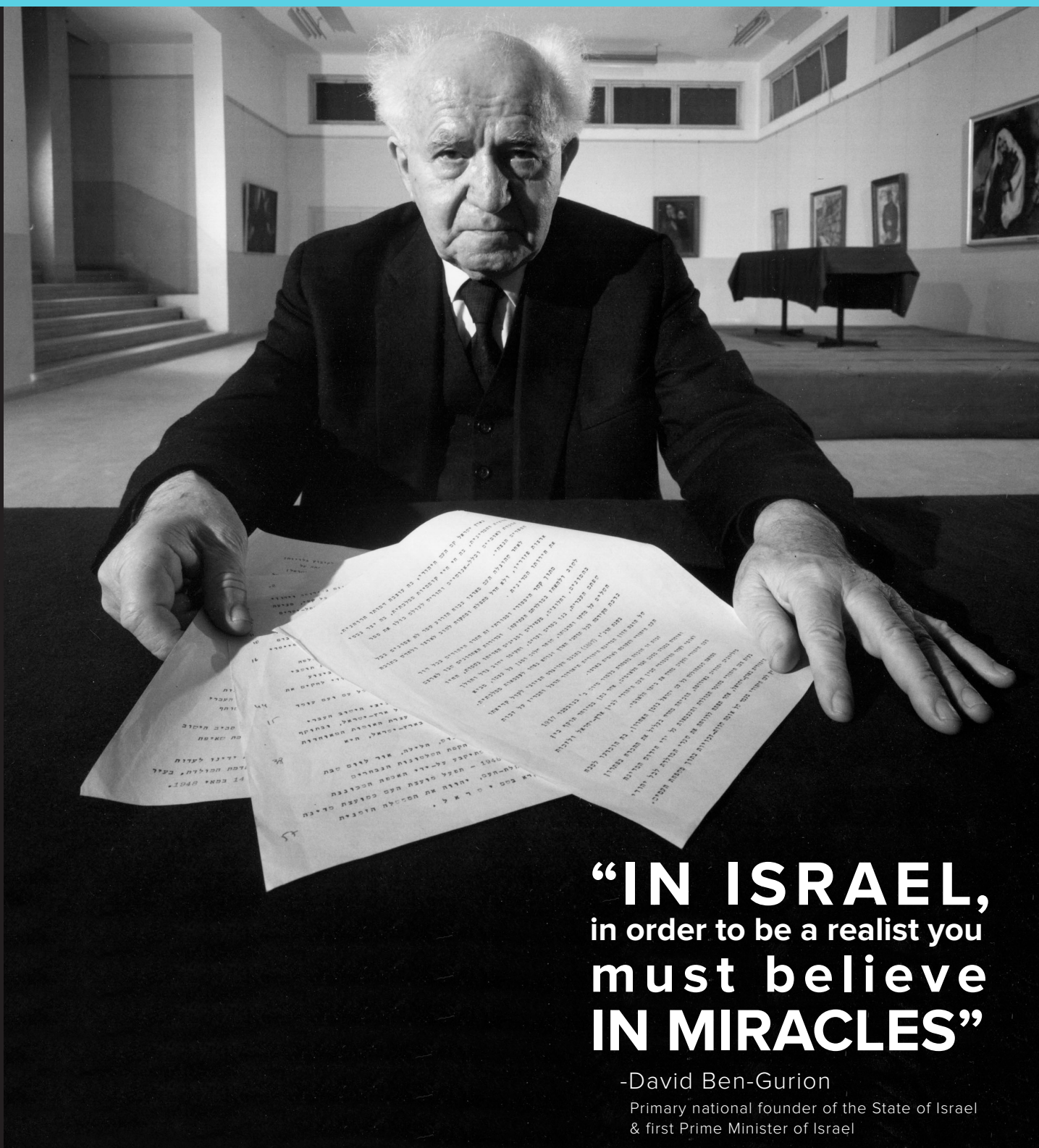


A SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER EXHIBITION

# THE BIRTH OF ISRAEL <sup>ישראל</sup>

18 MONTHS THAT CHANGED  
JEWISH DESTINY



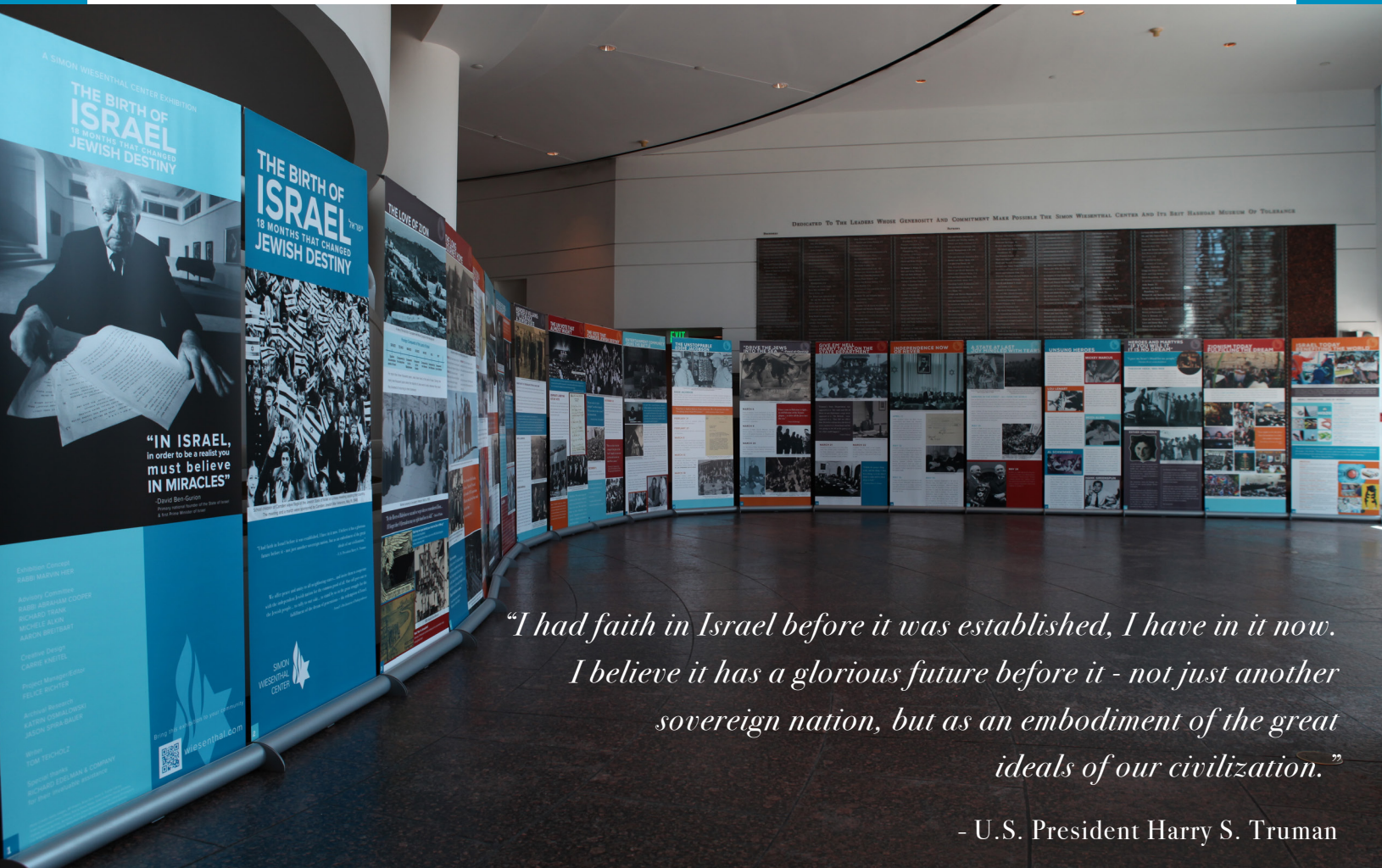
**“IN ISRAEL,  
in order to be a realist you  
must believe  
IN MIRACLES”**

-David Ben-Gurion

Primary national founder of the State of Israel  
& first Prime Minister of Israel



*The Birth of Israel: 18 Months That Changed Jewish Destiny*, is a new, 20 panel, self-contained, high quality exhibition (3ft x 7ft) designed for easy travel and setup. It tells the story of fulfilling the dream of a Jewish State and the remarkable people that played a role in this epic time in the history of the Jewish people.





