



In Defense of Democracy & Civil Rights

COALITION FOR HUMAN DIGNITY

P. O. Box 21266 • SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98111-3266 • (206) 233-9775

PORTLAND (503) 281-5823 • FAX (503) 281-8673 • E-MAIL: chdpx@aol.com

NORTHWEST UPDATE

December 15, 1997

1. NORTHWEST ACTIVIST MEETING ADDRESSES GROWTH OF FAR RIGHT: The Coalition for Human Dignity and the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment co-sponsored a gathering of human rights activists from around the Pacific Northwest on Dec. 7-8 in Seattle, Washington. The meeting was called to foster communication between grassroots groups and regional human and civil rights organizations and to help coordinate joint organizing around the region. Participants discussed the need for a closer integration of research on the far right with organizing efforts, described the state of human rights organizing and the far right in their locales, and discussed plans for region-wide campaigns in 1998. Key issues identified in regional far right organizing included attacks on affirmative action and growing anti-Indian as well as anti-immigrant activity. Attendees also described the continued presence of the allies of the far right in public office and the localized growth of neo-Nazi skinhead groups. The meeting was facilitated by Coalition for Human Dignity executive director Terre Rybovich, Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights president Leonard Zeskind, and Marlene Hines and Eric Ward of the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment.

2. COALITION FOR HUMAN DIGNITY IN CHICAGO: Coalition for Human Dignity Research Analyst Robert Crawford gave workshops on the anti-immigrant movement, common law courts and militias, and researching the far right at the Center for New Community's "Building Democracy" conference Dec. 5-6 in Chicago, Illinois. Activists from the mid-west reported an upsurge in Ku Klux Klan activity as well as a continued strong presence of common law court organizing. Attendees brought a variety of experiences to the conference, including a strong emphasis on anti-racist work in the religious community.

Crawford's presentation of the anti-immigrant movement looked beneath the economic and environmental arguments used by anti-immigrant activists to the core of white nationalism lurking behind key anti-immigrant think tanks and grassroots groups. The workshop facilitated a useful discussion on the role of racism versus economic stress in fueling anti-immigrant organizing.

The workshop on researching the far right introduced attendees to the nuts and bolts of documenting the bigotry and anti-democratic aims of the far right. Attendees learned the basic kinds of information available on the far right, discussed security issues for human rights groups, and received answers to specific research problems they were confronting. The workshop on research was conducted with the Center for New Community's Building Democracy Initiative director Devin Burghart and Missouri Citizen Education Fund researcher Robyn Steely.

Crawford also participated in a panel discussion titled "The Far Right: 1998 and Beyond." The panel featured Leonard Zeskind of the Institute for Research and Education on Human Rights, Marlene Hines and Eric Ward from the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment, Robyn Steely, and Cathy Cox of the Indiana Interreligious Commission on Human Equality. Panelists discussed the state of far right influence in America as well as bright spots in the battle for affirmative action and the possibilities of future anti-racist organizing.

3. HUMAN RIGHTS SUPPORTERS RALLY FOR VICTIMS OF DENVER VIOLENCE: In the wake of an anti-hate rally in downtown Denver, Colorado attended by some 1700 people, human rights activists around the country have committed to organizing events on Dec. 17 to commemorate those killed in the recent outburst of violence in Denver. As of this writing, human rights leaders from Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Washington, Oregon, North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas had initiated events ranging from candlelight vigils, to rallies to ringing bells to voice their concern for the victims of hate crimes. Those interested are encouraged to contact Marlene Hines (303-838-5953) or Zachary Bruce (206-233-9136) of the Northwest Coalition Against Malicious Harassment for information on future responses to hate activity.

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4. FUND-RAISER FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION STRUGGLE: All supporters of human and civil rights are urged to donate to the NO! 200 Campaign, the group fighting Washington state's anti-affirmative action Initiative 200. NO! 200 held a fundraising event on Dec. 17 featuring a host committee of Washington Governor Gary Locke, U.S. Senator Patty Murray, U.S. Rep Jim McDermott, Seattle Mayor Norm Rice and Seattle Mayor-Elect Paul Schell, among others. NO! 200: PO Box 567; Seattle, WA 98111.

