

Soviet Reactions to the Eichmann Trial: A Preliminary Investigation 1960–1965¹

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Introduction

Since the Soviet Union² maintained a consistent silence with regard to the various aspects of the Holocaust, an analysis of the Soviet reaction to the Eichmann trial is an important means to examine their attitude to the Holocaust in general. The trial, which drew international attention, received considerable press coverage, and the Soviet media was therefore unable to ignore it. As a result, researchers can draw on a lengthy series of newspaper reports, articles, and even books about the Eichmann trial that were published in the Soviet Union.³

During the trial there were efforts to investigate the Soviet position. However, since the requisite information was not available then, commentators were able to relate only to the narrow context of the trial itself and did not examine the Soviet reaction as a whole.⁴ Thus, most of the relevant material, including what does exist in the public domain, has not yet been subjected to academic scrutiny. This involves

1 This article is an amended version of a seminar paper submitted for a Tel Aviv University master's seminar, "New Findings in Holocaust Studies," under the supervision of Prof. Yehuda Bauer. I wish to thank Prof. Yaacov Ro'i for reading the article and for his insightful comments.

2 For the most detailed coverage of the subject, see Zvi Gitelman, "Politics and the Historiography of the Holocaust in the Soviet Union," *idem*, ed., *Bitter Legacy: Confronting the Holocaust in the USSR* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), pp. 14–50.

3 Most newspaper clippings were taken from the series *Jews and the Jewish People*, which was published from 1962 on, initially in London, and, from 1970 on, at the Hebrew University's Abraham Hartman Institute of Contemporary Jewry. I drew heavily on these volumes in writing my paper.

4 See below for a presentation of these attempts.

not just the historical processes, but also an analysis of the approach that the Soviet establishment sought to adopt.⁵

This article examines the Soviet Union's attitude to the Eichmann trial over three time periods: (1) from David Ben-Gurion's announcement to the Knesset about Eichmann's capture until the opening of the trial; (2) during the trial itself; and (3) a number of years after the trial.

Inevitably, the trial, which highlighted Jewish suffering, could not but elicit reactions in this context as well. We will, therefore, attempt in this article also to examine the Soviet Union's position with regard to the Holocaust by means of its attitude to the Eichmann trial.

The date 1965 has deliberately been chosen to mark the end of the period reviewed here. This was the year that the negative Soviet position vis-à-vis Israel, which it viewed as the main bastion of international Zionism, was officially expressed. For the first time the Soviets drew a parallel between Zionism and Nazism from the UN rostrum.⁶ In light of this development, the question is whether the Soviet Union's political stance vis-à-vis the State of Israel and Zionism influenced the position it assumed regarding the Eichmann trial.

Background

Before looking at the Soviet Union's position regarding the Eichmann trial, we must examine the prevailing atmosphere in the country to the objects of the trial in the period leading up to it. In addition, there are a number of related aspects: the Soviet Union's attitude to the Holocaust and to Israel itself; and the Soviet Union's attitude to the Jewish question within its borders. Since Israel's establishment, the Jewish state

5 Yitzhak Arad, "The Holocaust in Soviet Historiography", in Yisrael Gutman and Gideon Greif, eds., *The Historiography of the Holocaust Period: Proceedings of the Fifth Yad Vashem International Historical Conference* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1988), pp. 188–189.

6 During the same year, for the first time the Soviets tried to draw a parallel between Zionism and Nazism from the official UN rostrum; see Yohanan Manor, *To Right A Wrong: The Revocation of the UN General Assembly Resolution 3379 Defaming Zionism* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: The Zionist Library, 1997), pp. 27–29. The term "international Zionism" was designed to give Zionism a broad, global meaning, rather than a restricted one, limited to a small geographical area. William Korey, *Russian Antisemitism, Pamyat, and the Demonology of Zionism* (Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1995), pp. 30–45.

had, both overtly and through clandestine channels, emphasized its ties with Soviet Jewry, while the Soviet regime viewed itself as being duty-bound to break this bond.⁷ Moreover, we must examine the Soviet Union's view of the events of World War II, as this view led to the development of the ideological bedrock on which the Soviet position to the Eichmann trial was based.

Only after the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party was there any real momentum in studies of World War II — or, more precisely, the Soviet-German war, “the Great Patriotic War,” as it is known.⁸ Since the end of the war, a song of praise had been sung to the genius of Stalin, who had led the peoples of the Soviet Union to victory. No further proof was needed. Moreover, the public agenda, as dictated by the leader, was headed foremost by the need to rehabilitate the state as quickly as possible, and, in order for this to succeed, the suffering of the past had to be put aside.⁹ Nonetheless, the war was a reminder of the frightful struggle against the forces that had risen up against the Soviet Union to destroy it — not only Fascist Germany,¹⁰ but all the imperialist countries. The fact that the United States and Great Britain were allies did not contradict historical fact; however, this was presented as a constant attempt to harm the Soviet regime even as the war was being waged.¹¹

The changes in Soviet society in the second half of the 1950s were also reflected when it came to memories of the war. Since the Stalinist personality cult was condemned, the peoples of the Soviet Union had found themselves cast in the role of the key factor that had led

7 Yaacov Ro'i, *The Struggle for Soviet Jewish Emigration* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 55–85.

8 The name is taken from the “Patriotic War” (or, to be accurate, “the wars of the Fatherland”), which Russia waged against Napoleon's Grande Armée in 1812. The name is actually a combination of pre-revolutionary traditions of bravery and the Soviet present, and the term “Great” (*velikaia*), in the Soviet tradition, is intended to point to the uniqueness of their own undertaking relative to the past. For more details, see Nurit Schleifman, “Moscow Victory Park. A Monumental Change,” *History & Memory*, vol. 13, no. 2 (2001), p. 8.

9 Nina Tumarkin, “The Great Patriotic War as Myth and Memory,” *European Review*, vol. 11, no. 4 (2003), p. 597.

10 As opposed to the Western practice, the Soviet Union used the term Fascism to denote the ideology that dominated Germany. Apparently, the Soviets were fearful of confronting the “Socialist” element of the Nazi movement.

11 Tumarkin, “The Great Patriotic War as Myth and Memory,” p. 597.

the Soviet Union to victory. Descriptions of the events of the war now emphasized the common denominator — a tragedy of suffering shared by all. But this tragedy contained within it an optimism that expressed the fortitude and bravery of the Soviet people.¹² The late 1950s also symbolized a generational change. Not having experienced them personally, those who were now becoming adults no longer remembered the suffering and bravery that were once so tangible.

All of this brought about a sea change in perceptions of memory. Personal tragedy and bravery were replaced by national bravery, which was mingled with suffering on a national scale. The myth of the war even overshadowed the revolutionary myth and made use of its intellectual icons — an all-out struggle against imperialism for the sake of survival.¹³ External icons and markers also changed. The cult of relating to those who had died as martyrs grew stronger, acquiring a monumental-sacral form.¹⁴ And although the process did not reach its climax until the second half of the 1960s, from the very beginning it provided a secure footing for the martyrs' status as the main victor and to whom accrued the exclusive privilege of having saved the entire world.¹⁵ Within a few years thousands of books and articles were published about the tragedy and the bravery. Nevertheless, references to the Jewish people's particular tragedy were either completely omitted or given very limited coverage.¹⁶

12 Piotr Vail, Alexander Genis, *60-e. Mir sovetskogo cheloveka* (Moscow: NLO, 2001), pp 88–89.

13 Schleifman, "Moscow Victory Park," pp. 8–9; Gitelman, "Politics and the Historiography of the Holocaust," p. 281; combating an external "enemy" in the same way as a domestic one who has come to destroy "the building of the New Society" is one of the key elements in shaping identity in totalitarian society generally, and Soviet society specifically. For a study of the development of the perception of the "face of the enemy" in the Soviet Union, see Lev Gudkov, "Ideologema 'Vraga': 'Vragi' kak massovyi sindrom i mekhanizm sotsiokul'turnoi integratsii," idem, ed., *Obraz vraga* (Moscow: OGI, 2005), pp. 7–97, and, in particular, pp. 43–69.

14 Catherine Merridale, "War, Death, and Remembrance in Soviet Russia," in Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, eds., *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 77–83.

15 On the scale of Soviet enmity, Nazi Germany was absolute evil, beyond human moral understanding. The victory over Nazism was therefore viewed not so much as a straightforward military victory, but rather as a moral victory providing additional proof of the rightness of the path and deeds of Sovietism (and subsequently of Russianness). Gudkov, "Ideologema 'Vraga,'" pp. 58–59.

16 Arad, "Historiography," pp. 204–205.

The period between the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the severing of ties between Israel and the Soviet Union (1956–1967) constitutes one stage in the Soviet Union's position with regard to the Holocaust. It is characterized by reference to the suffering of the Jews as part of the suffering of the peoples of the Soviet Union and ignoring any specific reference to the Jews as such.¹⁷ This stage was a half-way step between the absence of any explicit reference relating to the Holocaust and charges of Zionism collaborating with Nazism.

In the period prior to the Eichmann trial, public discourse surrounding the Babi Yar killing ravine was one of the rare discussions relating to the murder of Jews perpetrated within the Soviet Union.¹⁸ This discussion, which climaxed after the opening of the trial, with the publication of the well-known poem by Yevgeny Yevtushenko (September 19, 1961) and a series of reactions elicited by it, took place in the Soviet press as early as 1957–1959. However, until the poem was published, this discussion took place in the absence of any explicit reference whatsoever to the Jewish subject.

Even though the matter has not yet been researched in depth, it may be said that the Babi Yar episode constitutes an excellent example of the beginning of the disagreement among three groups of Soviet intellectuals: liberals, conservatives, and Russian nationalists.¹⁹ The liberals demanded the freedom to mention the suffering of all the Soviet peoples, while the conservatives and Russian nationalists — each group for its own reasons — opposed this.²⁰ The conservatives advocated the guideline of the regime's policy, which spoke of the overall suffering of the Soviet peoples, while the nationalists argued (unofficially) that

17 Ibid.; Gitelman, "Politics and the Historiography of the Holocaust," pp. 18, 24–25.

18 On the place of Babi Yar in the memory of the Holocaust of Soviet Jewry, see E.W.Clowes, "Constructing the Memory of the Holocaust: The Ambiguous Treatment of Babi Yar in Soviet Literature," *Partial Answers*, 3(2) (2005), pp. 153–182.

19 Kiril Feferman, *Soviet Treatment of the Holocaust, 1941–1964*, master's thesis submitted to the Hebrew University (Jerusalem, 2000), pp. 37–41. I would like to thank Kiril Feferman for making this study available to me.

