

A Complex Web

The Mega Group

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Study_Group_\(Jewish_group\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Study_Group_(Jewish_group))



<https://mintpressnews.cn/mega-group-maxwells-mossad-spy-story-jeffrey-epstein-scandal/261172/>

The Mega Group is a secretive group of billionaires formed in 1991 by Charles Bronfman and Leslie Wexner. [Media profiles](#) of the group paint it as “a loosely organized club of 20 of the nation’s wealthiest and most influential Jewish businessmen” focused on “philanthropy and Jewishness,” with membership dues upwards of \$30,000 per year.

Mega Group members founded and/or are closely associated with some of the most well-known pro-Israel organizations. Members Charles Bronfman and Michael Steinhardt [formed](#) Birthright Taglit with the backing of then- and current Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Steinhardt, an atheist, has stated that his motivation in helping to found the group was to advance [his own belief](#) that devotion to and faith in the state of Israel should serve as “a substitute for [Jewish] theology.”

Other well-known groups associated with the Mega Group include the World Jewish Congress — whose past president, Edgar Bronfman, and current president, Ronald Lauder, are both Mega Group members — and B’nai B’rith, particularly its spin-off known as the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). The Bronfman brothers were major donors to the ADL, with Edgar Bronfman [serving as](#) the ADL’s honorary national vice-chair for several years.

Yet several of its most prominent members have ties to organized crime. When Edgar Bronfman died in 2013, long-time ADL Director [Abe Foxman said](#), “Edgar was for many years Chair of our Liquor Industry Division, Chair of our New York Appeal, and one of our most significant benefactors.” Other Mega Group members that are donors and major supporters of the ADL include [Ronald Lauder](#), [Michael Steinhardt](#) and the late [Max Fisher](#).

In addition, Mega Group members have also been key players in the pro-Israel lobby in the United States. Max Fisher of the Mega Group founded the National Jewish Coalition, [now known as](#) the Republican Jewish Coalition — the main [pro-Israel neoconservative political lobbying group](#), known for its support of hawkish policies, and whose current chief patrons, Sheldon Adelson and Bernard Marcus, are among Donald Trump’s top donors.

Though the Mega Group has officially existed only since 1991, the use of “philanthropy” to provide cover for more unscrupulous lobbying or business activities was pioneered decades earlier by Sam Bronfman, the father of Mega Group members Edgar and Charles Bronfman. While other North American elites like J.D. Rockefeller had previously used philanthropic giving as a means of laundering their reputations, Bronfman’s approach to philanthropy was unique because it was focused on giving specifically to other members of his own ethno-religious background.

Ronald Lauder

Perhaps the best illustration of how the connections between many of these players often meld together can be seen in Ronald Lauder: a Mega Group member, former member of the Reagan administration, long-time donor to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israel’s Likud Party, as well as a long-time friend of Donald Trump and Roy Cohn.

Lauder, billionaire heir to the Estee Lauder cosmetics fortune, and one time client and friend of Roy Cohn has often been described in the press as a “leading Jewish philanthropist” and is the president of the World Jewish Congress, yet his many media profiles tend to leave out his highly political past.

A small window into the Lauder-Cohn relationship surfaced briefly in [a 2016 article](#) in *Politico* about a 1981 dinner party held at Cohn’s weekend home in Greenwich, Connecticut. The party was attended by Ronald Lauder’s parents, Estee and Joe, as well as Trump and his then-wife Ivana, who [had a weekend home](#) just two miles away. That party was held soon after Cohn had helped Reagan secure the presidency and had reached the height of his political influence.

Two years later, in 1983, Ronald Lauder — whose only professional experience at that point was working for his parent’s cosmetics company — [was appointed](#) to serve as United States Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for European and NATO Affairs. Soon after his appointment, he [served on](#) the Dinner Tribute Committee for a dinner hosted by the Jewish fraternal and strongly pro-Israel organization B’nai B’rith, the parent organization of the controversial Anti-Defamation League (ADL), in Roy Cohn’s honor. Cohn’s influential father, Albert Cohn, was [the long-time president](#) of B’nai B’rith’s powerful New England-New York chapter and Roy Cohn himself was a member of B’nai B’rith’s Banking and Finance Lodge.

The dinner [specifically sought](#) to honor Cohn for his pro-Israel advocacy and his efforts to “fortify” Israel’s economy, and its honorary chairmen included media mogul Rupert Murdoch, Donald Trump and then-head of Bear Stearns Alan Greenberg,

<https://consortiumnews.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Cohn-Dinner.pdf>

all of whom are connected to Jeffrey Epstein.

