



# Bringing Zion Home: Israel in American Jewish Culture, 1948-1967

*Emily Alice Katz*



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*Demonstrates how American Jews used culture—art, dance, music, fashion, literature—to win the hearts and minds of postwar Americans to the cause of Israel.*

*Bringing Zion Home* examines the role of culture in the establishment of the “special relationship” between the United States and Israel in the immediate postwar decades. Many American Jews first encountered Israel through their roles as tastemakers, consumers, and cultural impresarios—that is, by writing and reading about Israel; dancing Israeli folk dances; promoting and purchasing Israeli goods; and presenting Israeli art and music. It was precisely by means of these cultural practices, argues Emily Alice Katz, that American Jews insisted on Israel’s “natural” place in American culture, a phenomenon that continues to shape America’s relationship with Israel today.

Katz shows that American Jews’ promotion and consumption of Israel in the cultural realm was bound up with multiple agendas, including the quest for Jewish authenticity in a postimmigrant milieu and the desire of upwardly mobile Jews to polish their status in American society. And, crucially, as influential cultural and political elites positioned “culture” as both an engine of American dominance and as a purveyor of peace in the Cold War, many of Israel’s American Jewish impresarios proclaimed publicly that cultural patronage of and exchange with Israel advanced America’s interests in the Middle East and helped spread the “American way” in the postwar world. *Bringing Zion Home* is the first book to shine a light squarely upon the role and importance of Israel in the arts, popular culture, and material culture of postwar America.

Emily Alice Katz teaches history at the University of California, Irvine.



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