

Steve Skrovan: Welcome to the Ralph Nader Radio Hour. My name is Steve Skrovan along with my co-host David Feldman. Hello David.

David Feldman: Hi, I'm firing my agent again. Six times this week.

Steve Skrovan: Yeah. Well that's a whole 'nother issue we can talk about. And we also have the man of the hour Ralph Nader. Happy Earth Day Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, listeners he is referring to the fifth anniversary of the Ralph Nader Radio Hour. We are five years in, still have some real progressive community radio stations don't carry it: WBAI in New York, WPFW in Washington, D.C., and the big one in Tampa, Florida. So progressive forces need to pull together more and learn lessons from the right wing, but anyway we have a great show today. And it's not going to tax the listeners the way some of our more intricate shows, but it will give them a great historical perspective on how to build democracy.

Steve Skrovan: Right. And I mentioned Earth Day earlier Ralph. Why don't you just give us a little capsule summary of your experience with Earth Day.

Ralph Nader: Well, I was active in the first Earth Day April 22, 1970. I did three events from Philadelphia to Buffalo, but there were 1500 events at colleges and universities. It was launched by Senator Gaylord Nelson, Democrat of Wisconsin who responded to a suggestion by a citizen in Colorado. And it really put the environmental health and safety issues on the political map and made it part of election dialogues and made the cover of Time and Newsweek Steve and David. That was a big deal then. And the students should get great credit for that, but as it succeeded in the following years the big corporations started diluting it. They started giving money to some of the local events. They did a lot of greenwashing that is talking environmentalism but not doing it. And now we want to see it revived with the huge numbers of youngsters who are turning out from Europe to India, Japan and United States on climate disruption and climate catastrophe. And they're just applying what they've learned in school. So, they're getting the attention of parents, getting attention of these corporations and hope to make a big deal out of Earth Day coming up April 22, 2019.

Steve Skrovan: Excellent. Thank you for talking about that Ralph. We want to acknowledge that and as Ralph mentioned before we've got a great show today. We're going to talk about electoral politics, both here in the United States and also, all the way across the ocean and the Mediterranean Sea to Israel. First up is Richard Winger, founder of Ballot Access News which is a monthly newsletter that reports on the rules, the regulations and the difficulties getting on a ballot so that people have the choices they need to make a conscientious vote. This is especially important as we head into the primary season. For instance, there are state laws proposed that would bar candidates, I understand, from getting on the ballot if they don't release their tax returns. We'll find out where Mr. Winger stands on that. Next up, we will welcome back philosopher and peace activist Jerome Segal, who is often credited with helping write the Palestinian Declaration of Independence. Mr. Segal founded The Jewish Peace Lobby and he's going to give his insights into the recent reelection of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and what we can expect from his right-wing government that continues to box the Palestinians into smaller and smaller parcels of land. As always, we will take a break in between to check in with our Corporate Crime Reporter, Russell Mohkiber and if we have time, we will answer more listener questions, but first let's get an update from the Ballot Access News. David?

David Feldman: Richard Winger is an advocate for more equitable laws allowing access to the ballot for minor parties. Mr. Winger has testified on behalf of these issues in court cases across the country and has been published in journals ranging from the Journal of Election Law [Election Law Journal] to the Fordham Urban Law Review [Fordham Urban Law Journal]. In 1985, he began publishing Ballot Access News, the national, monthly newsletter covering developments in ballot access law and third parties in general. Welcome back to the Ralph Nader Radio Hour Richard Winger.

Richard Winger: It's great to be back here for the second time this year. I appreciate being invited.

Ralph Nader: Richard Winger is a phenomenon, listeners. He is by far the national expert on state ballot access laws and we're going to be talking about that more, but if listeners don't think this is important for democracies listen to a little background. In World War II, right after World War II Europe - Western Europe, Eastern Europe - they were all in destitution, destruction; it was a very, very violent war as everybody knows, but in Western Europe they recouped with a lot of small parties on the ballot. It's because small parties were allowed to be in coalitions that they pushed progressive initiatives on the more stayed status-quo parties. And as a result, they got Full Medicare for All in effect. They got good pensions. They got a higher minimum wage. They got four weeks paid vacation whether or not you belong to union. They got stronger union laws. They got thriving consumer cooperatives. They got repaired public facilities like parks, support for the arts, support for mass transit and tuition-free higher education. Now in our country, we don't have that tradition. It's very difficult first of all to get on the ballot. It's harder over the years to get on the ballot in North Carolina than it is probably in four European countries and Richard will talk more about that. But you know people often don't realize when they say to candidates for third parties, "don't run you're going to be a spoiler." They're really saying, "Shut up. Don't use your First-Amendment Rights to speak, petition and assemble." And I think they don't quite realize how dictatorial that demand is. Now they can oppose third-party candidates; they can support third-party candidates, but to say shut up is to say, you should not speak the way the Democrat and Republican candidates are free to speak, assemble and petition under the First Amendment. So, in our country we've had a two-party duopoly. We are not susceptible to new waves of public opinion. I mean look at the two parties; they really in various ways have sat on the minimum wage at the federal level regardless of lip service and a vast majority of people want that minimum wage raised very, very significantly—conservative/liberal. So, with that background, Richard before we get into some of the specifics, talk about your Ballot Access News. You know I'm holding the February issue in my hands and you cover for example, 50 state deadlines for the presidential candidates to get into the race. You cover the status of third-party candidates in state legislatures. Your lead article is, "New York Injures Ballot Access". You have articles on what the Libertarian Party is doing, the Green Party is doing, the Bread & Roses Party in Maryland is doing. And Jill Stein, the candidate for the Green Party, won a second lawsuit on vote counting machines in Pennsylvania. She won a lawsuit saying that Pennsylvania has to have a paper audit trail behind their voting machines. And so, talk about some of the improvements in ballot access. Am I correct saying that things are better--a little bit better now than they were 20 years ago?

