

BCR REPORTS

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of the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society

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Fall & Winter, 1994

NOW WHAT?

By Fred Neudom

Watching the election returns on the night of November 8 certainly provided an opportunity to think about the politics of the country – where we are going and what we need to do.

Now, a month later and having had the time to listen to the post-mortems, I find myself disgusted with (not surprised by) the narrowness of the range of commentary. The Republicans claim a “mandate” for change – for a move to proposals so right wing that they would have been the source of ridicule not too many years ago. This mandate is based on having captured a stunning 15-20% of eligible voters. The real majority in this election was made up of people who found the choices so unappealing that they didn’t bother to vote. Democrats, on the other hand, seem split between those who would use the election to move the party further to the right and those who think that the problem was an inability to project its accomplishments more effectively.

My own take is best reflected in an old Harry Truman line (which goes something like): “Give the voters a choice between a Republican and a Republican and they’ll vote

for a Republican every time.” Democrats make lousy and unconvincing Republicans. The voters didn’t buy it. Good for them.

The fight now (for those of us who harbor some hopes for and fantasies about the Democrats) is to open another option: that the Democrats fatally walked away from their base among workers and others who don’t own capital. Exit polls make much of the gender gap and point out how a plurality of white males have abandoned the Democratic Party. My argument is that the reverse has happened – the Democratic Party has walked away from the issues that have historically commanded loyalty from working people.

How different would the election outcome have been if Democrats had pushed a line like: “We’re committed to rebuilding the economy of this country and will oppose NAFTA, GATT and other ways of exploiting workers around the world and undercutting your wages here. We will make the tax structure progressive enough to place the tax burden more fully on people who profit from the economy and will oppose capital gains tax cuts, which benefit people whose income comes from their money and not

their work. Don’t be fooled by those who would tell you that your enemies are welfare clients, immigrants, gay people, or others who have little power in this society. Attacking programs that provide some security for poor people only undercuts the wages and working conditions of all workers.” Much more could be added. My point is that an economically populist platform could have energized many of the voters who stayed home and turned around others who voted their resentments in the absence of anything positive to support.

None of the above is intended to foreclose work on a third (or is it second?) party. My only intent is to suggest that the election outcome could have been different if Democrats had campaigned as progressives instead of closet Republicans. That point needs to be made as the Democratic Party is entertaining the possibility of a purge of the left, despite seeing its DLC types (e.g. Cooper, McCurdy) taking a particular beating.

The people may well have gotten what they wanted. What remains to be seen is whether they are going to want what they are about to get. ■

JOIN US TO HELP STOP THE WAR ON THE POOR!

All across the country citizens are joining forces to organize "Our Hearts Are In Your Hands," a National Day of Action, on Valentine's Day (February 14, 1994). This event is designed to show members of Congress and State Legislatures that there is strong, unified, grassroots opposition to the destruction of our nation's social safety net. Our goal is to get 20 cities involved – but with the enthusiastic response we've been receiving we may be able to do more. The theme of this day is designed to symbolize the great human devastation which will ensure if proposals which eliminate and severely restrict A.F.D.C., S.S.I., Food Stamps, housing assistance, and child nutrition programs (to name a few) are adopted.

To get the names of people who are organizing an event for the National Day of Action in your community, to volunteer to organize an event, or to get more information and/or an organizing packet, please call JEDI Women at (801) 364-7765. Every hand is needed! This event is co-sponsored by the BCRS.

Help Save Bertha's Home

Bertha Reynolds died in 1978 leaving her house, barn and over 20 acres of land to the Town of Stoughton. The property had been in Bertha Reynolds' family for generations. Part of the house was built in 1757 and the larger portion in 1839. Reportedly the buildings served as part of the underground railroad of escaped slaves.

The house and barn are very attractive in their open-space setting on well-traveled Pleasant Street and evoke old New England. Until recently the town leased the buildings to a family. However, very little was done over the years to keep the buildings up even though Bertha Reynolds left a fund to the town which has grown to a reported \$55,000.

