

Ralph Nader Radio Hour

Episode 507

Justifying the Unjustifiable in Palestine

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Steve Skrovan: Welcome to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*. My name is Steve Skrovan, along with my co-host David Feldman and the rest of the team. Hello, David.

David Feldman: Good morning.

Steve Skrovan: And of course, the man of the hour, Ralph Nader. Hello, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Hello. This is a program, listeners, you will not find redundant, concerning what's going on and what has gone on between Israel and the Palestinians.

Steve Skrovan: That's right, Ralph. On today's program, we welcome back a guest who has done the show a number of times before. We're going to be joined by author Miko Peled. Longtime listeners may remember Mr. Peled as the general's son. His father was one of the heroes of the 1967 war, and his maternal grandfather was one of the signers of Israel's Declaration of Independence.

We spoke to Miko previously about his turn from Israeli Special Forces Red Beret to staunch advocate for Palestinian rights. Mr. Peled is going to debunk many of the justifications the Israeli government gives for the bombing and grand assault on Gaza, and much of the double speak it uses—phrases such as existential threat, human shields, terrorist organization, anti-Semitic, and on and on. Also, Ralph is going to pay tribute to former First Lady, the late Rosalynn Carter. And as always, somewhere in the middle, we'll check in with our steadfast corporate crime reporter, Russell Mokhiber. But first, in our ongoing coverage of the Israeli Palestinian conflict, let's speak to the general's son. David?

David Feldman: Miko Peled is an author, writer, speaker, and human rights activist living in the United States. He is considered by many to be one of the clearest voices calling for justice in Palestine, support of the Palestinian call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions (BDS), and the creation of a single democracy with equal rights in all of historic Palestine. Mr. Peled was born and raised in Jerusalem. His grandfather was a signer of the Israeli Declaration of Independence, and his father was a general in the 1967 war.

Welcome back to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*, Miko Peled.

Miko Peled: Great to be with you. Thank you for having me.

Ralph Nader: Yeah. Welcome back again, Miko. I thought we'd do something new that a lot of the progressive press has not really covered and go through, one by one, the Israeli government's justifications for what they're doing. I hope you'll indulge us in this examination and get your views on it. The first thing the Israeli government does is say, Hamas started this on October 7th and we're just retaliating. Your response?

Miko Peled: Palestinians could not have possibly started this since the Palestinians are engaged in resistance. Resistance is always a response to oppression and occupation. Nothing ever is initiated by resistance. So it's absurd to claim that somehow Palestinians have initiated this war. The war began 75 years ago when the Zionist movement declared war on the Palestinian people and began a brutal campaign of genocide and ethnic cleansing that has been going on for 75 years, since before the State of Israel was established actually.

The State of Israel, as we know, because Amnesty International produced a report last year, has been engaged or has been in de facto crime of apartheid, which is a crime against humanity. Palestinians have been subjected to apartheid, which is a crime against humanity. They've been subjected to ethnic cleansing and to at least genocidal policies for 75 years. So to claim the Palestinians, when they resist this horrific reality in which they live, are initiating or are starting a war, is ludicrous, it's absurd.

Ralph Nader: The second thing that the Israeli government says is they have to go full-bore into Gaza because Hamas is an existential threat to Israel. Your response?

Miko Peled: The claim that somehow what the Zionists have done or are doing in Palestine is a response to or a result of the Holocaust is not true. The plans and the beginning of the execution of the ethnic cleansing of Palestine and the Zionist takeover of Palestine started long before the Holocaust. And very few Israelis are actually descendants of Holocaust survivors. Very few Israelis have any connection to the Holocaust at all.

Although it's often used as an explanation, historically it's untrue. The Zionist movement designed on Palestine began long before the rise of Hitler or the Holocaust. It's important to put that in perspective.

Ralph Nader: How about Hamas being an existential threat to Israel?

Miko Peled: Let's start with this—Palestinians have never had a military force. They've never had an army. They've never had a tank. What they have had over the years are small militia groups and very small guerrilla groups that engaged in resistance. To say that any small resistance group, particularly coming out of the Gaza Strip, which is one of the poorest and most oppressed areas on Earth, is an existential threat to a state that has one of the largest, best equipped and best trained armies, which I refer to as a terrorist organization with armies including nuclear weapons—I don't know how anybody can say this with a straight face.

What we did see, however, which was very interesting, on October 7th, is this small group of fighters that came out of the Gaza Strip, one of the poorest and most oppressed areas in the world, was able to paralyze the State of Israel and show that this entire Israeli army, in all of its force, is basically a paper tiger.

That is the reality. The fact that they're calling it an existential threat is absurd. The fact that they are inefficient, ineffective, and unable to defend their own citizens is to their own fault, their own hubris, and their own inability to function as a state and maintain an army beyond just killing civilians.

Ralph Nader: And the third claim the Israeli government makes is they don't and have never intentionally targeted civilians. Columnist Charles Lane of *The Washington Post* bought this in two columns, along with many other very little knowledgeable columnists in the US press. They don't intentionally target civilians. Your response?

Miko Peled: Palestinians have never had a military. They've never had an army. So anything Israel does is targeting civilians. In 1948, the ethnic cleansing of Palestine, these were all civilians. Over a million people, civilians were thrown out of Palestine. And God only knows, I don't think there's even a number of how many were killed in massacres during that year. And then all the attacks against Palestinians in Gaza, in other places, and refugee camps around Palestine, and probably most dramatically over the last 10 years, these massive assaults against Gaza, where Israel kills thousands upon thousands of civilians. It's absolutely absurd. Israel has been targeting civilians as a strategy.

