



Recent Relevance of Nuremberg Boards: Difficulties and Contests

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Abstract

Design to the death of Benjamin Berell Ferencz¹, the last prosecutor in the Nuremberg Tribunals, held in the aftermath of World War II, were groundbreaking in establishing the principles of international criminal law and setting a precedent for holding individuals accountable for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. This research paper explores the historical significance of the Nuremberg Tribunals and examines their relevance in today's international legal perspective. It delves into the impact of the tribunals on the development of international criminal law, the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and the ongoing pursuit of justice for grave international crimes. At the outset, the present paper analyses the challenges and criticisms faced by the Nuremberg Tribunals and reflects on their legacy in shaping the contemporary international legal framework.

Keywords

Organic farming, IOFAM, Farming, Hacters, Value

1. Introduction

The Nuremberg Tribunals, also known as the Nuremberg Trials, were a series of military tribunals held in Nuremberg, Germany, between 1945 and 1949. The trials were conducted by the Allied forces after World War II and aimed to prosecute and bring to justice the major war criminals of Nazi Germany. The idea for the Nuremberg Trials originated during the war itself, as Allied leaders recognized the need to hold individuals accountable for the unprecedented atrocities committed by the Nazis. The trials were seen as an opportunity to establish legal precedents and ensure that those responsible for war crimes and crimes against humanity faced justice. The tribunals were established through agreements between the Allied powers, specifically the United States, the Soviet Union, the United Kingdom, and France. The International Military Tribunal (IMT), created by these countries, was responsible for prosecuting the most significant Nazi leaders, often referred to as the "major war criminals." The IMT held its first trial from November 1945 to October 1946.

The defendants faced charges of crimes against peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. The Nuremberg Trials introduced several important legal concepts. The principle of "crimes against humanity" was officially recognized, defining such crimes as extermination, enslavement, deportation, and other inhumane acts committed against any civilian population. The trials also established the idea of individual criminal responsibility, emphasizing that individuals could be held accountable for their actions, even if they were acting on behalf of a government. In addition to the IMT, there were subsequent Nuremberg Trials known as the Nuremberg Military Tribunals. These trials were conducted by the United States in collaboration with the UK, France, and the Soviet Union. The subsequent trials focused on prosecuting lower-ranking Nazi officials, doctors, jurists, and industrialists who were involved in war crimes and crimes against humanity. The Nuremberg Tribunals faced various challenges and criticisms. Some argued that the trials were "victor's justice" since they were conducted by the victorious Allied powers, and similar war crimes committed by individuals from the Allied countries went unpunished. There were also debates over the legality of retroactively applying the principles of international law to actions that were not explicitly illegal at the time they were committed. Nonetheless, the Nuremberg Trials were significant in establishing the foundation of modern international criminal law and holding individuals accountable for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The objective of this research paper is to explore the contemporary relevance of the Nuremberg Tribunals, which were held in the aftermath of World War II to prosecute individuals responsible for crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide. The paper aims to examine the enduring impact and lessons of the Nuremberg Trials in the context of present-day international criminal justice systems. It seeks to identify the

issues and challenges faced by modern tribunals in their pursuit of justice, drawing on the historical legacy of Nuremberg.

2. Significance of the Nuremberg Tribunals

The Nuremberg Tribunals hold immense historical significance for several reasons. They marked a turning point in international law and the pursuit of justice, setting a precedent for holding individuals accountable for crimes against humanity, war crimes, and genocide.²The Nuremberg Tribunals were the first international criminal trials that focused on prosecuting individuals rather than entire nations. This shift in perspective emphasized the principle of individual accountability for actions committed during times of war or conflict. The trials introduced the idea that political or military positions could not shield individuals from prosecution for committing heinous crimes. The Nuremberg Tribunals played a crucial role in the development of international criminal law.

