

The Notion of *Soviet Genocide*: Raphael Lemkin and East European Emigre Organizations in North America

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Introduction

Raphael Lemkin, who originally introduced the concept of genocide, scored a personal victory when the UN General Assembly on December 9, 1948, adopted the Genocide Convention. The celebration proved premature, however, since the convention required twenty signatories before it could enter into force. Convincing the United States to ratify the treaty proved the most difficult. In his relentless efforts to sway the US Government, Lemkin secured the support of East European émigré organizations in North America. What bound them together was the notion of *Soviet genocide*, which both parties variously promoted.

East European émigré organizations operated under the umbrella of the National Committee for a Free Europe, conceived by the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in April of 1948. Funded by the CIA, over one hundred such entities worldwide were supposed to forge a sense of common purpose, help sustain underground movement in the Soviet-controlled countries, and provide leadership in the event of a war against the Communist bloc. The émigré activities peaked in the period between 1948 and 1954, correlating with ideological and financial support accorded to them by the US Government.¹

According to Lemkin, the US Senate ratification of the Genocide Convention had been urged by a plethora of religious, ethnic, civic, and labor organizations representing Catholics, Protestants, and Jews. He mentioned specifically Italians, Poles, Ukrainians, Latvians, Estonians, and Greeks.² In his attempt to make the United States ratify the convention, Lemkin “played more and more shamelessly to the anticommunist gallery,” to quote Mark Mazower.³ Indeed, Lemkin was rather disingenuous when engaging East European émigrés, or anyone else who was willing to listen to him for that matter. It did not get any more

intimate than one of his interlocutor addressing him, jokingly, in Lithuanian. When communicating with the Jewish Labor Committee, however, he chose to collectively describe the Americans of East European descent as “foreign language groups in America.”⁴ Depends who he was talking to, Lemkin adjusted his vocabulary correspondingly.

Soviet Mass Deportations in the Baltic States

Lemkin relationship with East European émigrés was that of give and take. He encouraged ethnic organizations taking the issue of “Soviet genocide” to the highest political level, the United Nations and the Senate, in order to sway US politicians in favor of the Genocide Convention. The émigrés, for their part, appreciated an extra opportunity to rally against the continuous Soviet domination under the guise of genocide. Political leaders of Baltic descent proved Lemkin’s most trusted allies, and that for the following two reasons. The campaign to indict the Soviet Union for genocide goes back to the joint appeal submitted to the UN General Assembly by the representatives of the former Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian governments in November of 1947. The significance of that act was magnified by the fact that the United States had not recognized the Soviet annexation of the Baltic States.

On May 12, 1949 Herbert Evatt, president of the UN General Assembly, received another joint appeal from the Baltic representatives. The document accused Soviet occupation authorities of committing “unspeakable horrors of genocide” in violation of the Genocide Convention and the UDHR. The petition focused on forced collectivization and accompanying deportations presently underway in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. As an established practice, Evatt forwarded the complaint to the UN Human Rights Commission.⁵ It should be mentioned here that, under UN rules, all the memorandums received from the émigré organizations had been filed as non-governmental communication. Action would be taken only if some national delegation decided to champion it as its own.

The British delegate to the United Nations on October 5, 1949 openly accused the Soviet Union of “genocidal terror” in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.⁶ Later that month, nine Catholic dignitaries published a letter in the *New York Times* charging Russia with committing genocide in Lithuania. They spoke, on behalf of 124 parishes, of a “gigantic plot to obliterate certain people,” which could affect any nation, and not just Lithuania.⁷

Émigré publications with the word *genocide* in the title were universally meant as political documents—composite of a declaration, appeal, and indictment. Among the

recipients were necessarily the US State Department and the United Nations. In effect, *genocide* became a compound word encompassing all possible acts of injustice, oppression, and murder. It denoted in equal measure policy of Russification, suppression of religion, labor migration, and mass deportations. All of the above was supposed to demonstrate that the Soviet Russia had continually practiced genocide on the Baltic peoples. Some authors speculated that eyewitnesses might one day help convict Russia's leaders of genocide in its physical, biological, and cultural forms. Remarkably, while the numbers of Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian victims had routinely been inflated those of Jewish victims understated. An article in *Collier's* from June 1951, for example, spoke of "150,000 Jews butchered by the Germans" in the occupied Baltic States.⁸ The actual death toll was about 57 percent higher.

A somewhat contradictory formula blending violations of human rights and genocide had entered the political vocabulary, as expressed in a letter to Secretary of State Dean Acheson. Lithuanian envoy to the United States Povilas Žadeikis, in October 1951, put it as follows: "Soviet genocidal methods which are being perpetrated against the human rights of the Lithuanian people." It was not just the absolute number of victims that ensured a greater focus on Lithuania than on the other two Baltic countries. Along with West Ukraine, Lithuania boasted the most efficient and long lasting anti-Soviet underground movement anywhere in East Europe. This is despite the fact that the population of Lithuania was about fifteen times smaller than that of Ukraine. Having captured the spotlight in 1947, the Lithuanians had also proved the most vocal of the East European émigré communities in their condemnation of "Soviet genocide." The Lithuanian émigrés demonstrated remarkable cohesiveness and excellent lobbying skills. No wonder then that the ethnic Lithuanian organizations in the United States quickly found a common language with Lemkin. Indeed, the two established a mutually beneficial partnership. Lemkin had received institutional and financial support from the Lithuanian émigrés, in return providing them with legal advice. As far as the issue of "Soviet genocide" was concerned, Lemkin probably had no better friends than the Lithuanians. As he noted in his unfinished autobiography: "I organize the Lithuanians in Chicago."⁹

On Sunday, June 17, 1951, Lemkin opened an exhibition on genocide in Lithuania, organized by the Cleveland branch of Lithuanian American Council (LAC). The day before, on personal invitation of Jonas Rimauskas, he also took part in the press conference. Writing to Frank J. Lausche, Governor of the State of Ohio, Lemkin described the "appalling material on extermination of the captive nations." As an example, he related a nebulous story of Soviet authorities "importing" ethnic Kalmyks and Russians to replace Lithuanian deportees.

