

RALPH NADER RADIO HOUR EPISODE 147

David Feldman: From the KPFFK Studios in Southern California...

Steve Skrovan: ...it's the Ralph Nader Radio Hour.

[Music]

Steve Skrovan: Welcome to the Ralph Nader Radio Hour. My name is Steve Skrovan along with my co-host David Feldman. Happy New Year, David. Have you fulfilled all your resolutions yet?

David Feldman: Y...y...y...yes.

Steve Skrovan: That sounds a little hesitant. It was a very elongated "yes."

David Feldman: Yes. I've resolved to start drinking more and not exercise.

Steve Skrovan: Excellent. And we also have the man of the hour, Ralph Nader. Hello, Ralph. Happy New Year.

Ralph Nader: Yeah. Happy New Year. Formidable New Year, strong New Year to all of you. We have a lot of challenges coming up, as we know.

Steve Skrovan: We do. And we're going to talk about some of them today. On today's show we're going to welcome back Mark Green, who last week spoke to us about the public letter and petition that he and Ralph submitted called "Divest or Impeach," demanding that Donald Trump either divest himself of his business interests or face impeachment for violating the US Constitution. We're going to get an update on that and talk about a different kind of law that the President-elect may have already violated. We will also check in with Corporate Crime Reporter Russell Mokhiber, the Fox Mulder of the corporate crime beat. But first, we are going to turn our attention to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Last week, Ralph promoted the idea floated by former President Jimmy Carter, that before President Obama leaves office, he should grant Palestine full

diplomatic recognition. Our first guest has a unique perspective on the relationship between Israel and Palestine. David?

David Feldman: Miko Peled is an Israeli writer and activist, living in the United States. He writes a blog dedicated to tearing down the wall between Israelis and Palestinians so that they can live as equal citizens. Mr. Peled was born and raised in Jerusalem. His grandfather was Dr. Avraham Katznelson, a Zionist leader and signer of the Israeli Declaration of Independence. His father Matti Peled was a young officer in the War of Independence in 1948 and a general in the 1967 war. Driven by a personal family tragedy to explore Palestine, its people, and their narrative, Miko Peled has written a book about his life called The General's Son, Journey of an Israeli in Palestine. Welcome to the Ralph Nader Radio Hour, Miko Peled.

Miko Peled: Thank you. It's a pleasure to be with you.

Ralph Nader: Yes, indeed. Welcome Miko. I know you've spoken all over the country and other countries, and in the Middle East on your views on how to come to a settlement of this perennial crisis between the Israelis and the Palestinians, but I think our listeners would like to know how you developed your points of view - which you will explore shortly - and growing up in Jerusalem. And tell us the story of your mother, when she was offered a nice Arab home in Jerusalem.

Miko Peled: Sure. Well, again, thanks for having me on the show. That's probably the one story that I get the most comments about, and the one story that creates the greatest emotion, particularly when I'm speaking and there are older Palestinians in the audience. This is 1948 when what Israelis call the War of Independence took place. And what actually took place was a horrible catastrophe and campaign of ethnic cleansing in which the Palestinians were the victims. And in Jerusalem, which is - I'm talking about the western part of Jerusalem - the part of the city that Israel conquered in 1948, and then made it its capital. The Palestinian neighborhoods were taken by the Israeli forces, and the Palestinians were forced to leave their homes. And these beautiful homes that are still part of the landscape really in Jerusalem were made available to Israeli families, to Jewish families. And my mother was a young mother at that time. She was born and raised in Jerusalem actually, and she was living in a tiny apartment with her parents. She was offered one of these beautiful homes; and she refused, and she wouldn't take it. And her comment was - and by the way still is, she just turned 90 and we still talk about this - her comment was until it is today, "How can I possibly take the home of another mother? How could I possibly move into the home of another family that was forced to leave? And can you imagine just how terrible it is for them and how much they must miss their home?" That's the story. And there's always somebody in the audience that had a home in Jerusalem and remembers their home and are grateful that my mother made a decision, which is really the decision you'd hope all people would make, but in this particular case was unique.

Ralph Nader: That is a very telling story, and it had a great impact on your life, but so did your father, Matti Peled. Tell us about your father and his transformation.

Miko Peled: My father - we heard in the introduction - he was a member of the Israeli high command during the 1967 war. He was one of the generals of that war, who prepared for the war and pushed for the war and then led this war. That entire generation of Israeli generals was like the gods of the Olympus really. Immediately when the war was over at the very first meeting of the Israeli High Command - their weekly meeting - he stood up and he said, "We now have an opportunity to make peace with the Palestinians. Even though we all want the full land of Israel from the river to the sea, and even though this is our land, we need to be willing to make a compromise, because there is another nation. There are other people living here with us. If we maintain that occupation over the entire country, we will become occupiers. There will be terrorism. We will have to spend all of our resources fighting it. And eventually there will be no Jewish state, but we will have a state, which is a bi-national state. And it won't be the Jewish democracy that we want." This is what he said. Of course, he said this in 1967 and of course everything he said actually came true. He suggested that the Palestinians will be recognized and be allowed to establish their own state in the West Bank, in the Gaza Strip. And that's really when the idea of the two-state solution as we know it today was born. And other Israelis - not many - but several Israelis who thought the way he did, joined him, and he continued to pursue and push for this idea really until his dying day. He passed away in 1995. But the problem was that nobody else was interested. People looked at him and said, "What are you talking about? We've just finally completed the job. We finally completed the conquest of the land of Israel. We're going to build for Jews, and we're going to get rid of the Arabs." And that's exactly the process that's been taking place over all of Palestine. There really is no more West Bank, because Israeli did not want to allow this development that he was suggesting to actually take place.

