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UNITY ENDS BOYCOTT

AGREEMENT REACHED BETWEEN BILL BOYETTE AND BLACK COMMUNITY.



(Photo credit, Tim Sowell)

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UNITY ENDS BOYCOTT

AGREEMENT REACHED BETWEEN BILL BOYETTE AND BLACK COMMUNITY.

As of January 14, 1972, the boycott of Bill's Liquor Stores, in Oakland, California, is over. These stores, owned by Brother Bill Boyette (president of the Cal State Package Store and Tavern Owners Association, or Cal-Pac), had been picketed for over five months, for the purpose of leveling economic pressure, through the community's boycott, upon Bill Boyette.

Many people can remember when, during last summer, the Black Panther Party aided Cal-Pac in picketing and boycotting one of the Mayfair Chain stores in the Oakland Black community. This came as a result

of a request on Cal-Pac's part for support in trying to force stores in the community to refuse to carry certain liquor brands (Johnny Walker scotches, Jim Beam and McNish scotch whiskey and Tangueray gin), because the distributors of the liquor had refused to hire Black people as other than low-level personnel. Within four days after the Party joined the picketing, the Mayfair store was closed.

Part of the agreement between Cal-Pac and the Party was that if the Black Panther Party helped in picketing Mayfair, a continuous contribution to the Black Panther Party-sponsored community survival pro-

grams (such as the Free Breakfast for School Children Program, the David Hilliard People's Free Shoe Program, the Angela Davis Free Food Program, etc.) would be made by each of the nearly 30 Cal-Pac member liquor stores. The type and quantity of the contribution was to be determined by the liquor dealers themselves. The main point was that the contribution had to be continuous. Cal-Pac offered a joint member donation, on a one-time basis, of several pounds of bacon, several dozen eggs, loaves of bread, gallons of milk. People's hunger and need for food, or other basic necessities is on-going. Therefore, the one-time donation was not acceptable.

There was a great deal of discussion over this point, for it was/is crucial. The needs of our community are on-going and will require strong efforts on everyone's part, until such time as we, our whole people, are in full control of the economy of the community, until we are liberated. It was explained to Cal-Pac that the one-time donation was a kind of pay-off, as though a service had been rendered and a pay check was to be passed out. They refused to alter or change their offer. After much discussion, the Black Panther Party organized a community boycott against the Cal-Pac's president's store.

We understood that the Black Businessman, though he had accumulated a greater quantity of money to get the things he needed and wanted, was still a victim of the super American corporate business power structure. He was a victim, relatively, as all others in the Community are victims. He might exist at a higher level within the Black community than the majority of the people, but his existence, his very survival was at the mercy of the big racist profiteers. He could climb, but just so high. He could enter in, but just a little. The men who own and control the large production companies, the fundamental economy in this country, who are in fact in control of the very government apparatus which carries out their designs, have not, nor do

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Cal-Pac first came to the Black Panther Party to get pickets to walk the line against Mayfair. Within four days after that, Mayfair was closed down.

Working together made it easy.

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they intend to permit the Black man to enter into their world. They dominate the economy and thereby the society. Certainly the members of Cal-Pac did not stand outside this reality.

It was clear, then, that really the only reliable support the Black businessman has is from his own Black community. If his business is to survive, he must have the support of the community. In the beginning Cal-Pac did not see this point. Further, they did not seem to grasp that certainly by joining with the community, by giving to and sharing with the community, the support of the community would increase. Certainly that would be to the Black businessman's interest, to the interest of his own survival.

This was a point of disagreement; in fact, a point of departure. When Cal-Pac decided there was no need to regularly donate to the survival programs or any other programs truly serving the community's real needs, it was a decision that would have ultimately proved to their disinterest. Cal-Pac, however, was not alone. Although their position was to be supported by a newly-formed organization of Black businessmen (the Ad Hoc Committee to Preserve Black Business), in fact, they represented the misconceptions of the average Black businessman in the country. Many, or most Black businessmen live under the illusion that although those who consume their products and patronize their businesses are predominately Black, that they are separate from and not in any way dependent upon the poorer people in the community, which are in the greater number.



The need for food, clothing, shelter is on-going, continuous. Eating is not a some-time thing.

