



THE JACOB RADER MARCUS CENTER OF THE
AMERICAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

**A Finding Aid to the
Raphael Lemkin Papers**

Manuscript Collection No. 60



Collection Summary

Title	Raphael Lemkin Papers
Dates	1942-1959 (bulk 1948-1956)
Collection Number	MS-60
Repository	The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives
Creator	Lemkin, Raphael, 1901-1959
Extent	2.8 linear feet (7 Hollinger boxes)
Language of the Material	English, French, German, Hebrew, Italian, Polish, Spanish, and Yiddish

Administrative Information

Biographical Sketch

Raphael Lemkin was born on June 24, 1901, near Bezwodene, Poland, one of three sons of Joseph and Bella (Pomerantz) Lemkin. Lemkin was educated primarily by his mother and tutors in the liberal arts until he was fourteen, when he began studying philology at the University of Lwow in Poland. He later studied at the University of Heidelberg in Germany, while also studying in France and Italy. Lemkin spoke nine languages and was able to read fourteen.

Lemkin decided on a law career and after receiving his degree became a public prosecutor for the District Court of Poland (1929-1934). He continued as Professor of Family at Tachkimoni College, Warsaw, where he had taught from 1927. In 1929, he became the secretary of the Committee on Codification of the Laws of the Polish Republic (1929-1935).

Even as a young boy the mass murder of a group of people had upset Lemkin. The book *Quo Vadis*, along with the slaughter of Armenians by Turks during World War I and Christian Assyrians by Iraqis in 1933 caused Lemkin to wonder why such things were allowed to happen. In 1933 he appeared before the Legal Council of the League of Nations in Madrid with a proposal to outlaw "actions of barbarism and vandalism." His proposal was not adopted and he returned to Poland.

Dr. Lemkin's actions in Madrid were looked upon unfavorably by the Polish government which was pursuing a policy of conciliation with the new Nazi regime in Germany. He retired from public office and opened a private legal practice in Warsaw (1934-1939).

In 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Lemkin became a guerilla fighter against the Nazis and was wounded. After hiding in the forests for six months, he finally managed to escape to Sweden. He and his brother Elias were the only surviving members of a family containing over forty members. During 1940-1941, he was a visiting lecturer of law at the University of Sweden, Stockholm. While in Sweden, he began collecting documents concerning Nazi rule in occupied countries.

Lemkin came to the United States in 1941 with an invitation to lecture at Duke University. During the summer of 1942 he lectured at the U.S. War Department, School of Military Government at Charlottesville University, Virginia and wrote *Military Government in Europe*, which was a preliminary version of his more fully-developed publication, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. From 1942-1943 Professor Lemkin was chief consultant to the U.S. Board of Economic Warfare and Foreign Economic Administration. In 1944, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* was published. The book made use of the information that Lemkin had gathered while in Sweden. In this book the word "genocide" is first used. Genocide is derived from the Greek "genos" (race) and the Latin "cide" (killing) and meant the deliberate destruction of a racial, ethnic, or religious group.

Dr. Lemkin became a consultant on international law to the Judge Advocate General of the U.S. Army in 1945 and was appointed legal advisor to the U.S. Chief Prosecutor at the Nuremberg trials (1945-1946). Material from *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* was used as one of the bases for determining the structure of the war trials program. From 1946-1947 Lemkin was an advisor on foreign affairs for the U.S. War Department.

In the meantime Lemkin continued his fight to have genocide recognized as an international crime. He hoped to have a genocide convention adopted by the Paris peace conference in 1945 but was unsuccessful. Lemkin turned to the United Nations and by arguments and persuasions managed to convince the U.N. delegates of Cuba, Panama, and India to propose a resolution making genocide a crime under international law. The resolution was unanimously passed in 1946. For the next two years Lemkin worked on the draft of the treaty. On December 9, 1948 the Genocide Convention was unanimously adopted by the U.N. It would take another two years for the convention to go into effect. On October 15, 1950 the

treaty became international law. As of today, over 50 countries have ratified the Genocide Convention. Although the United States signed the treaty, it has never been ratified by Congress, as the U.S. believes the Convention would impinge on its sovereignty).