The Stoughton Board of Selectmen and Conservation Commission are taking the position it would cost \$140,000 (the major portion of which would be for removal of lead paint) to renovate the house. We believe this figure is inflated. However, the town boards take the position they do not want to expend any public funds for renovation.

We believe that in view of Bertha Reynolds' prominence, the age of the house and the reported use in the underground railroad, it would be shortsighted to demolish Bertha's home. We understand town officials have already sought bids to raze the house. If you would like to help, we suggest you write a letter emphasizing town officials should do their utmost to preserve the home of one of Stoughton's most prominent residents. Such letters should be directed to: Board of Selectmen, Town House, 10 Pearl Street, Stoughton, MA 02072.

For further information contact Howard Hansen (617-344-4282) or David Lambert (617-536-5740 or FAX 617-536-7307).

*Submitted by Friends of the Capen-Reynolds House
(formed December 6, 1994)*

OBITUARY

Robert Glass, social worker, music lover, activist in behalf of social justice, died on July 1st, 1994, at his home in Hampton Bays, New York.

Mr. Glass was born in 1909 in the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood of New York City. He received a Master's Degree in History from City College of New York in the 1930's and later, a Master's Degree in Social Work from Columbia University.

Bob was a long-standing member of the National Association of Social Workers and the National Association of Jewish Communal workers. He was a personal friend of Bertha Reynolds and a member of a local chapter of BCRS. He served as the President of a local chapter of NASW in Connecticut.

At the core of Bob's professional development were his positions as a social worker for the New York City Department of Public Welfare during the Depression, and as group work supervisor at Bronx House in New York City. Mr. Glass taught at the University of Nebraska, the University of Connecticut and Fordham University. As a lay person in a Catholic University, he shared mutual respect and affection with his colleagues.

Bob and his wife Mary shared in many activities in the anti-war and peace movements. Mr. Glass' contributions to the cultural life of the community through his love of classical music were only matched by his lifelong dedication to achieve social justice and peace. He is survived by his wife Mary, a sister Dorothy and nieces and nephews.

— Renee Levine

Let's Document the Hypocrisy!

Conservatives complain about handouts to people on welfare while benefiting from unquestioned taxpayer gifts to the business sector, members of Congress, the upper class, middle class home owners, etc. We're trying to assemble a statistical portrait that documents this hypocrisy in a crisp, clear and concise Harper's Index-style presentation. If you have factual or statistical information that clearly shows the two sides of this conservative credibility gap, please mail it to Barbara Kasper, 265 Carling Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14610 or fax to (716) 325-1503. Published contributions will be acknowledged. For more information, call Barbara at (716) 325-4772.

Checkerboard Square Author Receives

C. Wright Mills Award

BCRS member, David Wagner, in Portland, Maine is the 1993 C. Wright Mills award recipient for his book, *Checkerboard Square: Culture and Resistance in a Homeless Community*, (see book order form in this newsletter for more information).

BCRS members who have written a book and have presented at a BCRS National Conference may submit a request to have the book listed in the BCRS book order form. Submissions should be received no later than January 31, 1995 for inclusion on the list for 1995. Send to: Michael Cronin
241 West 100th St., Apt. 2-R,
New York, NY 10025.

"Keep Discussing The Undiscussibles"

Only a compelling array of speakers and workshops could keep over 200 progressive human service workers and community activists indoors on a brilliant Seattle weekend. The Eighth Annual Meeting of the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society, "Progressive Approaches to a Multicultural World: Strategies for Confronting and Transforming Oppression," was held at the University of Washington School of Social Work July 8-10.

Although the conference highlighted the work we all have to do around oppression and diversity issues, it demonstrated that we, as individuals and as members of agencies, organizations, and coalitions, continue to have a willingness to push ourselves and deal with those difficult issues. This opportunity for frank discussion was appreciated by attendees, as indicated by their enthusiastic comments on the evaluation forms. The conference exchanges have inspired us to move ahead more boldly to address multiculturalism, process and action, within the BCRS.

