

Nataliia Danyliv

ORCID ID 0000-0002-3057-6620

Ivan Franko National University of Lviv

The Jewish emigration from the USSR in the KGB documents

Introduction

In terms of population, the Jews (based on census data in 1959, 1969, 1979, and 1989) were ranked third in the USSR after the Ukrainians and Russians (see Appendix 1). The majority of the Jewish population lived in cities and only 0.1% in the rural areas. Over 75% of them lived in Kyiv, Odesa, Kharkiv, Dnipropetrovsk, Vinnytsia, Chernivtsi, Donetsk, and Zhytomyr, Lviv, Zaporizhia, and Crimea¹.

The fact that the State of Israel was formed in 1948 is a key reason Jews were among the largest national minorities in the Soviet Union. Local Jews, who had suffered from various anti-Semitic campaigns after the death of Joseph Stalin in 1953, began the movement to grant the right of departure, which was crystallized particularly as a result of the successful Israel Six-Day War in 1967. The Jews who were entitled to travel to Israel made an “*aliyah*”, also defined as “the act of going up”, realizing the long-cherished desire to return to their historic homeland.

In general, after the Second World War, emigration from the Soviet Union became practically impossible for people of any nationality². The issuance of a departure permit was directly dependent on the representatives of special bodies. The process of submitting documents, as well as reviewing them, was a complicated and time-consuming bureaucratic procedure. Most of the applicants were refused, and their actions were regarded as treason or qualified as “anti-Soviet activity”³.

¹ Y. Zysels, *Nekotorye aspekty myhratsyy evreev Ukrainy* [in:] *Doklady na Vosmoi Ezhedodnoi mezhdunarodnoi mezhdystsyplynarnoi konferentsyy po yudayke*, Y. Zysels (ed.), Siefer, Moskva 2001, p. 14.

² *Zghadaty vse: Emihratsiia z SRSR*, https://24tv.ua/zgadati_vse_emigratsiya_iz_srsr_n1119209, [accessed: 15.05.2019].

³ *Kto y kak emyhryroval yz SSSR*, <https://news.rambler.ru/other/38016126-kto-i-kak-emigriroval-iz-sssr/>, [accessed: 18.05.2019].

The reaction of the Soviet authorities to the “application to leave”

The situation surrounding the emigration issue was, on the one hand, quite blurred, because the Soviet Union did not approve a single legal framework by which the issue could be resolved, and, on the other hand, overly aggravated, as a large number of people, in particular, the Jews, wanted to leave but could not do so. Yet Alexey Kosigin testified in his speech in Paris, 1966, to “the USSR’s readiness to allow family reunification”. In 1969, those words were backed up by an official document on the “quota for departure”⁴.

In theory, the “application to leave” was not a crime under Soviet law⁵. The Soviet Union was bound by a system of international law⁶ that declared that “every person had the right to leave any country, including his own”⁷. However, even though the quotas were fixed, the Soviet party nomenclature did not allow the general emigration. Only the Jewish, German, and Armenian ethnic minorities could leave the territory of the Soviet Union⁸. These nationalities were allowed to leave for repatriation, that is, to return to their historical homeland, provided that their relatives resided there⁹.

In 1965–1969, 10,899 thousand people repatriated to Israel from the Soviet Union (3,500–4,000 from Ukraine). Of those who first flew to the United States in 1965–1969, there were only 368 people (about 150 from Ukraine)¹⁰.

The largest number of applications for departure to Israel came from the following territories of the USSR: Transcarpathian, Chernivtsi, Lviv, Odesa, Kyiv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Vinnytsia, and Kharkiv. For example, in two years (1969–1970), the percentage of the total in these areas reached the limit of 96.9%¹¹.

The Soviet authorities were not interested in such a large number of applicants for departure. Therefore, they tried to damage the process in various ways. At the outset, the applicants were unexpectedly intimidated or harassed. For example, on the evening of the day when a resident of Kyiv S. Shmurak applied for a visa, he was stopped at his house by an unknown man shouting: “You throw it! I know you! I’ll show you!”. He started waving his hands in front of S. Shmurak, but suddenly two

⁴ S. Rutland, *Conflicting Visions: Debates Relating to Soviet Jewish Emigration in the Global Arena*, “East European Jewish Affairs” 2017, No. 47, p. 225.

⁵ J. Evrard, *Human Rights in the Soviet Union: The Policy of Dissimulation*, “DePaul Law Review” 1980, Vol. 29, No. 3, p. 835, <http://via.library.depaul.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2439&context=law-review>, [accessed: 7.11.2018].

⁶ In 1968, a Declaration of Human Rights was signed by the Soviet Union.

⁷ S. Rutland, *Conflicting Visions...*, op. cit., p. 225.

