

Should racism be illegal in the United States?

- Racist signs posted on South-west Third and Fourth Avenues in downtown Portland and Southeast Broadway, 82nd Avenue - "Gas a Jew," "Nuke a nigger," "White power."
- "White power" signs posted on Bank of California.
- Hate literature found in phone booth at 162nd and Halsey.
- Hitchhiker sees Nazi literature in car that gives him a lift.
- Black man stabbed by white man yelling racial slurs, carrying card of "White Socialist Party."
- Racist literature stuffed in mailbox in Salem.
- Racist fliers against "niggers, Mexicans, Cubans and Queens"

appeared around Portland State University. Same literature on Morrison and Alder streets.

- Racist fliers and literature in Northwest Portland.

- "Kill the Niggers" printed on outside wall of Galleria.

These are many of the complaints received by The Metropolitan Human Relations Commission since November, according to MHRC director Linda Roberts. Incidents have occurred at least weekly and many times more often and have increased since Governor Victor Atiyeh proposed legislation making racial harassment a felony, early in January.

The Governor's bill (House Bill

2479) would make racial harassment a Class C felony, and defines harassment as "the crime of intimidation if, intentionally and with intent to intimidate another person because of such other person's race, color, religion, ancestry or national origin, the person: a) causes physical harm to the other person; b) by word or conduct places, or attempts to place, the other person in fear of imminent physical harm; or c) tampers with, interferes with or destroys the property of other persons.

Literature distributed by the Christian National Socialist White Peoples Liberation Army says, in part, "Here in Oregon, the

powers that be are trying to force a 'racial harassment' (sic) law down our throats which will be just one more law our Jewish liberals will use to suppress white christian Americans. This law will make it a felony to express white supremacist views if this is found to 'harass' anybody...thus, it will take all of our energies to finally defeat the enemies of white America."

Another flier - while praising Adolph Hitler - says, "although the Jews and the communist allies have won the first battle, National Socialism is prepared to wage war for ten thousand years if necessary, until our race and the entire world are freed from tyranny of Jews,

communist butchers and slave masters."

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith, meeting in Florida last week, urged states to pass legislation outlawing paramilitary training camps run by the Klu Klux Klan and other extremist groups. The model law would make training in firearms, explosives, incendiary devices or techniques that kill or injure people a crime when it is for the intention of provoking civil disorder.

There are some who are concerned that the Governor's bill might be unconstitutional because of the First Amendment right to free speech. Among those groups is the ACLU. Steve Remington, local

director, said, "We are against racial harassment." The group's legislative committee is meeting this weekend to determine if they can support the bill or if they should offer other language.

Herbert Aptheker, prominent historian and political theorist, considers the free speech issue to be false.

Some believe "that the rights of all must be protected, and that any exception to this, is violative of the Bill of Rights and could have a dangerous and reactionary impact upon society. 'I believe that they are in error,' he said. 'I think Nazis and Kluxes should have no (Please turn to Page 2 Col 4)

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Citizens hit City's HDC plan, process

The City's Housing and Community Development Block Grant Application met with citizen anger and hostility at a public hearing held on election night, in a small room in downtown Portland. After hearing complaints on the time and place of the meeting, and the fact that hearing was difficult, City Planning Commission chairman Joan Smith further angered the overflow crowd by cutting off the testimony of the first speaker.

Steve Rudman of the Community Economic Development Task Force, a coalition of seventeen groups including the Black United Front and Eliot Neighborhood Association that had worked with 30 community groups and neighborhood associations for nearly a year to propose new directions and citizen participation procedures, was cut off at the end of his allotted five minutes and time offered him by other speakers was not allowed.

Rudman said the Task Force's main concern was to address "the inadequacy and inconsistency" of

the citizen participation procedure which allows only two opportunities for public input - two public hearings on the grant application. They recommended that no changes be made until a real citizen participation procedure is designed and approved by citizens.

Beverly Stein of the Ratepayers Union said in all other cities HCD money is available for community self-help programs. She asked that \$250,000 be set aside for that purpose and that citizens draw guidelines for its use.