Lemkin provided financial support for his one-man campaign for the Genocide Convention by lecturing at Yale University from 1948-1951. He also taught at Rutgers University from 1955-1956 as well as at Princeton. In 1950 and 1952 he was a nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize. His friends and colleagues attempted to have him nominated for the Peace Prize of 1955, 1956, 1958, and 1959. He did, however, receive the Grand Cross of Cespedes from Cuba in 1950 and the Stephen Wise Award of the American Jewish Congress in 1951.

Raphael Lemkin died on August 28, 1959.

Scope and Content

Contains material relating to Raphael Lemkin's crusade for the adoption of an international law making genocide a crime. Also includes materials on the Nuremberg trials and the Nobel Peace Prize. The collection includes correspondence, memoranda, newspaper clippings, printed material and miscellaneous items.

Arrangement

Organized into two (2) series: A. Genocide Convention, 1944-1959; B. Miscellaneous, 1942-1959.

Terms of Access

The collection is open for use; no restrictions apply.

Terms of Reproduction and Use

This collection has been placed in the permanent care, custody, and control of the American Jewish Archives (AJA) by the donors of the collection. Questions concerning rights to use or publish materials from the collection should be addressed to the Executive Director of the AJA. For more information, see the American Jewish Archives copyright information webpage.

Preferred Citation

Footnotes and bibliographic references should refer to the Raphael Lemkin Papers and the American Jewish Archives. A suggestion for at least the first citation is as follows:

[Description], [Date], Box #, Folder #. MS-60. Raphael Lemkin Papers. American Jewish Archives, Cincinnati, Ohio.

Provenance

Received from Robert R. Lemkin, 1965. An additional supplement of papers was received from David Saperstein in 1983.

Processing Information

Processed by Kathleen McIntyre. Additional processing by Rachel M. Howse, December 2002.

Index Terms

Subjects

Genocide / Holocaust, Jewish (1939-1945) / Jewish lawyers / Nuremberg Trial of Major German War Criminals, Nuremberg, Germany, 1945-1946 / War crime trials

Personal Names

Lemkin, Raphael, 1900-1959

Series A. Genocide Convention, 1944-1959

Extent 1.6 linear feet (4 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement

Arranged in two (2) subseries: 1. Correspondence; 2. Miscellaneous.

Subseries 1. Correspondence, 1942-1959

Extent 0.8 linear feet (2 Hollinger boxes)

Arrangement Arranged alphabetically by correspondent with unidentified correspondence placed at the end of the series.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 1. Folder 1. A, General.
Box 1. Folder 2. B, General.
Box 1. Folder 3. C, General.
Box 1. Folder 4. D, General.
Box 1. Folder 5. E, General.
Box 1. Folder 6. F, General.
Box 1. Folder 7. G, General.
Box 1. Folder 8. H, General.
Box 1. Folder 9. I, General.
Box 1. Folder 10. J, General.
Box 1. Folder 11. K, General.
Box 1. Folder 12. L, General.
Box 1. Folder 13. Lemkin, Raphael, 1942-1948
Box 1. Folder 14. Lemkin, Raphael, 1949
Box 1. Folder 15. Lemkin, Raphael, 1950
Box 2. Folder 1. Lemkin, Raphael, 1951
Box 2. Folder 2. Lemkin, Raphael, 1952
Box 2. Folder 3. Lemkin, Raphael, 1953
Box 2. Folder 4. Lemkin, Raphael, 1954-1956
Box 2. Folder 5. Lemkin, Raphael, 1957
Box 2. Folder 6. Lemkin, Raphael, 1958
Box 2. Folder 7. Lemkin, Raphael, 1959, undated
Box 2. Folder 8. M, General.
Box 2. Folder 9. N, General.
Box 2. Folder 10. O, General.
Box 2. Folder 11. P, General.
Box 2. Folder 12. Q-R, General.
Box 2. Folder 13. S-Sh, General.
Box 2. Folder 14. Si-Sz, General.
Box 2. Folder 15. T, General.
Box 2. Folder 16. U-V, General.
Box 2. Folder 17. W, General.
Box 2. Folder 18. Y-Z, General.
Box 2. Folder 19. Unidentified.
Box 2. Folder 20. Personal miscellaneous, 1944, 1951-1956, undated

Subseries 2. Miscellaneous, 1944-1959

Extent 0.8 linear feet (2 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Consists of news articles, printed material, speeches, press releases, memoranda, and petitions.