Reportedly, those “imported persons” assumed not only the family name of the deportee but also the position of a husband and father of the distressed family. (Lemkin just “forgot” to mention that he was effectively the one who wrote the text for the exhibition.) This and similar anecdotes of suffering underlined his main point:

I think in the war of ideas against the Soviet Union we will be more successful in using the concept of genocide than the concept of individual human rights. As things stand now, only the Soviet Union is committing genocide, though some of the great democracies do not have their house completely in order regarding human rights or civil rights. In matter of genocide, the Soviet Union is in no position to bring countercharges.

Consequently, Lemkin asked the governor urging President Truman to “include genocide as a concept carrying the highest moral condemnation in our cold war against the Soviet Union.”¹⁰

The exhibition was chronologically divided into three main parts: the first Soviet occupation of 1940-41, the Nazi occupation of 1941-44, and the second Soviet occupation from 1944 onward. Under the subheading “Extermination of the Lithuanian Nation,” the first segment of the exhibition focused on arrests, extrajudicial investigations, and deportations carried out by Soviet authorities in Lithuania. The third segment, “Resistance in the Enslaved Country,” was self-explanatory, covering also the 1949 mass deportation. Fairly comprehensive, the part of the exhibition dealing with Stalinist terror featured documents and photos. The intermediate segment advanced two theses: the Nazis’ attempts to engage the Lithuanians in the war against Western Allies, and anti-German resistance in Lithuania. Interestingly, the exhibition featured two add-ons describing the efforts of Lithuanian émigrés on behalf of their country and the “Bolshevik-Communist terror in the Western World.”¹¹ One element that was conspicuously missing in the exhibition was the mass murder of about 196,000 Jews by the Nazis and their Lithuanian collaborators.¹² Lemkin—the man who produced one of the first comprehensive accounts of Nazi mass crimes, who lost forty-seven of his relatives during the war, and who effectively supervised the exhibition—apparently did not insist. The exhibition later traveled, among other places, to New York and Boston.¹³

The Lithuanians had emerged altogether as the most active émigré group going after Soviets on the issue of genocide. Beginning in 1950, the Soviet deportation of June 1941 had been officially commemorated as “Lithuanian Genocide Day.” In October 1951 the Lithuanian Legation in Washington, DC submitted a memorandum regarding Soviet deportations. In the name of Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Czechs, Hungarians, Poles, and

Romanians, the memorandum outlined the patterns of Soviet terror, which it described as “hitherto unknown in history.” The document used the term *crimes against humanities*, yet stated that the Communist deportations operated along the same lines as the Nazi extermination camps inasmuch as they had the same aim—the deliberate destruction of human lives. Žadeikis expressed the hope that the US government would endorse the conclusions in the memorandum to be presented at the UN General Assembly meeting in Paris the next month. An attached exposé called, “Lithuanian: Soviet Measures Destined to Destroy an Enslaved Nation, Physically and Morally,” charged the violations of the UN Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Genocide Convention by the Soviet Union. In support of this claim, it reproduced excerpts from the key Soviet documents pertinent to planning and executing the mass deportations in Lithuania. The most notorious document, which had acquired a central place in the discussion of Soviet terror in the Baltic States, was the “Instructions on the Procedure of Carrying Out the Deportation of the Anti-Soviet Elements From Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia,” signed by Deputy Head of the NKGB Ivan Serov sometime between February and June 1941.¹⁴

In 1952 the Lithuanian community in North and South America launched an unprecedented publicity campaign to indict the Soviet Union for genocide. The timing was not accidental: the émigrés attempted to make it an issue in the forthcoming US presidential elections. In January Žadeikis submitted a supplement to the memorandum that he had earlier sent to the State Department. Betraying the hand of Lemkin, the supplement placed the Soviet mass crimes more firmly within the legal definition of genocide. Those were not wanton killings but a “preconceived plan to destroy systematically the peoples of Czechoslovakia, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Rumania.” By eliminating the leadership, described as the “residue of national conscience or religious inspiration and convictions,” the Soviets hoped to paralyze the “entire body.” The Soviet claim that they had been fighting only against political opposition was false since the “numbers of persons affected by genocide” far exceeded the actual membership in political parties. In East Europe the Soviet authorities and their agents had perpetrated “one of the greatest robberies of children in the history of mankind.” The overall conclusion drawn in the supplement read as follows: “Genocide affects close to a hundred million peoples [sic] belonging to western civilization, which the Communist invaders are unable to assimilate.” The most instructive, however, was the discourse on Soviet mass deportations and force labor. The former had nothing to do with “security” and the latter carried no economic rationale—was stated in the supplement—but aimed to terminate life. The explication given was rather peculiar: “To use the words

deportations or *forced labor* independently of genocide could almost put the Soviet Union on a similar level to some nations of the Western World which have had to resort to transfer of populations in time of emergency.”¹⁵ The statement of “Soviet genocide” thus rested on the proposition that the West could not possibly do such a thing.

It was to expect that the level of communications received by the State Department varied greatly, from highly sophisticated to downright naïve. Like the printed émigré publications, individual writers offered divergent causal links, all under the heading of *genocide*. Alternatively, the Soviets were said to have specifically targeted the Lithuanians for obliteration, subjected the Lithuanian nation to a policy of wanton destruction as part of the global Communist expansion, or continued implementing the malicious plans laid down by the Russian Tsars. Reverend Albinas Spurgis of St. Joseph’s Church in Ohio and Antanas Elijošius of Toronto spoke generically about Lithuania “and all her people persecuted by Soviet genocides.” President of Knights of Lithuania Joseph B. Krašinskas obviously had a problem with logic when he argued that, “Because Soviet Russia is bent on wiping out the Lithuanian Nation, it is evident that, in committing the international crime of GENOCIDE, she is acting against the principles of the Genocide Convention.” As an example of premeditated “Soviet genocide,” John C. Jutkevičius of the Knights of Lithuania reiterated the cryptic story about “Mongols and other Asiatics,” allegedly shipped in to replace the exiled Lithuanians. Leonardas Dambriūnas of Brooklyn, New York reasoned that, “to insure the complete success of Moscow’s imperialistic plans, the extermination of the Lithuanian nation began.” The Lithuanians were the victims of Soviet Russia’s vicious ambition to conquer the world—wrote Birutė Kemėžaitė of Chicago to Eleanor Roosevelt—one of many peoples standing in the way to Communist expansion. A clear stand by the United Nations on “Soviet genocide” would bring about the downfall of international communism, she believed.¹⁶

