

16 A Case Study in Hate and Intimidation

[T]he Jews do not merit a “second homeland” because they already have New York, with a huge Jewish population, Jewish-run media, a Jewish mayor, and domination of cultural and economic life.

—*Noam Chomsky, MIT professor of linguistics*¹

I can’t imagine why Israel’s apologists would be offended by a comparison with the Gestapo.

—*Norman Finkelstein, assistant professor at DePaul University and author of The Holocaust Industry*²

I don’t know there’s enough exterior evidence to determine whether they [the claims that Israel perpetrated both 9/11 and the anthrax attacks] are true or not.

—*Alexander Cockburn, columnist for the Nation and editor of the Web newsletter CounterPunch*³

In this chapter, I will show how a small but influential group of anti-Israel, antipeace, and antitruth zealots has managed to intimidate many moderate voices for peace and the two-state solution on American

university campuses. In exposing this new form of literary McCarthyism, I will necessarily have to focus on some of the attacks on me, because I have become a central focus of this intimidation since the publication of *The Case for Israel*. But the problem is much larger than any one person, and poses significant threats to the ongoing peace process.

I have often wondered why so few academics are willing to speak out in moderate support of Israel—or even of the two-state solution—on American university campuses. Some faculty members are prepared to play a behind-the-scenes role in counseling students who do speak out and some are willing to sign reactive petitions, such as the one against divestment. But on many campuses, perhaps even a majority, there is not a single professor who can be counted on to speak proactively about Israel, to write op-ed articles for the school newspaper, to present a pro-Israel or pro-two-state perspective on local talk radio or television shows, or in any other way to be identified publicly and positively with Israel.

I am not talking about support for all of Prime Minister Sharon's policies. I too am critical of some of these. I am talking about Israel's right to exist as a secular Jewish democracy, to defend itself against terrorism by proportional means, and to have its human rights record judged by a single standard. I am talking about Israel's right not to be demonized, delegitimated, singled out for unfair condemnation, and compared to the worst of regimes, especially the Nazis.⁴

This silence is particularly troubling in light of the raucousness of the anti-Israel rhetoric on so many university campuses, as described in chapter 14. The absence of a single pro-Israel voice among the faculty of a college or university—especially in contrast to the presence of so many anti-Israel voices—has a stifling effect on students and makes it seem as if there is no other side to the issues than that presented by the anti-Israel hard left. This threatens to produce a generation of graduates—future leaders—who take for granted that any show of support for Israel is immoral and politically incorrect. Indeed, it is these future leaders that the anti-Israel campus campaigns are specifically targeting.

This phenomenon contributes to an atmosphere that is not conducive to peace, because it encourages anti-Israel extremists to reject any compromise peace in the expectation that Israel will have little support among the next generation of leaders. It also encourages anti-Palestinian extremists in their belief that any compromise peace will only be a first step toward the eventual goal of Israel's enemies to destroy the Jewish state.

The reason for the faculty silence is not what is widely believed—namely, that few academics actually think that Israel or the two-state solution deserve their support. In my experience speaking on many campuses, there is unexpressed silent support for Israel—though certainly not for all of its policies—among many professors, and widespread support for the two-state solution. When I speak about these issues on a campus, I receive phone calls from faculty members thanking me for speaking out. When I respond by asking them why they don't speak out, I hear excuses galore: "I'm *not* an expert in the Middle East, so I really have no credentials for that issue." (I never hear that about other issues such as gay rights, abortion, or the Iraq war.) "I *am* an expert on the Middle East, so I can't take sides." (As if experts who are anti-Israel have any reluctance to take sides.) "I'm too busy with other projects."

Then there is the real reason, which I am now beginning to hear more often: "If I speak out in a way that is seen as in any way supportive of Israel, I will be attacked viciously by anti-Israel academics. My integrity and professionalism will be challenged. I will become the object of scorn and ridicule on the Internet. My academic career will be hurt." I have recently learned, from firsthand experience, that this is true and that the fear of becoming the target of unfair attacks by anti-Israel advocates is having a discernible impact on the willingness of academics to speak or write in support of Israel or the two-state solution.

The interesting news is that this is not haphazard or episodic. In fact, it is part of a well-orchestrated campaign to try to discredit pro-Israel advocacy on college campuses that has never previously been documented and exposed.

Since the publication of my book, *The Case for Israel*, I have become a prime target of this campaign of vilification. The Web is filled with personal attacks on me. The language is almost always the same. Pickets and protesters appear at my public speeches. False charges have been hurled against me in letters to the president, dean, and newspapers of Harvard. Boycotts of my classes have been proposed. My physical safety has been threatened.⁵ All this despite—or perhaps because of—the fact that I have always presented a centrist, two-state approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which includes criticism of certain Israeli actions.⁶ The attack on me is part of a broader campaign against moderate

pro-Israel writers and professors that goes back many years and will likely continue unless it is exposed and confronted.

The attack team consists of Noam Chomsky, the MIT professor and noted linguist;⁷ Norman Finkelstein, an obscure but prolific assistant professor of political science at DePaul University; and Alexander Cockburn, the extremist columnist for the *Nation* and editor of the radical political Web magazine *CounterPunch*.

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. Cockburn publicizes these "findings," and then a cadre of fellow travelers bombard the Internet with so many attacks on the target that these attacks jump to the top of Google. Because no one has thus far exposed the pattern, each attack seems plausible on first impression. After all, some people do plagiarize. There are frauds and hoaxes, and some scholars deserve to have their integrity attacked. But when the pattern is examined and exposed, the entire enterprise becomes clear for what it is: a systematic attempt to chill moderate pro-Israel advocacy on university campuses by a form of literary McCarthyism.

