

# BCR REPORTS

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of the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society

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## What Needs To Be Done?

*Fred Newdom, Chairperson*

Two domestic issues present us with important opportunities to advance progressive positions to build alliances critical to any serious progressive organizations concerned with the human services. The first, health care reform, enjoys a great deal of popular support and has been the subject of well-articulated proposals. The second, welfare "reform," is likely to be the next major domestic policy initiative by the Clinton administration.

Health Care reform has long been a part of the left's agenda. Efforts to institute a national health program as part of the Social Security Act of 1935 foundered in Roosevelt's pragmatic retreat from the determined opposition of the medical profession. Since then, proposals to address the inequities in our health system have been presented regularly and have fallen victim to the power of the interests arrayed against it. Even the passage of Medicaid and Medicare, while providing a "foot in the door," did not make it certain that a decent system of health care would be available to everyone.

Now we are at the threshold of a national health care program and the degree of

consensus surrounding it should make all of us uneasy. The proposal advanced by the administration has the support of virtually every interest group that opposed earlier efforts to reform the health care system. What is clear is that, under the Clinton plan, control of health care will remain in the same hands that brought us the too-costly, maldistributed, two-class system we have now.

The consensus that has been orchestrated is designed to block serious discussion of a single-payer system which progressive groups around the country have been advancing. Over 450 groups (including the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society) have endorsed the American Health Security Act (H.R.1200/S.491) sponsored by Rep. Jim McDermott (D-WA), Rep. John Conyers (D-MI) and Sen. Paul Wellstone (D-MN). One thing you can do is to get organizations to which you belong to join in the campaign for a decent health care system. Send organizational endorsements to:

National Single-Payer Letter  
c/o Public Citizen  
215 Pennsylvania Ave., S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20003

While the national political mood supports a demand for a better health care system, welfare remains an easy political target for those who want to attack poor women, people of color, and policies directed at addressing the evils of racism, sexism, and classism in our society. The administration promises to reform welfare – as if the Family Support Act of 1988 were not "reform" enough. Welfare is a bipartisan scapegoat with no major political figures standing up to the assault on the poor.

This is an issue on which the Bertha Reynolds Society has committed itself to work collaboratively with the welfare rights movement. A leader of that movement, Marian Kramer, President of the National Welfare Rights Union (NWRU) electrified our annual conference at Smith College last summer with a stirring call for an end to poverty and a challenge to groups like ours to join in that effort.

Local chapters of the BCRS should be seeking out alliances with local welfare rights organizations to press for

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## **BCRS Chapter Updates:**

### **KALAMAZOO:**

The Rebecca Binkowski Chapter of BCR at Kalamazoo is meeting weekly with about 20 people attending. We are working especially around the following issues:

- We are concerned with children's issues and teens and violence. We have been organizing for a new facility for juveniles and we are holding a forum on teens and violence.
- We are organizing a coalition around advocating for a single payer, Canadian type system.
- We are organizing with others in Michigan for a statewide BCR Conference in Lansing on "Reordering Priorities in Michigan and the Nation: Human Rights, Human Needs First."
- Solidarity work with Native Americans, African Americans and Hispanic Groups is also on our agenda.
- We are coalition-building with other groups on "no to NAFTA," solidarity with people in South Africa, Haiti and Central America.

Please mail all contributions for the next *BCR Reports* to:

Barbara Kasper, Editor  
350 New Campus Drive  
SUNY College at Brockport  
Brockport, NY 14420-2952  
FAX #716-395-2366

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

**Please Note:** The deadline for materials submitted for inclusion in the next *BCR Reports* is **JANUARY 22, 1994.**

### **BUFFALO:**

The Buffalo Chapter has been meeting regularly over the past year. In late spring, members came together to view the video, "Takeover." A discussion followed regarding the low-income housing problems in Buffalo, particularly in regards to the Buffalo Municipal Housing Authority, which is being investigated by HUD for misappropriation of funds. Effective strategies for grassroots organizing around a variety of community issues were also addressed.

In May, Shirley Lord gave the commencement address at U.B.'s graduate School of Social Work. She discussed the need for social workers to be progressive activists for social change and talked about Bertha Capen Reynolds and the national and local BCR societies.

In September, members were mobilized to conduct a phone and letter writing campaign to the County Executive and local legislators in support of the appointment of Debbi Merrifield, a progressive BCR supporter and MSW, as Commissioner of Erie County's Department of Social Services. Debbi was confirmed so we have progressive BCR social workers at the county level and in Albany where Karen Schimke is now Executive Deputy Commissioner of New York State Department of Social Services.

### **SEATTLE/PUGET SOUND:**

The major focus for the Puget Sound Chapter right now is

planning and organizing the 1994 Annual BCRS National Conference which will be held in Seattle July 9-11, 1994. We have a very committed and active planning committee of eleven people that has been meeting about every two weeks. Our aim is to have at least three hundred people attend the conference, and we're well on our way in terms of planning. One thing that is being done differently this year is that we are putting out a call for workshops to members and other targeted groups. The theme of the conference is "Progressive Approaches to a Multicultural World: Strategies for Confronting and Transforming Oppression." We urge you to take a look at the call for proposals in this newsletter and to pass the word on to anyone else who might be able to contribute to the conference or who may want to attend.

