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Two Sections

Stevenson death:

600 demand justice

by Lanita Duke

GRASSROOT NEWS, N.W. — A united cry for justice was heard across the city April 25, as more than 600 Portlanders demanded, "Justice, no more choke hold and Barbour's got to go!" at a noontime march and rally downtown at City Hall.

From the Justice Center to City Hall, marchers verbally expressed sympathy, outrage and bitterness over the sleeper hold death of Tony Stevenson. Stevenson died Saturday, April 20th, at a 7-11 parking lot after police used a carotid artery hold to subdue Stevenson.

Ronnie Herndon, co-chair of the Black United Front, said the purpose of the march was to press for the suspension of the officers and a permanent ban on the carotid artery hold, known as "the sleeper hold."

Currently, Police Chief Penny Harrington has issued a temporary ban on the sleeper hold and instituted

a committee to study its use. Officers Gary Barbour, who administered the hold, and Bruce Pantley, who said Stevenson struck him as he intervened between Stevenson and two gas station attendants, have been reassigned to desk duty.

But eyewitness accounts disputed the police version of the incident, and the marchers definitely do not believe the police.

A united front of Northeast ministers and bishops led the march. Bishop A. A. Wells told the rally, "I've not been one to be on the forefront, but when this happened something cried out in me: 'It's enough!'"

Bishop Hardey added, "We're here today because a young man who committed no crime is out of it. He simply had a neck. And we had to rally against the sleeper and strangling hold on our schools, jobs, living facilities, transportation and pocket-books. Now, we're rallying against the sleeper and strangling hold on our

throats, just like they put it on Tony's throat. Everyone of us has a throat. Just like it worked on his throat, it can work on our throats."

An inquest is tentatively scheduled for May 9-10 in the hearing room of the Multnomah County Commission in the County Courthouse. "Ain't goin' to be a whitewash this time," Herndon noted, referring to the reinstatement of officers who threw dead opossums in front of a Black-owned restaurant, "and when the inquest comes, we want to see jurors who look like us."

State Representative Margaret Carter sent a press release to the rally expressing grave concern over Stevenson's death and a ban on the sleeper hold.

"In the past, there has been controversy between the police department and the community. Now, we have a new mayor and police chief. I am hoping that our experience will be proven differently," Carter stated.



Part of a crowd of 600 that gathered at City Hall to express their outrage at the handling of the Lloyd Stevenson death by officials.

(Photo: Richard J. Brown)

Food Bank cancels:

Powerhouse Temple continues program

by Robert Lothian

The Overstreet Powerhouse Temple is a humble church in a small former house a 4525 N. Williams.

Each Friday before noon, people begin lining up in front of the church for free food boxes.

Rev. Mary Overstreet and her husband, Rev. Thomas Smith, said that until February, when Powerhouse was suspended by the Interagency Food Bank, the church supplied 150 to 200 families each week with the free food boxes.

The Food Bank charged Powerhouse Temple with breaking Food Bank regulations. They lodged 12 complaints, and after they said Smith and Overstreet failed to comply with requests to correct the complaints, Powerhouse was removed from Food Bank membership on April 8th.

Overstreet and Smith say that a power play was behind the Food Bank decision. Powerhouse had been extremely successful in getting food to the poor, yet it wouldn't knuckle under to what they described as arbitrary Food Bank rules.

They charge the Food Bank with being discriminatory — applying rules that might work well for a well-heeled white organization, but inappropriate to an all-volunteer organization run by Black people.

Powerhouse Temple received the second highest amount of food from the Food Bank next to the Salvation Army for the last six months of 1984. That included 62,000 pounds of free U.S.D.A. commodities and 19,000 pounds of food purchased from the Food Bank at 7 cents per pound.

Powerhouse continues its free food program with food donated to Harvest Time Ministries, a cable television ministry of which Smith and Overstreet are the directors.

The lines are down, said Mary Overstreet, but 100 people or more continue to line up on Fridays. The lines dwarf the small, white building.

Smith and Overstreet also continue to offer free hot meals to about a dozen people three times a week in their home.

One of the disputed issues, said Smith, is the Food Bank charge that Powerhouse was soliciting food on its own, or that at least a lack of organizational clarity and accountability exists between Powerhouse and Harvest Time.