The Lithuanian American Council in Cleveland brought all these themes together in an emotional address to the head of the US delegation to the United Nations. “Complete enslavement of the country, merciless extermination of its population, Russification and introducing of Communist gods—these are the ‘values’ brought to Lithuania by the Soviet Union.” The letter then elaborated: “Today they are slaves in labor camps, officially called kolkhozes; they are reduced to the status of half-starved beggars;... they are behind barbed wire fences, behind iron walls, where they cannot move, dare not complain, cannot even send letters abroad to reveal the truth about their misery...” The Connecticut branch of the same organization used a slightly different format to articulate, among other things, the connection between the Genocide Convention and the struggle against Communism. The resolution

adopted in the city of Ansonia on the occasion of the anniversary of the Declaration of Lithuanian Independence portrayed the Lithuanians as a “reliable outpost in the present defense line of the free nations against communist aggression.” The ratification of the convention would enable the US Government to enlighten the world on the “barbaric practices of the Soviets against enslaved peoples...” The resolution demanded that the liberation of Lithuania and other East European countries be part of the American foreign policy, and that the underground movement behind the Iron Curtain be given direct assistance.¹⁷

Neither then or later, Lemkin was able to provide any specifics beyond rhetorical statements delivered as bullet points: “genocide did not stop with Hitler but continued behind the Iron Curtain”; “there is a scientifically elaborated plan to wipe out the Lithuanian nation as well as the peoples of Latvia and Estonia”; “the destruction of the Lithuanian nation is a grave shock to world conscience and a great loss to world culture.”¹⁸ A pamphlet “Genocide in Lithuania,” which Lemkin produced on request of Pius Grigaitis of LAC, was plagued with the same problems.¹⁹ As time went on, Lemkin’s interpretation of the Soviet terror in the Baltic States became more grandiloquent. Circa 1953 he explained to an ABC journalist that the Soviet Union sought to eliminate “national consciousness” within the areas where it had advanced due to the fear of encirclement. In the Baltic States, according to him, it had been done by means of “partial genocide.”²⁰ In a draft article titled “The Truth about the Genocide Convention,” Lemkin dug deep into the Soviet military strategy, contradicting his émigré contacts in the process. The motivation to annihilate the Baltic nations appeared to be strategic, he declared. The Soviets had transformed the Baltic area into an arsenal of arms and amphibious craft to be used against the West, and specifically the United States. As the Soviets were planning to penetrate the Atlantic from the Baltic Sea, for such eventuality they were “destroying a highly patriotic population which might rise against them in case of war.” The intent to destroy the Baltic peoples, rounded up Lemkin, was manifest in the notorious Serov instructions for carrying out mass deportations.²¹

The estimates of number of victims varied greatly. Take, for example, Lithuania. Mykolas Krupavičius, Catholic priest and president of the Supreme Lithuanian Committee of Liberation, spoke in February 1949 of “700,000 *citizens* of Lithuania who have disappeared during the Nazi and Soviet occupation [emphasis added].” Appearing at an ethnic rally in Washington, DC, Krupavičius demanded the “end of the policy of genocide perpetrated against the Baltic peoples.”²² Lemkin, at a symposium organized in 1951 by the League for Industrial Democracy, used the same figure though described the victims as Lithuanians who

had been deported under conditions involving loss of life. A pamphlet called *A Look Behind the Iron Curtain: Exhibit of Genocide in Lithuania* at one point mentioned an aggregate loss of 600,000 Lithuanian inhabitants, only to upgrade it to 750,000 a few paragraphs down. Senator Paul Douglas (D: Il), appearing before the House Select Committee in February 1954, claimed that: “At least 500,000 and possibly a million Lithuanians have been seized and sent to the torture camps in Siberia to be starved or worked to death.”²³ The most recent figure of Lithuanians who had been deported during the Stalinist period is about 132,000, some 28,000 of who perished.

The Baltic émigré activism related to the issue of genocide peaked in 1952–1953. Subsequently the House Select Committee on Communist Aggression became the platform for their grievances. The act of testifying in the Kersten’s committee had a more profound effect that partaking in the National Committee for a Free Europe project and/or in Lemkin’s genocide crusade. Beside cementing interethnic ranks and forging a common historical narrative, collecting evidence of Communist atrocities had a broader objective of sustaining the American policy of non-recognition of Soviet annexation of the Baltic States. As for Kersten, the committee that he had chaired (until he lost his office in the 1954 elections) served as a window for his ideological convictions as well as a “means to puncture the Soviet peace offensive.”²⁴ Nevertheless, “genocide” still featured in the fall 1953 hearings of the House Select Committee to Investigate Seizure and Forced Incorporation of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia by the USSR. Žadeikis argued that since 1940 the Soviet Union had been carrying out genocide against the Lithuanian people by means of arrests, murder, and deportation to Siberia and the Arctic.²⁵ Anatols Dinbergs made the exact same point in relation to Latvia, describing as genocide “deportation and annihilation of countless thousands of Latvian citizens.”²⁶

The response of the State Department remained lukewarm—a sign of a growing frustration with the émigré politics. Sustaining unity between various national committees in exile became increasingly difficult by 1953. The State Department’s memoranda spoke of endless rivalries within the fractured, dysfunctional émigré entities. Some of the leaders of those groups, for instance Romanian General Radescu, hardly fit the “democratic” model. It soon became clear that émigré politicians had no significant following in their homelands, effectively rendering them useless.²⁷ The Baltic émigrés proved unwilling to adjust their rhetoric following the death of Stalin and the gradual, though unmistakable, shift in domestic Soviet policy. The 1954 gathering in Detroit in memory of the victims of Soviet deportations still spoke of the ongoing “deportations and exterminations of whole ethnic groups, which are

criminal acts of aggression and genocide” perpetrated by Russian Communists. The meeting denounced “brutal genocide of the Baltic States” and urged the US Senate to ratify the convention.²⁸

Meanwhile Lemkin encouraged Baltic émigrés to pressurize the United Nations for an investigation of genocidal techniques allegedly practiced in the Soviet forced labor camps. This would provide the United Nations with the unique opportunity to look into the case of the “captive nations.” This occasion should be utilized “completely and sincerely,” he said.²⁹ For a single individual, Lemkin had maintained an incredible level of communication, in this particular case with Baltic émigrés. In October 1954, for example, two Estonian students studying in Georgia wrote to Lemkin thanking him for showing them around the UN building. The pamphlet on genocide that he had given them, they said, became a point of discussion in their government class.³⁰

By the 1960s calls for US ratification and/or indictment of the Soviet Union for genocide became much less frequent and the tenor milder—the trend across East-European émigré communities. Upon receiving a pertinent letter from the Baltimore Lithuanian Women’s Citizens Club in the summer of 1962, the State Department spoke of “extinction” only with regard to Lithuania’s independent, emphasizing the fact of American non-recognition of Soviet annexation. As far as the Soviet treatment of the Lithuanian people was concerned, State Department officials used the euphemism “deplorable acts of...diminution or dispersal.”³¹ The émigré organizations were altogether in decline, especially following the termination of government funding in 1971.

