was selected for its seat. Regular sessions were held until 1941. The League was formally dissolved in 1946 and its role assumed by the United Nations Organization.

German soldiers shoot Polish civilians in Bochnia near Kraków, December 1939, photo: National Digital Archives

The war and the escape from Poland

Having left the burning city of Warsaw, Lemkin tried to get to an assembly point, but the Luftwaffe attacks on civilian trains and the columns of refugees prevented him from reaching his destination. He considered fleeing the country, for he could count on many close friends in the West to help him out. Finally, Lemkin attached himself to a random group of strangers going towards Lithuania.

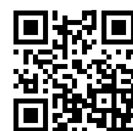
The German total war affected everyone in equal measure: soldiers and civilians, the poor and the rich, men and women. Lemkin had lost everything overnight, being turned from a lawyer to a vagrant. He experienced the bombing of a train, living with other refugees in the forests, and traveling long distances on foot. He marched at night and hid in barns during the day in order to avoid running into German troops or getting captured by the Soviets. He was hungry and thirsty. Miraculously, he survived, but witnessed many others perish.

Lemkin had started researching the legislation of the Third Reich and its ideological foundations already before the war. He was certain that the world of the Polish Jews in which he had been raised, along with his current intellectual milieu of the newly restored Republic of Poland, was about to face a difficult ordeal – or even complete extermination. His escape from the country was a personal tragedy. He was not only abandoning the prosperous life of a Warsaw lawyer and the stability and safety founded on the excellent reputation which he had built over the years, but also his beloved land, language, culture and – most importantly – family. When meeting his relatives for the last time, following the Red Army's invasion from the east, he understood that the only way he could survive was to flee the country alone. A risky journey with his elderly parents and brother, who had a large family of his own, could not end well. Everybody knew that. "I tried to live a year in this one day, to borrow time from the future, to absorb the whole soul of my home. I looked intensely at their faces as if to imprint them as they were then on my memory forever. When their eyes became sad with understanding, I laughed away our agonizing thoughts, but I felt I would never see them again. It was like going to their funeral while they were still alive. The best of me was dying with the full cruelty of consciousness," he described the last moments right before leaving his family home. With a heavy heart, but also with a blessing from his loved ones, Lemkin set out on an extraordinary and highly dangerous, yet fascinating journey. He travelled across many countries, observing various cultures and traditions with the perceptiveness which he had developed in childhood amongst the diverse communities of the Eastern Borderlands.

The occupation policy of the Third Reich on Polish lands

According to Nazi ideology, both Poles and Jews living in conquered Poland were races lower placed than the Germans. The occupier's policy was aimed at turning Poles into a pool of free labor and transforming the seized lands into German "living space" (Lebensraum). Poles were to work for them as slaves, with the next step being the erasure of their national identity. In order to achieve this goal, the Germans used mass repressions, targeting in particular the intellectual elites. The measures were also extended to the Catholic Church, which over history had played an integrative role for the Polish nation. Many Polish scholars and creators of culture perished in mass executions or in the concentration camps. Round ups – wholesale arrests of people caught randomly in the streets – were a daily occurrence, as were deportations to forced labor camps, beatings, systematic humiliation, and torture (frequently ending in death) in the Gestapo jails. The mentally ill were murdered methodically. Polish children were taken from their parents and subjected to Germanization. Anti-Jewish propaganda was widespread. Initially, Jews were forced to wear special markings on their clothing, but soon they were isolated from the rest of society in overcrowded ghettos. The final, preplanned stage of the exterminatory German policy was the annihilation of Jews as a race, and it was implemented mainly in the Nazi death camps located on Polish territory. Granting any assistance to Jews – giving them food, shelter, or concealing information as to their whereabouts – was punishable by death or deportation to a concentration camp.

exercise



Read the testimony of Stanisław Adler at the online database "Chronicles of Terror" (www.chroniclesofterror.pl).

What laws introduced by the German Nazi occupier does the whitness talk about? What forms of repression did the Germans use in occupied Poland before creating ghettos? Do you think they can be called genocidal? Why?

German policemen mistreat an Orthodox Jew, photo: www.polska1918-89.pl

The Polish Jews

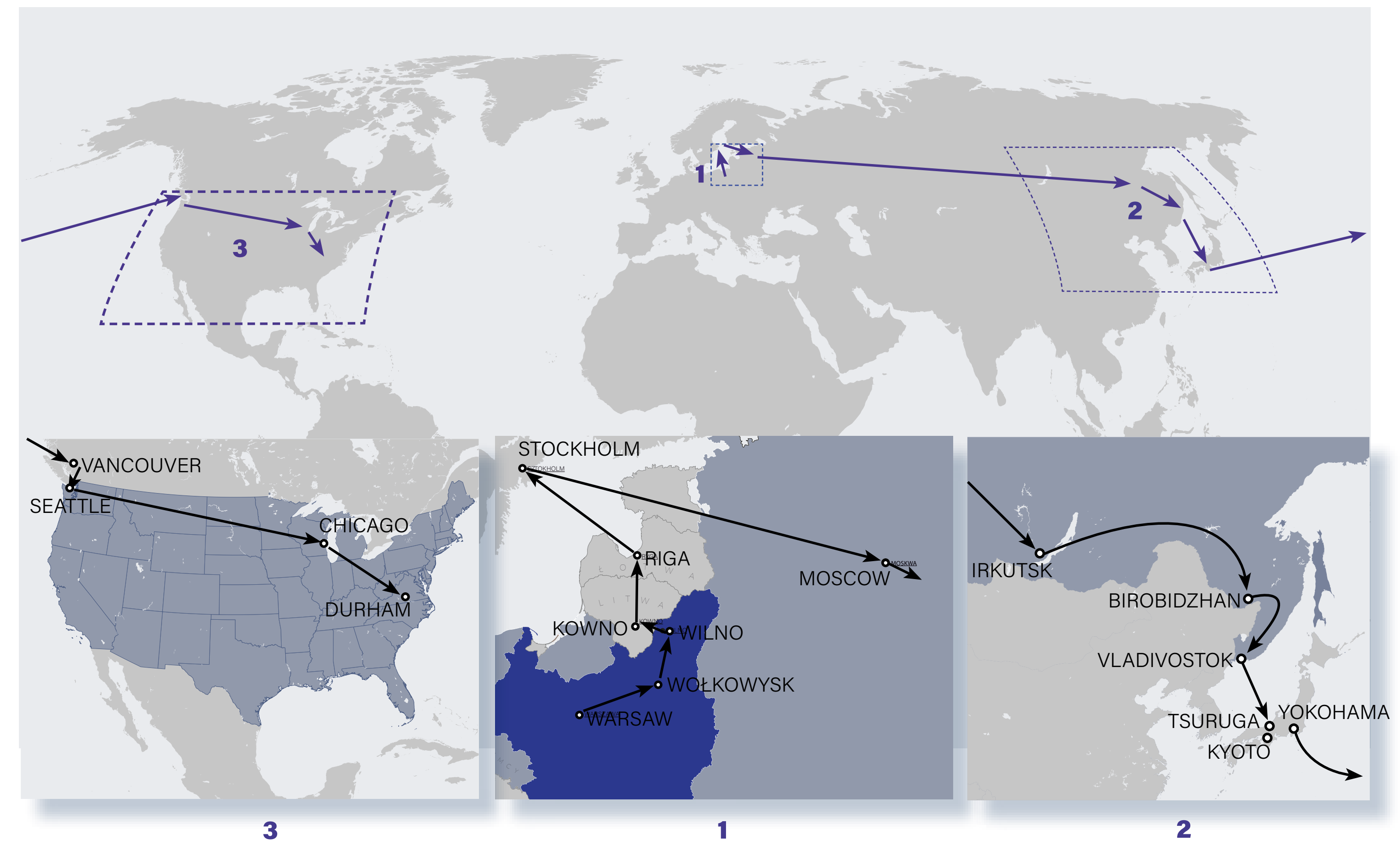
The first Jews established themselves on Polish lands in the 10th century. Throughout its existence, the multinational Polish Commonwealth was a favorable location for the settlement of Jews, who were persecuted in other parts of Europe. When World War II broke out, there were some 3,000,000 Jews living in the Second Polish Republic. They were the second largest national minority after the Ukrainians. The Jewish community was varied, with Orthodox followers – who resided mainly in the cities and smaller townships – separating themselves from other groups and developing their own unique culture. Many Jews belonged to the intelligentsia, and worked to enrich Polish culture, art and intellectual life. There were large Jewish districts in the major municipal centers, such as Kraków, Lwów, Lublin and Warsaw.

