

The Gaza Genocide is Changing America | Norman Finkelstein

The wind is shifting. And the rulers of the Empire don't like it at all. First and foremost the lobbyists who are so accustomed to calling the shots in "their" democracy. Pascal and Felix Marquardt from @TheBlackElephantExperience speak with scholar Norman Finkelstein about Gaza after two years of genocide, Israeli goals, genocide claims, Tucker Carlson and the right, Zionism and Jewish identity, the New York Times, the fading use of Holocaust framing, the UN's loss of legitimacy, and Finkelstein's upcoming book Gaza's Gravediggers, including his critique of the October 7 rape narrative. Links: Felix's Channel: <https://youtube.com/@TheBlackElephantExperience> Neutrality Studies substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> (Opt in for Academic Section from your profile settings: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com/s/academic>) Merch: <https://neutralitystudies-shop.fourthwall.com> Donation: <https://neutralitystudies.com/donate> Timestamps: 00:00:00 Introduction 00:00:27 Gaza after two years of genocide 00:09:08 Tucker Carlson and the right 00:20:15 Zionism Judaism and Jewish identity 00:32:13 Jewish elites and the New York Times 00:47:18 Conspiracies and the Kennedy debate 00:53:53 UN legitimacy and Iran 01:01:15 Gaza's Gravediggers and October 7 claims

#Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to a collaboration today between Neutrality Studies and the Black Elephant Experience YouTube channel. My name is Pascal Lottaz, and I'm joined today by my co-host, Felix Marquardt. We are delighted to have with us today one of the United States' most important and outspoken activist scholars, Dr. Norman Finkelstein. Norman, welcome.

#Norman Finkelstein

Thank you for having me. Welcome, Pascal.

#Pascal

Thank you very much, both, for doing this. Felix, this was your idea, and it's a brilliant idea. Norman, you are one of the United States' top experts on what is actually going on in Israel, in Palestine, and the genocide in Gaza. Can we maybe start with your reading of where we stand after two years of genocide?

#Norman Finkelstein

Where we stand? I think that the basic fact is Israel set a certain objective on October 8th. And the objective was to once and for all solve the Gaza question. What solving the Gaza question meant in practice, in my opinion, was the following. Israel had carried on periodically these high-tech killing sprees in Gaza, the best-known manifestations of which were Operation Cast Lead in 2008–09 and Operation Protective Edge in July–August 2014. Those were the two operations that fell above the radar, but there were a good ten or so of these murderous high-tech killing sprees. And the goal was, as Israel put it, to mow the lawn in Gaza. That's the metaphor they use, the slightly pathological metaphor, when you bear in mind that the lawnmower was cutting the blades of a population, half of whom were children. Yeah.

But after October 7th, Israel decided it was no longer going to mow the lawn in Gaza. It was going to extirpate, which is the fancy word for pull out by the roots. It was going to extirpate every blade of grass in Gaza. And that, in legal terminology, meant it was going to carry out an ethnic cleansing of Gaza. Now, the ethnic cleansing, however, in order to execute it in the first few weeks, Israel hoped to expel the entire population to the northern Sinai. That didn't work. There was a veto by the Arab states. And then Israel embarked on a genocide, but a genocide not as the objective. Genocide was the means, the modus operandi for carrying out the, if we can use the term, the final solution in Gaza. The modus operandi was a genocide. So I don't think there's any serious dispute anymore that Israel's tactics were genocidal in nature.

Everything from the order to bar any food, fuel, water, electricity from entering Gaza, to, as the human rights organizations put it, using starvation as a method of war, to denying Gaza access to any water — all of the tactics, when you aggregate them, come down to a genocidal intent. The intent was to destroy a part or the whole of the Gaza population. And that, to me, is the definition in the Genocide Convention. It applies easily to the situation in Gaza. So that was its goal. And the goal obviously had to accommodate external constraints — that in the real world, no state can carry on with complete and total immunity. Even if you take the current situation in Iran, Mr. Trump made several clearly genocidal statements — that he was going to return Iran to the Stone Age, that he was going to destroy Iranian civilization.

But at the last minute, he recognized he couldn't do it. There are constraints imposed by the international system. Now, we can agree that they are honored mostly in the breach. We can agree that the constraints are relatively feeble. We can agree that the constraints are more rhetorical than practical. But at the end of the day, the constraints exist. And the same thing in the case of Gaza. It went through periods of intense death and destruction, basically the first six months. And then various constraints kicked in until Trump finally, for reasons having nothing to do with humanity — a concept totally alien to him and his administration, but also alien to almost every president's administration — imposed a kind of ceasefire on Gaza.

As Amnesty International stated, the genocide continues, but now it's a slow-motion genocide because of constraints imposed from the outside, constraints imposed on Israel. I don't think the

objectives have changed at all. Netanyahu is still determined to solve the Gaza question, within the limits placed by the Trump administration on him. As I said, there are limits. I'm not going to deny that. The most barbaric phase of the Gaza genocide, to date, has passed — the most barbaric phase. The goal hasn't changed, but it's a slow motion one, where Netanyahu was hoping to trigger a stampede out of Gaza.

