

Tory Lobby Group Secretly Funded by Israeli State-affiliated Institute

Conservative Friends of Israel received funds from one of the most established Zionist organisations in Jerusalem.

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A powerful Westminster lobby group took money from an organisation with close ties to the State of Israel, it has emerged.

Around 80% of Tory MPs are members of Conservative Friends of Israel (CFI) – which is the [largest](#) funder of foreign trips for British politicians.

Yet CFI's own source of income has long been shrouded in secrecy, as it does not publicly disclose its donors.

Declassified can now reveal that those have included the Jewish Agency. That's a parastatal body in Jerusalem, which is [legally](#) required to assist new migrants to Israel.

It has been encouraging Jews to move there from abroad for almost a century – offering considerable financial incentives – and actively supports those who wish to enlist in Israel's army.

The Jewish Agency, now led by Major General Doron Almog, is one of Israel's four "[national institutions](#)" that pre-date the State's creation in 1948. When the country became independent, its first prime minister was David Ben-Gurion, the then head of the Jewish Agency.

Together with its twin, the World Zionist Organisation, as well as the Jewish National Fund and *Keren Hayesod* (The Foundation Fund), these groups were at the forefront of buying

land and promoting (often illegal) migration to Palestine during British rule.

‘Likud Office in London’

The revelation that CFI was funded by the Jewish Agency is contained in minutes from a meeting held in 1990 between the lobby group’s then chairman, British MP Robert Rhodes-James, and UK foreign minister Douglas Hogg.

Rhodes-James is recorded as saying:

“CFI had been in poor shape when he took over two years ago. It had degenerated into a virtual ‘Likud office in London’, even taking money from the Jewish agency.”

The amount of money is not mentioned. Likud is the right-wing political party led by Israel’s current prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Likud’s original manifesto controversially pledged:

“Between the Sea and the Jordan there will only be Israeli sovereignty.”

Rhodes-James went on to say:

“CFI was now financially independent, and had earned respect as a group of spokesmen for HMG [the British government] sympathetic to Israel, rather than mere apologists for every Israeli action (even if some members remained uncritical Likud supporters).”

Whether CFI retained its financial independence after 1990 is unclear. The group has become a staunch defender of Netanyahu’s policies, even as the International Court of Justice warns Israel could be committing genocide in Gaza.

CFI and the Jewish Agency did not respond to requests for comment.

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Featured image: The Jewish Agency’s headquarters in Jerusalem. (Photo: Hagai Agmon-Snir / Wikimedia)

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