

Economic recovery no impact on blacks

by Lanita Duke

Grassroot News, N.W.—John Jacob, the National President of the Urban League, graced the Pacific Northwest with his presence at the League's Western Regional Conference.

In a press conference on April 7, Jacob, answered a question regarding a black presidential candidate in 1984. "The League has not taken a position on it and we cannot because of our tax-exempt status. While we have not taken a position on the notion of a black presidential candidate, we understand some of the theories behind it. The idea does have some advantages, and disadvantages as well. I happen to believe if a black wants to run for president he or she does not need permission to do so. Given a candidate who could energize the black community this may lead to increased black voter registration. This would increase our political power on the state, as well as the federal level. Just the notion of a black presidential candidate has elevated Civil Rights to the front burner." However, Jacob concedes that a black would not win the presidential nomination and if one placed himself in the running this would only draw away votes from a candidate sympathetic to the plight of the dispossessed.

Asked if he felt the Democrats had betrayed Harold Washington in Chicago, Jacob replied that the situation was both "fascinating and tragic." "Harold Washington played by the rules. When the political machine lost they said that Washington had to convince them that he had the interest of all Chicago at heart. In the past the one who won the primary got the endorsement of the party. It appears that these are no longer the rules. What we are seeing uncovered is the racism we thought America was beyond.

"One of the issues raised is Washington's past record which says that he is not Mr. Clean. But we ran Tom Bradley in California and there is no one alive cleaner than Bradley. Nevertheless, Bradley lost so we cannot suggest the fact that Harold Washington is not Mr. Clean caused a change in the political attitude of



Urban League President John Jacob at Portland press conference. (Photo: Richard Brown)

Chicago. Their actions say to blacks and other minorities that America is not ready for fairness or openness in a pluralist society. Therefore, the struggle becomes more intense and the level of frustration becomes higher."

We also questioned the influence large corporations have over the Urban League, in particular, those corporations which are advancing policies that are hurting poor and colored people. "There are some myths that have always existed regarding corporate positions on what we say and do. Now, I've been in the League for 18 years and to my knowledge they have never tried to influence positions that we have taken. They may not like them and they tell us when they don't. But, they have never not given because they disagreed with us or we disagreed with them. I think corporate America recognizes the fact that we represent a disadvantaged constituency and we must articulate their needs and aspirations. Even if some corporations ceased to give because of policy we must continue to tell the truth and take our chances in that process. I do not perceive it as being between a rock and a hard place."

Jacob explained the League's policy of not endorsing divestment in the racist Republic of South Africa.

"We think new investments should not go into South Africa but those that are there ought to be used to improve the plight of the black South African." Regardless of his organization's stand on divestment, Jacob believes that black rule will come to South Africa. "There is no way four million people can continue to dominate 27 million people. The sheer weight of the numbers will win out. White South Africans have a decision to make, whether they all want to die in the process of black self-rule or become a participant when it does in fact come."

Does Jacob believe the economic position of blacks will increase with the increase of a few economic indicators? "I think we ought to put the recovery of the economy in a black perspective. Even though there is a rise in the economy it is not having an impact on the black problem. A rise in tide does not lift all boats. Blacks are in those industries which are devastated by the change in the economy. There will never be an impact on the black economic problems unless there is a conscious effort to address that problem." Jacob calls for a domestic

Marshall Plan. "In 1940 when we decided to rebuild Europe we dedicated three percent of our GNP to rebuild Europe. We ought to be equally committed to rebuilding America. We could put in place a Universal Employment and Training Program to deal with the problems of our cities."

Jacob was also asked to address the boycott of the Portland Bottling Company (7-Up). "I think that it is tragic that in 1983 we are talking about getting black people employed. The power of an economic boycott has sent to our doors many of the companies who are being boycotted to see how we can help them. I do know that 7-Up is owned by Phillip Morris and we have a very good relationship with Phillip Morris. Their national record is very good in terms of minority employment. I am compelled to speak with George Wiseman, the Chairman of Phillip Morris, about the 7-Up problem in Portland. I know that Wiseman would be concerned about a company that carries the Phillip Morris label being perceived as being discriminatory in its employment practices."

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Juvenile Justice funds UL program

The Multnomah County Juvenile Justice Commission has decided to fund seven community programs this budget year.

The disproportionate numbers of black young people in the juvenile justice system influenced the commission's decision to fund two Northeast program.

Programs dealing with delinquent children are: Open Meadow Learning Center, \$45,177. The program provides education, counseling and special needs services to young people at risk of commitment to a state training school.

