Volume III, Number 1 Summer, 1990

## PASS THE AMMUNITION

By Ann Withorn

ing session.

as Progressives" was the overall goal of the fourth Bertha Capen Reynolds Society Conference held in San Francisco on July 6th and 7th. The major themes of the conference emerged during the first day's institutes and plenary, and then were refined during the Saturday workshops and clos-

relping ourselves to "Practice"

In brief, the Mayor of Berkeley, Loni Hancock, reminded us of the social costs of the last decade, of how tired many liberals are and how desperate many activists have become over the past ten years of Republican ascendency. She spoke of how the calls for compassion for the needy increasingly fall on deaf ears, and of how we have to reframe demands more universally—building on broadest concerns for family security and an

ecologically sound society — if

we are to revive hopes for posi-

the area of social justice.

tive federal government action in

Economist and writer Julianne Malveaux picked up on the Mayor's themes by documenting the depth of the problems facing people of color and the poor. She also spoke of the need for broad coalitions around issues of concern to everyone, because the breadth of popular support for the poorest people may have eroded as the extent of economic insecurity for all has grown. Neither the plenary speakers nor the audience were wildly opti-

mistic about a rebirth of militant politics, but both saw some hope in the increase in organizing of the homeless, people with AIDS, welfare recipients and other direct victims of the systems of oppression.

The Institute and workshops gave specificity to such general directions. The more than 75 participants attended Institutes with topics ranging from progressive teaching, unionism and direct service while the workshops focused on issues such as abortion, AIDS, immigration, welfare rights, health care and cultural diversity. In all sessions, participants tried to grapple with the reality that social workers today are asked to play ever more oppressive roles within an increasingly public sector. In many of the workshops it became obvious that, now as never before, progressive social work means challenging the systems of authority that govern us as workers and the citizens we serve. We talked of the critical need for more information sharing, for more support when social workers have to stand up for clients and themselves, and for a more developed analysis that will help progressive social workers engage in the real, threatening

The Closing Plenary concluded with renewed calls for solidarity against the increasing repression aimed at all poor people, and at those who seek to

struggles that are thrust upon us

in these frightening times.

work supportively with them. The words of activist Ethel Long Scott from the welfare rights workshop were recalled as a closing message:

"We can fight for ourselves; we need you to 'pass the ammunition' of information, strategies, skills and money. Don't try to control our movement. Help us respectfully in the ways we ask. Just 'pass the ammunition'."

The final event of the confer-

ence was an evening of interna-

tional culture with music from the Vukani Mawethu Choir and Enrique Ramirez. The fine entertainment and update on Central America was coordinated by Arline Prigoff. Special thanks for an exceptional job of coordinating the conference goes to BCRS steering committee member Ken Grossinger and to the planning group: Michael Reisch, Arline Prigoff, Lee Schore and Amy Reisch. The San Francisco State College's Social Work Program and SEIU Local 535 co-sponsored the event, providing many of the speakers and participants and energy that gave it success. Amy Reisch and the San Francisco YWCA offered important assistance as well as help in obtaining space at the Sheehan Hotel.

In addition to its intrinsic merit, the conference also gave us a good model of how to use a national conference to help build local chapters of the BCRS. Since

Continued on next pag

#### Pass The Ammunition — Continued

the Steering Committee has decided that every other year we will hold our conference in a city where people are seeking to build a chapter, think about this for your area and let someone on the Steering Committee know. We still need a place for 1992!

The 1991 Conference will be held at Smith College in early July. We know we will hold Institutes and workshops and have some plenaries and entertainment. Fred Newdom and I are conference coordinators, and the entire Steering Committee will be reviewing conference plans. If anyone has suggestions or ideas for activities, speakers or themes for the conference, please let us know by the September Steering Committee meeting. Our goal is a fully planned program in place by November of 1990, in order to allow winter and spring for outreach to bring more people and

more diversity to the conference.

So please help by sharing your ideas SOON. (Fred and Ann's phone numbers are in this newsletter on the Steering Committee list).

