

= Norman Finkelstein =

Norman Gary Finkelstein (born December 8 , 1953) is an American political scientist , activist , professor , and author . His primary fields of research are the Israeli ? Palestinian conflict and the politics of the Holocaust , an interest motivated by the experiences of his parents who were Jewish Holocaust survivors . He is a graduate of Binghamton University and received his Ph.D in political science at Princeton University . He has held faculty positions at Brooklyn College , Rutgers University , Hunter College , New York University , and DePaul University where he was an assistant professor from 2001 to 2007 .

In 2007 , after a highly publicized feud between Finkelstein and an academic opponent , Alan Dershowitz , Finkelstein 's tenure bid at DePaul was denied . Finkelstein was placed on administrative leave for the 2007 ? 2008 academic year , and on September 5 , 2007 , he announced his resignation after coming to a settlement with the university on generally undisclosed terms . An official statement from DePaul strongly defended the decision to deny Finkelstein tenure , stated that outside influence played no role in the decision . In 2008 , he was banned from entering Israel for 10 years .

Finkelstein taught at Sakarya University Middle East Institute in Turkey between 2014 and 2015 .

= = Personal background and education = =

Finkelstein has written of his Jewish parents ' experiences during World War II . His mother , Maryla Husyt , grew up in Warsaw , survived the Warsaw Ghetto , the Majdanek concentration camp , and two slave labor camps . Her first husband died in the war . She considered the day of her liberation as the most horrible day of her life , as she realized that she was alone , her parents and siblings gone . Norman 's father , Zacharias Finkelstein , active in Hashomer Hatzair , was a survivor of both the Warsaw Ghetto and the Auschwitz concentration camp .

After the war they met in a displaced persons camp in Linz , Austria , and then emigrated to the United States , where his father became a factory worker and his mother a homemaker and later a bookkeeper . Finkelstein 's mother was an ardent pacifist . Both his parents died in 1995 . Of his parents , Finkelstein has recalled that " they saw the world through the prism of the Nazi Holocaust . They were eternally indebted to the Soviet Union (to whom they attributed the defeat of the Nazis) , and so anyone who was anti @-@ Soviet they were extremely harsh on " . They supported the Soviet Union 's approval of the creation of the State of Israel , as enunciated by Gromyko , who stated that the Jews had earned the right to a state , but thought that Israel had sold its soul to the West and " refused to have any truck with it " .

Finkelstein grew up in Borough Park , then Mill Basin , both in Brooklyn , New York , where he attended James Madison High School . In his memoir , Finkelstein recalls his strong youthful identification with the outrage that his mother , witness to the genocidal atrocities of World War II , felt at the carnage wrought by the United States in Vietnam . One childhood friend recalls his mother 's " emotional investment in left @-@ wing humanitarian causes as bordering on hysteria " . He had " internalized [her] indignation " , a trait which he admits rendered him " insufferable " when talking of the Vietnam War , and which imbued him with a " holier @-@ than @-@ thou " attitude at the time which he now regrets . But Finkelstein regards his absorption of his mother 's outlook ? the refusal to put aside a sense of moral outrage in order to get on with one 's life ? as a virtue . Subsequently , his reading of Noam Chomsky played an important role in tailoring the passion bequeathed to him by his mother to the necessity of maintaining intellectual rigor .

Finkelstein completed his undergraduate studies at Binghamton University in New York in 1974 , after which he studied at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris . A deep admirer of Paul Sweezy , he was an ardent Maoist and was devastated by the news of the trial of the Gang of Four , an event which " totally devastated " him , and led him to abandon Marxism ? Leninism .

Finkelstein received his Master 's degree in political science in 1980 , and later his PhD in political studies , from Princeton . His doctoral thesis was on Zionism . Before gaining academic employment , Finkelstein was a part @-@ time social worker with teenage dropouts in New York . He then taught

successively at Rutgers University , New York University , Brooklyn College , and Hunter College and at DePaul University in Chicago . During the First Intifada , he spent every summer from 1988 in the West Bank , a guest of Palestinian families in Hebron and Beit Sahour .

According to The New York Times , Finkelstein left Hunter College in 2001 , " after his teaching load and salary were reduced " by the college administration . In his own recollection , he enjoyed teaching at Hunter (1992 ? 2000) and was ' unceremoniously kicked out of ' the school after begging them to keep him on with just two courses a semester (\$ 12 @, @ 000 a year) . Hunter set conditions that would have required him to spend four days a week , which he thought unacceptable .