Richard Winger: It goes back and forth. It's amazingly fluid. We made huge gains in 2016, 2017 in 2018, but I'm sorry to say this year there's 13 states where legislators have introduced bills to make the ballot access laws worse and three of them have already passed. It's a bad year in the legislatures. When there's a lot of unhappiness in the country the ballot access laws generally get worse. When people are in a sort of a good mood like the late 1990's they get better.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, one interesting thing is that people I think need to realize if you don't have more candidates on the ballot, you don't give voices and choices to the voters. The voters cast a more meaningful vote when they have broader choices. I mean in some races especially at the local level, there's only really one candidate, a Republican or a Democrat and in gerrymandering all over the country, it's either slam-dunk Democrat/slam-dunk Republican. It isn't even a two-party system in a competitive way. But you started this Ballot Access News I guess 34 years ago; you work out of your kitchen table. You're by far the greatest expert. No academic professor comes close to your knowledge. Give us your view of where you think multiparty politics should go. Right now, it's smeared with the word "spoiler," but what's Richard Winger's take on all of this?

Richard Winger: Well I am very happy about Maine using ranked-choice voting last year for Congress and in the primaries for state office.

Ralph Nader: Explain that.

Richard Winger: Maine is the first state to use ranked-choice voting for office, beyond just local office, and I think it's gonna spread and that will cure the spoiler.

Ralph Nader: Explain how that works to people who aren't familiar?

Richard Winger: Well this is very old idea. It's been in use around some parts of the world for over a hundred years. It lets the voter communicate more information instead of the voter just scanning a list of candidates for a particular office and deciding which candidate the voter likes best, ranked-choice voting lets the voter communicate who is his or her first choice and who is his or her second choice and if the second-choice person does better than the first-choice voting then they set aside the voters' first choice and put the second choice into effect.

Ralph Nader: So, it always ensures that whoever wins, wins a majority of the vote cast.

Richard Winger: That's right. A purist would quibble a tiny bit, but generally that's right.

Ralph Nader: Which means you know for those who are wedded to the two-party duopoly if the Green Party vote, say for Jill Stein, the second choice by the Green Party voter is Joe Smith of the Democratic Party, the third party is some other choice. If Jill Stein doesn't have a majority it goes to the next candidate that has the largest vote, which is the number two preference. It's really hard to describe it in sound bite television; I'll tell you that's one of its problems. It's often called instant-runoff voting [IRV]. So instant meaning is the first choice drops to the second choice in order to get a majority candidate winning the election. So historically Richard, what if third parties contributed to America? Before the Civil War you didn't even have to have signatures to get on a ballot? I understand in most states you just had to buy the ballots.

Richard Winger: Well, before the 1890s there was no such thing as a government-printed ballot. Any voter was free to prepare--and I'll say his, not his or her, because back then it was just male of course--but any voter was free to make his own ballot. Just take a piece of paper and write down who you wanted to vote for and that way the government had no power to stop people from running for office. The government was out of it. And of course, there were disadvantages with that system, but at least it was totally free. Anybody could run for office. There was no such thing as a petition, a filing fee, a declaration of candidacy. And that that's why, in that part of our history, we had new parties rising up

when people got tired of the old parties. Three times the voters got tired of one of the major parties and a new one arose to take its place. The Federalist Party died out. And the party that very few people even know about took its place. That was the National Republican Party. That was the party of John Quincy Adams and Henry Clay and it died out. And in its place arose The Whig Party and it died out. And in its place arose the Republican Party. So, we had a fluidity and that's the way it is in other democratic countries like in France in 2017, people started a new party called in En Marche, which means the Republic on the move. And here this brand new party elected the president in the 2017 election and two months later they had their legislative races that new party won a majority in the national legislature. So, the French were perfectly free to just junk their old parties and start a brand new one and put it in power and the same thing happened in Mexico in 2018. Andres Manuel López Obrador formed The National Regeneration Movement and he was elected president and here was a brand new party. That's what I wish we had in this country, but there are so many impediments to a new party getting going that, we just get stuck with the same old two parties from the 19th century.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, we have deadly rigidity here that doesn't respond to the necessities of the people or even public opinion polls on particular issues. In my reading of American history most of the things we like about that we inherited from our forebears politically, economically were first proposed by third parties. The Liberty Party in 1840 came out against slavery, The women's Suffrage parties, The Labor Farmer parties later on and in late 19th century, The People's Party, The Greenback Party. They're the ones who purported women's right to vote. They proposed progressive taxation. They proposed the right to form labor unions. They proposed the 40-hour week. They proposed the abolition of child labor. Later on, in the early 20th century, The Progressive Party, Eugene Debs, for example, even Teddy Roosevelt when he won on third party in 1912, they pushed for universal health insurance. They even pushed for federal chartering of giant corporations, taking it away from the corporate states like Delaware. It's really quite amazing. I mean Medicare came out of Norman Thomas's Socialist Party - pressured Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Harry Truman – he [Norman Thomas] ran for President. The same is true for a lot of the early environmental consumer movements. So, what changed? Could it be that when the Communist Party registered in the US, right after World War II that that was seen as a threat and that's when the draconian restrictions on ballot access to get candidates on the ballot started big time. They wanted to keep communist candidates off the ballot?

