



Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History

Norman G. Finkelstein

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In this long-awaited sequel to his international bestseller *The Holocaust Industry*, Norman G. Finkelstein moves from an iconoclastic interrogation of the new anti-Semitism to a meticulously researched exposé of the corruption of scholarship on the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Bringing to bear the latest findings on the conflict and recasting the scholarly debate, Finkelstein points to a consensus among historians and human rights organizations on the factual record. Why, then, does so much controversy swirl around the conflict? Finkelstein's answer, copiously documented, is that apologists for Israel contrive controversy. Whenever Israel comes under international pressure, another media campaign alleging a global outbreak of anti-Semitism is mounted.

Finkelstein also scrutinizes the proliferation of distortion masquerading as history. Recalling Joan Peters' book *From Time Immemorial*, published to great fanfare in 1984 but subsequently exposed as an academic hoax, he asks deeply troubling questions here about the periodic reappearance of spurious scholarship and the uncritical acclaim it receives. The most recent addition to this genre, Finkelstein argues, is Harvard Law Professor Alan Dershowitz's bestseller, *The Case for Israel*.

The core analysis of *Beyond Chutzpah* sets Dershowitz's assertions on Israel's human rights record against the findings of the mainstream human rights community. Sifting through thousands of pages of reports from organizations such as Amnesty International, B'Tselem, and Human Rights Watch, Finkelstein argues that Dershowitz has misrepresented the facts.

Thoroughly researched and tightly argued, *Beyond Chutzpah* lifts the veil of controversy shrouding the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History Details

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From Reader Review Beyond Chutzpah: On the Misuse of Anti-Semitism and the Abuse of History for online ebook

Hatuxka says

This is a careful, comprehensive, concise work that provides understanding of why Israel is so reviled in the world and which indicts, through its focus on one highly visible, well-connected, "media-savvy" apologist, Alan Dershowitz, an entire class of mainstream elite. This elite regularly justify war crimes and horrific human rights abuses on TV and other media. The sections on collective punishment (destroying homes of the accused, their family members and sometimes neighbors, even with them in it in some cases (!!!!) torture, assassinations, use of human shields and hostage-taking are particularly anger-inducing. Finkelstein saves the best for last, indicting the morally bankrupt Israel supreme court (who have legalized, explicitly or implicitly, all these practices) while juxtaposing Dershowitz's fulsome praise of their legal uprightness and integrity. He closes by showing what a brazen phony and plagiarist Dershowitz is by detailing how much he lifted material for one of his more popular books, The Case for Israel, from the widely discredited work of another author. This is excellent scholarship mixed with justifiable ridicule of the distinguished Harvard professor and his class of hypocrites. The well-placed rapier asides aimed at Dershowitz were a favorite feature of the book.

Ned Rifle says

This is a thorough and well researched book - no surprise there. What makes this book far more enjoyable than others on the Israeli-Palestine conflict is that it is framed as an elaborate and detailed rebuttal of Alan Dershowitz's 'The Case for Israel'. Alan Dershowitz is a horrid but hilarious character, always one to go to for an original idea (see his idea to put the separation wall on wheels: "I proposed, actually, that the security fence be placed on wheels and constantly be able to be moved consistent with Israeli security needs."), and it is nice to have a reason for occasional levity in what is, naturally, a very serious book. For the original debate between the 2 relevant men in which Finkelstein accuses Dershowitz of plagiarism, and plagiarism of a purported hoax at that, go here: <http://www.democracynow.org/2003/9/24...>

Seeing as Dershowitz launched a huge campaign to discredit Finkelstein and this book which eventually led to Finkelstein having his tenure denied, the least you can do is read this book.

One last point: I find it deeply disturbing the amount of reviews on the page for 'The Case for Israel' that start by saying they were looking for an unbiased account of the Israeli-Palestine conflict and that this book managed nicely. On what level do they fail to understand that the book is 'The Case For Israel'?

Syed Fathi says

This book is the second Norman Finkelstein's book I read. The first book I read was The Holocaust Industry, in which Finkelstein brilliantly exposed the international Jewry conspiracy which used the Holocaust memory to gain monetary gain from Europe at the expense of the Holocaust survivors. Like the first book, this book also were equip with tonnes of footnotes, making it exhausting to read. But, the reading would be easy and less exhaustive if you decide not to read each of the footnotes. The footnotes were intended for

scholarly reading, for casual reader, main text should suffice. The preface is also very long, it takes me 4 days to reach page 1! Nevertheless, it worth the read.

The main theme of the book is to exposed Israeli apologist tactics of using anti-Semitism to silence critics toward brutal Israeli occupation. In his preface, Finkelstein pointed out that, many of the solutions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, are highly uncontroversial. On settlement for example, World Court ruled that it “have no legal validity”, citing article 49 of the 4th Geneva Convention. The UN also in accordance to General Assembly Resolution 194 (1948) upheld Palestinian refugees “right of return”.

