

ZOA REPORT

A PUBLICATION OF THE ZIONIST ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA

Fall 2023



ZOA CELEBRATES ISRAEL

Read more on page 44



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and ZOA National President Morton A. Klein at the ZOA Leadership Mission to Israel

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Published by the Zionist Organization of America
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Morton A. Klein
ZOA National President

In ZOA's previous report, I discussed how ZOA courageously speaks out against dangers to Israel, America and the Jewish people, stemming from any source and any party. ZOA can never stand by quietly when our people's lives, security, human rights and nationhood are at stake, even if we have to stand up alone. We speak out on television, on social media, in op-eds and press releases, in Congress and in the courts.

Unfortunately, there has been a flood of worrisome events that we've needed to speak out against lately.

Almost every day, there is more bad news from the Biden administration. More attempts to unravel the pro-Israel advances of the previous administration. More hostile-to-Israel and antisemitic appointees. More arrogant (and unlawful) interference with Israel's internal affairs. More unwarranted criticism of Israel. More pressure to adopt policies that inhibit Israel from assuring her people's safety. More demands that Israel and her Jewish citizens must not exercise the sovereign and human rights of every other nation and individual. More silence about rampant Palestinian Arab terrorism. More funding of Israel's enemies. More kowtowing to Iran. More snubs of elected Israeli officials.

Some of the administration's actions are petty insults, such as refusing to invite Israeli ministers to the U.S. embassy's party on July 4, 2023. But other Biden administration actions are life-threatening, such as failing to continue maximum sanctions on Iran and instead insisting on negotiations; demanding less Israeli control over checkpoints; and resuming and increasing U.S. funding for Palestinian Authority (PA) governmental purposes and U.S. funding to Hamas-allied UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) to over \$1.5 billion.

ZOA continues to speak out against all of this.

As I'm writing these words, President Biden just criticized, on national television, Israel's duly elected government as "extreme." During this broadcast, Biden also absurdly called the right of Jews to build homes in the Jewish heartland an "extreme" position; continued to refuse to invite Israel's prime minister to the White House anytime soon; and reiterated his call for creating a Palestinian Arab state on Israel's land which would surely be an Iranian-proxy terror state (a so-called "two-state solution"). And Biden absurdly attributed terrorism to the PA's supposed "weakness," instead of acknowledging the truth that the PA is inciting and participating in the violence and paying Arab terrorists to murder Jews and Americans.

As always, ZOA promptly responded.

There are countless other recent examples. To name just a few:

- The Biden administration reinstituted a boycott of joint U.S.-Israeli science and technology projects over the artificial 1949 ceasefire lines. ZOA promptly joined with Senator Ted Cruz in condemning the Biden administration's antisemitic boycott.
- Biden's State Department sent funds to one of the main organizers of the anti-Netanyahu, anti-judicial reform demonstrations. Biden and his U.S. Ambassador to Israel, Tom Nides, also condemned Israel's much-needed judicial reform proposals.

ZOA speaks up, even when we are the only major American Jewish organization to do so, and even when other major groups turn reality upside down, oppose us, or try to censor us.

ZOA responded on television and wrote influential op-eds. We pointed out that the administration's interference with Israel's internal affairs violated the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations; and we explained that Israel's proposed judicial reforms would be good for democracy and good for the rule of law.

- The Biden administration threatened Israel's potential entry into the Visa Waiver Program and potential expansion of the Abraham Accords if Jews build homes in the Jewish heartlands of Judea and Samaria. ZOA promptly condemned this blackmail.
- Similarly, Biden's Ambassador to Israel Tom Nides denounced Jews who build homes in and around Jerusalem and in Judea and Samaria as "stupid" and "infuriating," and bragged to the BDS group "Americans for Peace Now" that he had succeeded in pressuring Israel not to build in the strategically essential E-1 corridor between Jerusalem and a Jerusalem suburb.

Borrowing Nides' own language, ZOA promptly condemned Nides' statements as infuriating and stupid (as well as patronizing). As we frequently do, ZOA also explained that Jews have the right to live in Judea and Samaria under binding international law.

- During his trip to the Middle East, Biden proclaimed a series of anti-Israel policies. He called for creating a "contiguous" Palestinian state "on the 1967 lines" with illusory "mutually agreed swaps." ZOA pointed out that Israeli diplomat Abba Eban called the 1967 lines "Auschwitz lines" because they would leave Israel indefensible; that President Lyndon Johnson stated that the 1967 lines would cause more war; and that these lines would divide Jerusalem, subject all of Israel to rocket attacks, and endanger Israel's very existence.
- During the same trip, Biden increased to over \$1.5 billion the amount of U.S. tax dollars his administration sends to Palestinian Arabs; falsely compared Palestinian Arabs' situation to oppression of the Irish; pressured Israel to provide "increased access" for Palestinian Arabs to enter Israel from Gaza and Judea and Samaria (shortly after such access resulted in Palestinian Arabs murdering 19 Jews and others); and called ordinary Israeli checkpoints, which are necessary for security, "indignities" against Palestinians.
- Also during the same trip, Biden undermined Israel's security and sovereignty by calling for the PA to share control of the Israel-Jordanian crossings; legitimized, met with and held a smiling joint press conference with PA/PLO terrorist dictator Mahmoud Abbas, despite Abbas' incitement of terrorism and "pay to slay" payments to terrorists who murder Jews and Americans; insultingly removed the Israeli flag from his limo when he traveled to eastern Jerusalem; falsely claimed that Palestinian Arabs have "deep and ancient roots in this land" in order to try to justify creating a Palestinian Arab terror state on Israel's land; refused to allow Israeli officials to accompany his visit to an Arab eastern Jerusalem hospital; refused to visit Hadassah Hospital in eastern Jerusalem; and pressured Israel to legalize massive illegal Arab building in Area C – the area of Judea/Samaria lawfully under full Israeli administrative control.

ZOA condemned all of this. But sadly, other Jewish groups praised Biden's trip.

- During his Mideast trip and throughout his tenure, Biden and his officials also continued to pressure Israel to allow the U.S. to open a U.S. consulate for Palestinian Arabs in (western) Jerusalem, which would undermine Israel's sovereignty over her united capital. ZOA responded with a major campaign, including giant "Say No to the Consulate" billboards, op-eds and television appearances.
- Biden repeatedly praises the worst antisemites and Israel-bashers in Congress, Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar. Biden even publicly told Tlaib: "I admire your intellect, I admire your passion, and I admire your concern for so many other people. . . . From my heart, I pray that your grandmom and family are well. I promise you, I'm going to do everything to see that they are on the West Bank. You're a fighter, and God, thank you for being a fighter."

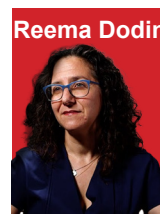
- Biden also pressured Israel to enter into the terrible Lebanon deal, in which Israel surrendered 330 square miles of maritime territory and gas fields to Hezbollah-controlled Lebanon, which was 100% of what Lebanon demanded. Israel received no recognition or peace. Again, ZOA strenuously spoke out against the deal – while other Jewish groups praised this terrible surrender.
- ZOA also speaks out proactively. When the Biden administration was preparing its “Combating Antisemitism National Strategy,” ZOA wrote to the administration, urging the administration to adopt the helpful, widely-accepted IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) working definition and examples of antisemitism. The IHRA definition and examples identify antisemitism that is masked as anti-Zionism. ZOA explained that alternate definitions shield and justify antisemitism that is masked as hatred for the Jewish state and for Zionism.

But shamefully, the Biden administration’s recently-released Combating Antisemitism National Strategy downgraded the IHRA definition and “welcomed” the alternate definitions which give anti-Zionist forms of antisemitism a free pass. Biden’s strategy further downgraded efforts to combat antisemitism by lumping antisemitism together with “Islamophobia, homophobia, transphobia, and misogyny.” Biden’s strategy also failed to mention the antisemitism of Black Nationalists such as Louis Farrakhan, the Black Lives Matter movement, the antisemitic Squad in Congress, Islamists, and other radical leftwing groups. ZOA immediately condemned the Biden strategy for these serious flaws. Sadly, other Jewish groups praised the strategy and refused to mention its fatal shortcomings.

- ZOA also continues to speak out against Biden’s parade of hostile-to-Israel appointees and nominees. A few examples: U.S. Special Envoy to the Palestinians Hady Amr stated that he was inspired by the Intifada terror wars against Israel. White House Office of Legislative Affairs Deputy Director Reema Dodin supported suicide bombings. National Security Council Senior Director for Intelligence Maher Bitar organized an anti-Israel conference and ran a “how to demonize Israel” session. Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines falsely condemned Israel for terrorism and incitement. Unfortunately, ZOA’s “Biden Appointments Watch” webpage continues to expand.

Recently, a new book entitled *Betrayal: The Failure of American Jewish Leadership*, praised ZOA’s brave stands. The editors, Dr. Charles Jacobs and Avi Goldwasser, wrote: “Within the establishment Jewish leadership, the Zionist Organization of America has been the lone, unfaltering exception” to the failures of Jewish leadership to confront the crescendo of hateful assaults on the Jewish people.

In truth, we wish that we were *not* the “lone, unfaltering exception” speaking out against the dangers facing Israel and the Jewish people. We wish that every Jewish group, every Jew, and every caring person would join us. In this time of growing danger for our people, we need every voice to join with us.



Morton A. Klein

Morton A. Klein
ZOA National President



Scan here
for full list:



MORT KLEIN: EDUCATING THE PUBLIC ABOUT ISRAEL

This year, ZOA National President Morton A. Klein spoke at numerous venues, including:

Jewish Community Alliance in Jacksonville, FL
Gross Family Center for the Study of Antisemitism and the Holocaust in Boynton Beach, FL
Scholar-In-Residence at Southampton, NY Jewish Center
Scholar-In-Residence at the Atlantis Hotel on Paradise Island in Nassau, Bahamas
Florida International University speaker with Zionist Dumisani Washington
Beverly Hills Hotel Synagogue, CA
San Francisco Chabad, CA
Chabad of Boca Raton, FL
Columbia University, NYC

Mort was also a speaker in the **Bureau of Jewish Education Passages Speaker Series 2023** in Scottsdale/Phoenix, AZ; and the **2nd Annual Palm Beach Summit Countering Antisemitism** in Palm Beach, FL. In addition, Mort spoke before over **20 members of Congress** on judicial reform, the truth about occupation, the dangers of a Palestinian state, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, and Jerusalem.

Additionally, Mort has published articles in *Israel Hayom*, the *Jerusalem Post*, *JNS* and other Jewish newspapers, has been quoted in dozens of papers in the U.S. and internationally, and has appeared on Newsmax TV, Fox News, The Mark Levin Radio Show, the Dr. Sebastian Gorka Radio Show, *JNS* podcasts, and more.

Save the Date

ZOA SUPERSTAR GALA 2023

Edward
Lewis

Justice Louis
D. Brandeis
Award

U.S. Speaker of
the House

Kevin
McCarthy

Dr. Miriam
And Sheldon
G. Adelson
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Israel Award

Senator

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Friend of Zion
Award

MK Dan
Illouz

Myron
Zimmerman
Security of
Israel Award

Azerbaijani
Minister of
Foreign Affairs

Jeyhun
Bayramov

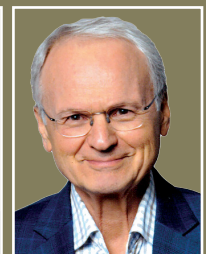
Dr. Robert
Shillman
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Diplomacy
Award

Mark
Schiff

ZOA Jewish
Comedian
of The Year
Award

Morton A.
Klein

ZOA National
President



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2023, NYC

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Alan D. Jay
ZOA National Executive Director

Greetings to all from ZOA headquarters in midtown Manhattan. It is from here and from our regional offices that the ZOA, with robust energy, indefatigable resolve and laser focus, continues to fight for Israel's sovereign rights, our shared Zionist dreams and the rights of all Jewish people to live safe, productive lives without fear of persecution and antisemitism.

Our national and regional ZOA staff are once again enjoying the benefits of in-person, day-to-day interaction and professional collaboration. When we are not in our offices, we are meeting with government officials, media, rabbis, colleagues, educators and students, and we are meeting with you, our Zionist partners. It is all of you, our supporters, who make our critical work possible.

It's been a very busy year since our last ZOA Report. Here are some ZOA highlights.

Our 2022 ZOA Annual Superstar Gala took place in November 2022 at a beautiful venue on the Hudson River. There, the ZOA did what no other prominent Jewish group dared to do: For his achievements on behalf of Israel, the entire Middle East, and the Jewish people, the ZOA honored the 45th President of the United States, Donald J. Trump.

ZOA National President Morton A. Klein presented President Trump with the prestigious and rarely conferred Theodor Herzl Gold Medallion. Past recipients of this award include Winston Churchill, Lord Arthur Balfour, Harry Truman and Golda Meir. This honor was bestowed on President Trump because the ZOA understands that moving the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, signing the Taylor Force Act, recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, withdrawing from the dreadful Iran nuclear deal, presiding over the brokering of the Abraham Accords, signing an executive order protecting Jewish students under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, and other pro-Israel, pro-Jewish actions qualified President Trump to be included in the company of the aforementioned giants in Jewish history.

Also honored on this special evening for all the wonderful and important things they've done for Israel, the Jewish people and the ZOA: Ambassador Jason Greenblatt, Esq., one of the architects of the Abraham Accords; Israeli Brigadier General (res.) Amir Avivi, founder and CEO of Habitchonistim (the Israel Defense and Security Forum); and Joseph Lubeck and Ali Meli, successful businessmen who support ZOA, Israel and other causes in ways that were explained in detail during the festivities. I would be remiss if I neglected to specially thank the NYPD and the United States Secret Service for helping to facilitate this monumental evening and especially for keeping us safe. (The Gala is covered in more detail on page 12.)

The ZOA has been busy hosting informative and educational in-person events as well as Zoom With ZOA and ZOA Book Club programs. These events have featured a who's who in the pro-Israel space, including MKs Dan Illouz and Simcha Rothman, former New York State Assemblyman Dov Hikind, Brigadier General Amir Avivi, Professor Eugene Kontorovich, and prominent authors including journalist extraordinaire Caroline Glick and the founder of The Home Depot, Bernie Marcus.

On a beautiful June Sunday in New York City, ZOA hosted an impressive cohort of nearly 100 Zionists in the annual Celebrate Israel Parade. Led by Mort Klein and his wife Rita, the group included ZOA supporters and our ZOA Coalition in the World Zionist Organization. Marching down Fifth Avenue, clad in our "ZOA & ISRAEL, Together Always & Forever" t-shirts, we proudly

showed our support for Israel, singing Hebrew songs, chanting “Am Yisrael Chai,” and greeting the many thousands of spectators who came to celebrate Israel. Upon passing the reviewing stand, Mort was invited by radio personality Nachum Segal to share his thoughts on the parade during Segal’s live coverage of the event. Mort did not disappoint, once again committing himself and the ZOA to eternal support of the Jewish State.

