

Dear Town Meeting Members,

I grew up in an Orthodox, Zionist household. At dinner, we often talked about the Holocaust, but more often we talked about Israel and the wonderful things it was doing in the barren desert of the middle east. We bought Israel bonds. Planted trees in Israel. I attended Young Judea, a Zionist youth group that prepared young Jews to travel to Israel to work and live. In fact, both my older brothers took time off from college to work and live on a kibbutz for a year or two. I learned that supporting Israel was part of being a good Jew. And that any criticism of Israel was a criticism of Jews as a whole and was antisemitic. Interestingly, during the Vietnam War criticism of the war was considered un-American.

But I am among a growing cadre of tens of thousands of Jews across the country who've learned to separate being Jewish from blindly supporting Israel.

With the help of billions of dollars in US military aid, the state of Israel has to date killed more than 35,000 Gaza civilians, two-thirds of them children and women, with thousands more likely to die, including hostages, as Israel pursues its stated goal of killing every last Hamas fighter in the crowded city of Ramallah. I believe that Israel's continued slaughter of civilians in its scorched-earth war policy, not calls for a ceasefire, is what fans the flames of antisemitism here in the US.

I ask you tonight to please have the moral courage to support the ceasefire resolution before you. Do it because it's the right thing to do. Do it despite the likelihood that you'll be unfairly condemned as antisemites. Do it and know you will have my support and the support of so many in this community who pray for the slaughter and the genocide to end.

In peace,
Jordan Weinstein
TMM, pct 21