He's now resigned to, he has to accept a trickle going out of Gaza. But two things I think are clear. I said them at the time. This so-called Board of Peace and International Stabilization Force, the Trump plan — the Trump plan, which he almost certainly never read — the claim that there's going to be an increase in humanitarian aid, that there's going to be reconstruction, that's all complete nonsense. I said it at the time, and I think what I said has been borne out. There will be no reconstruction. There will be no restoration of necessary humanitarian aid. There will be none of that until the Gaza question is solved. That is, it's emptied out.

#Pascal

Hey, very brief intermission because I was recently banned from YouTube. And although I'm back, this can happen anytime again. So please consider subscribing not only here, but to my mailing list on Substack. That's pascallottaz.substack.com. The link's going to be in the description below. And now, back to the video.

#Felix Marquardt

Maybe I'll jump in with a question, Pascal. I want to start by mentioning that in the early 2000s, I read one of the books that really impacted me the most on the question of Palestine, which was **The Holocaust Industry** that you wrote, I think, right after 9/11. Am I right on the timing, or not at all? A few years later.

#Norman Finkelstein

I wrote **The Holocaust Industry**. I think it came out in June 2000.

#Felix Marquardt

Okay, so right before. I spent the next many years basically selling my soul as a sort of underling of the Epstein class. So when the Epstein files came out and I saw that there was only—I can't think of one figure apart from you that came out sort of on top of those files—and I was really thrilled to reconnect with you. But I wanted to ask you about, because of what you said in recent interviews, the way Tucker Carlson and the right have been talking about, have been sort of producing a reaction on Israel that is quite novel, and you were sort of pushing back on that in these interviews.

I mean, seen from Europe, and I think from many other places, we're all dreaming of having a movement on the right that goes towards anti-Zionism of any sort. Um, and so I was a bit sort of curious about—can you see the difference between what's happening in the U.S. on this front and what's happening everywhere else? Because the conversations in Europe, as you know, probably—there was a law that was almost passed a couple of weeks ago in France that would have criminalized criticism of Israel and would have indeed, with up to five years in prison. So it's a very different conversation. And yeah, aren't you welcoming this?

#Norman Finkelstein

Well, I've said on many occasions that many things Tucker Carlson has said, many things that he said over the past year, are correct. They're accurate. I never quarrel with facts. And there's no doubt in my mind that he was not only correct, but he played a crucial role in bringing his understanding of the situation—a significant part of which is correct—before a large audience. I know that, and I don't quarrel with that. The problem is that I don't like these terminologies, but I'll use it. The way he frames the issue is never anything that had anything to do historically with the left. And I am a person solidly and firmly of the left.

He frames the whole issue as: here is this innocent, pure United States that has been tricked, duped, seduced, blackmailed—and that's an important aspect of their claim—that's been blackmailed by these Jews in Israel. That's how he frames the question. For the left, Palestine is or was a national liberation struggle. It's a story about oppressed people. It's about imperialism. It's about colonialism. It's about all these sorts of things. I don't particularly like the term "settler colonialism" because I don't think it's particularly productive intellectually. However, that's the broad framework of the left, and that's how Palestine became an issue of the left: a national liberation struggle, a struggle against imperialism, one of the last struggles against European colonialism akin to the South Africa question.

That's how the left frames it. I think the right frames it as basically Jews, wire-pullers, international wire-pullers, who now control and actually have for a long time, according to these people. They were responsible—they meaning the Jews in Israel—were responsible for the Kennedy assassination. So far, they haven't blamed Lincoln's assassination on Israel. I could see that coming down the pike. They blamed the 2003 war in Iraq on the Jews in Israel. And the bottom line is that the Jewish question historically, in the hands of the right, has never had a particularly happy outcome. I'm not saying there haven't been problems on the left, and people say, what about Stalin, and what about the doctor's plot, and this and that and the other.

Yes, that is true, but historically, Jews as a leftist question—they fared very well. The Jews, you know, you take World War II, there was a very strong identity between the international left and the suffering, the martyrdom of the Jewish people. You take a figure like Paul Robeson or W.E.B. Du Bois—they were of the left, and they were very close to the Jews. So there was always a sense of

commonality of struggle between oppressed peoples, which included, at that point in time—referring to World War II and also the anti-fascist movements before World War II—between Jews and the left. But the right, no, Jews and the right—Jews have not fared well on the right. I think everybody can agree on that.

#Felix Marquardt

No, no. Fair enough, Norm. Fair enough. But what I would say is, first of all, I would argue that Tucker is very careful to make a distinction. He doesn't say "the Jews." He really doesn't.

#Norman Finkelstein

I'm perfectly aware of Tucker Carlson. I don't know if you're familiar with the TV program Columbo. You know Columbo? Yeah, of course. And Tucker Carlson has a Columbo shtick, you might call it. He's the simple-minded fellow who doesn't know what he's doing, and he's always asking these silly questions and admitting that he doesn't know what he's talking about. And he says, I might be the simplest guy in the world. And in fact, he knows exactly what he's doing. And eventually, as the fate of Ted Cruz and Mike Huckabee revealed, he goes in for the kill, and he knows exactly what he's doing. He does. And these claims of not really talking about all the Jews—it's sort of like Lady Macbeth protesting too much.

