

Gaza

John Daniels



John Daniels established the Russell Press in 1968. He reviews Norman Finkelstein's painstaking study of a slender coastal strip, home to hundreds of thousands of people.

Gaza: An Inquest into Its Martyrdom is a powerful call to intensify our campaign to bring about justice for the Palestinian people which has been denied them for so long. Noteworthy at this juncture is the rubric that has guided all the Russell Tribunals, to “prevent the crime of silence”, and this is a very apt dictum to describe the thrust of this book. During a lecture in February this year in Stockholm the author described his frustration about writing the book. With his usual openness and honesty, he admitted that at that time he was feeling very pessimistic about the situation regarding the Palestinians. Conscious that he was often criticised for “obsessing” about Palestine, and the situation was as bleak as ever, it was small wonder that he felt pretty low. Thankfully he did find the strength and determination to go on and he became convinced that he had a duty not only to the living, but also to the dead, to record their suffering. The expression of these feelings was registered in the book’s dedication with a quotation from Gandhi: “*The massacre of innocent people is a serious matter. It is not a thing to be easily forgotten. It is our duty to cherish their memory.*”

Gaza: An Inquest into Its Martyrdom begins with a brief history of the area from November 1947 when the UN General Assembly divided Palestine into a Zionist state and a Palestinian entity. This provoked a painful armed struggle between the Zionist settlers and the Palestinians, the latter being assisted by several Arab states who half-heartedly joined the conflagration. For the Palestinians, poorly armed, lacking adequate leadership, and

caught up in the Israeli policy of ethnic cleansing with at least 750,000 refugees driven out, the war was a disaster. Some 250,000 Palestinian refugees ended up in the Gaza strip, easily surpassing the number of 80,000 original inhabitants. This exodus, or the *Nakba* or catastrophe, caused thousands of Palestinians to leave their homes under the threat of death and led directly to the far-flung diaspora that now constitutes the exiled Palestinians. Now numbering some 6 million their return is one of the key demands which must be incorporated into any settlement with the Israelis. The exiles were reluctantly welcomed by one or two Arab countries, but many found safety in Western Europe, North America and, as time passed, many other countries.

Given Gaza's history it is hardly surprising that the first Intifada was ignited by a traffic accident on the Gaza-Israel border in which four Palestinians were killed. The resilience and bravery shown by the Palestinians in Gaza under terrible conditions was to force a rethink by the Israelis, so much so that in 2005 the prime minister of Israel, Ariel Sharon, evacuated Israeli settlers and withdrew its troops to a highly fortified fence encircling the whole of Gaza. It is the largest "open air prison" in the world, according to Tony Blair who should have also said that Gaza was being slowly throttled by the restrictions on vital materials and many medical supplies in particular. There is a pattern to the Israeli's actions: Gaza is being laid to siege by the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) in the hope that its population acquiesces to Israeli rule and all resistance is crushed.

The book is divided into four parts: the two massive invasions of Gaza by the IDF *Cast Lead* and *Protective Edge*, the capture of the *Mavi Marmara* ship and *The Goldstone Report*. Finkelstein forensically analyses Western media reports and official Israeli communications and uses them as a sounding board to expose their lies and spurious deceptions. In this context he examines the official reasons given by the Israelis for the invasion in December 2008, namely as a response to the firing of rockets by Hamas. The principal reason for *Cast Lead*, however, was the unhelpful messages coming from the various Arab and Palestinian factions that they were coming around to accepting the two-state solution sought by the UN and the global community. This was unhelpful in the sense that it would mean peace, which is not on the Israeli agenda — what they are looking for is total victory. The *Cast Lead* invasion lasted 22 days, during which it became increasingly clear that the Israelis had a public relations disaster on their hands. There was a war of words between the Israeli propaganda machine and the combination of the world's press and the various human rights observers, who were busily exposing the IDF and the Israeli government to the sort of criticism that was showing the directed brutality

of the IDF.