<https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/jeffrey-epstein-high-society-contacts.html>

During his time as deputy assistant secretary of defense, Lauder was also very active in Israeli politics and had already become an ally of the then-Israeli representative to the United Nations and future prime minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu. Lauder would go on to be one of the most important individuals in Netanyahu's rise to power, particularly during his upset victory in 1996, and a major financier of Israel's right-wing Likud Party.

The key to Netanyahu's success was the hiring of Arthur J. Finkelstein, a New York state-based Republican Party (GOP) consultant who worked for conservative and right-wing candidates in the United States, Canada, Israel, Central Europe, and Eastern Europe over four decades. Finkelstein spent half a century whispering in the ears of presidents, prime ministers, and strongmen, teaching them the dark arts of political destruction. By the time he died in August 2017, his fingerprints covered the wreckage of democratic norms across three continents.

The core premise was elegant in its cynicism: rather than persuade voters to back your candidate, you destroy the opponent so thoroughly that even apathetic citizens drag themselves to the polls to vote against him. Finkelstein believed perception mattered more than policy, that facts were malleable, and that people could be made to hate individuals more readily than institutions.

Late in life, Finkelstein appeared to reckon with the forces his methods had unleashed. In a rare 2011 lecture at Prague's Cevro Institute, he offered something resembling a confession. "I hate the Republican field," he said of the 2012 primary field. He lamented the rise of "anti-Mexican, anti-Muslim" anger within the party. And then he delivered a verdict on his own career: "I wanted to change the world. And I said, I did; I made it worse."

<https://www.unz.com/jnino/villains-of-judea-arthur-finkelstein/>

In 1986, the year that Roy Cohn died, Lauder left his post at the Pentagon and became the U.S. ambassador to Austria. Lauder's interest in Austrian politics has continued well into recent years, culminating in accusations that he sought to manipulate Austrian elections in 2012.

<https://nypost.com/2012/12/09/ronald-lauder-accused-of-manipulating-austrian-elections/>

After leaving his ambassadorship, Lauder founded the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation in 1987 and later went on to run for Mayor of New York against Rudy Giuliani in 1989.

The likely reason was that Giuliani, though once an ally of the "Roy Cohn machine," was at the time deeply disliked by the late Cohn's associates for prosecuting Cohn's former law partner, Stanley Friedman, for racketeering, conspiracy and other charges. In the early 1990s, Lauder joined the Mega group, which recently become of interest in connection with the Jeffrey Epstein scandal

Lauder was well-connected to Epstein's former patron — former head of Bear Stearns Alan Greenberg, who had hired Epstein in the late 1970s immediately after the latter was fired from the

Dalton School — and Donald Trump, another friend of Lauder and Greenberg who began his friendship with Epstein in 1987.

According to the New York Times, Mr. Lauder has not given a single dollar this year (2026) to Republicans in his home state, and his super PAC has gone idle. He appears to have abruptly closed his political checkbook in the middle of another crucial midterm election year. His motivation is not entirely clear. <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/08/04/nyregion/ronald-lauder-republicans-donor.html>

The Origins of the Mega Group Mafia

Sam Bronfman had long-standing deep ties to organized crime, specifically Meyer Lansky's organized crime syndicate. Yet, Bronfman's private ambition, according to those close to him, was to become a respected member of high society. As a consequence, Bronfman worked hard to remove the stain that his mob associations had left on his public reputation in Canada and abroad. He accomplished this by becoming a leader in Canada's Zionist movement and, by the end of the 1930s, he was head of the Canadian Jewish Congress and had begun to make a name for himself as a philanthropist for Jewish causes.

Yet even some of Bronfman's activism and philanthropy had hints of the mobster-like reputation he tried so hard to shake. Bronfman was actively involved in the illegal shipping of arms to Zionist paramilitaries in Palestine prior to 1948, specifically as a co-founder of the National Conference for Israeli and Jewish Rehabilitation that smuggled weapons to the paramilitary group Haganah.

https://larouchepub.com/eiw/public/1992/eirv19n27-19920701/eirv19n27-19920701_019-the_bronfmans_rags_to_rackets_to.pdf

At the same time Bronfman was abetting the illegal smuggling of weapons to the Haganah, his associates in the criminal underworld were doing the same. After World War II, close aides of David Ben-Gurion forged tight-knit relationships with Meyer Lansky, Benjamin "Bugsy" Siegel, Mickey Cohen and other Jewish gangsters of the period.

<https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/arts-letters/articles/gangsters-for-zion>

They used their clandestine networks to establish a vast arms smuggling network between the United States and Zionist settlements in Palestine, arming both the Haganah and the Irgun paramilitary groups. At the same time these gangsters were aiding the illegal arming of Zionist paramilitaries, they were strengthening their ties to U.S. intelligence that had first been formally (though covertly) established in World War II.