The strategy is to kill civilians. The strategy is to destroy Palestinians, to destroy their monuments, to destroy their homes, to destroy their history, to destroy their country. That is the strategy. It's absurd to say that Israel doesn't target civilians. Targeting civilians is all Israel ever does, because its strategy, its declared goal, is to get rid of the Palestinians.

Ralph Nader: Since October 7th, they've bombed crowded marketplaces, schools, mosques.

Miko Peled: Yeah, they always have always targeted civilians.

Ralph Nader: Apartment buildings, homes, fleeing refugees at instructions of the Israeli military, and they bomb them as they flee to the south of Gaza. Another claim that the Israeli government makes is that Hamas uses human shields. And before your response to that, there's a letter by Charles D. Smith, who is a professor emeritus of Middle East History at the University of Arizona, author of the book *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*. And in his letter recently to *The Washington Post*, he wrote, "In fact, Israel has used Palestinians as human shields for decades, including placing individuals in front of Israeli soldiers, making children move wires in homes to see whether the home was booby-trapped, et cetera. This practice was finally outlawed by Israel's High Court in 2005 after years of protests by human rights activists."

What's your response, Hamas uses human shields? Urban warfare, by the way listeners, involves going in and out of buildings and ducking here and there when your opponent has complete control of the air, the land and sea with modern weapons. By the way, as you know, Miko, in the

battle for Israel's independence, or what the Palestinians call unleashing the Nakba, for them, the catastrophe, the Irgun and the Stern Gang, as it was called, these were the resistance groups, used all kinds of civilian buildings in going after the British soldiers who were controlling Palestine under the mandate flowing from World War I. Anyway, your response to the human shield, which they use all the time to divert attention from the slaughter of civilians in Gaza?

Miko Peled: It's part of a larger argument, which is that Israel attempts to justify the fact that Israel is killing civilians by the thousands, to say that, well, the Palestinian fighters are somehow hiding among population centers, and that is how they're using human shields.

And I have two things to say to that. Number one, if anybody ever inquires, where is Israeli army headquarters? Israeli army headquarters is in downtown Tel Aviv. It's in one of the nicest parts of downtown Tel Aviv, where all the nicest restaurants, cafes, apartment buildings, and museums are. That's where Israeli army headquarters is.

Does that mean civilians who live in Tel Aviv are legitimate targets? I used to live in San Diego. San Diego has several military bases right smack in the middle of civilian population. So does that mean that the people in California and Southern California are all legitimate targets? In other words, making this statement is so dangerous because it opens up possibilities of such horror that we're afraid to talk about or even afraid to mention. So that's the first argument.

The second argument that I would make is that the notion that it's okay to kill civilians, it's okay to harm a child because maybe there's some fighter or somebody who lives or is hiding in their home or next to their home or under their home, the notion that that justifies killing civilians is absolutely grotesque. And that's precisely the problem. They're trying to justify something that is unjustifiable in any way, shape, or form by blaming the other side.

No, anybody who is willing to harm a child because they think maybe there's a fighter who is in the vicinity, is out of their minds. That is the total lack of humanity. That means there's absolutely no moral compass at all to anybody who argues that this is somehow justifiable.

Ralph Nader: Let's look at the death toll. The Hamas Health Ministry only counted the deaths that were registered in hospitals and morgues in the first few weeks, and they reached 11,000 dead. But of course, people are dying, children are dying under the rubble. They're dying from disease. They're dying when ambulances are blown up. They're dying in their apartment buildings, in shelters and schools, et cetera.

But the press and Hamas doesn't seem to be that concerned about huge undercount in the death toll, not to mention the injury and spreading diseases because there's no medicines. Even people with diabetes can't get insulin. People with cancer can't get chemotherapy. You have the elderly. You have the tiny babies who are dying without their parents around because their parents have been killed.

I wrote a tweet the other day, Miko, that if 20,000 precision bombs and missiles were dropped on all the civilian areas of Philadelphia, which geographically is about the size of Gaza, you think

there'd only be 14,000 fatalities? No hospitals, nothing, just rubble. How do you explain this vast undercounting of the death toll, not to mention the injuries and the illness?

Miko Peled: The only way to explain it is that number one, their resources are very limited. Their ability to access those areas where all this destruction is taking place is limited. There's nowhere safe. So in order to go and count the dead under the rubble of buildings, all the buildings that were destroyed, is a huge undertaking. You need resources, you need manpower, you need the time to do it, and you have to treat the more urgent matters. So these things, these numbers will probably surface later on. These numbers, I'm sure, will surface.

I remember listening to Mads Gilbert just a few days ago. He and I were both in Jordan at the same time a couple of weeks ago. And he was talking about that there were over 2000 children who were not accounted for, which means they are buried somewhere in the rubble, either dying a slow, horrifying death or crushed to death by the buildings

Ralph Nader: He's a Norwegian doctor.

Miko Peled: Right. Mads Gilbert is a Norwegian doctor who's been working in Gaza and working with Palestinians for decades. He has very strong connections to the Ministry of Health in Gaza and to the doctors who work at the various hospitals in Gaza.

And so you need resources for this. Authorities in Gaza barely have the resources to do what needs to be done urgently and deal with this savagery that they've been subjected to. So I'm sure these numbers will surface later on. They have more urgent matters to deal with right now.

Ralph Nader: All right. The next argument is Israel is a democracy and the press and media are free to cover whatever they do in Israel or elsewhere in Gaza. Well, there have been 52 journalists since October 7th in Gaza killed by Israeli firepower, including some of their entire families. And that's the figure as of November 20, which sets an all-time record in any seven-week period since the Society of Journalists started covering journalist deaths 30 years ago. Describe the media tension. Gideon Levy told us he hasn't been allowed to go into Gaza for many years. Can the media go in? Are they just embedded? Are they excluded? What's going on?

