

Continue the Struggle for Affirmative Action!

Since the Supreme Court's decision supporting Allan Bakke's claim of "reverse discrimination", the anti-Bakke movement has been in an ebb. The two largest national organizations dealing with this issue, the National Coalition to Oppose the Bakke Decision (NCOBD) and the Anti-Bakke Decision Coalition (ABDC), have scaled down their activities around the case.

Yet, daily, the bourgeoisie's attacks on affirmative action programs continue to intensify, particularly since the decision. These attacks are a reflection of the deepening crisis of imperialism. The bourgeoisie is attempting to divide our class, to find scapegoats whom they can blame for the existing crisis, in order to divert the struggle away from the real enemy -- the bourgeoisie itself.

It is necessary that we unite to fight against these attacks, which greatly affect oppressed nationalities and women, in particular, and the working class as a whole in general. It is in the spirit of uniting all those that can be united that we examine the National Proposal to Build the Anti-Bakke Movement put forward by the Workers Congress (ML) in its political organ THE COMMUNIST of September 11, 1978, vol. IV, number 20. The proposal says:

1. "Nationwide, we must organize a broad mass movement to defend and expand affirmative action programs for women and oppressed nationalities."

We agree with the WC(ML) that it is correct to focus the struggle on affirmative action programs and link that to national oppression. We disagree with IWK-ATM's intentions to change the character of the movement to one against national oppression in general. This would narrow instead of broaden the base of the movement, which would also lose continuity by jumping from one

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CONTINUE THE STRUGGLE FOR AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

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struggle to another without a national perspective and plan of action.

From the beginning, LPR (ML) saw the Bakke case as not merely reduced to an issue for students, but one affecting oppressed nationalities in general and women as well. We said:

"Its effects are not limited merely to the Medical School of the University of California at Davis. It establishes the legal precedent for the elimination of many such programs throughout the country, not just in education, but also in labor contracts and in housing. The Bakke case constitutes the stepping stone for far-reaching attacks against the hard-won gains of oppressed nationalities in the U.S."

"The Bakke Decision seriously threatens the gains that had been won as a result of the mass struggles, especially those for working women, such as the quotas establishing that a certain minimum of women has to be hired by companies such as AT & T, N.Y. Telephone, GE and others. This is especially hard on working women who need to keep their jobs for the survival of their families in these times of serious economic hardships."

(see RESISTANCE vol.8, no.9)

At the same time there are certain so-called affirmative action programs that we do not support such as those calling for more oppressed nationalities to be hired as cops. We think that to support the "right" of oppressed nationalities to repress others is to see democracy in the abstract, not from a class viewpoint. Also, such programs would only aid the capitalist State in their repressive measures.

2. "In the immediate period ahead we must pay special attention to affirmative action in the field of employment rights, as typified by the need to defend against the "Weber" attack in steel."

In carrying out our work in defense of affirmative action programs the focus of our efforts must be in the working class. The bulk of our work should be aimed at the shops and workplaces. The discrimination against oppressed nationalities and women divides the working class, as well as the phoney charges of "reverse discrimination" used by the forces who oppose affirmative action. Therefore, we have also said:

"Affirmative action programs benefit not only oppressed nationalities but the whole of the working class. It is in the interest of all workers to support the struggle to end national oppression and racial discrimination as this is precisely one of the tools of the bourgeoisie to continue to oppress workers by keeping us divided and fighting each other for a few jobs, and other opportunities. By keeping the oppressed nationalities (and women, Ed.) much below the level of the rest of the population, the bourgeoisie uses the minorities to keep down the level of the rest of the workers and to divide and weaken the working class."

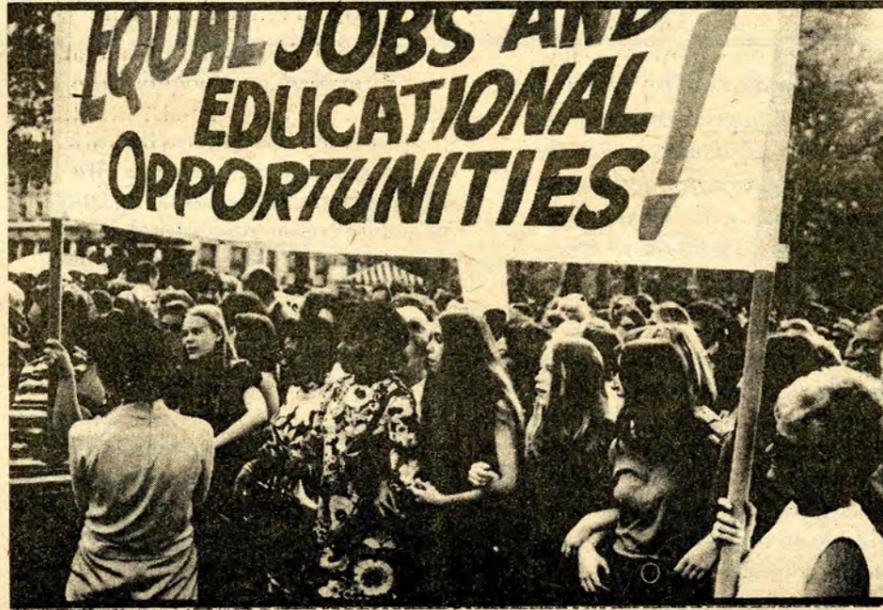
(see RESISTANCE vol.8, no.9)

Thus it would be incorrect to limit our work to the colleges, as ABDC has done, to the point that when summer comes along affirma-

tive action struggle seems to go underground because there are no students around to carry it out.

