

# 75 Non-Israelis Who Helped Shape Israel

Many people, Jewish and non-Jewish, have played a part in the State of Israel's creation, survival and development despite never themselves becoming Israeli. For good or bad, Israel would not be what it is today without the contributions of these 75 people. They are, of course, not the only non-Israelis who have been important in Israel's history, but all have been essential. They join our lists of [75 current Israelis](#), [75 people from Israel's history](#) and our [75 Zionist founders](#).



## **Bella Abzug, 1920–1998**

Abzug was the [first Jewish woman elected to Congress](#), representing New York as a Democrat in the House from 1971 to 1977. The daughter of immigrants from Russia, she joined Zionist youth group Hashomer Hatzir in her teens and raised money for [Zionism](#), often by speaking at subway stops. In Congress, she promoted economic and military aid to Israel. She fought to reverse the [1975 U.N. resolution equating Zionism with racism](#).

Photo: Library of Congress

## **Sheldon Adelson, 1933–2021**

Casino magnate Adelson was one of the biggest donors to Israeli and Jewish causes. He launched and owned Israel Hayom, Israel's most widely distributed newspaper, and was a stalwart backer of [Benjamin Netanyahu](#). He funded organizations to counter anti-Israel narratives on college campuses. He was also a major contributor to the Republican Jewish Coalition and GOP campaigns in the United States.



Photo: U.S. Embassy Jerusalem, CC BY 2.0



## **Konrad Adenauer, 1876–1967**

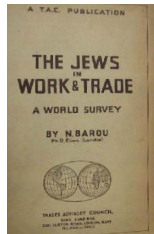
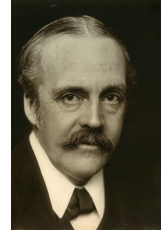
Adenauer, West Germany's chancellor from 1949 to 1963, [initiated talks](#) in March 1952 that resulted in [West Germany agreeing to pay](#) Israel 3 billion marks over 12 years as Holocaust reparations. The funds were crucial to the [fledgling state's economy](#) but were [criticized as "blood money"](#) by [Menachem Begin](#) and others. The two states established [full diplomatic relations](#) two years after Adenauer left office.

Photo: Peter Bouserath, Christian Democratic Union, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, CC BY-SA 3.0 DE, via Wikimedia Commons

### **Arthur Balfour, 1848–1930**

Balfour, an English politician and diplomat who served as the British prime minister from 1902 to 1905, was the foreign secretary in November 1917 when [he sent a letter](#) to Lord Rothschild that became known as the [Balfour Declaration](#). The brief statement announced the British government's support for establishing a Jewish national home in Palestine, which the [British captured](#) a month later.

Photo: George Charles Beresford, National Portrait Gallery



### **Noah Barou, 1889–1955**

Born in Ukraine, Barou was a trade unionist and political activist who was involved with [Poalei Zion](#). After that group broke with the new Soviet authorities, he moved to London, where he helped found the World Jewish Congress in 1936. He served on its Board of Deputies and, starting in 1948, led its European executive, a position from which he helped negotiate Israel's [1952 reparations deal](#) with West Germany.

Photo: Noah Barou's "The Jews in Work & Trade" (courtesy Kennys Bookshop, Galway, Ireland).

### **Fritz Bauer, 1903–1968**

Bauer was a German Jewish judge and prosecutor before and after World War II. He was arrested by the Nazis in 1933, lived in Denmark from 1936 to 1943, then escaped to neutral Sweden. He returned to Germany in 1949. After he learned from a fellow concentration camp survivor in 1957 that [Adolf Eichmann](#) was hiding in Argentina, he notified [the Mossad](#), which [captured the Nazi war criminal](#) in 1960.

Photo: A. Mergen, Fritz Bauer Institut



### **Leonard Bernstein, 1918–1990**

[Born in Massachusetts](#) to Ukrainian Jewish immigrants, Bernstein was a prominent pianist, conductor and humanitarian. His longtime association with the [Israel Philharmonic Orchestra](#) began with a concert he conducted in Tel Aviv in 1947. Among other appearances, he led a Be'er Sheva concert in 1948 for troops [fighting for independence](#) and a [Mount Scopus concert in 1967](#) to celebrate [Jerusalem's reunification](#).

Photo: Marion S. Trikosko, U.S. News and World Report Collection, Library of Congress

### **Jacob Blaustein, 1892–1970**

Serving as the [American Jewish Committee](#) president, Blaustein in 1950 coordinated with Israeli Prime Minister [David Ben-Gurion](#) to reach the [Blaustein-Ben-Gurion Agreement on Israel-Diaspora relations](#). The agreement aimed to secure financial and political support for Israel by affirming that [Diaspora Jews' first allegiance](#) was to their own countries and that Israel did not speak for non-Israeli Jews.