Ralph Nader: What were the reactions of the Israelis to his stand, which was obviously against the established policies of the state? Did they ostracize him? Did they exclude him? Did they slander him or did they just accept him as a dissenting voice?

Miko Peled: It was a gradual process. At first it was a dissenting voice, and then later on in the early, mid '70s, he began to talk about the need to actually negotiate with the PLO, the Palestine Liberation Organization. And in those days they were the biggest enemy. They were the terrorist organization. And that's when he became ostracized and shunned. And that was the end of it. From that point on and then later on, he met with Yassir Arafat and so on. That kind of seals his fate in terms of being not just a dissenter but really somebody who completely lost his way and that sort of thing.

Ralph Nader: Before we get to your remarkable positions and your closeness with Israeli and Palestinian peace activists to a point where you are arrested more than once - we're talking with Miko Peled, the author of the book, The General's Son, which is just out in second edition, published by Just World Books. A lot of praise, Seymour Hersh and Naomi Wolfe praised it. Presidents of colleges have praised it. You've been all over the country. And your position now is no longer in support of a two-state solution. Tell us what you think should be the approach now.

Miko Peled: I think today we have the advantage of having seventy years of the history - or sixty-nine years - since the State of Israel was established. I think it's pretty clear that Israel is not interested and is not willing under any circumstances to compromise on the issue of the land. Israel basically by taking the West Bank in 1967 didn't begin an occupation of Palestinian territories. It completed the conquest of the land of Israel and populated the West Bank with Israeli Jews and destroyed Palestinian towns. And it continues to do so. And that is exactly what Israel did as soon as it was established in 1948 - in other words build cities and towns for Jews only on Palestinian land and all the while making sure that the Palestinians either had to leave or die. That hasn't changed. It's only become more intense over the years. In fact Palestine is one state. It is the Jewish state. It is governed by the state of Israel. It's a state where people like myself, Israel Jews, have all the privileges and all the rights. We are a protected citizenry of the country. It is our country. It is our state. And the Palestinians, who by the way today make up the majority of the people in that land, are oppressed and have no rights. The one-state two- state conversation is really a moot conversation, because there is a single state over the entire country. And there is no possibility of dividing it, because the populations are so close together. And that's just the way it is. The only possibility - if we don't like what we see happening today, if we seek justice, if we believe the Palestinians should have rights - is to fight for the end of the regime, which exists there today, which is the state of Israel, just like people of conscience fought for the end of apartheid in South Africa, fought for the end of Jim Crow here in the United States and other racist regimes. That to me is really the only way forward, if we are interested in seeing a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians - not between the state of Israel, because the state of Israel stands in the way of a peaceful coexistence between Israelis and Palestinians.

Ralph Nader: I don't think people realize unless they're really on top of the subject, how much interaction there is daily between Israelis and Palestinians. There are about 1.5 million Palestinian Arabs in Israel. They clearly are discriminated against. They can't get mortgages, for example from banks, and there's the usual bias against the minority. And then there is about two and a half million or so in the West Bank and 1.5 million in Gaza. And it's the Palestinians, who actually build the colonies. They build the homes in the building. They are the principle source of cheap labor. There's all kinds of interaction, places like Haifa, social interaction, artistic, cultural interaction. And what really stands out in your book The General's Son - we're talking with Miko Peled - is that when you join with other Israeli peace advocates in an incredibly courageous effort near the wall with Palestinian activists and the Israeli soldiers arrest you, and you're involved in non-violent open civil disobedience in the old Civil Rights-Gandhi tradition, how were you treated

as an Israeli citizen, compared to the Palestinians, who are side by side with you in non-violent protest when they're arrested?

Miko Peled: Night and day, because they live under a completely different set of laws than I do. Israelis, regardless of where they live, are governed by the laws of the land, civil law, because they're citizens. Palestinians are governed by laws that are different, depending on where they live. If they're living in the West Bank, if they have Israeli citizenship, if they have Jerusalem ID, if they live in Gaza, they're lives are completely different than the lives of Israel Jews like myself. It's interesting that you asked that, because I was actually on trial recently for an arrest from four or five years ago. And people found it interesting, so they wanted to interview and ask me about this. My response is that it's embarrassing for me to talk about my arrest and my trial, because as a privileged white Jewish male in a society, which is a racist society, it's a joke. The arrest took place four years ago. The trial took place last year, sentencing took place just a few months ago. And at the end of the day, we sacrificed nothing as Israeli Jews, because we don't get punished. When we get arrested, at the end of the day, we go home. We get questions, a few forms to fill, and then we go home, and we're fine. Our lawyers wait for us. There's always a lawyer that waits for us at the police station by the time we get there. And so forth. If a Palestinian is arrested in the exact same place for violating the exact same law, then they are under military law. Or if they're Israeli citizen then under the law or the governance of the Israeli secret police, they get beaten. They get blindfolded, handcuffed and shackled. They get thrown in prison. And they're stuck in a cell for however long as the local commander deems it necessary. And they are interrogated, which means tortured. Now, they cannot see a lawyer until they confess. They're not allowed to see a lawyer until they confess. And that could take twenty days, forty days, sixty days. And so Sana Khawaja, who is an activist with the BDS movement in Palestine and Stop the Wall Movement as well, was arrested about two months ago. It took twenty-five days before he could see a lawyer. And he was interrogated over forty times, which means he was tortured over forty times in that period. And then he was allowed to see a lawyer. And then again his detention was extended and extended and no charges have even been filed. In my case, there's a charge, and I get to go home. The difference in the treatment of Israeli Jews and Palestinians is beyond night and day. It's not even something that people can begin to understand, unless they understand the workings of a racist system and a racist society.