Every four years the World Zionist Organization holds elections during which the World Zionist Congress is elected. We were very successful in the 2020 election, quadrupling our votes and doubling our seats. We are setting our sights on even better results in the 2024 election. To that end, we hosted WZO Chairman and ZOA Coalition partner Yaakov Hagoel and his team from Israel to discuss 2024 election strategy. To ensure the success of positions important to the ZOA and to Israel’s survival – sovereignty and judicial reform, to name two – we will not only need your vote, but also your help in encouraging others to vote. We will share developments via email and on our website.

Our ZOA regions are also quite busy. Around this great country, the ZOA has been organizing pro-Israel events and fighting antisemitism on the state and local levels, hosting community events, parlor meetings and regional galas. You will find comprehensive articles about our work around the country in this report. Please use my contact information below to let me know if you’d like to become active in your local region and I will make sure you hear from one of our directors.

In June 2022, ZOA National President Morton Klein and his wife Rita hosted the most spectacular ZOA Leadership Mission to Israel to date. Using the beautiful David Citadel Hotel – mere blocks from the Old City – as a base of operations, the group went on day trips throughout Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, and the Jordan Valley. We spent a day in the Knesset hearing from ministers and MKs. We visited Gush Etzion, Hebron, Ma’ale Adumim, Area C, and E1, and saw beautiful, thriving and growing Jewish communities. But we also saw illegal Arab construction on Israeli land which the European Union is largely and illegally funding.

The greatest surprise and perhaps the most incredible memory from our amazing journey was the private meeting that Mort arranged for our group with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. His 45-minute briefing left us all speechless. When the ZOA starts advertising next year’s mission to Israel, I strongly encourage you to sign up early! A more detailed description of the trip is on page 23.

I’ve given you a bird’s-eye view of what’s been happening at ZOA – a typical year, really. But we’re striving for bigger and better, so stay informed. The best way to keep up with our work is by subscribing to our emails. If for any reason you are not receiving our emails, please call us so that we can sign you up. Or go to our website and sign up yourself; we’ve made it very simple.

Call or email me with any thoughts, questions, or comments about the ZOA’s work.



L’hitraot,
Alan D. Jay
ZOA National Executive Director
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ZOA NATIONAL NEWS

ZOA Proudly Announces New Chairman of the Board: Rubin Margules

The ZOA is honored to announce that in June 2023, Rubin Margules was elected Chairman of the ZOA's Board of Directors. An accomplished real estate investor and manager, Rubin graduated from the City University of New York and received his MBA degree from Harvard Business School.

Rubin is also an extraordinary Zionist activist. Since the time that he worked on Kibbutz Tirat Zvi after high school, Rubin has committed his time, energy, and finances toward strengthening the Jewish State of Israel. During the Six-Day War, he organized his first fundraiser for Israel.

Rubin is a member of the board of the Jerusalem Reclamation Project/American Friends of Ateret Cohanim and is also a member of the board of the American Friends of Ariel University. For 10 years, he served as president of his congregation, The Manhattan Beach Jewish Center.

In addition, Rubin has a deep and longstanding relationship with the ZOA. He has served as president of the ZOA's Brooklyn region and been a member of the ZOA's National Board of Directors for over 20 years, as well as a National Vice President. For more than 20 years, Rubin has also led the ZOA's Purim mission to Israel, distributing mishloach manot packages filled with food and treats to thousands of IDF soldiers on their bases every year. The packages include letters from yeshiva students thanking the soldiers for their courageous defense of the Jewish homeland.

Rubin's wife Cecilia, a prolific poet and songwriter, is equally committed to the Jewish people and to Israel. She is on the National Board of Emunah of America and, together with Rubin, is a patron of the Yossi Berger Holocaust Education Center at the Appleman Emunah College of Art and Technology in Baka, Jerusalem.

In 2021, Rubin received the ZOA's highest honor, the Justice Louis D. Brandeis Award for Defense of Israel. He was also honored with the Jerusalem Award for Diaspora Leadership at the Jerusalem/Arutz Sheva Conference in 2022, as well as with the Shomer Yisrael award in 2011 from the Bet El Yeshiva Center. Together with his wife Cecilia, Rubin received the Jerusalem Reclamation Project Bonei Yerushalayim award.

Rubin Margules truly exemplifies the meaning of the word "Zionist" and is a generous and outstanding activist for Israel and the Jewish people. The ZOA is so proud to have him serve as our Chairman of the Board.



Rubin has committed his time, energy and finances toward strengthening the Jewish State of Israel.

ZOA Welcomes New Members to Its Board of Directors

The ZOA is proud and honored to announce that the following individuals have been elected to the National Board of Directors:

Henry Schwartz

Mr. Schwartz is a long-time supporter of the ZOA, having previously served on the National Board of Directors and as Treasurer. We are so happy to welcome him back to the Board. Mr. Schwartz is a legendary businessman and generous philanthropist. He is the CEO of Elmhurst, which was one of the largest dairies on the east coast and a family business for close to a century. In 2017, under Mr. Schwartz's innovative leadership, Elmhurst entered an exciting new chapter as a plant-based milk company. The Schwartz family also runs Steuben Foods and Dora's Naturals.

Michael Leven

Mr. Leven is a visionary executive in the hotel and hospitality industry. Among his many accomplishments, he launched the Holiday Inn Express brand; reorganized Days Inn of America, growing it from a regional chain to one of the largest hotel organizations in the world; and served as president and chief operating officer of the Las Vegas Sands Corporation. Mr. Leven is also a visionary philanthropist, having established two unique Jewish philanthropy initiatives: the Jewish Future Pledge and – for teens and young adults – the Jewish Youth Pledge. You can read more about Mr. Leven on page 35.

Gary Schottenstein

Mr. Schottenstein is chairman and CEO of Schottenstein Real Estate Group, one of the largest developers/builders in the Midwest, focusing on residential and mixed-use developments throughout the Midwest and Southeast U.S. The Schottenstein family have led some of the world's largest retailers, including DSW and American Eagle Outfitters. They also have had a longstanding commitment to community service and generous philanthropy to Jewish causes. Members of the Schottenstein family financially supported a 16-year project to translate the Yerushalmi version of the Talmud from its original languages of ancient Hebrew and Aramaic into English, making the Yerushalmi Talmud more accessible to learners.

Brian Decker

Mr. Decker is a partner at Francisco Partners, which provides capital, expertise and support for growth-aspiring technology companies. Before joining Francisco Partners in 2008, he was a business analyst with McKinsey where he focused on engagements in the semiconductor, telecommunications and hardware sectors. Mr. Decker serves on the boards of BeyondTrust, Boomi, Forcepoint, SmartBear, and Sonicwall.

Jeffrey Kraines, M.D.

In addition to his clinical experience practicing internal medicine and rheumatology, Dr. Kraines has been a senior healthcare executive in the managed care, pharma/biotech, consulting, and product innovation industries. Dr. Kraines is president of the William P. Goldman & Brothers Foundation, which is devoted to defending Israel, protecting Jews, preserving Jewish history and culture, and providing medical, educational, and social service needs. He is also a supporter and member of numerous Jewish organizations in Israel and the U.S. and serves on several boards. Dr. Kraines was married to Linda Gail Kaplan, z"l, an ardent Zionist and major Jewish leader and influencer in the Boston area. 🇺🇸

ZOA Welcomes Lee Rosenblum as Our New Chief Development Officer



**“I Ask Not for A Lighter Burden,
But for Broader Shoulders”
- Jewish Proverb**

It is an honor and privilege to now be associated with an organization under the brave leadership of Morton Klein whose philosophy regarding Israel and Jewish continuity blend with mine.

At age 11 while attending the Hebrew Academy of Greater Miami, our school hosted Simon Wiesenthal who spoke to us and the community about the Holocaust, survival, and tolerance. Afterwards we were each handed a tzedakah box and directed to raise money for the cause. The student raising the most funds would be rewarded, along with his or her family, with a private dinner at the home of our principal, Rabbi Alexander S. Gross, and Mr. Wiesenthal. Having raised the most money, my family and I spent an evening I will never forget. Since that time, I have carried with me a strong sense of “גאווה” (pride). It has remained impenetrable and helped me when I was the victim of deliberate and cruel Jew-hatred.

Following a successful senior marketing management career in the financial services industry, I returned to my roots and found my calling in the Jewish centric nonprofit sector beginning as the New York Regional Director for the American Committee for the Weizmann Institute of Science. Since then, my roles have included National Major Gifts Officer for the American Friends of Bar-Ilan University to, most recently, National Executive Director of the Friends of the European Leadership Network (ELNET), Europe’s leading pro-Israel advocacy and political action organization where I have spent the last ten years.

Why ZOA? At this critical time where we see a deterioration of the golden age of Judaism and emboldened anti-Zionism/antisemitism here and abroad, the work and voice of the ZOA must come to the forefront. Israel’s detractors are vocal, vibrant and widely accepted in every aspect of society. Our voice and message, once strong and influential, have become more and more diluted with every generation removed from the Holocaust. We at the ZOA represent the unwavering idea of a strong, safe and independent Jewish homeland with Jerusalem as its undivided capital.

Building a successful and sustainable campaign that ensures the growth of our organization and its bold mission, driving revenue, expanding programming and donor recognition along with increasing our regional presence will be the focus and priority.

I thank our leadership for allowing me to broaden my shoulders to serve and protect our Jewish homeland and the Jewish people. 🇺🇸



Zionist Organization of America

Superstar Gala

November 13, 2022

ZOA's Star-Studded Louis D. Brandeis Award Dinner

Celebrating 125 Years

It was standing room only at the ZOA's Louis D. Brandeis Award Dinner at Manhattan's Pier Sixty on November 13, 2022, celebrating the ZOA's 125th anniversary. Former U.S. President Donald J. Trump; Kevin McCarthy, then House Minority Leader and now House Speaker; Jason Greenblatt, Esq., former U.S. Special Representative for International Negotiations; Israel Defense Forces Brig. Gen. (res.) Amir Avivi; Iranian Muslim Zionist activist Ali Meli; and eminent businessman and philanthropist Joseph Lubeck, Esq. were our distinguished honorees.

Renowned speakers and presenters at the Gala were Dr. Miriam Adelson, a global philanthropist, researcher, physician and expert in drug addiction; World Zionist Organization Chairman Yaakov Hagoel; Dr. Kiron Skinner, former Director of Policy Planning at the U.S. Department of State; ZOA National Vice President Myron Zimmerman; businessman Steven Sass; Harvard Law School Professor Emeritus Alan Dershowitz; and ZOA National President Morton A. Klein.

Notable dignitaries and VIPs at the Gala included Knesset member Simcha Rothman; Amir Ohana, Israel's former Minister of Justice and former Minister of Public Security, and now Speaker of Israel's Knesset; former U.S. Ambassador to the Netherlands and former U.S. Rep. Pete Hoekstra; journalist Caroline Glick; Matt Schlapp, Chairman of the Conservative Political Action Coalition; former U.S. Rep. Michelle Bachmann; Newsmax host and past ZOA Gala Emcee Rita Cosby; and Dr. Harvey Risch, Professor Emeritus of Epidemiology at the Yale School of Public Health.

Thanks to our generous donors, more than 100 college students and young professionals attended the Gala. It was truly a night to remember.



Former U.S. President Donald J. Trump, Recipient of ZOA's Theodore Herzl Gold Medallion

Appearing by video, Dr. Miriam Adelson introduced former President Donald Trump, describing him as a visionary who, during his presidency, understood America's special bond with the Jewish State of Israel and who brought the alliance between the two countries to unprecedented heights. Dr. Adelson noted that President Trump signed decrees recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital and recognizing the Golan Heights as Israel's sovereign territory. She stressed that his cancellation of the Iran deal and the termination of funding to the anti-peace Palestinian Authority were critical to Israel's security. Dr. Adelson called President Trump the “best friend” that Israel ever had in the White House and said, “There are countless Americans and Israelis who will be born into a better world that the President made possible.”

At the outset of his speech, President Trump noted what an honor it was for him to receive the ZOA's Theodore Herzl Gold Medallion. Indeed, this award has been given sparingly over the course of ZOA's history, having been conferred on such giants as Lord Alfred Balfour, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, U.S. President Harry Truman, Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, and Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir.

President Trump described the State of Israel as “a living tribute to the unbreakable spirit of the Israeli people and the glory of Almighty God. What an achievement. Out of the generations of suffering, from the heart of an arid desert has emerged a proud, mighty, and thriving nation to inspire the entire world.”

Trump noted that “as President, I was proud to be the best friend the State of Israel has ever had in the White House. Under my leadership, the alliance between the United States and Israel had never been stronger, and the future of the Middle East had never looked brighter.”

Referring to his record on Iran, President Trump said, “Very quickly, I withdrew from the disastrous Iran [nuclear] deal, which actually I think may be the single most important thing . . . and I imposed the toughest-ever sanctions on the Iranian regime. . . .From the day he took office, [U.S. President] Joe Biden has been groveling to the Iranian dictatorship to re-enter the Iran nuclear deal.”

Regarding his momentous decision to move the U.S. embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, President Trump noted that “for decades every U.S. President had promised to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem . . . but they never did.” President Trump kept his promise, moving the embassy and recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's eternal capital.

The President described Israel as “a very special place, an amazing place. It's really a miracle, if you think about it, with what the Jewish people have gone through and what Israel has gone through, and all the incredible work and incredible brilliance to have it shaped the way it has been shaped.” President Trump concluded by expressing his solidarity with the Zionists in the room and his love for Israel.

ZOA National President Morton A. Klein

When Dr. Kiron Skinner introduced ZOA National President Morton Klein, she said she did so with happiness and pride. Dr. Skinner explained: "It is Mort's commitment to the facts that has changed the narrative on the role of Israel in the world, and has made us refocus on the fact that there is a covenant between America and Israel that goes back to the founding of our country, the United States, and the modern founding of the State of Israel."

In his address to the crowd, Morton Klein called President Trump "the greatest friend of Israel we have ever had in the White House." He noted the President's long list of accomplishments: forging the Abraham Accords between Israel and four Arab nations; signing an executive order which strengthened Jewish students' protection from antisemitic harassment and discrimination under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act; withdrawing from the Iran nuclear deal and imposing maximum sanctions on Iran; cutting \$500 million in funding to the Palestinian Authority (PA) so long as the PA continued to pay Arabs to murder Jews; terminating funding for UNRWA which teaches Arab children to hate and harm Jews; recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights; reversing discriminatory labeling that had prohibited products made by Israelis in Judea and Samaria to be labeled "made in Israel"; and allowing American citizens born in Jerusalem to list Israel as their birthplace on their passports.

Mort also noted that President Trump appointed "the greatest friends of Israel to important posts affecting U.S. relations with Israel," and he was "the first President ever to pray at the Holy Western Wall, as no U.S. president had ever visited this holy site." For all these reasons, Mort told President Trump, "You unquestionably deserve the Nobel Peace Prize for your extraordinary accomplishments."

