

Reading guide for *Israel through My Lens*

Introduction

Photojournalist David Rubinger reports his own story in *Israel through My Lens*, which in many ways reflects the history of Israel that he has recorded so faithfully with his camera. In recounting his eventful career, spent mostly with *Time-Life*, Rubinger proves himself a gifted raconteur, sharing anecdotes of the numerous leading personalities he has photographed and telling the stories behind his most famous pictures. He has photographed all of Israel's leaders, many of whom have allowed him a remarkable degree of access to their lives. But Rubinger has not confined his reporting to war and politics: by photographing the successive waves of Jewish immigrants from Europe, the Arab world, Russia, and Ethiopia, he has also created a valuable record of Israel's transformation from a country of six hundred thousand to one of seven million. Also included in the book are a selection of Rubinger's never-before-published personal photographs, which provide vivid behind-the-scenes glimpses into the work of a photojournalist. Published on the sixtieth anniversary of Israel's independence, *Israel through My Lens* is both a personal account of one man's life with the camera and a visual document of the birth of a nation.

About the Authors

David Rubinger was born in Vienna in 1924. He emigrated to British Palestine in 1939 and developed a passion for photography while serving in the British army's Jewish Brigade. After fighting in Israel's War of Independence, he became a professional news photographer, reporting on each of his young nation's subsequent wars from the front lines, first for the Israeli media and later as a correspondent for *Time-Life*. A winner of the Israel Prize for services to the media and a fixture on the masthead of *Time* magazine, he is the only photographer whose work is on permanent display at the Knesset, Israel's legislature.

Ruth Corman is a London-based photographer, art consultant, and curator, as well as the former director of the British Israel Arts Foundation. She has organized many exhibitions in Britain and Israel, including two shows of David Rubinger's photography. David Rubinger's latest photographic exhibition, *Israel through My Lens*, is curated by Ruth and is currently touring cities worldwide including Portland, Bangkok, and Singapore.

Discussion Questions:

1. David Rubinger photographed what he thought was the very beginning of the Settler movement in Israel. What impact do you feel the settlers have had on Israel and its future?
2. What do you think was unique in the way that David Rubinger was able to work as a photojournalist? How does this differ, if at all, from the way young photojournalists work today?

3. David Rubinger strove always to respect the dignity of those people he photographed. Do you think he always achieved this? How is this approach different from today's photojournalism?
4. "A picture is worth 1,000 words" is a popular saying. Do you agree with this? Are there any particular photographs of David's that illustrate this maxim?
5. Select one of Rubinger's photographs that you feel particularly conveys the story that it is telling. Explain why.
6. Do you think photography can be powerful enough to influence public opinion? Are there any instances of Rubinger's photography where you think this might have happened?
7. Can there be such a concept as objectivity in photography, or does one's own empathy with a particular subject matter impede objectivity?
8. Should an Israeli photojournalist always record the truth, even though in some instances it might hurt Israel's image abroad? Or should there be a degree of self censorship?