Ralph Nader: I don't think there's enough attention, Miko Peled, about the variety of Israeli public opinion here. I was astonished. About ten years ago there was a poll by a major Israeli university on Hamas. And this is when they whole things was steaming up. And 61% of the Israelis urged the Israeli government to negotiate with Hamas. 29% opposed. That was reported in the US press. And that's an astonishing rendition of Israeli public opinion, which of course varies according to the various conflicts and tragedies that erupt from time to time. But from what you know of Israeli public opinion, how does it break down one: vis a vis a two-state solution, two: a unitary state with equal rights, a Palestinian-Israeli secular state, or just taking over like the People's Party - so-called - and the Netanyahu coalition leans in that way, taking over the whole West Bank and putting them under Israeli control. How does it break out that way?

Miko Peled: I think the best answer to that is to look at the makeup of the Israeli Knesset, the Israeli parliament. Israelis vote in very high numbers. And the makeup of the Knesset is such and the makeup of Netanyahu's coalition and even Netanyahu, whose landslide victory in the last elections points to the fact that Israelis have absolutely no interest in the Palestinian issue. They want to see the Palestinians dead or gone. They view the Palestinian issue as not their problem. They want the Palestinians to get the hell out. They're quite happy with building cities and towns and villages and shopping malls and highways for Jews on Palestinian land. When Netanyahu bombs Gaza - as the Israeli government does on a regular basis from time to time - his poll numbers are in the sky. It's like he's in prime minister heaven. There isn't a lot of variety among Israelis right now. And if you look again at the makeup of the Knesset, of the different political parties, the vast majority of them agree with the current policies, which are continue to build on Palestinian land everywhere. This idea that there is somehow a West Bank and that the settlements in the West Bank are different than settlements in other parts of the country. Many people view it as though there is a legitimate part of Israel, and then there's the occupation. I don't see it that way. The entire Israel is an illegal occupation. And all Israeli towns and cities are illegal, because they're built on stolen Palestinian land. The reality is that the West Bank really is no longer in existence. When you drive up and down the highways you see signs to the cities and towns of the West Bank, just like you see the signs the cities and towns elsewhere. And this is a reality, and the Israelis are quite fine and quite happy with that. When you look at the end of the major political parties the large ones, they all agree on these. Some are a little bit more vocal and say, "Yeah, we're not going to talk about a two-state solution anymore." Some still put on that façade and say, "Yes, we'll negotiate. But we can't negotiate, because the Palestinians are terrorists, and they can't be trusted." But that really is as far it goes. That's the range of political debate on this issue in Israel. In terms of talking about real democracy with equal rights, there is no conversation on that at all. It's in the fringes. It does not exist. They're not interested in it, and nobody wants to talk about it. Nobody wants to hear about it on the Israeli side. And you can't blame them, because it means the end of their privilege. And no privileged society wants to see their privilege end.

Ralph Nader: Israel is clearly a military, technological, and economic super power in the area.

Miko Peled: That's true.

Ralph Nader: Its GDP is equal, I think, to that of Saudi Arabia with all the oil they have. So, they're not feeling the sense of sacrifice here that pressures them to engage in any kind of settlement, whether its two-state, one-state, three-state or whatever. But the Arab parliamentarians in the Knesset - they have several seats in the parliament, the Israeli-Arabs - and they're often outspoken. And don't they have some alliances with the Meretz Party for example. Isn't there a core in the Knesset that tends to reflect some of the views that you have been writing about?

Miko Peled: I'll respond to the first part first. You're right that they have no sense of... Israel is a very country and the economy is strong, which begs the question: why is it getting billions of dollars in foreign aid from the United States? But that's perhaps another question. To run for office in Israel, you have to accept the Zionist premise, which is that the State of Israel has a right to exist as a Jewish state in Palestine. You cannot run on a non-Zionist platform, because you'll be disqualified. So, even the Palestinians, who are Israeli Knesset members cannot run on that platform. So they have to hide the fact that this is probably what they wish for and that what they really believe. Now, it's called the Joint List. The Joint List is a coalition of several political parties, and the majority of the members are Palestinians. They have thirteen members, and they are the third largest party in the Knesset. But they're completely ignored. They don't get to participate in any important committees. They will never be part of a coalition. And their vote is excluded, because everybody knows that they have a certain number. Out of one hundred and twenty members, they have thirteen. They've always have about ten, twelve, thirteen votes, so nobody takes them into consideration. It's an interesting play on democracy, where on the one hand they can say, "Yes, we allow them to vote. And they have members in the Knesset. And they're allowed to speak their minds." On the other hand they are completely excluded from any important decisions. I think that the problem with the Israeli left - Meretz and others, what used to be the Israeli left - is that it's a Zionist left. And so it cannot survive. You cannot be progressive and support a racist idea. Zionism is a racist, colonialist idea. It's time has come. It's time to move on and beyond it. It's an idea that says that my grandparents had the right to come from Ukraine, take the land from Palestinians, and build a state for themselves there. This is an idea that has no legitimacy, I believe, has no right to continue. And the reality is that, true, there are about six million Jews living there right now and we need to find the solution that accommodates them as well. But any kind of attempt to legitimize the occupation of Palestine as a legitimate Jewish state I think is bound to fail and is wrong. And I think it's time for people to start supporting the idea of boycotting Israel and boycotting and divesting from companies that support Israel. And I'm sure fair to the BDS Movement, the Boycott, Divest and Sanctions movement, and start acting like people did when they wanted to end apartheid in South Africa.