After opening remarks, Friday offered six day-long institutes, on topics such as "Strategies for Confronting Oppression in the Workplace," "Liberation/Oppression Theory and Practice," and "Multicultural Organizing and Coalition Building for Personal/Organizational Transformation."

Saturday started off with a bang, as keynote speaker Caitlin Fulwood brought the house to its feet with her address "Multiculturalism: Social Justice and Social Action" (see related article on her talk). It was an inspiring send-off to small group gatherings in two workshop sessions.

The 20 workshops offered on Saturday were selected, for the first time, through a "call for

Workshop Proposals" to BCRS members and progressive friends. We had a good response to this call, and netted a great cross-section of issues and workshop leaders from across the country, from "Rethinking the Concept of 'Culture' in Human Services" out of Michigan to "Empowerment through Community Building" out of Alaska. Many workshops offered local Seattle models of activist practice to share, such as "Housing Activists in Seattle Demonstrate Success Through Direct Action" and "Learning the Dance, Writing the Music: Multicultural/Ethnic Coalition Building."

Two wonderful folk singer/songwriters, Alan Atkisson and Francisco Herrera, provided Saturday evening's entertainment at the Waterfront Activities Center on Lake Washington. Attendees had a chance to relax, mingle, and sample local micro brew Red Hook Beer.

Sunday closed the conference with an intense process discussion around the weekend and "strategies for Building a More Multicultural BCRS." We were lucky to have two wonderful facilitators, Robin Boehler and Robin DiAngelo, who provided an environment for folks to speak up and confront issues head on. We received a fair amount of positive and negative feedback about the conference and its achievements around diversity and inclusion. The action-planning ideas that came out of Sunday morning, for both next year's conference as well as for BCRS as a whole, really brought the group together. No matter what our differences, we come back to working as allies because we are the ones willing, as one attendee put it, to "keep discussing the 'undiscussibles.'"

Bertha Capen Reynolds Society National Conference Call to Participate June 21-23, 1995, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania at the University of Pennsylvania School of Social Work

The theme of the 1995 BCRS Conference will be "Swimming Against the Tide." We will try especially hard to understand why and how the U.S. seems to be turning so directly on immigrants, women on welfare and other poor and working people who "break the rules" made by the economic winners as well as to examine individual and collective strategies for changing things and keeping ourselves going as progressives in social welfare.

One of the mandates from the 1994 Seattle meeting was to try to break away from the overly constraining and professional "conference" format. People wanted chances to talk with each other, listen to each other and share ideas in a wider range of ways. So we are sending our members this somewhat unusual Call to Participate. We are sending an expanded version to identified

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 **February 15, 1995**

friends and "fellow travellers" of the Society. We are asking everyone to "propose to participate" in our June gathering by proposing to do one or more of the following (examples are given just to be generally suggestive):

- Give a talk about your work, your ideas or your research into some topic of interest (e.g., *Rehabilitating Racism: How Current Social Theory is Making Racist Ideas and Practice Respectable Again*).
- Organize a panel which will present current thinking and strategies for activism in a particular area (e.g., *Piece Work: Progressive Practice in the World of Managed Care*).
- To lead a discussion on a topic of relevance, where questions proposed but no formal presentations are given (e.g., *What's the Meaning of the 1994 Elections?*)
- Organize a more "hands on" training session that will allow folks to develop skills, tactics and strategies (e.g., *Ducking the Crossfire: Don'ts and Do's for Building a Working Multi-Racial Coalition in Your City*).
- Hold a gripe and support session to keep folks going (e.g., *Beyond Appropriateness: Keeping Your Politics Alive while getting an MSW*).
- Organize a song fest, or a hike, or a walking tour for everyone, or for a subgroup

of your choosing (e.g., *Lesbians Look at the Liberty Bell and other Cracks in the American Dream Walk*).

- Provide names (preferably with addresses and phones) of other people you would like to hear and talk with (must be alive, reside on this planet and expect little or no fees).
- Suggest topics you would like to discuss, without proposing to lead the discussion (here again, please give some ideas about who might help).
- Offer to be involved in whatever ways make sense to you (e.g., to serve on the planning committee).

