**John Torpey** 00:04

Welcome to International Horizons, a podcast of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies that brings scholarly expertise to bear on our understanding of a wide range of international issues. My name is John Torpey, and I'm Director of the Ralph Bunche Institute at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Today, we examine the complexities of the notion of genocide and some of their consequences in the real world. In order to explore that issue, we're fortunate to have with us today Dirk Moses; Frank Porter Graham Distinguished Professor of Human Rights History at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Professor Moses is a prominent commentator on the history of human rights abuses, conflict and on modern German history. He also edits the Journal of Genocide Research. Thank you so much for taking the time to be with us today, Dirk Moses.

**Dirk Moses** 01:00

Great to be with you this morning.

**John Torpey** 01:02

Great to have you. Thanks so much. So you have a new book out with the title "The Problems of Genocide, Permanent Security and the Language of Transgression". Perhaps we could begin by having you tell us what you think are the problems of genocide?

**Dirk Moses** 01:21

Okay, that's a good question and an obvious question, but not necessarily an obvious answer. Now, in a banal way, obviously, genocide is a problem; no one would dispute that. But I'm asking a different question. It's less about mass death and the perpetrators and so forth -- which is, I think, quite well known to people who work in international human rights but also in the public more generally -- it's about the concept of genocide, that I'm interested in and that I think, is a problem. And it's a problem that occurred to me over 20 years of working in the field; I got my first job 20 years ago after a PhD at UC Berkeley and studying in Germany. I returned to the University of Sydney; I'm from Australia -- as you can probably guess -- where a debate was underway about genocide against indigenous peoples -- mainly at the time in the late 90s -- in relation to the practice that persisted into the 60s of taking indigenous children away from their families and then putting them in foster homes and so forth. There's an analogy with the residential school system in Canada and parts of the US. But unlike the residential school system, they didn't go home on the summers; they were permanently taken from their families. There's a well known film called "Rabbit-Proof Fence", which some of you may know, which depicts one of these episodes in Western Australia.

**Dirk Moses** 02:54

In any event, I came back to Australia, and I wanted to teach a course on genocide in global history, but of course, with a week or two on Australia. And there was no book for me to set. So I thought: "it's all very well for me to pontificate about German history" -- it was my PhD thesis and then book was about Holocaust memory in Germany -- which I know you're interested in as well, John, and no doubt many of your listeners -- but what about your own country? That's when history becomes difficult. It's when you look at the founding violence, the incipient criminality of the founding of your own state. And not that of an easy target like Germany, where the criminality was so obvious.

**Dirk Moses** 03:37

Now, not only was there no book to set but when I raised the issue in class, and I did so by inviting a colleague from the Indigenous Studies unit in the university -- because it's important that the students hear from indigenous scholars and not from me about these issues, or not just from me -- a number of students said: "You are insulting the memory of the victims of the Holocaust by claiming that indigenous peoples were victims of genocide" whether in Australia or North America, South America, and so forth. They're just completely different cases. And the genocide concept really is reserved for just a very special select cases, the Holocaust above all, Rwanda, Cambodia, maybe Srebrenica in former Yugoslavia and Armenia. Sort of four or five cases across the 20th century. And that did lead to a teaching moment with them; there were students who then responded to that. And that led actually to really interesting debate. But I, I was struck by the certainty with which those students and I said this denunciation of my indigenous colleague, who was quite shocked, actually. And I have encountered that style of argumentation again and again.

**Dirk Moses** 05:01

And when I started a new project, which is called "The Diplomacy of Genocide", which is about post-war claims of genocide in secessionist civil wars. In Nigeria, that would be the Biafracase in the late 60s, and then in east Pakistan in 1971. I was struck that that reasoning recurred. So when Biafrans and then the East Pakistani Liberation movement, the Bengalis in now Bangladesh, argued that what was occurring to them was genocide, they were met with the response of "no, no, what you're going through is a civil war -- horrible as it might be -- but it's not genocide, because for it to be genocide needs to resemble the Holocaust". There was sort of a syllogistic chain of reasoning.

