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Directors
University of California Press

Dear Director:

I am writing to alert you to a highly questionable and dangerous publishing decision recently made by the University of California Press. That decision is to publish a sequel to a book that several experts have characterized as an anti-Semitic variation on the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, the infamous czarist fraud that is today published only by neo-Nazi and Islamic extremist publishing houses. If the University of California Press goes forward with this decision, it will be the first time in recent history that a distinguished university press will publish an anti-Semitic hate book, and thereby lend its imprimatur to such bigotry. At a time of increasing anti-Semitism around the world, this decision should not be made without serious consideration of the consequences.

First some background on the book that the University of California Press is planning to publish. It is by Norman Finkelstein whose previous book, The Holocaust Industry, was the one that has been compared to the notorious Protocols. In 1999, Peter Novick, a noted historian at the University of Chicago, wrote a book in which he investigated why so many American Jews grounded their identity in the Holocaust. Novick's book served as the "stimulus" for Finkelstein's 2000 book about the Holocaust in which Finkelstein postulated "an international Jewish conspiracy," an unfounded claim that, in the words of Prof. Omer Bartov who reviewed The Holocaust Industry for the *New York Times*, "verges on paranoia and would serve anti-Semitism around the world..."¹ Bartov, who is the John P. Birkelund Distinguished Professor of European History and Professor of History at Brown University and one of the world's leading scholars of the Holocaust, destroyed the credibility of both the book and its author, using words that rarely appear in the *New York Times Book Review*: "indecent," "stupid," "bizarre," "irrational," "insidious," "reckless," and a "perversion." Prof. Novick, whose own book had been praised by Finkelstein, was also asked to review the book that his own book had stimulated. He concluded that the Finkelstein book was based on made up quotes, false facts and invented assertions:

¹ Omer Bartov, "A Tale of Two Holocausts," *New York Times*, August 6, 2000, p. 8.

“As concerns particular assertions made by Finkelstein concerning reparations and restitution, and on other matters as well, 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.”²

He also concluded that the book as a whole, with its concoction of an international Jewish conspiracy, is a “twenty-first century updating of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion.”³

Finkelstein’s previous writings also contained vicious anti-Semitic canards against a so-called international Jewish conspiracy and distinguished Jewish leaders such as Elie Wiesel, Abraham Foxman, Daniel Goldhagen, Martin Gilbert, Burt Neuborne, Yehuda Bauer, Gerald Feldman, Richard Overy and Abba Eban. It is no surprise, therefore, that Finkelstein has become a favorite among neo-Nazis and has been called the neo-Nazi’s favorite Jew. He has said that he “can’t imagine why Israel’s apologists would be offended by a comparison with the Gestapo”⁴ and asserted that Israel’s human rights record is “interchangeable with Iraq’s” when it was ruled by Saddam Hussein⁵, that he supports “solidarity with Hezbollah,” (which he says is being targeted for “terrorist intimidation and attack” by the U.S. and Israel)⁶ and hates Israel with a passion unmatched outside of the Arab world. He has said that most alleged Holocaust survivors — including Elie Wiesel — have fabricated their past, are “bogus,” and that those seeking reparations are “cheats” and “greedy.” Because of my support of Israel and of the two state solution, he has compared me to “Adolf Eichman [sic].”⁷ When challenged to defend his frequent comparison between Jews and Nazis, he has responded, “Nazis never like to hear they’re being Nazis.”⁸ He is a popular speaker among German neo-Nazis: one (Ingrid Rimland, whose husband, the notorious Ernst Zuendel, has authored *The Hitler We Loved And Why*) even referred to him admiringly as the “Jewish David Irving” (“Jüdischer David Irving”)—a reference to the British Holocaust denier and Hitler admirer. The comparison is apt because Finkelstein has reportedly praised the Holocaust-denying Irving as “a good historian”⁹ and as having “made an indispensable” contribution to our knowledge of World War II.”¹⁰

² Peter Novick, *Offene Fenster und Tueren. Ueber Norman Finkelsteins Kreuzzug*, in: Petra Steinberger (ed.): *Die Finkelstein-Debatte*, (Piper Verlag: Muenchen 2001), p. 159 (translated from German).

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ John Dirlík, “Canadian Jewish Organizations Charged With Stifling Campus Debate,” *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, April/May 1992, p. 43.

⁵ Norman Finkelstein, “A Reply to Henry Kissinger and Fouad Ajami,” *Link*, December 1992, p. 8. To compound his lies, Finkelstein attributes the comparison to Amnesty International—a comparison explicitly disavowed by Amnesty officials.

⁶ Norman Finkelstein, “A Reply to Michael Young” (accessible at <http://www.normanfinkelstein.com/id119.htm>).

⁷ Y.M.D. Fremes, “Interview with Professor Norman G. Finkelstein,” *Palestine Chronicle*, November 24, 2003.

⁸ Simon Rosenblum and Len Rudner, “In a nasty neighbourhood, Israel needs to be tough,” *Record*, June 16, 2003.

⁹ Anne Applebaum, “The battle for the Holocaust Legacy,” *Sunday Telegraph*, July 16, 2000 (accessible at www.anneapplebaum.com/other/2000/07_16_tel_holocaust.html).

