

Richard Falk

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SPEAKERS

Jessica Knezy, Zoe Varenne, Sam Coleman, Tom Pegram, Richard Falk

Tom Pegram 00:00

Hi, and welcome to 'Global Governance Futures', based out of the UCL Global Governance Institute. This is a podcast about the challenges facing humanity, and possible global responses. If you're new to the show, and you want to get a list of our favourite books are the resources, listen to past shows, and to join our community, go to ucl.ac.uk/global-governance. Just to forewarn you that we did experience some technical problems with the sound in this episode, we hope that you will still enjoy this conversation.

Tom Pegram 00:48

It's a real pleasure to introduce our guests on this episode of 'Global Governance Futures'. Professor Richard Falk. Professor Falk is a world renowned authority on international law, global politics and ethics. He taught at Princeton University Politics Department for over 40 years, and has published upwards of 50 books and many articles on international law. Over a long and distinguished career, beginning in the late 1950s, Professor Falk has been a prominent and outspoken critic of the Westphalian system of nation states, and what he views as a status quo geopolitics, which is permissive, if not complicit in the face of gross injustice. In a recent piece titled 'Twilight of the Nation State at a Time of Resurgent Nationalism,' he restates his conviction that quote, "no adequate political mechanism is available to protect the global or human interest, as distinct from the national interest or its aggregation." Professor Falk was chair of the Nuclear Age Peace Foundation's Board of Directors until 2012, and has served as honorary vice president of the American Society of International Law. In 2008, he was appointed UN Special Rapporteur on Palestinian human rights by the UN Human Rights Council, where he served until 2014. Well known as an activist scholar, Professor Falk decided early on in his career, that he had an ethical duty to combine academic work with political activism in a role he describes as: the Citizen Pilgrim. Indeed, his most recent book, published just last week is titled, 'Public Intellectual, the Life of a Citizen Pilgrim', and recounts his extraordinary journey through the momentous twists and turns of the past half century. So welcome, Richard, thank you for joining us today.

Richard Falk 02:53

Thank you, Tom. It's a pleasure to be with you.

Tom Pegram 02:58

Yeah and before we begin, I'd really like to just invite our students, our poll crew to introduce themselves.

Jessica Knezy 03:04

Hi, I'm Jessica, and I work on the research and the logistics for the podcast.

Sam Coleman 03:11

Hi, my name is Sam, and I work on the audio and video editing. So any problems on that, feel free to hit me up. And I'm really looking forward to this conversation with Richard today.

Zoe Varenne 03:22

Hi I'm Zoe, I tend to do social media and some of the research as well. And I'm also very excited about this conversation.

Tom Pegram 03:30

Okay, great. Well, for my part, as an international relations scholar, who is grappling with water, an age of planetary crisis might mean for this discipline, it's been fascinating to find that this kind of debate is actually nothing new indeed the 1960s and 1970s, was a time of very lively discussion on questions of world order in the context of ecological crisis. And I've been left wondering what value we might find in excavating from these earlier now forgotten debates. And this is really a rare opportunity to speak with one of its key protagonists. So I'd love to nerd out a little bit, Richard, and ask you to kind of cast your mind back to those days. So by the late 1960s, you were already directing your attention towards what you described in a letter to the famous political theorist Harold Lasswell, the ecological demographic and biogenetic aspects of the future of world order. I was wondering what prompted this intellectual shift at a time when the war and peace, Cold War, bipolar paradigm was so dominant in the discipline?

Richard Falk 04:45

Well, it was a momentous change of direction for me not so much from thinking along the Cold War, bipolar axis of concern But it was a departure from my involvement with the opposition to the Vietnam War which was a very preoccupying issue in the United States throughout the 1960s, and really was a transformative moment for myself well, because it led me away from being a library, classroom academician to wanting to be an engaged citizen at the same time. And I was very influenced by a trip I made in the middle of the Vietnam War to North Vietnam, where I witnessed the effects of a high technology war being waged against a low technology society and how the Vietnamese people, which I found very impressive from a cultural and social point of view, were completely vulnerable and victimised by this enemy who was projecting its military power at such great distances. Let me now get to your question, which is really a, was a kind of capricious change in my own research agenda, I was spending a year of leave from Princeton at the Stanford Centre for the Advanced Study of the Behavioural Sciences. And in the very early days, I was there, I went to get a drink at the Carter water cooler, and had a long conversation with a physicist at Stanford, who persuaded me to drop what I was working on, which was to bring together my writing on Vietnam, and address this planetary crisis that he convinced me was emerging. And the more I looked into it, the more convinced I became, he was right. And so I really altered my projected research and had a kind of accidental reinforcement of that,

