PeS. to the NEWS

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## JOB QUOTAS AND PREFERENCES

When the Bakke case, now under consideration by the Supreme Court, is decided, it will probably break wide open the controversy that started to burst in the recent flap about whether HEW Secretary Joseph A. Califano, Jr. supports racial and sexual job quotas under that name or disguised under a less abrasive label such as affirmative action.

The Bakke case came to the U.S. Supreme Court on appeal from the California Supreme Court which held that a racial quota for admission to the University of California Medical School violates the constitutional rights of nonminority applicants by giving preference on the basis of race.

When Secretary Califano said he supports racial and sexual quotas in employment and education, 44 educators rose in collective indignation, accusing him of a "flagrant defiance of the 1 aw."

Dr. Sidney Hook, a leading spokesman for that group, once summarized their position rather colorfully. Racial and sexual quotas are just as ridiculous, he said, as it would be to give blacks and women each two or more votes in order to redress the discrimination their ancestors suffered when they were deprived of the franchise.

While Federal law today prohibits discrimination in employment on the basis of race, religion, or sex, it also authorizes affirmative action of an undefined extent.

The word quota is usually avoided because, as Califano ruefully admitted, "it's obviously a nerve-jangling word," but an assortment of synonyms is used, including goals, timetables, and intermediate targets, as well as affirmative action.

The semantic controversy does not reach the core of the problem, The real question is, in periods when there are not enough jobs to go around, or in

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situations where there are several or many applicants with roughly the same qualifications, who should get the job?

To society, this is a question of great social and economic importance. To the individual involved, it may be a question -Of enough to eat, or a decent standard of living, or going on welfare.

The quota advocates, such as Califano, argue that jobs should be awarded as a remedy for past racial and sexual discrimination. The fallacy in this position is that the persons reaping the benefits are not the persons who suffered the wrongs. Racial or sexual quotas do not correct discriminations that occurred one or more generations ago.. Such quotas unjustly reward and penalize persons today who had nothing to do with the sins of the past.

It is unjust for a job preference (for reasons of race, sex, or past discrimination) to be given to a second wage-earner in a family instead of to one in a family that has no wage-earner at all.

Other alternatives should be explored for solving the question of who should get the job preference in those many cases where individual qualifications are not a factor. A more moral criterion would be to give the job to that person, regardless of race, religion, or sex, who is supporting a family.

The use of this criterion would not only be more just, but it would safeguard the dignity and economic independence of the family. It would also give welcome relief to the hard-pressed taxpayers by reducing the welfare burden. Obviously, a welfare-applicant with a half dozen dependents costs the taxpayers more than a welfare-applicant with none.

This standard would be fair to all races and both sexes, and has the logic of simple justice.

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