**Dirk Moses** 05:54

And I realize that in many claims of victims in which there are massive civilian casualties, that was beyond dispute; it was a categorization issue. Many victims of mass casualties, civilian casualties, above all, are not getting the recognition in international law and in the international public sphere because their cases don't resemble the Holocaust. And it was clear to me, as an intellectual historian who was interested in the way language frames people's perceptions of things, is that this was a style of argumentation that itself had a history. And I determined to write a history of the genocide concept.

**Dirk Moses** 06:41

But after all, [the genocide concept] is rather new. It was effectively invented in 1943 in Raphael Lemkin's head. He published it in a book, which came out in late 1944. There were a few references to genocide in the Nuremberg trials, but it wasn't one of the indictments which were crimes against humanity; above all, crimes of aggression, and war crimes. But several years later, genocide quickly surpassed those other crimes, which were until then the crime of crimes, especially the crime of aggression. It surpassed them, and then has become the benchmark for mass criminality. And that is which shocks the conscious of mankind, which is in the preface, or the rather, the preamble to the UN General Assembly resolution calling for a Genocide Convention in late 1946.

**Dirk Moses** 07:35

Versions of this curious phrase are littered throughout international humanitarian declarations, preambles to the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, and so forth. I was fascinated by this curious turn, shocking the conscience of mankind. And it became clear that there is a history of the way [in which] initially Westerners, but [also] now a global discourse talked about mass atrocities and what the limit was, what that threshold was, for that which is truly shocking. And thus, calls for international intervention of whatever kind.

**Dirk Moses** 08:20

And the threshold after the Second World War was genocide. And that was indentured to an image of the Holocaust, which was genocide archetype or ideal type. Okay, so I wanted to write a history of how we ended up with this situation with his strict hierarchy of criminality, with genocide at the top is the crime of crimes, which I saw blending out lots of other types of mass violence against civilians. So my normative standpoint is trying to prevent mass violence against civilians, or even other kinds of low intensity but ongoing violence against civilians: like occupation regimes and so forth, which we can get into. Why don't we find those truly shocking? I'm interested in how certain types of violence were framed as truly shocking for the conscience of mankind, but others weren't.

**Dirk Moses** 09:14

That those categories [of violence] are not natural despite what our friends in international law and international relations think. They take the UN Charter as given. And then, this is how the UN system works, the international system works. And international lawyers say: "well, here's the UN, here's the Rome Statute of the ICC. Let's see what applies in different circumstances." Whereas we historians are asking: "well, why do we have these categories at all? They have a history", "How did the drafting procedure or process work?", "which crimes or which policies and practices were omitted? which were included?", "which interests were at play in these drafting negotiations?" whether for the Genocide Convention or the Geneva Conventions in 1949, which are very, very important as well and people are working on that. So as an historian, I want to go back and do a genealogy and archaeology of how we ended up with this peculiar hierarchy of criminality and these array of different international crimes -- like crimes against humanity, war crimes, crimes against peace and genocide, which have been bundled as atrocity crimes by the UN along with ethnic cleansing -- which a lot of your viewers are familiar with. But rather than take them for granted, I want to understand how we ended up with this.

**John Torpey** 10:35

Right. It's a fascinating exploration in the book. And, as you may know, when I did my own book on the idea of reparations for historical injustices, I came across this phenomenon all the time. So that anybody, who was seeking reparations for whatever it happened to their group, tried to demonstrate or establish that one could liken it to the Holocaust. So, for example, there's a book about the genocide of the Native Americans, it's called "American Holocaust". And that was obviously not chosen randomly as a title. But in any case, what you're saying is that there's been this hierarchization of forms of violence, or violence as such, as a result of the creation of this notion of genocide, which is so widely seen as a kind of achievement to the international community. A way of talking about a particular kind of crime and a way of thinking about how it should be punished and all these kinds of things. So it's a really fascinating project. And, you have this subtitle about permanent security in the language of transgression, and maybe you could tell us now what those terms refer to and how they are a response to the problems of genocide?

