**John Torpey** 00:00

Hi, my name is John Torpey, and I'm director of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Welcome to International Horizons, a podcast of the Ralph Bunche institute that brings scholarly expertise to bear on our understanding of a wide range of international issues. Today on Indigenous Peoples' Day, we explore the plight and prospects of unrepresented peoples around the world with Ralph Bunche III, the grandson of the namesake of our institute, Dr. Ralph Bunche, who was Under Secretary General of the UN and winner of the 1950 Nobel Peace Prize. Ralph Bunche III is General Secretary of the Brussels-based Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, UNPO, an international membership organization established to facilitate the voices of unrepresented and marginalized nations and peoples worldwide. UNPO members consist of indigenous peoples, minorities, and other nations and peoples that are not fully represented in domestic and international governance structures in accordance with their right to self determination. He was elected General Secretary of UNPO in September 2018, and received his responsibilities in January 2019. Ralph Bunche III speaks to us today from Brussels. Thank you so much for joining us.

**Ralph Bunche III** 01:29

Thank you for having me, John.

**John Torpey** 01:30

Great, great to have you with us. So I guess the first question is to ask you about your organization, the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, which consists of members of unrepresented groups in the sense that these groups have not been able to achieve, quote, unquote, self determination. Can you tell us more about the organization and what it does?

**Ralph Bunche III** 01:54

Yeah, absolutely. So we were founded in 1991 at the initiative of three different peoples around the world. One was the Tibetan people, and the Tibetan government in exile. Another was the Uighur people, so the people who are living now as you know, in concentration camps in China, and the third was the Congress of Estonia, which was an exile parliament for the Estonian people during the Soviet occupation. We were founded in 1991, as the Cold War was ending, and there was this great hope that the end of the Cold War would unfreeze the process of granting peoples the right to self determination. They had a lot of movement, after the Second World War with the creation of many new nation states, but was frozen for quite some time, during the Cold War. There was a hope that with the end of the Cold War, the breakup of the Soviet Union, these issues around what the international community looks like, and who has representatives at the United Nations would be back on the agenda and that we could have a proper conversation about the way the world was structured. That's how we were founded. The idea of the organization was to, as you kind of said, to, to give a voice to, to facilitate the voices of underrepresented people from around the world. And I think the key thing for us there is the unrepresented in our name. We aren't an organization that works for all peoples' rights to self-determination in the sense that we believe that all people have an equal right to self-determination. But the members of our organization, it's a membership based organization, of people who have a valid concern that the national government that sits or has the seat that effectively represents them at the United Nations does not adequately represent them. Because they are, in some ways either de facto or de jure, so in law, in fact, disenfranchised at the national level, not fully involved in the governance that impacts them. What we do as an organization is two things. So one is the membership based aspect of what we do. So we currently have 46 members representing a little over 300 million people from around the world. And those members are very different in character. Some are people's movements, indigenous people's movements or other movements, rather of people who are seeking self determination. We've got political parties that represent those people. We've got governments in exile, governments in occupied territories such as the Tibetan people, the Crimean Tartar people. And then we've got governments as well. Governments of states that are unrecognized or have limited recognition. So states like Taiwan, Somaliland and Abkhazia, as well as governments that are at the sub-national level, that are seeking a better deal for their people domestically, and an ability for people to have a say in their status in the international community. And that includes the government of Guam and the District of Columbia, both in the United States. So what we do, that's that part of our work is that we provide a forum for our members. We were sort of founded - in the great moment we were founded that was - at the Peace Palace in The Hague, as, in many ways, the press sort of mentioned at the time, like an alternative United Nations sort of recognizing that the UN, and the boundaries of the nation state today doesn't necessarily represent all of the people of the world. And so we were founded in this way as sort of an alternative United Nations as a place for nations and peoples who were not represented as nations to have their voices heard, to be listened to, and to show themselves as valid members of the international community. So we provide that role of, of trying to help solidify and build that membership part the organization. And the other thing that we do, the other half of our work, or a bit more of that is more of a sort of think tank function for underrepresented people. So we do a lot of research around the right to self-determination around what it means to be unrepresented, what the impact of being unrepresented is on people. Oftentimes, we sort of, we're guided by a saying that they have here in in Brussels that they like to trot out every now and again, which is if you're not at the table, you're on the menu. And a lot of our research is about that, documenting what that means to be not at not at the table, not to have the ability to sort of to interact or participate in decision making that impacts you. And then the other part of what we do is capacity building. So we work with people's movements, NGOs, foreign affairs officers from states with limited recognition, a whole panoply of people around the world, building their capacities to engage at the international level, to become diplomats for their people, even in a society that doesn't recognize them as diplomats. So those are the sort of big functions of what we do is organization.

