

**SOVIETS AND PALESTINE
USSR-ISRAEL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS**

**4. REESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS AFTER STALIN'S DEATH-5 MARCH
1953**

April 4, 1953

July 15, 1953

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July 15, 1953

STATEMENT BY THE ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTRY REPRESENTATIVE TO THE PRESS.

April 4, 1953

The Government of Israel was very pleased with the official statement published in Moscow that the accusations against Jewish doctors had been fabricated and that their "confessions" of alleged acts had been obtained through illegal methods. This is practically confirmed the fairness of the position taken by the Government of Israel on this issue and expressed during the Knesset meeting on 19 January 1953.

In connection with the "doctors' case" unfounded accusations were made against such international Jewish organizations as Joynt and the World Zionist organization. The crackdown on doctors served as the basis for an anti-Jewish campaign, one of the manifestations of which was the severance of diplomatic relations with the State of Israel.

The Government of Israel hopes that the correction of the perversions will lead to an end to the anti-Jewish campaign and welcome the restoration of normal relations between the USSR and Israel.

LETTER FROM B. RAZIN. ACTING DIRECTOR OF THE EASTERN EUROPEAN DEPARTMENT OF THE ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTRY S.BENZURU.

April 10, 1953

On April 4, I was invited with my wife to a reception at the Hungarian Embassy. As soon as we entered the main hall, I saw that the Soviet ambassador, Mr. Bodrov, was standing about 10 meters away and talking to the Polish ambassador, pointing to the corner where we were standing with one of the Western representatives. A few seconds later Bodrov came up to us, shook hands and asked how things were. At first I thought that he just did not recognize us, as we met only once, at a reception in the garden at the Soviet Embassy last September, and the very next day he left Sofia and returned only in early March.

The ambassador struck up a general conversation. Then the French ambassador and his wife came into the hall and joined us, and I translated them from Russian to French and back, then spoke himself. During the conversation, one of the Soviet diplomats came up and wanted to recall the ambassador to the side, but he did not go, and continued to tell how well he was cured at home. Then he jokingly added: "You can rely on Soviet doctors" - and immediately asked me if I had read today's "Truth" and whether I already knew about the release of doctors. I answered that it is known, adding that today we have Passover - a holiday of freedom, so I even drank for the health of the Soviet government, for the courage shown by it and hope that all the problems caused by this sad story will find a speedy resolution. The ambassador thanked and said that he too was "happy and proud" of the courage of his government and that it was a "characteristic example of the course of the Soviet government" and then asked me to translate all this to the French ambassador. I asked him to translate only his words or mine too, he nodded his head: "Everything, everything." The Ambassador of France replied that he was also glad of the events of today, well understood the feelings of his colleague (i.e. me) and fully shared

them. I told the Ambassador that after the charges against Jewish doctors were dropped, it made sense to restore relations with my country. The ambassador chuckled and asked me how I knew Russian so well, that is, changed the subject. The conversation lasted 7-8 minutes and was interrupted when the Prime Minister entered the hall.

The halls were overcrowded, and all the Western representatives were present, and all the Western representatives who were amazed to see me in Mr. Bodrov's company for so long. Some of those who stood nearby, also heard the contents of the conversation.

The rest of the eastern bloc treated us with politeness and warmth and entered into conversations about all sorts of "neutral" things. Workers of the Hungarian Embassy showed a special cordiality. Of all the employees of the Soviet Embassy, I was greeted only by the second secretary in charge of the embassy's protocol department. From here I conclude that all this was not just an accident. ...

I would like to know whether our colleagues in other missions had similar contacts with representatives of the Eastern Bloc, especially the Russians.

With respect
Razin Ben-Tsion

TELEGRAM OF THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES OF ISRAEL IN BULGARIA B. RAZIN TO THE EASTERN EUROPEAN DEPARTMENT OF THE ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTRY.