BCRS members should submit a written "Proposal to Participate" including a specific proposal of what you would like to do and a brief summary of your relationship to this topic. Please get this to us as soon as possible, but by no later than January 31st. The Conference Planning Committee will review all proposals and either accept your idea, suggest an alternative format, or explain why it won't work, by Feb. 28, at the latest.

Please mail your proposals to: Bertha Capen Reynolds Conference Planning Committee Columbus Circle Station, P.O. Box 20563, New York, NY 10023, or fax them to Ann Withorn, 617-738-9629. ■

P. Catlin Fullwood Gives Powerful Speech at National Conference

BCRS National Conference keynote speaker P. Catlin Fullwood by example made clear that longtime activists can fight the good fight with passion, style and humor.

Recently transplanted from Seattle to New York City to work with Hunter College's Center for AIDS, Drugs and Community Health, Fullwood gave the bi-coastal audience a riveting, witty perspective on contemporary activism.

Fullwood, who founded Seattle's People of Color Against AIDS Network, sardonically suggested that leftists in the '60's had an easier task, as today's decimated economy, widespread homelessness, AIDS and more repressive immigration laws have lengthened the list of pressing social problems. Noting that 80% of new jobs created in the '80's and '90's pay less than \$8,100 a year, (and often lack benefits) Fullwood said, "you can't pull yourself up by your bootstraps when you have no boots." People stretched that tight financially may have less time to organize and find allies, creating "a war in which we cannot find the enemy, so we turn our rage and frustration on loved ones and others, or we take drugs and alcohol to salve the pain."

People in this country nonetheless are well positioned to make changes, as "people have lost enough to dare to revolt and voice for the voiceless, demand equity and equality, capture resources and create power through organizing that includes a strong emphasis on coalition-building." Drawing laughs from the crowd, Fullwood compared the prospect of building yet another coalition

BCRS Members in the Metro New York Area: Coalition Representatives Needed to Work on Nuclear Disarmament and Full Employment

Since beginning my sabbatical in Ann Arbor Michigan, I have been unable to represent the BCRS at the meetings of two important coalitions: the JOBS FOR ALL Coalition and the Professional's Network for Social Responsibility. I am seeking someone to replace me who can regularly attend these meetings.

The Professionals Network for Social Responsibility includes the Nobel prize winning Physicians for Social Responsibility, as well as the Lawyers' Alliance for World Security, Educators for Social Responsibility, etc. The group represents the NYC area and is influential in the national coalition's work in Washington D.C. It maintains an active lobby with Congressional representatives from New York and the New York City area. It sponsors several major educational forms; recent speakers included Helen Caldicott and Barry Commoner.

The JOBS FOR ALL Coalition was founded the summer of 1994 and grew out of the activist scholarship of Collins, Ginsburg and Goldberg's book *Jobs for All in a Nation that Works: A Plan for the Revitalization of America* and the *New Initiatives for Full Employment*. A Jobs Bill has been drafted by Congressperson Ron Dellums (a social worker) working with the San Francisco Campaign to Abolish Poverty. (See article in this newsletter for more details). The group has constituted several working committees.

Please contact me to further discuss your interest in representing BCRS in either of these groups. Marti Bombyk, P.O. Box 4078, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Tel: (313) 913-0006 Fax: (313) 913-4599.

to "childbirth," noting that only amnesia allows us to do it again.

Fullwood also offered commentary on anti-racism work in the human services, observing that diversity consulting is a booming enterprise that often focuses more on personal vs. institutional change. She suggested that human service workers pay close attention to where access, resources and power are distributed, especially for people of color. She noted, "representation of diversity at the lowest organizational levels does not count."

Fullwood suggested that as human service workers, we pay more attention to making

oppressed people's issues our issues, and examine what resources we're willing to commit to the process. "There's no such thing as a quick diversity fix. We should have a willingness to create conflict, as well as have the skills to resolve it," she said. Humor and a spirit of affirmation go a long way.

