

Pakistani Academic Muhammad Maaz Arif interviews notable voice on Gaza and Israel-Palestine conflict Prof. Norman Finkelstein

Speakers:

Prof. Norman Finkelstein

(American Political Scientist)

Muhammad Maaz Arif

(Pakistani Academic/Researcher)

[27-Jul-2024]

Summary:

Professor Norman Finkelstein criticizes academic corruption and moral cowardice, while recognizing the courage and integrity of Palestinians and student demonstrators.

Finkelstein blames donor-driven colleges, careerism, and identity politics as strategies for maintaining power and diverting attention away from injustice. He emphasizes Western hypocrisy on human rights, notably in Gaza, contends that Israel aims to make Gaza uninhabitable, and asks for moral clarity, truth, and solidarity with the oppressed.

Text/Transcript:

The interview with Professor Norman Finkelstein¹ focuses on topics of moral courage, intellectual integrity, and opposition to power. Both the interviewer and Finkelstein emphasize the bravery of Palestinians, particularly doctors, journalists, and students, who continue to work despite conflict and tyranny. Their unwavering determination, like that of student demonstrators in Western colleges, is portrayed as a great moral stand in an age of conformity and fear².

A main focus is on **academic corruption** and moral decline. Finkelstein attacks affluent funders and political elites like William Bill Ackman, Ross Stevens, Barry Sternlicht and Robert Kraft for undermining academic independence and transforming universities into

instruments of power. He laments the increase of careerism and opportunism among academics, claiming that intellectual life has grown divorced from reality and justice².

The conversation also delves into **identity politics and "woke" culture**, which Finkelstein views as weapons used by liberal elites to distract from class inequalities and defend the privileged. He highlights the hypocrisy of institutions that claim to condemn racism while remaining mute about the tragedy in Gaza. This ties to a broader theme of Western hypocrisy, as human rights language is applied selectively, often ignoring or rationalizing Israel's conduct².

On the Israel-Palestine conflict, Finkelstein contends that Israel's policy is to **make Gaza unlivable rather than pursue peace**, and he thinks that a diplomatic settlement is conceivable while US domination endures. The discussion includes global power shifts, the symbolic significance of Jerusalem, and the potential of military escalation culminating to nuclear conflict².

Finally, the interview is a call to moral integrity, truth, and solidarity with the disadvantaged. It portrays Finkelstein as a unique academic conscience someone who stands up for honesty and justice against political pressure and personal expense².

References:

1. Norman Finkelstein [Internet]. Norman Finkelstein. Available from: <https://www.normanfinkelstein.com/>
2. Iqbal's Response 21C. Norman Finkelstein's full interview - Cancel Culture & Israel-Palestine (IR21C Podcast #4) [Internet]. YouTube. 2024. Available from: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jxfAaIyN-LU>

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