

BCR REPORTS

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BERTHA, SWAA, SOCIAL WORK AND WALKING FUNNY

Over the years, there have been countless discussions of the relationship between BCSR/SWAA and social work. These discussions are often fairly heated, in great part because all of us are talking about different "social works", not to mention differing views on what SWAA is and ought to be about. This is yet another attempt to move the discussion and, as with all the previous efforts, it virtually begs further engagement. Whatever else we do, this is a conversation that has to continue.

At its founding, the then BCRS self-consciously placed itself at the left end of the political spectrum relative to organizations and workers in the world of social welfare. We made a clear decision not to ally ourselves with or define ourselves in relation to NASW, CSWE or other mainstream social work organizations. Since most of the founding members of the organization were social workers, this invited each of us to think about our own relationship to social work as we made decisions to join and become active with Bertha.

For many of us, social work was the field through which people like Bertha Reynolds, Florence Kelley, Jeanette Rankin, Whitney Young, Mickey Schwerner and Ron Dellums among many others made important contributions to advancing political and economic justice. And, at the same

time, social work was the field that shunned many of its own during the McCarthy area, equivocated during the civil rights and anti-war movements, and turned away from our identification with clients of the welfare state from the Nixon era through today. Which social work do we identify with?

And the identity of social work also is bound up in our conflicting views of professionalism and its meanings. For many, the word conjures up commitment to service and excellence, a disciplined and thoughtful approach to encounters with clients, whether individuals, families, groups or communities. For others, professionalism conjures up the claiming of privilege, most often at the expense of distancing from clients and in support of an elite that confers certain benefits on professionals in exchange for acting in its interests.

With all of these conflicting stories, then, what story about "social work" do we relate to? And how does that decision influence the actions of SWAA since it continues to define itself on its own terms and not in relation to social work?

Ultimately, the way we relate to social work operates on two levels. First, we make individual decisions about our involvement with the field. Many of us are active in other social work organizations and try to bring a

left politics to our engagement with those groups. We find spaces within NASW, CSWE, etc. and attempt to move the institutions in a direction compatible with our politics. We, for the most part, recognize the difficulty in that effort and live with the contradictions inherent in having parts of our identities in often incompatible places. Among those taking that stance, many push the mainstream organizations on specific issues – positions on the Gulf War or Welfare reform or non-discrimination against Gay and Lesbian people or protecting Affirmative Action – while others critique the organizations for their focus on a vision of professionalism that we see as elitist, racist and anti-democratic.

Beyond the individual ways we relate to mainstream social work, SWAA also deals with those organizations as an organization in its own right. In that context, we pursue alliances with other organizations based on our shared overall vision and the strategic basis for a particular joint effort. Over the years, we have had close on-going relationships with organizations such as Association for Women in Social Work, Kensington Welfare Rights Union, Committee for International Human Rights Inquiry, the Urban Justice Center, a number of unions representing social welfare workers, and organizations repre-

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BERTHA, SWAA, SOCIAL WORK AND WALKING FUNNY *Cont.*

senting social welfare workers of different races and ethnicities, among others. We also have worked on specific activities with national NASW and several chapters, as well as with commissions, caucuses and committees of NASW and CSWE. Our stance in relation to those organizations remains critical, while not cutting ourselves off from the potential inherent in any coalition effort. We, for example, participated in and played an active role at the Social Work Summit and worked with like-minded groups to advance a more activist agenda within NASW and allied organizations.

The discussion, thus far, is intended to provide a context for looking at how SWAA and its individual members who identify with social work may view their connection to the field. In real life, this relationship plays out in very concrete ways. How, for example, do we publicize the upcoming annual conference in East Lansing? As always, we reach out to social work schools – it is being hosted by Michigan State University and has had planning committee representation from several social work schools in Michigan – and social agencies. We also work with local activist groups, welfare rights organizations, unions, etc. to help design, promote and shape the politics of the conference. Once more, we have a foot in each of two different worlds and (to

use a phrase from Paulo Freire) that is why we often walk so funny.

The problem we run into, a much more serious one than having a peculiar gait, is the effect on our political work of continuing to have feet in two, often antagonistic, worlds. At times, we are suspect in both camps. Being held in suspicion by establishment groups is a sign of honor; we certainly don't want to be seen as safe and unthreatening. Having our non-social work allies be concerned about our loyalties is another matter altogether. That requires real attention on our part. To deal with that, we have to strive for ever-greater clarity. And that clarity comes from dialogical process, from a commitment to keep thinking and acting together and keeping the conversation going.

In that spirit, I urge members to respond to this essay in whatever fashion you prefer. We will certainly differ with each other in our analysis and in our strategies but we must find a way to stay in alliance with each other if we want to move the social welfare field to the left, to an embrace of political and economic justice. ■

(I use BCRS and SWAA at different points in this essay. My intent is to use the name that seems to fit the context and apologize for any lack of clarity that may cause. This is part of the difficulty in transitioning from one name to the other.)

Fred Newdom

On the Feminist Front...

At a recent meeting of the Association for Women in Social Work, a decision was made to explore the possibilities of our having a "presence" at SWAA's 2001 conference. The exact nature of that presence must be worked out, but both AWSW and SWAA steering committees see this as a positive development in making common cause. Bernice Liddie of Clark-Atlanta University and Mary Bricker-Jenkins, co-founder of AWSW, will work with the SWAA Conference 2001 committee and the steering committee to shape this collaboration. We will be looking for an additional member of the SWAA Conference Planning Committee to work with these two liaisons. Don't be shy if interested! ■

School of Social Work Information!

The Education Committee of KWRU has asked me to put together a proposal for a School of Social Work within the University of the Poor and, in turn, I am asking you to give me your ideas for this proposal. The school, along with its university, will be primarily web-based, will not offer a degree, and will surely NOT be accredited by CSWE. But this is our chance to put together a structure and a curriculum that will prepare social workers for liberatory practice as allies in building the movement to end poverty!