Photo: Moshe Milner, Israeli Government Press Office





**Louis Brandeis, 1856-1941**

The [first Jew on the U.S. Supreme Court](#), [Brandeis](#) influenced many American Jews in the early 20th century to become Zionists. He persuaded [President Woodrow Wilson](#), a close friend, to support the 1917 [Balfour Declaration](#) and the [British Mandate](#). He played a key role in the formation in 1926 of the Palestine Economic Corp., which helped finance development in the Land of Israel.

Photo: George Grantham Bain Collection, Library of Congress

**Charles Bronfman, 1931-**

Bronfman, part of the Canadian Jewish family who built the Seagram beverage company, co-founded [Birthright Israel](#), which brings young Jewish adults from around the world to Israel for a [10-day educational visit](#). His foundation, Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, supports organizations in Israel, the United States and Canada working in the areas of Jewish life, youth and communities.

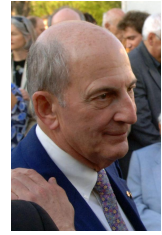


Photo: Moshe Milner, Israeli Government Press Office



**Ralph Bunche, 1904-1971**

[Bunche](#), an American diplomat, received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950 for brokering the [armistice agreements](#) between Israel and four Arab neighbors in 1949. He served in 1947 with the [U.N. Special Committee on Palestine](#), which recommended [partition](#). He was a deputy to the U.N. mediator in the 1948 Arab-Israel war, [Count Folke Bernadotte](#), and succeeded him when [Bernadotte was assassinated](#).

Photo: Scurlock Studio Records, Archives Center, National Museum of American History, Smithsonian Institution, CC0

**George W. Bush, 1946-**

The [43rd U.S. president](#), Bush offered a [vision for a two-state Israeli-Palestinian solution](#) in June 2002 that inspired the "[Roadmap for Peace](#)" presented by the Quartet (the United States, European Union, United Nations and Russia) in 2003. He [held talks](#) with Israeli Prime Minister [Ehud Olmert](#) and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas in [Annapolis, Maryland, in 2007](#). Abbas rejected Olmert's resulting peace offer in 2008. Bush's 2003 invasion of Iraq dramatically changed Israel's neighborhood. Photo: Eric Draper, White House



**Jimmy Carter, 1924-**

The [39th U.S. president](#), Carter mediated the [1978 Camp David Accords](#) and [1979 peace treaty](#) between Israeli Prime Minister [Menachem Begin](#) and Egyptian President [Anwar Sadat](#). The treaty was the first between Israel and an Arab state. In his post-presidency, he has taken public positions increasingly critical of Israel, highlighted by his 2006 book, "Palestine Peace Not Apartheid."

Photo: Ansel Adams, National Portrait Gallery, CC0

### **Emanuel Celler, 1888–1981**

Celler was New York's longest-serving congressman, holding a House seat from 1923 to 1973. He read [Herzl](#) during World War I and became a Zionist. He attempted to assist fellow Jews by opposing the [Immigration Act of 1924](#), which cut off most Jewish immigration to the United States, and he [advocated for the admission of Jewish refugees](#) during and after World War II.

Photo: National Photo Co. via Wikimedia Commons



### **Winston Churchill, 1874–1965**

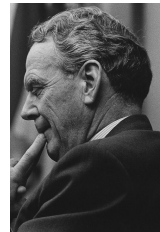
Churchill visited Palestine in March 1921 as the British secretary of state for the colonies and declared that a Jewish national home would be a "blessing to the whole world." [In July 1922](#), after the House of Lords voted to retract the [Balfour Declaration](#), Churchill persuaded the Commons to maintain support for a Jewish home in Palestine. He argued before the [Peel Commission](#) in 1937 that Britain [should enable Jewish immigration](#) to achieve a majority.

Photo: British Central Office of Information

### **Clark Clifford, 1906–1998**

As a [special presidential counsel](#), Clifford [opposed the pro-Arab State Department](#) and urged President [Harry Truman](#) to [maintain support](#) for the [U.N. partition of Palestine](#) and to lift the arms embargo on Jewish forces heading into Israel's War of Independence in 1948. He equated support for [partition](#) with strengthening the United States' presence in the Middle East at the onset of the [Cold War](#).

Photo: Yoichi R. Okamoto, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration



### **Bill Clinton, 1946–**

As president, Clinton [hosted the signing](#) of the [1993 Oslo Accords](#), helped Jordan and Israel achieve a [peace treaty in 1994](#), and mediated the [1995 Oslo II agreement](#) that recognized the Palestinian Authority. He brokered the [Wye River Memorandum](#) in 1998 to keep the Oslo process alive and brought Israeli Prime Minister [Ehud Barak](#) and PA President Yasser Arafat to [Camp David in mid-2000](#)

before presenting the [Clinton Parameters](#) for a final peace deal in December 2000.

