

**ՊԱՏՄԱԿԱՆ****THE ROLE OF THE SOVIET UNION  
IN THE CREATION OF THE STATE OF ISRAEL**

After the Second World War, Palestine was still under the control of Great Britain and the Soviet Union did not have any presence in the Middle East. To free Palestine from the control of Great Britain or at least to have a presence in the Middle East, the Soviet Union decided to interfere in the two-state solution issues of Palestine. On one hand, the Soviets always supported the two-state solutions and claimed that it would be the best solution for both sides. On the other hand, the Soviets did not hesitate to communicate that it would be a precarious idea to have a Jewish state in Palestine. This was motivated by the fact that the Soviet Union has always been ideologically against Zionism, for it was not compliant with their Communist ideals, and they made no attempt to hide their efforts in eradicating potential Zionist factions within its borders.

Therefore, the Soviet Union was never specifically interested in supporting the creation of an independent Jewish state, but began seeing the value in the formation of such a state in an attempt to drive away Great Britain and other western influences from Palestine, seeing the opportunity to be sole superpower-presence in the Middle East. The Soviets correctly analyzed that the Arabs were in good relations with the British and would never go against them consider the extent of the financial, logistical, and even military assistance that they were providing. They recognized that the Jews would do everything in their power to have their own independent state, even at the expense of expelling Great Britain from the region with relationship-ending finality. For that reason, in the second half of 1947 and the first part of 1948, the Soviet Union, involuntarily, supported the idea of Zionism and its mission. Furthermore, the Soviet Union became the first Great Power of the time that supported the quasi-state of Ha-Yishuv, economically, militarily, and demographically. In fact, the Soviet Union was the first Great Power of the time that de-jure recognized the independence of the State of Israel as an independent state only after three days it has been declared so in 1948. Aiming to rid the region of British influence, even with running the risk of alienating Arabs in Palestine and all over the Arab world, the Russians wanted to also establish a loyal ally in the region to give itself another means of asserting global power. But even though the Soviet Union expected this reciprocity, they never received it, as Israel drifted away from its influence toward the West.

At the end of the Second World War, Great Britain seemed for the first time in history to emerge as the sole dominant power in the Middle East. It had 60,000 troops in Greece, a newly concluded treaty of alliance with Turkey, and a considerable force in Iran. Great Britain had ejected the Italians from Libya, helping to ease the French out of Syria and Lebanon and established a position of influence with the newly independent governments.<sup>1</sup> It had longstanding treaties of alliance with Egypt, Iraq, and Trans-Jordan and held a mandate over Palestine. British bases scattered in the entire Middle East and its position in the area appeared unassailable.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Gyoo-Hyoung Kahng, “Zionism, Israel, and the Soviet Union: A study in the rise and fall of brief Soviet-Israeli friendship from 1945 to 1955,” *Global Economic Review* 27(4), 1998, p. 96.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, p. 97.

However, the war had left Britain drained financially and psychologically. In the face of economic bankruptcy at home and nationalist pressure abroad, the British government was compelled to revise its entire imperial position, including its position in the Middle East. Ernest Bevin, Foreign Secretary of the Great Britain under the Labor party Government, was coming under increasing public pressure to cut colonial costs and to reduce the size of the British forces in the Middle East, especially in view of the heavy casualties resulting from terrorist activity against them in Palestine.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the British presence in the Middle East in Britain even decreased to a point of only securing a few bases in the region from which the Suez and overland routes to the east and the Iraqi and Persian oil could be protected and nothing else.<sup>4</sup>

In protecting Suez and overland routes to the east and the Iraqi and Persian oil, Palestine emerged as the key to the British presence in the Middle East because of Anglo-Egyptian talks about eliminating British bases in Egypt.<sup>5</sup> Palestine contained a network of military aerodromes, numerous military barracks, highways and railroads of strategic importance, which could shift troops to the borders of Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia, thus protecting the Suez Canal and continuing the British dominance in the Middle East.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the Soviets were aware that if they could expel Britons from Palestine the British strategic position would be seriously weakened in the Middle East.