Regular chapter activities are also continuing. The aim is to have a series of brown bag lunch discussions at the University of Washington School of Social Work. The first one, October 7th, focused on radical practice in general. Topics for future brown bag lunches may be on *The Various Faces of Radical Practice: What People Are Really Doing Out There*, and on the *School of Social Work's* relationship with the surrounding community, particularly its street youth and homeless populations. Our aim is to hold three to four brown bags per quarter during the school year.

## **BCRS Chapter Updates:**

### **COLUMBUS/OSU:**

The OSU/Columbus Chapter had a busy autumn. Members helped to organize an Observance and Fast for Justice that was held from October 1 through October 12, 1993.

Traditionally, this city has a large celebration around the Columbus Day holiday. For some time, community groups have tried to raise awareness of the true legacy of Columbus and the European invasion of the Americas, Africa, and Asia.

We helped to put together a series of community events intended to increase public awareness of the state of indigenous peoples in the U.S. and throughout the world.

David Dellinger and several of his associates staged a fast for the 12-day period in observance of the genocidal history of this country. The fasters congregated daily at the Columbus City Hall building, where there is a large statue representing an Anglicized image of Columbus. There were speakers and other events at noon and 5:00 p.m. everyday. Other community events were also held, including a lecture by Howard Zinn, a panel presentation on "Environmental Racism," a conference on "The International Year of Indigenous Peoples," and an observance of "Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Day" (October 12).

The Chapter also held the second Columbus Progressive Film Institute on October 7, intended to coincide with the activities regarding Columbus Day. The theme of this

presentation was American Colonialism and Puerto Rican Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War, including "Puerto Rico: Hidden Colony, Hidden Struggle, and "War on America."

Our Chapter has also taken a leadership role in organizing an anti-Ku Klux Klan rally. The Klan was granted a permit to hold a rally on the steps of the Ohio Statehouse on October 23, and we worked with groups throughout the state of Ohio to hold a counter-demonstration. Some so-called community

leaders organized a "Unity Day" to be held on the OSU campus, over two miles away from the Klan rally itself. In fact, local police authorities identified anti-Klan organizers as "the enemy," suggesting that we would provoke violence. About 200 people marched from the OSU campus down to the State House. Overall, about two thousand people showed up to demonstrate against the Klan's presence and we successfully prevented the Klan from getting their message across.

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## ***Human Rights Organizations and Periodicals Directory Available***

The seventh edition of the *Human Rights Organization and Periodicals Directory* from Meiklejohn Civil Liberties Institute contains up-to-date, concise descriptions of 1000+ U.S. organizations and publications that work for human rights and peace regionally, nationally and internationally. The book is over 250 pages, including: an Alphabetical Guide, Federal Agencies Guide, Subject Index, Intern Opportunity Index, Periodicals Index and Geographical Index.

Meiklejohn Institute provides this link-up resource to help people find information or assistance on issues and problems affecting the public welfare. It gives job-seekers and networkers vital resources in an easy-to-use format. The *Directory* sells to organizations and libraries for \$44.95, or to individuals for \$39.95. (Subtract \$4 without looseleaf binder) plus \$6.00 shipping/ handling and 8.25% tax in California. Send your check to MCLI, Box 673, Berkeley, CA 94701-0673. Phone (510) 848-0599, FAX 848-

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## ***Our Members Say:***

"Your efforts are critical to the social work/human services profession to help us realize our mission and role to enable participation in social change which encourages economic and social justice. Your articles and efforts are in need of other messengers. Count me in!"

— Michael F. Regan, Grand Rapids, Michigan

"I first met Bertha when, in 1943, as a social work student in the University of Toronto, a few of us studying group work contacted her and arranged for her to come to Toronto for a marvelous workshop. Subsequently, I met with her a couple of times, once in New York when she was with the union and before that at the NASW meeting in Atlantic City, along with Henry Wallace who was heading the Third Party around that same time. (Boy, do you ever need one now!)"

— Carl Birchard, Ottawa, Ontario

## *Addressing Issues of Violence and Development: Common Problems... Universal Causes... Shared Solutions.*

Violence is a pervasive and growing problem that is of critical importance to the social work profession. Based on awareness that the problem of violence – like other human problems – cannot be solved without accounting for global interdependence, NASW's Office of Peace and International Affairs has launched a three-year development education project on Violence and Development. The purpose of the project – funded by a grant from the U.S. Agency for International Development – is to educate social workers and segments of the general public about the connections between violence and development with a primary focus on developing countries. The project is expected to emphasize in a profound way the importance of working for global peace and development through an examination of parallel conditions in the United States and developing countries as well as issues of interdependence.

