WAR CRIMES
Law, Politics, & Armed Conflict in the Modern World

STEVEN P. REMY
This book is a concise and accessible introduction to the problem of war crimes in modern history, emphasizing the development of laws aimed at regulating the conduct of armed conflict developed from the 19th century to the present.

Bringing together multiple strands of recent research in history, political science, and law, the book starts with an overview of the attempts across the pre-modern world to regulate the initiation, conduct, and outcomes of war. It then presents a survey of the legal revolution of the 19th century when, amidst a global welter of colonial wars, the first body of formal codes and laws relating to distinguishing legal from criminal conduct in war was developed. Further chapters investigate failed but influential attempts to develop the laws of war in the post-World War I period and summarize the major landmarks in international law related to war crimes, such as the Hague conventions and the Nuremberg and Tokyo trials, as well as hundreds of lesser-known post-World War II trials in Europe and Asia. It also looks at the origins and debated significance of the Genocide Convention of 1948 and the 1949 Geneva Conventions, accounts for the acceleration worldwide of war crimes investigations and trials from the 1970s into the 2000s, and summarizes current thinking about international law and the rapidly changing nature of warfare worldwide as well as the memorialization of war crimes.

Including images, documents, a bibliography highlighting the most recent scholarship, a chronology, who’s who, and a glossary, this is the perfect introduction for those wishing to understand the complex field of war crimes history and its politics.

Steven P. Remy is Professor of History at Brooklyn College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. His most recent publications include *The Malmedy Massacre: The War Crimes Trial Controversy* (2017) and *Adolf Hitler: A Reference Guide to His Life and Works* (2022).
Introduction to the series

Each book in the Seminar Studies series provides a concise and reliable introduction to a wide range of complex historical events and debates, covering topics in British, European, US and world history from the medieval period to present day. Written by acknowledged experts and including supporting material such as extracts from historical documents, chronologies, glossaries, guides to key figures and further reading suggestions, Seminar Studies titles are essential reading for students of history.

Almost half a century after its launch, the series continues to introduce students to the problems involved in explaining the past, giving them the opportunity to grapple with historical documents and encouraging them to reach their own conclusions.

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War Crimes
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Steven P. Remy
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<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1856</td>
<td>Paris declaration respecting maritime law</td>
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<tr>
<td>1857</td>
<td>Indian Mutiny (also known as the Sepoy Mutiny and the First War of Independence)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1863</td>
<td>“Lieber Code” adopted by the Union Army in the US Civil War; International Committee of the Red Cross founded</td>
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<tr>
<td>1864</td>
<td>Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field (the first of four Geneva Conventions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1868</td>
<td>St. Petersburg Declaration Renouncing the Use in War of Certain Explosive Projectiles</td>
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<tr>
<td>1873</td>
<td>Institute for International Law founded in Ghent, Belgium</td>
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<td>1874</td>
<td>Brussels Declaration</td>
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<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Hague Convention adopted</td>
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<tr>
<td>1904–5</td>
<td>Russo-Japanese War</td>
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<tr>
<td>1904–8</td>
<td>Fighting between Herero rebels and German forces in German Southwest Africa (today Namibia) produces the 20th century’s first genocide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1906</td>
<td>Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armies in the Field in Geneva updates provisions of the 1864 Convention</td>
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<tr>
<td>1907</td>
<td>Second Hague Convention</td>
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<td>1914–8</td>
<td>World War I</td>
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<td>1915–23</td>
<td>Armenian genocide</td>
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<td>1917</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>The Russian Revolution begins</td>
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<td>1919</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Versailles Treaty concluded</td>
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<td>1921</td>
<td>War crimes trials in Leipzig, Germany</td>
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<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<td>------</td>
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<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Lausanne Treaty signed between Allies and Turkey; Permanent Court of International Justice founded</td>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>The Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare signed</td>
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<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>Pact of Locarno signed</td>
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<td>1929</td>
<td>Pact of Paris (Kellogg-Briand Pact) signed</td>
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<td>1929</td>
<td>Provisions of the 1907 Hague Convention regarding the treatment of POWs supplemented at the conference of the ICRC (and updated again in 1939)</td>
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<td>1931</td>
<td>Japan invades Manchuria</td>
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<td>1935</td>
<td>Italy invades Ethiopia</td>
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<td>1936–9</td>
<td>Spanish Civil War</td>
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<td>1937</td>
<td>Japan begins full-scale war against China</td>
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<td>1939</td>
<td>German and Soviet forces invade Poland</td>
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<td>1941</td>
<td>German forces invade the Soviet Union</td>
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<td>1941–5</td>
<td>The United States enters the war</td>
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<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>The Holocaust</td>
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<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>The USSR, the UK, the US, and six governments in exile create Inter-Allied Commission on the Punishment of War Crimes</td>
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<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>United National War Crimes Commission created</td>
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<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>VE Day</td>
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<td>1945</td>
<td>London Agreement released</td>
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<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>VJ Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>United Nations founded in San Francisco</td>
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<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Allied Control Council Law Number 10 promulgated</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>UN General Assembly affirmed provisions of the London Agreement as principles of international law</td>
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<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>Genocide Convention adopted by the UN</td>
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<td>1948</td>
<td>UN adopts Universal Declaration of Human Rights</td>
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Chronology