Stalin concluded that the cause of Jewish state in Palestine would not only help Soviet Union to interfere in the regional issues and have a friend country in the Middle East, but it will be a useful lever for dislodging Britain from the heart of the region.<sup>7</sup> Soviets inferred that Britons still hold sway over their Arab clients in Transjordan and Iraq, and keep Egypt in their grip. Soviet Union deduced that a Jewish state will drive the Britons out of the Palestine, lock, stock and barrel.<sup>8</sup> In fact, the Soviets saw that only the Zionists could oust the Britons from the area, since they believed that Arabs were too dependent on the British and irrevocably committed to the bourgeois West.<sup>9</sup> In one of Ivan Maisky's (Soviet Union Ambassador to the United Kingdom) visits to Palestine, David Ben-Gurion and Chaim Weizmann, by a joined effort succeeded in convincing him that Jews are not pro-Britain like Arabs, on the contrary, they are ready to fight for their own freedom and independence even if it has to be on cost of disrupting their relations with Britons and expelling them from the Middle East.<sup>10</sup> Thus, Moscow concluded that if the Soviet Union were to succeed in weakening Britain in the Middle East, the Zionist movement was the only means of doing so.<sup>11</sup> Soviets thought that Zionist leaders were determined to get their own state and will never miss the opportunity provided by the thousands of candidates to emigrate waiting in refugee camps in Europe and in Cyprus.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>3</sup> **Arnold Kramer**, "Soviet Motives in the partition of Palestine 1947-48," *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 2(2), 1973, p. 111.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 112.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 103.

<sup>6</sup> **Kahng**, "Zionism, Israel, and the Soviet Union: A study ...," p. 97.

<sup>7</sup> **Martin Kramer**, "Who Saved Israel in 1947?," *Mosaic Magazine*, November 5, 2017, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> **Kahng**, "Zionism, Israel, and the Soviet Union: A study ...," p. 97.

<sup>10</sup> **Kramer**, "Who Saved Israel in 1947?," p. 11.

<sup>11</sup> **Laurent Rucker**, *Moscow's Surprise: The Soviet-Israeli Alliance of 1947-1949*, Cold War international history project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2005, p. 35.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*.

The Soviet Union was aware that supporting a Jewish state in Palestine would come at a cost: jeopardizing the existence of the Arab communist parties in the Arab all countries.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, Soviets were cognizant that in their support for the Jewish state in Palestine will lead all the small Arab Communist parties to their devastation, and all the Arab countries will go against Soviet Union.<sup>14</sup> However, for the Soviets it was a negligible price to pay in return for securing Britain's ignominious retreat from one of its biggest bases in the Middle East.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, Jewish leaders tried to do their best in order exacerbate the Soviets and the Arabs, already precarious, relations presenting the latters' as the henchman of the British imperialism in the region. For instance, Jewish leaders succeeded in convincing Moscow that the creation of the Arab League was believed to have been "incited and supported by the British in so far as it suits their plans to reinforce their influence in the Middle East and to establish a barrier against any possible penetration of Soviet influence there."<sup>16</sup> Jews convinced the Soviets that Arabs' unification could occur only under the aegis of a ruling power, which at the present time was Britain.<sup>17</sup> From one hand, the Jewish leaders presented the Soviets that Arabs prefer the Britons to solve the Palestinian issue, on the other hand, the Jewish leaders kept conveying assurance that they want Soviets also to be involved in the final agreement of Palestine issue.<sup>18</sup>

The Soviet Union has always supported the bi-national solution where Jews and Arabs were representationally even in their own governments.<sup>19</sup> However, as Moscow diplomatically familiarized itself with both factions, it became evident that this was impossible due to both Jews and Arabs being vehemently opposed to each other having stately control any region, even those widely undisputed.<sup>20</sup> The Soviets understood that a strong Palestinian state in the region was a factor that could unite the entire Arab world, which would in turn gain more support from and further become the henchmen of Great Britain, working against the Jewish Agency.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, Stalin decided that these two nations cannot live harmoniously in bi-national state and both of them need their own national state with their own government.