The book shows clearly that Finkelstein is a master at investigating the mendacious nature of Israeli propaganda. The author makes the point that Gaza was attacked not for the puny missiles fired at Israel by Hamas and other groups. These were more an expression of symbolic resistance than of any military advantage. In fact, Hamas and the PLO had moved significantly closer together from their conflict for control of Gaza, and this was further intensified as they moved towards a negotiating position in line with the majority feeling in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The Israelis therefore had a problem of a potential global/Palestinian consensus and they chose to deal with this in their time-honoured fashion. This was to fabricate a crisis and employ their armed might to blur any possible chance of a settlement, because there is a sizeable section of Israeli political opinion that does not want a settlement of any kind and wishes to return to the historic make-believe of a “Greater Israel”. Another factor driving this fractured dynamic is the UNGA which, having found the Israeli barrier illegal, asked the International Court of Justice for a ruling on the consequences if Israel was to ignore the stipulations already in place.

Finkelstein is like the proverbial dog with a bone: he won't let the matter rest till he gets to the truth. The book is of course littered with examples of his forensic questioning of the facts, but here are two illustrations of the IDF's lies: initially the IDF denied using white phosphorus but was forced to admit to it after Channel 4 News videoed its use near a hospital facility. In another example Hamas was accused of transporting Grad missiles in an ambulance but it was subsequently found they were gas cylinders, probably oxygen. The IDF has long attacked Hamas for the use of medical vehicles but, as *The Goldstone Report* makes clear, in neither case is there any evidence that Hamas sited military positions near sensitive medical facilities or used ambulances for other than their proper medical purpose.

Another accusation levelled at Hamas was that it sited Gazan civilians, including children, as human shields. Again *The Goldstone Report* cannot find any evidence of such a tactic. There is, however, evidence of the IDF's brutal treatment of Gazan civilians — over a thousand were held by the IDF as the operation progressed and kept in often cruel and frightening situations. For example, Palestinian children were sent into buildings where Hamas fighters may have been hiding. The detainees were often handcuffed in a rough way, strip-searched, made to undress and in some cases left naked. The press at the time were often bamboozled by the public relations personnel of the IDF who had been preparing for this

operation for the previous three months. Despite Israeli assertions that the IDF upheld “paramount values of Human Life” and “purity of Arms”, Israeli soldiers told a very different story. They insist they were informed to shoot first and to use overwhelming force. For example, if a building seemed to contain potentially hostile occupants then they were to send in a missile plus two tank shells and finish it off by bulldozing the whole building.

The destruction of whole areas of Gaza was certainly a conscious decision of the IDF. Housing was certainly a target in its own right as well as essential infrastructure buildings such as hospitals and schools, always with spurious excuses that Hamas fighters were using them for missile dispatching or as centres of armed resistance. Prior to *Cast Lead* the infrastructure of Gaza was in a dire state with water supply very limited, the sewerage system badly damaged, electricity available for a few hours a day if that, medical facilities in a calamitous state, food deliveries haphazard, and building supplies essential for the repair of damaged housing halted because they could be used to build fortifications. *Cast Lead* was of course to make the situation much worse, with whole tracts of land where no recognisable buildings were observable, just piles of rubble. That Israel was failing to win the propaganda war became daily more obvious, so much so that Amnesty International took the novel step to appeal for a “comprehensive arms embargo on Israel and Palestinian armed groups”. The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) ordered an investigative mission to examine the human rights aspect of *Cast Lead* and the actions of the IDF. The mission to examine the conduct of the IDF during the *Cast Lead* invasion was to be led by an openly Zionist liberal South African jurist, Richard Goldstone. One of the first things Goldstone did after his appointment was to insist that the actions of Hamas were also to be investigated on the same basis.

The Goldstone Report was to document and condemn the many forms of violence meted out to the people of Gaza and the disproportionate and destructive response to the slightest resistance shown to IDF forces. It listed those matters which were war crimes and recommended that the measures taken to inflict inhuman suffering, not justified by military necessity, and calculated to make life intolerable for Gazans should be sent to the International Criminal Court for adjudication, for example, the divebombing and crashing through the sound barrier to disturb the sleep of mainly children in built-up areas. Operation *Cast Lead* was to result in deaths totalling 1,400, four fifths of whom were civilians and children.

