

A Silenced Israeli Critic

Although the U.S. news media's fancies itself the world's "gold standard," it operates with stunning hypocrisy and huge blind spots, none bigger than its fawning coverage of Israel that ignores critics like Miko Peled, notes Rick Sterling.

By Rick Sterling

Despite the U.S. media's extensive coverage of Israel, what Miko Peled says is seldom heard by Americans, although he was born in Jerusalem and comes from a famous Israeli family. Peled's grandfather was one of the signers of the Israeli founding documents. His father was a soldier in the war which led to the creation of Israel and later a senior army general during the 1967 war. And one of Peled's nieces was killed in a suicide bombing attack.

However, in contrast to what one might expect, Miko Peled is a voice of sharp criticism of Israel and Israeli policies. He does not mince his words. Israel is a "settler colonial state" and Israel does NOT have a "right to exist" as an apartheid state with preferential treatment based on ethnicity.

Peled does not speak in the abstract; he gives specific examples to demonstrate what he says. Palestinians in the West Bank have no consistent running water while settlers enjoy unlimited drinking water plus swimming pools and water for green lawns. The situation in Gaza is even worse. The two million residents of the tiny Gaza strip endure horrific conditions. Babies with medical conditions die while just a few miles away, Israeli babies with the same conditions will live.

Peled does not limit his criticism to the "Occupied Territories," He says all of the state should be called Palestine with equal rights and opportunities for all. Peled pokes fun at the claims that Jews anywhere have a "right to return" because of a supposed 2,000-year-old claim and entitlement. These claims are based on the Old Testament not scientific history.

In contrast with the myth, most Israeli citizens have zero DNA connection to the region. Peled humorously points to the irony of Zionists who claim a 2,000-year-old "right" to the land as they deny and denigrate the rights and claims of Palestinians who were expelled in 1948 and after.

As Peled explains, most Israelis are quick to tell Palestinians to "get over it" despite the fact that Palestinian claims are well documented and only go back 70 years, not 2,000. Unknown to most Americans, about half a million Palestinians

languish in Lebanon, waiting for the time when they return to their villages in Palestine from which they were expelled in 1948 and after. The actual history of those events has been clearly documented by the Israeli historian Ilan Pappé.

But Peled is not entirely pessimistic. Indeed, he thinks that it is better that the pretense of a “two-state solution,” which has been used as an excuse to justify the current situation, is openly dismissed by President Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Things are now clarified, leaving two paths to the future. One, a supremacist “democracy” for Jews and continuing occupation and oppression for the Palestinians or, two, a one-state democracy for all.

Peaceful Resistance

While acknowledging that most Israelis today reject the idea of equality for Palestinians, Peled recalls how quickly the change from apartheid to democracy happened in South Africa. He says if they could overcome apartheid in South Africa, why is this not possible in Israel/Palestine?

In the 1980s and early 1990s, the international Boycott Apartheid campaign helped to end open racism in South Africa. Around the world, there is a similar peaceful and non-violent campaign pressing for the end of open racism in Israel. It’s called “BDS” for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions. The goal is to pressure Israel to abandon its apartheid policies just as South Africa did.

Making clear his own stand, Peled wore a large BDS button on his lapel. For those who mistakenly believe that Israel is a progressive force internationally, the reality is that Israel was one of apartheid South Africa’s closest allies.

For taking the stance he does, and especially because of his family roots, Miko Peled has been vilified and threatened. It takes great courage to follow his beliefs as he has. His family is apparently with him.

In his memoir, *The General’s Son: Journey of an Israeli in Palestine*, he describes how his mother refused to take furniture or property of Palestinians who had been expelled from Jerusalem in 1967, as many other prominent Jewish families were doing.

Peled describes his father’s evolution from military general to an advocate for peace and respect for Palestinians. And he describes the reaction of his sister and how she blamed Netanyahu and racist policies for the death of her daughter. Miko Peled demonstrates courage and integrity. Through his writing and speeches, he exposes racist policies in Israel and the U.S. He seeks a better future even if it sometimes appears hopeless and provokes slander and personal threats against himself.

On Oct. 6, Peled spoke in Lafayette, California, in an event sponsored by Mt Diablo Peace & Justice Center (MDPJC) with co-sponsorship by Jewish Voice for Peace and others. Peled's book is published by [Just World Books](#). A [video](#) of his Lafayette presentation, including the introduction by St Mary's College Professor Hisham Ahmed, is posted at the Mt Diablo Peace & Justice Center [website](#).

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