In order for British influence in the region to not be furthered through the strengthening of Arabs and a possibly sovereign Palestinian state, Soviet support for Zionism reached an all-time high on May 14<sup>th</sup> 1947, when a veteran Soviet diplomat and former ambassador to Washington, Andrey Gromyko, gave a consequential speech. He very cleverly prefaced this with public denouncements of the British Mandate citing its failure to maintain stability to the point of deterioration.<sup>22</sup> Gromyko started his speech with recalling the horrors of the Holocaust and that the "almost complete physical annihilation" of the Jews was grounds for the Jewish people to

<sup>13</sup> **Kramer**, "Who Saved Israel in 1947?," p. 10.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> **Rucker**, *Moscow's Surprise: The Soviet-Israeli Alliance of 1947-1949*, p. 35

<sup>16</sup> **Gabriel Gorodetsky**, "The Soviet Union and the Creation of the State of Israel," *Ssoar*, December 2001, p. 11.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> **Yosef Govrin**, "Milestones in Israeli's relation with East-Central Europe and the Soviet Union: A timeline," *Israeli Journal of Foreign Affairs* 12(2), 2018, p. 109.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p. 110.

<sup>21</sup> **Joseph Heller**, "The Soviet Union and Israel: From the Gromyko declaration to the death of Stalin (1947-53)," *The United States, the Soviet Union and the Arab-Israeli conflict, 1948-67* p. 8. pp. 8-9.

<sup>22</sup> **Kramer**, "Who Saved Israel in 1947?," p. 11.

be helped “...not by word, but by deed....”<sup>23</sup> Gromyko mentioned that the Soviet Union had not changed its preference on a “...single Arab-Jewish state with equal rights for Jews and Arabs...” but he pointed out that this plan had ultimately failed, and the partitioning of Palestine into two independent single states, Jewish and Arab, was finally justified.<sup>24</sup> Gromyko, to the surprise of many, used the moral question of the almost annihilated Jewish people front-and-center, using these moral grounds to unwaveringly support the Yishuv.<sup>25</sup> The moral weight of using the Holocaust as a means to establish a Jewish state was undeniably powerful, and possibly the only way Gromyko could justify negating previous anti-Zionist sentiments from the Soviets with this newfound support.<sup>26</sup> Expectedly, the Yishuv were elated at the public support from Gromyko and the results it would yield, prompting widespread Jewish celebration for the remarks and all that was implicit in them.<sup>27</sup>

In his first Meeting with Ivan Maiskii, Chaim Weizmann alerted Maiskii about the possibilities that would open up for the Soviets in the region if they were to cooperate with the Jewish Agency. Weizmann elaborated on the socialist features of the Jewish settlements in Palestine, harping on the Soviet’s ideological predictions and hoping to drive a wedge between the Russians and Arabs on the one hand and the Russians and Britons on the other.<sup>28</sup> To impress his interlocutor, Weizmann also commented wryly that British Mandatory administration calling Jews communists. Weizmann tried to entice Maiskii—claiming that Palestine has no market for her oranges and asked him if the USSR will take them in exchange for furs.<sup>29</sup> During Maiskii’s visits to Palestine, the Jewish leaders would make an attempt to communicate that the Kibutz ideologies were saturated with communistic themes and that this was an indication that a process of Sovietization was underway in the Middle East through the Yishuv.<sup>30</sup> This was an opportunity for the leaders of Israel to express the mutual interest of an Israeli state for *both* Israelis and Soviets, as the Soviet ideation that Moscow desired for the entire world, was already widely found and propagated in and by the Yishuv.<sup>31</sup> That is to say, Moscow was to be easily convinced that they had a communist-friendly stronghold in the Middle East, through an Israeli state.