20 For more details about these positions, see Jay Bergman, "Soviet Dissidents on the Holocaust, Hitler and Nazism: a Study of the Preservation of Historical Memory," *The Slavonic and East European Review*, vol. 70, no. 30 (July 1992), pp. 477–504. On anti-Soviet nationalist circles' attitudes to the Jews, see Benjamin Pinkus, "The Dissident Movement in the Soviet Union and its Attitude to the Jews and the State of Israel" (Hebrew), *Shvut*, 15 (1992), pp. 246–253.

the crimes of Nazism did not surpass those perpetrated by the Bolsheviks against the Russian people. This position followed the official Soviet stance, which viewed the Holocaust as an event of secondary importance.²¹ The two conservative groups' profiles were almost identical, and, after a few years, to some extent they merged. They emphasized the Russian aspect of Sovietism, and, as such, the Jews were the complete antithesis.²²

Marked changes in the Soviet Union's relationship with the State of Israel also occurred in the late 1950s and early 1960s.²³ There was a period of relative calm following the end of the "Doctors' Plot" and the renewal of relations in 1953, but, in the wake of the 1956 Suez Campaign, hostility to Israel flared up once again.²⁴ Two publications that came out in 1958 placed Israel squarely in the imperialist camp. The first was an article by Galina Nikitina, which appeared in Volume 10 of the Soviet Oriental Studies journal, *Sovetskoe Vostokovedenie*.²⁵ The article's author condemned Israel for its links with American imperialism and argued that the State of Israel was established by and for the purposes of imperialism.²⁶

At the same time that Nikitina's article came out, a book about the State of Israel was also published by Zinovii Sheinis and Konstantin Ivanov.²⁷ This was a first attempt at providing a thorough, comprehensive description of Israel. In addition to the "bourgeois aspect," which also appeared in Nikitina's article, this book addressed the economic

21 Feferman, *Soviet Treatment*, p. 41.

22 See Nikolai Mitrokhin, *Russkaia partiia. Dvizhenie russkikh natsionalistov v SSSR 1953–1985*, (Moscow: NLO, 2003). This fairly recent study discusses the history of the Russian-Soviet nationalist group in ruling circles, the party, and political apparatus in the Soviet Union.

23 Yosef Govrin, *Israeli-Soviet Relations, 1953–1967: From Confrontation to Disruption*, (London: Frank Cass, 1998), p. 73.

24 On November 5, 1956, Nikolai Bulganin, the Soviet prime minister, even sent a threatening letter to the British, French, and Israeli leaders to the effect that his country would not hesitate to use military force in order to protect Egypt. For more details, see Govrin, *Israeli-Soviet Relations*, pp. 45.

25 Galina Nikitina was one of the Soviet experts on Israel and was awarded a degree after submitting a dissertation on the subject.

26 Govrin, *Israeli-Soviet Relations*, p. 73.

27 In his book *Provokatsiia Veka* (Moscow: PIK, 1992), which was published in 1992, and was a form of "seeing the light," Sheinis exposes the real name of "Ivanov" — Vladimir Semenov, the deputy foreign minister, who, by virtue of his position, was responsible for matters involving Israel; see, *ibid.*, p. 174.

aspect. It provided a gloomy description of the Israeli economy in the clutches of U.S. and West European monopolies.²⁸ The authors also made an attempt to explain away the contradiction between the Soviet tendency to support the young states that had recently gained their independence and its negative attitude to Israel.²⁹ According to the authors, Marxism does not see the national liberation of one people as a positive goal that justifies the means; rather, it views them in the overall global, material context. Consequently, just as the national movements of the Czechs and the southern Slavs became reactionary movements in the nineteenth century, so Zionism is a twentieth-century reactionary movement.³⁰ This was the first time that things that previously had been said surreptitiously were expressed openly.

The Soviets also criticized Israel for its cooperation with West Germany.³¹ The roots of this criticism reach back to the early 1950s, when Moscow criticized Israel for signing the reparations agreements, which, so argued Moscow, conferred legitimacy on Bonn.³² At the same time, however, in the early 1960s, the Soviets were sending Israel messages through secret channels justifying the signing.³³

Sheinis and Ivanov's book had another, no less important role — to put Soviet Jewry off the State of Israel. Two events took place during this period that greatly underscored the ties between Soviet Jewry and Israel: the youth festival in Moscow in the summer of 1957; and

28 Konstantin Ivanov, Zinovii Sheinis, *Gosudarstvo Izrail'. Ego polozhenie i politika* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1958), pp. 100–117.

29 Govrin, *Israeli-Soviet Relations*, p. 75.

30 Ibid.; p. 96, Sheinis and Ivanov, *Gosudarstvo Izrail'*, pp. 140–143.

31 Govrin, *Israeli-Soviet Relations*, p. 80.

32 See, for example, *Novoe Vremia*, no. 25, 1952; *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, February 17, 1952; Yaacov Ro'i, *Soviet Decision Making in Practice* (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1980), pp. 422–423.

33 See, for example, *Documents on Israeli-Soviet Relations. 1941–1953*, Part II (London: Frank Cass, 2000), pp. 750–751, 794, 800–801, 832–833. In this context what is of interest is the position adopted by the Soviets in all matters relating to any reference to the murder of the Jews by the Nazis as a sufficient reason for severing ties with Germany. When a number of MAKI (Israel Communist Party) representatives visited Moscow at the end of 1961, they were told, according to Moshe Sneh, that Israel could sever its ties with West Germany “on a purely Jewish basis” without having to vilify it. See Govrin, *Israeli-Soviet Relations*, p. 80. Apparently the message was not only the upshot of the Soviet position, and Moshe Sneh himself also had a hand in hammering it out. See Pinchas Ginossar, ed. *Moshe Sneh — Writings, 1954–1965* (Hebrew), vol. IV (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1995), pp. 36–37.

the “repatriation affair,” during which former Polish citizens, including 30,000 Jews (most of whom subsequently immigrated to Israel), left the Soviet Union between 1956 and 1959. The festival highlighted the strengthening of ties between Soviet Jewry and Israel, while the repatriation demonstrated the falseness of the Soviet claim that Soviet Jewry were “happy with their lot” and did not wish to leave their “homeland.” The “repatriated” Jews also included some who had never held Polish citizenship.³⁴

In an attempt to discourage its Jewish citizens from contact with Israel, the Soviet Union now initiated an unbridled anti-Israel campaign. It was waged on two fronts – covert and overt. Anyone who expressed interest in Israel was clandestinely arrested, while at the same time an overt propaganda campaign was launched. This included the publication of books and articles, as well as newspaper and radio reports intended solely to present Israel in a negative light.

In addition to the “old” charges, during this time a new “literary genre” previously absent from Soviet publications about Israel developed, known as “voices from over there.” Letters were published in the press from Soviet citizens who had immigrated to Israel, changed their minds, and were now writing about the real situation in the “Zionist paradise.”³⁵ Israeli society was presented in these publications as a racist society that fostered the myth of the supremacy of the “Chosen Jewish People.” Soviet citizens who visited Israel also published reports and articles about the ostensibly wretched situation of the country.³⁶ The combination of describing Israel as a state governed by racism and referring to cooperation with West Germany, Hitler’s heir, paved the way to a parallel between the two.

On the eve of the announcement of Eichmann’s capture, Israel, in Soviet eyes, belonged to the “camp of evil.” Not only was it described as a satellite state of world imperialism, it was also perceived as collaborating in the rehabilitation of Nazism, the absolute evil.

34 On the two events, see Ro’i, *The Struggle*, pp. 252–268; Natan Shaham, *Encounters in Moscow 1957* (Merhaviya: Hakibbutz Haartzi Hashomer Hatsair, 1957).

35 Benjamin Pinkus, *The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union: The History of a National Minority* (Hebrew) (Sde-Boker: Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Ben-Gurion Heritage Institute, 1986), p. 390.

36 *Ibid.*, pp. 392–393.

The Soviet Position From Ben-Gurion's Announcement to the Trial's Opening

Two days after Ben-Gurion's announcement about the capture of Adolf Eichmann, the leading newspapers³⁷ of the Russian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian republics published articles containing an item by TASS (the Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union) about Eichmann's capture.³⁸ Other than *Der Birobidzhaner Shtern* (Yiddish), on May 27, 1960, which repeated the item, the other papers ignored the event. Only the *Sovetskaia Belorussia*, followed by the *Birobidzhaner Shtern*, noted that Eichmann was responsible for the extermination of millions of Jews in Europe. Other newspapers simply printed the item, noting the fact that Eichmann would be tried in Jerusalem.

A week later (on June 3, 1960), the Polish-language Lithuanian Communist Party mouthpiece, *Czerwony Sztandar*, basing itself on the Polish press, wrote that the West German authorities had asked Israel to hand Eichmann over to them in order to prevent the exposure of war criminals who had found refuge in the ranks of the new West German establishment. This article symbolized what would come to be one of the main lines in the Soviet Union's attitude to the trial — the claim that Germany was trying to whitewash the affair.

A few days later the Moscow evening paper *Vecherniaia Moskva* repeated the charges, albeit with a significant change. In an article entitled "End of a Career," West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer was said to have officially approached Israel's prime minister with a request to prevent wide-scale publication of the affair.³⁹ Not content with simply attacking the Germans, the paper also made extremely grave charges against other Western countries — the Americans had had Eichmann in their custody, but he managed to escape detention; he was then given temporary refuge by Franco in Spain and migrated to South America with the help of the Catholic Church. Although the article does not ignore Eichmann's role in implementing the "Final

37 On the structure of the Soviet press, see Eugene K. Keefe, Arsene A. Boucher, et al., *Area Handbook for the Soviet Union* (Washington, D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1971), pp. 520–521.

38 *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, *Pravda Ukrainy*, *Sovetskaia Belorussia*, May 25, 1960.

39 *Vecherniaia Moskva*, June 7, 1960.

Solution,”⁴⁰ when referring to its victims, the paper refrained from noting that these were Jews.

This article does mention an apparently marginal detail, which, in the overall context, should have made an important contribution in shaping the impression made by the trial. Citing “foreign sources,” the paper notes that Eichmann was captured while visiting a female acquaintance in Israel [*sic!*] who arranged for him to be handed over. A similar impression (that Eichmann was captured on Israeli soil) is also given by reading the *Pravda Ukrainy* article of May 25, 1960. This report adds little new to Soviet readers, since ties between Israel and West Germany, which their government described as the successor to Hitler, had been established in 1959. However, these ties were ostensibly an insult to the memory of the victims.⁴¹

In early 1960, indirect attempts were made to strike a link between Israel and Nazism by bringing up the subject of Israeli-German cooperation. An article entitled “The Intense Fondness for the Swastika,” which was published in the February *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, referred to Ben-Gurion as the person trying to “mock” (*oglyupit*) his country’s citizens by presenting the Soviet Union as the source of antisemitism and East Germany as the real heir to Nazism.⁴² A few weeks later the Ukrainian-language satirical weekly *Perets* published caricatures of Ben-Gurion and Adenauer side by side. The German chancellor was depicted as drawing his self-portrait as a Hitler figure.⁴³

At this stage the Soviet media concentrated on pointing an accusing finger at Germany, which was allegedly trying to prevent the exposure of Nazi criminals. In an article published by *Komsomol’skaia Pravda* on June 9, 1960, describing the panic in Bonn, the first mention was made of Hans Globke, an undersecretary of state and security advisor to Chancellor Adenauer, who had been a legal adviser in the Interior Ministry during the Nazi regime.⁴⁴ In addition to describing

40 Journalist B. Irinin notes at the beginning of his article that Eichmann was in charge of the department responsible for implementing the “solution to the Jewish Question,” but the wording implies that his field of expertise was “race questions” generally.