Multnomah County Juvenile Court Options Program, \$77,734. This program provides services to prevent commitment of young women to Hillcrest.

Yaun Child Care Center, \$21,729, provides resident care for ten adolescents and follow-up services.

Morrison Center Intensive Family Intervention Program, \$116,500, provides a structural program of family counselling for families of delinquent youth.

Prevention programs are:

Funds buy medicine

by Charles Goodmacher

Residents of the Irvington and Alameda neighborhoods gave \$320 last Thursday in humanitarian aid for the people of El Salvador. The money, raised in only two-and-a-half hours by just six volunteers, will provide medical aid for Salvadorans in contested areas. The canvassing effort is a prelude to an April 30 Oregon-wide door-to-door fundraiser sponsored by the Central American Support Committee.

One of the canvass organizers, Bruce Fitzgerald, states that "these funds are very important because the government has confiscated most medical supplies in rural areas to keep them away from guerrillas and guerrilla sympathizers. This unfortunately has the effect of keeping

adequate medical care from most of the population. Health care personnel in rural areas are constantly harassed, and some assassinated, by right-wing death squads."

People to people medical aid for El Salvador is channeled through the Arch Bishop of Guernavaca, Mexico who purchases medical supplies which are then sent to El Salvador.

Volunteers are being recruited for the massive statewide canvass April 30. Donations from several areas of Oregon will be solicited by as many as 100 volunteer canvassers. Training sessions will be provided by the Central American Support Committee prior to the canvass. The Committee can be reached at 235-9388 or 232-8187 for more details.

Harry's Mother Runaway Youth Program, \$112,000, provides safe shelter for homeless/runaway youth.

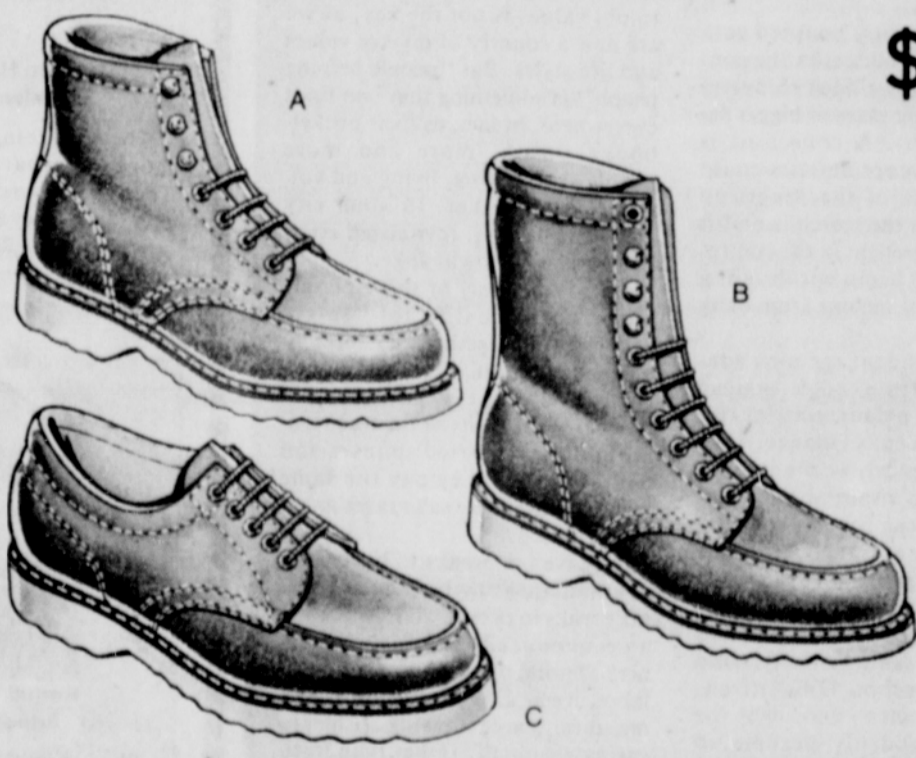
Parents United of Oregon Youth Outreach Program, \$32,930, serves children who are victims of intra-family sexual abuse.

Urban League of Portland, \$210,914. This grant will expand services of the Northeast Service Center to increase the ability to meet the needs of youth and families. Approximately 400 young people will be served.

The Urban League program is a response to the need for blacks to determine the community's needs and to determine how to meet those needs.

One popular program that will not be refunded is the Juvenile Court's Probation Support Week-end which provided custody and counselling for young people who are on probation and who need help in maintaining probation goals.

A large contingent from the black community was on hand at the Tuesday night hearing to support the Urban League program.



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