⁸ G. Beyer, *The Evolving United States response to Soviet Jewish Emigration*, “Journal of Palestine Studies” 1991, Vol. 21, No. 1, p. 142.

⁹ Y. Kosharovskiy, *My snova evrey. Ocherky po ystoriy syonystskoho dvyzhenyia v Sovetskom Soiuzie*, Yzrayl, Yerusalyim 2007, p. 187.

¹⁰ Y. Zysels, *Nekotorye aspekty myhratsyy evreev Ukrainy...*, op. cit., p. 34.

¹¹ Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSR do TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operatyvnoi obstanovky, diialnosti sionistiv..., 4.07.1976–2.09.1976, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1108, ark. 163.

policemen appeared who drove the victim to the detention centers, and two days later, he was sentenced to fifteen days for “disorderly conduct” for “trying to beat Yampilsky citizen”¹². A similar situation occurred on October 5, 1971, with R. Rosenblum, who returned home after applying for a departure. A woman climbed into the elevator to her apartment, but an unknown man, who sat down with her, began threatening with a knife attached to her throat, saying: “Jewish muzzle, Israel wanted!”¹³.

A simple scare, or jail time of fifteen days, was not the only punishment applied to the applicants. Some of them were imprisoned for a long period. For example, on December 1, 1970, R. Palatnyk was arrested in Odessa for trying to find his relatives in Israel. After a search of the apartment, a typewriter and collections of some poems were found and removed. She was imprisoned for two years for defamation of the Soviet state and public order¹⁴.

The day after I. Borisov, together with his wife, visited the Leningrad Visas and Registration Departments (farther – DVAR)¹⁵, another suspicious event occurred. The couple was returning by train when suddenly, in the same train car, they met three drunk passengers shouting about how they “Hated Jews; as if they had all been beaten and cut”. A dispute broke out between the drunken company and I. Borisov. Finally, in December 1970, a court was held in the village of Toksovo in the Leningrad region, in which I. Borisov was found to be the sole culprit of the incident and sentenced to three years in prison¹⁶.

Application for departure or workplace?

While the Soviet authorities used simulated situations to provoke and later prosecute one person after another, they also used more practical methods to cope with unbearable conditions in the workplace, university, or school. Illegal dismissal from work was practiced most often. Thus, in September 1970, A. Reichman, a biophysicist and the head of the laboratory at the hospital in Berezivka, Odessa region, not only received a refusal to leave but also lost his job, which made him have to work as a loader. A similar situation occurred in 1971 with V. Gauhman, a candidate of the physical sciences of the Moscow Civil Engineering Institute. After he applied for an Israeli visa, his colleagues condemned him for “an act incompatible with the high rank of a university teacher”. Similar criticisms from the local vocational school were given to Leningrad’s O. Hittelson in 1970: “a cunning careerist who defrauded the confidence of the Soviet people and went to the side of the Israeli camp with a strangler of the freedom and independence of the Arab peoples”¹⁷.

¹² “Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi”, Vyp. 17., <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].

¹³ Ibidem, Vyp. 23.

¹⁴ Ibidem, Vyp. 17.

¹⁵ The official structure for applying for departure.

¹⁶ “Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi”, Vyp. 17., <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].

¹⁷ Ibidem, Vyp. 18.

In some cases, an applicant got a visa after the first application. B. Schein, for example, in response to a meeting of the Faculty Competition Committee stating that he would no longer be able to hold the post of associate professor of the geometry department of Saratov University because he intended to leave for Israel, appealed to the Helsinki Act of 1975. By signing this, the Soviet authorities had committed themselves to uphold fundamental rights and freedoms. In the end, he got permission to leave¹⁸.

After the date of the visa application, the employed person was completely dependent on his colleagues. The authorities got even through all those who abstained or voted against the resolution to dismiss the applicant. For example, while discussing a resolution to exclude V. Godyak, a senior researcher from the electronics department of the Physics Department of Moscow State University, from the union, out of sixty-three people attending the meeting, only one person voted against this and three abstained. The letters were sent to the bureau for "processing". One of the attendees, a post-graduate student, deferred his thesis. Another employee of the department who voted "against" was regularly summoned to the trade union committee for talks, and the defense of her husband's doctoral dissertation, who also worked at the Faculty of Physics, was postponed. The certificate from V. Godyak's workplace was issued only after repeated appeals to the Moscow State University Rectorate and the Leninsky District Committee. A similar situation occurred with L. Wild, who also worked at this department¹⁹.

Yet, applicants were not always fired from their jobs. In some cases, they managed to preserve their employment. However, after a certain period, many people left on their own initiative. Due to the creation of unbearable conditions at work, J. Begun, a Candidate of Technical Sciences, V. Slepak, the leading engineer of the Institute of Organic Chemistry of the USSR Academy of Sciences, L. Milyavska, a lecturer, I. Korenfeld and V. Polish, engineers, R. Rosenblum, a translator, and others quit by their own volition²⁰.