The Katyn Massacre

Like many other instances of Stalinist terror, the original idea to place the Katyn massacre in the specter of genocide came from Lemkin. In December 1949 he suggested to Charles Rozmarek, President of the Polish American Congress, reviving public attention to the Katyn case. A splendid occasion presented itself during the forthcoming hearings on the genocide treaty in the Senate, he said. To entice the Poles, Lemkin casually mentioned that the Lithuanians had already contacted Senator McMahon, and would utilize that opportunity to bring up “genocide perpetrated now on the Lithuanian people by Soviet Russia.” Lemkin was all business: had Rozmarek agreed to participate in the Senate hearings, he might be able to incorporate the Katyn case in the proceedings.³² Although Rozmarek did not participate in the

hearings, his letter drawing a parallel between “Nazi genocide in Auschwitz and Soviet genocide in Katyn,” was entered as part of the official record.³³

On March 31, 1953, The Polish American Congress sent a telegram to President Eisenhower, urging US ratification of the Genocide Convention. The telegram used all the right words, making the mass execution at Katyn sound like a pretext for intervention rather than the cause for concern. Remarkably, “communist genocide” was presented as a tool in the Cold War rather than an extreme form of mass violence accompanying convention warfare. The information made public by the Congressional Select Committee for the investigation of the Katyn massacre, wrote attorney Francis Wasetter, exposed the criminal intent of Soviet rulers to destroy the Polish nation. Apparently it was a blueprint to be applied to other “captive nations,” insisted the author: “The wave of genocide now applied in the area between the Elbe River and the Pacific including China and Korea clearly indicates that total or partial destruction of nations as well as the elimination of religious groups is used as a technique for the extension of communism without resorting to a global shooting war.” While the references to “our Christian civilization” appeared original, “eliminating the flower of Polish intelligentsia” and similar passages bore Lemkin’s imprint.³⁴ What was really important, stated chairman of the Select Committee Congressman Ray J. Madden (D-IN), that the Katyn hearings had placed the Soviet propaganda machine on the defensive.³⁵ Fitting Katyn in the framework of genocide, however, remained problematic. Madden was opaque, to the extent of sounding odd, when answering the question if he could possibly prove genocidal intent at Katyn. The Polish Government in Exile inquired with the Soviets about the whereabouts of Polish officers, but only got the short answer—Manchuria.³⁶

The Katyn demonstrates just how vicious did the struggle over the interpretation of mass crimes become and how often the participants in the debate were willing to take it to the highest international forum. The tenets of Soviet diplomacy prescribed offensive as the best form of defense. In September 1952 Foreign Minister Andrei Vyshinsky warned Vyacheslav Molotov that the “Katyn affair” might be taken up at the seventh session of the forthcoming General Assembly. Vyshinsky suggested equipping the Soviet delegation at the United Nations with the materials exposing the “slanderous nature of American pretense” to investigate the mass execution at Katyn by a US Congressional committee. Molotov supported Vyshinsky’s idea of enlisting the help of those Prosecutor’s Office and security police officials who had been involved in the Soviet investigation of the crime eight years earlier.³⁷ It could not possibly be otherwise, because Molotov’s signature appeared on Beria’s proposal of March 5, 1940 to execute Polish officers en masse, along with that of Stalin,

Voroshilov, and Mikoyan. Fortunately for the Soviets, the Katyn did not make it to the General Assembly's agenda. Otherwise, the United States did indeed consider pressing charges of genocide as fallout of the Congressional report on Katyn. However, the Bricker Constitutional amendment had stalled US ratification and thus reduced the "possibilities of the Genocide Convention in terms of propaganda and psychological warfare."³⁸

In the 1950s the Katyn emerged as primarily a foreign policy issue. Used as a representative example of "Soviet genocide" at one time, it was submerged in the specific charge of Soviet genocide against the Polish people at another. Someone who Lemkin had met at the Katyn hearings intended using it as an "early example of elitocide" for his prospective article in *Harper's Magazine*. Along with the Poles, the author listed as the major victim groups of the Soviet genocide the Lithuanians, the Crimean Tartars, the Volga Germans, the Kalmyks, the Buryats, and the "Moslem tribes of Eastern Turkestan."³⁹ Drawing a parallel between the suffering of the Poles and other East-European peoples at the hands of the Soviets was an important element in the émigré discourse. Any omission of this discursive link prompted an instant rejoinder from the ethnic group inadvertently excluded from the genocide paradigm. Thus, Secretary of the Association of Lithuanian Journalists in the United States Algimantas Šalčius, while praising the work of the Katyn massacre investigation committee, berated the fact that one of the participating congressmen failed to mention Lithuania as a victim of Soviet aggression in a recent statement. "Please permit us to call your attention to the fact that the Katyn massacre was but one of the first steps of the Soviet genocidal policy," wrote the journalist to Madden, "shortly after Katyn, mass murders were perpetrated in Lithuania."⁴⁰

The death of Stalin and the waning circle of violence in the Soviet Union did not deter the Polish American Congress from situating, in November 1953, Katyn and prison camps in Siberia and North Korea alongside Auschwitz and Dachau. Congress's President John Nowak deplored the confusion between genocide perpetrated at these sites and the "unfortunate occasional discrimination in employment, housing, and transportation against individuals in some free countries," as he put it. This was a "trap laid for the United States by Soviets and their dupes" that hindered "our struggle against communism," Nowak declared on behalf of seven million Americans of Polish descent. He then lashed out against Roosevelt and former Democratic Administration for purportedly making genocide part of the UN antidiscrimination and human rights projects.⁴¹