Miko Peled: My understanding is that Israel is not allowing media into Gaza and that there are a select number of Israeli journalists who are embedded with the forces, and they are the only ones who are allowed to report. That's the reality right now. This is not the first time this has happened. After the massacre in Jenin in 2002, it was the same thing. Israel did not allow journalists to go in for a very long time. So that puts that to rest.

In terms of Israel being a democracy, that has never been true. Israel has never been a democracy. It's been an apartheid state. I refer the listeners to the Amnesty Report of last year. Israel has been engaged in committing the crime of apartheid since it was established. And you can't claim to be a democracy when you're practicing an apartheid regime. The fact that certain segments of the population you govern have privileges doesn't make you a democracy. That notion needs to be put to rest as well. Israel was never intended even to be a democracy.

Ralph Nader: The other claim is that Hamas is vulnerable to being exterminated because it is a terrorist organization. But of course, people in Israel know that Netanyahu for years has had a strategy to break up any two-state solution with the Palestinian authority by supporting and funding Hamas. Hamas was fostered into larger impact by both the US and Israel in 1980s.

But in 2019, quoted in the *New York Times* by Roger Cohen a few days ago, Netanyahu was telling his own Likud Party that its strategy was to support and fund Hamas. Why doesn't that resonate politically in Israel? That's fairly well-known, isn't it, that Israel was supporting what they call a terrorist organization?

Miko Peled: I don't believe that's true. I don't believe that Israel had anything to do with the creation of Hamas. The history of the creation of Hamas is that it was the first Intifada, and the Islamic Movement decided it was time to join the resistance, and they established the Islamic Resistance Organization, which was Hamas, and they began operating immediately as a resistance organization. And then throughout the first intifada, throughout the '90s and so on and to this day, Hamas has been operating as part of the Palestinian resistance.

I don't believe that it's true that Israel had anything to do with that, although I believe the claim to do it has been put out there in order to attack Hamas and to take away its legitimacy as a Palestinian organization. It's one of many tactics that have been put in place to delegitimize the authenticity of Hamas as a legitimate Palestinian resistance. I don't think anybody in Palestine believes that it was either.

Ralph Nader: You're right. They didn't start Hamas. It was an offshoot of the Muslim Brotherhood, but they began seeing it as a counterweight to the secular Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Now, are you saying that Netanyahu was not telling his Likud Party the truth? That he really hasn't been supporting and funding Hamas over the recent years?

Miko Peled: Absolutely not. These are all attempts to attack Hamas and to delegitimize it in the eyes of Palestinians, as though Palestinians would believe what Netanyahu was saying over what they know, and they've seen with their own eyes and heard with their own ears. So I don't believe that for one minute. I know that there's this conversation about these are two factions, but I don't believe for one minute that Israel or the US funded or supported Hamas in any way, shape, or form. And there's a history. The actions of these organizations, of the different groups within the Palestinian resistance are well-known.

Ralph Nader: The last claim is the perennial. This is the one that helps freeze Congress. Anybody who criticizes the Israeli government for what they're doing to Palestinians and other neighboring countries is called anti-Semitic. And the members of Congress are totally fearful of being targeted. Even Arab-Americans like Darrell Issa from a safe seat in California, a Republican, voted for one of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) resolutions a few years ago while Israel was in one of its periodic slaughters of Gazans.

And he was asked, "You're Syrian American, you're very wealthy, you come from a safe district in southern California. What are you doing adding to the 400 members of the House plus in

condemning the Palestinians who are being slaughtered and, as Gideon Levy said, totally defenseless?" And Representative Issa said, "I didn't want to be accused of being anti-Semitic." Give us your response on the cheapening of that phrase, given its origination in the Russian pogroms and the Nazi holocaust.

Miko Peled: If you're not willing to take the heat, you should stay out of the fire. So anybody who is not courageous enough to stand up and speak the truth and stand up for what is right, because they might be called this name or that name, it's cowardice. It's hypocrisy. Being called anti-Semitic is a small price to pay when you talk about standing for the rights of millions of people who have been living under such terror for so many decades. So that's all I have to say.

The claim itself is, of course, absurd. It has nothing to do with anti-Semitic. But this has been a strategy of the Zionist movement that goes back decades and decades to always use that threat and always call people anti-Semitic when they are opposed or when they reject or even when they oppose slightly the Zionist agenda. This is nothing new. Of course, it's been hyped recently with a new definition of anti-Semitism, but this is something they've been using for a very long time and it's time to call their bluff and say it's absurd, it's racist.

People who are pushing forward a racist agenda, which is Zionism, who are supporting an apartheid state, which is based on racial discrimination and genocidal policies dare to accuse others of racism. If that isn't the worst kind of crazy, I don't know what is. And nobody dares to stand up and say, how dare you allow yourself to call other people racist when you engage in racist genocidal policies. And by the way, if American institutions, both governmental and nongovernmental, claim to have zero tolerance for racism, why in the world do they allow Zionist groups, pro-Israel groups to function on campuses? Why do they have Zionist groups lobbying throughout the country for all these different aspects of Israeli agenda? You know what I mean?

If there's zero tolerance for racism, there should be zero tolerance for Zionism because it is like anti-Semitism. Zionism, like anti-Semitism, like white supremacy and all other forms of racism are all racism, and there should be no tolerance for all of them. And again, politicians like Darrell Issa and others who are afraid to stand up because they don't want to take the heat, it's the worst kind of cowardice. Because, number one, it's so easy to refute the claim that this is anti-Semitism. I'm sure you've been subjected to this as well. And it's so easily refutable. So rather than stand up and refute it and argue and stand for what's right, people are cowards. And that's the only thing you can say about that.