¹⁰ Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry*, p. 71

A German writer has observed that "seldom has a Jew been more celebrated by brown propaganda than Finkelstein."¹¹ Finkelstein has voiced the old anti-Semitic canard that the Jews dominate the American media and that "all opinion-leaders, from the left to the right, are Jews."¹² He has condemned *Schindler's List* as an effort by American Jews to divert attention from America's Mid-East 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...¹³

Finkelstein's books are dismissed as drivel in the U.S. and do not sell here, (Finkelstein blames his poor sales here on the same international Jewish conspiracy that controls the media and concocted *Schindler's List*), but they sell well among neo-Nazis in Germany.

Finkelstein's new book, entitled *Beyond Chutzpah*, has been advertised as a "sequel" to his twenty-first century updating of the *Protocols*. This is the book scheduled for publication by the University of California Press for May of 2005. Another publishing house apparently cancelled its agreement to publish Finkelstein's book after investigating Finkelstein's alleged facts, sources and quotations. Finkelstein acknowledges that not a single peer review or scientific journal has ever been willing to publish his writings.¹⁴ This is not surprising because Finkelstein is a failed academic who describes himself as "an exile" at DePaul University because he has been - - by his own account - - "thrown out of every school in New York."¹⁵ He has apparently been fired by Brooklyn College, NYU and several other schools for "incompetence," "mental instability," and "abuse" of students with politics different from his own, according to a high-ranking official at one of the schools.¹⁶

I cannot imagine the University of California Press being willing to publish a sequel to the *Protocols* themselves. Yet they have agreed to publish a sequel to a book that makes similarly wild anti-Semitic accusations. The book that has been accepted for publication also contains willful and malicious lies against me personally and against other prominent Jews, lies which I have been advised by the nation's leading first amendment lawyer are defamatory on their face both under U.S. law and the law of other countries in which the book is being published. For

¹¹ Eds. Martin Dietzsch and Alfred Schobert, „Ein „jüdischer David Irving“? Norman Finkelstein im Diskurs der Rechten—Erinnerungsabwehr und Antizionismus“ (Duisburg, Germany: Unrast Verlag), p. 6 (translated from German). In Germany, *The Holocaust Industry* had 10 editions and has sold more than 170.000 copies. Before the first day of sale, the renowned Piper publishing house, which issued the book in Germany, had more than 40.000 advance orders. Among those 40.000 orders were tens of thousands by neo-Nazi circles and right extremists which were coordinated by the *National-Zeitung*, the German neo-Nazi newspaper.

¹² *NRC Handelsblad* <http://www.nrc.nl/W2/Nieuws/2000/08/05/Vp/z.html> (translated from Dutch).

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ In 2001 he described his academic status as follows: "I am an adjunct teacher at Hunter College, which is as much as being a liftboy. My income is between \$15,000 and \$18,000, so below the poverty line.[...] Only once I was interviewed for a job interview, at the University of San Francisco, a small Jesuit school." Finkelstein is no longer at Hunter College. His current curriculum vitae lists him as an Assistant Professor at DePaul University at the age of 50.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

example, Finkelstein has claimed on C-Span and in a letter to the Dean of Harvard Law School that in his book to be published by the University of California Press he will claim that I "did not write" my book The Case for Israel and that I "didn't even read it prior to publication." He has said that he means this "literally," not "as a joke".¹⁷ I, of course, did write the book. Indeed, I wrote it by hand. I neither type nor use a computer and I have my handwritten manuscript. Yet, no fact checker from the University of California Press has even asked to see the manuscript or speak to the many witnesses who can attest to my writing of the book. Finkelstein has also made up out of whole cloth quotes he attributes to me and to others (including the Supreme Court of Israel.) I have documented some of his defamatory inventions in an article I am planning to publish about this matter. No fact checker has tried to reach me to check the numerous other lies, made up quotations, false statements and other defamatory material in Finkelstein's manuscript.

I am enclosing with this letter a preliminary draft of an article I plan to publish which gives much more detail and documentation regarding Finkelstein's use of falsified quotations, footnotes and facts. I hope you will read it along with this letter. I have a thick file proving the falsity of many of Finkelstein's quotations, assertions, etc. I would be happy to review this evidence with an objective fact checker or attorney for the University of California Press. I have no interest in censoring or suppressing Finkelstein's freedom of expression, but merely in assuring that maliciously false statements about me, about other Jews, and about some supposed international Jewish conspiracy, are not published by a responsible press, especially at a time of spreading anti-Semitism around the world. Finkelstein has already exploited the fact that his book is being published by a distinguished university press to gain credibility for his anti-Semitic claims. The University of California Press too has freedom of expression and should have all the facts before deciding whether to lend its imprimatur to a hateful book that deliberately falsifies facts and defames individuals and groups. Finkelstein will have no difficulty having his defamatory bigotry published by the kind of publisher who specializes in this kind of material and whose imprimatur will not be misused by Finkelstein, as the University of California's imprimatur is already being misused by him.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'AW' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line.

See attached list for individuals sent copies of this letter

¹⁷ C-SPAN2, *Book TV*, April 11, 2004.

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