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Fabricating Israeli History: The 'New Historians' (Israeli History, Politics And Society)



Synopsis

Israeli historiography is under assault by "new historians" exposing "Zionist narrative". This text takes issue with these "revisionists", arguing that they have ignored or misinterpreted much documentation in developing their analysis of Israel's history.

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Customer Reviews

If the above excellent reviews leave you less than entirely convinced of the worthlessness of Morris' thesis [how could they?], the final cap may be the lame reply Morris gave in the Middle East Quarterly.[...] Morris says that Karsh's earlier [prior to the current book] work "is a mélange of distortions, half-truths, and plain lies...." Morris fails to give a single example to support his accusation, but simply says, "It does not deserve serious attention or reply." If all Morris can muster in his defense is an ad hominem attack on Karsh, reasonable persons can safely conclude that Morris is engaging in psychological projection.

Rely on primary sources. Be intellectually honest. Let evidence form the conclusions. Any first-year history major should have that drilled into their heads. It's also a basic set of tenets for journalists, academics, and anyone else seeking truth among facts and fiction. What I gain from Karsh's book is an objective perspective of the origin of the modern conflict in Israel. I am treated to primary sources, secondary accounts, and conclusions drawn directly from the evidence, and not wild imagination or heresay. The way it hangs together, and the way it is written, almost compels you to

consider going through the bibliography to learn more. Presented in the context of an academic response to sloppy historiography, it is a scathing rebuttal that cannot be ignored. Presented as an introduction to the conflict, it doesn't stand alone. More than basic familiarity with the facts of Israel's modern (re)birth as a nation is needed to understand a majority of the references. However, once a basic understanding is in place, this book should serve as the standard by which other accounts or works are judged. Fred

This book is an important exposure of academic mendacity and intellectual dishonesty. Karsh carefully reads the 'so-called revisionist historians' and shows how they have deliberately falsified records, used skimpy facts, made massive generalizations from a single instance, omitted and slanted evidence that contradicts their own claims. Unfortunately this work will not undo the damage these 'historians' have done. They have succeeded in creating 'myths' about the conflict which are part of the commonplace perception of it today. These myths fit in well with the Arab propaganda effort to delegitimize Israel. One would wish that this present volume would be much more widely disseminated than it has been. I would suggest that in this regard the first audience should be the journalists who cover the Middle East, who often carry with them some of the 'intellectual distortions' promoted by the revisionist historians. The second place should be the Middle East Studies Departments of all Western universities.

helpful. as a gift to Tommy, arrive on time. Great looking product, beautifully crafted. Very sharp, good weight, incredible price! Nice and valuable.

In the late 1980s a group calling themselves the 'new historians', including Avi Shlaim, Ilan Pappé and Benny Morris burst onto the scene, claiming to have written the 'real' history of the beginning of the state of Israel, a history that had ostensibly been covered up and which they wished to expose. According to the 'new history', Israel was guilty of a multitude of sins, from direct or indirect responsibility for the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem (Morris) and colluding with Jordanian monarch Abdullah I to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state by secretly agreeing to divide the country between them (Shlaim and Pappé). Morris also insisted that the idea of 'transferring' the Arabs out of the Jewish state had been a central tenet of the Zionist movement, at least from 1937. They attracted criticism quickly, and for years the argument over what exactly happened in the Israeli War of Independence was THE hot topic, resulting in many journalistic and scholarly articles and mutual accusations. By far the most straight-forward, no-holds-barred attack

on the collective theses of the 'New Historians' is this book. Karsh, professor of King's College, faces the 'new historians' on their home turf-namely their claim that their research is based on newly uncovered archival material, a claim that is only partly true. After first demonstrating that their 'ideas' are not new - indeed, many of them have been staples of Arab propaganda for years - Karsh takes a look at the evidence the 'new historians' bring to support their ideas. Repeatedly, whether it is the claim that the Zionist movement was obsessed with 'transfer' or that Britain under Atlee and Bevin, long thought to be anti-Zionist, was in fact a friend of Zionism, Karsh demonstrates that these historians ignored evidence that contradicted their thesis, blew the (slim and selective) evidence they had out of proportion, and at times even misread what the document actually said, such as the case where Morris claimed that a meeting discussing the future of the Negev actually discussed transfer. Worse, they completely failed to consider the historical context of various documents, thus jumping to conclusions not allowed when examining the whole picture. Though Karsh may overreach at times with his rhetoric, it is impossible to ignore his claims. Karsh's rebuttal is not just important in the limited context of correcting a distorted picture of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but is an important warning against the dangers of forcing the facts to fit the theory, rather than the other way around. Historians the world over should take note. This book is a must-read on the still controversial subject of the fateful period of 1947-1949, whatever side of the conflict you may be on.

Accusations that this book is "propaganda" cannot be further from the truth. I suspect that people who make such accusations have not read the book. What Karsh does is show how the "new historians" (especially Morris, Pappe, and Shlaim) distort and misrepresent historical evidence in an effort to fabricate the history of Israel. Likewise, Karsh shows how these historians purposely ignore evidence which contradicts their claims, even though they may be aware of its existence. He shows that the only thing "new" about the "new historians" is their willingness to play loose with historical evidence. Karsh's book completely undermines the credibility of these historians. "Fabricating Israeli History" is an admirable defence of the truth against shoddy, biased scholarship.

A serious study of by a renowned historian challenging the fashionable wave of 'new historians' (who mix politics with history)

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