

Hertz

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February 27, 1985

Honorable A. M. Rekunkov
Procurator General USSR
Procuracy Pushkinskaya
Ulitsa 15a Moscow 103009
USSR

Dear Mr. Rekunkov:

On October 19, 23 and 24, 1984, my associates Melvin Stein, Esq., Alan Pesky and I visited the Office of the Procuracy. We came to express our concern and that of our professional and business colleagues in the United States over the arrests of Alexander Kholmiansky and Yuli Edelstein, two young Russian Jews, whose incarceration on criminal charges we believed to be related solely to their religious observance and their teaching of the Hebrew language and Jewish culture, and not because of any actual criminal conduct on their part. On our last visit, we left a written statement with Mr. N.V. Maslov of your office, addressed to you, outlining our views on these cases, a copy of which is enclosed for your convenience. During our visits, as noted in the enclosed statement, we also spoke on behalf of three other Russian Jews, Jacob Levin, Jacob Mesh, and Marc Nepomnashi, all of whom appear to have been similarly treated because of their religious background.

Both Mr. Kholmiansky and Mr. Edelstein have now been convicted by Soviet courts of certain crimes -- possession of bullets and hooliganism in the case of Kholmiansky, and possession of drugs in the case of Edelstein. We will say nothing further about the nature of these charges or the sentences imposed, beyond reiterating the basic points we raised in our written presentation: namely, that the charges are utterly incongruous with the character and background, and past records, of these young men.

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Honorable A. M. Rekunkov

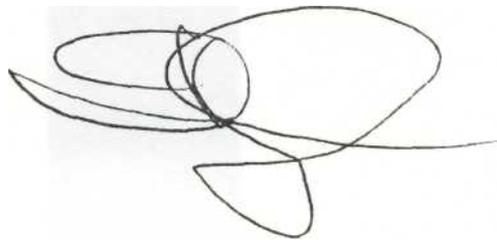
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We write now concerning a separate phase of the Kholmiansky case. Based on reports we have received, we understand that Mr. Kholmiansky's family has not been permitted to visit him for many months. Under Soviet law, as you know, such a visit is permitted -- at least after sentencing. Yet in this case, we understand that the visit is being denied because Mr. Kholmiansky has been engaged in a hunger strike. This seems to be an unusually harsh and unreasonable reaction by the authorities. Also, is it not inconsistent with the very purpose of Soviet law which requires visitation rights for the benefit of the prisoner's family, even if not for the prisoner?

We, therefore, respectfully urge, on simple humanitarian grounds, that you permit Mr. Kholmiansky's family to visit with him at the earliest possible date. Such a gesture could scarcely be detrimental to the Soviet system. On the other hand, it would temper your Government's power and authority, reflecting its legitimate concern for and recognition of its citizens' rights in this situation and would certainly be gratefully received and acknowledged.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

IK:lh

Enclosure

Registered Mail/
Return Receipt Requested