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### **From Friends to Foes: The Deterioration of Soviet-Israeli Relations in the Mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century**

This paper sheds light on an often overlooked, but integral, chapter in Soviet and modern Middle Eastern history as it investigates the rise and drastic fall of auspicious Soviet-Israeli relations in the 1940s and 1950s. In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, Soviet support for Israel played a crucial role in the formation and survival of the nascent state. However, within just several years, the Soviet bloc abandoned its support for Israel and adopted an antagonistic attitude toward the state. In investigating the reasons for the salient transformation in Soviet-Israeli ties, this paper gathers data from both primary sources—newspapers and governmental documents—as well as secondary historical and theoretical literature. With the data, the paper utilizes two analytical approaches to explain the abrupt shift in Soviet-Israeli relations in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. The first approach involves a delineation of four events, each of which played a decisive role in fomenting increasingly greater tension between the Soviet bloc and Israel—thus ultimately catalyzing the complete disintegration of Soviet-Israeli relations. All four of these events—Golda Meir’s visit to Moscow in 1948, the 1950 Tripartite Declaration, the outbreak of the Korean War, and the anti-Semitic purge trials of 1952—highlight Soviet apprehension towards political actors that showed any form of perceived Western alignment. In the second mode of analysis, the paper critically analyzes Soviet motives during the ostensibly friendly period with Israel in order to show that the Eastern bloc’s intentions were in fact never to support the Israeli cause for self-determination, but rather to gain influence and a strategic footing in the Middle East. After explaining the demise of Soviet-Israeli relations via the two above-mentioned analytical methods, the paper then uses the diplomatic downfall at hand to test the international relations paradigm of *realpolitik*, subsequently arguing for the necessity of a reworked realist-constructivist framework. Thus, the paper ultimately claims that a nuanced understanding of key historical processes in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as a critical look at underlying motivations during the period of strong Soviet-Israeli relations, are both needed to explain the souring of Soviet-Israeli relations. In broader terms, the paper claims that the disintegration of Soviet-Israeli relations in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century must be elucidated via a broader understanding of the dynamics of Cold War politics.