**Dirk Moses** 12:01

Yeah, thanks for that. So this term "shocking the conscience of mankind" was, for me, a way into writing a history of the concept of genocide before the concept existed. So, as I mentioned, until the Second World War, this word didn't exist. And yet, people had been talking about atrocity, obviously, in denouncary form for hundreds of years in the West, and no doubt in other in other cultural systems as well, but I don't have those languages. And Raphael Lemkin, who invented the concept was coming out of a Western legal tradition. So that's the one I investigated. And what's clear, is that he distills in one word, an entire intellectual tradition of talking about atrocities. And I call that the language of transgression.

**Dirk Moses** 12:59

Now, this is the intellectual historian and I'm interested in political languages or idioms. And "shocking the conscience of mankind" were keywords in that language. And what I decided to do was write in the first two chapters, it kind of potted history of those over 90 pages, starting with what I thought the origins of this was; of "shocking", of "conscience", and of "mankind/humanity". And I mean, the purest among us will say: "you have to go back to Rome, that is where it all starts". But I'm not. I can't go back that far. Where I see the modern language of transgression crystalizing is in "Bartolome de Las Casas' well-known denunciations of Spanish colonial or Imperial excesses in Latin America in a number of books, he wrote in the middle of the 16th century -- which I taught to undergraduates in this country -- along with Sepulveda's defense of the these Imperial practices. Especially whether the indigenous peoples had rights and so forth.

**Dirk Moses** 14:08

Now, [Bartolome] de las Casas use these terms, "shocking conscience and mankind" throughout these books. And they were widely translated in Europe. It wasn't just that he was a blip in history. He inaugurated a style of criticizing Imperial excesses. And I can't go into too much detail here, but his books were widely translated in Protestant Europe as a way of attacking the Spanish Empire by rival Protestant empires, above all the Dutch and the British. And they criticized the Spanish and the Portuguese empires for enslavement, for plunder, and for massacres. That was for them what those empires signified and this is now known as the black legend of Iberian Imperial rapacity. By contrast, the Imperial apologies for the Dutch, and above all the British, is that "we don't engage in conquest an empire, we engage in settlement and colonization; we bring agriculture and progress". It's a John Locke applied in Virginia and so forth. "And we try to conciliate the natives and convert them voluntarily through uplift in a kind of moral liberal Empire".

**Dirk Moses** 15:34

So, here I see the birthplace in the language of transgression of the other subtitle of the book, which is permanent security here. And I'll get to the origin of that particular and peculiar phrase shortly. But from the early modern period, the rival claims of European empires in the rival models: one, the black legend of the Iberian elite, the exploitative plunderous one, versus the settlement colonization "liberal" one, presents us with a with a dichotomy, which I see enduring into the modern period. And particularly interesting for me is the "liberal" one, which becomes incarnated in the British Empire in the 19th century, which, after the abolition of slavery in its own realm, then uses the British Navy to police many parts of the globe in suppressing the slave trade. But in doing so, of course, expands its own Imperial realm, which will include selling opium, while encouraging the opium trade in China, and so forth.

**Dirk Moses** 16:52

The Pax Britannica becomes a becomes the vehicle for liberal permanent security, which really means pacifying the globe in the name of humanity. And that's what makes it liberal. And Pax Americana has taken this on: "we're doing this not for us, well, not only for us, but for humanity as a whole." Whereas, illiberal permanent security is the assertion of a particular interest: in the Nazi case, German interest, or Aryan interest if you want to use their language. So, it's not interested in humanity or the welfare of humankind, and it disregards international law. Whereas the liberal mode of permanent security uses international law as its vehicle; it creates international law, and thereby justifies or legalizes it modes of governance and domination over indigenous people initially to secure its realm and political power.

**Dirk Moses** 17:56

Now, what is the difference between security and permanent security? Well, the difference is this: permanent security means the application of usually state force in order to secure for a particular entity: safety not only now, but in the future forever. So it's quite a grandiose claim, which unnecessarily is going to result in in excesses. Because not only are you dealing with immediate threats, which every state is entitled to do; every state or individual has a right to some security. Permanent security is a kind of a paranoid hyper vigilance, not just vigilance, hyper vigilance, which is always looking for threats, to like a hyper threat perception. And thereby stalks the world, trying to liquidate those that might be threatening in the future. So it's quite an expansive dynamic. And, I do see that in history in many ways with expansive empires.