Furthermore, Jewish leaders convinced the Soviets that an Israeli state was hugely beneficial to the Soviet mission, and would double as a negation of western influence(s) over the region through British-Arab relations.<sup>32</sup> The Yishuv leaders asserted the Soviets that not only there is no reason to expect Soviet Union policy to be hostile to us, there are grounds for thinking it will be friendly. They stated it is not out of sympathy to us or out of hatred towards the Arabs, but in order to settle political accounts with England.<sup>33</sup> Jewish Agency leaders claimed that if

<sup>23</sup> **Kramer**, “Who Saved Israel in 1947?,”

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid*, p. 12.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>26</sup> **Jorgen Jensehaugen, Marte Helan-Engdal and Hilde Henriksen Waage**, “Securing the state: From Zionist ideology to Israeli statehood,” *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 23(2), 2012, p. 282.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>28</sup> **Gabriel Gorodetsky**, “The Soviet Union’s Role in the Creation of the State of Israel,” *The Journal of Israeli History* 22(1), 2003. pp. 5-6.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15.

anyone is liable to lose, it is first of all Arabs and the Britons, since the former will have to accept Soviets' supervision and the latter its participation in all matters relating to the East – legitimate supervision and legitimate participation.<sup>34</sup> This means that supervision could undermine the entire political and social structure throughout the Arab East, and the participation that may limit even more the evolution of self-government in the Arab East.

When the Soviets saw a potentially growing coordination between the Americans and Great Britain in establishing trusteeship over Palestine through official discussions taking place that excluded Russian diplomats, it further emboldened them in the scope and speed of their efforts to help the Yishuv, as the Cold War was still a looming conflict and the Soviets feared that American success in the region would equal to another American logistical and military base forming nearer to Russian borders.<sup>35</sup> The Soviets saw this as an opportunity, however, as they saw potential with the Yishuv, and wanted to lay claim to establishing a strong state in the region while simultaneously expelling Western influences at odds with Moscow.<sup>36</sup> The Soviets recognized that their involvement in this issue could serve as both a strategic and public relations victory for Russia, while keeping the option of fighting a proxy war through the Jews against the Anglo-American-backed Arabs, if necessary.<sup>37</sup>

Therefore, the ultimate purpose of the Soviet Union's dealings in the Middle East was not primarily to back Zionist powers in an attempt to bolster a potential, future ally in the region but mainly to expel English influence that had already grown prevalent over the region, threatening the global posturing of Moscow.<sup>38</sup> In reality, the Russian communist regime was very anti-Zionist and not only supported criticisms leveled against Zionism as being a wholly incompatible thought-system to communist ideals, but actively banished Zionists to Siberia among other persecutions.<sup>39</sup> The actions, both covert and overt, taken by Moscow were clearly not motivated by cultural sentimentalization between Jews and Russians, but the to-be-made geopolitical yields by Moscow in the ridding of a maturing British-Arab tandem leaving its infancy and the sustaining of their expulsion with an Israeli state bent on self-determination.<sup>40</sup> The actions of the Soviets, ulterior motives notwithstanding, ended up being of high historical consequence in the creation of a Jewish state in the Middle East.<sup>41</sup>

However, at the same time Jewish leaders explained to the Soviets that being minorities in Palestine and not having the essential components for statehood yet, that they could not create their own state without support. The Jewish leaders made it clear that the Soviet Union is the only Great Power available that can both logistically and socio-culturally help them establish these realities.<sup>42</sup> One of the many facts that reinforce this narrative is the overwhelming percentage of Jews worldwide residing in Soviet demarcated territories. Yishuv leaders also explained that as

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> **Rucker**, *Moscow's Surprise: The Soviet-Israeli Alliance of 1947-1949*, p. 16.

<sup>36</sup> **Kahng**, "Zionism, Israel, and the Soviet Union: A study in the rise ...," p. 104.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> **Rami Ginat**, "Soviet policy towards the Arab world, 1945-48," *Middle Eastern Studies* 32(4), 1996, p. 331.

<sup>39</sup> **Walid Sharif**, "Soviet Marxism and Zionism," *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 6(3), 1977, pp. 96-97.

<sup>40</sup> **Rami Ginat**, "Soviet policy towards the ...," pp. 331-332.

<sup>41</sup> **Kramer**, "Who Saved Israel in 1947?," p. 14.

