

# DON'T STAND BY

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY 2016

Raphael Lemkin



Raphael was born in 1900 in Poland. Raphael read a lot of history books and learned about the good and bad things that happened in the past.

Raphael read about Christians being fed to the lions in Roman times, just because they were Christians. Raphael asked his mother why the other people did not stand up to the Romans and stop them from feeding the Christians to the lions.

Raphael's mother told him when good people stand by they become bad people as well.

Raphael was interested in learning about times when big groups of people had been killed. He tried to understand why some people wanted to kill people just because of their ethnicity.

The Nazis invaded Poland in 1939. This started World War Two. Raphael escaped the Nazis by first moving to Sweden and then to America.

Raphael's mother and father did not escape, and were killed by the Nazis. Other members of his family were also killed. Raphael was very, very sad. He said he was so sad that the world did not seem to have any colours anymore. Raphael smiled because he thought that in America you had to smile.

Raphael wanted to make people understand that killing other people just because they are different was wrong. The Nazis killed big groups of people just because they were different.

Raphael made a new word: Genocide. He made the word out of two other words:

1. The Greek word 'genos' means race or tribe. This part of the word showed that the people were part of the same group.
2. The Latin word 'cide' means killing. This part of the word showed that the people were being killed.

The word 'genocide' made it easier for Raphael to tell the American government why it was important to stand up to the Nazis.

Raphael worked very hard to let people know they should stand up to genocide. He worked so hard that he was often hungry and tired.

After the war finished governments agreed with Raphael that 'genocide' was a terrible crime. Now governments know that if they kill big groups of people just because they are different, then they are committing a terrible crime.

Raphael died aged 59.

### **Glossary:**

**Christian** – 'Christians' are a group of people who share a religion called Christianity.

**Different** – Being 'different' is the opposite to being the same. We use the word 'different' to talk about lots of things, for example, red is a 'different' colour to blue, sunny weather is 'different' to cloudy weather. In our life stories the word 'different' is often talking about people and the groups they belonged to. The Nazis were a group of people who did not like people from other groups because they thought they were 'different' to them. The Nazis only saw the differences between people. This made them bad.

**Ethnicity** – Belonging to an 'ethnicity' means belonging to a group of people who all have things in common with you. People of the same

ethnicity may share the same traditions, or history, or language, or homeland, or beliefs, or styles of dress, or lots of other things.

**Genocide** – ‘Genocide’ is a word used to describe killing people just because they belong to a particular group.

**Greek** – Greek is an ancient language that people in Europe still speak today.

**Government** – The ‘government’ are a group of people whose job it is to make decisions about what a country should do.

**Latin** – Latin is an ancient language. People do not speak Latin today as their own language, but a lot of people learn about Latin as many of the words we use in Europe are made out of Latin words.

**Nazis** – The ‘Nazis’ were a group of people in Germany who believed that they were better than everyone else. The ‘Nazis’ were racist, they wanted to kill people who were Jewish for being ‘different’ to them.

**Stand by** – ‘Stand by’ is a phrase people use to talk about letting things happen. Often people use it to talk about allowing bad things to happen. A person who stands by does nothing and says nothing to stop bad things from happening. Someone who tries to stop bad things from happening, or who speaks out against them happening, is someone who does not stand by (even if the things they do do not stop the bad things from happening).

**World War Two** – A war is when lots of people fight each other. A world war is when most of the countries in the world are fighting. There have been two world wars. ‘World War Two’ was fought between 1939 and 1945 over 70 years ago. On one side were the Nazis and the countries that supported them. On the other side were all the countries who wanted to stop the Nazis, these countries were called the Allies.