

Editorial

Down With the Bakke Decision!

Build the Struggle Against Discrimination

After close to a year of stalling, the Supreme Court has ruled on the Bakke case. Its decision is the most severe legal attack on minority rights in decades. The High Court struck a heavy blow at affirmative action by forbidding universities to set admissions quotas which make sure a certain number of minority students get to attend. Race can be "a factor" in admissions decisions, added the justices in a lame effort to prettify their racist decision.

By deciding in favor of Alan Bakke's suit to get into medical school, the Supreme Court gave its stamp of approval to his contention that whites have become the victims of "reverse discrimination." Absurd! How can white people in the US be considered the victims of discrimination when Blacks and other minorities are still handed the worst of everything? The unemployment rate among Blacks is still over twice that for whites. The average income of a Black adult is only 3/5 of the white average--and the gap is widening! Only one doctor in fifty is Black--and it's a safe bet that when Allan Bakke graduates he won't open a practice to serve the people of Watts or Harlem.

The significance of the Bakke decision is that it is a roadblock, intended to stop the further progress of Blacks and other minority peoples in their long fight against discrimination and oppression. Affirmative action was won through bitter battles in the civil rights movement and Black Liberation Movement in the 1960s and early '70s. Today the rich who rule this country face a severe economic and political crisis. The 5-4 vote for Bakke and the "race as a factor" ruling by the Supreme Court reflect differences in the ranks of the ruling class on this question. How much of the burden can be dumped on Black people how quickly, without creating unacceptable social problems?

One obvious reason for their caution was the powerful movement which grew up to oppose the Bakke case. Students and professionals, Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican and Asian, made up the main force of the movement, which also drew support from thousands of whites who wanted to stand against oppression and for justice. It became the most massive upsurge against attacks on minorities in this decade, educating and mobilizing many people and organizations to the defense and extension of minority rights.

The Bakke decision only highlights the need for such a movement. Further court cases, some of them going beyond the campus to attack affirmative action in hiring, job training and promotion, are on the docket now and must be exposed and resisted. Nor can the struggle against discrimination and the oppression of national minorities be limited to taking on legal shackles, old and new. It is breaking out on dozens of battlefields from the anti-Rizzo fight in Philadelphia streets to the boycott and marches against the Klan in Tupelo, Mississippi, as articles in this issue of The Worker report. Build the Fight! Defend and Extend Affirmative Action! Fight Discrimination and National Oppression!