Still, the request to leave often entailed dismissal from the previous job or transfer to a low-paying position; otherwise, the person could be accused of being a "parasite"²¹. Someone might be assigned a position as a postman or a janitor, and M. Dorfman, for example, worked three jobs as "a nurse in a polyclinic, a massage therapist, and collected breast milk from donors in the orphanage"²². L. Stonov worked writing articles in scientific journals, using a pseudonym: "And then my acquaintance researchers, gave money for it"²³.

¹⁸ Ibidem, Vyp. 54.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

²⁰ Ibidem, Vyp. 23.

²¹ Leonid Stonov (1932 r. n.), zapysala Nataliia Danyliv, 3 sichnia 2018 r.

²² Mykhailo Dorfman (1954 r. n.), zapysala Nataliia Danyliv, 18 kvitnia 2018 r.

²³ Leonid Stonov (1932 r. n.), zapysala Nataliia Danyliv, 3 sichnia 2018 r.

It was not only the Jews who were employed but also young people who had attended higher education who were subjected to discrimination. When estimating the character of A. Kleer, who was a student of the October Revolution Music-Pedagogical College, at the Komsomol meeting of the course, the participants exclaimed: "You must hang ... you must kill" after her parents submitted papers for departure²⁴.

B. Kalendariev's difficulties rose immediately after he submitted his request for departure in 1973. Initially, he was removed from his studies at the military department, and as a result, he was deprived of a scholarship at the Kalinin Leningrad Polytechnic Institute and later expelled²⁵.

Young male applicants had to enlist in the army after being expelled from the university. However, military service could have been a direct reason for refusing permission to leave because of the possession of "military secrets". A similar situation happened with L. Kolchinsky: in 1968, he was expelled from the ninth class for his speeches in defense of Sinyavsky and Daniel, as well as against the introduction of troops into the Czechoslovak Republic²⁶. After reaching the age of majority, he received a summons to the army. Fifty Moscow and Kharkiv Jews appealed to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR to request that L. Kolchinsky be able to go to Israel. Eventually, after a brief period of service in the army, L. Kolchinsky left for Israel²⁷.

The entire family of Doctor Y. Nudelman was subjected to anti-Semitic attacks. He held a meeting at the school where his daughter Anna studied, after which she was expelled from the Komsomol. Later, the girl's classmates came to their house, chanting "Yid, get in Israel!"²⁸. L. Varwak almost lost her parental rights because "leaving Israel is contrary to the interests of her children". Subsequently, the woman was registered with the district psychiatric dispensary for being found by the Board of Trustees in the Children's Room with a Bible²⁹.

The Soviet authorities made no exceptions for peasants. In December 1977, at the meeting of the collective farm "Russia" of the Talovsky district of the Voronezh region, four Matveev families' requests to leave the collective farm and apply for a visa to Israel was denied. The explanation was honestly objective: "If you were a pensioner, we would have let you go, in another case – who would work?"³⁰. Famous figures of the Soviet Union did not have special privileges: A. Yoshpe and

²⁴ "Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi", Vyp. 23, <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].

²⁵ Ibidem, Vyp. 53.

²⁶ Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSS do TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operatyvnoi obstanovky, antyradianskykh proiaviv..., 14.03.1971–31.03.1971, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1013, ark. 317.

²⁷ "Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi", Vyp. 18, <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].

²⁸ Ibidem, Vyp. 23.

²⁹ Ibidem, Vyp. 57.

³⁰ Ibidem, Vyp. 51.

C. Rahim, pop singers and honored artists of the USSR, who applied for a visa to Israel, were forbidden to continue performing³¹.

If permission is given: Nuances in preparation for departure

The number of applicants increased despite the permanent persecution. Following the end of the Six-Day War in 1967 and Israel's victory over the Arab countries, the applicants began to use all kinds of manipulation. Since only those who had relatives in Israel could obtain permission to leave, some Jews simply invented them. The special invitation could have come from a stranger who only seemed to be in a family relationship with the applicant. As a rule, this kind of cheating was revealed by the Soviet authorities, and the chances of leaving were non-existent. Sometimes, the "Israeli challenges" did not always reach potential applicants. E. Seve received his document after the third attempt and his acquaintances after the fifth³².