41 Rather than using the terms “Holocaust” or “deliberate murder,” the article referred to the Jewish victims of Fascism. See for example, Grigorii Plotkin, *Poezdka v Izrail* (Moscow: Literaturnaia Gazeta, 1959), pp. 42–43.

42 *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, February 6, 1960.

43 *Perets*, no. 8, 1960.

44 Feferman, *Soviet Treatment*, p. 98, note 243.

his past, the paper indicated that Globke had been called in for urgent consultations with Adenauer. It also wondered how a German head of government could not possibly be aware of the fact that so many Nazis had penetrated the ranks of his government.

Other than a few unavoidable references, Israel's name is not mentioned.⁴⁵ In one context, however, Israel was singled out. In the last two weeks of June 1960, a number of debates took place in the UN Security Council concerning Argentina's complaint against Israel for violating its sovereignty by kidnapping Eichmann. The TASS report about the complaint was carried only by the *Birobidzhaner Shtern*, on June 19, 1960, but when the debates were underway all of the leading papers gave them broad coverage. *Pravda*, for example, reported the speeches of Israel's Foreign Minister Golda Meir, as well as of Arkadii Sobolev, the Soviet UN representative. The paper, which printed selected passages of Sobolev's speech about the right of all states to punish Nazi criminals, at the same time vehemently attacked the Western countries, accusing them of harboring the criminals. The same day *Vecherniaia Moskva* also quoted the Polish delegate's speech, which was in keeping with Sobolev's, including the attacks on the West. The other papers made do with printing general reports on the debate.⁴⁶ A few months later a direct accusation was leveled at the Argentine government for giving refuge to large numbers of war criminals.⁴⁷

In a series of articles in *Novoe Vremia*, serious accusations were hurled at West Germany and the United States for trying to avoid

45 Eichmann's arrest and future trial in Israel were not even raised in the talks between the leader of the Soviet Union, Nikita Krushchev, and MAKI Secretary-General Shmuel Mikunis during the Romanian Workers' Party Congress. The talks focused on the national issue, which, in Krushchev's view, was secondary to the social-class subject; see *Kol Ha-Am*, June 20, 1960. Although Mikunis admitted that what Krushchev had said was quoted with slight changes, it stands to reason that he would not have omitted this detail, particularly in light of the debate about the kidnapping due to take place at the UN. In Mikunis's later writings about the talks, he also does not refer to the affair, noting that the initiative for the conversation came from Krushchev, who also did most of the talking. This affords us the possibility to understand the Soviets' priorities at the time; see Shmuel Mikunis, "Israel and the Jewish People – In Talks with Soviet and Communist Leaders" (Hebrew), Labor Movement Archive (Lavon Institute), Shmuel Mikunis Section IV-104-85, File 69.

46 *Krasnaia Zvezda*, June 23, 1960; *Trud, Sovetskaia Litva*, June 25, 1960.

47 *Sovetskaia Estonia*, September 13, 1960.

bringing Nazi criminals and their accomplices to justice by making Eichmann a scapegoat.⁴⁸ Expressing a lack of faith in the Western criminal justice system, the paper indicated satisfaction at the fact that Eichmann was being tried in Israel of all places, since there was no death penalty in West Germany.⁴⁹ A similar position was also expressed among diplomatic echelons. In face-to-face talks, Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko told Israel's ambassador, Prof. Aryeh Harel, that, apart from Eichmann, other Nazi criminals such as Martin Bormann and Josef Mengele were walking around free: Israel was the only country that could bring them to justice.⁵⁰

In effect, from the first month after Eichmann's capture was announced, the Soviets began little by little to display their expectations of the future trial. In addition to Eichmann, they intimated, many Nazi criminals, who were hiding primarily in the ranks of the West German government, must also be brought to trial.

In all these publications, the Holocaust was given only a marginal place; nevertheless, references to the areas of responsibility of Eichmann and others could not be avoided. However, these references were counterbalanced by a reminder of the suffering of the other peoples, or by concealing the victims' national origin. The *Trud* newspaper, for example, the mouthpiece of the Association of Pan-Soviet Trade Unions and one of the most widely distributed papers in the Soviet Union, referred, on August 9, 1960, to Globke's anti-Jewish activities as one of those responsible for introducing the race laws into Germany.⁵¹ In this

48 *Inter alia* it was said, for example, that the United States ambassador to Israel had instructions from President Eisenhower to insist that Israel restrict the future trial and focus on the figure of Eichmann alone; *Novoe Vremia*, no. 24, June 10, 1960, no. 25, June 17, 1960.

49 *Ibid.*, no. 26, June 24, 1960.

50 Avigdor Dagan, *Moscow and Jerusalem* (New York: Abelard-Schuman, 1970), p. 138, note 22.

51 *Trud*, August 9, 1960; on August 13, 1960, the Yiddish-language Warsaw *Folks-shtime* published an article by Y. Korman entitled "About the Jewish Instigators of the 'Cold War'." The author accused Nahum Goldmann, whom he calls "Adenauer's friend," of trying to prevent the investigation of Globke's crimes. Toward the end of the article, the Zionist movement is charged with striving to divert the public's attention away from the Eichmann trial by means of the Paris Conference, which, as the author puts it, is directed against the Soviet Union. On the international conference in Paris, whose theme was the Jewish problem in the Soviet Union, see Ro'i, *The Struggle*, pp. 138–141; Nehemiah Levanon, "Nativ" Was the Code Name (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1996), pp. 169–172.

article an attempt was made to present Globke as being responsible not only for the persecution of the Jews, but also for many crimes that were committed on Soviet territory. According to the article, Globke operated in Lithuania during World War II, “where tens of thousands of *Soviet citizens* were put to death” [emphasis added]. By omitting the national affiliation of those who were murdered, the press tried to give the impression that Globke must have been involved in the Eichmann affair as well. Furthermore, *Sovietskaia Russia*, the main paper of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic, in its November 30, 1960 edition, openly accused the Mapai party leadership of having betrayed the memory of six million Jews — the victims of Nazism — when it struck an alliance with the Bonn authorities. At the time this was practically the only way of presenting the Holocaust as a unique event in the Soviet press.

In this context it is interesting to consider the Russian translation of Anne Frank’s diary, which was published in the second half of 1960. The preface to the book was written by author Ilya Ehrenburg and discussed the Holocaust but made no mention whatsoever of the Eichmann affair (the book was ready for print at the end of May and approved in August 1960). It does, nevertheless, harshly criticize Globke, who has “six million innocent victims on his conscience.”⁵²

The attempt to make Eichmann into a “universal criminal” also continued through the use of inaccurate quotations. In its issues of September 6 and 9, 1960, which related that Eichmann’s conscience was burdened with the responsibility of throwing Jewish children into the furnaces at Majdanek and Auschwitz, the *Literaturnaia Gazeta* also highlighted Eichmann’s comment as the war was drawing to a close about his pleasure at the destruction of millions of human beings.⁵³

52 *Dnevnik Anny Frank* (Moscow: IL, 1960), p. 9. In addition, Ehrenburg, who was known for his sensitivity about the Holocaust, chose to ignore the trial altogether, and not just in this book. See Mordechai Altshuler et al., eds., *Soviet Jews Write to Ilya Ehrenburg 1943–1966* (Russian) (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1993), p. 425.

53 According to Dieter Wisliceny’s testimony in Nuremberg, in various circumstances Eichmann gave the figures of four and five million *Jews* who perished in the framework of the “Final Solution.” In the course of his testimony, in response to questioning by the prosecutors about the number of *Jews* who were murdered, Wisliceny quoted Eichmann as giving the figure of five million *people*; see *The Trial of German Major War Criminals* (London: Published under the authority of H.M. Attorney-General by His Majesty’s Stationery, 1964), vol. 3, pp. 287–289.

This time, too, the Soviet Union's emotional involvement was clear: Eichmann was presented as the person responsible for writing the instructions to destroy the "Bolshevik commissars" as well as the Jews. Unlike the *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, which was considered a pan-Soviet paper, the other, less important newspapers made a point of being accurate when quoting Eichmann's words, but they balanced this by stating that, in addition to murdering the Jews, Eichmann was directly responsible for the deaths of millions of Poles, Czechs, Russians, and people of other nationalities.⁵⁴

How was the suffering of the Jews presented to the Soviet reader? In its issue no. 31 *Novoe Vremia* said that the destruction of the Jews was undertaken with the same degree of cruelty with which Communists, Soviet fighters, and partisans were destroyed. This displayed a certain degree of overt sympathy for the Jews in their suffering. At the same time, however, the statement once again showed that, when covering up the suffering of the Jews, the Soviet regime needed something "more tangible" in order to describe the extent of their suffering without referring to the Holocaust. It should be noted that at the time this was a unique article, because for the first time it referred to the charge — leveled not only at Germany but also the countries of the West — of not having done enough in order to save Jews. By way of illustration the article cited the story of the "Joel Brand affair." Brand was forced "by the greedy Nazis to travel to Palestine in order to organize a consignment of trucks in return for the release of Hungarian Jewry."⁵⁵ The article, out of a profound loathing for the Nazis' actions, pointed an accusing finger at the mandatory authorities, who, for their own reasons, thwarted the implementation of the deal, resulting in the murder of tens of thousands of people.

Within just a few months, however, the Eichmann trial was presented in a different light. Toward the end of 1960, the Soviet press began to change its position on Israel's involvement. In October, a Soviet party paper for the first time accused the Israeli government not only of delaying the opening of the trial, but also of maintaining economic ties with a country whose hands were stained with Jewish blood.⁵⁶ Previously the press had talked about German-American efforts to pres-

54 *Sovetskaia Estonia*, September 13, 1960; *Moskovskaia Pravda*, October 13, 1960.

55 *Novoe Vremia*, no. 31, 1960.

56 *Moskovskaia Pravda*, October 13, 1960.

sure Israel in order to silence the affair, while now Ben-Gurion was presented as somebody who had made up his mind to help conceal the truth. For this purpose government officials were hiding behind walls of red tape and inventing a plethora of excuses in order to delay the trial. *Vecherniaia Moskva*, in an article on December 22, 1960, raised explicit doubts about the future of the trial and outlined what the Soviets expected of it: “How will the trial of one of the bloodsoaked hangmen of the Hitlerite Reich be conducted? How will it help in exposing the face of the Nazis in West Germany – the future will show.”⁵⁷ Israel must not only try the Nazis, but also “prevent the forces of reaction from reviving the Hitlerite regime.”⁵⁸

Nor did the Soviets neglect the trial’s other aspects. In addition to the attacks on Germany and the West, especially Hans Globke, the archetypal Nazi criminal who had escaped the dock,⁵⁹ there was a steadily increasing campaign of attacks on Eichmann’s counsel, Dr. Robert Servatius. Even before the defense attorney’s name became public, items appeared in the Soviet press about the West German government’s intention of sending to Israel a representative who would “take care” of silencing Eichmann.⁶⁰ A month or so later, when Servatius’s name had already been published, an article appeared in the Belorussian paper *Zviazda* accusing the defense attorney of receiving payment from Globke and hence doing everything in his power to prevent his exposure.⁶¹ In the eyes of the Soviet press, the fact that Servatius had been counsel to Fritz Sauckel, who had been Plenipotentiary for the Employment of Labor in the Third Reich and sentenced to death at the Nuremberg Trials, was further proof that the man had a wealth of experience in defending Nazis.⁶² Similar accusations about attempts to make sure that Eichmann was silenced were also leveled at Willy Brandt, who paid a visit to Israel during this period.⁶³

57 *Vecherniaia Moskva*, December 22, 1960.