<sup>42</sup> **Heller**, "The Soviet Union and Israel: From the Gromyko declaration ...," p. 10.

a result of Anglo-American arms embargos on the Jewish Agency, the Soviet Union is the only Great Power that could offer ground support related to Jewish minority in Palestine.<sup>43</sup> Weizmann explained to the Soviet Union's envoys that the easiest way to accomplish these goals is to support with weapons, facilitate the Jewish migrations into Yishuv and sending many Arabs to Iraq and other Arab-neighboring countries in order to secure a Jewish majority in Palestine.<sup>44</sup>

Eventually, the Soviet's helping the Jews to create their own state began to look like an inevitability. Aside from their geopolitical utility, the Soviets understood that they were the only option for the Jewish people at that time.<sup>45</sup> They understood very well that the Palestinians, being Arabs, shared religion, ideology, language, and enmity for Jews with the entire Middle East. Understanding the essential nature in their role in helping the Jews, the Soviets knew that in order to be successful in expelling the Britons from the region, Moscow must support the Israelis with manpower.<sup>46</sup> In 1948, through the help of Soviet logistical presence in a post WWII Europe, a Jewish migration of 150,000 Poles, 5,000 Czechs, 40,000 Romanians, 25,000 Hungarians, and 8000 Yugoslavia was administered. This repatriation provided the critical-mass that was missing for the Jews in Palestine, and laid the foundation for a future Israeli state.<sup>47</sup> Therefore, this is the main reason that most of the Jewish Agency leaders, in retrospect, claim that immigration is one of the pillars for the establishment of a State of Israel.<sup>48</sup> Since the influx of post-World War I Jewish refugees from East European countries played a crucial role in its establishment and in its ability to rebuff Arab attacks in its first days of independence, something that would not have been possible without the acquiescence of the Soviet Union.<sup>49</sup>

To further cement their support for establishing a Jewish majority in the territories in question, the Soviets backed Israel on the question of Arab refugees. Instead of built-in agreements predetermining an Arab return to the Jewish territories, the Soviets preferred that Jews have the political flexibility, and only after having established themselves on the land, would be able to choose, at-will, their peace-negotiation tactics.<sup>50</sup> This was clearly a best-case scenario for the Jewish contingencies and would not have been possible without the relentless support and bulwark political style of the Soviets, which was deeply at odds with the 'wobbly, vacillating' style of the Americans.<sup>51</sup>

Another show of support, arguably the most important one, was the armament of the Yishuv by the Soviet Union through its proxy country Czechoslovakia. During those days where Israel was still a newly established quasi-state, it faced the existential issues of protecting its newly minted borders without the arms required to do so. The American-British embargos on the Jewish state (The American embargos were for *both* Arabs and Jews) made it nearly impossible

<sup>43</sup> **Rucker**, *Moscow's Surprise: The Soviet-Israeli Alliance of 1947-1949*, p. 26.

<sup>44</sup> **Gorodetsky**, "The Soviet Union's Role in the Creation ...," p. 6.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>46</sup> **Xiao Yu and Zeng Ji**, "Revising Moscow's support for the establishment of Israel," *Israel Affairs* 24, (5), 2018, p. 824.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>48</sup> **Binyamin Pinkus**, "Change and Continuity in Soviet Policy towards Soviet Jewry and Israel, May-December 1948," *Israel Studies* 10(1), 2005, p. 99.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>50</sup> **Kramer**, "Who Saved Israel in 1947?," pp. 7-8.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid*, p. 8.

for the Jewish Agency to fulfill all the national security requirements to keep their citizens safe.<sup>52</sup> The Soviets understood that their efforts to secure their interest in the region through a new Jewish State would be futile if Israel did not have arms to defend itself and that as a newly formed state, it would not survive. Since, the Britons were providing the Arabs not only small-arms but artillery with large-scale war capabilities.<sup>53</sup> Among all the antagonisms shown toward the Jewish Agency, the supplying of arms to Arabs who are willing to fight for the prevention of a Jewish state was the most egregious.<sup>54</sup> The British never once showed any slowing down of their support for the Arab contingencies in an effort to supplant Russian efforts, and this further cemented the working-relationship between the Soviets and the Jewish Agency.<sup>55</sup>