Richard Winger: You're right. That's true. But the absolute worst period for making the ballot access laws more restrictive was in the period 1969, 1970 and 1971 because it was a shock to the system when George Wallace, who was not a good person at that time--he was a force for evil-- got on the ballot in all 50 states and he got 13% of the vote and that was the first time anybody had got as much as 3% all the way back since 1924. I mean Henry Wallace had been Vice President but he only got 2% in 1948. So, the status quo thought minor parties weren't much of a threat until George Wallace came along and shocked the country.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, it's amazing the barriers like Ross Perot got 19 million votes in 1992. He actually got on the presidential debates. He didn't get one Electoral College vote. What's your view on Electoral College? And what's going on in terms of neutralizing it with nationalpopularvote.com?

Richard Winger: You're right there's a lot of problems for fluidity other than the ballot access laws. One of them is Article II of our original U.S. Constitution. It says if nobody gets a majority of the Electoral College vote then guess what--the US House picks the president and every state gets one vote. So that is

a worst impediment for somebody like Howard Schultz or Ross Perot or any new party that has real appeal than even the ballot access laws, because if it's a real three-way race then nobody gets a majority from the Electoral College vote. And then guess what--the Republicans and Democrats sitting in the House get to pick the next president. That's a real problem. The only way we can change that--you mentioned The National Popular Vote Movement--as it gains and gains and it's doing very well this year; I think if it gets really close to having enough electoral votes to take effect, then the country really will get serious about a constitutional amendment and we can clean up so many of these unfortunate barriers to a real fair election.

Ralph Nader: Yeah, for those of you who don't know about it, it started with the businessman Steve Silberstein and he hired six people go around the states and states now have passed laws that say, "once all the states that pass laws total up to 270 electoral votes, which is majority, we will throw our electoral votes to whoever wins the National Popular Presidential Vote [National Popular Vote Interstate Compact-NPVIC] and you already have New York, Maryland, New Jersey, Illinois, California and others that have passed these laws. Let's say you could wave a wand, what would be the Richard Winger reform on ballot access? Would you have one federal ballot access law for everyone running for Congress and the White House? Or what would be the clean sheet to get rid of this enormous obstruction of voter choices and varying agendas and redirections being proposed on the ballot?

Richard Winger: It seems obvious to me that we should have a federal standard for federal office. There are only two countries in the whole world that don't have a national law regulating how you get on the ballot in national elections--that's The United States and Switzerland. Switzerland, of course is a well-governed country and I don't want to disparage Switzerland, but they let each canton [member state] write the ballot access laws even for the national elections and so do we. And we're the only two countries like that. We've had nine sessions of Congress in which we had a federal ballot access bill. John Conyers [Congressman] introduced it three times, Tim Penny [Congressman] from Minnesota introduced it once and Ron Paul [Texas Congressman] introduced it four times.

Ralph Nader: Republican. Yeah, he's a Republican. Yeah.

Richard Winger: I should mention, there is a Ballot Access Law in the House this year too. Justin Amash [Congressman] of Michigan; I hope I'm saying his name right maybe you can correct it.

Ralph Nader: Yes, you are, you are...

Richard Winger: Okay. He introduced one [the Ballot Fairness Act], which doesn't have any co-sponsors yet and I'm afraid hardly anybody knows about it, but I'm glad you brought that up. I should talk about that more myself.

Ralph Nader: How about at the state-office level--running for governor in state legislatures. What would you institute as a reform to respect voter choices?

Richard Winger: I look to Britain and Canada as models. They have perfectly equal ballot access and it's tolerant. In Britain, you pay one thousand pounds and turn in 10 signatures to run for Parliament. And if you get 5% of the vote you get your money back. In Canada, it's similar, you paid one thousand Canadian dollars and 100 signatures. So, Canada and Britain simply have no ballot access problem. The typical race for national legislature has five or six parties in the ballot.

Ralph Nader: You know you'd think when a former president of United States with huge experience in electoral systems all over the world says that the U.S. is no longer an electoral democracy, that this would generate news. It would be on the networks; it would be a subject of discussion; candidates would focus on that more, but the forces of autocracy are prevailing again and again. And by the way listeners, don't think this is just a proposed reform to get more candidates on the ballot. Your rights as a voter are essentially being curtailed here, when you just have Republican and Democrat on the ballot both dialing for the same corporate campaign cash contributions. And so many important changes in the country--living wage, full health care for all and cracking down on corporate crime against workers, consumers, the environment and so many other things are just stalled, they just stalled. Never mind that 70%, 80%, 90% of the American people want these changes. So, we're dealing here with a dictatorial shield around our electoral systems that Richard Winger has been exposing and proposing for years but are you getting on the mass media at all Richard?