Ralph Nader: The real armed forces backing anti-Semitism in the current situation is anti-Semitism laced with genocidal intent and implementation against the Arabs of Palestine. You have often spoken of the way you're treated in Israel as an Israeli citizen, even though you are a very prominent defender of Palestinian rights—the way you're treated when you go to the airport and go into Israel, compared to the way Palestinians are treated in the West Bank or in Israel proper. Can you give us a description of that comparison, the definition of what apartheid is really all about?

Miko Peled: Apartheid is all about, exactly, providing or giving privilege to a certain segment of the population. So the apartheid regime State of Israel, the, which is known as the State of Israel, has declared itself a state for Jewish people. So if you're not Jewish and if you're going to establish a Jewish state in an Arab country where the majority of the population are Arabs, in this case, Palestine, then you have to engage in ethnic cleansing in order to create some kind of a majority. You have to engage in at least genocidal policies, if not outright genocide. And you have to impose an apartheid regime, which will provide privilege only to the segment of the population that you prefer, which in this case happened to be Israeli Jews. And by the way, all three of these are defined as crimes against humanity. Many of the definitions came out after the Holocaust. And here we are three years later after the Holocaust, and the world allows these crimes against humanity to take place against Palestinians in Palestine.

Normally when I land, I land with a passport, and I go right in. And when I get arrested, in the West Bank standing with my Palestinian sisters and brothers my treatment is with kid gloves, and I usually go home at the end of the day, or worst-case scenario, I spend 24 or 36 hours in a jail cell. Palestinians get beaten, get thrown in a cell and nobody knows when they're coming home. It's a completely different reality. Israelis get all the water they need. The entire Palestinian population in Palestine receives only 3% of the water supply throughout the entire country. And today, Palestinians are the majority of the population.

Home demolitions for Palestinians within the Palestinian citizens of Israel, we're talking about tens of thousands of homes being demolished and home demolition orders that exist in homes of Palestinian citizens of Israel. And not one of these cases of home demolitions applies to Israeli Jews. And you would think Israeli Jews never build without a permit. Is that even possible? I know for a fact that that's not true.

It goes on and on and on. There's policy, there's law and then there's the reality. The reality is that's just the way it is. Nobody needs to pass a law. Everybody understands that water supply goes to the Jews, is just the way it is. Palestinians have water issues and it's not our problem.

Ralph Nader: Miko, is it true that Palestinians cannot legally collect rainwater in cisterns because rainwater is considered the property of Israel?

Miko Peled: Yes. And they can't dig wells. They're not permitted to dig wells on their own land. The water is the property of the State of Israel, and it distributes it very effectively, when you consider how small the country is and how very often the Israeli settlement is across the street from a Palestinian community. And one gets all the water they want any time of day, and the other across the street gets maybe 7, 8, 10 hours of water per week. And ~~how you do that~~, you need a very sophisticated system to do that. Palestinians only get 3% of the water and that's how it's done.

So it's a kind of discrimination that defies any kind of reason or logic other than to say this is an apartheid state, we are privileged. And by the way, if you want to kill people without spending money on a bullet, then denying them water, denying them electricity, and denying their hospitals resources is a sure way to do that. That's part of the genocidal policies taking place.

Ralph Nader: Two questions before we go to Steve and David. What do you think the end goal is of the invasion of Gaza?

Miko Peled: I don't believe there's any planning or any strategy behind this whatsoever. This is pure revenge. What we're seeing is vengeance of a military force in a state that had been humiliated. And just like any bully, any gangster who's been humiliated, they take it out on the weakest people they can find, people who cannot defend themselves. That's what we're seeing.

There's no strategic thinking or planning behind this. It's just revenge. And this is the Israeli government, who, again, was found to run a country that has no defenses whatsoever. It cannot provide even the minimum defense to its citizens. As we saw on October the 7th, half of the country was occupied by these Palestinian fighters, and the country is still paralyzed, by the way. This is an act of revenge.

And to say to the people, to their constituents, look what we're doing. We're finally letting them have it by murdering all these people and killing Palestinians, which is what Israelis have been asking for. So there's no thinking beyond that. It's revenge for the sake of revenge. It's savagery for the sake of savagery. It's brutality in its purest form. There is no other reason than the brutality itself. It's killing for the sake of killing so that they can show they're doing something bad.

Ralph Nader: And the Israeli government is turning on many of its own people who are dissenting and speaking out, by firing them and arresting them. And even in this country, police tactics are being imported because of the dissent and resistance against what Congress and Biden have been doing. Full-throated support without conditions, without even meeting human rights requirements to only use weapons for defensive purposes under federal law. They're disregarding that in Congress and the White House.

How do you characterize the resistance? How long will it be before the Israeli people will oust Netanyahu and his coalition? He's now lower in the polls than he's ever been in his long career in Israel. What's your prognosis?

Miko Peled: To the first part of the question, I was in Jordan, planning to go across the river to the other side, to Palestine, and I was advised that I would probably be arrested. And nobody knows how long that process would take, so I ended up staying in Jordan. Here in the United States, students are being arrested on campuses. At Dartmouth, activists were arrested. I was at an event at University of Indiana just a few days ago, and the students had to occupy the room because the administration canceled the event on them. Thankfully, the students were bright enough and courageous enough to just occupy the room and insist that the event go ahead.

We're seeing terrible things done to Israelis who dare to dissent—and even to the families of the prisoners that were taken by the Palestinians that are now in Gaza. Even their family members, when they protest and demand release, are beaten up and called traitors. I don't believe that Netanyahu is going anywhere. Netanyahu is going to stay in power for a very long time.

