

SAILOR RELEASED BY SOVIET IS HERE

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Lithuanian Who Attempted
to Defect to U.S. in 1970
Arrives With Family

NYTimes

A seaman from the Soviet Republic of Lithuania who tried to defect to the United States four years ago arrived here yesterday.

The seaman, Simas Kudirka, had jumped from a Soviet ship near the New England coast onto a United States Coast Guard cutter but had then been dragged off and later sentenced to prison. He was released last August in what was seen as a Soviet gesture to Washington on the emigration controversy.

Yesterday, accompanied by his mother, wife and two children, Mr. Kudirka arrived at John F. Kennedy Airport after a direct flight from Moscow.

Wearing a heavy coat and a scarf, Mr. Kudirka walked slowly out of the customs section of the airport and broke into a smile as a small group of Lithuanian-Americans began to applaud.

The Kudirkas were surrounded by the waiting group and hugged and congratulated. The trip ended an ordeal involving imprisonment of Mr.

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Kudirka, repeated arrests of his Brooklyn-born mother by the Soviet secret police and the eviction of his wife and family from their home.

A spokesman for the Lithuanian-American who greeted him said the Kudirkas would temporarily stay with one of the families that had worked for their release.

The spokesman said the Kudirkas were fatigued after the trip from the Soviet Republic of Lithuania to Moscow by train, and then the flight from Moscow to New York.

Kudirka was a radio operator aboard the Soviet ship Sovetskaya Litva when he tried to defect on Nov. 23, 1970.

The ship was tied to the Vigilant, a United States Coast Guard cutter, off the New England coast and the ships' officers were discussing fishing rights.

Mr. Kudirka jumped aboard the Vigilant and said he wanted

asylum. After consultation with higher officers, the ship's captain allowed Russian crewmen to come aboard. The Russians beat Mr. Kudirka and dragged him back to the Soviet vessel.

Repercussions of the episode reached the White House. After an investigation, two Coast Guard officers primarily involved retired.

Mr. Kudirka was sentenced on treason charges to 10 years in a Soviet prison. The Supreme Soviet, the Soviet legislature ordered his release last August.

Less than a month before Mr. Kudirka's release, the United States State Department declared him an American citizen after an investigation showed that his mother had been born in Brooklyn.

Mrs. Kudirka went to Lithuania before the country was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940.