April 14, 1953

During a meeting with the Czech ambassador and his wife at their home, I asked to issue an emigration passport to a Czech Jew living in Bulgaria. It was promised to "do everything." In addition, the Ambassador, on his own initiative, informed me that:

1. It is to be hoped that Soviet-Israeli relations will soon be restored.
2. Everyone was waiting for Israel to respond, and were glad that it was ready to reach out.
3. Now it can be believed that the bomb was thrown by an embittered loner.
4. The Soviet Ambassador, returning from Moscow in mid-March, ordered contacts with Westerners, especially Austrians and Israelis.
5. The Czech Ambassador is convinced that most Israelis are socialists and that the stronger they are, the weaker Israel's dependence on the West will be.

Now it is clear that the Polish and Romanian ambassadors visited Avner not by accident. The source of the information is not for publication.

Razin

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REFERENCE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE MIDDLE EAST OF THE USSR FOREIGN MINISTRY "ON ISRAEL'S ATTEMPTS TO RESTORE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE USSR".

May 18, 1953

Secret.

After the publication of the Soviet Interior Ministry's report on the rehabilitation and release of a group of doctors by USSR on April 4, 1953, attempts were made to restore diplomatic relations with the USSR by Israel.

.....

(c) On April 13, Vyshinsky said that the director of the Eastern Europe Department of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, Levavi, and Israel's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, Rafael, visited Poland's permanent representative to the UN, Beretsky, and asked him whether the Poles would help restore Israel's relations with the SOVIET Union. According to Beretsky and Sksheeszewski, the representatives of Israel, speaking about the assistance of the Poles, meant to find out whether they can expect that the Soviet representatives will positively respond to the establishment of contact with representatives of Israel.

That. Vyshinsky expressed the opinion that in the present conditions we should not rush to react to the probe of Israel, but wait for the end of the investigation into the explosion and how Israel will behave in the future (Telegram T. Vyshinsky in the 9387 of April 13, 1953).

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(Telegram T. Dorofeev No. 128-129 of April 14, 1953).

Assistant Head of the OBSV P.Gerasimov

LETTER FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES OF ISRAEL IN HUNGARY AND BULGARIA, G. AVNER TO THE DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTRY A. LEVAWI.

July 1, 1953

Negotiations with the Russians and further actions

I sent you an analytical note with the last mail regarding all the stages of negotiations here. I would now like to add a few thoughts on how events have evolved to this day, as well as on what to do next.

1. It is in our own interest to try again to analyse how the process leading to the resumption of relations began. As for Sofia, the events had the following chronology:

Stalin dies on March 9, the Russian ambassador returns to Sofia after a long vacation on March 15 and on April 4 speaks with Razin in the presence of other diplomats at a reception with Hungarians, asking his opinion on the rehabilitation of convicts in the "doctors' case".

Apparently, he already knew from the return from Moscow that such a step was expected.

A Czech colleague told Razin in mid-April that the Russians had sent instructions on rapprochement with the Austrians and Israelis; in other words, they were already aware of the expected change of attitude in favour of Austria and Israel.

This means that a principled decision against us was made in March or mid-April.

At a reception with the Czechs in early May, a TASS correspondent told Razin that he “thinks” that there will soon be changes for the better in relations between the Soviet Union and Israel.

In the same week, the Pole began to probe the ground as to the possibility of our initiative, set out in the form of a letter.

On May 15, at our reception, all Bulgarians said with one voice that we should send such a letter. Perhaps at that stage they also had instructions to discuss our first step with us.

2. When the Russian Ambassador read out the text of their reply to us this week (you will receive it in the original with this post), which refers to the report of the Government of Israel on 28 May, Razin and I could hardly hold back from the smile.

But it is worth remembering that our first meeting with him (it took place when I already knew that they had received assurances that we would take the first steps) the ambassador began by saying: “I was told that you want to see me and tell me something. I'd like to hear what you have to say.”

In other words, despite the fact that the Poles in general only informed us, etc., he began to act as if it were our initiative addressed to the government of the USSR, and as if their letter had it been that if the whole process had started on May 28 with our appeal, it would have been....”

3.....

