

Drafted
by Gabe Solomon

AA-out

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M. G. Jones

LOCAL NEGRO LEADERS PRAISE
BOTH PICKETS AND BANK OF AMERICA

In a joint statement issued by several of the most widely recognized leaders in the local Negro community praise has been extended to both local Bank of America officials and local members of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) who participated in Fridays picketing demonstration against alleged discriminatory practices of state-wide Bank of America officials. The joint statement was signed by Rev. T.W. Russaw, President of the Bakersfield Negro Ministerial Alliance, Alfred G. Saunders, President of the Bakersfield NAACP Chapter, Rev. H.A. Green, Attorney Gabriel W. Solomon, Rev. Julius B. Brooks, Dr. Herman W. Hyatt, business-man Thomas B. Reese, Rev. D.J. McDowell, Councilman S. Del Rucker, Rev. Lee Anthony, Mrs. Jchnnie Mae Parker and Rev. Tyree Toliver.

The full text of the statement read as follows: "On the one hand, we compliment the courage and dedication which motivated local CORE members to demonstrate in support of the state-wide CORE effort to correct inadequate state-wide Bank of America employment policies. On the other hand, we would feel remiss in our responsibilities, if we failed to point out and compliment the fact that local Bank of America officials have within the past year taken vigorous steps to correct past employment deficiencies. Specifically, we have in mind the fact that less than a year ago no Negro, as far as we know, had ever been successful in obtaining employment in a Bakersfield branch of Bank of America in any capacity except menial labor; Whereas, within the last twelve months local Bank of America officials have hired at least four young Negro ladies in responsible job categories. The orderly and peaceful nature of the picketing and the unbiased, law abiding and impartial response of local police authorities also deserves commendation.

Fridays Bank of America picketing by CORE members was the first instance of civil rights picketing in Bakersfield and this instance was directed more at a state-wide problem than a local situation. We point out however, that there are numerous situations here in Bakersfield which would fully justify vigorous direct action and which will almost inevitably result in protest action if responsible local businesses, education and civic leaders and groups fail to initiate corrective action.

Less we be accused of making vague charges we point, by way of example only, to just a few of the local situations which do nothing but invite and insure future protest action. The policies or lack of policies of the Bakersfield City School Board which results in or acquiesces in assignment of all Negro school teachers to six or so de facto segregated elementary and junior high schools is grossly and clearly in violation of both state and federal laws. The lily white staffs of all other local banks and most local department stores and most departments in the city and county administrative

buildings and the local telephone company (janitorial jobs and the like excepted as usual) are just a few examples of historical local situations which just seem to sit there year after year without any attempt or effort at affirmative and intelligent corrective action. To those who immediately seek to salve their consciences with blithe statements relative to job qualification requirements, we note that it does not require a college degree to sell trinkets in a five and dime store, nor to drive a beer or bread delivery truck, nor to smile and count money behind a tellers cage in a local bank. We therefore call upon all local businesses, city, county, and school officials to conscientiously review their existing employment patterns and practices and we urge the Bakersfield City Council to take all necessary steps to insure an effective and functioning City Inter Group Relations Board.

Finally, we close by saying that we are not unmindful of the fact that inter-racial harmony and progress is, so to speak, a two way street on which traffic (or corrective action) must move ahead in both directions at the same time. We therefore, pledge our own efforts and call upon all groups and leaders in the local minority community to redouble our efforts to instill into our own community an ever increasing respect for education, law and order, property and self help."

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