Covering the 18 months leading up to the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, this exhibition contains original documents, historic photos and remarkable stories all curated by the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

This exhibit highlights the Jewish people's long journey home, their struggle for a Jewish State, the leading figures who advocated for Statehood and the villains who tried to block it. The Simon Wiesenthal Center's other acclaimed traveling exhibitions, *The Courage to Remember* and the UNESCO co-sponsored *People, Book, Land – The 3,500 Year Relationship of the Jewish People to the Holy Land* have been seen by millions of people, on every continent, throughout the world.

## HEROES & VILLAINS: TRY TO BLOCK A JEWISH STATE



Grand Mufti (center) visiting a Nazi camp in 1943 with Reichsführer Heinrich Himmler (right)

### GRAND MUFTI OF JERUSALEM VISITING A NAZI CAMP

"Grand Mufti" was a position created by the British authorities after World War I. In 1921, Mohammad Amin al-Husayni, an Arab nationalist and Muslim leader, was appointed Grand Mufti of Jerusalem.

As Grand Mufti, he was violently opposed to Jews and a Jewish homeland. He became a rabid ally of the Nazis. He first met with Hitler in Germany in 1941 and later visited Auschwitz. Al-Husayni made Nazi propaganda radio broadcasts and recruited Bosnian Muslims to fight for Nazi Germany. In 1948, when Jordan occupied Jerusalem, King Abdullah removed al-Husayni and barred him from entering Jerusalem.

In a telegram to the Grand Mufti, Reichsführer S.S. Heinrich Himmler wrote, "The Nationalist Social Movement since its beginning, inscribed upon its flag the fight against world Jewry... it is in the recognition of this enemy and the common struggle against him, that lies the firm foundation... that exists between the National Socialist and Germany and the freedom loving Muslims of the whole world in this spirit I am sending you on the anniversary of the infamous Balfour declaration my hearty greetings and wishes for the successful pursuit of your struggle until... final victory..."

### FAWZI AL-QAWUQJI

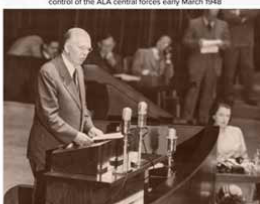
Fawzi al-Qawuqji was a leading Arab nationalist military figure. Born in Tripoli and educated in Istanbul, he served in the Ottoman Army fighting in Iraq and at Beersheba during WWI with Germany awarding him the Iron Cross for his service. During WWII, after being wounded fighting the British in Iraq, he went to Germany where he was made a Wehrmacht Colonel after the Nazis signed a secret document supporting Arab nationalism. In 1947 he went to Egypt, where the Arab League appointed him Field Commander for the Liberation Army against the British and the Jews.



Fawzi al-Qawuqji arrives at the village of Jaba' near Nablus to assume control of the ALA central forces early March 1948

### GEORGE MARSHALL

George Marshall was an American war hero. A five-star General during WWII, he served as U.S. Secretary of State from 1947-1949. The Marshall Plan to rebuild postwar Europe, which he directed, earned him the 1953 Nobel Peace Prize. Marshall opposed U.S. support for a Jewish State, believing it would threaten U.S. oil supplies from the Middle East. State Department colleagues shared his views. Marshall threatened that if President Truman supported a Jewish State, Marshall wouldn't support him in the upcoming Presidential election.



