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INFORMATION REPORT

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PREPARED AND DISSEMINATED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

COUNTRY
China

REPORT NO. 25X1A2g
DATE DISTR. [REDACTED]

SUBJECT
Teacher's Experience Leaving Red China/
Interrogations and Procedures

NO. OF PAGES 3
NO. OF ENCLS. 5

PLACE ACQUIRED 25X1A6a

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT #

DATE ACQUIRED [REDACTED] DATE OF INFORMATION (Date or dates, on or between which, events or conditions described in report existed)
Late 1954 Believed late 1954

RESPONSIVE TO
OO/C-

SOURCE [REDACTED]

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- "Departure from Red China is a difficult process. First, a visa to a foreign country must be obtained. The next step is to apply for an exit permit, and it is here that real trouble begins. The application form contains hundreds of items, some of them of a purely personal character. For instance, one has to state the class-origin and occupation of the applicant's grandparents, parents and relatives, residing in China as well as abroad. One is subjected to interrogation by a high-class specialist whose methods are similar to those used by his USSR instructors. After 'sounding one out' for a couple of hours, during which period questions from all departments of life must be answered, one leaves the General Police Department in a hopeful state, expecting that everything is cleared up to the satisfaction of all concerned. What a childish notion! One has hardly reached one's home when a police agent calls. He wants to know your real reason for leaving and wonders whether you are dissatisfied with somebody's treatment and have some complaint to make. Having assured him that you have no complaint whatsoever, you expect the interview to end. But suddenly he confronts you with the direct question of whether you are leaving because of your disapproval of the Red regime. Watching your face intently he demands a plain answer....Inexplicably, a sense of some unknown guilt assails one, and one begins to dread the constantly recurring inquests.
- "After a couple of weeks of prolonged questioning by the different agents of the Security Service and Economic Police, who appear at any hour of the day and stay for any period of time, one becomes worried as to the issuing of the Exit Permit.
- "The fixed limit of funds that one can take out of China is GD 30. Since the writer and her husband had resided in China for several decades and had some savings, they applied for a permit to withdraw this money, explaining that it was earned by teaching in local schools and not by commercial transactions, which are nowadays considered harmful. No amount of explanation was of any avail, and after many fruitless efforts, they had to leave their savings behind.

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- At this stage they had much trouble in giving definite proof as to where and in whose keeping the money had been left. Only after proving this fact conclusively and incontrovertibly could they hope to be granted Exit Permits. A small but artistically carved collection of Chinese Ivory had to be sold urgently at a trifling price, as new regulations were promulgated, prohibiting export of ivory from the country. Explanation was given that this collection had been in the family for years and was not bought for export, but this proved of no help.
4. "Having surmounted these obstacles, one starts packing, but here a new problem arises: As the would-be travelers are prohibited from being present at the examination of their heavy luggage, one has to engage a special agent, whose duty it is to re-pack all the belongings after the Custom's search. This agent informs one of the 'export quota' for diamonds, gold, silver, carpets and furs. This quota is changed almost every month.
 5. "The writer happened to have a beautifully wrought Chinese gold bracelet, the weight of which exceeded the small export quota. She was summoned to the Economic Police Department, where a meeting took place of the chief with the Communist-activists. As a result it was declared that the bracelet was 'overweight' and, therefore, could not be taken out of China. Instead, a compensation was proposed at the official rate for gold. As the writer admired this work of art, she suggested that a part of the bracelet weighing exactly as much as the existing quota permitted should be cut off. But she was reminded that she and her husband would desire to take with them their watches and wedding rings. This being the case the quota would be filled up already, and consequently there would remain no extra weight for the unlucky bracelet. Thus, a cherished work of art was left behind. Payment was effected according to the official rate. The writer's engagement ring followed in the bracelet's wake, for the reason of its exceeding the quota. Next came a new surprise! It was made known that all documents, letters, photos, etc., had to be submitted to the Security Service several days prior to departure. The writer had a couple of old-fashioned family albums containing photos of her large family left in Russia, also her parents' photos. After a meeting with the young activists, the Senior Agent of the Department declared to the writer that only loose, unattached photos could be taken. The explanation was that the hard cardboard sheets could be split and secret information slipped in between.
 6. "Some of the belongings were packed in a beautifully carved Chinese trunk made of camphor wood. The trunk was broken to pieces by the Customs in their attempt to find hidden secrets in the thick lid and bottom.
 7. "Finally, after one has been deprived of a vast number of treasured possessions and is depressed by the endless interrogations of Agents of the General Police, Economic Police, Customs Authorities and Security Service, one is summoned to the Passport Section, and after an additional lengthy inquest, the longed-for Exit Permit is granted. Surely now all the difficulties are over. But no! Further disappointments are waiting. All light luggage as well as the travelers themselves have to be examined, prior to embarkation. In port you take quick leave of the few Chinese friends who 'dared' to see you off--their contact with 'undesirables' entails grave risk for them. Passengers are taken to a huge go-down, where they are placed in two long queues. Women are ordered to take off coats and blouses in the presence of all the company. Communist young activists perform a personal search.

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The writer's long hair caused her much trouble--it was twisted into a thick roll at the nape of her neck. This aroused suspicion on the part of the activists, who commanded her to unloose her hair. Men were simultaneously searched in the same manner. Objections only aggravate the situation. This was proved beyond doubt when several who had protested against a bodily search were taken to separate cubicles, where they were subjected to a much more rigorous bodily examination. Ones suitcases and bags were emptied onto the floor of the go-down and they were 'sounded' with the aid of some special, previously non-existent gadget.

8. "When after all this the travelers are led along a narrow passage to the boat that is to take them out of Red China, there is a tremendous feeling of relief, despite the sadness of leaving devoted friends behind. One leaves the country with a feeling of deep sympathy and grave concern for these kindly, industrious, and friendly people, who are passing through terrifying tribulations. May God help them!"

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