Let's have a discussion on the SWAA ListServ about this concept (see instructions for subscribing below) and, if you have specific proposals, send them to Mary Bricker-Jenkins, mbricker@nimbus.temple.edu. If you have students that can't wait, we are already offering an MSW-supervised field unit (through Temple) for both MSW and BSW students at KWRU. To subscribe to the SWAA listserv: bertha-swaa-subscribe@egroups.com
To post a message: bertha-swaa@egroups.com (post only after subscribing)
To unsubscribe: bertha-swaa-unsubscribe@egroups.com
To send message to list moderator: bertha-swaa-owner@egroups.com

NEW BOOK:

WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT?: A CRITICAL LOOK AT AMERICAN CHARITY by David Wagner (The New Press, 2/00)

What's Love Got to do With It? is an insightful debunking of the way charitable giving disguises the American neglect of the public welfare. While the United States prides itself on being one of the most generous nations, we provide our citizens with the lowest benefits of any Western society and have one of the highest rates of poverty and inequality in the industrialized world. One of the few works to examine the overall role of charitable giving in America, *What's Love Got to do with it?* is bound to spark debate, and hopefully lead to social change (from the book jacket).

DAVID WAGNER is a professor of Social Work and Sociology at the University of Southern Maine. His previous books include the award-winning *Checkerboard Square: Culture and Resistance in a Homeless Community* and *The New Temperance: The American Obsession with Sin and Vice*.

Order from: THE NEW PRESS at 800-233-4830 or order online at www.thenewpress.com (hardcover \$25.00). ■

SOCIAL WORKERS PARTICIPATE IN PROTEST ON GLOBAL TRADE ISSUES IN SEATTLE

— by Katie Galvin, Marilyn Moch and Arline Prigoff

At the end of November, 1999 a broad coalition of non-governmental organizations brought activists from around the world to Seattle, Washington, where the World Trade Organization was scheduled to hold meetings that were expected to lead to a new round of global agreements, with more new rules to govern international trade.

Social workers were among the health professionals represented in marches and rallies of protest against the policies of the World Trade Organization (WTO). The Board of the California Chapter of NASW had endorsed an NGO International Resolution, signed by hundreds of labor and civic organizations worldwide, that called for an evaluation round which would examine the economic, social and environmental consequences of past "free trade" agreements prior to any further extension of WTO regulations or expansion of its authority.

Why Social Workers Participated in Protest against the WTO

Katie Galvin, MSW student at California State University, Sacramento writes: "I spent November 30th–December 2nd in Seattle, Washington taking part in the protests and workshops surrounding the meeting of the WTO. It is vital for social workers to be aware of the issues surrounding the WTO because decisions made by that organization have far-reaching effects and many of our clients are the most victimized by WTO decisions. It is my goal to clarify and describe why WTO decisions are hurtful to women and other economically marginalized groups of people."

Arline Prigoff, Professor at CSU Sacramento and a representative of California Region D at the 1999 NASW National Delegates' Assembly, went to Seattle as a participant in local coalitions that oppose the "free trade" agreements. Arline is Co-Chair of the Fair Trade Task Force of the Sacramento Valley Progressive Agenda. Arline and the Fair Trade Task Force are opposed to the policies and practices of the WTO for these reasons;

- The globalization of markets, facilitated by WTO policies, is rapidly widening the gap between rich and poor, globally, nationally and locally. Mega corporations are increasing their control of the world's resources and of essential life supports, including food and water.
- WTO tribunals have eliminated laws for protection of the environment, of decent working conditions and of human health by defining them as "restraints to trade".
- WTO policies support global freedom of movement for capital and corporations, while protecting investors and corporations from potential liability for the economic, social or environmental damages their arrival or departure may cause in local communities. The externalized costs are burdens on the public.
- The WTO is killing people. Global regulation by the WTO of "intellectual property rights" (patents, copyrights and trademarks) comes at the expense of health and human rights. WTO's support of drug company patents and prices

are at odds with governments that are seeking to protect public health. This is a form of institutional violence, according to the definition of levels of violence by NASW's Violence & Development Project.

- The WTO undermines laws established through democratic public decision-making. The WTO has created a supranational court system of tribunals that consist of three trade bureaucrats who are not screened for conflict of interest. These tribunals have the power to levy large fines on countries to force them to comply with their rulings. The WTO, through its power to rule on trade disputes, has replaced national governments with an unaccountable corporate-backed global government that serves the interests of multinational corporations, not the needs of the world's people.

A First-person Account of the Protest (Marilynn Moch)

Although we kept losing and finding each other again at the WTO protests on November 29 and 30, several identifiable clusters of social workers and students from around Seattle, Tacoma and Sacramento participated together, and it was heartwarming and empowering to participate as a social worker with other social workers. The protest reminded us all that social justice is alive and well in our discipline. According to the *Seattle Times*, "Social workers and lawyers shared picket lines with body-pierced punks and tattooed grunges." It was good to know that we were noticed as part of this largely non-violent, peaceful protest, and that we were so inclusive in our sharing!

NASW put out e-mail information and the Social Welfare Action Alliance (formerly called the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society) got out a mailing on meeting places for the November 29 Human Chain and the November 30 rally and march. While opinions and suggestions to resolve the problems involved in world trade vary across the political spectrum, the unifying theme for all was: "Social workers have a message for the WTO: social justice, labor rights, and environmental impact are central to world trade, NOT side issues."

As social workers arrived for the Jubilee 2000 interfaith service and rally at the First United Methodist Church, (sponsored by the international campaign calling for cancellation of the debt of the world's poorest nations) the rain chased us inside. We came outside again for the march to the Exhibition Hall to form a human chain around the opening WTO reception. We did this to call attention to the ordinary people of the Global South who have been hurt the most by the globalization of trade. The rain did not deter the energy of the chant, "We're here, we're wet, forgive the debt!"

The students (from the School of Social Work at the University of Washington) continued to walk the walk early the next morning as the protest moved to the convention center and the rally at Seattle Center, after which two groups of social workers marched downtown. Those inside

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SOCIAL WORKERS PARTICIPATE IN PROTEST ON GLOBAL TRADE ISSUES IN SEATTLE

Cont.