Number one, there is no opposition, so there's really nobody else to vote for. Number two, he's doing exactly what Israelis want him to do right now, which is exact this brutal revenge against the Palestinians. Israeli politics is a game of musical chairs, and in this particular case over the last more than a decade now, Netanyahu always maintains his position as the Prime Minister and all the other chairs/children run around and try to capture whatever chair/the best seat that they can.

Netanyahu isn't going anywhere anytime soon. I don't think Israelis are going to unseat him because there's nobody else who can do what he's doing, and they know it. And everybody's involved. There's nobody to vote for that hasn't been part of this catastrophic failure of the Israeli government that is providing any kind of opposition to what Netanyahu is doing. Everybody on this issue is together.

Ralph Nader: It's quite extraordinary because in many parliamentary systems from Japan to Europe, if there was an October 7th colossal military and intelligence failure like this, they would have immediately resigned. They'd been pushed out. The government would have collapsed. But then, as you indicate, Israel is not exactly a parliamentary democracy.

Do you think they want a larger war into Lebanon and taking over all the West Bank and Gaza and driving the residents into the desert toward Jordan and Egypt? Do you think that's what we're going to see in the next few weeks?

Miko Peled: That might be what they want, but I don't think we're going to see that. They don't have the capability to do that. The King of Jordan and the Egyptians made it very clear very early on that they absolutely would not take any more refugees and that's that. So that's not happening.

The number of prisoners has doubled. Israel had 6000 prisoners on October the 6th and today there are double, almost 12,000 Palestinian prisoners being held in Israeli jails. And they are terrorizing Palestinians everywhere. They're killing Palestinians everywhere they can. I'm sure they want all the Palestinians to disappear into the desert, but that's not going to happen. They're never going to get that. And I don't think they have the capability to push for that either.

So the best thing that we're going to see, the best thing that's going to happen for Israel is that this is going to go on and then there's going to be some kind of a ceasefire and then Israel will violate the ceasefire. They're going to try to keep killing and destroying as long as the rest of the world allows them to do that. When the world decides to stand up and stop Israel, impose sanctions, boycott, and divest from Israel, and turn Israel to the pariah it needs to be, kick Israel out of the Olympics and make sure that Israeli teams can't participate in sports and Israeli diplomatic missions are closed down and on and on. Then we will see a change and we'll be able to talk about a real future for Palestine.

Ralph Nader: We've been talking with Miko Peled, author of *General's Son*, really a gripping book about how he came to be a champion of Palestinian rights. He served in the IDF. His sister's daughter was killed in a Palestinian assault that brought him to focus on the cause of all this, the dispossession of Palestinians and the oppression of Palestinians. But it goes back further

than that, Miko, when in the late 1940s, his father was a high military ranking officer, and the Palestinians left/fled and evacuated some of their very nice homes in the cities, Miko's mother and father were offered a choice of homes. Which home would you like? And Miko's mother said, *none of these homes because they don't belong to me, they belong to the Palestinians*. So, that might have been the upbringing spark that led you to be who you are today, Miko. Steve?

Steve Skrovan: Yes, thanks, Ralph. Miko. What is your vision for this area of the world—Israel/Palestine? How would you achieve that vision?

Miko Peled: To begin with, we need to refrain from calling it Israel. Israel is the name that the apartheid regime has given the country and that has no legitimacy. By using the name, we legitimize it. The future for Palestine, and the future for Israelis and Palestinians, can be a future of peace, but not under the apartheid regime. Once the international community works to dismantle the apartheid regime through sanctions, serious boycotts and so forth, then we will, in a post-apartheid, in a free democratic Palestine with equal rights, the possibility of peace between Israelis and Palestinians can materialize.

The way we frame the question needs to be not whether someone is pro-Palestinian or pro-Israeli. Pro-Israeli is pro-apartheid, pro-racism, and pro-violence. Pro-Palestinian is pro-justice, liberation, and equality. So if you support equality, freedom, and human rights, then you also support the possibility of peace between Israelis and Palestinians. That's what it means to be pro-Palestinian. If you support the other side, then you're supporting racism and violence.

So the question should be, does somebody believe in racism and violence, or does somebody believe in equality, freedom and justice that will lead to peace? I would frame it that way. People of conscience all around the world who are willing to stand up for justice, equality, and freedom, can help bring about this peaceful resolution and the reality of peace for Israelis and Palestinians.

Ralph Nader: Well, in 2002, the League of Arab States (LAS), representing 19 Arab nations, proposed to Israel that if they went back to the 1967 borders and accepted a two-state solution, they would open diplomatic and economic relations between all these nations in Israel. The ALS kept repeating this and put full-page ads in the *New York Times*. Israel completely ignored it. Washington completely ignored it. What is your argument against a two-state solution, which is often seen as unlikely, but more likely than a one-state solution that you espouse?

Miko Peled: The long answer is this—on the 5th and last day of the 1967 war, the Israeli military high commands had their first post-war meeting, during which, my father stood up, still in uniform, and made the statement that now Israel is clearly strong and is here to stay, and therefore it is time to make peace with the other people who we share the land with, which are the Palestinians. My father proposed what we know today as the two-state solution, where Palestinians would be allowed to establish their own state in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. This is what we know today as a two-state solution.

As he was saying these words, two things happened. At the same time, Israeli bulldozers were destroying Palestinian towns, villages, and neighborhoods, and building massively in those areas for Jews only. Immediately after the '67 war, they were doing it as the war was over. They didn't

wait a year, two years. This happened immediately. And he was taken aside by his friends, by Yitzhak Rabin and others, to say, what the hell are you talking about? Why in the world would we, as they say, give back these territories that we finally took, and we just finished the job of 1948? That's how they framed the 1967 assault on their Arab neighbors as finishing the job of 1948.