Quoting from Malcom X, Fullwood reminded us that "we are not responsible for our oppression, but we are responsible for our liberation."

- Submitted by Susan James
Puget Sound Chapter

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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: 8 Thurlow Terrace, Albany, New York 12203. 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!

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 8 Thurlow Terrace, Albany, New York 12203. 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.

BCRS T-Shirt Available

BCRS has a limited number of T-shirts available from our summer national conference in Seattle. The T-Shirts feature a purple silk-screened photograph of Bertha Capen Reynolds along with a familiar quote by Bertha: "It is not we, a handful of social workers against a sea of human misery. It is humanity itself building a dike and we are helping in our particularly useful way." The back of the shirt commemorates the 8th National Conference in Seattle. The proceeds benefit BCRS. Make check payable to BCRS (\$14.00 plus \$2.00 for shipping costs) and send to: Graydon Andrus, 3130 34th Ave., South, Seattle, WA. 98144.

BCRS Helps Found National JOBS FOR ALL Coalition

Recognizing that full employment at decent wages would make it easier to solve most of the nation's serious social problems, over 80 social workers, economists, political scientists, journalists, and labor, religious and community activists met at Hunter College in New York City on June 17, 1994, to found the National JOBS FOR ALL Coalition. Present at the founding meeting of the Coalition and representing BCRS was former steering committee chairperson Marti Bombyk. At its conference in Seattle this summer, the BCRS Steering Committee voted to join the National JOBS FOR ALL Coalition.

The Coalition was launched with the publication of *JOBS FOR ALL: A Plan for the Revitalization of America* (New York: Apex Press, 1994).* *JOBS FOR ALL*, which has already been endorsed by over 100 intellectual and organizational leaders, provides the economic, political, and ethical case for full employment and analyzes the impact of domestic and global economic restructuring on American workers, families and communities. The authors of *JOBS FOR ALL*, Sheila D. Collins, Helen Lachs Ginsburg, and Gertrude Schaffner Goldberg, link full employment to the achievement of a number of important social goals: equality for women, people of color, youth, the elderly, and the disabled; the abolition of poverty; environmental protection; economic conversion and disarmament; restoration of the public infrastructure; and strengthening of public finance. In so doing, the authors develop an argument for a full employment coalition that

embraces the organizations and social movements which strive for these related goals.

Although the Coalition has only begun its job of education and outreach, its founding meeting included representatives from an impressive range of organizations: the National Urban League, National Council of Churches, Americans for Democratic Action, Gray Panthers, AFL-CIO, World Hunger Year, Consumers Union, New York City NASW, Alliance of Hispanic Social Workers, Shorter Work Time Group (Boston), Committee for Sustainable Economic Development (Portland, OR), New York Unemployed Committee, Green Party (Syracuse, NY), Federation for Industrial Retention and Renewal (Chicago), New York Metropolitan Peace Action, Campaign to Abolish Poverty (San Francisco), the Council on International and Public Affairs, the Inter-University Program for Latino Research, National Commission on Economic Conversion and Disarmament (Washington, DC), and the Center for Puerto Rican Studies of Hunter College.

The National JOBS FOR ALL Coalition is in the process of developing a program and an organizational structure to carry out its goal of achieving jobs at decent wages for all who seek paid employment. Its Legislative Committee has responded to a request for Rep. Ronald Dellums to help him seek co-sponsors for his bill, "A Living Wage, Jobs for All Act." The Dellums bill, which the Congressperson will introduce this fall and again in January, was drafted with the assistance of the Coalition's San

Francisco member, the Campaign to Abolish Poverty. The Legislative Committee has also been in touch with members of the Progressive Caucus in the House of Representatives which is planning to introduce a jobs creation bill. The Committee has developed a set of criteria for jobs creation and employment legislation and is in the process of identifying the features of legislation that contribute most to education and grass-roots organization.

