

ONCE AGAIN ON QUALITY EDUCATION

The bourgeoisie has launched an all-round reactionary campaign to contain and suppress the struggle for national equality and democratic rights. Putting on a pious tone of high morality, one prong of this campaign complains that a 34 year old engineer, Alan Bakke, was subject to "racial" discrimination in being denied admission to University of California at Davis Medical School. He was subject to "reverse discrimination."

"Reverse discrimination" is supposed to mean that Bakke as a white person is discriminated against. This shows how bourgeois equality is used as a tool of national oppression. Opposing minority admissions programs, which was the basis for Bakke's claim, means to continue the present policy of preferential admissions in fact for white males to go to colleges, universities and professional schools. This is the reality behind the liberal rhetoric about "reverse discrimination."

The bourgeoisie is trying to reduce national equality to a question of individuals, ignoring their nationality. This is done to obscure the fact that imperialism means national inequality for the oppressed and privileges for the oppressor nation -- not national equality. They try to spread the concept of bourgeois equality as if there were no distinction between the oppressed and oppressor nations.

This exposes the formal character of bourgeois equality. Bourgeois equality is always a mask for real inequality. It is always a cover for exploitation and oppression of women, minority nationalities and the working class.

It is a chauvinist lie to say that Bakke, a white male, has been subject to discrimination. Any differentiation on any basis is a discrimination, but what does that elementary lesson of logic -- which the bourgeoisie pretends is the height of social wisdom -- have to do with overcoming economic and political oppression, the perpetuation of insults and social exclusion to which

minority nationalities are subject in United States?

In order to buttress this weak reed of "reverse discrimination", bourgeois hypocrisy has marshalled another high-minded goal -- "quality education."

We are familiar with "quality education" already -- it is the shibboleth of every racist reactionary force striving to perpetuate segregation by opposing school busing.

Having done good service, "quality education" is now trotted out as a necessary antidote to affirmative action.

UC REGENTS UPHOLD "QUALITY EDUCATION"

On October 21, the governing body of the University of California system, the UC Regents, in effect confirmed that it had no intention from the beginning of putting up a substantial defense in favor of affirmative action or special admissions programs in the Bakke case. Moving to the offensive, the Board adopted a new admissions policy which gives greater weight to standardized test scores as a corrective to "a decline in the quality of preparation among incoming freshmen." This new plan for "quality education," according to one study, will exclude less than 2% of white freshmen, but almost 9% of black students and 9.5% Latino. This would be in addition to the effect of the Bakke decision which, according to one UCLA admissions officer, would disqualify 4 out of 5 applicants now accepted under special admissions programs.

What are these standardized tests so decisive to the bourgeoisie for measuring "quality"? It is well known that college and professional school entrance exams as well as employment tests used throughout the economy test the commonly accepted "middle" class values of the oppressor nation culture. An exam based on the underlying assumptions of great nation chauvinism is being legitimized as a means to screen minority nationality candidates for education and jobs. This kind of "quality education"

lends the same racist stench to the market for jobs and education that liberal handwringing about "property values" brought to the search for decent housing.

THE DECEPTIVE LIBERAL GESTURE OF A SLY SLAVE OWNER

The Carter administration is second only to the UC Regents in two-faced defense of affirmative action. With the "deceptive liberal gesture of a sly slave owner," (CI Resolution on the Negro National Question, 1930), the Justice department filed a "friend of the court" argument in the Bakke case taking a position against quotas, but in favor of targets, and anyway suggesting that the case be sent back to California without decision because all the preliminary issues haven't been adequately resolved.

What does all this doubletalk amount to? Vagueness on this issue allows the bourgeoisie to deepen its attack on affirmative action programs in exactly the fashion the UC Regents have done. This offensive will unfold in all areas -- as it has begun to -- jobs, housing, etc. Under court order a white woman has already been admitted to UC Davis Medical School because she had better test scores than some of those admitted by special admissions. Yet as long as the question is not finally decided, reformists will still work to hold back militant opposition in hopes that the ruling class will finally have a "change of heart".

Reformism is a big enemy in the anti-Bakke campaign. From slick administrators who throw sops to "Third World"* students for whom their contempt based on class and national arrogance is matched only by their shallow fear of an unruly individual or mass movement, to the student or community activist willing to use the campaign to grab a sop or so for himself, reformism seeks to contain the resistance of the masses within a framework acceptable to the bourgeoisie. We must unflinchingly show

the connection between the struggle against national oppression and the fight for proletarian revolution and demonstrate that these two struggles are closely allied in a common battle against the same enemy. What this means is that we must apply the fundamental tactical rule of THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO constantly in our work -- to connect the short term interests of the movement with its long term interests. We must demonstrate that the proletariat is a vanguard fighter for democracy and the only thoroughgoing and consistent fighter for democracy. Making no concessions to opportunism, it is our job to put forward a proletarian revolutionary line to lead the mounting resistance of the masses and to expose bourgeois or social democratic reformism.

MOUNTING RESISTANCE TO THE BAKKE DECISION

Opposition to the Bakke decision in the recent period has been strong and is steadily growing in strength. Over 3000 people demonstrated against the decision on October 15 in the Bay Area in a rally called by the Anti-Bakke Decision Coalition. Well over 1000 demonstrators

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*The term "third world" has considerable importance in our movement. In view of the present controversy over its use, comrades would do well to use it scientifically. Any capitulation to loose bourgeois usage of the term undermines the strategic significance of the concept and makes the drawing of lines of demarcation between Marxism-Leninism and opportunism more difficult. Students most directly affected by the liquidation of special admissions programs are not "third world" students, but minority nationality students of the first world subjected to great nation chauvinism and exploitation by US oppressor nation monopoly capital. A "third world" student is a foreign student.

BAKKE

marched in Washington D.C. the night prior to Supreme Court arguments in the case. Other meetings have been held in Los Angeles, Boston, New York, Atlanta, Denver, Chicago and other cities. During the week of September 11, a march was held from San Jose to Sacramento, California, a distance of 150 miles, to call attention to the Bakke decision and emphasize its impact on the day to day lives of working and oppressed peoples.

THE PROLETARIAT AS A VANGUARD FIGHTER FOR DEMOCRACY

How can forces in our movement who have held the struggle for democracy up to such scorn with their struggle against the ERA, busing, etc. measure up to the task of leading the resistance to an all around attack on national equality and to a general campaign designed to suppress hard won democratic gains of the working and oppressed masses?

How can forces which bow to the motion of the spontaneous movement, to what exists, and who fail to connect the

struggle for partial demands as in the Bakke campaign to the fundamental long term interests of the proletariat provide proletarian leadership for the democratic struggle?

We oppose every effort to narrow the political significance of the Bakke decision in a way that isolates the democratic struggles of the oppressed nationalities from the revolutionary struggle of the working class. The democratic struggle of the oppressed nationalities for liberation is a firm ally of proletarian revolution and it is the duty of every class conscious worker to come to its support. We need to demonstrate this connection in our work.

We also oppose every effort to narrow the scope of activity to one region or area such as the South or Southwest. Bakke is the concern of working and oppressed people in every corner of the country. Our campaign must reach every community and every factory and utilize the unyielding resistance of the masses as our only reliable support!