Memorial Stadium (the site of a rally organized by the AFL-CIO, with participation by international trade unions and non-governmental organizations) gathered after the rally. Though tear gas was in the air, the sense of purpose and mellow mood made the experience moving for some, exciting for others. For many, the speakers, the labor choir, and the solidarity made it the experience of a lifetime. It didn't feel like what we later saw on television, and all agreed that the media had generally done a poor job of discussing the peaceful protests, marches and interviews. Those who participated in the People's Assembly March from the International District (which was denied a permit) felt a special bond with the client organizations involved in that protest.

Shutdown of WTO Sessions in Seattle

The aggressive crowd control methods of Seattle police, with random firing of tear gas canisters to attempt to clear the streets, plus use of rubber bullets and an illegal designation of a part of the city as a "no protest zone", converted downtown Seattle into what looked in the media coverage like a city under siege. It was the smoke of tear gas, as well as the disciplined civil disobedience of non-violent sit-downs and the violence of a few broken storefront windows, that gave Seattle the appearance of a war zone. Along with the battle in the streets, conflicts erupted between WTO delegations from the nations of the Global South and those of the Global North. Undemocratic procedures of the WTO and its failure to benefit working families in all nations were apparent. On Friday, December 3, WTO sessions were disbanded. The protest achieved its goal: to shut down the WTO. The transformation by global coalitions of world wide economic development and trade policies has just begun.

The Sacramento Valley Progressive Agenda, in which the Sacramento unit of the California Chapter-NASW is a member organization, is committed to providing information on the WTO to interested groups in Sacramento and Yolo Counties. The Education and Outreach Committee of the SVPA Fair Trade Task Force welcomes your request for materials or a scheduled program. Contact Arline Prigoff, 916-925-8950 (home); prigoffa@csus.edu. ■

HOW TO ORGANIZE A SWAA CHAPTER:

"How to Organize a SWAA Chapter" organizing packets available by contacting Mel at Communication Services (518) 463-3522, 50 Solvin Avenue, Albany, NY 12206. The contents of the packets include such things as posters, brochures, book order forms, recent newsletters, copy of by-laws, names of SWAA organizers from the Steering Committee who will help you, and much more! Allow 4 weeks for delivery. ■

BCRS MEMBER RUNS FOR PRESIDENT OF NASW

Terry Mizrahi, a BCRS member who teaches at Hunter College School of Social Work in New York City, is running for president of NASW. Terry directs the Education Center for Community Organizing at Hunter and was secretary of the Association for Community Organization and Social Administration (ACOSA) and a founder of the Journal of Community Practice. Much of her recent work has dealt with national health care, managed care, and the role of government. ■

Social Welfare Action Alliance Announces the 14th Annual National Conference

The Social Welfare Action Alliance will hold its national conference in East Lansing, Michigan June 23-25, 2000 at the Kellogg Center on the campus of Michigan State University. In the tradition of Bertha Capen Reynolds, an author, educator, practitioner, trade unionist, and social activist, we hope to draw a diverse group of people all committed to social, political, and economic justice and coalition-building from a variety of fields and backgrounds.

The theme of the conference, "Social (In)Justice: 2000 Reasons for Radical Change," suggests that we already know the reasons for radical change. Now we must share what we know and discover new strategies for fundamental change.

Workshop topics include neighborhood revitalization, advocacy, ageism, the Americans with Disabilities Act, a model for counter-hegemonic social work, economic human rights campaigns, union organizing, participatory and international work and research, Freire's pedagogical work, and developing activism. Speakers include Kim Bobo of the National Interfaith Committee for Worker's Justice, Marian Kramer of the National Welfare Rights Union, and Maryann Mahaffey of the Detroit City Council and long-time Social Welfare Action Alliance member. Plenty of interactive activities, performances, and organizing opportunities will be integrated into the structure of the conference to add a chance for some real action.

The broad array of workshop topics and variety of activities will enable participants to discuss issues and strategies, challenge existing views and laws, and find ways of connecting and building on the work and talents of others. The atmosphere of the conference is intended to invite dialogue and argument alike, but we gather primarily to build on what we know, what we can communicate to one another, and what we can create on the road to justice.

Conference brochures and registration materials are available by e-mail and in paper form. If you would like to receive a brochure, please contact swaa@hotmail.com or call 734-615-2114 and specify e-mail or paper. Also, feel free to contact either of the above numbers or write to SWAA, School of Social Work, University of Michigan, 1080 S. University, Box 195, Ann Arbor, MI 48109 if you have questions or need additional information. ■

MARCH FOR ECONOMIC HUMAN RIGHTS

July 31, 2000 – Philadelphia, PA

FACT SHEET

PURPOSE: People are poor in America! We are consciously being made to disappear. As the Republican National Convention descends upon Philadelphia, we will be marching to demand our economic human rights. We will call attention to the fact that poor people have been made to disappear from the debates, the media and discussions about the so-called "economic boom". Both parties – **Republicans and Democrats** – have abandoned the poor people of this nation and so we must take our country in a new direction, one that is based in the human right to a living wage, healthcare and housing. United as the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign, we will bring together thousands of poor people, along with students, social workers, unions, lawyers and religious leaders to make our voices heard as we March for Economic Human Rights.

DATE: Monday, July 31, 2000 11am – assemble at City Hall for kick-off rally. 12noon - begin Marching to the First Union Center Non-violent civil disobedience will take place at the conclusion of the march for those who are trained and wish to participate.

HOUSING: In order to accommodate all marchers and to be a visible presence during the Republican National Convention we will be erecting a Tent City at Marconi Park (Broad & Oregon). All registered marchers are welcome to stay at the Tent City. The Tent City site will be our base for the March for Economic Human Rights and will be where daily teach-ins and musical performances are held throughout the weekend leading up to the March.

TRAVEL: Philadelphia is easily accessible by car, plane, train or bus. Travel plans need to be made now! Once in town all activities will be easily accessible by public transportation.

REGISTER: Print out and mail or fax the registration form you can find at <http://www.libertynet.org/kwru/updates/r2register.html> to the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign, c/o Kensington Welfare Rights Union, PO Box 50678, Philadelphia, PA 19132, fax: (215)203-1950

ENDORSE: Organizations are invited to become official sponsors of the March for Economic Human Rights. In order to become an official sponsor, your group needs to commit to bring at least 100 marchers to participate. Sponsors will have their organization listed on our official endorsement list which will be part of our outreach and press packets.

