



JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

DOCUMENTING THE CRIMES

Between 1933 and 1945, the Nazis and their collaborators carried out the systematic persecution and murder of Europe's Jews, a genocide now known as the Holocaust. The Nazi regime also persecuted and killed millions of others whom they considered politically hostile, racially inferior, or socially unfit. The U.S. Signal Corps took photographs and film in the newly liberated Ohrdruf concentration camp to help document these crimes.

Ohrdruf, Germany, April 1945

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Tara Stewart

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JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

DOCUMENTING THE CRIMES

German citizens view victims in the former Nazi concentration camp in Wöbbelin. The U.S. Army encountered deplorable conditions when entering the camp in May 1945. In response, Army commanders ordered local townspeople to tour the camp to see firsthand the atrocities that had occurred in the vicinity of their own community. This act attempted to prompt public acknowledgment and establish a public record that crimes had been committed.

Wöbbelin, Germany, May 6, 1945

National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD

2

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DOCUMENTING THE CRIMES

U.S. Army staffers organize stacks of German documents collected by war crimes investigators as evidence for the trial of war criminals before the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg. To counter any potential argument that the charges were based on biased or tainted testimony, prosecutors relied primarily on the mounds of documents written by the Nazis themselves.

Nuremberg, Germany, November 20, 1945–October 1, 1946
National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD

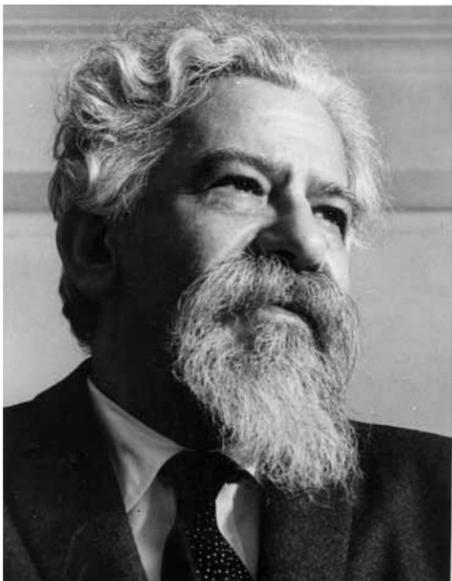
3

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“The war will outlast the victory of arms if we fail to conquer the infamy of the soul: the indifference to crime, when committed against others.... The Fascists have shown that they are great in evil. Let us reveal that we can be as great in goodness.”

—Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel
(The Meaning of This War, 1944)



Born in Poland, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–72) pursued his rabbinical studies in Berlin. Arrested by the Gestapo in 1938 and deported back to Poland, he immigrated to London shortly before the war. Most of his family, including his mother and his sisters, was murdered by the Nazis. He arrived in the United States in 1940 and became renowned as one of the leading Jewish theologians and philosophers of the 20th century. He was also prominent in social justice causes, particularly the U.S. civil rights movement.

Abraham Joshua Heschel, 1960s
Courtesy of the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York

4

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JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

THE TRIALS

Evidence is presented during the trial of 22 high-ranking Nazi leaders before the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, Germany. The Nuremberg Trial of 1945–46 established the precedent that individual officials can be held responsible for “crimes against humanity” and for implementing policies that violate international law—regardless of their status as government officials.

Nuremberg, Germany, December 2, 1945

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5

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Local Forecast: Today partly cloudy and cool. Tomorrow sunny and cool. Weather Forecast on Page 9.

VOL. 79—NO. 78—IN TWO SECTIONS—SECTION ONE

NEW YORK 15, N. Y., TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 1946

Printed in second class matter Post Office New York, N. Y.

GOERING, VON RIBBENTROP AND 9 OTHERS TO HANG

Branca to Oppose Dickson in Opener

Ailing Cards 7-5 Choice In Playoff

THE BATTING ORDER.