The Steering Committee met briefly on the closing evening of the conference. Priorities for the next year were introduced. They included:

- 1) more efforts to ally with labor
- more attention to the question of progressive practice in direct service
- increased efforts to expand the diversity of BCRS
- 4) more work at clarifying the focus of the organization These issues, and others, will be on the agenda for the next steering committee meeting to be held on Saturday and Sunday, September 23-24 in New York City at Marilynn Moch's house. Call Marilynn at 212-316-3150 for more details.

## **Obituary**

Founding member Henrietta Rothaizer passed away March 5, 1990. Henny was a highly esteemed social worker, avid bird watcher, folk dancer, world traveler, philosopher and political activist. Henny had a zest for life, firm convictions and will be greatly missed by her family and many friends.

Members wishing to be in touch with her daughter, Shoshana Rothaizer, can reach her at 147-44 69th Road, Flushing, NY 11367.

Please mail all contributions for the next BCR Reports to:

Barbara Kasper, Editor Social Work Department, Faculty Office Building SUNY College at Brockport Brockport, NY 14420

Letters to the editor, essays, news items, BCRS Chapter activities, cartoons, etc., are all welcome!

# How To Organize A BCRS Chapter:

"How to Organize a BCRS Chapter" organizing packets are available by contacting Marti Bombyk at: BCRS, Columbus Circle Station, P.O. Box 20563, New York, NY, 10023. The contents of the packets include such things as posters, brochures, book order forms, recent newsletter(s), copy of by-laws, name(s) of BCRS organizer from the Steering Committee who will help you, and much much more! Allow 4 weeks for delivery.

#### Boycott Alert

Last November an international boycott of Salvadoran coffee was launched following the Salvadoran government's murder of six Jesuit priests and their female coworkers. Coffee revenues of \$300 million to \$400 million a year follow U.S. tax aid as the major source of Salvadoran death-squad funding. More than 50% of Salvadoran coffee is sold in the U.S. in major coffee blends such as Folgers.

# BCRS Represented At NABSW Conference

BCRS members staffed the BCRS/ Smith College SSW information table at the National Association of Black Social Workers' Annual Conference in Los Angeles from April 24-28. We had an excellent location at the entrance to the exhibit area, greeted old friends, recruited Los Angeles area Smith alumni, and made many new friends and contacts.

Many thanks to members Bert Nepove, Eleanor Belser, and Marilynn Moch who staffed the exhibit, and to Bert who provided housing for Marilynn so she could attend the conference from New York.

We hope to develop one or more collaborative projects with NABSW in areas of mutual interest during the coming year. A proposal to assure significant African representation at the 1992 conference of the International Federation of Social Workers to be held in Washington, D.C. is currently being developed to present to the International Relations Committee of NABSW.

Interested members, please contact Marilynn at 212-316-3150.

## Worth Reading:

The following selections, submitted by Mimi Abramovitz, are recommended to BCRS members who wish to deepen their understanding of African American

women from a socialist feminist perspective. Given the current climate of welfare/workfare reform

proposals and the public scrutiny of African American women and their families, these readings will help progressive social workers to identify "blaming the victim" ideology and to advocate for African American women.

"Our Mother's Grief: Racial Ethnic Women and the Maintenance of Families." By Bonnie Thornton Dill. Research paper #4, May 1986. Center for Research on Women, Memphis State Univer-

sity, Memphis TN, 38152. (Part of a series available for cost of reprinting, list available through the above address). "In Crisis: Low Income Black

Employed Women in the U.S. Workplace." By Bette Woody and Michelene Malson. Working Paper #131, 1984. Center for Research on Women, Wellesly Col-

lege, Wellesly, MA. 02181. "Racial Ethnic Women's Labor: The Intersection of Race, Gender, and Class Oppression." By Evelyn Nakano Glenn. *Review* of Radical Political Economics, Vol.

Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow: Black Women, Work and the Family from Slavery to the Present. By Jacqueline Jones, NY: Basic Books, 1985.

17 (4), Fall 1985, 86-109.

When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America. By Paula Giddings. Toronto: Bantam Books, 1984.