He knows exactly what he's doing, and he knows exactly the message he's conveying. And the more he protests that he's not making that message, the more he's clearly making that message. So he says, well, I know it was Israel that was behind the 2003 war in Iraq. And there are these people in this country who have a dual loyalty. Their loyalty is really to Israel, and they don't care about the United States. And now he says that Israel dragged the U.S. into the war because it wanted to weaken the United States, because Israel wants an alliance with India. Where he came up with that, only God knows, I have to say. All right. And Israel and others of his ilk say that Israel was behind the Kennedy assassination.

And when I was on with Candace Owens, she said all the so-called Holocaust survivors were actually Russian Bolsheviks who killed millions of Christians and then pretended to be survivors of the death camps. Yes, that's literally what she said, word for word. It's pretty clear where all of this is coming from, with all of the protests and with all of the caveats and with all of the, as it were, protective language. Now, let me be clear, because I don't want there to be any misconstruing on my part or misconstruing of what I'm saying. I think a lot of what he says is true. I know that. I have no problem. Now, okay, a lot of it I think is complete craziness. Israel has had as much to do with the Kennedy assassination as my local synagogue, which I never attended, did.

I think this is all complete lunacy. Even though people are very emphatic about it, I get so many angry emails, you know. But didn't a president, or whatever he called himself, Gaddafi, didn't he say Israel did it? You know, now Gaddafi's become an authority on the Kennedy assassination. Complete

lunacy. But I'll admit a lot of what he says is true. Sometimes I'll even go further than him. I was the first person, I believe, who said that a handful of Jewish billionaire supremacists are crushing academic freedom in our country. And that's a real problem. And we have to call it out. We have to call it out.

#Pascal

I mean, go ahead, Pascal. Sorry. Can I just ask about this one? Because I've been wondering recently, I mean, the damage, the carnage that Israel and Zionism are inflicting upon the Palestinians, upon Gaza, is very, very obvious, right? Because we see it so much, and the numbers are absolutely horrendous. But the damage—what is your assessment of the damage that Zionism is doing to Judaism? I have no idea what Judaism is.

#Norman Finkelstein

Really, I don't. I never studied the Jewish religion. I don't know anything about it. I think that Zionism I know something about because I wrote my doctoral dissertation on the topic. So I labored for several years in the New York City Public Library, the research branch. On the third floor, quite a spectacular edifice, in my opinion, even though back then it didn't have air conditioning, but the very, very high ceilings were such that, with the heat rising, it was tolerable. I labored many years in the library and also just in my head trying to figure out this phenomenon. Zionism, in my opinion, basically can come down to a simple proposition: a Zionist believed there was no future for Jews in the non-Jewish world.

Some believed that Jews would end up assimilating and they would just become, for all intents and purposes, and sometimes literally—no, not sometimes, often literally, if they intermarried—that they would just become goys. And the Jewish people and the Jewish religion would disappear. That was one view. And the other view was that the Jews would not be assimilated, they would be exterminated. At some point, the temperature of anti-Semitism, which always hovered at a high level, would result in a mass extermination of Jews. And so, there being no future for Jews in the non-Jewish world, Jews needed to establish a state, and they thought the state should be established in their historic homeland as they saw it, namely Eretz Israel, or Palestine.

That's a Zionist. And there was a social critic, his name was Irving Howe. I didn't agree with most of what he said. He was a person ostensibly of the left, but he once made a statement which I found sensible. He said, if you have enough money in your pocket to buy a one-way ticket to Israel and you don't do it, then you're not a Zionist because you believe there is a future for Jews in the non... in the non... in the... in the Christian world, or whatever you want to call it. There's a future for them. And you decided to stay. You parked your car in the non-Jewish world, in the case of how he was referring to American Jews. They're not Zionists. I don't know why people use this terminology. I do believe that they're Jewish supremacists in their sense of community with the Jews in Israel.

#Norman Finkelstein

It's born of the fact, not that they're Zionists, but because they feel a sense of commonality with fellow Jews, and that sense of commonality is a Jewish supremacist one. I think it was Philip Roth, the writer. I'm not positive. I could check it now, but I'll do that later. He said that Jews grow up with one thought hammered into their heads from birth: Jews are better. Jews are better. And I think that's actually accurate. I grew up certainly that way. I didn't grow up with my parents, definitely not. I have to say, I grew up with that because I grew up in an old Jewish neighborhood. And these were the whiz kids, very smart, very smart for sure. And we did believe that Jews are better.

And if there were any doubt about it, there was the fact that Jews, who represent, I think, 0.02% of the world's population, could lay claim to 20% of the Nobel Prizes. And we were told that all the great figures of modernity—Sigmund Freud, Einstein, Marx—they were all Jewish. And so it seemed like the spectacular success in the secular world was such that Jews had proven their superiority. And that's these people. They're Jewish supremacists. I don't believe they're Zionists. I doubt any of them has ever read a book on Zionism. They may have read the schmaltzy books, you know, the books they write for coffee tables, but no serious work on Zionism. I don't think they much care. They're Jews.

#Felix Marquardt

I think, you know, I want to just stop here.