Ralph Nader: Well, a majority of Jewish Americans in poll after poll according to the *New York Times* favor a two-state solution. So the minority activists, represented by AIPAC and others, are much better organized, much more connected to members of Congress, which as a body accepts the Netanyahu narrative, which is that the Palestinian leadership is not only not willing to come to the table. Palestinians are terrorists. Palestinians have not recognized the state of Israel. Of course that's a false statement. That has been recognized as a part of the Oslo Agreements and before. And yet when you clearly define terrorism as an attack on innocent civilians, the ratio is about four hundred to one. That is, there are four hundred more Palestinians killed and injured as innocent civilians compared to the number of Israelis. Four hundred to one. And it continues to widen in terms of the disparity. And yet the word "terror" is attached to the Palestinians who are the occupied, who are losing their land and losing the water and are barricaded and invaded from time to time. How is that narrative going to turn around? It certainly seems to be turning around on a lot of college campuses. But there's a bill in Congress now and it basically equates anti-Zionism with anti-Semitism. Of course, the Arabs are the big brother numerically of the Semitic race, and so there's anti-Semitism historically against Arabs as well as, of course, against Jews. But there's

very little attention to the former. So how do you expect the US to turn around here? Because, maybe it only accepts this proposition. But unless the US changes its policy, nothing is going to change in the Israeli-Palestine dynamic, which is to swallow more and more of the West Bank and to blockade illegally under international law, Gaza.

Miko Peled: Well, I think you probably remember probably better than I do the fight against apartheid in South Africa. The United States government jumped on the train very, very late in the game. They were one of the last, if not the last to accept the boycott of South Africa. So, I don't have a lot of expectation for this from the US government. I do know, like you said, that there's a big change on the grassroots level. The BDS movement, the movement calling for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel, which is a call from Palestinian civil society to the world, has gained enormous ground, even here in the United States to the point where the Israeli TV came here to the US to find out what happened. How is it that it's grown so much and has so much popularity, especially on campuses and then in some of the progressive churches? And this is the way forward - and at one point, there's going to be as a result of the growth of the BDS movement and the isolation of the State of Israel. Israeli academics have nowhere to go. They're not invited anywhere. And nobody wants to talk to them. Israeli performers are not invited. More and more cultural figures, artists and so forth, Alice Walker, Roger Waters to name a couple, are calling to boycott Israel. So there's an isolation culturally. There's an isolation academically. There's more and more boycotting of Israeli products, sanctions and divestment. There's a lot of divesting, particularly in Europe. Big companies, G4S, the big security company, just pulled out as a result of pressure from the BDS. Veolia, which is a large transportation - they're doing the light rail and so forth - are pulling out. Banks in Europe - they're pulling out from divesting in Israeli companies. There's a big campaign against HP now, because they supply Israeli Security Forces with technology. And this is how it's done. And at some point, there's going to be an Israeli Prime Minister just like de Klerk from South Africa stood up one day, and he called for free and fair elections and the release of all political prisoners without condition. And that was really the end of apartheid. It's going to happen in Palestine as well, where an Israeli Prime Minister - and I think it's going to happen rather soon. And at some point, either a little bit before or a little bit after that, the US government will realize that they have to join the party, and they can no longer support this racist idea of the State of Israel. Like I said, it's going to go bottom - I think it always goes bottom up. Grassroots is where it starts. We know that every single presidential candidate this last election cycle spoke about BDS as though it was another kind of Osama Bin Laden, even though it's dedicatedly non-violent and principled. We know that more and more states are passing laws. The governor of New York just signed a few months ago an executive order making the call for boycott illegal. And, by the way, since he signed that order, I, myself been invited to speak in New York about four times just since then and specifically to speak about BDS and to violate that executive order. So even though more and more American politicians are trying to prove how much they love Israel, there's a serious change taking place. And I think that's how this is going to end. This is how justice will be brought to Palestine. And of course, in the end - even though it seems punitive - in the end Israelis are going to be free of this racist occupation as well.

Ralph Nader: Well, we've been speaking with Miko Peled, author of The General's Son. And deep in your book, which is part autobiography and part taking positions on this issue, you have a chapter called "The Fear Virus." Why don't you explain that?

Miko Peled: Yes. One of the things I described in the book is my very first trip on my own to the West Bank. I was in a car, an Israeli car with Israeli license plates, so I was clearly identified as an Israeli. I was by myself. And I was driving to this small village of Bil'in where the non-violent resistance had begun about twelve, thirteen years ago. And this is exactly when it began. It was 2005. And as I was driving - the landscape is beautiful - you get off the main highway and you're driving - the roads are bad and you're in Palestine. Suddenly, you're in a completely different place. And my sense was that that was going to be my last day on earth, because there is going to be a Palestinian there somewhere wanting to kill me and waiting to kill me. Now, when you cross from the official Israeli side into the Palestinian side, you have to cross these huge red signs that say to you in Hebrew, "You're about to commit a felony by entering Palestinian territories and you are risking your own life." So it's quite frightening. And then all these demons, this virus, this fear virus, which I and many other Israelis and Jews had been infected over the years, begins to act. And these little demons start running around your head. And I was absolutely sure that this is going to be my last day on earth. And of course it wasn't. And it was the beginning of a wonderful relationship. And it's been going on for more than a decade now. And this is the problem that I think the only... for which the solution can only be forcing a reality that is different. We rely on forcing Israelis to realize Palestinians are not the enemy. Palestinians are not dangerous. Palestinians are not terrorists. And the only way to do it is by force, which again, I go back to the BDS movement and to the end of the Israeli regime over Palestine and the creation of a democracy, where Israelis will have to go to school with Palestinians. Their kids will go to school with Palestinian kids. They may end up having an Israeli Prime Minister. And they're going to realize the sky is not going to fall. It's like white South Africans had Nelson Mandela, who they had in prison for almost three decades beforehand. This is the reality. And this is the virus I think for which the only cure is a solid knock on the head, which forces us to live into a different reality.