The Israeli government and the higher ranking IDF officers were

greatly discomfited by *The Goldstone Report*, (having of course refused initially to cooperate with Goldstone's investigation) particularly because of the judge's Zionist commitment and the fact that a significant number of dissident soldiers were prepared to corroborate what Goldstone reported. The balance sheet of physical destruction needed little corroboration:

“damaged or destroyed 58,000 homes, 1,500 factories and workshops, 280 schools and kindergartens, electrical, water and sewerage installations, 190 greenhouse complexes, 80% of agricultural land and nearly one-fifth of cultivated land”. (*page 127*)

Additionally, the IDF left tons of rubble, together with 29 ambulances and nearly 50% of the 122 medical facilities, including the 15 hospitals, damaged or destroyed. The catalogue of destruction did not end with *Cast Lead* as subsequent chapters of the book make clear. However, it will take more than the armed might of the 18th globally ranked military power, the support of the majority of misguided world Jewry and that paragon of moral virtue and statesmanship, the president of the United States, to sway the Palestinian people from their path of righteous anger and protest. What may have dented it, even if only temporarily, was the behaviour of Judge Goldstone who, 6 months after his report was published in the columns of the *Washington Post* on 1st April 2011, attempted to rubbish his own report. Finkelstein remarks that this “was a black day for human rights and a red-letter day for their transgressors.” Some of the pressure on Goldstone to sing to a different tune we know of, for example his being banned from his grandson's bar mitzvah. However, a few days after Goldstone's recantation the other three members of the mission, namely Christine Chinkin, Hina Jilani and Desmond Travers, took the step of publicly reaffirming the original content of the report.

After some 18 months, at least 75% of the damage caused by *Cast Lead* had not been repaired and with the ever-tightening grip of the Israeli embargo things were grim indeed. Even vital medical supplies were denied to the besieged and suffering. It therefore comes as no surprise that supporters of the fight for Palestinian freedom would organise support action. The Israeli soldiers and border authorities at the border crossings and checkpoints would of course have been under orders to make their dealings with the imprisoned Palestinians of Gaza as time-consuming and nit-picking as possible. A more dramatic and publicity-friendly initiative was to be attempted in which a flotilla of small boats led by the

Mavi Marmara, a liner with a passenger capacity slightly over 1,000, was to deliver 10,000 tonnes of much needed supplies to the inhabitants of Gaza. The supplies were mainly stored on the accompanying flotilla of smaller boats. The ship was owned by a Turkish charitable organisation, the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (HRF) who numbered amongst its sponsors South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Mairead Corrigan Maguire. Israel has designated the Foundation a terrorist organisation. It should perhaps be noted in this context that prior to setting sail the organisers of the flotilla arranged an inspection of the supplies to ensure only items used for peaceful purposes were aboard. They also made an offer to be inspected by a neutral organisation such as the Red Cross but the offer was ignored by Israel.

The ships were all attacked on 31st May 2010, and the smaller vessels were easily boarded by the IDF with token resistance from the protestors. It was a different story with the *Mavi Marmara*, where the full force of Israel's military might was utilised. This included a Black Hawk armed helicopter gun ship. On board the liner were many of the personnel of the HRF, the owners of the boat, who were justifiably outraged that their ship should be attacked in international waters given that their mission was of a purely humanitarian nature. According to some descriptions of events the initial commando assault was beaten back with water hoses and this was followed by soldiers descending from a hovering *Black Hawk* helicopter with attack dogs. Whatever the progress of the fighting and what exactly happened will, as Finkelstein remarks in the book, "never be known for certain". What we can be certain of is that at the end of the day nine bodies of activists lay on the boat's deck with a tenth victim to die later. The behaviour of the IDF has been well documented in the occupied territories over the last 50 years and has been shown to be often brutal, even murderous, and we have no reason to think it would have been any different on board the *Mavi Marmara*. The Israeli press had the usual well-prepared story and the government's well-oiled publicity machine sprang into action. Finkelstein, for his part, is unequivocal — piracy in international waters and the illegal blockade of Gaza gave the activists aboard the vessel the right to resist since their mission was purely humanitarian. A subsequent report by the United Nations Human Rights Committee (UNHRC) found that the use of force by the IDF was "disproportionate" and that of the 10 fatalities six had been shot in the head in an execution style manner.