#Norman Finkelstein

I want to answer your question. I think so long as Israel seemed to be a benefit—an unbalanced benefit—you know, the Jewish fighters defending Western civilization, their Silicon Valley in Israel, and all that stuff. So long as, on balance, they seemed to be a positive, if we can use that term, Jews embraced it. But not anymore. About that, I'm certain. Now, you could say the change has been quite abrupt, and it has. You could say the last two or three years. Every Jew I meet—and just the other day, I got an email from somebody I knew in graduate school, and he was a professor at the university where I was adjuncting—and he said he was reading Peter Beinart's new book on Judaism, or the Jewish people, or Judaism after Gaza.

And he said, in one chapter, Beinart lays out the facts on the ground. And he said, I really didn't know these things. I'm really embarrassed now. And I'm really ashamed. And I don't find this. Now, there is a cohort—I see a lot of them live in my neighborhood—who are still fanatically pro-Israel. But overwhelmingly now, the sentiment borders between shame and disgust and horror at this state, this completely lunatic state. So I think it's over among the Jewish population. Among the Jewish population in your neighborhood, you're saying? Yeah, in my neighborhood, there are the ultra-conservative Jews, there are the Orthodox, and then there are the Russian Jews who are extremely

racist. And my neighborhood—Coney Island, Brighton Beach, that part of New York—it always goes Trump.

But, you know, Trump has two kinds of constituencies. One constituency you might call the white working class, who are suffering a lot under the current economic situation. But then he has another constituency who are not suffering at all. They're just diehard racists. And that's the Jewish constituency among them, who he would include in that class. And they're not suffering, I can assure you of that. But they're all solidly Trump, just like during the last mayoral race, they were solidly pro-Cuomo and anti-Zoran Mamdani. So there is that. You could say they may constitute about, I would guess, maybe if you add up all the Orthodox, probably around 15% of the Jewish population, but the other 85% has really turned very hostile to Israel.

#Felix Marquardt

But this is, I would argue, Norman, this is a sort of New York phenomenon, because in L.A., that is not what I'm hearing from my Jewish friends in L.A. There's still an extremely strong constituency of Jews who are viscerally pro-Israel. I, you know, like the Jews—Tucker's shtick drives me—you know, there are a number of things that drive me nuts when I watch him. One of them is this, "That's not us." You know, he talks about genocide. He talks about, "We don't do that. You know, we don't do that." And I'm like, the whole country was founded upon it. What are you talking about? And he has this thing—what do you think happened in Vietnam? And what happened in Iraq? Yeah, it's just Alice in Wonderland. It's like this thing happened just recently, and you just go back 100 years. Go ahead.

#Norman Finkelstein

But then you have to ask yourself the question: if what you're saying is true, and I believe it is true, why has he suddenly—has his heart suddenly warmed to the suffering of the Palestinian people and not other people? Why? Why? And I think there's an answer there, and it's not a particularly happy answer to give. Why, of all people, is he suddenly outraged at the treatment, the evil, as he correctly calls it, the evil of what has befallen the people of Gaza and elsewhere? Why? It would be perfectly understandable if a person of the left, who has historically identified with the struggles of oppressed peoples, oppressed nations, oppressed workers—I mean, the Palestine struggle fits squarely in that trajectory. That's understandable. But when it suddenly comes from the right, it's a perplexing, or it appears to be on the surface, a perplexing phenomenon. I like to think something else is going on, which I believe it is.

#Felix Marquardt

So it sounds like what you're saying, that there's an underlying sort of current of anti-Semitism in this. I do think that he's, you know, he's using his technique, his shtick, et cetera, to point out—and maybe you are aware of one counterexample or several—but, you know, one of the things that is coming out is American Jews are moving. And, you know, seen from Europe, it's incredibly—it gives

me hope, because French Jews, to talk about the Jewish community that I know well, they are not moving. I mean, they're just not moving. But in America, I don't know any example, not one, of a Jewish billionaire who is anti-Zionist. Not one.

#Norman Finkelstein

That's totally correct. There are probably some, and I just don't know them. And it's a bit of an optical illusion, because the most...

#Felix Marquardt

But don't we think we'd know about it if there were any?

#Norman Finkelstein

Well, you know, I don't know what the opinion of, let's call it the Soros class, of which there is a large number of Jews, where they currently stand. I don't follow those things. We know the Bill Ackmans and we know the Barry Sternlichts, and we know a large number of others because they're so vocal and they're so brazen in how they carry on. But it's possible that there's also a Jewish billionaire class which is recoiling at the way Israel is carrying on. I can't answer that question.

#Felix Marquardt

But those are two different things, right? I mean, because the problem that we have right now is that—and this is a good segue into another question that I had for you—which is about what you were saying recently to Briahna Joy Gray about the New York Times, which, as you mentioned, looks like it's abandoning Trump.

#Norman Finkelstein

I don't think it looks like that. I think it's very clear that the Times wants Trump to lose in a run.

#Felix Marquardt

It means it's separating from Israel, right? That's your analysis?

#Norman Finkelstein

In this war, Israel and the United States are...

