

CALL FOR PAPERS

MIĘDZYNARODOWA KONFERENCJA NAUKOWA



The 20th-Century Polish School of Law. To the Rescue of Mankind – Between Diplomacy, Law and Politics

8–9 December 2021, Warsaw

The 20th century, and in particular the period of the Second World War, brought with it the greatest number of civilian victims in history, countable in the tens of millions. The instruments of terror were aimed against groups, communities, and entire nations, all of which were consigned to annihilation on the basis of political decisions grounded in totalitarian ideology. But it was earlier experiences – the First World War, the Armenian Massacre, the pogroms of Jews in the Russian Empire, the Bolshevik Revolution, and the vociferous reaction against the Treaty of Versailles that had confirmed the independence of once-enslaved nations following the demise of four established European empires – that provided the fundamental backdrop to the tragedy which unfolded as the immediate consequence of Nazi and Soviet efforts aimed at achieving dominance in Europe through armed force and terror.

During the first half of the 20th century, attempts were made to organize a response to these emanations of violence, thus helping foster the gradual development of international law and the idea of ensuring effective protection for peace and, crucially, rights – not only those of the individual, but also of whole communities and groups. One of the singularly significant elements of this process was the pioneering conceptual work of Rafał Lemkin, the author of the notion of “genocide”, which he famously presented in his book *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (1944). It is worth noting here that

the issue of organized mass killings, viewed from a historical and legal perspective, had focused his attention since the early 1930s.

The international legal milieu of the inter-war period, of which Polish scholars and judicial practitioners constituted an important part, gave birth to new, pivotal concepts of law. Having this context in mind, the Pilecki Institute is hopeful that the present edition of the conference will provide a platform for re-examining the legal and political trends of the interbellum, the underlying concepts and ideas of the epoch, actions undertaken by specific individuals, and, finally, the efforts made during the Second World War to extirpate and universally stigmatize genocide.

It is our intention to analyze the activities and endeavors of lawyers, diplomats, and politicians – both Poles and nationals of other countries – which were aimed at saving lives, assisting the countless victims of the total war waged against the civilian populations of Europe and the world, and introducing into international relations legal and political mechanisms that would become effective guarantors of the right to life of individual people and entire nations. Prospective participants are invited to submit papers on topics broadly relating to the development of international law in a comparative approach, presenting the results of both individual and group research.

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TOPICAL SCOPE:

- The lives and activities of lawyers, diplomats and politicians involved in the shaping of human rights
- The Polish school of law in the 20th century: representatives, trends, specificity
- Polish sources for research into genocide
- Law and politics in the first half of the 20th century on the example of the Briand-Kellogg Pact – towards a condemnation of war
- Genocide: the origins of the concept and of the Convention of 1948 – a politico-legal approach
- To the rescue: lawyers, diplomats and politicians confronted with genocidal totalitarianism in Europe
- From *raison d'état* to crime – the end of genocide?
- In search of the guilty: crimes, criminals, judges
- *Transitional Justice* – towards justice and reconciliation

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS:

- The conference will be held in Polish and English (simultaneous interpreting will be provided).
- Various forms of virtual participation will be available: video recordings, on-line videoconferencing.
- Time allocated for individual presentations: 10–15 minutes.
- The conference is planned as a virtual event, and will essentially be held over the internet

(Zoom communicator). The organizer admits of the possibility of some presentations being given in a conventional format in Warsaw (for those interested), however provided that this will not be precluded by the global pandemic.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

- Applications are to be sent in by e-mail using the application form (attached below).
- Candidates from Poland are requested to complete the form in Polish, unless Polish is not their mother tongue. In this event, we request that the form be completed in English.
- The deadline for submission of applications will elapse on 18 October 2021.
- Applicants will be informed of the acceptance of their applications.

Conference applications and all queries should be sent by e-mail to lemkin@instytutpileckiego.pl