Mort criticized the present U.S. administration for its double standards – for example, unfairly railing against the Religious Zionist Party, the second largest party in the Israeli coalition government, while remaining silent when the previous coalition included Ra'am, the Arab political party in Israel that opposed the Abraham Accords, opposed the Jewish state and called Israel racist, and advocated for removing 500,000 Jews from Judea and Samaria.

Mort also strongly criticized the current administration for failing to condemn and continuing to deal with Mahmoud Abbas and the PA, when the PA pays Arabs lifetime pensions to murder Jews. In addition, Mort criticized the administration's failure to condemn members of Congress who are hostile to Israel, such as U.S. Rep. Rashida Talib. Indeed, Mort told the crowd that President Biden had recently praised Tlaib, telling her that he admired "[her] intellect, [her] passion, [her] concern for people." President Biden told Tlaib, "You are a fighter, and God thanks you." Calling this "a disgrace," Mort chastised the Jewish world which, except for the ZOA, responded with silence to President Biden's praise of Tlaib. Mort urged: "We lovers of Israel must demand that these haters of Israel be removed from every committee in Congress on which they serve."

Mort raised the question: "Why aren't Jewish leaders, Jewish groups, Israeli leaders, and the Jewish media telling the truth about the Jewish city of Jerusalem that President Trump recognized as Israel's undivided capital? I think they are afraid of a rise in Jew hatred and violence . . . if they expose the truth about the lies about Jerusalem, the lies about occupation, about settlements, about the Palestinian Authority and President Abbas."

*"We lovers
of Israel
must
demand that
these haters
of Israel be
removed
from every
committee
in Congress
on which
they serve."
- Morton
Klein*



Morton Klein

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy, Recipient of the Dr. Miriam and Sheldon G. Adelson Award for Defense of Israel

In introducing (now Speaker of the House of Representatives) Kevin McCarthy, Morton Klein described him as someone who “has always been there for Israel, supporting aid to Israel, military aid, supporting the Abraham Accords, whatever he can do to help Israel.”

Appearing by video, Rep. McCarthy said, “To be mentioned in the pro-Israel cause with the likes of ZOA and the Adelsons is very humbling. I want to tell you tonight that America has no better ally than Israel. While leaders in our second branch of government at times may project hesitance, it is my pledge to you that as the Speaker [of the House of Representatives], Republicans will lead the first branch of government with the clarity and the strength of our firm support of Israel.”

House Speaker Kevin McCarthy

Mort stressed that Israeli leaders must tell the truth about a Palestinian Arab state, about Mahmoud Abbas, and about the fiction of “occupation.” He said, “This Arab war against Israel is not about land. It is about Israel’s existence. That is why offers of land fail every time.”

Mort concluded, “As Jews we are divinely commanded in our holy Torah to pursue true justice, to fight evil, to defend against those who seek our destruction. We dare not retreat from confrontation, for the stakes are as high as they are today. We Jews did not come to Eretz Yisrael as colonialists; we came neither like the British imperialists, nor like the French colonizers in Algeria, nor like the English and Dutch settlers in South Africa. We did not come like immigrants seeking a new homeland. We came back to our ancient home. This is our homeland. Let’s never forget it.”

Mort implored: “Never again dare we be the ‘sha, shti’l’ Jews, the Jews of silence. As long as we speak out, as long as we fight as fighters for God, we, the Jewish people, and we, the people of Eretz Yisrael, will prevail.”



Joseph Lubeck, Esq., Recipient of the Justice Louis D. Brandeis Award

In his introduction, Morton Klein noted that it was his honor and privilege to present “one of ZOA’s highest and most prestigious awards” to Joseph Lubeck, “one of the great businessmen and great Zionists.” In addition to his “extraordinary accomplishments in the business world,” Joe Lubeck’s own proudest achievements are “his work for Jews and Israel,” Mort said. For example, Mr. Lubeck established the Escoll Israel Fellow program at schools such as Cornell University and Vanderbilt University, which brings former IDF soldiers who are now in college to American campuses, to engage in dialogue about Israel and their Jewish heritage. Mr. Lubeck’s generosity also enabled the expansion of the Hillel at the University of South Florida. Named in loving memory of Mr. Lubeck’s grandparents, USF’s Hillel building is now the Morris and Bertha Escoll Center for Jewish Campus Life, and now has a new kosher kitchen, dining room and programming space, thanks to Mr. Lubeck’s generous financial support. Noting that Mr. Lubeck also supports the Technion, Chabad and the ZOA, Mort described Joe Lubeck as “one of the major, unsung, pro-Israel, pro-Jewish philanthropists in the United States of America.”

Expressing his pride in receiving the ZOA’s award, Mr. Lubeck explained that fighting campus antisemitism had “become a passion for me over the last few years.” He implored everyone: “We need to be strong and make our voices known. It was said many years ago that the Jews who respect themselves are the ones who will gain the most respect.”

Noting that more than a hundred years ago, his own grandfather wrote a paper about his life at Cornell, titled “The Jewish Student on Campus,” Mr. Lubeck said, “Here we are, a hundred years later, and yet the problem [of antisemitism] remains.” He recalled the valuable lesson that he learned from his grandfather which still resonates today: “Don’t assimilate. Don’t hide your faith. Be proud of who you are. And be a proud, strong Jew. It is the proud, strong Jew who will in fact garner the most respect.”

Ali Meli, Recipient of the Steven Sass Righteous Friend of Zion Award

In presenting Ali Meli with the first of this annual award, Steven Sass noted Mr. Meli’s prominent position advancing freedom for the Iranian people. Mr. Meli “has formed and is an active member in the pro-Iranian democracy movement and has led Iranian Americans for Liberty,” Mr. Sass said. He expressed the hope that Mr. Meli “is the start of a vanguard of those seeking a peaceful future for Iran.”

Expressing his gratitude for the award, Mr. Meli dedicated it to the many Iranians who have risen to oppose the Iranian Shiite fundamentalist regime of the Ayatollahs. He lauded those protesting in the streets of Iran, reminding us of the values of liberty and freedom that we cherish across our shared heritage.

Mr. Meli noted that Iranians are waking up to the nightmare of the Iranian regime in power, and some have had the courage to rise up against this tyranny. Iranians are looking for a future with a free Iran, he said, where antisemitism and terrorism will have no place, and where Iran can be at peace with its neighbors. Mr. Meli paid tribute to those risking their lives against the Ayatollahs, noting that their bravery is an inspiration to all of us.



Mort Klein and Joseph Lubeck, Esq.



(From left) Morton Klein, Gen. Amir Avivi, and Myron Zimmerman

Brig. Gen. (res.) Amir Avivi, Recipient of the Myron Zimmerman Security of Israel Award

When Myron Zimmerman – a valued member of the ZOA National Board of Directors, a ZOA National Vice President, and the presenter of the award to General Amir Avivi – was introduced to the crowd, he was aptly described as “a man of many accomplishments.” A successful commercial real estate developer and manager, Mr. Zimmerman is also someone who is deeply committed to Eretz Yisrael and the Jewish people. He founded the MZ Foundation, which is dedicated to fighting antisemitism and safeguarding Jews and the Jewish State of Israel. And he has a special interest in our young people. Mr. Zimmerman's extraordinary generosity to the ZOA has supported our fight against campus antisemitism and enabled the ZOA to sponsor its annual one-of-a-kind student leadership missions to Israel. Thanks to Mr. Zimmerman's financial support, when college students return from the ZOA leadership mission, they are armed with knowledge, tools, and confidence to stand up effectively for Israel and the Jewish people.

Praising General Avivi as he presented him with the award, Mr. Zimmerman noted that only two and a half years after having “an idea about how to help Israel,” the General “now runs an organization with 16,000 military personnel in it.” General Avivi “knows everybody, he reviews basic facts when you speak with him, and he captured the public's attention, which is a big reason why the Likud Party won. His influence, with all the generals, is unbelievable.”

In his acceptance speech, General Avivi stressed the importance of remembering the meaning of Zionism: “Zionism is a very, very simple holistic idea. There is a national home for the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael, a special homeland. And we are the people of Israel, and this is the Land of Israel, and it is ours.” It is that simple, the General stated, and yet Zionism is misunderstood today.

Having fought for 30 years in the IDF in all operations and wars, General Avivi became worried about Israel's younger generation, whom he saw taking Israel for granted. They were not talking about Zionism anymore, about patriotism, or about what it means to be a Jew. His organization, the Israel Defense and Security Forum, with 16,000 officers and commanders, goes to schools and speaks to the younger generation with the goal of “reshaping” Israeli society.

“There is a national home for the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael, a special homeland. And we are the people of Israel, and this is the Land of Israel, and it is ours.”
– Brig. Gen. (res.) Amir Avivi



Morton A. Klein and Ali Meli



Jason Greenblatt, Esq., Recipient of the Dr. Bob Shillman Outstanding Diplomacy Award

Appearing by video to present the award to “the great Jason Greenblatt,” Professor Alan Der-showwitz noted that Mr. Greenblatt would “be remembered by history forever for having helped engineer the very important Abraham Accords. . . . I know the great role he played, which sent a powerful message to the Palestinian Authority that peace with Arab states could be achieved despite the failure of the Palestinian Authority to engage in any kind of meaningful negotiations for peace.”

Jason Greenblatt expressed his gratitude to “some of the people who traveled with me in my journey to this podium.” First, he thanked President Trump whom he described as “a fighter against antisemitism and an incredible friend to the Jewish State of Israel.” President Trump “created history-altering policies with respect to Israel and the Middle East, because he was not wed to false diplomatic norms, and because he understood that the Middle East is the most dangerous neighborhood on the planet.” Mr. Greenblatt also thanked Jared Kushner for his passion for Israel and for peace, and for his inspirational eternal optimism, “no matter how daunting the issue.”

In addition, Mr. Greenblatt thanked “the courageous bold leaders” who signed the Abraham Accords, and those who have not yet signed it but still supported the initiative. And he thanked the ZOA for defending Israel and the Jewish people, for fighting antisemitism, and for strongly standing by the Trump administration’s pro-Israel policies and actions.

Mr. Greenblatt cautioned that “we are at a very unique point in history now.” While Israel is a strong and thriving democratic state, “the enemies and the critics of the State of Israel are many.” Since Israel’s founding, “we have witnessed countless outrageous attacks on the only functioning democracy in the Middle East. The actual history of Israel has been replaced by an alternative narrative, a carefully contrived narrative advanced by the Palestinian Arab leadership and others. They make up facts, grotesquely distort history, and are very successful in doing so. Time and again the Palestinian Arab leadership and their friends falsely claim that all the misfortunes of the Palestinians are the result not of their own making, but of the State of Israel.”

The Abraham Accords “demonstrated conclusively that former Secretary of State John Kerry was completely wrong when he claimed that peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors was impossible, without Israel accepting the creation of a Palestinian state on the unyielding terms of the Palestinian leadership.” In Mr. Greenblatt’s view, today’s Middle East “is undergoing a profound transformation, confronted by a recently emboldened Iran. The most forward-looking leaders realize that Israel is not the problem, but, in fact, it is part of the solution.” While there will be “significant bumps in the road,” Mr. Greenblatt believes that “this road to peace is just the beginning. . . . The signatories of the Abraham Accords and others in the region who have not yet signed the Accords will move history forward for all of the people in the Middle East . . . and the Abraham Accords will blossom beyond our wildest imaginations.” 🇺🇸



President Trump greets the crowd



Dr. Joseph Frager, MK Amir Ohana, Rita Cosby and Mort Klein



Dr. Kiron Skinner, Former Director of Policy Planning at the U.S. Department of State



Rita Klein (left) with ZOA National Board Vice Chair Michael Orbach (right) and family



Elie Pieprz, Cindy Grosz and Efrat Mayor Oded Revivi



ZOA National Board member Myron Zimmerman, Mort Klein, Matt Schlapp and MK Simcha Rothman



Morton Klein (center) with Ruth Gleit and ZOA National Board member Morton Gleit



ZOA National Board member Jay Miller and ZOA Deputy Director Howard Katsoff (right)



Dr. Barry Tigay (second from left) and family



Shalom & Iris Maidenbaum



Susan Getz, Director of ZOA's Center for Law & Justice Susan Tuchman, Esq. and ZOA National Board member Dr. Rosaline Barron



Dr. Kiron Skinner and Mort Klein



Joseph Lubeck, Esq., recipient of the Justice Louis D. Brandeis Award



Nassau County Legislator Mazi Melesa Pilip, Nassau County Executive Bruce Blakeman, Jason Greenblatt, Esq. and Iris & Shalom Maidenbaum



Mort Klein and ZOA National Board member Dr. Rosaline Barron



ZOA National Executive Director Alan Jay and ZOA National Board member Myron Zimmerman



Rabbi David Baron, Mort Klein, Speaker of Knesset MK Amir Ohana and MK Simcha Rothman



Matt Schlapp, Cindy Grosz, Rita Cosby and ZOA National Board Vice Chair Michael Orbach



Liz Berney, Esq., ZOA Director of Research & Special Projects, and her Klezmer group, Kol B'Yachad



Jason Greenblatt, Esq. and family



Ali Meli, Recipient of the Steven Sass Righteous Friend of Zion Award



ZOA National Board member James Pollack, former U.S. Rep. Michele Bachmann and Jason Greenblatt, Esq.



Richard Miller, Margaret Topper, Lewis Topper and Amy Miller



Mort Klein and ZOA National Board Chairman Rubin Margules



Professor Alan Dershowitz



ZOA National Board member Sheryl Silver and Mort Klein



Steven Sass



Sheryl Silver, ZOA National Board Vice Chair Dr. Paul Tartell and Dir. of ZOA's Center for Law & Justice Susan B. Tuchman, Esq.



Sharon Risch & Dr. Harvey Risch

ZOA'S LEADERSHIP MISSION TO ISRAEL - JUNE 2023

By Glenn Taubman

How do you turn “regular” Zionists into unafraid, passionate, knowledgeable, energized, outspoken and fervent Zionists? Send them on ZOA’s Leadership Mission to Israel.

In 1972, at the age of 16, I spent a summer in Israel. That was a magical experience that turned me into a lifelong Zionist. Since then, my family and I have traveled to Israel 12 times. I have long supported pro-Israel organizations, but in the past decade gravitated to the ZOA because of its strong, consistent and unambiguous pro-Israel stances. I attended several ZOA advocacy missions in Washington, D.C., always considering myself a “regular” supporter.

Then came the 2023 ZOA Leadership Mission. I have long admired Mort Klein, having heard him speak on several occasions. When my wife and I saw that he was personally leading the 2023 Mission, we knew we had to go and signed up immediately. Mort led an amazing trip, due in part to his encyclopedic knowledge of the issues and direct access to the key players.

You can probably figure out the end of the story before I even begin. The 2023 ZOA Leadership Mission transformed us from “regular” Zionists into passionate, educated and energized Zionists. In just one week, we heard from a remarkable array of speakers who are on the front pages every day, people who shape the fate and destiny of Israel.

