

Evaluation of Master Thesis *Rewriting Israeli History: New Historians and Critical Sociologists – Formation, Terminology, and Criticism* by Adam Coman BA.

Adam Coman's thesis deals with the emergence, growth, formation, and critique of the so-called "New Historians" and "Critical Sociologists" in the Israeli academic and public discourse.

As sources used in the research, Adam Coman analyzed the works of aforementioned historians and sociologists (Pappé, Morris, Segev and many others) and also the works of their opponents in the academia, i.e. the "old" or mainstream Israeli scholars of the "previous wave" (such as e.g. Shapiro and others) who felt compelled to react to the emergence of the new historians.

Already at this point I wish to remark that Mr. Coman's diploma thesis is a brilliant analysis and an excellent academic work.

The paradigm shift in the Israeli public and academic discourse had been, as the thesis argues, brought about by new findings (declassified and opened archival materials) and by the influence of new methodological and philosophical approaches (such as e.g. Anglo-Saxon critique of colonialism, etc.). According to A. Coman, these were the main reasons of the New Historians' and Critical Sociologists' emergence as well as of a revisionist wave sweeping over national history, national narratives, mythology, and ultimately national identity. This is the principal finding of Chapter 1.

Chapter 2 analysis the transformation of terminological frameworks of research and the retrograde change of emphasis (typically from *alyia* (or ascent) to *hagira* (or colonization), the "First Arab-Israeli War" instead of formerly "War of Independence" ect.). The crucial quality of the thesis lies in its ability achieve a sophisticated contextualized interpretation in contrast to the common practice of superficial reviewing of secondary sources so often witnessed in student works. One of such analytical insights I would like to point out is the New Historians' view of the Palestinians as a "looking glass", a reflection of the Israeli history (used to question Israeli leadership or their intentions), but failing to represent the Palestinians as actual historical agents (p. 62, Chapter 3.4.2).

Lastly, in Chapter 3, the author reviews and analyzes the critical responses to the new scholars by the previous generations of Israeli scholars (Shapiro, Friling, and others).

I consider the diploma thesis as extraordinary, presenting high quality of analysis, sound reasoning, and enriching our understanding of the analyzed phenomena with new insight, new findings. It should be a valid consideration to rework the main argument into a journal article and have it published.

For the final grade I recommend “A” (“excellent”).

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