

End Game: The Rise and Fall of Affirmative Action in Higher Education

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You mean that, halfway through,
With the game all but over, you'd like
To change the rules of play?

— Primo Levi (1988: 70)

It was time but somehow we missed it. I don't see how.

— Caryl Churchill (1996: 61)

Introduction

ON NOVEMBER 5, 1996, SOME 56% OF CALIFORNIA VOTERS DECIDED TO ENDORSE Proposition 209, the so-called California Civil Rights Initiative, which, if upheld by the courts, will eliminate what is left of state-based affirmative action policies. The day after the elections, Mario Savio died. The two events are quite interrelated, not only because Mario's last effort was to co-write with his son Nadav a defense of affirmative action and a critique of Proposition 209, but also because his life of activism corresponded with an extraordinary period of U.S. history (Savio and Savio, 1996). Future historians might very well note 1954, the year of *Brown v. Board of Education*, and 1996 as the markers of the rise and fall of the post-World War II Civil Rights Movement, the end of a historically specific phase in the struggle for social equality.

Much has been written in recent years about the merits and problems of affirmative action as a specific policy for rectifying inequality.¹ In this article I will try to locate this debate in a larger historical context. First, I argue for a broader interpretation of affirmative action that rescues it from the mostly racialized imagery in which it has been projected for at least the last decade.² Second, I propose that the expanded use of affirmative action in the 1960s and 1970s should be understood as one component of a far-reaching movement to attack the root

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causes of inequality in the United States. In particular, I will focus on the role it played in beginning to democratize both access to and the organizational culture of higher education. Third, I will discuss the varied reasons for the demise of affirmative action as we have known it.

Revisoning Affirmative Action

Affirmative action is typically associated with the civil rights legislation of the 1960s and the struggle of African Americans to break through the barriers of segregation and exclusion. Yet as a government policy, it has much deeper roots, going back in name to the 1935 Wagner Act, which authorized the National Labor Relations Board to correct unfair labor practices. In one sense, affirmative action of the 1960s continued a long tradition of Progressive Era and New Deal regulatory commissions, from the 1915 Federal Trade Commission to New York's 1945 State Commission Against Discrimination (Graham, 1992). Today's critics of affirmative action, who represent this policy primarily in racialized terms, choose to forget this aspect of its history (see, for example, Herrnstein and Murray, 1994: Chapter 19).

By affirmative action, I am referring to government-supported interventions to stop injustices against individuals or groups whose suffering is not self-inflicted; to correct the injustices caused by systemic discrimination; and to prevent its recurrence. This broad definition encompasses people who by virtue of their birth into a particular class, ethnicity, racial designation, gender, or sexuality are excluded or denied rights and entitlements that would typically be theirs if they were born white, male, and middle or upper class.

As a result of the institutional weaknesses of the labor movement and the lack of a sustained tradition of third parties, the United States of the last 150 years has the greatest class polarization and economic disparities of any comparable Western nation (Carnoy, 1994). As Gary Wills (1996: 13) has noted, wealth in the United States is "concentrated in fewer hands than at any time in our past — and in fewer hands than any other modern democracy tolerates." Still, during the last century, we can find several examples of class-based entitlement programs that used the power of government to open doors to previously excluded groups and to redistribute resources, jobs, and tax benefits. The affirmative action policies of the 1960s owe a great deal to the legacy of struggle over social insurance, public assistance, and the politics of entitlement. Prior to the successes of the modern Civil Rights Movement, however, the limited beneficiaries of these programs were typically a small sector of white, working-class and lower-middle-class men, as the following examples suggest.³

The first significant entitlement was forged between the Civil War and the Progressive Era, when postwar pensions evolved from a restricted program for disabled veterans and the dependents of soldiers killed in military service into "an open-ended system of disability, old-age, and survivors' benefits...." But it was

primarily white, male, Northern veterans who benefited from these relatively generous pension rights gained after the Civil War. Women were excluded as noncombatants and most African Americans were denied pensions, either because they lived in the South or because of Jim Crow practices that prevailed throughout the country (Skocpol, 1992: 102, 138).