The tribunals established a legal framework that influenced subsequent international criminal justice systems and shaped the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in the modern era. The Nuremberg Trials served as a platform to document and preserve evidence of the atrocities committed during World War II, particularly by the Nazi regime. Testimonies, documents, and other forms of evidence presented during the trials provided a comprehensive record of the Holocaust, war crimes, and the extent of Nazi brutality. This historical documentation was crucial in ensuring the truth about these events and preventing denial or distortion in subsequent years. The Nuremberg Tribunals offered symbolic justice and closure to the victims of Nazi crimes. Although many perpetrators could not be brought to trial, the tribunals delivered a message that the international community was committed to seeking justice for the victims of atrocities. The trials helped survivors and affected communities to find a sense of closure and recognition for the suffering they endured. The Nuremberg Trials aimed to deter and prevent future crimes against humanity and war crimes. By establishing accountability and demonstrating that even high-ranking officials could be held responsible for their actions, the tribunals sent a powerful message that such acts would not go unpunished. The trials played a significant role in shaping international humanitarian law and contributing to the prevention of similar atrocities in subsequent conflicts. The Nuremberg Tribunals served as a model for subsequent trials and transitional justice processes in post-conflict societies. The trials' approach of combining legal accountability with historical documentation and the pursuit of truth has influenced subsequent trials, truth commissions, and efforts to reconcile communities after conflicts or repressive regimes.

Overall, the historical significance of the Nuremberg Tribunals lies in their establishment of individual accountability, contribution to the development of international criminal law, documentation of atrocities, symbolic justice for victims, deterrence of future crimes, and their influence on transitional justice processes. The trials remain an important milestone in the pursuit of justice and a reminder of the international community's commitment to upholding human rights and preventing mass atrocities. The establishment and jurisdiction of the Nuremberg Tribunals were significant aspects of these historic trials. The decision to establish the International Military Tribunal was made by the victorious Allied powers United States, Soviet Union, United Kingdom, and France. They agreed to hold the trials to bring the major Nazi war criminals to justice and to demonstrate the commitment to justice and accountability for the atrocities committed during the war.

The prosecution of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in the Nuremberg Tribunals involved several key elements and procedures. The prosecution at the Nuremberg Tribunals began with the preparation of indictments and the formulation of charges against the accused individuals⁶. The indictments detailed the specific crimes committed by each defendant, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, and, in some cases, genocide. The charges were based on evidence gathered during investigations and aimed to establish the individual criminal responsibility of each accused person. The prosecution presented extensive evidence to support the charges against the defendants. This included testimonies from witnesses, documentary evidence, and other exhibits. The evidence presented aimed to establish the commission of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide by the accused. The prosecution utilized a variety of sources, such as official records, captured documents, and eyewitness testimonies, to build its case. The prosecution called witnesses to testify during the trials. These witnesses included survivors of Nazi atrocities, experts, military personnel, and others with knowledge relevant to the crimes committed.

The prosecution delivered closing statements summarizing the evidence, testimonies, and legal arguments presented throughout the trial. These statements aimed to reinforce the prosecution's case and persuade the tribunal of the guilt of the defendants. The closing statements provided a final opportunity for the prosecution to emphasize the gravity of the crimes committed and the need for accountability. After considering the evidence, testimonies, and legal arguments presented by both the prosecution and the defence, the tribunal deliberated and reached verdicts for each defendant. The tribunal pronounced the verdicts, including findings of guilt or innocence on specific charges. Subsequently, the tribunal determined the appropriate sentences for the convicted defendants, which ranged from imprisonment to death by hanging. The prosecution of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide in the Nuremberg Tribunals followed a comprehensive legal process that aimed to establish the guilt of the accused individuals based on evidence and witness testimonies.