#Felix Marquardt

But don't you think that what the Times is doing is basically going back to a place where it wants to sell the world Zionism-lite, which is basically that the problem is Netanyahu, not Israel.

#Norman Finkelstein

Right. But you realize it would have been unthinkable even five years ago, even during the Gaza genocide, for the Times to want Israel to lose. And this is a major issue for Israel. It's Iran. And they want Israel to lose. And the New York Times' readership base is very clear. It's the Upper East Side Jewish billionaire class. That's their readership base.

#Felix Marquardt

And the Upper West Side, sort of slightly more, you know.

#Norman Finkelstein

In my way, the East Side, you know, the East Side—the West Side was where Woody Allen began, and the East Side is where he ended. And it was different. The Upper West Side Jews were hip, liberal, and so forth. The Upper East Side Jews were conservative billionaires. And that's the Times' base—the Upper East Side conservative Jewish billionaires. And still, it clearly wants Trump to lose. It thinks it will be a disaster if he wins because it will so embolden this guy that they want him to lose, and they don't care if Israel loses also. But that's my point, Norm.

#Felix Marquardt

Don't you think that what they're doing is just going like, okay, Netanyahu and Trump are basically threatening the survival of Israel, right? It looks to me like what they are trying to do is find a way so that we sort of go, okay, Netanyahu is awful, and Ben-Gvir and Smotrich and all those insane Zionists. Let's go and seek the good Zionists. They've always looked for that.

#Norman Finkelstein

And at some points, it seemed plausible that you could have a return to the days of an enlightened Israel, the light among the nations and all of that. But I think there is—I could be wrong—there is a realization setting in that that no longer exists, and it's not going to happen.

#Felix Marquardt

When did it ever exist?

#Norman Finkelstein

Well, I said, in their minds, Israel—light unto the nations and the most moral army in the world and all of that. But I think there is a realization that has set in that that day has passed. And my guess is that, slowly but surely, we're going to return to the situation before 1967, when Israel was just a backwater, and where American Jews—the only time Israel crossed the consciousness of American Jews before the 1967 war—was when you would give some sort of money, a donation to plant a tree in Israel. That's what it was. It was an object of occasional charity. Otherwise, Israel did not exist in the minds of American Jews. Incidentally, as the foremost Jewish sociologist of that era, Nathan Glazer—his name—he was at Harvard.

As he put it, Glazer said there are two major absences in American Jewish life: Israel and the Holocaust. Holocaust—nothing. There were no books on the Holocaust. You know, when Hannah Arendt wrote **Eichmann in Jerusalem** in 1964 or 65, she was obviously a trained scholar and a very smart woman, for sure. And she had the bibliography at the end of **Eichmann in Jerusalem**. Do you know how many books in that bibliography were in English? Now, she read everything there was to read on the subject. But the other side of the coin was, there was nothing to read. There were two books: there was Raoul Hilberg's **Destruction of the European Jewry**, there was a book on the SS, and there was a third book on the history of anti-Semitism. That was it.

Now there are hundreds—well, there are tens of thousands for sure. That was all a post-June 1967 phenomenon. One of the interesting things, which nobody has commented on, surprisingly—I mentioned Israel was absent from American life, the Holocaust was absent from American life. One of the interesting things, in my opinion, that occurred since the Gaza genocide: it's the first time the Holocaust wasn't invoked. They tried it the first few weeks. If you remember, the original way what happened in Gaza on October 7th, the way it was framed at the very beginning—it was, this is the largest massacre of Jews since the Nazi Holocaust. That clearly fell flat. Nobody wanted to hear about the Holocaust at this particular moment.

It disappeared after about two weeks. And then no mention—none. It meant that the days of explaining the Nazi Holocaust, they're past. They're over. They realize it doesn't work anymore, in particular with the younger generation. The younger generation, for better or for worse—I think definitely for worse—the new generation has no historical sense. Not only do they have no historical sense, they have no historical curiosity. If it didn't happen two weeks ago, we're not interested. So the Nazi Holocaust, having been at this point about 80 years ago, there's no interest among the younger generation. It fell completely flat. You know, on campus, when people on campus—the Israel agents, effectively, the Hillels and so forth—they never invoked the Nazi Holocaust. Never. It just completely died that first time.

And so in that sense, too, an era has passed. The era of that book called **The Holocaust Industry**, the era of that industry, is over. It's now basically defunct. From overuse, it now has to file for bankruptcy. It's gone. So there have been significant changes that have occurred. And as I said, the fact that the New York Times wants Israel to lose is very unusual, even as their base is in the Upper East Side. Upper East Side. For you, Pascal, the Upper East Side is the wealthiest neighborhood in

the world, with the highest concentration of millionaires and billionaires in the world. And it's overwhelmingly Jewish, overwhelmingly Jewish. And that's what the New York Times depends on for its prestige, for its income. That's the place it depends on. And for the first time, it expresses no sympathy at all for Israel during this war.

#Pascal

So these are real and probably very serious changes to Israel and the way that its politics has been working. But on the other hand, we've also seen how, over these two and a half years now, this genocide has been implemented in utter, complete complicity with Europe, in utter, complete complicity with all of the network. You know, sometimes we call it the collective West.