Since then, all the way to this day, more than 50 years, Israel has done everything it possibly could to make sure that a two-state solution would never happen, would never be possible, and they succeeded. Israel established a single state over all of historic Palestine. It's the apartheid state known as Israel. Israel is the one that established a single state, not the Palestinians. Of course, the Palestinians have been talking about a democratic state with equal right over all of historic Palestine. Israel created apartheid state with rights only for Jews over the same piece of land.

So Israel can't now complain and say, we want the two-state solution. The two-state solution is not a possibility because there's no partner on the Israeli side to this, number one. Number two, why in the world should Palestinians agree to a two-state solution? Why in the world would Palestinians agree to accept anything but all of Palestine, free and democratic, with mechanisms to allow the right of return to take place. It's an absolutely absurd idea. It was absurd idea from the beginning. It was maybe naïve on my father's part, I'm not sure. But Israel made it clear that it was never going to allow it to happen. And this is the reality today. There's a single state in Palestine.

The question is not one-state, two-state. The question is the nature of the one state. Is it going to be an apartheid, violent state, as we see now, or transformed by dismantling the apartheid state and pushing for a free, democratic Palestine with equal rights on all of historic Palestine? These are the choices. The two-state solution is not a choice. It's nothing. It does not exist. And it will never exist because the entire country is a single state.

Ralph Nader: So what you're saying is one state already exists, but it's an apartheid state and you want to make it democratic for all people who live there. Is that correct?

Miko Peled: Exactly. The Zionist movement created the one state and made it impossible to separate Palestine. I don't think the separation of Palestine was a good idea to begin with. I don't know why Palestinians should agree for anything less than all of their country—a state on all of the historic Palestine. But Israel established this. Israel can't complain when Palestinians say from the river to the sea because Israel established the state from the river to the sea. Israel created this. And now they complain when Palestinians say they want the country to be free from the river to the sea, as opposed to apartheid from the river to the sea, since the

Ralph Nader: David?

David Feldman: So with apartheid and the dismantling of it, you would have to have a truth and reconciliation process. Was South Africa's truth and reconciliation process the gold standard? And could Israel, in order to start a one-state solution, could a truth and reconciliation commission begin? I look at the settlers and there are some settlers who celebrate the birthday of

Yitzhak Rabin's assassin. I hate to use the word realistic, but how realistic is a one-state solution given the intransigence on both sides, and grudges that are on both sides? Would a truth and reconciliation commission work?

Miko Peled: After apartheid falls apart. Like in South Africa, the truth and reconciliation didn't happen until apartheid collapsed. After apartheid collapsed. And it's not going to collapse because Israelis agree. It's not going to collapse because Israelis wake up one morning in a good mood. Israel is going to have to be forced on its knees, just like in South Africa. Whites in South Africa were on their knees.

We're talking about severe sanctions. We're talking about closing down all diplomatic missions. We're talking about not allowing Israelis to participate in sporting events, cultural events, any events, academic arenas. They need to be shunned. Israeli society in the apartheid state that they created needs to be brought on their knees. Once that happens, and one-person, one-vote elections take place on all of historic Palestine with equal rights and a new establishment, a new government is in place that represents all the people, then we can talk about truth and reconciliation. Then we can talk about how we create and how we heal the wounds.

David Feldman: Is there a Nelson Mandela?

Miko Peled: There are thousands of Nelson Mandelas. When Israel releases the prisoners and one-person, one-vote, elections are called up, political parties will take place, will be formed. I'm guessing probably 2025 political parties will be formed. People will vote for the best people, the best candidates that they believe will serve them, and we will have a free and democratic Palestine. I don't think we need a single figure. Having a single figure has been proven to be not so good in most cases, because people who lead revolutions are usually not the best political leaders.

Ralph Nader: Miko, you've been all over the United States. Are you encouraged by the level of resistance by groups like Jewish Voice for Peace, Palestinian solidarity groups, student groups? It's something you haven't seen in past wars.

Miko Peled: Well, we've seen it as a result. There's always a response. After Israeli assaults on Palestinians, we do see protests. But the problem is that people are not accustomed to ask to give Palestinians what the Palestinians deserve. So the ask in all the protests that I've seen now taking place is ceasefire. That should not be the ask. After the enormous sacrifices the Palestinians were forced to make after the military operation by Palestinian fighters from Gaza—described by Israeli generals as a brilliant, Palestinians deserve nothing less than the lifting of the siege, release of all prisoners, and the dismantling of the apartheid state. Nothing less than that should be demanded.

And all we're seeing people talk about is ceasefires as though ceasefires is some great accomplishment. Ceasefire does not provide the possibility of a future where this is not repeated. What needs to be demanded now is a political solution that will ensure the safety and security of Palestinians. And that is never part of the conversation.

A ceasefire does not secure the life or the security of Palestinians because we know Israel will violate it a week later. So the demand that needs to be made and is not being made by any of the protests that we've seen, is a permanent end to the violence against Palestinians, a permanent guarantee to the safety and security and freedom of Palestinians. And billions of dollars invested in the Gaza Strip to help heal Palestinians and rebuild their homes and rebuild their lives. Nothing less than that should be the ask.

Palestinians deserve the moon right now. They have shown enormous sacrifice. They have shown enormous courage. And all people talk about is a ceasefire as though that's going to change anything. We have to demand everything for Palestinians and be relentless with this ask. Nothing less than that. Unfortunately, I'm not seeing that demand being made anywhere.