because the cultural editor of the New York Times came to write a feature story on the activities of this research centre in the middle of Stanford University, and ended up just... He interviewed several people there and including myself and ended up devoting his column in the New York Times, to my proposed research, and that generated a lot of interest that unprecedented before or ever since, in the manuscript that I hadn't started writing, 22 publishers got in touch with me, and it was quite an overwhelming experience. But it certainly led me to try to work out my thinking about these issues. And I produced a book called 'This Endangered Planet', which was published in 1972, by Random House, one of the mainstream publishers that academic people like myself don't often get published by. And I then sort of dropped the issue and it had very, it was only tangentially connected with the WOM (World Order Models) project. Because the WOM project was funded and conceived by Saul Mendlovitz. And the funders were not, he wasn't the funder, but his friends who were Wall Street entrepreneurs, provided the funding and they held the kind of world federalist, World Government outlook that emerged out of really out of World War Two, there was this sense that the world could not afford a third World War and that world government was the answer. And the shape of that world government was prefigured in the US Constitution. So it was very much a kind of export global, an attempt to globalise American market oriented constitutionalism. And this was not what ended up being the actual WOM project because it's one of these instances where the person that really imagined the project, thought of it as World Government advocacy. But it turned out that he was the only one that shared that outlook among the research scholars like myself that participated. And what it's real value turned out to be was the way people from different civilizational and ideological backgrounds understood what the planetary crisis was, and what to do about it. And it illustrated the very sharp division between those of us in the North who were worried about war and war prevention, and those in the Global South, who were preoccupied with post-independence state Building and development and economic development and domestic state building, were really the priorities and they just wanted to stay out of this geopolitical conflict that was so preoccupying for those of us in Europe, North America, and Soviet Union. So it was, and the books that came out of the WOM project, none of them are, one would say, could be considered as a, as proposing that the solution of the planetary crises was, could be achieved by a world government in the American model. Mine probably came close. My book from the project called 'The Study of Future Worlds' probably came closest. But I very carefully avoided the rhetoric of World Government and talked about central guidance system and used a different kind of language to say, there was a need for more globalised problem solving mechanisms. But there was no political traction behind the idea of World Government. And given the economic inequalities that existed in the world, it would have been a likely disaster to have attempted to combine such diverse political communities into a single confederated whole and probably would have led to some form of either chaos or tyranny. And, and would not be a very constructive response to the issues that were at the surface back then 50 years ago.

Tom Pegram 13:52

You've raised a lot of really important and fascinating issues that we could explore. I suppose one thing I'd like to ask is, to what extent? Well, I mean, I think it would be a surprise to many people to learn how sophisticated the academic discussion was around the possibility of a global, federated formal social organisation during that time, I don't think that many scholars today, and certainly many students really have much knowledge of those earlier debates. And I'd be curious to ask to what extent that also reflected kind of a desire to bring in a more Global South, developing country perspective. Now I have

found a quote from the former famous Indian Prime Minister, Nehru, who was no utopian, and he essentially argued in the mid 1950s, that the only way to look ahead assuredly, is for some kind of world order, one world, to emerge. And I'm wondering to what extent that's sort of rhetoric reflected sort of geopolitical strategic positioning or to what extent that reflected a real sense that this could be a pragmatic possibility. Your response, your earlier response seems to suggest perhaps the former more than the latter.

Richard Falk 15:18

It's probably hard to say and different people probably had different ways of configuring a response. I think they're what, the further you got from World War, the end of World War Two, the less was invested by at least elite figures in the idea that there needed to be a fundamental change in the way in which the world was organised. In the immediate aftermath of World War Two, there was this sense that it was too dangerous to persist as a world order, and the world government rhetoric was, seemed to be the most accessible rhetoric in order to address that challenge. But as the Cold War paradigm began to be dominant, it seemed just implausible to think that you could get enough agreement among the leading states to shape any kind of global order that was more centralised and the but the notions of bipolarity took precedence in the mainstream. So efforts like the WOM project, really were reactions to this kind of drift away from the sort of sentiments that individuals like Nehru or Bertrand Russell and others had had, after World War Two, Einstein and Buckminster Fuller, they sort of geopolitical, the inventor of the geodesic dome and kind of visionary architects had this phrase "Utopia or else..." You know, in fact, say, suggesting that what realists thought feasible, was a path to dystopia, to a dystopian future. And, and so there was this underlying sense that something fundamental had to be changed. But that was really at the edges of the debate, which again, conformed to the realist pattern, typified by individuals like George Kennan, Morgenthau and others who came later, like Brzezinski. Many, many, many others Raymond Aron in France. And, and the Soviets had a similar way of seeing the world that was not very dissimilar, from what, how the West saw international relations. And then this, again, I think it's worth thinking in this dualistic way about the world order discourse at this period, because most people think of it as East/West dominated by the ideological difference between Marxism and capitalism, but there was also this North/South discourse. And that really was between the notion of a new international economic order based on greater equality between the technologically advanced countries and the rest of the world and a more organisational effort, including at the UN, to mobilise energy and resources for development. For the development of the poorer countries.