PPEHRC: The Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC) is a national effort led by poor and homeless men, women and children of all races to raise the issue of poverty as an economic human rights violation. Together the PPEHRC is fighting for our basic rights as provided for in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: the right to a decent job at a living wage, the right to

A TRIBUTE TO A FELLOW SOCIAL WORKER

VIRGINIA MCGUIRE LERNER
1917-1999

Who could have had a better friend
Than Ginny, beloved and admired by many
Who saw her heroism—
Her readiness to defend those being persecuted.
Despite serious physical handicaps
Mumia Abu-Jamal was one of many causes
To which she gave major support.

She joined us in the labor movement
In its expansion after WWII
And helped organize a social agency
Where we worked together,
Then leading together in Chicago union functioning
And later in New York City.

She learned to support a human society
Not based on a profit motive,
But on a socialized economic order
Controlled by its members
That seeks creativity and new solutions
To aid the development of humanity.

We good friends of Ginny
Can together pursue more vigorously
Our quest for human rights
Developing the unity of peoples,
And to merge today's struggle with her,
For peace, justice, and human values.

– Ruth Wilson, April 2, 2000

suitable housing, the guarantee of quality education and quality healthcare, the right to communication and a future for us and our families. From migrant workers in Florida to welfare moms in Idaho to public housing tenants in Chicago to downsized workers in Ohio, poor people have all joined together to fight an escalating war against poverty in our wealthy nation. Following the success of 1998's New Freedom Bus Tour and 1999's March of the Americas, the PPEHRC is now organizing this March For Economic Human Rights to bring together poor and homeless families from all over the United States as part of the struggle to end poverty.

CONTACT US:

Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign
c/o Kensington Welfare Rights Union
PO Box 50678,
Philadelphia, PA 19132
(215) 203-1945, fax (215)203-1950 kwru@libertynet.org
<http://www.kwru.org> ■

AN IMMODEST PROPOSAL:

REWARDING WOMEN'S WORK TO END POVERTY

In 2002 the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Restoration Act (PRWORA) will expire, and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), the policy it authorizes, will come up for abolition, renewal, or replacement.

In anticipation of the debate that will ensue, the Women's Committee of 100/Project 2002 calls for a broadened perspective on women's poverty, including attention to the special economic vulnerability arising from the caregiving responsibilities that women often assume.

General Principles

Women perform the bulk of caring work for children, elders, and dependent persons, both within their own homes and as paid employees. Our economic system undervalues caregiving work when it is performed in the labor market and penalizes caregivers when they work outside the labor market caring for dependents. Although caregiving in families is indispensable to the welfare of families, communities, and the economy, research clearly shows that this work exposes women to poverty and other forms of economic inequality. Caregivers' poverty deepens as they encounter additional hardships and disadvantages. These include:

- Low wages;
- Discrimination based on gender, race, age, disability, and being the sole adult responsible for dependents;
- Having a history of sexual abuse and/or encountering domestic abuse;
- Lacking adequate education or skilled training.

When poor caregivers meet these hardships, they face destitution; when middle class caregivers encounter them, they become vulnerable to poverty for the first time. This is why today poverty in this nation — and globally — assumes the face of a woman with children or other dependents.

If caregivers' poverty has a woman's face, that face also often belongs to a woman of color. Poverty in the United States is not color-blind. The debate preceding the 1996 welfare law made the color of poverty the fault of the poor. We insist that the color of poverty is the consequence of racism and related forms of discrimination. Accordingly, our proposal proceeds from the recognition that race affects the material basis for caregiving, privileging some women at the expense of others. We call for policies that address the shared vulnerabilities of women of all races, beginning with the particular vulnerabilities of the poorest caregivers, especially poor women of color.

Ending Poverty, Not Ending Welfare

As a crucial first step toward ending poverty as we know it, we call for social policies that recognize and reward the work of caring for dependents.

TANF, like its predecessor, AFDC, provides minimal assistance to those who are impoverished and have dependents in their care, but the arbitrary and punitive aspects of such policies prevent them from granting the type of recognition we have in mind.

We call for an end to:

- mandatory work outside the home as a condition of assistance
- arbitrary time limits
- child exclusion policies ("family cap")

To replace TANF, we propose a set of policies that will allow women to choose between performing caregiving themselves and purchasing high-quality services for those who depend upon them for care. Such policies should ensure that caregivers — whether they are caring for family members or non-family members — receive just compensation and provisions for respite, old age, health insurance and other basic needs.

AFDC and TANF have given special, but inadequate, attention to poor families, especially those with a single adult responsible for dependent children. We, too, are especially concerned with this group of highly vulnerable caregivers, but propose that support should be extended more broadly for all caregiving work.

A Caregiver's Allowance

We call for the replacement of TANF with a guaranteed income for caregivers of minor children and other dependent family members requiring sustained care.

- This program would work like survivor's insurance (OASI), in that it would provide cash payments for family caregiving that would be administered according to national standards and would be disbursed at the national level on a regular, automatic and guaranteed basis. As with survivors' insurance (and social security) the caregivers' allowance would not authorize or condone government intrusion into the personal or family lives of recipients, including often racist intrusion into women's reproductive decisions. Those not now eligible for TANF would also receive a cash payment in recognition of their caregiving work, but the amount of compensation would be adjusted based on the total household income.
- The caregiver alone would decide how to spend the grant. For example, s/he could purchase surrogate caregiving services (child, elder, or other dependent care) and pursue paid employment, education, or training. Or, s/he could perform the carework herself. Or s/he could devise a combination of carework and other pursuits.
- As with survivor's insurance, there would be no employment requirements and no oversight, and the allowance would be available to any primary caregiver, regardless of gender.
- Each caregiver would determine for her/himself the balance of caregiving and other employment that is manageable and desirable.
- The value of a caregiver's allowance and the time spent doing caregiving work for dependents should be counted in an individual's work history for social security purposes.
- As an interim measure, the child tax credit should be expanded as a refundable Care Credit for all caregivers with dependents who need sustained care.

