

## Harvard's Hucksters

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Stephen Walt and John Mearsheimer, authors of “[The Israeli Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy](#),” have been touted by some in the press as “two of America's top scholars.” The academic dean of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government and his co-author of the University of Chicago may occupy prized perches, but that doesn't make them scholars.

However you slice it, the half-baked folderol that is “The Israeli Lobby” isn't “scholarship.” Scholarship appeals to evidence and reason. Theirs is a randomly yoked together bit of pamphleteering in the postmodern tradition—its authors don't reason or argue. Instead, they propagandize, promoting as axiomatic a belief in the superiority of certain moral or political positions, one of which is the idea of Israel's foul founding.

A scholar, moreover, builds his case. These two declare their case open and shut on page two of the screed. “Readers may reject our conclusions,” they grandiosely state, “but the evidence on which they rest is not controversial.”

The logically invalid argument from authority undergirds “The Israeli Lobby”—and in particular, our authors' assertion that the facts they present “are not in serious dispute among scholars,” because these rely “heavily on the work of Israeli scholars and journalists.”

Jews—Israelis included—are leaders of the new anti-Semitism, which consists in the demonization of Israelis (often described as Nazis vis-à-vis the Palestinians) and the delegitimization of the Jewish State. Blaming Israel or the Israeli lobby for America's foreign policy blunders, and alleging that Israel was founded through systematic ethnic cleansing and land theft are the centerpieces of their campaign.

Because a Jew—Israeli or other—has espoused these positions against Israel, Harvard's Tweedledumb and UChicago's Tweedledumber would like their readers to believe that they must be true. The **Capos** of the concentration camps were Jews; did their Jewishness make their depredations against their own people correct or commendable?

While our “scholars” both demonize and delegitimize Israel, they are mere dwarfs standing on the shoulders of **Jewish giants**. Noam Chomsky, “The Godfather,” Steven and Hillary Rose, Norman Finkelstein, Joel Kovel, Tanya Reinhart in Tel Aviv, and Michael Cohen in Swansea—these are but a few of the new anti-Semitism's leading Jewish lights.

The real rock stars of the Israeli intelligentsia—Israel's own **Ward Churchills**—are the pretentiously self-styled “New Historians.” This is a group of popular far-left fabricators (one of whom facetiously boasted: “We perform at weddings and bar mitzvas”), who've cocked a snook at the liberal country in which they've thrived, so as to gain admittance into the fashionable Palestinian pantheon.

They claim “Zionist imperialists” cheated Palestinian peasants out of their land (which was, in fact, bought fairly and legally), and that these interlopers conducted a systematic and deliberate policy of ethnic cleansing with respect to the “indigenous population.” (There undoubtedly have been sporadic acts of aggression and even terror against Palestinian Arabs by Jews during the War of Independence. But there is simply no historical evidence that they have been the result of a concerted or systematic campaign.)

The “New Historians” rendition is fast becoming the received wisdom on Israel’s history in the court of public opinion. This historical revision of Israel’s birth, incidentally, resembles the way the Left has distorted and reduced America’s history to a narrative of the oppressed and the excluded. As Efraim Karsh, Professor of Mediterranean Studies at the University of London, has noted, “Partisan rewriting of history has apparently become the accepted norm in those fields of research dealing with highly contentious political, social, and historical phenomena, such as the Arab-Israeli conflict.”

The Harvard philippic defers to the “New Historians” most flamboyant and fishy associate, Benny Morris. In fact, it was Morris’s bowdlerization of Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion’s words that first prompted Karsh to investigate the fraud perpetrated by these hip historians, and expose it in his masterful book, “[Fabricating Israeli History: The ‘New Historians.’](#)”

While perusing the English-language version of Morris’ doctored-to-death book, “The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem,” Karsh happened upon a quote from a letter Ben-Gurion wrote to his son, allegedly stating that, “we must expel the Arabs and take their places.” Karsh “recalled the letter saying something quite different.” On examination, it transpired that the Hebrew text read as follows: “We do not wish, we do not need to expel Arabs and take their place ... All our aspiration is built on the assumption that there is enough room in the country for ourselves and the Arabs.”

Initially Karsh, a gentleman and a scholar, read Morris charitably, attributing the mangled citation to an innocent mistranslation or typo. Still, to allay his worst fears, he proceeded to plumb all primary source-material Morris used to shore-up his allegations.

Parroted by Walt and Mearsheimer, Morris has charged that the “Zionists” systematically “drove Palestinians into exile,” and “that the Zionist and Israeli establishments have systematically falsified archival source material to conceal the Jewish state’s less-than-immaculate conception.”

It turns out Morris was **projecting**. For, as an incredulous Karsh discovered, “Morris not only fails to show rewriting by [the Israeli founding fathers], but he himself is the one who systematically falsifies evidence.”

Indeed, “there is scarcely a document that he does not twist.” As Karsh demonstrates in detail, Morris and his cohorts have “violated every tenet of bona fide research”: they misrepresent documents, resort to partial quotes, withhold evidence, make false assertions, and rewrites original documents. Such is the incompetence of these Arabists that they even neglect Arab archival material, relying almost exclusively on Western—often only secondary—sources.

“Through documentary manipulation,” observes Karsh, the Israeli “scholars” (lauded by Walt and Mearsheimer) have turned “Israeli history on its head.”

Although Karsh has been attacked personally and stigmatized, the blistering, textual bitch-slap he dealt these charlatans remains unassailable. A dejected Morris even wrote to the Times Literary Supplement to admit that “Karsh has a point. My treatment of transfer thinking before 1948 was, indeed, superficial.”

The Arab-Israeli debate, however, doesn’t hinge on the “professional and intellectual integrity” of the interlocutors. Irrespective of whether they are true or false, certain positions in contemporary Middle-Eastern Studies and history departments are automatically deemed virtuous, and veracity be damned. Their proponents are published in prestigious journals and by distinguished publishing houses and become media darlings.

Popularity, fashion, and the booming “bash-Israel business” account for the “new historians” tenure, not scholarship. Ditto the Harvard hucksters who promote them.

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