The Coalition's Education/Outreach Committee is putting together a plan for developing linkages and joining programs with important potential constituencies for full employment. One educational/outreach effort is through a series entitled *Uncommon Sense*, a set of one-page information sheets dealing with such topics as the true extent of unemployment and how to cut the federal deficit through reducing unemployment. Future pieces will explain how the Federal Reserve policy of raising interest rates solves a problem we do not have - inflation - and exacerbates the serious problem that we do have - unemployment.

For more information about JOBS FOR ALL, how to obtain *Uncommon Sense* and other materials prepared by the coalition, and how you can contribute, write to: National JOBS FOR ALL Coalition, c/o Council on International and Public Affairs, 777 United Nations Plaza, Suite 3c, New York, New York, 10017. Or telephone 516-877-4334. *JOBS FOR ALL can be ordered from Apex Press, tel. 800-316-APEX.

Chapter Updates

NEW YORK CITY CHAPTER:
On Saturday, June 11, 1994, the New York City Chapter of the BCRS, along with several other organizations in a coalition called the Social Service Workers Action Network (SSWAN), held a teach-in, *The Politics of Welfare Reform: Not for the Poor Alone*.

More than 350 activists, advocates, students, welfare recipients, and welfare workers participated, including Mitch Ginsberg, a former Commissioner of the Human Resources Administration and professor at Columbia University School of Social Work, Don Friedman of NYC Legal Services, Mimi Abramovitz of Hunter College School of Social Work, and activists Richard Cloward and Frances Fox Piven.

Two newspapers, *Newsday*, and *The Westsider*, covered the day and the NYC Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers not only provided good coverage in their newsletter, *Currents*, but also created a Welfare Reform Task Force based on those who signed up at the Teach-In.

We are now in the process of editing the videotapes of the plenary sessions and the various workshops to make them available as educational and organizing tools for ourselves and other BCRS Chapters. And, finally, the workshop on Welfare Rights has been submitted as a case study for a curriculum being developed by the NASW for schools of social work on the relationship between Poverty, Violence, and Development.

This winter the Chapter will continue to work with SSWAN and is also helping the Philadelphia Chapter plan for the next BCRS Annual Meeting in that city. Any member in the Philadelphia-New York area willing to help, please call Fred Newdom, Sandy Bauman, or

Marilynn Moch (see box for phone numbers).

ST. LOUIS CHAPTER:

The St. Louis Chapter of BCRS's fall action was the generating of more than 800 phone calls to registered voters requesting that they oppose a ballot initiative that would place a cap on the amount of revenue Missouri could raise. The initiative, Amendment 7 or Hancock II, would have crippled all services in the state of Missouri. Many groups, including educators, state workers, and church groups also actively worked against the initiative, which was defeated.

The St. Louis Chapter held a potluck brunch in November, and will hold a potluck dinner on Saturday, January 7 at 7:00 p.m. David Gil of Brandeis will join the group for dinner and dialogue on January 7. Those who are interested in attending, or who are interested in other St. Louis Chapter BCR activities can contact Marian Hartung, St. Louis Chapter Steering Committee representative, at 533-0479.

KALAMAZOO CHAPTER:

The Kalamazoo Chapter of the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society calls itself the Rebecca Binkowski Chapter in memory of one of our sisters, a student-member here, who was murdered almost two years ago while serving others.

We meet every Wednesday at noon at Western Michigan University and we average about 20 people a meeting. We have been active on many issues especially the following:

Over the past two years we have worked hard for single payer health care. Last January, we brought Dr. David Himelstein to campus for a public forum and have sponsored two other forums. This semester one of our members, Mayiro represented us in Arlington, Virginia at the

Conference of Universal Health Care Activists.

We have been active in the struggle for welfare reform. We brought Teresa Amott to campus in the spring and we work with a campus based Single Parent organization called PRIDE. Next semester, we will work with them on a forum on welfare reform with Marian Kramer (National Welfare Rights Union) as keynote speaker.

We are working with other groups around issues of discrimination and sexism on campus.

We have worked with local mental health workers to try and effect increased state spending on mental health.