Ralph Nader: Well, in that dynamic, according to former President Jimmy Carter, 137 countries have recognized Palestine, including Sweden. And there are efforts in this country, led by Jimmy Carter and others, to have President Obama do that before he leaves, given the fact that he's supported Israel with a ten year \$38 billion military aid program. He has advanced more intelligence and more military research to the Israeli military than any other president. He was humiliated by Prime Minister Netanyahu, who bypassed him in an unheard of direct address to Congress to undermine the negotiations with Iran and many other countries, including the US on the nuclear deal. And so there's an effort - before Trump takes over - for this to happen. But there's a huge educational effort that's needed that can come back onto Congress, because not a single member of Congress has changed his or her position from being a hard line supporter of whoever is in the Israeli government to the views that you have expressed. In your book, you have a chapter called "Who Will Speak For Gaza?" That's pretty provocative. Can you explain that?

Miko Peled: Yes. Well, there's several issues here. The first one is: the reality in America - that you probably know more than anyone - is that American politicians are beholden to lobbies. And probably one of the two strongest lobbies, the most effective lobbies in America is the Israeli, the Jewish lobby, AIPAC. And I don't think that American politicians - or at least most of them - care one way or the other about Israel or Palestine, but they are beholden to the lobby if they want to get re-elected. So if they have an agenda that they want to pursue for their constituents, they have to support Israel. It's almost like a tax, because that guarantee - because if they don't - that almost guarantees that they're going to lose the next election. And that's the reality that I think is going to change when - like I said - people become more aware of the BDS movement, the strength and the moral strength of the Palestinian struggle becomes more apparent here in America. In terms of "Who Will Speak For Gaza?" In 2014, Israel bombed Gaza for fifty-one days killing over 2,500 people in prime time. Everybody saw it. Everybody knew it was happening. Like you mentioned earlier, Gaza has been under a brutal and cruel siege, which is - sometimes you don't know what's worse - is it the bombing or what's worse is the reality, the day-to-day reality, where people have no access to water or the basic most medicine, knowing full well that five minutes away from where they are in Israeli towns and cities, people thrive. There's plenty of electricity, clean water, all the medicine, all the food that you could possibly want. We're talking about five minute's away right across the border. And of course, this is the reality that Israel has created. There's no reason for there to be poverty or lack of water or lack of electricity in Gaza. A little girl, a child in Gaza with a curable cancer will die, because Israel won't allow them access to medicine, to proper medical facilities, which exists sometimes five to ten minutes away. And an Israeli-Jewish child will live, because of that access. And for some reason, this is not an issue in America. The lives of the Jews are valued more than the lives of the Palestinians in America. And this is not going to stop.

Ralph Nader: Well, that's because the narrative is: the Israelis are just reacting to these crude rockets that fortunately hardly kill anybody - they're so crude - sent by Gazans. And that's always the narrative that Israelis are retaliating. But in fact, the blockade, the provocation, the incursions and other aspects that you've written about and spoken about show that it's really the reverse, that the Gazan response is are a pathetic effort to tell the world that there's still a pulse there of resistance. And of course, the casualty toll is enormously on the Palestinian-Gaza side. But, that isn't the narrative in the US and the US press. It's always, well Israelis are responding to all these crude rockets that are put together in garages in Gaza, as if the Israelis don't know everything that's going on in Gaza down to the DNA of some of the families there. They're constantly under surveillance. So that's the kind of hurdle that has to be overcome, if the US public is going to manifest any kind of impact on the Congress, which is the key body as the decision making body.

Miko Peled: Yeah. You know, Ralph, it's interesting. Another part of this narrative that people aren't aware of is that Israel began bombing Gaza as soon as Israel created the Gaza Strip. The Gaza Strip is not a natural strip of land. It is a line that Israelis drew in the early 1950's around the city of Gaza. And it was a place to send hundreds of thousands of refugees, who were just turned out of their homes. And as soon as Israel established the Gaza Strip, it began bombing the Gaza Strip. So at first, they were killing dozens and hundreds. Today, they're killing thousands. And then there's this magic trick. I swear it's a magic trick, where Israel manages to convince

people that there is a military threat to Israel from Gaza. Gaza Strip, where there's never been a tank, there's never been a military force, there's never been – not to speak of - a war plane, somehow poses a threat, a military threat to this massive war machine, which is the State of Israel. And as Israel is bombing the people in Gaza, and committing what can only be described as genocide, all the talking heads just nod and say, “Yes, it's self defense. It's self defense.” There is nothing from which to defend. I think the problem that Gaza poses to Israel is that it poses a threat to the legitimacy of the State of Israel, because when we see - nothing speaks to the illegitimacy of the creation of the Jewish State in Palestine and the existence of the state for almost seven decades - as the reality in Gaza, where people have absolutely no reason in the world to live in such poverty, have no reason in the world that they are denied access to water and medicine and food and are bombed and killed on a regular basis. There is no justification in the world for this. And I've said this many times: I think this reality - the entire State of Israel - but certainly the reality in Gaza will be remembered as the stain on the history of the Jewish people, a stain that will not easily be removed. And also, this is and it's already proven to be a source of deep divide among Jews around the world, because accepting this and supporting this with money and with votes and giving it moral support is absolutely abhorrent. It's absolutely unacceptable and unjustifiable.

Ralph Nader: Could be that's why the Israeli government doesn't allow Israeli reporters to go into Gaza and report what's going on.