Finkelstein tackles all the various major committees of investigation that examined the *Mavi Marmara*. The UNHRC investigation condemned

the actions of the IDF which it described as “not only disproportionate but demonstrated levels of totally unnecessary and incredible violence”. Two other enquiries looked at the *Mavi Marmara* affair: one by a panel of foreign notables under the auspices of the UN and an Israeli enquiry led by Jacob Turkel, the Israeli Supreme Court justice. Finkelstein devotes a chapter to each of the two reports, respectively *Whitewash I* and *Whitewash II*, which gives us a large hint about his attitude. It is interesting to note that the composition of the UN Panel includes a member better known for the breaking of human rights, the former president of Colombia, Álvaro Uribe. *Whitewash I* spent very many of the “nearly three hundred pages” trying to prove there was no hunger in Gaza. The reason that building materials were not let into Gaza was because they would undoubtedly fall into the hands of Hamas and be used for “military purposes”. The fact that there was no food shortage, Turkel states, validates the purpose of the sea blockade, and furthermore even if it was the case that 60% of the Gazans were in a state of food insecurity this does not constitute starvation and does not legitimize the flotilla’s incursion. Turkel found that, as there was no starvation, the action of Israel in seizing the vessels was perfectly legal. The other major finding of the Report concerned the violence when the *Mavi Marmara* was seized by the IDF. The blame for the commencement of violence was pinned on the 40 or so members of the HRF who had supposedly plotted that some of their number would become martyrs to the cause. Finkelstein takes apart the accusations and ends with a quote from Sir Walter Scott. “*Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practise to deceive.*”

The brutal attack on the flotilla continued to attract global attention, and the Turkish government was disinclined to let Israel off the hook. UN General Secretary Ban Ki-moon, “ever attuned” to the desires of the White House, set up an investigative UN Panel chaired by Álvaro Uribe, the right-wing ex-president of Colombia. The UN Panel was made up of one member each from Israel and Turkey plus various pliant eminences, and according to Finkelstein had an “eviscerated mandate”. Finkelstein destroys the UN Panel’s vacuous interpretations that Israel had a right to a naval blockade of Gaza. The blockade by land was studiously ignored in this context and the Israeli naval blockade was legitimised not only for the *Mavi Marmara* incident but for any future attempt by sea. Mary Robinson, formerly President of Ireland, visited Gaza at this time and remarked that Gaza’s “whole civilisation has been destroyed, I’m not exaggerating”.

After all the mayhem, murder and destruction that the IDF had visited on the people of Gaza worse was to come: this was in the shape of

“Operation Protective Edge”. This was the longest of the invasions of Gaza and by this time it was obvious that the IDF’s priority was not with confronting Hamas fighters firing their rockets, as there was little fluctuation in their intensity from the beginning to the end of the operation. The priority was the crushing of the spirit of the people of Gaza (and for that matter those in the West Bank) so they would be forced to submit to some unjust abject half-baked settlement of their plight. Prior to Protective Edge there had been some moves of rapprochement between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas. By April 2014 John Kerry, US Secretary of State, and the EU began a conversation about the possibility of restarting peace moves and additionally there was a developing international consensus of what shape a peace settlement might look like. When put together with Netanyahu’s fears for his position in the upcoming elections Finkelstein says a distraction from these pressures would be extremely useful. The opportunity for action came when a rogue Hamas cell kidnapped and murdered three Israeli teenagers in the West Bank. Of course the immediate response of the Israelis was to arrest some 700 Hamas members or supporters resulting in five deaths in the West Bank with numerous homes, shops and businesses wrecked. This was of course designed to provoke a response by Hamas with an intensification of rocket attacks, but they held back for a time, as did the Israeli’s ground intervention, as another factor had come into play. In a joint intervention Tony Blair and Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, President of Egypt, had suggested a new ceasefire agreement with a staged suspension of hostilities. When formally presented to Hamas they rejected the terms as they considered it gave an advantage to Israel. With the news of a Malaysian passenger aircraft shot down over the Ukraine dominating the international headlines, the Israelis were able to launch *Protective Edge* with a vengeance:

“As ground troops crossed into the Strip, Israel let loose with abandon its explosive arsenal. Gaza’s civilian population and infrastructure — homes and businesses, schools and mosques, hospitals and ambulances, power stations and sewage plants, civilian shelters and civilians fleeing in panic — came under relentless, indiscriminate, disproportionate, deliberate attack. Israel reportedly fired 20,000 high-explosive artillery shells, 14,500 tank shells, 6,000 missiles, and 3,500 naval shells into the enclave.” (*Finkelstein page 215*)

In an interesting investigation into the Israeli calculations of the threat posed by Hamas’s rocket weaponry Finkelstein explores the carefully concocted Israeli propaganda myths surrounding the efficacy of the

rockets and their number. One only needs to look at the number of deaths associated with Hamas rocket attacks to realise these were low technology and highly inaccurate. The Israelis claimed that the reason for the low damage caused by the rockets was because of their adoption of the Dome anti-ballistic missile system, but Finkelstein rejects this hypothesis as erroneous. The figures given for the downing of Hamas rockets was 740 according to the Israelis and 240 by the UN, but the figure given by an expert on ballistic missile systems, Theodore Postal of MIT, was 5% of the Israeli total, namely 37. Operation *Protective Edge* was to last 49 days and Israel's stated aim was to halt the rocket attacks from Gaza. This aim remains unfulfilled, the rockets attacks have continued to this day – less for the damage they cause but as an act of defiance.