Beginning with his doctoral thesis at Princeton , Finkelstein 's career has been marked by controversy . A self @-@ described " forensic scholar " , he has written sharply critical academic reviews of several prominent writers and scholars whom he accuses of misrepresenting the documentary record in order to defend Israel 's policies and practices . His writings have dealt with politically charged topics such as Zionism , the demographic history of Palestine and his allegations of the existence of a " Holocaust Industry " that exploits the memory of the Holocaust to further Israeli and financial interests .

Citing linguist and political activist Noam Chomsky as an example , Finkelstein notes that it is " possible to unite exacting scholarly rigor with scathing moral outrage , " and supporters and detractors alike have remarked on the polemical style of Finkelstein 's work . Its content has been praised by eminent historians such as Raul Hilberg and Avi Shlaim , as well as Chomsky .

Finkelstein has described himself as " an old @-@ fashioned communist , " in the sense that he " see [s] no value whatsoever in states . "

= = Academic career = =

= = = On From Time Immemorial = = =

In Finkelstein 's doctoral thesis , he examined the claims made in Joan Peters 's From Time Immemorial , a best @-@ selling book at the time . Peters 's " history and defense " of Israel deals with the demographic history of Palestine . Demographic studies had tended to assert that the Arab population of Ottoman @-@ controlled Palestine , a 94 % majority at the turn of the century , had dwindled towards parity due to massive Zionist immigration . Peters radically challenged this picture by arguing that a substantial part of the Palestinian people were descended from immigrants from other Arab countries from the early 19th century onwards . It followed , for Peters and many of her readers , that the picture of a native Palestinian population overwhelmed by Jewish immigration was little more than propaganda , and that in actuality two almost simultaneous waves of immigration met in what had been a relatively unpopulated land .

From Time Immemorial had been praised by figures as varied as Barbara Tuchman , Theodore H. White , Elie Wiesel , and Lucy Dawidowicz . Saul Bellow , for one , wrote in a jacket endorsement that :

" Millions of people the world over , smothered by false history and propaganda , will be grateful for this clear account of the origins of the Palestinians . "

Finkelstein asserted that the book was a " monumental hoax " . He later opined that , while Peters 's book received widespread interest and approval in the United States , a scholarly demonstration of its fraudulence and unreliability aroused little attention :

" By the end of 1984 , From Time Immemorial had ... received some two hundred [favorable] notices ... in the United States . The only ' false ' notes in this crescendoing chorus of praise were the Journal of Palestine Studies , which ran a highly critical review by Bill Farrell ; the small Chicago @-@ based newsweekly In These Times , which published a condensed version of this writer 's findings ; and Alexander Cockburn , who devoted a series of columns in The Nation exposing the hoax The periodicals in which From Time Immemorial had already been favorably reviewed refused to run any critical correspondence (e.g. The New Republic , The Atlantic Monthly ,

Commentary) . Periodicals that had yet to review the book rejected a manuscript on the subject as of little or no consequence (e.g. The Village Voice , Dissent , The New York Review of Books) . Not a single national newspaper or columnist contacted found newsworthy that a best @-@ selling , effusively praised ' study ' of the Middle East conflict was a threadbare hoax . "

Noam Chomsky later reminisced :

" I warned him , if you follow this , you 're going to get in trouble ? because you 're going to expose the American intellectual community as a gang of frauds , and they are not going to like it , and they 're going to destroy you . "

In 1986 , the New York Review of Books published Yehoshua Porath 's review and an exchange with critics of the review in which he criticized the assumptions and evidence on which Peters 's thesis relied , thus lending independent support from an expert in Palestinian demographics to Finkelstein 's doctoral critique .

In the house journal of the American Council on Foreign Relations , Foreign Affairs , William B. Quandt , the Edward Stettinius professor of Politics at the University of Virginia and authority on Middle Eastern politics , later described Finkelstein 's critique of From Time Immemorial as a " landmark essay " and a " victory to his credit " , in its " demonstration " of the " shoddy scholarship " of Peters ' book . Israeli historian Avi Shlaim later praised Finkelstein 's thesis , saying that it had established his credentials when he was still a doctoral student . In Shlaim 's view , Finkelstein had produced an " unanswerable case " with " irrefutable evidence " , proving that Peters ' book was both " preposterous and worthless " .