## Whither The Activists In Social Work?

Throughout the last decade or so, we have been barraged by media hype celebrating reunions and anniversaries from the 1960's which are often laden with self-satisfaction. The activists and radicals of

the past have now become contented "yuppies" or have been affected by a "Big Chill" now that the days of mass demonstrations are over. The social movements of the

1960's and 1970's led many activists to choose work in the social service professions. What happens to these activists as they age and advance in their careers? About four years ago, David Wagner began to investigate this question, noting an almost complete absence of follow-up study about what happens to activists in the social work profession. BCRS members may be interested in reading the forthcoming book based on this study, The Quest for a Radical Profession: Social Service Careers and Political Ideology, (which includes an introduction by Richard Cloward and Frances Fox Piven).

Based on in-depth interviews of radicals who had been associated with the Catalyst collective in New York City (many also held memberships in a variety of other activist social work groups like BCRS, SWAWR, RASSW and URSHW in Boston), the book provides a social history of radical social work over the last two decades. Are activists who enter the social service professions able to sustain their ideals over time? How were they influenced by social work education? How did they experience their jobs as caseworkers, community organizers, administrators, therapists, educators or supervisors? Do they find social work professionalism compatible with their political beliefs or antithetical to them? How do they understand social work's quest for professionalism — as a conservative force or as a potential progressive force?

The book also analyzes the actual ability of radicals to translate their ideas into social action. What were the strategies of radicals in social work over the last

decades? Can these strategies —

whether radical therapy, organizing at the workplace or supporting client organizing - be evaluated as successful or not? What is the relationship between individual activism, the rise of a left in social work, and the broader context of the profession, the economy, and macro level political changes?

Many social work activists who were not a part of the study will see themselves in the book -Wagner has had that reaction already from articles based on the study published in The Social Service Review and in Social Work. Wagner is particularly interested in the comments and critiques of BCRS members on his analysis of the ebbs and flows of radicalism in social work. This book will help stimulate further discussions about activism in social work and new directions and strategies for radical social work.

**Note**: This book may be ordered from the University Press of America, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, MD., 20706. (\$15.75 in paperback). Those who live in the New York area can get a copy at Papyrus Bookstore, 2915 Broadway (W. 114th Street).

## Progressive Journal On Health Issues Available:

HEALTH/PAC Bulletin,

pub-lished by the Health Policy Advisory Center, a consumerfocused journal, is available for \$27.50 (student/retired rate \$22.50) by writing to HEALTH/ PAC, 17 Murray Street, New York, NY. 10007. The Health Policy Advisory Center, founded in 1968, is not a political action committee, but a non-profit, public interest organization which advocates appropriate, accessible care for all. It publishes research, reporting, and analysis aimed at creating a national health care system that serves public needs versus professional prestige or private profit.

## DEPARTMENT NEWS

### Chapter Updates:

Boston Bertha: The state's continuing budget crisis has preoccupied those activists who would normally have been building a Boston chapter, so 1989-90 was not an active year. We hope that the opportunity to host a BCRS forum at the national NASW meeting in November will give renewed energy to the Boston members. Sandy Felder, BCRS member and President of the Massachusetts Social Workers Union SEIU 509, plus a representative of Boston's Rainbow Coalition, will speak at the forum on "The Tensions and Possibilities for Labor and Community Alliances." There will also be a chance for all BCRS members at the conference to meet for dinner.

Anyone interested in helping to make this event happen should contact Ann Withorn at 617-738-7081.

Puget Sound Area: Students, alumni, and faculty of the University of Washington School of Social Work came together this last Fall to found a Puget Sound Chapter of the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society. In a series of organizing meetings they have decided to orient their activities around the goals of education, support and activism. Although this chapter has only been in existence for a short time, they have already carried out the following activities:

- Monthly potluck meetings at which they discuss business and ways to develop the organization.
- Two "Progressive Forums" open to the public in which they attempted to educate themselves and the human service community regarding progressive practice. At the first forum, Marti Bombyk presented her vision for progressive social work and facilitated a discussion. At the

- second forum, four progressive social workers Juan Bocanegra, Jane Wu, Cindy Schu, and Ken Kraybill shared their experiences and struggles in both their practice and political work. This panel was videotaped for use in future social work courses or community outreach work.
- Attended networking meetings held by the NASW Chapter to bring together the different constituency groups which represent social service workers. In a cooperative agreement, NASW will be highlighting the BCRS Chapter in the statewide newsletter and has suggested that they have representation on NASW's political advocacy committee.

