

Angry blacks say mayor siding with Koreans

By **Richard Reyes Fruto**
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Black activists are angered with what they perceive to be Mayor Tom Bradley's tilt toward the Korean side in the current crisis in ethnic relations.

They have bitterly criticized him for calling a high-profile news conference after an arson fire at a liquor store in August and making no similar effort when a grocer fatally shot a teen-age girl in March.

Members of the Latasha Harlins Justice Committee, a group named for the dead girl, asked the mayor on Sept. 4 to ask him to make a public gesture of sup-

port for her family, but they came away empty.

"That would calm down the neighborhood," said a woman who identified herself only as Malkah. "That's what the neighborhood is upset about, that he would come out and speak about a burned building, but not the death of an innocent child."

Bradley made no statement after the meeting.

Blacks apparently are as upset as Koreans with Bradley's handling of the crisis. Some Koreans have faulted him for

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doing little to end the boycott of a liquor store.

"Whose side do you think the mayor is on?" asked a reporter in a news conference outside the mayor's office after the meeting.

"He sure is not on our side," said Denise Harlins, the girl's aunt.

"The Koreans, just because they have a lot more money than the black community has to give," Malkah said.

Latasha Harlins died in a dispute with Soon Ja Du, whose murder trial is scheduled to start this week. Racial tensions worsened in June when police said Lee Arthur Mitchell was



Tae Sam Park, owner of Chung's Liquor, holds a plant sent from members of the African American community who wanted to wish him well during the boycott.

killed trying to hold up John's Liquor Store.

Blacks launched a boycott of the store after the shooting because they don't believe Mitchell was robbing the store. Two months later, an alleged gang member set fire to Champion Liquor Deli in a long-standing feud with the owner.

The Latasha Harlins Justice Committee wanted the mayor "to bring himself out here with this family, not to speak on the guilt or innocence of Mrs. Du, and just stand with this family in unity and support," said a man who identified himself as Brother David.

"The meeting with the mayor was a complete waste of our time," said Denise Harlins, who described Bradley as "antagonistic" and "defensive."