According to Noam Chomsky , the controversy that surrounded Finkelstein 's research caused a delay in his earning his Ph.D. at Princeton University . Chomsky wrote in Understanding Power that Finkelstein " literally could not get the faculty to read [his dissertation] " and that Princeton eventually granted Finkelstein his doctorate only " out of embarrassment [for Princeton] " but refused to give him any further professional backing .

Finkelstein published portions of his thesis in the following publications :

" Disinformation and the Palestine Question : The Not @-@ So @-@ Strange Case of Joan Peters 's From Time Immemorial " , Chapter 2 of Blaming the Victims : Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question (1988) ; and

" A Land Without a People (Joan Peters ' " Wilderness " Image) " , Chapter 2 of Image and Reality of the Israel @-@ Palestine Conflict (1995) .

= = = The Holocaust Industry = = =

The Holocaust Industry : Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering was published in 2000 . Here , Finkelstein argues that Elie Wiesel and others exploit the memory of the Holocaust as an " ideological weapon . " The purpose , writes Finkelstein , is to enable the State of Israel , " one of the world 's most formidable military powers , with a horrendous human rights record , [to] cast itself as a victim state ; " that is , to provide Israel " immunity to criticism . " He alleges what he calls a " double shakedown " by " a repellent gang of plutocrats , hoodlums and hucksters " seeking enormous legal damages and financial settlements from Germany and Switzerland , moneys which then go to the lawyers and institutional actors involved in procuring them , rather than actual Holocaust survivors .

The book received a hostile reception in some quarters , with critics charging that it was poorly researched and / or allowed others to exploit it for antisemitic purposes . The German historian Hans Mommsen disparaged the first edition as " a most trivial book , which appeals to easily aroused anti @-@ Semitic prejudices " . Israeli Holocaust historian Israel Gutman called the book " a lampoon " , stating " this is not research ; it isn 't even political literature ... I don 't even think it should be reviewed or critiqued as a legitimate book . " The book was also harshly criticized by Brown University Professor Omer Bartov and University of Chicago Professor Peter Novick .

However , preeminent Holocaust scholar Raul Hilberg said the book expressed views Hilberg himself subscribed to in substance , in that he too found the exploitation of the Holocaust , as Finkelstein describes , " detestable " . Asked on another occasion if Finkelstein 's analysis might

play into the hands of neo @-@ Nazis for antisemitic purposes , Hilberg replied : " Well , even if they do use it in that fashion , I 'm afraid that when it comes to the truth , it has to be said openly , without regard to any consequences that would be undesirable , embarrassing " .

Other critics claim Finkelstein 's evidence is highly selective and / or dubious and that his arguments would be based on a misinterpretation of history and a questionable use of sources . The historian David Cesarani wrote that while Finkelstein absolves Swiss banks of serious misconduct towards Holocaust survivors and depicts them as victims of a Jewish terror based on a sentence from an important report annex , he had ignored the report body which describes deceitful actions by Swiss banks , inappropriate closing of accounts , failure to keep adequate records , and so on .

= = = Criticism of Alan Dershowitz 's The Case for Israel = = =

Shortly after the publication of the book The Case for Israel by Alan Dershowitz , Finkelstein derided it as " a collection of fraud , falsification , plagiarism , and nonsense " . During a debate on Democracy Now ! , Finkelstein asserted that Dershowitz lacked knowledge about specific contents of his own book . He also claimed that Dershowitz did not write the book , and may not have even read it .

Finkelstein noted 20 instances , in as many pages , where Dershowitz 's book cites the same sources and passages used by Joan Peters in her book , in largely the same sequence , with ellipses in the same places . In two instances , Dershowitz reproduces Peters 's errors (see below) . From this Finkelstein concluded that Dershowitz had not checked the original sources himself , contrary to the latter 's claims . Finkelstein suggests that this copying of quotations amounts to copying ideas . Examining a copy of a proof of Dershowitz 's book he managed to obtain , he found evidence that Dershowitz had his secretarial assistant , Holly Beth Billington , check in the Harvard library the sources he had read in Peters 's book . Dershowitz answered the charge in a letter to the University of California 's Press Director Lynne Withey , arguing that Finkelstein had made up the smoking gun quotation , in that he had changed its wording (from ' cite ' to ' copy ') in his book . In public debate he has stated that if " somebody borrowed the quote without going to check back on whether Mark Twain had said that , obviously that would be a serious charge " ; however , he insisted emphatically that he himself did not do that , that he had indeed checked the original source by Twain .

