

MIKO PELED

An Appreciation

I was reading his book, *The General's Son*, as my train pulled out of Liverpool. All around me were smiling, happy people talking about football. Reading Miko's description of the funeral of his niece killed by a suicide bomber I was weeping. Crossing the River Mersey I emailed his sister Nurit to tell her. She replied to say that she would tell him. Later he joined in and so I came to review his book.

As I write it is Passover and all over the world the phrase 'next year in Jerusalem' is being spoken, as it has been for many generations. In Israel I have also heard the phrase from old people, 'But this is not the Israel that we prayed for.'

Many years ago someone, I forget who, wrote in *Ha'aretz* that Israel was like an organ transplant. For that to be successful the host body must accept being invaded. The approach taken by a succession of single-minded Zionist leaders in Israel has been to displace, kill and vilify the host. If you begin like that you must go on like that and make yourself oblivious to the obvious consequence.

What can stop this process? So many people twist words, falsify history and switch narratives when threatened by fact and by reason that clarity falls an early victim.

Miko Peled provides clarity in terms of history; in terms of morality; in terms of practical politics; and, perhaps most of all, he makes clear the human values that must underpin any settlement that would claim to be fair, just and lasting.

Also clear from listening to and reading Miko is that gaining clarity requires a journey of discovery. So many myths, so many misrepresentations, so many shibboleths and so many straightforward lies must be identified and dealt with. Stories of childhood, stories of classroom, stories that were internalised in order to believe yourself to be among the exceptional: the chosen: stories to which you cling for legitimacy.

He is not alone on this journey. A remarkable feature of Israel is that as its politicians encourage racist thuggery that not even they can control, and simultaneously expend a huge effort to present themselves to gullible presidents and prime ministers as the victims, so there emerge clear-headed humanistic Israelis to challenge official humbuggery.

They suffer for it. Some are forced to continue their careers in other countries. Some may find that research funds and work dry up. Many must endure insults. Working with Palestinians can become very difficult because of official obstacles. Compare their suffering with that of the indigenous people and some will not sympathise, understandably. But this is not a competition. There is no league table for suffering. Who would wish to score goals in that premier league?

The inhumanity threaded through the policies and actions of every Israeli government is not only killing the host body but also the invasive transplanted organ. There are arguments to be won and lost; proposals that will lead to counter proposals; plenty more suffering while patience is worn through (the Modern Hebrew words for suffering and for patience share the same etymological root); but, for me, at stake here is humanity itself.

Without Miko Peled and many others like him humanity will lose. The falsified narrative of Zionism shall prevail. The self-harming dysfunctional ethnocracy of Israel will continue its drive to the precipice. And as it hurtles over the edge it will take with it the innocent and the oppressed.

Maybe you think there is too much of a sense of compromise in what I have written but give me imperfect humanity rather than perfect inhumanity every time.

My review of Miko's book? Here is the link.

http://www.criticalprofessionallearning.co.uk/assets/CliffWeb_General's_Son.pdf

Cliff Jones, April 2017