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Notes

Editorial Staff

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From the Editors Notebook

2 The Bakke Case And Affirmative Action

The civil rights gains that Black people have made during the last few years seem to be slowly eroding in the face of mounting pressures from those who wheel and deal in the American system. Not so long ago, in Washington, D. C., two plaintiffs who lost job discrimination cases were ordered by local judges—in separate decisions—to reimburse court costs. The effect of this is far-reaching, meaning fewer and fewer cases involving racial bias will be filed by Blacks and other minorities for fear that an adverse decision could leave them with heavy financial burdens.

This fall the Supreme Court will hear the case, *Regents of the University of California v. Allan Bakke*, which challenges the legality of the special minority admissions program at the Davis Medical School of the University of California. If the court agrees with the plaintiff, who is white, it would amount to an unfortunate setback in the educational advancement of Blacks and other minorities in this country. Once again, the inherent racism in the American social system is at work. A handful of special admissions programs in higher institutions of learning and the affirmative action programs that are currently in operation are hardly enough compensation for the centuries of racism and injustice that Black people and other minorities have suffered throughout the United States.

The controversy before the court represents the most noted litigation involving access to educational opportunities for minority Americans since the celebrated *Brown v. Board of Education* decision of 1954. That ruling opened public school doors for Black children, notwithstanding the current struggle for quality education in Chicago, Boston, and elsewhere in the country. Indeed, an adverse decision in the *Bakke* case would amount to much more than blocking access to graduate and professional schools for a number of Blacks and other minorities. It would mean a step backwards in the job sector as well, because this case is in a direct collision course with affirmative action programs.

In an article elsewhere in this edition, Dr. Kenneth S. Tollett of Howard University writes:

"Blacks' and other minority groups' participation in higher education, particularly in graduate and professional schools, has been substantially increased or improved by special admissions programs. If these programs are discontinued, the admission of Blacks and other minorities into graduate and professional schools will be terribly curtailed. Blacks' access to, and distribution in a broad cross-section of institutions, will be impaired by eliminating these programs. Black and other ethnic studies programs will be brought into some question. Predominantly Black colleges and universities—particularly their graduate and professional schools—will be threatened. The entire affirmative action program will be enshrouded in doubt and uncertainty."

For factual details on the *Bakke* controversy and the political and economic implications thereof, as well as the history of affirmative action, turn to the following pages. □

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