A similar double standard of racist and sexist practices for veterans was imposed after World War II when the 1944 G.I. Bill enabled some 7.8 million, mostly white, male veterans to afford higher education with the help of free tuition and supplies, a living subsidy (including additional payments for children), and low-interest loans for housing (Bennett, 1994; Olson, 1994). The G.I. Bill, as former University of California President Clark Kerr (1994: 29, 31) noted, was a “new entitlement” that heralded the “great age of federal initiatives.” By 1947, veterans accounted for almost 50% of all U.S. college enrollments, thus setting the stage for the upward mobility of Irish and other ethnic Americans into stable working-class and public-sector jobs, and Jews into academia and other professions. According to Karen Brodtkin Sacks (1994: 90–91), “educational and occupational G.I. benefits really constituted affirmative action programs for white males because they were decidedly not extended to African Americans or to women of any race.” The few thousand African Americans who used the G.I. Bill to go to college were mostly tracked into segregated, inferior colleges. When African Americans, Latinos, and women entered the military in large numbers during and after the Vietnam War, however, this kind of preferential entitlement was drastically reduced, leaving the majority of servicemen and servicewomen today close to the poverty line, with little possibility of upward mobility.⁴

The history of welfare policy in the United States is also characterized by class, racial, and gender distinctions that elevate some programs (such as Social Security) into “rights and deserved benefits that increase a citizen’s self-esteem and feeling of entitlement,” while disparaging others (such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children) as parasitic and undeserved (Gordon, 1994: 302–303; Quadagno, 1995; Mink, 1990). Typically, most women and most families of color either have been denied welfare benefits or provided with benefits that are both stingy and humiliating. For example, “mothers’ aid” programs, established by state and local governments between 1910 and 1920 for single mothers with children, not only conditioned aid on the moral propriety of recipients, but also used a racialized means test: whites regularly received more money than blacks and Mexican Americans in California were excluded as undeserving (Gordon, 1994: 37–64).

The New Deal was the first national program of social insurance, designed to protect individuals against the vicissitudes of a chaotic labor market. Yet Roosevelt’s program contained no specific, anti-racism measures, other than the promise that economic renewal would benefit everybody (Katznelson, 1989: 199; Bernstein, 1969: 263–288). In practice, however, the New Deal’s “universal” policies

reinforced the racial divide by functioning, in the words of Norman Birnbaum, as a “gigantic affirmative action program” for white working-class and lower-middle-class men, especially Jews and Catholics, to get a leg up into the professions and better paying jobs (*Salmagundi*, 1994: 17). The Social Security Act of 1935, for example, de facto excluded African Americans and Latinos by denying benefits to servants and agricultural workers. During the 1930s, 90% of black women worked in these two occupations. Only about 10% of employed black women “derived any direct benefit from the new federal policies relating to minimum wages, maximum hours, unemployment compensation, and social security” (Jones, 1985: 199; Katz, 1986: 244–245; Ehrenreich, 1985: 100). Race and sex discrimination in relief policies “could not always be distinguished,” notes Linda Gordon (1994: 198). For example, “New Mexico relief workers rationalized discrimination against Hispanic women by arguing that they, unlike Anglo women, needed to stay in their homes to care for families because of their cultural traditions.”

Similarly, the New Deal’s public works programs, which provided millions of jobs for the unemployed, primarily benefited white men. Of the 1.6 million people collecting work relief in 1934, only 11% were women. Women who managed to get hired were typically assigned to “stereotyped, tedious, low-wage jobs,” like sewing factories, while African American women and Latinas were lucky if they could find janitorial work (*Ibid.*: 194). In some areas of the country, local functionaries in the Works Progress Administration laid off women and men when there was a demand for domestic servants or agricultural workers. Moreover, in the 1930s, thousands of Chicanos were forcibly “repatriated” to Mexico in order to save welfare costs (Gordon, 1994: 192–199; Schwartz, 1984: 216–217; Abramowitz, 1988: 283–287).