We co-sponsored a Day of Fast for World Hunger and raised about \$1500 for Ox-Fam's work in Africa, a local food bank and soup kitchen.

We are very active with other groups on campus around South Africa, Haiti and Central American issues. We are strong supporters of our local Leonard Peltier Defense Committee. We co-sponsored a forum on "The World Bank at 50" and next semester will work with other organizations on a "50 Years is Enough" campaign.

We brought to campus, John Kretzmann, an organizer from Northwestern University's Institute for Urban Affairs. At two well-attended sessions he gave a workshop for local organizers. Seven of nine local neighborhood organizations sent representatives and gave a presentation on *Visions and Dreams for Community Organizing*.

OSU/COLUMBUS CHAPTER:

The OSU/Columbus Chapter is devoting its energies to welfare rights, the major concern for the national BCRS as well. While the recent elections have profound implications for the

future of national welfare programs, state level elections results may be even more critical. In Ohio, we now have a completely Republican state government, including the governor and both legislative houses. A number of legislators have been hostile toward welfare recipients for some time now, Michael Fox being one of the more important figures. They now have a free hand in carrying out their agenda of cruelty.

On November 16, the OSU/Columbus Chapter sponsored a "Post Election Post Mortem." The panelists were JoAnne St. Clair, the executive director of NASW Ohio, and Jim Kane, from the Ohio Coalition for the Homeless. We had a lively discussion on what the elections mean for welfare and human services. A proposal came up to get more involved in local elections, including having members of BCRS run in local and state elections.

Other events focusing on welfare rights (as opposed to so-called "welfare reform") are now in the planning stages. We have scheduled another in our series of progressive film institutes for February 7. We will be showing a video made at City University of New York, titled "Women to Women: Welfare Reform." On April 6, Mimi Abramovitz will be venturing into that twilight zone for New Yorkers that exists between the Hudson River and California. She will make a presentation at Ohio State University, under the sponsorship of the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society and the OSU College of Social Work.

BUFFALO CHAPTER:

After repeatedly discussing "what do we want to do?" we have decided to meet together as a progressive social work support group and see how the process evolves. Many members

will be attending a welfare reform speak-out to hear and discuss probable Republican

outcomes and what we can do to help. We all will attempt to be "truth-tellers." ■

Report From the Committee for Human Rights Inquiry

Our CIHRI and other groups both within the social work field and in other areas have taken up the cause of social worker Phylis Coard of Grenada and her suffering in isolation imprisonment for most of ten years, to the detriment of her mental and physical health.

Palestinian Rula Abu Duhou, sentenced to twenty-five years, after seven years remains incarcerated in Israel together with thirty-eight other women. The freedom of all Palestinian prisoners, including Rula Abu Duhou, would be of special importance in moving the current peace process forward, the greatest goal of all. She is eager to resume her social work education so as to serve her community.

We continue to campaign for the human rights of the Cuban people to have free trade with the U.S. and other nations, including the food and medicines so badly needed, due to the present U.S. embargo. We support the Rangel and the Serrano bills for Congress to lift the embargo and other U.S. restrictions.

A special concern has been the continuation of our opposition to NAFTA and not to the GATT treaty, which has been quietly pushed through Congressional Committees by Senator Moynihan and President Clinton. Environmental and consumer groups, the AFL-CIO and the Fair Trade Campaign have led the opposition. Public discussion of this treaty is essential, possibly only in 1995, via open Congressional hearings and public debate.

Finally, your help is urgently needed now for Jennifer Harbury, a U.S. attorney on a hunger strike since October 11th for the rights of her husband, thirty-seven other Guatemalan political prisoners and the rights of the Guatemalan people. She would have been killed if not a U.S. citizen. Harbury has helped immigrants from Guatemala for years, written about human rights abuses there and is married to a Guatemalan guerrilla leader, Efrain Bamaca Velasquez. He was captured and imprisoned by the military in 1992 and tortured. All efforts to aid Harbury's demands for a fair trial for him have been unsuccessful, thus leading to her hunger strike. The government there maintains that Bamaca was never captured, and last year told Harbury he was wounded in combat and shot himself through the mouth with his rifle. An exhumation of the alleged gravesite in August 1993 proved that statement false.