Northwest District Association thrilled the audience with an operatic rendition of "people with low incomes need a place to live" to the tune of West Side Story.

Nick Barnett, speaking for Piedmont Neighborhood Association, questioned the "form, content and intent" of the study on which the City's recommendations were based and complained that "vital, substantive information was informally distributed two weeks before the hearing" and that the "agenda has serious changes without proper

notice." He called the citizen participation opportunity "callously piecemealed out if given" which causes only frustration and anger. He reminded the Commission of the federal mandate for public input, saying that "it erodes credibility of not reaching illegality."

James Loving reminded those parents that Northeast has tried for five years to have the allowed 10 percent put into social services - special projects - "but at that time the City Council priority was physical - not a dime for anything else." He asked why the City refuses to hear King Neighborhood Association requests regarding King Neighborhood Facility. "I don't know why the City won't spend money on its own building - they got for nothing. The federal government built it for them - then we had to borrow money from the school district to buy venetian blinds and fire extinguishers."

He questioned removing 1 percent from the administrative budget while increasing the contingency budget by 2 percent. "Are they

hiding money to put back in administration?"

Ed Leek called the process "legitimization not participation" and said time is needed for citizens to study and comment on decisions made "behind closed doors."

He sharply criticized the policy of Portland Development Commission in Northeast Portland. Saying the PDC office in the area is needed, he added "but we don't need continuation of the policy of the current director of their office." The policy of the current director tries to drive a wedge between the Union Avenue businesses and the neighborhoods, he said.

Representatives of the Police Bureau requested that the Crime Prevention Locks Program not be removed from HCD as there is no other source of funding. Three thousand homes have been assisted, mostly in Northeast neighborhoods, which has decreased burglary by sixty percent.

(Next week: The proposals of the Community Economic Development Task Force).



Shukree and Jihad Dawon ask for "children movies." The Black United Front will picket the Walnut Park Theatre on Union Avenue every Saturday until the management agrees to stop showing "porno" and X-rated movies. The Front's position is that the current film policy is detrimental to the community and is not frequented by community people. (Photo: Richard Brown)

Bill prohibits South Africa investment

A bill designed to prohibit the investment of state funds in companies doing business with South Africa was introduced to the legislature on February 5 by the House Aging and Minority Affairs Committee.

Passage of the bill (HB 2618) would mean divestment of approximately \$700 million of the \$3.2 billion currently invested by the Oregon Investment Council. Twenty-five state funds would be involved, with the Public Employee's Retirement Fund, the Industrial Accident Fund, and the

Short Term Fund being most affected. It is recommended that the monies would then be reinvested in companies which would benefit Oregon's economy.

The Oregon divestment campaign is part of a nationwide effort to withdraw state, municipal, and university funds from companies doing business in South Africa. South African Black leaders have long called on Western nations to put economic pressures on the South African government since economic ties help the government maintain its policy of apartheid.

South Africa is the only country whose system of apartheid legalizes discrimination only on the basis of race.

Many Oregon groups have already endorsed the bill, including the Oregon State Employees Association (OSEA) and the Lane County Labor Council. Two other organizations supporting divestment and involved in education concerning these issues are the American Friends Service Committee and the People for South African Freedom in Eugene. Support comes from moral and economic considerations.

Divestment proponents believe that Oregon Public Policy opposes racial discrimination, but indirectly promotes such practices through its current investments. It is argued that investments in South Africa provides companies with a supply of cheap labor which takes away

potential jobs of Americans.

Opposition to the bill will most likely come from those who feel that the bill will result in a loss of profits for state funds. However, similar measures passed in other states have not resulted in a negative economic impact on public funds.

Hearings on the bill have not yet been scheduled, but are expected in the month of March. A group called "Oregonians for Responsible State Investment" has formed a coalition to support the bill and has been holding monthly meetings in Salem to coordinate their efforts. Anyone interested can contact representatives of the group through Pamela at 287-6605.

This bill will be discussed at the Observer Legislative Breakfast, February 21st. The public hearing will be held on March 5th and 10th, in the State Capitol Building. Time to be announced.

