



BAMN Defends Purpose

By Jordan Schrader, The Michigan Daily

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Activists reiterated their commitment to achieving their goals "By Any Means Necessary" at the Second National Conference of the New Civil Rights Movement this past weekend [at the University of Michigan], defining the objectives of their fight and what they are willing to do to achieve their goals.

"If we have to destroy some things, we will destroy some things," University of Tennessee student Dumaka Shabazz said to loud applause.

Shabazz also drew battle lines in the conflict over affirmative action, which he said has no middle ground.

"Either you're with us or you're with the re-segregationists. Either you're for racism, injustice and inequality, or you're for justice and equality -- which is affirmative action," he said.

A member of the Black Student Alliance at the University of Tennessee, Shabazz was one of many students who came from across the country to join the Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action and Integration and Fight for Equality By Any Means Necessary (BAMN). Students from the University of Virginia, the University of Kentucky and the University of Cincinnati were also in attendance.

The conference focused on issues facing minorities in education, including the use of affirmative action in college admissions and shortages of funds and teachers in public schools.

Shabazz said the racism faced by African Americans at the University of Tennessee makes the BSA willing, like BAMN, to use any means necessary to achieve equality.

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Visible symbols of racism on campus have included nooses hung from a tree, a Confederate flag painted on a rock and ethnic slurs scrawled on walls, Shabazz said.

He added that another source of racism is the Tennessee Daily Beacon, a campus newspaper that he said misrepresents black students. Shabazz said if it continues to

action." be racist in its coverage, the BSA will gather and burn copies of the paper.

BAMN member Luke Massie told the conference that activists counterfeited tickets to the University's affirmative action lawsuits hearing in Cincinnati on Dec. 6, which he said shows what the new Civil Rights Movement is willing to do to win.

"There's not a lot of case law on counterfeiting federal court tickets," Massie said. "When we say 'By Any Means Necessary,' we mean it."

BAMN's strong showing in Cincinnati was only a taste of what the movement can do, said BAMN national coordinator Shanta Driver.

"What we did on December 6th was tremendous but it was too small, too modest. We need to make a deeper, broader shift in American politics," Driver said.

Corporate corruption and how it affects education was a major topic of discussion at the conference, especially at a workshop led by Massie titled "A Revolutionary Anti-capitalist Perspective in the New Movement."

Massie, who is also a member of the socialist Revolutionary Workers League, said urban schools are falling apart only blocks away from magnificent public buildings because government priorities are skewed toward corporations.

"The decisions that are being made are entirely being made from the perspective of the capitalists," he said.

Massie said the affirmative action movement is part of a larger struggle against those interests because fighting for racial equality will change how people look at the world.

"The path that this movement is going to take will lead us into much deeper inroads into society," he said.

But Shabazz downplayed this radical aspect of the movement.

"We're not fanatic revolutionaries or socialists. We are the vanguard of the new civil rights movement," he said.

The conference voted unanimously to approve three resolutions.

Among the points approved are:

-- To support efforts to end the use of the Scholastic Aptitude Test and similar standardized tests nationwide;

-- To mobilize for the National Civil Rights March in Detroit on April 13;

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-- To circulate the Petition to Support Affirmative Action Before the U.S. Supreme Court, and

-- To organize a march in Washington, D.C.

The next National Conference of the New Civil Rights Movement will be held in June at the University [of Michigan].

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