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March 21, 2006 The graves of academe

The US has its own problems with the deadly virus of Jew-hatred, particularly on campus. A particularly ripe example of the 'global Zionist conspiracy' libel has now surfaced in a 83-page screed by two professors -- Stephen Walt, the academic dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, no less, and John Mearsheimer of the University of Chicago -- and published across 14 pages in the [London Review of Books](#) (of course). 14 pages! 83 pages! My, those LRB editors and progressive intellectuals at Harvard and Chicago sure have a striking sense of priorities (who said 'pathological obsession' at the back there? Must be another member of the conspiracy). Among many other canards, the article claims that the only reason the US supports Israel is the American 'Israel lobby'; that supporting Israel is not in America's own interests; that the 'Israel lobby' has thus persuaded the US to act against the interests of America in supporting Israel; that this manipulation is unique in America's history; that this lobby was also critical in persuading the US to go to war in Iraq; and that America's alliance with Israel brought about 9/11.

Well, I suppose it makes a change from the 'wicked oil industry lobby' that George Clooney, Michael Moore et al tell us has hijacked American foreign policy. Doubtless the 'Israel lobby' is behind the oil weapon too, and the fact that Israel is its victim is just further proof of the diabolical manipulative powers of AIPAC.

You have to laugh, though, when the authors try to wrap themselves in the mantle of heroic fighters against the attempt by the 'Israel lobby' to stifle them:

Anyone who criticizes Israeli actions or says that pro-Israel groups have significant influence over U.S. Middle East policy...stands a good chance of getting labeled an antisemite.

Actually, they stand instead an excellent chance of being published in the [London Review of Books](#), one of the most prestigious publications of the British and English-speaking intelligentsia. Anyone who offers the alternative view doesn't have a cat in hell's chance of writing for it at all -- and not a much brighter prospect of getting it published anywhere else, either. But open the [Guardian](#) or [Independent](#) any day of the week, and these 'stifled' claims of the Israel /Jewish/neocon global conspiracy/world evil pour from their pages in an unstoppable torrent of bile.

Needless to say, reaction to this work of malevolent charlatany has been voluminous and devastating. **Powerline** has produced a useful compendium of references which expose the mendacity, ignorance and prejudice of the article:

Among the excellent commentary it has generated on the Internet is a column by Richard Baehr and Ed Lasky at the American Thinker, a statement by Alex Safian at CAMERA, a post by Martin Kramer at Sandstorm, and a personal correction (scroll to bottom) by Daniel Pipes. Among the legion of individuals assigned to the 'Israel lobby' by Mearsheimer and Walt are Bernard Lewis, Bill Bennett, George Will, Alan Dershowitz, and Clinton Mideast advisors Martin Indyk, Dennis Ross, and Aaron Miller. In today's New York Sun, Meghan Clyne quotes Dennis Ross: 'Also critical of the paper's academic quality was one of the figures mentioned in it as part of the "lobby," President Clinton's special Middle East envoy, Dennis Ross, who said the authors displayed "a woeful lack of knowledge on the subject." "The part I've read I find remarkable for its lack of seriousness," Mr. Ross told the Sun yesterday. "It is basically a series of assertions. They quote only those people who basically have this point of view and don't take a serious look at anything in a more profound way. It is masquerading as scholarship."

The fundamental misrepresentations and distortions in this LRB paper are quite astonishing. Take this claim, for example, that Israeli citizenship

is based on the principle of blood kinship.

This is totally untrue. Arabs and other non-Jews are Israeli citizens. As Alan Dershowitz has observed, the authors have confused Israel's law of return with its criteria for citizenship. According to the **New York Sun**:

Mr. Walt said on this citizenship point last night that he wanted to check into it.

He wants to check into it? The academic dean of the Kennedy School of Government has published an 'academic' work of 83 pages which delegitimises and demonises a country and all those who support it -- and he now wants to 'check into' the, ahem, veracity of his own incendiary claim?

But why should Mearsheimer and Walt bother about little details like the truth when, as the New York Sun also reported, they can bask in the warm admiration of white supremacists and Islamist fanatics:

A paper recently co-authored by the academic dean of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government about the allegedly far-reaching influence of an 'Israel lobby' is winning praise from white supremacist David Duke. The

Palestine Liberation Organization mission to Washington is distributing the paper, which also is being hailed by a senior member of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist organization. Duke, a former Louisiana state legislator and one-time Ku Klux Klan leader, called the paper 'a great step forward,' but he said he was 'surprised' that the Kennedy School would publish the report. 'I have read about the report and read one summary already, and I am surprised how excellent it is,' he said in an e-mail. 'It is quite satisfying to see a body in the premier American University essentially come out and validate every major point I have been making since even before the war even started.' Mr. Walt said last night, 'I have always found Mr. Duke's views reprehensible, and I am sorry he sees this article as consistent with his view of the world.'