Dodgers.	Cardinals.
Stanky 2b	Schoendienst 2b
Lavagetto 1b	Moore cf
Olson lf	Musial 1b
P. Walker cf	Kaufman cf
Parsons lf	Kurywak 3b
Spencer 3b	H. Walker 2b
Beane ss	Quigg 2b
Edwards p	Marion ss
Branson p	Dickson p



Ralph Branca, Dodger.

Soviet Curtain Holds Up U. S. Global Airline

By ALLAN KELLER, World-Telegram Staff Writer

The refusal of the Russians to permit Americans or American firms to operate behind the "iron curtain" they have erected around their sphere of influence is keeping the Pan American World Airways from completing its globe-circling network, the World-Telegram learned today.

This attitude by the part of the Russians is keeping Turkey and other states from joining the American influence in the Middle East.

Works of Effect Fall The Civil Aeronautics Board, which decides where American planes shall fly in foreign lands,

U. S. May Seize Livestock, Buy Argentine Beef

Anderson Warns Stockmen of Drastic Action in Meat Crisis

Government seizure of all market-bound livestock and the purchase of Argentine beef today appeared to be possibilities as federal officials sought to relieve the country's worst meat crisis.

The threat of seizing livestock came from Secretary of Agriculture Clinton D. Anderson, who told a group of cattlemen in Albuquerque, N. Mex., that if "day by day becomes more of a possibility."

Objective Not Clear. It was not immediately clear whether the restraining step would be designed to put more meat into regular channels and thus to balance supplies, or merely to secure the armed services and hospitals of a supply.

The warning came after the government also warned that the stock standing limit against buying a slaughter plant might be increased by public demand.

The warning was supplemented by a report from the Army-Navy

Hess, Funk Get Life; Schacht, Papen Free

Sentences in Nazi War Crimes Trial



Keitel, Streicher, Rosenberg, Jodl, Seyss-Inquart to Die; Reds Dissent to Acquittals

By EDWARD W. BEATTIE, United Press Staff Writer.

NUREMBERG, Oct. 1.—The international military tribunal today sentenced Hermann Goering and 11 of Adolf Hitler's top leaders to death by hanging, imposed life prison terms on three, terms of 10 to 20 years on four others and acquitted three in the world trial of the Nazi regime. Russia dissented on the acquittals.

Those sentenced to be hanged were: Goering, Joachim von Ribbentrop, Wilhelm von Keitel, Dr. Ernst Kaltenbrunner, Alfred Rosenberg and Hans Frank.

Also Wilhelm Frick, Julius Streicher, Franz Sauchel, Alfred Jodl, Arthur Seyss-Inquart and Martin Bormann, in absentia.

Those sentenced to life in prison were: Rudolf Hess, Walther Funk and Eric Raeder.

