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THE NUREMBURG MILITARY TRIBUNALS AND THE ORIGINS OF CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

by Prof. Dr. Kevin Jon Heller

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Chair: Prof. Dr. Frank Verbruggen

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12pm – 2pm

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Abstract

Twelve war crimes trials were held in the American zone of occupation between 1946 and 1949, which were known as the “Nuremburg Military Tribunals”. These judgments have shaped the modern practice of international criminal law, and as such inform how modern courts and tribunals treat crimes against humanity, war crimes and the crime of aggression. The NMTs deal with unique cases not often addressed in post WWII literature, that is, the crimes committed by the so-called ‘lower-level’ functionaries’ - the lawyers, judges, industrialists and bankers whose willingness to participate in the destruction of innocents manifested what Hannah Arendt famously called ‘the banality’. Kevin will address particularly the role of the trials in the development of ‘Crimes Against Humanity’.

Bio

Kevin Jon Heller is a Senior Lecturer at Melbourne Law School where he teaches international criminal law and criminal law, and a permanent member of the popular international law blog *Opinio Juris*. Kevin has been involved in the International Criminal Court’s negotiations over the crime of aggression, served as Human Rights Watch’s external legal advisor on the trial of Saddam Hussein (whose lawyers cited his academic work in their appeals), and consulted with a number of defendants at the ICTY and ICTR. He served from December 2008 until February 2011 as one of Radovan Karadzic’s formally-appointed legal associates. In May 2011, his book “The Nuremberg Military Tribunals and the Origins of International Criminal Law” was published by Oxford University Press. He is also the joint author of “The Handbook of Comparative Criminal Law”, published with Markus Dubber in February.

Participation is free, but registration required by 13 June, 10 am at: conference@ggs.kuleuven.be