Dershowitz threatened libel action over the charges in Finkelstein 's book , as a consequence of which , the publisher deleted the word " plagiarism " from the text before publication . Finkelstein agreed to remove the suggestion that Dershowitz was not the true author of The Case for Israel because , as the publisher said , " he couldn 't document that " .

Asserting that he did consult the original sources , Dershowitz said Finkelstein is simply accusing him of good scholarly practice : citing references he learned of initially from Peters 's book . Dershowitz denies that he used any of Peters 's ideas without citation . " Plagiarism is taking someone else 's words and claiming they 're your own . There are no borrowed words from anybody . There are no borrowed ideas from anybody because I fundamentally disagree with the conclusions of Peters 's book . " In a footnote in The Case for Israel which cites Peters 's book , Dershowitz explicitly denies that he " relies " on Peters for " conclusions or data " .

In their joint interview on Democracy Now , however , Finkelstein cited specific passages in Dershowitz 's book in which a phrase that he says Peters coined was incorrectly attributed to George Orwell :

" [Peters] coins the phrase , ' turnspeak ' , she says she 's using it as a play off of George Orwell which as all listeners know used the phrase ' Newspeak . ' She coined her own phrase , ' turnspeak ' . You go to Mr. Dershowitz 's book , he got so confused in his massive borrowings from Joan Peters that on two occasions , I 'll cite them for those who have a copy of the book , on page 57 and on page 153 he uses the phrase , quote , George Orwell 's ' turnspeak ' . ' Turnspeak ' is not Orwell , Mr. Dershowitz , you 're the Felix Frankfurter chair at Harvard , you must know that Orwell would never use such a clunky phrase as ' turnspeak ' " .

James O. Freedman , the former president of Dartmouth College , the University of Iowa , and the

American Academy of Arts and Sciences , has defended Dershowitz :

I do not understand [Finkelstein 's] charge of plagiarism against Alan Dershowitz . There is no claim that Dershowitz used the words of others without attribution . When he uses the words of others , he quotes them properly and generally cites them to the original sources (Mark Twain , Palestine Royal Commission , etc .) [Finkelstein 's] complaint is that instead he should have cited them to the secondary source , in which Dershowitz may have come upon them . But as The Chicago Manual of Style emphasizes : ' Importance of attribution . With all reuse of others ' materials , it is important to identify the original as the source . This not only bolsters the claims of fair use , it also helps avoid any accusation of plagiarism . ' This is precisely what Dershowitz did .

Responding to an article in The Nation by Alexander Cockburn , Dershowitz also cited The Chicago Manual of Style :

Cockburn 's claim is that some of the quotes should not have been cited to their original sources but rather to a secondary source , where he believes I stumbled upon them . Even if he were correct that I found all these quotations in Peters 's book , the preferred method of citation is to the original source , as The Chicago Manual of Style emphasizes : " With all reuse of others ' materials , it is important to identify the original as the source . This ... helps avoid any accusation of plagiarism ... To cite a source from a secondary source (' quoted in ... ') is generally to be discouraged "

... to which Cockburn responded :

Quoting The Chicago Manual of Style , Dershowitz artfully implies that he followed the rules by citing " the original " as opposed to the secondary source , Peters . He misrepresents Chicago here , where " the original " means merely the origin of the borrowed material , which is , in this instance , Peters .

Now look at the second bit of the quote from Chicago , chastely separated from the preceding sentence by a demure three @-@ point ellipsis . As my associate Kate Levin has discovered , this passage (" To cite a source from a secondary source ... ") occurs on page 727 , which is no less than 590 pages later than the material before the ellipsis , in a section titled " Citations Taken from Secondary Sources . " Here 's the full quote , with what Dershowitz left out set in bold : " ' Quoted in ' . To cite a source from a secondary source (" quoted in ") is generally to be discouraged , since authors are expected to have examined the works they cite . If an original source is unavailable , however , both the original and the secondary source must be listed . "

So Chicago is clearly insisting that unless Dershowitz went to the originals , he was obliged to cite Peters . Finkelstein has conclusively demonstrated that he didn 't go to the originals . Plagiarism , QED , plus added time for willful distortion of the language of Chicago 's guidelines , cobbling together two separate discussions .

On behalf of Dershowitz , Harvard Law School dean Elena Kagan asked former Harvard president Derek Bok to investigate the assertion of plagiarism ; Bok exonerated Dershowitz of the charge .