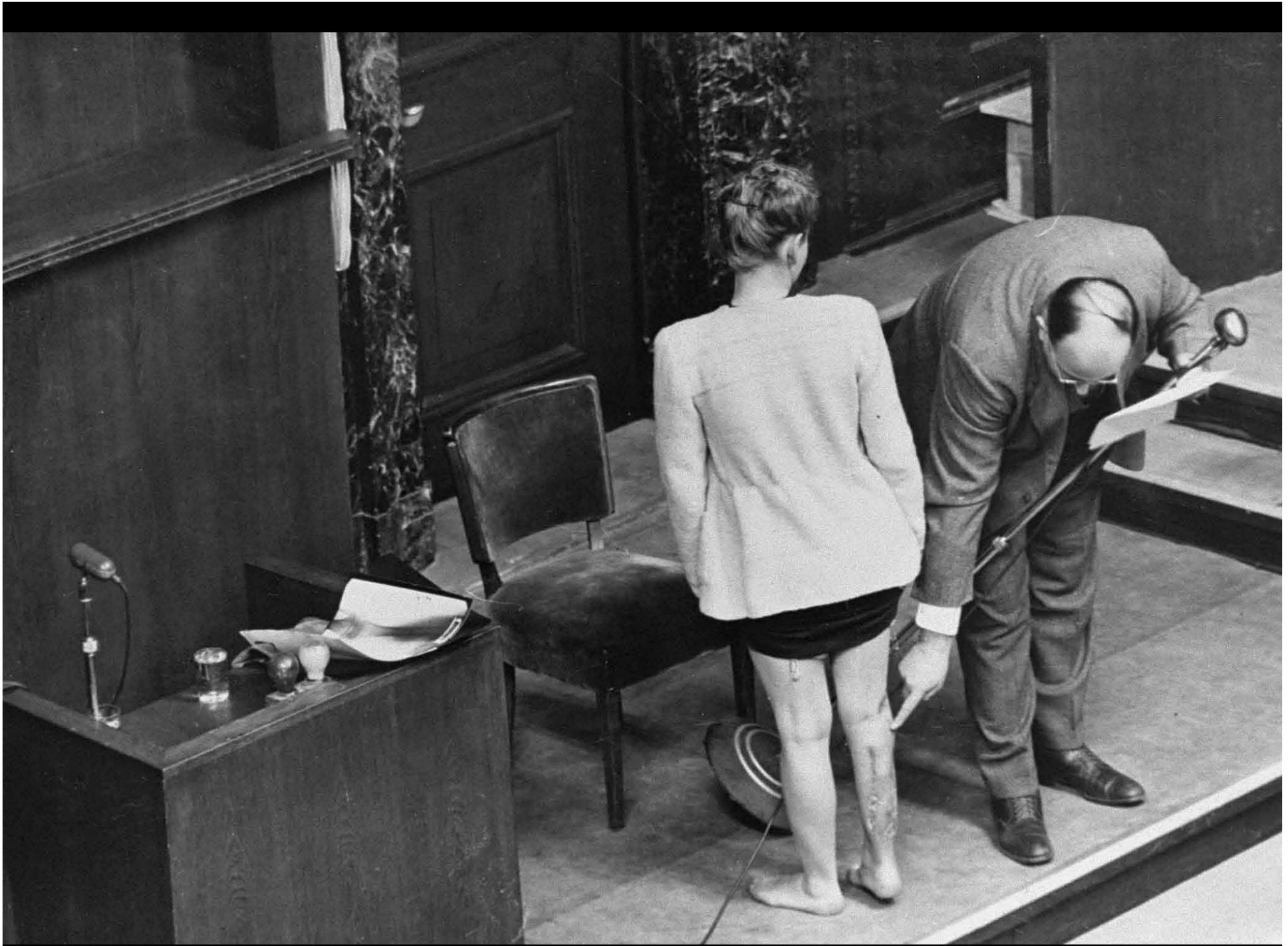
Those receiving prison terms were: Karl Doenitz, 10 years; Baldur von Schirach, 20 years.

JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

THE TRIALS

Of the 22 war criminals tried before the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, 12 defendants were sentenced to death, 3 were sentenced to life imprisonment, and 4 received prison terms ranging from 10 to 20 years. Three defendants were acquitted. The acquittals showed that the courts honored the legal system and would not convict individuals if the evidence was insufficient.

*New York World-Telegram, New York, October 1, 1946
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, gift of Peter Klappert*



JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

THE TRIALS

In 1946 Polish survivor Jadwiga Dzido appeared as a witness at the Doctors Trial, one of the tribunals that prosecuted second-tier German officials, including doctors, judges, and industrialists. Here, expert witness Dr. Alexander explains the medical experiment performed on Dzido in the Ravensbrück concentration camp. Although not all Nazi offenders were tried for their crimes, the trials in Germany and other European nations established a precedent for bringing a broad range of perpetrators to justice and holding them individually responsible for their actions.