Miko Peled: Absolutely. I mean, the Gaza Strip is under lock and key. It is absolutely closed. I tried to go to Gaza several times, and eventually I had to go. I talked about that in the second edition in the epilogue. A friend from Gaza sent me a message, asking if I would consider coming in through the subway. And of course what they meant was through a tunnel. I ended up being smuggled into Gaza - if you will - through a tunnel. It's incomprehensible. It's a forty-five minute drive from Jerusalem to Gaza. It took me fourteen hours to get there. And I had to go through a tunnel. And again, it's this fear virus. It's the sense of we have to be afraid of the people in Gaza. And by the way, this is the fear that has been pushed and injected into Israelis since the early 1950's, when the Gaza Strip was established, that these are an angry, murderous, dark, uneducated people that just want to kill us. And it goes on today. And that's how you have an entire young population of Israelis, not only supporting the siege, not only supporting the bombing but executing the bombing. Who is it that is executing? Who are the pilots that are flying those war planes? Who are the men who are driving those tanks? Who are the infantry soldiers that go into house after house and murder innocent civilians? These are young Israelis. And so the ability to do that can only come from years of indoctrination, very racist indoctrination that tell us that those people over there don't have a right to live. Those people over there are the enemy.

Ralph Nader: Fortunately, there is a group of Israeli soldiers who have gone through all this and who are taking the stand against the brutality of the Israeli attack on Gaza.

Miko Peled: True.

Ralph Nader: And they have been severely criticized. But they're very courageous, aren't they?

Miko Peled: Absolutely. We have several thousand young Israelis who refused to serve. And it's actually very easy to get out of the military service, even though it's mandatory. All you have to do is say that you have some kind of a mental issue or a back problem or migraines. Anything goes, because they don't need people. And they don't want anybody who's not motivated. The only thing that will land you in prison is if you say you're a conscientious objector. And these young men and women, thousands of them, know that they can get out of the draft by saying something else, but they purposely say, "We are conscientious objectors, what you guys are doing is wrong, and we object to it." And they always end up in jail. There is an easy way out for these guys, and they choose the hard way. And, of course, that is courageous, because having said that after about thirty or so forty-five days in a minimum-security prison, they get to go home and live their life. Again, on the Israeli side, it's actually very easy to protest. We sacrifice very little in order to do the right thing. And again, yet sadly - and for me as an Israeli I say this, very, very few - relatively speaking - very few people actually stand up and speak out. And that absolutely is a terrible tragedy.

Ralph Nader: Miko, I have to ask you this. You've been speaking about this issue over the years before many audiences in the United States. Have you ever been interviewed by National Public Radio or Public Broadcasting? Any of the various talk shows, various programs? Terry Gross, Diane Rehm, Charlie Rose, all these well-known interviewers who have certainly given the Israeli government side and the AIPAC side a lot of time. Have you ever been interviewed nationally?

Miko Peled: No, never. Not even once. Not even once, no. I'm not surprised, because I always assume that they were quite progressive. But no, not even once.

Ralph Nader: Well, I think that speaks for itself. I think in conclusion, we have Donald Trump ready to unleash all the forces that have been somewhat restrained, backing whatever the Israeli government wants to do vis a vis the Palestinians. There was an article in the *New York Times* a few days ago, saying that this could be the worst thing for Prime Minister Netanyahu, because it can get him into worse trouble, worse turmoil if there aren't any restraints from the US government under the Trump administration and his designated Ambassador David Friedman, who believes in a complete takeover of the Palestinian lands and the most extreme views for Israeli dominance. What do you think's going to happen? And what do you think people in this country should do after January 20th?

Miko Peled: Well, I think the only difference - I mean I can't imagine. I've seen no restraints in place on Israel by any American administration. Like you said earlier, President Obama has given

Israel more of everything, money and weapons and support, than any other American president, so I think the only difference is that perhaps Trump does it without having the Harvard degree. And it's almost like there's no mask. He is doing it. And he says he's doing it. He doesn't pretend that he doesn't like it. But of course, there's no telling what Trump will do. And Netanyahu is already in deep trouble, I think. First of all, he is being questioned again by the police about corruption charges again. And it seems to be a thing with Israeli prime ministers. Out of twelve Israeli prime ministers, five have been questioned about corruption. And he's also in a lot of trouble, because for the first time the US allowed a vote in the UN Security Council to take place and then abstained, which are two levels of diplomatic failure on part of Netanyahu and his diplomatic team. He's already in trouble in that regard. And like I said earlier, I don't know that it quite matters who Trump sends as an ambassador, because the ambassador represents truthfully what American policy has been de facto, and what Israel is doing anyway. So it's not really that much of a break from what's been going on. But I do think that once again, it's important for people of conscience to learn about the movement calling to boycott, divest and impose sanctions on Israel. It is important for people of conscience to get involved with the Palestine Solidarity Movement and the Palestinian resistance. It is time for people to wake up. And many people feel this already and realize that this whole idea of a state for Jews in Palestine cannot but infringe on the rights of Palestinians. It's got to change. And the change has got to be swift, because Palestinians are suffering. Young Palestinians are being killed at the checkpoints every single day. Palestinians are suffering in Gaza every single day. The death count, the poverty, the enormous difficulties the Palestinians have to live through that are imposed on them by Israel has got to change. And what people should do is exactly that. They need to go. They need to re-read my book. They need to read other books about this issue. They need to go to the BDS movement website and learn how they can boycott and support the boycott of Israel. And it's time to isolate this regime and bring it down just like apartheid was brought down in South Africa and to allow Israelis and Palestinians to live like people should. Then I - actually just to give it a positive note, an optimistic note - I believe that this reality of the transformation of this regime into a real democracy is going to happen much faster than most people think. I think the reality is changing very quickly. And it's unsustainable to keep things the way they are.

Ralph Nader: Well, we've run out of time. We've been talking with Miko Peled, author of The General's Son, issued second edition very recently. Published by Just World Books. How can people reach you? Do you have a website? How can they react to this program or ask you more questions?