To avoid the Red Army, which was advancing from the East, he travelled north. His first stop was Wilno, which had been temporarily occupied by the Soviets. For the time being, the city was home to many refugees from war-torn Poland. They were exhausted and weighed down by fear for their loved ones who had stayed behind in the homeland. Separated from their state, they were frantically trying to complete the formalities which would secure some sort of existence away from home: they exchanged currency, filled out visa applications, and wrote letters and telegrams to relatives scattered all over the world. Lemkin also sent out a couple of important cables: one to Karl Schlyter in Sweden (the former Swedish Minister of Justice) and one to count Henry Carton de Wiart in Belgium (the country's former Minister of Justice and its delegate to the League of Nations) – asking both men for help with his journey to the United States – and a third to the owners of the Pedone publishing house in Paris, in which he inquired about the release date of his latest book. He needed money. He further wrote to Prof. Malcolm McDermott at Duke University in Durham, North Carolina, with whom he had become friends over years of academic cooperation. He was hoping that the professor would help him settle in America.

The Soviet invasion of Poland in 1939

On 17 September 1939, the Red Army invaded eastern Poland without any formal declaration of war. Acting jointly, the Third Reich and the USSR carried out a partition of Poland in accordance with the provisions of the secret protocol to the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. Engaged in the fight against the Germans, the Polish Army lacked the resources to successfully defend against a simultaneous attack from two sides. German-Russian collusion was confirmed by the joint victory parades held in Brześć and Grodno – cities located on the border of the zones occupied by the two aggressor states. The invasion resulted in the capture of 22,000 Polish soldiers (including active and reservist officers) and policemen; in the spring of 1940, all these men were murdered by the NKVD – each with a shot to the back of the head – in the Katyn Massacre.

The Soviet army attacks Poland in 1939, photo: wikipedia.org



Rafał Lemkin's route

The next part of his journey took Lemkin through Latvia to Sweden, where he stayed a little longer. Over time, however, as he began to realize just how dramatic his situation was, he became increasingly homesick. He was constantly accompanied by uncertainty, confusion and a peculiar sort of melancholy – the feelings which come with losing one's home and becoming a refugee. "I knew I could change my refugee status only through my spirit: by continuing my intellectual work and by enlarging the concepts of my world – awareness of the oneness of the world, despite its desperate division at that time," he recalled those difficult moments in his autobiography. Lemkin worked hard to learn Swedish well enough to lecture at Stockholm University. He spent much of his time at a library, continuing his research on the legislation of the Third Reich. With the help of the businessmen who operated in the occupied territories, Lemkin gathered information about the laws and decrees being introduced by the Germans. The reality of occupied Poland which gradually emerged from the gathered materials was truly frightening.

Lemkin perceived his life mission with growing clarity: "[...] it had been my strongest desire to go to the United States. From there I hoped I could explain to the Allies and friendly neutrals the real purpose behind the Nazi war policy. [...] The Nazi plan was so outrageous that nobody would believe it in time to try to forestall it."

At the beginning of 1941, Lemkin received good news from the United States. Thanks to the good offices of Prof. McDermott, he was granted an academic post at Duke University. He could therefore continue on his journey. The moment of departure from the Continent brought back feelings of melancholy and an intense longing for the family he was leaving behind: "Emotionally, I was in a Hamlet state of mind. I felt I would be leaving my parents on a powder keg, even though I could not actually help them from Stockholm. It was one of those struggles of the heart, difficult to live through and quite impossible to explain logically. As long as I was in Europe, I had felt that I was watching over them. But it was only a geographical illusion," he wrote years later in his autobiography.

From Sweden, he traveled through Riga to Moscow. The capital of the Soviet Union greeted him coldly. The people were miserable and poor, "their movements were slow, their faces showed concern, preoccupation, heavy responsibility, as of men and women who had long carried a sad burden." The streets and restaurants were full of men in uniforms. He could feel tension and fear in the air. After all, the country had been shaken by a bloody revolution not more than two decades earlier, while now it was governed by a cruel tyrant.

He travelled through Asian Russia on the Trans-Siberian Railway – passing through Novosibirk, he reached Lake Baikal and thence Vladivostok, making a stop in Birobidzhan, the Jewish Autonomous Oblast created on Joseph Stalin's orders. After a short stay at the coastal city of Vladivostok, he embarked on a small boat which took him and a crowd of other refugees – as exhausted, unkempt and frightened as he himself – to Japan. "[...] our boat, which we dubbed Floating Coffin, ran into many storms on the three-day journey. We were called on day and night to help remove the water that seeped constantly into the lower deck," he wrote in his autobiography.

A week in Japan allowed Lemkin to catch a breath, rest and get some sleep, and catch up on the basics – like shaving. He also briefly visited Honshu, the largest of the Japanese Isles, a place quite exotic to any European. Lemkin was fortunate enough to arrive in Kyoto during the cherry blossom season, and this allowed him to witness the most beautiful views of nature in this distant land. Having experienced the unique climate, culture and spirituality of Japan, he was equally enchanted by the country's vibrant customs. He contemplated the beauty of the Japanese rice paddies and relished the harmonious sounds of nature. At the same time, he pondered on the history of these lands and their inhabitants. He was surprised by the contrast between the inherently subtle culture and the acts of wanton destruction committed during the country's many fratricidal wars – especially during the brutal extermination of Japanese Christians in the 17th century. Lemkin couldn't have predicted that the Japanese, whom he perceived as gentle and endearing, would soon renew their onslaught in Southeast Asia and yet again commit unspeakable violence against innocent local populations.

On 18 April 1941, after a year and a half spent wandering, Lemkin finally arrived in the western American city of Seattle. This marked the beginning of a new chapter of his life. Finding himself in comfortable surroundings, he was finally in a position to commence the fight for the idea to which he had devoted his entire life. It was high time, as His mission involved a turbulent race against two factors over which he had no direct control: time and the genocidal apparatus of the Third Reich.

Mass grave of the victims murdered in the Treblinka German Nazi camp, 1943, photo: public domain

exercise

What could Rafał Lemkin have had in mind when he compared himself to Shakespeare's Hamlet, the Prince of Denmark? How does Lemkin's own fate and his experiences of World War II make him a tragic figure?