**John Torpey** 07:13

This is fascinating work. And it raises, I think, a philosophical question, at least in my mind, namely, what it what is self-determination, and who is the self who determines, you know, whatever self-determination brings about. And I'm also struck by the fact that this, as you know, we've been talking a little bit about your grandfather in some of our other recent podcasts, and the matter of self-determination was a very important one for him. So I'd be interested if you could talk about, as you may say, the United Nations in a certain sense ratifies the existence of - whatever it is - 195 or so nations, nation states around the world today, but the groups that you're talking about are nations in waiting there. How should we think about their future? Is it more about recognition within the countries in which they currently find themselves? Or is this involve separation of which, obviously, is a complicated matter?

**Ralph Bunche III** 08:28

Yeah, it's a very good question. I mean, it is the question for us as an organization. I think I can talk a little bit about what the right means and what it doesn't mean, this is at the beginning, and then think through a little bit with you about who is the self and what is that? So obviously, there are a couple of different forms of self-determination. Actually, I think often today, people are used to thinking about the concept of self determination almost as an individual right about each individual person being able to sort of live with some degree of autonomy. I think people think about that and talk about self-determination often in that individual capacity today. The self-determination that we're dealing with at the UNPO is not that, it's that it's the idea of group self-determination: self-determination of a people or of a nation. What is the right mean? Or does it not mean? I think the very easiest thing to say straight up front is that the right stuff to self-determination is not a right to independent statehood. And it's not something that we at the UNPO actively work on. There is some international law and more scholarly thinking around when self-determination might lead to independent statehood, particularly for people who are living in systems of oppression, where their future is a sort of a home for those people within the broader nation state that currently exists is not potentially, is not possible. There are some sort of discussions about that sort of independent statehood and all of that. But within the UNPO, that's not what we are mostly talking about. What we're mostly talking about is the right to self determination, as it's understood under international law. And that is sort of a two-fold right. People talk about it in this, I actually don't really want to get into the way they talk about it, I don't really like it. But they talk about this as the internal and external dimension of the right to self-determination. What they mean by that is that there's an internal dimension to self-determination, which allows people - which says that people should be able to control economic, social and cultural development, without outside interference. It's the concept of sort of internal self determination. So having a say in the issues that impact you around economic, social and cultural development, often having control of that. And there's an external dimension they talk about, which is the right for people to choose their status in the international community overlaying all of that is, sort of embedded in that is, the right for all people to equally participate in governance, and participate in governance that impacts them. So very broadly, I mean, that's what it is, that all people have this right, to, at some point, choose your status in the in the international community. But I think more importantly, to control economic, social, cultural development for themselves. And the difficulty of the right of self-determination is that all peoples have that right. All peoples have that right. And as a result of all peoples having that right, you have areas of overlap where one person, one group of people exercise the right to self-determination, and another group's exercise the right to self-determination could involve things like natural resources that are common to both groups. And then the tension in the right self-determination is to try and find a way in which the society in which they're living can meet both of those claims, and to ensure that ultimately each of those groups feel that they have the ability to control economic, social, and cultural development, albeit in the knowledge that that some of that control needs to be shared. And because of that, oftentimes, we are not talking about independence, because ultimately, when when you're dealing with these questions, I think the history of the world has shown that sort of arbitrarily creating new states, in those new states, you're never going to get a mono-ethnic society anyway, you're always going to get societies made up of multiple different groups of people with competing claims for self-determination. So what we care about at the UNPO is to try and find ways in which societies can meet those competing claims through the ability for people to participate in governments/governance, through different mechanisms through which people can have a right to say what they do in the issues around control. Where we do get into questions of independence is not on the rights for any group to have an independent state, but rather the right of all peoples to have that belief, and to seek it through nonviolent means. So we do a lot of work to try and protect people's freedom of opinion and expression around that issue. Even if that issue isn't one that we necessarily say yes to - there's a right to live in state that there isn't - but there's a right to seek it. To do it without punishment, as long as you're using nonviolent means. The difficult one is the second question that you asked John, which is what's the self that does the self-determining. So I said at the beginning, so the self is not an individual. In this case there is a different way of thinking around the right to self-determination as a concept, that is individual, but what we're talking about is group rights. And there, it gets very difficult. So what is that group - who defines it? Is it, you know, something that's bound only by territory? Is it bound by identity, but then if it's bound by identity, who gets to choose what parts of your identity you subscribe to? So it's a very, very difficult thing. And it's one that we'll talk later, but about the indigenous peoples' rights and it's also a very difficult one, where this has been very hard to sort of determine in a very legalistic way, what a group is that has that right. So what we talk about at the UNPO are peoples or nations are bound by some shared affinity, whether it's territory, ethnicity, language, some sort of cultural heritage, some sort of shared identity, that as a result of that shared identity has, has that right to claim it, to claim self determination. And the trick there is also to recognize that people can have multiple identities. So I'm sitting here in Brussels in Belgium, where you've got the Walloon State and the Flanders state, and you've got a Flemish-speaking parliament and a French-speaking parliament, and actually a little German territory as well. And all of these people have their individual rights as Flemish speakers, or people inhabiting Flanders, which is two different things, or French speakers or people who are inhabiting Wallonia, and also their identity as Belgians. And within Belgium, they have rights to self-determination of their groups and internationally have rights to self-determination of their groups and as a Belgian. So it's a very tricky concept, but it's one that's often about self-identification. And the importance of that is that you're trying to find and understand what it is that the people of the world, you know, identify by, and how they can, how we can create societies to meet their, their ultimate goals. Because if you don't create societies that are able to meet those ultimate goals, and to protect those identities and shared histories, you end up with a society that's fractured, that tends towards violence and war and is unstable. And what we're working towards is a stable, peaceful world where people's sort of needs and wants and their identities are protected.

