

Struggle For Equality Goes On!

Bakke Decision Hits Gains of 60s

This month the U.S. Supreme Court decides on the case of would-be medical student Allan Bakke. Bakke's suit against the University of California at Davis (UCD) charges that UCD passed him over, a "higher qualified" white, in favor of "less qualified" Blacks who were admitted to UCD under an affirmative admissions program. Bakke contends that this is "reverse discrimination." (Bakke was also turned down by 13 other medical schools but UCD got hit with court action because of its affirmative action program.)

Bakke's suit was upheld by the California Supreme Court in September 1976 and goes hand in hand with other lawsuits and court decisions hacking away at the rights of minorities.

The Bakke suit and other court actions are only the tip of the iceberg. These legal attacks are taking place in the context of a general assault on the gains of the civil rights and Black liberation movements during the '50s and '60s. Out of these movements many concessions were won from the ruling class to-

wards more equal opportunity in hiring and education.

This enabled more young people from minorities to go to universities, enabled more workers to bid into better jobs or get into apprentice programs.

Even as these gains were won, the ruling class began trying to take them back. As a result of struggle over 4900 places were added to medical schools. Yet this was turned around somewhat as the schools went ahead and filled 77% of the new places with whites, instead of with more minorities who had been shut out for "so long. Overall, however, while these gains did not wipe out discrimination, nor could they, they were a big step forward. Now many of these programs are gone or severely cut back.

In a surprise move by the U.S. Justice Department in mid-September the Carter administration filed a "friend of the court" brief basically upholding the principle of affirmative action, though it came out against "rigid, exclusionary quotas" as a formula for determining minority participation (which could be used

to knock down some affirmative action programs). Carter, in coming out on the side of affirmative action, is blowing smoke in order to let the courts take the heat for shafting Blacks and other minorities. And he is also trying to repay some of his political debts to Black bourgeois forces who aided in his election.

The biggest arguments outright reactionaries raise against affirmative action have to do with it "going too far" and it discriminates against whites in order to make up for past discrimination against minorities.

Right now the ratio of doctors to population in the U.S. is 1/700 (which is worse than many Western European countries). Among Blacks it's one Black doctor/3800 Black people; Native Americans 1/20,000; and Chicano 1/30,333. This is "going too far"? Among Blacks the ratio has hovered around 1/4000 since the 1930s! If the rate of increase in Chicano medical students in California kept increasing at the same rate it has over the last decade it would take 38 years for Chicanos to hit the 1/700 ratio.

These statistics show that even with the current affirmative action programs that discrimination is hardly a thing of the past. It is today, it is a fact of life as long as capitalism exists. And, of course, this discrimination and inequality is not limited to medical schools or doctor/population ratios. Blacks, Chicanos, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans and other minorities still get hit with the worst in housing and schools, have more of the lower paying, lousy working condition jobs, more unemployment, suffer from the highest crime rates, etc. etc. Past discrimination? Hogwash!

What does affirmative action in medical schools mean? Statistics show that more doctors from the minorities return to the communities they came from to set up practice. The more Black doctors there are, the more doctors working in the Black community, and this is very necessary. Black communities and poor areas are generally low on dedicated doctors and high on quick buck artists with scalpels.

There needs to be more affirma-

WORKERS GO INTO STATE SENATE CHAMBER TO DEMAND JOBS AND UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS.

tive action, not less. It is vitally necessary for these programs to exist, so that minorities can make some headway against the present-day inequality in society.

The capitalists are responsible for the history of segregation, discrimination and oppression of minority nationalities. They are the only ones who have profited and the struggle for affirmative action must be directed towards the goal of making the ruling class pay.

The ruling class and their media spokesmen use affirmative action, and that many students don't make it into medical school, to stir up divisions between Black and white. A real problem is that there are too few spots in medical schools. Dozens apply for every place. But the American Medical Association (AMA) fights to keep the number of med school places low so that there are less doctors so that what doctors there are can charge higher fees. And the steep tuition, \$10-12,000 a year, is a giant road block for students from families with a poor or moderate income.

As for the children of the rich, getting into med school is no sweat. In a trial involving the Chicago Medical School in 1974 it was revealed that the family and friends of 77 of the 91 entering freshmen in 1973 had donated a per student average of \$50,000 to the school. In short, they bought their way in.

The Bakke case is important. The decision of the Supreme Court will have a far-ranging effect. Already progressive forces around the country are battling against the Bakke suit by explaining the issues to the people and organizing demonstrations. The Medical Committee for Human Rights (MCHR), an organization of progressive doctors and other health professionals, and the Revolutionary Student Brigade are among them.

The gains of the Black liberation struggle and other minority struggles were paid for in sweat and blood. The people will not give them up lightly and the struggle around the Bakke case is bound to be just one battle in a struggle to defend past victories and go forward. ■



THE GAINS OF THE BLACK LIBERATION, AND OTHER MINORITY STRUGGLES WILL NOT BE TAKEN AWAY WITHOUT A FIGHT.