Richard Winger: I got a lot of mass media in the 1990s. My subject was very, very popular because of Ross Perot both in 92 and 96.

Ralph Nader: But the tax issue--do you think that presidential candidates should be required by state law to release their personal tax returns?

Richard Winger: There is 18 states that have bills pending, although some of them have been defeated, that says you can't get on the ballot if you don't expose the last X number of years of your income tax returns. I understand the emotions that prompt people to introduce these bills and I wish President Trump would reveal his income tax returns, but the trouble is, this is philosophically wrong. If we want to bar presidential candidates who don't expose their income tax returns, we need to put that in the U.S. Constitution. Ever since the beginning of the Constitution it's been pretty plain that when the signers, the founders of the Constitution, listed qualifications they intended them to be exclusive and that's the way it's been interpreted. And because of that understanding women were permitted to be on the ballot for Congress even though they couldn't register a vote. African-Americans were permitted to be on the ballot even when they lived in states where they couldn't register to vote. If Russia had a constitution like that Putin would not have been able to keep his leading opponent off the ballot in the presidential election in 2018. That was Alexei Navalny. He was a heroic anti-corruption Russian and he would have given Putin a real run for his money but Putin kept them off the ballot because he had been convicted of embezzlement which was a phony charge. In this country, that can't happen thanks to our Constitution. They had to let Eugene Debs to run for President 1920 when he was locked up in the penitentiary for opposing our involvement in World War I. So, I just hate to have Democrats around the country in state legislatures attacking this very good principle in our Constitution.

Ralph Nader: I agree with you.

Richard Winger: Thank you.

Ralph Nader: I think that personal tax returns are matter of essential privacy. There is a huge form that candidates have to fill if they run for president. They have to disclose the relevant information, but if somebody's giving a charitable contribution to a mental health institution because a relative is there, it shouldn't be disclosed on the tax return. Why am I saying that Trump should disclose his tax returns? Because quite apart from any non-legal obligation to do so, he bragged about his business; he bragged about his wealth, inflated his wealth. He bragged about all the things he did and his hundreds of pages

of business tax returns he demanded to be kept secret. Well you know once you open up that door equitably you say, oh so you think you're worth 10 billion dollars. You think you've done this great business success that you are using to get votes to run for president. Let's see your business tax returns. Of course, the...

Richard Winger: Well, fortunately there is a 1924 federal law that says, "Congress can look at any taxpayer's tax return". It's kind of a forgotten law that's been revived recently. So, you read about it in the newspapers every day. There's going to be a big court battle over this.

Ralph Nader: Right. The House of Ways and Means Committee has sent a formal demand to the US Treasury Department to release Trump's tax returns. Well, before we conclude Richard. How can people get Ballot Access News fascinating newsletter--nothing like it in the country?

Richard Winger: Well, thank you for giving me the chance to mention that. It's \$18 a year for 12 issues. So, could either send a check to the address that's listed on the web page and all you have to do is Google Ballot Access News and it'll come right up or you can use PayPal and again if you Google Ballot Access News you'll find it.

Ralph Nader: And you should have your libraries subscribe because it's right up to date--what's happening in Arizona; what's happening in Connecticut; what happened in Alaska. This is all about democracy being stifled by these ballot access exclusions and of course all the things like Electoral College and gerrymandering. What a mockery of any kind of open democratic system with full choice and voice possible; what a mockery to younger generations to learn in grade school that we live in a democratic society. Thank you very much Richard Winger for all your work and I think you're going to be more in the news coming up because there are some active third parties who want in and give people more voices and choices. Thank you, Richard Winger, Editor of Ballot Access News--the greatest expert in the history of the United States on ballot access laws. There is no number two!

Richard Winger: Okay. Thank you so much Ralph. Thank you very much.

Ralph Nader: You are welcome - to be continued.

Steve Skrovan: We've been speaking with Richard Winger of Ballot Access News. We will link to his work at ralphnaderradiohour.com. Now let's take a short break and check in with Russell Mohkiber, our Corporate Crime Reporter. When we come back, we will welcome back to the show philosopher and peace activist Jerome Segal who's going to talk to us about the implications of Benjamin Netanyahu's victory in the latest Israeli elections. You're listening to the Ralph Nader Radio Hour back after this.

Russell Mohkiber: From the National Press building in Washington, D.C. This is your Corporate Crime Reporter "Morning Minute", Friday April 19, 2019. I'm Russell Mohkiber. Corporate criminal prosecutions are in decline. The Department of Justice has paid lip service to corporate prosecutions but in practice the department has extended new forms of leniency to the largest corporations in the most serious criminal cases. What to do? Create an independent unit within the Justice Department to prosecute corporate criminals. That's the take of Duke Law professor, Brendan Garrett in a new article titled, "Declining Corporate Prosecution" [American Criminal Law Review, March 26, 2019]. "Settling corporate prosecution functions in a dedicated expert group within the Department of Justice would help to insulate this work in a way that the anti-trust division in the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act [FCPA] group has been," Garrett wrote. "The inconsistency of US corporate prosecution policy and practice is a

function of our system's reliance first and foremost on nearly unfettered prosecutorial discretion." For the Corporate Crime Reporter, I'm Russell Mohkiber.