Eventually, Katyn remained emotional reference point in a long list of grievances against the Soviet Union, subsumed under the heading of *genocide*. In a conversation with a

member of the US delegation to the United Nations in December 1952, two prominent Polish exiles did not even mention Katyn. Stanisław Mikołajczyk and Konrad Sieniewicz asked Senator Alexander Wiley to support a proposal charging the Soviet Union, among other gross violations, with genocide. The individuals who abstained in the recent election had reportedly been liquidated while forced labor camps had contained up to half a million Poles. The Senator and his interlocutors “wholeheartedly” agreed that the “traitors and saboteurs,” that is, the USSR and their satellites, should be “cleaned out” from the United Nations (the former used the metaphor of rotten apples spoiling the whole barrel). At the same time, Wiley warned Mikołajczyk and Sieniewicz that he was speaking in his capacity as a member of Congress, and that in the new Administration he would only have the role of Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee. On the matter of substance, he expressed himself rather vaguely, to the effect that the Eisenhower Administration would be interested in the statements made by the Polish representatives. Former Prime Minister of Polish Government in Exile made a point that Poland had been virtually abandoned by the West. Even though bringing the formal charges in the United Nations would result in no concrete action, admitted Mikołajczyk, it would remind the Polish people that other countries do care about them.⁴²

Stalin’s Terror in Soviet Ukraine

Next to the slaughter of Polish army officers at Katyn in 1940, the most frequently invoked Soviet mass atrocity had been the mass executions at Vinnitsa in 1937–41. Coincidentally, both examples of Stalinist terror had been uncovered by the Nazis later during the war.⁴³ The revelations about the Vinnitsa overshadowed even the famine of 1932–33 in Ukraine. Neither Lev Dobriansky, an unofficial spokesman for the Ukrainian Americans, nor Lemkin had paid much attention to the famine until the sad anniversary in 1953. For the commemorative event in New York City that year, Lemkin wrote an essay “Soviet Genocide in Ukraine.” Based on personal observations and emotionally charged testimonies by Ukrainian Americans, Lemkin’s essay appeared rather sketchy, if not naïve.⁴⁴ Conspicuously, Lemkin depicted the 1932–33 famine as one of many elements of the grand Soviet scheme of domination. Lemkin argued that the mass murder of entire peoples and the destruction of cultures accompanying the Soviet expansion in East Europe was part and parcel of the Kremlin’s strategy to create the “Soviet man.” In line with his original conceptualization of *genocide*, Lemkin described the famine as the “classic example of Soviet genocide, its longest and broadest experiment in

Russification.” He referred the alleged long-term policy of liquidation of non-Russian peoples back to Catherine the Great, Ivan the Terrible, and Nicolas I. Following the common line of argumentation of that time, Lemkin could not resist comparing the infamous oprichnina of the 16th Century to SS troops, and the destruction of religious, intellectual, and political elites of Soviet Ukraine to the systematic mass murder of the Jews by the Nazis. Speaking interchangeably of “brutal extermination” and “liquidation,” forced labor and starvation, he claimed that 75 percent of intellectuals and professionals in West Ukraine had been wiped out by 1949. Putting as much emphasis on the Soviet persecution of clergy, he came up with the allegory of an attack on the “brain” and “soul” of Ukraine. To illustrate the respective article of the Genocide Convention, he boldly restated unverified facts about the deliberate separation of Ukrainian families—fathers dispatched to Siberia, mothers to brickworks in Turkestan, and their children to communist homes for reeducation. As regards the famine, he presented it as “necessary” for the Soviets, who were keen on destroying the repository of the Ukrainian culture and spirit—the peasants. According to Lemkin, the Ukrainian peasantry was sacrificed in order to stifle ethnic nationalism and to achieve the uniformity of the Soviet state. Finally, he spoke of deliberate attempts to reduce the percentage of ethnic Ukrainians through demographic intervention. He concluded by declaring Ukraine to be a part of the Soviet plans of global expansion, “the criminal waste of civilization and culture.”⁴⁵

As Lemkin’s fame of an international lawyer faded, his reputation as a political adviser grew, particularly in East-European émigré circles. Among other ethnic gatherings in 1953, he was invited to speak as an honorary guest at the first congress of Ukrainian-American students at Columbia University and the third convention of Dobrus, the Democratic Organization of Ukrainians Formerly Prosecuted by the Soviet Government.⁴⁶ With time, Lemkin drifted further away from the main theme of the commemoration, that is, the 1930s famine, and into current international politics. The resolution that he had drafted for a Ukrainian mass rally in January 1954, typically ended with a call for US ratification of the Genocide Convention, which would then bring salvation to the captive nations. Speaking in the name of ethnic Ukrainians about “our historic fight against Communism and Soviet Genocide,” Lemkin blasted both the “obstructionist tactics of the Soviet Union” and the lobbyists of “beautifully sounding projects” such as the Human Rights Covenant and the draft Code of Offenses. In fact, these projects tended to establish impunity for “Soviet genocide” and to simultaneously put the United States in a defendant’s seat. Their secret agenda included the establishment of an international criminal tribunal for the purpose of indicting the United States on “biological” warfare charges, as had been proposed by the International

Association of Democratic Lawyers.⁴⁷ This was a new item on the Lemkin's list of abuses, as he obviously meant the alleged use of bacteriological weapons by the United States in Korea.