5. BUCHANAN CLAIMS VICTORY ON FAST TRACK: Calling it "the first defeat of globalism in fifty years," Paleo-conservative columnist Pat Buchanan is stepping up efforts to appeal to working people by declaring victory in the recent defeat of fast track legislation. Unlike those labor unions that oppose fast track on the grounds that will undermine the well being of workers in the United States and abroad, Buchanan conjures up global conspiracies and appeals to nationalism: "We cannot let this victory become an anomaly in the great march to One World Government. All Americans must understand that their very existence as a nation is at stake...The evidence is before us. Fast Track proved that the strength of our ideas, together with the courage and conviction of those in our cause can re-ignite the spirit of nationalism throughout this great land."

A recent mailing (Nov. 1997) by Buchanan's American Cause appeals to the left even as it highlights Buchanan's differences with those who oppose Fast Track on labor-rights grounds. To encourage left-right alliances on fast track, Buchanan notes how he and Ralph Nader both opposed fast track despite disagreement "on many issues such as *environmental and labor standards*" [emphasis added]. Buchanan has also frequently made clear that his nationalism leans in a racial direction (See *Northwest Update*, Sept. 1, 1997). Buchanan's nationalist, anti-labor-standards stance contrasts with the Washington State Labor Council position that, "We shouldn't continue to reward other countries with dismal labor, environmental and human rights records with generous trade agreements. Instead, we should use these pacts as a tool to encourage responsible, fair treatment of these countries' citizens" (Washington State Labor Council web page, Dec. 13).

Unlike Buchanan, the AFL-CIO holds that "Congress should heed the lessons of NAFTA and only approve new trade negotiating authority that includes *enforceable protections for workers and the environment*...Workers provisions must be subject to the same dispute resolution procedures as other covered issues, issues that businesses care about, like investment and copyright protection" [emphasis added] (AFL-CIO press release, May 5, 1997).

6. CHD OPINION: NEW TERROR STRATEGIES CAUSE DIFFICULTIES IN NICHOLS' TRIAL: On Dec. 11 the defense rested in the case of accused Oklahoma City bomber Terry Nichols, bringing near to close the latest chapter in the story of the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah federal building. With the verdict now in the jury's hands, the only certainty is that the terror strategies that emerged in the white supremacist movement in the early 1990s are having their desired impact – terror cells consisting of a handful of close allies that make arrest and prosecution of their members and associates difficult.

Unlike the dramatic 1985 trial of 21 members of the Order, the trial of Terry Nichols conjures a conspiracy of only a few. The prosecution claimed that Nichols alone aided McVeigh in planning the attack and constructing the bomb used to kill 168 people in Oklahoma City. The defense meanwhile heaped suspicion upon the infamous John Doe II – and possibly others – as McVeigh's actual co-conspirator(s). In either case, only a handful of conspirators are alleged. Like other less dramatic bomb cases of recent origin, the number of alleged conspirators is small – the exceptions being the Arizona Viper Militia case (twelve arrested) and the Washington State Militia case (8 arrested & convicted). *Hunter*, neo-Nazi William Pierce's trash novel of a lone racist assassin, was found in Nichols' home. This book, together with Richard Kelly Hoskins' *Vigilantes of Christendom* and Louis Beam's Leaderless Resistance strategy have steered terror-minded racists away from large, unruly organizations towards tight-knit cells.

The weaknesses in the circumstantial case built by prosecutors stem largely from a lack of reliable witnesses directly tying Nichols to the bombing. Unlike the McVeigh case, where Michael Fortier testified that McVeigh had made explicit his plans to bomb the Murrah building, Fortier here could only testify that McVeigh had mentioned Nichols' (apparently wavering) involvement. The effectiveness of even this testimony was potentially weakened by a strong defense attack on Fortier for his drug involvement. Recent revelations, admitted during the course of the trial, of FBI mishandling of evidence; the spectre of John Doe II still at large; and the emotional portrayal of Nichols as a family man all threaten to give the jury enough cause to acquit.