3. Development of the principles of individual criminal responsibility

The Nuremberg Tribunals played a significant role in the development of the principles of individual criminal responsibility. The Nuremberg Tribunals marked a departure from traditional notions of state responsibility and introduced the concept of individual criminal responsibility. The trials emphasized that individuals, regardless of their official positions or orders received, could be held personally accountable for their actions. This shift recognized that individuals are responsible for their own criminal conduct, even in times of war or conflict. One of the significant aspects of the Nuremberg Tribunals was the prosecution of high-ranking Nazi officials and military leaders. The trials demonstrated that individuals in positions of power and authority could be held accountable for crimes committed under their command or as part of their official duties⁸. This approach challenged the idea that political or military positions granted immunity from prosecution for international crimes.

The tribunals recognized that certain acts, such as mass murder, extermination, persecution, and enslavement, could constitute crimes against humanity when committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against a civilian population. The trials played a crucial role in defining and codifying these crimes, contributing to the development of international criminal law. The Nuremberg Tribunals also contributed to the development and clarification of the concept of war crimes. The trials identified and prosecuted various war crimes, including murder, torture, unlawful detention, and targeting of civilian populations. The principles established during the trials, such as the prohibition of targeting non-combatants and the obligation to follow the rules of war, formed the basis for subsequent definitions of war crimes in international law. The Nuremberg Tribunals faced the challenge of applying international law retroactively, as many of the crimes prosecuted were not recognized as international crimes at the time they were committed. The tribunals justified the retroactive application of international law based on the understanding that certain acts, such as crimes against humanity, were already prohibited under customary international law, regardless of their codification in treaties or statutes. The principles of individual criminal responsibility established in the Nuremberg Tribunals had a profound influence on subsequent developments in international criminal justice⁹. The trials laid the foundation for the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and influenced the creation of ad hoc international tribunals, such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). These institutions continue to apply and develop the principles of individual criminal responsibility established in Nuremberg. The Nuremberg Tribunals significantly contributed to the development of the principles of individual criminal responsibility. The trials demonstrated that individuals could be held accountable for grave violations of international law, regardless of their official positions or the context in which the crimes were committed.

4. Influence on the Development of International Criminal Law

The Nuremberg Tribunals made significant contributions to the evolution of international humanitarian law. The Nuremberg Tribunals played a pivotal role in recognizing and defining war crimes and crimes against humanity¹⁰. The trials established that certain acts, such as the targeting of civilians, torture, and genocide, constituted grave violations of international law. This recognition laid the foundation for the subsequent codification and expansion of these crimes in international legal instruments. The tribunals clarified the principle of individual criminal responsibility for violations of international humanitarian law.

This recognition of individual responsibility reinforced the idea that perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity could not shield themselves behind state or organizational authority. The Nuremberg Tribunals contributed to the development of the principle of command responsibility. The trials recognized that military and civilian leaders could be held accountable for crimes committed by subordinates under their command, even if they did not directly participate in the criminal acts. This principle emphasized the duty of superiors to prevent and punish crimes committed by their subordinates. The Nuremberg Tribunals had a profound impact on the subsequent development of the Geneva Conventions¹³. The trials' findings and legal principles informed the negotiations and drafting of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, which form the cornerstone of international humanitarian law. The tribunals' recognition of specific crimes and individual criminal responsibility influenced the content and scope of these international treaties. The Nuremberg Tribunals established a precedent for the establishment of international criminal tribunals to prosecute serious violations of international humanitarian law¹⁴. The trials served as a model for subsequent tribunals, such as the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR). These ad hoc tribunals continued the work initiated at Nuremberg, contributing to the further development of international humanitarian law. The Nuremberg Tribunals also influenced the establishment and functioning of the International Criminal Court (ICC). The ICC, established in 2002, is the first permanent international tribunal with jurisdiction over war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. The legal principles and precedents set by the Nuremberg Tribunals served as a basis for the creation of the ICC and continue to shape its interpretation and application of international humanitarian law.