Steve Skrovan: Thank you Russell. Welcome back to the Ralph Nader Radio Hour. My name is Steve Skrovan along with David Feldman and Ralph. Now let's get an expert opinion on what is going on in Israel with the reelection of the right wing government of Benjamin Netanyahu. David?

David Feldman: Jerome Segal is a Senior Research Scholar at the Center for International and Strategic Studies as well as a Research Scholar at the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy at the University of Maryland. In addition, he is President and Founder of The Jewish Peace Lobby. He is the author of *Graceful Simplicity: The Philosophy and Politics of the Alternative American Dream*. Welcome back to the Ralph Nader Radio Hour professor Jerome Segal.

Jerome Segal: Thank you very much.

Ralph Nader: Yeah welcome again Jerome. Before, we open up this discussion we have to deal with this issue of anti-Semitism charges. There used to be a time, centuries and decades ago when anti-Semitism was connected to Russian pogroms, violent attacks on Jewish populated villages or the Nazi slaughter or in this country systemic exclusion from corporate law firms. For example, Jewish graduates on Harvard Law School couldn't go to corporate law firms. Now the charge of anti-Semitism is so diluted, it is being applied for example, if you criticize AIPAC, the U.S. Lobby in Washington, D.C. Prime Minister Netanyahu said the other day, "Criticizing AIPAC is anti-Semitic". Now if you simply say that there is a lot of campaign money connected with the U.S. policy toward Israel and Congress that's supposed to be anti-Semitic. So, let's start from a unique angle, which I think you appreciate. The worst anti-Semitism is against Arabs. If you look at the coalition parties in Prime Minister Netanyahu's coalition, they have said the most vile things against Palestinian Arabs. They've called them vermin, cockroaches; only understand force, they don't belong where they are. The words are so vile you don't even want to repeat them. But one in the home party, which is part of Netanyahu's coalition, one of the leaders said that, "Palestinian women who are pregnant have these little snakes in their stomach". And you know, talked about violent action against Palestinians generally. Now I think if we recognize, as a civil debate recognized in the U. S. a few years ago, that there are two anti-Semitisms--against Jews and against Arabs, we'll be able to have the kind of open discussion that you've been famous for that results in peaceful dispute settlement; results in viable two-state solutions. In that debate, as you know, was between two Jewish Americans and two Arab Americans and you can see it on debatingtaboos.org, debatingtaboos.org. And the debate subject was, "Is anti-Semitism against Arabs worse now than anti-Semitism against Jews in the United States? Arab Americans and policies toward the Palestinians". So, with that background why don't you tell us what you think U.S. policy should be toward the Israeli-Palestinian crisis which is now reaching annexation talk by the Israeli regime of the West Bank?

Jerome Segal: Yeah. Well, I've actually put forward a proposal and I know you know that you know I ran against actually Ben Cardin in the Maryland Senate race and it was largely a race against AIPAC just last June and in the context of that Senate primary I put forward a proposal for completely revamping our approach and what I argued for was, first of all, to replace all of the military aid that we give Israel to transfer it to economic aid. Give them no military aid and then they could still have access to American weapons but they'd have to pay market prices. But the advantage of that is that it gives you a lot of flexibility policy-wise when it's all economic. And the first thing, I would do is actually just as a wake-up call, is simply reduce the level and I think it's now \$3.8 billion. I would take \$800 million right off the top.

Then I'd take basically \$1 billion of that and I would make it available for something that people aren't really aware of, which is as many as a third of the Israeli settlers living in the West Bank would actually return to Israel-proper today without a peace agreement, if simply they had financial support for doing so for the major dislocation both with respect to jobs and families and so on. And there is no program, there is no program to assist them to come back. So, the first thing I would do is use a large chunk of American aid money, in fact to start a flow of settlers from the territories back into Israel, which would be really staggering in its impact. And the second thing I would do, is for whatever money Israel spends on expanding settlements, I would deduct that and put it into a trust fund that Israel could only have access to in the event of a permanent freeze on settlements or a peace treaty with the Palestinians. And then for the rest of the money which might be let's say the remaining billion because economic aid I would link that to very specific projects and they'd be projects that were aimed at promoting peace between the Israelis and Palestinians and promoting democracy inside of Israel. So, we could have major educational contact. In fact, I proposed that 25 years ago when we started The Jewish Peace Lobby--that the U. S. Fund contact between Israelis and Palestinians for their entire school career basically from kindergarten through college. And it would have cost, I don't know, \$20 million a year or something. We couldn't get congressional support for anything except a pittance. But, in any event, that's my specific proposal. And what's interesting other than the content of this, is that as far as I know nobody has another proposal; there is no proposal. The entire democratic left and for all of the speaking out that different people have said about criticizing AIPAC and all stuff that's been in the paper policy wise, I'm not aware of a single piece of interesting legislation having to do with these fundamentals of \$3.8 billion a year and in fact the Senate just gave support to doing that for 10 years for \$38 billion. And that's going to be dealt with in the House and with no opposition to this at all, from anyone.

Ralph Nader: You know the Israeli peace leaders and the opposition to Prime Minister Netanyahu involves former heads of the Israeli equivalent to CIA, the FBI, former Israeli generals, former mayors of Israeli cities. And since 1948, they have never had their viewpoint before a congressional committee. Are you supporting opening up the Senate Foreign and House Foreign Relations Committee so that the other Israeli voices get heard?

