



Thousands of progressive doctors and other professionals have taken a stand against Bakke. (Above) MCHR demonstration at Supreme Court.

Actions Coast to Coast

Bakke Case Under Heavy Fire

As the case of Allan Bakke, would-be medical student, is being considered by the U.S. high court, struggle against the Bakke decision (handed down by the California Supreme Court) is growing from coast to coast. If the Bakke decision is upheld the affirmative action programs won in the struggles of national minorities in the late '60s will be in serious jeopardy. (See *Revolution*, October 1977 and January 1977)

On October 8 demonstrations involving thousands were held in numerous cities. The actions, called by the National Committee to Overturn the Bakke Decision (NCOBD), were a new high point in the battle to halt the attacks on affirmative action. The Revolutionary Student Brigade endorsed and participated in NCOBD actions as well as holding independent actions, particularly on the West Coast.

The largest actions took place in Washington, DC, where 1500 people marched; Seattle, 1500 people; Los Angeles, 600; Sacramento, 600; and Oakland, 3000. The NCOBD actions were sponsored and endorsed in some places by as many as 100 different organizations and individuals. Among the groups are a number of professionals' organizations, of lawyers, doctors, medical technicians, and others.

The largest of the demonstrations, in Oakland, was characterized by its multi-national character and by wide involvement of the masses. (This was pretty much true for all of the West Coast actions, where the anti-Bakke movement has had broad participation. An example of this is that a number of groups mobilized from Black churches joined in the Oakland march.) The Brigade mobilized a contingent under the banner of the October 8 Coalition of students from area campuses.

A week later the Anti-Bakke Decision Coalition (ABDC) held an action in the Bay Area. Over 2500 people turned out, mobilized in large part by MECHA, a Chicano student group.

"Armband Day"

On the day the U.S. Supreme Court opened its hearings on the Bakke case, the RSB in California distributed 5000 armbands declaring: "Minorities and Whites, Unite to Defeat the Bakke Decision!" In a day of struggle, the RSB organized rallies, demonstrations, forums and debates in an effort to build the battle to "Bury Bakke."

At the University of California in Berkeley, over 2500 students wore armbands. A rally was held where speakers from the Chicano Studies program and the RSB spoke to the demand to smash the Bakke case and pointed to the class interests behind the attacks on minority admissions and all students.

The morning of the Berkeley rally, the campus daily paper—claiming to represent the sentiments of the majority of students—editorialized in favor of Bakke. So, after the rally, students took to the streets to march on the newspaper's offices. Once there, they confronted the editor-in-chief and put some of his papers to the torch. That evening 800 students attended a debate between pro and anti-Bakke forces.

At San Jose State, 450 students joined a rally organized by the RSB and the Committee to Defeat the Bakke Decision. Afterwards, some 300 people marched on the administration building to confront the school's president, John Bunzel, a big supporter of the Bakke

decision. At first Bunzel refused to meet with the protesters but when 100 of them staged a sit-in, he finally showed up in hopes of fast-talking the students. His eloquent defense of Bakke fell on deaf ears and he fled the building. This was the largest demonstration on that campus since the anti-war movement.

At Los Angeles Community College, the RSB distributed armbands as well as holding a meeting of 150 to protest the Bakke decision.

The RSB on the West Coast is continuing to build struggle against the Bakke case and, after the October 22 demonstration in Kent, the RSB in the Midwest, South and East is making plans for building a big scale national campaign around the Bakke decision. While the RSB will continue to endorse and build for regional actions called by the NCOBD—although a handful of sectarian forces have thus far prevented the RSB from joining the NCOBD—it is also necessary for the Brigade to play an independent role and bring out a fuller analysis of what's behind the Bakke decision.

Different Lines

The need for this is pointed to by the different lines running through the struggle on what the source of national oppression is. The tone of the NCOBD action in Oakland was that racism and national oppression was a "societal problem," making it seem as if it was due to vague and general problems flowing out of society as a whole. But, as the RSB has been saying, while racist ideas and bourgeois ideology in general are picked up by the masses to one degree or another, the source of national oppression is the capitalist system itself, which cannot do without the oppression of whole peoples. And unless the bullseye is firmly hung on the bourgeoisie the struggle is in danger of becoming weakened or misdirected.

