

## REDS WAIVE TAX MEASURE

NEW YORK (WNS)--As reports reached the West that 19 Jewish families were granted exit visas without having to pay the education head tax to which they were previously subjected, Jewish sources close to the situation saw this move as only a temporary lull in the official Soviet policy.

In a telephone conversation between Gavriel Shapiro, Soviet Jewish activist, and his American wife, Judy Silver Shapiro, Shapiro said that Jewish academicians in the Soviet Union regarded the Soviet waiver of the tax as no more than a "token gesture" brought about by the pressure generated in the United States during the Presidential election campaign. When the elections are over, he said, the Jews fear the visa fees will be applied more harshly than ever before.

Richard Maass, executive director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, said that "at this time it does not appear to be a trend." He warned that "If this was timed so that the news would dissuade Americans from their

efforts in terms of the total situation, it will backfire because Americans will not accept less than a real reversal in policy."

In Washington, State Department sources said that they "did not know how to interpret" the reports. The sources further stated, "It is not clear if this move was a reversal of policy. It might only be a gesture timed to the (trade and lend-lease) agreements that were signed."

(Earlier, Secretary of Commerce Peter G. Peterson had said that he did not initiate any discussion of Soviet Emigration policy in the negotiations between the US and the Soviet Union on the trade agreements. He said, "We find the Soviet negotiators to be careful readers of our media and they informed us that they were aware of our views on the matter." He also said that "Quiet diplomacy holds out the greatest promise of success" in this matter.

The 19 families were told by Soviet authorities that they would not have to pay a collective visa fee amounting to some \$300,000, provided that they leave the Soviet Union by Oct. 28, Jewish sources here reported. Six other families were told that they would lose their visas if they did not pay fees aggregating \$200,000

by Nov. 6.

In other news, two Jewish colonels in the Soviet army were reduced in rank to privates and stripped of their pensions after they submitted applications for visas to go to Israel. The two were identified as Col. Leib Petrovitz Obsistcher and Lt. Col. Nahum Mordeshowitz Ilashansky.

The Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry learned of three cases of Soviet harassment of Jews. Anatoly Glod, 39, a dentist, was charged with diamond smuggling as he prepared to board a plane on his way to Israel. Glod was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment, according to SSSJ. Leonid Zabelishensky of Sverdlovsk is being tried on charges of making anti-Soviet remarks at the trial of Vladimir Markman, who is serving a three-year sentence. In the third case, Yakov Strom wasser, a Kishinev Jew, has been in jail since Dec. 1969, when he was sentenced to three years imprisonment for allegedly writing anonymous letters against the Soviet system, SSSJ reported.

## BEWARE BOOBY-TRAPPED MAIL

NEW YORK (WNS) -- Following an announcement by Federal authorities that they were carefully scrutinizing suspicious-looking mail, two letters containing explosive devices were discovered here.

One was mailed to Mrs. Rose L. Halprin, Hadassah honorary vice president, and the other to Hannah Goldberg, former executive director of the women's Zionist organization. Both letters were post-marked Malaysia.

Authorities have advised Jewish leaders to scrutinize all their mail, and if any seems

suspicious, to put it aside unopened. They said, "We're covering the field in order to safeguard all organizations from any possible danger."

Mrs. Halprin reported that there was "absolutely no alarm" at the Hadassah office and that office routine had not been affected. She expressed satisfaction with the cooperation received from postal authorities, and claimed that no suspect mail had been received since the original two letters.

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