Lemkin's engagement with the émigrés was not purely intellectual. The Ukrainians and the Lithuanians in particular, regularly sent him checks. In fact, from the early 1950s onward, when Lemkin found himself increasingly in isolation, the financial support from the East-European émigré organizations essentially remained his only source of income. Without unduly emphasizing the sense of obligation that Lemkin might have felt toward his donors, the much-needed cash injection made it difficult to end dependence. According to the communications that Lemkin had received from Julian Revay of the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America, in April and November 1952 he was paid out five checks totaling \$ 400 (ca \$ 3,250 in today's money). On September 18, 1953 committee's representative requested Lemkin's presence at the rally to commemorate the victims of the famine in Ukraine in 1932-33. His potential address to the rally participants would ensure the success of that event, Revay assured Lemkin.⁴⁸

Lemkin was due in taxes for the year 1948, and was given extension on his tax-return for the following five years. What started as a few personal and legal claims by his creditors in 1951 escalated into a relentless debt hunt by 1954. Whereas in 1951 close to 70 percent of Lemkin's gross income of \$ 5,675 (ca \$ 48,500 in today's money) came from two Jewish organizations—the Littauer Foundation and the American Jewish Congress—with the Lithuanian American National Council pitching in just \$ 750, in 1952 the Lithuanian and Ukrainian émigré organizations—along with the National Committee for a Free Europe—contributed over 90 percent of his significantly diminished annual gross of \$ 2,025.⁴⁹

The money Lemkin had received effectively came from the CIA. Independently of that fact, he perched the National Committee for a Free Europe, the Voice of America, and the Crusade for Freedom—all propaganda spinoffs of the CIA—as the captive nations' "symbol of hope for survival from genocide"⁵⁰ Lemkin helped to edit a document adopted by the Assembly of Captive European Nations on December 20, 1954. The Appeal to the Peoples of the Free World condemned the Soviet methods of domination of Eastern Europe, summing them up as follows: "They have suppressed all freedoms and all human rights." Lemkin's sole contribution was adding to that sentence one of his own: "By resorting to genocide they are threatening our civilization and weaken the forces of the free world."⁵¹ Unsurprisingly, then, the Assembly's chairman was among the first to congratulate Lemkin on receiving the Officer's Cross of the Order of Merit from the West-German Government the following year.⁵²

Since 1953, the famine had provided the ethnic Ukrainian organizations in the United States and Canada with a most potent reference to “Soviet genocide.” The UN Genocide Convention, which was called into life for the purpose of preventing and punishing the crime of genocide, had metamorphosed into a means of condemnation. A resolution adopted by the Ukrainian Evangelical Alliance of North America on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the famine, for example, put it as follows:

Whereas Communist Moscow perpetrated genocide in Ukraine and for this crime should be condemned by the free world. Whereas Communist Moscow, and especially its present dictators, used similar though less extensive methods of genocide after having occupied the territories of other nations. [We] call on all countries in the free world to sign the Convention on Genocide.⁵³

Conclusion

At different times genocide was said to have been perpetrated against the following nations: Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Armenians, Poles, Romanians, Albanians, Bulgarians, Hungarians, Yugoslavs, Greeks, Italians, Chinese, and Koreans, but also against Czechs, Slovaks, Serbs, Ruthenians (Rusyns), Volga Germans, Crimean Tartars, Jews—all the major ethnic groups within the Soviet grasp. The man who had originally introduced and variously promoted this idea was Lemkin. Lemkin used all the buzzwords of political lexicon, mixing and matching them with the wording of the Genocide Convention, to emphasize the urgency of US ratification. He collectively referred to East Central Europe as the “captive nations,” which the Soviet Union had allegedly set to destroy in part. In fact, partial destruction of the groups was specific to Soviet Genocide (capital “G” in the original), he said. Outstripping the non-Russian population of occupied Europe two to one, less than two hundred million Russians held in captivity some hundred million East and Central Europeans. However, Lemkin reasoned, they could not possibly “digest” such a large number of people belonging to a higher “civilization.” Therefore, they had decided to destroy the elements within the captive peoples that provide the forces of national cohesion. The Soviets supposedly had plans to destroy some 25 percent of the East European population so that the rest should “surrender in passivity as an amorphous mass of slaves.” It did already happen, according to Lemkin, in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The Cuban delegation to the United

Nations had invoked the Genocide Convention to stop the slaughter in Hungary. The convention was the only international legal instrument capable of keeping the captive nations alive. Every parliament had to raise that issue in order to reveal the full scope of Soviet Genocide, Lemkin concluded.⁵⁴

As a journalist once remarked, “Most of Professor Lemkin’s work has been the behind-the-scenes and off-the-record kind.”⁵⁵ Finland was well aware of the problem of genocide, said Lemkin, because it had to absorb ethnic Finns from the Soviet-acquired Karelia in 1940.⁵⁶ Following a phone conversation with Lemkin in January 1952, James Mandalian related “latest genocidal developments in Soviet Armenia” to the executive committee of the organization he had represented, the Hairenik Association.⁵⁷ When trying to convince Turkish diplomats that their country should ratify the convention, however, Lemkin carefully avoided mentioning the Armenians.⁵⁸ The biggest incongruity of them all was that the wholesome deportation of ethnic Armenians from Crimea in June 1944 never ever entered the conversation on Armenians and genocide. According to NKVD head Beria, the Armenian Committees set up under German occupation carried out “anti-Soviet activities,” including the calls to establish an independent Armenia.⁵⁹

In spite of his prominent role in beefing up the anticommunist campaign in the United States, the Soviets apparently did not take Lemkin seriously. After all, Lemkin was not buttressed by the power of state, which resonated with the Kremlin. Thus, Soviet critics dismissed Lemkin’s book *The Axis Rule* for having failed to adequately present the scope of Nazi atrocities. Enough it is to say, they pinpointed, that out of the 671 pages in the book only 15 addressed the Nazi crimes carried out against the Soviet people. Lemkin’s biographical sketch was even less flattering: a Polish immigrant (*vykhodets iz Polshi*), Lemkin had settled down in the United States; currently (i.e., 1947) he treads the boards (*podvizaetsia*) as a legal expert in the UN Secretariat, while being an ardent supporter of American imperialist policies.⁶⁰

¹ Katalin Kádár Lynn, Preface in: *The Inauguration of Organized Political Warfare: Cold War Organizations Sponsored by the National Committee for a Free Europe/Free Europe Committee* (Saint Helena, CA: Helena History Press, 2013), 1-2; idem., “The Hungarian National Council/Hungarian National Committee” in: *ibid.*, 267-68. See also Lucas, *Freedom’s War*, 63-67

² Lemkin’s speech at Yale University, 21 March [?], American Jewish Archives (hereafter: AJA), 60/4/4.

³ Mazower, *No Enchanted Palace*, 132.

⁴ Cf. Mary [Kizis], Lithuanian-American Inf. Center, to Lemkin [17 February 1950], American Jewish Historical Society (hereafter: AJHS), P-154/2/3; Lemkin, memo on international action, 10 March 1952, RWLA, 232/2/67.