Coming off Carter's decision to support affirmative action in principle but attack the use of quotas, many

Ban The Krugerrand!

The National Steering Committee of the Organizing Committee for a new African Liberation Support Committee held a national meeting on October 15 and 16 in Philadelphia to map out plans for the coming year. The main issue that was discussed was the final planning for a Fall campaign against the sale of the South African gold coin, the Krugerrand. Following the example of the early history of ALSC, and especially the recently successful May 28, 1977 African Liberation Day Coalition March on the White House, the plans for the anti-Krugerrand campaign are based on building a broad coalition united around two points of political unity: 1) Ban the Krugerrand—Stop the Sale of the South African Gold Coin; 2) Victory to the Peoples of Southern Africa.

The anti-Krugerrand campaign will reach a peak on December 3, with regional demonstrations being planned for Oakland, California; Chicago, Illinois; Atlanta, Georgia; and a large East Coast city to be announced. There were 17 chapters attending this meeting, with several existing chapters not in attendance and several other cities sending word that efforts are under way to form new chapters. Overall the meeting was characterized by lively discussion, debate, and in the end a militant unity was reaffirmed around the main theme of this year's work: Fight imperialism and national oppression from USA (United States of America) to USA (Union of South Africa). ■

of the pro-Bakke forces have been hitting at quotas in order to knock down affirmative action altogether. These reactionaries are saying that "affirmative action is fine" but quotas, under any circumstances, are not. They point out that quotas have been used in the past to exclude religious and national minorities from education and other things. This is true, of course, but quotas have also been used to include religious and national minorities. They say that quotas place a "stigma," but this is just muddling the issue to take the "stigma" of discrimination off the bourgeoisie.

The effect of this anti-quota hullabaloo, translated into court rulings or administrative decisions, would be not only to back Bakke but to throw out many of the current affirmative action programs now in effect—a completely reactionary program which must be defeated.

Quotas

The main argument of the reactionaries is that quotas run counter to the "equal protection clause" for individuals in the 14th amendment of the U.S. Constitution, denying the fact that the real question involved is the social question of inequality and national oppression. Their "fair and just" solution to this dilemma is to restrict affirmative action to merely a show of good intent, such as "aggressive recruiting programs," rather than to measuring them by concrete results.

Yet, to leave the success of affirmative action to the "good intentions" of the oppressors, the bourgeoisie, is to leave it dead. The success of affirmative action programs, in almost all cases, requires a concrete, quantifiable goal, for example demanding the percentage of minorities admitted be at least equal to their representation in the population. In this way, quotas can be a weapon to force the bourgeois educational apparatus to accept minorities into higher education. Still it would be wrong to advocate a "quota system" everywhere and always as a cure-all for inequality and national oppression.

And the bourgeoisie, while overall stepping up its attacks on affirmative action—including quotas—and increasing national oppression generally has also worked to turn such things around against the people. They have often allotted "slots in such a way as to keep oppressed nationalities out of programs and have often used them to get minorities fighting among themselves over who gets a larger share of the pie: Here is your minority allotment—fight over it. The bourgeoisie, and the American Medical Association (AMA) in particular have also restricted the number of medical school places available to keep the price for their services dear—with the net effect being high priced and restricted medical care for the masses, minority nationalities in particular.

The struggle to defeat the Bakke decision, whose heart is the fight against national oppression and inequality, is very important and protracted. Some recent maneuvers of the Supreme Court have indicated that even this particular case may be sent to other courts. Even if a victory is won, there will be continued attempts to block affirmative action or render it meaningless. But a line is being drawn and a movement is growing, focused on the Bakke case, which is saying loudly and militantly that the attack on affirmative action, the attacks on minorities must be battled and defeated. ■



Volume 2, Number 1
October 1977

the COMMUNIST

- Part Two of a Three Part Series
On World War 2
Dealing with the Prewar Period
- Against Paul Sweezy's Theories of
Capitalist Crisis
- Marxism, Nationalism and the Tasks of
Party Building
History and Lessons of the National
Liaison Committee
Complete Text of Article Excerpted
in October '77 *Revolution*

Order Now!