58 *Novoe Vremia*, no. 31, no. 42.

59 In Issue 11 of the monthly *V Zashchitu Mira*, for example, a number of documents were published that were intended to reveal Globke’s real – Nazi – face to Soviet public opinion.

60 *Moskovskaia Pravda*, October 13, 1960.

61 *Zviazda*, November 25, 1960. Later Israel would be blamed for agreeing to pay Servatius’s fee.

62 *Vecherniaia Moskva*, December 22, 1960.

63 *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, November 30, 1960.

The year 1961 opened with a vehement attack on Israel. *Trud*, one of the most important papers in the Soviet Union, published a lengthy article under the title “A Gathering of Bankrupts” (“*Sborishche bankrotov*”), which was devoted to the Twenty-fifth Zionist Congress taking place in Jerusalem at the time.⁶⁴ The paper accused Israel and the Zionist leaders of betraying the memory of millions of Jews by making an agreement sealed in blood with Hitler’s successors — “the Bonn revanchists.”⁶⁵ The article was written in a venomous style — which later became the standard in all matters involving Israel and Zionism, although during this period it was still very rare. However, at this stage West Germany was still presented as the main driving factor, acting out of fear about what Eichmann was likely to say when he opened his mouth, while Israel was depicted as being dragged along in its wake.⁶⁶

At the same time, a process continued in which the Eichmann trial was turned into an event linked directly with the Soviet Union. A few weeks before the trial opened, the *Sovetskaia Belorussia* published a background article about Eichmann’s past.⁶⁷ According to the article, Eichmann not only specialized in murdering Jews, but was also one of the experts dealing with other inferior populations and *inter alia* in charge of sending Soviet prisoners to camps. The author went so far as to say that, “Eichmann’s testimony is likely to incriminate many Nazis who exterminated Soviet citizens.”

A week later *Sovetskaia Rossiia* opened an offensive against Friedrich Foertsch, appointed *Generalinspekteur* of the *Bundeswehr*, “who is responsible for the deaths of large numbers of peaceful Soviet citizens.”⁶⁸ The article lowered its readers’ expectations of the trial and “prepared” them for what “is likely to happen in Jerusalem”: “We do not know what verdict the Israeli court will hand down against the

64 *Trud*, January 1, 1961.

65 At the time the term “revanchists” or “avengers” was synonymous with West Germany.

66 *Komsomol’skaia Pravda*, February 8, 1961, *Kommunist*, Yerevan, Armenia, March 22, 1951, *Sovetskaia Belorussia*, April 2, 1961. Here, unlike in *Trud*, the material was published in less important papers.

67 *Sovetskaia Belorussia*, April 2, 1961.

68 *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, April 9, 1961. During World War II, Lieutenant-General Foertsch, who also served as deputy commander of the NATO forces in Europe, commanded various units on the eastern front, making him a prominent war criminal in Soviet eyes.

hangman and mass murderer, Eichmann. Ruling circles in Israel may prefer to close their eyes to his past for the sake of their present-day friendship with the militarists from Bonn.”

The author of the article went on to attack the French and English as well for forgetting the lessons of the war and making a treaty with the German authorities.

Izvestia also joined in the general chorus and announced on the trial’s first day that “the payment to Servatius has paid off” – Eichmann had stopped talking.⁶⁹ The article reprimanded Israel for agreeing to pay counsel’s fees, since West Germany was clandestinely involved in Servatius’s activities. The claims had been made months earlier in the Soviet press but had never reached the front pages. The comments about the fees that Israel paid Servatius were coupled with gloomy descriptions about Israel’s adverse economic circumstances and aroused an inescapable question: How was it that a state whose citizens were in such economic straits was prepared to pay a foreign citizen defending a Nazi criminal and, even more so, a Nazi himself?

Aleksander Lebedev book, which actually covered the official Soviet position and the expectations and criticism of the trial, was published in 1961.⁷⁰ The author, concealing facts of what had happened to the Jews, tried to create a direct link between what Eichmann and his ilk had done and the events of “the Great Patriotic War.” In addition to Globke and Foertsch, the book also names people from West Germany who, the Soviets claimed, were responsible for the war crimes perpetrated against civilians on the territory of the Soviet Union. The conclusion was that they should be in the dock together with Eichmann, which was also where his counsel, Dr. Servatius, should be.⁷¹ In addition, the book explicitly refers to the murder of the Jews only when the author accuses Ben-Gurion of betraying the memory of those who were murdered by trying to gloss over the importance of the trial. The reason was said to be lest this adversely affect Bonn and all those who assisted Eichmann and his ilk to evade justice.⁷²

⁶⁹ *Izvestia*, April 11, 1961.

⁷⁰ Aleksander Lebedev, *Soldaty maloi voyny. Zapiski Osventsimskogo Uznika* (Moscow: Gospolitizdat, 1961), pp. 120–121.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 123–126.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 126–127.

The Soviet Position During the Trial

Most of the Soviet Union's main newspapers, as well as those published in the various republics, reported on the opening of the trial. However, while the main papers made do with publishing short reports,⁷³ the other papers allowed themselves not only to attack Germany⁷⁴ but also to accuse the Israeli authorities of preventing the general public from being present in the courtroom.⁷⁵

Now not only West Germany but Israel was described as trying to prevent the revelation of embarrassing details from the pasts of senior NATO commanders. At the end of April 1961, the Soviet Union's two main papers, *Pravda* and *Izvestia*, advanced hypotheses about the existence of a conspiracy (*sgovor*) between Israel and West Germany to prevent exposing other Nazi criminals.⁷⁶ Furthermore, in an article entitled "Trial or Farce," *Pravda* charged that, at the trial, "an attempt is being made to silence war criminals' pasts."⁷⁷ The article concludes with an unveiled threat to the effect that "Israel is expected to conduct a fair trial," since "the conspiracy between Israel and Bonn will not pass unnoticed."

A similar note was struck by *Sovetskaia Rossiia* in its edition two days later, as well as by Radio Moscow in its broadcasts of May 12, 1961.⁷⁸ Two weeks later, on May 23, in an article entitled "Operation 'Sand in Eyes' Continues," the mouthpiece of the Soviet Defense Ministry, *Krasnaia Zvezda*, declared the existence of a conspiracy between the Bonn and Tel Aviv governments, a conspiracy intended to prevent "Nazi criminals in senior positions in West Germany from being put on trial."⁷⁹

73 *Pravda, Izvestia, Trud, Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, April 12, 1961.

74 *Gudok*, April 12, 1961; *Czerwony Sztandar*, April 13, 1961.

75 *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, April 12, 1961; *Kazakhstanskaia Pravda*, April 13, 1961.

76 *Pravda, Izvestia*, April 26, 1961. This position was first expressed on the day that the trial began by Radio Moscow, April 11, 1961. See Baruch Gur-Gurevitch, *Search for Identity. Between Assimilation and Emigration* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Zionist Library, 2003), p. 168.

77 *Pravda*, April 28, 1961.

78 *Sovetskaia Rossiia*, April 30, 1961; William Korey, "Reporting the Eichmann Case," *Survey*, 39 (December 1961), p. 21.

79 See, also, *Za Rubezhom*, no. 13; *Sovetskaia Belorussia*, May 20, 1961; *Czerwony Sztandar*, June 2, 1961.

In the period leading up to the trial, most of the spotlights had been trained on Germany, whereas now their focus was Israel. Furthermore, an effort was made to undermine Israel's legitimacy to put a Nazi criminal on trial. A *Novoe Vremia* correspondent reverted to the old propaganda tools and attacked the nature of Zionism, expressing amazement that a Nazi criminal was being put on trial in a racially divided state that maltreats Arabs.⁸⁰ Similar charges were also hurled at the Western states, whose citizens were conducting a racist policy toward the peoples of Asia and Africa, and hence were no better than Eichmann.⁸¹ At the same time there was a continuing Soviet effort at emotional participation in the trial by portraying Eichmann as the person responsible for the deaths of large numbers of Soviet citizens.⁸²

In the framework of the discussion about an Israeli-West German conspiracy, charges cropped up that would become one of the staples of Soviet anti-Zionist propaganda — the accusation of collaboration between Zionism and Nazism.⁸³ These charges deserve special attention. Through them we can gain an understanding of the workings of Soviet propaganda and how it related to the Holocaust. However, this is a very complex subject, as the charges were still being intimated and were still only confined to the level of comments. Nevertheless, the direct appeal to the readers' emotions, combined with claims that Israel was trying to appropriate the trial for itself by presenting evidence of war crimes only against the Jews, created an atmosphere in which Israel was deliberately harming the Soviet Union in the most hurtful way possible — by desecrating the memory of the victims of Fascism and glossing over the fact that it was the peoples of the Soviet Union who had “wrested the ax from the hands of the Hitlerite hangmen.”⁸⁴ In unofficial talks between Israeli diplomats and high-level Soviet officials, they were also told in as many words that the Soviet Union

80 *Novoe Vremia*, no. 23.

81 *Sovetskaia Latvia*, April 30, 1961.

82 *Ibid.*, April 30, May 14, 1961.

83 *Sovetskaia Latvia*, *Sovetskaia Litva*, *Czerwony Sztandar*, April 20, 1961, *Sovetskaia Kirgizia*, April 21, 1961.

84 *Trud*, *Moskovskaia Pravda*, May 6, 1961; *Kazakhstanskaia Pravda*, May 16, 1961, *Czerwony Sztandar*, May 19, 1961; *Bakinskii Rabochii*, May 23, 1961; *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, July 20, 1961.

was not interested in Israel being portrayed as anti-Fascist and thereby stealing its “birthright.”⁸⁵

It was still forbidden to say as much in public, but the same result could be achieved through a combination of hints about Zionist-Nazi collaboration. The accusations were that Israel was failing to refer to “Eichmann’s non-Jewish victims,” in a repeated attempt to excite the emotions of the Soviet readership.⁸⁶ “The Israeli treachery,” they contended, was not only against the memory of the victims of Nazism, but was also reflected in contemporary events. For example, the monthly *Novyi Mir*, in its June 1961 edition, noted that Ben-Gurion was trying to defend West Germany which was at that very time was engaged in a vehement antisemitic campaign.⁸⁷ In Soviet eyes, Israel’s attempts to present Eichmann as a murderer only of Jews embodied the very essence of the “conspiracy between Tel Aviv and Bonn.” After all, apart from the Jews, Eichmann, according to the press, had also wreaked havoc on “Russians, Ukrainians, Poles, French,” and the attempt to ignore this constituted a “defense of Fascism.”⁸⁸

On a number of occasions, the desire to gloss over the Jewish theme led to a distortion of the facts that no one tried to conceal. For example, in issue 40 of *Novoe Vremia*, in an article attacking Friedrich Foertsch, a German map was reproduced indicating the number of Jews who were wiped out in the Baltic countries. Although this is also reflected in the German title, the article states that the numbers refer to Soviet citizens who were executed.⁸⁹

An interesting example of the gradual change in attitude toward the trial can be found in the volumes of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* for 1960 and 1961. The 1961 annual (which discusses the events of

85 Levanon, *Nativ*, p. 180; Dagan, *Moscow and Jerusalem*, p. 139, note 23; Moshe Zak, *40 Years of Dialogue with Moscow* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Maariv, 1988), p. 121.