American soldier, statesman and Secretary of State George C. Marshall (1880 - 1959) speaking at the second General Assembly of the United Nations in Flushing Meadows, New York

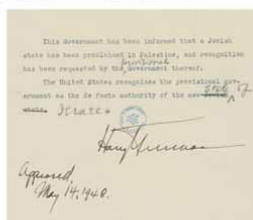
## INDEPENDENCE NOW OR NEVER



David Ben-Gurion reading the Declaration of the Independence of Israel in the Tel Aviv Museum, May 14, 1948

### APRIL 11

Eddie Jacobson enters the White House unannounced and meets with President Truman. Jacobson wrote of this meeting: "He reaffirmed, very strongly, the promises he had made to Dr. Weizmann and to me; and he gave me permission to tell Dr. Weizmann so, which I did. It was at this meeting that I also discussed with the President the importance and vital matter of recognizing the new state, and to this he agreed with a whole heart."



### MAY 12

President Truman meets in the Oval Office with U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall, Under Secretary of State Robert Lovett and Counsel to the President, Clark Clifford, to discuss the Middle East. Clifford argues in favor of recognizing the new Jewish State. Marshall opposes Clifford's arguments. Seeing that Truman's mind was made up, Marshall announces he will neither support nor oppose Truman's decision to recognize the Jewish state.



Ben-Gurion meets Sir Winston Churchill

### MAY 13

Truman tells Weizmann in secret that he will recognize Israel. Weizmann, who previously had urged Ben-Gurion to delay statehood, calls Moshe Sharett, an ally of Ben-Gurion, to tell him that the time to declare independence for Israel is now.

### MAY 14

Ben-Gurion declares Statehood in Tel Aviv. It officially goes into effect with the end of the British Mandate at midnight - 6PM EST. Eleven minutes later, as President Truman recognizes the State of Israel, his UN Ambassador Warren Austin goes home in protest. The rest of the delegation stays to hear Soviet Ambassador Andrei Gromyko deliver a strong speech in favor of Israel. Ben-Gurion would later credit his courageous decision to the time he spent in London during the Nazi Blitz, listening to the stirring wartime speeches of Winston Churchill.

## ZIONISM TODAY FULFILLING THE DREAM



In the 21st century, the democratic Jewish State strives to reflect Prophet Isaiah's vision of Israel as a **Light unto Nations**. More Jews are studying Torah than any time since Mt. Sinai, while religious rights of all faiths - Christians, Muslim, Baha'i, are fully protected by law and deed. Society's achievements and failures are debated by Jewish and Arab Parliamentarians in the Knesset and in the robust free press.



"You ought to let the Jews have Jerusalem; it is they who made it famous"

