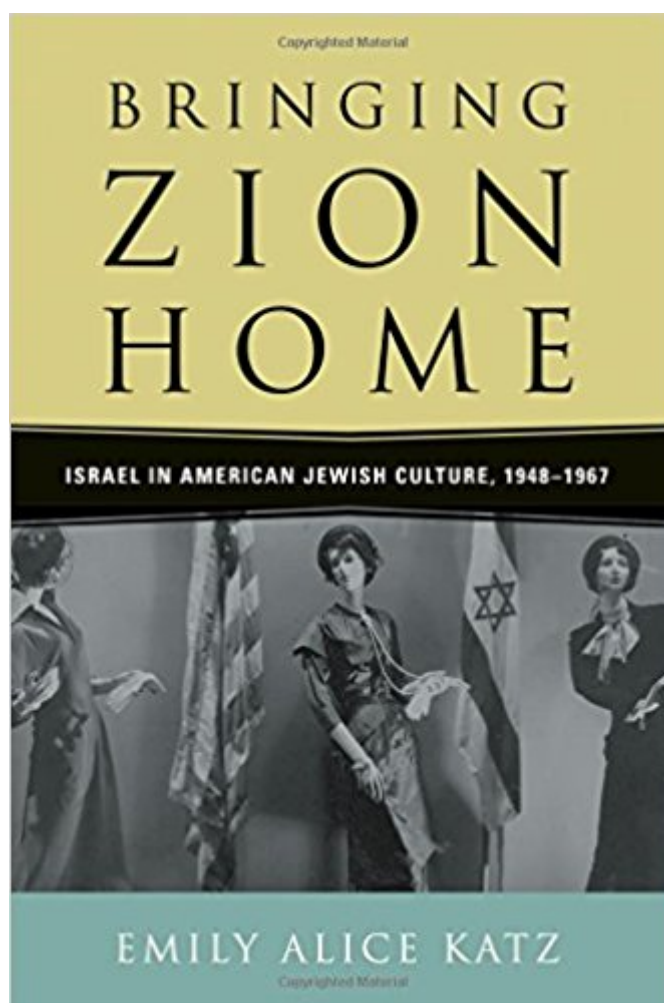


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Bringing Zion Home: Israel In American Jewish Culture, 1948-1967



Synopsis

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. “A sophisticated work of historical scholarship” [Katz] gives readers much to ponder. —CHOICE

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[a] sophisticated work of historical scholarship [Katz] gives readers much to ponder. "CHOICE" Katz has written an engrossing account of efforts by American Jews to bring Israeli culture into their suburban lives during the postwar decades. She argues persuasively that American Jews shifted their focus away from Europe through their embrace of Israeli culture. Journal of American History [a] sophisticated work of historical scholarship [Katz] gives readers much to ponder.

CHOICE "Bringing Zion Home will have appeal to a wide variety of disciplines and will serve as a great example of how to effectively and convincingly execute material and cultural analysis.

Ultimately, Katz offers an engaging, colorful, and insightful investigation of the role of Israel in shaping American Jewish self-identity and culture. American Historical Review Katz has written an engrossing account of efforts by American Jews to bring Israeli culture into their suburban lives during the postwar decades. She argues persuasively that American Jews shifted their focus away from Europe through their embrace of Israeli culture. Journal of American History [a] sophisticated work of historical scholarship [Katz] gives readers much to ponder. CHOICE "Bringing Zion Home will have appeal to a wide variety of disciplines and will serve as a great example of how to effectively and convincingly execute material and cultural analysis. Ultimately, Katz offers an engaging, colorful, and insightful investigation of the role of Israel in shaping American Jewish self-identity and culture." -- American Historical Review "Katz has written an engrossing account of efforts by American Jews to bring Israeli culture into their suburban lives during the postwar decades. She argues persuasively that American Jews shifted their focus away from Europe through their embrace of Israeli culture." -- Journal of American History .. "[a] sophisticated work of historical scholarship ... [Katz] gives readers much to ponder." -- CHOICE

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

A very helpful book for anyone examining Israel's role on American Jewish life. Culture was neglected by far too many scholars before, but rather than being peripheral to the relationship it is at its core.

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