After completing and submitting the entire package of documents for departure, which included an invitation from relatives, references from the place of work/study, and a personal application, it was necessary to wait for a decision from the local DVAR. Only a few were issued without delay and difficulties. For some, success came by chance, and others took the situation into their own hands, using every possible means. For example, in 1970, the Kabak family from Odessa tried to leave for Israel. A positive answer was not delayed after Ya. Kabakov's wife, Basya, shouted at the local DVAR that she would commit suicide if their application was refused. Interestingly, they only stayed in Israel for a year, after which point, they moved to Vienna, where they asked to return to the Soviet Union³³.

From time to time, the matters of departure were reviewed. Most often, and most quickly, visas were issued to Jews who did not pose a threat to the Soviet regime but wished to return to their homeland under the influence of romanticized ideas. The second category included the leaders of the Zionist groups, which the KGB tried to get rid of as soon as possible. For example, after several refusals, B. Katsov was granted permission to leave, and his threats to start a hunger strike were meaningless³⁴.

Jews who had permission to leave were deprived of their Soviet citizenship (instead of being able to obtain an Israeli passport at the Holland Embassy of Moscow) and instead received a short period, on average five to ten days, to gather their belongings and leave the Soviet Union³⁵. Such a short term was given deliberately.

³¹ Ibidem, Vyp. 61.

³² E. Sevela, *Vozrast Khrysta*, Khranytel, Moskva 2007, p. 172.

³³ Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSS do TsK KPU shchodo diialnosti sionistiv..., 10.02.1971–13.03.1971, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1011, ark. 115

³⁴ Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSS do TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operatyvnoi obstanovky, diialnosti sionistiv..., 29.05.1973–28.06.1973, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1071, ark. 379.

³⁵ Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSS do TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operatyvnoi obstanovky, antyradianskykh proiaviv..., 14.03.1971–31.03.1971, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1013, ark. 252.

A person who had to travel in a hurry would not be able to collect their things in an organized fashion, successfully “sell” the apartment (the order for the apartment – a document about the owner – just passed on to someone else for some reward)³⁶, say goodbye to friends, or collect provocative information about the realities of life in the Soviet Union.

The last thing that could irritate the state security authorities was the conduct of the person leaving. At first, it might be a gathering in an apartment or yard: “a dinner, children who were playing outside and a deep understanding that you will never see them again”³⁷. Later, there might be demonstrations at the checkpoint of departure from the USSR, where dozens of people sometimes gathered. For example, on the initiative of E. Spivakovsky on March 8–9, 1971, a group of Kharkiv refusers was sent to Moscow for Balabanov’s departure to Israel³⁸. Later, similar measures were limited to the KGB ruling on participation in the gathering of no more than ten people. According to the decision of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the USSR from 1978, the visa could be rejected if the person was followed by a collective demonstration³⁹.

If the departure process posed considerable difficulties, even greater challenges were faced by the Jews who awaited a response after the departure papers were submitted. Due to the absence of a timetable for response in Soviet law, many applicants waited for years, even decades⁴⁰. The dismissal from their usual places of work, being thrown out of university, persecution by the KGB – the life of the Jews became an unbearable existence and a constant struggle to re-submit documents to the DVAR. Requirements for the pre-determined visa waiting period were unsuccessful: the Soviet Union Minister of Internal Affairs B. Shumilin stated that the request could not be satisfied⁴¹.

Reasons why a person might become a “refusnik”

A similar fate was shared by those Jews to whom the answer came with one short word: “rejection”. The reason for refusal was reported by DVAR. Among the explanations were a variety of options:

- If the person was employed in a factory that used classified technology, produced classified goods, or possessed “classified information”; likewise, if a person served in a military unit and was therefore acquainted with “military classified information”, then they were denied “regime reasons”. In the KGB documents,

³⁶ Viktoriia Senyk (1964 r. n.), zapysala Nataliia Danyliv, 2 sichnia 2018 r.

³⁷ Ibidem.

³⁸ Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSR do TsK KPU shchodo diialnosti sionistiv..., 10.02.1971–13.03.1971, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1011, ark. 241.

³⁹ Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSR do TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operatyvnoi obstanovky; diialnosti sionistiv..., 13.05.1978–30.12.1978, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1149, ark. 177.

⁴⁰ Leonid Stonov (1932 r. n.), zapysala Nataliia Danyliv, 3 sichnia 2018 r.

⁴¹ “Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi”, Vyp. 51., <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].

there are thousands of refusals for this reason. "I worked at a chemical laboratory on the development of pesticides, which is why I got my first refusal", says L. Stonov⁴².