Even though the Arabs had the advantage of being supplied by Great Britain, they still sought arms from other countries, one of which being Czechoslovakia. The Jewish leaders discovered this through their own negotiation for arms with Prague and promptly requested from the Soviet Union to prevent any sale of arms to Arabs in the region through its communist satellite state.<sup>56</sup> Moshe Shertok, the Jewish Agency's Foreign Minister forwarded these requests to Moscow through the Deputy Foreign Minister Zorin, who then presented them to the Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov and was ultimately successful.<sup>57</sup> When the requests from the Jews reached Moscow it was met with overwhelming support, as Moscow knew very well that the enemies of the forming Jewish state (Jordan, Iraq, Egypt) had unlimited access to British warehouses, and preventing the sales to the Arabs living in Jewish territory would further undermine the ongoing British efforts in the region.<sup>58</sup>

Many years after the Jewish State finally formed, early Jewish leaders involved in the formation of Israel as a state came out publicly to emphasize that both the denial of arms for the Arabs and the receiving of arms for the Jews through Czechoslovakia was paramount to the survival of the newly formed Jewish state. Ben Gurion is publicly on record stating that without the statecraft that led to Yishuv's intended result with these arms, Israel as a new state would not have survived even a single month.<sup>59</sup> Golda Meir shared similar sentiments, historically comparing the brink of total destruction of the Jewish people in 1948 to the high-stakes negotiations deciding the future of the Jewish nation two decades later.<sup>60</sup>

Immediately after the Second World War the Soviet Union had zero presence in the Middle East and knew well that the custodian superpower in the region was Great Britain. In order to establish a presence from nothing, the Soviet Union injected themselves in dealings surrounding a potential two-state solution using their large Jewish Diaspora that stretched across the breadth of their territories as pretext. Even though Soviets were ideologically anti-Zionist and never once showed support for a Jewish State in Palestine and were historically indifferent, sometimes

<sup>52</sup> **Rucker**, *Moscow's Surprise: The Soviet-Israeli Alliance of 1947-1949*, p. 26.

<sup>53</sup> **Kahng**, "Zionism, Israel, and the Soviet Union: A study in the rise ...," p. 99.

<sup>54</sup> **Megan Bailey**, "A strategic alliance: An exploration of Israeli-Russian relations," Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection 2014, p. 11, [https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3008&context=isp\\_collection](https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3008&context=isp_collection)

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> **Yu and Ji**, "Revising Moscow's support for the ...," p. 823.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, pp. 823-824.

<sup>59</sup> **Kramer**, "Who Saved Israel in 1947?," p. 11.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

entertaining opposition to the idea of a Jewish state in the region, they threw their support behind the Yishuv and a Jewish-state solution as it became clear that this was in their best interest.

The relative indifference of the Soviets extended to the Arabs as well, as they never expressed any interest in solving the Arab-Israeli disputes that created a volatile Middle East. When recognizing the value of inserting themselves into the conflicted region, they decided on the tactic of using their large internal Jewish population across the Soviet Union as cudgel to establish presence and dominance in the region, ultimately pushing Great Britain out and undoing their progress made with their Arab allies. Another consideration is that the Soviets also recognized the organizational zeal and willingness to fight from the Jewish leaders. This made it comparatively clear that the Moscow-backed Yishuv would operate far more independently than the Arabs already had with their almost entire resource and strategic dependence on the British. The Yishuv understood Great Britain as a proxy helping their enemy, and the Soviets knew that the Jewish leadership would work hard to rid the region of British presence, inadvertently doing Moscow's strategic bidding.

For this reason, in late 1947 going into 1948, the Soviet Union, against all of its established precedents, became the first superpower to fully back Zionism and the establishing of a Jewish State, giving the quasi-Jewish state the necessary resources to combat, both politically and militarily, the Arabs, along with the means to escape the choking embargos placed on them by the United States and Great Britain. When the Jewish leaders declared independence on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 1948, the Soviets not only became the first major power to recognize their sovereignty, but did so only three days after the declaration.