Our accommodations at the David Citadel Hotel were first-class in every way, remarkable and refined, and many speakers came to the hotel to speak with our group. They included: MK Simcha Rothman, the architect of the judicial reform movement who spoke in depth about why reform is so critical for the future of Israel and Zionism; Fleur Hassan-Nahoum, the Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem and outreach ambassador to the Abraham Accords nations, who spoke about many current topics, including the way the Palestinian Authority (PA) educates Arabs to hate Jews and not learn Hebrew, which contributes to their social isolation and immiseration; and Khaled Abu Toameh, the brilliant journalist for the *Jerusalem Post*, who discussed the media’s extreme anti-Israel bias and the failings and fraud of the PA and its army. Mort Klein gave two talks describing in detail the problems with the Biden administration’s hostile appointments and policies toward Israel, and the serious flaws in the Biden/Lipstadt Antisemitism Strategy.



Glenn Taubman on the ZOA's Leadership Mission

In just one week, we heard from a remarkable array of speakers who are on the front pages every day, people who shape the fate and destiny of Israel.



Fleur Hassan-Nahoum, Deputy Mayor of Jerusalem



Journalist Khaled Abu Toameh



Rabbi Leo Dee



Finance Minister Bezael Smotrich



Minister Ofir Akunis



(From left) Margaret Arciniega; founder, owner and CEO of Caliber 3, Col. Sharon Gat; Glenn Taubman; and Dennis Levin at Caliber 3



Brigadier General (res.) Amir Avivi

Most touching of all, we were visited by Rabbi Leo Dee, who lost his dear wife and two daughters to a vicious terrorist murderer. Rabbi Dee spoke about their murders and his wishes for a more hopeful future of coexistence. He also spoke about his potential lawsuit against CNN and CNN anchor and host Christiane Amanpour for falsely stating that his wife and daughters were engaged in a “shootout,” rather than truthfully stating that they were unarmed and murdered in cold blood by a vicious Arab terrorist who shot them in their car. We discussed this and other Palestinian Arab terrorist issues at our special luncheon with six of Israel’s brave “lone soldiers,” who came from all over the world to join the IDF and fight our enemies.

Outside of the hotel, our ZOA group ventured to the Knesset to meet several MKs and government ministers, including Finance Minister Bezael Smotrich who spoke about liberalizing Israel’s sometimes creaky and semi-socialist economy; MK May Golan who gave a rousing speech about Israeli policies and about the Israelis in south Tel Aviv suffering from the wave of illegal Somali immigration; and Ofir Akunis, Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology, who spoke about the miracle of the “Start-Up Nation” and Israel’s export of high technology to other countries. We also had the pleasure of a powerfully informative and insightful lecture from MK Dan Illouz, formerly the ZOA’s own Israel representative. We were gratified to hear all of them express heartfelt thanks for ZOA’s courageous and effective work on behalf of the Jewish State and the Jewish people, recognizing that the ZOA’s work is unique and so needed in these difficult times.

On another day, we were escorted to the Jordan River Valley by Brigadier General (res.) Amir Avivi to see firsthand the strategic importance of Israel safely controlling the area by the river and the interior heights bordering Jordan. General Avivi, founder and chairman of Habitchonistim (the Israel Defense and Security Forum), also spoke about the importance of



Wine tasting at Psagot Winery



Lital Marmerosh-Slonim and Daniella Weiss of the Nachala Movement

Israel's deterrence against Iran and even some semi-allies, like Egypt. We visited Caliber 3, one of the world's premier anti-terrorist training organizations. Police and special forces officers from all over the world come to train there, and we were inspired by the story of its founder, Colonel Sharon Gat. We viewed actual training exercises, which were reminiscent of a James Bond film.

While keeping us on a busy and varied agenda, ZOA also kept us well fed and well hydrated throughout. One day we visited the beautiful Psagot Winery and had a wonderful lunch and wine tasting with Daniella Weiss, Director of the Nachala Settlement Movement – Jews who live in Judea and Samaria and lobby the government to expand Jewish towns and villages in those areas. We spent a special morning with a sovereignty leader, the irrepressible Nadia Matar, learning about her efforts to fulfill Abraham Accords policies to declare sovereignty over 30% of Judea/Samaria and the Jordan Valley. We witnessed first-hand a large number of illegal Palestinian Arab homes being built in Israel-controlled Area C in Judea/Samaria, and discussed with experts what should be done about this.

We also spent an afternoon with members of a group called Yatar, specially trained citizen-volunteers who, using a small fleet of All-Terrain Vehicles, work 24/7 alongside the IDF and the Israel Border Police to protect Israel and its citizens from terrorist attacks. We visited residents of the Gush Etzion bloc and then made our way to Hebron/Chevron to visit the Cave of Machpelah/Tomb of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs with Noam Arnon, spokesman for the Hebron Jewish Community. We also spent an inspiring spiritual morning at Judaism's holiest place, the Temple Mount, and learned of its history and issues surrounding it. And who can forget our time in ancient Jerusalem's City of David (Ir David), seeing the numerous irrefutable archaeological proofs that Jews were here for thousands of years.

On top of all of this, we made several new lifelong friends, who have also become passionate and educated Zionists. At the headquarters of Keren Kayemet L'Yisrael-JNF and the World Zionist Organization (WZO), we met with WZO Chairman Yaakov Hagoel. We were shown the historic room where the Declaration of Independence was issued in 1948. Then, we went around the table with each participant explaining his or her Zionist background and what brought them to cast their lot with Israel and the ZOA. Many of the participants shared interesting and inspiring personal stories about how their love of Israel began and evolved. We learned how all the other participants' lives had also been transformed by Israel, Zionism and the ZOA trip.



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and ZOA National President Morton A. Klein



ZOA Mission participants meet with PM Benjamin Netanyahu and two top aides



ZOA Mission participants with WZO Chair Yaakov Hagoel (front row, red tie)

And there is more! As if all this were not enough, our group had an in-person meeting with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the conference room adjacent to his office. This was an almost surreal experience that Mort was able to arrange. After going through the strictest security checks of our lives, we were ushered into the Prime Minister's private conference room, where he and two top advisors spent almost an hour with us, talking and answering substantive questions about everything from Iran, judicial reform, European NGOs, relations with the Saudis and more. It was the thrill of a lifetime for just about all of us. We were expecting a five-minute photo op at most, and instead got 45 minutes of substantive time with an inspiring Jewish world leader. A truly amazing experience for a group of "regular" Americans! Separately, Mort had a remarkable two-hour private meeting with Minister of Strategic Affairs Ron Dermer discussing Israel's challenges – from hasbara to Palestinian Arab terrorism to Iran to the important need to further expand Israel's incredible high-tech industry, the envy of the world that has almost every country regularly knocking on Israel's door.

So now, we are an exhilarated group of knowledgeable and passionate Zionists, ready, willing and prepared to fight for Israel and defend its sovereignty and morality before the entire world. We ended this extraordinary experience with a standing ovation after breakfast, properly reflecting our powerful emotions. We extend our grateful thanks to ZOA for rolling out the red carpet for us in Israel and giving us the trip of a lifetime. L'hitaot. 🇺🇸

Founded 1897



Zionist Organization of America

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Note: Membership in ZOA Donor Societies is based on annual giving and is subject to change.

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Susan B. Tuchman, Esq.
Director, Center for Law & Justice

ZOA Triggers Federal Investigation of Antisemitism in Fairfax County, VA Schools

Spurred by a ZOA complaint detailing years of unaddressed antisemitism in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS), the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (OCR) has opened an investigation into whether FCPS violated its obligation to protect Jewish students under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. FCPS is one of the largest school districts in the U.S., serving more than 181,000 students.

The ZOA's complaint alleges that Jewish students in FCPS have been subjected to "Heil Hitler" salutes and Jewish "jokes" from their peers. They have had coins thrown at them and been subjected to comments like "Jew them down," both reflecting antisemitic stereotypes about Jews being greedy and materialistic.

One Jewish student received hundreds of antisemitic texts from other students, calling him a "f—king Jew ass whore," "f—king Jew," "dirty Jew," "Jew F—ktard," and "dollar dealer." Swastikas have defaced school property, including desks and bathrooms. FCPS officials failed to respond effectively to all these horrific incidents, according to the ZOA.

Since filing the complaint, the ZOA has furnished OCR with additional evidence of antisemitic harassment that FCPS continues to inappropriately address, in violation of Title VI.

ZOA Files Amicus Brief with U.S. Supreme Court, Urging that Social Media Companies be Liable for Recommending Antisemitic Content to Users

In December 2022, the ZOA filed an amicus brief with the U.S. Supreme Court in support of an American terror victim's lawsuit against Google. This case marked the first time that the Court would be considering the scope of Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act, a federal law that immunizes social media companies from liability based on content posted by their users.

The ZOA's brief argued for limitations on the scope of immunity under Section 230. Social media companies should not be immune from liability when they knowingly steer their users toward content that encourages hatred, violence and terrorism against Jews.

The case before the Court, *Gonzalez v. Google*, was initiated by the family of Nohemi Gonzalez, after Ms. Gonzalez, a 23-year-old American citizen studying in Paris, was brutally murdered in 2015 by ISIS terrorists while out at a café with friends. The plaintiffs alleged that Google, through YouTube (which Google owns), materially assisted, aided and abetted, and conspired with ISIS in violation of the Anti-Terrorism Act, by recommending content to its users, thereby assisting ISIS in spreading its hateful, violence-inciting messages.

Social media companies should not be immune from liability when they knowingly steer their users toward content that encourages hatred, violence and terrorism against Jews and others.



Nohemi Gonzalez (Courtesy of Facebook)

Google claimed that it was immune from liability under Section 230 and moved to dismiss the suit. The district court agreed and granted the motion to dismiss, and the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit affirmed. The Supreme Court agreed to consider the case.

Joined by the Rieders Foundation – a non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing Jewish culture and the civil rights of the Jewish people – the ZOA argued in its amicus brief that it would be inconsistent with the text of the Communications Decency Act to afford immunity to social media companies when they collect data about their users, including their users’ social media posts and viewing habits, to determine what additional content the users would be interested in viewing, and then recommend new content to users to view. Immunizing social media platforms from liability for such actions would encourage already soaring antisemitism and violent and often deadly attacks on Jews. And it would undermine the legal protections afforded to American victims of international terrorism.

Oral argument before the Supreme Court took place on February 21, 2023, and the Court issued its decision on May 18, 2023, vacating the judgment and remanding the case to the Ninth Circuit. The Court concluded that the plaintiffs did not have a case under the Anti-Terrorism Act and therefore the Court had no need to address Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act.

Because the Court declined to address the scope of immunity under Section 230, it is now up to Congress to act. There is bipartisan support for limiting the immunity that social media companies enjoy under Section 230. The Biden administration’s U.S. National Strategy to Counter Antisemitism, issued in May 2023, calls on Congress “to hold social media platforms accountable for spreading hate-fueled violence, including antisemitism.” The Strategy calls on Congress to “remove special immunity for online platforms,” including if a platform uses an algorithm to amplify or recommend content to a user that promotes violence.

No employee should have to sacrifice their religious beliefs and observances to earn a living.

ZOA Files Amicus Brief with U.S. Supreme Court, Urging More Workplace Protections for Observant Jews

In February 2023, the ZOA filed another amicus brief with the Supreme Court, in *Groff v. DeJoy*, urging the Court to expand the legal protections for Jewish and other employees who require religious accommodations from their employers.

Gerald Groff, an evangelical Christian employed by the United States Postal Service (USPS), sued USPS under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, after USPS refused to offer an accommodation that would allow him to observe his Sunday Sabbath. Title VII requires

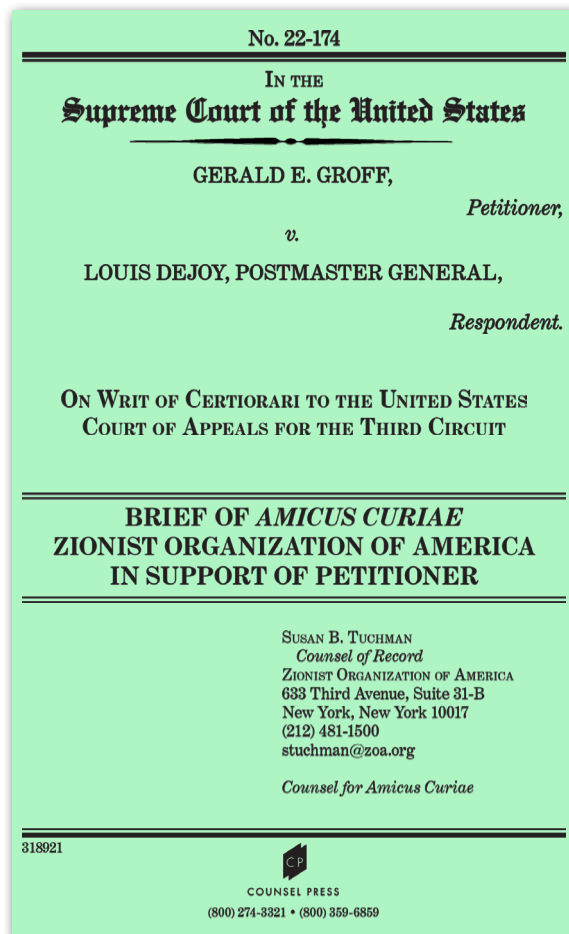
employers to accommodate an employee's religious beliefs and practices, unless doing so would impose an "undue hardship." USPS claimed that accommodating Groff would impose an undue hardship.

The lower courts decided in favor of USPS, relying on a 1977 Supreme Court case, *TWA v. Hardison*. In *Hardison*, the Supreme Court stated that requiring an employer "to bear more than a de minimus cost" to accommodate an employee's religious needs constitutes undue hardship. On Groff's petition, the Supreme Court agreed to hear the case.

The ZOA's brief argued that the de minimus cost standard wrongly gives employers virtually carte blanche to deny a religious accommodation, putting observant Jewish employees (and employees of other religious faiths) in the untenable position of choosing between their jobs and their sacred religious obligations. The standard is not contained in Title VII's text, it is contrary to the plain meaning of "undue hardship," and it is inconsistent with the "undue hardship" standard applied in other federal statutes.

The ZOA's brief also documented the serious and surging antisemitism in the U.S., including discrimination against Jews in the workplace. Title VII should be interpreted in a way that discourages, rather than facilitates, bigotry against Jews, the ZOA argued.

Oral argument took place on April 18, 2023. On June 29, 2023, a unanimous Court rejected the de minimus standard, providing better and more meaningful legal protection to observant Jews and others who may need religious accommodations from their employers. The Court determined that employers must provide religious accommodations to their employees unless it would result in "substantial increased costs" to the employer's business.



NJ Appellate Division Hears ZOA's Ethics Case Against Clifton School Board Members

On June 1, 2023, a three-judge panel of the New Jersey Superior Court, Appellate Division heard the appeal that the ZOA filed on behalf of Elisabeth Schwartz whose ethics complaint against two Clifton, NJ school board members had been dismissed by the New Jersey School Ethics Commission. Ms. Schwartz filed the complaint after the two school board members used their official podiums during the “commissioner comments” portion of a school board meeting to attack and demonize Israel.