1949

August
Geneva Convention adopted by the UN

1945–6

20 November–31 August
IMT in Nuremberg

1945–9
Period of formal occupation of Germany

1946–8

April–November
International Military Tribunal for the Far East

1946–9

December–April
Nuremberg Military Tribunal

1949

December
Communist forces in China prevail in civil war with nationalists

1945–51
Military tribunals for Japanese war criminals and collaborators held in Asia and Australia

1950–3
Korean War

1954
Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property

1955–75
Vietnam War (known as the American War in Vietnam)

1961

April–December
Adolf Eichmann tried in Jerusalem

May
Amnesty International founded in London

1963–5

December–August
Trials of former Auschwitz camp personnel in Frankfurt, West Germany

1972
Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme proposes making ecocide an international crime; Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention concluded

1974
First truth commission established in Uganda

1975–9
Cambodia ruled by the Khmer Rouge

1977
Additional Protocols to the 1949 Geneva Convention adopted

1978
Human Rights Watch founded

1980
UN Certain Conventional Weapons Convention

1983
National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons established in Argentina

1991–2001
Wars in the former Yugoslavia (Slovenia, 1991; Croatia, 1991–5; Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1992–5; Kosovo, 1998–9; Macedonia, 2001)
1993

January  Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons;

May  International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) established. Operates until 2017

1994

Spring-summer: Rwandan genocide

November  International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) established

1995–2002  Commission of Truth and Reconciliation operates in South Africa

2001–12  Gacaca courts operate in Rwanda

1998

July  Rome Statute establishing the International Criminal Court (ICC)

2000  Women’s International War Crimes Tribunal held in Tokyo

2003

February  Genocide in Darfur begins; Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (or the Cambodia Tribunal or Khmer Rouge Tribunal) established; ICC begins operating

2008  Montreux Document signed

2011

March  Syrian civil war begins

May  Final conviction of John Demjanjuk in Germany; Commission for International Justice and Accountability (CIJA) founded

2012

April  Charles Taylor convicted by UN Special Court for Sierra Leone

2014  Bellingcat founded

2015–6  Hissène Habré tried in Senegal

2017  African Union resolution urging member states to withdraw from the ICC

2018

July  ICC jurisdiction over crime of aggression activated

2021

May  German government pledges reparations payments to Namibia

2022

February  Russian forces invade Ukraine
Who’s who

Akayesu, Jean-Paul (b. 1953): A former mayor of the Taba commune, Akayesu was accused by the ICTR of doing nothing to protect women being raped by members of Hutu militias (known as “interahamwe”) around his office and of ordering fatal attacks on women. Not only was Akayesu, who received a life sentence, the first person to be convicted and sentenced under the terms of the Genocide Convention, but his case also established sexual violence as a crime against humanity and instrument of genocide.

