



In Defense of Democracy & Civil Rights

COALITION FOR HUMAN DIGNITY

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NORTHWEST UPDATE

June 15, 1997

1. MORE EFFIGYS HUNG IN SALEM; GEORGE HANSEN ADDRESSES RALLY: A rally held June 3 on the steps of the Capitol in Salem, Oregon featured former Idaho Congressman George Hansen. Organized by Ed Snook, the owner and publisher of the far-right Oregon Observer, rally participants (numbering 150-200) showed their support for Lawrence Carver, the Eugene, Oregon man who hung an effigy of Children's Services Director Kay Toran, an African-American, at a previous rally April 28 (See Northwest Update, May 1). Carver and his associates came to the June 3 rally prepared with a scaffold and hanging nooses mounted in the back of a pick-up truck from where they hung the same effigy of Toran and four other Oregon State legislators. Snook, Hansen, and a gaggle of other far-rightists then convened a press conference wherein they announced a "\$60 million lawsuit" naming Toran, "the State of Oregon," the Oregon State Police, and a number of legislators as defendants.

Snook waxed eloquently, "I think it [the effigy] sends a pretty good message. I think it sends a message to stop listening to the damn socialism..."

The rally was promoted by Gun Owners of America, although the Oregon representative of the group, Kevin Starrett, was apparently not present. Snook also boasted that "My friends at the Gun Owners of America hold the same values I do. They think the Constitution's important."

Hansen made the following dubious claim during his address to the crowd: "All my life I've been interested in human rights. I'm head of a human rights group right now." CHD staffers are curious as to the political orientation of this "human rights" group.

Other rally attendees of note include Paul DeParrie, editor of the pro-murder anti-abortion magazine, the Life Advocate; Roger Weidner, a former attorney associated with the Multnomah County Common Law Court; and, Tim Richardson, a Common Law Court activist from Creswell, Oregon. Weidner was the apparent organizer of a follow-up rally held June 13th on the capital steps that attracted only 30-50 supporters.

2. UPOW TAKES PART IN HEARINGS ON INDIAN SHELLFISH RIGHTS: In early May, James Johnson, a former Washington State Assistant Attorney General and the lawyer for the anti-Indian organization United Property Owners of Washington, testified before a federal appeals court which is reviewing a 1994 ruling by U.S. District Court Judge Edward Rafeedie. Judge Rafeedie's ruling had determined that 1850s treaties signed with Puget Sound Indian tribes reserved to the tribes one-half of the harvestable shellfish in their "usual and accustomed" fishing grounds. Indian tribes, shellfish industry representatives and private property owners are appealing various aspects of the ruling.

As usual, the arguments put forward by UPOW combine a faulty version of Indian treaty rights with an attack that would have implications beyond this specific case. In the Summer 1997 issue of the UPOW Update, UPOW executive director Barbara Lindsey writes, "UPOW attorney, Jim Johnson, argued that the treaties were in fact designed to 'extinguish' future claims by the Indians... The United States and Tribes agreed to extinguish all Indian claims to the 'lands and territory' except for the reservations." UPOW's argument flies in the face of the fact that the 1850's "Stevens' Treaties" clearly reserved certain off-reservation resource rights to the tribes. If successful the argument would effectively overturn key parts of the treaties (Tacoma News Tribune, May 6; Eastside Journal, May 6; West Sound Sun, May 6, AP, May 6).

3. NEW AMERICAN CIRCULATION IN THE NORTHWEST: According to the John Birch Society, the number of subscriptions to its conspiracy-minded publication, The New American, has dropped 1.76% per congressional district around the country. In the northwest, the group claims that Washington has 1205 subscribers, Idaho 619, Oregon 465 and Montana 352. The group also claims that its three top congressional districts are in the northwest. These are, in order, Montana's single district at 352 subscriptions, Idaho's first district (Helen Chenowith's) at 330

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and Idaho's second district at 289. Idaho's second district moved from seventh place in 1996 to third place in 1997, a feat the Birch Society attributes to activists such as Montpelier, Idaho's Lyman Kunz who is reported to have sold 30 subscriptions this year. Other top northwest congressional districts include Oregon's second with 204 subscriptions and Washington's fifth district with 200 (JBS Bulletin, May 1997).

4. PHINEAS DEFENDANTS TO BE TRIED TOGETHER: Federal Judge Frem Neilson ruled in early June that the four defendants in the infamous Spokane bombing and bank robbery case will be tried together. Charles Barbee, Robert Berry and Jay Merrill were convicted in April of conspiracy, weapons charges and auto theft, though a mistrial was declared on the bombing and robbery charges. Brian Ratigan was not tried in the first case, and has sought to have his case separated from the other three. He is charged only in the July 12, 1996 bombing of a Spokane Planned Parenthood and robbery of a U.S. bank. The other three are also charged with an April 1 bombing and robbery. Ratigan has, however, been allowed to have a separate table in the courtroom and a separate private meeting room from the other three defendants. The trial is scheduled to begin June 23. Nielsen also rejected Merrill's claim that re-trying him after the hung jury constituted double jeopardy (Spokesman Review, Jun 4).

5. KUEHNOEL SENTENCED: Gary Kuehnoel, one of seven far right activists convicted in connection to Washington State Militia bomb-making activity, was sentenced on May 30 to 27 months in federal prison for possession of an unregistered automatic weapon (Seattle P-I, May 31).

6. ARMY KNEW OF PREVIOUS BURMEISTER THREATS: According to a CBS news report, the U.S. Army was informed that James Burmeister had threatened to blow up the police chief of his hometown months before he murdered an African-American couple in Raleigh, North Carolina. Despite this knowledge, the Army continued to allow Burmeister to work in an arms room at Ft. Bragg. FBI spokeswoman Joann Marley told the Associated Press that the Army was told that Burmeister was being investigated for an alleged criminal conspiracy months before the December 1995 murders. Capt. Vincent Baker, Burmeister's commanding officer, told reporters that the FBI assured him that it was not necessary to remove Burmeister from the arms room. Baker has since resigned from the military (AP).