#Norman Finkelstein

Richard Sakwa calls it the collective West. Because it's a system, right? Including the Times. The Times was just a propaganda mouthpiece for the first year of the Gaza genocide. Completely. It was horrible. The guy Patrick Kingsley and a bunch of others. Half of the Times staff now on Israel-Palestine are Israelis. Nobody even blinks twice about that. They're Israelis. Most of them used to write for Israeli propaganda sheets like the Times of Israel and the Jerusalem Post. That's their staff now. So even during the Gaza genocide, it was still a propaganda outlet for Israel. However, the times when they ran... They have to make a choice. If they want to support Israel, they have to support Trump. I don't think so.

#Felix Marquardt

I don't buy that. I think what they're doing, again, is they're trying to save Israel because they understand that Israel is basically cooked, and the only way to save it is for Netanyahu to lose.

#Norman Finkelstein

Actually, I don't even see that as a consideration by these folks. Their consideration is, we've got to get rid of Trump. We've got to get rid of Trump. And if the price is Israel losing, we will accept that price. That's how I read the situation. And that, of course, flies in the face of the claim that all these American Jews are looking out only for Israel. It's not true. These are Jewish elites entrenched in the United States. They are not Zionists because they believe there is a future for Jews here. In fact, it's been wonderful for Jews here in the United States. And they think Trump is a menace. They're not anti-Zionists.

No, they're not anti-Zionists. They're not anti-Zionists. They're all Jewish supremacists. They are. Well, that's true. I grew up with that. I know that. You know, Chuck Schumer, he went to my high school. I knew he was three years ahead of me, brilliant guy, no question about it, first-class mind. I knew his sister. His sister back then, Fran, very impressive, extremely impressive. Back then, you

see, you have to, as Georg Lukács famously said, you have to see the present as history. Back then, there was no interest in Israel. Israel, when we were going to school, was a backwater. It was very poor. I mean, it's hard to believe now.

It was very, very poor. Very simple, egalitarian. It was—you could call it primitive communism. That's a term from Marx, primitive communism. It was a kind of primitive communism in Israel. American Jews, when we were growing up, they were ready to conquer the world. They knew or believed that they were going to be at the commanding heights of American society. And you know what? They were right. They were. They didn't think about Israel. So I would not... In that era, they thought Jews were smarter, that's for sure. But there was no loyalty to Israel. And I think that's what it's going to return to.

#Felix Marquardt

Okay, I want to go back to this idea. I mean, I understand the structuralist in you that sort of wants to look at, like, sort of has no time for hearsay and, you know, conspiracy theories, and I get it.

#Norman Finkelstein

I think conspiracies happen. Of course conspiracies happen. Right. But what I mean is, Adam Smith says at the beginning of *The Wealth of Nations*, capitalists are all the time getting together and conspiring. Exactly. Exactly.

#Felix Marquardt

But as someone who lived in the world, you know, minus the pedophilia, but who was, you know, in the world of the Epstein files, I have spent the last few years waking up to the reality of the world that I came from. I remember the first time I went to Davos, I was taken there by a New York PR mogul who—I didn't know back then, I should have known, because it was out. It was way later, it was in the 2000s. But I was so, you know, as I've told you, Norm, I have a history of drug addiction, so I wasn't present to it. I wasn't able to look at this. I wasn't aware.

But this guy who took me to Davos was actually the guy who organized the testimonial of the Kuwaiti daughter of the Kuwaiti ambassador to the United States that basically played an absolutely critical role in getting America to carry out the first Gulf War—what is called now the first Gulf War. Your history, your books are littered with examples of things that for many years we thought were this and turned out to be that. And, you know, what you were just saying about the vibe in the U.S. in the early '60s about Israel shows very clearly that no one was talking about the Nakba. No one was talking about the fact that this, you know, whatever you call it, primitive socialism, actually was built on killing and basically on an original sin.

#Norman Finkelstein

I'm not sure why that would surprise you.

#Felix Marquardt

No, what I'm asking you is, how can you be so sure that Israel—there's an amazing book by a guy named Peter Dale Scott about the possible implication of Israel in the Kennedy assassination?

#Norman Finkelstein

It is not. It is not. OK, I don't want to. There is no evidence of that whatsoever. Zero. None. You can't leap from James Angleton, a CIA spook who was buried in Israel. You can't leap from that to "Kennedy was assassinated by Israel." There are about 10,000 dots that have to be connected before you make that claim. It's so completely preposterous. There have been—I was checking the other day—there have been between 1,000 and 2,000 books written on the Kennedy assassination. If you include books which peripherally touch on it, the number goes up to 40,000. Now, of those 40,000 books, or 1,000 to 2,000, if you look in the index, how many mention Israel? Answer: zero. Zero. I didn't read all of them. I've read them. I read Harold Weisberg's **Whitewash**. I read Mark Lane's **Rush to Judgment**. And then I read a bunch of lesser ones. Israel never even comes up. It's not even a...

#Felix Marquardt

But Norm, you're talking about—I saw this interview where you talked about reading all these books. I remember that one of the things you said was that you read them in the '60s.

#Norman Finkelstein

I mean, you lost interest, right?