Alexander II (1818–81): The Russian Tsar who convened an international conference in 1868 in St. Petersburg to seek international agreement on limiting the use of a highly destructive type of bullet. The resulting declaration – the St. Petersburg Declaration Renouncing the Use in War of Certain Explosive Projectiles – was signed by representatives of 14 European states and the Ottoman Empire, who pledged that their respective armies would not use explosive bullets of a certain size. The declaration was the first international agreement to ban the use of a particular weapon for humanitarian reasons. At the same time, it articulated the principle that there were limits to what actions can be taken by the belligerents in a war and that it was “contrary to the laws of humanity” to deploy weapons that cause excessive and unnecessary suffering.

Bauer, Fritz (1903–68): Bauer was a West German state prosecutor and German Jew who had survived the Holocaust. He led the prosecution of 22 former mid-ranking SS officers and capos who served in Auschwitz and had been living freely and openly in West Germany. In what became known as the Frankfurt Auschwitz Trials, the accused were charged not with committing war crimes or crimes against humanity but of violating German law. Eighteen were convicted, with six sentenced to life terms and the others receiving sentences ranging from five to 14 years. Though the trial received extensive coverage by the West German and foreign press, much public opinion in the country was indifferent and even hostile to the proceedings.
Bernays, Murray (1894–1970): A US War Department lawyer who during World War II proposed charging Nazi Party organizations with “conspiracy to commit murder, terrorism, and the destruction of peaceful populations in violations of the laws of War” (Smith, 1982: 51). An individual could thus be found guilty on the basis of membership in a criminal organization, with the extent of his or her knowledge of or participation in its crimes determining the severity of punishment. Bernays had in mind principally the SS, the organization he and many other Allied government officials held most responsible for the Nazi regime’s worst crimes. His idea was backed by Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson and became one of the main legal bases of the International Military Tribunals in Nuremberg and Tokyo.

Callwell, Charles (1859–1928): A British Army officer and veteran of British colonial wars in Afghanistan and South Africa, Callwell wrote one of the most influential books about fighting colonial wars: Small Wars: Their Principles and Practice (1899). He intended his book to serve as a guide for what he called disciplined soldiers facing – in his words – “savages and semi-civilized races,” who refused to engage with regular armed forces on the open field. For Callwell, small wars were fought for three reasons: to conquer territory, to put down rebellions, or to retaliate for atrocities committed against imperial forces or settlers. He knew that they would often be long wars and that clear-cut victories would be elusive. He also understood that the rules of war that applied in so-called regular wars between civilized states did not apply in small wars.

Clay, Lucius D. (1898–1978): The US Army officer who first served as the Deputy Military Governor of the American occupation zone in Germany from 1945 to 1947 and then commander-in-chief of US forces in Europe and military governor of the US zone, Clay was responsible for overseeing the first crucial stage of recovery and denazification. He successfully navigated two major diplomatic and military crises over the status of Berlin, which was occupied by the four wartime allied states but lay deep inside the Soviet occupation zone. He also reviewed the verdicts and sentences of German war criminals convicted by US Army courts.

Demjanjuk, John (1920–2012): Demjanjuk was a Ukrainian-born Nazi collaborator who served as a guard at the Sobibor death camp during World War II. After the war, he immigrated to the United States and lived freely for decades, though American investigators had known of his past since the 1970s. Demjanjuk was first extradited to Israel, where he was tried and convicted in 1987 as a camp guard at Treblinka, but the verdict was overturned as there was not sufficient evidence proving his service in that camp. He was deported to Germany in 2009, where he was convicted in 2011 of being an accessory to the murder of 28,000 Jews and sentenced to five years’ imprisonment. He died in 2012. The trial was important
because it set a new standard in German courts: despite the fact that it could not be proven that he killed anyone, Demjanjuk had served at a camp that was designed to murder its prisoners, meaning he – and other former personnel – could be charged as accessories to murder.

**Dunant, Henry J.** (1828–1910): A Swiss businessman who wrote a bestselling book about the suffering of wounded soldiers that he witnessed during a short war fought between Austria and Piedmont in 1859. Dunant’s book proposed the creation of a neutral, international organization of volunteer medical professionals dedicated to the care of wounded soldiers in wartime with the idea that belligerents would not interfere with the organization’s work in the field. In 1863, Dunant and members of Geneva’s elite formed the International Committee for Relief to the Wounded. The Swiss government then offered to host an international conference to promote the new organization’s mission. Representatives of 16 states met in Geneva in August 1864 and signed the **Geneva Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded in Armies in the Field**, which aimed to ensure the humane treatment of wounded and sick soldiers and protection for civilians providing treatment. It also established a red cross as the identifying symbol of civilians covered by the convention’s terms. In 1875, the International Committee for Relief to the Wounded became the **International Committee of the Red Cross** (ICRC). In 1901, Dunant was the co-recipient of the first Nobel Prize for Peace.