**John Torpey** 16:50

Well, Belgium is indeed a real test case for many of these kinds of problems. It's such a complicated place, as you've just described, with two arguable- two nations based on language, shared religion, roughly speaking. But in any case, you know, it always seems like it's on the brink of collapse, and only recently got a government together after a long time of controversy between those two sides that kept it from having really a proper functioning government. But this discussion reminds me of the early foundational work on multiculturalism of Will Kymlicka, who made a basic distinction between colonized or immigrant minorities. That is to say quote, unquote, indigenous people and immigrant minorities. And he ascribed to indigenous groups a much different set of rights, because their submersion, so to speak, as minorities took place on the basis of an incursion of others, Europeans, who came and took over where they were, where as the immigrants came, by and large, in a voluntary way. So I wonder, I think this term indigenous peoples is really only 50 or so years old. And I wonder if you could say, you know, how you see the kind of distinction between these different types of groups and the sort of rights that they have based on their differing historical emergence, so to speak?

**Ralph Bunche III** 18:45

And it's a very difficult one, because it's very rare. There are the concepts of indigenous people, just like self-determination, and what is a group that has that right? The concept of indigenous people is still about self-identification. So even in and of itself, it's actually hard to sort of pinpoint specifically what it is that you're talking about; you kind of got at this issue of, well, okay, you've got people who are there first, and then people who were there later. At some point in time, that it's true. The difficulty is that, when you look at things historically, it's very rare that you have found people who haven't migrated at some point to where they are. You could go back as far as - you can keep going back and eventually you're going to find people who migrated to a place. And so in that context it's very difficult. And before I go back to sort of the history of it, to talk about and think about it in the context of Europe. They've gotten away with it now because, in Europe, in the communities that we work with, you're not talking about indigenous people anymore. We're talking about autochthonous people, which is a spin on the term effectively, but it's a recognition that ultimately, in a place like Europe, everyone has been a migrant at some point and displaced somebody else at some point in history. It's very rare to find that that well, that's not the case. There's like the Sami up in the Arctic Scandinavia that have a very strong claim to have not been sort of migrated in like others, but it's very rare. And so internationally, there's a difficult term. And one that has become more fractured, I think over time, and it's becoming more difficult, I can talk a little bit about that as well. So just to sort of step back on it. Quite right - so where does it come from this idea of indigenous people? How does it come about? I think the idea of people being displaced by incomers is sort of historical. Right, so it's been so historical, it's for a completely different type of analysis, one that you're probably better attuned to do there John with looking at it from a historical standpoint. But looking at it from the standpoint of rights, where does it come from, and you can see discussions around this really emerging 1950s, particularly around the creation of ILO, the International Labor Organization Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples' rights, which happened in 1957. But these discussions are ongoing. And they're happening largely as a result of this process of decolonizing the world where you're ending European Empire. And at the end of European Empire, you're creating states. But within those states, there are multiple different peoples, and it's possible to identify within those states of multiple different peoples groups that have been there for a longer period of time, whose culture and history and identity is inexorably tied to the land, the territory that they're living in. And the question of displacement, whether it's like physical displacement as in, like, moving people off the territory, or displacement in a different sense of not being able to use your language and your culture, because you've got a dominant culture, that sort of doing something else, and governing the society, leads to the need to have a discussion around a different group of people's rights to self-determination, and that's indigenous people. So understanding how that