Photo: Bob McNeely, White House

### **Irwin Cotler, 1940–**

Cotler is Canada's special envoy on preserving Holocaust remembrance and combating antisemitism after serving as a member of Parliament and justice minister. He defended Israel and Jews at the 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, which became an extended attack on [Zionism](#). Cotler serves as the international chair of Canada's [Raoul Wallenberg Centre for Human Rights](#).

Photo: Jindřich Nosek (NoJin), CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons







### **Richard Crossman, 1907–1974**

A leader of the Labor Party Zionists in the British Parliament, [Crossman](#) served on the 1944–1946 Anglo–American Palestine Commission, which aimed to set the number of Jews permitted into Palestine after World War II. He was sympathetic to Palestine’s Arabs until [Chaim Weizmann](#) moved him toward [Zionism](#).

Crossman wrote the 1960 book “A Nation Reborn” about the creation of the Jewish state.

Photo: Bassano Ltd. via Wikimedia Commons

### **Lester Crown, 1925–**

American billionaire Crown is a philanthropist who supports many Israeli causes, including [Tel Aviv University](#) and the [Weizmann Institute of Science](#). He is dedicated to sharing Israel’s accomplishments with the world. He is a director for the Jerusalem Foundation and the [Jewish Theological Seminary](#) and an honorary trustee at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

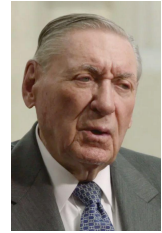


Photo: American Committee for the Weizmann Institute of Science, YouTube screen grab



### **Ted Deutch, 1966–**

Deutch, a Democratic congressman from Florida since 2010, succeeded [David Harris](#) as the [American Jewish Committee](#) CEO on Oct. 1, 2022. In the U.S. House he introduced and supported legislation and resolutions to further U.S.–Israel relations. He helped pass the [U.S.–Israel Strategic Partnership Act](#) of 2014 and a denunciation of Hamas’ use of human shields in July 2014.

Photo: U.S. Congress

### **Blanche “Baffy” Dugdale, 1880–1948**

A close adviser to [Chaim Weizmann](#) on his relations with British officials, [Dugdale](#) was a strong, non–Jewish advocate for [Zionism](#). A niece of [Arthur Balfour](#)’s, she wrote a biography of him and a book on the [Balfour Declaration](#). She served on Britain’s delegation to the League of Nations’ 1932 assembly. She spoke at Zionist Congresses and worked for the [Jewish Agency](#)’s political department through the 1940s.

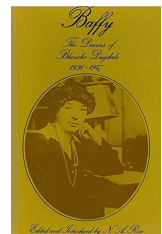
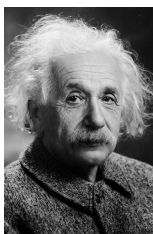


Photo: “Baffy: The Diaries of Blanche Dugdale 1937–1947” book cover courtesy Amazon



### **Albert Einstein, 1879–1955**

[Einstein](#) was a Zionist who wrote about the importance of Jewish nationalism in 1921. The physicist credited [Zionism](#) with strengthening the Jewish community, though he [preferred a binational Palestine](#) to [partition](#). He raised money for the [Hebrew University](#) and spoke at its site in 1923. After [Chaim Weizmann](#) died in 1952, Prime Minister [David Ben-Gurion](#) offered Einstein the [presidency of Israel](#), which he declined.

Photo: Oren Jack Turner

### **Max Fisher, 1908–2005**

Pittsburgh native [Fisher](#), who made his fortune in Midwestern gas stations and real estate, advised Republican presidents from [Richard Nixon](#) to [George W. Bush](#) on the Middle East and Jewish issues. He helped persuade Nixon to [airlift arms to Israel](#) during the [October 1973 war](#). As a philanthropist devoted to Jewish causes, he raised hundreds of millions of dollars for Israel and chaired the [Jewish Agency](#) board.



Photo: Amos Ben Gershom, Israeli Government Press Office



### **Abraham Foxman, 1940–**

Foxman was the national director of the [Anti-Defamation League](#) from 1987 to 2015. He and ADL spoke out against rising anti-Israel sentiment as an expression of increasing antisemitism beginning in the late 1990s. A Holocaust survivor, he wrote a book about re-emerging antisemitism in 2003, “Never Again?” Under his leadership, ADL promoted training exchanges between U.S. and Israeli law enforcement.

Photo: Department of Defense via Flickr

### **Jorge García-Granados, 1900–1961**

García-Granados, Guatemala’s ambassador to the United Nations and a member of the [U.N. Special Committee on Palestine](#), was moved by [Chaim Weizmann’s partition](#) pleas to UNSCOP in July 1947 and cast the first vote for U.N. General Assembly [Resolution 181](#) on [Nov. 29, 1947](#). He persuaded other Latin American countries to back the resolution. He wrote the book “The Birth of Israel: The Drama as I Saw It.”