Who Is Noam Chomsky?

Many people know who Noam Chomsky is. The jacket of one of his books describes him, without irony, as "arguably the most important intellectual alive."⁸ He is well-known for his extreme hatred of the United States and Israel, having famously declared that "[i]f the Nuremberg laws were applied today, then every Post-War American president would have to be hanged."⁹ But not many are aware of the even darker side of his record—including supporting, praising, and working with Holocaust deniers. Chomsky's most notorious bedfellow is Robert Faurisson, who called the Holocaust a "hoax," denied the existence of Hitler's gas chambers, claimed that the diary of Anne Frank was a "forgery," and described the Jewish claims for Holocaust reparations as a "fraud."¹⁰ (These words have a tendency to recur in anti-Semitic and anti-Israel rhetoric.) Chomsky leaped to Faurisson's support. He did not limit himself to defending Faurisson's *right* to publish his false claims about the Holocaust, as a civil libertarian might.

Chomsky went out of his way to describe this Holocaust denier as a “a sort of relatively apolitical liberal,”¹¹ to praise him as a scholar who had done “extensive historical research,” and to characterize his assertions about the Holocaust as historical “findings.”¹² He also said that he did not see any “hint of anti-Semitic implications” in Faurisson’s claim that the so-called Holocaust was a fraud perpetrated by the Jewish people. Chomsky, the linguist, assured his readers that “nobody believes there is an anti-Semitic connotation to the denial of the Holocaust . . . *whether one believes it took place or not*”¹³ (thus implying that reasonable people could believe that it did *not* take place). Chomsky wrote an introduction to a Faurisson book, lending this Holocaust denier his academic imprimatur. Chomsky has also published his writings with a well-known neo-Nazi press.¹⁴ As Paul L. Berman summarized Chomsky’s record on these issues: “Chomsky’s view of anti-Semitism is positively wild. His definition is so narrow, neither the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* nor the no-Holocaust delusion fit into it. . . . I am afraid that his present remarks on anti-Semitism and Zionist lies disqualify him from ever being taken seriously on matters pertaining to Jews.”¹⁵

Ever since his close association with Holocaust deniers compromised his credibility on “matters pertaining to Jews,” Chomsky has tended to stay away from these issues—at least directly—leaving it to surrogates to continue his campaign of vilification against the Jewish community. His primary surrogate is Norman Finkelstein. In selecting as his intellectual hit man Finkelstein, Chomsky picked a real soul mate.

Chomsky and Finkelstein have remained, in Chomsky’s words, “very close friends”¹⁶ since they conspired back in 1984 to attack a writer named Joan Peters whom they regarded as pro-Israel. Chomsky has urged audiences “to come listen to” Finkelstein because he can speak about Israel “with more authority and insight . . . than anyone I can think of.”¹⁷ This about a man who repeatedly calls Israel a Nazi nation and who boasts of “publicly honoring” and showing “solidarity with Hezbollah.”¹⁸

Chomsky has characterized Finkelstein as “a very fine scholar.”¹⁹ (Chomsky has also characterized the work of Ward Churchill—the Colorado professor who called the victims of the attack on the World Trade Center “little Eichmanns”²⁰—as “excellent, penetrating and of high scholarly quality,”²¹ and his achievements as “of inestimable value.”²²) In light of Chomsky’s standards regarding scholarly quality, it should not be surprising that his own scholarship has been rigorously

questioned. Professors Robert Levine and Paul Postal, both linguists at distinguished universities, have documented serious charges of plagiarism against him, accusing him of “the uncredited adoption of others’ research ideas.”²³ Others have documented denials by Chomsky of having made statements that appear on videotape. He has also been accused of “fabricat[ing] facts,” concocting sources, mis-citing authorities, “lying,” ignoring countersources, “intellectual corruption,”²⁴ “deliberate distortion,”²⁵ “intellectual misconduct,”²⁶ “playing fast and loose with the source material,”²⁷ and “massive falsification of facts, evidence, sources and statistics.”²⁸ The historian Arthur Schlesinger, in summarizing the documented accusations against Chomsky, has labeled him an “intellectual crook.”²⁹

Who Is Norman Finkelstein?

Norman Finkelstein is a transient academic who describes himself as “in exile” at DePaul University because he has been—by his own account—“thrown out of every school in New York.”³⁰ The former chairman of the political science department at one such college told me that Finkelstein was fired for “incompetence,” “mental instability,” and “abuse” of students with politics different from his own.

Finkelstein boasts, “Never has one of my articles been published in a scientific magazine,”³¹ and for good reason. As Peter Novick, whose book *The Holocaust in American Life* Finkelstein characterized as “the initial stimulus for [his] book,”³² wrote,

As concerns particular assertions made by Finkelstein . . . the appropriate response is not (exhilarating) ‘debate’ but (tedious) examination of his footnotes. Such an examination reveals that many of those assertions are pure invention. . . . No facts alleged by Finkelstein should be assumed to be really facts, no quotation in his book should be assumed to be accurate, without taking the time to carefully compare his claims with the sources he cites.³³

Novick called Finkelstein’s book “trash”³⁴ and a “twenty-first century updating of the ‘Protocols of the Elders of Zion.’”³⁵ When Finkelstein’s own muse warns readers not to believe him, that warning must be taken seriously.