might be different to the broader concept of how self-determination is being used at that time to create new nation states as they decolonize the world largely around the boundaries that were created by the European and actually American empires, using those sort of territorial boundaries, and putting people together, makes people start thinking about indigenous peoples and in a very different way. And it's there for a long time with these discussions going on for a long time. Why you have this ILO convention from 1957, I think it was very quickly understood that convention was very quickly out of date or not really addressing the issues specifically around things like land rights and cultural identity in the way that they needed to be addressed. And so this stuff comes back on the agenda really in the 1980s at the international level, and you've got this very, very long period of. I think, well over 20 years of trying to get a declaration at the United Nations level on indigenous peoples, and also to find a forum for indigenous peoples for them to have their say at the United Nations level, which ultimately in the 2000s leads to the creation of a UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues and a Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. And that alongside a sort of revamp of the ILO convention that happened a bit earlier starts giving more sense and more meat and weight to the rights of indigenous peoples have, when it comes to their ability to control governance in their own territories, to have protection of the land rights, the cultural identity and all of those things and how they might fit in the context of a broader society. And there's been some more attempts to flesh that out. So in 2016, there's an American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. So that's the Inter-American system. One of the nice pieces about that was the process through which that was drafted and the Government of Costa Rica actually stood up and did the one thing that we would love to see governments do all around the world in many different ways, but stood up and gave their seat to the indigenous people of Costa Rica, to be able to sit and negotiate that declaration. So these things have sort of been been ongoing for quite some time, in that sense. I would say that sort of way we've got to where we are today, the challenge of where we are today is that we've not litigated, but we've not worked out and finalized our understanding of what it means to be indigenous. And as a result of that, there is quite some tension within both the communities themselves as to who is indigenous who gets to come to the permanent forum on indigenous issues, and all of these different things. And governments and authoritarian states have done a really great job of playing on those divides. And, actually funnily enough, I would say I'm most worried about with UNPO, and not within our organization, but within in my role at the UNPO it's driving a wedge between communities as a result of this sort of challenge around what's the definition of an indigenous person and having different groups saying, "well, I'm indigenous, and you're not indigenous, and you can come and I can't come" and creating sort of an environment where solidarity, I think, is breaking down a little bit as a result of this definitional issue. So for us at the UNPO, we much rather talk about the rights and what it means to be unrepresented than the specific sort of: are you a minority? Are you are autochthonous? Are you indigenous? We don't like to particularly get into the question of people's self identification and try to decide for them what they are, and what rights are near to them as a result under the international treaty. This is a bit of a problem in that regards. What we like to talk about and think about, is that what binds people that we work with, irrespective of how they are identified, is this the sense of exclusion from national governments, exclusion from governance over the issues that impact them, whether or not they're indigenous, autochthonous, minorities, or whatever, you might call people and actually sometimes majority groups. And that for us is how we try to address the issue. And I think what we are quite unique, what makes us quite unique is that approach enables us to have a forum that includes governments, indigenous communities, minority communities - minority communities would say that they are autochthonous communities - political parties, people's movements, majority communities who think they're excluded, and to be able to include all of those together and have peoples create solidarity through the understanding of the shared condition of being unrepresented or effectively disenfranchised at the national level.