**Adolf, Eichmann** (1906–61): A former SS Lieutenant Colonel, Eichmann was one of the principal architects of the Holocaust. After the war, he escaped from Europe and settled in Argentina, where he lived under a false identity and continued to propagate Nazi anti-Semitism. In 1960, he was captured by the Israeli foreign secret service Mossad and transferred to Israel. Though he never killed anyone personally, Eichmann had combined bureaucratic efficiency with intense ideological commitment to deadly effect. In a widely publicized trial held in Jerusalem, he was convicted of crimes against the Jewish people, sentenced to death, and executed. The publicity generated by the trial raised awareness of the Holocaust and reminded Germans that thousands of perpetrators had gone unpunished. Eichmann’s trial was one of the very few involving charges of crimes against humanity held during the Cold War.

**Habré, Hissène** (1942–2021): The dictator of Chad from 1982 to 1990, Habré was ousted in a **coup d’état** and took refuge in Senegal. A truth commission convened in 1991 and 1992 reported that around 40,000 people had been killed and thousands more tortured by the regime, and revelations by the NGO **Human Rights Watch** revealed a more extensive record of abuses. In 2015, a new Senegalese government, backed by the **African Union**, took the unprecedented step of prosecuting in one of its
own courts the former head of another state. In May 2016, the court convicted him of crimes against humanity, torture, and sex crimes, and he was sentenced to life in prison. Around the same time, a court in Chad tried and convicted former member of Habré’s security services. Human rights activists and advocates of expanding international criminal law hailed the trial in Senegal as a landmark moment for war-related atrocities cases.

Jackson, Robert L. (1892–1954): A US Supreme Court Justice, President Harry Truman selected Jackson to serve as the US Chief of Counsel at the IMT in Nuremberg.

Kambanda, Jean (b. 1955): A former prime minister of Rwanda, Kambanda was the first head of state to be convicted (by the ICTR) on the charge of perpetrating genocide.

Lemkin, Raphael (1900–59): A Polish-born lawyer, Lemkin first proposed and defined the concept of genocide in his 1944 book, Axis Rule in Occupied Europe. While unable to get it included by name as a charge in the indictments of the Nuremberg or Tokyo IMTs, its essence was incorporated into count 3 (war crimes) of the Nuremberg IMT. Lemkin then worked relentlessly to get the UN to adopt a resolution on genocide, which it did in 1948.

Lieber, Francis (1800–72): A German immigrant and legal scholar who wrote codification of the rules of war for use by armies in the field. Issued by the US War Department during the Civil War, it was and remains to be known as the “Lieber Code.” President Lincoln ordered the code to be included in the Union Army’s General Orders, effective in 1863. The militaries of numerous other nations adopted similar codes, and their articles influenced the language of the Geneva and Hague Conventions.

MacArthur, Douglas (1880–1964): The US General who served as commander of the Southwest Pacific Theater in World War II and then as Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers in Asia. As the effective ruler of occupied Japan, MacArthur attempted to influence the course of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, most successfully in his steadfast resistance to indicting Emperor Hirohito.

Martens, Fyodor (1845–1909): A Russian diplomat, jurist, and delegate to the 1899 conference that produced the first Hague Convention. Martens authored a clause affirming that military commanders could not simply do as they wished should they encounter a situation not covered explicitly by the convention’s terms.

McCloy, John J. (1895–1989): An American lawyer and diplomat who served as the High Commissioner for West Germany from 1949 to 1952. McCloy oversaw the establishment of a stable liberal democratic political system and the early stages of the country’s economic recovery. He also
dealt extensively with the fate of convicted war criminals, whose continued imprisonment as the Cold War heated up was becoming a major diplomatic problem. McCloy’s solution was to create a system for parole and amnesty. By 1958, all German war criminals convicted by the NMT and US Army courts (but not by the IMT) and imprisoned in West Germany had been released.