**Dirk Moses** 19:04

And then you also see it in two ways. So it's important to disaggregate this concept, there's the liberal and the illiberal version. So this might be very abstract, but the modes of domination, the applications of violence are different. So the Nazi version, if you like, is the most extreme version of a illiberal permanent security, and there's a long chapter on this in the book. If you read the documents closely, you know that the Nazis were obsessed with security, and they wanted to annihilate enemy peoples of different types, but above all Jews, because they were considered a threat.

**Dirk Moses** 19:43

Now, I'm not saying that they were, in fact a threat. It's a fantasy and this is why we need to study these fantasies as historians, but they were regarded as an act of threat. If you read Saul Friedlander's famous book on Nazi Germany [you will see that] he talks about this in terms of redemptive anti-semitism. And he acknowledges that the Nazis regarded "organized Jewry" or "world Jewry" as an active threat and menace to Germans.

**Dirk Moses** 20:11

Now, the liberal version is not engaging in setpiece genocide. It's engaging in police actions. And the temporality is slightly different. The temporality is using military necessity; military rather than genocidal logic, in order to put down resistance to liberal empire. And certainly, after the saturation bombing of the Second World War, the atomic attacks on Japan, the excessive bombing of parts of North Korea and Vietnam, the American military has moved to precision bombing, which is no doubt a positive development from a civilian perspective. But it does mean that there is an acceptance of accumulated small scale civilian casualties that over time will accumulate. So, this is a logic on why it's liberal permanent security: in order to guarantee your security there in New York, or the security of farmers in the middle of this country, or coal miners in Virginia (if there are any left), or oil diggers in Texas, you have to have drones flying around Central Asia who are killing perceived threats and those that are in their immediate vicinity. And this is ongoing. And there are people in this country that are tracking the casualties. And it is a mounting number. And it will be ongoing because it's legal, because of collateral damage calculations which are within international law.

**Dirk Moses** 20:35

And that's what worries me. I'm obviously worried about the kind of more recognizably genocidal conjunctions that you have in Myanmar or China and in other parts of the world. They're legible as genocide, for obvious reasons. But there's a lot of violence against civilians that's not legible as genocide, and it's not picked up even by other elements of international law. And yet, they're accepted; it's not considered shocking to shock the conscience of mankind, and that concerns me. So the book is trying to rearrange our mental and imaginative apparatus of shock.

**John Torpey** 22:47

So, the term genocide has, as we said before, kind of created a focus on certain kinds of violence, and has provided for remedies: the Genocide Convention, if a genocide is declared, countries are supposed to intervene and do something about that set of circumstances, which is one reason I think it actually has had, in certain ways, relatively limited effect in reality. It has led to relatively little in the way of prosecutions at the International Criminal Court. But it has kind of overtaken the rhetorical space, so to speak, in a way that you're describing. So this is not an abstract discussion of etymology that we're talking about; you're talking about changing our perception of what's going on in the world in the in the realm of violence. And I wonder, from a practical perspective, what would change if the views expressed in the book were actually persuasive to a lot of people? As you just suggested, you hope they will be.

**Dirk Moses** 24:06

Well, what I'm proposing, in a somewhat utopian gesture, is that we wipe away this current somewhat complex architecture of war crimes; crimes against humanity, genocide, and so forth; which are bundled into atrocity crimes. And as you acknowledge, genocide is very, very difficult to prosecute and replace it with the crime of permanent security. There's no way this would ever be accepted because states have limited the definition of genocide to make it resemble the Holocaust as much as possible. So that they have a free reign to apply their sovereign rights in the way they conduct civil wars or bomb other peoples. And that's why international law is so limited in many ways, that's the idea. In the somewhat whiggish romantic view of the development of international humanitarian law and human rights law is that there's a steady upward trend of humanization of international affairs. I could give you some examples of how this is put together as a narrative, but very basically, is that after the First World War, we had these failed war crimes trials against Ottoman and German leaders who lost, obviously, but they did sort of set a precedent of some kind. And then you had Nuremberg, which was a great improvement. Then you had this human rights revolution immediately after the war, and the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the Genocide Convention, the Geneva Conventions in 1949, the Refugee Convention 1951. And then you had the ad-hoc criminal tribunals in the 90s for the former Yugoslavia, and Rwanda, and then the ICC, and there's sort of an upward trend.