**John Torpey** 28:00

Well, this is fascinating. As you may know, or may not know, I did a book about 15 years ago about the idea of reparations for historical injustices. And one of the things that struck me in doing that work was the way in which these efforts to rectify wrongdoing from the past has this tendency to reassert the lines of difference upon which those wrongs were initially perpetrated. And so you have the kind of problem that you've just described of tensions between different groups based on the question of whether or not they deserve some kind of special attention. In the book, I talk about a scene from the show "the West Wing", which may or may not be familiar to you, but it was an attempt to portray a more cleaned up version of what people thought of the Clinton White House. And it showed, at one point, a scene where I forgotten whether it was the chief of staff or something is interviewing a black guy that they have nominated to be Assistant Attorney General for civil rights. And they're having this discussion because he's recently been found to have written a blurb for a book called "The Unpaid Debt", which was clearly a play on a book by a guy named Randall Robinson called "the Debt" which was about what Americans owed to the descendants of slaves. And turns out that the chief of staff or whatever he was, is Jewish and says, "Well, you know, I'd love to give you the money, but seems that somebody stole my grandfather's wallet in Auschwitz". So it sort of portrayed these tensions between groups that have perfectly legitimate claims to some kind of reparation, but can create these sort of divisions. And I guess the question really fundamentally is: can one say that what we're really going to do is treat everybody as citizens equally. And that's our goal. And we're going to deemphasize or sort of bracket the peculiarities of how they got to be here and seek to treat everybody in some equal way. And is that ultimately a more productive route to go? Or, would the response to this would be certain people suffer or experience oppression on the basis of these categories and experiences from the past. And only some affirmative, so to speak, attention to those experiences can properly achieve social justice, in effect. So I wonder what you would say about that.