Other New Deal legislation and subsequent amendments operated within the assumptions of gender and racial discrimination. The 1935 Wagner Act was in effect “the Magna Carta of white labor” because it permitted racial exclusion in labor contracts, a policy that continued well into the 1970s (Duster, 1996: 46). Similarly, the 1934 National Housing Act created social policies that justified and perpetuated segregated and inferior residential patterns. A later act of 1949 and the policies of the Federal Housing Authority from the 1930s through the 1950s, backed up by “redlining” banking practices, ensured that residential segregation was enforced and only whites benefited from suburban subsidies and tax breaks (Duster, 1996: 46–47; Sachs, 1994: 92–97). Public housing policies in the 1960s further reinforced segregation by locating projects within ghettos and barrios, and by refusing to enforce integration (Massey and Denton, 1993; Bullard, Grigsby, and Lee, 1994).

Expansion....

Affirmative action as we know it today — “any measure,” to quote the 1977 U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, “beyond simple termination of a discriminatory practice, adopted to correct or compensate for past or present discrimination from recurring in the future” (Taylor and Liss, 1992: 31) — has its roots in the civil rights and feminist struggles that were sustained on many fronts from the early 1950s to the mid-1970s. Rather than initiating affirmative action, this movement expanded its beneficiaries and toughened its enforcement policies (Graham, H., 1992). For the first time in 16 generations (with the brief exception of Reconstruction), African Americans no longer were required to live in slavery or enforced legal segregation (Lazarre, 1996: 103); and for the first time in U.S. history, particularly as a result of Title IX of the 1972 educational amendments to the Civil Rights Act, the right of women to equal opportunity was backed up by the power of the federal government and law.⁵

Affirmative action became a complex interrelation of policies involving Supreme Court decisions, executive orders, and administrative regulations that transformed social convictions into government action. Part symbolic, part very practical, affirmative action stood for the recognition that racism and sexism are systemic inequalities, requiring sustained, long-term, ongoing policy initiatives if they are to be alleviated. Affirmative action was a hard-won redistributive measure based (like virtually all government entitlements or subsidies) on preferential group policies (West, 1993: 63). Its landmark components include the 1954 Supreme Court case of *Brown v. Board of Education*, which reversed the 1896 case of *Plessy v. Ferguson* and the doctrine of “separate but equal”; President Kennedy’s 1961 Executive Order 10925, which for the first time linked the phrase “affirmative action” to civil rights enforcement policy; the 1964 Civil Rights Act, the 1965 Voting Rights Act, and subsequent civil rights legislation; and the establishment of regulatory hiring goals and timetables in the 1970s during the Nixon administration. During this period, the Supreme Court ordered tough remedies in cases involving even nonintentional but institutionalized patterns of discrimination, and the federal government did more than ever before to ensure active, vigilant enforcement by regulatory agencies of civil rights laws (Taylor and Liss, 1992; Oppenheimer, 1996).

Affirmative action, as it was developed and implemented after President Kennedy’s Executive Order, had a rather brief existence. The high point, I would argue, lasted at most 14 years, from the 1964 Civil Rights Act to the 1978 *Bakke* case, though its consequences were felt well into the 1980s. In this period, we should not underestimate the profound changes that took place in one generation of race and gender relations. True, the Civil Rights Movement was not revolutionary in its politics, but neither was it simply reformist. After all, it took a battering ram to make a breach in a very well fortified structure of “racial dictatorship” (Omi

and Winant, 1994). In addition to generating responsive government policies and court cases, the struggle also educated millions about the history and consequences of inequality, and mobilized the powerless to make the most of their newly won rights; moreover, it helped to create an anti-racist and anti-sexist political culture that resonated with deep moral authority. As Alice Walker (1967: 554) observed, this era “gave us hope for tomorrow. It called us to life.” What made affirmative action effective was not the policies alone, but the political and social pressures that forced the various branches of government to live up to their commitment to end institutionalized racism and sexism.

The educational system was not the only site of enforcement of affirmative action policies, but it was certainly one of the most important routes for upward mobility. When the New Right selected its targets and campaigns in the 1980s, it focused on higher education, which it regarded, quite correctly, as an institution that had been profoundly affected by the progressive movements associated with the New Left.⁶ The massive growth in higher education after World War II, the development of community colleges in the 1960s and 1970s, and a highly politicized youth movement all combined to transform university life.

