

## ***Norman Finkelstein's Academic Struggle for Truth and Justice for the cause of Palestine: A case for Noble Peace Prize***

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### ***Abstract***

*Norman G. Finkelstein, a prominent scholar with a PhD in political science from Princeton University, is recognized for his detailed analysis of the Israel-Palestine conflict. His influential works address Israeli policies, humanitarian issues, and international law, advocating for justice for Palestinians. Finkelstein's notable publications include *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*, *Beyond Chutzpah*, *This Time We Went Too Far*, "Gaza: An Inquest into Its Martyrdom" and "I'll Burn That Bridge When I Get to It!" where he critiques historical narratives, human rights abuses and cancel cultures while challenging the misuse of Anti-Semitism in silencing dissent. His scholarship highlights the human impact of illegal Israeli military actions and advocates for a just resolution to the conflict. Despite facing academic opposition, particularly from figures like Alan Dershowitz, Finkelstein's relentless pursuit of truth has significantly shaped the discourse on Palestinian rights, making a compelling case for his consideration for the Nobel Peace Prize.*

**Keywords:** *Humanitarian, International Law, Historical Narratives, Alan Dershowitz, Nobel Peace Prize*

### **Introduction:**

According to Nobel Peace Prize criteria determined by The Nobel's will, Nobel Peace Prize shall be awarded to the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses. All living persons and active organizations are eligible for Nobel Peace Prize.

Norwegian Nobel Committee is the selecting body of the recipient of this Prize among thousands of nominees(1).

Norman G. Finkelstein holds advanced degrees in political science. He received his PhD from the Princeton University Politics Department in 1987. He is a prominent scholar known for his critical perspective on the Israel-Palestine conflict. His work often focuses on issues related to Israeli policies, the humanitarian aspects of the conflict, and the broader implications for international law and human rights. Finkelstein's academic work has been influential in debates about the Israel-Palestine conflict, often reflecting his critical stance on various aspects of the conflict and international responses to it. In the year 2020, Norman Finkelstein was named the fifth most influential political scientist in the world (2).

A collection of his notable works for the truth and justice in the pursuit of Israel-Palestine conflict are enlisted below:

### **Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict:**

The Zionist movement in the late 19th century aimed to create a Jewish state in Palestine to address the 'Jewish question', which involved anti-Semitism and assimilation. However, the indigenous Arab population, predominantly Muslim and Christian Arab, posed a significant obstacle to achieving this goal, as Palestine was not predominantly Jewish. Zionism was aware of Palestine's Arab population's resistance to dispossession, as it recognized that the Arab dilemma had no solution within the Zionist way of thinking. Zionist intellectuals and leaders ignored this issue, contrary to common belief. Both sides understood each other well and knew Zionism could only be implemented at the expense of Palestinian Arabs. Moshe Shertok dismissed the illusive hopes of unity and peace between the two fraternal peoples, focusing on common interests. David Ben-Gurion argued that a nation opens its doors to another nation not out of necessity, but because the other nation has expressed its desire. Walter Laqueur argued that Zionism appeared when empty spaces on the world map were no longer present, but rather because extermination was no longer an option for conquest. The Zionist movement had to make a decision between two strategic options to achieve its objective: Benny Morris refers to the concept of 'the way of South Africa', which involves establishing an apartheid state with a settler minority over an exploited native majority, or 'the way of transfer', which involves transferring Arabs to create a homogenous Jewish state or overwhelming Jewish majority (3).

### **Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History, Updated Edition, With a New Preface**

Beyond Chutzpah is a comprehensive study of the Israel-Palestine conflict, highlighting the consensus among historians and human rights organizations. It exposes scholarship corruption, human rights abuses, and new anti-Semitism. The paperback edition includes a preface and an afterword on recent developments and Israel's West Bank wall construction (4).

Finkelstein's Beyond Chutzpah critiques the "New Anti-Semitism" as a tool created by Israeli supporters to label criticisms of human rights abuses as anti-semitism, aiming to silence criticism

and cover Israel's expansionist and illegal policies in the Palestinian territories, according to published sources. In *Beyond Chutzpah*, Finkelstein analyzes Alan Dershowitz's book *The Case for Israel*, claiming it falsified Israel's human rights record and copied research from Joan Peters' book *From Time Immemorial*. Dershowitz's lawyers threatened a lawsuit against the University of California Press for publishing the book. Dershowitz contacted California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to prevent the publication of a book, but Schwarzenegger declined due to the academic freedom issue it presents, stating he is not willing to influence the matter. Dershowitz's lawyers attempted to halt the publication of his book by contacting the president of the University of California, the university provost, seventeen university press directors, and nineteen faculty editorial committee members, as reported by Jon Weiner (5).

Dershowitz withdrew from the project, and the book was published by UC Press, with minor modifications due to his threat (6).

