RUSSIAN ANTI-JEWISH POLICY EASING

NEW YORK (WNS) -- In an apparent reversal of a previous Soviet policy of allowing certain Jews to leave without paying the exit tax, the Soviet Union has suspended hearings by the special committee set up to deal with exemption matters, Jewish sources reported here. In addition, 3 Jewish activists who had been granted permission to emigrate, have been refused this permission on technical grounds, the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry reported. The activists, Roman Rutman, Mikhail Kliachkin and a third surnamed Lapides, were told by the director general of Ovir (the visa office), "If you want to go to a fascist state, your emigration is against the interests of the USSR. It's the same thing as if you wanted to go to Nazi Germany during World War II. You would have been shot by us. You should consider yourselves fortunate that we leave you alive." The fate of Gavriel Shapiro, who was granted a visa along with the other t3 is still unknown.

But Foreign Minister Abba Eban told the Cabinet that "Whether waiving the education tax is intended as an effort to calm world public opinion by a small gesture or whether it's the first sign that world public opinion has impressed the Soviet enough to do away with the tax, we must reach the same conclusion, and that is to continue the fight."

Protest were also carried out in the Soviet Union. Three of the protests demanded the release of Sylva Zalmanson Kuzentsov, who is in solitary confinement at the Potma Labor Camp and is suffering from tuberculosis. In addition, a sit-in was held at the Moscow headquarters of the Central Committee of the Communist Party by 44 members of the Jewish scientific community in the Soviet Union.

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