Photo: Moshe Pridan, National Photo Collection of Israel



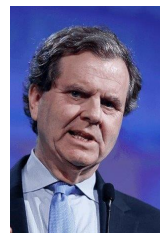
### **Arthur Goldberg, 1908–1990**

[Goldberg](#) resigned as a U.S. Supreme Court justice in 1965 to serve as the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. He drafted the text of U.N. Security Council [Resolution 242](#), the basis of all “land for peace” negotiations, after the [June 1967 war](#) in the Middle East. He emphasized that the [resolution was intentionally vague](#) about how much captured territory Israel should withdraw from in exchange for peace.

Photo: Executive Office of the President

### **David Harris, 1949–**

Harris served as the chief executive of the [American Jewish Committee](#) from 1990 until the end of September 2022. He made advocacy for a Jewish, democratic, internationally accepted Israel a fundamental part of AJC’s efforts. He worked for Soviet Jewry in the 1980s and played an important role in facilitating the immigration and absorption of [some 1 million ex-Soviet Jews](#) in Israel. Photo: American Jewish Committee





**Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, 1921–2006**

[Hertzberg](#), who arrived in the United States from Poland in 1926, was a Conservative rabbi and scholar. He was the president of the American Jewish Congress in the 1970s and vice president of the World Jewish Congress from 1975 to 1991. He opposed Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza and supported Palestinian statehood. His 1970 book, "[The Zionist Idea](#)," was seminal in [Zionism](#) scholarship.

Photo: Stsparky via Wikimedia Commons

**Malcolm Hoenlein, 1944–**

[Hoenlein](#) is transitioning out of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, which coordinates support for Israel, after serving as the executive vice chairman since 1986. He handed the CEO position to William Daroff in 2020. He organized a solidarity rally for Israel in Washington and founded the Conference on Soviet Jewry. His current efforts include recruiting STEM professors to Israel.



Photo: Matty Stern, U.S. Embassy Tel Aviv



**King Hussein, 1935–1999**

As [Jordan's king](#), Hussein tried to annex the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem while ruling them from 1948 to 1967. He lost everything [west of the Jordan River](#) after he attacked Israel to support Egypt and Syria in the [1967 war](#), but he [largely kept Jordan out](#) of the [1973 war](#). He [withdrew claims to the West Bank](#) in 1988 while maintaining stewardship over the Temple Mount. He signed a [peace treaty with Israel](#) in 1994.

Photo: Israeli Government Press Office

**Henry "Scoop" Jackson, 1912–1983**

As a congressman from 1941 to 1953 and a senator from 1953 until 1983 for Washington state, Jackson was one of the leading pro-Zionist and [pro-Israel voices](#) in Congress. He wrote legislative amendments in 1970 that facilitated the U.S. sale of F-4 Phantoms to Israel and in 1974 that pressured the Soviet Union to allow Jews to emigrate. He organized support for the arms airlift to Israel during the [1973 war](#). Photo: Bernard Gotfryd, Library of Congress



**Eddie Jacobson, 1891–1955**

[Jacobson](#) and [Harry Truman](#) became close friends during World War I and partnered after the war in a failed haberdashery. In March 1948, Jacobson visited Truman, now the president, at the White House and persuaded him to meet with [Chaim Weizmann](#) at a time when [Truman was refusing to see Zionist leaders](#). Jacobson's intervention is considered crucial in [Truman's recognition of Israel](#) that May.

Photo: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, Harry S. Truman Library

### **Kenneth Jacobson, 1943-**

The deputy national director of the [Anti-Defamation League](#), Jacobson is the civil rights organization's No. 2 official and its longest-serving professional. Since 1971, in roles that include international affairs, education, and marketing and communications, he has been an important voice in ADL's support for Israel. He has been vocal in warning about rising antisemitism in the United States and abroad. Photo: Anti-Defamation League



### **Lyndon Johnson, 1908-1973**

The 36th U.S. president, Johnson increased U.S. economic and [military support](#) for Israel. Unlike [Dwight Eisenhower in 1956](#), Johnson did not demand Israel's immediate withdrawal from captured territory after the [1967 war](#). He [outlined five principles](#) for peace in the Middle East that became the basis for U.N. Security Council [Resolution 242](#), the foundation for subsequent Arab-Israeli negotiations.

Photo: Arnold Newman, White House Press Office

### **Isaiah "Si" Kenen, 1905-1988**

Isaiah "Si" Kenen in 1951 founded the American Zionist Committee for Public Affairs, the predecessor of the [American Israel Public Affairs Committee](#) (AIPAC). Kenen's organization provided a united pro-Israel voice in Washington and helped win financial aid and rhetorical support for Israel. In the 1940s, Kenen was an information director for the [Jewish Agency](#) and briefly part of Israel's delegation to the United Nations.

Photo: AIPAC



### **Jeane Kirkpatrick, 1926-2006**

Kirkpatrick was the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations under President [Ronald Reagan](#). She built a close relationship with Israeli Ambassador Yehuda Blum and was as staunch in her support of Israel as she was in her opposition to the Soviet Union. She criticized states that vilified Israel, opposed sanctions after [Israel bombed Iraq's nuclear reactor](#) and defended Israel against charges of discrimination against Palestinians.