**Dirk Moses** 25:58

Well, a number of us are thinking that you can see this as a downward trend. These various moments in which state parties negotiated these legal instruments were opportunities for them to limit the scope of the law in the prosecution of state interests. And this is why the Genocide Convention is so limited in its application and why states have been able to get away with what they have in these various conflicts in Nigeria, as I mentioned, in Pakistan and the Myanmar case, and so forth so easily. They have been able to get away with it, so easily since they know [to say] that: "no, this is an application of security or military logic, which is legal, not genocidal logic".

**Dirk Moses** 26:50

So replacing the current architecture with permanent security is designed to get away around those excuses. Because I'm focusing on state actions in terms of security, rather than an alleged racial intent, which is what is embedded in the Genocide Convention. It requires the intent to destroy an ethnic, racial or religious group as such. And the way that's been interpreted in the jurisprudence is that the intent of the state, or the guilty party, has been to attack a group simply on identity grounds. In the book, I show this is a depoliticization of violence, because it implies that people are attacked simply on, if you like, emotive grounds or racial hatred, rather than a state claim that they fear that group, or that members of that group are engaged in an insurgency. And if you look empirically at the mass violence against civilians since the Second World War, and indeed before then, you will see that they are embedded in complex circumstances where there is a lot of political violence. And racialization processes have been wrapped up with securitization processes.

**Dirk Moses** 28:12

By focusing on excessive security as a crime, rather than Holocaust-like events, which can never be really proven, I'm hoping that states would be forced to justify their policies put before the international public sphere and say why they're proportionate and reasonable. And in doing so, rather than deciding "that's not genocide, so leave us alone" which is what they've been doing so far, or, as in say the Darfur case, which gives you a very good sense of the way hierarchies of criminality are perceived in international relations. When the UN report came out in 2007, and said "what's happening in Darfur is not genocide, but crimes against humanity", at least in part, there was an audible sigh of relief in Khartoum and among some members of the African Union: "Okay, that's not so bad...Phew! kind of were off the hook here" as if crimes against humanity are not shocking and outrageous. But that's what we've come to.

**Dirk Moses** 29:17

Now, as a footnote here, the lawyers listening will complain that in the ICC statute, there is no hierarchy of criminality; that war crimes and crimes against humanity and above all, genocide in relation to crimes against humanity are not in a hierarchy. That may well be true, but it's not the public perception. And it's certainly not the perception that the UN gives in public statements. So in effect as a political fact, there is definitely a hierarchy. So I'm trying to get away from hierarchies so that when a state, or a party or a non-state party, is accused of a crime of permanent security, they are forced to justify why the action they've undertaken is legitimate and proportionate.

**John Torpey** 30:05

I want to ask you a question now that is apropos your background as an intellectual historian, and it's about the kind of argument that you're making, and whether we're not sort of observing a kind of trajectory of the way in which World War 2 was processed. So it seemed to me that if you went to a bookstore 30 years ago, you would find a big section on World War 2. And then over time, basically, you've got a small section on World War 2 and a large section about the Holocaust. And then over time, there was a kind of shift away from an exclusive focus on the Holocaust and a broader focus on genocide, and the kind of hierarchy that you've been describing. And I wonder whether, in some ways, what we're talking about is a kind of shifting relationship to that set of events that has to do in part with the passing of the last of those who lived through it. Does that make sense as a kind of interpretation of some of this at least? I mean, not the substance of your argument, but the fact that people are thinking in this kind of way more.