- "Operational reasons" denied all those Jews who, according to the KGB, represented the most active part of the Jewish population⁴³.
- The "availability of valuable specialists" in the field of medicine, science, and culture was also given as a reason. The loss of specialists and search for new ones were not profitable for the Soviet Union: it took into account the state costs of education and the personal diligence and excellent skills often possessed by the representatives of Jewish nationality. A high percentage of Jews worked in research centers and educational institutions of various categories. Among the 122,700 researchers, there were 9,354 Jews with a doctorate⁴⁴. A small proportion of Jewish representatives also worked in one position or another in the Union Ministries (see Appendix 2)⁴⁵.
- A similar situation was found in the case of the "presence of conscripts and military servicemen" who, by the Soviet military law, were obliged to serve "their homeland"⁴⁶.
- There were also "unreasonable requests for "family reunification". The Soviet authorities had information about the presence of "invented relatives" and, therefore, about falsified requests. Visas were not always granted to those applicants who did not intend to remove all other family members from the Soviet Union in the future, especially when it came to older people. Since 1978, the organization of the departure of the applicant's "parents" had become a necessity⁴⁷. The departure of an individual representative from a family was interpreted by the Soviet authorities not as a "family reunion" but as a "family separation"⁴⁸.
- The classification of "inappropriate" did not explain the reason for the refusal at all. "From the state's point of view, your request is inappropriate, and it was not possible to challenge this decision"⁴⁹.

If the term "poor relatives" was used in the Soviet terminology, it indicated that one of the family members did not have permission to leave. For example, a father might not allow a child to leave because he would be left with his second wife and

⁴² Leonid Stonov (1932 r. n.), zapysala Nataliia Danyliv, 3 sichnia 2018 r.

⁴³ Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSR do TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operatyvnoi obstanovky, diialnosti sionistiv..., 4.07.1976–2.09.1976, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1108, ark. 165–166.

⁴⁴ Ibidem, ark. 246.

⁴⁵ Ibidem, ark. 165–166.

⁴⁶ Ibidem.

⁴⁷ Ibidem.

⁴⁸ Dokumenty KDB URSR na adresu TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operatyvnoi obstanovky, diialnosti sionistiv..., 4.07.1979–31.08.1979, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1158, ark. 220.

⁴⁹ Leonid Stonov (1932 r. n.), zapysala Nataliia Danyliv, 3 sichnia 2018 r.

extended family obligations⁵⁰. P. Solodnikov, a resident of Chernivtsi, could not leave due to the disagreement of his wife's relatives.

Among other things, there were unforeseen failures. In some cases, the personal mood of a DVAR employee could also be crucial. For example, the chief of the Leningrad DVAR, V. Bokov, referred to the denial of ratification by the United States of America of the SALT-2 Treaty in 1979 as grounds for a refusal to issue a visa. Another DVAR inspector responded sharply to a statement from 170 refusers who needed written copies of the reason their requests to leave were refused: "Your scribbles will not help you. I spit on your statements. I advise you to go nowhere, not write or not complain. We will keep you as long as we need".

A Jew who was denied a visa was called a "Refusnik". In most cases, the desire to travel to Israel was transformed into the main purpose of this person's life, and after applying, they often unconsciously embarked on a full-fledged struggle against the Soviet power. Collective demands or personal manifestations became commonplace. For example, on October 17, 1971, the filmmaker M. Kalik, who was denied a visa, returned to the Presidium of the USSR Order of Honor, which he was awarded for his services in the development of the Soviet cinema on June 8, 1960⁵¹.

Every "dangerous" Jew had a case file with all the necessary items: birth details, party affiliation, place of work, and information about past and present activities describing "illegal" actions. In addition to expulsion from the university and dismissal from work mentioned above, KGB agents used other methods of punishment, including the following:

- "Preventive conversation" meant that the person could be stopped on the street and taken to the police station to hold the so-called preventive conversation. A conversation such as this was conducted with M. Dagan, the head of the Institute of Semiconductors of the USSR Academy of Sciences, who allegedly "over-promoted persons of Jewish descent", favoring them for employment, obtaining scientific degrees, and publishing articles in scientific journals⁵².
- Blackmail was also possible. They could blackmail anyone with anything, from dismissal to jail, such as P. Abramovich was threatened with for teaching Hebrew⁵³.
- Mental hospitals were used as a punishment as well. This occurred with Pargamanik (name not specified), who was placed in a psychiatric hospital for being a "cheap parasite"⁵⁴.

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ "Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi", Vyp. 22., <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].

⁵² Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSS do TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operatyvnoi obstanovky, antyradianskykh proiaviv..., 2.01.1973–21.02.1973, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1063, ark. 88.

⁵³ "Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi", Vyp. 61., <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].

⁵⁴ Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSS do TsK KPU shchodo diialnosti sionistiv; operatyvnoi diialnosti sered predstavnykiv naukovoi ta tvorchoi intelihentsii..., 18.05.1977–29.12.1977, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1138, ark. 243.