To help, please call the White House Comment Line at 202-456-1111. You must tell them you want Clinton to intervene on an emergency basis, and insist that Bamaca and the other political prisoners be turned over to the courts for fair trials at once. More detailed information about what points to make in your call can be obtained by contacting our office. For more information about the Committee for International Human Rights Inquiry, write: CHRI, 415 Grand St., #E. 1905, New York, New York 10002. 212-674-3762. ■

Searching for Scapegoats: Immigration and Welfare Reform

by George Manalo-LeClair

Before the November elections I attended a spirited rally of over 70,000 people protesting California's Proposition 187. This proposal sought to cut basic services to undocumented immigrants – particularly, education to children and health care to sick people. As Congress begins tackling welfare reform in the next year, attempts to deny services to immigrants will undoubtedly be held out as "reform" by some. California's experience with Proposition 186 may be useful to those working on national welfare reform.

Attacking Immigrants is Quite A Distraction

In California we have not been successful in focusing the public's attention on the root causes of our state's economic woes because of all the immigrant bashing. National welfare reform, particularly the President's proposal, has already included distracting attacks on immigrants. Such efforts to deny services to immigrants or their children will only divert attention away from positive reform efforts such as increasing earned income disregards, increasing subsidized child care, creating jobs, etc. Low-income people and their allies need to develop a public education strategy which puts an end to immigrant bashing so that the root causes of poverty can be addressed.

Legal vs. Illegal Immigrants

Few people understand the distinction between legal and illegal immigrants.

Undocumented immigrants are not eligible for public benefits from programs such as AFDC. Even legal immigrants are not eligible for welfare until 3 to 5 years after coming to this

country. This one fact undercuts the erroneous claim that immigrants are coming to this country to get on welfare. Legal immigrants have been the targets of attacks even though they have done everything they are supposed to do. Since we are for the most part a country of immigrants, the U.S. could only be viewed as racist and divisive if it chooses now to deny services to legal immigrants who have worked, paid taxes and met all other requirements.

Immigration: A Drain or a Gain

Though I find myself tempted to enter in discussions about how national boundaries are arbitrary or how poverty and job creation should be thought of in global terms, I have found that the most effective arguments about immigration are those that consider the fiscal contributions of immigrants. How much money immigrants put into the economy, how much they pay in taxes, and how much they receive in services have become crucial statistics. Reports have clearly shown that immigrants generate more income (\$285 billion), pay more in taxes (\$70 billion) than they receive in services (\$5.7 billion, [Urban Institute, 1994]). In fact, immigrants who are eligible for services use them far less than native born citizens. In order to reach people where they are, advocates should arm themselves with these important facts and resist using global arguments.

The Election Results

Proposition 187 passed by a considerable margin in California. Governor Pete Wilson wasted no time in implementing it. The day after the election he issued an

executive order requiring state agencies to develop emergency regulations to quickly carry out the provisions of the proposition. Governor Wilson has chosen as a primary target undocumented mothers receiving prenatal care, even though the child who would benefit from this care will be a U.S. citizen. Eleven lawsuits have been filed against the implementation of 187. While the state works out these regulations it is supposedly "business as usual." Courts have ordered that undocumented students can still go to school as the legal battles begin.

But it really isn't business as usual here. Students wonder if they really can safely go to school without being turned in to the INS. Sick or injured people are fearful of going to clinics or hospitals. As undocumented people struggle with fear in this state of limbo, professionals grapple with ethical questions. Doctors, teachers, and social workers face the challenge of carrying out the will of the voting public, a will which goes against their professional oaths, codes and commitments. California has made a dreadful mistake with 187. Let us hope the country does not make a similar mistake by attacking immigrants in welfare reform legislation.

The rally that occurred here in Los Angeles was the largest mass protest in the city in decades. If immigrants continue to be scapegoated in the welfare reform debate, this kind of strength and solidarity should be tapped. ■

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