**Dirk Moses** 31:21

Yeah, that's really fascinating. The hold on the imagination, the moral and political imagination of mass criminality that the Second World War exerts, above all the Holocaust, is striking. But you know, it's partial. It's not just that the Holocaust or D-Day occupied [imaginations], it's that the bombing of civilians has been forgottten, largely. It's integral to the way World War 1 and 2 was fought.

**Dirk Moses** 31:54

I'm going to read out a little passage here from Robert Jackson, who was, of course the American Chief Prosecutor in the Nuremberg trials and a celebrated jurist here, who would be seen as an icon of international law and justice. But here he is writing an article in New York Times Magazine in September 1945, soon after he had arrived in Germany and was engaging in the preparations for the trials. And he's trying to prep the American public for the trials, but also for the Cold War, which was brewing. The article was called "The Worst Crime of All". Now, it's not the Holocaust. He said, its aggressive warfare which was the supreme crime, because all other war crimes derived from this act of invasion. Now from the terrible ravages of the war that he witnessed as he toured the defeated Germany and learned of these crimes, he drew further conclusions. He wrote, "if there are to be future wars, we have got to win them by being better killers, by killing more and killing more quickly than the enemy, by killing with less risk to ourselves." So these are his words.

**Dirk Moses** 33:13

In making this declaration, he then proceeded, which is for a lawyer quite remarkably, to advocate violating the principle of distinction between combatants and non-combatants by casting warfare as a conflict between peoples and not solely between military forces. So he was reasoning here like the interwar, air-war theorists --in the 1920s and 30s, there was a large debate about aerial bombing and whether to bomb cities, whether it was moral and so forth-- and he was echoing their arguments. Although he didn't mention the Allied bombings of German and Japanese cities, which had just occurred and killed hundreds of thousands of civilians. He was thinking, of course of the future war with the Soviet Union, and he wrote the following... and this is, of course, to the American public and the New York Times Magazine. "For the fact is obvious that modern war has become more and more a struggle between whole populations and not between armies alone. The issue is, which shall be subjugated, and which will survive."

**Dirk Moses** 34:21

Now, I was quite shocked when I read that because that is already moving into a kind of genocidal space where entire populations are considered as an enemy and liable to destruction through air warfare, through bombing, rather than just the military forces. And what's so curious for this style of reasoning for a lawyer like him is that it violates the principle of distinction between combatants and non-combatants, which is what I'm interested in. And his rationale wasn't taken up into the way that the American war in North Korea and in Vietnam was waged. And led, at least in the Vietnam case, which is not one you mentioned, to a debate about what the Americans were doing in Vietnam was genocide. Now that debate fizzled out in the late 70s, because, in the end, the critics who are on the left and anti-war, obviously, couldn't make out the case that the American campaign in Vietnam sufficiently resembled the Holocaust, which it didn't obviously. These are a very different situation. I don't think people should be engaged in sort of sloppy analogizing.

**Dirk Moses** 35:39

What's so fascinating about this debate, as well as disturbing, is that it kind of ended by the time Reagan is elected here. And then we have a revival of Cold War, chest-beating, and a remilitarization of American foreign policy. And then in the 90s, when you get these genocidal situations in Africa and in the Balkans, you get a revival of the genocide rhetoric in a new field called genocide studies, which is developed since then. And I'm involved in it; I edit the major journal in the field. And genocide studies as a field, and through the NGO sector that utilizes that term and pushes for American intervention to stop those genocides.

**Dirk Moses** 36:29

So genocide studies and the genocide rhetoric, the interventionist-preventionist rhetoric, becomes a vehicle for American interventionism, which, in many ways, is a continuity of the militarization of American policy that was criticized in Vietnam. And it's done in the name of now, global security. And it's no accident that one of its icons, Samantha Power, was a proponent of the destruction of the Libyan state in 2000, you know, 10 years ago, which has led to catastrophic consequences for the people of North Africa and Europe indirectly as well.

