



In Defense of Democracy & Civil Rights

COALITION FOR HUMAN DIGNITY

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NORTHWEST UPDATE

August 1, 1998

1. HUMAN RIGHTS SUPPORTERS RALLY AGAINST ARYAN MARCH: Nearly 2000 supporters of human rights held rallies in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho and Spokane, Washington to voice opposition to a July 18 march led by the Aryan Nations down the streets of Coeur d'Alene. Press reports estimated that 1000 people gathered along the streets of Coeur d'Alene to protest the march of about 90 Aryan Nations' supporters dressed in neo-Nazi and Ku Klux Klan attire.

While human rights advocates had debated for weeks whether or not to hold protests at the site of the march, in the end opponents of the Aryan Nations came from around the region to voice their disgust with the group's race hatred and history of violence. Representatives from the Bonner County Human Rights Task Force (BCHRTF), the San Poile Human Rights league and area Buddhist and Quaker groups organized a community-based effort that brought counter-demonstrators to Coeur d'Alene. Joining the local activists in support of the anti-Aryan rally were Robert Crawford of the Coalition for Human Dignity, Michelle Lefkowitz of Communities Against Hate and Eric Ward of the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment.

In Spokane, some 800 people attended a rally at Gonzaga University to protest Aryan Nations' bigotry. Those at the Spokane event heard speeches by Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment executive director Bill Wassmuth and Eva Lassman, a Holocaust survivor, among others. Afterward attendees danced to music by a reggae band. As announced at the Spokane event and a gathering following the Coeur d'Alene protest, the Making Lemonade campaign, a plan supported by regional and local human rights groups to gather pledges for every minute the Aryan Nation's marchers were in the street, raised about \$28,000 for human rights groups.

On the Aryan Nations' side, the march was joined by a number of old and new white supremacist allies. Accompanying Butler in the truck that led the march was longtime Aryan Nations leader Charles Tate, now of North Carolina. Other marchers included Rick E. Cooper of the National Socialist Vanguard, Washington Klan figure Mark Downey, a contingent of Klan members from Texas headed by Charles Lee, the grand dragon of the White Kamelia Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Another reported marcher was Proctor Baker, a Moscow, Idaho man who served time in prison for a 1990 plot to bomb a gay bar in Seattle. Speakers at the Aryan Nation's conference scheduled for the next day included Ohio Aryan Nations' leader Ray Redfairn and onetime Montana Klan leader Charles Howarth. One notable attendee who watched from the sideline was Montana racist Charles Mangels, on hand with camera and sporting a Phineas Priest belt buckle. In a move that surprised many, Richard Butler announced that 72-year old Aryan Nations California leader Neuman Britton is to become Butler's successor to head the group. Britton, married to Joan Kahl, the former wife of Posse Comitatus leader Gordon Kahl.

2. ARYAN NATIONS MEMBER SENTENCED FOR BANK ROBBERY: Aryan Nations member John A. Luther was sentenced to six years in prison for the June 1997 robbery of an Ohio bank. In mid-July Luther pleaded no contest to the charges shortly before the date set to begin his trial. Lorain County (Ohio) assistant county prosecutor Robert Corts told reporters that Luther's confession will be used in the trials of his brother, William, 22, and friend Scott Smith, 21. Both are currently being held on similar charges (AP, July 16).

3. KIRBY KEHOE SENTENCED: Kirby Kehoe, the eastern Washington white supremacist alleged to have been a leader in the Aryan People's Republic, was sentenced in late July to 51 months in a federal prison for possession of hand grenades and a machine gun. Members of the Aryan Republic, which reportedly include Kirby's son Chevie, are alleged to have committed five murders, robberies and the bombing of the Spokane City Hall in their quest to create a polygamous white Republic. A previous indictment against Kirby Kehoe accuses him of possessing a handgun belonging to an Arkansas woman who was murdered along with her husband and 8-year-old daughter (*Spokesman Review*, July 22).

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4. KOERNKE TARGET OF FBI INVESTIGATION: Michigan Militia leader Mark Koernke has become the target of a FBI domestic terrorism investigation for allegedly using his shortwave radio show to urge listeners to murder Assistant U.S. Attorney Llyod Meyer for prosecuting a man linked to the militia. Koernke was arrested with Anne Elizabeth Dawson nearly two months ago near Battle Creek, Michigan. When arrested, Koernke was reported by police to have called himself Michael Kern and spoken in a contrived Irish brogue (*Ann Arbor News*, July 22).

5. REPUBLIC OF TEXAS MEN LINKED TO ASSASSINATION PLOT: Three men who reportedly told a federal informant that they belonged to the Republic of Texas have been alleged by the FBI to have plotted to kill President Clinton and other officials. Johnnie Wise, Jack Grebe and Oliver Emight were arrested July 1 in Olmito, Texas and charged with conspiring to use weapons of mass destruction against federal officials including Clinton, U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno and FBI director Louis Freeh. Two recently unsealed FBI affidavits report that the three discussed using cactus thorn's poisoned with the AIDS virus against the officials. The affidavit alleges that a June 26 e-mail sent to Freeh stated, "Your FBI employees and their families have been targeted for destruction by revenge." The affidavit claims that an FBI informant also heard two of the suspects discuss the use of chicken parts to produce botulism and said all three had identified themselves as members of the Republic of Texas (Reuters, July 14).

6. EXPOSE ON VAL STEVENS: A July 19 Everett Herald expose on Val Stevens chronicles the longtime Washington State legislator's far right-style tax protest, defense of common law court activists and history of attacks on civil and human rights. Stevens, who has served as a the state contact for Concerned Women for America, led a charge to criticize the Washington state patrol for alerting state legislators to the threat of common law court intimidation, proposed so-called sheriff enhancement legislation and has long crusaded against gay and lesbian rights. Stevens is also a leader in the newly formed Conservative Caucus, a conservative block of legislators who attacked moderate Republicans as "pro-death" for not voting for a bill to ban late term abortions.

7. FAMILY RESEARCH COUNCIL PRAISES ENGLISH ONLY: Commenting on the passage of California's "English Only" Proposition 227, Family Research Council writer Ryan Messmore approvingly writes that "With half the nation's bilingual programs in California, the June 2 victory should lend support to congressional efforts to roll back federal bilingual programs. This may mark the beginning of a national trend to end these failed programs" (*Washington Watch*, June 1998).

8. PLAN TO SEIZE SLOT MACHINES PROMPTS PRO-TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY RALLY: An estimated 500 tribal leaders and members and non-Indian supporters of Indian sovereignty rallied the federal building in Spokane July 16 to protest the request by the U.S. attorney's office in Spokane, Washington for a federal judge to order the seizure of some 2,000 slot machines on the Colville and Spokane Indian reservations. Another 1000 plus were estimated to have marched nearby or maintained a encampment at Riverfront Park.

Speakers at the rally focused on the rights to sovereignty and economic self-determination of Indian people and the importance of the Indian gaming industry to Indians and non-Indians alike. Demonstrators carried signs declaring "Save Our Slots" and "Save Our Sovereignty," among other messages supporting tribal sovereignty. Calling all of the tribal children present to come to the front of the rally, Colville Confederated Tribes councilwoman Doll Watt told those gathered "I want to show you why we're here. This is why we're here." On hand to support the rally, Nez Perce general council chairman Richard Broncheau told the crowd that "There's no way the state of Idaho, which is where I live, or the state of Washington has the right to tell us what to do" (*Spokesman Review*, July 17).

••• 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. •••