Lemkin spent the first night after his arrival in Seattle with a newly acquainted American family, delighting in the tranquility of a country so distant from the reality of war. He spent the time gathering his strength before the long journey to his friend at Duke University in Durham, more than 4,500 kilometers away. During this long voyage he had an opportunity of admiring the majestic Rocky Mountains and the snow-capped peaks of the Appalachians. But his enthrallment with the nature of the New World was occasionally intertwined with disenchantment, for he noted with surprise that the country which functioned as the symbol of freedom actually had second-class citizens, who were discriminated against on the basis of race. A disgraceful and yet telling example of such segregation were the separate toilets for African Americans and whites in railway cars and at stations.

In 1941, Lemkin (top row, sixth from the left) becomes a lecturer at Duke University in Durham, photo: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Jack L. Bloom

exercise

Create a mind map associated with the word "genocide."

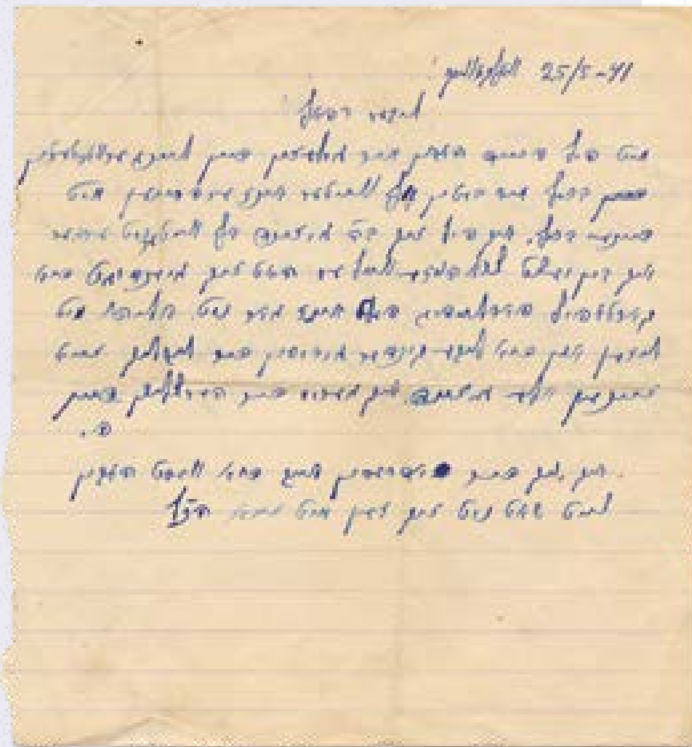
The birth of the concept of genocide

"New conceptions require new terms," he argued in the book. "By 'genocide' we mean the destruction of a nation or of an ethnic group. This new word […] is made from the ancient Greek word genos (race, tribe) and the Latin cide (killing), thus corresponding in its formation to such words as tyrannicide, homicide, infanticide, etc."

When he reached Durham, Lemkin was warmly welcomed by his friend, Professor McDermott. The Polish refugee's arrival aroused such great interest in the scholarly community that already on the same day, encouraged by McDermott, Lemkin gave a speech at a reception for graduates of the University. His initial fear of delivering an address in a foreign language quickly gave way to a sense of mission that was to become his hallmark. Who, if not he, was to tell the Americans about the criminal policies being implemented by Hitler in Europe? Thus, he described the actions undertaken by the Nazis in Poland, and also reminded those gathered of the Armenian Massacre in the Ottoman Empire, warning that a similar tragedy could occur in Poland. Finally, he asked his listeners: "If women, children and the elderly were being murdered just a hundred miles from here, would you not hasten to help them? Why then do you refrain from doing what your hearts tell you to when the distance is five thousand miles, not a hundred?" When he finished speaking, a thunder of applause broke out.

Lemkin was employed at Duke University. The job allowed him to gain some respite following his arduous journey, during which he had nearly girdled the world. But his rest did not last long, for he felt obligated to continue his mission of raising public awareness of the criminal objectives of Nazi ideology. Lemkin gave lectures in numerous townships throughout North Carolina. Among others, his listeners included members of the Chamber of Commerce, and youth and women's organizations. He also traveled to Washington, where he met with a representative of the Department of War, Colonel Archibald King. Finally, he succeeded in arousing the interest of officialdom.

Availing himself of the assistance of employees of the Library of Congress, he gained permanent access to its collection of contemporary German decrees. This allowed Lemkin to continue work on the book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, in which he was to introduce his original neologism, "genocide."



One of the last letters from Lemkin's parents, 25 May 1941, photo: Collection of American Jewish Historical Society

The Nazi German extermination camp of Treblinka (Treblinka II)

An extermination camp functioning near the township of Treblinka in the years 1942–1943. The gas chambers at the facility were used to murder Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto and other ghettos around Poland, as well as those deported from abroad, mainly from Austria, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. The Romani and the Sinti were also among its victims. According to estimates, some 800,000 people perished at the camp, which makes it the second largest killing center after Auschwitz-Birkenau.

On the opposite page: Jews in a freight wagon transported to the German-Nazi death camp in Treblinka, photo: public domain

Indeed, the definition of genocide is Lemkin's work entirely, and it was he who brought the term to common usage.

The most obvious example of genocide is the murder of all members of a given group due to their belonging to that group. However, Lemkin stressed that genocide can take various, and sometimes very refined forms. The destruction of the genos does not consist solely in a direct assault on the lives of its members. Planned actions, the objective of which is the disintegration of the political and social institutions, the culture, and the language of the group are also genocidal in their nature. In the above instance the biological existence of the members of a nation may continue, but its culture, spirit and intangible essence shall be irretrievably lost. Lemkin considered culture as constituting an integral part of each nation and ethnic or religious group. Thus, he viewed any attacks aimed against it, and in particular the denationalization of children by having them removed from their parents at a young age and raised in a foreign culture, as actions equally genocidal to mass murders. Further, he identified the artificial restriction of births as another of the "soft" – albeit just as despicable – techniques of genocide practiced throughout history.

Lemkin himself acutely experienced the consequences of the genocidal measures applied by Nazi Germany in its conquered territories. One day while working on the concept of genocide he found a crumpled piece of paper in his letter box. It was a note from his parents. A few days later news reached him that the Third Reich had invaded the Soviet Union. His familial town was occupied by the Germans, while his parents' house was bombed. He surmised that this had been their final, farewell letter. Only after the war did he learn that his parents – and indeed nearly his entire family – had been gassed at Treblinka extermination camp half a year after writing the missive.

News filtering through to America of the crimes committed by the Nazis in Poland and other occupied countries provided Lemkin with continued motivation to act. Shortly – and very much unexpectedly – he was offered a position of advisor to the American government. He accepted without a moment's hesitation. Once in Washington, he found that not many people were aware of the actual gravity of the situation. Similar "terrible stories" about the Germans had been making the rounds during World War I, and they turned out to be false. Why should it be different now? – asked his friends from the Board of Economic Warfare. Henry Wallace, the Vice-President of the United States, was another who did not share his concerns. Lemkin decided to intervene with Franklin D. Roosevelt himself. He was given permission to elaborate a one-page memo for the President's attention. In it, he tried to convince the American head of state about the necessity of adopting a treaty which would recognize genocide as a crime. He hoped that the proclamation of such an international act of law would serve as a warning to Hitler and thus prevent further massacres of civilians. But Roosevelt's response was a disappointment. He recommended "patience."

