

The City

Trustees Rebuffed In Synagogue Sale

The trustees of a Lower East Side synagogue did not have the right to sell the building to a Buddhist group, Justice Martin Stecher ruled yesterday in State Supreme Court in Manhattan. He ordered that a trial be started to determine if the \$180,000 sale should be set aside.

Justice Stecher's ruling came in a suit brought by 20 members of Congregation Chebra Ukadisha Israel Mikalwarie. They objected to the sale of the synagogue last August to the Eastern Buddhist Association.

Justice Stecher said that while the three trustees had "custody and control" of the synagogue on Pike Street, they had not been vested with the power to sell it. He ordered that the \$180,000 be frozen until the trial was completed.

Bank Plot Charged To Manhattan Man

Hugh Winchester, 49 years old, has been arrested at his home at 26 East 93d Street on Federal charges that he conspired to purchase a St. Louis bank with \$5.9 million in fraudulent bank drafts, authorities said yesterday.

A spokesman for the Federal Bureau of Investigation said that Mr. Winchester had deposited at the North St. Louis Trust Company \$5.9 million in drafts drawn on Finabankers International Ltd., a bank in Rome. The funds were to be used in part to buy the trust company but, the spokesman said, Finabankers had assets of only \$1,100 and used an apartment in Rome as its business address.

The F.B.I. said that Mr. Winchester's alleged co-conspirator, identified as Finabankers' president, Felice Alberto Morella, was arrested last Friday by authorities in Rome.

Air Traffic Delay Laid to Computer

Air traffic in and out of the New York area was delayed yesterday for up to an hour because of trouble with the Federal Aviation Administration's main traffic-control computer for the area.

The computer is installed at the agency's traffic control center for New York's airports, at Long Island MacArthur Airport, in Ronkonkoma. Technicians deliberately shut down the computer Tuesday night so that modifications could be made in anticipation of getting an improved backup device for use in case the main system fails.

Controllers had to revert to an earlier-era control system that lacks automatic altitude data and numerous other computerized capabilities when the computer malfunctioned. Planes were spaced much farther apart than normally to avoid midair collisions. At 6 P.M., trouble-shooters were still working on the system.

The new backup system, expected to be in place in six months, will automatically provide altitude data and identity of aircraft in case of a shutdown of the main system.

Tax-Exempt Parcels Face a City Review

Ten thousand real estate parcels currently carried on the city tax rolls as belonging to nonprofit organizations and therefore exempt from \$284 million a year in taxes will be reviewed by the City Tax Commission. The properties are listed as owned by organizations operated exclusively for religious or charitable purposes or as hospitals, educational institutions or cemeteries.

Last January, a state ruling required

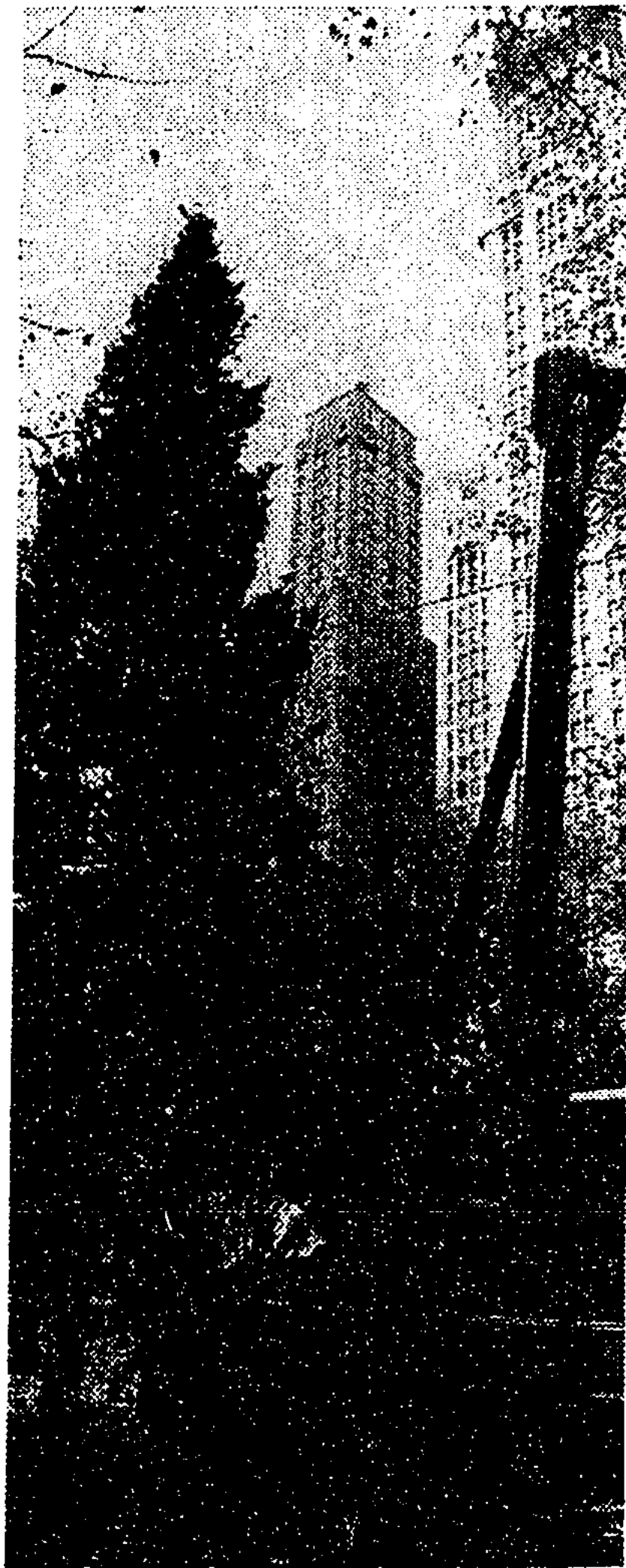
such organizations to file applications to retain their tax-exempt status. Properties owned by religious and charitable groups currently have an aggregate assessed value of \$3.25 billion.

Christmas Future Casts Shadow in City

New York City's official Christmas tree, a 55-foot balsam fir from upstate New York, was installed yesterday in City Hall Park. It is the first of 35 donated by the International Paper Company that will be placed at borough halls and at such locations as Washington Square Park, Prospect Park and the municipal zoos.

Gordon J. Davis, the Parks Commissioner, said the trees would be officially lighted at dusk on Dec. 12.

The City Hall tree was trucked down from International Paper's tree plantation at Tupper Lake, N.Y., in the Adirondacks. Had the city bought the trees, they would have cost \$18,830, Mr. Davis said.



The New York Times/Neal Boenzi

The city's official Christmas tree being set up in City Hall Park.

Legal Staff on Strike

The 300-member staff of Community Action for Legal Services Inc., which represents poor people in civil actions, went on strike for better pay and more training programs. The group includes attorneys, paralegal aides, secretaries and receptionists. An attorney starting out at the organization is paid about \$15,000 a year.

The group receives Federal funds for 23 offices in all boroughs except Staten Island. Its annual budget is \$10 million.