**What is development?** International development is the process of improving social and economic conditions in developing countries. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines the purpose of development as widening the range of people's choices. This definition asserts that – while economic growth is indeed a piece of development – real development looks beyond quantities of production to the environmental impact of growth, the depletion of natural resources, and the

distribution of wealth. Social work is especially concerned about social development, which emphasizes the elimination of poverty and injustice and improving the welfare of the people in ways determined by the people themselves.

**What is violence?** For the purposes of the project, violence is broadly defined as any act or situation that injures the health and well-being of others and any condition that inhibits or blocks the development of human potential. This definition: 1) emphasizes the consequences from the perspective of the victims of violence; 2) treats all types of violence equally regardless of whether those responsible are individuals, groups, institutions, or society at large; 3) permits examination of the many and various manifestations of violence (e.g., overt or covert, legitimate/ socially sanctioned or illegitimate, physical or non-physical, intended or unintended, etc.); and, 4) includes any avoidable action that violates human rights in a broad sense or prevents the fulfillment of basic human needs.

**What is a developing country?** Many terms are used to designate the economically disadvantaged countries of the world with which the project is concerned. Developing countries or less developed countries (LDCs) are terms used to contrast poorer, less industrialized countries with more developed, industrialized countries. Some authors

distinguish least developed countries as those with little advancement in social and health indicators or economic growth. The term "the Third World" has been used to describe the poorer non-industrialized countries of the world, the "First World" to describe the industrialized countries, and the "Second World" as the former Soviet Union and its satellites. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, some authors now purport that the concept of a Third World is no longer accurate.

**What is Development Education?** Development education, as the term is used in the Violence and Development Project, is simply educating social workers about development issues and interdependence. The primary goal of development education is to increase understanding of conditions in developing countries, how we are affected by those conditions, and how our actions affect those conditions. Its focus is on global interdependence, the need for world justice and equity, and the elimination of poverty through social and economic development.

The goal of this project is to increase our understanding of global interdependence. Real solutions to the problem of violence require that the social work profession understands the complex relationships across, among and between nations so that we can join others on the cutting

# Call For Workshop Proposals

"Progressive Approaches to a Multi-Cultural World: Strategies for Confronting and Transforming Oppression," is the theme of the 8th Annual Conference of the BCRS to be held July 8-10 in Seattle, Washington. This conference is dedicated to developing strategies for human service workers and other workers for social change, to confront and change oppressive practices in their workplaces and daily lives. It will also provide opportunities for sharing resources and support for organizers in all areas. We invite proposals for two hour workshops which will present these strategies. we are particularly interested in the following topics:

- strategies for dealing with issues of oppression in all levels of human service and community practice (e.g. direct services, administration, community organizing, education or research);
- strategies for working with specific populations (e.g. gay men and lesbians, youth, single parents);
- strategies for working in specific settings (e.g. rural, health care, inpatient mental health, grassroots organizations, child care);
- strategies for multi-cultural coalition building;
- examples of successful projects and programs which have worked towards social transformation;
- innovative perspectives on oppression and liberation.

Guidelines for proposal submission:

1. Submit three copies of a one to two page abstract describing the proposed workshop. Describe the content of the workshop and how you plan to present the material. Attach a separate sheet with the workshop name and your name, address and phone number.
2. All workshop proposals will be read by the conference planning committee and will be selected on the basis of the

topic, proposed method of presentation, and program balance.

3. Workshop presenters will receive complementary registration at the conference.
4. Deadline for submission is December 15, 1993. Presenters will be notified by February 1, 1994.
5. Proposals should be sent to: Lorraine Gutierrez, School of Social Work JH-30, 4101 15th Avenue NE, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195. FAX: 206-543-1228.

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## ***Addressing Issues of Violence and Development: Common Problems... Universal Causes... Shared Solutions.***

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edge in shaping social developments to bring about peace and justice. the project's development education activities will focus on five sub-themes: poverty, ethnicity, family structure, drug abuse and trauma.

Through a competitive grant awarding process, five NASW chapters will be selected to develop educational materials, with each chapter focusing on one of the sub-themes.

Materials to be developed include backgrounders that provide information about key development concepts and related facts, curriculum modules that include a variety of materials for classroom use, videotape segments and other resources. The resource centers will contribute to two major activities of the project that will take place in October 1995:

- a nationwide teach-in at schools of social work;
- a videoteleconference at schools of social work focused on "empowerment" and "what the United States can learn from the Third World" in relation to the sub-themes.

A request for grant proposals will be disseminated in December 1993 and the deadline for proposals is February 15, 1994. Grants to the five chapters will be awarded in March 1994.

For more information: Dorothy Van Soest, Violence and Development Project Director, National Association of Social Workers, 750 First Street NE, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20002-4241; 202-336-8273.

