

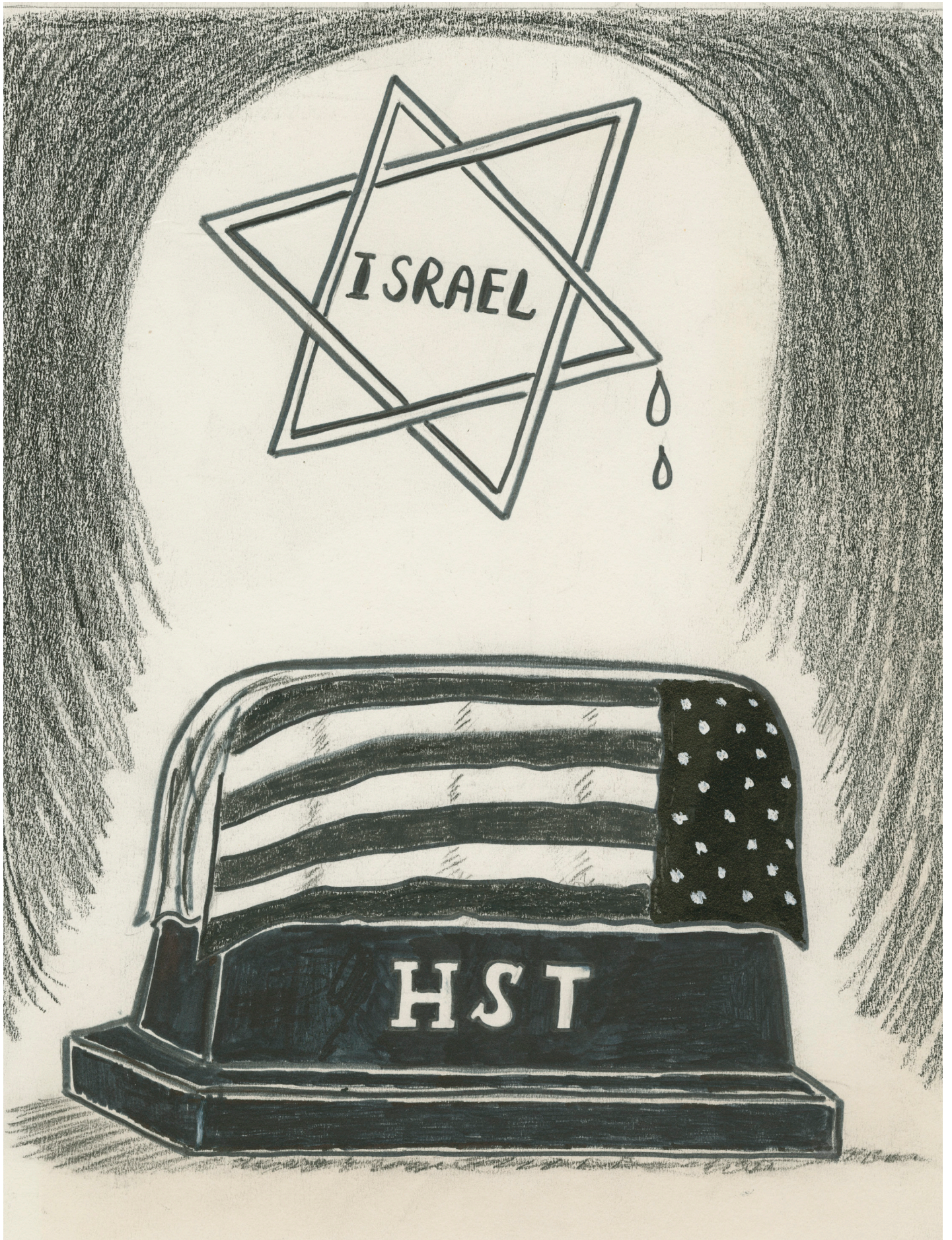
STAY TRU★



**“I had faith in
Israel before it was
established.**

**I believe it has a
glorious future before
it – as not just another
sovereign nation, but
as an embodiment of
the great ideals of our
civilization.”**

–HARRY S. TRUMAN



POLITICAL CARTOON FROM *THE JEWISH PRESS* BY RITA ROSENTHAL AFTER PRESIDENT TRUMAN'S DEATH IN 1972.



PRESIDENT TRUMAN WITH THE PRESIDENT OF ISRAEL, DR. CHAIM WEIZMANN, MAY 25, 1948.

Truman and the Jewish People

“All my life I have fought against prejudice and intolerance. As a young man I was disturbed by the attitude of some people toward other races and religions. And as I grew older, I could never understand how people could forget the origins and blessing of their own freedom.” – Harry S. Truman

As a United States Senator, Truman felt the fate of the “ancient people” resting on his shoulders and he insisted that the United States could “not possibly avoid the assumption of world leadership after this war.” On April 14, 1943, he spoke before an estimated 25,000 people in a packed Chicago stadium for the United Rally to Demand Rescue of Doomed Jews:

“Today—not tomorrow—we must do all that is humanly possible to provide a haven and place of safety for all those who can be grasped from the hands of the Nazi butchers. Free lands must be opened to them. Their present oppressors must know that they will be held directly accountable for their bloody deeds. To do all of this, we must draw deeply on our tradition of aid to the oppressed, and on our great national generosity. This is not a Jewish problem. It is an American problem—and we must and we will face it squarely and honorably.” It was one of the strongest speeches Truman ever made.