Academia was largely a white, old boys’ club until the 1960s. White women had made some important gains prior to the 1930s, largely as a result of the expansion of the teaching and nursing professions, as well as the creation of private colleges for women. By some accounts, women comprised almost 30% of all faculty in 1910, and again in 1940 (Cott, 1987: 218; Ware, 1982: 80; Graham, P., 1978). But the Depression (which made “women’s work” attractive to unemployed men) and the restoration of “separate spheres” in the 1950s wiped out these gains. In 1920, women received one out of every seven Ph.D.’s awarded; by 1956 it was one out of 10 (Ware, 1982: 79). According to Nancy Cott (1987: 220), “the high point in women’s share of professional employment (and attainment of advanced degrees) overall occurred by the late 1920s and was followed by stasis and/or decline not reversed to any extent until the 1960s and 1970s.” As with white women prior to the 1960s, African American faculty also found employment in a separate and segregated system of higher education. However, class differences combined with racism made most black colleges quite inferior in resources and standards to their female counterparts.⁷ It was not until after World War II that the color line was broken and a handful of black intellectuals could find tenure-track positions in predominantly white universities. As late as 1936, for example, more than 80% of all African American Ph.D.’s were employed by Atlanta, Fisk, and Howard universities.⁸

The 100-year monopoly over intellectual life by Anglo men began to be broken up for the first time in the 1960s. Graduate programs in the mid-1960s, like the one at Berkeley where I did my doctoral degree, were still almost exclusively white and predominantly male. Yet the next decade of activism and government intervention made quite a difference. At its best, affirmative action was a democratizing process

in academia, used not only to “compensate for past wrongs,” but also to make university life into a “public site of cultural exchange, one in which the practice of equality is brought to bear on intellectual work...” (Butler, 1996: 78). What I have called the high point of affirmative action (1964 to 1978) involved broadly inclusive policies and programs that played an important role in beginning to transform academia from a guild-like club (exclusive, selective, hierarchical, and nepotistic) into a much more democratic institution. These changes were made possible by four kinds of interrelated affirmative action programs, most of which have either long ceased to exist or have been drastically reduced.

First, for the first time in U.S. history, class-based entitlement and welfare programs associated with the “war on poverty” included as direct beneficiaries African Americans, Latinos, poor women of all colors, and other underrepresented groups. Government funding of public education, health and nutrition programs, as well as community development programs for inner cities, made it possible for previously excluded populations to make it through high school and into higher education and/or better paid working-class jobs. During this 1964 to 1978 period, affirmative action not only benefited more privileged African Americans, Latinos, and women, as Orlando Patterson (1995) has suggested. Jobs and possibilities also opened up in unions, the public sector, and other areas that a decade earlier had been off limits to all but white men (Quadagno, 1995: 69, 86–87; Duster, 1996: 56; *New York Times*, 1995: E4).

Second, at its high point affirmative action provided opportunity and support for previously excluded groups to apply to and move into formerly hostile institutions. In higher education, this took the form of aggressive outreach and recruitment, “bridge” and remedial programs, and other programs that provided psychological, cultural, and technical encouragement. Many of these programs also recognized that intelligence is multifaceted, flexible, and deeply affected by social and economic contexts; that a capacity to do well in a university cannot always be judged by past educational performance in standardized tests or grades, especially when local schools lack the will or resources to bring out the best in students (Kozol, 1967; 1991).

Third, at its high point affirmative action put enormous political, legal, and regulatory pressures on previously exclusive institutions to diversify their business contracts, admissions, and promotions. Universities, for example, were forced to comply with affirmative action if they wished to continue receiving direct and indirect economic support from the state and federal governments. This compliance was enforced by very concrete measures, such as quotas, set-asides, goals, and timelines. Without quotas (which I will use as shorthand for these measurable policies), I do not think that we would have made any significant progress in diversifying academia. Given that the old boys’ club had hardly changed in over a century, it would have taken more than good will and promises to make profound changes in the organizational culture of a previously racist,

sexist, segregated, lily-white, male-dominated institution. Remember, it wasn't until after World War II that prestigious universities were forced to allow more than a token Jew on the faculty. Quotas made it possible to track changes and effectiveness by requiring institutions to "go on the record" and publish their intentions, as well as respond to the demands of various constituencies. Administrators had to say how and when they planned to get from A to B; promises had to be backed up with demonstrable results. To begin to change and integrate the institutional fabric of previously monolithic organizations would not have been possible without this kind of enforcement.