Photo: White House Photographic Collection

### **Henry Kissinger, 1923-**

Kissinger was the national security adviser and secretary of state to Presidents [Richard Nixon](#) and [Gerald Ford](#). He heavily influenced U.S. policy in the Middle East and made "[shuttle diplomacy](#)" famous after the [October 1973 war](#). He [stalled to give Israel time](#) in that war to push across the Suez Canal. His approach of [interim, confidence-building steps](#) put Israel and Egypt on the path toward their [1979 treaty](#).

Photo: U.S. State Department







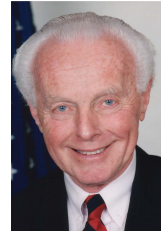
### **Howard Kohr, 1955-**

Howard Kohr has served as the top executive of the [American Israel Public Affairs Committee](#) since 1996. Under Kohr, AIPAC has built support beyond the Jewish community. Its lobbying for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship has drawn criticism for aligning with Israeli policies, including [opposition](#) to the [2015 Iran nuclear deal](#). For the 2022 elections, AIPAC launched a PAC and a super PAC to directly support pro-Israel candidates, regardless of party, for the first time.

Photo: Howard Kohr (right) with Prime Minister Ehud Olmert in 2007 (Amos Ben Gershom, Israeli Government Press Office)

### **Tom Lantos, 1928-2008**

A native of Hungary, Lantos was the only Holocaust survivor to serve in Congress, [representing California in the House](#) from 1981 to 2008. Steven Spielberg's documentary "The Last Days" featured Lantos' life story. He was an advocate for international human rights, [Soviet Jewry](#) and strong U.S. support for Israel, though he was willing to criticize Israeli policies. A street in Netanya is named for him. Photo: U.S. Congress



### **Naomi Lauter, 1930-2017**

Recruited by [Si Kenen](#), Lauter worked with the [American Israel Public Affairs Committee](#) in San Francisco for more than 50 years, from chief volunteer recruiter to regional director to a consultant training staff across the country. She was active in civil rights, working with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. She co-founded the New Israel Fund. She visited Israel more than 35

times. Photo: Courtesy J. The Jewish News of Northern California

### **Emma Lazarus, 1849-1887**

Jewish poet Lazarus' words, taken from "The New Colossus," are on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty: "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." She wrote some of the earliest works on antisemitism in Russia and in the United States. Though she died a decade before the [First Zionist Congress](#), Lazarus advocated for a homeland for the Jewish people in Palestine. Drawing: T. Johnson and W. Kurtz



### **Bernard Lewis, 1916-2018**

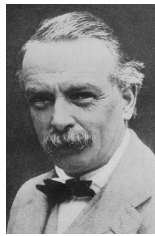
Orientalist scholar Lewis, a London native who finished his academic career at Princeton, influenced [American foreign policy](#) and the West's attitudes toward the Middle East. He backed U.S. intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan. His "Lewis Doctrine" urged the promotion of democracy in countries with despotism. He and Edward Said were frequent foes in [Middle East studies](#). Lewis' books included "Islam and the West" and "The Arabs in History."

Photo: Nataev, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons



### **Samuel Lewis, 1930–2014**

Lewis served as the [U.S. ambassador to Israel](#) from 1977 to 1985, second in tenure to Walworth Barbour. He played an important part in brokering [Israeli-Egyptian peace](#) and provided the on-site U.S. response to the 1981 Israeli [raid on the Iraqi nuclear reactor](#) and Israel's [1982 invasion of Lebanon](#). He was a critic of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. He was involved with the Israel Policy Forum and J Street.  
Photo: Ann Thomas, U.S. State Department



### **David Lloyd George, 1863–1945**

Lloyd George was the British prime minister from 1916 to 1922. His government issued the [Balfour Declaration](#) and [took control of Palestine](#) during World War I, negotiated for the inclusion of the declaration's language at the [San Remo peace conference](#) and in [the mandate](#) the League of Nations granted Britain for Palestine, and [installed Herbert Samuel](#) as the first high commissioner for Palestine.  
Photo: Underwood & Underwood via Wikimedia Commons

### **Bernie Marcus, 1929–**

Home Depot co-founder Marcus has devoted much of his philanthropy to Israel and to organizations supporting Israel. Examples within Israel include the [Israel Democracy Institute](#) and [Magen David Adom](#)'s underground blood storage facility in Ramle. His foundation has supported [Birthright Israel](#) and provided the funding to launch [RootOne](#), both of which bring young Jews from the Diaspora to visit Israel.  
Photo: Kobi Gideon, Israeli Government Press Office



