

## Judgment in Jerusalem: Chief Justice Simon Agranat and the Zionist Century

By Pnina Lahav



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Simon Agranat (1906-1992) was the third chief justice of the Israeli Supreme Court and a founding father of Israeli law. Born in Louisville, Kentucky, and educated at the University of Chicago, Agranat brought U.S. progressivism and constitutionalism to Israeli legal soil. Agranat laid the foundation for Israel's bill of rights and took part in nearly every important Israeli legal and political issue of this century. Pnina Lahav's rewarding study of Simon Agranat portrays Israeli history through the lens of judicial opinions. It is based on her extensive interviews with the justice before his death and a close examination of his papers. A major theme in her book is the relationship between Agranat's world view and landmark Israeli Supreme Court opinions, and she tells the compelling story of a visionary jurist and an American pursuing his Zionist dream in Palestine. Here, too, is an illuminating view of Israeli history and legal culture that includes the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Holocaust, the symbiosis between religion and the Jewish state, and the tensions within Zionism itself. Lahav also details the thinking behind Agranat's 1962 decision to convict Adolph Eichmann and the justice's dissent in the "Who Is a Jew?" case in 1970.

This is the first biography of the man who made both a geographical and a psychological journey from the United States to Jerusalem. In demonstrating the influences of one culture on another, *Judgment in Jerusalem* provides important insights into Israeli law and politics and into the complex processes that form a national identity.





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#### **Editorial Review**

#### From Kirkus Reviews

Lahav, a Boston University law professor raised in Israel, provides a textured portrait of the life, times, and legal decisions of American-raised Simon Agranat, former chief justice of Israel's Supreme Court. Lahav's Israeli-American perspective helps her analyze the profound influence of progressive American ideology and legal writing on Israel's most prolific jurist. During Agranat's tumultuous years on Israel's Supreme Court (194876), he even cited Abraham Lincoln while shaping Israel's judicial history. Agranat is seen as the pivotal force who "steered the Israeli judiciary away from legal formalities and toward a more substantive understanding of the meaning of law." Occasionally, Agranat disappoints Lahav's own, more liberal stances on separation of church and state and the rights of Israeli Arabs to mount political challenges to the Jewish state. For all its reforms, the Agranat Court could not tolerate Palestinian nationalism. Lahav sets Agranat's most public episode, the Eichmann trial of 1960, within the ideological context of universal "Utopian" Zionism's struggle with the insular ``Catastrophic'' Zionism; the latter wins out as Agranat betrays his former opposition to the death penalty as a lesson to the world. Lahav sees the Agranat Commission in the wake of the Yom Kippur War as the justice's greatest challenge and legacy. In examining the reasons for national unreadiness in this disastrous surprise attack, Agranat secured both his integrity and his unpopularity. Most Israelis identified with the army (which the commission pilloried) and resented Golda Meir and Moshe Dayan (who were vindicated). The book offers a unique view of Israeli legal history and is far too readable (and relevant) to be dismissed as simply a judicial biography. (11 photos, not seen) -- Copyright ©1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.

#### From the Inside Flap

"Pnina Lahav's evocative and masterfully written biography of one of Israel's greatest justices is a penetrating study of a country, a nation, a legal system combining ancient laws with modern concepts, and a dream turned into destiny."—Elie Wiesel

"[This] is one of the best judicial biographies ever. It is also one of the most acute and riveting depictions of the birth and development of Israel itself. Agranat, as Lahav writes, was to Israeli law what David Ben Gurion was to its politics. This book is worthy of him."—Floyd Abrams

"This is the best biographyI have ever read. Pnina Lahav brilliantly uses the life of Simon Agranat to illuminate the history of Zionism, the history of Israel, the history of law in Israel, and the history of justice. The result is riveting."—Laura Kalman, author of *The Strange Career of Legal Liberalism* and *Abe Fortas* 

"A wonderful book that is not only a biography of one of Israel's most important Chief Justices, but a history of the development of Israel's Supreme Court and of Israeli public law. It includes a fascinating account of the trials arising out of the Holocaust. This is the first biography in English of a man who made the geographical as well as the psychological journey from Chicago to Jerusalem, and it is in part the story of the way one culture can be carried to another by a human being who ultimately is affected by both. It is well worth the attention of anyone interested in Israel, the development of law, the phenomenon of law developed in the absence of a written constitution, and the culture of human rights."—Philippa Strum, author of *The Supreme Court and Political Questions* 

From the Back Cover

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Playing with family in the park, coming to see the water world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you may have done when you have spare time, and then why you don't try issue that really opposite from that. 1 activity that make you not experiencing tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you already been ride on and with addition info. Even you love Judgment in Jerusalem: Chief Justice Simon Agranat and the Zionist Century, you may enjoy both. It is good combination right, you still want to miss it? What kind of hang-out type is it? Oh seriously its mind hangout guys. What? Still don't understand it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

#### **Judith Roemer:**

Judgment in Jerusalem: Chief Justice Simon Agranat and the Zionist Century can be one of your starter books that are good idea. All of us recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary that may increase your knowledge in language, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The author giving his/her effort to get every word into pleasure arrangement in writing Judgment in Jerusalem: Chief Justice Simon Agranat and the Zionist Century but doesn't forget the main stage, giving the reader the hottest along with based confirm resource facts that maybe you can be one among it. This great information can easily drawn you into completely new stage of crucial contemplating.

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