



THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM
CENTRE FOR RESEARCH AND DOCUMENTATION
OF EAST EUROPEAN JEWRY

**JEWS AND JEWISH TOPICS
IN THE SOVIET UNION
AND EASTERN EUROPE**

3(19)

WINTER 1992

Confiscation of Matzah by the KGB, 1975

Introduced by Michael Beizer

In the 1970s Jewish organizations in Israel and the West learned that packages of matzah which they had been sending to Soviet Jews had not been reaching their addressees.

The document presented below, a copy of which is located in the archives (No. 1377) of the Centre for the Documentation and Research of East European Jewry of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, indicates that in 1975, at the initiative of the Committee of State Security (KGB), the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union decided not to allow the distribution of matzah sent from abroad. Similar decisions were most likely taken in other years as well.

The draft of this decision was prepared at the order of Chairman of the KGB and member of the Politburo of the CC CPSU Yuri Andropov by his deputies Victor Chebrikov and Filipp Bobkov on February 26, 1975. On March 11, the document was registered at the CC CPSU under the number N547-A. The Central Committee's approval was given on March 12 and, apparently, at the same time a phrase was included permitting the delivery of packages sent by individuals.

On the following day the document was returned by Laptev, head of the 1st section of the General Department of the CC CPSU, to the authorities who drafted it for KGB functionaries to implement. A copy was sent to Konstantin Chernenko, Administrator of Affairs of the Central Committee of the CPSU, who supervised the work of the General Department.

DOCUMENT

On the Confiscation of Packages of Matzah sent to the USSR by Zionist Organizations from Abroad

Secret

Copy no. 2

[26.02.75]

Approved by the CC CPSU

Communicated by comrade V. E. Galkin

1st Sector of the General Department of the CC CPSU

Zionist circles in countries of the West and Israel, taking advantage of the upcoming religious holiday of Passover (March 27 this year), having organized a mass dispatch of packages of matzah (Passover ritual food) with the aim of stirring up nationalistic attitudes among Soviet citizens of Jewish extraction.

ЛИЧНО Т. ЧЕРНЕНКО К. У.

Копия

СОГЛАСИЕ ЦК КПСС ИМЕЕТСЯ
сообщил тов. ТАККИН В.Е.

Секретно
экз № 2

Сектор общего отдела ЦК КПСС

12.03.75 г.

ЛАПТЕВ ЦК КПСС

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Меморандум
Басманов
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О конъюнктурных посылках с мацой, засылаемых
в СССР сионистскими организациями из-за
границы.

Сионистские круги в странах Запада и Израиле, используя предстоящий религиозный праздник еврейской пасхи (27 марта с.г.), организовали массовую засылку в СССР посылок с мацой (ритуальная пасхальная пицца) в расчете на возбуждение националистических настроений среди светских граждан еврейского происхождения.

Уже сейчас в Одессе, Риге, Львове и некоторых других городах страны скопилось несколько тысяч посылок, адресованных, как правило, лицам, известным своими националистическими и произраильскими настроениями.

Из опыта прошлых лет известно, что доставка адресатам посылок вызывает негативные процессы среди еврейского населения СССР, усиливает националистические и эмиграционные настроения.

Учитывая это, а также то, что в настоящее время еврейские религиозные общины полностью обеспечены мацой, выпекаемой непосредственно на местах, Комитет госбезопасности считает необходимым посылки с мацой, поступающие из-за границы,

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Рассмотреть
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конъюнктурно использовать для усиления антисемитских настроений среди населения СССР. В связи с этим предлагается целесообразным поручить Министерству

внешней торговли и связи СССР дать соответствующие указания таможенным и почтовым службам.

С Министерством внешней торговли СССР (т. КУЗЬМИН М.Р.) Министерством связи СССР (т. ШАМШИН В.А.) согласовано.

Проект постановления ЦК КПСС прилагается.

Просим рассмотреть. ПРЕДСЕДАТЕЛЬ КОМИТЕТА ГОСБЕЗОПАСНОСТИ

АНДРОПОВ

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Some thousands of packages, mostly addressed to people who are known for their nationalistic and pro-Israel attitudes, have already accumulated in Odessa, Riga, L'vov, and some other cities of the country.

From the experience of past years, it is known that the delivery of packages causes negative processes among the Jewish population of the USSR and increases nationalistic and emigration-oriented attitudes.

In view of this and also of the fact that, at the present time, the Jewish religious community bodies (*obshchiny*) are completely supplied with matzah, baked locally, the KGB considers it necessary to confiscate packages with matzah sent from abroad <with the exception of packages sent by individuals to individuals living in the USSR>.

In this connection we consider it useful to instruct the Ministers of Foreign Trade and Communication of the USSR to issue appropriate orders to the customs and postal authorities.

This has been agreed upon with the Minister of Foreign Trade of the USSR (Comrade M. R. Kuz'min) and Minister of Communications of the USSR (Comrade V. A. Shamshin).

A draft resolution of the CC CPSU is attached.

We request consideration [of this matter]

Chairman of the Committee on State Security [KGB]
ANDROPOV

In addition to the handwritten phrase inserted in the document itself, indicated above by < >, there are a number of hard-to-read signatures and dates visible on the document. One can make out an annotation "Resolution transmitted for execution. . . ." The original of this document apparently is in the CC CPSU Archive.

The following directions and signatures appear on our copy of the text: (1) "Personal to Comrade K. U. Chernenko" [at top of document]; (2) Chebrikov, Bobkov (Feb. 26, 1975); (3) an illegible signature (March 6, 1975); (4) Laptev (March 12, 1975); (5) Chebrikov (March 13, 1905); (6) "To Comrades Chebrikov, V. M. and Bobrov, F. D. for implementation," Laptev (March 13); (7) "Resolutions transmitted to the implementers" [signature illegible] (March 14, 1975); (8) another illegible signature.