

The Prime Ministers: Soldiers and Peacemakers

Written by Evelyn Chai Chua

***The Prime Ministers: Soldiers and Peacemakers* will premiere at the Laemmle Royal & Laemmle Town Center on October 14th.**



Soldiers and Peacemakers is set to be the sequel to Academy Award winning director Richard Trank's documentary *The Prime Ministers: The Pioneers*. This also serves as Moriah Film's 14th documentary, and features the voices of Michael Douglas as Yitzhak Rabin, Christoph Waltz as Menachem Begin, and Nicola Peltz as the voice of Esther Cailingold.

This two-part series was based on Ambassador Yehuda Avner's best selling book similarly titled *The Prime Ministers: An Intimate Narrative of Israeli Leadership*. The book reflects on the author's thirty-year history in Israeli politics. Avner's personal narrative, which included serving as advisor for then Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and as speechwriter confidante to Menachim Begin, allowed for a more personal recollection of the series of events leading up to some of the Jewish nation's most dramatic peace negotiations.

Dating back to the time when territorial conflicts between the Arab countries and the Jewish country were at its peak, this film, which was produced by Academy Award winning producer Rabbi Marvin Hier, proves to be more of a personal and earnest outtake than a dry history lesson.

There aren't too many individuals that have had such personal access to such a number of prime ministers as Mr. Avner did. The longevity as well as diversity of roles he undertook allowed for a compelling and highly personal documentary on the complex nature with which decisions that make or break wars are made.

All too often, there isn't a complete picture painted of the delicate negotiations involved between leaders of the so-called free world. Just the same, there is always a degree of sensationalizing that mass media cannot do away with. We all lived to see the media's muted take on the Israeli versus Palestine story, and then there's the unfiltered raw version of the same story that you are exposed to through the eyes of the author and filmmaker of the *Prime Ministers* series.

The first of the two series, which opened in theatres in 2013, explored the years that Ambassador Avner worked for Prime Ministers Levi Eshkol and Golda Meir and on the period he served as an aide to Yitzhak Rabin when he was Israel's U.S. Ambassador in the late 1960s.

As the follow-up to the above-mentioned film, this documentary points to the interesting character contrasts between Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin (1974 - 1977, 1992 - 1995) and Menachin Begin (1977 - 1983). The title itself alludes to both prime ministers' different approaches to dispute resolutions and international relations. Specifically, the contrast is shown in the evidently friendly relations that Prime Minister Begin had with other international leaders, in comparison to the more somber relationship status that Prime Minister Rabin had with other international leaders.

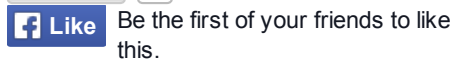
The documentary carries us through the presidential terms of Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan—with Carter playing the biggest role of mediator between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Begin. In the same light, the film also touches on the resignation of then Prime Minister Rabin, the heartbreaking death of Prime Minister Begin's wife and its impact on the said leader, and finally the eventual assassination of Rabin. These are just some of the stories embedded in the film.



The film provides no shortage of never-before-seen film threads and photos about the pivotal moments of the Arab-Israeli conflicts. In particular, the scenes at Camp David where former U.S. president Carter, Sadat, and Begin negotiated the terms of the Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty, along with scenes that included the dramatic rescue of 100 hostages by the Israeli forces in Entebbe, Uganda as instructed by Rabin in 1976 are testaments to the rich archives of footage that the filmmakers' team had access to.

Needless to say, Avner operated from a standpoint of confidant and adviser to both leaders and was privy to history-defining events in Israel. *The Prime Ministers: Soldiers and Peacemakers* makes one thing evidently clear for viewers. Decisions of war are ironically made by men who are often far from the line of fire.

The Prime Ministers: Soldiers and Peacemakers premieres at Laemmle Royal & Laemmle Town Center on October 14th. Visit www.laemmle.com/films/39575 for showtimes and more details.



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