Nor should it be surprising in light of his methodology. When he was asked, "If you are a historian, why didn't you write a serious study about the subject? Why didn't you do research yourself? Interview people, etc.?" Finkelstein responded, "Why should I interview people?"³⁶

Finkelstein has characterized Israeli counterterrorism actions a "holocaust" and said that he "can't imagine why Israel's apologists would be offended by a comparison with the Gestapo."³⁷ He has blamed September 11 on the United States ("[W]e [the U.S.] deserve the problem on our hands because some things Bin Laden says are true"),³⁸ and asserted that "Libya had nothing to do with [the blowing up of Pan Am 103]" (for which Libya has acknowledged responsibility).³⁹ He has said that most alleged Holocaust survivors—including Elie Wiesel—have fabricated their past and are bogus, and that those seeking reparations are cheats and greedy.

Marc Fisher, a columnist for the *Washington Post*, has observed that "Norman Finkelstein [is] a writer celebrated by neo-Nazi groups for his Holocaust revisionism and comparisons of Israel to Nazi Germany."⁴⁰ One actual Nazi (Ingrid Rimland, whose husband, the notorious Ernst Zündel, authored *The Hitler We Loved and Why*) referred to Finkelstein admiringly as the "Jewish David Irving"—a reference to the British Holocaust denier and Hitler admirer.⁴¹ The comparison is apt because Finkelstein has reportedly praised Irving as a good historian⁴² and as having "made an 'indispensable' contribution to our knowledge of World War II."⁴³ Martin Dietzsch, a German sociologist who is an expert on neo-Nazism, described him as a Jew who "supports anti-Semitism."⁴⁴ Like other anti-Semites, Finkelstein generalizes about "the Jews"; for example: "Just as Israelis, armed to the teeth by the United States, courageously put unruly Palestinians in their place, so American *Jews* courageously put unruly Blacks in their place."⁴⁵ Also like other anti-Semites, he blames the recurrence of anti-Semitism on the Jews: "[T]he worst enemies in the struggle against real anti-Semitism are the philo-Semites. . . . Alongside Israel ['American Jewish elites'] are the main fomenters of anti-Semitism in the world today. . . . They need to be stopped."⁴⁶ It should come as no surprise therefore that Finkelstein's books, which have no market in the United States, are widely read in Germany and distributed by neo-Nazi groups.⁴⁷

Leon Wieseltier, literary editor of the *New Republic*, described Finkelstein as "poison, he's a disgusting self-hating Jew, he's something you find under a rock."⁴⁸ Gabriel Schoenfeld, senior editor of *Commentary*

magazine, has labeled his views as “crackpot ideas, some of them mirrored almost verbatim in the propaganda put out by neo-Nazis around the world.”⁴⁹ Prominent among these ideas is the old anti-Semitic canard of a “Jewish conspiracy” that includes Steven Spielberg, NBC, and Leon Uris. Finkelstein has condemned *Schindler’s List* as an effort by American Jews to divert attention from America’s Mideast policy: “Give me a better reason! . . . Who profits [from the movie]? Basically, there are two beneficiaries from the dogmas [of *Schindler’s List*]: American Jews and the American administration.”⁵⁰

He believes that NBC decided to broadcast the series *Holocaust* in order to strengthen Israel’s bargaining position with Egypt: “In 1978, NBC produced the series *Holocaust*. Do you believe, it was a coincidence, 1978? Just at this time, when peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt took place in Camp David?”⁵¹

And he accuses Leon Uris, the author of *Exodus*, of naming his central character “Ari” in order to promote Israel’s “Nazi” ideology: “The name of the character is Ari Ben Canaan because Ari is the diminutive for Aryan. It is the whole admiration for this blond haired, blue eyed type.”⁵² (Ari is a traditional Hebrew name going back to the Bible.)

Normally, no one would take seriously the ridiculous claims Finkelstein makes, but he boasts that he “can get away with things which nobody else can”⁵³ because his parents were Holocaust survivors. As Alain Zucker, in his review of *The Holocaust Industry*, put it, “If Finkelstein wasn’t Jewish, his book would have been dumped by the reviewers as a right extremist pamphlet.”⁵⁴ Finkelstein accuses others of exploiting the memory of the Holocaust for personal purposes, yet it is clear that he himself ranks as one of that tragedy’s most perverse exploiters. He quotes his mother as asking rhetorically, “If everyone who claims to be a survivor actually is one . . . who did Hitler kill?”⁵⁵ Finkelstein even doubted his own mother’s denial that she was a kapo, asking whether her frequent statements that “the best didn’t survive” constituted “an indirect admission of guilt?” The most he was willing to do was “assume” that his mother answered him “truthfully.”⁵⁶ But he questioned even that assumption: “Still, if she didn’t cross fundamental moral boundaries, I glimpsed from her manner of pushing and shoving in order to get to the head of a queue, which mortified me. . . . Really, how else would she have survived?” A ninety-year-old Holocaust survivor in Canada told me that “this Finkelstein man is, in some ways,

worse than an outright Holocaust denier, because he acknowledges only the dead but not the living. It hurts so much to hear him say that we didn't actually suffer."

Who Is Alexander Cockburn?