Milošević, Slobodan (1941–2006): President of Serbia from 1989 to 1997 and President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 1997 to 2000, Milošević was determined to create a “greater Serbia,” mainly at the expense of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which contained large populations of ethnic Croats and Bosnian Muslims. Milošević supported Serb separatists in Bosnia and their murderous ethnic cleansing operations. He also engaged in a war with separatists in Kosovo. Sanctions and NATO military operations forced him to settle both conflicts. In 1999, he was indicted by the ICTY for crimes committed during the fighting in Kosovo. Following his defeat in presidential elections in 2000, he was arrested by Yugoslav government officials and handed over to ICTY custody to face charges of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. His trial began in 2002, but he died in 2006.

Mukwege, Denis (b. 1955): A Congolese gynecologist and human rights activist, Mukwege pioneered a combined form of physical and psychological treatments for victims of sexual assault during Congo’s wars in the 1990s and early 2000s. In 1998, he shared the Nobel Prize for Peace with Nadia Murad for their work in calling attention to use of rape and sexual crimes as weapons of war.

Murad, Nadia (b. 1993): A Yazidi human rights activist who was kidnapped by ISIL and held as a sex slave. She escaped and sought asylum in Germany and in 2016 was named the first Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). She also published a memoir, The Last Girl (2017), and shared the 2018 Nobel Prize for Peace with Denis Mukwege.

Moynier, Gustave (1826–1910): A Swiss jurist and co-founder of the International Committee for Relief to the Wounded (the forerunner of the International Committee of the Red Cross) and the Institute of International Law.

Nicholas II (1868–1918): Russian Tsar who convened the 1899 meeting in The Hague to deal with an accelerating arms race and defuse rising tensions among the European great powers. The delegates, representing 28 nations, considered disarmament, revisited the 1864 Geneva Convention, and otherwise discussed ways to resolve international disputes peacefully. In the end, delegates from 23 states ratified what was the first codification in the form of an international treaty of the laws of war on
land and sea. The convention defined belligerents, dealt extensively with the status of prisoners of war and sick and wounded soldiers, and set limits on the “means of injuring the enemy,” the status of spies, truces, capitulations, and armistices, and occupations.

Nyiramasuhuko, Pauline (b. 1946): A former minister in the Hutu Power government in Rwanda, Nyiramasuhuko was accused by the ICTR of encouraging her son and the group of genocidaires he commanded to rape Tutsi women in the town of Butare. In 2011 she was convicted on seven charges and sentenced to life in prison, later reduced to 47 years. She was the first woman to be convicted by an international court for sexual violence committed in connection with genocide.

Plavšić, Biljana (b. 1930): One of only two women since the post-World War II trials to have been prosecuted for war crimes by international courts. Plavšić was a former member of the Supreme Command of the Armed Forces of Republika Srpska. She was not a top-level decision maker, but was an enthusiastic supporter of ethnic cleansing. The ICTY indicted her on nine counts, including genocide, but most of the charges were dropped. This was in part because of her subordinate position vis-à-vis the all-male political and military leadership and in part because Plavšić was a cooperative defendant who was able to manipulate assumptions about the supposed impossibility of middle-aged white European women perpetrating war crimes. She pleaded guilty to one count (persecution on political, racial, and religious grounds), was sentenced to 11 years, and released in October 2009. While serving her sentence, however, she published a memoir in which she presents herself as an unapologetic and unrepentant Serb nationalist, even claiming that Bosnian Muslim women were not raped but willingly engaged in a form of prostitution.

Scott, Winfield (1786–1866): The commander of US forces in the war with Mexico (1846–8), Scott (who was also a lawyer) created the first modern military commissions. What he called “military commissions” and “councils of war” tried around 400 US soldiers and a small number of Mexican civilians for a variety of offenses that would have been tried by civilian courts had the alleged crimes been committed within the United States.

Stimson, Henry L. (1867–1950): An American lawyer, statesman, and two-time Secretary of War (the second time from 1940 to 1945), Stimson was one of the most important American proponents of creating an international tribunal to try high-level Nazi officials.