Nonetheless, prosecutors managed to outline a convincing set of circumstances in tying Nichols to the 1994 robbery of an Arkansas gun dealer (which prosecutors allege was done to finance the bombing); showing his close relationship with McVeigh; and documenting his obsession with ammonium nitrate. Adding other evidence,

prosecutors have depicted Nichols' behavior as consonant with that of a terrorist bomber. On the final day of testimony in the case, testimony damaging to Nichols was given by his wife, Marife. Despite being called by the defense as part of their Nichols-as-family-man strategy, Marife did not know how to spell her husband's last name, could not recall their wedding date, and admitted that she slept late on April 18, 1995 and was thus unable to provide her husband with an alibi on the day he was alleged to have helped McVeigh make the bomb.

If Nichols is found guilty, one more culprit in the Oklahoma City bombing will be brought to justice. If he is found not guilty, it can hardly be claimed that McVeigh masterminded and carried out the bombing by himself. His co-conspirators will remain free and Leaderless Resistance will have won the day in the case of the Oklahoma City bombing. Either way, anti-racist activists should not look to the verdict to end future far right violence.

7. FOUR QUIT HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL; VOW TO FORM NEW GROUP: Four members of the Kitsap County Council for Human Rights—one-third of the 12 member board—resigned Monday, November 17 in a press conference convened at the Kitsap County Indian Center in Silverdale, WA. Council Vice-Chair Joe Chevere, Robin Carson, Thomas Loushe and Leah Slaney said in a prepared statement that “the people of Kitsap County deserve a citizen’s body that can effectively lead in providing the tools and resources necessary for the protection of our community from discrimination, harassment and violence. We are saddened to report that the Kitsap County Council for Human Rights has failed to carry out its mission in this respect...In order to truly live out our commitment to the values of respect, equality, tolerance and dignity for all people of this county, we must have an organization that can serve as the expression and embodiment of these values. We ask you to join us in the creation of this new voice for equality in Kitsap County. We call on county officials, the Human Rights Council and the community at large to support us in our endeavor, and encourage citizens of Kitsap County to join us at our first meeting, to be held on January 6, 1997.”

The Council was formed in the late 1980s in response to a series of hate crimes, including a cross-burning, and until recently served as a model for human rights task forces in the state. (See the *Northwest Update*, February 15, 1997; September 15, 1996; August 1, 1996).

Early in 1996 right wing county commissioners, to whom the Council is answerable, replaced the former chair of the council, Marion Boushie, a respected leader within the Suquamish Indian Tribe, with Christian right supporter Mick Sheldon. Another former council member, Val Torrence, was replaced by Jim Craswell, the son of former GOP gubernatorial candidate Ellen Craswell. Both mother and son are Christian Right stalwarts. Since the appointments of Craswell and Sheldon the Council has been beset by controversy. Moreover, the two have used the council as a conduit to legitimize the Christian Right. They have attacked other human rights organizations for their alleged anti-Christian bias. And Sheldon went so far as to work with the Christian Coalition on an anti-gay campaign while touting his position on the council.

CHD applauds the four former Council members for their courageous stand, and encourages more Council members to remove themselves from the Council, which at best is an impediment to good human rights work and at worst facilitates the organizing of Craswell and Sheldon. CHD staffers will continue to serve as consultants to the four former Council members, and welcome their tentatively-named new organization, the Kitsap Network for Human Rights.

8. SPOKANE POLICE OFFICER CITED FOR VIOLATING TRIBAL SOVEREIGNTY: Disciplinary action has reportedly been taken against Washington State Patrol Officer David Fenn and Fenn's former supervisor, Sgt. David McMillan, for violating the tribal sovereignty of the Spokane Indians by issuing civil and criminal citations on reservation roads. According to Spokane Tribal officials, Fenn admitted to recording civil citations originating on tribal land as if they had occurred off-reservation and acknowledged ignoring direct orders to stop his patrol of reservation roads. Fenn reportedly received ongoing support for the violations from McMillan despite the fact that tribal officials had twice met with Fenn's superiors about the violations. On a troubling note, Washington State Patrol Association President Bill Hanson defended Fenn, reportedly saying, “Why punish one of the highest-producing DWI troops and put the reigns on him?”

