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BLACKS LABELED AS SHOPLIFTERS

"If the dangers of our community are to be uprooted, let the news media and all other forces of truth and justice concentrate on the underlying causes of crime and social disorder. . . . The causes are steeped in racism . . . Racism in our courts, in our jails, in our streets, and in our hearts." These words were uttered by Judge George W. Crockett, of Detroit, in July 1969.

These could be the words of any decent human being. Eldridge Cleaver said it; Julian Bond has said it; George Stevens, Tom Johnson and Ambrose Brodus have said it. Institutional racism is subject to be the undoing of this nation. This country is on her way to doom because the real danger to communities across this nation are steeped in racism and too few peopple outside the Black communities have the guts to stand up and do something about what's happening.

It happened in La Mesa last week as more than 100 very secure white folks settled back comfortably in the Bronze Room of the La Mesa Chamber of Commerce for what apparently turned out to be a session on the shoplift of Black folks.

And when the end came sometime later, the white folks, representing merchants from all over this County of San Diego, where all kinds of folks spend their hard earned money on high priced items, had themselves a good time.

According to the Daily Californian, an El Cajon daily newspaper, a La Mesa police officer, Robert Oliver, was one of the major contributors to the racist acts which occurred. Other names mentioned as participants in that clam-bake in La Mesa were: Bill Wooten of Southland Corporation, franchiser of 7-11 food markets; Henry Barnes of the Mission Valley office of Bank of America, and an unidentified representative of the May Company in Mission Valley.

On hearing of this overt act of racism, one necessarily asks the question; what's going to be done about this? The answer is; something is going to be done about it. In fact, something is already being done about it. In the Black community a group of concerned people, representing the cross section of that community have come together for the express purpose of dealing with this racist act.

An alignment of organizations and individuals called Coalition of Black Organizations Against Racism has been formed for an effective approach to the problem. The problem has been identified in the following manner: (1) The Commission of an overt act of racism by each and every participant in the clinic; (2) The irresponsible representation of the La Mesa Police Department; (3) Public manifestation of white racism under the guise of a public service seminar.

The Coalition of Black Organizations Against Racism is moving methodically about its business. There is clear indication that decisions which are reached are not based on emotions, but out of genuine concern for the survival of Black folks. Ambrose Brodus is serving as Chairman of the group.

Out in the white community, some small groups are busy turning plans into action in an effort to prevent the reoccurance of the kind of thing which happened so close to the All American City, San Diego.

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Editorial

E. Davis Jr.

Racism strikes again

Every day America sinks further and further into the quicksand of its own destruction by continuing to practice the systematic oppression, categorical segregation, and illiterate teachings of white supremacy. All of these ills are summed up in one word — **racism.**

Last week, another incident happened locally that continued to prove these facts. A La Mesa police officer, while addressing a shoplifting clinic, stereotyped Black people as shoplifters. He told the group about the many methods Black people use in shoplifting. He even had a few choice stereotyped remarks to make, such as, "Don't try to identify them, they all look alike."

This type of racism was further intensified by the fact that officials from the local BankAmericard offices, the May company, and Southland Corporation participated in this clinic without once questioning the remarks of the officer. Neither did any of the other 100 participants question the remarks of this ugly presentation. As a matter of fact, several of the officer's remarks produced laughter from the audience.

Evidently the low opinion of Black people was shared by all who attended. At no time did anyone ever try to get the point across that not **all** Black people are shoplifters. They chose to point out the problems that merchants would have with Black people exclusively.

This means that whenever Municipal Judge Earl Gilliam, Councilman Leon Williams, or Rev. George Smith of the San Diego School Board, enter a merchant's shop in that area, they are to be closely scrutinized as though they were common thieves.

In fact, so much attention may be given to honest Black shoppers that white shoplifters will probably steal the merchants blind.

Black people in San Diego County should not take this situation lightly. If merchants think we are so bad, then we should see that none of our hard-earned dollars are spent in those stores. Why shop where you are being watched like a hawk?

We spend 30 million dollars a year in San Diego County and hardly any of that money is returned to the Black community. Look at how the transit system suffered when the late Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. led the Montgomery Boycott. We can do the same thing here in San Diego County. Together, we make a very strong front and we can very easily bring these merchants to their knees.

We should hit them where it hurts most — in the pocketbook.

America is geared to only one kind of power — not Black power, or even "rainbow" power — but **GREEN** power! No one likes to lose money, and we don't have to spend our money where we are not appreciated!

We urge you to call the offices of BankAmericard and turn in your cards. Tell them that since "we all look alike," the cards will do us no good anyway since they don't know whom they are giving them to.

There's nothing that says you **must** shop at the May Company either!

The time has come when we must make the white power structure realize that **we too** are an integral part of America.

We call on the entire Black community to show its concern by writing letters, making phone calls, and cancelling accounts with these merchants who have shown their true colors through these ugly acts of racism.

Whites must realize that we can only be as non-violent as they allow us to be, because we most certainly will be as violent as we have to be.