**Dirk Moses** 37:15

So, you can see that I have concerns about the way the genocide concept can be mobilized to destabilize regions, even if at times it's well intentioned. I understand the motivation to prevent genocide, believe me, I've experienced it too. But one needs to be very, very careful about the politicization of it. And I think it makes much more sense to think in terms of excessive securitisation, rather than just looking for episodes of genocide around the world that one can prevent. And then thinking that one can mobilize massive state power in doing so, when that application of state power is itself implicated in killing quite a lot of civilians.

**John Torpey** 38:07

So let me ask you one last question, before we let you go. Your book is really about categorizations of violence; where they stand in our moral hierarchy, so to speak. So it's not about numbers. But a number of years, a few years ago, Steven Pinker wrote a big and widely received book about basically the decline of violence in the modern world. And in the 20th century, actually in particular, which seemed counterintuitive to a lot of people given what had happened in both the First and Second World Wars. And the genocide idea is meant to stanch a particular kind of violence, but it's meant to sort of undercut violence more generally. And I wonder if you have a view on that debate which has died down perhaps in the meantime, but it was a matter of concern, certainly, to those of us in the social sciences who are concerned about violence. Have we done any better at reducing the amount of wanton criminal violence that takes place in the world?

**Dirk Moses** 39:16

So I think it all depends on where you look. I think it's clear that interpersonal violence for privileged, many white people in the West, has definitely declined. And even in my lifetime. To think of a banal example: I'm a classic Generation X, and it was quite common when I was a schoolboy until the mid 80s that students would be subject to "the cane", as we call it, to corporal punishment from the headmaster. I mean, that's now unthinkable. I mean, the teacher would go to jail for child abuse if they did that today. So that's taken place pretty quickly. And that is, of course, a banal example.

**Dirk Moses** 40:01

For those less racially privileged, there seems to be plenty of violence going on. And a lot of that, of course, is linked to poverty and class status and to lack of access to resources and so forth. So it's important to disaggregate within Western societies and not just between Global North and Global South. Much depends as well on how you define violence. As I understand it, Pinker is less interested in notions like structural violence, or the asymmetries in power which result in the dysfunction of state capacities in the Global South through structural adjustment programs and so forth, which then indirectly lead to push factors and then massive migration flows from Africa into Europe, which has led to quite a bit of fatalities in the Mediterranean, and not to speak of the hyper-exploitation of sweatshop workers in Bangladesh; so that we can buy some cheap t-shirts, and Nike shoes and things like that.

**Dirk Moses** 41:14

So I think once you sort of broaden the understanding of what violence can look like, then it's displaced from the inside to the outside. So in order that we can live less violent lives, the other people have to endure various types of violences, so that there's less stress in our lives. And here I am speaking to a privileged audience, if you like, but a condition of possibility of this comfortable lifestyle is the violent existence of people, not only in other parts of the world, but also in this country as well. So people have made this criticism to Pinker already. I'm not saying anything that others haven't said; there's a terrific review of his book, actually, by John Gray, the philosopher, in The Guardian which is very worth looking at. So, I don't think it makes sense to sort of statistically try to track violence of one kind over the centuries, as he's done, in order to argue that the Enlightenment project, narrowly defined as he does, it is still ongoing. I think if you look at it globally and capaciously in terms of what violence is, then you'll see that most privileged modes of existence are predicated on the displacement of an deterritorialization of violence to elsewhere. I think that would be a more holistic way of looking at it.

**John Torpey** 42:54

Well, thank you, Dirk Moses. You've given us a lot to think about. As we go forward, a lot to think about in terms of violence and genocide and moral hierarchies and much else besides. So thanks so much for joining us for today's episode of International Horizons. I want to thank Dirk Moses of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for sharing his insights about the problems with the concept of genocide and what we might do about them. Remember to subscribe and rate International Horizons on SoundCloud, Spotify and Apple podcasts. I want to thank the Otto and Fran Walter Foundation for its support of our European oriented programming. I also want to thank Hristo Voynov for his technical assistance and Merrill Sovner for helping to produce this episode. I also want to thank and acknowledge Duncan Mackay for sharing his song "International Horizons" as the theme music for this show. This is John Torpey, saying thanks for joining us and we look forward to having you with us for the next episode of International Horizons.