Moscow knew that their show of support of the Jews would further ignite hostilities against them, because implicit in their support of the Jews, was a declaration against the sovereignty and unity of the Arabs. Furthermore, the risk extended beyond the Palestinian territories into the entire Arab world, as Moscow's support of the Jews would be poorly interpreted by all Arab nations who expressed clear unity with the Palestinian Arabs, and all of the Communist diplomacy done in those Arab regions was potentially at risk of being jeopardized. But ultimately, Moscow was more than willing to take on these risks, as their geopolitical priority was not maintaining relationships with Arab countries, but ridding the region of British presence. The Soviet Union gambled those damaging relationships with the Arab world by helping the Jews was worth it, as the Soviets suspected they would never be able to command loyalty from Arabs as they would from the newly declared and highly indebted (to Moscow) Jewish State. The Soviets saw the newly created Jewish State as a victory over their Western enemies as well as a new stronghold for themselves in the region where they could show their global influence and power. But the Soviet Union misjudged the loyalty they anticipated from the Jews, as Israel, noticing the superior posturing of the United States in the still playing out Cold War, quickly turned to the West, realizing the Soviet Union was not going to finance, protect, and support their newly formed state as adequately as the United States and Great Britain.

In retrospect, the friendship between Israel and the Soviet Union was characterized by a common interest: the expulsion of the British presence from Palestine and the establishment of a strong Jewish state that would defend its independence and its frontiers against the Arab clients of Great Britain. The Zionist's hard work to have their own independent state and the

Soviet's main goal to expel Britons from the region brought the Soviet Union and Yishuv to work together and, as a result, both of them achieved what they wanted. Moscow was not interested to support the creation of Jewish State but was willing to support any movement, regardless of its ideological persuasion, to end British influence in the Mediterranean and to break that Anglo-American front. Therefore, in supporting Israel Moscow did not specifically want to create a Jewish state in Palestine but wanted to support the most potentially successful element – Israel – that can weaken and liquidate the Palestinian Mandate and expel the Britons from the region. In fact, Soviets recognized and believed that the Yishuv leaders are the ones that can do so, which would be seen by the Soviets as the first step towards the collapse of British power in the Mediterranean. Soviets thought that they might be able to undermine or influence the direction of the Israeli government, by manipulating the emigration of East European Jews and by letting the Jewish state include a number of Communist agents in their government. However, once Israel was established the Soviets found themselves excluded from any influence in the area and had to admit that Israel belongs to the West and not to the East.

In conclusion, there are two essential and heavily intertwined components to the formation, survival, and continued thriving of the still-young Jewish State of Israel: The first being the overt, Soviet-first disposition of a Moscow newly emboldened from its worldwide strategic gains and successes in WWII, intent on cementing itself as the unchallenged world-number-one power with growing resources born from widened global positioning and maintained through cleverly earned and presumably indebted, intercontinental allies. The second and more subtle, is the indomitable national will possessed by the Jewish leaders in British Palestine recognizing and capitalizing on the zeitgeist of their near-extinction in Europe along with a threatened expulsion from the Middle East, combined with the well-timed diplomacy with a posturing Soviet Union interested in expelling Western powers from wherever they could succeed in doing so, exceptionally so on the edges of their very continent.

A complex web of high-stakes international interests between the grasping superpowers of a post-World War II globalized era progressed on and through the Arab-Israeli conflicts regarding their respective fights for statehood in Palestine. The Arab leaders, who had the established backing of Great Britain along with the sympathies of the entire Arab world, were in a superior position to their Jewish counterparts, who also angled for statehood and internationally recognized borders. The Soviet Union, who historically never had any interest or formed allies in the Middle East, recognized the opportunity for a geopolitical win over the British and the West at-large by supporting the Jewish Agency in gaining and maintaining their statehood. The Soviets planned on not just ridding the region of Western influence, but earning the full diplomacy of the Jewish leaders, hoping that their role in supporting Israel as a state early on in its formation would earn them another country usable for the purposes of the communist regime. This, however, did not take place, as the newly formed Israel quickly turned its needs and loyalties to the West, failing to ever become a reliable geopolitical conduit for Moscow.

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