

STRENGTHEN THE PRINCIPLES WHICH GUIDE OUR WORK OVERTURN THE BAKKE DECISION!

The following analysis is taken from the document submitted by the WORKERS CONGRESS (M-L) to the first national conference of the Anti-Bakke Decision Coalition at Los Angeles, California, February 19, 1978.

...The present principles of unity of ABDC have had a particular significance for a particular period of the struggle. Starting in late spring 1977 they served to draw lines of demarcation with the reformism of the National Committee to Overturn the Bakke Decision (NCOBD). But in drawing lines of demarcation and in guiding the work of the ABDC the present principles have proven to be inadequate -- vague on the fundamental issue of equal rights, narrow on how to unite all who can be united, and outright wrong in use of the term "Third World".

1. "RELY ON THE MASSES OF OPPRESSED PEOPLE TO DEFEAT THE BAKKE DECISION."

In building the Bakke struggle we should base our work on the concept of the united front. That is, we strive to unite all who can be united. Only a massive show of strength can force concessions from the ruling class. We cannot afford to close the doors to any allies and to do so undermines the struggle itself.

The present principles fail to give us this broad perspective and this has resulted in people separating and counterposing oppressed nationalities to whites, students to workers, oppressed nationalities to women, etc. Here is a concrete example of how the narrowness of principle promotes narrowness in practice and saps our potential power.

While we unite all who can be united we must rely on the working class first of all. Although Bakke took the form of an attack on university admissions programs, in fact its heaviest impact will be felt by women and oppressed nationalities in the workplace. It is in the workplace that Bakke becomes a direct question of jobs, wages and profits.

Secondly, the experience of all countries over the past 100 years teaches us that it is the working class that is the most consistent fighter for democracy and alone capable of carrying the struggle through to the end. Without that basic force our efforts remain limited. The limits of the gains of the democratic struggles of the 1960's speak in part to that very fact. The courage, stamina, and spirit of the farmworkers and miners are two contemporary examples which show the potential force of the working class in challenging the power of the ruling class.

We also rely on the oppressed nationalities and women as basic allies of the working class--as "oppressed masses". Both are "equal targets" of the Bakke decision. The mass resistance of oppressed nationalities and women in the 1960's and 70's were responsible for the very gains in equal rights which are threatened by Bakke today.

None of this should be used to attack or belittle the activist role that students play in our various struggles. Students have played a great role in sparking the various anti-imperialist struggles in this country, the anti-war movement is only one example. The same is true throughout the world -- in southern Africa, in Thailand, in South Korea, in Europe, in Mexico and Latin America. But none of this denies the general character of the united front, which relies on the working class and democratic movements.

2. "OPPOSE BOTH THE US SUPREME COURT AND THE UC REGENTS AS EQUAL TARGETS."

While this principle served to demarcate ABDC from NCOBD, it has lost that significance for guiding our work of mobilizing national resistance. We suggest that we drop this principle and incorporate the ideas expressed in our literature. In our literature we should address the role of both institutions, but our analysis must expose the system behind those and other institutions and not just the institutions themselves. Otherwise if the liberal forces do succeed in reversing Bakke to pacify our struggle, we leave ourselves open to the reformist illusion that they can be relied to act in our interests.

3. "OPPOSE THE SYSTEMATIC OPPRESSION OF THIRD WORLD PEOPLE."

First, the current use of the term "Third World" in this and the next principle of unity (and in the literature and cultural events) is incorrect and should be stopped. There is a growing attack on the term and Chairman Mao's three world theory in the international communist movement today. Careless and unscientific use of the term only aid that attack and make it harder for honest forces to defend it.

This is an important question of principle. The third world is composed of the oppressed nations of Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the socialist countries who are together the main force in the international class struggle today. The US is a first world country. The people who are incorrectly referred to in the principles as "Third World people" are actually oppressed nationalities of the first world.

Second, to oppose systematic oppression of third world people is too restrictive because it omits women which are also a specific target of the Bakke attack. But even "oppose the systematic oppression of oppressed nationalities and women" would be incomplete unless we point to the principle of equal rights. Supporting the struggle for equal rights makes it possible for us to reach all those who support the struggle for equality, but at the same time show the systematic oppression which makes equality a sham at this time. The struggle for equal rights is in fact the way to struggle against all forms of national and sex oppression.

4. "DEFEND AND EXPAND ALL THIRD WORLD PROGRAMS, AFFIRMATIVE ACTION PROGRAMS, AND ALL SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR WOMEN AND WORKING PEOPLE."

The use of "third world" in this principle is incorrect for the reasons stated above. Second, working people in general are not the focus of the Bakke attack, oppressed nationalities and women are. That focus should be reflected consistently in our principles. This kind of principle is important in the development of the struggle for concrete partial demands linked up with the daily needs and afflictions of those attacked by the Bakke decision.

Given these views on the present principles of unity of ABDC, we propose the following principles be considered to replace them.

1. Unite all who can be united to defeat the Bakke decision. Rely on the working and oppressed masses.

2. Oppose all reactionary policies of national and sex oppression. Give firm support to the struggle for equal rights of women and oppressed nationalities.

3. Defend and expand all affirmative action programs.

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