Miko Peled: My e-mail is mikopeled@gmail.com. My blog is mikopeled.com. I'm on Facebook. I'm on Twitter. I'm very easy to find. I'm always happy to discuss things with people if they want to invite me, if they want to speak to me, if they want to just chat or ask questions, I'm always available on social media. And I'm all over the country speaking, like you said. So it's very easy to find me. I'll be in Albany in a couple of weeks. On the 17th I'm speaking in Albany on January 17th. So people are always welcome to come and chat, ask questions, and discuss this further.

Ralph Nader: You've never run away from a debate with the opposing viewpoints.

Miko Peled: No. Not that only have I never run away, they never show up. That is the problem. It's not me running away. It's that they never show up to the debates. That's usually been the problem. I've been happy to debate many people, many different people.

Ralph Nader: Well, thank you very much, Miko, for your work throughout many years, bringing truth to power and hoping that's that that extremely continual struggle in the Palestinian-Israeli theater, which has spilled over in many ways to the larger Middle East theater will receive a greater level of rationality. It's been known to happen. It happened in South Africa. Sometimes things that are viewed as unchangeable change very rapidly. And we hope that will be the case for peace between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Thank you again.

Miko Peled: Indeed. Thank you so much.

Steve Skrovan: We have been speaking with Israeli author and activist, Miko Peled about his book [The General's Son, Journey of an Israeli in Palestine](#). We will link to that at the Ralph Nader Radio Hour website as well as linking it to his blog, mikopeled.com.

We're going to take a short break now and check in with corporate crime reporter, Russell Mokhiber.

Russell Mokhiber: From the National Press Building in Washington, DC, this is your corporate crime reporter morning minute for Friday, January 6th, 2017. I'm Russell Mokhiber. Odebrecht, a global construction conglomerate based in Brazil, and Braskem, a Brazilian petro-chemical company pled guilty and will pay a combined total penalty of at least \$3.5 billion to resolve charges with authorities in United States, Brazil and Switzerland, arising out of their schemes to pay hundreds of millions of dollars in bribes to government officials around the world. Odebrecht and Braskem used a hidden button, but fully functional Odebrecht business unit, in effect, a Department of Bribery that systematically paid hundreds of millions of dollars to corrupt government officials in countries and three continents. Odebrecht and Braskem will plead guilty with conspiracy to violate the anti-bribery provisions of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. For the corporate crime reporter, I'm Russell Mokhiber.

Steve Skrovan: Thank you, Russell. Welcome back to the Ralph Nader Radio Hour. My name is Steve Skrovan along with David Feldman and Ralph. Inauguration day is less than three weeks away and the Trump administration is shaping up to be possibly the worst corporate takeover of

the government in this country's history. Here to once again talk to us about some of the potential legal obstacles in the way of the President-elect is a returning guest. David?

David Feldman: Mark Green is an author and a radio and TV commentator whose latest book is entitled Bright, Infinite Future: A Generational Memoir on the Progressive Rise. Last week, Mark joined us to talk about the letter and petition he and Ralph submitted called "Divest or Impeach," demanding that Donald Trump either divest himself of his business interests or face impeachment for violating the US Constitution. Welcome back to the Ralph Nader Radio Hour, Mark Green.

Mark Green: Thank you so much.

David Feldman: The last iteration of this argument appeared in a letter that you wrote to the *New York Times* along with Professor Laurence Tribe. I've been asked to read it. Let me read the letter:

All the moves discussed by the Trumps to resolve their potential conflicts of interest add up to sacrificing pawns to protect the king(dom) — the Trump Organization.

The Constitution's Emoluments Clause is unambiguous. It forbids an American president from accepting anything of value from a foreign entity, without congressional consent, because that would open the door to bribery or extortion.

The only way for President-elect Donald Trump to cure this problem would be an arms-length sale by a public trustee, not piecemeal judgments after Jan. 20 about the thousands of possible winks and nods between foreign leaders and the new administration.

Here come the post hoc rationalizations. Unfair to the family? It would probably pocket a cool \$3 billion-plus. Voters don't care? They will after the first scandal, but even if they don't, popular opinion doesn't amend the Constitution; only amendments can.

Undoable because of size? Mr. Trump chose to put himself in this situation and cannot now act aggrieved, nor is there a too-big-to-sell exemption in the Constitution; if anything, the larger the potential for conflict, the more urgent a sell-off.

Because of a lifetime habit of cutting corners while pursuing profit, Mr. Trump might assume that he could again just brazen his way through this situation. But the White House is not Trump Tower. Merging public office and self-enrichment would be corrupt, unprecedented, unconstitutional and an ongoing impeachable offense.

And that's signed by Professor Laurence Tribe and Mark Green. And I wish my name were attached to that.

Ralph Nader: Well, that essentially sums up the case regarding the Emoluments Clause of the Constitution. And, Mark, you couldn't have a more celebrated Constitutional law expert on your side than Harvard Law School Professor, Laurence Tribe. But right now, I want to talk about The Logan Act, which you have studied and which you think applies to President-elect Trump as a private citizen. Just what is The Logan Act and how has Trump violated it?