Official wartime American reports contain no information about German crimes. The Allies were silent. No one wanted to listen to Lemkin. Embittered by the passivity of the Washington political elite, he decided to address an appeal to the American nation. His book, Axis Rule in Occupied Europe (excellently documented), was to serve as the appeal. The German decrees which he accessed in America and cited in his work painted a horrific picture of the reality of occupation. That people were being systematically starved could be surmised from the grossly inadequate rations allotted to Jews and Poles. Already in 1942, rumors swirled around Washington about Jews being killed in mass executions or deported to their deaths. These were confirmed among others by Jan Karski in London, who informed the Polish Government-in-Exile about conditions existing in the Warsaw Ghetto. Reviews of *Axis Rule*... were published in "The Washington Post," "The New York Times," and numerous scholarly journals. Lemkin, meanwhile, overworked and overstressed, ended up in hospital.

It was only towards the end of the war that the Allies decided to face up to the problem of punishing German crimes. Their sheer

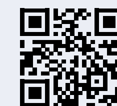
Jan Karski's mission

Jan Karski (proper name Jan Romuald Kozielewski), a courier of the Polish Underground State, twice risked his life to cross the wall of the Warsaw Ghetto, and also disguised himself as a guard to enter the transit camp in Izbica, where he determined how the Germans were carrying out the extermination of Jews. He wrote down a report and in November 1942 delivered it personally to London, passing it on to the British authorities and the Polish Government-in-Exile, and also to the media. This document was one of the first official accounts of the Holocaust to reach the West. In July 1943, Karski traveled to the United States, where he met with President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Tragically, however, none of the Allied leaders undertook any actions aimed at halting the mass extermination of Jews. Jan Karski was recognized as Righteous Among the Nations, and posthumously awarded the Freedom Medal by President Barack Obama.

Displaced Jews on their way to the Warsaw Ghetto, photo: public domain

exercise

Read the accounts of Marian Knappe and Stanisława Krokowska about the children's camp from the online database "Chronicles of Terror" (www.chroniclesofterror.pl).May the actions of the Germans as described by these witnesses be considered genocidal? Elaborate on your answer.



Read the accounts of Irena Sendler and Tadeusz Żebrowski from the online database "Chronicles of Terror" (www.chroniclesofterror.pl) .How do you think – why did Poles decide to help Jews? What punishment could they receive for their involvement?

Ghetto

A sectioned off area of a city intended for habitation by Jews. In Europe, closed city quarters developed to an extent naturally, through the voluntary settlement of Jews in close proximity to each other due to the necessity of observing religious regulations. During the occupation, the ghettos set up by the Germans in Poland served to facilitate the concentration, isolation and extermination of the Jewish populace. They were overcrowded, food and drugs were in short supply, while the sanitary conditions were extremely difficult. Residents were decimated by disease, hunger and exhaustion, exacerbated by the hard labor which every Jew between 14 and 60 years of age was obligated to provide. In 1941, the Germans introduced the death penalty for Jews who left a ghetto without permission – and for Poles who provided them with assistance.

Lemkin becomes an adviser to Hugh Jackson (in the photo), the prosecutor at the Nuremberg Tribunal on behalf of the USA, photo: East News

scale was overwhelming, and world public opinion clamored for justice. Immediately after the end of the conflict, an International Military Tribunal was set up in Nuremberg in order to try Nazi criminals. Lemkin was allowed to take part in the trials as one of the collaborators of the American prosecutor.

He arrived in Nuremberg in May 1945 and diligently followed the proceedings. But in his opinion their consequences for international law were unsatisfactory. First to surface were legal problems with prosecuting the leaders of a sovereign state. The mass murders had been carried out in accordance with the provisions of law and under the auspices of a lawfully elected government. Hermann Göring, Hans Frank and the other principal figures of the NSDAP were finally tried for crimes committed during a war of aggression. The defendants were adjudged as being primarily culpable for starting the War, while the genocidal killings were treated as an act accompanying this fundamental crime.

Lemkin saw a problem in this direct linkage between war and genocide, for over the centuries the latter had also occurred during peacetime. The history of mankind gives us many examples of genocide, for example the persecution of Christians in Ancient Rome or in 17th-century Japan, or the Armenian Massacre perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks at the being of the 20th century. Later, during a lecture at the seat of the United Nations Organization in Geneva in 1948, Lemkin argued that "genocide is not the result of the mood of an occasional rogue ruler but a recurring pattern in history. It is like a disease that is congenital to certain situations and requires remedies."

In order to make it possible to prosecute genocidal actions carried out in accordance with the letter of the law, it was necessary to introduce an international legal act that would be recognized and ratified by the entire global community. Lemkin was faced with a difficult task. He knew that the definition of genocide must be universal and anticipate various, even the most sophisticated methods of destruction used against diverse groups and their cultures. Its proper wording, however, was just one of the problems. Firstly, it was necessary to secure the support of numerous milieus in a host of countries. Rafał Lemkin's crusade was just beginning.

The International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg

A court of law established by the Allies in August 1945 to try Nazi war criminals. It continued in existence until October 1946. Nuremberg was selected as the seat of the Tribunal because of its symbolic significance as the place of proclamation of the Nazi laws of 1935 which deprived German Jews of citizenship rights. The Tribunal was the first such body in the history of law to consider the cases of state leaders accused of international crimes. During the opening proceedings, it tried 24 persons (of whom 22 were actually present), sentencing 12 to death. The Nuremberg Trials were criticized, among others by Rafał Lemkin, for dealing solely with crimes committed directly or indirectly in connection with a war of aggression, and completely omitting the issue of a broader anti-humanitarian policy.

Persecution of Christians

Followers of Christianity were persecuted from the moment when the religion came into existence. The 20th century brought with it another – and, according to some researchers, the greatest – wave of persecution of Christians in history: they died in their thousands in German concentration camps, the Soviet Gulag, and later in the Middle East and Latin America.

The NSDAP
(Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei)

A far-right German political party, established in 1919 as the German Workers' Party (Deutsche Arbeiterpartei). From 1921, it was headed by Adolf Hitler. The NSDAP's program was a mixture of racism, chauvinism, nationalism and socialism, while its main political objective was to provide Germans with "living space" (Lebensraum) through an aggressive expansion in Eastern Europe. Support for the party steadily rose, especially as its leaders made good use of Germany's difficult economic and international situation after World War I. In 1933, the NSDAP won the elections to the Reichstag and proceeded with the gradual replacement of democracy with a totalitarian regime which soon extended state control to practically all spheres of life. The ideology of the NSDAP was instrumental in the passage of the Nuremberg Laws (1935), which helped lay the foundation for the acts of genocidal criminality committed by Nazi Germany during World War II (the Holocaust, the brutal and destructive occupation policy, etc.). After war's end, the NSDAP was delegalized as a criminal organization.

Hitler at the NSDAP congress in Bückeberg, 1934, photo: National Digital Archives

UN

In October 1946, Lemkin tried to publicize the idea of adopting a convention on genocide in the most important American newspapers. He visited the editorial boards of "The New York Times," "The Washington Post" and the "(New York) Herald Tribune". He was helped by the postwar atmosphere, and newspaper publishers readily printed materials containing his reflections on the topic of the crime of genocide. In this way, he was able to lay the ground for future action on the international forum. But while Lemkin attached great importance to public opinion, he was aware that he could not limit his activities to journalism alone. Clearly, it was indispensable to interest and involve delegates to the United Nations Organization in the matter.

The United Nations Organization (UN)

An international organization set up on the initiative of the Allied leaders in October 1945. The basis for its foundation was the Charter of the United Nations, which had been signed by the representatives of 50 states. The Polish Government-in-Exile was not invited to the UNO's inaugural session in San Francisco, for by then it was no longer recognized by the Soviet Union. The organization's establishment was presaged by the Declaration of The United Nations, which was signed on 1 January 1942 by the representatives of 26 countries as an affirmation of their fight against the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo Axis. The main objectives of the UNO are maintaining international peace and security, and facilitating international co-operation. At its head is the General Assembly, a "parliament of states" in which each country has one vote. The Assembly elects members to the remaining bodies of the UNO, formulates recommendations for member states, and passes resolutions concerning internal affairs of the UNO.