Fourth, affirmative action was used inside institutions to make them more gender and color-friendly. In the university, for example, it was not enough to begin to diversify the composition of the students and faculty. Much more was required to shake up ingrained customs in campus policies, programs, curricula, and relations. Universities that are serious about affirmative action have taken steps to establish affirmative action officers and procedures; to fund educational equity committees; to advocate and promote changes from a monocultural to a multicultural curriculum; to establish and support departments and programs of Ethnic and Women's Studies; to diversify public space and cultural life, from food services to artistic representations and entertainment; to establish multicultural sites for mediating race/gender tensions and providing workshops and programs that educate the campus community about racism, sexism, homophobia, and other prejudices.

During the most expansive period of affirmative action, considerable progress was made, albeit unevenly, depending on the level of activism from below and the seriousness of commitment from above. For example, between 1970 and 1990, the number of African American college graduates more than doubled; between 1964 and 1994, the number of female Ph.D.'s increased more than tenfold; and with the ensuing diversification of the faculty, the canon was opened up to new ideas and, in some disciplines at least, the university began to approximate what it is supposed to be — a marketplace of ideas (Platt, 1994b; Carter and Wilson, 1994; Levine, 1996). Overall, compared to academia of the 1950s, the changes were sufficiently far-reaching and substantial that Allan Bloom and other guardians of the *ancien regime* were convinced that the barbarians had stormed the gates.

...Contraction

The struggle to transform higher education was quickly stalled in the 1980s, the result of a combination of political, cultural, economic, and organizational factors. Just as middle-class, white women lost ground after the Depression, so too the movement to democratize higher education in the 1960s to 1970s quickly lost momentum and initiative after a decade of innovation. The demise of affirmative action in its most interventionist phase is the result of a conjuncture of forces, some politically intentional, some economically determined, some organizationally driven.

At least since the *Bakke* case in 1978, the legal and political climate has been quite hostile to the broadly interpreted affirmative action policies that flourished during the early years of the Nixon administration. The policy offensive against affirmative action followed a long period of ideological tilling of the cultural ground, from William Bennett's 1984 critique of multicultural developments in the Humanities to the sustained attack on "political correctness" by Allan Bloom, Linda Chavez, Dinesh D'Souza, Nathan Glazer, Richard Herrnstein, Charles Murray, Diane Ravitch, Shelby Steele, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and other neoconservatives and neoliberals whose ideas were promoted by a sympathetic media (Platt, 1996a).

The kind of affirmative action policy that compelled institutions to make profound changes in organizational priorities and culture is long gone (Oppenheimer, 1996). The Supreme Court and federal government have backed away from the proactive affirmative action policies that assume the existence of institutionalized inequality and put the burden of proof on institutions to concretely demonstrate that they are moving toward diversity and equality. In a series of cases involving federal contracts, electoral districts, race-based scholarships, and public school integration plans, the Supreme Court has turned a political, social, and moral mandate into a compressed tunnel of opportunity. Now, affirmative action must be "narrowly tailored," "serve a compelling national interest," and be "subject to strict scrutiny." The *Hopwood* case in Texas, which ruled against "any consideration of race or ethnicity...for the purpose of achieving a diverse student body" (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 1996c) and the California Civil Rights Initiative, which is heading on appeal to a sympathetic U.S. Supreme Court, are the logical culmination of this trend.

To those who argue that institutionalized racism, sexism, and classism are no longer serious, structural problems in the United States, and that all that remains of these inequalities is individual prejudice, policies of affirmative action have long outlived their dubious utility (D'Souza, 1996). The evidence, however, suggests that in the critically important areas of public housing, health, and education, we are returning to a highly segregated, separate and unequal, racialized society. The devastating economic polarization of the last 20 years, aggravated by a malign neglect of the public sector, has hit hardest at African American, Puerto Rican, Chicano, Latino, Afro-Cuban, Haitian, American Indian, Southeast Asian, and poor white communities. It also disproportionately affects immigrants, women, and children (Platt, 1996b).