The Nuremberg Tribunals made significant contributions to the evolution of international humanitarian law, from recognizing and defining war crimes and crimes against humanity to establishing principles of individual criminal responsibility. The trials' impact reverberates in subsequent legal instruments, international tribunals, and the ongoing pursuit of justice for grave violations of international law. The Nuremberg Trials contributed to the development of

substantive law by defining and codifying crimes against humanity and war crimes. The Charter of the International Military Tribunal (IMT) at Nuremberg identified crimes such as murder, extermination, enslavement, and deportation as crimes against humanity. These definitions formed the basis for subsequent international legal instruments, including the Genocide Convention of 1948 and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 1998. The concept of genocide was formally defined in the Genocide Convention, which was strongly influenced by the Nuremberg principles.

The Nuremberg Trials established the principle of individual criminal responsibility, emphasizing that individuals could be held accountable for their actions, even if they were acting on behalf of a state. This marked a departure from the traditional notion of state sovereignty and immunity and established the foundation for prosecuting individuals for international crimes, at the same time the trial also gave rise to a clear need for distinction between state mandated actions and international crimes committed by individuals, this was initially dealt in cases like *ICTY, The Prosecutor v. Duško Tadić* but has been cordially addressed in the ILC Draft Articles on State Responsibility for Internationally wrongful acts which clearly address and clarify when does an internationally criminal act become the responsibility of the state.¹⁸ The trials also introduced the concept of command responsibility, holding military and civilian leaders accountable for crimes committed by subordinates under their authority. The principle of command responsibility recognizes that superiors can be held liable for failing to prevent or punish crimes committed by their subordinates, even if they did not directly participate in the criminal acts. This principle has become a fundamental component of modern international criminal law.¹⁹ The Nuremberg Trials expanded the scope of jurisdiction for international crimes. The IMT exercised universal jurisdiction, asserting that individuals could be prosecuted regardless of their nationality or the location of the crimes. This broadened understanding of jurisdiction influenced subsequent international criminal tribunals and the establishment of the ICC, which also operates under the principle of complementarity, allowing national courts to exercise jurisdiction if they are willing and able to prosecute crimes under international law. The Nuremberg Trials set a precedent for prosecuting the crime of aggression, although it was not included in the IMT's jurisdiction. The trials demonstrated the need to hold individuals accountable for planning and waging aggressive wars, leading to ongoing discussions on the definition and prosecution of aggression. Eventually, the ICC adopted a definition of aggression in 2010, allowing for the prosecution of this crime under international law. The Nuremberg Trials generated a set of guiding principles known as the Nuremberg Principles. These principles established fundamental concepts of international criminal law, such as the principle of legality, which states that individuals cannot be held accountable for acts that were not prohibited by law at the time of their commission. The Nuremberg Principles have been influential in shaping subsequent legal frameworks and have been incorporated into various national legal systems.²² The Nuremberg Trials paved the way for the establishment of international criminal tribunals.

5. Legacy of the Nuremberg Principles and its impact on subsequent trials

The Nuremberg Principles, a set of guidelines established during the Nuremberg Trials following World War II, have had a profound and lasting impact on subsequent trials and the development of international criminal law.²⁶ These principles sought to establish a legal framework for prosecuting individuals responsible for war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. Critically examining the legacy of the Nuremberg Principles reveals both their strengths and limitations in shaping the course of justice. The Nuremberg Principles played a pivotal role in establishing the notion of individual criminal responsibility for international crimes.²⁸ They emphasized that individuals could be held accountable for their actions, regardless of their official capacity or position within a state. This marked a departure from the traditional notion of sovereign immunity, paving the way for future trials that would prosecute high-ranking officials and political leaders for their roles in mass atrocities. The Nuremberg Principles laid the foundation for the development of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and other international tribunals.²⁹ The principles highlighted the importance of establishing a permanent international court to prosecute those responsible for grave crimes. The ICC, established in 2002, owes much of its existence to the legacy of the Nuremberg Principles, as it provides a forum for the prosecution of individuals accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide.