### **This Time We Went Too Far:**

The Israeli invasion of Gaza in 2008 was a devastating event, resulting in 1,400 deaths, including hundreds on the first day. Despite the suffering, there is potential for redemption from the tragedy. Norman Finkelstein highlights that the Israeli assault was widely recognized as an injustice, making it difficult to label it as partial or extremist. Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the UN investigation into Israel's use of force against civilians during the invasion has sparked dissent among Jews in the US and UK, particularly among the young. This shift, according to Finkelstein, could create pressure to move the Middle East crisis towards a solution that includes justice for both Palestinians and Israelis. The revised paperback edition includes an afterword on the Israeli attack on the Gaza Freedom Flotilla, an appendix by Finkelstein, and a new appendix on the official Israeli investigation (7).

The oppressive occupation of Israel in Gaza and the West Bank significantly influences Palestinian life, yet scholars have neglected the humanity aspects of this occupation. This lack of context and aversion to context has led to dominant conceptualizations that ignore Palestinian suffering and the reasons for it. These paradigms legitimize Israel's occupation without an agreement to end it, making the term "occupation" irrelevant. Norman Finkelstein's book, *This Time We Went Too Far*, offers a comprehensive analysis of Palestinians' struggle with a displaced sense of place and home, focusing on Israel's Operation Cast Lead and its impact on Gaza. Finkelstein criticizes Israel's invasion of Gaza, arguing it was not intended to stop Hamas rocket fire, citing the Israeli military killing 1,250 Palestinians and 11 Israelis since 2005. Finkelstein argues that the attack on Gaza was not to end rocket fire but to provoke Hamas into resuming it, restoring Israel's deterrence power after the 2006 Lebanon war and preventing a new "peace offensive" with Hamas (7).

The Goldstone Report highlights the political implications of human rights organizations' findings on the Gaza attack, contrasting official Israeli claims with the findings of human rights organizations. The new edition features an epilogue on Israel's 2010 attack on Gaza Freedom

Flotilla, a continuation of 2008/09 attacks, and Finkelstein's analysis of the Turkel Commission's report, providing a legal analysis of Israel's blockade.

The Report cites violent incidents in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 2000, known as the Second Intifada, and suicide attacks in Israeli cities. It overlooks Palestinians' resurgence of suicide attacks after Israel began using lethal firepower to suppress nonviolent demonstrations. The report also overlooks Israeli attacks on Gaza during the same period. Israel was not found guilty of collective punishment in Gaza, but the siege targeted Hamas's military capabilities and allowed a humanitarian minimum, which was arbitrarily determined and fell below Gaza's needs. Israeli officials privately stated their intention to keep the Gazan economy on the brink of collapse. Finkelstein exposes the failed arguments and internal contradictions of a report on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, revealing a consistent political agenda aimed at destroying Palestinian aspirations for a state and dignified existence. Finkelstein's exceptional scholarship remains an essential part of the ongoing struggle (7).

### **What Happened on the Mavi Marmara? An Analysis of the Turkel Commission Report**

In 2010, Israeli commandos killed nine Turkish citizens on the Mavi Marmara, causing international outrage and prompting Israel to appoint an inquiry commission chaired by former Supreme Court Judge Jacob Turkel. In 2011, the Turkel Commission released a 300-page report claiming to have established the events of the Israeli assault, which was actually a grotesque whitewash of Israeli actions. The report effectively protected Israel from further international scrutiny. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's panel of inquiry, tasked with resolving Turkey-Israeli differences over Mavi Marmara killings, has been linked to the Turkel report's findings, with no independent researcher revealing its dishonesty and fraud yet (8).

### **Method And Madness: The Hidden Story of Israel's Assaults on Gaza**

Over the past five years, Israel has conducted three major assaults on the 1.8 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, resulting in the deaths of around 3,700 Palestinians and 90 Israelis, including the deaths of Operation Cast Lead, Operation Pillar of Defense, and Operation Protective Edge. The disproportionate number of attacks has often appeared frenzied and pathological. Israeli politicians have encouraged perceptions of hooliganism in recent operations, as seen in the 2008-9 assault. However, Norman G. Finkelstein's book reveals that Israel's repeated use of savage war is not irrational, but rather designed to sabotage the possibility of a compromise peace with the Palestinians, even on terms that are favorable to it (9).

Finkelstein examines the 2009 UN Goldstone report and Turkey's attempt to seek UN redress for the 2010 Gaza freedom flotilla attack, revealing Israel's persistent evasion of accountability for war crimes, including the killing of its citizens. The stalemate in the Gaza conflict is more tolerable for Israelis than for Gazan citizens, according to Finkelstein. He suggests that a mass non-violent protest strategy might hold more promise for a Palestinian victory than military

resistance. Finkelstein uses various weapons, including anger, irony, sanity, and rational logic, against various weapons (9).