Nuremberg, Germany, December 20, 1946

National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD

7

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JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

THE TRIALS

Defendant Adolf Eichmann—who coordinated deportations to killing centers—sits in a glass booth erected to protect him from assassination. He was found guilty on 14 counts, including crimes against humanity and crimes against the Jewish people. This trial accentuated that no statute of limitations should exist for crimes of this nature. Most of the witnesses at this trial were Holocaust survivors, enabling the world to put a face not only to the perpetrators, such as Eichmann, but also to the millions of victims and survivors.

Jerusalem, Israel, May 29, 1961

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Israel Government Press Office

8

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“Not only, as we have seen, is evil incapable of succeeding in the long run, and not only does strength without justice weaken in the long run; but here and now strength *can exist* together with justice, and the power of nations struggling for freedom can be even greater than that of nations struggling for enslavement. The second world war was proof of that.”

—Jacques Maritain, French Catholic philosopher
(*Man and the State*, 1951)



Jacques Maritain (1882–1973) was a French Catholic philosopher. He was strongly opposed to the Vichy regime and spent the war in exile in New York, where he worked to help bring refugees to the United States. In a 1946 letter to the Vatican, he noted the church’s role in fostering antisemitism and asked Pope Pius XII to condemn antisemitism. After the war, Maritain was one of the drafters of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Jacques Maritain, Jacques Maritain Center at the University of Notre Dame, 1958

University of Notre Dame Archives, Notre Dame, IN

9

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JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

LASTING LEGACIES

Before 1944, no word existed to describe the coordinated destruction of civilian populations on the basis of race, ethnicity, or religion. Polish Jewish legal scholar Raphael Lemkin introduced the word “genocide” to give the crime a name. On December 9, 1948, the United Nations unanimously adopted the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, which came into effect in 1951. Representatives of states that ratified the convention on October 14, 1950, are pictured with Lemkin (*back row, far right*).

Lake Success, New York, October 14, 1950
UN Photo/MB

10

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JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

LASTING LEGACIES

On September 4, 1998, former Rwandan prime minister Jean Kambanda became one of the first individuals convicted of genocide before an international tribunal, for his leadership role in the 1994 Rwandan genocide in which at least 500,000 Tutsi were killed in 100 days. International and national tribunals have gained international clout as key tools for responding to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide, holding individuals accountable for such crimes committed in Rwanda, the former Yugoslavia, Cambodia, and Sierra Leone.

Arusha, Tanzania, January 5, 1998
REUTERS



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JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

LASTING LEGACIES

Students hold drawings depicting attacks by the Sudanese government on their villages, which forced them to flee Darfur. For his leadership in orchestrating these and other acts of violence in Darfur, Sudanese president Omar Al Bashir has been indicted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) on charges of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. The ICC relies on cooperation from its signatory member states, none of which has arrested Bashir. As a result, he remains president of Sudan.

Farchana, Chad, July 2007

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

12

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JUSTICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY AFTER THE HOLOCAUST

LASTING LEGACIES

Survivor Henry Greenbaum and his granddaughters, Danielle and Lauren, light candles in the Museum's Hall of Remembrance for their family members who perished in the Holocaust—Greenbaum's mother, five sisters, two nephews, and three nieces. Justice can never undo the crimes committed. Regardless, international efforts to seek justice ensure that those responsible are held accountable and that those who suffered will be recognized.

Washington, DC, United States, 2001
United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

13

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“Man’s capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man’s inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary.”

— Reinhold Niebuhr, Protestant theologian
(The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness, 1944)



Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971) was the leading American Protestant theologian of his times. In 1933 he was one of the first to condemn the Nazi persecution of the Jews, and he became active on refugee committees and an outspoken foe of National Socialism. His views about the dangers of National Socialism led him to become a strong advocate for U.S. involvement in the war against Nazi Germany. He became one of the first theologians to disavow Christian proselytization of Jews, and he was a strong supporter of the new state of Israel.

Reinhold Niebuhr, Union Theological Seminary, ca. 1930
The Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, New York

14

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