Box and Folder Listing

Box 3. Folder 1. Newsclippings. U.S, 1944-1959

Box 3. Folder 2. Foreign newsclippings [German, French, Polish, Spanish, Yiddish, and Hebrew].

Box 3. Folder 3. Printed publications, U.S.

Box 3. Folder 4. Printed publications, U.S.

Box 3. Folder 5. Printed publications [German, French, Spanish].

Box 4. Folder 1. Petitions to U.N. General Assembly to adopt the Genocide Convention, 1948

Box 4. Folder 2. Scripts of radio programs, 1947-1956

Box 4. Folder 3. Press releases, 1948-1959, undated

Box 4. Folder 4. Statements and speeches, 1949-1957, undated

Box 4. Folder 5. Resolutions urging the ratification of the Genocide conventions, 1947-1952, undated

Box 4. Folder 6. Memoranda concerning the Genocide Convention, its ratification and revision.

Box 4. Folder 7. Miscellaneous material on the Genocide Convention [English], 1947-1957, undated

Box 4. Folder 8. Miscellaneous material on the Genocide Convention [German, French, Spanish, Italian].

Series B. Miscellaneous, 1942-1959

Extent 1.2 linear feet (3 Hollinger boxes)

Scope and Content Note Contains biographical material, material on the Nuremberg trials, the Nobel Peace Prize, copies of Military Government in Europe, a photocopy of portions of Axis Rule in Occupied Europe and miscellaneous memoranda and printed material dealing with Nazi concentration camps, refugees, the Cold War, and religious magazines.

Arrangement Arranged in two (2) subseries: 1. General; 2. Studies of Genocide in Various Countries.

Subseries 1. General, 1944-1959

Extent 0.6 linear feet (1.5 Hollinger boxes)

Box and Folder Listing

Box 5. Folder 1. Deposition of witnesses at the Nuremberg trials, 1945-1946

Box 5. Folder 2. Reprint of trial transcript [fragment].

Box 5. Folder 3. Correspondence and newsclipping relating to the Nobel Peace Prize, 1950, 1952, 1955, 1956, 1958, and 1959

Box 5. Folder 4. Photocopy of Axis Rule in Occupied Europe [fragment], 1944

Box 5. Folder 5. Miscellaneous, memoranda, press releases, papers on international law, classes taught at Rutgers, 1951-1959, undated

Box 5. Folder 6. Miscellaneous printed material [German, French, Spanish, Italian, Polish, Yiddish, Hebrew].

Box 5. Folder 7. Biographical material.

Box 6. Folder 1. Readings on Military Government in Europe.

Box 6. Folder 2. Miscellaneous publications.

Subseries 2. Studies of Genocide in Various Countries

Extent 0.6 linear feet (1.5 Hollinger boxes)

Box and Folder Listing

Box 6. Folder 3. Albigensians.

Box 6. Folder 4. Alva; the Netherlands.

Box 6. Folder 5. Assyria.

Box 6. Folder 6. Ceylon [16th Century].

Box 6. Folder 7. Chios [Turkish Persecutions].

Box 6. Folder 8. French in Sicily [ca 1282].

Box 6. Folder 9. Germans in Africa.

Box 6. Folder 10. Greece [Ottoman Empire].

Box 6. Folder 11. Greece [1948-1950].

Box 6. Folder 12. Hereros.

Box 6. Folder 13. Huguenots.

Box 6. Folder 14. Hungary [U.N. Report].

Box 7. Folder 1. Incas.

Box 7. Folder 2. International Collective Responsibility for Survival of National Racial, Religious, and Ethnical Groups.

Box 7. Folder 3. Iraq under Hulagu [13th century].

Box 7. Folder 4. Japan [Persecution of Catholics in 16th-17th centuries].

Box 7. Folder 5. Lusations.

Box 7. Folder 6. Mongols.

Box 7. Folder 7. Moravia Under the Mongols.

Box 7. Folder 8. Mormons.

Box 7. Folder 9. Moors and Moriscos.

Box 7. Folder 10. Nagas.

Box 7. Folder 11. Nationalism.

Box 7. Folder 12. Nazi genocide [untitled manuscript].

Box 7. Folder 13. Nuremberg.

Box 7. Folder 14. Teutonic Knights and Prussian Pagans.

Box 7. Folder 15. Unidentified.