Since at least 1980, class-based policies of affirmative action have been gutted, making it all but impossible for millions of members of what is sometimes referred to as the "underclass" to achieve any kind of upward mobility. Over 20 years of rollbacks in public health, welfare, housing, and education programs have made sure that affirmative action is no longer linked to economic entitlements.⁹ Public employees of color have been hit hard by cutbacks in federal, state, and city work

forces (Johnson, 1997: 1, 14). The “war on poverty” has been replaced by a “war on the poor” that condemns more and more poor people to jail, prison, the illegal economy, part-time work, or a mostly dead-end career in the military (Quadagno, 1995; Piven and Cloward, 1993; Platt, 1994a). Between 1970 and 1990, the number of African Americans in the military almost doubled. Populations of color now comprise 42% of the Army, 32% of the Navy, and 25% of the Air Force. Of all women in the service, about one-third are black (Graham, B., 1995: 1, 10–11; *New York Times*, 1995: E4; Wood, 1996: 3). Meanwhile, 75% of all enlisted men and women earn less than \$30,000 a year, while 45% of the Army and 46% of the Marines earn less than \$20,000 a year (Schmitt, 1994: 1, 14).

The abandonment of class-based programs of affirmative action has had a major impact on diversity in graduate programs and faculty hiring. The abolition of “minority-designated” scholarships in public universities has made it much harder to recruit and retain students of color (Schultz, 1993: 51). In Mississippi, for example, where college tuition costs represent about 40% of the annual income of an average black family, fewer African Americans earned bachelor’s degrees in 1991 than in 1979 (Applebome, 1995: 16). When you look around at institutions of higher education, especially community and state colleges in California, you initially see considerable diversity. If you think that universities have done as much as is possible to diversify our students, faculty, curricula, and public discourse, then you might argue that affirmative action is no longer needed. What you see is accurate — California has the most diverse population, work force, and student body in the country. But look closer and you will find that this diversity generally stops as you climb the ladders of power. Walk on any campus these days and you will see a large number of employees of color, but over 80% of them work in clerical, support, or maintenance positions (Schultz, 1993: 51–52).

Moreover, the increasing costs of higher education — rising tuition, the failure of grant programs to keep pace with inflation, and stagnant income for most working families — have eliminated some 25 years of progress in reducing the unequal distribution of educational opportunities. Affluent students, who were nearly four times as likely as the poorest students to graduate from college by age 24 in 1979, are now nearly 10 times as likely to graduate (Anderson, 1997; *Chronicle of Higher Education*, 1996b). As a result, the racial diversification of higher education has either stalled or regressed, whereas middle-class, Anglo women have continued to improve their share of the market, albeit at a slower pace than in the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁰ Higher education still remains thoroughly segregated for faculty: Latinos remain mostly invisible, increasing their share of full-time positions by only .8 percent between 1975 and 1991 (De los Santos and Rigual, 1994: 186–187); though black faculty comprise about four percent of all full-time faculty, they only account for about one percent in predominantly white universities (Blackwell, 1996: 317). Ironically, graduate students from Third World countries are now three times more likely to receive U.S.-awarded doctorates than their U.S. counterparts.¹¹

The vigorous application of affirmative action policies in the 1960s and 1970s was facilitated by the growth of the economy, in particular its public sector. Beginning in the 1980s, the decline in political and economic support for higher education generated not only cutbacks in resources for diversity, but also a reorganization of university management along the lines of a more corporatist model. Public universities in particular came under pressure to streamline their operations, cut waste, implement cost-effective methods for increasing productivity, and, in general, do more with less. Consequently, the last hired were either the first fired or tracked into more “flexible” (that is, less secure and more poorly paid) positions. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, by 1993 some 43% of faculty worked part time, compared to 38% in 1988, and 22% in 1970 (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 1996b: 13). This burden has primarily been carried by women faculty who, while increasing their rate of participation in university life, continue to be tracked into gender-segregated disciplines where, for the most part, they work harder for less pay than their male counterparts (Zimbler, 1994; Schultz, 1993).

In a climate of political intolerance for diversity and increasing competition for scarce resources, most universities have drastically reduced their internal equity programs, cut back on outreach and recruitment, and brought their affirmative action policies into line with restrictive legal guidelines. With organized right-wing groups on the hunt for examples of “reverse discrimination” and the progressive student movement in demobilized disarray, most university administrations have chosen to do what they did during McCarthyism — either collaborate or go on the defensive (Schrecker, 1986).