### **On the Anniversary of the Six-Day War, Recommended Reading for Understanding the Occupation**

The Six-Day War, fought between Israel and Egypt, Jordan, and Syria from June 5-10, 1967, transformed the Middle East and lasted just six days, yet its impact continues today. This year marks fifty years of Palestinian military occupation, with Israeli forces capturing east Jerusalem, West Bank, Gaza, Golan Heights, and Sinai during the war. The fifty-year anniversary of the Six-Day War has led to the selection of recommended titles to comprehend the nature of the occupation, its longevity, and its impact on Israeli and Palestinian lives (10).

### **Gaza: An Inquest into Its Martyrdom**

This book focuses on the actions taken against Gaza, emphasizing the importance of considering the limitations imposed by objective circumstances. The book provides an overview of the historical context and Israeli policies that have shaped the political and economic situation in Gaza. The second chapter, titled "Deterring Arabs, Deterring Peace," refers to Israeli policies involving military deterrence and preventing so-called Palestinian "peace offensives".

The book provides detailed analysis of Israel's military operations in Gaza since 2008, most notably Operation Cast Lead of 2008–2009, Operation Pillar of Defense of 2012 and Operation Protective Edge of 2014. The Goldstone Report is thoroughly discussed, including its impact and Judge Goldstone's subsequent statement. The book provides a detailed account of the Mavi Marmara raid, contrasting it with the Israeli Turkel report and the UN Panel of Inquiry report, which he deems as a white-wash. Finkelstein argues that Israel's actions in Gaza violate international law, citing the failure of human rights organizations like Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and the United Nations Human Rights Council to fulfill their promises (11).

### **I Accuse**

This finely-honed indictment by a writer widely acknowledged for his forensic skills is directed at Fatou Bensouda, the Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court. The first letter "I" and the letters "cc" are highlighted in the book cover to show that it's in response to ICC chief prosecutor. It sets out how she defiled her office by refusing to investigate credible allegations of Israeli criminality (12).

On 31 May 2010, Israeli forces attacked a humanitarian flotilla bound for Gaza. By the end of the action, nine passengers on the flotilla's flagship, the Mavi Marmara, were dead (a tenth passenger died later from his injuries). Scores of others were injured, and hundreds more endured torture and inhuman treatment. The Union of the Comoros, where the Mavi Marmara was registered, referred the Israeli attack to the ICC. The Chief Prosecutor ruled that the incident was not of sufficient gravity to warrant an official investigation. Bensouda could only reach this conclusion by grossly misrepresenting the facts of the case and removing the assault from its

context—the illegal Israeli blockade and the humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. Though she declared the case closed, an unprecedented pushback from within the ICC has forced the Chief Prosecutor to revisit it. The challenge now posed by this volume comes down to this: If justice is to prevail, ICC Chief Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda must either investigate alleged Israeli crimes or resign (12).

### **I'll Burn That Bridge When I Get to It! Heretical Thoughts on Identity Politics, Cancel Culture, and Academic Freedom**

Norman Finkelstein, a graduate student, exposed a national bestseller as a hoax and later scrutinized Israel's apologists and Holocaust hucksters, exposing their deceptive practices. Finkelstein's book analyzes identity politics canonical texts, revealing they lack intellectual substance and primarily aim to derail a class-based movement for radical change, rather than providing intellectual substance (13).

Finkelstein critiques the cult surrounding Barack Obama, arguing it's a product of identity politics. Obama, the first Black president, gained power by standing for nothing but his skin color, and liberals embraced him because he aimed to uphold the corrupt status quo. Finkelstein shares his personal experience with radical politics and cancel culture, leading to unemployment and unemployment. He discusses academic freedom debates and expresses no regrets about his choices (13).

"If I can't laugh, I don't want your revolution," Finkelstein declares.

### **Conclusion:**

In summary, Finkelstein frequently, despite the strongholds in Western politics against his works, continued to be a critique of Israeli policies, a challenge to mainstream narratives, and an emphasis on human rights and justice for Palestinians. His works aimed at advocating for a more equitable and just resolution to the Israel-Palestine conflict. These kinds of persons used to be looked up to in the social media for providing accurate information about the Israel-Palestine conflict. The works of Norman Finkelstein set the base many years ago for the Truth and Justice for Palestinian rights to unfold in recent times. He faced academic bullying from Alan Dershowitz for speaking about the rights of Palestine, but remained steadfast in his fight. His continuous works has become one of the reasons that led to the change in the global narrative on the Palestine cause. Laborious work and persistence over many years, as well as the overwhelming amount of details in his writings for standing out for the rights of oppressed Palestinians and becoming a prominent academic figure in their prolonged struggle, make him a clear deservant for a Nobel Peace Prize.

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