- Prime Minister Winston Churchill, 1955



People of faith, Old City, Jerusalem



Yeshiva students studying

Bnei Torah, Haifa

אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁלִּי



Tel Aviv's Gay Pride Parade

German Bundestag President Norbert Lammert addresses Knesset

heroes and villains original documents historic photos

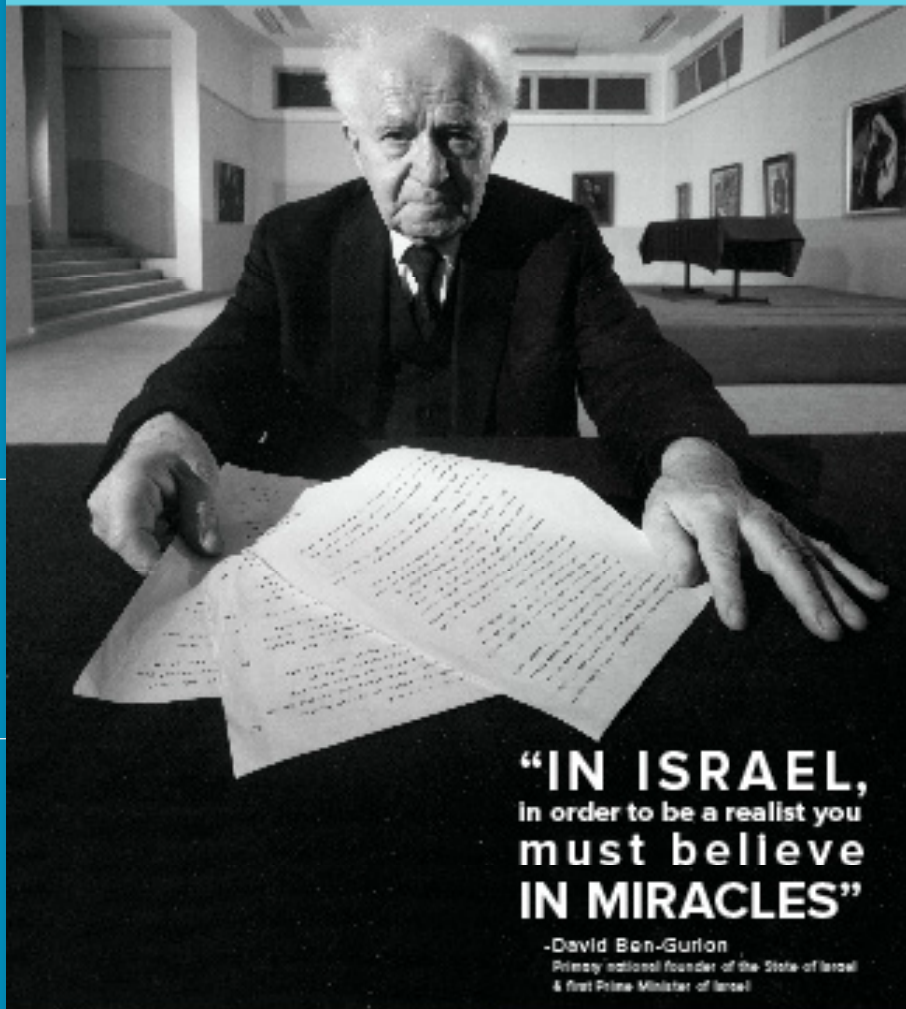
SHARE ISRAEL'S REMARKABLE STORY WITH THE WORLD



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# THE UN VOTE THAT ALMOST WASN'T



The UN votes on partition, November 29, 1947

"Both Russia and the Western Nations supported the establishment of Israel. Perhaps the one resolution that East and West concurred... he who looked carefully with his spiritual eye saw the true chairman [the Almighty] who conducted those proceedings."

- Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik

## DESPERATE LOBBYING VOTE BY VOTE

The UN scheduled a vote on partitioning Palestine into a Jewish State and an Arab State. Abba Eban, the Jewish Agency's representative to the UN recalled, Arab nations and countries dependent on their oil were against it, as were many Catholic countries.

The vote was originally scheduled for November 26, 1947, but Eban feared it would not pass. Fortunately, the vote was delayed until November 29. Intense lobbying resulted in France voting 'Oui'; Peru, Uruguay and Guatemala, (three members of the UN committee that had visited the disputed territories) voted in favor and convinced 15 of the 21 Latin American countries to support two states.



Dances of joy after the announcement of the UN Partition Plan, 1947

Morris "Two-Gun" Cohen was a Polish-born Jew who would become the protector of Chinese leader Sun Yat-sen. Later, on the eve of the UN vote, Cohen flew to San Francisco to convince China's delegation to abstain rather than oppose partition.

*These notes look a little better.*

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

1) We have been in touch with Liberman minister to try to get the Government's instructions changed to support us

2) I think we have Itali

3) We may get Philippines out of NO into abstention or, with luck, yes.

4) Cuba still won't play.

5) Greece is uncertain but has the excuse of the Balkan Commission vote made with Hebrews.

Cabinet meeting note detailing the White House's determination to gather UN votes in support of Partition.



May 11, 1949, the twelfth day of Iyar, 5709, at about 7:30 pm, when the United Nations convened its General Assembly in Flushing Meadows and voted to admit Israel as its 59th member nation.