In an April 3 , 2007 interview with the Harvard Crimson , " Dershowitz confirmed that he had sent a letter last September to DePaul faculty members lobbying against Finkelstein 's tenure . "

In April 2007 , Dr. Frank Menetrez , a former Editor @-@ in @-@ Chief of the UCLA Law Review , published an analysis of the charges made against Finkelstein by Dershowitz , finding no merit in any single charge and concluding that Dershowitz had misrepresented matters . In a follow @-@ up analysis he concluded that he could find ' no way of avoiding the inference that Dershowitz copied the quotation from Twain from Peters 's From Time Immemorial , and not from the original source ' , as Dershowitz claimed . In an interview given for the film American Radical : The Trials of Norman Finkelstein in 2009 , Dershowitz said of Finkelstein : " I don 't think he is a Jew . He 's Jewish only on his parents ' side . "

= = Controversies = =

= = = Tenure denial and resignation = = =

In September 2006 , Dershowitz sent members of DePaul 's law and political science faculties what

he described as " a dossier of Norman Finkelstein 's most egregious academic sins , and especially his outright lies , misquotations , and distortions " and lobbied professors , alumni and administrators to deny Finkelstein tenure . De Paul 's political science committee investigated his accusations against Finkelstein and concluded that they were not based on legitimate criticism . The department subsequently invited John Mearsheimer and Ian Lustick , two independent academics with known expertise on the Israel ? Palestine conflict , to evaluate the academic merit of Finkelstein 's work ; they came to the same conclusion .

Also in 2006 , the Washington Post noted " the ADL repeatedly accused " Norman Finkelstein of being a " Holocaust denier " and that " These charges have proved baseless . " Finkelstein 's mother survived the Majdanek concentration camp , his father survived the Auschwitz concentration camp , and most of his family died in the Holocaust

In early 2007 , the DePaul Political Science Department voted nine to three , and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Personnel Committee five to zero , in favor of giving Finkelstein tenure . The three opposing faculty members subsequently filed a minority report opposing tenure , supported by the Dean of the College , Chuck Suchar . Suchar stated he opposed tenure because Finkelstein 's " personal and reputation demeaning attacks on Dershowitz , Benny Morris , and the holocaust authors Elie Wiesel and Jerzy Kosinski " were inconsistent with DePaul 's " Vincentian " values ; as examples of the latter , Suchar argued that Finkelstein lacked respect for " the dignity of the individual " and for " the rights of others to hold and express different intellectual positions " . Amidst considerable public debate , Dershowitz actively campaigned to block Finkelstein 's tenure bid . In June 2007 , a 4 ? 3 vote by DePaul University 's Board on Promotion and Tenure (a faculty board) , affirmed by the university 's president , the Rev. Dennis Holtschneider , denied Finkelstein tenure .

The university denied that Dershowitz , who had been criticized for his campaign against Finkelstein 's tenure , played any part in this decision . At the same time , the university denied tenure to international studies assistant professor Mehrene Larudee , a strong supporter of Finkelstein , despite unanimous support from her department , the Personnel Committee and the dean . Finkelstein stated that he would engage in civil disobedience if attempts were made to bar him from teaching his students .

The Faculty Council later affirmed the right of Professors Finkelstein and Larudee to appeal , which a university lawyer said was not possible . Council President Anne Bartlett said she was " ' terribly concerned ' correct procedure was not followed " . DePaul 's faculty association considered taking no @-@ confidence votes on administrators , including the president , because of the tenure denials . In a statement issued upon Finkelstein 's resignation , DePaul called him " a prolific scholar and an outstanding teacher " . Dershowitz expressed outrage at the compromise and this statement in particular , saying that the university had " traded truth for peace " .

In June 2007 , after two weeks of protests , some DePaul students staged a sit @-@ in and hunger strike in support of both professors denied tenure . The Illinois Conference of the American Association of University Professors also sent a letter to the university 's president stating : " It is entirely illegitimate for a university to deny tenure to a professor out of fear that his published research ... might hurt a college 's reputation " and that the association has " explicitly rejected collegiality as an appropriate criterion for evaluating faculty members " . In a 2014 interview , professor Matthew Abraham , author of Out of Bounds : Academic Freedom and the Question of Palestine , described the Finkelstein tenure case as " one of the most significant academic freedom cases in the last fifty years " , claiming the case demonstrated " the substantial pressure outside parties can place on a mid @-@ tier religious institution when the perspectives advanced by a controversial scholar threaten dominant interests " .

