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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Reform Judaism is the official voice of the Union for Reform Judaism, linking the institutions and affiliates of Reform Judaism with every Reform Jew. *RJ* covers developments within our Movement while interpreting world events and Jewish tradition from a Reform perspective. Shared by 305,000 member households, *RJ* conveys the creativity, diversity, and dynamism of Reform Judaism.

DEAR READER

Israel—The Responsibility Is Ours

We live at an extraordinary moment in the history of the Jewish people. After 2,000 years, we have once again established a sovereign Jewish nation in the Land of Israel—the one place in the world where Shabbat and the festivals provide the rhythm of the calendar and where Jews can apply Jewish values and the Jewish spirit to every aspect of life.



PHOTO BY HENRY CROSSMAN

We are blessed to do what Moses was not permitted to do: to set foot on the soil of the Jewish State. And not only can we walk on her soil; we can build on it. We can watch children grow up on it, speaking the language of the Bible, revived at last as a spoken tongue.

This precious moment of renewal, rebirth, and possibility is ours. Will we seize it, or will we squander it?

Let us not allow our dissatisfaction with this or that government policy to dampen our support for Israel. Yes, Israeli politicians can be every bit as incompetent as our own. Yet politics has nothing whatever to do with our connection to the Zionist idea—an idea which lives in the soul, in the words of the Psalmist, and in the prayers we say every day. Our connection to Israel is not rooted in ideology, but in a religious vision and in a dream of what Israel can become.

Israel needs us now as never before. It requires our political activism, our financial support, and our frequent visits. And it requires us to answer the lies and distortions of Israel haters, including those self-haters in our midst who uphold the rights of every group except their own.

And just as much as Israel needs us, we need Israel—the place that inspires us and pumps the dynamism of Jewish life through our veins. For Reform Jews the stakes are especially high. If we fail to establish a significant presence on Israeli soil and do not become a powerful force in the next generation, we will have consigned ourselves to the margins of Jewish history. While Reform successes in Israel give me confidence that this will not happen, it is for this reason that our support of Reform Judaism in Israel is so vitally important.

As we approach the 60th anniversary of the Jewish State, let us join together in gratitude to the Eternal One of blessing. Let us remember that Israel's fate rests not only in the hands of Israeli's citizens, but in ours as well. May we be ready for what the times require and our tradition demands: that we be untiring partners in the building of Zion.

Eric H. Yoffie

Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie
 President, Union for Reform Judaism