Tom Pegram 20:06

Yes, I think it's very interesting to go back to look at some of that scholarship around the, the WOMP project the world order models project, and also to perhaps reflect a little bit on what conclusions that you and colleagues drew from those experiments and those thought exercises at that time and their legacies to this day.

Richard Falk 20:32

Well, I think the greatest surprise for the organisers was the disinterest in Western thought about these kind of concerns. And I think it perhaps, was exaggerated by this being a post-colonial moment when the colonial era of deferring to the West had ended. And there was a kind of almost ideological rejection of any idea that could be closely associated with the West. And I think the WOMP brought together very

strong personalities from these various civilizational backgrounds, including Latin America, India, China, Japan, Soviet Union, and the strong German participant, and Johan Galtung, who was sort of non-territorial participant, myself. And we interacted quite, we were quite a congenial group, except for the organiser and the convener who continued to press his agenda, and which was resisted quite vigorously by the rest of us. And the value of the project was both this friction that showed those who participated that the US was not in a position to dictate the future of the world. You know, the future of that geopolitical and military, geopolitical hegemony and military capabilities could not easily be translated into political outcomes. And in my own learning experience, that was the, that remains the central unlearned lesson of the Vietnam War, that you can have total military superiority and yet lose the war. And understanding that puzzle. And reacting and adapting to it has been a systemic failure of policy planners in countries, including the US, including in my view, Israel, and some other countries that are involved in conflict situations. In other words, there's a new realism in the post-colonial world in which political outcomes are more determined by the perseverance of nationalist movements than they are by who is the better military hardware. That doesn't mean that the military hardware can cause massive suffering and devastation. But it does mean that it won't win the war. And finally, the intervening side gets tired of the losses without achieving the results and gets out, withdraws. And but, you see the unlearned, this, what I'm calling the unlearned lesson of the Vietnam War repeated in Afghanistan, and in Iraq, and Libya. And what it has led to are the so called forever wars, wars that go on and on, and really don't change the internal or regional picture very much.

Tom Pegram 24:49

That reminds me a bit of the old adage, you know: if you have a hammer, everything looks like a nail.

Richard Falk 24:54

Yeah.

Tom Pegram 24:54

So I'm going to hand it, I know Jess has a question. So please Jess.

Jessica Knezy 24:59

Yeah, continuing on. In this vein of thought about a world of sovereign states that's unable to cope with endangered planet problems. And I'm quoting you here in the early 70s, saying that the political logic of nationalism generates a system of international relations that is dominated by conflict and competition. So my question is, why have such observations and above all, the issue of climate change, so rarely been examined seriously within the mainstream of IR inquiry? And why 50 years later have we not progressed further into this vein of thought in addressing key issues facing the world today?

Richard Falk 25:38

Well, yes, that's an important, complicated question. And I think the clearest answer is that the system itself is invested in military solution. And therefore, it has a very difficult time taking into account the possibility of non-military solution. And part of this is the need to sustain a wartime budget in the absence of real strategic threats. And you can only do that by exaggerating the conflictual nature of developments around the world. And hope, presenting them as dangerously poised to threaten fundamental security. And this, this really combined much of the organisation of the world into distinct