Mark Green: Well, we have here not a president allegedly maybe doing something illegal. We have pre-inauguration, serial corruption. It's not only he's violating the Foreign Bribery Clause and seems to want to continue doing it, it's not only that he has not said it sell-off the Trump International Hotel under a GSA Lease that doesn't allow the leaseholder to be in public office, now comes the Logan Act. Most people haven't heard of it. In 1797, a state legislator, George Logan in Pennsylvania, met with French leaders to tell them, "Hey, your country is really unpopular in America, and if you don't change X, Y and Z, there may be a war." Well, probably good news, but France then changed some policies. However, President Adams with the Federalist Congress proposed and enacted a new law called The Logan Act, which said, "Hey, we elect people to negotiate with foreign governments. We can't allow Tom, Dick or Jane just to freelance and represent us in an international negotiation. We only have one president at the time." So, the law passed. There's been no prosecutions of it since then. However, as Ralph pointed out to me earlier, look Donald Trump is not like a secret break-in at the Watergate. He has openly talked to and negotiated with Bibi Netanyahu, Prime Minister of Israel and the UN against what President Obama did on the settlements issue. And he's constantly interacting - maybe not speaking to - on Twitter with President Putin about what should happen in sanctions on Russia and generally on sanctions in response to the apparent hacking by Russia of the American Democratic team in the presidential election. That seems to be an individual, albeit a president in three weeks, privately negotiating, something no president-elect has done previously, Ralph, with one exception that I know about. A President-elect Richard Nixon in late the year he won and took over in 1968, winked at and told the South Vietnamese government "Do not settle the Vietnam War before I get there. I'll give you a better deal." President Johnson and George Will later said that was treasonous. And so it was known but not acted on at the time.

Ralph Nader: This Logan Act is a serious law. It's a criminal law statute for violation. What's the point if it never gets enforced? And why doesn't it get enforced? And who would enforce it? Just briefly.

Mark Green: Well, since it's a criminal statute and the violation of which is a felony, it would be the United States' Attorney General or a US Attorney in a jurisdiction where the acts took place. Now, we're dealing with something that said at the time passed overwhelmingly in both Houses, of course, and then President Adams signed it. But I guess it's hard to enforce because A: maybe people don't do it because of a law and B: it's hard to enforce the law against an incoming president as a legalistic matter. In other words, it wouldn't be wrong as a matter of principle but in terms of effectiveness - a president could become president and then pardon himself. A pardon power is

unlimited. Now, if that ever happened, the blowback - it's like a governor, Ralph appointing himself, herself Senator, if there's a vacancy. It's legal, but whenever a governor has backfired and he or she is lost the next time. If a president pardons himself - it was bad enough when Gerald Ford pardoned Richard Nixon. Can you imagine? It's rare to non-existent, although on the face of it - it's funny how Trump gets away with so much, because he admits it as opposed to denying it.

Ralph Nader: Apart from any enforcement of the Logan Act, it does show that he is oblivious to restraints under the rule of law. And that's going to get him into a lot of trouble well beyond the Emoluments Clause or the Logan Act. He just thinks he's the ruler. He's the boss.

Mark Green: Let me interrupt with an example. Anticipating this brief interview, I thought of an amazing parallel. All of us think that Richard Nixon was a kind of a smart, capable guy but was fundamentally corrupt, hence Watergate. And the Supreme Court rules that he has to turn over the Watergate tapes. He then thought briefly about burning them. He's the president. "President can't break the law," he later said to David Frost. Well, he didn't burn them. He turned them over. And the rest is history. Imagine, Ralph, if it were Donald Trump - and this is not a fantastical - a court or the court orders him to do X. And he says, "Where's your army to enforce it? I'm the President." There's a fair chance that kind of authoritarian, populist, Philippine leader, Turkey leader, Russian leader scenario would occur in our country. And the best tweet and comment that I've seen this month is people writing, "You know, the Constitution. We revere it. It's not self enforcing."

David Feldman: Didn't Andrew Jackson say, "Where's your army to enforce?"

Mark Green: It may have been Jackson or Stalin, but I think you are right.

David Feldman: So, it's also an American - when you bring up those countries, it's happened in America.

Mark Green: Yes. And if this happens, the only way to restrain a guy with an army, the nuclear code and a Justice Department is for the people of honor like those Senators who stood up to Joe McCarthy, and against public opinion to stand up and go "No." It's Jason Chaffetz of Utah saying, "You know what? I'm a good Republican. This is too much. I'm going to start the impeachment proceedings."

Ralph Nader: Maybe Donald Trump better reads the results of the Nuremberg Trials and the international law that came out of it that you can't just say, "I'm following orders." When a Donald Trump tries to overthrow our Constitutional regime...

Mark Green: Ralph, you are so right.

Ralph Nader: ...Because he has such a bruisable megalomaniac ego, having said on more than one occasion if anybody slams him, he slams back twenty times harder.

Mark Green: Your analysis is perfect with one exception, if I may. He doesn't read. If the Nuremberg Trials are rebroadcast on cable, and he sees it, then and only if Mika Brzezinski and Joe Scarborough say it, will he go, "Wait. Does that apply to me?"

Ralph Nader: We know we're in trouble when the main restraint reportedly on Donald Trump has to come from his family, and especially his daughter Ivanka. Anyway, this is to be continued, Mark. We have covered some really solid original ground in the last two shows: one on the Emoluments Act, one on the Emoluments Clause to the Constitution and this one on the Logan Act. So, we'll continue to be the law and order monitor of the Trump administration. And in the future, we're going to hear from Mark Green's proposal to expand that in a very, very instantaneous manner to hold the President Trump accountable. Thank you very much, Mark.

Mark Green: Thank you, Ralph. Thank you, guys.

Steve Skrovan: Well, that's our show. We want to thank our guests Miko Peled, author of [The General's Son, Journey of an Israeli in Palestine](#) and once again, Mark Green for telling us all about the Logan Act. We will link to the letter that he and Laurence Tribe wrote in the *New York Times* about the need for Donald Trump to divest himself of his business interests before taking office. We'll do that at ralphnaderradiohour.com. Join us next week on the Ralph Nader Radio Hour. We'll talk to you then, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Thank you very much. Let's have a just New Year. And to have a just New Year, we need many justice seekers among all of you.