Abba Eban: "We took the map and divided up [the voting countries] one by one and found that we were four or five short. We really bore down on these delegates... one by one." Supporters were able to convince a majority of nations to vote for partition.

panel  
9



# THE VOTE THAT CHANGED JEWISH DESTINY



Jubilant residents celebrating the United Nations decision on partition of Palestine in front of the Mugrabi Cinema in Tel Aviv, 1947

## panel 10

"Do you realize it's after midnight?" an officer shouted.  
"Do you realize we have a state?" they shouted back.

– from the book, *O Jerusalem!*

### NOVEMBER 29

The UN approved the partition plan. The Jewish Agency agreed to the UN plan because "it would make possible the immediate re-establishment of the Jewish State with sovereign control of its own immigration."

The UN plan was rejected by all Arab governments. Following the UN vote, Arabs rioted in Jerusalem for two days, torching many buildings and shops, with 70 Jews and 50 Arabs killed in the fighting. The Arab Higher Committee declared a strike and the Jewish Agency building was blown up.



A crowd of Jews gathered in Jerusalem

### DECEMBER 5

U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall announces an arms embargo on the Middle East.

"'Mine eyes have seen the coming of the glory of the Lord', happily you can now say that and can now say what Moses cannot."

– Written by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter to Chaim Weizmann upon hearing of the vote

The weekly Torah portion read by Jews around the world the day of the vote contained this verse from Genesis...

*"Your name shall not be called Jacob but Israel shall be your name!"*



Jews dancing in the streets on November 29, 1947



# ENTERTAINMENT COMMUNITY JOINS THE BATTLE



Rehearsal for the Hollywood Bowl performance of *We Will Never Die*, July 1943, with music composed and conducted by film composer Franz Waxmann

## panel 11



In April 1947, Leonard Bernstein, America's leading conductor, was deeply effected by what he witnessed on his first visit to the Holy Land: "There is a strength and devotion in these people that is formidable. They will never let the land be taken from them; they will all die first. And the country is beautiful beyond description."



Marion Brando, holding aloft the flag symbolizing the hopes for a Jewish State in the 1946 play, *A Flag Is Born*

### ACTION AND ADVOCACY WORLDWIDE

Leading journalists, Ben Hecht, I.F. Stone, and Ruth Gruber, galvanized support for a Jewish homeland and for trapped Jewish victims of the Nazis. Academy Award®-winning screenwriter Hecht (*The Front Page*, *Stagecoach*) organized *We Will Never Die* at NY's Madison Square Garden and L.A.'s Hollywood Bowl. In recognition, a refugee ship is named the S.S. Ben Hecht.

*We Will Never Die* was produced by Billy Rose and Ernst Lubitsch, staged by Moss Hart with music by Kurt Weill. It starred Edward G. Robinson, Sylvia Sydney, and Paul Muni. Other famous supporters included Frank Sinatra (Wiesenthal Center Board Trustee 1981-1998), Burgess Meredith, and John Garfield.

BRICHA, the underground network that organized the illegal transport of Holocaust survivors and arms to Eretz Israel, was led by Artur Ben-Natan (later Israel's first ambassador to Germany), Ephraim Dekel, and Bruce Teicholz (Director of Vienna's Rothschild Hospital). Simon Wiesenthal provided the BRICHA with a list of Holocaust survivors in Austria. He and Tuvia Friedman documented Nazi war crimes. While in Hollywood Marlon Brando assisted in the Israel effort by helping to smuggle illegal arms to Palestine.

Polish violin prodigy Bronislaw Huberman, fleeing Hitler's Germany, rescued over a thousand Jewish symphony artists, recruiting them for what would become the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra.



Frank Sinatra in the studio, 1947



Rehearsing lines in preparation *We Will Never Die* at Hollywood Bowl are Paul Henreid and Joan Leslie, two of many stars who participated in the performance





German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier with Rabbi Hier

## CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information on how to purchase this exhibition for a one-time fee of \$8750 for your community, campus or congregation, please contact:

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Longtime SWC supporter and Trustee, Mary Hart with Rabbi Hier

