The Soviet Government and the Jews
1948–1967
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Preface

This book has been in the making for more than ten years, a relatively long period in which, even after the initial text was ready, the endless hurdles of translation, abbreviation, annotation, transliteration — in short, editing — had to be cleared. During all that time, I have been fortunate to receive help and encouragement from both individuals and institutions, here and abroad.

First, and above all, I should like to express my true thanks to my friend and colleague, Jonathan Frankel of the Hebrew University, who is general editor of a series (of which this volume is part) on the Jews in the Soviet Union projected by the Institute of Contemporary Jewry. There is no doubt that without his tireless assistance and efforts, patience and perseverance, this book would never have seen the light of day. The Institute of Contemporary Jewry, under the auspices of which this project went forward, gave it throughout both moral and material support and its successive directors during this period — Moshe Davis, Yehuda Bauer, Haim Avni, Mordechai Altschuler — together ensured that it would be seen through to completion.

It gives me much pleasure to thank Nathan Rotenstreich and Joshua Prawer, who as members of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities gave their support to this project. This book is published jointly by the Academy and the Institute. Israel Getzler of the Hebrew University carefully read the manuscript and made many suggestions which proved to be of great value and for which I am very much in his debt.

It was truly a stroke of luck to find in Jerusalem a translator of the calibre of Anthony Benjamin who combines an unusual knowledge of languages with great breadth of knowledge in many areas. He prepared the initial English text, but unfortunately was no longer here in the final stages — his decision to join the Israeli Foreign Office, albeit our loss, was its gain. Norma Schneider of the Academy and Philippa Lewis (now Mrs S. Shimrat), both highly skilled editors, devoted enormous efforts to the preparation of the manuscript for publication. Elizabeth O’Beirne-Ranelagh of Cambridge University Press has been responsible for the final copy-editing and displayed quite unusual professionalism in going over this exacting text. I appreciate the work and skill which all four have invested herein and cannot find words to thank them enough.

I should like to take the opportunity to thank the following institutions and members of the Hebrew University who in various ways provided me with assistance: Geoffrey Wigoder, Aharon Kedar and Menahem Kaufman of the
Preface

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Finally, however banal it may sound, I do not want to overlook my wife and three sons who found themselves perforce full partners on this long road. To them this book is dedicated.

Sdeh Boker
June 1983

B.P.
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Note on transliteration and style

The system of transliteration from Yiddish is based on the YIVO system as formulated in Uriel Weinreich's dictionary; from Russian on that of the Library of Congress; and from Hebrew on that used by the Encyclopaedia Judaica. However, in the case of Russian and Hebrew I have introduced modifications in order to ease the way for the non-specialist reader (hence, for example, Izvestiya rather than Izvestia; or magid rather than maggid). In the spelling of names, diacritical marks have not been used, and the system has accordingly been somewhat modified. (Hence, Yizhak is used in bibliographical entries, but Yitskhak in the text.) First names have in the main been transliterated either from the Russian or the Hebrew forms. Thus, the Yiddish variant (Shloyme, not Shlomo) has generally not been used. Both variants are, of course, spelt in the same way in Hebrew and Yiddish. To have tried to divide the sheep from the goats (Yiddishists from Zionists, etc.) would have involved us in a rather arbitrary exercise given the lack of pluralist expression in the USSR. Yiddish variants are, however, given in the index. Moreover, this rule has not always been pushed to its limits (e.g. Itsik, not Yitskhak, Feffer). Finally, it should be noted that names appearing in the Documents are as a rule transliterated according to the language of the text (Russian, Polish, Hebrew, Yiddish, etc.).

Documents originally published in English have been reproduced in their original form with only minor changes in spelling made to achieve uniformity of style.