territorial states with the excessive militarization of those that, those among these territorial states that are geopolitical actors. And I draw this distinction within the Westphalian framework between the sovereign states and the few states among them, that are geopolitical actors, such as, at the present time, the United States, China, and maybe Russia, and to some extent, the UK and France, in other words, the permanent members of the UN Security Council, they've enjoyed impunity in relation to international criminal law. They, they have a veto power over their security council decisions, which means essentially, that they only have to obey the UN Charter and international law when it serves their national interests. So you have this very strange constitutional arrangement in the world. That is embodied in the UN system, where the smaller states are accountable. And the weak, I mean, the weaker states are accountable, and the stronger states are operating according to their own discretion. They, so and they're the most dangerous, the most dangerous states are not governed by not, not even technically not governed by an obligation to uphold international law. So you have double standards throughout the system. And that means that you can't overcome these biases, that privilege, those national communities that have geopolitical leverage. So that includes not only the United States, but the states that are closely aligned with it. And the same thing for the other kind of states. And it affects, it goes back to World War Two, where, at the end of the war, only the defeated German and Japanese leaders were held accountable and the victors were given impunity. So they have double standards built into the essence of international law. And that is, despite the fact that one of the worst and most controversial legacies of World War Two was the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, that was never examined, except in a Japanese lower court from an international law point of view. And yet, if the Germans or Japanese had developed the atomic bomb and used it, and then went on to lose the war, there's little doubt that, that would have been criminalised and the whole attitude toward nuclear weaponry would have emerged in a very different manner. I'm not sure how successfully I answered your question. So ask me a follow-up.

Jessica Knezy 31:19

Very successfully. Thank you. I do have a follow up in terms of the rigidity of the Western bias within the UN Security Council and the sort of tendency to favour these western states and the power that they hold. How do you think that's contributed to the rhetoric of globalisation and the global North/South divide over the last 30 years through the structural readjustment programmes and where we are right now in terms of global polarisation of resources and ideologies?

Richard Falk 32:00

Yes, I think there's no question that it has been a contributing factor. Of course, it's been offset to some extent by the Asian resurgence. Because they, even though China is a member of the P5, until very recently, it didn't have much geopolitical leverage. And it didn't play a really important part at the global level. Now, in the last few years, it has, but the emergence of China in the face of this Western dominated economic system is quite extraordinary, because they took advantage of certain features of state socialism, as it was badly practised in the Soviet Union, and combined with good features of the market organisation of the economy, to achieve the greatest surge in economic development in all of history. You know, it was China, at the end of World War Two, and even quite a bit later, was viewed as a hopelessly overpopulated under industrialised basket case of the international, international society. And this incredible turnaround started in the about 50 years ago, half century ago, under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping, and the so called modernization movement in China really was a revolutionary

transformation that didn't really depend very heavily on Western ideas or Western technology, rather, it took advantage of certain needs of the Western economies to provide very attractive investment opportunities that accelerated its development speed, and other countries in Asia also did extremely well, even though they didn't adhere to the kind of Chinese model of what they called a market system with socialist characteristics. But China more than more than the rest, in one generation, eliminated extreme poverty for 300 million people, which is an amazing achievement and Vietnam has now more recently done the same thing, following really Chinese model more or less. And there's a book by Deepak Nyer, published by Oxford University Press, called 'Asian Resurgence,' which is an, he's an economist, kind of economic account but he follows the trajectory of 14 countries in Asia, and shows that it doesn't matter very much whether they are categorised as socialist or capitalist. What matters is how they handle state society relations, and particularly with regard to savings and investment. And some of the other, all of these Asian countries did well in this period, which suggests that there's a cultural foundation connected as much with Confucian ethics, as it is with Marxist Maoist thinking. So the whole question of how far western hegemony extends beyond its dominance of military technology is very difficult to I think crystallise at this point.

Tom Pegram 36:57

I mean, the resurgence of Asia is, is an extraordinary transformation of geopolitics and I do sometimes wonder what it must have been like to do geopolitics, to teach geopolitics in the 1970s. I presume China would not have featured very much in those conversations, whereas obviously today. Yeah, so I'd like to hand over to Sam, Sam's got a question for you.

Richard Falk 37:22

Good.

Sam Coleman 37:24

Hi Richard, thank you, yeah. Just a question on, we've talked about the kind of inherent geopolitical nature of the UN system. And obviously, your work within the UN provides a kind of unique vantage point for analysing that system. I was wondering if you had any takeaways about potential waves through that kind of geopolitical gridlock? And then just as a side question, you can choose either one or merge the two, truth to power has been a kind of key tool used in, you know, post-colonial discourse, and also now when thinking about big systems, and I was wondering if you could talk about how useful that is as a tool today, when thinking about the kind of inherent geopolitical nature of the UN system, and whether it's still a valid means of change making?

