

## Sellout or Compromise?

# All's quiet on the boycott for now

### Owner Tae Sam Park consents to settlement.

By Richard Reyes Fruto  
Korea Times

Capitulation. Sellout. These thoughts crossed the minds of many Koreans when the pact ending the boycott of John's Liquor Store was announced two Fridays ago.

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But those who took part in the talks said they needed to bring an end to the boycott so they could turn their attention to the bigger issues underlying tension with the African-American community.

Under the agreement, boycott organizers will call off the pickets, and the store will be closed and put up for sale, initially to black buyers and then to others after 30 days.

"This is not the best deal, but what can we do? We have no choice," said



Danny Bakewell and Rev. Edgar Boyd, right, meet with reporters.

Duk H. Kang, president of the Korean American Chamber of Commerce. Kang echoed concerns that the boycotts might spread to other stores.

"We are not happy about it, but it is a compromise," said attorney T.S. Chung.

"Previous to this, we were at loggerheads with each other."

According to Kang, Chung and others, store owner Tae Sam Park consented to the plan for the good of the community. The agreement guarantees



Yang Il Kim, right, exchanges last minute views with Korean leaders and city officials before news conference announcing agreement.

that Park will get a "fair price" agreed upon by both sides.

"Considering the alternatives, Mr. Park felt this was an acceptable alternative," Chung said. Otherwise, the boycott would go on, the store would

continue to do little business and nobody would buy the store, Chung reasoned.

The deal was hammered out in four days in a whirlwind round of meetings.

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## Settlement

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phone calls and fax transmissions involving City Hall, Korean American Grocers Association and Brotherhood Crusade president Danny Bakewell.

Mayor Tom Bradley's aides brokered the settlement, and it was announced at a hastily called news conference at almost midnight at a KAGRO banquet in Universal City on Oct. 3.

The deal smelled like a sellout even to others at the meeting of community leaders the previous night where the settlement got the green light from the Korean side.

"(Some) feel the Koreans are giving up everything and not getting anything," said Marcia Choo of the Korean American Race Relations Emergency Fund (KARE). "What are we getting out of this? This is Danny Bakewell and Mayor Bradley's agreement."

The boycott began in June when black activists rejected the findings of the district attorney's office that Park fatally shot a man in a robbery. Prosecutors have reinstated the shooting as justifiable.

The impetus for the agreement came from KAGRO president Yang Il Kim, Bradley's aides said. According to them, Kim approached the mayor's office with a proposal while Bradley was trying to bring boycott organizers to the table.

"The point that is getting missed is that Yang Il Kim has been forthright for a number of months now trying to (stop the boycott)," said Gary Boze, Bradley's coordinator for South Central Los Angeles. "Yang Il definitely took the lead in the Korean community."

Kim flew to Korea on a business trip the day after the deal was announced. His Korea trip had given urgency to the negotiations because he will be away until Oct. 18.

"This is about this one store so that all these other things can be worked on in a positive sense," said Yoon Hee Kim, an aide to Mayor Tom Bradley.

Under the agreement, KAGRO and boycott organizers will develop a dispute resolution process and a merchants' code of ethics, neither one of which is a new idea in black-Korean relations.

The Asian-Pacific American Dispute Resolution Center and the Martin Luther King Dispute Resolution Center already have been mediating conflicts, while the Black-Korean Alliance has been working on a code of ethics for months.

These efforts involve Korean groups, county and city human relations commissions and civil rights groups, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference.

Boycott organizers refused to meet with the Korean side for three months because they insisted they wanted to demonstrate first, Bakewell said at a news conference in front of John's

Liquor on Oct. 4.

On Sept. 28, Bakewell finally indicated in a conversation with Bradley that they were ready to talk, and the mayor instructed his aides to arrange a meeting.

On Sept. 30, Yang Il Kim met for 90 minutes with Bakewell and Rev. Edgar Boyd, another boycott leader, at the SCLC office in south Los Angeles. They made a tentative agreement that still needed the approval of others.

On Oct. 2, Yoon Hee Kim secured Park's consent when she visited John's Liquor that morning.

That night, 14 Korean leaders met for two hours at the Holiday Inn in downtown Los Angeles to sign off on the proposed settlement.

The meeting included six KARE representatives. The group is made up of second-generation English-speaking leaders who have tried since July to mediate an end to the boycott.

According to Choo, people at the meeting saw the agreement as a chance once and for all to end the boycott.

But Choo said some people wished they could have had more time to review it because they saw it only for the very first time. They wanted to fully understand its implications, Choo said.

"I definitely saw this as a window of opportunity toward the solutions we wanted," Choo said. "I didn't want to close this window, but I also didn't want to jump out the window and fall 50 stories down."

They amended the proposed settlement to include creation of a dispute resolution process and code of ethics.

On Oct. 3, the boycott organizers indicated their approval at 5:30 p.m. when Bakewell called Boze at the mayor's office.

"This is not about who wins and who loses," said Yoon Hee Kim. "It is about coming to an agreement and how to take the focus away from this detrimental situation."

But Bakewell was triumphant at the news conference in front of John's Liquor, sounding like boycott organizers had scored a victory.

"What is significant about today is that we are winning. The African American community has won," Bakewell said. "We have brought home the bacon for the African American community."

In accepting the agreement, boycott organizers made a key concession—dropping their demand that the district attorney's office reopen its investigation of the shooting.

The deal would have collapsed without the consent of the mother of Lee Arthur Mitchell, the man who died in the shooting.

Bakewell also claimed the agreement will create jobs for local residents at Korean businesses and bring capital from Korean American banks. But those points were not written in the document.