#Felix Marquardt

The Kennedy assassination was not at the... Okay, but the book that I'm talking about—and again, I want to—it's early '90s. You didn't read it.

#Norman Finkelstein

I was. New information that's come out about the assassination of Kennedy—that there were differences of opinion between the U.S. and Israel, of course. Were there sharp differences of opinion? Of course. But as I said the other day over dinner, I turned to two people who were taken by this idea of Israel and the Kennedy assassination. I said, do you quarrel with your wife? The fellow said yes. I said, you sometimes have very, very heated quarrels with your wife? The fellow said yes. I said, do you ever sometimes feel like you'd like to strangle your wife? The fellow

reluctantly admitted yes. I said, now, let me ask you a question. Have you ever hired an assassin to kill your wife? I mean, there are a lot of dots that have to be connected between Israel and the United States having conflicts of interest over the nuclear program and so forth, and then claiming—it's just completely nutty. We've gone to a lunatic place.

#Pascal

Yeah, and honestly, I would like not to go to that place. I would rather ask you, Norman, about your perception of, for all the flaws of the United Nations, the role that Francesca Albanese is playing and that the United Nations managed to play in at least documenting stuff. What is your assessment of that one? Is there life in the UN post-genocide?

#Norman Finkelstein

No. I said on November 17th, 2025, the UN Security Council passed a resolution called number 2803. And that resolution, the core of the resolution, the essence of it, was very simple. It gave the deed of Gaza to Donald J. Trump. It literally did. It was one of the most shocking things. As someone who follows this stuff, it gave the deed of Gaza to Donald J. Trump. There hasn't been anything like it since the conference in Africa in 1884 to 1885. The conference of Africa gave Congo to King Leopold. There hasn't been anything like it.

#Norman Finkelstein

At that point, I wrote something and I said, on 17 November 2025, the UN has turned into a rotting corpse. There's nothing there. And then, if there were any further proof needed, it came with the most brazen, the most flagrant, the most egregious breach of the UN Charter in its history—in the history of the UN—even, frankly, before the UN Charter, because every state, when it launched a war of aggression, has always—I don't want to say always, but for the longest time—felt the need to fabricate a pretext, some sort of armed retaliation as a pretext. I remember during the 1967 war, Charles de Gaulle, when he commented on the buildup to the war in 1967, de Gaulle said, whoever fires the first shot is responsible.

#Norman Finkelstein

You always have to pretend you're acting in self-defense. Article 51 says you only have the right of self-defense in the event of an armed attack. An armed attack. Hitler, when he invaded Poland in September 1939, fabricated a border incident where allegedly the Poles attacked. If you know American history, far back in the Spanish-American War, it seems—we don't know for certain—but the attack on the vessel called the Maine, "Remember the Maine," it looks like the Maine was also a pretext. Not certain. But you always needed a pretext. When there was the major escalation of the

war in Vietnam, for anybody who lived through that era, they'll all remember what was called the Gulf of Tonkin incident, where the North Vietnamese had allegedly attacked an American vessel, but they didn't.

So that was the pretext for what was called the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which then marked a major escalation of U.S. involvement in Vietnam. Israel and the United States attacked Iran with no pretext whatsoever. None. Nobody claimed an armed attack. None. There was nothing. Zero. They did it twice. They did it in June last year, and they did it again. And then if you go to the Security Council debates on the subject—and I listened to them on YouTube—everybody, except with the exception of Russia and China, everyone's blaming Iran. The Russian representative said, during the Security Council debate, he said, "You listen to the French and the Germans."

He said, it's like you're in Alice in Wonderland, through the looking glass. He said, it's like they're in a parallel universe. They're talking about Iran being the aggressor. So at this point, now remember, the UN is a ramified organization. There are the political bodies, there are the legal bodies, and then there are all the humanitarian, peacekeeping, and all those other things that the UN does. It's a mammoth bureaucracy. And I would say those other organs, like UNRWA, perform an important function, and of course we want to keep them alive. But as a political body, I think it's lost all legitimacy.

#Pascal

That makes a lot of sense, to differentiate between these different parties.

#Norman Finkelstein

You have to do that because they're doing very important work in keeping people alive, and I don't want to be dismissive of that. But as a political body, it's lost all legitimacy. It's almost—it's actually—it's almost comical. How, in this situation, can you blame, can you accuse Iran of being the aggressor? That's just—it was the same thing with the debate over Venezuela. Do you know, with the exception of Russia and China, and at some point Cuba, do you know Trump's name was never mentioned? Never mentioned. All they did was attack Maduro for what was said to be a fake election. Yeah. Even countries which sympathized, which opposed the U.S. coup in Venezuela, like Chile—Chile would never then say a single word against the U.S., not one word.

#Felix Marquardt

No, they woke up only for Grenland.

#Norman Finkelstein

Yeah, the Europeans woke up for Grenland. That's absolutely correct. That's absolutely correct.

#Pascal

Yeah, it's an entire worldview. It's a very, very disciplined kind of vassalage of the supporters. But Norman, thank you very much for all of these insights. Is there anything that we haven't touched upon that you would like to mention in closing?

#Felix Marquardt

I would like to mention your book, Norman, which is coming out in June, called *Gaza's Gravediggers*.