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## Symposium on Progressive Social Work to be Held at 1994 CSWE Conference

For the first time, the Annual Program Meeting of the Council on Social Work Education to be held in March 1994 in Atlanta, will include a Symposium on Progressive Social Work. The Symposium, long a goal of the BCRS, will be co-chaired by two BCRS members, Cheryl Hyde of Boston University and Michael Reisch of San Francisco State University. Juried papers, already accepted for inclusion in the Symposium's sessions, will address issues of theory, practice and education of concern to progressive social workers. Additional details about the Symposium will be forthcoming shortly.

The establishment of the Symposium in the 1994 APM also means that the Symposium will automatically be included in the "call for papers" for the 1995 APM to be held in San Diego. BCRS members are strongly encouraged to begin thinking about submitting abstracts for the 1995 APM. Please note that the deadline for submitting these abstracts is earlier than in past years - April 1, 1994. Look for details about submitting abstracts in the "call for papers" included in the Advance Program for the 1994 APM which was distributed this fall.

Please direct your ideas and questions about the 1994 or 1995 Symposium to Cheryl Hyde or Michael Reisch. See you in Atlanta!

## BCRS Brochure Available:

Members wishing to order copies of the Society's brochure may request up to 100 copies by calling Mary Jo at Communication Services at (518) 463-3522, faxing her at (518) 426-3961 or writing her at: 4 Central Avenue, Albany, New York 12210. The brochure has an easy to use tear-off return form, and features an "Our Members Say" section with quotes from Chauncey Alexander, Millie Charles, Herman Curiel, Lorraine Gutierrez, Barbara Joseph, Maryann Mahaffey, Mary Bricker-Jenkins, Irmgard Wessel, Susan Kinoy and Sandy Felder. Order copies for your school or workplace today!



## ***The BCRS Commitment to Support Welfare Rights***

At the BCRS conference in June, we voted to make the support for welfare rights activism a major theme of the Society for the next two years. We decided this because welfare rights is one area of policy politics where a truly progressive voice is often absent from the debate. There was a strong feeling that the Clinton Administration as well as liberal advocacy and professional groups have abandoned any commitment to real welfare rights, in order to achieve more "feasible" middle class agendas, like health care reform. Many of us also felt that the deeper issues raised by a welfare rights perspective – questions about the value of labor that does not produce profit, and about women's rights to support their families without men – are critical ones for developing an analysis and a politics that can lead to radical change in this society.

Therefore, at our October Steering Committee, we voted to reaffirm that support for welfare rights activism, and opposition to current "welfare reform" initiatives, will be a priority for the Society for the next two years. We identified several ways to meet the BCRS commitment to welfare rights:

1. Update the "Myths About Welfare Reform" fact sheet, and include with it guidelines on how to support welfare rights activism, stressing the imperative of including women on welfare themselves in all forums, taskforces, and public events on the topic. We will also include a bibliography of resources on the issue.
2. Endorse *Survival News*, the national welfare rights newspaper and the official paper of the National Welfare Rights Union, sending out a sample copy with each renewal letter and each new membership, along with a request that BCRS members subscribe.

3. Distribute the NWRU booklet on "Which Way Welfare Rights" through the book fund. This means that BCRS will be buying copies and selling them ourselves.
4. Write a BCRS statement on welfare reform and submit it to NASW, CSWE and other professional organizations, or journals. Encourage chapters and members to participate in coalitions and taskforces to promote this position, and conduct educational activities, in conjunction with local welfare rights groups, to promote the position.
5. Create, in collaboration with welfare rights activists, a list of guidelines for how social workers can be aware of, and respectful to, the situations facing welfare recipients. Prepare this so it can be used in trainings, classes and distributed through union newspapers. The idea would be that the BCRS would play a role in helping individual social services workers to be "part of the solution" in their daily practice, rather than "a part of the problem."
6. Develop a set of materials for responding directly to the current media assaults on women who receive welfare, such as the Diane Sawyer *20/20* television show on welfare fraud. We might, for example, create a videotape of a group of welfare recipients' responses to the show, and send along with a fact sheet about welfare fraud to local stations. We might even try to push *20/20* to do a show from another perspective.

We ask members of the Society to comment on these proposed activities, and to suggest others, or offer to participate. Anyone interested should contact Mimi Abramovitz, Barbara Kasper, Marilyn Moch, or Ann Withorn with their ideas. The Steering Committee will be reviewing these suggestions, and will draft a text for the statement on welfare reform at our January 22-23 meeting in New York.

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## **Scapegoating Women on Welfare**

*by Mimi Abramovitz and Frances Fox Piven  
Reprinted from the New York Times OP-ED 9/2/93*

The Clinton Administration is making a grand show of touring the country and holding public hearings about "welfare reform." Women should be on guard. Johnnie Tillmon, leader of the National Welfare Rights Organization in the 1960's, used to call the welfare system "The Man" because, she said, it rules women's lives. The term still fits. Men are the welfare "experts," and the system they have designed is increasingly abusive to poor women struggling to raise children.