86 See, for example, a stinging article entitled “The Price of Blood,” in the *Czerwony Sztandar* of June 25, 1961, which describes the Israeli government as behaving like a hypocritical traitor (*faryseusz*) with regard to the memory of Hitler’s victims.

87 The reference here is to the antisemitic outbreaks engulfing Europe at the time. *Novyi Mir*, no. 6, 1961; however, the monthly ignored the similar occurrences taking place in the Soviet Union itself, the most notorious of which was the burning down of the synagogue in Malakhovka, a Moscow suburb, in October 1959. For additional details, see Pinkus, *Jews of Russia*, pp. 370–371.

88 *Krokodil*, no. 16, 1961; *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, July 18, July 20, 1961, *Trud*, July 20, 1961.

89 *Novoe Vremia*, no. 40, 1961.

1960) makes no reference whatsoever to the affair, whether under the entry for Israel or that for West Germany.⁹⁰ A year later, in the 1962 annual (discussing 1961), the description of the trial takes up considerable space in the “Israel” entry. In addition to a reference to the murder of six million Jews, the writer also notes: “Despite the agreement between Israel and Germany which preceded the trial and notwithstanding the efforts of the prosecution, the defense, and the court, during the trial proof was given of the involvement of several of West Germany’s leaders in the bloody crimes.”

This time the author of the “West Germany” entry in the same volume also ignored the affair and chose to attack Foertsch’s appointment as chief of the general staff of the Bundeswehr as an “unfriendly step towards the Soviet Union and all the countries which were attacked by Hitlerite Germany.”⁹¹

Although it underscored the importance of the trial and the “anti-Soviet” activities of the accused, the Soviet Union completely ignored Israel’s request to be provided with information that could help in conducting the trial. The official request was submitted to the Soviet Foreign Ministry on June 27, 1960, while the unofficial talks had begun early in the month. The Israeli embassy in Moscow repeated its request in December of the same year.⁹² None of the requests produced any response. The official excuse was that “all of the information requested has already been provided at the Nuremberg Tribunals.”⁹³ Unofficially, as indicated above, the Soviet representatives explained their unwillingness to help on the basis of the argument that helping would deprive the Soviet Union of its halo as the “liberating nation.” This, in turn, would help Israel portray itself as combating Nazism. Hence Israeli Justice Minister Dov Joseph announced from the Knesset rostrum that the Soviet Union, unlike the other Eastern-bloc countries, had completely ignored Israel’s requests for help in obtaining information.⁹⁴

90 1961. *Ezhegodnik Bol’shoi Sovetskoi Entsiklopedii* (Moscow: BSE, 1961), pp. 225–226, 346–347.

91 *Ibid.*, Moscow, 1962, pp. 252, 374–375.

92 Documents on the Foreign Policy of Israel: Volume 14 (Jerusalem: Government Printer, 1997), p. 462. See, also, note 1 on the same page.

93 *Ibid.*; Zak, *40 Years of Dialogue*, p. 121; Levanon, “*Nativ*,” p. 180; Dagan, *Moscow and Jerusalem*.

94 Dov Joseph addressed the Knesset plenum on November 28, 1961.

The Israeli justice system was treated similarly, since, in the eyes of the Soviet press, it served the interests of the Israeli government. Such charges were leveled at both the prosecution and the court itself, which, according to the press, was trying to act according to the line laid down from above.⁹⁵ One author even wrote in as many words: “The judges have aligned themselves with the accused [*sic!*] (*sud’i somknulis’ s obviniaemyi*).”⁹⁶

The German origins — or, as the Soviet paper put it, “Germans who had become Israeli citizens” — of the prosecutor and the judges were also presented as a drawback.⁹⁷

Unlike the Israeli justice system, which was seeking “in every which way to cover up for the Nazi criminals,” even by deliberately dragging the trial out, the Nuremberg Trials were presented as exemplary. There were claims that holding a trial in the spirit of those at Nuremberg was being prevented by a “conspiracy.”⁹⁸ The press also tried to distinguish between the “Eichmann trial” (*protsess Eikhmanna*), being held in Jerusalem with the aim of covering up for the Nazis, and the “Eichmann affair” (*delo Eikhmanna*), which was designed to expose the true face of all Nazi criminals.⁹⁹ It is not by chance that, from 1961 on, the Soviet press reported extensively on the trials against collaborators held in its territory.¹⁰⁰

Henceforth, the Soviet press presented the trial as a mere staged performance intended to conceal the truth. The choice of words reflects this position: the recess in the trial, for example, was called an “intermission” (*antrakt*, from the French *entracte*), as if in the middle of a theatrical performance.¹⁰¹ The Soviet leaders made comments along these lines: Khrushchev himself speaks of the “directors of the trial”

95 *Za Rubezhom*, no. 18, 1961; *Zaria Vostoka*, July 1, 1961; *Sovetskaia Litva*, July 14, 1961; *Gudok*, July 18, 1961, *Pravda Ukrainy*, July 27, 1961.

96 *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, July 20, 1961.

97 *V Zashchitu Mira*, nos. 7–8, 1961.

98 *Komsomol’skaia Pravda*, May 16, 1961; *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, May 23, 1961.

99 *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, July 20, 1961.

100 Emanuel Brand, “Nazi Criminals on Trial in the Soviet Union (1961–1965), *Yad Vashem Bulletin* (English edition), 19 (October 1966), pp. 39–40, 44; Benjamin Pinkus, *The Soviet Government and the Jews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 426, 560 note 34; Lukasz Hirsowicz, “The Holocaust in the Soviet Mirror,” in Lucian Dobroszycki and Jeffrey Gurock, eds., *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (New York: M.E. Sharp, 1993), pp. 39–46.

101 *Izvestia*, June 15, 1961.

who “are sticking to the script.”¹⁰² Moreover, following the “emotional involvement” line, the Soviet leader explicitly notes that the running of the trial “is causing shame to the sons and daughters of the Soviet Union who gave their lives for the future of the world.”¹⁰³

After the pleadings’ stage and before the verdict was handed down, the affair was no longer a top priority for the Soviet press, although this recess was also presented as an attempt to “coordinate” versions.¹⁰⁴ However, in order to keep the subject alive, articles about the trial were still published from time to time. On September 3, 1961, *Izvestia* published a major article by Gerhard Leo of East Germany. Leo gave his impressions of the trial, underscoring the Soviet army’s role as an army of liberation, a fact that was frequently emphasized by the witnesses at the trial. In addition to references to the six million Jews who perished, the author tried to analyze Israel’s position, arguing that, on the basis of this analysis, Ben-Gurion failed in his aspiration to shed his image as a collaborator with the successors of Nazism. Leo followed the line toward the trial developed by the Soviet press: on the one hand, he underscored Eichmann’s guilt in the destruction of many Soviet peoples, yet on the other, he glossed over the fact of the murder of the Jews even when referring to the Wannsee Conference. There, as he puts it, Eichmann’s department took the decision “about the final destruction of millions of people of various nationalities: Poles, Russians, Byelorussians, Ukrainians, Jews, French, Serbs, Czechs.”

Here we are witness to a deliberate attempt by the second most important Soviet paper to present the Nazi “Jewish Department” as a body responsible for the murder of many a secondary place on the list.

It was during the Eichmann trial that the first effort was also made to compare and contrast the destruction of the Jews with that of the Slavs by presenting “*Generalplan Ost*” as the purpose of the war.¹⁰⁵ In an article called “Under the Magnifying Glass,” the author,

102 *Pravda*, June 23, 1961.

103 *Ibid.*

104 *Moskovskaia Pravda*, August 24, 1961; *Bakinskii Rabochii*, August 25, 1961; *Sovetskaia Belorussia*, November 12, 1961.

105 On developments in the Soviet view of the “*Generalplan Ost*,” see Arad, “Historiography,” pp. 203–204, 157; Dan Zhits, “The Soviet Publication Policy on the Murder of the Jews” (Hebrew), *Dapim: Studies on the Shoah*, 15 (1998), p. 171. Also cf. with the later Soviet description: *Velikaia Otsechestvennaia Voina. Entsiklopedia* (Moscow: Sovetskaia Entsiklopedia, 1985), p. 521.

A. Leonidov, analyzed “260 hours of the Eichmann trial.” His discussion presented the murder of the Jews, he presents them as individuals, whereas the murder of the Slavs was a calculated plan intended to bring about “the complete annihilation of the Poles, Russians, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians,” because they were “Slav subhumans.”¹⁰⁶ The author also “reveals” the “real” reason, for Ben-Gurion’s attempts to prevent the exposure of the Nazi criminals. During World War II, Zionist rescue activities aimed at saving only their relatives, while the other Jews were condemned to annihilation since they did not fit into the Zionist plan to bring about one unified Jewish nation.¹⁰⁷ In other words, just as the Zionists had collaborated during the war with Nazism, the Zionists of today were collaborating with the Nazis’ successors. When Eichmann’s accomplices were exposed, the Zionists’ activities would also be exposed. Therefore, by defending Nazism, the Zionists were first and foremost defending themselves. From this time on, the accusations about collaboration between the Nazis and the Zionists became one of the main underpinnings of Soviet propaganda.¹⁰⁸

The Soviet media also used caricatures in covering the Eichmann trial.¹⁰⁹ The portrayal of the trial in these caricatures was entirely consistent with the general Soviet line. In the early stages the barbs were primarily directed at the Germans, who were accused of serious crimes, while in the later stages an attempt was made to expose the Israeli-West German conspiracy. Sometimes the caricatures also referred to the extermination of the Jews, but these were copies of caricatures that had appeared in the world media, and they also depicted the Holocaust

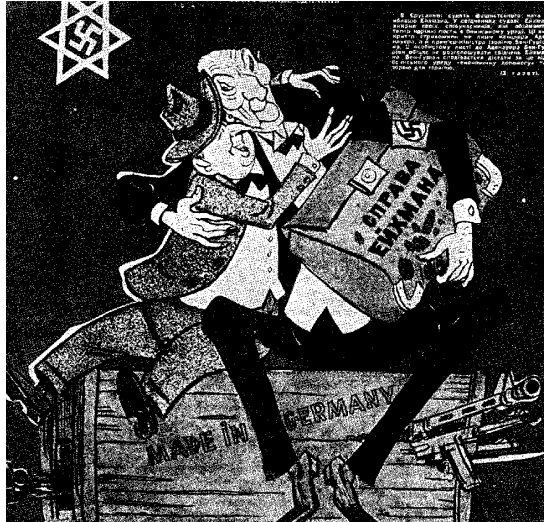
106 *Novoe Vremia*, no. 29, 1961; Feferman, “Soviet Treatment of the Holocaust,” p. 48.