The school board meeting occurred in May 2021, when Israel was fighting a defensive war against Hamas in Gaza and there was a consequent surge in antisemitism, including in New Jersey. The two board members used that board meeting to make false and hateful accusations against Israel. One falsely accused Israel of “ethnic cleansing” and “occupation.” The other falsely claimed that Israel is an “apartheid” and “colonialist” state. He also falsely claimed that American police go to Israel to be taught “abusive tactics,” which they bring back to urban communities. He effectively blamed Israel for the death of George Floyd.

Instead of giving Ms. Schwartz the opportunity to prove that the school board members, by their antisemitic, anti-Israel comments, potentially compromised the public trust in the board in violation of the School Ethics Act, the School Ethics Commission simply dismissed her complaint without a

hearing. The ZOA argued that this decision could not be squared with another contemporaneous Commission decision, in which a school board member made comments allegedly offensive to Muslims. The board member in that case did not make his comments at a school board meeting; he posted them on his personal, private Facebook page. Instead of dismissing the complaint against him, the case proceeded to a hearing and the Commission decided that the board member violated the School Ethics Act and should be censured – even though he was no longer on the school board.

The ZOA is representing Ms. Schwartz in this case together with Jeffrey Schreiber, Esq., a distinguished litigator and the managing partner of Meister Seelig & Fein’s New Jersey office. Mr. Schreiber argued the appeal before the Appellate Division. Three groups submitted amicus briefs in support of Ms. Schwartz: The Lawfare Project, StandWithUs, and the Deborah Project. We are awaiting the Appellate Division’s decision. 🇺🇸



Jeffrey Schreiber, Esq. (photo courtesy of Meister Seelig & Fein LLP)

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS



Dan Pollak
Director, Government Relations

Iran Is Our Highest Priority

The Government Relations Department continues to focus on Iran, antisemitism, and the poor behavior of the Palestinian Authority (PA). There is nothing more important to the ZOA than stopping Iran. It has been apparent for some time that the Biden administration and, in particular, the Special Envoy for Iran, Rob Malley, will go to any lengths to appease Iran. The only reason the U.S. has not returned to the disastrous JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action) has been that Iran has not agreed to inconvenience itself with additional inspections as it completes its development of nuclear weapons.

As this article goes to press, it appears that an informal agreement has been reached with Iran that will allow the unfreezing of billions of dollars in payments to Iran from Iraq and South Korea in exchange for . . . well, nothing at all, except empty promises from Iran to not exceed certain thresholds of their enrichment efforts and to reduce the pace of attacks on Americans in the region. All enrichment beyond 20% is already prohibited according to the JCPOA, but no penalties on Iran are envisioned by the administration or from the Europeans for demonstrated bad faith. To make matters worse, the international watchdog organization has, as part of these new arrangements, agreed to ignore the proof of Iranian cheating that was uncovered by

Israel, and accept literally incredible technical explanations that Iran has given for uranium enriched beyond 80% in some samples.

The new agreement will be informal because the Biden administration is also purposefully evading the law that Congress passed in 2015, the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA). INARA requires the U.S. president to bring any agreement relating to Tehran's nuclear program to Congress for a 30-day review period. Instead, President Biden is calling his new agreement a memorandum of understanding, and insisting that Congress has no role in reviewing it. The result of this foreign policy malpractice may be a major war in the region, since Israel may have no other option to stop Iran from reaching a nuclear military capability except kinetic strikes on Iran itself. That may unfortunately prompt Hezbollah, the Lebanese terrorist group under Iranian command, to launch thousands of missiles at Israeli civilians.

There is nothing more important to the ZOA than stopping Iran.

Difference Between the ZOA and the Government of Israel

As our members know, the ZOA is an independent American organization, and has no connection at all to the Israeli government. Many critics of the ZOA pretend not to understand this fact. They suspect that we are secretly acting in concert with the Israeli embassy or even taking orders directly from Jerusalem. Not only is this false, but also, during my career at the ZOA which now spans more than 15 years, there have been numerous occasions when the ZOA has disagreed with the Government of Israel. Of course, as Americans, most members of the ZOA do not get a vote in Israel, and it is appropriate for the Israeli people to select both the policies and the elected officials of their own country without interference from non-Israelis. Sometimes, though, the issue is about American activities which relate to Israel, and in that case, it is our obligation as Americans to speak up for what is best for our country.

One example of this from more than 15 years ago was the Gaza withdrawal, which was an ill-advised policy of the Israeli government. At the same time, though, Israel asked U.S. taxpayers to subsidize the costs to Israel of the withdrawal, and that was something the ZOA spoke up about, even though it did not please the Israeli government of the time. In addition, the ZOA has been consistently critical of the release of terrorists from prisons, even when the country making the deal has good internal reasons to proceed. The ZOA has also argued for sovereignty over all of Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the Golan, even when the Israeli government has not explicitly supported sovereignty for tactical reasons.

Two more current examples have to do with American funding for the UN – especially the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), despite that body's ongoing slander and lies against Israel - and U.S. reentry into UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), which was announced by the Biden administration in June 2023. The ZOA explicitly supports cutting funding to the UN when it acts against the interests of our own country and against Israel. Bills in the House and Senate were introduced to cut some funding for the UN if no action is taken to decrease the anti-Israel and antisemitic activities of the UNHRC. This group has a permanent Commission of Inquiry (COI) dedicated to finding violations of "humanitarian law." In fact, the UNHRC is biased against Israel in every way possible. At every meeting of the UNHRC, there is a permanent "Agenda Item 7," forcing discussion of the Israeli-Palestinian Arab conflict without regard to what else is happening in the world.



The ZOA supports cutting funding to the UN Human Rights Council based on its anti-Israel bias.

(Credit: UN Photo/Cia Pak)

ZOA will not support legislation, however it is worded, that would result in a new Arab state in the region that would be an existential danger to the very existence of Israel.

For example, during the height of the Syrian civil war, the UNHRC passed a resolution decrying Israeli human rights abuses in the Golan Heights, while staying silent on Syria's murder of its own people. Some of the worst regimes in the world have seats on the UNHRC, including China, Algeria, Cuba and Russia. The UNHRC appointed a special rapporteur on the Israeli–Palestinian Arab conflict as its only official with no year of expiration. This position has always been filled with a rabidly anti-Israel person. Even the U.S. State Department called the COI's report "a one-sided, biased approach that does nothing to advance the prospects for peace."

Many Democrats are opposed to cutting funds to the UN for ideological reasons, but the ZOA believes that using the power of contributions is the only way to change bad behavior at the UN. Continued American funding to the UNHRC without conditions enables the anti-Israel bias to continue. Israeli diplomats have unfortunately not been as clear as the ZOA about the need to cut funds to the UN.

In the case of UNESCO, it was founded after World War II as a well-meaning, but mostly ineffective science and cultural body. It drifted into excessive corruption and political bias to such a degree that when President Ronald Reagan withdrew from the organization the first time, in 1984, his position was bipartisan and even lauded by the *New York Times*! The U.S. eventually rejoined and was pulled out again by President Barack Obama over UNESCO's bizarre policies, including admitting the PA as a full member, in violation of U.S. law. UNESCO also called the Temple Mount and the Kotel only by their Muslim names, negating Jerusalem's undeniable historical connection with Christians and Jews. In 2017, UNESCO designated the ancient Jewish city of Hebron as a Palestinian World Heritage Site, denying Judaism's historical tie.

The organization now claims to have reformed, and for whatever reason, the Israeli coalition government in power last year determined that it would no longer oppose a U.S. return to UNESCO. The Omnibus bill, passed in 2022, included billions of dollars in support for this corrupt organization. The ZOA still strongly opposes President Biden's decision to rejoin this organization. The President's rationale includes the false notion that rejoining will allow the U.S. to reduce the international influence of China. The main problem, though, is that the PA is not a country; treating it as one is not in the interests of the U.S., even if Israel has decided to keep its own objections low key.

No Support for a PLO Terror State in the Region

For the majority of the ZOA agenda, including Iran, antisemitism and ending pay-to-slay, the ZOA agrees with the Israeli embassy, and we routinely work with them when it comes to pro-Israel legislation. ZOA has certain non-negotiable red lines, however; we will not support legislation, however it is worded, that would result in the recognition of a new Arab state in the region that would be an existential danger to the very existence of Israel. We remain the only major American Jewish organization which takes this principled position and will not compromise it under any circumstances. 🇺🇸

ZOA PEOPLE

Profile: Michael Leven



*Visionary Philanthropist &
Businessman Extraordinaire*

Michael Leven, the 2014 recipient of the ZOA's Justice Louis D. Brandeis Award, is an icon in the hotel and hospitality industry, with a dizzying list of accomplishments. He is also a visionary philanthropist committed to the strength and security of the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

Growing up in Boston, Massachusetts, Mike lived in a three-story tenement “with 86,000 Jews within three square miles,” he said. An only child, Mike’s maternal grandparents, both immigrants, lived with him and his parents. “I had two fathers and two mothers for the first 16 years of my life.”

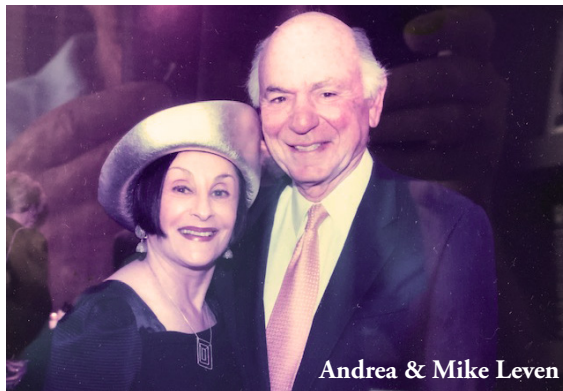
Mike’s childhood was richly Jewish. He had a traditional Jewish education. His grandfather was the vice president of a small Orthodox shul. Mike himself ran a Shabbat service for children in one of the Orthodox shuls in the area. When he was 10 years old, Mike began attending a Jewish summer camp called Camp Tevya, where he was exposed to Jews of all denominations. He eventually became a counselor at the camp and the athletic director.

A graduate of the prestigious Boston Latin School, Mike went on to attend and graduate from Tufts University. He briefly attended law school at the University of Chicago, but “it wasn’t for me,” he said. It was his first time living away from home.

Mike obtained a graduate degree from Boston University’s College of Communication and married after he graduated in 1961. He and his wife Andrea have been married for 62 years and have three sons.

In 2019, Mike ended his tenure as the chairman and chief executive of Georgia Aquarium to devote more time to Jewish philanthropy and investing in the future of Jewish life.

After graduate school, Mike needed a job, and he began looking for one in advertising. But when he applied to management programs in advertising, Mike couldn't get into any of them because he was Jewish. He ended up going to Boston University's placement office to look for work. The only job available was a sales promotion manager position at the Roosevelt Hotel in New York City. Mike applied for the job and got it. From there, he held a variety of positions, moving around frequently. He and his wife lived in New Jersey, Boston, Connecticut, Chicago, and even in the Bahamas for a year, when Mike was director of sales and marketing for the Plaza Hotel. At the time that they moved to the Bahamas, Mike and Andrea were the parents of two babies, one 16-months-old and the other only six-weeks-old.



Mike's career eventually led him to move to Atlanta in 1985, to work for Days Inn. He became president of Days Inn of America, growing the company from a regional chain to one of the largest hotel organizations in the world. Under Mike's leadership, Days Inn developed and implemented initiatives to hire older workers, people with disabilities, and people who were homeless, leading AARP to recognize Days Inn as "Outstanding Employer."

It was during his tenure at Days Inn that "my world began to change," Mike said. To that point of his adulthood, he had not been very involved in Jewish life, other than his synagogue memberships and a 1971 trip to Israel with his father. When the campaign director for the local Jewish Federation came knocking on Mike's door and encouraged him to get involved, Mike's commitment to the Jewish world, which had been so integral to his childhood, was re-ignited. He helped organize men's missions to Israel, became involved in young leadership training, and committed his time to other local Jewish organizations, including the local Israel Bonds. Eventually, Mike became involved in the national Federation, as national marketing chair.

In 1990, Mike went on to serve as the president and chief operating officer of Holiday Inn Worldwide, where he remained for five years. During his tenure, the new Holiday Inn Express brand grew from zero to 330 open hotels.

Mike then started his own business in the franchise world, U.S. Franchise Systems, where he served as chairman and chief executive officer. The company franchised the Microtel Inns & Suites, Hawthorn Suites, and America's Best Inns & Suites hotel brands.

When Mike sold that business, he went on to run The Marcus Foundation, which was created by Mike's friend Bernie Marcus, co-founder of Home Depot. Mike had already been on the board of trustees of the foundation, which, among other objectives, aids non-profits in Israel and the U.S. that support Jewish causes. The foundation's major philanthropic initiative was the creation of the Georgia Aquarium, which Mike ran for two years.



In 2009, Mike received an offer to return to the hospitality industry. He had been on the board of the Las Vegas Sands Corporation, founded by Zionist giant Sheldon G. Adelson who offered Mike the position of president and chief operating officer. During Mike's tenure there, the corporation had one of its greatest periods of growth.

Mike and Sheldon Adelson were close, eating lunch together every day and dinner several times a week. Adelson had a singular commitment to Israel, Mike said. "After his family, Israel was everything to him."

Mike remained the president and COO of the Las Vegas Sands Corporation until 2014. He described it as "a spectacular experience. I learned about politics, people, and charity." The position also "made a big difference in my life financially," Mike said. "I became a mini philanthropist."

He was committed to steering philanthropy to sustaining and strengthening the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

That commitment led to his launching of the Jewish Future Pledge, a worldwide initiative that asks individuals and families – regardless of their age or net worth – to commit at least 50% of the charitable dollars in their wills to support the Jewish people and/or the State of Israel. The first step is signing the pledge, which Mike emphasized "is not a legal document. It's a moral commitment and a note to yourself about why you signed it." The next step, he added, is talking with family, friends, and others, explaining to them what the pledge means to you and why it reflects your values, so that they can carry on those values and themselves be inspired to support Jewish causes and organizations like the ZOA.

More than 20,000 people have already joined the Jewish Future Pledge. While that number includes several billionaires, Mike made it clear that the initiative is intended to inspire – and has in fact inspired – Jews at all levels of charitable giving.

To mobilize Jewish teens and young adults, ages 13-24, to support the Jewish people and the State of Israel, Mike also created the Jewish Youth Pledge. It asks teens and young adults to commit to being active and contributing members of the Jewish community throughout their lives.

Leven's initiatives to secure the Jewish future and strengthen Israel



Mike described himself as “a big emotional, psychological and financial supporter” of the ZOA and its national president, Morton Klein.

The pledge by Jewish youth provides: “I hereby pledge to act today and throughout my lifetime to strengthen the Jewish people and Israel. I make this commitment because I have a responsibility to ensure that my generation writes the next chapter of the Jewish story and remains a strong link in the chain of generations.” The pledge includes a letter to oneself, reflecting what the pledger would like to contribute to and accomplish for the Jewish world. Everyone who takes the pledge is reminded every five years for the next 20 years of their commitment to strengthen the Jewish people and Israel. The reminder comes via text message and includes the full letter that they wrote to themselves.