... They had a change in the issue of friendly relations, probably planned in advance. They told us things they would never say publicly because of their flirtation with the Arabs.

When I disagreed, one after another the following answers followed: first, their desire to renew the relationship in itself is a sign of a friendly disposition, and there is no need to demonstrate this in any particular way. Secondly, normal relations and friendly relations should be the same. Thirdly, what we ask will appear in the final version, because what he is sending to us now is a project. Fourth, he telegraphs our request to Moscow. Fifthly, he sees no reason why not to include what we ask, because what is written now and what we ask is the same thing... Each of these points was a response to my arguments....

In this regard, it is interesting that Tito does distinguish between diplomatic and normal relations. From the clippings that I attach, it follows that it distinguishes three stages: diplomatic relations, normal relations, friendly relations. Therefore, we can assume that in relation to us the Russians go to stage number two. But these are also only academic calculations.....

4. I would like to analyse the essence of events: it is absolutely clear to me today that the decision of the Russians in relation to us is similar to that of the Russians their decision on Yugoslavia, and this brings me back to the idea that I telegraphed to you immediately after our first meeting with the Russian ambassador, when I tried to interpret his question of mere relationships or friendship, and when I advised to establish the work of our missions in practical terms in places where they are not present at the moment, for example in Belgrade, Athens, Berlin Vienna, and maybe in some Latin American countries with which relations were severed long ago.....

I came to this view as a result of my stay and negotiations in Budapest, after I saw that there was no change or concessions, both in matters relating to Jews, even in small matters, such as caravans, and in the case of Yugoslavia and diplomatic contacts with the West.

This is confirmed by the fact that, as I saw, the word "friendly" was absent from the draft letter of the Russians to us. They, of course, informed their allies of their intention to restore relations with us and Belgrade, and at the same time informed them that at least for now this does not mean a willingness to make concessions in private, non-international, matters.

Notice my conversations with the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and with the Pole in Budapest.

I have no doubt that on major international issues they are seeking multilateral negotiations. There they may be willing to make some concessions (I am, for example, sure that they leave the Austrian issue in reserve because they do not want to make concessions on it now, but will follow them when it will be beneficial for them in the context of comprehensive negotiations with the Western powers).

For the main negotiations, they want to prepare the atmosphere and public opinion in a way that achieves their demands, and this is achieved through current gestures.

They want to organize a kind of "second Yalta," that is, a general agreement that would be based on maintaining the status quo between the two blocs, which would give the Russians guarantees of non-aggression by the U.S.-Western bloc (which is why Churchill's words about guarantees have got to the very center of their desires, because their goal is to really reach a security agreement for Russia and the Satellite countries).

In response to such an agreement, they will be ready to make serious concessions somewhere (Austria, etc.).

Thus, the intention to prepare the atmosphere and public opinion is absolutely clear.

On our problems, as well as the problems of Yugoslavia and Western diplomats related to the domestic political system, concessions will not follow either now or later.

Another thing is the requirement of compensation for nationalized property.

This question has to do with money and there is something to talk about (French and Swiss in Sofia).

However, emigration, repatriation, exit permits, the activities of Yugoslav missions in the bloc countries are things that affect domestic politics and contradict the order on which concessions will not follow.

In this area, concessions can only be made if domestic pressures within the country require this; then concessions on Germany's problems and maybe in other matters, but nothing more.

They do not believe that there is a direct link between preparing the ground for general negotiations or even the negotiations themselves and the demands on emigration, because these things relate to domestic policy, would mean serious concessions of an internal nature and cannot be resolved at the stage of gestures and the preparation of public opinion

.....

On this occasion it will be interesting to note that the head of the Austrian government, a man of right-wing views, in his speech in parliament 10 days ago, opening a debate on foreign policy and talking about the need to seek some concessions from the Russians against his state, not only clearly demanded that the press not irritate the Russians with their actions and not slander them, but, moreover, hinted that in order to get concessions from the Russians it is necessary to find a way to get concessions from the Russians. where it is possible to meet the political interests of the Russians, seeking their favorable location.