**Ralph Bunche III** 31:12

Well, ultimately I think that - the ultimate goal is exactly the set of the former peace, right. So the ultimate goal is a society where everybody can be treated completely equally, and it's completely blind. That's the ultimate goal. I think you have to get to a place where you're there. But practically, I think it's it's unrealistic to think that you can just sort of start afresh, and create a level playing field where everyone is actually practically and truly equal, without addressing those historical injustices through some, or - in Europe, you would call it positive discrimination, in America to affirmative action - but through some way in which you can try to redress historical imbalances. If you don't do that, you look at, I mean, from the United States, but you still have questions about voting rights, voting behavior. If you don't address historical imbalances, can you can you actually get to a point where all groups in the United States vote equally, not equally in terms of who they vote for, but in equal portion with each other, without having barriers for voting? It's very, very difficult. Otherwise, if you haven't gone back and address some of those issues. So I think you ultimately need to have an individual case specific response to each individual issue. And it's one that we deal with really a lot at the UNPO. So with this forum, getting everyone together, we try to have everyone work with each other, because they want to have a resolution on a specific topic or whatever it might be. And the challenge is always to be able to recognize that everyone's situations are fundamentally different, and so that the responses to those situations aren't going to be the same. There's no one cookie cutter approach to dealing with those issues. But there are also broader systemic challenges they all face, that you can that you can try and address. So I think yeah, I think ultimately, you have to just say the goal is pure equality, with no need for, as you call it, the United States affirmative action. But the reality of that, it's just not going to happen, that pure equality without addressing the historical injustices in some fundamental way. And what we would say at the UNPO, because we deal with a lot of societies that had all the conflicts inside them, and what we would say is, without being able to sit down at a minimum, even if you're not addressing it through some positive policy standpoint, and a minimum to have a process of reckoning, where these questions are openly discussed, and not suppressed in some way. At a minimum, you must have that. And it's the role and responsibility of government, everywhere, to do that. And that's part of the responsibility of governments when they deal with the right to self-determination. This is one of the ones that I like to talk about. The right to self determination is a right of people, but it's also an obligation on states. So what is the obligation on states when it relates to self determination? And the obligation on states is to facilitate the ability for all people to participate on an equal basis - doesn't mean necessarily completely hundred percent the same on all issues - but on a basis that's grounded in equality in governance. And that facilitation process might mean that government might have to take specific policy measures to enable and facilitate a group that has been marginalized to the extent that the exclusion from education, exclusion from economic opportunities, exclusion from voting prevents them from being able to truly participate in an equal basis. Government have a responsibility to do that. The government also has a responsibility to ensure that the questions around the society, the pluralism in a society, to recognize there's no such thing as a monoethnic society, that all societies are pluralistic in the sense that those questions must be addressed and discussions must be had about those things. And you can't just forget about them and just let them let them sit forever, because you let them sit forever they fester. And they turn into what I think you're seeing there in the States right now, with what's happening with Black Lives Matter movement and the counterreaction that you're seeing, and it leads that sort of frightening moment, because it hasn't been necessarily the reckoning that was needed.

**John Torpey** 35:47

Well, you've led directly into the next question I wanted to ask you, which is precisely about the recent wave of, some call it racial reckoning that's been going on in the United States. And from there, echoing, rippling out to the rest of the world, certainly to Europe, and its colonial pasts. I wonder how you see that relating to the kinds of issues that you've been able to address in UNPO, and how you think this is all going to play out.

**Ralph Bunche III** 36:19

it is directly relevant to the things that we address at UNPO, directly relevant globally, directly relevant in the United States. So I said before, we've got the District of Columbia, and Guam as members of the UNPO. These are groups - these are territories United States that are majority minority, I hate the way to put it that way but it's the best way I can say it pretty quickly. But majority minorities in those in those areas, and these people are disenfranchised. They don't have equal representation in Congress, they don't have equal representation in Congress so the people in Guam have no voting for President. I mean, it's just not an equal situation. And that has happened in large part because of a lack of historical reckoning. So look at Guam, a lack of historical reckoning with the fact - the very fact that the US was an imperial nation that has never happened. The US never really thought of itself as a as an imperial nation. But it is, you know, it was it had huge land masses after the Spanish American War; it had the Philippines, it had Guam and it had other places. It has Puerto Rico today. So the lack of reckoning of society as a colonial nation, as well as a reckoning of a society as a nation that has wreaked such havoc on on Native American populations, as well as a society that has a history of slavery and segregation. These reckonings need to have have happened, they have happened at different stages in the US. And that's a good thing. But they've never, they've not taken place in the way that you'd like to see them. And in one area, in particular, I think, and that's violence. The critical condition about having those discussions is that you're taking violence off the table, and that you're having these conversations without violence. But I mean, you're seeing it right now on the streets in the US, the the counterreactions, the violent counterreactions that are happening, typically, when people are out there trying to talk about the Black Lives Matter movement, talk about racial injustice in the United States, and you're seeing violence meted out in response, whether it's state sponsored violence or violence coming from militias, or even what you want, what you want to call these groups. That is no way to deal with the issue. And what makes me worried about the moment that's happening in the United States, in a way, it's sort of a heartening moment, because people are trying to have these discussions. But the way in which they're turning violent, is frightening to me. It harkens back to the way in which segregation was imposed violently, and slavery was imposed violently, and it raises a real concern as to how we would ever - I'm a US citizen, just don't listen to my accent - how we will ever in the us resolve these issues, if we're going to default to using violence in these situations?