The UNO's inaugural session in San Francisco, 25–26 June 1945, photo: UN

The title page of *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, 1944

exercise

What is the role of media in counteracting the phenomenon of genocide? What is the significance of exposing modern-day instances of mass violence against religious groups and nations?

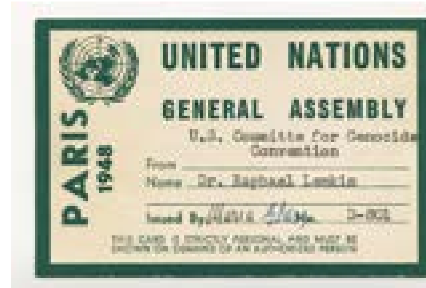
The Unofficial

At the time, this newly-formed international institution – established only a year earlier – was working in New York on its plan of action and elaborating the agenda of the first General Assembly. Since no rules on usage and maintaining orderliness had yet been introduced for UNO buildings, Lemkin was able to move around freely through the corridors and lobbies, where he worked to convince delegates from around the globe about the rightness of his mission. He also presented the gathered diplomats with copies of his book and offprints of the article on genocide which had been published in "The American Scholar." Indeed, Lemkin's zeal became anecdotal, and "The New York Times" soon dubbed him "the unofficial."

Meeting and talking with envoys from all over the world, he quickly determined that the great powers were not interested in the adoption of a convention on the punishment of genocide; however, they could not oppose such an initiative outright. Great Britain had an inglorious colonial past, the United States was responsible for the murder and displacement of the native population of North America, while the Soviet Union perpetrated crimes which could easily be classified as genocidal, to mention but the Ukrainian Holodomor of 1932. Lemkin therefore turned to the representatives of smaller states that had themselves suffered genocide or whose existence was threatened by larger nations. He talked at length with delegates from Norway, Panama, Cuba, India and Egypt. Notably, he received the backing of American women's organizations. In the end, even the United States and the Soviet Union, not wanting to be seen as indifferent on such an important issue, gave their support.

The Great Hunger in the Ukraine (also known as the Holodomor)

A famine artificially induced by the authorities of the Soviet Union in the years 1932–1933 in order to bring about the physical extermination of an indiscriminate part of the Ukrainian population, which was accused of opposing Communism. Accordingly, the people were targeted with severe repressive measures, including mass confiscations of foodstocks, while concealment of food was made punishable with deportation to the labor camps. At the same time, steps were taken to ensure that as few people as possible left areas afflicted by the famine, which encompassed both the countryside and the cities. Cannibalism was not uncommon. It is estimated that the actions undertaken by the Soviet authorities led to the deaths of between 3.5 and 10 million people.



Lemkin's identification card for the United Nations General Assembly, 1948, photo: Collection of the American Jewish Historical Society (on the left)

KINGSPORT TIMES

Lemkin Conducts 35-Year Crusade Against Genocide

Minister Shot

"Kingsport Times," 18 July 1949 (on the right)

The adoption and ratification of the convention

The resolution on genocide was adopted unanimously on 11 December 1946. In it, the UNO's official condemnation of the crime was accompanied by an undertaking to draw up a convention on the prevention and punishment of this crime. From that moment on, the concept of genocide – denoting a very specific type of crime – became a permanent element of the common consciousness. So began the long and arduous path leading, first, to the adoption of the convention, and then its ratification by individual states. For Lemkin, it was important that the treaty be incorporated into the legal systems of individual countries, and also that their penal codes be amended to include sanctions for the perpetration of genocide. First, however, it was necessary to elaborate the body of the document itself. To this end, a team of three experts – Vespasian Pella from Romania, Henri Donnedieu de Vabres from France, and Rafał Lemkin, all professors – was appointed in March 1947. Their task was to draw up the draft of the convention.

The group soon quarreled on the scope of crimes which should be recognized as genocidal. Lemkin's proposal that the destruction of culture ought also to be treated as genocide met with resistance. For Pella and de Vabres, the concept of cultural genocide was too broad. But Lemkin continued to emphasize strongly that over the course of history there were instances where the physical existence of a nation did not cease, however its spirit – its monuments, language and customs – was erased. These elements were also deserving of protection, argued Lemkin, for they constituted an original contribution to the richness and variety of humankind – a lasting value brought into the history of the world. Just as human rights protected the identity of the individual, so the convention on genocide should safeguard the identity of groups.

After the adoption of the Convention, Lemkin makes appearances in the media, receives many awards, and is nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize seven times, photo: New York Public Library

Further, doubts were raised as to the proper understanding of the "identity" of groups. Pella and de Vabres postulated to take political groups into consideration, too. The USSR, however, opposed such a provision at the next General Assembly in Paris in 1948. In the same year, the Social and Economic Council met in Geneva to discuss the draft of the convention before it was put to the vote. Obviously, Rafał Lemkin was present at the session.

When he arrived, his prewar memories came flooding back. He remembered how he had visited the Swiss capital in 1938 to take part in a session of the League of Nations. At the time, as he reminisced in his autobiography, European politicians had lacked courage and firmness. Hitler could yet have been stopped, but no one mustered the conviction to take decisive action. Would events play out differently now? Would the new international organization correct the errors of its predecessor? One thing was certain – a convention serving to prevent and punish the crime of genocide had a loyal and tenacious advocate, who would simply not allow the present round of talks to end in empty declarations.

United Nations
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Nations Unies
CONSEIL ECONOMIQUE ET SOCIAL

UNRESTRICTED
E/447
26 June 1947
ENGLISH
ORIGINAL: FRENCH

DRAFT CONVENTION ON THE CRIME OF GENOCIDE

This draft convention was prepared by the Secretary-General of the United Nations in pursuance of the resolution of the Economic and Social Council dated 28 March 1947.

Draft of the convention from 28 March 1947, photo: UN

exercise

Watch the account of Andrzej Jankowski on the "Witnesses to the Age" YouTube channel and consider what importance bringing perpetrators to justice has for their victims.

Lemkin talks to Ricardo Alfaro, Panama's delegate and member of the Legal Committee, before a plenary session of the United Nations, photo: UN

Mahmoud Azmi (on the right), 1954, photo: UN

Ann Newlands (on the left), 1948, Paris, photo: UN

Leolyn Dana Wilgress (on the right), 1948, photo: UN

Lemkin's meeting with Gilberto Amado, a Brazilian diplomat, on the day of passing the genocide convention, Paris, 9 December 1948, photo: UN, Marvin Bolotsky

Lemkin was tireless in his behind-the-scenes activity, conferring with the representatives of individual states at numerous informal meetings. Among others, he paid a visit to the Brazilian delegate, Gilberto Amado, who said: "Lemkin is a possessed fanatic, but we do like his ideas and give them our support." In the garden of Villa Rigot, the lawyer accosted the Egyptian delegation and soon found another proponent: Dr. Mahmoud Azmi, the originator of the Arabic translation of the word "culture."

