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Book Review for "The Victory of Zionism"

YOEL MELTZER | JANUARY 14, 2015, 10:46 AM |

The *Victory of Zionism* by Emmanuel Navon is a collection of articles written by Navon over the course of four years from 2010 to 2014. Navon, the Director of the Political Science and Communications Department at the Jerusalem Orthodox College as well as an International Relations lecturer at Tel Aviv University and at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya (IDC), analyzes a myriad of issues confronting Israel on the domestic, regional and international level. In a concise and lucid manner, each article either reveals a tidbit of new information, or debunks a spurious claim, or simply exposes some of the hypocrisy that is rampant amongst the critics of Israel.

Displaying a commanding knowledge of such diverse subjects as judicial activism in Israel or the growing Islamic influence in Africa, Navon often arrives at conclusions that are not the standard politically correct ones. Hence, right from the outset he declares:

I challenge the conventional wisdom and offer a different reading of Israeli politics, of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and of Israel's foreign policy.

Although a profound and insightful thinker, Navon, who was born in Paris and moved to Israel more than twenty years ago, is first and foremost an educator and like any gifted and determined educator he often repeats crucial points in order that the facts and ideas sink into the mind of the reader. When one considers the daily bombardment of information that all of us are exposed to, much of which is neither factually based nor agenda-free, Navon's repetitive approach is not only understandable but it is essential in order to acquire the necessary clarity to effect a real change.

On a conceptual level he is suggesting that only via an intellectually honest approach can one truly understand Israel and all the challenges that it faces, both from within and without. Therefore reality as it is, and not as many distort it to be, must guide Israel if it wishes to not only overcome the many obstacles that are being thrown its way but also to continue to survive and thrive in a very dangerous region.

Although such an understanding would certainly assure "the victory of Zionism" and therefore

justify the title of the book as a possible rebuttal to Peter Beinart's *The Crisis of Zionism*, the book would be more aptly titled *Reclaiming the Israeli Narrative: A New Look at Israel's Domestic, Regional and International Challenges* since this is truly the focus of Navon's book.

Whatever the title, anyone who reads this book with an open mind will be certain to learn something new. This in turn should be enough to ensure the fulfillment of Navon's earnest request:

Many of the ideas developed here go against the tide of conventional wisdom. If the reader is willing to look at Israel and at the Middle East from a different angle after reading this book, this alone will have justified the time I spent writing it.

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