The third member of this nasty triumvirate is Alexander Cockburn. Cockburn serves as the main megaphone for Chomsky's and Finkelstein's rants. He has used his column the *Nation*, and his online radical hotspot *CounterPunch*, to publicize many of their most outrageous claims. His hatred for Israel knows no bounds. In 1984 he was suspended from the *Village Voice* for hiding a \$10,000 "grant" he received from an anti-Israel organization.⁵⁷ When asked whether he believed the stories involving Israeli complicity in September 11 and in the anthrax attacks, his response was, "I don't know there's enough exterior evidence to determine whether they are true or not,"⁵⁸ thus legitimating these lies and those who spread them. The columnist Jon Margolis, after exposing several false charges made by Cockburn, asserted that "Cockburn has been abusing reality for decades" and that "as an accuser, Joe McCarthy was more responsible."⁵⁹

Their Alliance—Their Mode—Their Attacks

The story of this unholy alliance among Chomsky, Finkelstein, and Cockburn began more than twenty years ago with the publication of a book entitled *From Time Immemorial*, by Joan Peters. The book, an unlikely best-seller, was largely a demographic study of the population of the area that eventually became Israel. Peters's conclusion was that the claim that the Palestinians who left or were expelled from Israel during the War of Independence (1947–1949) had lived in the area from time immemorial was exaggerated. She tried to prove—through land records, census figures, immigration data, eyewitness accounts, and other information—that many of these Palestinians were relatively recent transplants from the West Bank, Gaza, and other places. It was a controversial thesis, especially since the Ottoman records on which she partially relied were often incomplete. Indeed, I disagreed with some of

her conclusions and said so in my book *The Case for Israel*.⁶⁰ But her major point—that not all of the refugees had lived for centuries in what became Israel—was supported by evidence and contributed an important new element to the debate.⁶¹

When Chomsky learned of Peters's book, he became outraged. He raised questions about whether Peters had actually written the book, writing that it was "*signed* by Joan Peters,"⁶² but "probably it had been put together by some intelligence agency."⁶³ Chomsky telephoned Finkelstein, then a graduate student already notorious for the virulence of his anti-Zionism, and directed him to expose the book as "a fraud." According to Finkelstein's account, Chomsky told him that "if I go through the book more carefully, [I'd] probably discover that the whole thing is a fraud."⁶⁴ Any legitimate academic would have rejected this Alice-in-Wonderland approach: conclusion first and then a search for—or concocting of—evidence to support it. But here is how Finkelstein responded: "Well, you know, I'm a person of the left, and when you get a call from Professor Chomsky, his wish is your command."⁶⁵ And of course, Finkelstein granted Chomsky his wish: he "discovered"—surprise!—that Peters had perpetrated a "spectacular hoax," a "fraud from start to finish."⁶⁶ He also accused Peters of "plagiarism."⁶⁷

Chomsky arranged for Finkelstein's critique of Peters's book to be published in an anti-Israel leftist magazine called *In These Times*.⁶⁸ Chomsky, who had not himself done the research, went even further than Finkelstein in attacking Peters's book. He said that the *entire book* "was completely faked" and that "the whole thing was a hoax."⁶⁹ (We will see that this pattern continues with regard to other books by pro-Israel academics as well.) With Finkelstein willing to devote his life to word-by-word scrutiny of every book contrary to Chomsky's political ideology, this was the start of a rather ugly collaboration.

The third member of the attack team, Alexander Cockburn, joined the orgy of name-calling calculated to destroy Peters's reputation. Cockburn characterized her conclusions as "fraudulent," "mad,"⁷⁰ and immoral. He called her book a "charnel house of disingenuous polemic"⁷¹ and "nonsense which was duly exposed as fraudulent from start to finish."⁷² He used his column in the *Nation* to publicize Finkelstein's charges of plagiarism—charges similar to the ones he has subsequently leveled against other pro-Israel writers.⁷³

The Chomsky-Finkelstein-Cockburn mode of ad hominem attack proved successful against Peters because the words "hoax," "fraud,"

“fake,” and “plagiarism” are so dramatic and unforgettable, as is the charge that Peters did not actually write the book, but merely signed a KGB-style forgery concocted by “some intelligence agency,” presumably the Mossad or the CIA. The impression created by these charges is that the author (or the intelligence agency) actually made up all of her sources out of whole cloth, faked all the data, and forged all the documents. That is the meaning of “hoax” and “fake,” as in the fake diary of Adolf Hitler or the forged *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. It did not seem to matter that none of these charges was even close to the truth. All Finkelstein had managed to show was that in a relatively small number of instances, Peters may have misinterpreted some data, ignored counterdata, and exaggerated some findings—common problems in demographic research that often appear in anti-Israel books as well, including those of Chomsky.

Yet the anti-Israel press repeated the exaggerated charges against Peters as if they were gospel (and coming from Noam Chomsky, the high priest of the anti-Jewish hard left, they *were* gospel). Suddenly the name Joan Peters was associated in the minds of many with the words “hoax,” “fake,” “fraud,” “plagiarism,” and the claim that she was a front for the Mossad or the CIA. This hard-left version of literary McCarthyism had succeeded in damaging the academic reputation of one writer.⁷⁴ The Chomsky-Finkelstein-Cockburn tactic thus became the preferred mode of attack against other pro-Israel and pro-Jewish writers. The same words—“hoax,” “fraud,” “fake,” and “plagiarism”—became the standard attack words, and other pro-Israel writers were falsely accused of the same literary crimes.