But in spite of his efforts, Lemkin was overcome by anxiety – he slept badly, worried that he had insufficiently involved himself in promoting the convention, which by now had become his obsession. During one of those sleepless Genevan nights he went for a walk. Unexpectedly, he ran into the Canadian envoy, Dan Wilgress, who had also been unable to sleep. Lemkin decided to make use of this fortuitous coincidence to win over one more ally. He told the diplomat about the kings of Assyria, who had condemned entire nations to death for insubordination, and about Mytilene, which rose up against Athens during the Peloponnesian War, striving to convince him that genocide was a crime which recurred cyclically throughout history and – as the Holocaust clearly proved – tainted the actions of even civilized and developed nations. Lemkin studied and documented instances of genocide in global history, and this helped him to formulate a universal definition of the crime. He also used historical examples to show that the problem of genocide was current and would continue to recur if the international community failed to take countermeasures. His personal research interests were later developed into what we know now as *genocide studies.*

Thanks to the chance night-time meeting, Lemkin not only gained another disciple, but also received invaluable assistance, for the Canadian ambassador arranged him a meeting with the Chairman of the General Assembly of the UNO, Dr. Herbert Evatt, the delegate of Australia, for the very next day. The latter promised Lemkin his support – critically important, as it soon turned out – in proceedings on the convention. Opposition to the treaty, which Lemkin had so greatly feared, came to light during the session of the Social and Economic Council. The British delegation openly voiced its objection. During its period of greatness, their now dwindling empire treated the colonized peoples with contempt, hostility, and oftentimes outright brutality. Now the British were convinced that the convention would be used against them to uncover this dark period of their history.

exercise

Using sources from the online database "Chronicles of Terror" (www.chroniclesofterror.pl) regarding German politics in occupied Poland, trace and identify the stages of German racial policy against Jews: 1) discrimination, 2) stigmatization, 3) isolation, 4) destruction. Consider whether you can see disturbing behaviors towards individuals or groups in your environment.

The Holocaust

The actions of the Third Reich and its collaborators during World War II resulted in the murder of approximately 6,000,000 people of Jewish origin. This crime was one of the factors which led the General Assembly of the UNO to adopt the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in 1948. The Nuremberg Tribunal, however, did not recognize the Holocaust as genocide, and did not use the term in its sentences, even though it was cited by the prosecution. Paradoxically, therefore, there is no judgment of an international tribunal determining that the Holocaust was an act of genocide.

The final battle for the adoption of the treaty took place in September 1948 at the General Assembly of the UNO in Paris. Lemkin resumed his role of unofficial lobbyist. Although he held no formal position in the course of the session, his actions had an overwhelming impact on the legislative process. Most importantly, the experts whom he himself had recommended were engaged by the Legal Committee working on the final text of the convention. This was obviously due to his good contacts with the recently acquainted Dr. Evatt, the Chairman of the Assembly. Lemkin won over French public opinion and the Parisian intellectual milieus thanks to the help of his dear friends, the ladies Pédone, who owned a publishing house and with whom he had collaborated even before the war. Whereas the delegate of New Zealand, Ann Newlands, approached Lemkin's efforts with both kindness and surprise. "Once I return home, I shall tell everyone about genocide. I will make people aware that we should support this good legal act. It is all so simple; why do some people complicate such obvious matters?" – she replied to Lemkin after being informed of the opposition to the convention.

While speaking at the forum, the Lebanese diplomat Karim Azkoul supported Lemkin's brainchild thus: "The convention has fundamental importance for the protection of small states. The larger countries can defend themselves with the strength of arms, but our only safeguard is international law." The document was also backed by the representatives of Pakistan, who had the recent massacre of their compatriots, perpetrated during the division of India in 1947, freshly in mind. Their voice was a painful reminder to those gathered of the relevance of the threat posed by genocide.

Within the Legal Committee there was a stormy discussion on the shape of the convention. Successive delegations presented the agonizing experiences of their own nations. The Chinese reminded those present of the criminal actions of the Japanese, who during World War II produced narcotics and distributed them amongst the Chinese population in order to collectively destroy its psyche and national aspirations. Similar methods had been employed by the Germans during the occupation of Poland, when laborers had been paid in vodka, added the Polish delegation. Following these discussions, the definition of genocide set forward in the convention was broadened to include causing mental harm to members of a group.

The Greeks presented the policy pursued by the Ottoman Empire for some four hundred years, which consisted in the removal of children from their parents and raising them in Turkish culture. They estimated that if not for this systematic campaign, the Greeks would have presently numbered 16 – not 7 – million people. Further, during the civil war of 1947 some 28,000 Greek children were kidnapped to Eastern Bloc states. Thus, acting upon the initiative of the Greeks, the definition of genocide was expanded to include the removal of children from members of a group.

exercise

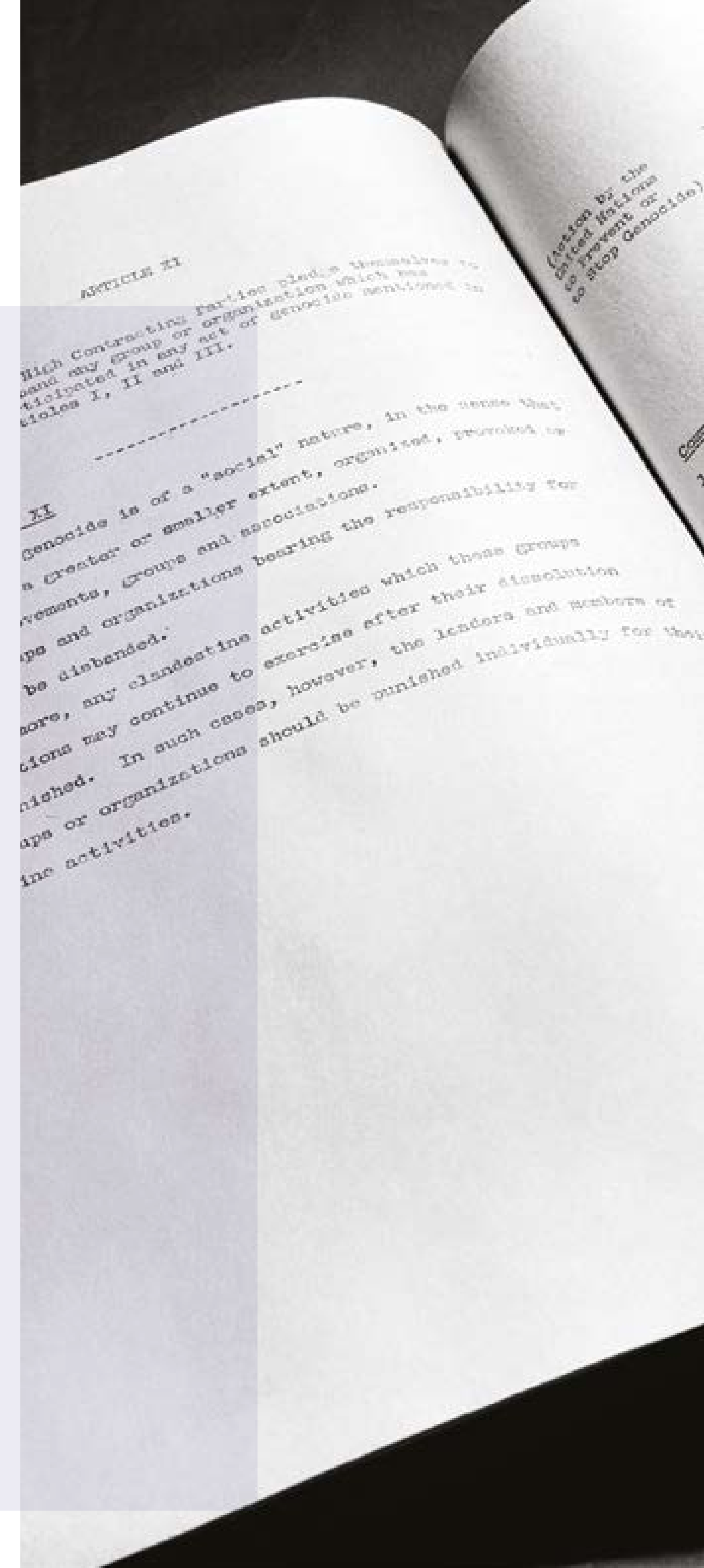
Which countries were particularly interested in passing the Convention? Why?