Many pages in the book from preface, chapters, right into appendices were devoted to expose Alan Dershowitz “threadbare hoax”, namely his book ‘The Case for Israel’ which Finkelstein compared to the work of Joan Peter ‘From Time Immemorial’ which he said “grossly distorts the documentary record”. Finkelstein destroyed many of Dershowitz false claim with vast documentary evidence from human right groups including Amnesty International, B’Tselem, Human Right Watch (HRW) and many others. As you read further and further, you will find that Dershowitz did not even know his subject (or his book), he seems a little bit more like a joker than a Harvard Law Professor.

Joeji says

A wonderful guide on the correct methods of academic citations.

Hussain Ali says

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Simon Wood says

BEYOND THE JOKE: DEBUNKING ALAN DERSHOWITZ

Norman Finkelstein first appeared in the 1980's with his thorough debunking of Joan Peters "From Time Immemorial" which had been widely praised on publication by Zionists and other supporters of Israel who were overjoyed to read an "academic" work that supported the Zionist assertion that the Palestinians didn't exist. Finkelstein in a memorable contribution to "Blaming the Victims" showed Peter's magnum opus to be a tissue of lies, distorted quotations and innumerate demographic calculations. Now in "Beyond Chutzpah" Finkelstein directs his considerable critical abilities towards the issue of "The New Anti-Semitism" and to Alan Dershowitz's "The Case for Israel", an important text for Zionist apologists.

In the first part of the book Finkelstein identifies "The New Anti-Semitism" as a more or less fictional construct, that is functionally useful for labeling critics of Israel as anti-Semites and automatically delegitimizing criticism of Israel without having to deal with them rationally and honestly, which would inevitably cause difficulties given the gulf between the rhetoric of Israel's supporters and reality. He gives an account, or perhaps history is the correct term as "The New Anti-Semitism" approaches its fortieth year, of its birth in the period after the two major Arab-Israel Wars of 1967 and 1973, before it came to age with Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Finkelstein, with his forensic approach details and debunks the various developments of this pernicious concept systematically and with occasional examples of a well-aimed and sharply barbed wit.

In the second part Alan Dershowitz's "The Case for Israel" comes under scrutiny. It might seem overkill for Finkelstein to spend over a hundred pages debunking Dershowitz, but when one considers the important role his book has played for those who seek to perpetrate distortions about the reality of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the value of Finkelstein's work is more than evident. After all "The Case for Israel" has been distributed by Israeli Embassies across the world and by Zionist organizations throughout the United States in an effort to sow a distorted version of Israeli actions into the public discourse, and provide ammunition to those who seek to influence any debate around Israel purely in the "interest" of Israel without regard to truth, reality or the Palestinians.

One of Finkelstein's conclusions from examining Dershowitz's work ought to be enough on its own to discredit the book. In the historical section at the beginning of the book Finkelstein identifies over 40% of the citations as being straight from Joan Peter's "From Time Immemorial". Dershowitz is obviously a little shy of crediting the discredited Peter's as his source, so he instead inserts the original source precisely as stated in Peter's footnotes but without attributing them to her. He then undermines his subterfuge by quoting only those parts that are quoted by Peter's and includes the errors from Peter's quotations. The critique then proceeds on an issue-by-issue basis, juxtaposing Dershowitz's claims about the Israel-Palestine conflict with material from a variety of sources, many of them Human Rights organizations including the Israeli group B'Tselem. "The Case for Israel" is revealed to be a tissue of distortions, ought-right lies and even in contradiction to other statements by Dershowitz. And yet this book received universal praise by supporters of Israel on publication?

Also included are a number of appendices, including a table with Dershowitz's assertions in historical order, placed next to the Evidence as attributed to a wide variety of sources, many of them actually of Israeli origin. Reading through the table it became evident that I had heard a few of the claims ("Israelis treat injured Palestinians free gratis") expressed confidently by supporters of Israel, only to find now that the reality is entirely different. The occasional Palestinian has had free and highly publicized treatment in Israel, these are exceptions: the standard procedure is to charge what many regarded as an inflated fee. Further to that there is the damage that Israel's occupation has done to the development of Palestinian Medical Services and the educational base that these services require to be effective, not to mention attacks on medical infrastructure including dozens of ambulances. Dershowitz's claim that Ambulances were used for terrorist attacks is also examined. There was one case, well after the Israeli attacks on Ambulances began, where there was evidence

that this may have occurred, though the circumstances in which the Israelis brought this to light were at best dubious.