### **Louis Marshall, 1856–1929**

Marshall co-founded the [American Jewish Committee](#) and [served as its president](#) from 1912 to 1926. He supported efforts that aided the development of a Jewish homeland in Palestine and united Zionists and anti-Zionists in helping Jews in need, including the formation of the [American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee](#). At the post-World War I [Paris peace conference](#) he helped write protections for Jews as individuals and a people into the constitutions of new European states.  
Photo: J. Tepper, State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry

### **Mayer "Bubba" Mitchell, 1933–2007**

A longtime resident of Alabama, Mitchell was the president of the [American Israel Public Affairs Committee](#) from 1990 to 1992 and AIPAC's chairman from 1993 to 1996. As an activist and philanthropist for Jewish and Zionist causes, Mitchell reached across the political aisle to advance U.S.-Israel relations and was seen as one of the most influential pro-Israel voices in the United States.  
Photo: AIPAC





### **Henry Morgenthau Jr., 1891–1967**

Morgenthau was the U.S. secretary of the Treasury under Franklin Roosevelt and [Harry Truman](#) from 1934 to 1945. He drove the creation of the War Refugee Board in 1944 to help Jews escape the Nazis and settle in the United States, and he persuaded Truman to send a mission to assess the [conditions of Jews in postwar displaced persons camps](#). He was a financial adviser to Israel and served on the [Israel Bonds](#) board.

Photo: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

### **Daniel Patrick Moynihan, 1927–2003**

[Moynihan](#) was the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations in 1975 when the U.N. General Assembly passed [Resolution 3379](#), equating [Zionism](#) with racism. He delivered a passionate speech lambasting the resolution and its supporters and defending Israel. His stand on Resolution 3379 helped him win a U.S. Senate seat from New York, which he held from 1977 to 2001. He remained a strong supporter of Israel.



Photo: U.S. News and World Report Collection, Library of Congress



### **Richard Nixon, 1913–1994**

Though he expressed antisemitic views in private, Nixon as the [37th U.S. president](#) authorized [the airlift](#) that replenished Israel's arms during the [October 1973 war](#), providing the means for Israel to end the war with the same territory it held at the start. Nixon empowered his secretary of state, [Henry Kissinger](#), to engage in [shuttle diplomacy](#) and achieve [disengagement agreements](#) between Israel and Arab states.

Photo: U.S. National Archives and Records Administration

### **Barack Obama, 1961–**

The 44th U.S. president, [Obama](#) was less active in [seeking Middle East peace](#) than his [three immediate predecessors](#) and tried to [strengthen relations with Israel's neighbors](#). He split with Israeli Prime Minister [Benjamin Netanyahu](#) over the [2015 Iran nuclear deal](#), and the [United States abstained](#) on the anti-Israel U.N. Security Council [Resolution 2334](#) in December 2016. But [national security cooperation remained strong](#), and Obama approved [military aid totaling \\$38 billion](#) over 10 years in 2016.



Photo: Pete Souza, White House



### **Pope Paul VI, 1897–1978**

Pope Paul VI's visit to the Holy Land in 1964 served as de facto recognition of the State of Israel. It was the first time any pope left Italy in over a century. In 1965, Paul issued the [Nostra Aetate](#) declaration, which cleared the Jewish people of blame for the death of Jesus — an accusation that long fueled antisemitism — and promoted dialogue and better relations between Jews and Catholics.

Photo: Fotografia Felici

### **Ronald Reagan, 1911–2004**

Although considered pro-Israel, Reagan, the [40th U.S. president](#), acted to [balance U.S. policy](#) toward Israel and Arab states. Under Reagan, the United States halted F-16 sales to Israel after its [raid on Iraq's nuclear reactor](#) in 1981, approved the sale of [advanced surveillance aircraft to Saudi Arabia](#) in 1981, pushed Israel to halt its [offensive in Lebanon](#) in 1982 and opened formal talks with [the PLO](#) in 1988.



Photo: Executive Office of the President



### **Russell Robinson, 1956–**

The CEO of the [Jewish National Fund](#) (JNF-USA) since 1997, Robinson has led programs to raise billions of dollars for Israeli infrastructure beyond trees, including reservoirs, the revival of Be'er Sheva, and the sustainable development of the Negev and Galilee as population centers. He has served as a [tireless advocate](#) of the achievements of Israel and of the importance of strong

Israel-Diaspora connections.

