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# Letter to the Editor:

## Anti-Semitic Speaker Has No Place at Bates

**By:**

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To the Editor:

The speaker brought to campus last Thursday by Students for Peace and Justice in Palestine evokes memories of last year's speaker Alison Weir. On paper, Norman Finkelstein represents an intellectual, and his résumé includes faculty positions at NYU and DePaul, to name a few, but he was dismissed at each of these universities and he was denied tenure at DePaul. Finkelstein authored several books, each doing its part in disproving the existence of anti-Semitism. He argues that the Holocaust is being used as a money-making venture. To toot his own horn, Finkelstein claims to be the "world's leading authority on UN Resolution 242." At 293 words, this is not an impressive feat. I listened carefully to Finkelstein on Thursday night for the duration of his over two-hour speech and then decided that I disagree.

In his lecture, Finkelstein attempted to brainwash students by supporting Hezbollah and by citing various parts of International Law and the United Nations charter. Throughout his lecture, Finkelstein isolated Israel and its allies. An example was the argument that under International Law, all the land claimed by Israel in the 1967 war is occupied territory and not legally Israel's. This claim is worthless since international law is unenforceable, similar to United Nations recommendations.

Finkelstein argued that when Israel has political or social difficulties, they "play the Holocaust card." This is absolutely untrue. Israel has grown to be a strong military country, which defends itself and does not "play a Holocaust card." Furthermore, he argues the "Holocaust card" came to America and became the "Holocaust Industry" after 1967. This is also untrue. The Holocaust changed the lives of millions, and they have a right to share their stories. Since 1948, Israel has been a leader in national security and sports a strong national army, which is required for all Israeli citizens to enter at age 18. Finkelstein argues that the Israeli army victimizes Palestinian children, which is evident in death tolls. This is a simple ploy; anyone can cite numbers and argue reciprocity.

When it came to the right to return, Finkelstein boosted his ego by saying that he settled with DePaul University because his concessions were substantial. He claimed that if Israel gave Palestinians enough concessions, and if Palestinians stopped giving concessions, Palestinians would relinquish their right to return. Israel has made concessions since the beginning. Israel gave up sections of land to promote peace. Also, Israel attempted to stop the problem of suicide bombers, but Finkelstein appeared on an Arab TV station and praised the work of Hezbollah and suicide bombers.

I am outraged that the student body can allow such an anti-Semitic speaker on campus and not take action. I would have enjoyed attending a lecture that presented both sides, but Finkelstein was pro-Hezbollah. By bringing Norman Finkelstein to campus, anti-Semitism has been brought to campus (which he argues does not exist!). Would the student body allow a racist speaker from the Ku Klux Klan to speak on campus? How can we allow such an anti-Semitic speaker at Bates and not be outraged?

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