While people have referred to these initiatives as Mike’s legacy project, he says it isn’t that at all. This is a new and creative way for Jews of all ages to invest in the future of the Jewish people and the State of Israel. Mike himself stands out as an example for others to follow. He has already given away 30% of his net worth to charity. “I’ve taken care of my wife and kids,” he said. “The rest of my money is to take care of the Jewish people as best I can.”

One way he does that is through his support for and commitment to the ZOA. Mike described himself as “a big emotional, psychological and financial supporter” of the ZOA and its national president, Morton Klein.

Mike met Mort in Las Vegas, maybe even before Mike worked with Sheldon Adelson. To Mike, Mort Klein “stands almost alone in the Jewish world. His beliefs are consistent with his actions. He says what he thinks and does what he thinks” and “doesn’t get the applause he deserves.” When Mort approached Mike and told him that the ZOA wanted to give him the ZOA’s prestigious Brandeis Award in 2014, Mike said he was “overwhelmed by the honor.”

Every time Mike reads an article or a press release from the ZOA, he says he smiles. “ZOA keeps fighting,” he said, “Who else fights?” Particularly in the battle against antisemitism, he said that “Mort stands alone.” Mort is “the noisiest,” someone who is “unwilling to give up his principles – even if that means losing a donor,” Mike said. “Most organizations are more interested in feeding their furnaces than in taking care of Israel.” But Mort and the ZOA are different. Both are “absolutely consistent” about speaking up and telling it like it is, “influencing other people” and “making them think.”

Michael Leven is plainly made of the same stuff. A legendary business executive. A published author: His 2020 book, titled *Can’t Do It Yourself: How Commitment to Others Leads to Personal Prosperity*, is an inspirational guide and resource, based on Mike’s own life and career. And an innovative and generous philanthropist, fiercely committed to sustaining the strength of the Jewish community and the State of Israel. Equally committed to these goals, the ZOA is proud of and grateful for Mike Leven’s friendship and support. 🇺🇸

Home Depot Founder Bernie Marcus presenting the Brandeis Award to Mike Leven



ZOA CAMPUS



Jonathan Ginsburg
Managing Director

ZOA Campus proudly continued its activism in support of Israel and proved once again to be the strongest Zionist voice on college campuses across the United States. By empowering Jewish students and representing the spirit of Zionism, ZOA Campus engaged hundreds of students from a variety of backgrounds and faiths, to equip them with the facts and strategies for effectively advocating for Israel and fighting antisemitism in all its forms.

ZOA Campus also forged important relationships with a range of partners, including campus chapters of Chabad and Hillel. These partnerships resulted in successful collaborative events that encouraged students to learn more about Israel and deepen their own connection to the Jewish state.

ZOA Campus Fellowship

The ZOA Campus Fellowship class of 2022-2023 consisted of over 30 passionate Zionist student leaders from schools across the country. Over the course of the academic year, ZOA Campus Fellows successfully engaged their campus communities by hosting programs that focused on educating about and advocating for Israel. ZOA Campus Fellows hailed from UC Berkeley, Columbia University, Duke University, Emory University, Binghamton University, and many other schools.

ZOA Fellows also helped raise awareness about how contemporary antisemitism may be expressed on college campuses today. In partnership with allied organizations and our ZOA Fellows, we helped pass and reaffirm the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism on critical college campuses such as at UC Santa Barbara, where a resolution in support of the Jewish community passed in student government.



ZOA Fellow tables during Israel Week at Binghamton University

Events and Programs

ZOA Campus helped facilitate educational Zionist programming on over 70 college campuses over the course of the 2022-2023 academic year. The events focused on strengthening Jewish identity, raising awareness about Israel's complex security challenges, and educating about Jewish rights throughout the Land of Israel, including Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria.

In the West Coast Region, ZOA Campus partnered with Hillel at Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo to host Yoseph Haddad, a former IDF soldier and Israeli activist. Haddad, a Christian Arab Israeli, shared his experiences defending Israel, and enlightened students about the reality of Israel's diverse, democratic, and vibrant society. By sharing his personal story, Haddad helped dispel the many anti-Israel myths (e.g., that Israel is a racist, apartheid state) that circulate frequently on campus.

ZOA Campus also partnered with Tikvah, the main pro-Israel student group at UC Berkeley, to host educator Naya Lekht in the fall of 2022. Dr. Lekht, a Soviet-born Zionist activist, spoke with students about how to combat anti-Israel bias in the classroom.



Yoseph Haddad, a Christian Arab Israeli activist and former IDF soldier, at Cal Poly-San Luis Obispo

Another highlight was the ZOA's partnership with UCLA Chabad for a West Coast Shabbaton in February 2023. It brought together 350 students and featured special guests, including former IDF soldiers from Belev Echad, and Jewish educator and Israeli tour guide Doron Kornbluth. Additionally, ZOA Campus collaborated with student groups and Hillels at other California schools, including UC Davis and UC Santa Barbara.

Across the Midwestern Region, ZOA Campus built new relationships and collaborated on presenting a variety of educational programs. Working with the ZOA Fellow and student leaders from Maroons for Israel at the University of Chicago, we helped combat anti-Israel propaganda that was being disseminated by the campus chapter of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP), by creating customized fact sheets and graphics that told the truth about Israel. ZOA Campus also collaborated with Maroons for Israel to co-sponsor a Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration in the spring of 2023. Partnering with student leaders and Chabad and Hillel chapters at Washington University, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Miami (Ohio) University, ZOA Campus presented additional events, including group advocacy sessions and educational tablings.



A former IDF soldier shares his inspirational story with students at UVM Chabad.



Students at Emory University participate in Meeting the Challenge, a student-led pro-Israel conference co-sponsored by ZOA Campus in partnership with Hillels of Georgia

The Southeast Region surged with exciting and informative Zionist events that were hosted and co-sponsored by ZOA Campus. At the University of Florida, ZOA Campus collaborated with Chabad UF for a special Israel-themed Shabbat dinner, where students learned about the indelible roots of the Jewish people in Eretz Yisrael and Israel's vibrant modern-day society. Additionally, ZOA co-sponsored a special student-led conference at Emory University titled "Meeting the Challenge." The conference was a big success and worked to strengthen the pro-Israel community and connect students with each other. Students had the opportunity to hear from expert guest speakers and learn about issues relating to Israel's history, culture, and

politics. The campus department also hosted a series of engaging Israeli culture and Hebrew language workshops at Florida Atlantic University in partnership with FAU Hillel. These programs provided Jewish students with an opportunity to learn more about Israeli culture and Zionism in an interactive way.

ZOA Campus also worked closely with Chabad chapters at the University of Texas-Austin, the University of Central Florida, the University of South Florida, and more. In partnership with Virginia Tech Hillel on Yom Hazikaron, Israel's Memorial Day, ZOA co-sponsored a candle-lighting remembrance event in honor of the IDF soldiers who gave their lives in defense of the Jewish state.



Students at UC Davis celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut



ZOA Fellow tableting at Yeshiva University

As part of the campus department's celebration of Yom Ha'atzmaut, ZOA Campus also co-sponsored large-scale Independence Day festivities at Emory University, Georgia Tech, the University of Miami, the University of Georgia, and more. These festivities were a special highlight during this academic year, when hundreds of Zionist students across the country publicly and proudly participated in celebrating Israel's 75th anniversary.

ZOA Campus co-sponsored several educational programs in the New England region. In the fall of 2022, the campus department partnered with Chabad at the University of Vermont and Belev Echad to host two wounded former IDF soldiers who shared their inspirational stories with students. ZOA Campus also developed new partnerships with student leaders at Harvard University and Williams College. Adding to the festivities of Yom Ha'atzmaut, ZOA Campus

partnered with the Student Alliance for Israel (SAFI) at UMass Amherst for a week-long series of programs dedicated to celebrating Israel's 75th anniversary.

ZOA Campus was also active in the New York Tri-State and Mid-Atlantic regions. Under Mid-Atlantic Campus Coordinator Lily Dillon's direction, the ZOA sponsored events at Brooklyn College, Union College, and the University at Albany. The ZOA also helped run weekly educational seminars about Israel at Baruch College, The City College of New York, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Pace University, the School of Visual Arts, Fordham University, the Fashion Institute of Technology, and The New School. ZOA Campus also expanded its presence at Yeshiva University with events, movie screenings, and tablings throughout the academic year.



Mid-Atlantic Campus Coordinator Lily Dillon (right) with a student at Binghamton University



Students at Florida Atlantic University participate in a workshop co-sponsored by ZOA Campus and FAU Hillel.

In February 2023, ZOA Campus worked with Hillel at Binghamton University on its annual Save a Child's Heart Gala, which raises money for and brings awareness to Israel's important work to cure childhood cancer. ZOA Campus also partnered with Belev Echad and Chabad at Duke University and Penn State for impactful speaking events featuring wounded IDF soldiers who shared their experiences. In addition, ZOA Campus worked closely with Neil Lazarus, an acclaimed voice on Middle East politics, on several events including at American University, which educated students about media bias against Israel and how to effectively combat it.

The highlight of the spring 2023 semester was ZOA President Morton Klein's event at Columbia University entitled "The Orwellian Lies Against Israel: Now Hear the Truth." Mort's talk outlined many of the anti-Israel lies and misinformation that students hear in the classroom and in the media. The lecture received great feedback from the students who attended. ZOA Campus also co-sponsored widely attended Yom Ha'atzmaut celebrations at NYU, Binghamton University, Rutgers University, and the University of Maryland.

Among the other highlights of the spring semester was a collaborative partnership with Students Supporting Israel (SSI) to combat "Israel Apartheid Week" at the University of Chicago, Kennesaw State, Texas A&M, and UC Berkeley. These SSI-ZOA programs exposed students to the facts behind the terror-supporting policies and actions of the Palestinian Authority, Hamas, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad.

The students were extremely grateful for the support, resources, and assistance from the entire staff at ZOA Campus throughout the academic year.

Social Media

ZOA Campus has worked hard to expand our outreach on social media and engage more effectively with our audience in promoting the ZOA's values and mission. Karen Amouyal, ZOA's Social Media and Digital Coordinator, is now based in Tel Aviv, and has guided the success of ZOA Campus's educational and marketing efforts on social media. With a boots-on-the-ground approach, Karen has delivered dynamic content on our social media pages that is geared to college students and the general youth demographic, resulting in increased interaction, likes, comments, and shares.

ZOA Campus also continued its "Student Spotlight" profiles, which showcase the experiences, accomplishments, and contributions of ZOA Campus Fellows and ZOA-affiliated students on their respective campuses. In addition, ZOA Campus launched its first-ever Instagram Live series with leading Zionist influencers, which garnered great feedback due to its interactive and engaging model.

In May 2023, during Operation Shield and Arrow, ZOA Campus worked around the clock to deliver breaking news and key updates on social media about the IDF's defensive actions against the Palestinian Islamic Jihad terror organization. The original infographics and content created by the campus department were widely shared and circulated within the pro-Israel community on Instagram.

The campus department looks forward to expanding our digital reach even further and continuing to empower and advocate for Zionism and the State of Israel. 🇮🇱



Karen Amouyal,
ZOA's Social Media and
Digital Coordinator

Follow ZOA Campus on Social Media!



@zoa_campus



facebook.com/zoacampus

Or visit zoacampus.org

AROUND THE COUNTRY

NEW YORK CITY

Celebrate Israel Parade

On June 4, 2023, nearly 100 ZOA friends and supporters marched proudly in the Celebrate Israel Parade in Manhattan. Thank you to our friends at AFSI and everyone who marched with us!



Exclusive Donor Society Meetings With Israeli Leaders

ZOA Donor Society members enjoy access to lectures and briefings by prominent American and Israeli officials, authors, journalists, political advisors and others. Two recent Donor Society briefings featured Israel's Minister of Innovation, Science and Technology Ofir Akunis, and Brigadier General (res.) Amir Avivi. 🇮🇱

Brig. Gen. (res.) Amir Avivi event



Minister Ofir Akunis event



All photographs on this page by Susan May Tell



MICHIGAN

Kobi Erez, ZOA Michigan Executive Director

ZOA Michigan Fights Anti-Israelism at Bloomfield Hills High School

ZOA took action after an anti-Israel and antisemitic activist was invited to speak at Bloomfield Hills High School, located in a Detroit suburb, as part of the school's diversity initiative. On March 14, 2023, the speaker, Huwaida Arraf, addressed the entire 10th grade of 1,700 students – which is heavily Jewish – in the span of four mandatory assembly sessions. Her anti-Israel and antisemitic rhetoric made many Jewish students uncomfortable and angry, with some leaving the assembly in tears.

Arraf referred to Zionists as occupiers running an apartheid state and accused Israel of genocide in the Gaza Strip. Arraf also denied Israel's existence, referring to the land as Palestine.

ZOA Michigan contacted the school and demanded a public apology and an investigation into the school's failure to vet Arraf's background before inviting her to speak. In addition, the ZOA called on the school to put rules in place, to ensure that an anti-Israel event like this one would not recur. ZOA Michigan also encouraged parents of students and members of the community to voice their complaints to the school.

Soon after the incident, ZOA Michigan's President Sheldon L. Freilich addressed the Bloomfield Hills High School Board of Education at a board meeting that was covered by national and local media. Freilich described Arraf's background in detail, and questioned how the school could conclude that, given her anti-Jewish, pro-terror record, she would be appropriate to speak to impressionable young people. Arraf's Twitter account repeatedly displays antisemitic tropes and lies, calling Israelis "Jewish supremacists." She has praised Palestinian Arabs resorting to violence and insisted that suicide bombings are "noble."



ZOA Michigan President Sheldon L. Freilich addressing the Bloomfield Hills High School Board of Education

Freilich also exposed the following:

- As chair of the Free Gaza Movement, Arraf was behind the infamous 2010 Mavi Marmara flotilla, which attempted to break the perfectly legal Egyptian and Israeli weapons blockade of Gaza. Arraf was aboard one of the boats of the nine-ship flotilla, which was linked to both Hamas and Al-Qaeda.
- Flotilla organizers made clear that they intended to violate Israel's security perimeter. Though they claimed that their goal was to deliver humanitarian supplies, weapons and contraband were subsequently found on the Mavi Marmara.
- Nearly two dozen members of Hamas used knives, clubs, chains, and metal rods to mount an unprovoked attack on the Israeli weapons inspectors who boarded the flotilla in accordance with international law. Video footage shows, among other acts of violence, an Israeli soldier being stabbed, gangs of passengers pummeling soldiers with metal rods and other objects, and a soldier being thrown off one of the upper decks.
- Arraf founded the International Solidarity Movement in 2001. ISM members take an active part in illegal and violent actions against IDF soldiers. At times, ISM activists work with representatives from Hamas and Islamic Jihad and support shooting attacks against Israeli civilians. When Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity was occupied by terrorists in 2002, Arraf and other "activists" acted as voluntary human shields on behalf of the terrorists.