However, as Cal-Pac represented those ideas, the Black Panther Party represents the interests of the Black community, to receive the basic requirements for life (which are human birth rights): to have enough food, enough clothing, a place to stay, shoes on your feet, etc. It was a contradiction. It was a contradiction among victims, among Brothers, among class Brothers. It was resolvable. The Black Panther Party chose the method of economic boycott of one of Cal-Pac's stores to bring the contradiction to a head, to the point where it could be resolved. Bill Boyette became the example, not only for Cal-Pac, or the Ad-Hoc Committee, but for the Black Businessman, in general, to view. It had to be brought out, in real terms, so that everyone could understand, that the Black businessman and the Black community are suffering under the common oppression, relatively, of the racist, fascist U.S. government. This is a point that had to be brought home, so that we could all come home and thereby join in a common struggle to rid ourselves of this oppression.

It was not intended, and, fortunately, did not develop into an antagonistic battle, into a win-or-lose conflict, a fight to the bitter end. The purpose in heightening or bringing out this long-time division in our community, among our people, was to get it out in front, where it could be resolved. If this long-standing issue were to continue to be glossed over, or white-washed, we

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To be able to provide large quantities of food, through the Angela Davis Free Food Program, in one day is good. It must be regular.

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would all lose, it's as fundamental as the old saying, "In Unity there is strength".

In July (1971), the Black Panther Party set up pickets in front of one of Bill Boyette's two liquor stores. The idea was that if the Black businessman could not or would not aid in the common struggle of the entire community, as he was in a better position to do so, as his very position had come about from the community itself, then he would have to be punished, criticized until he would mend his ways. He would have to concretely see that without the patronage of the community, he, himself, couldn't survive. By joining in the common effort, however, by returning a small amount of what he receives from the people back to the people, on a regular, on-going basis, he too, would benefit. He would not lose. We would all win.

During these past months there have naturally been bitter moments. A struggle is never easy. Struggles, however, like all things, always develop to some nodal point, some point at which a change, a point of transformation is reached. Between oppressor and oppressed such struggle has always developed to physical conflict, to the use of violence. This is because they are in total opposition to each other, because they are enemies. A struggle, a contradiction among Brothers, members of the same family, the same oppressed community, does not need to, and by virtue of its very nature, will not develop so.

Bill Boyette is a Black man. He is in business, profiting from and living better than most in the Black community. In another sense, he is a member of our family, if we view our community as a large family. Our arguments with him were family arguments, that can become bitter, but that are resolvable. Everyone is probably familiar with how well this relates to the story in the Christian Bible in which the father gives his



We had re-analyzed that Black businessmen could be the people's allies. It had to be proven in practice.

two sons all his wealth. In that story, one son uses the wealth wisely, working with the father to build up their homeland. The other son goes out, leaving the home, and unwisely squanders the money. The story goes on that the son, who left the family, the home, squandering the family money, eventually loses everything. He is without food or even a place to stay. He tries to get help, but there is none. No one seemingly cares. He decides to return home, to tell the father that he is sorry he has squandered half the family's money, and to ask to even work for his own father. Upon his return, he is welcomed with open arms. This has become known as the story of the prodigal son.

After suffering great loss, Bill Boyette decided to return home. It must be clear, however, that his decision was not only based on his financial situation, his losses; not only based on the fact that he recognized that it is the community,

his own community, which maintained him; but, primarily, this was his own decision, as a Black man, to join in struggle with the whole community against the common oppressor. Even more credit should be given to this decision, as Brother Bill Boyette stood up and admitted a mistake and is going about correcting it. Many may not have been able to do this. He had nothing else to lose, for his business had already gone down so far, that he was broke. Certainly, if he had decided to refuse to unite in our struggle, he himself was not going to face much greater loss. He made a decision based upon his love for and understanding of the People. He took the criticism and came to understand.

On Saturday, January 15, 1972, Brother Bill Boyette joined Huey P. Newton, the leader of the Black Panther Party and Servant of the People, along with Congressman Ron

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"It wasn't anything new to the Black community that Black businessmen ought to make contributions to special problems which confront the Black community. We give Huey Newton credit, however, for adding the catalytic agent which made that realization come about..."



Brother Bill Boyette will be a survival and liberation.

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Dellums, Father Earl Neil (of St. Augustine's Episcopal Church) and Hiawatha Roberts (of the Ad Hoc Committee) in a press conference to announce the end of the boycott. Of course, as with all things, the going out of one thing signals the coming into being of another. Many people have spoken, thought about and talked about the need for unity in the Black, oppressed community. The Black Panther Party, too, recognizes that without the unity of the victims, we cannot struggle and win freedom from oppression. The very fact that Bill Boyette and Cal-Pac and the Ad Hoc Committee were joining in the efforts of the Black Panther Party to announce the end of the boycott, introduced a real, a concrete move toward the kind of unity necessary for the liberation of all of us.

