F.O.R.D.[[1]](#footnote-1) Memorandum on Soviet and satellite attitudes towards Israel, 15 May 1949

THE ATTITUDE OF THE SOVIET UNION AND THE SATELLITE GOVERNMENTS TOWARDS ISRAEL

When, in the autumn of 1947, the U.S.S.R. gave her support to the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine, the Zionists hoped that they had won a powerful friend. The recrudescence, since the middle of 1948, of officially-inspired anti-Zionism in Eastern Europe has therefore come as a disappointment to them. In view of these events, it has been thought worthwhile to examine past records of the policy of the Soviet Union and her satellites towards Jews and towards Zionism and a series of memoranda on the subject has been prepared of which abbreviated versions follow.

These memoranda clearly bring out the fact that Soviet policy is essentially opposed to Zionism and that, particularly in the case of the Soviet Union, it was the temporary attitude of benevolence rather than its cessation which might have caused surprise. Viewed in the light of earlier pronouncements on the subject of Zionism it is evident that Soviet support of the Israeli case before the United Nations, her precipitate recognition of the State of Israel, her approval of the export of arms and emigration of men of fighting age to Israel during the critical months before and after the termination of the Mandate, were manifestations of an anti-British rather than of a pro-Zionist policy.

In the satellite countries the intensity with which the recent campaign against Zionism has been conducted has apparently varied according to the differences in the numbers and influence of the Jews in each country and in the power of the anti-Zionist Jews. In Romania, where the situation for Zionists is worse than in other Eastern European countries Jewish Communists are particularly strong and they are believed always to be more bitter of Zionism than any gentiles are.

Various reasons for this opposition to Zionist activities have been suggested. The Israeli press, according to its political affiliations, has advanced different theories…

It is unlikely that the Soviet Government has serious hopes of the Communists obtaining control of the Israeli Government in the elections of the 25th January, 1949. Anti-Zionist activities in East Europe began several months before the election, while political support for Israel still continues. The Communists polled only 3% of the votes – no larger a percentage than in the elections to the Jewish ‘elected Assembly’ in 1944, while Mapam, the left-wing party partially penetrated by Communists, though gaining a bad second place, failed to come up to expectations or to make an Agreement with Ben Gurion[[2]](#footnote-2) by which they could enter the Coalition Government.

[TNA, FO 371/75200]

Keywords: Post-war order, Inter-allied relations, United Nations, Post-war USSR, Post-war Middle East

1. F.O.R.D. - Foreign Office Research Division, contained different sections (eg. German section), headed by Arnold Toynbee until 1946, then by E. James Passant until 1955. Sourced from Eckert, Astrid, The Struggle for the Files: *The Western Allies and the Return of German Archives After the Second World War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

   [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ben-Gurion, David (born David Joseph Grün, 1886-1973) – Israeli political figure, first Prime Minister of Israel (1948-1954, 1955-1963). He played one of the key roles in achieving independence for Israel. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)