He spoke with caution, picking up the words, while the representative of the Communist Party unequivocally said that only if Austria does anything in the sphere of international relations to meet the interests of the Russians, can we expect that Russia will do something in the interests of Austria.

.....

..... I attach to the letter a few newspaper clippings, which are related to what was mentioned above.

Gershon Avner

LETTER FROM ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER M. CHARETTA TO THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE USSR V.M. MOLOTOV.

July 6, 1953

Your Excellency,

The Government of Israel has recently noted a marked improvement in the international situation and a renewed desire to reach a peaceful and constructive solution to major international issues still awaiting resolution. Following its constant policy of seeking friendship with all peace-loving countries and promoting, to the best of their abilities, the establishment of normal and harmonious relations between all

peoples, the Government of Israel, under the present circumstances, wishes to raise the issue of the resumption of diplomatic relations between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and Israel.

2. The Government of the Soviet Union severed its diplomatic relations with Israel following the bombing of the Soviet Mission in Tel Aviv by unknown criminals there and the damage to persons and property caused by the explosion. The Government of Israel recalls that it, in its note of 10 February 1953, the SOVIET Mission in Tel Aviv expressed its deep regret and apologies for the crime committed against the Mission, and offered full compensation for the damage and material damage suffered by the Mission and its personnel. The Israeli police have made every effort to identify and punish the perpetrators. It is known that, for reasons beyond the control of the Israeli police, the investigation of evidence at the crime scene could not have begun until 15 hours after it had been committed. Extensive searches were carried out in the offices of some organizations, as well as in private homes, and dozens of persons suspected of possible complicity were detained for questioning. Unfortunately, the investigation has so far failed to produce positive results, but the case has in no way been dropped and the search for evidence continues with full energy in the hope that the arrest and trial of the perpetrators and their deserved punishment may still be possible.

3. The Government of Israel takes the opportunity to recall its reply of 8 December 1951 to a note from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR dated 21 November 1951, in which it stated:

“Israel has never agreed and will not agree to support the implementation or preparation of acts of aggression against the USSR or any other peace-loving state.” This policy remains unchanged. Without hostile feelings towards the USSR, but rather, being concerned about establishing and maintaining friendship and peaceful relations with it, Israel will not be a party to any alliance or agreement pursuing aggressive objectives against the Soviet Union.

4. The Government of Israel officially proposes to the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics to restore, in the spirit of genuine international friendship, normal diplomatic relations, which were interrupted on February 12, 1953.

I take this opportunity to convey to Your Excellency my very high respect.

M.Charette

Israeli Foreign Minister July 6, 1953

LETTER FROM SOVIET FOREIGN MINISTER V.M. MOLOTOV TO ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTER M. SHARETT.

July 15, 1953

Mr. Minister,

In connection with your letter of July 6, 1953 I inform the following. As you know, on February 9, on the territory of the Soviet mission in Israel, the attackers detonated a bomb, resulting in the mission personnel and family members of some of the mission were seriously injured, and the Soviet Government recalled the Soviet Union envoy, as well as the composition of its mission in Israel, and cut off diplomatic relations with the Government of Israel.

On 28 May, the Israeli Government asked the Soviet government to restore diplomatic relations between Israel and the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Government took into account the proposal that the Government of Israel had expressed its deep regret and apology for the crime committed against the Soviet mission in Tel Aviv, and that, although the search for those responsible had not yielded positive results, the Government of Israel, it claimed, was continuing to search for those responsible for their arrest and trial.

The Soviet Government also took into account the Israeli Government's statement that it would not be a party to any alliance or agreement with aggressive objectives against the Soviet Union.

Given the above assurances of the Israeli Government, as well as its concerns about establishing friendships with the Soviet Union and following its policy of maintaining normal relations with other countries and strengthening cooperation between peoples, the Soviet Government, for its part, also expresses its desire to have friendly relations with Israel and considers it possible to restore diplomatic relations with the Government of Israel.

Please, Mr. Minister, to accept my high esteem.

V. Molotov