For 20 years, a long line of male policy wonks have been complaining that welfare "dependency" is America's major problem. By the wonks' reading, it's all right for people to receive money from Social Security or defense contracts or bank bail-outs. Only Government largess to poor mothers ruins character, breaks up families, weakens the economy and bloats the budget.

To listen to the male critics, you would think the welfare rolls were mushrooming and spending was spiraling out of sight. In fact, the

welfare rolls stabilized in the early 1970's at about 3.6 million families and began to grow only with the 1989 recession. Even now, Aid to Families With Dependent Children accounts for only 1 percent of the Federal budget, or about \$22 billion a year. And rather than supporting families so generously as to encourage "dependency," the grants are painfully low, averaging \$370 a month in 1992. No state brings families up to the poverty line, even when food stamps are included.

## Scapegoating Women on Welfare — *continued*

But desperate poverty under government auspices is not the critics' main problem.

"Dependency" is, and their solution is to force women to go to work. Not surprisingly, given high unemployment and plummeting wage levels for unskilled workers, the much-vaunted welfare-to-work reforms and experiments under way can claim only marginal gains.

Workfare is just one way in which "The Man" is trying to make women shape up. Wisconsin's "learnfare" reduces the checks of welfare mothers whose children are truant; Maryland's "healthfare" docks mothers when their children don't receive health checkups or immunizations; New Jersey's "wedfare" offers a bonus to women who marry, while its "family cap"

lowers the grant to women who have an additional child while on the rolls. And some politicians talk about making Norplant, the contraceptive implant, a condition for receiving A.F.D.C. money.

In other words, poor women are supposed to become adequate providers and better parents by dint of welfare sanctions. But even if there were jobs for unskilled women that paid enough to support a family and cover child and health care besides does it really make sense to force poor mothers into a labor market flooded with other desperate job seekers? Is it sane policy to force women to leave their children for jobs flipping burgers or mopping floors? What will this really do to their ability to be good parents, especially in neighborhoods plagued by drugs, crime and poor schools?

If there were good job training, adequate child care and decent wages at the end of the road, many women would eagerly leave welfare. But such programs could cost upward of \$50 billion, so that is not what Government is doing. Instead, the harassment of welfare mothers in the name of reform continues.

Welfare mothers make good scapegoats at a time when politicians and experts need scapegoats. Welfare is a code word for women and for blacks. It singles out the most vulnerable people in our society. As the certainties about family and prosperity that once anchored life for most Americans crumble, our leaders, having little substantive to offer, point the finger of blame at poor women.

### Response to the Call to Join the BERTHA CAPEN REYNOLDS SOCIETY

- Please send me more information about the Society.
- I would like to join the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society.
- I would like to renew my membership.

Enclosed is my check:

- \$10 Student, unemployed, low-income member
- \$25 Member
- \$100 Sustaining Member
- \$250 Institutional Member

- I would also like a subscription to the *Journal of Progressive Human Services*:
- Individual Subscription: \$10 for BCRS members (regularly \$12.00)
- Institution Subscription: \$20
- Library Subscription: \$25

Name  
(please print or type)

Address

Institutional/Organization  
Affiliation (optional)

Telephone  
(Home) (Work)

**Please make your check payable to  
The Bertha Capen Reynolds Society  
and return to:**

**Bertha Capen Reynolds Society  
Columbus Circle Station  
P.O. Box 20563  
New York, NY 10023**



**From Cheryl Hyde:**  
*The Journal of Progressive Human Services*

**I**n January of this year, I officially undertook the editorship of the *Journal of Progressive Human Services*. I did so with a mixture of excitement and trepidation. Excitement because I believe in the unique voice of this journal in particular, and in the legacy of progressive praxis in general. Trepidation because this is a rather overwhelming project; a project in which all of you have an open invitation to participate. I want to use this space to say a bit about the journal's direction and its relationship to Haworth Press.

During the past four years, *JPHS* has offered some exciting, thought-provoking works on such topics as the role and responsibility of the state, the inhumanity of capitalism, the danger of the New Right, the potential for progressive clinical work, the multiplicity of views in radical social work, new models for engaged teaching and research. Themes of empowerment, social justice, and collective action are woven throughout these contributions; a solid foundation upon which to continue the journal's development. Such featured articles will remain as the core of the journal. I trust that forthcoming works will advance progressive theory and practice, undertake perplexing and critical issues, and offer vision and hope.

I am particularly interested in increasing those works that illustrate progressive praxis – case studies, testimonies, memoirs, reprinted documents and speeches, and photo

essays. Such exemplars are, I think, essential to "spreading the word" about the possibilities of progressive social welfare. I know that my students hunger for "real life examples" and I would like the journal to be an arena in which the "voices of progressive practice" are heard.

Lorraine Gutierrez (new book review editor) and I would like to expand the book review section and include well-developed critical essays on works of relevance to progressive practitioners and educators. We also welcome ideas for what books ought to be reviewed. Poetry and "From the Archives" (as well as other pieces that convey our history) will continue. These two features are, I think, among the truly unique aspects of the journal.