= = = Denied entry to Israel in 2008 = = =

On May 23 , 2008 , Finkelstein was denied entry to Israel , according to unnamed Shin Bet security officials , because " of suspicions involving hostile elements in Lebanon " and that he " did not give a full accounting to interrogators with regard to these suspicions . " Finkelstein had previously visited

south Lebanon and met with Lebanese families during the 2006 Lebanon War . He was banned from entering Israel for 10 years .

Finkelstein was questioned after his arrival at Ben Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv and detained for 24 hours in a holding cell . After speaking to Israeli attorney Michael Sfard he was placed on a flight back to Amsterdam , his point of origin . In an interview with Haaretz , Finkelstein stated " I did my best to provide absolutely candid and comprehensive answers to all the questions put to me . I am confident that I have nothing to hide ... no suicide missions or secret rendezvous with terrorist organizations . " He had been travelling to visit friends in the West Bank and stated he had no interest in visiting Israel . Sfard said banning Finkelstein from entering the country " recalls the behavior of the Soviet bloc countries " .

= = Reception = =

Finkelstein 's books are an attempt to examine the works of mainstream scholarship . The authors whose work he has thus targeted , including Daniel Jonah Goldhagen and Dershowitz , along with others such as Benny Morris whose work Finkelstein has also cited in his scholarship , have in turn accused Finkelstein of grossly misrepresenting their work , and selectively quoting from their books .

According to Raul Hilberg , Finkelstein displays " academic courage to speak the truth when no one else is out there to support him ... I would say that his place in the whole history of writing history is assured , and that those who in the end are proven right triumph , and he will be among those who will have triumphed , albeit , it so seems , at great cost . " In a peer review for *Beyond Chutzpah* , Avi Shlaim said that Finkelstein " has a most impressive track record in exposing spurious American @-@ Jewish scholarship on the Arab @-@ Israeli conflict . " He praised Finkelstein for " all the sterling qualities for which he has become famous : erudition , originality , spark , meticulous attention to detail , intellectual integrity , courage , and formidable forensic skills . "

Sara Roy stated that her shared experience with Finkelstein as a child of Holocaust survivors engaged in research on the Palestinian @-@ Israeli conflict gave her a unique position to comment . According to Roy , Finkelstein 's scholarship is , " exceptional both for its brilliance and rigor . In the fields of Middle Eastern studies and political science his work is considered seminal and there is no doubt that both disciplines would be intellectually weaker without it . Norman 's power and value , however , do not emanate only from his scholarship but from his character . His life ? s work , shaped largely but not entirely by his experience as a child of survivors has been and continues to be informed by a profound concern with human dignity and the danger of dehumanization . "

The Israeli newspaper , Haaretz , stated that " [i] t is difficult to sympathize with Finkelstein 's opinions and preferences , especially since he decided to support Hezbollah , meet with its fighters and visit the graves of some of its slain operatives . " Still , it continued to say that he should not be banned from entering Israel , because " meetings with Hezbollah operatives do not in themselves constitute a security risk " .

= = = 2009 film about Finkelstein = = =

American Radical : The Trials of Norman Finkelstein is an award @-@ winning documentary film about the life and career of Norman Finkelstein , released in 2009 and directed by David Ridgen and Nicolas Rossier . It has been screened in Amsterdam IDFA , in Toronto Hot Docs and in more than 40 other national and international venues , it received a freshness rating of 100 % on film review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes . The same year Finkelstein appeared in *Defamation* (Hebrew : ????? ; translit . Hashmatsa) a documentary film by award @-@ winning Israeli filmmaker Yoav Shamir .

