

Rallies marking assassination of Reverend King thin

ATLANTA (AP) — The political heirs of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. called Monday for a mass challenge of Reagan administration policies, but attendance was thin at rallies in several cities marking the 15th anniversary of King's assassination.

Leaders of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference announced plans for a mass march on Washington Aug. 27, the 20th anniversary of King's famous "I have a dream" speech in the nation's capital.

"We don't look like many,

but we moved this nation once and we can do it again," the Rev. C.T. Vivian, an SCLC board member, said in an apparent reference to the crowd of about 250 people at a "jobs and peace" rally at the Atlanta federal building.

The size of the crowd in

King's hometown of Atlanta was similar to that at rallies held in Memphis, Tenn., Anderson, Ind., and Little Rock, Ark., to mark the anniversary of the civil rights leader's assassination April 4, 1968. James Earl Ray, an escaped convict, pleaded guilty to the murder and was sentenced to 99 years in prison.

About 250 union members, carrying placards demanding jobs, health care and a national holiday on King's birthday, turned out in Memphis for a march from Clayborn Temple to the Lorraine Motel, where King was shot to death. Despite clear skies and good weather, the turnout was one of the smallest ever in Memphis for the annual tribute.

Fewer than 1,000 people gathered in Anderson for a rally to mark the anniversary and call attention to the plight of the unemployed. The Rev.

Jesse Jackson, a former King lieutenant who now heads Chicago-based Operation PUSH — People United to Serve Humanity — had predicted 10,000 people would turn out for the rally in recession-plagued Anderson.

Some 60 to 100 people attended a rally in Little Rock.

At the Atlanta rally, the focus was on the Reagan administration's cutbacks in social welfare programs and record defense spending.

Earlier Monday, King's widow, Coretta Scott King, joined SCLC leaders and other relatives of the slain civil rights leader in a brief wreath-laying ceremony at King's tomb.

Afterward, King told a news conference that she plans to join in the Aug. 27 march on Washington to help "forge an accelerated, nonviolent campaign for jobs, peace and freedom."

Reagan official criticizes state for voters nuke freeze support

SALEM (AP) — Despite Oregon voters' support for a freeze on nuclear weapons, a Reagan administration official says such a freeze "is not an effective or sound approach to arms control."

Last November, Oregon voters endorsed a non-binding

advisory referendum measure calling for keeping American and Soviet nuclear arsenals at current levels.

In a letter to Gov. Vic Atiyeh, who supports a freeze, Jayne Plank of the U.S. State Department said Pres. Ronald Reagan "shares your concern about nuclear war and the high levels of nuclear weapons."

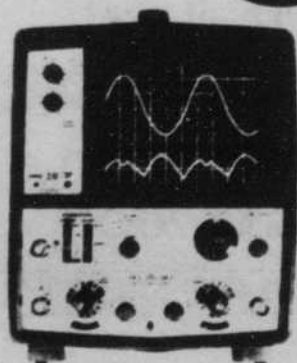
But Plank also said a freeze would hurt the administration's efforts to negotiate major arms reductions because the Soviets would have little reason to negotiate seriously for such reduction.

That's because a freeze would "perpetuate existing Soviet military advantages while preventing us from carrying out necessary modernization of our nuclear forces," Plank's letter said.

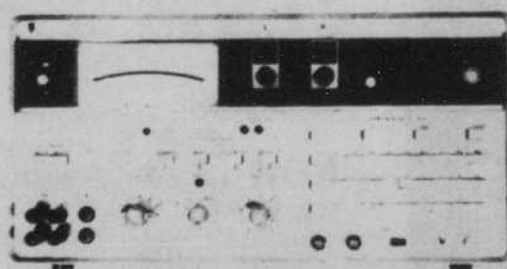
Reagan's efforts to replace aging missiles with "more survivable ones" will maintain American deterrent forces and give the Soviets the incentive to negotiate for "balanced reductions," she said.



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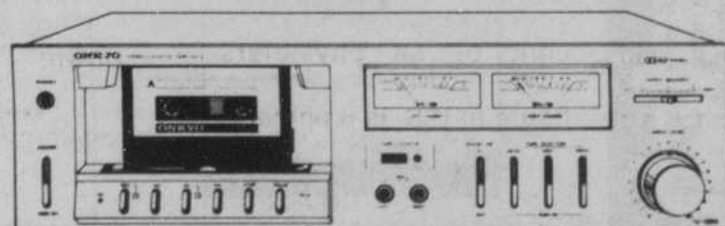


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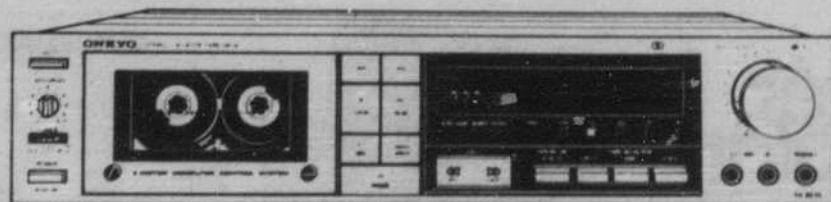
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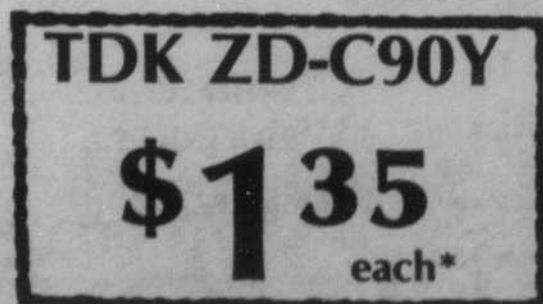


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