Jerome Segal: Yeah. Sure, That's a very good idea Ralph and I remember you actually raised this once before and I totally support it. And in fact, I've worked closely with one of the Israelis that you're talking about, a man named Amihai Ami Ayalon, who had been head of the Israeli Navy and then became the head of the Shin Bet, which is sort of like their FBI, but they are an internal security group. And he's you know very much someone who has talked about the importance for Israel of ending the occupation. He said something the other day that was quite interesting and really on the button. He said, "You know the war that most Israelis think they're fighting is a war that we won 20 years ago". That war was all over 40 years ago with the Arab states and with the Palestinians. We won that. The war we are all fighting now is really for the nature of Israel itself for what kind of Jewish state are we going to have. So, I agree with you totally. And you know it may be possible; there has been change. Things are opening up somewhat in the Congress and I think just what you're talking about certainly having people like Ami Ayalon and some of the other, you know they have this group of Commanders for Israeli Security [CIS], which is I think now in the hundreds of senior officers and heads of intelligence service and so on. And I think it's within the reach to have those people come and speak before the Congress. The real question is whether or not that ever translates into anything because you know, here is a dirty secret: The Democrats and almost everybody in the Congress we think of as basically you know decent person

regardless of party, but the truth is that everybody knows the reality. It's no secret you know there isn't actually you know all that by way of message that even someone like Ami Ayalon--he provides cover for people doing things, but they know it, they know it and especially the Jewish members who I'm very friendly with. Listen, I started The Jewish Peace Lobby in 1989. And I put forward a resolution that I wanted to go through the Congress that would have called for three things. It was very balanced. It called on Israel to stop building settlements; called on the Palestinians to abandon any terrorism and called on the Arab states to halt what was called the secondary boycott then. And I remember going to a Jewish member of Congress, a liberal, someone generally respected, and asking if he would cosponsor this thing and he looked at me and said, "Well, it's totally balanced, but I'm not sticking my head up in that shooting gallery".

Ralph Nader: Well again, you see the fear of being labeled anti-Semitic

Jerome Segal: Or even anti-Israel.

Ralph Nader: Yeah. Just to clarify this business of Congresswoman Omar and how she's being ground under because she dared say that campaign money was a factor, not the only factor, in persuading members of Congress. Here's a report in The Intercept and it is based on a recorded conversation that David Ochs, Founder of HaLev, which helps send young people AIPAC's Annual Convention in Washington, big fundraiser and he's quoted as saying, "Congressmen and Senators don't do anything unless you pressure them. They kick the can down the road unless you pressure them. And the only way to do that is with money". That's just one of many forms of bragging by AIPAC and its associate groups about their influence in Congress and if people want the details on this just go to grim@theintercept.com.

Jerome Segal: Yeah. Let me say something about money Ralph, because I've got you know as someone who both started a lobby that was an alternative to AIPAC and even ran for office against them, I know plenty about the importance of money but I have a somewhat different take on it. When I look at the numbers, it's actually not the case that it takes all that money to win the support of members of Congress. I mean AIPAC or the AIPAC itself doesn't do it but the coordinated PACs that support Israeli government policy. The amount of money is not gargantuan. When Cardin ran for U. S. Senate the PACs played a really critical role. This is when he ran in the primary, I think it was 2006, against another member of Congress and he beat him in the Democratic Party primary by about three points; it was very close race. So, the PACs put in a lot of money and supported Cardin for the first time in that race. But it was about \$400,000 it wasn't like \$4 million or \$40 million.

Ralph Nader: We're talking with Jerome Segal. Let me get this point in. You're right. The money it is actually a smaller part of it. Far greater is just constant lobbying. You can learn a lot of lessons from how AIPAC is mobilized its base, which was never more than 300,000 people to begin with. But they focus on every Senator, every Representative. They make them go to meetings; they know who their associates are back home who can influence them. And then the ultimate two weapons, politically that they use is the anti-Semitic smear and they will challenge the incumbent in the primary, the way they did Senator Percy and defeated Senator Percy in Illinois.

Jerome Segal: That's right.

Ralph Nader: What it comes down to is reflective of a minority of Jewish American opinion. AIPAC is as a minority of Jewish American opinion. J Street, Jewish Voices for Peace, Peace Now, etcetera reflect far greater opinion, but it's not organized like AIPAC is.

Jerome Segal: That's right. And let me add to that Ralph because I know exactly what you're saying and the reference to Percy is very sharp in my mind and this is really what put AIPACs muscle on the map. Actually, if you think of it as a carrot and stick; the carrot is always there, the money or the trips and so on. But the stick is a real thing. Is that AIPAC can and has gone after politicians in such a concerted way that they have actually been responsible for ending promising careers. And that's what happened with Percy and the thing is what I called it in my Senate race was the big-dog strategy. And what I said was we could use against the NRA also, and what we needed to do was to pick out you know a key AIPAC lieutenant in the Congress and go head to head challenge him in a primary and either beat him or beat him up bad and that had never happened. No one has ever, ever done that except my primary race against Ben Cardin and I didn't have to defeat him. That was the thing that was so disturbing, because I got very little support for that and no press attention, but I did not have to beat him, I just had to demonstrate you know that 25% of Maryland Democrats would vote against someone for that reason and it would have changed the equation. It never happened before in Congress and the Washington Post didn't even write an article about it.