If the public reason for *Protective Edge* was unsuccessful so was the covert reason. The spirit of defiance has not been extinguished yet – the cost though has been high. The destruction was deliberate and was obviously carefully planned: some 18,000 homes damaged or destroyed, the killing of some 550 children, 1,560 civilian fatalities, and 640 combatants' deaths. The comparative death rates between the Palestinians and the Israelis show a staggering disparity. This is illustrated in particular by the figure above for child Palestinian deaths, namely 550, and the corresponding total for Israel, that of one – the ratio is of course 550:1. The Israeli propaganda machine says that Hamas uses children as shields but there is no evidence of this. However, there is evidence of IDF usage of such a tactic.

The last two chapters of the book are given over to a criticism of the Amnesty International report, *Protective Edge, Unlawful and Deadly* which concentrates largely on the activities of Hamas. Many other reports were written by various concerned human rights bodies and one which is also examined in more detail is the UN Human Rights Council report. Finkelstein claims the Amnesty report “whitewashed” the crimes of the IDF and was a “comprehensive indictment of Hamas”. He uses his encyclopaedic knowledge of the attacks on Gaza to refute the case mounted by Amnesty. For example, he cites the findings of a medical investigatory mission commissioned by the Israeli branch of *Physicians for Human Rights* which certainly wouldn't overlook the Hamas attacks on civilians. In fact, they state that whatever damage Israel faces “pale in comparison with the massive destruction wrought on Gaza”. The author has compared the number of pages in the two Amnesty reports, on both *Cast Lead* and *Protective Edge*, to see the extent to which they are devoted to the two adversaries. He finds that despite the massive destruction and

mayhem wrought by *Protective Edge*, proportionally less pages are devoted to the activities of the IDF. The *Unlawful and Deadly* report relies on Israeli military sources and this is clearly shown in the report's examination of Hamas's rockets, namely the exaggerated claims as to both the quantities and sophistication. Heavily involved were the Iranians, who had supplied sophisticated missiles like the Fajr 5, J-80 and BM21 Grad together with 7,000 rockets and mortars, many supposedly capable of going deep into Israel. In fact it was possible to get a realistic appraisal of Hamas's military ability to hit targets in Israel with its "bottle rockets" from several public sources. If we look at a brief tally of casualties, fatalities and the destruction of the physical infrastructure of both sides the gross military imbalance between the Palestinians and Israelis is soon apparent. Surely the attacking of schools, medical facilities and ambulances, whatever the excuse, is a war crime? The author maintains that Amnesty's quest for even-handedness led them to inflate the number of Hamas's rockets and list their type, provided by the Israeli propaganda machine. It should be noted that the Israeli authorities had such confidence in their own reporting that they would not allow human rights organisations and reporters to enter Gaza while *Protective Edge* was in progress and this remained the case after the operation had concluded.

The next report that Finkelstein takes issue with is that of the UN Human Rights Council who commissioned a report whose brief was to establish whether or not there had been breaches of "international humanitarian and human rights law". It was set up in August 2014 shortly after the conclusion of *Protective Edge* as a fact-finding investigation and was to encompass the conduct of the two opposing sides in Gaza. But it was not, however, restricted to just Gaza and in fact carried out enquiries on the West Bank. It was to be chaired by a notable Canadian jurist, William Schabas, an expert on genocide. Once the Israeli foreign minister, one Avigdor Lieberman, heard of his appointment he moved to press for his dismissal. Schabas acceded and a New York judge, Mary McGowan Davis, was appointed chair of the mission. Finkelstein writes, "the betrayal had begun."

