

THE PRIME MINISTERS: SOLDIERS AND PEACEMAKERS



Yehuda Avner counsels Menachem Begin in compelling documentary about Mideast peace process

THE PRIME MINISTERS: SOLDIERS AND PEACEMAKERS (Richard Trank, 2014)

AMC Village 7

66 Third Ave at 11th St.

Opens Friday, October 9

212-398-2597

www.soldiersandpeacemakers-thefilm.com

www.amctheatres.com

🔍🔍🔍 (out of four) The Simon Wiesenthal Center's Oscar-winning team of writer-director-producer Richard Trank and writer-producer Rabbi Marvin Hier (*The Long Way Home*, *Genocide*) has followed up the relatively dull and lifeless *The Prime Ministers: The Pioneers* with the much more involving and absorbing *The Prime Ministers: Soldiers and Peacemakers*. Based on longtime Israeli diplomat and consultant Yehuda Avner's 2010 book, *The Prime Ministers: An Intimate Narrative of Israeli Leadership*, the documentary picks up where the previous one left off, shortly after the Yom Kippur War. Avner, who served the State of Israel in numerous capacities over many years, details the Mideast peace process as he works with Yitzhak Rabin and Menachem Begin, who have dealings with U.S. presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, and Bill Clinton as well as Henry Kissinger, Egyptian president Anwar Sadat, and PLO leader Yasser Arafat. "Both [Begin and Rabin] had started out as rivals and, much later on in life, they found this commonality of spirit in what they both wanted to do for the best of Israel," Avner says early on, describing the attack on the Altalena in 1948, which involved Begin, Rabin, and David Ben-Gurion and almost led to civil war. "Patriotism governed them body and soul over the whole of a lifetime," Avner, who was a Haganah officer at the time, adds. His riveting fly-on-the-wall stories, told in his warm Mancunian accent, take viewers behind the scenes of the complex goings-on, lending fascinating insight into the nature of the proceedings, from state dinners to funerals for assassinated leaders. Trank includes remarkable archival footage, never-before-seen photographs, and original documents and letters as the Israelis and Arabs, and factions within each side, battle over peace. The two-film project still suffers from being told from only one point of view, although Avner, who passed away in March 2015 at the age of eighty-six, has more compelling revelations this time around. Lee Holdridge's score is again overwrought, saving the most personal and intimate memories of family for the end is melodramatic, and the voices of Michael Douglas as Yitzhak Rabin and Christoph Waltz as Menachem Begin feel out of place, but this second installment of *The Prime Ministers* is a far more engrossing look at the evolution of the State of Israel and the never-ending struggle for peace than its predecessor.

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