For example, Finkelstein has accused Elie Wiesel, whom he calls the “resident clown” of the Holocaust “circus”⁷⁵ and a “wimp,”⁷⁶ of being a liar who has made up stories of his past. Finkelstein finds it necessary to attack Wiesel’s credibility because Wiesel’s documentation of his experiences during the Holocaust is among the most important primary sources for historians of that tragic epoch in Jewish history. Just like Robert Faurisson, who falsely claims that the diary of Anne Frank is a “fraud” and a “hoax,” Finkelstein claims—quite falsely—that Wiesel’s account of his own life is false. To try to prove this defamation, Finkelstein focuses on a lighthearted anecdote in Wiesel’s memoir that recounted how he read Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason* in Yiddish and lost the interest of young women when he would mention the work in conversations. Finkelstein jumps on the story, insisting that

"*The Critique of Pure Reason* was never translated into Yiddish."⁷⁷ Finkelstein disregards the fact that a huge portion of Yiddish literature was destroyed or lost during and after the Holocaust. Moreover, former Oxford professor Dovid Katz, one of the world's most distinguished scholars of Yiddish literature, assures me that he has seen a Yiddish translation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and that its substance was also included in a popular Yiddish philosophy compendium by Chaim Zhitlovsky. Moreover, even Finkelstein concedes that Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason*⁷⁸ was published in Yiddish by a Warsaw publishing house in 1929 and there is a copy in the Harvard library.

Other targets of Finkelstein are Edgar Bronfman, whom he called "the Jewish Ribbentrop";⁷⁹ Rabbi Israel Singer, who is according to Finkelstein "[Bronfman's] crooked sidekick . . . , a blackmailer, an extortionist . . . [who] belongs behind bars";⁸⁰ Abraham Foxman, whom Finkelstein called the "grand wizard"⁸¹ of the ADL; and other Jewish leaders who support Israel and who work for reparations for Holocaust victims.⁸²

Finkelstein's own claim to fame is a book called *The Holocaust Industry*, which was labeled an "irrational and insidious" "conspiracy theory" by the *New York Times* reviewer and historian Omer Bartov.⁸³ In this theory, Finkelstein accuses American Jewry of a conspiracy and of "shaking down" such helpless organizations as Swiss banks, German corporations, and European governments. As Finkelstein observed, "They [the Swiss banks] are so afraid of those hoodlums [the "Holocaust Industry"] . . . They [the Jewish leaders] are so ruthless and reckless thugs."⁸⁴ The so-called "Holocaust Industry" is, in the world according to Finkelstein, a group of well-connected and powerful Jews using victim status to cover up for the sins of Israel and to line their own pockets with "Holocaust booty." In the *New York Times*, Bartov called Finkelstein's thesis "a novel variation on the anti-Semitic forgery, 'The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.'"⁸⁵

To date, the Chomsky-Finkelstein-Cockburn attack team has targeted at least the following writers who support Israel and seek justice for Holocaust survivors: Stuart Eizenstat, Martin Gilbert, Burt Neuborne, Yehuda Bauer, Gerald Feldman, Richard Overy, and Abba Eban. They have called these distinguished Jews "hucksters," "hoaxers," "thieves," "extortionists," and worse. The pattern of attack is always similar.

After Wiesel, the other major targets of Finkelstein's bile are Daniel

Goldhagen and Burt Neuborne. Goldhagen, an eminent historian and best-selling author, was targeted by Finkelstein for his book *Hitler's Willing Executioners*, which Finkelstein accused of being another Holocaust Industry-sponsored example, a "hoax . . . with footnotes."⁸⁶ In reply, Goldhagen convincingly demonstrates that Finkelstein simply "fabricated" the charges against him.⁸⁷

This is a man who has made a career of attacking Israel's legitimacy. . . . Now, suddenly, he turns to Holocaust studies, which he discovers to be a Zionist conspiracy. . . . In addition to his documented inventions about my book, it is worth noting that Finkelstein has never before written anything on the Holocaust or German history and cannot read German . . . which means that he cannot read many of the sources on which he is passing his "expert" opinion.⁸⁸

Burt Neuborne is one of the most distinguished civil liberties lawyers in the world today. Now a professor of law at New York University Law School, Neuborne previously served with distinction as the national legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union. In that capacity, he brought lawsuits against the government and in favor of the free speech rights of everyone ranging from the Palestine Liberation Organization to the Nazi party. In 1999, he was asked by a federal district court judge to serve as co-counsel for Holocaust survivors who were seeking compensation from the Swiss banks that had kept the money deposited by victims of the German atrocities. Neuborne brilliantly achieved a settlement for his clients, and everyone seemed satisfied with the results. Everyone except for Finkelstein (and, as we will soon see, Chomsky). Finkelstein began a vicious attack against Neuborne's integrity, accusing him of "tribal solidarity"⁸⁹ with the Jews, calling him a falsifier of documents,⁹⁰ a "blackmailer,"⁹¹ a "shake-down" artist,⁹² and "a liar,"⁹³ and publicly demanding his "disbarment."⁹⁴ In his replies, Neuborne demolished Finkelstein, pointing to made-up quotations,⁹⁵ faked facts,⁹⁶ and outright lies.⁹⁷ As usual, Finkelstein ignored the documented rebuttals to his false claims and repeated them in print.

Finkelstein even had his publisher take out an ad in the *Nation* calling Neuborne a liar. Neuborne responded by writing that "to be called a liar by Norman Finkelstein is like being called a traitor by Osama bin Laden. It means you must be doing something right."⁹⁸ Neuborne

understood that Finkelstein's attack on him and Finkelstein's broader efforts at "minimizing the Holocaust" were motivated by an agenda that had little to do with the Holocaust itself and everything to do with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. As he wrote: "When peace is achieved between a sovereign Palestinian state and a sovereign Israel, the political motives for minimizing the Holocaust will disappear."⁹⁹ Finally, Neuborne wrote the following: "I have no illusions that you will alter your chapter to bring it closer to the truth. You appear to be so obsessed with waging your private political war against militant Zionism and the Jewish establishment that you simply cannot see anything except corruption and bad faith. . . . But your stridency and rage prevents your work from playing any constructive role. Rather, you just become fodder for *someone else's* political obsessions"¹⁰⁰ (emphasis added).

