

NCGS

NORTH CAROLINA GERMAN STUDIES

seminar & workshop series

Co-Conveners: Duke University; Department of History, and UNC-Chapel Hill, Department of History, Center for European Studies and the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies

Friday, 25 September 2020

4:00–5:30 pm | Online

A. DIRK MOSES

Frank Porter Graham Distinguished Professor of Global Human Rights, UNC-Chapel Hill, Department of History



The Problems of Genocide: Permanent Security and the Language of Transgression

This presentation summarizes some main results of Moses's forthcoming book *The Problems of Genocide: Permanent Security and the Language of Transgression*, which argues that genocide is not only a problem of mass death, but also of how it organizes and distorts thinking about civilian destruction. Taking the normative perspective of civilian immunity from military attack, it argues that the implicit hierarchy of international criminal law, atop which sits genocide as the "crime of crimes," blinds us to other types of humanly caused civilian death, like bombing cities, and the "collateral damage" of missile and drone strikes. Talk of genocide, then, can function ideologically to detract from systematic violence against civilians perpetrated by governments of all types. The book contends that this violence is the consequence of "permanent security" imperatives: the striving of states, and armed groups seeking to found states, to make themselves invulnerable to threats.

A. DIRK MOSES is the recently appointed Frank Porter Graham Distinguished Professor of Global Human Rights History at the UNC Chapel Hill, Department of History. Before coming to Chapel Hill, Moses taught at the University of Sydney for twenty years and was Professor of Global and Colonial History at the European University Institute in Florence. His first monograph, *German Intellectuals and the Nazi Past* was published in 2007 and his second monograph, entitled *The Problems of Genocide: Permanent Security and the Language of Transgression*, will arrive in 2021.

Comment: KONRAD H. JARAUSCH | UNC-Chapel Hill, Department of History

Moderator: KAREN HAGEMANN | UNC-Chapel Hill, Department of History

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