

Black Backlash Hits Panther Liquor Store Boycott

By Don Martinez

Picketing of a West Oakland liquor store by the Black Panther Party has created a unique black backlash among East Bay businessmen.

Some 200 of them are fighting Panther Chief Huey P. Newton's money demands and boycott of Bill's Liquor Store.

The group calls itself the Committee to Preserve Black Business in Oakland.

The store is owned by Bill Boyette, a black who also is president of the Cal State Package Store and Tavern Association. His refusal to make cash contributions to the Panthers' "Community Survival Program" touched off the picketing of his store at 5350 Grove St., Oakland, in July.

Business Drops

Boyette claims that his business — which he established 15 years ago — has dropped off 98 percent since the picketing started. He says he is losing about \$1000 a day despite a Superior Court order placing rigid restrictions on the Panther protest.

Co-Chairmen of the Com-

mittee are Albert L. McKee, a black real estate broker, and black attorney Joseph Simmons.

The purpose of the committee, according to McKee is to "break the boycott and see to it that black people are given a choice of whether they want to contribute to any group or charity."

McKee recalled that he had attended a meeting some time ago at which Boyette offered to contribute food, rather than cash, to Newton's breakfast program.

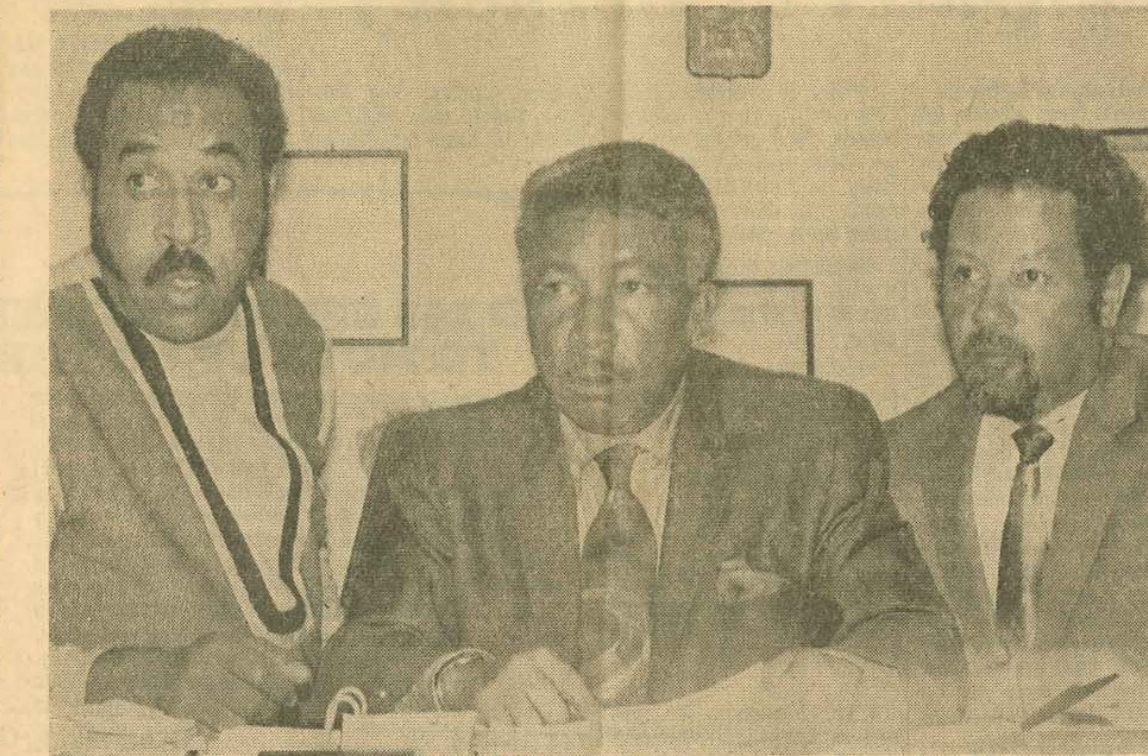
Newton Threat

"Newton slammed the desk three times and said that this was unacceptable, explaining that he wanted weekly cash contributions," McKee said.

"When Boyette refused Newton said he would 'make you a poor man.' I was angered and amazed because I had never heard anybody publicly threatened like this."

Boyette said his business has picked up by about 10 percent since the committee came to his support last week.

"I've had people, black and white, make special trips



STORE OWNER BILL BOYETTE, CO-CHAIRMAN ALBERT L. MCKEE AND JOSEPH SIMMONS
Oakland Committee to Preserve Black Business has been formed to contest Panther tactics

—Examiner photo by Seymour Snaer

to the store from throughout the Bay Area," Boyette said. "Even (former) Senator Wil-

liam F. Knowland (publisher of the Oakland Tribune) has marched through the picket

line to shop."

McKee claimed that many people are not supporting

Boyette because "they are afraid of the Panthers due to their recent direction and be-

cause of Newton's dictatorial attitude."

Both McKee and Simmons blasted what they said is Newton's position that he is the only leader and spokesman for the black community.

'Injustice'

"No black leader speaks for all black people just as no white leader speaks for the entire white community," Simmons said.

Calling the picketing of Boyette's store "a terrible injustice to the black community," McKee criticized the Panthers' lack of accountability to the black community.

"If we contribute one dollar to the survival program we can't be sure that the money will be spent to buy breakfast cereal or medicine for children," said McKee.

Regarding the Panthers' free food program, Simmons objected to the method in which the food is distributed.

"You just can't drive a truck into a neighborhood and open its doors," he said. "We want to make sure that needy people receive the food

and not the lazy ones who may turn around and sell it to their neighbors."

Asked why the black business community hasn't come together before, McKee objected to "the assumption that we haven't done anything in the past to help black people."

Jobs for Blacks

"Some of us were fighting against racial injustice when Newton was running around barefooted," he said.

"The reason we have now banded together is to preserve what we have been doing to help the black community all along."

Boyette claimed that his Cal-Pak group has created nearly 500 jobs for blacks in the liquor industry in California in the last 10 years.

"All blacks are militant about civil rights but the principle upon which we base our fight is the freedom of choice without threats," McKee said. "And that is what we're telling Newton. We simply want the choice to decide where our energy and money should go to fight for black liberation."