107 According to the Soviet view — already expressed by Stalin in his essay, “Marxism and the National Question” — the Jews do not constitute one people; see Josef Stalin, “Marxism and the National Question,” in idem, Josef Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1947), pp. 5–13.

108 This resurfaced the same year; see *Inostrannaia Literatura*, no. 11, 1961.

109 On Soviet caricatures, see Yaacov Guri, *Hatred of the Jews as Mirrored in Caricatures* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Maariv, 1986); Judith Vogt, “When Nazism Became Zionism — An Analysis of Political Cartoons,” in: Shmuel Ettinger, ed., *Antisemitism in the Soviet Union: Its Roots and Consequences*, vol. 3 (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1983), pp. 159–194; Kevin McKenna, *All the Views Fit to Print — Changing Images of the U.S. in Pravda Political Cartoons, 1917–1991* (New York: Peter Lang, 2001).

in a distorted fashion or provided just a general idea of the scope of the crimes.¹¹⁰



Soul mates – Bonn-Gurion

The bag that Adenauer is holding is labeled: “Eichmann Affair”

This caricature was published in 1961, in issue no. 15 of the biweekly Ukrainian-language satirical magazine *Perets*. Following the Soviet line, it portrays “the real reason for the Zionists’ actions.” Significantly, this was the first time that the combination of a Star of David and a swastika was portrayed — a combination that from then on would appear frequently in Soviet propaganda. Nevertheless, I would argue that we do not as yet have here the emotional-propagandist charge that invested this combination several years later. Here it can be interpreted in a literal fashion: collaboration between the Zionists and the successors to Hitler’s philosophy — West Germany.

In Soviet propaganda the Star of David symbolized Zionism, just as the swastika and the iron cross stood for the Nazis and their successors. The negative use of this symbol was initiated only in the early

110 *Novoe Vremia*, no. 31, 1960, no. 29, no. 32, 1961; *Pravda Ukrainy*, May 11, 1961; *Izvestia*, May 18, July 4, 1961; *Czerwony Sztandar*, June 4, June 20, 1961; *Literaturnaia Gazeta*, May 30, 1961; *Sovetskaia Estonia*, June 28, 1961, *Krokodil*, no. 14, 1961; *Za Rubezhom*, *Sovetskaia Litva*, December 20, 1961, *Nauka i Religia*, no. 12, 1961.

1960s. In the caricatures from the “Doctors’ Plot” period and even at the time of the Suez Campaign, Zionism and Israel had not yet acquired their own distinguishing features. Only once during that period is there a positive mention of the Star of David. In the early 1960s, Khrushchev was awarded the Ethiopian “Queen of Sheba” decoration in the form of a Star of David. At the time the Soviet leader was forced to invite then Israeli ambassador, Aryeh Harel, to lecture “on the historical significance of this ancient symbol.”¹¹¹

The reports about the verdict in the Eichmann trial also provided the Soviet press with a broad base for anti-German and anti-Israeli propaganda. With respect to West Germany, this occasion was used in order to make demands to try other Nazi criminals,¹¹² whereas the Israeli court, despite the fact that it had handed down a death sentence, was accused of considering pardoning Eichmann.¹¹³ Until Eichmann was actually hanged, the Soviet media primarily focused on these two aspects: the demand that Nazis be tried; and the fear that Eichmann’s life might be spared.

In the autumn of 1961, there was a modest print-run of 25,000 copies of the second, revised edition of *From Munich to Nuremberg*, written by Arkadii Poltorak, secretary of the Soviet delegation to the Nuremberg Trials. The book was intended to act as a reminder that, if not for the Munich Agreement, Nazi aggression would not have been unleashed.¹¹⁴ In light of his past role, this was meant to serve as a valid argument against the position adopted by the West with regard to West Germany, by drawing a parallel between the events of the 1930s and 1940s and the contemporary period. Furthermore, the author also came out strongly against the USSR’s former Allies, who were now trying to lay claim to the suffering for the struggle as well as to the sweet fruits of victory.¹¹⁵

Unlike the first edition, which had been published the previous

111 Zak, *40 Years of Dialogue*, p. 352.

112 *Sovetskaia Latvia*, December 12, 1961; *Pravda Ukrainy, Sovetskaia Litva*, December 14, 1961; *Birobidzhaner Shtern, Pravda, Izvestia, Komsomol’skaia Pravda, Krasnaia Zvezda*, December 16, 1961; *Birobidzhaner Shtern*, December 17, 1961; *Sovetskaia Litva*, December 20, 1961; *Novoe Vremia*, no. 51, 1961; *Ogoniok*, no. 52, 1961.

113 *Novoe Vremia*, no. 52, 1961; *Vecherniaia Moskva*, February 5, 1962.

114 Arkadii Poltorak, *Ot Miunkhena do Niurnberga* (Moscow: Institut Mezhdunarodnykh Otnoshenii), 1961, p. 2.

115 *Ibid.*, pp. 594–598.

year, in the second edition Poltorak also discussed the Eichmann trial. He listed all of Eichmann's crimes in meticulous detail, underscoring their Jewish aspect. At times he resorted to special phrasing in order to indicate the place that the Jews occupied in both Nazi propaganda and the mass murder.¹¹⁶ However, Poltorak also addressed the disgrace that haunts the West and Israel in the wake of their attempts to conceal the large numbers of criminals lined up behind the man in the dock. The author quoted from the protocol of the Nuremberg Trials, arguing that Eichmann's guilt had already been long since proven. Hence the Israeli criminal justice system was not filling the historic role incumbent upon it to expose the face of the large number of Nazi criminals who had found refuge in the West.¹¹⁷

Although it was published just before the verdict was issued, Poltorak's book is a sort of summation of the pre-verdict period. Whereas it accused Israel of covering up the truth and drew a parallel between the contacts with the Nazi authorities in 1944, and the ties between the Israeli government and West Germany,¹¹⁸ this is presented as one event among many in the overall Western conspiracy against the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Position After the Trial

After the verdict was announced, the number of references to the trial in the Soviet press declined drastically. From then on there were no more short, informative items. Instead, there were mostly analytical articles designed to examine various aspects of the situation. In the first stage there were two tendencies. One related to West Germany in presenting the Soviet demand to put other Nazi criminals on trial and not just Eichmann. The other involved the position of Israel, which, as the Soviets saw it, felt that it had done what it had to and was now prepared to resume in full its collaboration with West Germany, glossing over the results of the trial. An article by L. Ginsburg, entitled "Is the Eichmann Trial Over?" basically summed up the trial already in the last issue of *Novoe Vremia* for 1961.¹¹⁹ *Inter alia*, the author wrote:

116 *Ibid.*, pp. 266–272, 283.

117 *Ibid.*, pp. 275, 280, 285.

118 *Ibid.*, pp. 282–283.

119 *Novoe Vremia*, No. 52, 1961.

Eichmann's verdict has been handed down. However, the nagging sense of trepidation continues to loom over mankind. The vision refuses to dissipate: rows of striped shirts, ghosts, rising up out of their graves. Some say: the dead are silent, the dead accuse.... No, it is the living who accuse and act... They must not hope, those who wish to pay their chivalrous respects to the hangmen of the last war and the instigators of the wars to come. The Eichmann trial is not over.

Drawing on a combination of everything written so far about the Eichmann affair, in this article the author expressed one of the key pillars of the Soviet perception of the outcome of World War II: the West was trying to consign what happened into oblivion, but the Soviet Union will not let this happen.¹²⁰

The most salient expression of this position, involving a combination of “messianic” foundations — i.e., the struggle against the “forces of evil in the world”¹²¹ which are trying to appropriate the memory of the suffering and the heroism” — can be found in E. Zaitsev's article “What Themis [the Greek goddess of justice] Passed Over in Silence in Tel Aviv.” This was published in the *Neva* literary magazine, the mouthpiece of the Writers' Association of the Federative Russian Republic.¹²² At the very beginning of the article, the author attacks Israel by writing Tel Aviv in the title instead of Jerusalem, where the trial actually took place.¹²³ He not only contends that the Israeli government did not do enough to expose Nazism, but it also turned the trial into a farce. The year-and-a-half of the pre-trial interrogation was simply a ploy de-

120 Vail and Genis, 60-e, p. 90.

121 Even the perception of the “Great Patriotic War” as a struggle against the forces of evil that aspired to harm the future world, as a kind of holy war with mythological underpinnings, and not just political or historical ones, was one of the points of consensus within Soviet society; Vail and Genis, 60-e, p. 91. The willingness to fight a future war was one of the aspects that triggered the messianic-patriotic aspect, which in turn spurred on the aggressive Russian nationalism bordering on chauvinism and xenophobia. One of the prominent features of this manifestation was Judeophobia [hatred of Israel]; see Peter J.S. Duncan, *Russian Messianism. Third Rome, Revolution, Communism and After* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 69.

122 E. Zaitsev, “O chem molchala Femida v Tel'-Avive?,” *Neva*, 3 (1962).

123 In all the Soviet publications about Israel, Tel Aviv is cited as Israel's capital. Citing Tel Aviv in the title was meant to stress the Israeli government's involvement in the legal process.

signed to gloss over the truth. Large numbers of Nazis had been tried and sentenced at the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, which he considered the quintessential trial, and these legal events were conducted at a smart pace. They also had paved the way to Eichmann's conviction. And yet, the author contends, the system in Tel Aviv decided to take advantage of the trial in order to silence the conspiracy between the Nazis and the Zionists as the war drew to an end.

In contrast to what had been written the previous year,¹²⁴ the Joel Brand affair was now presented in a completely different light: indirectly, the Soviets were responsible for thwarting this attempt. What happened was that the Western countries, who had been prepared to go along with the evil collaboration between Himmler the antisemite and the Zionists, realized that the Soviet Union would not allow this and therefore withdrew. Hence it was not Eichmann but the Zionists who were responsible for the death of Hungary's Jews. Furthermore, the Zionists even tried to prevent Hungary from being liberated by the Soviet forces. The fear of the Red Army advance was the motive that had brought together those sides that seemed to have opposing interests: the Zionists, the Nazis, and the West. It was no wonder, therefore, that Ben-Gurion and Adenauer were able to find a common language. Zaitsev even went so far as to accuse Zionism of being a repressive force that had been used by the Gestapo in order to prevent riots in the concentration camps.

Apart from these charges, the author asserted that the main issue was neither Eichmann nor Nazism, but the struggle between the forces of light and the forces of darkness. He also intimated that anyone who now tried to dislodge the Soviet Union from its primacy regarding defeating Nazism was no more than an old-time collaborator with Nazism.