- To enable individuals to make meaningful decisions about care, we further advocate the creation of high-quality, universally available, caregiving services, including child care for infants, toddlers, preschoolers, and school-age children and elder care and non-custodial care for incapacitated dependents. All such programs should be federally funded and meet federally defined minimum standards that include adequate training, compensation and benefits for workers as well as mechanisms for input from parents, guardians, and those responsible for the individuals under care.

Transforming Wage-Work

Ending women's poverty also requires transforming the labor market by valuing the work that women currently perform for wages, enforcing anti-discrimination law, and offering the opportunities and training for better-paying jobs.

Crucial for this transformation are an overall improvement in labor standards, including:

- A shortened standard workweek. This should be available to both women and men so that both can meet their responsibilities for family caregiving.
- Effective protection of the right to unionize.
- A living wage achieved through an automatically indexed minimum wage. This should be a universal right. The minimum wage should be set high enough so that a single adult earns enough to bring a family of three above the poverty line.
- Application of the principle of comparable worth, or equal pay for work of equal value. This is necessary to undo the low wages in female-dominated occupations.
- Affirmative action law must continue to combat gender, race, age and ability discrimination and open up higher-paying positions.
- Universal access to higher education and skill-building training programs that lead to economic opportunity and enhance earning power. These should be developed to prepare women for existing and future occupations. Education and training should be free and students should be provided stipends, along with substitute caregiving services.
- A reformed unemployment insurance system. This should cover all workers, including the part-time, very low-waged, and intermittent. All jobs should provide paid family and medical leave. Legislation ensuring paid family leave should be phrased in such a way that it acknowledges caregiving responsibilities as a legitimate constraint on the types of demands an employer can make on an employee (for example, requiring overtime as a condition of employment).

Related programs:

- We envision additional social programs to enhance the quality of life of women and their families and to ensure that caregiving takes place in safety and with dignity.
- Broadly defined disability insurance/supports should protect those who cannot be employed, are not caregivers, or are not retired.
- Universal health care should be a right.
- Victims of domestic abuse require 24-hour emergency assistance and temporary shelter and priority in subsidized housing.

- Child support responsibilities of non-custodial parents should be strongly enforced, but only at the request of custodial parents.
- The government should develop affordable housing in economically and racially integrated communities and provide adequate public transportation, including customized service to remote, especially rural, areas, and late-night service to accommodate night-shift workers.

Conclusion

We will not count it as a victory if the status of American women is improved at the expense of women from abroad, whose economic and social disadvantages are even greater, compelling them to relinquish their own caregiving responsibilities in order to find work—often in low-paying service occupations—here in the U.S. We therefore call for the recognition and promotion of policies that justly compensate the work of caregiving and improved labor standards for women across the globe.

The Women's Committee of 100 is a group of feminist academics, professionals, and activists who are concerned with the relationship between women, economic survival, and the work of caregiving. We have developed this statement in light of our research and our continuing commitment to ending women's poverty.

For the WC 100/Project 2002

Mimi Abramovitz	(Hunter College School of Social Work, CUNY)
Randy Albelda	(University of Massachusetts-Boston)
Eileen Boris	(University of Virginia)
Ruth Brandwein	(SUNY at Stony Brook)
Nancy Fraser	(New School University)
Cynthia Harrison	(George Washington University)
Eva Feder Kittay	(SUNY at Stony Brook)
Theresa Funciello	(executive director, Social Agenda)
Sonya Michel	(University of Illinois-Urbana/Champaign)
Gwendolyn Mink	(University of California-Santa Cruz)
Frances Fox Piven	(Graduate Center, CUNY)
Dorothy Roberts	(Northwestern University School of Law)
Rickie Solinger	(historian and author, <i>Wake Up Little Susie</i>)
Jean Verber	(welfare advocate/activist, Racine, Wisconsin)
Guida West	(activist and author, Montclair, New Jersey)
Ann Withorn	(University of Massachusetts-Boston)

To endorse this proposal, email to: grmink@earthlink.net or fax 831-425-1536, attn: WC100

As the statement indicates, this is a suggestion from numerous feminist academics, advocates and activists about how we might think about policy approaches to address women's poverty. It is one longer-term perspective meant to spur discussion. Anyone wishing to sign on is welcome and so are comments on the document and ways to use it.

— Ann Withorn and Mimi Abramovitz

CHAPTER UPDATES:

Kalamazoo: We have had a busy winter! We've been helping out with United Students Against Sweatshops in our joint struggle for economic justice. We had a huge victory at Western Michigan University in March when President Elson Floyd signed on to the WRC, making WMU the sixteenth university in the country to become a part of this major step toward workers rights. Our struggle to enact a Living Wage Ordinance continues into its second year as we approach a ballot proposal for the City. We have also been involved with the Kalamazoo Poverty Reduction Task Force which is making headway in the city as well. We organized a rally calling for a Fair Trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal in March in honor of the National Day of Action for Mumia. We have planned several events for World Bank/IMF week on campus as well. Finally, we have busily helping to plan the SWAA National Conference and publicize around our section of the state. It looks great and we hope to see you all there!

University of Michigan Chapter: On February 21 at the University of Michigan School of Social Work, our local chapter of SWAA sponsored a panel discussion on "Prisoner's Rights."

In December 1999, governor John Engler signed into law two pieces of legislation that would declare prisoners incarcerated in Michigan prisons to be "non-persons." This declaration removes prisoners from protections under Michigan's Civil Rights Law and Disabilities Act and prevents prisoners from pressing lawsuits about various forms of discrimination they may be experiencing in Michigan's correctional institutions. This legislative action was in response to a sexual harassment lawsuit brought by female prisoners against male employees in correctional facilities for observing women prisoners while bathing and for extorting various

sexual acts from prisoners.

The panel members included a state representative who had fought this legislation unsuccessfully, an advocate from the American Friends Service Committee, a lawyer who represents the rights of women prisoners, and a retired social worker who had been a strategic planner in Michigan Department of Corrections. The two-hour panel discussion attracted over 90 social work students, faculty, and citizens of the Ann Arbor community. This panel discussion was planned as a precursor to the action component of the SWAA National Conference in Lansing on June 23, 2000.