As President, Truman was one of the few postwar political leaders who faced the refugee crisis with both compassion and determination. On August 24, 1948, former U.S. Commissioner of Immigration and U.S. Representative on the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, Earl G. Harrison, submitted his report on the displaced persons camps, “we appear to be treating the Jews as the Nazis treated them except we do not exterminate them.” The findings made Truman ill.

Although he directed General Eisenhower to immediately remedy the camps’ conditions, Truman knew that Western Europe could not absorb all the refugees into its displaced person camps, “the grave dislocation of populations in Europe resulting from the war has produced human suffering that the

people of the United States *cannot and will not* ignore.”

On December 22, 1945, Truman signed an executive order to open the United States to 26,000 Jews. Three years after the war ended and with increasing pressure from the President, Congress passed the Displaced Persons Act of 1948 authorizing 205,000 European refugees over the next two years. Under continued presidential pressure, the Displaced Persons Act of 1950 welcomed another 200,000 war refugees over two more years.

In her memoir, Margaret Truman wrote that the controversy over extending diplomatic recognition to Israel was the most difficult dilemma of her father’s presidency. The Truman Administration was divided over the direction American policy should take. Truman’s cabinet held the dominant opinion: placate the Arabs and avoid jeopardizing access to strategic oil reserves or providing an opening for Soviet influence. Truman’s White House staff favored recognizing Israeli independence. Scholars have also noted the impact of Truman’s best friend, Eddie Jacobson, as well as Truman’s childhood experiences reading history and the Bible.

On May 14, 1948, the British Mandate for Palestine expired. Israel’s first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, proclaimed the existence of a Jewish State of Israel as of midnight May 15, 1948. Eleven minutes later, Truman extended de facto recognition to Israel on behalf of the United States. Truman’s policy in Palestine was not an Arab policy or a Jewish policy. It was an American policy “because it was based on the desire to see promises kept and human misery relieved.”

The Truman Library

Education Programs



Student Museum Tours

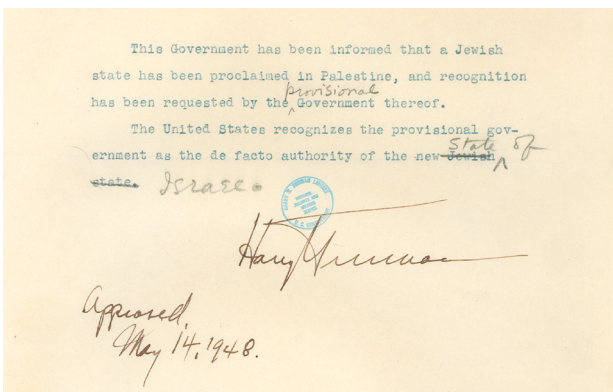
The Library has over 32,000 objects, 125,000 photographs, and 16,000,000 documents in its care. Each year, the Library shares these resources with more than 10,000 students in addition to youth and scouting organizations and adult groups through education programs and museum tours. Each tour includes the story of Truman's recognition of the Jewish State of Israel and his influential friendship with one-time business partner, Eddie Jacobson.



White House Decision Center

The White House Decision Center is a nationally recognized hands-on history lab where participants step into the roles of President Truman and his advisors and work with formerly classified primary source documents to tackle some of history's greatest challenges. Addressing the end of the British Mandate in Palestine is one of five high-stakes decisions from which educators can choose for their students to participate.

Library Archives



Online Resources

The Truman Library created and maintains a special collection of primary source materials on its website relating to the recognition of the State of Israel. Highlights include official documents from the Truman administration, correspondence from Truman's personal papers, and other items. Relevant audiovisual materials from the Truman archives are also available through the Library's YouTube channel and online photo database. These resources are accessed by tens of thousands of individuals each year through research as well as educational and public programs offered by the Truman Library and Truman Library Institute's education staff and archivists.

The Truman and Israel Experience

All-New, \$29-Million Presidential Center



A gallery in the newly renovated Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum is dedicated to sharing the story of the recognition of Israel. The highlight of this spacious, centrally-located exhibit is a feature film, *Question of a Jewish Homeland*, that shares the background and context of President Truman's dramatic decision. On display are several gifts of appreciation – a menorah from Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and Ambassador of Israel H. E. Abba Eban and a Torah from President Chaim Weizmann – and President Truman's official statement recognizing the State of Israel.

Harry S. Truman and the Birth of Israel



Developed in partnership with historians and scholars, the traveling exhibit, *Harry S. Truman and the Birth of Israel*, provides an in-depth look at President Truman's decision to recognize the Jewish State of Israel through primary source documents and photographs from the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum. The exhibit is comprised of seven banners that explore the historical, cultural, and personal factors that went into the decision. The panels can be easily transported and installed with the flexibility to fit a variety of venues and spaces, including universities, libraries, museums, research centers, synagogues, and special event locations.

Truman and Israel Program



The Library presents an exciting array of programs and lectures featuring authors, journalists, and heads-of-state. An important subset of these programs focuses on Truman and Israel, including recent lectures from Ben Stein, Ambassador Dennis Ross, American Jewish Council CEO David Harris, and former Israeli Ambassador to the United States Ron Dermer. Programming also extends beyond Kansas City. In 2018, Dr. Kurt Graham spoke at the American Jewish Committee Global Forum and in 2020, the Torah that President Weizmann gifted to President Truman was on loan to the National Museum of American Jewish History where it was reunited with the now Rabbi, Ezra Finkelstein, who first received it as a Bar Mitzvah gift 80 years earlier.



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