Ralph Nader: Before, we close David, Steve any questions or comments?

David Feldman: Hi, professor I was told that AIPAC can't give money to candidates.

Jerome Segal: They can't; they don't. They're not a PAC, it stands for Public Affairs Committee, but they are linked to oh maybe a hundred or more PACs around the country and they themselves have tens of thousands of members who as individuals can give. So, they can channel a fair bit of money, but they themselves, it's quite true, they can't directly give. Let me say one thing before we close just about the Israeli elections and Trump. You know I'm a very optimistic person and I've been involved in this since 1982 with the war in Lebanon. So that's like 37 years, but I think that right now is that it was a very fateful election and we may see the close of what I sort of refer to as a 30-year period of negotiability that started with the Palestinian Declaration of Independence in 1988 in which they accepted the Famous U. N. Partition Resolution of 1947 and that will open things up. Five years later we had Oslo and then we had on and off and so on, the whole cycle of negotiations and non-negotiations. But this is different right now with the move towards annexation and the alliance between Trump and Netanyahu on that and I listened to the AIPAC conference and we had our Ambassador David Friedman speaking to the AIPAC people and he said something to them that was actually quite correct from his point of view. He said, "You know we don't want it to be the case that" and this is after Trump recognized Israeli Sovereignty on the Golan, which it had opposed since it was enacted in 1981. So, Friedman said, "We don't want to be the case that years from now people ask, well why didn't we make more progress when Trump was President and Pompeo was Secretary of State and John Bolton was Security Advisor and even David Friedman was Ambassador"? And that's the argument that the right wing of the Settlers' Movement is making for going to annexation. It's that, we've never had and we never may have again a president who is likely actually to support Israeli annexation if we do it, and certainly won't oppose it. And I actually think that it's very likely that Israel will do annexation but you know in a creeping way it'll allow the Trump plan to come forward. It will say sort of an ambiguous "yes, but" to it; it'll hope that the Palestinians reject it. Then we will paint them as no partner on the other side. And then it will start by

annexing just the settlements that are on the west side of the wall. And they will say, well these would have been part of any peace agreement. And that's going to settle up its own dynamic. I think the security cooperation may break down because that's the definitive end of Oslo, which was the commitment to not do that. That was built into the Oslo II agreements as a central premise.

Ralph Nader: Yeah. And the political sands are shifting now. Israel is aligning itself with Saudi Arabia and the UAE and other regimes against Iran.

Jerome Segal: Yeah.

Ralph Nader: And by the way did the Israelis push for the US to invade Iraq? What's your knowledge about that?

Jerome Segal: Well, Netanyahu, who wasn't Prime Minister at the time, had an op-ed piece in The Wall Street Journal I think a year or two before it happened explicitly calling for that. So, it wasn't the Israeli government.

David Feldman: He was with PNAC. He was lined up with Bill Kristol and the People for the New American Century –who wrote the script for the invasion.

Jerome Segal: I didn't know about that. But John Kerry said actually that when he was head of the Foreign Relations Committee that Netanyahu would come in there regularly and I think Kerry was talking about actually an attack on Iran. And it's interesting, you know, when the United States invaded Iraq Ariel Sharon said, "wrong country." He said they should have gone after Iran. And I think that's the real danger right now because that's exactly what Netanyahu really wants and.

Ralph Nader: By the way Jerome, your point on cutting aid, U.S. aid to Israel because it's a modern economy; it has \$40,000 per capita GDP

Jerome Segal: Yeah.

Ralph Nader: Which is like England or Britain. You probably remember that Prime Minister Netanyahu made a speech to the Joint Session of Congress in 1996 where among his many ovations his biggest standing ovation came when he said, "Israel is now a modern economy and we're not going to be asking for aid anymore".

Jerome Segal: Right.

Ralph Nader: And he got a huge standing ovation whatever happened to that?

Jerome Segal: Yeah. Well, of course nobody wants to turn down free money and the thing is that there's not one member of Congress who has raised it. That's why we are saying you know in my comment about Ilhan Omar what she's right about, I didn't agree with this analysis of "Its all the Benjamins" or it's this, that and the other thing, but the bottom line is what she was saying is that when it comes to Israel there's something wrong with the way Congress goes about its duties. And at the AIPAC Conference you know this really hit a nerve. And everybody was saying then I heard this line. Well, there's nothing wrong with legitimate debate and disagreement about American policy towards Israel or Israeli policy. It's just the anti-Semitism that we're concerned with. But my point was what debate? Where is the debate? And one of the examples was the aid question. It's not a question that Israel gets a lot of aid it's that there's no debate of it. This and many other issues should, given

everything that we know about people in Congress, like can you think of any other example where we take a rich country and make them the number one recipient of US Foreign Aid and nobody in the Congress would oppose it?

Ralph Nader: And starve South Central Los Angeles.

David Feldman: How true is that aid to Israel is a backdoor subsidy to American defense contractors?

Jerome Segal: Well there are. Yeah, I mean that I think that's part of the politics of it; the military aid does have some requirements for purchases of American weapons. It all gets woven together. It's kind of like a multiplier of the lobbying forces for this, but the point is that none of that would be sufficient to have this kind of policy without serious argument in any other instance. I'm not saying that you know that the fact that it gets through is the key thing. The key thing is, that there's no opposition to it. And it was the same with other policies. For instance, moving the embassy to Jerusalem. There with legislation calling for that, that went back to 1995 that had gone through the Congress you know like a hot knife through butter. And six or nine months before Trump did it, Congress reaffirmed that legislation and the vote in the Senate was 90 to zero. Well this is crazy.