When I asked Burt Neuborne to whom he was referring when he wrote about "someone else's political obsessions," he replied, "Chomsky, of course. He's behind this."¹⁰¹

One more incident will illustrate this pattern. Professor Werner Cohn sent me an e-mail stating that when he wrote a book exposing Chomsky's flirtation with Holocaust deniers, one of Chomsky's acolytes accused Cohn of not having written his own book. The CIA, and the Mossad have apparently been kept quite busy "writing" books of which Chomsky disapproves.

Their Attacks against Me

Having attacked Joan Peters, Elie Wiesel, Daniel Goldhagen, Burt Neuborne, Werner Cohn, and so many other Jewish supporters of Israel and Holocaust reparations, it was only natural that the anti-Israel triumvirate would target me after *The Case for Israel* became a bestseller and, according to Finkelstein, "got great reviews everywhere."¹⁰² One of Finkelstein's Internet acolytes reported in an overstatement characteristic of the triumvirate and their followers, that "no book in recent memory has received such unvarying praise from both the American intellectual establishment and the American and world press," and that it had become quite "influential among policy makers."¹⁰³ It was necessary therefore to subject my book to "the treatment" accorded other influential pro-Israel writings. The carefully coordinated response to my

book employed exactly the same words they had used so successfully against Peters (and others).

I have the resources to counter their attack and disprove their false charges, but younger, less-established academics could have their careers hurt or even destroyed by such false accusations. Finkelstein boasts of having destroyed at least two promising academic careers and has made it plain that he will go after others who write in support of Israel or Holocaust reparations.

The attack against me began with my appearance on a radio show called *Democracy Now!* (recorded on September 24, 2003) on which I was supposed to debate Chomsky. Finkelstein showed up instead, having arranged with the host to “expose” my book, and having coordinated the attack with Chomsky and Cockburn, who stood ready to publicize it in the *Nation* and other left-wing media. They first claimed—as they had with Peters—that I did not “write this book,” that I did not even “read it,” and that I “had no idea what was in the book.”* The implication was that some Israeli intelligence agency wrote it and had me sign it—exactly as they claimed was the situation with Peters’s and Cohn’s books. The problem for them is that I don’t type or use a computer, so every word of the text was handwritten by me in my own handwriting—and I still have the original, handwritten manuscript.¹⁰⁴

Well, if I did actually write it in my own hand, I must have copied it or plagiarized it. That was the next charge. And guess who I plagiarized it from? Joan Peters, according to Finkelstein, Chomsky, and Cockburn. The problem with their charge—in addition to its complete falsity—is that Peters’s book was entirely demographic and historical, whereas more than 90 percent of my book deals with contemporary events that took place years *after* the publication of Peters’s book in 1984. The other, even more serious problem for them is that they could not come up with a *single* sentence, phrase, or idea in my book that came from another source and was used without quotation marks,

*Recently Finkelstein claimed that I don’t write any of my books: “[I]t’s sort of like a Hallmark line for Nazis. . . . [T]hey churn them out so fast that he has now reached a point where he doesn’t even read them.” (Norman Finkelstein “Ambushes” Alan Dershowitz [Part II]: an original transcript from *theExperiment*, December 6, 2003, accessible at www.theexperiment.org/articles.php?news_id=1991.)

attribution, and citation. I explicitly cited Peters's book numerous times while disclaiming reliance on its conclusions because I disagreed with some of them. That, of course, means there was no plagiarism.

Moreover, Finkelstein has publicly stated that he does not take the issue of plagiarism seriously, virtually acknowledging that he uses it only as a tactic against his ideological enemies: "I'm a leftist and I don't get too excited about plagiarism, I have to admit it."¹⁰⁵ Despite Finkelstein's lack of excitement about plagiarism, and his obvious realization that I had not engaged in it, he knew from his previous experience that the false charge of plagiarism, if leveled, would be more likely to garner media attention than simple criticism of my conclusions.

That is why the charge of plagiarism has become a central element of their standard attack plan. Finkelstein's claim of plagiarism against me is laughable. His charge is that I originally came across several quotations that I use in my book—for example, one from Mark Twain—in Peters's book. Although he acknowledged that I put the Twain quote in quotation marks and cited it to Twain, he says I should have cited it to Peters. In any event, I didn't even find the Twain quote (and others that Finkelstein points to) in Peters's book. I have been speaking about the Israel-Palestine conflict for decades—well before Peters published her book—and was using many of these quotes in my debates and speeches, as I can conclusively prove.¹⁰⁶ Chomsky knew this because I used quotations from Mark Twain, the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, and the Peel Commission in debates with *him*. It is true that I first came upon some obscure diplomatic letters in Peters's book, but I then checked them against the originals in the Harvard library and cited them to their original sources. When I could not find the original sources, I cited them to Peters. *This* became the charge of plagiarism—that I cited some quotations to their *original* sources rather than all of them to the *secondary* source in which I first came across them. That is not plagiarism. It is what the style books mandate and scholars do—except in the mind of the Chomsky-Finkelstein-Cockburn attack team, and only when pro-Israel writers do it, not when they themselves do it!