Ralph Nader: Well, it's just the reverse on Capitol Hill. They want to pass \$14.3 billion in addition to the annual budget for Israel to send more munitions and arms and exacerbate the situation further. Do you ever have members of Congress ask you to come up there and have a conversation with them? Have you ever gone up there and talked with some of the legislators and their staff?

Miko Peled: No. I mean, here and there, I've spoken to Rashida Tlaib or somebody like that. But no, of course not. The problem is not that. There are two problems. One is there is no Palestinian presence in Washington, D. C., so even if the decision makers, even if the legislators wanted to make an informed decision, they can't because nobody's presenting the Palestinian side of the story. So all they hear, and all Americans actually hear, for that matter, is a very compelling myth, a very compelling lie that is being perpetrated by Israel. And there's nobody presenting the other side of the story. So in the absence of the other side of the story, nobody can make an informed decision even if they were inclined to do so.

And as a matter of fact, me, and a few others right now here in D.C. are engaged in an initiative to start and establish a place here in Washington, D.C. We're calling it Dar al-Huriya or House of Freedom that will do just that. That will fill that void of having a presence in Washington, D.C. that will counter these campaigns by the Zionists, that will counter the hundreds of emails that every congressional office receives, that will counter the stories so there is a balance to what the press is receiving, to what the diplomatic corps is receiving and what the American people are hearing. Because right now there's nobody doing that. In the absence of that, there's not going to be change. I think that's one thing, and that's a big one. That needs to happen immediately. And we're working as fast as we can to put this Dar al-Huriya together right now.

And the other thing is that as constituents, we're not demanding enough. There's a gap, and we've seen this in Europe and in other countries. There's a huge gap between the public support for the cause of justice in Palestine and what happens in the halls of power, and it is our responsibility to close that gap. Here in America, it's particularly difficult, because there's nobody presenting in a strategic, intelligent, systemic, and well-funded manner, the case for Palestine.

Ralph Nader: How do people who want to support this contact you or your group?

Miko Peled: They can email me, mikopeled@gmail.com. They can just email me or send me a message on any of the social media platforms. I'm on all the social media platforms working on this right now.

Ralph Nader: Last question, Hannah?

Hannah Feldman: Thank you, Ralph. Miko, in order for there to be an apartheid state, the state needs to define who is in which racial category. How does the State of Israel define Jews, and what relationship does the international Birthright program have to reinforcing the ruling class in Israel?

Miko Peled: One of the most contentious political issues since the State of Israel was established was trying to define or avoiding defining who is a Jew. There have been attempts to pass laws, to pass legislation defining the "Who is a Jew" question. It's called the "Who is a Jew" legislation. And of course, they don't want to do that because there are lots of different definitions, and they are scared that if they go with one faction, then they're going to alienate somebody else.

So there is no definition of who is a Jew other than somebody who was born to a Jewish mother, and that's it, or converted. And the conversion issue is a very contentious issue because the Orthodox don't accept the other conversions and so on. But basically, if you are a Jew, your ID — and Israelis all have an ID card. If you're a Jew, it says Jew. If you're not a Jew, it says Arab. And that's how they differentiate. Now, if you show up at the airport with an Israeli passport, and you don't look necessarily like an Arab, and they look at you and they smile and say, "Hey, how are you?" And as soon as they open the passport, they see the name or they see the designation, that's it. You'll go through a completely different kind of processing.

And it's not just at the airport. If you apply for a mortgage, if you want to buy a house, if you want to open a bank account, if you want to get a driver's license. I was speaking to friends of mine in the occupied city of Lod, where Tel Aviv Airport sits. They're building massively there to bring more Jewish residents because it's a mixed city that's about 40% Palestinian. A gentleman I was talking to said he went to register to buy an apartment, and they told him, "Sorry, it's all full. The list is full." An Israeli Jewish friend of his went to register, and they said, "Oh, sure, we got lots of spaces. Which one do you want?" And he said, "Wait a minute. But my Arab friend was just told that you're full, that there are no more apartments available." And they said, "Well, what do you want? We can't let Arabs come in to live in these developments." Because if they do, nobody else would want to buy, nobody else would lease from us.

So, this is openly done in every aspect of life. If you're an Arab, you get a completely different treatment. And of course, Israel passed the nation-state law, and like I described earlier, the home demolitions and water distribution and all of that. Israel knows it's a very effective system. Not everything is necessarily set in law. Some things are just the way they are, the way it is, and people accept it.

In terms of the Birthright, I think Birthright was a failed attempt to try to get young American Jews to come and live in Israel. And as far as I know, it was a massive failure.

Ralph Nader: Well, we've been talking with Miko Peled, author of the book *General's Son*. For more on his views about a real political solution for the Palestinians and Israelis alike, Susan Price interviewed him in a publication called *Green Left*, [an Australian weekly], October 31, 2023, issue #1393 for anybody who wants to go further. Before we conclude, anything that you would like to say that you haven't been asked about?

Miko Peled: The only thing I would say is that we have to start realizing that what is realistic or not realistic is up to us. The Arabs always talk about Salah ad-Din, [The Righteousness of the Faith] the day when Salah ad-Din returns. Well, there's no Salah ad-Din. We are Salah ad-Din. We are the ones who have to make the change. So if we want to see the possibility of peace between Israelis and Palestinians materialize, we have to act in order to bring down the apartheid state and create a just, democratic, free Palestine with equal rights.

It's going to be up to us. Number one, we're going to have to push hard on the legislature, all elected officials, from people running for school board all the way to people running for national office. Number two, we have to push back on the media. When Bill Maher and Jordan Peterson and the networks interview Netanyahu and when they interview Israeli spokespeople, they never push back. And if they push back a little bit, then it becomes a big deal.