- There was also imprisonment for a term of six months to seven years with exile or for a term of two to five years without exile. This could be blamed on Art. 70 of the Criminal Code of the RSFSR (Article 190-1 of the Criminal Code of the USSR), which mandated imprisonment for “Anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda, spread for the same purposes of slanderous fabrications that defame the Soviet state and social order, and at the same time distribution, production or storage for the same purpose in writing, printing or another form of works of the same content”. Due to the advent of extensive material and financial assistance from Jews outside the Soviet Union, the law was corrected. From January 1, 1984, “the same actions committed with the use of funds or other material assets received from foreign organizations or persons acting in the interests of these organizations, shall be punishable by imprisonment for a term of three to ten years and imprisonment or a term of two to five years without exile”⁵⁵.

There were cases when, at the end of the working day, “refusers” who were waiting for admission in one instance or another were pushed into a bus, taken outside the city, and left there. For example, in 1972, a group of Jews was taken 60 km away from Moscow, where they were left in the middle of the forest. The same night, a press conference was held at V. Slepak’s apartment. The following day, newspapers and radio stations in Western Europe reported the incident. Photos of the beaten Jews spread across the world⁵⁶.

Anyone might fall under the KGB’s heavy hand. An interesting incident occurred in 1974, when KGB officers arrested a musician on the “Danube” steamboat, G. Henkin, accusing him of spying and money fraud⁵⁷.

“Refusniks” were also connected to the representatives of the “evil Zionists” when they could no longer reconcile themselves to their status and began their struggle. One of the letters stated that the author “initially wanted to leave peacefully and quietly”, but the inactivity of the DVAR employees, who did not provide any response to the submitted documents for two years, provoked him to take action: “This case is pushed me into the path of struggle”⁵⁸.

On May 5, 1971, Israel passed a law granting citizenship to all repatriated Jews without exception. This alarmed the Soviet authorities, who believed that the document only “promoted” an increase in emigration sentiment⁵⁹. To prevent an increase in the number of applicants for departure, advocacy has gained momentum, and the Israeli policy was characterized as aggressive and dangerous. In 1975, a separate department was set up under the KGB to discredit the Israeli intelligence

⁵⁵ Uholovnyi kodeks RSFSR ot 27 oktiabria 1960 h. (UK RSFSR), <http://www.garant.ru/>, [accessed: 25.12.2019].

⁵⁶ “Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi”, Vyp. 23., <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].

⁵⁷ Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSS do TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operativnoi obstanovky; diialnosti sionistiv..., 13.05.1975–3.07.1975, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1106, ark. 123.

⁵⁸ “Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi”, Vyp. 28., <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].

⁵⁹ Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSS do TsK KPU shchodo diialnosti sionistiv..., 10.06.1971–12.07.1971, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1018, ark. 421.

services and develop a new plan to strengthen the fight against “Jewish extremism inside the country”⁶⁰.

Use of spies

In addition to the standard forms of propaganda, the Soviet authorities practiced total control over the personal lives of all members of society. Even the confidants could be spies and “leak” information to KGB. Documents often mention the person as “our employee”, “our agent”, or a person under a pseudonym. For example, in 1976, a resident of Moscow, V. Albrecht, came to Kyiv to meet the so-called “Kyiv extremists”, among whom were the special KGB agents “Friend”, “Bold”, and “Lama”⁶¹. The whole meeting was recorded on a voice recorder for further analysis by KGB officers. Subsequently, in 1978, the KGB launched another campaign to promote not only Kislik (name not established) but also the next challenger to the leadership of the Zionists of Kyiv, Albert (name not established). In the end, this action was well developed because both were later considered to be KGB spies. Kislik sent his proxy to Israel in 1978, who was, as it turned out, an actual KGB agent, to convince local political circles that Albert was a spy⁶². “At the same time, work is being done to strengthen the leading position of our proven operational source among ‘refusers’ with the aim of ‘exerting beneficial effects on them,’” the KGB documents say. In the end, Kislik, without realizing it himself, supported the KGB-controlled person in the leadership position among the “Refusniks”. On the other hand, like-minded individuals such as Albert, Pargamannik, and Herzberg (names not established) were suspected of “impurity”⁶³.

Summary

In 1948, when the State of Israel’s proclamation took place, the country’s population was 806,000, while today, there are more than 7 million. Nine out of ten Jewish Israelis are either immigrants or descendants of first- or second-generation immigrants. As we can see, the authorities of the young country have worked hard to repatriate a large proportion of the Jews scattered throughout the world.

The greatest increase was expected from the Soviet Union, where the Jews made up a large proportion of society. However, there was constant persecution, particularly during Stalin’s era, and significant restrictions on the immigration to a permanent place of residence in Israel in the later period by the party nomenclature, which

⁶⁰ Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSSR do TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operatyvnoi obstanovky; diialnosti sionistiv..., 13.05.1975–3.07.1975, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1106, ark. 123.