Japanese war crimes

The Japanese committed numerous crimes during World War II, and specifically during the (Second) Sino-Japanese War (1937–1945). In 1937, they carried out the Nanjing Massacre, the victims of which were between 100,000 and 300,000 Chinese civilians and prisoners of war. The Imperial Japanese Army had a top secret unit which conducted experiments with chemical and biological weapons on POWs and Chinese civilians. In all, actions undertaken by the Japanese Army resulted in the deaths of a dozen or so million Chinese, the majority of whom were non-combatants. Furthermore, approximately 200,000–400,000 women in the conquered territories were forced into prostitution.

The Janissaries

Elite Turkish infantry units, existing from the 14th to the beginning of the 19th century. Their soldiers were in the main Christian boys forcibly taken from the European part of the Turkish Empire. New recruits had to adopt Islam and sever all ties with their families, and were indoctrinated in absolute loyalty to the Sultan. They underwent rigorous military training, which changed their identity and caused them to lose all association with the cultures into which they had been born. The janissaries were expertly trained warriors and fanatical Mahometans.



The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, photo: UN

Rafał Lemkin in Lake Success (New York), 12 September 1948, photo: UN

Rafał Lemkin (standing first from the right) during the ratification of the Convention by South Korea, Haiti, France and Costa Rica, Lake Success (New York), 1950 photo: UN, Marvin Bolotsky

Throughout the entire session, Lemkin was both active and vigilant. He would call delegates at night, asking for their support or requesting that they ease off on certain issues. Further, he tried to guide the members of the Committee in such a way as to ensure that work progressed as rapidly as possible. He clearly wanted to make use of the conducive atmosphere, fearing that it would be gone by next year's Assembly.

Finally, the day of 9 December 1948 – the long-awaited date of the General Assembly's vote on the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide – arrived. The delegates were unanimous in approval. Lemkin was warmly congratulated and thanked. At long last, he could breathe a sigh of relief. And so he did – a day later he checked into a Parisian hospital, where he stayed for three weeks. But the doctors were unable to determine his ailment. Jokingly, Lemkin himself gave a diagnosis – genociditis, that is the exhaustion brought on by his strenuous work on the convention.

In March 1948, having returned to the United States, he resumed his teaching career at Yale. However, the matter of the convention was not closed – its adoption by the General Assembly meant only that its text had been approved and that the parliaments of individual states were obligated to ensure its ratification. No country was yet formally required to observe its provisions. What is more, the document set forward the mechanism of its entry into force, and this required its ratification, i.e. endorsement, by the legislative assemblies of at least 20 states. Once the treaty was thus endorsed, the state concerned would be lawfully obliged to prosecute and punish persons who committed genocidal acts. But without its initial acceptance by 20 countries, the convention would have no binding power. Significantly, the agreement also provided for the trial of perpetrators before the International Court of Justice.

Lemkin set to work immediately. Thanks to his efforts, the Convention was ratified by the parliaments of Ethiopia, Australia, Norway and Iceland. Later, this group was joined by a number of Latin American states: Ecuador, Panama, Honduras, Costa Rica, Salvador, Guatemala, Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay. The document was also endorsed by France, then by the French protectorates of Laos, Vietnam and Cambodia, and later by Ceylon, Haiti and New Zealand. Lemkin even succeeded in winning over Turkey – even though its history was bloodied by the Armenian Massacre. Using considerable skill, he presented the ratification of the Convention in such a manner as to make it seem as the next logical step in the country's atonement for its errors.

On 24 June 1950, North Korean armies invaded South Korea. The South Korean Ambassador sent a note to the member countries of the UNO asking that ratification of the convention be hastened, for his fellow countrymen were now faced with the threat of genocide. When the General Assembly reconvened in August 1950 at Lake Success in the state of New York, the entry into force of the document was still by no means a foregone conclusion. As it turned out, the British were trying to sow confusion, while the Soviet Union approved the convention with a reservation to one of its articles. Attempts were also made to pressure certain of the Latin American states into not sending in documents confirming ratification, without which the treaty could not come into force. Additionally, some delegates tried to force through the idea that the judgments of the Nuremberg Tribunal should be treated as a precedent determining future practice in the punishment of crimes against humanity. Lemkin, however, was opposed to this view, remaining firmly convinced that genocide was recurrent throughout world history and should not be defined on the basis of an individual instance, i.e. the Holocaust and other crimes committed by Germany during World War II.

He decided to take part in the deliberations of the General Assembly in order to bring his mission to a close. But this entailed resigning from his university position and thus losing his means of livelihood. To make matters worse, a friend from whom he was renting a room unexpectedly terminated the lease. Despite this accumulation of difficulties, Lemkin pressed on with his "unofficial" crusade in the plenary halls, accosting delegates and reminding them of the necessity of submitting ratification documents. By mid-October he had gathered papers proving that the Convention had been endorsed by 24 states.

On 12 January 1951, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide finally entered into force.

Rafał Lemkin, photo: Collection of American Jewish Historical Society

What did Lemkin do after completing his mission? He fought on – after all, many countries had not approved the convention. The USSR did so in 1954, following the death of Stalin, Great Britain only in 1970, China in 1983, and the United States in 1988. Acting with tireless conviction, Lemkin gave politicians no respite right until his death.

The struggle for the convention had taken a heavy toll on his health, preoccupying his mind to such an extent that all else had completely lost importance. Lemkin never started a family, while when he lost his position at Yale University, he fell into poverty, forced to borrow money from friends. In the final years of his life he worked strenuously on a book – ultimately unfinished – entitled *History of Genocide*, and also on his autobiography, in which he presented the inside story of the epic campaign for the genocide convention. Lemkin died of a heart attack on 28 August 1959, while waiting at a bus stop. He was on his way to a publishing house, with the typescript of his autobiography in his briefcase.

exercise

What did you think most influenced Lemkin and shaped his personality and mission (ideas, people, events, works of culture etc.)? Sort the answers in order of importance, illustrate the selection graphically (you can use the diamond 9 method). Explain your answers.

History of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

1933

Rafał Lemkin presented a speech during a conference in Madrid in which he referred to a particular type of atrocity that would later come to be known as "genocide".

1944

The concept of "genocide" was established.

11 December 1946

A resolution regarding genocide and the requirement to prepare a convention to prevent and punish this crime was unanimously accepted. From this moment on, the concept of genocide became a permanent feature of the global consciousness as a specific type of crime.

9 December 1948

The United Nations genocide convention was unanimously accepted. A total of 24 states were required to ratify the convention in order to validate it legally.

12 January 1951

After 13 months from its adoption, the Convention was ratified by 24 states and officially entered into force.

The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide

The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was adopted on 9 December 1948 – just a day before the General Assembly of the UNO passed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Unlike the latter, the convention is an international treaty and a source of international law; in other words, it determines the legal obligations of its signatory states.