But "Powerhouse doesn't solicit donors, Harvest Time Ministries does," said Smith. Harvest Time solicits food on its own and donates to 14 churches and organizations, many in Northeast Portland, he said. Harvest Time donated food to the Powerhouse program because Powerhouse was not getting enough food from the Food Bank, according to Smith.

"They don't have any control over where Harvest Time gets its food, but they want to," he said. "They want you to be dependent on them, and they let it out a little at a time."

"If they didn't make an example out of Powerhouse, all the other agencies would go out and solicit food and the Food Bank would lose revenue," he said.

Powerhouse was suspended in February after a Food Bank inspector allegedly found a box of mildewed powdered milk and other garbage in back of the church.

"We were suspended on the spot," said Mary Overstreet. "They did it without even coming out here and seeing how many people we were serving." "It was planted," said Thomas Smith about the powdered milk.

Mary Overstreet said that powdered milk is one of the most popular items, and that they don't store it long enough for it to get mildewed. "When we get it one one day, it's gone the next," she said.

Powerhouse was also charged with dividing food under unsanitary conditions.

But according to Overstreet, "We have never divided U.S.D.A. commodity foods except when they started limiting us. We did cut the cheese in half when they told us to do so."

Furthermore, their record keeping, another point of dispute, was found to be in order by an inspector, said Overstreet. Their program is small and informal, with no paid staff, but "a stack of volunteers," she said. "I will not do that," she said about furnishing names and addresses of food recipients as the Food Bank requested.

Powerhouse was also accused of selling the food boxes for \$2.50 each. The accusation was based on an anonymous phone tip, said Smith.

Overstreet said they have never sold the food, but they do ask for donations, receiving no more than \$18 at the most, in "nickels and dimes."



PSU students protesting apartheid as Gov. Victor Atiyeh met with business leaders.

(Photo: Sheri Imai)

Students protest apartheid

by Nathaniel Scott

"Freedom, yes. Apartheid, no. U.S.A. has got to go," chanted Portland State University (PSU) students in Smith Memorial Center last Wednesday as Gov. Vic Atiyeh and about 30 business leaders toured PSU's campus on the delegation's tour of Oregon's state colleges and universities.

The governor and his delegation's education mission coincided with PSU's students' participation in the National Student Anti-Apartheid Protest Day which joined Harvard University, Boston College, UCLA, Rutgers University, Princeton, and other schools throughout the nation in a dramatic show of student solidarity.

PSU students were demanding that Oregon's House Bill 2001, which calls for divestment of state funds in South Africa, be passed, and that freedom from oppression be granted all citizens of South Africa.

The students, about 60, in a separate demonstration in the South Park Block, vowed that they would not rest until Oregon's "shameful support" of the racist regime be stopped.

David Cress, the student-body president-elect for the 1985-86 academic year, said, "Apartheid is terrible. Students (at PSU) agree that it's immoral." Cress emphasized that PSU's student senate has a resolution that calls for students to do everything possible to work toward a free South Africa, and to also pressure the state board of higher education to divest itself from companies that do "significant" business in South Africa.

Moreover, he said, "I'd like to see something (rallies and demonstrations) done here (at PSU) on a weekly basis." He added, "I'd also like to see some constructive dialogue with the university president because we (students) need more faculty and administration support."

Cress isn't the only student leader at PSU who is emphasizing more university involvement. Abdi Hassan, president of the Association of African Students' organization, said last Wednesday's demonstration should not be the last time students come together to protest South Africa's Apartheid system. He added, "The U.S. has already taken a stand for freedom (in most parts of the world) but when it comes to South Africa, it doesn't."

Steve Vohs, director of student and government affairs at PSU, said, "We don't want our (student) money in South Africa. We don't think they (the state) should be using our tuition fees in South Africa; we think we (the state of Oregon) should divest."

The matter can be summed up by one student's comment. He said, "I think we are forgetting what our government stands for. As long as we sit quietly, we are in trouble! because we are encouraged by the way we are taught to be passive."

The irony of his words was echoed by the fact that only three faculty members joined the students in their National Day of Anti-Apartheid Protest.



Volunteers continue to distribute food to the needy despite withdrawal of Food Bank supplies at the Overstreet Powerhouse Temple, 4525 N. Williams. (Photo: Richard J. Brown)