Richard Falk 38:20

Yes, that's a really fundamental question. My own personal involvement was with the UN Human Rights Council, which is not a decision making body on these geopolitical questions. And even though I was required to report to the General Assembly each year, during the six years that I had this position, I didn't get a great deal of on this additional understanding of how the UN system worked. What I did do overall and particularly, because of my assigned role as Special Rapporteur for Israel/Palestine, was the sense that the UN was very important on the level of symbolic politics, but very limited on the level of substantive politics. In other words, it could serve to legitimate or delegitimize behaviour, but it couldn't implement the results of its determination because it was subject to geopolitical blockage. In

other words, the US and the other G5 members had a lot of leverage outside the Security Council. But they couldn't block factfinding and investigative reports, other kinds of assessments, particularly in these secondary parts in the UN system, like the UN, Human Rights Council, or UNESCO, or the Economic and Social Council. But what they could do is block the implementation of any recommendations that came out of those initiatives. And so, again, going back to what I said earlier about the puzzle that military capabilities have lost agency, in relation to the political outcome conflict. It turns out that winning legitimacy wars, the phrase I developed, is often more important than winning on the battlefield. And so the UN is a definite important site of struggle in these legitimacy wars. And that's why for instance, Israel cares so much about being criticised at the UN or investigated by the International Criminal Court. And it's why the anti-apartheid campaign was so important in bringing the apartheid regime in South Africa to its knees, it wasn't through violent resistance, that changed the balance of forces, it was this change on the level of symbolic power. That's why I think people make the mistake, either of thinking, the UN is the saviour of a just world order, or just dismissing it as irrelevant, you'll find both points of view either a very legalistic point of view, that says that all we need to do to create a peaceful and just world is to uphold the charter, or the opposite view that says, since the charter isn't being upheld, the UN is irrelevant. So I've tried to articulate this middle ground of well, not middle ground exactly. But this understanding of what the UN can and can't do, and why what it can do is important but that from the point of view of people enduring a very bad situation, it's extremely difficult to modify behaviour. If it has the, if the status quo has the support of the geopolitical actors. Sometimes the UN can do too much, you can argue that its support for the Libyan intervention in 2011, because it had geopolitical backing was an excessive use of force that has produced a deterioration in the situation within Libya, it became a regime changing intervention that destabilised the country. It did eliminate Gaddafi, the authoritarian ruler, but it replaced that with an ongoing civil strife and chaos and that's happened too often in the aftermath of these interventions, sometimes advertised as humanitarian intervention. That it's extremely difficult in the post-colonial age, to use military power to alter the internal balance of forces within sovereign states.

Tom Pegram 44:41

The importance of symbolic power is something that perhaps gets under, is underappreciated in the kind of the paradigmatic understanding of where power resides within these systems. Yeah. Sam, do you have a follow up?

Tom Pegram 44:59

Yeah. So thanks Richard, it was a great perspective. And it actually reminds me of a previous episode. I guess we had Farhana Yamin who talked about her work in the UN and what it can and what it cannot do for in her case, climate change. And I was wondering if you could talk a bit more about the working on different levels, you know, that we talked about what the UN can do, and the agency that it can be afforded. But then on the more immediate struggles, for example, your work in Palestine, that it might need something a little more immediate, a little more grass roots. And I was wondering how your Citizen Pilgrim idea might play into that, as obviously, we're students going out into the world, and how we might be able to maybe continue that that kind of ethos that idea?

Richard Falk 45:49

Yes, I think that's very relevant. The government's structure, even putting aside for the moment, the problem of geopolitics is one that is geared toward incremental change and the problems that are emergent, and not only climate change and biodiversity, but also global migration, to some extent, nuclear weaponry, these are problems that call for systemic response. And systemic responses can only I think, only arise out of, in two contexts. One is a world older catastrophe, especially a war, which creates more flexibility with regard to adapting the system, or as a result of, in a combination of governmental initiatives, but strong grassroots civil society pressure. And, for instance, the anti-apartheid campaign is a good illustration, where the UN was led to support the anti-apartheid movement but only after a very extensive grassroots mobilisation took place, particularly in the UK in the US, and overcame the objections of very conservative, Cold War oriented governments at that time, Reagan in the US and Thatcher in Britain, they were forced from below to give way to these pressures that were basically of an ethical and political character, but had very widespread support. And so I think climate change itself is something that illustrates this mismatch between a governmental reluctance to make systemic adjustments and the nature of the problem of the challenge, which requires systemic adjustments, in some ways, the young Swedish woman, Greta Thunberg, I thought, well summarise this in her talk at the UN where, where her most vivid takeaway line was, to the delegates whom she was addressing, "You will die of old age we will die of climate change." And I think that is suggestive not only of grassroots but of the importance of young people being considering themselves participants in the struggle for a viable future. And that consciousness that political consciousness is probably more vital in present time than ever before, governments are not, they are too subject to conflicting interests, to be capable of taking clear systemic positions except in circumstances of catastrophe or a power movement, popular movement.