3. "All national and local forces must be organized into a single, broad based, democratic coalition."

We agree that this is the best way to build a strong and effective anti-Bakke movement. Our experience in the ABDC with the CPML and the IWK-ATM leading it, is that they had no intentions of building a single movement on a democratic basis. Due to their sectarianism, they were unable to draw the masses into the ABDC. A movement that had seen thousands of followers in demonstrations and other actions, was down to less than a hundred in its last highly publicized rally in New York City.



Decisions were being made exclusively by them, without the participation of the masses and other communists and advanced forces there. They would allow no political struggles to go on at the meetings, always claiming "that has been decided already", and certainly no opposition which would be immediately labeled as sectarian, obstructionist, etc.

This is consistent with what happened with the WC(ML) in other ABDC chapters in the country. The ATM-IWK leadership of ABDC squashed the struggle raised by these comrades around the focus of the work and the need for a national plan. Rather than discussing the WC proposal, the ABDC leadership preferred to expel them from ABDC. This was done through a unilateral decision of the IWK-ATM leadership without any participation or discussion of the general membership. By taking the differences between communist organizations into the mass organization the IWK-ATM leadership are carrying out an incorrect, sectarian, non-mass style of work that can only help to destroy, not build, this mass democratic movement.

The anti-Bakke movement cannot be built in this way. The masses must be given ample participation both in making and carrying out decisions, and the broadest possible sectors must be incorporated in a single program for struggle around affirmative action.

4. "We must rely on the direct action of the masses."

The fact that the NCOBD and the ABDC have scaled down their activi-

ties since the Bakke Decision was upheld by the Supreme Court objectively proves one thing: that both were relying on the courts. Now that the channel of the courts has been exhausted it seems like there's not much else left for them to do...

But affirmative action programs must continue to be defended. And it is only through mass struggle that this can be done! In fact, the masses have continued to defend affirmative action and, scattered throughout the country small groups or coalitions have sprung up and have continued to struggle where the NCOBD and the ABDC left off. It is our task now to organize all these forces into a single powerful movement.

5. "While focusing mainly on affirmative action, we need to play a good role in giving support to the overall struggle for equal rights of women and oppressed nationalities."

The struggle for affirmative action is in fact linked to the struggle for the democratic rights of women and oppressed nationalities. It is our task to link them up and thus raise the consciousness of the masses in the course of the struggle, as well as point to the final solution to national and women's oppression -- socialism. It is by concretely showing the masses that we are active defenders of their rights that we can expect to win them over to the cause of socialism.

The step taken by the comrades of the WC(ML) in putting forward a national proposal is a very positive one. Besides being an attempt to provide leadership to the anti-Bakke mass struggle, it can help us in the tasks of uniting Marxist-Leninists and winning the advanced, crucial in our party building efforts.

We urge all comrades to study the proposal and in the spirit of Marxist-Leninists unite, put forward their views on it.

SUPPORT THE DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS OF OPPRESSED NATIONALITIES AND WOMEN!

Without the PLO There cannot be peace

The framework for betrayal cooked up in Camp David between Egypt and Israel with the blessings of U.S. imperialism has led to a proposal for a peace treaty between the two countries. This proposal will establish diplomatic ties at the ambassadorial level between Israel and Egypt. It is a major victory for the illegal settler state of Israel and U.S. imperialism.

In asking the Israeli parliament for approval of the proposal, Prime Minister Begin said: "Without Egypt, it will be impossible for Syria, Jordan, or other Arab states to launch a war against us." Begin is obviously describing the favorable conditions for Israel that were created by Egypt's treasonous behavior towards the Arab world.

Having the guarantee that the major and most powerful Arab state will remain neutral — maybe even assist them — in any conflict with other Arab states, it's definitely something for the fascist-zionists to be happy about. Furthermore, its recognition from Egypt can lead to recognition by other Arab states under the pressure of both Egypt and the United States. Finally, Egypt's treason is a big blow to the aspirations for self-determination, and the recovery of their historical homeland, for the Palestinian people.

But there is one thing that both Israel and Egypt are belittling: that is the masses of Palestinian, and other

Arab people, who will not stand by this peace treaty. They will escalate the struggle against Israeli aggression. The masses and the masses alone are the makers of history. Over the negotiations of Sadat and Begin is the determination of the Palestinians to be free. The Arab people will unite in their struggle against their common enemies: U.S. imperialism and Zionism.

To the proclamations of Begin that without the support of Egypt it is not possible for the Arabs to fight against them, the Palestinian Liberation Organization answers by saying: "If without Egypt there can be no war, be sure that without the PLO there can not be peace!"

We unite with all progressive and revolutionary minded people the world over in condemning the great treason committed by Sadat. We are confident that the Egyptian masses will not stand for this treaty and will continue to support and participate in the struggle against Zionist Israel. Sadat has raised a big rock only to drop it on his own feet. Sooner or later the Egyptian masses will make Sadat pay for his crimes.

DOWN WITH THE PEACE TREATY BETWEEN EGYPT AND ISRAEL!

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE!

LONG LIVE THE FIGHT!