- ⁵ “Balts Lay Genocidal Horrors to Reds in 3 Occupied Nations,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 13 May 1949.
- ⁶ Sergius Yakobson, “Soviet Concepts of Point Four” in: *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 268 (1950): 132f.
- ⁷ “Letters to the Times: To Outlaw Genocide,” *NYT*, 24 October 1949.
- ⁸ William Attwood and Seymour Freidin, “Why Stalin Must Be Tried for Murder,” *Collier’s* (30 June 1951): 20-21, 66, 68.
- ⁹ *Totally Unofficial*, 219.
- ¹⁰ Rimauskas to Lemkin, 7 June 1951, AJA, 60/2/12-Q-R; Lemkin to Lausche [after 17 June 1951], AJA, 60/2/7. Some 25,000 persons of Baltic origin resided in Cleveland.
- ¹¹ Plan of exhibition “The Genocide of Lithuania” [1951], AJA, 60/4/2.
- ¹² The most comprehensive study of the Holocaust in Lithuania is Christoph Dieckmann’s *Deutsche Besatzungspolitik in Litauen 1941-1944* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2011).
- ¹³ It was probably the same photo exhibit that went on display at the Sheraton-Chicago hotel in June 1970 (Jonas Maleiska, “Genocide Exhibit,” *Chicago Tribune*, 19 June 1970; “Lithuanian Exhibit Recounts Horrors of Soviet Invasion,” *Chicago Tribune*, 21 June 1970).
- ¹⁴ Lithuanian Legation in Washington, DC to Secretary of State Acheson, 23 October 1951; Memorandum, 19 October 1951; “Lithuanian: Soviet Measures Destined to Destroy an Enslaved Nation, Physically and Morally” [October 1951], US National Archives and Records Administration (hereafter: NARA), DoS decimal files, 1950-54, 59/862915/1341. Romania was expected to play a part in the Soviet-planned invasion of Yugoslavia. As part of the military preparations, the Romanian government in June 1951 deported some 40,000 civilians from the border areas. Closely coordinated with Moscow, this mass deportation was supposed to remove “hostile elements” and “Titoist sympathizers” (Kramer, “Stalin, Soviet Policy, and the Consolidation of a Communist Bloc,” 96, 100-101; idem., “Stalin, the Split With Yugoslavia,” 303, 306).
- ¹⁵ Lithuanian Legation in Washington, DC to Secretary of State Acheson, 11 January 1952; Supplement, NARA, DoS decimal files, 1950-54, 59/862915/1342.
- ¹⁶ Elijošius to DoS, 14 January 1952; Kemėžaitė to Roosevelt, 15 January 1952; Spurgis to DoS, 17 January 1952; Krašinskas to US Delegation to the United Nations, 17 January 1952; Jutkevičius to US Delegation to the United Nations, 17 January 1952; Dambriūnas to DoS, 28 January 1952, NARA, DoS decimal files, 1950-54, 59/862915/1342.
- ¹⁷ LAC, Cleveland branch, to US Delegation to the United Nations, 19 January 1952; LAC, Connecticut branch, to Ernest Gross, US Delegation to the United Nations, 15 February 1952, NARA, DoS decimal files, 1950-54, 59/862915/1342. On the LAC see Juozas Banionis, “Lietuvos laisvinimo veikla XX a. penktajame dešimtmetyje Vakaruose: Amerikos lietuvių taryba 1940–1950 m.,” *Genocidas ir rezistencija* 2 (2006): 83-103.
- ¹⁸ Lemkin’s statement at the opening of the genocide exposition in Waterbury Public Library in Vermont, 10 February 1951, AJHS, P-154/6/2.
- ¹⁹ Grigaitis to Lemkin, 16 May and 2 June 1952, AJA, 60/1/7.
- ²⁰ Lemkin in conversation with Pauline Frederick, ABC Radio Networks [btw. March 1953 and January 1955], AJA, 60/4/2.
- ²¹ Lemkin’s draft article, “The Truth About the Genocide Convention” [btw. July 1950 and December 1951], New York Public Library (hereafter: NYPL), ZL-273/4.
- ²² “Baltic Genocide Charged,” *NYT*, 14 February 1949.
- ²³ “Dr. Lemkin on Genocide Convention” in: *A Symposium: World Cooperation and Social Progress* (New York: The League for Industrial Democracy, 1951), 27; *A Look Behind the Iron Curtain: Exhibit of Genocide in Lithuania*, pamphlet (Cleveland, [1951]); excerpts from the address of P. Douglas before the Senate, 16 February 1954, AJA, 60/3/3.
- ²⁴ Jonathan H. L’Homediou, “Baltic Exiles and the U.S. Congress: Investigations and Legacies of the House Select Committee, 1953-1955,” *Journal of American Ethnic History* 2, vol. 31 (Winter 2012): 42-50, 55, 58, 61-62.
- ²⁵ Žadeikis’s statement, 30 November 1953, AJA, 60/4/4. For details on the House Baltic Committee see L’Homediou, “Baltic Exiles and the U.S. Congress,” 41-67.
- ²⁶ Chargé d’affaires of Latvia Dinbergs, “Memo re. the Illegal Occupation and Subsequent Annexation of Latvia by the USSR in 1940. Submitted to the House Baltic Committee of the US Congress” [November-December 1953], AJA, 60/5/5.
- ²⁷ Lucas, *Freedom’s War*, 200, 267-69.
- ²⁸ Ilmar Heinaru, Chairman of the Baltic Nations Committee of Detroit, to Secretary of State Dulles, 13 June 1954, NARA, DoS decimal files, 1950-54, 59/862915/1342.
- ²⁹ Lemkin, “The Horror of Genocide,” *Lietuvių Dienos*, March 1954, AJA, 60/3/3.
- ³⁰ Gerda and Laine Roosman to Lemkin, 30 October 1954, AJA, 60/2/11-P.