At the Press Conference, Brother Ron Dellums (whose office facility was used to deliver the announcement) read a prepared statement outlining the positive agreement that had ended the boycott. The statement points out that a new unity has been realized in the Black community, a new unity that had come out of struggle, which should advance the ability of the Black

community's on-going need to survive:

"We are announcing today that an agreement has been reached of great importance to all of the people in the Bay Area and, in particular, the black population of this area. This agreement, between the Black Panther Party and the Ad Hoc Committee for Promotion of Black Business, officially ends the boycott of Boyette's Liquor Stores by the Black Panther Party.

"It is my belief that this agreement between the Ad Hoc Committee and the Black Panther Party is not only important, but has unique aspects that bear commenting upon here.

"The agreement is important because it portends the development of a greater sense of organized unity and purpose than has heretofore existed in the black community. The business and social elements have here pledged to work together in a constructive and purposeful manner so that the fiscal and human resources of that community can be joined in a common effort toward common goals.

"The agreement is unique in that many agreements that arise or are created out of prolonged and bitter conflict often end by somebody winning and somebody losing. In the present case there are no losers. I strongly believe that all parties to this agreement are winners. Among the winners are the Black Panther Party, the Ad Hoc Committee to Promote Black Business and Bill Boyette, the president of the Cal-Pac Liquor Dealers of the East Bay. Much the greater winners, however, are the black community in particular and the greater community in general. In an important sense this has been a creative conflict for out of it has come not only a new recognition of responsibility and respect on both sides, but a whole new organization, created to respond to the desperate and special needs of the black community, which needs have often been dramatized by the Black Panther Party.

"That new organization is The United Black Fund of the Bay Area, Inc. This organization, sponsored and created by the Ad Hoc Committee for the Promotion of Black Business and the Cal-Pac Liquor Dealers, has already begun the task of collecting funds from black businesses and in-

(Photo credit, Tim Sowell)

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partner with us all in the struggle for our

Brother Ron Dellums (left) with Father Earl Neil, stated: "The agreement is important because it portends the development of a greater sense of organized unity and purpose than has heretofore existed in the Black community."

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dividuals for programs of special need in the black community. Operating as a non-profit social vehicle for the black community, this new organization will make disbursements to various significant organizations in the black community on a regular and continuing basis. Among the programs that will benefit are the survival programs of the Black Panther Party. My staff and I have been very pleased to be of assistance in resolving this conflict, and I particularly thank Don Hopkins, my district representative, for the many hours he has spent in this effort. It should be underlined, however, that it is the good faith and genuine concern for the welfare of this community that has made it possible for the parties to this dispute to be here today; it is this same faith and concern which will make this event a milestone of progress in the development and welfare of the community."

As Congressman Dellums' statement describes, even a new organization has been created by the Black businessmen with the aims of really working in the interest not only of the businessmen, but of the entire Black community. Brother Huey P.

Newton pointed out that the regular donations made to the survival programs sponsored by the Black Panther Party would be given through St. Augustine's Church.

