



Outsider in the Promised Land: An Iraqi Jew in Israel

Nissim Rejwan

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In 1951, Israel was a young nation surrounded by hostile neighbors. Its tenuous grip on nationhood was made slipperier still by internal tensions among the various communities that had immigrated to the new Jewish state, particularly those between the politically and socially dominant Jewish leadership hailing from Eastern Europe and the more numerous Oriental Jews from the Middle East and North Africa. Into this volatile mix came Nissim Rejwan, a young Iraqi Jewish intellectual who was to become one of the country's leading public intellectuals and authors. Beginning with Rejwan's arrival in 1951 and climaxing with the tensions preceding Israel's victory in the Six-Day War of 1967, this book colorfully chronicles Israel's internal and external struggles to become a nation, as well as the author's integration into a complex culture. Rejwan documents how the powerful East European leadership, acting as advocates of Western norms and ideals, failed to integrate Israel into the region and let the country take its place as a part of the Middle East. Rejwan's essays and occasional articles are an illuminating example of how minority groups use journalism to gain influence in a society. Finally, the letters and diary entries reproduced in *Outsider in the Promised Land* are full of lively, witty meditations on history, literature, philosophy, education, and art, as well as one man's personal struggle to find his place in a new nation.

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