7. ICAN UPDATE: At its June 24th meeting the Idaho Citizens Awareness Network is scheduled to show the video "America's Judgement" by the Militia of Montana. The event is scheduled for 7:00 PM at the Sandpoint Community Hall.

8. GORDON SELLNER CONVICTED: Montana far right activist Gordon Sellner was convicted June 10 on two charges of possessing illegal weapons. Sellner, who is already serving a life sentence for the attempted murder of a sheriff's deputy, faces an additional 10 years in prison on the weapons charges. The weapons in question were a sawed-off shotgun and a fully-automatic home-assembled sub-machine gun. Sellner was acquitted on a charge of possessing a pipe bomb (AP, June 11).

9. FREEDOM FORUM UPDATE: The scheduled speaker at the June 2 Freedom Forum meeting, billed as a "Freedom Forum & Grassroots Alliance Special Event," was Len Horowitz, author of Emerging Viruses: Aids and Ebola Nature, Accident or Intentional?

9. NEWS FROM MONTANA: The June issue of the Montana Human Rights Network's Network News Flash reports a number of recent developments in Montana far right and Christian Right organizing. Knights of the Ku Klux Klan leader John Abarr has moved his "Realm of Montana" to Great Falls from his long-time base in Billings. Abarr surfaced in late May when he sent a flier to the Bozeman Daily Chronicle "warning" readers of the "threat" of contracting AIDS at the June 6-8 Pride! weekend celebration.

Meanwhile, following a national trend, the Christian Coalition of Montana held a May 3 "God and Country Rally" in an effort to build alliances with minorities. About 50 people attended the rally. During the 1997 legislative session the Christian Coalition lobbied in favor of ending affirmative action.

Roland Morris has taken over as president of All Citizens Equal (ACE), a Polson-based anti-Indian organization. His wife Lisa Morris is now ACE's secretary. Roland, who claims to be a member of the Minnesota Chippewa tribe has been outspoken in opposition to the management of a Bison Range by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai tribes which he terms "foreign governments."

On the Christian Patriot front, Raymond Yates, the son-in-law of tax protestor Gordon Sellner, pleaded guilty

in March to charges of obstruction of justice for impeding the arrest of Sellner for the 1992 shooting of Missoula County Deputy Sheriff Bob Parcell. Steve McNeil has also been convicted of using a \$2,600 bogus check from Identity figure Leroy Schweitzer to pay a court fine.

Montana Representative Wes Prouse (R-Sheppard) has come out as a "contitutionalist." Prouse claims not to believe in drivers' licenses and has driven for five years without one. (Montana Human Rights Network, P.O. Box 1222, Helena, MT 59624).

10. SCHOOL DISTRICT PROHIBITS DISCUSSION OF HOMOSEXUALITY: The Pocatello, Idaho School District has issued guidelines that limit discussion in 11th grade sex education classes to "monogamous, heterosexual relationships" (Idaho State Journal, May 21). Parents must give written permission slips before students can attend the classes, and the topics of homosexuality and alternative lifestyles are expressly prohibited. Sexual abstinence until marriage will be taught as birth control.

11. UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON SUED FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAM: Lawyers for Katuria Smith, a white 1994 University of Washington School of Law applicant who claims her rejection was the result of racial discrimination in the admissions process ("reverse discrimination"), filed to make her claim a class action suit that includes all UW School of Law applicants from 1994 who feel they were denied equal consideration.

Smith, now a law student at Seattle University, filed her original charges in March 1997. Michael S. Greve, executive director of the Center for Individual Rights, which is representing Smith, said, "The only significant discrimination at the University's law school has been against those in the majority" (University of Washington Daily, June 2).

The law school has filed a response that asserts the exclusion of race from admissions considerations would "unlawfully discriminate against persons of color" because minorities would be grossly underrepresented.

12. FAR-RIGHT "LACKS LUSTRE" IN BRITISH ELECTIONS: According to the anti-fascist monthly, Searchlight Magazine (June 1997), 87 candidates ran for election on behalf of far-right and overtly racist groups in British general elections held May 1, contesting 80 seats and attracting 49,750 votes. The party fielding the most candidates (56) was John Tyndall's British National Party (BNP). The BNP's best results came from the East End of London where Tyndall polled 2,849 votes, or 7.26%, and Dave King, another BNP candidate, took 3,350 votes (7.50%). Searchlight states: "While the BNP is very far from making a national breakthrough, the results show that it is capable of breaking the 5% barrier, which could be an important threshold if ever proportional representation is introduced."

The Community Security Trust of the Board of Deputies of British Jews summarized the far-right's election results accordingly: "As was the case in 1992, campaigning by all Far Right parties lacked lustre and direction and in many constituencies was hardly evident at all. Reports from around the country indicate that outside their heartlands there was little or no canvassing. Apart from Glasgow Govan there were no reports of violence or disorder at the polling stations or during the election counts, a feature of past years."

Other far-right parties fielding candidates included the National Democrats (21), the National Front (6), The Third Way (2), Pathfinder (1) and Christian Nationalist (1).

••• The CHD Research Department prefers incident reports, newspaper clippings, event write-ups, questions and comments to be e-mailed to chdpdx@aol.com. Alternatively you can mail such items to the address below or call us either in Portland or Seattle at the numbers listed below. CHD Research staff rely upon such information to fill out much of the Northwest Update and we appreciate your contributions. •••