There are a number of groups within Michigan that are trying to educate Michigan citizens about this legislation and also organizing to get these bills repealed. For more information contact Brett Seabury at bseabury@umich.edu

Washington State: Though Washington State is still struggling to revive the Chapter, we organized to work with Cheri Honkala during her recent trial on WTO demonstration charges (see article), and held a breakfast meeting at the April meeting of the Washington State Chapter of NASW. With both the Washington NASW Executive Director and President as members of SWAA, the March NASW Newsletter for Washington State included an article explaining the BCRS/SWAA name change and encouraging social workers to join SWAA.

Rochester, New York: The Rochester Chapter of SWAA has had an extremely busy and productive spring! On April 14th, the SUNY Brockport Student Social Work Organization brought Mary Bricker-Jenkins (Temple University Depot of the Underground Railroad), Cheri Honkala (Kensington Welfare rights Union), Sarah Forgione (KWRU

Student Organizing Committee) and Carrie Young (Temple MSW 1st year student and a core member of the Underground Railroad-Temple Depot.) to campus for a 3-hour workshop (including a showing of "Outriders"). This event was attended by over 100 students and faculty, as well as about a dozen workers from the Monroe County Department of Social Services. Afterwards, the Temple Depot/KWRU folks met for lunch with interested students and faculty, along with a few local SWAA members. Later that same day, SWAA (as a member of the Rochester Poor People's Coalition) participated in a rally and march against homelessness and poverty with the RPPC. The march went from the House of Mercy (homeless shelter) to the Genesee Settlement House. Cheri Honkala spoke at the pre-march rally. We had excellent media coverage.

At the Settlement House, we offered a free meal and a showing of the video "Outriders," followed by local speakers as well as presentations by Mary Bricker-Jenkins and Cheri Honkala. The following morning, April 15th, Mary, Sarah and Carrie met with other allies and advocates at a brainstorming and strategy swapping session at the House of Mercy.

On April 27th, Fred Newdom gave a talk at the annual field instructors' luncheon at SUNY Brockport, "Integrating Clinical Work and Social Action," and later that evening did a workshop entitled "Being a Social Worker on The Left: Living with our own Contradictions and Causing them in Others" as a chapter-building activity in Rochester.

Our future plans include organizing (in conjunction with the Rochester Poor People's Coalition) a local contingent to attend the KWRU events surrounding the Republican National Convention (see related information in this newsletter). ■

Call for a University of the Poor

Dear Member of the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign,

We hope all of you and your families are doing well and have continued organizing since the March of the Americas. We want to thank each of you and your organizations for making the March a success.

One of the most important parts of the March of the Americas was the participation of so many dynamic organizations of the poor. While each organization came to the March with a rich history and a unique range of experiences, all of the groups are united in the struggle to build a movement to end poverty led by poor people themselves. These varied experiences towards the common goal of securing economic human rights for all can be a valuable resource to us all.

We are breaking new ground by building a new social movement in this country, a movement to end poverty and economic human rights violations. The role of education and the exchange of experiences become increasingly important as we develop new tactics and strategies for this new period.

Join us. A number of the organizations of the PPEHRC discussed and agreed at the March of the Americas on the concept of a "University of the Poor" – a web-centered university where the different groups of the PPEHRC can share their experiences, leadership development ideas, and educational models. This university will host exchanges, where different "teachers" and "students" from participating organizations can visit other areas nationally and internationally to learn lessons on organizing, educating and developing membership. During the March, the Movimento Sem Terra (Landless Workers Movement) of Brazil extended an invitation to host such exchanges.

The "University of the Poor" will also host intellectual exchanges including calls for papers to assist the PPEHRC organizations with organizing in their local areas. During the March, organizing low wage, temporary and contingency labor workers was identified as one such issue. Different leadership development institutes, education centers of the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign will serve as campuses for the "University of the Poor". The libraries and resources that each of our organizations have developed can be shared among the campaign, either at the sites/campuses or over the web.

As poor people's organizations, we have limited resources to regularly get together in large conferences and gatherings. Through developing independent and cheap lines of communication with our web pages, listserves and email, we will be able to better support one another. The "University of the Poor" can be web cen-

tered and much of the exchange of information and curriculum can be over the Internet.

We want to share an experience that demonstrates how the "University of the Poor" might function. After the March of the Americas, members of the Kensington Welfare Rights Union and the Atlanta Labor Pool Workers Union visited Immokalee, Florida, where the Coalition of Immokalee Workers is holding a general tomato strike, asking the growers of Southwest Florida for a dialogue and a raise in the wages for tomato pickers. All three organizations of the PPEHRC were able to learn from each other as the strike unfolded. Also, during this exchange, a web page was developed where the Coalition can add to their network of supporters as well as keep in touch with other PPEHRC groups.

We believe the University of the Poor can help build each of our local organizations. By growing and strengthening locally, we can build a large national movement to end poverty. There is a wealth of information and experiences in this campaign. We see the University of the Poor as an infrastructure to facilitate communication and exchange among the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign. We welcome any and all ideas that you may have on how to establish such an infrastructure.

We invite you to consider how you might benefit from and can contribute to the University of the Poor. We will be getting in contact with you soon. But please feel free to send or email your ideas and responses to Willie Baptist or Liz Theoharis of the Kensington Welfare Rights Union. (PO Box 50678, Philadelphia, PA, 19132, (215) 203-1950 fax) (Email Willie or Liz at kwru@libertynet.org) We look forward to hearing from you soon and making the "University of the Poor" a reality.

Sincerely,

Willie Baptist
Education Director
Kensington Welfare Rights Union

Liz Theoharis
Education Admin Assistant
Kensington Welfare Rights Union

HONKALA AND MOREHOUSE VINDICATED IN CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS TRIAL

Cheri Honkala of the Kensington Welfare Rights Union, and Ward Morehouse of the Program on Corporations, Law and Democracy, were the first protestors arrested during the WTO demonstrations in Seattle when they attempted to serve Citizens' Arrest Warrants to the G7 Trade Ministers for Crimes Against Humanity.