Although Spokane tribal officials asked for a federal investigation of civil rights violations, U.S. Attorney Jim Connelly told reporters that there was no basis for the complaint. Spokane vice-chairman Jim Sijohn, however, told *Indian Country Today* (Dec. 8-15) that “We remain concerned. We see a continued pattern of disregard for our civil rights, for the government-to-government process. That disregard flies in the face of the commitments from both state and federal governments, that we deal with each other out of a mutual respect.” *Indian Country Today*: PO Box 2180; Rapid City, SD 57709.

9. KEHOE INDICTED FOR PLOTTING OVERTHROW OF GOVERNMENT: Colville, Washington white supremacist Chevie Kehoe was charged together with two others for plotting to overthrow the government and set up a polygamous "Aryan People's Republic." Kehoe and Daniel Lewis Lee of Oklahoma City were charged in a seven count indictment which includes murder, racketeering and conspiracy. Faron Lovelace of Sanpoint, Idaho, already convicted for murdering fellow racist Jeremy Scott in 1995, was also charged with racketeering in the indictment. Kehoe is alleged to have led the group in a campaign of murders, robberies and kidnappings in a quest to establish the "Aryan People's Republic." According to the indictment, the new country would grow rapidly "by recruiting certain white people into the Republic and by engaging in polygamy so that the number of these white persons would greatly increase." Kehoe and Lee face previous charges in the death of Arkansas gun dealer William Mueller, his wife, Nancy, and their eight year-old daughter. Kehoe and Lovelace are alleged to have transported stolen goods from the Identity compound at Elhoim City, Oklahoma to Spokane, Washington in March 1995 as well as from Arkansas following the murder of the Mueller family (AP, Dec. 12, 13).

10. NEW NORTHWEST COTC CONTACTS: Illinois neo-Nazi Matt Hale's World Church of the Creator has added new contacts in Washington state. They are: P.O. Box 1269; Bremerton, WA 98337 and P.O. Box 110864; Tacoma, WA 98411-0864.

11. ROHRBACKER AT CCIR MEETING: According to the California Coalition for Immigration Reform (CCIR), U.S. Rep. Dana Rohrbaker (R-CA) will speak at the group's Dec. 17 meeting. CCIR also claims to have invited state senator Dick Mountjoy. California Attorney General candidate David Sterling is slated to speak at the group's Jan. 28, 1998 meeting while 46th District congressional candidate Bob Zemel will appear at the Feb. 25 meeting (9*1*1, Nov.).

12. RATIGAN GETS 55 YEARS: Brian Ratigan, convicted in September for his part in a July 1996 bombing of a Planned Parenthood clinic and robbery of a U.S. Bank branch in Spokane, was sentenced to fifty-five years in prison on Dec. 4. During a pre-sentencing hearing, Ratigan reportedly claimed that bombing an abortion clinic is not a crime as abortion violates the Ten Commandments and declared, "People of Spokane, you have been warned...For our creator, there's no such thing as a bank, so there's no such thing as a bank robbery" (AP, Dec.4).

13. STEDFORD PLEADS GUILTY: Scott Stedeford has agreed to plead guilty to charges of conspiring to rob seven Midwestern banks. Stedeford, a member of the infamous Aryan Republican Army, is already serving a nine-year sentence for his role in bank robberies in Iowa (AP, Dec.).

14. LINDBERG SENTENCED TO DEATH: Gunner Lindberg, convicted of the 1996 Santa Anna, California murder of Vietnamese-American Thien Minh Ly, was sentenced to death Dec. 12. Lindberg, reportedly the head of a white supremacist group called the Insane Criminal Posse, wrote in a letter to his cousin, "Oh, I killed a Jap (sic) a while ago...I put a knife to his throat...(and he) looked at me, tried to get a description of me. So I stomped on his head three times and each time said: 'Stop looking at me...The he was kind of knocked out. Then I stabbed him in the side about seven or eight times. He rolled over a little so I stabbed his back about 18 or 19 times" (AP, Dec. 12).

15. HATE CRIME IN DENVER: Just one week after an outburst of racist skinhead violence rocked Denver, six people were arrested in Denver for an apparent bias crime against an African-American woman. The assault reportedly occurred near a 7-Eleven store when the woman asked the suspects if they were skinheads. Five adults and one juvenile were arrested and are being investigated for ethnic intimidation and assault. The victim was treated for cuts and wounds to her face (AP, Nov. 28, Nov. 29).

•••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 use 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. •••