

# GUERNICA 37 NEWSLETTER

INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE CHAMBERS MONTHLY NEWSCAST



## A CULTURE OF PRODUCTIVITY

*Article by Toby Cadman*

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# SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE OPENING OF THE NUREMBERG TRIALS

*Guernica 37*

Today marks seventy-five years since the Nuremberg Trials began. It was a trial of crimes that defied the imagination. There were so many deaths to account for. Nearly a quarter of a million children deported to Auschwitz, to take just one example. And for these crimes, Nazi leaders for the first time faced a court that established the principal of international justice. Seventy-five years later, we all still live in the long shadow of Nuremberg. Benjamin B. Ferencz, the last remaining Nuremberg Prosecutor, stated most eloquently: Nuremberg taught me that creating a world of tolerance and compassion would be a long and arduous task. And I also learned that if we did not devote ourselves to developing effective world law, the same cruel mentality that made the Holocaust possible might one day destroy the entire human race.

For the Nuremberg Trials, investigators put together a vast body of evidence in a trial, the first of its kind, that would shape the collective memory of humanity. For the prosecutors at the time, seeing justice done meant leaving all personal feelings aside. Instead, what was necessitated was to regard all the people who were victims of the crimes as human beings and the need to fight for their collective cause. After all, the prosecution always insisted that vengeance was never the goal. As British human rights lawyer Philippe Sands (who lost 80 members of his family in the Holocaust) puts it: What Nuremberg achieved was a precedent. New crimes were created – the crime of genocide, killing of groups, crimes against humanity, the killing of individuals. That sowed the seed, the idea that for the first time in history the state was not above the law.”

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