⁶¹ Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSSR do TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operatyvnoi obstanovky; diialnosti sionistiv..., 20.09.1976–28.10.1976, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1123, ark. 284.

⁶² Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSSR do TsK KPU shchodo diialnosti sionistiv..., 13.02.1978–12.04.1978, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1142, ark. 61.

⁶³ Ibidem, ark. 329.

in every way tried to avoid both the beginning and, subsequently, the rapid development of this irreversible process.

The overwhelming majority of applicants received a refusal after submitting their travel documents to Israel, the reasons for which were not clearly stated by the DVAR staff: “for reasons of regime”; “for operational reasons”; “availability of valuable specialists” in the field of medicine, science, culture; “presence of conscripts”; “unreasonable requests for “family reunification”; classified “inappropriate”. However, despite the refusals, people continued to fight for their right to leave under their newly formed “refusnik” status. Of course, such individuals were subjected to a variety of persecution by the Soviet authorities, ranging from direct threats to actual imprisonment or exile in labor camps. The recently declassified KGB documents also provide information on the use of various propaganda techniques to depopulate emigration intentions. The spy system involved was not only to control but also to bring misinformation into the development and engagement of local Jewish communities. However, despite these and other forms of punishment and restraint, the number of those wishing to leave the Soviet Union increased steadily.

References

- Beyer G., *The Evolving United States Response to Soviet Jewish Emigration*, “Journal of Palestine Studies” 1991, Vol. 21, No. 1.
- Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSR do TsK KPU shchodo diialnosti sionistiv..., 10.02.1971–13.03.1971, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1011.
- Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSR do TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operatyvnoi obstanovky, antyradianskykh proiaviv..., 14.03.1971–31.03.1971, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1013.
- Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSR do TsK KPU shchodo diialnosti sionistiv..., 10.06.1971–12.07.1971, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1018.
- Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSR do TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operatyvnoi obstanovky, antyradianskykh proiaviv..., 2.01.1973–21.02.1973, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1063.
- Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSR do TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operatyvnoi obstanovky, diialnosti sionistiv..., 29.05.1973–28.06.1973, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1071.
- Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSR do TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operatyvnoi obstanovky; diialnosti sionistiv..., 13.05.1975–3.07.1975, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1106.
- Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSR do TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operatyvnoi obstanovky, diialnosti sionistiv..., 4.07.1976–2.09.1976, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1108.
- Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSR do TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operatyvnoi obstanovky; diialnosti sionistiv..., 20.09.1976–28.10.1976, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1123.
- Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSR do TsK KPU shchodo diialnosti sionistiv; operatyvnoi diialnosti sered predstavnykiv naukovoï ta tvorchoï intelihentsii..., 18.05.1977–29.12.1977, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1138.
- Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSR do TsK KPU shchodo diialnosti sionistiv..., 13.02.1978–12.04.1978, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1142.
- Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSR do TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operatyvnoi obstanovky; diialnosti sionistiv..., 13.05.1978–30.12.1978, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1149.

- Dokumenty KDB URSS na adresu TsK KPU shchodo potochnoi operatyvnoi obstanovky, diialnosti sionistiv..., 4.07.1979–31.08.1979, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1158.
- Evrard J., *Human Rights in the Soviet Union: The Policy of Dissimulation*, "DePaul Law Review" 1980, Vol. 29, No. 3.
- "Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi", Vyp. 17., <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].
- "Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi", Vyp. 18., <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].
- "Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi", Vyp. 22., <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].
- "Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi", Vyp. 23., <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].
- "Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi", Vyp. 28., <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].
- "Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi", Vyp. 51., <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].
- "Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi", Vyp. 53., <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].
- "Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi", Vyp. 54., <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].
- "Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi", Vyp. 57., <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].
- "Khronyka Tekushchykh Sobytyi", Vyp. 61., <http://hts.memo.ru>, [accessed: 7.02.2019].
- Kosharovskiy Y., *My snova evrey. Ocherky po ystoriyy syonystskoho dvyzheniya v Sovetskom Soiuzie*, Yzrayl, Yerusalyim 2007.
- Kto y kak emyhyroval yz SSSR*, <https://news.rambler.ru/other/38016126-kto-i-kak-emigriroval-iz-sssr/>, [accessed: 18.05.2019].
- Leonid Stonov (1932), Mizhnarodnyi dyrektor Biuro z prav liudyny i dotrymattia zakonnosti v kolyshnomu Radianskomu Soiuzi, prezident Amerykanskoi Asotsiatsii yevreiv z kolyshnoho SRSR, "vidmovnyk", zapysano Nataleiu Danyliv, 3 sichnia 2018 r.
- Mykhailo Dorfman (1954), pysmennyk ta publitsyst, zapysano Nataleiu Danyliv, 18 kvitnia 2018 r.
- Rutland S., *Conflicting Visions: Debates Relating to Soviet Jewish Emigration in the Global Arena*, "East European Jewish Affairs" 2017, No. 47.
- Sevela E., *Vozrast Khrysta*, Khranytel, Moskva 2007.
- Uholovnyi kodeks RSFSR ot 27 oktiabria 1960 h. (UK RSFSR), <http://www.garant.ru/>, [accessed: 25.12.2019].
- Viktoriiia Senyk (1969) – personalni dani na vymohu respondentky zmineni, zapysano Nataleiu Danyliv, 2 sichnia 2018.
- Zghadaty vse: Emihratsiia z SRSR*, https://24tv.ua/zgadati_vse_emigratsiya_iz_srsr_n11-19209, [accessed: 15.05.2019].
- Zysels Y., *Nekotorye aspekty myhratsyy evreev Ukrainy* [in:] *Doklady na Vosmoi Ezhehodnoi mezhdunarodnoi mezhdystyplynarnoi konferentsyy po yudayke*, Y. Zysels (ed.), Siefer, Moskva 2001.