In order to level his spurious charge of plagiarism, Finkelstein had to make up a false quotation, which he called the "smoking gun":¹⁰⁷ "[I]n the [galley] proofs, it . . . says: *Copy from Joan Peters*."¹⁰⁸ It does. . . . There was no question about it." He thus alleges that I instructed a research assistant to "copy"¹⁰⁹ from another author without citations. But he simply makes up the word "copy." The note says precisely the

opposite: “*cite* sources on pp. 160, 485, 486, footnotes 141–145” (emphasis added). The instruction is to be certain that the material is properly *cited*. This is not proof of plagiarism; it is proof of scholarship.

That is why James O. Freedman, the former president of Dartmouth, the University of Iowa, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, concluded after reviewing the Finkelstein charge:

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:

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. Moreover, many of the sources quoted both by Dershowitz and Peters are commonly quoted in discussions of this period of Palestinian history. Nor can it be said that Dershowitz used Peters’ ideas without attribution. He cites Peters seven times¹¹⁰ in the early chapter of his book, while making clear that he does not necessarily accept her conclusions. This is simply not plagiarism, under any reasonable definition of that word.

Professor Charles Fried, the former solicitor general of the United States and the Beneficial Professor of Law at Harvard, called the Finkelstein accusation “stupid, unfair and ridiculous . . . from biased accusers,”¹¹¹ and concluded that my use of citations was absolutely proper and usual among academicians. The distinguished chief librarian at Harvard Law School was asked for an opinion on the matter and concluded that citing “the first source, not the repeater” is “certainly correct” and that my use of citations was absolutely proper.¹¹²

Finkelstein was furious that Harvard cleared me of his entirely false and politically motivated charges of plagiarism. In December 2004, he sent an e-mail to the dean of Harvard Law School in which he complained about the decision that had “completely exonerated” me of all

charges. He then had the gall to cite his own lie about the galley proof of my book that he said “conclusively demonstrated that Dershowitz instructed his research assistants to copy the quotations and citations in his book from Joan Peters’s hoax, *From Time Immemorial*.” He also claimed that he could prove that I “almost certainly didn’t write the book, and perhaps didn’t even read it prior to publication.” Dean Kagan ignored Finkelstein’s missive, treating it as the nut mail it is. Indeed, in June 2005 Dean Kagan awarded me a “writing prize . . . to honor exceptional scholarship, for your publication this year of *Rights from Wrongs*.”

Finkelstein, of course, knows that his politically motivated accusations against me are complete fabrications, but he also knows that false charges once made tend to stick, even if they have been authoritatively disproved. The media regards plagiarism as such an explosive charge that even absolute innocence is no defense. After the charge against me was dismissed as wholly without merit,¹¹³ it continued to be recycled in some newspapers and magazines. In this case, the false charge has grown in size. In the well-coordinated Internet attack on me, Finkelstein’s tiny accusation about the citation form for a handful of quotations—totally false as it is—has ballooned into a charge that I plagiarized “all” or “large parts” of my book from Peters. For example, here is what Chomsky has said (after characterizing me as “a passionate opponent of civil liberties”¹¹⁴): “*large parts* of the book were simply plagiarized from a well-known hoax” (emphasis added). This charge was then transmogrified into the usual accusation that my *entire* book was a “hoax,” a “fraud,” a “fake,” and a “lie.” It sounds familiar, doesn’t it? The only new element in this tired tactic is the creative use of the Internet. When I was Googled in June 2005, the third entry under my name was Cockburn’s headline “Alan Dershowitz, Plagiarist?” Finkelstein’s headline “The Dershowitz Hoax” was not far below. There were hundreds of Google results on Alan Dershowitz and plagiarism and even several for “Dershowitz admits plagiarism,”¹¹⁵ though I have always denied that false charge and was completely exonerated by Harvard. When the phrase “Dershowitz didn’t write *The Case for Israel*” is plugged in, dozens more results appear. These false allegations remain on the Internet, even though Finkelstein was forced by his publisher to drop them from the text of his book.

In addition to the charges that I didn’t write *The Case for Israel* and that if I did I must have plagiarized it, Finkelstein also claimed that

“every substantive sentence in his [Dershowitz’s] book is fraudulent.”¹¹⁶ In order to prove *this* absurd charge, Finkelstein himself resorts to what his muse Peter Novick previously accused him of doing: he simply makes up quotations and facts. A couple of examples will illustrate this pattern. Finkelstein claims that in *The Case for Israel* I “never once—I mean literally, not once—mention[ed] any mainstream human rights organization. Never a mention of Amnesty’s findings, never a mention of Human Rights Watch’s findings, never a mention of B’Tselem’s findings . . . none.”¹¹⁷ But a simple check of the index reveals that I repeatedly discuss—and criticize—the findings of these very organizations. He then purports to quote a judicial opinion in support of his claim that I distorted the facts of “a famous case in 1995 of a Palestinian who was shaken to death while in detention.”