"Beyond Chutzpah" is a valuable work that comprehensively debunks a key text of Zionist apologetics and distortion in a robust (Finkelstein certainly doesn't mince his words) and clear manner that shows that "The Case for Israel" made by Dershowitz is simply a blatant and hardly sophisticated fraud. The Table in the appendices that pairs the statements Dershowitz makes in his case with the actuality is as comprehensive a guide to the main examples of distortion and outright lies peddled by the Israeli lobby (up to 2005) as I've come across. Well recommended.

Kaitlin says

Serious scholarship that illuminates a painful history.

Jordan McPeck says

Israel/Palestine: terribly complex issues, tread carefully, don't want to be anti-Semitic. Finkelstein says not really, that's just so much smoke thrown up by pro-Israeli apologists to keep people from examining the issues. This book tackles many of them, primarily through closely examining the work of Alan Dershowitz, the Harvard law professor and a leading proponent of Israel, and comparing it to reports from various human rights agencies. When reading opinion pieces like this, I assume I'm just getting one side of the argument. Not so here. Example after example from Dershowitz and others are quoted, then examined. What is one to think when over and over again their statements are shown to be illogical or even false. And it's not just Finkelstein's opinion. He spent a lot of time checking Dershowitz's footnotes, and found numerous examples where the assertion is based on, say, the first phrase of a sentence, but ignores the latter part which totally negates the assertion. Finkelstein simply uses Dershowitz's own work against him! Other times the footnote refers to a solitary piece of evidence like, say, a confidential source. Finkelstein then draws in multiple published sources which completely demolish Dershowitz's point. Sprinkled throughout are funny and devastating one-liners that express Finkelstein's incredulity over what Dershowitz et al try to get away with. A fair bit of material is also provided on Dershowitz's response to this book. Once again, using his own work against him, the lack of substantial rebuttal demonstrates the weakness of Dershowitz's arguments. And this is one of the Israel lobby's shining lights (not to mention Harvard)? Really, it's Finkelstein who performs a valuable service to Israel by providing this kind of critique that clarifies the issues. And it's quite useful for someone like me with limited knowledge of them.

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[illegible]

Greg says

Totally destroys Alan Dershowitz's credibility. A little shrill, to say the least.

Dean Dalton says

Very informative collection of Israel's human rights abuses and how Jewish elites distort and deny the findings of respected NGO's.

Henry Lockett says

I think that Finkelstein puts too much focus on discrediting Alan Dershowitz; he sometimes comes across as petit. However one of the main aims of the book is to illustrate how stretched the definition of 'anti-semitism' has become, and much of Dershowitz's writing is a shining example of such abuse. So perhaps the popularity of his book 'The Case For Israel' warrants the critical review given in 'Beyond Chutzpah'. The record needed to be set straight.

Finkelstein's footnotes and references are excellent. I tried my best to maintain a balanced perspective (especially as I have never read 'The Case For Israel') and to assume that maybe references and statistics had been selected to simply reinforce his arguments, but I did not get a sense of this. The evidence to support Finkelstein's claims is substantial.

I would definitely recommend this book.

Amr Mohamed says

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Especially important right now, is the involvement of Israel in getting us into the Iraq conflict. For the first time in history, we have attacked a country that has done nothing to us. We now have blood on our hands. Just whose interests are the neocons serving? What about Senator Lieberman, a man whose head is screwed on correctly for most things. Why is he serving the interests of Zionism rather than those of America? There is a very simple reason why the Muslims hate us and that is our absurd absolute support for radical Zionism

and its crimes against humanity (yes, Muslims are people, too). We are the only country in the world so positioned. The powerful Jewish lobby has gotten us into something we can never get out of - it is a stain on our souls. And Dershowtz's crude apologia just makes the case for Israel and our support of it weaker.

Any reader of this book cannot but help drawing parallels between Israel's activities and those of Nazi Germany. Just as there was collective guilt in Germany, there is collective guilt in Israel and, since as Finkelstein shows, the vast majority of Israelis support the anti-Palestinian atrocities, they are all equally guilty.

This reasoned book alone is unlikely to stop the juggernaut, but Israel will forever be cursed if it does not atone and that will ultimately be its downfall. A nation built totally on deception and terror, indeed, one which NEEDS terror (in order to get 4 billion dollars a year from the USA) and exploits its self-proclaimed victimhood (like a third-world beggar exposing his sores whilst seeking alms) will ultimately fail. It may take a hundred years, but evil generally dies.

But it need not be so and Israel can join the world of civilized nations - but it and all of us need to heed Finkelstein. In this respect, maybe Dershowitz, by providing such flagrant absurdities, has a use - providing a platform so ridiculous that it can be easily perceived. If Israel needs a Dershowitz, then heaven help it.

Finkelstein has done an extraordinary job! It is, in the long run, a service to Israel and perhaps to America as well.