**John Torpey** 39:22

Well, I certainly share your concern about that. And, once again, you've led directly into the next question I wanted to ask you, and that, of course has to do with the American election. You've talked about some of the very worrisome developments, just of the recent past the role of whatever they are militias or armed vigilantes and the possible kidnapping and potentially worse of a sitting governor. So these are all obviously very worrisome developments, but I wonder if you could say little bit about how from the point of view of Brussels how you think Europeans or, you know, looking at the election and the situation, the United States more generally. So we have a sense of how we're being viewed from outside, which I think is very important.

**Ralph Bunche III** 40:16

I would say it's a hard one because, you know, it's sitting in Brussels today, it's hard to escape the difficulties that we're having in the European Union right now. So it's hard to, obviously, everybody is always got their eye on what's happening in the States incredibly important power, and the decisions that get taken impact the world. But in so many ways, what you're seeing in the United States is being played out everywhere else in the world; whether it's in Brazil, whether it's India, whether it's in Europe. There are so many different things that are happening that are fundamentally changing the way in which we're looking at these institutions that we thought were established. I'm referring to Brexit to a certain extent. But I'm also referring to the the great existential crisis that the European Union has right now in trying to understand how are we going to respond to the rise of illiberalism in Eastern Europe. So efforts to pack the judiciary in Poland, efforts to deal with them and to restrict civil society elsewhere in Eastern Europe, how are we going to deal with the fundamental sort of repression of the Catalan movement in Spain, and the way in which the Spanish government has taken an extremely heavy hand to it to the extent that the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention is having to call out the fact that the Deputy Minister of Justice in Spain has said that they're going to decapitate their political rivals as it relates to the Catalan question: decapitate them by their actions. And I think this is causing such a fundamental fracture within Europe, that while there is ultimately concern about making sure that the US has a coordinated and coherent government and policies going forward that actually ultimately Europe itself is too busy looking internally to be able to deal with it. And for us, that's frightening. Not frightening, necessarily, because of what's happening in the United States. But it's frightening, because of what's happening in the People's Republic of China and what the Chinese Communist Party is doing. And we're frightened about that we're looking internally, we're navel gazing in Europe, in the United States, as to the way our societies are running, when we're missing out on the fact that you've got a new empire that's being formed, that's using economic development programs, to push out across Southeast Asia, to push out over South Asia. That is, you know, putting millions of Uighurs into concentration camps, that is going back into Tibet, occupied Tibet and doing the same thing, again in Tibet, putting people in concentration camps, that's doing it to the people of Inner Mongolia, that's threatening Taiwan, that's taking over Hong Kong in violation of international agreements. And all the while we're looking internally, and worrying about ourselves and not looking at this giant threat in a very coherent manner, whether it's United States or in or in the European Union. And this is what worries us, at least at the UNPO is that that we are sort of sleepwalking towards a global conflict because we're allowing, once again, a totalitarian party, whether it's now it's the Chinese Communist Party before it was the Nazi Party and the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, to spread out and bring repression and genocides everywhere else. So anyway, it's a long answer, that doesn't answer your question directly. But I think the big point is that we're both in Europe and United States where we're so worried about what's happening internally now, that we're not addressing the big global issues. We're not addressing climate change. We're not not addressing the Chinese Communist Party. And I think that's my big fear at least, that at the end of that, we get back to where we were hundred years ago, and it's a very, very scary world.

**John Torpey** 44:20

Well, on that uplifting

**Ralph Bunche III** 44:23

Sorry

**John Torpey** 44:25

Okay. \*\*Laughter\*\* I mean, certainly the matter of China is something that we have to pay more attention to in this podcast. But more generally, as a society, I totally agree that this is something that needs more attention than it's really been getting. But on that note, as I say, I want to thank Ralph Bunche III for taking time to discuss the activities of his organization, the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, and its activities and, more broadly, the situation in the world with regard to indigenous and minority peoples. I also want to thank Hristo Voynov for his technical assistance. This is John Torpey, saying thanks so much for joining us and we look forward to having you with us for the next episode of International Horizons.