We have an interesting and at times, frustrating, relationship with the publisher, Haworth Press. What is good about this relationship is that they give us free editorial reign. The downside, as many of you know, is that this is not the most efficient business. Issues are chronically late and subscriptions often misbilled or

not honored. I have been in contact with Haworth about these problems, but as editor, have little influence on this "business end." If you are having problems, please contact Haworth directly at 1-800-342-9678. Understand that the **Bertha Reynolds Society is not responsible for any of these mistakes.** So please don't cancel your society membership because Haworth is not performing adequately.

What is most important for me, as the editor, is to be in contact with you. Let me know what you did and didn't like. Contact me – if you have an idea for a submission, but aren't sure how to proceed; know of an interesting case study that someone could analyze; read a good book that warrants attention; are interested in guest editing a special issue. The journal's vitality and viability depends on our collective ability to debate and challenge and critique; to analyze what works and what does not. The journal should be an arena in which this can take place, and a forum in which we celebrate the past, present and future of progressive social welfare.

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### ***Age Discrimination Suit at Columbia University***

Sumner Rosen, a professor in the Columbia School of Social Work, is suing the University on the grounds that he has been discriminated against on the basis of his age. The suit was filed in the spring of 1992, alleging that University officials and the Dean of the School of Social Work had discriminated against him in setting his salary. Rosen also contends that, in addition to lower salaries, older faculty with long service have been excluded from school governance committees, denied certain teaching assignments, and suffered from violation of their academic freedom rights. To find out more about this situation and/or to support the lawsuit, contact: Rosen Legal Defense Fund, 201 West 86th Street, Apt. 905, New York, NY 10024

# *A Theory of Human Need.*

Len Doyal and Ian Gough.  
New York: The Guilford Press.  
(1991). \$17.95. paperback.

*A review by Michael A. Dover*

The recent publication of Len Doyal and Ian Gough's *A Theory of Human Need* represents a significant advance in human needs theory, one which has a number of implications for social work practice, research and activism. Both British academics, Doyal is a professor of philosophy at Middlesex University, and Gough a professor of social policy and social work at Manchester University. The book has received both the Myrdle Prize and the Isaac and Tamara Deutscher Award.

The theory outlines the societal circumstances necessary for the meeting of two universal human needs, physical health and autonomy. These circumstances, or preconditions, include the capacity to engage in agricultural and other forms of commodity production, the societal capacity to successfully reproduce biologically, the ability to culturally transmit to the next generation the skills to produce and reproduce, and the existence of some kind of political authority to ensure that all of this can occur.

The meeting of these necessary preconditions, which are common to all societies, allows particular cultures to fashion specific methods ("satisfiers") of ensuring the meeting of what Doyal and Gough refer to as "intermediate needs": food, water, shelter, work, health environment, health care, protection in childhood, protection from physical harm and from destitution, education, etc. These intermediate needs

are, in various combinations, sufficient conditions for the achievement of the one or both of the basic human needs defined in their theory: physical health and autonomy.

Once these two basic needs have been met, people can achieve the universal goals of avoidance of serious harm and of social participation in a way which is inhibited to only a minimal extent. Ideally, given certain additional necessary preconditions (for instance, political freedom rather than just political authority, and the achievement by people of the ability to communicate across cultures) people can build upon their basic human needs by exercising a higher level of autonomy called critical autonomy. Having achieved critical autonomy, a higher form of social participation, human liberation, can be achieved.

The book represents a growing progressive intellectual trend to reconsider some of the culturally relativist assumptions of the school of thought of Laclau and Mouffe and others, which views human needs as merely discursive or culturally defined, not objective and universal. Doyal and Gough's theory doesn't impose a unitary ideology or agent of change upon social movements, it merely provides a unifying theme based on universal needs, which are satisfied in culturally different manners. Such a unifying theme could clarify some of the commonalities of the many messages of modern social movements.

In terms of politics and activism, the Doyal/Gough book

provides the theoretical and philosophical basis for overcoming many of the divisions between liberals and radicals. It fully embraces both human rights and human needs, rather than counterpoising them to each other. Human need satisfaction may well prove to be in the banner of progressive movements of the 90's. Joel Blau, in *The Visible Poor*, suggests building coalitions around satisfying common human needs. Doyal and Gough provide theoretical tools to inform such a strategy.

For social welfare policy, it becomes possible to develop forms of needs-based policy analysis, which examine social policies from the standpoint of the extent to which they are compatible with human needs. Human needs, met in a variety of public, voluntary, market, relational and individual manners, would be paramount, not service or social systems.

For social work practice, a recentering on human needs can be the basis for enriched practice model development, and can infuse existing approaches with a renewed humanism. For research, the theory can be the basis of enhanced forms of needs-assessment research, survey research on health and autonomy and cross-national comparative social indicators research.

*The Theory of Human Need* deserves the attention of progressive social workers as we strive to define our practice and our politics in a changing world.

