

Truman, Harry S.

(1884--1972), Thirty-third president of the United States, in office from 1945--1953. Before he reached the White House, Truman was a judge and a senator from Missouri, and in 1944 became the vice-presidential running mate of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Truman became president upon Roosevelt's death in April 1945. Less than a month later the Germans surrendered to the Allies and the war in Europe ended.

Already as a senator, Truman took a strong stand in favor of helping the persecuted Jews of Europe. As president at the war's end, he was candidly supportive of helping Jewish survivors and Displaced Persons (DPs, see also Displaced Persons, Jewish). In July 1945 he changed certain aspects of the Displaced Persons Act that were discriminatory against Jews. In 1946 he publicly asked the British government to allow 10,000 DPs into Palestine, as he was convinced that Palestine was the best place to resettle Jewish refugees. As a result, he also supported the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, and on November 29, 1947 he had the United States vote affirmatively for the United Nations' Partition Plan, whereby Jews would be given a state in Palestine. In May 1948 Truman's government was the first to recognize the newly established State of Israel.