

Canada and Israel: The Early Years

Canada's role in international affairs during the late 1940s and 1950s, particularly in the Middle East, was an important factor in the formation of Canada's unique national identity.

In April 1947, Canada was one of 11 countries to make up the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP). Its representative was Supreme Court Justice Ivan C. Rand, whose efforts helped to unify a majority of the UNSCOP committee members in support of partition. A partition proposal went to the General Assembly and on November 29, Canada was one

of 33 countries to vote in favour of Israel becoming an independent nation. On May 14, 1948, the state of Israel was declared.

On May 11, 1949, Canada recognized the state of Israel, marking the beginning of the formal diplomatic relationship. One week later Abraham Harman became Israel's first diplomat in Canada and took up residence in Montreal. In 1953 Canada opened its first embassy in Tel Aviv, where George Kidd served as the first Canadian ambassador to Israel. It was also in 1953 that Michael Comay was appointed Israel's first ambassador in Ottawa.