*(Michael A. Dover is a doctoral student in social work and sociology at the University of Michigan.)*

## "I Am Because You Are"

The Bertha Reynolds 1993 National Conference

by Ann Withorn

From June 18-20, two hundred progressives from around the country met and talked and shared plans for the future. The twin themes were "Practicing as Progressives in the New Political Context" and "Reclaiming Rights." In workshops, plenary sessions as well as over meals and long walks, participants discussed the current dilemmas for social welfare activists. Friday Institutes considered critical issues for radical practice, such as how to fight for public workers' and welfare rights. We discussed models for gay and lesbian, feminist and anti-racist practice. Frierian and Popular Education models for liberatory social work practice were put forth, debated and reconfigured.

At the opening plenary, our three speakers set high challenges for BCRS: they called on progressives to go beyond an analysis of what is wrong to demand real welfare rights and human rights, even at the risk of professional or political disfavor. Frances Piven gave a striking analysis of how strong the opposition to adequate social welfare provisions is, even among "liberal" Democrats.

Marian Kramer, President of the National Welfare Rights Union, reminded us that it is still possible to unite with the victims of poverty to rebuild a people's movement for social and economic justice. She called upon the Bertha Reynolds Society to join with welfare rights activists to fight against so-called "reforms,"

and for a program of reclaiming rights for welfare recipients and other oppressed people. Joseph Diescho helped to place the U.S. issues in a global context of international interconnectedness. From his experiences in Namibia, Europe and the U.S., he urged us to take heart from the efforts of the others who are still brave enough to make drastic changes in their societies and not to give up "radical" goals because, in our isolation, they seem impossible. He repeated a saying from his country, "I am because you are," and



reminded us that the commitment to welfare rights here constitutes our part of the global struggle for justice.

During Saturday, we divided into 18 workshops on a wide range of topics of importance to maintaining a commitment to activism and progressive analysis. As always, there were some problems with not enough time for discussion, or some people taking too much

"air time," but the conference evaluations showed that most people found the workshops stimulating and challenging, and the contact with other activists with similar problems highly supportive. The major unrealized hopes were for more strategy and less analysis, and for more cultural diversity among the participants.

By Sunday morning we were all pretty tired, but many stayed and found time to ponder how radicals should respond to the Clinton Administration. Nancy Amidei, from the University of Washington, argued that, while we should not expect this administration to fulfill our agenda, there was lots of room to work and struggle with them. Andrew Kopkind, from *The Nation* magazine, was much more critical and pushed us to consider how long it is justifiable to keep a stance of winless "loyal opposition" within mainstream political parties. The discussion that followed was lively and returned us to the initial themes of the conference: is it possible to reclaim rights within the new political context of Democratic compromise?

By the end of the three days, most people left with a sense that these discussions are "to be continued" over the next year – in the Newsletter, through increased organizational support of welfare rights activism, and at next year's conference in Seattle.

## **Report From The Committee For Human Rights Inquiry**

The good news is that the 300 delegates to the NASW Delegate Assembly meeting on August 21 in Washington, D.C. passed a resolution calling for "ending the U.S. embargo and normalizing diplomatic relations with Cuba." This was on the basis of the "lack of Cuba's access to food and unconditional access to medicine and medical equipment." NASW called on the U.S. government to "end its economic isolation of Cuba, which denies the Cuban people a fundamental right to basic needs for survival."

Copies of the Resolution and the press release can be obtained from Tony Vera, President of the Alliance of Hispanic Social Workers (718-589-0551), a group which, together with other social workers in the New York City area, had initiated the Resolution and a pamphlet, "About Human Rights in Cuba," stimulated by a recent trip to Cuba, organized by the Alliance of Hispanic Social Workers.

Human rights problems in Guatemala have also received our continuing and intensified attention. Social workers, street children and a large part of the population still live in fear of the military. Our representative, Jeff Fleischer, was part of a delegation this summer organized by two pacifist groups, and will report on his visit there and what further actions are needed. We have strongly supported Congressional action to cut off all forms of military aid to Guatemala and to stop special U.S. trade benefits to this country while gross human rights violations persist.

Our Committee is still deeply concerned about the negative effects of the North American

Trade Agreement on human rights, social services, jobs, living standards and environmental protections in the U.S. and elsewhere in this proposed agreement with Mexico and Canada, so vigorously sought by the multi-national corporations. Even the "supplementary agreements" proposed by the Clinton administration do not offer real protection, and the present agreement of the Bush administration needs an "environmental impact" study, (according to one court decision) and should be renegotiated. Our leaflet to Congress, still available by request, points up the dangers to the well-being of our country and the two other nations involved.

On another subject, Rula Abu Duhou, Palestinian imprisoned in Israel, the most recent report from the Women's Organization for Political Prisoners in Tel Aviv has reported deteriorating conditions in the prison. No doubt this will be of concern to those organizations active in behalf of Duhou. Together, with the peace efforts between the Palestinians and Israel, it has been mentioned that as the Palestinians achieve more self-rule, the prisoners should be part of this development. It should be a part of this peace process to liberate the prisoners who have been taken by Israel during the Intafada, we believe.

