

# Taking sides in the blame game

**DANIELLA PELED**

**The Road Map to Nowhere: Israel/Palestine since 2003**

Tanya Reinhart  
Verso, £8.99

**The Jewish Divide over Israel: Accusers and Defenders**

Edited by Edward Alexander and Paul Bogdanor  
Transaction Publishing, £30.50

**The Politics of Apocalypse: The History and Influence of Christian Zionism**

Dan Cohn-Sherbok  
One World, £12.00

**T**he endorsement from Noam Chomsky on the back of Tanya Reinhart's book tells the reader much about the book's contents before opening it. Reinhart's predictably anti-Zionist line makes her appraisal of Israel/Palestine since 2003 uninspiring — a pity, because her style is clear and eminently readable, and there are many valid criticisms to be made. However, her one-sided approach severely limits any decent analysis.

Reinhart implies that Israeli prime ministers from Yitzhak Rabin to Ehud Barak and Ariel Sharon were dedicated to carrying out the same unvaryingly oppressive policy towards the Palestinians. This tendency to see the hand of conspiracy is wearying.



Palestinian children cheer as the Israeli flag burns

Reinhart would certainly get short shrift in *The Jewish Divide over Israel: Accusers and Defenders*. This book purports to expose how prominent Jews have contributed in turning Israel into a pariah state. The usual suspects are rounded up; Mr Chomsky himself meriting two chapters and referenced in a third where historian Norman Finkelstein is described as Chomsky for Nazis, among others such as historian Tony Judt, an outspoken advocate of a one-state solution, and post-Zionist historian Benny Morris. "Cowardice

is the word that springs to mind most often as the suitable epithet of Israel's Jewish enemies," the authors assert.

They appear to have a strange view of what makes a Jew an enemy of Israel; harsh treatment is meted out to Thomas Friedman, the respected *New York Times* columnist, and Seymour Hersh, the investigative reporter. Similarly, Alexander rails against doveish Israeli authors Amos Oz and David Grossman and insists that as Foreign Minister Shimon Peres "routinely promoted the interests not of a sovereign Jewish

state but of the (largely Arab) Middle East". Any criticism of Israel appears to be unacceptable, making the book an essentially anti-intellectual exercise.

*The Jewish Divide* and *The Road Map to Nowhere* may have chosen different sides to support, but both are still preoccupied with the same pointless blame game. As much as they revisit old ground, Dan Cohn-Sherbok focuses on an important religious movement expanding at an enormous rate, and one with increasing power within American politics.

This millenarian theology posits that the return of the Jewish people to the Holy Land fulfils a biblical prophecy leading to the Second Coming. Thus Christian Zionists have been powerful friends of Israel both in terms of financial support and political backing.

Yet their aims do not always gel with those of the Israeli state — adamantly opposing a two-state solution, for example — and paradoxically, the Armageddon theory dictates that ultimately those Jews who do not convert at the Messiah's coming will perish. Cohn-Sherbok traces this theology from the Reformation to modern times, exploring the development of Jewish and Christian Zionism along the way.

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