

Gerald M. Steinberg and Ziv Rubinovitz: Menachem Begin and the Israel-Egypt Peace Process: Between Ideology and Political Realism

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Main content

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Gerald M. Steinberg and Ziv Rubinovitz

Menachem Begin and the Israel-Egypt Peace Process: Between Ideology and Political Realism

Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2019, 378 pp.

The authors of this book focus on the late Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin's ideology and its role in his decision-making process as a peace negotiator. Steinberg and Rubinovitz have entered the Israeli archives, the Begin Heritage Center, and the Jimmy Carter Presidential Library, poking into some newly released materials and searching for mistreated pieces of information. The result is this meticulous research, with new insights on the peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt.

This book lights a candle in the dark, in the sense that Begin did not leave diaries or personal memoirs about this chapter of his life, and shortly after the process was completed he went into the darkness of his last years, when he refrained from communicating via any public outlet. According to Steinberg and Rubinovitz, Begin was at the center of the diplomatic process, perhaps the chief signer of the peace treaty. Their interpretation of the archival findings leads them to characterize Begin's moves as a constant navigation between ideology and political realism. Starting with the international and regional new reality of the 1967 post-Six Day War, the authors follow Menachem Begin's moves, and examine the manifestations of his points of view vis-a-vis the various protocols and his statements on matters of foreign policy. They plunge deeply into official documents, transcripts of meetings during the 1978 Camp David summit, diplomatic cables, and internal assessments. In an attempt to illuminate some of the complexities that made the peace treaty anything but part of an obvious historical course of events, the picture that Steinberg and Rubinovitz paint is one of a great Israeli leader who, unlike the descriptions of some who criticized him in real time as well as retrospectively, did not make Israel's concessions unwillingly or half-heartedly. In particular, the authors negate US President Jimmy Carter's assertion that Begin acted reluctantly or that he was just a rightwing ideologue trapped in a situation where he could not maneuver. Rather, they claim, he was the initiator of the political developments; he was the architect and the motivator of the Camp David...

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Details about Menachem Begin and the Israel-Egypt Peace Process: Focusing on the character and personality of Menachem Begin, Gerald Steinberg and Ziv Rubinovitz offer a new look into the peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt in the 1970s. Begin's role as a peace negotiator has often been marginalized, but this sympathetic and critical portrait restores him to the center of the diplomatic process. Beginning with the events of 1967, Steinberg and Rubinovitz look at Begin's statements on foreign policy, including relations with Egypt, and his role as Prime Minister and chief sign Latest book: menachem begin and the israel-egypt peace process, between ideology and political realism, gerald M. steinberg and ziv rubinovitz, indiana university press, 2019. CV Highlights. Israel's delegate to the IAEA's academic conferences on a Middle East Zone Free of Weapons of Mass Destruction. Team leader of Israel at the Polls (1988 to 2005). Awarded Israel Science Foundation research grant, 2008. Member, Israel Council of Foreign Affairs. Israel Higher-Education Council, Committee on Public Policy in 2013. Inter-parliamentary Coalition for Combating Antisemitism ICCA. Steinberg is qu Focusing on the character and personality of Menachem Begin, Gerald Steinberg and Ziv Rubinovitz offer a new look into the peace negotiations between Israel and Egypt in the 1970s. Begin's role as a peace negotiator has often been marginalized, but this sympathetic and critical portrait restores him to the center of the diplomatic process. Beginning with the events of 1967, Steinberg and Rubinovitz look at Begin's statements on foreign policy, including relations with Egypt, and his role as Prime Minister and chief signer of the Israel-Egypt peace treaty. While Begin did not leave