Ward and Cheri participated in the Global People's Tribunal on Corporate Crimes Against Humanity during the weekend prior to the WTO meetings beginning on November 29, 1999. The Tribunal concluded that several international corporations were guilty of crimes against humanity, among them American Cyanamid for the disaster in Bhopal, India during which tens of thousands of citizens lost their lives and were seriously maimed. The Declaration that emerged from the Tribunal called for the arrests of the Trade Ministers of the G7 countries for their active support and sponsorship of the activities of these and similar corporations throughout the world. The participants selected Cheri and Ward to represent them in presenting the arrest warrants to delegates to the WTO meetings, especially to representatives or staff of the G7 and of the developing countries.

Having read the Declaration to the Tribunal participants and other demonstrators gathered on a street corner across from the Washington State Convention Center where the WTO delegates were meeting, Cheri and Ward stepped off the curb to cross the street to hand copies of the Declaration to the arriving delegates. Both were arrested immediately, charged with "Obstructing", and, later, for Cheri, with "Assault".

Cheri and Ward expected that they would be treated no differently from the over 500 WTO arrest

cases, but instead were singled out. While Ward was offered a \$250 fine and dismissal of charges after a year of probation, officials would only release Cheri on condition she agree to conduct no organizing anywhere in the country for two years, along with 5 days in jail and a \$1000 fine. As a result, Ward refused his offer, and the two demanded a jury trial.

Facing six months to two years in jail, Cheri and Ward's trial began on March 21 in the municipal court. For many reasons connected with the arrest and pre-trial events, we are convinced that the actual motivation for Cheri's arrest and subsequent efforts on the part of law enforcement was to prevent her organizing for the demonstrations planned for the Republican Convention beginning July 29 in Philadelphia, the home of the Kensington Welfare Rights Union.

As an incipient Underground Railroad in Seattle, students, social workers, the Labor Party, and other WTO protest sympathizers monitored the first days of the trial and prepared to bring members of our groups to the courtroom should the defense motions to dismiss be unsuccessful. The students, SWAA, and the lawyers from the Defense Action Network (D.A.N.), who defended Cheri pro-bono, organized

and kept everyone informed by e-mail. We wanted to be sure that a jury, and all of Seattle, knew that Cheri and Ward's work had broad based support, and that everything that went on in the courtroom would be widely known outside of it. We also knew that a jury, and Seattle citizens in general, would tend to be favorably disposed to WTO protestors.

After two weeks of organizing, and 2 1/2 nerve-wracking days of testimony, Judge Arthur P. Chapman not only concluded that there was no evidence that Cheri had assaulted anyone, but also concluded that her and Ward's actions "are not so significant as to warrant the condemnation of conviction, especially in the light of the cherished nature of the constitutional rights upon which the City reasonably infringed. I find the interests of justice have been served here. These matters are dismissed."

While in Seattle, Cheri met with those of us in the courtroom, and ventured into the heart of the Central Area in Seattle for a very successful meeting with our local poor-people's organization, the Welfare Rights Organizing Coalition. Cheri's visit with WROC, already affiliated with Community Voices Heard, built bridges, increased enthusiasm and began what will, hopefully, be an ongoing alliance with WROC and SWAA.

— Marilyn Moch

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

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Brockport, NY 14420-2952

E-mail: berthabk@aol.com
(E-mail submissions are preferable)

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 **September 15, 2000.**

Nation Article features Mass SERVE

Mass SERVE was featured in the lead article of the *Nation* (March 13th edition), "Why We Need a Care Movement" By Deborah Stone. The article talks about how Mass SERVE is on the innovative edge of new organizing efforts in the labor/care movement. To read the article, go to the Internet address: <http://www.thenation.com/issue/000313/0313stone.shtml>.

SWAA Book Fund Submission Policy

1. Author must be an active SWAA member.
2. Author must have presented at a SWAA regional or national conference.
3. Author will negotiate with their publisher for the best discounted purchase price.
4. Books will be sold to active SWAA members at a discount from the list price.
5. Only paperback or "reasonably priced" hardcover books with general distribution potential will be considered.
6. Submissions will be considered yearly by January 31st.

Forward submission requests to:

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Response to the Call to Join the SOCIAL WELFARE ACTION ALLIANCE

Please send me more information about the Alliance.

I would like to join the Social Welfare Action Alliance

I would like to renew my membership.

Enclosed is my check:

\$15 Student, unemployed, low-income member

\$35 Member

\$100 Sustaining Member

\$250 Institutional Member

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

Individual Subscription:
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Name (please print or type)

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Institutional/Organizational Affiliation (Optional)

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Please make your check payable to
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HOW ARE SOCIAL AGENCIES EXPERIENCING WELFARE REFORM?

Welfare reform has become a fact of life for both clients and social service agencies in the New York metropolitan area and around the country. The debate on welfare is heating up once again due to a proliferation of studies on the outcomes of welfare reform, the pending time limits on welfare eligibility and the expiration of TANG funding in September 2002.

One arena, however, that has been largely overlooked is the impact of welfare reform on social service agencies. Researchers have studied various features of welfare reform including its both policy development and the impact on recipients. However few have looked at the impact of welfare reform on social service which represent an important support in the lives of poor and working poor. Despite the key role played by social services in the lives of clients we have lacked systematic information about how changes in welfare policy may be affecting the needs of clients, the jobs of social service workers, and the work of social agencies.

However, work by SWAA members has begun to shed light on this important arena. In a study sponsored by the Kellogg Foundation-Worrying About Welfare Reform: Community-Based Agencies Respond, (1999) Ann Withorn (College of Public and Community Service, University of Massachusetts, Boston and SWAA National Steering Committee) and Pamela Jons reported how agencies engaged with the new welfare laws. This front line report gives voice to the many concerns expressed by workers and agencies trying to serve clients in the New welfare environment.

In May 1999, 15 social workers in New York City testified about their experience with welfare reform at a forum organized by the Task Force on Welfare Reform, New York City Chapter of NASW — which includes

many members of SWAA. Inspired by the Kellogg study and spurred by the reports of social workers at the NASW forum, NYC/NASW decided to conduct a more systematic investigation of the impact of welfare reform on social agencies in the New York City area.