Appendix 1. Number of Jews in the USSR (based on the data on population census in 1959, 1969, 1979, and 1989)⁶⁴

Census Data	1959	1969	1979	1989
Soviet Union (all)	208,826,650	241,720,134	262,084,654	285,742,511
USSR (all)	41,869,046	47,126,517	49,609,333	51,452,034
Soviet Union (jews)	2,267,814	2,148,917	1,807,876	1,449,063
USSR (jews)	840,311	775,993	632,610	550,709

Appendix 2. A list of Ministries in the USSR with the total number of specialists (with higher education) and the total number of Jewish specialists (with higher education)⁶⁵

Name of the Ministry in the USSR	Total number of specialists (with higher education)	Total number of Jewish specialists (with higher education)	The total number of Jewish specialists (with higher education) in percentage terms
Ministry of Commerce	23,717	2,096	8.9%
Ministry of Social Security	1,892	138	7.3 %
Cinematography Committee	1,704	228	13.4 %
Physical Culture and Sports Committee	1,272	885	69.6%
Ministry of Culture	18,437	2,054	11.1 %
Ministry of Higher and Secondary Education	39,397	2,065	5.2%
Ministry of Public Utilities	13,211	2,079	15.7%
Ministry of Health	125,882	17,081	13.5%

⁶⁴ Naseleniia SSSR po dannym vsesoiuznoi perepysy. *Hosudarstvennyi komitet SSSR po statystyke: ynformatsyonno-izdatelskiy tsentr*, Fynansy y statystyka, Moskva 1990, pp. 8, 9, 37.

⁶⁵ Dokumenty KDB pry RM URSS do TsK KPU shchodo diialnosti sionistiv..., 10.02.1971–13.03.1971, HDA SBU, f. 16, op. 1, spr. 1011.

The Jewish emigration from the USSR in the KGB documents

Abstract

The activity of the KGB aimed at controlling the next wave of Jewish emigration from the Ukrainian SSR has been traced back based on the declassified materials of the Sectoral State Archives of the Security Service of Ukraine. The intelligence services were constantly improving their working methods to prevent the mass exodus of the Jews, which was disadvantageous to the Soviet Union, by using another state structure – the Department of Visas and Registration (DVAR). The majority of the refusals received by the applicants had unclear and incorrect explanations such as: “for reasons of the regime”; “for operational reasons”; “availability of valuable specialists” in the field of medicine, science, culture; “the presence of conscripts and conscripts”; “unreasonable requests for “family reunification”; classified “inappropriate”. The duties of the KGB officers included monitoring people who, after receiving a refusal to leave, embarked on a path of struggle under their newly formed status of “refusnik”. For this reason, the KGB, to prevent “anti-Soviet manifestations”, used forms of intimidation, harassment, beating, and dismissal. People who were “particularly dangerous” were jailed in a psychiatric hospital, detention center, or labor camps. In some cases, the state security agencies listened to “apartment meetings”, sent their agents, staged provocations, etc.

Słowa kluczowe: Związek Radziecki, emigracja Żydów, „odmowa”, dokumenty KGB, Departament Wiz i Rejestracji (DVAR), ograniczenia i prześladowania

Key words: Soviet Union, Jewish emigration, “refusnik”, KGB documents, the Department of Visas and Registration (DVAR), restrictions and persecution

Nataliia Danyliv

Nataliia Danyliv is a Ph.D. student of Modern and Contemporary History of Foreign Countries at the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. She is interested in Jewish emigration in the postwar period, as well as human rights violations in the USSR, the history of international relations, and US history. She is a participant in national and international scientific conferences and author of scientific articles. E-mail: vilynad-nr@ukr.net