David Feldman: One last question--let me ask you a difficult question if you don't mind. Do you think the reason Netanyahu got reelected is because Israelis feel safer. Since the wall has been built...

Jerome Segal: Yeah.

David Feldman: ...there isn't this epidemic of suicide bombing going on. In Israel the way there was 10 years ago. They feel safer. Is that correct?

Jerome Segal: Yeah. They do and one of the big reasons is that simply, you know I mean, during the Second Intifada over a thousand Israelis died. And in the 10 years since then from all causes of the conflict the number is not even 20% of that and there hasn't been a war in Lebanon and he kept out of the Syrian conflict. So, he managed the security thing quite well from the point of most Israelis. And the economy is booming. The economy is doing very well. And foreign affairs; he's got this great relationship with the United States government. He's got a good relationship with Putin. He has opened things up with the Arab states; he's not worried about the EU. So, he is managed, I mean if you take foreign affairs, the security issue, the economy and then you take the fact that the Israeli left alienated the Israeli-Arabs, and they didn't turn out. If the Israeli-Arabs had turned out in the same proportion that Israeli-Jews vote, the right wing wouldn't have had a majority of the votes.

Ralph Nader: All that you've said and Netanyahu just barely won the election over his major opponent. By the way let the record be clear that the ratio between innocent Israelis and innocent Palestinians being killed and injured is hundreds to one. I mean 400 more innocent Palestinians are killed when compared to one innocent Israeli. And when you come down to injuries and diseases and childhood anemia because of the illegal blockade of Gaza and so forth, it's thousands to one, but what about off of what David is saying. Don't you think that Trump interfered in the Israeli elections on Netanyahu's side and why didn't the opposing Israelis raise the issue? It's unbelievable. Probably more than interference by Trump.

Jerome Segal: Yeah. Well first of all you are absolutely right. And it was really three things. Of course, there was the moving the embassy to Jerusalem, which is a little bit further back, but then right before

the election there was the recognition of the Golan Heights as sovereign Israeli territory and then the categorization of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard as terrorists. But the Golan Heights is very instructive, because it wasn't even on the table. No one had been pushing for that. There was no possibility--

Ralph Nader: Why didn't the Israeli opposition raise that, that Trump is interfering in our elections?

Jerome Segal: Well because it would have been a processing whereas substantively the Israeli public was very happy to see that and if they had done that, they'd have been painted as somehow being opposed to something great that the United States just did. So, they made their calculations you know as to what impact that would have on the voters. They just dealt with it like politicians but they knew, they knew of course that it was blatant interference, but they just made their judgment as to how best to play that in terms of the Israeli voters. And look, they had so many other things they were talking about that had to do with the corruption of Netanyahu and the scandals and so on. And this kind of thing was this wasn't exactly that, but it was sort of more like that it's sort of like these dirty things you know these back room deals and you know and so on verses you know these very solid things that Netanyahu gets boasting rights around. And by the way, I think there is going to be a quid pro quo; I mean I think that Netanyahu is going to be participating one way or another indirectly--

Ralph Nader: Particularly in that election you mean

Jerome Segal: That's right. And here's one little titbit I don't know if you focus on, right? So, you remember you know better than anybody in the world the importance of Florida. Well, Netanyahu's closest advisor is the Israeli Ambassador to the United States, a guy named Ron Dermer who comes from Florida. Netanyahu comes from Florida; he's the son and brother of a former mayor of Miami.

Ralph Nader: You'll be active, I'm sure. Listen we're running out of time.

Jerome Segal: Okay.

Ralph Nader: We've been talking with Jerome M Segal, the founder of The Jewish Peace Lobby many, many years ago and the state chair of Bread & Roses Party in Maryland. Go to breadandroses.us. He challenged Senator Ben Cardin in the Maryland Democratic primary in 2018. He is an author, a pamphleteer, an advocate, a humanitarian, peace champion. Thank you very much. Jerome Siegel.

Jerome Segal: Thank you again Ralph. It's been wonderful talking to you.

Steve Skrovan: I want to thank our guests again Richard Winger and of course Jerome Segal. For those you listening on the radio, that's our show. For you podcast listeners, stay tuned for some bonus material we call "The Wrap Up" where we talk a lot more with both of our guests. A transcript of the show will appear on the Ralph Nader Radio Hour website soon after the episode is posted.

David Feldman: For Ralph Nader's weekly column; it's free go to nader.org. For more from Russell Mohkiber go to corporatecrimereporter.com.

Steve Skrovan: Ralph has got two new books out the fable How The Rats Re-Formed The Congress to acquire a copy of that go to ratsreformcongress.org and To the Ramparts: How Bush and Obama Paved the Way For the Trump Presidency and Why It Isn't Too Late to Reverse Course. We will link to that also

David Feldman: Shows next week on the Ralph Nader Radio Hour we are going to talk to Rania Milleron and Nicholas Sakellariou about ethics, politics, and whistle blowing in engineering. Thank you, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Thank you very much everybody. Get involved citizens. That's what it's all about.