Black Commission meets here

The Governor's Commission on Black Affairs will hold a public meeting on February 23rd, 7:00 p.m., at King Neighborhood Facility. The public is urged to attend.

The next legislative action on the Commission is a work session of the House Committee on Aging and Minority Affairs at 1:30 p.m., March 3rd, at the State Capitol Building.

No more 'free lunches'?

President Ronald Reagan and some of his followers are saying: "No more free lunches" and are looking forward to cuts in federally funded social programs.

Those who are watching the economy closely question whether there has been a "free lunch."

Oregon's employment figures, just released by the State Employment Division, shows that 10.0 percent of the labor force was unemployed in January of 1981 (seasonably adjusted to 8.3 percent). This is an increase of 14,300 unemployed over December of 1981, a 12.7 percent increase in unemployment. Comparing January of 1981 to January of 1980, there are 27,000 more unemployed this January than there were a year ago.

Wood products is Oregon's largest industry, and it affects all

other areas of employment. Wood products account for about 60 percent of the unemployment in the state, and construction for 73 percent. The Employment Division is encouraged because the loss in timber and construction was not as great in the past year as in the two previous years. From January 1979 to January 1980 there was a loss of 14,400 jobs in construction, while between January 1980 and January 1981 there was a loss of only 10,000 construction jobs. In the timber industry, 10,700 fewer workers were employed in December 1980 than in December 1979, but in January 1981 there were only 8500 fewer jobs than in December of 1980. The increase of 2,700 jobs in January 1981 was the first increase in more than a year ago. It was interpreted by Ray Thorne, director of the Employment Division as "indicating

that the recession in Oregon may have finally turned the corner."

The Associated Oregon Industries received reports indicating improvement in Oregon's business climate "with skepticism." Ivan Congleton, president of AOI, said the states economy "is severely depressed and appears likely to remain that way for many months to come."

In a state already adversely affected by mill closures in Hines, Sheridan, Willamina and elsewhere - closures that remove nearly all employment opportunities and devastate the economies of the areas where they are located - Oregon State University predicts a "traumatic readjustment" over the next ten years.

OSU forestry economist Darius Adams predicts a 30 to 40 percent decline in the timber harvest by the

year 2000 in western Oregon and Washington and adds that a number of mills will go out of business.

Sales of new one-family houses dropped 25 percent in 1980. The resale market was the lowest in five years, totalling 2.9 million units -- a drop of 22 percent from the 1979 level. The median price of existing homes -- up to \$63,000 from \$56,000 a year before -- showed a slight drop in December. "The median price of an existing home, declined in December by \$1,300 to \$63,000," Dr. Jack Carlson, chief economist of the National Association of Realtors, said, "largely because of high mortgage rates which are keeping sales down, encouraging purchases of smaller homes, and causing sellers to ask lower prices for their homes." He said a slight decrease in interest rates could result in a slight recovery

in existing home sales and an accompanying raise in price by mid-1981.

Senate President Fred Heard said Friday "Oregon's economy is not expected to show any marked improvement until at least July or August. This is caused in part by high interest rates that meant a decline in housing and death a major blow to the timber industry." This causes a reduction in tax collected by the states, which takes place a time when inflation causes a rise in expenditures. "Oregon may have been hit harder proportionately than any state except Michigan by last year's recession," Heard continued. "By August, the shortfall approached \$200 million, or nearly 20 percent of general fund revenues."

In a special session last year, the Legislature cut expenditures by

about \$128 million which included a moratorium on construction projects, an average cut of 13 percent in each agency budget, and freeze on hiring.

Last year Oregon's state expenditure, per capita, was 44th of the 50 states.

The work climate, as compared to other states, is not the best either. Average weekly manufacturing wage was 41st among the states. Manhours lost per year because of work stoppages rated 29th; average unemployment benefits 30th; and maximum weekly workman's compensation for job related disability was 41st.

The most recent quotations by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for fall of 1979 shows a national average of \$20,517 needed to maintain a family of four on an intermediate budget. (Please turn to Page 7 Col 1)