= = = Criticism = = =

Criticism has been leveled against Finkelstein from several angles . The first sources are responses from those whose work Finkelstein has discussed . Daniel Goldhagen , whose book *Hitler 's Willing*

Executioners Finkelstein criticized , claimed his scholarship has " everything to do with his burning political agenda " . Alan Dershowitz has written that Peter Novick , Professor of History at the University of Chicago and a noted Holocaust historian whose work Finkelstein says inspired The Holocaust Industry , has strongly criticized the latter 's work , describing it as " trash " . Similarly , Dershowitz , whose book The Case for Israel and Finkelstein 's response Beyond Chutzpah sparked an ongoing feud between the two , has claimed Finkelstein 's complicity in a conspiracy against pro @-@ Israel scholars : " The mode of attack is consistent . Chomsky selects the target and directs Finkelstein to probe the writings in minute detail and conclude that the writer didn 't actually write the work , that it is plagiarized , that it is a hoax and a fraud , " arguing that Finkelstein has leveled charges against many academics , calling at least 10 " distinguished Jews ' hucksters ' , ' hoaxters ' (sic) , ' thieves ' , ' extortionists ' , and worse . " Although the back and forth between Finkelstein and Dershowitz received the most attention and attracted significant controversy , Finkelstein has maintained that " the real issue is Israel 's human rights record . "

Israeli historian Omer Bartov , writing for The New York Times Book Review , judged The Holocaust Industry to be marred by the same errors he denounces in those who exploit the Holocaust for profit or politics :

It is filled with precisely the kind of shrill hyperbole that Finkelstein rightly deplores in much of the current media hype over the Holocaust ; it is brimming with the same indifference to historical facts , inner contradictions , strident politics and dubious contextualizations ; and it oozes with the same smug sense of moral and intellectual superiority ... Like any conspiracy theory , it contains several grains of truth ; and like any such theory , it is both irrational and insidious .

Finkelstein has accused journalist Jeffrey Goldberg of " torturing " or " being an accessory to torture of " Palestinian prisoners during his IDF service in the First Intifada , based on statements made in Goldberg 's book Prisoners . Finkelstein says that Goldberg admits to personally sending prisoners to the zinzana , which he says has been repeatedly condemned as torture in human rights reports . Goldberg referred to the allegation as " ridiculous " and he had " never laid a hand on anybody . " Goldberg said his " principal role " was " making sure prisoners had fresh fruit . " He characterized Finkelstein as a " ridiculous figure " and accused him of " lying and purposely misreading my book . "

= = Statements on Israel = =

Finkelstein is a sharp critic of the state of Israel . Discussing Finkelstein 's book Beyond Chutzpah , Israeli historian Avi Shlaim stated that Finkelstein 's critique of Israel " is based on an amazing amount of research . He seems to have read everything . He has gone through the reports of Israeli groups , of human rights groups , Human Rights Watch and Peace Now and B 'Tselem , all of the reports of Amnesty International . And he deploys all this evidence from Israeli and other sources in order to sustain his critique of Israeli practices , Israeli violations of human rights of the Palestinians , Israeli house demolitions , the targeted assassinations of Palestinian militants , the cutting down of trees , the building of the wall ? the security barrier on the West Bank , which is illegal ? the restrictions imposed on the Palestinians in the West Bank , and so on and so forth . I find his critique extremely detailed , well @-@ documented and accurate . "

In a telephone interview with Today 's Zaman , in 2009 , Finkelstein stated :

I think Israel , as a number of commentators pointed out , is becoming an insane state . And we have to be honest about that . While the rest of the world wants peace , Europe wants peace , the US wants peace , but this state wants war , war and war . In the first week of the massacres , there were reports in the Israeli press that Israel did not want to put all its ground forces in Gaza because it was preparing attacks on Iran . Then there were reports it was planning attacks on Lebanon . It is a lunatic state .

When asked how he , as the son of Holocaust survivors , felt about Israel ? s operation in Gaza , Finkelstein replied :

It has been a long time since I felt any emotional connection with the state of Israel , which relentlessly and brutally and inhumanly keeps these vicious , murderous wars . It is a vandal state .

There is a Russian writer who once described vandal states as Genghis Khan with a telegraph . Israel is Genghis Khan with a computer . I feel no emotion of affinity with that state . I have some good friends and their families there , and of course I would not want any of them to be hurt . That said , sometimes I feel that Israel has come out of the boils (sic) of the hell , a satanic state .

The Anti @-@ Defamation League has described Finkelstein as an " obsessive anti @-@ Zionist " filled with " vitriolic hatred of Zionism and Israel . " On being called an anti @-@ Zionist Finkelstein has said : " It 's a superficial term . I am opposed to any state with an ethnic character , not only to Israel . "

Finkelstein is an advocate of a two @-@ state solution to the Israeli @-@ Palestinian conflict .

= = = Hezbollah and Hamas = = =

Finkelstein has expressed solidarity with Hezbollah and Hamas with respect to defensive actions , alleging that Israel had invaded Lebanon as a signal of rejection when Hamas was seeking a diplomatic settlement with Israel . He also condemned what he said was Israel 's refusal " to abide by international law [and] to abide by the opinion of the international community " to settle the conflict .