One of the group's prominent members, hedge fund manager Michael Steinhardt, opened up about his own family ties to Lansky in his autobiography *No Bull: My Life in and out the Markets*, where he noted that his father, Sol "Red McGee" Steinhardt, was Lansky's jewel fence of choice and a major player in New York's criminal underworld.

Another prominent member of the Mega Group with ties to this same criminal network is Max Fisher, who has been described as Wexner's mentor and is also alleged to have worked with Detroit's "Purple Gang" during Prohibition and beyond. The Purple Gang were part of the network that smuggled Bronfman liquor from Canada into the United State during Prohibition, and one of its

founders, Abe Bernstein, was [a close associate](#) of both Meyer Lansky and Moe Dalitz. Fisher was a [key adviser](#) to several U.S. presidents, beginning with Dwight D. Eisenhower, as well as to Henry Kissinger.

Another member of the Mega Group worth noting is Laurence Tisch, who owned *CBS News* for several years and founded Loews Corporation. Tisch is notable for his [work for](#) the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), the precursor to the CIA.

<https://www.jta.org/archive/several-prominent-jews-spied-for-the-united-states>

Leslie “Les” Wexner, the other Mega Group co-founder, also has ties to organized crime. Wexner’s ties to Jeffrey Epstein have come under scrutiny following the latter’s recent arrest, as Wexner was the only publicly acknowledged client of Epstein’s suspicious hedge fund, the source of much of this wealth, and [the previous owner](#) of Epstein’s \$56 million Manhattan townhouse, which Wexner transferred to an Epstein-controlled entity for free.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/07/08/nyregion/jeffrey-epstein-nyc-mansion.html>

Before Epstein received the townhouse, Wexner appears to have used the residence for some unconventional purposes, noted in [a 1996 New York Times article](#) on the then-Wexner-owned residence, which included “a bathroom reminiscent of James Bond movies: hidden beneath a stairway, lined with lead to provide shelter from attack and supplied with closed-circuit television screens and a telephone, both concealed in a cabinet beneath the sink.” The *Times* article does not speculate as to the purpose of this equipment, though the allusion to famous fictional superspy James Bond suggests that it may have been used to snoop on guests or conduct electronic surveillance.

The 1996 *Times* article also noted that, after Wexner bought the residence for \$13.2 million in 1989, he spent millions more decorating and furnishing the home, including the addition of the electronic equipment in the “James Bond” bathroom, only to apparently never live in it.

<https://www.nytimes.com/1996/01/11/garden/home-sweet-elsewhere.html>

https://www.seattle911visibilityproject.in/911VP_2025_update/acomplexweb/nyt-elsewhere.pdf

In the summer of 1996, Maria Farmer was working on an art project for Mr. Epstein in Mr. Wexner’s Ohio mansion. While she was there, Mr. Epstein sexually assaulted her, according to an affidavit Ms. Farmer filed earlier this year in federal court in Manhattan. She said that she fled the room and called the police, but that Mr. Wexner’s security staff refused to let her leave for 12 hours.”

Another possible connection between the Mega Group and the Mossad owes to the Mega Group’s ties to Meyer Lansky’s criminal network. Lansky had established deep ties to U.S. intelligence after World War II and was also connected to the Mossad through Mossad official Tibor Rosenbaum, whose bank was frequently used by Lansky to launder money. In addition, Lansky collaborated on at least one occasion with notorious Mossad “superspy” Rafi Eitan, who he [helped acquire](#) sensitive electronic equipment possessed only by the CIA but coveted by Israeli intelligence. Eitan is best known in the U.S. for being the Mossad handler of Jonathan Pollard.

Significance of Mega Group Influence on Donald Trump

What should be of concern in the preceding discussion is the frequent appearance of the current US President Donald Trump in these pro-Israel, pro-mob activities. To summarize: Sheldon Adelson, Bernard Marcus, Trump donors; Ronald Lauder: a Mega Group member, long-time donor to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Israel's Likud Party, the ADL, as well as a long-time friend of Donald Trump and Roy Cohn;

Trump and his then-wife Ivana attended a party in honor of Roy Cohn, attended by Estee and Joe Lauder and other supporters. The dinner specifically sought to honor Cohn for his pro-Israel advocacy and his efforts to "fortify" Israel's economy, and its honorary chairmen included media mogul Rupert Murdoch, Donald Trump and then-head of Bear Stearns Alan Greenberg, all of whom are connected to Jeffrey Epstein; Ed Meese, implicated in the theft of Bill Hamilton's PROMIS software, would later become an adviser to Donald Trump; Roy Cohn, protégé to mob-linked liquor baron Lewis Rosenstiel was a future mentor to Donald Trump.