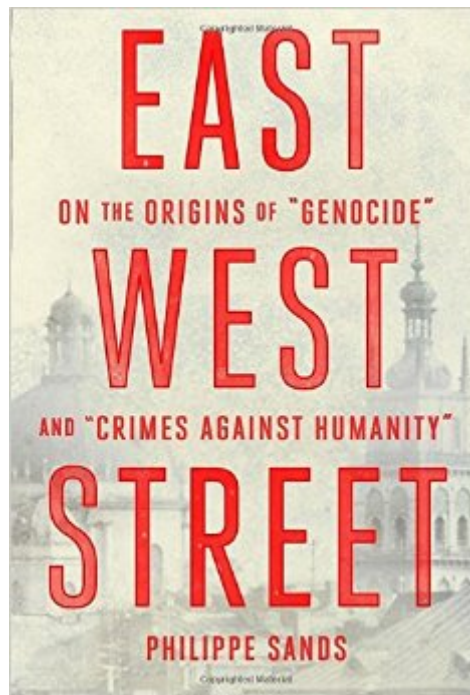


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East West Street: On The Origins Of "Genocide" And "Crimes Against Humanity"



Synopsis

“A monumental achievement” | a profoundly personal account of the origins of crimes against humanity and genocide, told with love, anger and precision. “John le Carré’s narrative, to my knowledge unprecedented. [It] should not be ignored by anyone in the United States or elsewhere.” Bernard-Henri Lévy on the front cover of The New York Times Book Review “Exceptional” | has the intrigue, verve and material density of a first-rate thriller. “The Guardian” “Astonishing” | An outstanding book | A story of heroes and loss. “The New Statesman” A profound and profoundly important book “a moving personal detective story, an uncovering of secret pasts, and a book that explores the creation and development of world-changing legal concepts that came about as a result of the unprecedented atrocities of Hitler’s Third Reich. East West Street looks at the personal and intellectual evolution of the two men who simultaneously originated the ideas of “genocide” and “crimes against humanity,” both of whom, not knowing the other, studied at the same university with the same professors, in a city little known today that was a major cultural center of Europe, “the little Paris of Ukraine,” a city variously called Lemberg, Lwów, Lvov, or Lviv. The book opens with the author being invited to give a lecture on genocide and crimes against humanity at Lviv University. Sands accepted the invitation with the intent of learning about the extraordinary city with its rich cultural and intellectual life, home to his maternal grandfather, a Galician Jew who had been born there a century before and who’d moved to Vienna at the outbreak of the First World War, married, had a child (the author’s mother), and who then had moved to Paris after the German annexation of Austria in 1938. It was a life that had been shrouded in secrecy, with many questions not to be asked and fewer answers offered if they were. As the author uncovered, clue by clue, the deliberately obscured story of his grandfather’s mysterious life, and of his mother’s journey as a child surviving Nazi occupation, Sands searched further into the history of the city of Lemberg and realized that his own field of humanitarian law had been forged by two men—Rafael Lemkin and Hersch Lauterpacht—each of whom had studied law at Lviv University in the city of his grandfather’s birth, each considered to be the father of the modern human rights movement, and each, at parallel times, forging diametrically opposite, revolutionary concepts of humanitarian law that had changed the world. In this extraordinary and resonant book, Sands looks at who these two very private men were, and at how and why, coming from similar Jewish backgrounds and the same city, studying at the same university, each developed the theory he did, showing how each man dedicated this period of his life to having his legal concept—“genocide” and “crimes against humanity”—as a centerpiece for the prosecution of Nazi war criminals. And the author writes of a

third man, Hans Frank, Hitler's personal lawyer, a Nazi from the earliest days who had destroyed so many lives, friend of Richard Strauss, collector of paintings by Leonardo da Vinci. Frank oversaw the ghetto in Lemberg in Poland in August 1942, in which the entire large Jewish population of the area had been confined on penalty of death. Frank, who was instrumental in the construction of concentration camps nearby and, weeks after becoming governor general of Nazi-occupied Poland, ordered the transfer of 133,000 men, women, and children to the death camps. Sands brilliantly writes of how all three men came together, in October 1945 in Nuremberg — Rafael Lemkin; Hersch Lauterpacht; and in the dock at the Palace of Justice, with the twenty other defendants of the Nazi high command, prisoner number 7, Hans Frank, who had overseen the extermination of more than a million Jews of Galicia and Lemberg, among them, the families of the author's grandfather as well as those of Lemkin and Lauterpacht. A book that changes the way we look at the world, at our understanding of history and how civilization has tried to cope with mass murder. Powerful; moving; tender; a revelation.