Photo: JNF-USA

### **Dennis Ross, 1948–**

Working in the Defense Department, with the National Security Council or in the State Department under every president from [Jimmy Carter](#) to [Barack Obama](#), [Ross](#) helped shape U.S. Middle East policy. He helped get Israel to the 1991 [Madrid peace conference](#). As President [Bill Clinton](#)'s Middle East envoy, he was active in the [Oslo process](#), the [1994 Israel-Jordan treaty](#) and the [2000 Camp David summit](#). Photo: Earl McDonald, U.S. National Archives and Records Administration



### **John Ruskay, 1946–**

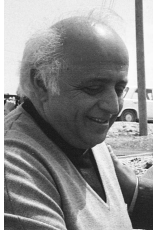
Ruskay was the executive vice president and CEO of UJA-Federation of New York from 1999 to 2014, giving him influence over millions of dollars a year allocated within Israel. He remains a consultant to nonprofits working in Israel and a writer about issues in the Jewish community, such as the difference between [Israel advocacy](#) and [Israel education](#). In the 1970s he co-founded an American Jewish peace movement called Breira. Photo: U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom

### **Anwar Sadat, 1918–1981**

Sadat was elevated from Egypt's [vice president to president](#) after [Gamal Abdel Nasser died](#) in 1970. With Syria, [he launched](#) the [October 1973 war](#) against Israel. [He flew to Israel](#) four years later in pursuit of peace. He negotiated and signed the [Camp David Accords](#) in 1978 and the [Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty](#) in 1979. He and [Menachem Begin](#) shared the [Nobel Peace Prize](#). Islamist Egyptian soldiers assassinated Sadat in 1981.



Photo: Dan Hadani Collection, Pritzker Family National Photography Collection, National Library of Israel



### **Rabbi Alexander Schindler, 1925–2000**

Serving from 1973 to 1996 as the president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Schindler aligned the [Reform movement](#) with [Zionism](#). [Going back to the mid-19th century](#), Reform had emphasized Jewish religion over peoplehood. Under Schindler, the movement embraced Zionism and launched the Association of Reform Zionists of America, now one of the largest parties in the [World Zionist Congress](#). He chaired the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations in the late 1970s.

Photo: Dan Hadani Collection, Pritzker Family National Photography Collection, National Library of Israel

### **Charles and Lynn Schusterman, 1935–2000 and 1939–**

Charles Schusterman, born in the Soviet Union, and wife Lynn, a Missouri native, used their Oklahoma oil wealth to launch the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies. The foundation is deeply involved in Israeli and U.S. Jewish and Zionist nonprofits, such as BBYO, Hillel, Moishe House and [Birthright Israel](#), and has launched initiatives such as ROI Community that unite the Diaspora and Israel.



Photo: Schusterman Family Philanthropies



### **Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver, 1893–1963**

Silver, a child immigrant to New York from Lithuania, was a leading American advocate and fundraiser for [Zionism](#) and headed the U.S. Zionist establishment in the late 1940s. He rallied support for a Jewish state among fellow Reform Jews, Jews in general and Americans as a whole, including President [Harry Truman](#). He [made a powerful speech](#) to the [U.N. Special Committee on Palestine](#) in May 1947.

Photo: Courtesy Cleveland Memory, Cleveland State University Library Special Collections

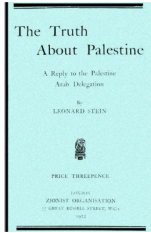
### **James Snyder, 1952–**

Since 2020, Snyder has been the executive chairman of the U.S.-based Jerusalem Foundation, which raises money and seeks partnerships to support the efforts of the [Jerusalem Foundation in Israel](#) to develop Jerusalem into an ideal of cross-communal coexistence. An American, he was the director of the [Israel Museum](#) for 20 years, building its collection, its endowment and its international partnerships.



Photo: Drkup(IMJ), CC BY-SA 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons





### **Leonard Stein, 1887–1973**

A British lawyer, Stein was stationed with the [army in Jerusalem](#) and Cairo and was part of the pre-[mandate](#) British administration of Palestine. He published a 1922 pamphlet titled “The Truth About Palestine” to counter the Palestine Arab Delegation in London. He served as political secretary of the [World Zionist Organization](#) in the 1920s, then as honorary legal adviser to the [Jewish Agency](#).

He edited [the letters of Chaim Weizmann](#).

Photo: “The Truth About Palestine” book cover (public domain)

### **Michael Steinhardt, 1940–**

Billionaire New York philanthropist Steinhardt’s extensive donations to Jewish causes include co-founding [Birthright Israel](#) with [Charles Bronfman](#) and launching a network of Hebrew-language charter schools. He chaired the board of [Tel Aviv University](#) and endowed a natural history museum in Ramat Aviv. In 2021 he admitted purchasing more than 1,000 antiquities illegally smuggled out of 11 countries, including Israel.



Photo: Steinhardt Family Foundation



### **Mark Sykes, 1879–1919**

Sykes was a British diplomat who, with French diplomat Charles Georges Picot, negotiated the secret [Sykes-Picot Agreement](#) in 1916. The [pact called for dividing](#) the Middle East territories of the Ottoman Empire after its defeat in World War I. Britain took control of Palestine and Iraq, and France gained Lebanon and Syria, including the Golan Heights. The [League of Nations](#) accepted the Sykes-Picot plan.