- ³¹ Ass. Secretary of State for Congressional Relations Frederick G. Dutton to Congressman George H. Fallon, 6 July 1962, NARA, DoS decimal files, 1960-63, 59/949637/570.
- ³² Lemkin to Rozmarek, 17 December 1949, AJHS, P-154/2/2. See also Monica Podbielski, "Charles Rozmarek, the Polish-American Congress, and Their Influence on United States Foreign Policy Toward Poland, 1944-1952" (PhD diss., Catholic University of America, 1997).
- ³³ *The Genocide Convention: Hearings before a Subcommittee of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, 81st Congress, 2nd Session, January 23, 24, 25, and February 9, 1950* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1950), 136, 540.
- ³⁴ For release 31 March-Morning [1953], AJA, 60/4/3. The Polish-American Congress urged using the Genocide Convention "against the Soviet criminals" at its general conference in Atlantic City in May 1952 (See Martin, *The Man Who Invented "Genocide,"* 231-32).
- ³⁵ Madden to Algimantas Šalčius, Secretary of the Association of Lithuanian Journalists in the US, 9 May 1952, AJA, 60/2/8. See also *The Katyn Forest Massacre: Hearings Before the Special Committee to Conduct an Investigation of the Facts, Evidence, and Circumstance of the Katyn Forest Massacre. Eighty-Second Congress: Second Session* (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1952); Crister S. and Stephen A. Garrett, "Death and Politics: The Katyn Forest Massacre and American Foreign Policy," *East European Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (January 1987): 429-46.
- ³⁶ "Soviet Genocide": Lemkin and Madden in conversation with Maria Rathaus [no date], AJA, 60/4/2.
- ³⁷ Vyshinsky to Molotov, 17 September 1952, Russian State Archives of Social and Political History (RGASPI), 82/2/1083.
- ³⁸ DoS, Assistant Secretary for Int. Org. Affairs John D. Hickerson to Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, 10 March 1953, NARA, DoS general files, subject files of Durwald V. Sandifer, 59/917370/8.
- ³⁹ James Rothy to Lemkin, 13 February 1952, AJA, 60/2/12-Q-R.
- ⁴⁰ Šalčius to Madden, 6 May 1952, AJA, 60/2/13-S-Sh.
- ⁴¹ Nowak to Secretary of State Dulles, 1 November 1953, NARA, DoS decimal files, 1950-54, 59/862915/1342.
- ⁴² US Delegation to the UN, memo of conversation btw. Mikołajczyk, Sieniewicz, Willey, and William O. Hall, 4 December 1952, NARA, DoS general records, Bureau of Int. Org. Affairs and Its Predecessors, position papers, 1945-74, 59/82D211/50.
- ⁴³ Weiner, *Making Sense of War*, 67-68, 264-68; Karel C. Berkhoff, *Harvest of Despair: Life and Death in Ukraine under Nazi Rule* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2004), 283-84.
- ⁴⁴ Roman Serbyn, "Lemkin on Genocide of Nations," *Journal of International Criminal Justice* 7, no. 1 (March 2009): 123-25. Lemkin borrowed heavily from the testimony of Lev. E. Dobriansky at the US Senate hearings on ratification of the Genocide Convention in January 1950.
- ⁴⁵ Lemkin, "Soviet Genocide in Ukraine," reproduced in Serbyn, "Lemkin on Genocide of Nations," 125-30. Draft speech in NYPL, ZL-273/2. Douglas Irvin-Erickson analyzed Lemkin's writings on Ukraine as an illustration of the latter's idea of "family of minds." See Irvin-Erickson's article, "Genocide, the "Family of Mind," and the Romantic Signature of Raphael Lemkin," *Journal of Genocide Research* 3, vol. 15 (2013): 286-90.
- ⁴⁶ Zinowij Melnyk, Conference of Ukrainian Student Associations of America, to Lemkin, 3 April 1953, AJA, 60/2/8; Mykola Stepanenko, Chairman of Dobrus, to Lemkin, 20 November 1953, AJA, 60/2/14-Si-Sz.
- ⁴⁷ Lemkin, draft resolution for a Ukrainian mass rally [January 1954], NYPL, ZL-273/3.
- ⁴⁸ Revay to Lemkin, 30 April 1952; 26 November 1952; 18 September 1953, AJA, 60/2/12-Q-R. According to *NYT*, about 10,000 Ukrainian Americans marched along Fifth Avenue in Manhattan on September 20. The newspaper quoted Lemkin saying, with no direct relevance to Ukraine and Ukrainians, that "high crime had been employed 100 years ago against the Irish" ("Ukrainians March in Protest Parade," *NYT*, 21 September 1953).
- ⁴⁹ See Lemkin's income tax returns for 1951 and 1952, as well as other financial documentation in AJA, 60/2/20.
- ⁵⁰ Lemkin's draft article, "The Truth About the Genocide Convention" [btw. July 1950 and December 1951], NYPL, ZL-273/4.
- ⁵¹ Assembly of Captive European Nations, Appeal to the Peoples of the Free World, 20 December 1954, AJA, 60/4/7.
- ⁵² Vilis Masens to Lemkin, 7 December 1955, AJA, 60/2/8.
- ⁵³ Ukrainian Evangelical Alliance of North America, resolutions, 23 September 1958, AJA, 60/4/3.
- ⁵⁴ [Lemkin], statement [after 4 November 1956], AJA, 60/4/4.
- ⁵⁵ Quoted in Martin, *The Man Who Invented "Genocide,"* 234.
- ⁵⁶ Lemkin to Herman Zetterberg, Sweden's Minister of Justice [early 1959], AJA, 60/2/7.
- ⁵⁷ Mandalian to Lemkin, 31 January 1952, AJA, 60/2/8.
- ⁵⁸ Cooper, *Raphael Lemkin*, 184; *Totally Unofficial*, 200-201.
- ⁵⁹ Beria to Stalin re. the advisability of resettling Bulgarians, Greeks, and Armenians from Crimea, 29 May 1944. Available online at: <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/58901>; Beria to Stalin re. the

expulsion of special settlers from Crimea, 4 July 1944. Available online at: <http://www.alexanderyakovlev.org/fond/issues-doc/58903> (accessed 2 December 2014). The total of 9,621 people, or 95% of the total Armenian population of Crimea, were deported to the Urals and Kazakhstan.

⁶⁰ *My obviniaem v genotside* (Moscow: The Publishing House of Foreign Literature, 1952), 366. “How many divisions has the Pope got?” asked dismissively Stalin upon the request of Pierre Laval back in 1935 to help secure the support of the Vatican against the raising Nazi threat.