Over the past six months over 75 people have attended meetings or participated in the forums. This summer they will focus on developing a way to structure the organization and continuing to build membership. A few of the members also attended the BCRS national conference. For the Fall, there are plans to more formally organize the Chapter's study group and support group as well as strategize ways to engage more directly in activism.

For more information, contact **Lorraine M. Gutierrez** at 206-543-3544.

## BCRS Members In Action:

David Antebi, Associate Professor and Director of the Social Action Center of the Rutgers University Social of Social Work, has a traveling photography exhibit, "Down But Not Out," focused on homelessness and poverty, which he created. The exhibit has been on display in conjunction with educational and social forums. It was on exhibit at Rutgers University, University of Wisconsin (Oshkosh), Simmons

College, Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton University, SUNY at Brockport and at national conferences including NASW, CSWE, and the 9th and 11th Annual Symposium on the Advancement of Social Work with Groups. The exhibit is available to groups, organizations, conferences, etc. for a small fee to cover costs of shipping and handling. Contact David Antebi at (201) 93207525 or write to the School of Social Work, Rutgers University, New Brunswick, N.J., 08903 for more details. Marti Bombyk was one of 12 invited participants at the "Goodwill Games Citizen's Initiative Conference on Planned Change Organizations, Communities and Institutions." The 5-day conference took place from July 23-27 in Seattle. It brought together social scientists from the Soviet Union and the United States to organize and advance knowledge of planned macro change. The goal of the conference was to look at planned social change from an international perspective and to begin to identify those factors which contribute to positive and constructive social change. Each participant presented a paper describing his/her perspective on planned change and time was scheduled in for the participation of human service workers and community activists. Other invited participants included Jack Rothman, Robert Chin, Gary Jusela, Arkady Prigozin, Ludmila Bueva, Igor Arievich, Sergei Cheshko, Madis Habakuk, Sergei Popov, Ronald Short and Daryl

Of the three letters to the editor published in the March 22nd editorial page of New York Newsday, two were authored by BCRS members. George De Stefano wrote a letter defending the strategy and tactics of ACT-UP as an effective advocacy group for people with AIDS.

Fuenches.

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Sol Gorelick's letter dealt with tenant's rights.

Lorraine Guitierrez published two articles this past year: Working with women of color: An empowerment perspective. Social Work, 35, 149-154, and Critical consciousness and Chicano identity: An exploratory analysis. In G. Romero (Ed.) Estudios Chicanos and the Politics of Community. Berkeley: NACS Press.

## Membership News

As of the newsletter deadline, Marti Bombyk and I have been hard pressed to wade through the piles of mail we have received since the last membership renewal mailing.

Process of Renewals

A couple of hundred members have responded by renewing their memberships, leaving a total of 372 members with dues paid through 1990. 266 members were paid through 1989 but haven't renewed for 1990 yet. For

these members, this will be the last newsletter received. They are urged to check "renewal" on the membership form on the back of this newsletter and mail in their dues. Only members up to date by October 30 will receive the

planned Membership Directory.

If you are wondering what your dues status is, beginning with this mailing, a two-digit code immediately after your name denotes the year you are paid through. If this is in error, please drop us a note and we will check our treasurer's records and correct our database.

The Membership Directory

will be this year's holiday present to our members, and will be mailed out around Thanksgiving — on or about our fifth anniversary as an organization. True, it was promised a year or more ago. But better late than never. It is hoped the directory will serve as a useful networking device for members.

> Michael A. Dover Membership Secretary

## BCRS Sponsors:

On April 25th, 1990, BCRS was one of the sponsors of a program entitled "Chipping away at Repression" which included BCRS Treasurer Fred Newdom as Moderator. The program took place at the Hunter College School of Social Work and included speakers focusing on persecuted social work colleagues in El Salvador, Chile, and the Philippines. The event was organized by the Committee for Chilean Inquiry.