In his closing remarks, Freilich urged the school board and administration to take the following steps:

- Develop an action plan that will prevent future similar incidents and investigate why Arraf was not fully and appropriately vetted before being invited to speak.
- Adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism, which includes examples of antisemitism expressed as anti-Israelism.
- Invite a speaker from ZOA Michigan to provide students with an honest and accurate picture of Israel, a vibrant democracy where all citizens have equal rights.

Shortly after ZOA Michigan's complaint and remarks, the school issued a statement acknowledging its wrongdoing:

We made a mistake. We express our sincere apology for the harm that was caused by allowing a conversation that was not appropriate in a school setting. We own what went wrong and will improve our practices. In a school of "No Place for Hate," antisemitic rhetoric was shared with our students and we recognize its devastating impact. For this we are very sorry. We have identified significant areas for improvement and we acknowledge we need to do better. We deeply regret that our process failed our students and created division in our school. None of our students should carry the burden of this – it falls squarely on the district.

The principal of Bloomfield Hills High School resigned following the controversy, after he was placed on leave in April. The superintendent of the school district announced his retirement the following month.

ZOA Michigan will continue to stand up against anti-Israelism and antisemitism in schools and universities.

“We must fight antisemitism whether it comes from the right or the left, regardless of political affiliation.”

– Kobi Erez, ZOA Michigan Director

Wokeness and Antisemitism Event

ZOA Michigan leadership was instrumental in bringing David Bernstein, president of the Jewish Institute for Liberal Values, to Detroit to discuss, together with Professor Howard Lupovitch, the impact for progressive ideology on the promotion of antisemitism. Over 400 people attended the event, which took place at the Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield on March 23, 2023. Bernstein gave additional briefings to Jewish leaders, including Jewish Federation and Jewish Community Relations Council representatives.

Bernstein described woke ideology as a threat to liberal values and explained how it inevitably fosters antisemitism:

Progressive ideologues believe that only people with power can be racists, which means that you cannot be a racist if you don't have power, and if you do have power, you cannot be a victim. Over time, progressives have come to view Jews as a privileged group and part of the American power establishment, and this lends little credence to Jewish claims of racism. So when Jews allege racism by Arabs or Muslims, or African Americans, progressives tend to remain conspicuously silent because, in their view, Jews cannot be victims, and “powerless” minority groups cannot be guilty of racism. There was a clear progression from not taking antisemitism seriously to believing that Jews' inordinate power implicitly justified antisemitism.

ZOA Michigan Director Kobi Erez noted: “We found that the far-left outlook in Michigan high schools and universities fuels antisemitism, links Israel to racism, and stifles debate. Unfortunately, some Jewish organizations often ignore antisemitism stemming from the left. We must fight antisemitism whether it comes from the right or the left, regardless of political affiliation.”

David Bernstein (right) with Professor Howard Lupovitch (left) and Rabbi Aaron Starr



Fighting Antisemitism at the University of Michigan

On January 12, 2023, when Vice President Kamala Harris came to the University of Michigan to deliver a speech about climate change, the anti-Israel group that calls itself Students Allied for Freedom and Equality (SAFE) used it as yet another opportunity to attack Jews and Israel. SAFE protesters walked through campus waving Palestinian Arab flags and chanting, “There is only one solution: Intifada revolution,” which is a call for the murder of Jews. They also chanted, “From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free,” which is a call for Israel’s elimination.

If a student group had marched through campus calling for violence against Blacks or any other minority group, it is unfathomable that the university administration would do and say nothing. Yet that is exactly what the administration did in response to SAFE’s public call for violence against Jews.

ZOA Michigan contacted university leadership and urged the administration to rescind SAFE’s registered status and suspend SAFE’s access to campus funding.

Additionally, the ZOA called on the university to publicly denounce SAFE for inciting hatred and violence toward Jewish students. Also, the ZOA publicized this dangerous incident and encouraged the community to start effectively addressing rising antisemitism on campus.

ZOA Michigan urged the administration to rescind SAFE's registered status and suspend SAFE's access to campus funding.

Fighting Antisemitism in Film

In February 2023, ZOA Michigan hosted a program about Amazon’s antisemitic film, “Hebrews to Negroes,” which climbed to Amazon’s most watched list after NBA star Kyrie Irving promoted it to millions of his online followers. The ZOA’s goal was to encourage the community to speak out and fight back against extremist groups such as the Black Hebrew Israelites who spread hateful misinformation through film and social media, which can lead to violence.

The film promotes several antisemitic tropes and conspiracy theories, including that Jews control the media, that “white” Jews are not “real” Jews, and that Jews dominated the slave trade. The film also promotes Holocaust denial.

In December 2022, after a rash of complaints, Amazon CEO Andy Jassy released a statement that the company would not remove the movie from its streaming platform, nor would it include a disclaimer explaining the context of the film’s discriminatory viewpoints. Instead, Amazon would simply rely on customer reviews of the movie as a form of content moderation.

In a press release, ZOA Michigan President Sheldon L. Freilich objected to Amazon’s response, stating:

We must stand as proud Jews without bowing our heads when faced with this hatred. This vile film denies the Holocaust, proliferates hatred that Jews are the manifestation of the devil, and spreads a Nazi genocidal hatred, among other despicable lies. These types of films are gaining followers, which leads to violent incidents against Jews. 🇺🇸



GREATER PHILADELPHIA

Steve Feldman, Greater Philadelphia ZOA Executive Director

Back In-Person, More Active and Assertive Than Ever!

As this issue of the ZOA Report went to press, Greater Philadelphia ZOA was eagerly anticipating our first in-person Gala since 2019, prior to the pandemic. It is scheduled for Thursday, September 7, 2023, at the Hilton Philadelphia City Avenue. We are looking forward to celebrating modern Israel's 75th anniversary of independence, as well as the 125th anniversary of ZOA's founding.

We also have quite a lineup of wonderful, deserving honorees:

- Bart Blatstein, a member of our local Board and the ZOA National Board, and ZOA National's associate treasurer, is our Pillar of the Community Award recipient;
- Justice Sandra Schultz Newman, attorney, groundbreaking Pennsylvania Supreme Court justice and advocate on behalf of Jewry and Israel, is our Defender of Israel Award recipient;
- Stan and Diane Cardano Casacio, a dynamic, patriotic couple in the real estate industry, are our Friends of Zion Award recipients; and
- Michael Goldfarb, founder of the *Washington Free Beacon* online newspaper and the Emergency Committee for Israel, is our Ben Hecht Award for Excellence in Journalism recipient.

Greater Philadelphia ZOA Board member and ZOA National Board member Gary Erlbaum will serve as our master-of-ceremonies. ZOA National President Morton A. Klein will deliver his customary address. Our Gala Chairpersons are Board members Lynne Kessler Lechter and Bruce Holber.

School Dazed

Anti-Israel, anti-Zionist, and antisemitic activity has been far too common throughout America's higher education system. But we were shocked by the warped and hateful display at an elementary school – yes, an elementary school – in the affluent, heavily Jewish Philadelphia suburb of Gladwyne.

The school's "Cultural Heritage Night" featured a display labeled "Palestine" that included a large Palestine Liberation Organization flag, the banner of the genocidal terrorist organization headed by Mahmoud Abbas; a hand-made poster declaring that Jerusalem is the capital of "Palestine"; another hand-made poster asserting that the Israeli town of Rama – about 20 miles west of the Kinneret – is in "Palestine"; an additional poster highlighting a character that is synonymous with the anti-Israel, antisemitic BDS movement and is closely linked to the so-called "Palestinian resistance" (a euphemism for the destruction of Israel and annihilation of Jewish people); and yet another poster – this one highlighting a popular Palestinian Arab performer who frequently sings in praise of those who slaughter Jews and who calls for Israel's destruction.

Clearly the school has an anti-Jewish problem.

Greater Philadelphia ZOA wrote multiple letters to the principal, the acting superintendent of the Lower Merion School District (LMSD), and all the LMSD's board members, demanding that they condemn the display, and offering the ZOA's help to train faculty and staff about Jew-hatred and issues related to the Arab and Muslim war against the Jewish people.

Our 2023 Gala has one of our strongest line-ups of honorees ever.

The school's "Cultural Heritage Night" featured a display labeled "Palestine" that included a large PLO flag, the banner of the genocidal terrorist organization headed by Mahmoud Abbas, and a hand-made poster declaring that Jerusalem is the capital of "Palestine."

Though we were told in a reply that our concerns were being taken seriously, the school district appeared to be taking the position that everyone is entitled to their own culture. But this was not simply a matter of expressing one's culture. The ZOA's local leadership agreed that this display went beyond a benign, innocent display of foods, clothing and other cultural symbols. It was a politically charged, utterly false and outrageous assault against the Jewish community.

We rapidly mobilized the local community and beyond to attend the subsequent school board meeting. About 40 concerned individuals attended, and about a dozen of them addressed the school board (only residents of the township were permitted to speak) – enduring a two-hour wait for the public-comment segment. Among the speakers was ZOA's own national president, Morton Klein, who lives in the district. Mort's words were so powerful that the acting superintendent interrupted the proceedings to address the issue. But she offered no substantive remedies to what transpired in the elementary school, nor any reforms to prevent something similar from happening in another school. In fact, she declared that it was legitimate to recognize "Palestine" because the United Nations purportedly does. Truly an outrage.

After the meeting, Mort subsequently spoke at length with the acting superintendent.

Greater Philadelphia ZOA will do our utmost to push for policy reforms to prevent this from happening again in this school district and throughout our region. Those who want to get involved in our Education Project can call Executive Director Steve Feldman at 610-660-9466.

"Palestine" display at Gladwyne Elementary School



From Every Angle an Attack, Utilizing Every Angle to Thwart the Attack

Greater Philadelphia ZOA has a new audiovisual presentation that we are offering to congregations and community groups, and to individuals who wish to show it in their homes for the benefit of family, friends, neighbors and others. The presentation is called "Nine Sources of Anti-Jewish Activity, Nine Strategies and Tactics to Counter and Prevent Them." It exposes the wide assortment of adversaries and enemies who are anti-Jewish, anti-Zionist and anti-Israel -- and provides tools for thwarting anti-Jewish agendas and responding effectively to anti-Jewish incidents. Much of the presentation focuses on the anti-Jewish activity within our region in schools, among religious groups, among academics, politicians, media and elsewhere – including within the Jewish community – during the last three years.

Jew-hatred and attacks against Jews come from many sources, not one or two. There are tools we can and must use to prevent them from attacking and delegitimizing us.

Media Spotlight

Executive Director Steve Feldman was a guest on "The Dom Giordano Show" radio program multiple times (scan the QR code to listen to his May 12, 2023 interview). The show airs on 1210 AM. He also had several articles and letters published, including in the *Jewish News Syndicate*, *American Thinker* and the *Jewish Exponent*. Steve also hosted and produced several ZOA webinars.

The media is one of the most dangerous sources of anti-Jewish incitement and hatred. We must get in the media as often and as widely as possible so that our voices are heard in these same platforms. 🇺🇸



Scan the QR code to listen to Steve's interview on "The Dom Giordano Show"

While most other Jewish organizations highlight one or two sources of Jew-hatred and minimize or ignore its other sources, we catalogue and expose it all. Rather than merely react after something terrible has happened, this presentation provides effective strategies for preventing our enemies from gaining the upper hand in the first place.

Our presentation is a must-see for those who are serious about understanding and fighting Jew-hatred. Call us at 610-660-9466 to arrange a presentation.

Up on the Hill

Four Greater Philadelphia ZOA members joined Executive Director Steve Feldman in Washington, D.C. in May 2023, to participate in ZOA's scaled-down Capitol Hill advocacy mission. We met with U.S. Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA), as well as with aides to Senators Bob Casey (D-PA) and John Fetterman (D-PA). It was a wonderful opportunity to interact with lawmakers and their staff, and to encourage them to co-sponsor bills and resolutions related to Iran, aid to the Palestinian Authority, and the United Nations' anti-Jewish Commission of Inquiry. We are grateful to Dan Pollak, ZOA's Director of Government Relations, for arranging the event.



Greater Philadelphia ZOA members Glenn Brown, Jeff Silverman, Zachary Margolies, Executive Director Steve Feldman and Isaac Svartsman meet with U.S. Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick (third from left) on Capitol Hill



PITTSBURGH

Stuart Pavilack, ZOA Pittsburgh Executive Director

Awards Dinner

ZOA Pittsburgh held its first in-person event in three years on May 2, 2023. It was a burst of sunshine seeing members and friends again. The recently renovated ballroom at Congregation Beth Shalom, which has been home to ZOA Dinners since 2010, was once again full of activity for the ZOA.

Each year, ZOA Pittsburgh presents three awards to deserving members of the community: the Israel Service Award, the Ivan and Natalie Novick Community Leadership Award, and the coveted Lifetime Achievement Award.

Abby W. Schachter

Recipient of the Israel Service Award



Abby Schachter grew up in Montreal and received her B.A. degree from McGill University. She earned a master's degree in Comparative History from Brandeis University.

From 2003 to 2012, Abby was a member of the editorial board at the *New York Post*, where she served as a politics blogger, an op-ed page editor, and books editor. She also served as a foreign correspondent from Jerusalem and an editorial writer in Washington. Her work has been featured in several major American newspapers and magazines.

Abby is the author of *No Child Left Alone: Getting the Government Out of Parenting*, which looks at how many private decisions are taken out of the hands of parents. Currently, she is Military Programs and Research Manager at Carnegie Mellon University's Institute for Politics and Strategy.

Abby and her husband Ben, an artist and professor of fine arts at Saint Vincent College, have four children. She is an active shul goer; an involved parent at Hillel Academy which her children attend; and a member of ZOA Pittsburgh's Board.

Charlene Tissenbaum

Recipient of the Ivan & Natalie Novick Community Leadership Award



Charlene Tissenbaum, a physical therapist, grew up in Montreal, Canada and attended its Jewish People School and Bialik High School, which together provided a complete Jewish and secular education from kindergarten through high school. Charlene then graduated from McGill University.

Since 2005, Charlene has been involved with the Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh and its Partnership2Gether Program with the Israeli cities of Karmiel and Misgav, and Warsaw, Poland. She has been to Israel countless times for the Maccabi Games, on missions, and to visit family and friends.

Charlene and her family are members of Congregation Beth El and participate with Temple Emanuel and Chabad as well. Charlene is a strong supporter of many Jewish organizations that are pro-Israel, pro-Zionism, and pro-Jewish peoplehood.

Jeffrey L. Pollock, Esq.

Recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award



In addition to serving the legal needs of his clients, Jeffrey Pollock is an accomplished actor who has performed on stage, in film and on TV. In his free time, he is an avid tennis player, golfer, and intense softball competitor.