We reached the high point of affirmative action in higher education some 15 years ago. To those who think that diversity is now the norm in academia, we should point out that about 87% of all full-time faculty are white; that some 90% of all full professors are Anglo; that white males represent 59% of all full-time faculty (and even higher in some departments — 73% of Engineering, 71% of History, 82% of Philosophy, and 70% of Economics); that close to 93% of all academics who have received Humanities doctorates since 1942 and are still active in their fields are Anglos; that almost half of African American faculty still teach in historically black colleges; that Anglo females are still underrepresented (28%) in full-time faculty and overrepresented (40%) in part-time faculty; that of 57,000 tenured academics in the United States, only 255 are Latinas; and that most curricula and textbooks have barely begun to diversify their contents (*Chronicle of Higher Education*, 1996a; Ingram, Brown, and Mitchell, 1995; Levine, 1996; Persquera and Segura, 1996: 243; Zimbler, 1994; Justiz, Wilson, and Bjork, 1994; Carter and Wilson, 1996).

Affirmative action, as we knew it in the 1960s and 1970s, has virtually disappeared. Unless reversed by the courts, which is unlikely, California’s Proposition 209 will eliminate what remains of its government-endorsed policies

and encourage advocates of “reverse discrimination” to sue any institution or administration that retains a voluntary commitment to equity and diversity. It will not be enough, however, to reverse Proposition 209. To continue the long journey to equality that we began some 30 years ago will require the renewal of a civil rights movement that, at its best, fought simultaneously and inclusively for class, race, and gender-based policies of affirmative action. Yet we will also need to develop new models and strategies of social change that take into account the profound shift to the right in the political climate; the unprecedented demographic transformation taking place in states like California; a much more complicated alignment of constituencies, criss-crossed by issues of race, class, gender, sexuality, and disability; and a struggle for racial equality that, more than ever before, involves multiple and diverse struggles not only over economic access and upward mobility, but also over immigration policies, citizen rights, language, and cultural diversity.

NOTES

1. See, for example, Bergman (1996), Curry (1996), Drake and Holsworth (1996), Eastland (1996), Feagin, Vera, and Imani (1996), Kahlenberg (1996), *Representations* (1996); and Skrentny (1996).

2. The reappropriation of affirmative action by neoconservative and neoliberal intellectuals can be traced at least to 1987, when Allan Bloom charged that it “institutionalizes the worst aspects of separatism” and “is the source of what I fear is a long-term deterioration of the relations between the races in America.” See Bloom (1987: 96–97).

3. A similar line of argument can be found in Duster (1996).

4. On the impoverishment of the post-Vietnam military, see Schmitt (1994: 1, 14).

5. The formation of the National Organization of Women in 1966 enabled white women in particular to lobby for aggressive enforcement of Title IX, which called for equality of gender in higher education. See H. Graham (1992: 61).

6. In 1984, William Bennett, then Reagan’s Secretary of Education, launched an attack on multicultural curricula in the humanities. I trace the origins of this campaign in Platt (1996a). See, also, Steinberg (1995).

7. Between 1926 and 1942, African Americans received only 335 Ph.D. degrees out of a total of almost 39,000. See Bowles and DeCosta (1971).

8. See Winston (1971: 695). I discuss the racial constraints on African American scholars in Platt (1991).

9. Between 1994 and 1996, welfare caseloads nationwide dropped an unprecedented 18% or about 2.5 million people, from 14.4 to 11.9 million recipients. See DeParle (1997: 1, 12).

10. Although the number of doctorates awarded annually to African Americans increased by about 200 between 1982 and 1995, the rate has fallen. Women (primarily Anglos) have increased their share of Ph.D.’s from about one-third in 1985 to about 40% in 1995. See Magner (1996: 25–26).

11. The proportion of doctorates awarded to non-U.S. citizens (primarily from China, Taiwan, Korea, India, and Japan) has increased from 14% in 1964 to almost 33% in 1994, compared to about 11% for all U.S. citizens of color. See Simmons and Thurgood (1995).

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