This Committee is still seeking support for the two disappeared social workers, Maria Nonna Santa Clara and Angelina Llenaresas in the Philippines, who have been missing since April 26, 1989. Though vanished for about a year, nothing has been heard about their fate and all evidence indicates that they were abducted by the Philippine army. For more information, contact Ruth Wilson, 415 Grand Street, Apt. E 1905, New York, NY., 10002, (212) 674-3762.

## **BCRS National Steering Committee**

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#### The Verne Weed Collection For Progressive Social WorK

The Verne Weed Living Archive at Hunter College School of Social Work and the Social Welfare History Archives at the University of Minnesota have agreed to establish the Verne Weed Collection for Progressive Social Work. The purpose of the collaboration is to honor the memory of Verne Weed, a long-time social work activist. It will assemble and make available for research, records documenting activities of individuals and organizations reflecting progressive values in social work practice, education and social action.

The Verne Weed Archive will become a depository of material from individuals and organizations who have been connected to the progressive social work tradition, past, present, and future. It will be housed in the Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. Founded in 1964 by historian Clarke Chambers, the Social Welfare History Archives collects unpublished source materials documenting the history of social services and social reform since the Civil War in the United States. The Archive's numerous collections are used intensively by social welfare scholars from around the nation.

The Verne Weed Collection for Progressive Social Work includes materials related to:
1) social work practice and services directed toward client entitlement and empowerment;
2) social work involvement in the peace, trade union, Black liberation, women's liberation, welfare rights, poor people's and similar social movements and in electoral politics;

3) social work struggles for agency, government, community, and societal reform; and 4) development and dissemination of theory that shapes progressive social work. The Verne Weed

Collection will focus on activities based in the United States, but evidence of contracts and involvement with other (particularly socialist) countries is welcome.

The Archive collects unpublished papers of individuals. It also collects the unpublished records of organizations (minutes, leaflets, correspondence, memoranda, other records of meetings, and supervisory and case notes). Printed materials such as newsletters, pamphlets, flyers, posters and clippings are also included. Materials are welcomed from large and small organizations, formal and informal groups, as well as local, state, national and international organizations. The organizations may be active or defunct. We especially don't want to lose sight of informal groups, short-lived groups, or groups whose activities focused just on single events, a particular neighborhood, or a personal situation.

The Archive currently holds the papers of Verne Weed and the files of the Downtown Welfare Rights Organization. Some other groups that have been mentioned as possibly appropriate for the Archive include the Radical Alliance of Social Service Workers (RASSW), Social Workers for Welfare Rights (SSWR), Social Workers for Spanish Democracy, Community Organizers Group (COG), Council of Trade Unions in Social Work, and Social Work Study Groups, among others.

The goal of the Verne Weed Archive is to document and preserve the record of progressive social work. This record will be built from the papers of the many individuals and groups that have participated in progressive social work activities over the years.

To build the Archive we need to find more people like yourself who are or have been active in progressive social work organizations. If you have materials to submit, we invite you to write or call (before sending materials)

describing the contents and amount of materials involved.

Address offers of materials and questions to: Mimi Abramovitz 212-452-71

Mimi Abramovitz 212-452-710 Terry Mizrahi 212-452-7112 Hunter School of Social Work 129 East 79th Street New York, New York 10021

### Social Workers Face Problems in Nicaragua

Elena Zuniga, secretary of national and international relations of the Nicaraguan Association of Social Workers, was scheduled to speak at the San Francisco conference in July, but had her visa application rejected by the U.S. Embassy in Managua. We urge you to write to your Congressional representative and/or Senator, urging that legislative pressure be applied to rescind the Presidential Order which prevents travel to the U.S. by members of the Sandinista Party or other Nicaraguans employed by the Government between 1979 and 1990. Although Ms. Zuniga was unable to come to California, she sent the following message:

From Nicaragua we salute you, and express to each one of you, as colleagues (in the health field), our feelings of solidarity with you and with all people who suffer and struggle for a dignified life. We hope that together we will continue moving forward on the path of liberty, democracy and enduring peace.