#Norman Finkelstein

Yeah, it's looking at personalities in the international system who I believe were either bribed or who are effectively Israeli agents in the system—characters like Judge Julia Sebutinde, the vice president of the International Court of Justice; the former president of the ICJ, Joan Donoghue; people like Pramila Patten, the special envoy of Secretary-General Guterres on conflict-related sexual violence. She was the one who validated the Israeli propaganda claim that Hamas had used rape as a weapon on October 7th. There's no evidence of that. Complete fake. I go through the record very carefully.

There's no evidence whatsoever except for Israeli eyewitnesses. There's no material evidence, no forensic evidence, no digital evidence—nothing of sexual violence committed by Hamas on that date. Rape or sexual violence, broadly speaking. In the case of the rape issue, I think, barring some revelation 30 years later by Peter Dale Scott's grandchild—barring a revelation—there's no evidence that rape occurred. I think the proof is pretty compelling. Namely, there are at least 5,000 photographs that have been preserved from October 7th—5,000. There's approximately 50 hours of digital footage from October 7th that includes body cams, dash cams, traffic light evidence. There's a huge amount—obviously, iPhone evidence.

#Felix Marquardt

Fifty hours.

#Norman Finkelstein

There's not a single image of sexual violence.

#Felix Marquardt

How could that be?

#Norman Finkelstein

If it was being weaponized for war, how could that be? There's nothing. It's zero. So I think what happened was the UN Human Rights Organization—I shouldn't say the UN, some UN, but also Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International—they were so desperate to get on the bandwagon that Hamas are, you know, these feral creatures, that they started to stretch the definition of sexual violence beyond any plausibility. So they would say things like the UN Commission of Investigation says, well, when Hamas militants were fleeing Gaza, they were on the motor scooters.

And so there would be two Hamas members on the motor scooter, and they were taking hostages, obviously. And the woman hostage was sitting between the two. So, okay, a woman hostage. We all know taking hostages is illegal under international law. It's a war crime. Fine. I have no problem with that. But then the U.N. Commission of Inquiry says, no, this is sexual violence. So I'm thinking, sexual violence? Okay, it's a war crime. Where does sexual violence come into this? They called it—the term they used was—this was coerced intimacy.

#Pascal

In order to serve the narrative?

#Norman Finkelstein

I think in order to appease Israel, to throw them a bone, because the reports are overwhelmingly critical of Israel. But what Israel did is it turned the issue of sexual violence into a litmus test. So you had to agree there was sexual violence. Otherwise, you're anti-Israel, you're anti-Semitic, you're anti-woman, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.

#Felix Marquardt

And The New York Times played a very important role with that article, "Screams Without Words," in December 2023. Right when the whole global opinion was turning against Israel, the timing was incredible.

#Norman Finkelstein

That's why I said I have to be precise. I said during the Gaza massacre, The Times was awful. I said that. It was horrible. It changed with the war in Iran when they had to make a choice between Israel and Trump. Um, so yeah, everybody went along with it. And it was, in my opinion, complete—not my opinion, my opinions are neither here nor there. The question is the evidence. There's zero evidence. They admit there's no forensic evidence. Now they claim the reason there's no forensic evidence is because the number of people killed was of such a magnitude—which is true, 1,200 people killed in one day—and they had to process the bodies so quickly for burial and so forth.

They didn't have enough forensic experts to look for forensic evidence because they were processing the bodies rapidly for ritual purposes. That, to me, okay, that's a possible explanation. I'm not saying it's completely convincing, but certainly it's a plausible explanation for the absence of forensic evidence. Then you have a problem—the absence of digital evidence. The rapes were said mainly to have occurred at the music festival, and it was mostly young people, obviously, at this music festival. And they said the rapes were purposely—the gang rapes, as they call it—the gang rapes occurred purposely in public to demoralize and destroy the Israeli esprit de corps and the ethos, you know. And there were these, like, 14 witnesses, quote-unquote witnesses, who said they were watching everything from hideaways.

They managed to secrete themselves. And you didn't take out the iPhone to document it? This is a generation that documents everything from the moment they get up to when they go to sleep with their iPhone. And now, you know, in our country, let's say, when there were the incidents in Minnesota with ICE, and ICE was killing, you know, killed people. But the young people were still going right up and documenting it with their iPhones. And you're telling me nobody even pulled out an iPhone—one snapshot, one picture—not one. Not one. Not one. How can that be?

#Pascal

Well, I mean, I'm glad that you have that book coming out that will be published. I think you said it will come out in June or July, right? The Brave Figures, where you then document also the people who tried to whitewash all of this. We will certainly try to have you on again then to talk about this book more in particular. But I would like to thank you both today for your time, Felix Marquardt and Norman Finkelstein.

#Felix Marquardt

Pascal, thank you so much. And Norm, thanks for taking the time to be with us. I hope that we have another walk down Coney Island Beach soon.

#Norman Finkelstein

Okay. It's still winter in New York. Yesterday it was 38 degrees.

#Felix Marquardt

You remember last time it was getting late. So anyway, gentlemen, thank you. I'll play the outro now.

#Pascal

We can meet right after the outro.