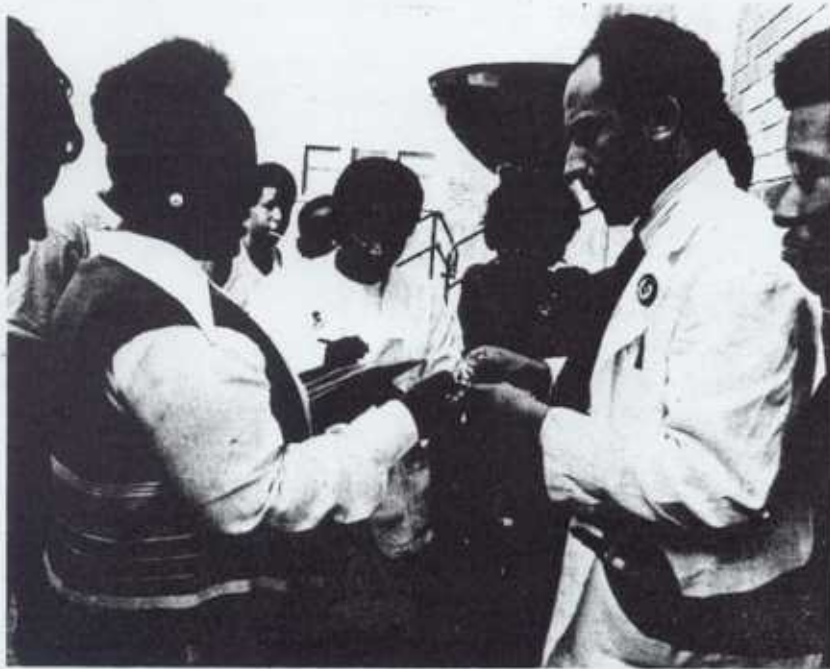
Unity among the victims, particularly within the oppressed Black community, presents a very threatening picture to the racist U.S. government. This government, sponsored and controlled by the big white corporate capitalists, is aware that the resolutions of the minor contradictions within the oppressed community means a greater emphasis will be placed, then, on the major contradictions, specifically between the oppressed and the oppressor. In fact, the contradictions within the oppressed community are most times created by and promoted by the government. The government wishes to promote greater dis-unity, division within the oppressed community. The case of the boycott of Bill's Liquor stores was no different. Using the news and other propaganda machinery is one of the government's main methods of carrying this out.

At the press conference on January 15th, newsmen kept repeating, in different forms, questions about whether or not there had been agree-

ment on a specific amount of dollars to be "paid" to the Black Panther Party. They asked was everyone sure there was no minimum donation that had to be regularly be given, even though it had been stated time and again that the specific donation would be determined by the businessmen. One reporter even asked if Brother Bill Boyette felt he had been "bludgeoned" into agreement. He told them, frankly "...I have had a tremendous loss. In fact, I'm broke. But I don't feel that I have been forced into agreement, because if I felt that I was going to be forced into something, I wouldn't have gone broke trying to do something."

The government's obvious anger over how this contradiction had been brought out and resolved to the People's interest continued to be demonstrated. There were many questions about what would "happen" if the donations were not "acceptable". They were still trying to drum up even a little bit of division on the issue. Hlawatha Roberts, of the Ad Hoc Committee, finally explained that everyone concerned had agreed that their collective decision would serve the interests of the entire community:

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Now, we'll be in a better position to give more to the community.

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"The agreement primarily is one based upon good faith, good faith demonstrated by the Black Panther Party in removing the pickets; good faith on the part of the members of the Ad Hoc Committee in recognizing a situation which has certainly long confronted the community. It wasn't anything new to the Black community that Black businessmen ought to make contributions to special problems which confront the total Black community. We give Huey Newton credit, however, for adding the catalytic agent which made that realization come about, perhaps, maybe five years earlier in the Black community than it would have otherwise. The Black businessmen have always been committed to the idea, have given lip service to it, but have not in any

organized way sought to set up a vehicle which will be able to address itself to those special needs of the Black community. And, one of the special needs of the Black community certainly are many of the Survival Programs which have been outlined by the Black Panther Party. Certainly we as Black businessmen cannot quarrel with the fact of feeding hungry children in the City of Oakland, or trying to get rid of Sickle Cell Anemia, and many of the other Survival Programs which have been outlined by the Black Panther Party. However, in addition to that, the organization and the vehicle which we have set up is going to address itself to a much broader area in the Black community than those which have even been outlined by the Black Panther Party."

The leader of the Black Panther Party and Servant of the People, Huey P. Newton, summed up how and why the contradiction had to be and was resolved. Further, he pointed out that with this type of unity, we can together begin to bring about more economic stability for our community, allowing for the larger victories, our liberation, to be a step closer to realization: "...We're very happy that this contradiction is over, and that the community is now going into its first stages of organizing itself in order to attend to the ills that we have been suffering so long. It was a very hard fight. It was a fight among class Brothers, and friends. Most of the time when we enter into these kinds of contradictions, even among our friends, we come out with something in the interest of everyone. If that's not the case, then, of course, the new thing should be criticized. We're sure, hopeful that this particular matter was resolved in the best interests of the whole community. We plan to go on contributing through our survival programs, the health clinics, the shoe distribution, that we have been doing; but, now we'll be in a better position to give more to the community. We're very sorry that it lasted so long, because it wasn't in any of our interests to fight. However, as a result of the fight, we hope to have a great unity in the community, for the Black community in general is very disorganized and very dis-united. We believe in bringing contradictions out to the front, in order to handle them. If we attempt to bury them, then, of course, we can't see them, so we can't even take the first step in making a thing better..."