One major criticism is the selective enforcement and application of these principles.³¹ While the Nuremberg Trials focused primarily on Nazi war criminals, subsequent trials have been criticized for disproportionately targeting individuals from certain regions or conflicts, raising concerns about political motivations and uneven justice.³² This has led to calls for greater consistency and fairness in the application of the Nuremberg Principles. Furthermore, the Nuremberg Principles have been criticized for their limited scope. The principles primarily address individual criminal responsibility and do not adequately address systemic issues or collective responsibility for international crimes.³³ This has limited the ability of subsequent trials to fully address the structural causes of mass atrocities or provide comprehensive justice to victims. The Nuremberg Principles have faced challenges in reconciling the pursuit of justice with political realities.³⁴ The principles underscore the importance of independent and impartial tribunals, but the realities of power politics often complicate the implementation of these ideals. The ability to secure cooperation from states, gather evidence, and enforce judgments remains a challenge in many international trials, often hindering the full realization of justice. In conclusion, the legacy of the Nuremberg Principles has been significant in shaping subsequent trials and

the development of international criminal law. They have laid the foundation for individual criminal responsibility and the establishment of international tribunals. However, their selective enforcement, limited scope, and challenges in reconciling justice with political realities underscore the need for continued refinement and improvement in the pursuit of international justice.

6. Conclusion

The historical and legal significance of the Nuremberg Trials resonates even today, particularly in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. This legal framework remains relevant in the current geopolitical scenario, serving as a basis for holding individuals responsible for war crimes and human rights abuses, such as those allegedly committed during the Russian-Ukrainian war. One of the significant objectives of the Nuremberg Trials was to deter future war crimes by establishing accountability and demonstrating that such actions would not go unpunished. The trials sent a strong message that individuals who commit heinous acts would face consequences for their actions. In the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, the principles and legacy of the Nuremberg Trials serve as a deterrent, emphasizing that those responsible for atrocities may be held accountable before international tribunals. The Nuremberg Trials contributed to the advancement of human rights by reaffirming the importance of protecting individuals' rights and dignity, even during times of conflict. The trials unequivocally condemned crimes against humanity, such as genocide and systematic persecution. In the current geopolitical scenario, this framework is highly relevant, particularly in light of allegations of human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law in the Russian-Ukrainian war. These institutions which have been instrumental in prosecuting individuals responsible for war crimes and human rights abuses worldwide.

Reiterating one of the significant legacies of the Nuremberg Trials is the recognition that states can be held responsible for acts of aggression committed by their leaders or agents. This principle remains relevant in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, raising questions about the accountability of the Russian government for its alleged support of separatist forces and military operations. Holding states accountable for their actions promotes stability, international law adherence, and respect for territorial integrity. The atrocities committed by the Nazis during World War II were pivotal in establishing this recognition. In the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war, where allegations of ethnic cleansing and mass killings have emerged, the Nuremberg Trials provide a legal framework to address such crimes and seek justice for the victim's. The Nuremberg Trials brought about a fundamental shift in the perception of justice by emphasizing its global nature. They underscored the importance of holding individuals accountable for their actions, regardless of their nationality or position of power. This pursuit of global justice remains highly relevant in the current geopolitical scenario, including the Russian-Ukrainian war, where the trials' legacy encourages international cooperation, collective responsibility, and a commitment to upholding humanitarian principles. The Nuremberg Trials highlighted the significance of ensuring accountability for war crimes and human rights abuses. The trials demonstrated that those responsible for such acts could not evade justice, and their actions would be scrutinized under international law. In the current geopolitical scenario, this legacy is crucial for preventing impunity and fostering a culture of accountability, particularly in conflicts like the Russian-Ukrainian war, where allegations of grave violations have emerged. The Nuremberg Trials significantly contributed to the development of international norms and standards concerning war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide. The trials cemented the understanding that certain acts are universally abhorrent and must be prohibited. The relevance of these norms in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war lies in the condemnation of actions that undermine peace, stability, and the fundamental principles of international law. The Nuremberg Trials had a profound impact on the behaviour and responsibility of states in times of conflict. The trials emphasized the duty of states to respect international humanitarian law and protect human rights.

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