Tsk! Such ingratitude! Doubtless Duke will now take out a subscription to the LRB.

The big question, however, is how such individuals who break every rule in the scholarly lexicon can be employed as professors -- and even an academic dean -- at Harvard and Chicago. One reason is suggested in the devastating evisceration of these two authors at [The American Thinker](#):

The authors resent Jewish citizens who contribute to universities, Jewish critics of the media, Jewish supporters of think tanks, and, finally it seems, Jewish people in government. However, they seem to have no concern for or even acknowledge the magnitude of foreign (Arab) donations, given by dictators who steal their own people's wealth to support hate and terror around the world, raining money down on think tanks, colleges, and media outlets in America. On the latter issue, the same Saudi Prince who gave \$20 million to Harvard bragged of his recent 5% purchase of News Corporation stock giving him the power to influence news reporting. This is a worrisome development, for he also owned a 30% stake in an Arab TV network, ART TV, that spews forth anti-Semitism and anti-Western agitprop. Foreign money, as long as it is anti-Israel, is worth its weight in gold (or oil). Jewish Americans who support universities are somehow tainted in their worldview...

The Iraq war is a source of much of the Israel-loathing which is just beneath the surface in the Walt/Mearsheimer article. The authors promote the theory that America went to war with Iraq in 2003 because of Israel, and in particular, at the direction of Israel's Likud Party and Ariel Sharon and their flacks in the American neoconservative movement. There were certainly Jews who supported the war with Iraq, though as even the authors admit, Jewish

Americans disproportionately opposed the war, with a far higher percentage opposed to the war than among the general population. So much, one would think, for the proposition that the Jews drove America to war. But the professors want us to ignore the general disapproval of the war by American Jews, for what is important are the powerful neoconservative voices, who pushed Bush and Cheney to war. To believe this theory, Bush and Cheney and Rumsfeld, and Condi Rice and Colin Powell were mere pushovers and puppets for the likes of Douglas Feith and Paul Wolfowitz and Lewis Libby.

Characterizing this as suggesting the cart is pulling the horse is too kind to the authors' theory. In fact, people such as Paul Wolfowitz and Richard Perle have always been consistent in their views opposing tyranny. They worked to bring down Communism, acted to save Bosnian Muslims and Iraqi Shiites from genocide, tried to stabilize Somalia and protect its citizens from the depredations of warlords, and have acted to stop the genocide in the Sudan. These actions are not particularly pro-Israel, as much as they are anti-dictatorship and pro-human rights.

The nations that directly benefited from the downfall of Saddam were Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq itself, since all these nations and peoples suffered from the sadism of Saddam. If Israel also benefited (a big 'if'), it certainly was not a prime beneficiary. Perhaps, these experts should be more aware of a basic statistical principle: correlation does not prove causation. Israel may have been aided by Iraq's liberation, but it does not prove – except in the delusional world of the authors – that tiny Israel (or a tiny minority of American Jews) caused the war to happen.

This LRB travesty is not a one-off. It is but the latest example of a poisonous pathology which has gripped the intelligentsia of the west, centred around a visceral loathing of America, Israel, the neocons and the Jews. Indeed, neo-conservatism seems to have induced a kind of madness, a total eclipse of reason among its political opponents; it is not surprising, therefore, that those within the intelligentsia who have developed such an obsessive loathing of the neo-cons have ended up in bed with white supremacists and clerical fascists.

Our campuses, which should be spreading enlightenment, knowledge and the power of reason are instead spreading hatred, lies and the toxins of murderous prejudice. The intelligentsia have become the fifth columnists of the west, an engine of war that is being deployed by the enemies of life and liberty to sow terminal confusion, self-loathing and de-moralisation that -- with every day that passes -- are progressively sapping the ability of the

free world to defend itself. It is not enough for this LRB article to be denounced and for the reputations of these two authors to be deservedly trashed at the bar of international opinion. The university world has got to take a long hard look at itself and start the trek back to proper scholarship, truth and integrity. It has to realise that it is not a disinterested bystander at the current struggle between freedom and genocidal clerical fascism. It is instead an active player -- *and on the wrong side*. It has to start cleansing its own academic Augean stables, and fast.

Posted by melanie at **March 21, 2006**

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