Directed by Mimi Abramovitz (Hunter School of Social Work and SWAA National Steering Committee) and funded by the United Way of New York City, the study is interviewing one senior staff person at each of 100 agencies representing a wide range of service arenas. It hopes to find out in

what ways changes in the lives of poor families wrought by welfare reform have affected the role of front line social service workers and the functions of social agencies. The study, which, has just begun, also explores agency attempts at advocacy and social change.

If you work at an agency in one of the five boroughs of NYC and would like to help us find out how welfare reform is affecting social agencies, please complete the following reply information and return it to Mimi Abramovitz, by FAX (212-452-7150) or send it to Hunter School of Social Work, 129 East 79th St, New York, NY 10021. You may also email the information to Mimi Abramovitz at iabramov@shiva.hunter.cuny.edu.
THANK YOU. ■

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The Social Welfare Action Alliance
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Underground Railroad - Temple Depot

Partners in Crime Project



*If you have come to help me, please go away.
But if you have come because your liberation
is bound up with mine, let us work together.*

-Lilla Watson, Brisbane-based Aboriginal Activist

Partners in Crime Project

**“As long as this country criminalizes the poor,
we must be partners in crime.”**

With the best of intentions and hope, social workers and other human service workers sometimes respond with band-aids to poverty and the travesty of Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF). Meanwhile, struggling with overwhelming caseloads and under-resourced programs, many workers hunt for better seats on the Titanic.

The purpose of the Partners in Crime Project is to create an alternative-- to promote liberatory and transformative practices with our natural allies: the poor, homeless, unemployed, and others denied basic human needs.

During the first phase of the project, we will gather and exchange information on what social and human service workers are already doing to work toward ending poverty.

We need your ideas for

- *A speaker's bureau and network
- *Media and web resources
- *Fundraising for building the movement to end poverty
- *Training and educational materials supporting alliances and liberatory social work practices
- *Internships, field placements, and other direct practice in organizations led primarily by people living in poverty.

During the second phase of the project, our collective ideas and resources will be made available in the form of a “Partners in Crime” resource handbook and activist kit. These materials will be distributed free to SWAA members and will cost approximately \$12.00 for non-members.

The Social Welfare Action Alliance

Columbus Circle Station P.O. Box 20563 NY NY 10023
(518) 475-1199 www.bertha-swaa.org

The Kensington Welfare Rights Union

P.O. Box 50678 Philadelphia PA 19132
(215) 203-1945 www.kwru.org

Underground Railroad-Temple Depot

Temple University School of Social Administration Philadelphia PA 19122
(215) 204-2164 <http://blue.temple.edu/~URR>

Please tell us how you will participate in the Partners in Crime Project:

Speaker's Bureau/Network:

___ I am interested in having speakers at my agency/school/group. Please send a list of presenters and topics.

___ I do presentations on _____ and want to be listed in the network. (Attach description of presentations and/or workshops with brief bio.)

Media Resources:

___ Please send information on the documentary videos "Poverty Outlaw" and "Outriders" with suggestions for use. (Log on to www.kwru.org for more information or to order.)

___ I use _____ in teaching/organizing to end poverty. Please list in the resources handbook. (Attach description of resource and how you use it.)

Fundraising for the movement to end poverty:

___ I will sponsor a fundraiser for Poor Peoples Economic Human Rights Campaign national events. (see current activities at www.kwru.org)

___ I am doing fundraising for other/local groups. (Attach description of the fundraising that you are doing and for whom so we can publish ideas and groups in the handbook.)

Creating New Practice Models:

Acts of resistance, liberation, transformation (or, "how to practice social work in an oppressive environment without being the oppressor"). Describe briefly, on a separate sheet of paper, what you do to create alternatives to "band-aid" social work practices.

Examples: "I always tell my clients about the Kensington Welfare Rights Union and encourage them to become members. "

" Reading materials on the economy, movement activities, etc. are available in our waiting area."

Field Placements/Internships/Activists in Residence:

___ I am interested in doing these at KWRU or other organizations in the PPEHRC network .

___ I am doing a field-based learning project. (Please send description.)

Name: _____ Organization/School: _____

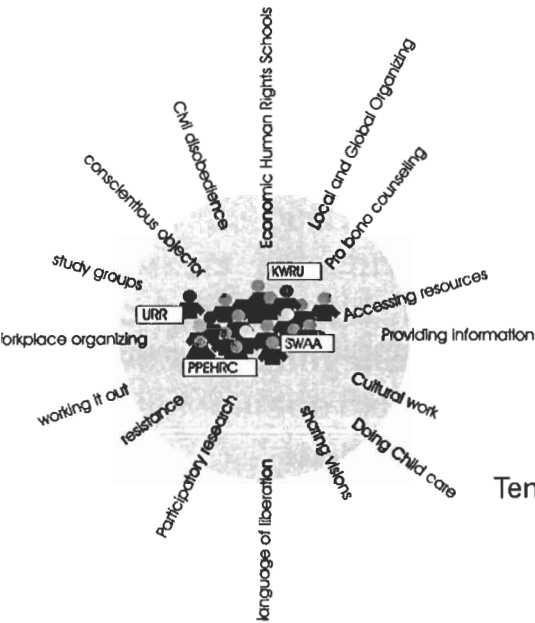
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Please return this form and materials to:

Underground Railroad--Temple University School of Social Administration
1301 Cecil B. Moore Avenue Philadelphia, PA 19122
or email : urr@blue.temple.edu

Creating practices of solidarity and liberation



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(formerly the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society)
Columbus Circle Station PO Box 20563 NY NY 10023
(518) 475-1199 www.bertha-swaa.org
Activists in Social Work and Human Services.

Underground Railroad - Temple Depot
Temple University School of Social Administration Philadelphia PA. 19122
(215) 204-2164 <http://blue.temple.edu/~URR>
A network of allies of the PPEHRC and KWRU.

Poor Peoples Economic Human Rights Campaign
c/o Kensington Welfare Rights Union
PO BOX 50678 Philadelphia, PA 19132 (215) 203-1945
FAX (215) 203-1950 www.kwru.org
A network of organizations building a movement led by the poor to end poverty.



Underground Railroad -- Temple Depot
Temple University School of Social Administration
Philadelphia PA 19122