

Notes on People

Pursuer of Ex-Nazis Drops Slander Suit

Simon Wiesenthal, the Austrian Jew who hunts down former Nazis, has dropped his slander suit against Chancellor Bruno Kreisky of Austria, and observers said that both men had backed down in their five-year feud. In October, the Socialist Chancellor, an agnostic of Jewish descent, accused Mr. Wiesenthal of using "Mafia methods" and "character assassination" in charging Friedrich Peter, head of the right-wing Freedom Party with membership in a World War II special SS brigade that executed thousands of Jews and others in the Soviet Union. Five years earlier, Chancellor Kreisky had called Mr. Wiesenthal "a Jewish fascist."

Yesterday Mr. Wiesenthal, announcing withdrawal of the slander suit, said Chancellor Kreisky had "backtracked" on enough of his charges. He said that his lawyer was also concerned about the Socialist Party's threat to start an investigation of the 66-year-old war-crimes investigator. Mr. Wiesenthal, who himself still faces a slander suit by Mr. Peter, said he was working with American justice officials on "60 cases of Nazis who went there after the war."

A portly young man in a brown jacket and tie, who had been picked to play Santa Claus for a shopping center, was told by Judge James O'Brien Tuesday that a sentence would surely lose him the job he had finally found as a Santa Claus. "You mean you can be kind and jolly to other people's children and refuse to support your own?" Judge James O'Brien asked the defendant. The formal court record noted the outcome: "Santa Claus executed wage assignment and was released from jail and remanded to the custody of his elves. Whereupon the court was rewarded with a jovial 'Ho! Ho! Mo!'"

Barbara Knowles Debs, who was named acting president of Manhattanville College in Purchase, N. Y., four months ago, was announced as the new president yesterday by Gerard V. Carey, chairman of the trustees. Dr. Debs followed the crisis-ridden one-year tenure of Dr. Harold Delaney, who was drafted from

the board of trustees after the departure of Elizabeth J. McCormack, a former Sacred Heart nun. Dr. Debs, who will continue to teach art history, is married to Richard A. Debs, the No. 2 executive of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

Tufts University announced the appointment of Dentse

Levertov yesterday as a professor of English. The poet and former poetry editor of The Nation magazine has been a visiting professor at the Medford, Mass., school for two years.

Eupice Kennedy Shriver joined the Kennedy family members on record against reinvestigation of her brothers' assassinations, saying yesterday that "trying to trace whether there is a conspiracy" is part of the nation's preoccupation with violence. The wife of Sargent Shriver, a candidate for the Democratic Presidential nomination, told The Christian Science Monitor that she was satisfied with the Warren Commission conclusions. Public "attention and energy," she said, could better be directed at "solving why people aren't employed or how the heck to get jobs for teenagers."

A regional court in Czechoslovakia upheld yesterday the 10-year sentence of Barry Meeker, the American helicopter pilot caught Aug. 17 flying East Germans from Czechoslovakia to the West. He got away and was tried in absentia. The 33-year-old Vietnam war veteran from Stamford, Conn., was in Munich when he was caught following his original sentencing Oct. 17. "I guess I won't be going to Czechoslovakia anytime soon."

In Los Angeles, Dionne Warwicke was granted a divorce from her singer-actor husband of 10 years, Bill Elliott, and custody of their two sons. The 34-year-old

singer registered legal opposition to a request for \$5,000 made by Mr. Elliott, who said he was earning \$500 a month to her \$100,000 a month. Miss Warwicke's lawyer said that she had already given Mr. Elliott, \$10,000. "She is living over her head," he told the court. "She is not, contrary to public belief, a money tree."

The cross-country tour of the Duke and Duchess of Leinster, planned to raise funds for victims of violence in Ireland, had been canceled before it started. It seems the Irish peers did not know that they needed a permit to collect money. Told it would take 15 days to get one, they said they did not have time to wait that long and still make the tour. The couple left New York for Montreal, where they plan to sail home tomorrow for England. LAURIE JOHNSTON