For more information about the Committee for International Human Rights Inquiry, write: CIHRI, National Association of Social Workers, New York City Chapter, 548 8th Avenue (6th floor), New York, NY 10018.

## **Support Alternative Visions for New Social Workers in Prague**

The Department of Social Work at Charles University in Prague is just beginning to develop models for Bachelors and Masters level work. They know they must escape the terrible roles as social controllers that existed under the old regime, and they also know that the country needs community workers and social change activists far more than it needs clinically oriented practitioners. Students in the program, especially, are concerned that their new profession be one that is viewed positively in the society, and one which helps the country move forward by establishing both positive social policies in the face of rampant privatization, and creative standards for day to day practice.

BCRS members can help by sending books or papers that might suggest some elements of what constitutes progressive practice in such a context. You could send papers you possess or have written, or books that seem useful - used is fine. Don't worry about duplicating someone else's donations, the more books that arrive the more that can be shared. Please send your material to two of the active students in the Program, Lenka Mecerodava and Barbora Machova, c/o Dept. of Social Work, Charles University, Celetna 20, Praha 1, 11000 Czech Republic. For more information you can contact Ann Withorn at U. Mass. Boston, College of Public and Community Service, Boston MA 02125.

# WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE?

*Continued from page 1*

policies that will get welfare clients up and out of poverty. Our national organization will be undertaking a number of steps (described elsewhere in this issue of BCR Reports) to support local and national efforts on the economic justice agenda. This can be an issue in which we can make a difference if we begin the hard work of organizing to shift the grounds on which the debate will take place.

To the extent that the Bertha Reynolds Society is still defining its role on the left and in the human services, taking on a strong progressive role in partnership with welfare rights organizations is an excellent means to move that process along. Join with us in this effort.

## Worth Reading:

*Checkerboard Square: Culture and Resistance in a Homeless Community.*  
David Wagner, Westview Press 1993.

*Checkerboard Square* offers an ethnographic portrait of the poor that reveals their struggles not only to survive but also to create communities on the streets and to develop social movements on their own behalf. Hardly passive victims, the homeless of *Checkerboard Square* survive within an alternative street culture, with its own norms and social organization, in a world often hidden from the view of researchers, journalists, and social workers. Wagner explains why the crisis of homelessness is not only about the lack of services, housing and jobs, but a result of the very structure of the dominant institutions of work, family and public social welfare.

## Book Order Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_ BCRS Member? \_\_\_\_\_

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TITLE	QUANTITY	UNIT/PRICE	TOTAL
Learning and Teaching in the Practice of Social Work Reynolds stresses the need for the professional social worker to be educated as a whole person. She describes the stages of conscious intelligence in the process of learning and relates them, to the motivation for learning. Softbound		\$11.00	
Social Work & Social Living The practice and philosophy of social work are critically examined. Reynolds argues, based upon her experiences with labor unions, that the orientation of social agencies toward psychological dynamics makes it difficult for clients to seek help. Softbound.		\$ 7.00	
Between Client & Community Caseworkers are often caught between the conflicting needs of their clients and the community, especially in times of rapid change. Reynolds examines how these conflicting demands can be resolved. Softbound		\$ 7.00	
Uncharted Journey Reynolds' inspirational autobiography dedicated to "young social workers who are facing realities and shaping our profession with courage and creativity." Covers the development of her practice philosophy and the course of her career from 1914-1964. Softbound.		\$16.00	
The Years Have Spoken A collection of annual greetings sent by Reynolds to her friends from 1935-1973. The collection includes her annual original verse and narrative describing the condition of the world that year and how she had been affected by these events. Makes an excellent holiday or graduation gift. Softbound.		\$10.00	
<b>RETURN FORM TO:</b> BCRS Book Fund Columbus Circle Station P.O. Box 20563 New York, NY 10023	<b>TOTAL</b>		
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## How To Organize A BCRS Chapter:

"How to Organize a BCRS Chapter" organizing packets are available by contacting Mary Jo at Communication Services at (518) 463-3522, at 4 Central Avenue, Albany, New York 12210. The contents of the packets include such things as posters, brochures, book order forms, recent newsletters, copy of by-laws, names of BCRS organizers from the Steering Committee who will help you, and much much more! Allow 4 weeks for delivery.

# Response to the Call to Join the BERTHA CAPEN REYNOLDS SOCIETY

Please send me more information about the Society.

I would like to join the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society.

I would like to renew my membership.

Enclosed is my check:

\$10 Student, unemployed, low-income member

\$25 Member

\$100 Sustaining Member

\$250 Institutional Member

I would also like a subscription to the *Journal of Progressive Human Services*:

Individual Subscription:  
\$10 for BCRS members (regularly \$12.00)

Institution Subscription: \$20

Library Subscription: \$25

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