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Riot police club demonstrators

MOSCOW (AP) -- Helmeted riot police wielding truncheons repeatedly charged and clubbed demonstrators Monday night after a candlelight vigil outside KGB headquarters in memory of Stalin's victims. Scores of protesters were knocked to the ground, beaten and dragged into police buses.

About 40 people were detained, the official Tass news agency said, in what was the harshest crackdown on protesters in Moscow in more than 1 1/2 years. Tass said the protesters were "trying to create as much disruption as possible, to display anti-Soviet posters and shout anti-Soviet slogans."

The clashes took place on some of central Moscow's busiest streets and were especially jarring because of the more permissive political climate instituted under President Mikhail S. Gorbachev's wide-ranging reforms.

About 1,000 Soviets converged on KGB headquarters at Dzerzhinsky Square after dusk to mark the unofficial "Day of the Political Prisoner" and mourn the millions who were wrongly imprisoned or killed under Josef Stalin.

The hourlong protest, in which two rows of people holding flickering candles lined up on three sides of the building, proceeded peacefully. It had been organized by the Memorial Society, which seeks to commemorate those who suffered unjustly under Stalin, and the Democratic Union, a self-styled opposition to the Communist Party.

At the end of the demonstration, a splinter group of about 500 people, mostly young men, marched off in the direction of Pushkin Square, a favorite rallying site for human rights activists.

Chanting, "Shame on the KGB!" and "The KGB is the enemy of the people!" the group was confronted without warning by riot police two blocks from Pushkin Square as they passed out leaflets to homebound commuters.

The white-helmeted police, armed with long black rubber trun-

cheons, formed a line, then waded into the protesters, clubbing at least four of their leaders to the ground, then dragging them into nearby buses for detention.

The demonstrators retreated, then formed again and headed to Gorky Street, the main thoroughfare leading to Pushkin Square. The riot police and other uniformed officers sealed off the square and split the protesters into two groups.

On Gorky Street, riot police again charged the demonstrators, taking about six into custody. As the protesters were dragged to the buses, specta-

tors shouted: "Shame! Shame!"

Another group of demonstrators, gathered on the southeast side of Pushkin Square, was also repeatedly charged by riot police, who ignored the dozens of television camera teams and foreign reporters who flocked there.

It was the roughest treatment of an unsanctioned demonstration in Moscow since December 1987, when about 200 burly men in civilian clothes roughed up Jews who staged a protest demanding the right to emigrate on the eve of Gorbachev's departure for his Washington summit with Ronald Reagan.

4 arrested for flag burning

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Four people shouting "burn, baby, burn" set fire Monday to three American flags on the steps of the U.S. Capitol in an attempt to force a court test on the constitutionality of a new law banning flag desecration.

"We defy your law," said spokeswoman Nancy Kent.

"We challenge you. Arrest us. Test your statute. Take it back to the Supreme Court and try once again to claim it is all consistent with your constitutional standards of free speech."

One of those arrested was Gregory "Joey" Johnson, whose 1984 arrest for burning a flag at the Republican National Convention in Dallas set in motion the court case that led to the new law.

Another was Scott Tyler, 24, who stirred controversy in Chicago earlier this year by placing a flag on the floor as part of a student exhibit at the School of the Art Institute.

Capitol police charged Johnson, 33, of Richmond, Ind., Tyler and two others with violating the Flag Protection Act of 1989, demonstrating without a permit and disorderly conduct, said police spokesman Dan Nichols.

The other two were identified as Shawn Eichner, 24, of New York

City, and David Blalock, 39, of Johnstown, Pa.

The demonstration came two days after members of a radical Vietnam veterans' group in Seattle, Wash., burned a full-size American flag and 1,000 paper flags to protest the law.

President George Bush, who favors a constitutional amendment to protect the flag, allowed the measure to become law without his signature. It went into effect at 12:01 a.m. Saturday.

It provides punishment of up to one year in jail and a \$1,000 fine for anyone who "knowingly mutilates, defaces, physically defiles, burns, maintains on the floor or ground, or tramples upon any flag of the United States."

The Supreme Court sparked the controversy earlier this year by declaring an existing law aimed at protecting the flag to be an unconstitutional intrusion on free speech. Johnson had been convicted under that law.

Flags were burned in several cities shortly after the new law went into effect. U.S. Attorney Mike McKay said in Seattle that the FBI is investigating the flag burning there to determine if a criminal complaint is warranted.

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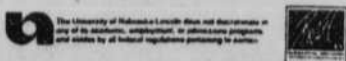
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Federal ruling renews controversy over appropriateness of Halloween

By The Associated Press

Some parents are sure that Satan lurks behind the cardboard black cats and witches that hang from classroom walls. Armed with a recent federal ruling strengthening legal restrictions on religion in the schools, they are demanding that Halloween be banned.

Those who view the day as an excuse to dress up and drink up and give children a night to wheedle sweets may be surprised that some people believe it's a religious holiday.

When teachers dress up like witches, says Robert Guyer of Alachua County, Fla., "what happens to these little Christian kids like mine? How are they going to feel when it's dress-up day and they don't dress up?"

Guyer gathered the signatures of about 200 parents who think the holiday is a religious celebration of Wicca, a modern witchcraft cult.

Officials in Alachua County left the decision on Halloween up to their local principals, but in neighboring Levy County, the superintendent asked schools to avoid using Halloween decorations and to cancel school celebrations.

Halloween apparently sprang from an ancient ceremony honoring the Celtic god of death, but in medieval England it came to be known as All Hallows' Eve, celebrated before the feast day of All Hallows, now All Saints'

Day. As is the case with the pagan Christmas tree, few pay attention to its religious origins.

But Guyer, a University of Florida law student, cites an 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruling in Atlanta earlier this year that found that prayers before high school football games violate the constitutional separation of church and state.

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