



A uniformed Soviet guard outside the U.S. Embassy in Moscow watching people examine a photo display board. Soviet authorities have imposed round-the-clock police surveillance and checks at the embassy entrance. Robert Sandler

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Harassment Reported at U.S. Embassy in Moscow

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MOSCOW, May 31 — Soviet policemen have reportedly tightened controls and stepped up harassment around the American Embassy, intercepting and sometimes holding and interrogating Soviet citizens, Americans and even diplomats trying to enter the embassy.

"There are virtually daily incidents, daily drag-aways," complained one American Embassy official. "This crude treatment is hardly in keeping with the spirit of détente. We consider these denials of access as violations of the Soviet-American consular convention."

Today, gray-uniformed militia guards stopped Arnold Ozolins, an American seaman who came here in 1960 and was forced to take out a Soviet passport as a condition of visiting his elderly mother in Riga.

Mr. Ozolins's wife and family live in Maspeth, Queens and he has been trying in vain to get

back to them in America for years. He was topped and interrogated for about 15 minutes today about entering the embassy, although consular officials consider him an American citizen entitled to free access.

'Help Me! Help Me!'

Yesterday, Soviet guards physically blocked Alexander Brenner, scientific counselor of the West German Embassy, when he was going to obtain an American visa. Guards held him while questioning him about whom he was going to see and why. They would not release him until he produced documents showing that he was a diplomat. On Memorial Day, a Rumanian diplomat was turned away by Soviet guards.

Two weeks ago, embassy officers had to go to the rescue of Dean C. Hoxsey, an American Communist, who was being dragged away by four militia men, as he was shouting, "help me! help me! I am an American."

After living here since 1957, Mr. Hoxsey said he wanted to return to the United States.

Scores of others cases have not come to light, but Soviet citizens have told American journalists and embassy officials that they have been blocked and forcibly taken away for long interrogations at booths and in cellars of houses within a block of the embassy, some right around the corner.

In many of these cases, Soviet citizens and embassy officials say, the people involved had written invitations from the American consulate inviting them to come to the embassy on consular matters, such as getting in touch with relatives in America, seeking lost relatives, applying for visas or inquiring about possible American citizenship.

In the Soviet Union, such invitations are necessary for access to almost any apartment building where foreigners live or to almost any embassy compound. Without them, Soviet citizens are routinely turned back by guards. Even with them, Soviet citizens report, they are turned back.

"The guards told me I must be crazy trying to go into the American Embassy," one young Russian remarked. "They accused me of picking up my invitation card off the street. They took it away from me and warned me never to try to go back to the embassy again. They told me that if I tried to contact the embassy again, they would take away my permission to live in Moscow and move me out to Siberia or somewhere."

On some occasions, American diplomats have gone to the Soviet interrogation booths

near the embassy to try to gain release of Soviet citizens seized at the embassy entrance. The Soviet militia respond by refusing to permit them entry to the interrogation rooms or any contact with the Soviet citizens, and routinely deny seizure of anyone with embassy business.

"But in some cases we have known in advance who was coming and exactly what time," said one American officer, "and later, we have gotten confirmation that they were intercepted, taken away and interrogated."

The confirmation has come from Soviet citizens who have defied Soviet warnings and who have, after braving the pressures and harassment, managed to gain access to the consulate.

Repeated protests and complaints to the Soviet Foreign Ministry by the embassy, on the basis of the Soviet-American consular convention signed 10 years ago, have been to no avail. The Soviet Foreign Ministry has steadfastly said there is no interference with access to the embassy for those with legitimate business there.

The problem has evidently been aggravated by détente, diplomats believe, because Soviet citizens sometimes assume that with better political and diplomatic relations they can approach the American Embassy more freely.

The Soviet Authorities have evidently felt unrestrained in handling the issue with tight, round-the-clock police surveillance and checks at the embassy because neither the White House, Secretary of State Kissinger nor Congress has shown much interest on this issue.