The article was ahead of its time. Its content is characteristic of what informed the Soviet propaganda a decade later — the struggle against Zionism as the representative of evil on earth. It is not known whether the author belonged to the nationalist circles of Soviet society that would lead the struggle against Zionism, but the tone of his article coincides with Trofim Kychko's book, *Judaism Without Embellishment*,

124 *Novoe Vremia*, no. 31, 1960; Poltorak, *Ot Miunkhena do Niurnberga*, pp. 282–283.

which was also ahead of its time. The latter was written by someone who could safely be called an antisemitic Ukrainian nationalist.¹²⁵ Evgenii Yevtushenko's poem "Babi Yar," which came out in 1961, "merited" literary reactions with nationalist overtones, accusing him primarily of betraying the memory of "the Russian boys" who had laid down their lives for the sake of the world, for the benefit of the "cosmopolitans"; in other words, the Jews.¹²⁶

Another article by N. Komlev appeared in issue no. 3 of the legal biweekly *Sovetskaia Iustitsiia*.¹²⁷ The article, which had a less aggressive tone than Zaitsev's, analyzed the results of the trial and its implications in legal and professional terms. Unlike Zaitsev, Komlev did not deviate from the general line and even complimented the prosecution team for managing to expose the lies of the accused. Nevertheless, when referring to the extermination of the Jews, Komlev quoted the interview that Ben-Gurion gave to *Die Deutsche Zeitung* in which he referred to the final disappearance of Nazi Germany.¹²⁸ This, said Komlev, was "treachery unacceptable to the peoples of the world" and hinted at the betrayal of the memory of the dead. He went further by adding an emotional and domestic element, emphasizing throughout the article that Nazi Germany has been revived — which impacts on the memory of the Soviet soldiers. Exactly the same tendency can be found in Ser-

125 Kychko argued that Hitler came to power by virtue of Jewish capital. The Jewish bankers were even given the title of "honorary Aryans," which protected them from extermination; Trofim Kychko, *Iudaizm bez prykras* (Kiev: Akademiia nauk USSR, 1963), pp. 160–161, 168–170. On Kychko, see Pinkus, *Jews of Russia*, pp. 433–434; Mitrokhin, *Russkaia partiia*, p. 167.

126 Aleksei Markov, "Moi otvet," *Literatura i Zhizn'*, September 24, 1961; Dmitrii Starikov, "Ob odnom stikhotvorenii," *ibid.*, September 27, 1961. Both belonged to the nationalist circle; Mitrokhin, *Russkaia partiia*, pp. 152–153, 160. Similar notes were also struck after the performance of Dmitrii Shostakovich's 13th Symphony, based on Yevtushenko's poems, including *Babi Yar*. See, also, for example, an article in *Sovetskaia Belorussia*, April 2, 1963, summing up the atmosphere: "The poet, and in his footsteps our beloved composer also, whom we see as an outstanding thinker, here take an *angry and isolated instance* [emphasis added] and raise it to a higher level, something approaching a tragedy of the people. One can therefore but engage in thoughts about lies and in one's innermost soul there grows a sense of protest."

127 N. Komlev, "Okoncheno li delo Eichmanna?," *Sovetskaia Iustitsiia*, 3 [1962].

128 The reference appears to be to the interview that Ben-Gurion gave to Rolf Vogel of *Die Deutsche Zeitung*, Cologne, on August 3, 1961. See online David Ben-Gurion Archives, <<http://bgarchives.bgu.ac.il/archives/archion>>.

gei Andreev's book, *Israel: A Journalist's Impressions*, which was published the same year.¹²⁹

The Soviet media also tended to insinuate that Eichmann might receive clemency. The insinuations were particularly insistent throughout May 1962, as the appeal hearing approached. On May 15, for example, *Komsomol'skaia Pravda* published an article asking, "Why do they not want to put Eichmann to death?" and immediately replying: "By handing down a life sentence and not a death sentence, the path is opened to clemency."

A week later Zinovii Sheinis (one of the authors of *The State of Israel, Image and Policy*) published an article in a similar spirit in *Sovetskaia Moldavia*. Although the author did not explicitly raise the clemency issue, it can be understood that Israel, having been coerced into trying Eichmann out of necessity, was doing everything in order to protect him for the sake of his patrons in the West. This is hinted at even in the name of the article: "Eichmann the Hangman and His Patrons."¹³⁰ Another article, "Two Steps to the Gallows. Will They Be Taken?" published in the *Literatura i Zhizn* on May 25, was written in a similar spirit.

Pravda reported on the rejection of the appeal, and both *Pravda* and *Izvestia* reported on the sentence being carried out. However, while *Izvestia* published the report under a major headline, *Pravda* only reported it in its "Reports from Different Countries" section, without even highlighting it.¹³¹ The report itself stressed the fact that Eichmann was sentenced to death for the crime of murdering Jews. It is not clear why it was decided to emphasize this. However, given the widespread tendency to blame Israel for restricting the trial to the Jewish aspect, combined with the tendency to gloss over the Holocaust, perhaps this was done out of ideological motives — i.e., to emphasize the success of whitewashing Eichmann's other crimes.¹³²

Here attention should be drawn to the article about Simon Wiesenthal, who helped with Eichmann's capture. The article, translated from a Bulgarian monthly, was written in a very positive spirit and is

129 Sergei Andreev, *Izrail'. Zapiski zhurnalista* (Moscow: IVL, 1962), pp. 112–118.

130 *Sovetskaia Moldavia*, May 22, 1962.

131 *Pravda*, May 30, 1962; *Pravda, Izvestia*, June 2, 1962.

132 An identical tendency can be found in *Za Rubezhom*, no. 23; *Novoe Vremia*, no. 25; *Sovetskaia Iustitsiia*, nos. 15–16, 1962.

an excellent example of the changes in Soviet propaganda. It took just a few years for Wiesenthal's role in Eichmann's capture to be presented as a publicity stunt designed to put an official stamp of approval on the activities of the "spy" and the person who "desecrates the graves and memories of millions of victims of Fascism."¹³³

From mid-1962 onward, the Eichmann affair was no longer the focus of Soviet media attention. It turned into one of the examples of "the treachery of the West," which was trying to revive Nazism. But the "assertions" and the "facts" that first appeared at the time of the trial or came into being as it developed enjoyed great attention, especially in connection with all matters involving Israel and the Jews. For example, 1963 was a turning point in how the war was perceived by the Soviet leadership, as Stalin's national-collective guilt was replaced by a class-based variation.¹³⁴ True, the anti-imperialist aspect of the Soviet Union's approach to World War II had existed ever since the war had ended, but during Khrushchev's time it was even more salient. This not only made possible future rapprochement with West Germany, but also

133 A draft of the article, addressing the comparison between the different ways in which Wiesenthal's personality was presented, can be found in the literary estate of Yaacov Guri, author of *Hatred of the Jews*, Goldstein-Goren Diaspora Research Center Archives, Tel Aviv University, P-40/89.

134 On March 10, 1963, *Pravda* published Khrushchev's speech at the meeting with writers and artists in which he emphasized the point that human action does not revolve around nationality but class. Just as the Russian people do not bear responsibility for the deeds of the Black Hundreds, so the Jewish people is not responsible for the deeds of provocateurs who handed over revolutionaries or "for the Bund's Zionist nationalism" [*sic!*]. In order to back up his observations, Khrushchev related the story of "Kogan," who served as an interpreter on Field Marshal von Paulus' staff at Stalingrad. In other words, just as the Jews could suffer from Nazism, so, too, could they also serve it. In the wake of this "revelation," "witnesses" started to crop up who claimed that they indeed had known the Kogan in question and had seen him "operating" in various locations. This episode is also included in the 1965 second edition of *Tuchi nad gorodom* by Porfirii Gavrutto about the underground in Kherson, in which a description appears of "Moisei Kogan the hangman," "the most faithful servant of von Paulus." The book was unfavorably reviewed by literary circles and even defined by one of the reviewers as "harmful." It is noteworthy that in the book's first edition, published in 1963, before Khrushchev's speech, although Moisei Kogan is referred to as somebody who handed over members of the underground, there is no reference to Kogan's "ties" with von Paulus. In any case, unlike Gavrutto's "Kogan," Khrushchev's Kogan operated in Kiev. Pinkus, *The Soviet Government and the Jews*, pp. 76, 127–133, 492–493, notes 111–115.

provided an ideological footing for charges against Zionism in collaboration with the successors to Nazism, and even with Nazism itself.¹³⁵

The Eichmann trial resurfaced to make headlines in July 1965, during the Moscow International Film Festival. One of the showings was Israel's *Zechor!* Apart from the reviews, which ran the gamut between positive and negative,¹³⁶ the media attacked the film's content, as it showed the trial in a way that "passed over the saviors, those fighters who saved the lives of millions."¹³⁷

In 1963–1965, a number of articles and reports appeared in the press, stressing the ties between Zionism and Hitler's successors, which sought to impair the memory of his victims:

"The anti-nationalist nature of the policy of the Israeli government was *also* particularly prominent during the preparations for and course of the trial of the bloodsoaked hangman, Eichmann. Israel's ruling circles engaged in a fair number of efforts so that during the trial there should be no revealing of many Eichmanns of all kinds..." [emphasis added].¹³⁸

A number of caricatures in a similar spirit were also published.¹³⁹

Conclusions

The Eichmann trial took place during a formative period for the historical memory and perception of the Soviet Union's past. The Soviet citizen, "the suffering hero," was presented as the main factor in the successful repelling of the Nazi evil. This was due to his own virtues and contrary to the wishes of the Allies, who, because of their fear of Bolshevism, tried to harm the Soviet Union despite their common cause of fighting Hitler.

The fact that the trial was held in Israel provided a catalyst of sorts to the development of this perception. The glossing over the Jewish aspect of Eichmann's actions during the first stage of the affair was a con-

135 Vail and Genis, *60-e*, pp. 91–92; Nina Tumarkin, *The Living and the Dead. The Rise and Fall of the Cult of World War II in Russia* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), p. 50.

136 *Pravda* July 12, 1965; *Trud*, July 13, 1965.

137 *Sovetskaia Kultura*; *Trud*, July 13, 1965.

138 *Narody Azii i Afriki Segodnia*, no. 4, 1963.

139 Kychko, *Iudaizm bez prykras*, pp. 161, 170, 175; *Izvestia*, November 12, 1964.

tinuation of the general tendency not to emphasize the suffering of the Jews in light of the general suffering of the peoples of the Soviet Union. Moreover, Jewish Israel was a good place to try a Nazi criminal, since the Jews had also suffered; their suffering could be compared to that of the soldiers and partisans, who were the “real” heroes. In contrast, West Germany, the “successor to Hitler,” was being spurred on by the United States (which, out of hatred for the Soviet Union, had forgotten what had happened). America would do everything, according to this view, to prevent exposing the Nazi crimes and would harm the Soviet Union in the most painful way possible — by insulting the memory of its heroes.

The Holocaust and the murder of the Jews were referred to from time to time in the press, but normally by foreign nationals, not citizens of the Soviet Union. Furthermore, any reference to the Holocaust was always offset by ideological statements that accentuated the suffering of Soviet citizens.¹⁴⁰ Soviet propaganda made use of the memory of Holocaust victims even before Eichmann’s capture became known, but even then no explicit reference was made to the policy of genocide pursued by Germany — except as a means of accusing Israel of pursuing a policy unacceptable to the Soviet Union.