Taylor, Charles (b. 1948): The civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone that began in the late 1980s resulted in the creation in 2002 by the UN of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The court, based in Freetown, convicted eight members of three armed factions involved in that country’s civil war
for war crimes and violations of international humanitarian law. Taylor was the highest-visibility defendant. A former president of Liberia, he supported a rebel faction in Sierra Leone. Taylor was charged with 11 counts related to war crimes and crimes against humanity, convicted on all counts in 2012, and sentenced to 50 years in prison. He became the first head of state to be convicted by an international tribunal.

**Taylor, Telford (1908–98):** An American military officer who served as Counsel for the Prosecution in the IMT in Nuremberg and then as Chief Prosecutor for the NMT. His 1992 book, *The Anatomy of the Nuremberg Trials: A Personal Memoir*, remains one of the most influential accounts ever written about the IMT and NMT.

**Trainin, Aron (1883–1957):** A Soviet jurist, Trainin made a crucial contribution to the IMT when he proposed including a charge of “crimes against peace” (or “aggressive war”) in the indictment. Trainin recognized the charge as a way to indict the leaders of countries, men who might otherwise avoid prosecution for war crimes and other violations of international law. He also hoped that Germany’s leading industrialists would be included in the charge. His proposal was taken up with enthusiasm by his American counterparts, who very much wanted to put the highest-ranking Nazi party officials in the dock.

**Yamashita, Tomoyuki (1885–1946):** In late 1944, Japanese General Tomoyuki Yamashita was ordered to defend the Philippines. Though he had ordered nearly all troops to evacuate Manila, thousands remained in the city, where they went on a murderous rampage against American POWs and Filipino civilians. Around 100,000 civilians and 1,000 US soldiers were killed, as were nearly all of the Japanese soldiers, while Manila was devastated. Fighting continued on Luzon for months, with appalling levels of casualties suffered by all sides, combatant and civilian. An outraged General Douglas MacArthur convinced President Harry Truman that Yamashita should be tried by a military commission. The single charge leveled against him was that he had failed to control the actions of the men under his command. What made the case distinctive was that it was the first time an officer had been charged with being accountable, indirectly, for war crimes committed by his troops. Moreover, the proceedings were rushed and the court ignored evidence that Yamashita had little to no effective control over the actions of his troops in Manila. He was convicted in December 1945 and sentenced to death. His lawyers appealed the verdict to the US Supreme Court, but the justices upheld Yamashita’s conviction with reference to provisions of the Geneva and Hague Conventions. The unfairness of Yamashita’s trial notwithstanding, a precedent had been established. **Command responsibility** has since become an important part of IHL, though since 1945 it has been applied selectively.
von Trotha, Lothar (1848–1920): Between 1884 and 1890, Imperial Germany took control of what it called German Southwest Africa (today Namibia). Expanding settlements provoked conflict with the Indigenous and pastoral Herero people over scarce resources in the largely desert environment. Fighting erupted in January 1904, and a new local military commander, Lieutenant General Lothar von Trotha, who had experience with suppressing revolts in other imperial settings, sought a single decisive battle with Herero forces in which he expressly ordered their annihilation. News of his murderous campaign provoked a rare instance of strong political opposition in Germany to the conduct of colonial forces, and the emperor rescinded von Trotha’s extermination order. German forces turned to erecting concentration camps – a practice copied from the British experience in South Africa – in larger towns, in part to suppress the revolt and in part to create a pool of slave labor. Historians consider the campaigns to have constituted the 20th century’s first genocide and estimate that around 80,000 Herero and Nama perished between 1904 and 1908, amounting to 75 percent of the Herero population and perhaps half of the Nama.

Wirz, Henry (1823–65): A Swiss-born officer of the Confederate army in the US Civil War, Wirz served as the warden of a prisoner of war camp in Andersonville, Georgia, where around 13,000 inmates died as a result of inhumane conditions. Tried and convicted in August 1865 on conspiracy charges and for violating the laws and customs of war, he was hanged. Wirz was the only Confederate officer to be executed following conviction by a military commission.
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