Three men were particularly involved in its elaboration: the Polish lawyer Rafał Lemkin, who created the concept of genocide (it first appeared in his book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, which was published in English in 1944), Vespasian Pella from Romania, and Henri Donnedieu de Vabres from France.

Currently (as on November 2019), 152 states are parties to the convention (by way of comparison, 193 countries are members of the United Nations Organization). This number includes Poland and all permanent members of the Security Council of the UNO, that is China, France, Russia, the United States, and the United Kingdom. But even those countries which are not signatories to the convention (for example Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Angola, Zambia, Suriname, Mauritania, Somalia, Kenya) are obligated by customary law to ensure observance of the prohibition on genocide.

Pursuant to this agreement, the crime of genocide may be committed both during wartime and peace as any of a number of very specifically defined acts (killing members of a group; causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of a group; deliberately inflicting on a group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; imposing measures intended to prevent births within a group; and forcibly transferring children of a group to another group).

Any such act must be perpetrated with the special intention of bringing about the biological destruction – either in whole or in part – of the group. The possibility of qualifying as genocidal actions aimed at destroying the culture of a group has been excluded, however attacks of such type may be used as proof of intent to obliterate the group as such.

The convention awards protection to national, ethnic, racial and religious groups. Contrary to Lemkin's original concept, however, it does not safeguard political or social groups. Nevertheless, in certain legal systems (among others the Polish) a broader definition of genocide, which includes – for example – persons with a specific world view, is applied for the purposes of national proceedings.

The definition of genocide adopted in the treaty was transferred without alteration to numerous other international documents, such as the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court of 1998 (Article 6); the statutes of temporary courts and tribunals established by the Security Council (for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda); and the statutes of internationalized tribunals set up by the UNO together with interested states (cf. the agreement establishing Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia).

Firstly, the convention obligates countries to prevent the crime of genocide. This is an independent obligation (i.e. it is separate from the additional obligation to punish genocide). The state must exercise due diligence as regards the prevention of genocide both within its own borders and on the territories of other countries. Thus, the threat of genocide was recognized as one of the premises for introducing responsibility for protection; the doctrine has been adopted by the UNO and makes it incumbent upon states to prevent, react to and employ restitutive measures in the event of, among others, genocide. Secondly, states have been obligated to implement the national regulations necessary to enforce the provisions of the convention. Thirdly, countries are legally bound to punish any instances of genocide committed, and this is connected directly with the fourth obligation, whereby they must cooperate in the field of extradition. Presently, it is accepted pursuant to customary law that states should either try the perpetrators of genocide (regardless of where the crime was committed, and irrespective of the citizenship of the perpetrator or the victims), or hand them over to the interested states or to competent international tribunals. Genocide cannot be considered as a political crime, for this could give perpetrators grounds to apply for asylum. Furthermore, and this follows directly from the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, those who commit genocide cannot receive refugee status.

The genocide convention provides for the punishment of genocide itself, and in equal measure of conspiracy or attempt to commit the crime, complicity in its committal, and also direct and public incitement to commit genocide.

The treaty also pointed to the necessity of establishing an international criminal court, and this was eventually set up on the basis of the Rome Statute of 1998 (with the Statute itself coming into force in 2002).

The convention empowers the International Criminal Court (ICC) to settle all disputes concerning the treaty's interpretation, application and enforcement. The ICC has on numerous occasions concerned itself with obligations relating to the prevention and punishment of genocide, among others in litigious proceedings between Croatia and Serbia (judgment issued in 2015) and between Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Serbia and Montenegro (judgment issued in 2007), while in 1951 it produced an advisory opinion on the possibility of submitting reservations to the convention (it admitted of this possibility in order to ensure the broadest ratification of the treaty).

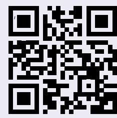
Due to the narrowness of the definition of genocide and the necessity of determining special intent, judgments recognizing the committal of genocide are very rare indeed. For example, only the former President of Sudan, Omar al-Bashir, has so far been indicted by the International Criminal Court on a charge of genocide (he has been specifically accused of complicity in the Darfur genocide). The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court prefers to bring indictments based on crimes against humanity; these are considerably easier to prove, with it being sufficient to demonstrate that there occurred an extensive or systematic attack on the civilian population. Thus, it is not necessary to prove any special intent or that the act was one of those enumerated in the restrictive and closed list of "acts of genocide."

Patrycja Grzebyk

exercise

Read the capsule articles about the Yazidis, the Rohingya people, and the Srebrenica Massacre. What were the effects of these events for their respective groups? What are the problems, actual and potential, faced by members of groups that have been targeted with genocide? How can the communities afflicted by such tragedies attempt to cope with their effects?

The Convention obligates its signatory states to punish not only the crime of genocide. With reference to the text of the Convention, indicate what other acts are subject to punishment (e.g. incitement to genocide, attempted genocide). Consider how such practices can be counteracted or prevented.



Text of the Convention

The Rohingya people

A Muslim minority in Myanmar (previously known as Burma). Although they had been oppressed for decades (being denied citizenship, discriminated against, and falling victim to acts of violence), in 2016 the scale and brutality of persecution forced them to seek shelter in neighboring countries, mainly in Bangladesh, to which – according to data from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs – some 900,000 fled. In 2019, the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court launched an investigation into the crimes committed on the territories of Bangladesh and Myanmar. Furthermore, in the same year Gambia commenced proceedings against Myanmar, stating that from October 2015 the Myanmaran army and security forces had conducted wide-scale and systematic "clearance operations," the objective of which was the destruction of the Rohingya people as a group, in part or in whole, accompanied by rapes and other forms of sexual violence, and also by the systematic burning of villages – frequently with the residents trapped in their homes.

Srebrenica

in July 1995, during the civil war in Bosnia and Hercegovina (1992–1995), more than 8,000 Muslim men and boys were murdered by Serbian units in the vicinity of Srebrenica, an enclave that had been declared a United Nations "safe area." It was protected by Dutch soldiers of the UN peace mission (UNPROFOR). Those guilty of the crime (among others Ratko Mladić) were tried by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, which was established by the Security Council in 1993. This court – similarly to the International Court of Justice – concluded that the murder of male Muslims made it impossible for their group to continue in existence in specific areas, and that, therefore, taking into consideration the intent of the perpetrators, the Srebrenica Massacre should be recognized as an act of genocide.

Propositions for educational activities

The story of Rafał Lemkin and his Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide is an occasion to engage the students in a discussion not only about the concept of genocide itself but also the various examples of the crime throughout history. It can also be used as a point of entry for a discussion on the role of the law in shaping the conscience and the influence of the media on the behavior of certain groups in society – on the shaping of something which Lemkin himself idealistically called "the world's conscience." These discussions can take place in history, social studies, geography, ethics and religion classes.

Below, we present possible introductions to these types of discussions. Part I presents a multifaceted concept of workshops concerning the concept of genocide and the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Part II provides teachers with a selection of supplementary workshop forms which can be used depending on time limits.

Educational goals:

At the end of the course the student will:

- be able to recognize the concepts of: genocide, the United Nations, the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide and connect them to Rafał Lemkin
- know who Rafał Lemkin was
- know and understand the motives which drove Lemkin in his work on the Convention
- understand the key postulates of the Convention
- be able to cite examples of genocide from recent international history

As well as:

- possess the tools necessary to attempt an understanding of the influence of law and the media on the behavior of individuals and society
- consider the role of personal responsibility of the individual in preventing the crime of genocide
- understand the complexity of the problem in declaring certain atrocities as genocide

Work methods:

- brainstorming / mind mapping
- quick writing
- mini-lecture
- source analysis in groups