Physically I am not there to share with you in reflective planning on the tasks of social workers (in the health field), because a visa and the opportunity to do so were denied to me by your consulate (at the U.S. Embassy in Managua), who stated that reorganization in the visa process was the reason.

We, the social workers of Nicaragua, have feelings of sadness and anguish because we do not know the social policies that will be implemented by the new

government, which even now has	Book Order Form			
failed to reveal them officially.  In the past two months of	Name BCRS Member?			
governing, what has been imple-				
mented is an inflationary econom-	Address            City            State/Prov            Zip Code			
ic development that destabilizes	CityState/	Prov	Zip Code	=
and undermines the goals of		<del></del>		
individuals, families and the	TITLE	QUANTI	TY UNIT/PRICE	TOTAL
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At the level of our profession-	in the Practice of			
al association as social workers,	Social Work			
misfortune and uncertainty exist,	Reynolds stresses the need for the professional social worker to be		\$11.00	
through loss of jobs, and through lack of economic security which	educated as a whole person. She			
is needed in order to assume	describes the stages of conscious in- telligence in the process of learning			
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ly survival. Social workers are	for learning. Softbound			
heads of families, and their	Social Work & Social Living			
professional development is un-	The practice and philosophy of			
certain. As a result of this transi-	social work are critically examined.		\$ 7.00	
tion there is a lack of energy in	Reynolds argues, based upon her experiences with labor unions, that			
active participation in the profes-	the orientation of social agencies			
sional association, collectively.	toward psychological dynamics makes it difficult for clients to seek			
However, as individual ac-	help. Softbound.			
tivists, we have a presence in	Between Client &			
trade union organizations with a spirit of fightback and unity	Community Caseworkers are often caught be-			
which are initiating social actions,	tween the conflicting needs of their		\$ 7.00	
principally those who work in	clients and the community, espe- cially in times of rapid change.		<b>4</b> 7.55	
the Ministry of Health, previous-	Reynolds examines how these con-			
ly known as MINSA, and the	flicting demands can be resolved. Softbound			
Ministry of Social Welfare.				
What have <b>not</b> changed sig-	Uncharted Journey Reynolds' inspirational autobio-	Temporar		
nificantly are social work strate-	graphy dedicated to "young social	Out of Sto	xk /	
gies for promoting access to	workers who are facing realities and shaping our profession with		\$10.00	
community medicine, based in	courage and creativity." Covers the			-
barrio health stations, and district services for social welfare. In the	development of her practice philosophy and the course of her			
districts, INSBBI, the Nicaraguan	career from 1914-1964. Softbound.			
Institute for Social Security and	The Years Have Spoken			
Social Welfare, continues to	A collection of annual greetings sent by Reynolds to her friends			
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Nicaraguan Association of Social		<b>L</b>		
Workers "Mildred Abaunza," are			TOTAL	
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to construct a home-like setting	those who lose their jobs; munity as a center for commun- 2) provide an association program ity skills training.			
for social workers that allows us	for professional development; With brotherhood and sister-			
physical space in order to:	hood for all — Flena Zuniga			

for professional development; With brotherhood and sister-hood for all — Elena Zuniga.

#### Response to the Call to Join the BERTHA CAPEN REYNOLDS SOCIETY Name Please send me more information about (please print or type) the Society. ☐ I would like to join the Bertha Capen Address Reynolds Society. ☐ I would like to renew my membership. Enclosed is my check: Institutional/Organization □ \$10 Student, unemployed, Affiliation (optional) low-income member \$25 Member ☐ \$100 Sustaining Member Telephone (Work) (Home) \$250 Institutional Member ☐ I would also like a subscription to the Please make your check payable to Journal of Progressive Human Services: The Bertha Capen Reynolds Society and return to: ☐ Individual Subscription: \$10 for BCRS members (regularly \$12.00) Bertha Capen Reynolds Society Columbus Circle Station ☐ Institution Subscription: \$20 P.O. Box 20563

New York, NY 10023

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New York, New York 10023

Library Subscription: \$25



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SEE: IMM 224.4/244.41