However, with the emergence of what the Soviet Union viewed as competition to its version of events — i.e., the Jewish component of the trial — the tendency shifted. Now it became more aggressive and focused on challenging Israel’s legitimization to try a Nazi criminal. What began with a description of the betrayal of the memory of the Jewish dead in the wake of the country’s ties with Germany slowly grew into an insult to the memory of the Soviet dead. Furthermore, Israel was described as attempting to undermine the Soviet Union’s status as a people who had suffered and who had literally protected the entire world with their own bodies. This general trend included not only diplomatic and semi-diplomatic hints but also crude interference with the arrangements for publicizing the trial.

There is rare documentation about a failed attempt to publish a book about the trial immediately after it was concluded.¹⁴¹ The correspondence between the author, A. Belov-Elinson, and the Soviet Jus-

140 Feferman, *Soviet Treatment of the Holocaust*, p. 47.

141 A. Belov-Elinson, “The ‘Eichmann Trial’ in Moscow” (Hebrew), *Shvut*, 15 (1992) (?), pp. 246–253.

tice Ministry publisher (Gosiurizdat), indicates that the condition for publishing the book was that the heroism and suffering of all Soviet citizens be underscored, while the suffering of the Jews as a separate people was to be somewhat glossed over. Yet there was to be no public talk of this, and everything took the form of inferences and unofficial comments. The manuscript was amended as required, but this also was not enough. Ultimately, the “unkosher” book was dropped from the publication schedule with a flimsy excuse, even though it had already been submitted for typesetting.¹⁴²

Any deviation from what had been expected in the USSR regarding the conduct of the trial was interpreted as a deliberate affront to the Soviet Union through the creation of a sense of direct involvement. As a result, when the trial actually began, the Soviet position shifted. Henceforth not only Germany and the Western countries were accused of trying to prevent justice from being carried out; Israel was also described as failing to stand up to Western pressure and contributing in this with pleasure and complete acquiescence. Ultimately, this led to the claim that Israel’s position was intended to conceal Zionism’s connections with Nazism just like that of the Western countries.

The Soviet attitude to the trial can be examined on two levels: the domestic and the international. On the international level, the trial was presented as an attempt to whitewash Nazi crimes and clear the name of a West German entity thirsting for revenge. On a domestic level,

142 A similar fate befell the book written by Bernard Mark, the director of the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, on the Warsaw ghetto uprising and destruction (Bernard Mark, *Walka i zagłada warszawskiego getta*, (Warsaw: Wydawn. Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1959). The book, which was translated into a number of languages, did not come out in Russian, despite countless discussions on the subject over a three-year period (1960–1963). The reason for the non-publication of the book, which was translated into Russian in late 1959, was “its pronounced Zionist character,” a euphemism for highlighting the Jewish aspect of the uprising. Nevertheless, the official reason given to the author was exactly the same as that given to Bellow: the lack of paper, the reduction in the literary publication schedule for the humanities, and the plethora of books on the market on the history of opponents to Nazism outside the borders of the Soviet Union. For more details, see Semion Charnyi, “Razvitie tsenzurnogo antisemitizma v period ‘Ottepeli’ [na primere knigi B. Marka] ‘Vosstanie v Varshavskom getto,’” *Vestnik Evreiskogo Universiteta v Moskve*, 2[15] [1997], pp. 76–81. Parallel (but apparently unrelated) to these attempts, the aforementioned A. Belov also tried to publish Mark’s book, with, however, the same result; see A. Belov-Elinson, *How I Became a Black Man* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Avieli Publishing, 1990), pp. 36–44.

right from the early stages, the trial was presented as an attempt to conceal the only truth — the immense suffering that had been experienced by the Soviet peoples and, above all, by the Russian people during the Nazi period. Moreover, there was an expression of the sense that, in addition to efforts to whitewash the crimes perpetrated by Nazism, clear Germany's name, and deprive the peoples of the Soviet Union of their precedence in all matters relating to suffering under Nazism, an attempt was also being made to play down the major contribution of the Soviet Union and its army in saving the world from Nazism.

Since Zionism had dared rob the peoples of the Soviet Union of their precedence in the suffering, it was accused of being Nazism's successor. In the early stages, the Soviet propaganda apparatus actually undertook its anti-Zionist in the usual way, hurling "old" charges of devotion to the West, racism, and economic problems. After a while, however, the tone changed, and an attempt was made to challenge Israel's claim to the very uniqueness of Jewish suffering.

This made possible a gradual change in how the accusations were viewed. According to Stalinist doctrine, there were peoples who had suffered and others who had transgressed and betrayed, and the latter were to be punished.¹⁴³ Under this doctrine the Jews were unable to collaborate with Hitler, since the Jews were *one* of the peoples destined for total annihilation. During Khrushchev's time, the shift in the perception of blame was completed, and it finally became class-based. Consequently, just as the Jew was able to suffer from Nazism, so, too, he was able to collaborate with it.

The changes in the Soviet position regarding the Eichmann trial make it possible to scrutinize the activities of the Soviet propaganda apparatus and to see how attitudes to events of all kinds shifted over a period of about a year and a half.

143 On the exile of those peoples who collaborated or were suspected of collaborating with the Germans, including the *Volksdeutsche*, the Crimean Tatars, the Chechens, the Kalmyks, and others, see Alec D. Epstein, *Genocide. Political and Ethnic Cleansing, 1918–1953* (Hebrew) (Raanana: Open University, 2007), pp. 113–134; Robert Conquest, *The Nation Killers. The Soviet Deportation of Nationalities* (Glasgow: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 84–111; Pavel Polian, *Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004), pp. 115–180. On Stalin's understanding of national character, see Erik van Ree, "Heroes and Merchants. Stalin's Understanding of National Character," *Kritika*, 8(1) (2007), pp. 41–65.

A lively debate was conducted in the Soviet press about all Eichmann-trial matters, but these were less important papers with relatively small circulation figures.¹⁴⁴ What was published in the leading papers, in contrast, was intended to sum up everything that had been said throughout an extended period in the local papers, reflecting the official — and generally negative — position on the trial.¹⁴⁵ Nevertheless, a certain degree of freedom over the coverage in a number of papers gives us reason to believe that there was no consensus about the trial. There would appear to have been a number of different schools among the writers. One group, including some Jews, tried to maintain “fair play” and attacked Israel in the context of its ties with Bonn, making something of a professional attempt at analyzing the trial and providing accurate facts. Another group, in contrast, went as far as to present the existence of ties with Germany as a unique historical action, which, far from being a recent development, had come about during and even before World War II. This group’s positions fit in well with those maintained by the body that would soon become the nationalist-Soviet group, comprising both Soviet conservatives and Russian nationalists.¹⁴⁶

Both during and immediately after the trial, attempts were made to examine the Soviet position. In all these publications there is a fair degree of confusion over the disparity between the aspiration on the part of the Soviet Union and the countries of the Eastern bloc to put Nazi criminals on trial and the anti-Israel position that was adopted.¹⁴⁷ The positive attitude to the trial adopted by the other Eastern-bloc countries served only to further heighten the confusion, culminating in the publication of Zaitsev’s article.¹⁴⁸ The Soviet position prior to the

144 Nevertheless, the republic-level and local press tended to copy and publish articles from both the central papers and the other republics, making wider exposure possible; Keefe, Boucher, et al., *Area Handbook for the Soviet Union*, pp. 521–522.

145 Feferman, *Soviet Treatment of the Holocaust*, p. 46.

146 See Mikhail Agursky’s Hebrew book, which is a follow-up and supplement to his English book of the same name: Mikhail Agursky, *The Third Rome (From the October Revolution to Perestroika)* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Sifriat Poalim, 1989), pp. 92–129.

147 Marian Mushkat, “Reactions to the Eichmann Trial”, *Yad Vashem Bulletin* (English edition), 13 (October 1963), pp. 50–51.

148 Gideon Hausner, *Justice in Jerusalem* (Hebrew) (Tel Aviv: Ghetto Fighters’ House and Hakibbutz Hameuhad, 1980), vol. II, p. 302. This reference did not appear in the original English publication of the book, *Justice in Jerusalem* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966).

publication of the article was a logical continuation of sorts to the anti-Israeli policy,¹⁴⁹ while the articles written by Zaitsev and his ilk were viewed as an attempted “break-out” on the part of Stalinist elements in the Soviet Union that were trying to revive antisemitism.¹⁵⁰

Coverage of the trial was a turning point in all aspects relating to the Soviet Union’s perception of the Holocaust and the suffering of the Jews. During the trial Soviet citizens were indeed exposed to a large amount of information that previously had been hidden from them.¹⁵¹ However, this was done subject to all kinds of heavy-handed and sometimes very blunt reservations, so as to gloss over the fact that there was a people that had suffered more than the Soviets.

At the same time, a substantive change also started to take place in the Soviet perception of Zionism. It stands to reason that in its Jewish and Israeli context, the trial spurred a number of processes in Soviet society involving the perception of World War II. These processes, which had begun in the late 1950s, combined with the tendency toward resurgent nationalist patriotism in the 1960s, a form of patriotism based in part on old anti-Jewish foundations. It was this combination that led to the turning point: the Jews could not only suffer, they could also inflict suffering. Zionism’s place in the anti-Soviet camp also put it firmly on the side of Nazism, the global evil of the time, thereby making it possible, after a while, for the two to be related to interchangeably.¹⁵²

Nevertheless, the coverage of the trial also had a positive impact, as many Jews were exposed to the history of their people. The Soviet

149 See, for example, *Davar*, May 10, May 18, May 22, 1961.

150 Mushkat, “Reactions,” p. 53; Mordechai Oren, “Miscellaneous – A Friendly Debate”; *Al Hamishmar*, May 22, 1962.

151 It is difficult to evaluate the actual extent of the Soviet reader’s exposure. There is no way of knowing whether they would have read the entire article, although, undoubtedly, there was a very highly developed reading culture. Furthermore, most of the short items about the trial were included in the international review sections, which were presented in a reader-friendly fashion. The more detailed articles and reports normally had eye-catching headlines. In addition, most of the reports were published in the major and highest-circulation papers and periodicals, with very large readerships. Keefe, Boucher et al., *Area Handbook for the Soviet Union*, pp. 522, 524, 526–528. I would like to thank the journal’s editorial team for directing my attention to this issue.

152 For an analysis of the implications of this perception, see Gitelman, “Politics and the Historiography of the Holocaust,” pp. 29–31; Korey, *Russian Antisemitism*, pp. 13–59.

authorities' attempts to prevent the exposure merely strengthened the attraction and constituted another stage in the national revival of Soviet Jewry.

The Soviet reaction was the outcome of a number of factors that coalesced and led to the aforementioned result. It is difficult to assess whether the Soviet reaction would have been less vehement had a trial on this scale taken place at the time in another "imperialist" state or in one with a less-charged national memory. Be that as it may, as the Soviet Union saw it, the Eichmann trial was an attempt to rob it of its primacy in the realm of the suffering. The upshot was that it refused categorically to lend it any support. The Soviet Union's negative attitude to Zionism and Israel also played a major role in this decision.

Translated from the Hebrew by Ruth Morris.