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Customer Reviews

British International rights lawyer Phillippe Sands's new book, "East West Street: On the Origins of 'Genocide' and 'Crimes Against Humanity'", is a disjointed look at what I can only say are several interesting subjects, put together in one book. Sands - the maker of an excellent documentary - "What Our Fathers Did: A Nazi Legacy" - combines a look at his own family's flight from Vienna to Paris, the lives of the two men who coined the terms, "Genocide" and "Crimes Against Humanity", the life of Hans Frank (the "Butcher of Poland"), as well as the Nuremberg Trials. This is a lot to

cover in one book, and the basis of it all is the town of Lemberg/Lviv/Lwow in today's Ukraine..Phillipe Sands' mother's family was originally from Zolkiew, a small town near the larger city of Lviv. His grandfather eventually left the area and moved to Vienna after WW1. It was there that he met his wife-to-be, and prospered as the owner of liquor stores. The family's story is the same as many others who were bullied and beaten after the Anschluss in 1938, but Sands' grandparents and mother were able to find safety of a sort in Paris and survived the war. Most of the other family members were killed in the camps or on the killing fields. But also from the Lviv area and growing up at the same time as Sands' grandfather were two men - Rafael Lemkin and Hersch Lauterpacht - both lawyers who were able to flee the Nazis. Lemkin eventually coined the word "genocide" and Lauterpacht, "Crimes Against Humanity". The use of both words - but in particular "genocide" - were used at the Nuremberg Trials. Another section of the book deals with Nazi lawyer, Hans Frank, who ruled over most of WW2 Poland.

In this book, author Phillippe Sands looks back to the city of Lviv, known as Lemberg (as well as many other names) and located variously in the Austro Hungarian Empire, Poland, occupied by the Soviets and, after 1944, part of Ukraine. Lviv, or Lemberg, was home to three men before the Second World War. One was the author's grandfather, Leon Buchholz. Another was Hersch Lauterpacht, a professor of International Law, born in Zolkiew, near Lemberg in 1877. The last was Rafael Lemkin, a professor and lawyer, born in 1900. Also, linked in to these men's histories is Hans Frank, who spent two days in Lemberg in August, 1942. The author's grandfather never spoke of his time during the war, but Sands carefully unravels those years in this wonderful book and asks the questions he wishes he had asked his grandfather while he was still alive. Why did Leon travel to Paris, from Vienna, without his wife and daughter? Who was the woman who travelled with his, then infant, mother through a war-torn Europe? What happened to his family, left behind in Lemberg? When invited by the law faculty of the University of Lviv to deliver a lecture on his work involving crimes against humanity, he takes the chance to visit his grandfather's birthplace and investigate the events of that time and of the Nuremberg trials. He intersperses the stories of his grandfather's life with those of Lauterpacht and Lemkin. During the Nuremberg trials, Lauterpacht was part of the British prosecution team, while Lemkin was part of the American prosecution team. The two men changed international law, with the idea of "War Crimes" and, in particular, the inclusion of "Crimes against Humanity" and the idea of individual criminal responsibility and the protection of the individual.

Philippe Sands, QC (born 17 October 1960) was a lawyer at Matrix Chambers and Professor of Laws and Director of the Centre on International Courts and Tribunals at University College London. A specialist in international law, he appeared as counsel and advocate before many international courts and tribunals. He has written this very informative book on the origins of two powerful concepts in international law, 'genocide and crimes against humanity' as an intertwining of his personal family history in the city of Lviv/Lwow/Lemberg around the time of the Nazi General Gouvernement ruled by Hans Frank. The denouement of his history occurs in Nuremberg/Nürnberg at the famous trials of the leading Nazis, where both 'crimes against humanity' and 'genocide' first entered the judicial record. His family history wove around the lives of the creators of these concepts, Hersch Lemkin and Rafael Lauterpacht, both internationally recognized experts in international law who have still left a powerful influence. Sands provides a brief and unsatisfying personal view of their concepts at the end. This review focuses on his presentation of these two key concepts in international law, which is as tortured and intertwined as his family history. Quotations from the book are in boldface. He begins his history with Lauterpacht's first involvement with the 'Constitutional Court, bringing Lauterpacht into direct contact with a new idea, in Europe if not America: individuals had inalienable constitutional rights, and they could go to a court to enforce those rights. This was a different model from that which protected minority rights, as in Poland'. His thesis 'to use general principles of national law to strengthen international obligations' was published in May 1927, to great scholarly acclaim.

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