Photo: Leopold Pilichowski, The Bridgeman Art Library

### **Harry S. Truman, 1884–1972**

The 33rd U.S. president, Truman had the United States vote for the [U.N. partition plan](#) for Palestine in November 1947 and made the United States the first country to [recognize the State of Israel](#) in May 1948. His [support for Israel](#) came despite the [opposition of the State Department](#). He also pressured the British government to [admit more Jewish refugees](#) to [Mandatory Palestine](#) after the Holocaust.



Photo: Greta Kempton, White House



### **Donald Trump, 1946–**

The 45th U.S. president, Trump took steps meant to [strengthen ties with Israel](#). He withdrew from the [Iran nuclear deal](#). He fulfilled a deferred 1995 law and moved the [U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem](#) in 2018. [He recognized](#) Israel’s 1981 [annexation of the Golan Heights](#). He [proposed](#) an [Israeli-Palestinian peace plan](#) without settlement withdrawal. His [signature foreign policy achievement](#) was brokering the [Abraham Accords](#).

Photo: Shealah Craighead, White House



### **Robert F. Wagner, 1877–1953**

As a U.S. senator from New York from 1927 to 1949, Wagner was a prominent Christian Zionist. He introduced unsuccessful legislation in 1939 to admit 20,000 Jewish refugee children from Germany. He co-wrote a congressional resolution that passed in December 1945 to reaffirm U.S. support for a Jewish state, and he pushed President [Harry Truman](#) to reject the Morrison-Grady plan to limit the size and population of the Jewish portion of Palestine and keep it [under British control](#).

Photo: Harris & Ewing, Library of Congress



### **Raoul Wallenberg, 1912–1947**

Wallenberg was a Swedish diplomat who in 1944 saved thousands of Hungarian Jews, including future Congressman [Tom Lantos](#), by providing protective passports and safe houses. He went missing in January 1945 and is believed to have been killed by the Soviets after two years in custody. He was granted posthumous honorary citizenship in Israel, the United States and other countries.

Photo: Pressensbild

### **Barbi Weinberg, 1929–**

Weinberg is the founder and chairman emerita of the [Washington Institute for Near East Policy](#), fulfilling a vision she shared with her late husband, Larry, a former [AIPAC](#) president. In 1973 she became the first woman to lead a major Jewish Federation when she was elected to head the Los Angeles Jewish Federation Council. Her political activities include support for the World Alliance for Israel Political Action Committee.

Photo: 1989 C-SPAN screen grab



### **Rabbi Avi Weiss, 1944–**

[Weiss](#) is an author and activist who led the movement to free Soviet Jewry; ultimately, [more than 1 million immigrants](#) moved as the Soviet Union crumbled. He served as spy [Jonathan Pollard](#)'s personal rabbi and advocated his early release from prison. He has organized pro-Israel rallies and called out anti-Israel bias in the United States. His Open Orthodoxy movement has led to clashes with the [Israeli Rabbinate](#) over conversions.

Photo: Drew Kaplan, CC BY 3.0, via Wikimedia Commons

### **Harold Wilson, 1916–1995**

Labor Party leader Wilson was the British prime minister from 1964 to 1970 and 1974 to 1976 and was one of Parliament's strongest supporters of Israel, where he made social democratic friends. He [spoke up for Israel](#) in May 1967 when [Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran](#). As leader of the opposition during the [October 1973 war](#), he argued unsuccessfully for Britain to drop its arms embargo and resupply Israel.

Photo: Eric Koch for Anefo, CC BY-SA 3.0 NL, via Wikimedia Commons





### **Charles Winters, 1913–1984**

A U.S. businessman who wasn't Jewish, [Winters](#) bought three surplus U.S. B-17 bombers on the pretense that they were for his Caribbean transport service. Instead, he delivered them to the nascent [Israeli Air Force](#) in June 1948. They were Israel's only heavy bombers in the [War of Independence](#). He was convicted in 1949 of violating the U.S. Neutrality Act. President [George W. Bush](#)

posthumously pardoned him.

Photo: FBI

### **Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, 1874–1949**

A [native of Hungary](#) who immigrated to the United States as a toddler, Wise co-founded the New York Federation of Zionist Societies in 1897 and the Federation of Zionist Societies in 1898 and launched the American Jewish Congress in 1920. He was the president of the World [Zionist](#) Movement from 1936 to 1938. He helped persuade [President Woodrow Wilson](#) to endorse the [Balfour Declaration](#) in 1919.



Photo: Harris & Ewing, Library of Congress



### **Sheik Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, 1961–**

Bin Zayed, known as MBZ, is the president of the United Arab Emirates and the ruler of [Abu Dhabi](#). In August 2020 he signed the [Abraham Accords](#) to [normalize relations](#) between [the UAE and Israel](#). [Refusing to put the Palestinian cause ahead](#) of his country's interests, he has led the emirates in building social, security and economic ties as well as diplomatic connections.

Photo: U.S. Air Force Tech. Sgt. Brigitte N. Brantley, Department of Defense