We have to demand as consumers of the media that they push back against these news criminals. If we do that, then yes, we will be able to see peace between Israelis and Palestinians materialize in a post-apartheid, democratic Palestine on all of historic Palestine.

Ralph Nader: Well, thank you very much for the time and the content of your presentation, Miko. I hope that we have advanced the public information on this issue, especially in the first part of the hour when we let you respond, as the mass media doesn't let you respond to the claims that the Israeli government makes to justify the current slaughter in Gaza. Thank you very much, Miko.

Miko Peled: Thank you. Thanks for the opportunity. Appreciate it.

Steve Skrovan: We've been speaking with Miko Peled. We will link to his work at ralphnaderradiohour.com.

Up next, Ralph is going to pay tribute to the late First Lady Rosalynn Carter. But first, let's check in with our corporate crime reporter, Russell Mokhiber.

Russell Mokhiber: From the National Press Building in Washington, D.C., this is your *Corporate Crime Reporter Morning Minute* for Friday, November 24, 2023. I'm Russell Mokhiber.

Department of Justice prosecutors are empowered to resolve serious corporate criminal allegations through deferred prosecution agreements. But in a new paper, [Sweetheart Deals, Deferred Prosecution, and Making a Mockery of the Criminal Justice System: U.S. Corporate DPAs Rejected on Many Fronts] Texas A&M law professor Peter Reilly argues that these agreements should not be permitted when corporate misconduct causes

people to lose their lives. Reilly is calling on Congress to immediately outlaw the use of deferred prosecution agreements [DPA] in addressing federal allegations of corporate misconduct when the wrongdoing leads to one or more human fatalities. Reilly said the deferred prosecution agreement in the Boeing case, for example, was unjust. To date, Congress has failed to draw any boundaries limiting the Department of Justice's use of such agreements as a tool in resolving allegations of corporate malfeasance.

For the *Corporate Crime Reporter*, I'm Russell Mokhiber.

Steve Skrovan: Thank you, Russell. Welcome back to the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour*. I'm Steve Skrovan, along with David Feldman and Ralph.

Ralph, before we go, we all heard the news about the death of Rosalynn Carter, the First Lady during the Jimmy Carter administration. And you had something you wanted to say about that.

Ralph Nader: Well, I've always thought Rosalynn Carter set the standard for first ladies. I first connected with her and Jimmy Carter after a reporter called me when Jimmy Carter was running for president in 1976. And he said, "You know what Jimmy Carter just said?" I said, "What?" He said, "He was going to ask you for nominees to head the federal regulatory agencies. That's where he's going to get his names." I said, "Well, I've never experienced that before by a president or a presidential candidate."

And next thing I knew, he invited me down to Plains, Georgia, for a weekend. And before I knew it, I was assigned to be an umpire for the softball game between the campaign workers for Jimmy Carter and the media reporters who were there. And then I was invited for dinner at Rosalynn and Jimmy's modest home to stay overnight. And they made me black-eyed peas. I had a very modest meal with them, and a lot of conversation in a very modest home.

They really were pretty authentic people. They didn't pontificate. They weren't pompous. And it's really sad to see that she's no longer with us. She was a great leader on paying attention to mental health situations that affect millions of people in the United States who were often stigmatized if they admitted they had such a mental health problem. And she helped erase that stigma.

She was indefatigable and very low-key Southern accent. They called her the Steel Magnolia. So it's very, very sad to see her go. And this was a marriage of all marriages. Seventy-seven years of marriage between Jimmy Carter and Rosalynn. Jimmy Carter is now 99. He is in hospice in his little modest home in Plains, Georgia, and I'm sure his grief is deep beyond belief.

Steve Skrovan: Well, thank you for that, Ralph. I want to thank our guest again, Miko Peled.

For those of you listening on the radio, that's our show. For you podcast listeners, stay tuned for some bonus material we call "The Wrap Up", featuring Francesco DeSantis and "In Case You Haven't Heard". A transcript of this program will appear on the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* Substack site soon after the episode is posted.

David Feldman: Subscribe to us on our *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* YouTube channel. And for Ralph's weekly column, it's free, go to nader.org. For more from Russell Mokhiber, go to corporatecrimereporter.com.

Steve Skrovan: The American Museum of Tort Law has gone virtual. Go tortmuseum.org to explore the exhibits, take a virtual tour and learn about iconic tort cases from history.

David Feldman: We have a new issue of the *Capitol Hill Citizen*. It's out now. To order your copy of the *Capitol Hill Citizen*, "Democracy Dies in Broad Daylight," go to capitolhillcitizen.com.

Steve Skrovan: And remember to continue the conversation after each show. Go to the comments section at ralphnaderradiohour.com and post a comment or question on this week's episode.

David Feldman: The producers of the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* are Jimmy Lee Wirt and Matthew Marran. Our executive producer is Alan Minsky.

Steve Skrovan: Our theme music "Stand Up, Rise Up" was written and performed by Kemp Harris. Our proofreader is Elisabeth Solomon. Our associate producer is the invaluable Hannah Feldman. Our social media manager is Steven Wendt.

David Feldman: Join us next week on the *Ralph Nader Radio Hour* when our guest will be patriotic millionaire Chuck Collins, to discuss his new report, the *True Cost of Billionaire Philanthropy*. Thank you, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Thank you. The new issue of *Capitol Hill Citizen* is out. It's got two short bills that you might want to support that would change Congress like never before. It probably will poll behind these two bills in the '90s with great left-right support. For a copy or many copies, go to capitolhillcitizen.com. For \$5 or more, you'll get this print-only 40-page newspaper sent to you immediately, first class.