Jeff has been actively involved in the ZOA for more than 16 years, recently completing three two-year terms as president of the ZOA's Pittsburgh region. He has also been active in the Federation's YAD, CPAC, Super Sundays, and Mitzvah Days; the JCC's Theatre and Singles; and Squirrel Hill Meals on Wheels. In the broader community, Jeff has volunteered for the boards of and/or been honored by several organizations, including the Allegheny County and Pennsylvania Bar Associations, NLSA, GPAC-VLA, Hosanna House, various charity Bachelor Auctions, American Cancer Society, Leukemia Society, SHUC, PNWF, and Open Stage Theatre.

Jeff grew up at Rodef Shalom, where he remains active. He lives in Squirrel Hill with his fiancée, Andrea Shapiro Riberi, and her three sons.

Entertainment at the ZOA Dinner was provided by the Pittsburgh Chapter of HaZamir: The International Jewish Teen Choir. HaZamir is a youth movement that promotes choral music as a vehicle to inspire Jewish life, literacy, community, and connection to Israel. Next year they will perform at Carnegie Hall in New York.



A contingent from the Pittsburgh Chapter of HaZamir performs, with their music director on keyboard

ZOA friends and supporters at the Awards Dinner



Scholarship to Israel

Established in 1962, ZOA Pittsburgh's Scholarship to Israel Program continues to assist local Jewish teenagers to participate in structured summer trips to Israel. Hundreds, if not thousands, of Jewish students from the Pittsburgh area have visited Israel on structured study trips with financial assistance from ZOA Pittsburgh.

Scholarship applicants are judged on their activities, Jewish and secular; their volunteerism; and their essays on "What the State of Israel and Zionism mean to me." Three \$1,000 scholarships are awarded with funding from endowments established by Avraham and Patti Anouchi; Harold and Marla Scheinman; the late Thelma Esman; the late Bernard and Esther Klionsky; and the Novick family, in loving memory of the late Ivan and Natalie Novick. Ivan was a past national president of the ZOA.

Mazel Tov to this year's ZOA Pittsburgh's Scholarship to Israel recipients:

Naomi Davis

Naomi will participate in the NCSY Israel ID program. Reflecting on the Tree of Life synagogue massacre, Naomi wrote in her essay, "As Zionists, we hold the responsibility of representing the Jewish nation. I take that responsibility very seriously in my everyday life. October 27, 2018, was a cloudy day. One mile away, the deadliest attack on Jews in America took place. The Tree of Life shooting took the lives of eleven Jews. I have learned that dark days can make us stronger and that there will always be bright days ahead. My journey to Israel will be one of those bright days." Naomi is the daughter of Elena and Robert Davis.




Daniella Sahel

Daniella is participating in NCSY's JOLT program during which participants run a 10-day camp for siblings of children with chronic illnesses. In her essay, Daniella wrote, "Being a Jew in France always made me and my family members a target. My family moved to the United States to seek safety and Jewish acceptance, but here we are faced with rising antisemitism. Just weeks after we moved to Pittsburgh, an antisemitic shooting occurred in a local synagogue that hit way too close to home. With antisemitism now growing in America, I realize aliya is becoming an option. Yet, frequent trips to Israel are vital to remind me that, as a proud Jewish woman, I have a secure home." Daniella is the daughter of Aurelia and David Sahel.



Rena Goldwasser

In her essay, Rena wrote, "Israel has always been a part of who I am; it's my passion, it's my inspiration, and most of all, it's the fuel that keeps me going. As I was growing up, my parents always made sure to put strong emphasis on the role that Israel played in our lives and how it shapes us into the people we are. I am traveling and seeing the land, but I am giving back as well. I strongly believe that a fundamental aspect of Judaism is doing acts of kindness in any way possible." Rena will participate in the NCSY Give (Girls Israel Volunteer Experience) program, which focuses on giving back to the land and people of Israel. Rena is the daughter of Michelle and Brian Goldwasser. 



FLORIDA

"Heroes for Israel" Gala



(From left) Speaker of the House Kevin McCarthy, Zionist Hero Award recipient Mark Levin, Julie Strauss Levin, and Morton Klein



Mort Klein presents a map of the Middle East showing Israel surrounded by hostile nations.

ZOA Florida held its annual "Heroes for Israel" Gala on Sunday, March 26, 2023. It was ZOA Florida's most successful Gala ever; the event was sold out.

Congressman Kevin McCarthy, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, presented Mark Levin with the Zionist Hero Award. Mark Levin is the internationally renowned host of the syndicated "The Mark Levin Show" on radio, and "Life, Liberty & Levin" on the Fox News Channel. Rabbi Efreim Goldberg of Boca Raton Synagogue accepted the Light Unto the Nations Award on behalf of his congregation.

Other Gala special guests included ZOA National President Morton A. Klein; Consul General of Israel in Miami, Maor Elbaz-Starinsky; U.S. Representatives Brian Mast and Carlos Gimenez; and other local elected officials. Deputy Consul General of Israel in Miami, Mike Driquez, led the Prayer for the State of Israel. Then-ZOA Florida Executive Director Sharona Whisler welcomed guests. Gala co-chair Lewis Stahl recognized elected officials and dignitaries in the audience.

ZOA National Board Acting Co-Chair Dr. Paul Tartell made a compelling appeal for increasing support for the ZOA. Dr. Tartell highlighted the ZOA's ongoing and successful Israel advocacy initiatives, including fighting antisemitism on college campuses, on Capitol Hill, and through the legal system. Consul General Maor Elbaz-Starinsky highlighted one such local initiative, thanking the Florida municipalities that have adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism.

Before presenting Mark Levin with the Zionist Hero Award, Speaker McCarthy praised the ZOA, noting that frequently, it is only the ZOA standing alongside him and other pro-Israel members of Congress. Additionally, Speaker McCarthy praised Congressman Brian Mast for having volunteered his service to the IDF, after sacrificing his life and losing limbs in service to the United States.

Speaker McCarthy said there is no stronger voice for freedom and educating the public in America today than Mark Levin. He also emphasized Levin's unapologetic support for Israel, noting that "I get a lot of requests to be in a lot of places, but you made this a combination

that I couldn't say no to – your organization and the man who truly is deserving as a Zionist hero, Mark Levin.”

In accepting the award, Levin shared that his love for Israel came from his parents, who taught him the history of Israel and Judaism. He proclaimed that the Jews are the indigenous people in all of Israel, including Judea and Samaria. He conveyed his grave concern for Israel and the U.S., noting the Biden administration's involvement in Israel's internal affairs, including its provision of funds to groups working to overthrow Israel's current democratically elected government.

Levin also expressed concern about the Biden administration reinstituting funding to the Palestinian Authority (PA), which enables the PA's payments to Arab terrorists who murder Jews. He criticized President Biden for not speaking out about the increase in antisemitic attacks in the United States. Levin emphasized the need to be stronger than ever in our support for Israel because of the serious internal and external threats to its existence. He expressed deep appreciation for receiving the Zionist Hero Award from the ZOA, stating that it is the only organization that speaks the truth and defends the core beliefs of both the United States and Israel.

In accepting the Light Unto the Nations Award on behalf of Boca Raton Synagogue, Rabbi Efreim Goldberg emphasized how proud and honored his synagogue community is to partner with the ZOA on the front lines, fighting for a strong Israel and a strong U.S.-Israel relationship. Noting that Passover was approaching, a holiday that represents freedom for the Jewish people, Rabbi Goldberg called on all of us to fight alongside the ZOA against antisemitism and for the safety and security of Israel. He reinforced his synagogue's continuing partnership with the ZOA to fulfill this mission.

ZOA National President Morton Klein began his remarks by emphasizing that the ZOA has been virtually alone among organizations in addressing the Biden administration's hostility toward Israel. He pointed to the administration's recent interference in Israel's judicial reform efforts.

Mort contrasted the interference with the administration's silence about the PA's refusal to hold elections since 2005, turning it into a fascist terrorist dictatorship. He also noted that while the U.S. condemns Jewish building in Israel's biblical heartland of Judea and Samaria, it says nothing about illegal Arab building in those areas. He pointed out that U.S. Ambassador to Israel Thomas Nides has refused to meet with Jewish leaders in Judea and Samaria, yet he has met with several Palestinian Arab leaders in Judea and Samaria.

Mort also called out the Biden administration for its silence about the PA's pay-to-slay policy, which rewards terrorists who murder Jews, and for ignoring PA Prime Minister Mohammad Shtayyeh's praise of Palestinian Arab terrorists. Mort noted that “there is a name for this type of double standard, and it's called antisemitism.”

Mort concluded with words from the Torah, saying that G-d promised the Holy Land of Israel to the Jewish people forever. “Unlike politicians,” Mort said, “G-d always keeps his promises!”

The success of the ZOA's Florida Gala showed that support for Israel and Zionism is stronger than ever in South Florida. We thank everyone who participated. Special thanks to ZOA National Board member Daniel Katz and his wife Caroline, and to local ZOA board members Lewis and Helene Stahl who were Gala co-chairpersons.

Promoting Understanding of Antisemitism

ZOA Florida was instrumental in the City of Hollywood's adoption of the IHRA working definition of antisemitism in January 2023. Mayor Josh Levy thanked the ZOA “for proposing this important initiative” which helps make “our community safer for our large and vibrant Jewish population.”

ZOA Welcomes Allison Zur, Our New Florida Regional Director and Director of Young Leadership

The ZOA is proud and delighted to welcome Allison Zur as the new Director of the ZOA's Florida region. Allison will also serve as our Director of Young Leadership.

Prior to joining the ZOA, Allison was a development professional for UJA Federation in New York, at a major synagogue in Florida, and at Jewish Family Services in Silicon Valley, California. She was also a young leadership director for CAMERA and a founding member of the young professionals board at Chabad of Santa Clara, California.

Allison studied at the University of Connecticut, Hebrew University, and the Pardes Institute of Jerusalem, and received a master's degree in social work in Jewish Communal Services from Yeshiva University's Wurzweiler School of Social Work. Allison is fluent in Hebrew.

Allison is married to Ron and they have two children. 🇺🇸



Allison can be reached at:

Email: AZur@zoa.org

Mobile: (203) 274-3656

**Chag Sameach
from your friends at the
Zionist Organization
of America!**



What They're Saying About ZOA

Superstar Businessman, Home Depot Founder Bernie Marcus

On November 17, 2022, the ZOOM With ZOA Book Club featured Bernie Marcus, who wrote *Kick Up Some Dust: Lessons on Thinking Big, Giving Back, and Doing It Yourself* (with Catherine Lewis who was also featured).



I'd like to compliment Mort Klein and the ZOA. I think that Mort is a true patriot. I think that he is the one voice in America that stands for Israel and the Jewish people. I think that most organizations are woke, are wussies, and back off and are not willing to attack the issues. Mort is fearless. He goes after anybody who goes after the Jewish people and the state of Israel. So I'm very happy to be here just because of my friendship with Mort and my admiration for what he does.

"Again, Mort, I want to say to everybody how important you are to Jewish people in this country. You are the only stand-up guy I know who's not afraid of slings and arrows that people throw at you. I'm proud to know you and proud to be a friend of yours, and a supporter [of the ZOA], of course. You're doing a great job. Just keep doing it, okay?"

Dr. Charles Jacobs, Founder, Jewish Leadership Project

At the May 21, 2023 launch of his highly anticipated book (compiled and edited with Avi Goldwasser), *Betrayal: The Failure of American Jewish Leadership*, held in Jerusalem at the Menachem Begin Center, Dr. Charles Jacobs credits ZOA as the only Jewish group with the courage to say the difficult truths. Jacobs is also the director of Americans for Peace and Tolerance. In addition, he founded The David Project and co-founded CAMERA's branch in Boston.



There needs to be change in American Jewish leadership. Please keep in mind that when I talk tonight about the failing Jewish establishment, I'm referring only to the legacy institutions: the Anti-Defamation League, the American Jewish Committee, the Jewish Community Relations Council, the Federations, along with most of the Rabbinitim. The lone exception among the legacy organizations that is not failing is the Zionist Organization of America, led by the courageous and indefatigable Morton Klein." 🇺🇸



ZOA IN THE JERUSALEM POST

Israeli Judicial Reforms Are Good for Democracy and the Rule of Law

By Morton A. Klein and Elizabeth Berney, Esq.

The Left has been screaming that the new Israeli government's judicial reform proposals are “extreme” and “the end of democracy.” However, honest examination reveals that the Israeli Supreme Court has extraordinary, autocratic, unchecked power. Reform is desperately needed and will be good for democracy and the rule of law.

Democracy is rule “of the people, by the people, for the people.” The Israeli and U.S. legislatures and executive are democratically elected and answerable to the public.

But U.S. and Israeli judicial systems are vastly different, starting with judicial selection. The U.S. public selects judges through its democratically-elected representatives: The president nominates new justices; the Senate decides whether to confirm them; and Congress has the power to impeach justices.

By contrast, in Israel, the Supreme Court self-selects and self-ousts its own justices. The court has the controlling vote and veto on a nine-person “judicial selection committee” that selects new judges. The Knesset has no power to impeach justices. Justices can only be removed by the same “judicial selection committee” controlled by the Israeli Supreme Court, or by a disciplinary court appointed by the Israeli Supreme Court. The Israeli Supreme Court's “self-selection” and continuing control over the court's composition has enabled the court to seize and maintain enormous, unchecked power.

Customarily, democracies also place checks and balances and limits on the power of each branch of government. Thus, the U.S. Supreme Court must uphold the U.S. Constitution; can only hear limited types of cases and actual, justiciable controversies between parties who have legal “standing” (an actual, redressable injury related to an alleged wrong); does not determine nonjusticiable political policy questions (the “political question doctrine”); does not rewrite laws; and requires a six-Justice quorum to hear typical cases (approximately 80 cases per year).

By contrast, Israel's Supreme Court has usurped and arrogated to itself the power to flout, invalidate and rewrite laws and policies enacted by the people's elected Knesset and government representatives simply because Justices subjectively viewed those democratically-enacted laws and policies as “unreasonable” or “inappropriate.” Moreover, the Israeli Supreme Court, convening as the High Court of Justice, hears petitions from parties without “standing” and cases that are nonjusticiable in Western democracies. The court even determines political and military policies.

Further, panels of only three justices decide most of the Israeli Supreme Court's 10,000 cases per year. Thus, just two Israeli self-appointed justices (the majority of a three-judge panel) can nullify Israel's elected legislature and government, based on those justices' personal preferences.

On July 24, 2023, the Knesset passed the first part of much-needed judicial reform. The new law prevents the Israeli Supreme Court from striking down or reversing democratically-appointed government officials' actions simply because the court's self-appointed, unelected judges believe that the government's actions are not “reasonable.”

This is an important first step for strengthening democracy in Israel. But much more needs to be done to democratically reform Israel's judiciary and curb judicial tyranny in Israel. 🇺🇸

(Article originally published on Feb. 12, 2023; updated here to reflect legislative developments)

ZOA WISHES TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE GENEROSITY OF ITS 2022 SUPPORTERS:*

National Leadership Society

\$250,000 +

William Joseph Family Trust	Stanley Margulies
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\$100,000 - \$249,999

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\$50,000 - \$99,999

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