" I was of course happy to meet the Hizbullah people , because it is a point of view that is rarely heard in the United States . I have no problem saying that I do want to express solidarity with them , and I am not going to be a coward of (sic) a hypocrite about it . I don 't care about Hizbullah as a political organization . I don 't know much about their politics , and anyhow , it 's irrelevant . I don 't live in Lebanon . It 's a choice that the Lebanese have to make : Who they want to be their leaders , who they want to represent them . But there is a fundamental principle . People have the right to defend their country from foreign occupiers , and people have the right to defend their country from invaders who are destroying their country . That to me is a very basic , elementary and uncomplicated question . "

While condemning the targeting of civilians to achieve a political goal , Finkelstein has stated he believes Hezbollah has the right to target Israeli civilians as long as " Israel persists in targeting [Lebanese] civilians until Israel ceases its terrorist acts . "

Finkelstein claims that an equivalence exists between Hamas and the state of Israel in regards to the military policy of targeted killings during the Second Intifada . According to Finkelstein " the record shows that Israel has routinely targeted civilians for killing " and " Israel indiscriminately kills civilians " . He concludes that " the argument , among human rights organizations at any rate is that ... in effect , there ? s no difference between indiscriminately killing civilians and targeting civilians . "

Finkelstein argued one of Israel 's primary motivations for launching the 2008 offensive in Gaza was that Hamas was " signaling that it wanted a diplomatic settlement of the conflict along the June 1967 border . " Finkelstein believes Hamas had joined the international community in " seeking a diplomatic settlement " and describes Hamas 's stance towards Israel prior to the war as a " peace offensive . "

= = Statements on the BDS movement = =

Finkelstein had made many criticisms of the Boycott , Divestment and Sanctions Movement . Finkelstein stated that " I think the solidarity movement has the right tactics . I support the BDS . But I said it will never reach a broad public until and unless they are explicit on their goal . And their goal has to include recognition of Israel , otherwise it 's a nonstarter . " Elsewhere , he has stated that he supports a " lowercase " BDS , making the same point about tactics and goals .

In February 2012 , The Jewish Chronicle in England stated that Finkelstein " launched a blistering attack " on the BDS movement , saying it was a " hypocritical , dishonest cult " , " [I] like the Munchkin cult in Oz , " that tries to cleverly pose as human rights activists while in reality their goal is to destroy Israel . Finkelstein stated that the BDS movement has had very few successes , and that just like a cult , the leaders pretend that they are hugely successful when in reality the general

public rejects their extreme views .

In June 2012 , in an appearance on Democracy Now ! , Finkelstein elaborated on his criticisms of the BDS movement :

The problem as I see it with the BDS movement is not the tactic . Who could not support Boycott , Divestment and Sanctions ? Of course you should . And most of the human rights organizations , church organizations have moved in that direction . The problem is the goal . . . The official BDS movement , they claim to be agnostic , neutral ? whatever term you want to use ? on the question of Israel . You can ? t reach a broad public if you are agnostic on the question of Israel . The broad public wants to know , where do you stand ? And if you claim not to have a stand , you lose them . The BDS movement , it always says , and I ? m using their language , " We are a rights @-@ based organization . We are based in international law . " I agree with that . That ? s where you have to go : rights @-@ based international law . But the international law is clear . You read the last sentence of the 2004 International Court of Justice opinion on the wall that Israel has been building in the West Bank , and the last sentence says , " We look forward to two states : a Palestinian state alongside Israel and at peace with its neighbors . " That 's the law .

And if you want to go past that law or ignore the Israel part , you ? ll never reach a broad public . And then it 's a cult . Then it ? s pointless , in my opinion . We 're wasting time . And it 's only a wasting of time . It becomes ? and I know it 's a strong word , and I hope I won 't be faulted for it , but it becomes historically criminal , because there was a time where whatever we said , it made no difference . Nobody was listening . You could shout whatever you want ? who cares ? But now , actually , we can reach people . There is a possibility . I ? m not saying a certainty . I 'm not even saying a probability . But there is a possibility that we can reach a broad public . And so , we have to be very careful about the words we use , and we have to be very careful about the political strategy we map out . Otherwise , we 're going to squander a real opportunity . And I don 't want to squander it .

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