He went on to explain that the "...fight has just started...in order to build a strong force, we have to unite all of the victims. We realize that within our community there are large chain, white stores, corporations. It's our intention at this time to ask a donation from those stores who take the money out of our community. We feel confident that we can win much faster than five months, because we have the strength of the WHOLE community: the Black businessmen, as well as Black people who have no businesses...Our next move, then will be to aid the Ad Hoc Committee in encouraging more Black businesses to join them. Our next step will be to ask a contribution from such stores as Breuners, Mayfair, and so forth. We're sure that the Ad Hoc Committee and Cal-Pac will join us in this effort, in order to get justice for our community."

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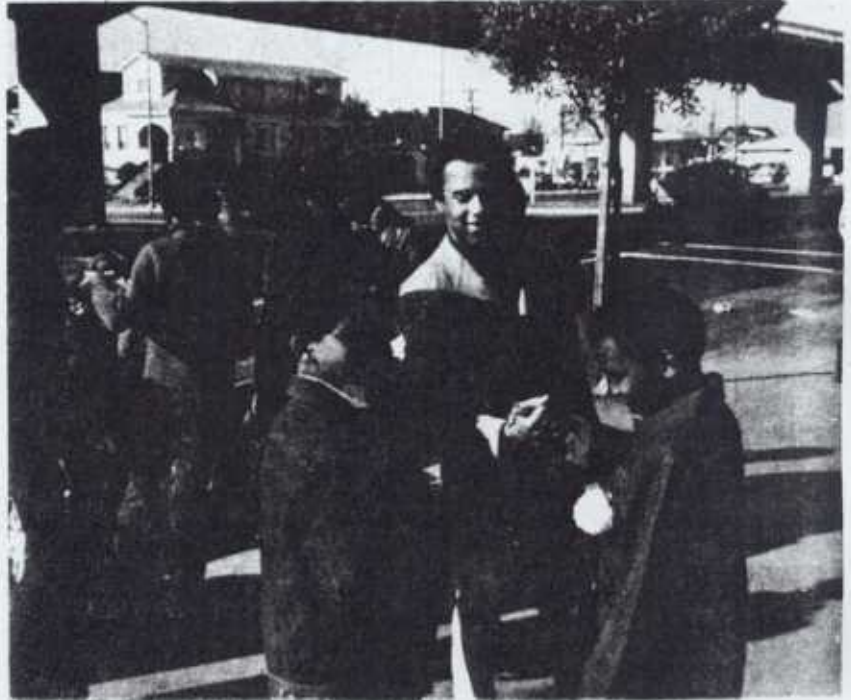
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The struggles in the oppressed community will, of course, continue. With the greater development of the unity, there will come greater victories for all oppressed people. Therefore, we, the Black Panther Party, ask and encourage everyone in the community to welcome, as we do, with full love, the return home of Brother Bill Boyette. We shall be putting forth every effort to help rebuild his business, so that he can recover from his losses. We will be leafletting and going throughout the local community to ask people to shop at Bill's Liquor stores.

In the prodigal son story mentioned above, there was another point. When the prodigal son returned, the father got together a huge banquet to welcome his son who had returned. He told that son that his place was within the family, not anywhere else. The other son became jealous and couldn't understand why so much fuss was being made over the prodigal. The son felt that since he himself had stayed and never strayed from the family, that he deserved such treatment, if anyone; that certainly the prodigal son didn't deserve such extraordinary concern. The father explained to that other son that as he had remained, of course he was his beloved son, and that everything the family had was his. However, the father explained, the prodigal son had been lost, but was now found; that he had come home, and that was an extraordinarily beautiful event.

Brother Bill Boyette exemplified the basic opinions of most Black businessmen. However, he has set another example, by his decision to join in our struggle for survival, by returning home. If we could criticize him before, then we must know the value of his decision. We must know that he wasn't so small, so un-loving of the people that he would insist on being right, under any circumstance. Brother Bill Boyette will be a partner with us all in the struggle for our survival and liberation. This is certainly a progressive step for us all. It is good.

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE



The Black Panther Party is asking and encouraging everyone in the community to welcome, as we do, with full love, the return home of Brother Bill Boyette.



If we could criticize him before, then we must now know the value of his decision. The picket lines were removed from Brother Bill's stores (January 14, 1972).