Tom Pegram 50:15

I'm reminded a bit of Gramsci's notion of the interregnum. You know, "the old order is dying. The new is not yet born and in the interregnum arise, the morbid symptoms." Perhaps that's where we are at the moment. So I'm aware of the time, Richard, I do want to hand over to Zoe. Zoe has a question.

Richard Falk 50:36

Good.

Zoe Varenne 50:39

Kind of following on from that. I, my question is, what advice do you have for millennials or generation Z, trying to make sense of the drivers of systems or systems change at the macro global scale in 2021? And where they might fit in when it comes to ensuring our governance systems defer to planetary needs?

Richard Falk 50:58

Well, I think that's more question for me to put to you, than for you to put to me. But I mean, the essence of what I was trying to say in response to the earlier question is that it's an imperative, called activists, that the one thing that your generation cannot do is leave to it to the older generations to solve the problems that confront your society, your life, your future. And this could also have the additional benefit of revitalising our understanding of citizenship in a democratic society that it's more than

elections. And it's, it could be a more movement oriented understanding of citizenship, which creates new opportunities for policymaking to be more creative, less shaped by special interests, and more transnational. And the nature of these, nature of the policy agenda at the present time is caught between this persisting organisation of political community in terms of national territorial states, and the character of global problematique, which affects certainly regions, but in many cases, humanity as a whole. So it really encourages the development of a more complex notion of personal identity, that you may be British, but you're also European, and you're also part of humanity, and that all of those are relevant, you don't have to choose among them. So I think that we older people, look to you younger people to give us the creative direction to address the future.

Tom Pegram 53:43

Do you have a response possibly Zoe?

Zoe Varenne 53:50

Not really just that, you know, I hope our generation doesn't disappoint.

Tom Pegram 53:57

Well, I think we're rolling to a close, Richard, thank you so much for your time, perhaps just to end, you know, you wrote over 50 years ago that you regarded as virtually essential to bring into being more centralised forms of political authority in international life by the end of the 20th century. Just curious to ask how you feel this claim holds up some 60 years later? And I suppose you've given us some indication of what the direction of travel in that, towards that objective might look like in terms of reflecting much more deeply on a politics of identity within a uniquely globalised age.

Richard Falk 54:41

I think essentially, the way in which particularly ecological issues have emerged reinforces my sense that if the human species is to flourish in the future, it has to figure out it has to establish mechanisms capable of acting in the global interests. For the global public good, let's put it that way. And acting for humanity rather than acting for particular states, or particular regions and civilizations that we need to, the whole has to become greater than the parts. Now, whether that means institutionalisation or governmentality is perhaps, still uncertain, what form how it should be embodied. But the idea of finding a way of overcoming the present equation, which makes the parts dominate the whole, the parts are much greater than the whole in the Westphalian framework, not only because of statism, but because of this geopolitical overrun that gives a few states this special kind of role in shaping policy according to their particular national interest without deference to international, agreed international legal standards. What the whole is, is, it's still to be determined, I think, and how that is to come into being short of catastrophe, and short of a movement that mobilises people in a new, different kind of revolutionary spirit to say, and as you suggested by the Gramsci quote, where we're likely to experience some morbid moments in this transitional time. And the average speaking as an American, Trump and Trumpism were examples of morbid responses to the challenges confronting humanity.

Tom Pegram 57:46

Well thank you so much for your time, Richard, I think we can at least all agree that it is a fascinating time to be alive. And in some respects, a kind of a, I guess, a kind of a call to adventure. It was also

very interesting to hear you talk about the whole and the parts and shade into complex systems ideas, which we have been engaging a bit in previous conversations and this idea that the whole is not just greater, but actually different to the sum of the parts. So perhaps something to ponder there as we move this conversation forward. But thank you so much for your time. I really appreciate it.

Richard Falk 58:23

Good, I enjoyed being with you, and wish you well with this work. Hope it goes forward in a good way.

Tom Pegram 58:30

Thank you so much. Thanks for tuning into 'Imperfect Utopias' to get access to all of our content, and to stay up to date with future zoom calls, workshops, and events and more. Check us out at ucl.ac.uk/global-governance. If you liked this content, please do leave us a comment and subscribe. Until next time!