



Eye on Israel: How America Came to View Israel as an Ally

Michelle Mart

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Examines the image of Israel in American culture before 1960.

Eye on Israel shows how the seeds of contemporary U.S.-Israeli relations were sown in the cultural narratives of the late 1940s and 1950s, long before American policymakers formed a close political and strategic relationship with Israel. Michelle Mart brings together diverse areas of history and examines the cultural antecedents of this much-heralded relationship. She also tackles the difficult question of the relationship between American Jews and U.S. policy toward the Jewish state. Finally, Mart demonstrates that American images of Israel and Jews were shaped by specific cold war concerns—visible in movies, novels, magazines, and newspapers—and reflect American identity and political mythology in the midst of the struggle against communism. The result is a unique examination of the intersections of culture, diplomacy, and ethnic and national identity through the specific case of U.S.-Israeli relations and American Jewish identity in the postwar period.

“...*Eye on Israel* is an intelligent and historically grounded study of the image of Israel in the United States from the mid-1940s to the late 1950s ... [it] is a truly valuable book that combines diplomatic and cultural history in innovative ways ... It is [a] book that will interest scholars in diplomatic studies, Middle East studies, American Studies, and ethnic studies, as well as readers who are interested in the history of the Israel or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. One can only hope that Mart continues down this path; I would love to see the book that takes this story through the 1967 war and beyond.” — Melani McAlister, *American Jewish History*

“Mart’s book ... adds to the literature and provides a number of enlightening examples and quotes. Read as a cultural-intellectual—and less as a political-strategic—study of evolving attitudes toward Jews in postwar America, this book supplements our understanding of what emerged as a central issue of U.S. foreign policy in later years.” — *American Historical Review*

“...an impressive, well-documented and original effort to impart new insights and significance to a research field that is permeated with simplistic and superficial generalizations.” — *The Journal of Israeli History*

“Historians in a variety of fields will appreciate Mart’s analysis of American popular culture and its influence on political issues. Her documentation is carefully used and impressive in its range. A more general audience will also appreciate this volume for its lively narrative and engaging subject matter.” — *The Journal of American History*

“This is a dazzling combination of social, cultural, intellectual, political, and diplomatic history, relying on a wealth of previously untapped original sources to provide a more nuanced look at the American response to the partition of Palestine and the establishment of the State of Israel.” — David Desser, coauthor of *American Jewish Filmmakers, Second Edition*

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