The report was published in June 2015 and at first glance appeared to present a balanced judgement on the conflict with both Hamas and Israel being taken to task for their behaviour. In fact Finkelstein, (who examined the report line by line) says the UN report, in spite of its initial appearance, was a spurious travesty of the truth. It attempted to be even-handed about a grossly unequal struggle comparing Hamas's firework rockets and their result with the hellish firepower of the IDF. But even the UN Report did

not subscribe to the Israeli lie that somehow the Palestinians had been granted independence in Gaza, and it did call for the immediate and unconditional abandonment of the blockade. If that had been done and the “suffocating siege of Gaza” lifted, then it is a virtual certainty that Hamas would have ended its rocket attacks on Israel. Since the beginning of the siege it had been common knowledge that it had been Hamas’s aim to reopen Gaza’s borders.

Whilst the commission was shocked by the suffering of both Palestinians and Israelis, the scale of misery and anguish of the former outweighs that of the latter with a ratio of 550:1 child killings, 18,000:1 homes destroyed and 1,600:6 civilian deaths. Unfortunately, the UN Report implies that the sirens warning of Hamas’s rockets cause an equal amount of stress to that endured by the residents of Gaza, who were bombed daily and faced the prospect of death and destruction. The Israelis could run to their shelters: the Palestinians had virtually nowhere to hide and the use of state-of-the-art high explosive used by the Israelis on civilian targets had a psychological shock effect on nearby survivors. To quote from the Report:

“The pressure from the explosion of a device such as Mark-84 JDAM can rupture lungs, burst sinus cavities and tear off limbs hundreds of feet from the blast area, according to trauma physicians. When it hits, the JDAM generates an 8,500-degree fireball, gouges a 20ft crater as it displaces 10,000 pounds of dirt and rock and generates enough wind to knock down walls blocks away and hurl metal fragments a mile or more. There is a very concussive effect. Damage on any human beings in the vicinity would be pretty nasty.”

(UN Report, para.225.)

How could anyone claim that the use of such weapons was legitimate in a densely over-crowded area like Gaza? Gaza City itself has a population density much higher than many cities of comparable size. The Report did accuse Hamas of war crimes for its indiscriminate and badly aimed rocket attacks but noted that the casualties were relatively low. The Israelis of course put the failure of the rocket attacks down, not to the inherent primitiveness of the missiles, but to the technological might of the Dome — a present from the Americans. The Report also accuses Hamas of “extrajudicial executions”, killings of collaborators and the shock, shame and despair this engendered in the families. It is easy for those safely removed from the horrors of the struggle against a brutal invasive force to criticise the needs of the defensive leaders to stop any collaboration when

lives are threatened. Finkelstein quotes an analogous situation in the Jewish revolt in the Warsaw Ghetto, where one of its leaders expressed the view that he felt guilty for not killing the collaborators on the first day of the uprising*. Difficult decisions — and perhaps only those who were involved in the struggle can make them. We can only view such matters with abhorrence and hope that such decisions should be examined by truly impartial judicial review in the context of the liberation struggle. As to Israeli war crimes, the Report, in Finkelstein's opinion, scatters its findings in a confusing manner rather than grouping them together in a dossier form. It thus results in a "watered down" effect ignoring the "ghastly reality" and thus in the author's opinion was "simply a cover-up". The Report's text continues with a truly horrific report on the results of a pattern of unexplained Israeli air attacks where 40% of such attacks could show no proximity to military targets. Finkelstein's conclusion is that the two reports of Amnesty and the UN constituted a "betrayal" of the people of Gaza and he makes no apology for this accusation, subscribing to the Confucian belief that the start of wisdom is to call "things by their proper name". The book ends with a lengthy *Appendix* asking the question *Is the Occupation Legal?* To which Finkelstein, as one would expect, says a defiant *NO*. This document is a thoroughly legal brief which could be used by the UN or other national or international entities to accuse Israel of flaunting international law with its continued occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. The references and information on similar cases of colonial withdrawal are copious and comprehensive.

Ultimately, Finkelstein does not strike an optimistic note of justice being delivered to the Palestinian people, his concluding remarks echoing remembrance of the fate of the native Americans. Hopefully his book will play an important part in galvanising world opinion to prevent this continued injustice. It is a work of exacting and thorough scholarship, encyclopaedic in its coverage of the detail of the terrible treatment of the Palestinians of Gaza, and stands both as a reference guide to the subject and an appeal for justice. To echo the words of Alice Walker, Norman Finkelstein is an "incredible warrior for Humanity and Justice".

*(Yitzhak Zuckerman, *The Surplus of Memory: Chronicle of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising*, Berkeley 1993, 1092, 209.)

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