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## B U F Sponsors March Against Racism

by Jerry Garner

A mixed crowd of Blacks and whites, young and old, participated in an anti-racism march sponsored by the Portland Chapter of the Black United Front. The march was held to call attention to the resurgence of racist violence that is occurring in Oregon and throughout the United States, and as a time to commemorate the death of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The civil rights leader was slain April 4, 1968, in Memphis, Tenn., as he stood on a motel balcony with friends. Dr. King had come to Memphis on behalf of striking sanitation workers. The workers were protesting the city's unfair two-tier wage system which paid white sanitation workers more than Black workers.

The march began at the King Neighborhood Facility and ended at Alberta Park. As the marchers traveled through the streets of northeast Portland, marchers chanted a variety of slogans including "Down With Reagan", "Down With Racism", "South Africa Must Be Free", and "Down With The Klan". When the marchers passed the Walnut Park Adult Theater, they stopped and chanted "Close It Down, Close It Down."

Community organizations, including the Black United Front, have been trying for years to get city officials to close down the x-rated movie house. They said the theater's presence in the neighborhood contributes to the prostitution and crime problem in the area, therefore, reducing the livability of the area. Although a Supreme Court ruling has given city officials broad powers to remove x-rated movie houses from residential and commercial areas, Mayor Bud Clark and the Portland City Council haven't announced any plan to use the high court's decision to eradicate them and place them in restricted areas.

After the parade, marchers gathered under the rain shelter at Alberta Park to hear several speakers, including the Rev. John Jackson, pastor of Mt. Olivet Baptist Church and co-chairman of the Portland Chapter of the Black United Front; Portland City Commissioner Dick Bogle; George Hendrix, president of the Portland Branch of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; and the Rev. Colin Jones, an Anglican priest from South Africa who is serving as interim pastor at Southminster Presbyterian Church.

Commissioner Bogle told the crowd that racial violence which they have been witnessing on the TV, hearing on the radio, and reading about in the newspapers and magazines can occur in Portland and throughout Oregon. "The increase in racial violence shows how truly difficult it is to change the hearts of people. Each violent act gives rise to the same type of poisoning. When will it end? Are these incidents growing in numbers? Are they related to one another? Are they part of a pattern? No longer can we point just to the South for examples of racist violence. Howard Beach, New York, is fresh in our minds."

Hendrix told the mixed crowd that the NAACP was born of violence. He said, "We are here today because of the violence the NAACP has watched; the increasing problem of racism that is occurring across this country. We must do what we have to do, that is, to stand together, shoulder to shoulder, Black and white, Catholics, Jews and Protestants, to speak out against the violence of physical being as well as that of the spiritual one." Hendrix said our young people must have hope that the future will be a place where everybody can enjoy liberty and freedom.

Herndon said despite statements by some who say that racism is on the decrease, racism continues to be a problem in society. He mentioned the recent incident in Portland in which a Black man died as a result of head injuries he received after a Portland Police officer pushed him to the pavement during an arrest; and the 1985 stabbing death of another Black man, Stanley Reed. Reed was stabbed to death by a white man as he rode his bicycle along Union Ave. enroute home from work.



Janaela Mitchell, Shukura Mitchell and Chauntell Lawrence lead the day, April 4th.

Black United Front's "March Against Racist Violence" held Saturday, April 4th. Photo by Richard J. Brown

Testimony from the trial revealed that Reed was killed because the man and his companion wanted to break in the blade of a new knife with the blood of a Black person.

Herndon said racism can be seen in the high rate of joblessness among African American adults and youth in Portland. He said the unemployment rate for Black adults in Portland is around 30 percent — 60 percent of all Black youth are unemployed. Herndon said the infant mortality rate among Blacks is twice the rate of whites.

The co-chair of the Black United Front also vented his criticism of the state education system. "When you look at the schools in our community, you will see that most of these kids can hardly read their names in box card letters. Two year ago the average Black senior graduating from these schools had an average grade point average of 1.85.

It shouldn't surprise anyone that during this same period, when it came time to attend a four year state college in Oregon, only 18 African American students from Portland Public Schools enrolled into a four-year state college in Oregon," Herndon said. Herndon said during the same period of time, 600 people graduated from state of Oregon schools in Engineering. Of this group, only two were Black. Out of 300 computer science graduates, none were African Americans. "How in the world are people going to survive in this technological age when you have two people graduating in Engineering and none in Computer Science?" He said it was the responsibility of each of us to make sure that all children throughout the state of Oregon get an equal education.

Gov. Neil Goldschmidt and District 18 Rep. Margaret Carter also took part in the March Against Racism.

## Goldschmidt to Act On Minority Concerns

Recently, the Observer requested from the office of the Governor a plan of action for addressing the rising elements of racism, unemployment and other concerns of minorities in Oregon. The following is the Governor's response.

Last year's campaign was dominated by talk about change. Words flew back and forth. But the votes are counted, and it is time to shift from rhetoric to action.

In our first 90 days we have begun the process of change. Expectations are high, and I am only one of many who wants to move faster.

In conversations with the Black Leadership Conference and others, I have pledged again my commitment to making state government a more active partner in the fight against racial discrimination and for economic progress in minority communities.

Our goal is to create work. We will use the Job Training Partnership Act as a tool to provide access to the workplace for disadvantaged workers, and for women, particularly single-parent women. As Mayor of Portland, I insisted on such a program when the city helped Wachter Chemical locate a plant in Portland. I will insist that similar agreements take place when the state invests in a major way in new plant sitings.

We will be moving faster with the Port of Portland, where I have just appointed a new presiding officer. I will work for more jobs for minority workers at the Port.

One of my major priorities is corrections, shifting the emphasis to treatment programs for drug and alcohol problems, and

working to deal with young offenders. A youth retention program to reverse the school dropout trend is a major priority in my budget, and is being approved by the Legislature.



Neil Goldschmidt talks with news people following his meeting with the Black Leadership Conference Steering Committee last week at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church. Photo by Richard J. Brown

I hope Portlanders will join me in supporting a school safety net proposal on the May ballot. Although Portland has a modern school tax base, we should all remember lost school days in the past because we lacked such a base. Estacada and Forest Grove should be the last schools in Oregon to close because of failure of a voter-approved levy.

My commitment to programs for minority and women business contractors is well-known. As Secretary of Transportation, I initiated the best and toughest such program in the Federal government. I want to improve our program now in Oregon.

My task force on affirmative action is completing its study of refocusing that office, away from numbers-counting and toward a strong voice for the minority community.

We are beginning to make the minority appointments we promised in the campaign, both to state executive offices and to boards and commissions. Our office is consulting minority organizations and has talked with each minority member of the Legislature, to solicit [sic] nominations.

Major state appointments to positions especially sensitive to the minority community will be made with advice from minority leaders.

And I expect to sign a bill divesting state funds from South Africa.

These are actions, not words. Programs are already moving as we wind up the first 90 days of this administration. I am not satisfied with the pace, but I am satisfied with the direction. The election was all about change, and change is underway in Salem.

11 Days Until Easter Sunday