And *I’m quoting now* from the High Court of Justice Judgment; “All agree that Harizat died from the shaking.” If you go to Dershowitz’s book, he discusses the case and says, *quote*, “an independent inquiry found that *he didn’t die from the shaking*, but from a previous illness.”¹¹⁸

There is simply no statement in the High Court judgment that says, “All agree that Harizat died *from* the shaking,” nor in my book that “he didn’t die from shaking.”¹¹⁹ He simply makes up both quotes, as he has others.¹²⁰

Another made-up quotation by Finkelstein is his claim that in my book *Chutzpah* I analogized “ethnic cleansings” to “urban renewal.”¹²¹ I say nothing of the kind in *Chutzpah*. I never even mention “ethnic cleansing.”¹²² He also claims that I actually wrote “at the very beginning” of *The Case for Israel* that I only “became actively involved in supporting Israel *after June 1967*.” I urge anyone to look at what I actually say, to see how deceptive Finkelstein is. I was among the leaders of the faculty campaign at Harvard in support of Israel during the months, weeks, and days leading up to the Six-Day War.¹²³

Finkelstein has even alleged that the autobiographical account of my life in *Chutzpah*—growing up as an Orthodox Jew in Brooklyn in the 1940s and 1950s—does not “have much to do [with] what has actually happened in [my] life.”¹²⁴ Well, I guess he caught me there: I’m actually a thirty-year-old Norwegian-American woman raised in Minnesota during the 1980s. (I’m sure Finkelstein will quote this

“admission” from me in his next speech! It will certainly surprise my ninety-one-year-old mother, who still thinks I am her son who grew up in Brooklyn.)

In the face of Finkelstein’s long and well-documented record of making up fake quotations and false facts—a record exposed several years ago by the very scholar who inspired him to write his own major book—one would expect that no reputable publisher would go near him. After all, journalists have been fired for much less and have never been published again.¹²⁵ But Finkelstein’s career and reputation on the anti-Israel hard left has not suffered from these revelations. If anything, it has soared on Planet Chomsky. The best proof of this phenomenon occurred in April 2005, when a group of students prepared a series of David Letterman-type top ten lists of Finkelstein’s greatest literary sins that documented his made-up quotations and false facts. Finkelstein’s reaction was to post the lists on his own Web site, acknowledging that they were accurate except for a few typographical errors.¹²⁶ Had he caught one of his enemies making up even a single quote—which, of course, he has not—he would demand that the sinner be fired and never again published. But just as he does not take plagiarism seriously when committed by his compatriots on the anti-Israel hard left, but only when alleged against his ideological enemies, so too with making up false quotations.

Finkelstein can get anything he writes published, regardless of its demonstrable falsehoods, because Noam Chomsky has enormous influence on the hard-left press. When no one would publish Finkelstein’s falsehoods about Joan Peters, Chomsky boasted that “I finally managed to place a piece of it in *In These Times*.”¹²⁷ More recently, when one publishing house refused to publish Finkelstein’s most recent book that claimed, among other falsehoods, that I plagiarized and didn’t write *The Case for Israel*, Chomsky persuaded another, more sympathetic press to publish the book. Chomsky’s criteria for praise, condemnation, and publishability seem to have more to do with ideology than accuracy, as evidenced by his praise of not only Finkelstein, but also Ward Churchill, another hard-left academic who has also been accused of making things up.¹²⁸

The same is true with regard to the third member of the triumvirate, Alexander Cockburn. Because he has his own Web site and would welcome the publicity of a defamation lawsuit, he can publish anything he chooses, regardless of its accuracy. Even his column in the *Nation* is

subjected to less vetting than the rest of the magazine. When I told the publisher of the *Nation* that his magazine had published false information by Cockburn, he shrugged and said, “Don’t judge the rest of the magazine by what we allow Cockburn to say.”

Therein lies the reason why young academics who support Israel and the two-state solution are so intimidated and frightened by this anti-Israel triumvirate. They realize that no matter how false and easily disprovable the charges against them may be, those charges will still be widely circulated. The marketplace of ideas, a marketplace in which falsehoods are supposed to sink by their own weight, simply does not operate on the anti-Israel hard left. Instead, a kind of Gresham’s law seems to govern, by which the bad currency of made-up quotations drives the good currency of truth out of circulation. For example, the publisher of the University of California Press, which is publishing a book by Finkelstein, has said that Finkelstein has “an incredible amount of documentation.”¹²⁹ That is literally true: his documentation is “incredible.”

Despite his long and well-documented record of demonstrable lies and made-up quotations, Finkelstein remains a popular speaker at anti-Israel events on university campuses around the world. He is not quite as popular as Chomsky and Cockburn, but he is paid handsomely by student groups anxious to promote his anti-Zionist rants. The members of the McCarthyite triumvirate are invited to campuses far more frequently than centrist, moderate pro-Israel and pro-two-state-solution speakers. But now that the well-coordinated pattern of literary McCarthyism dating back more than twenty years has been exposed, perhaps the picture will change—at least among objective, well-intentioned, and open-minded audiences. The boy who cried “wolf” was eventually ignored. The anti-Israel extremists who cry “fraud,” “hoax,” and “plagiarism” whenever a pro-Israel book becomes successful must also now be ignored because they have been proved to be fabricators of truth. They are also enemies of peace, and relegating these naysayers to the dustbin of history would eliminate a significant barrier to a peaceful compromise between Israel and the Palestinians.

Postscript: As this book was going to press, a serious charge of real plagiarism was leveled at one of the triumvirate’s favorite anti-Israel professors—Rashid Khalidi, the Edward Said Professor of Arab Studies at Columbia University and director of its Middle East Institute.¹³⁰

188 THE CASE FOR PEACE

Although this charge is far more serious than any leveled by the triumvirate against pro-Israel writers, you can be sure that Finkelstein will not examine it, Chomsky will not complain about it, and Cockburn will not publicize it. Nor will they demand sanctions against their ideological soul mate, as they have against me and other pro-Israel writers. The same double standard that is directed against Israel by these selective condemners is also directed against pro-Israel and pro-peace academics.