

BCR REPORTS

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ONE, TWO, MANY TEACH-INS

As I write this, the consequences of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon are still unclear. We have begun our war on Afghanistan and Osama bin-Laden and incidents of anthrax poisoning are being reported. This is an altogether frightening and unsettling time.

It's impossible to predict what this will all mean, though it is safe to guess that the Bush/Cheney/Ashcroft administration will use this to advance its anti-civil liberties, pro-tax cut and pro-WTO agenda. It is also virtually certain that there will be little attention paid to pressing social needs in this country with budget priorities assigned to the war effort and bailing out corporations that were already doing badly before the attacks.

It was with an awareness of the dramatic shift in domestic politics resulting from September 11 that the National Steering Committee set a bold and imaginative course. We recognized the need to build national momentum within the social welfare community for a serious effort to end poverty, given the lack of any administration interest in a serious domestic policy. And, finally, we understood that we could best do this by initiating and supporting local and regional events that could be used to generate alliances with grass roots, client-led welfare rights and other organizations.

The notion is that teach-ins focused on ending poverty could build on the interest in TANF reauthorization, preserving Social Security and

globalization among schools of social work, other campus entities or social service organizations. SWAA nationally would take responsibility for creating materials that could be used (or not used) locally, identify and/or provide speakers, propose ideas that might help local organizing for these events. Our hope is that we can organize at least 5-7 teach-ins scattered around the country by June of 2002. Is there a chapter where you are that could do this? Can you build one? Can you use this idea as an individual member or teacher to get a teach-in rolling? What can we do to help? If you are interested in

organizing a teach-in or need more information, please contact me at fnewdom@aol.com.

The idea of holding teach-ins, we think, will help SWAA to grow and offer possibilities for the activism and alliance-building that we see as central to our role. This is a time for us to offer something clear and positive as a counter to the calls for a lock-step "loyalty" to anything Bush and Congress want. In the tradition of Jeanette Rankin and Barbara Lee and Bertha Reynolds, we must speak out and work for the kinds of justice that will make terrorism far less likely. ■

— Fred Newdom

Editor's Note

This issue of *BCR Reports* includes the statement of the DC SWAA Chapter on the September 11, 2001 attacks, as well as Barbara Lee's statement in Congress when she stood alone in her refusal to grant the Administration a blank check to fight a war on terrorism.

Such articulate and principled positions are important during this time of jingoism and misguided patriotism. Also needed is determination to stay the course and do the hard work needed to unite the opposition, create alliances, and build coalitions to create a unified groundswell that can effectively influence the Administration's foreign and domestic policy. Coalition demonstrations in New York, San Francisco, Seattle, Washington, D.C. and other cities are facing media coverage intent on emphasizing that 'Pacifist Orthodoxy Faces Dissent' (NYT 10/3), and for this very reason, speaking out and building alliances are critical.

During the last few years, SWAA has often considered regional Teach-Ins, in addition to or in place of our annual conference. A proposal to call for such Teach-Ins this year was being discussed prior to September 11, but after the attack, the National Steering Committee, at its scheduled September 22-23 meeting in New York City, decided that this is the year to replace the conference with a series of regional Teach-Ins. We urge each of you to respond to Fred Newdom's "One, Two Many Teach-ins" in your own creative way. Create alliances and coalitions with schools, peace, church, and other groups, now, and organize for a Spring Teach-In in your area. A luta continua! ■

— Barbara Kasper, Editor

Claiming Our Economic Human Rights: History, Analysis, and Action

2001 SWAA Conference a Success!

Almost 250 people gathered for the 2001 SWAA Conference held at Temple University in Philadelphia from June 28, 2001 through July 1, 2001. Many participants took part in a SWAA event for the first time. The co-hosts included The Kensington Welfare Rights Union (KWRU), Temple University School of Social Administration, The University of the Poor (U of P), and The Underground Railroad-Temple Depot. Co-Sponsors were the Association for Women in Social Work, Marywood University School of Social Work, NASW-Philadelphia Division, NASW-Pennsylvania Chapter, Philadelphia Alliance of Black Social Workers and Temple University-Office of the Provost. The KWRU secured funding from the Ford Foundation to assure attendance of many of The University of the Poor participants.

This gathering was considered historic before it began as SWAA chose to collaborate on the conference with a national poor people's organization, The University of the Poor (U of P). The U of P – community-based and web-centered – is the educational arm of the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC), a network of over 50 groups working to end poverty. Recognizing that the theme of claiming our economic human rights could not have been addressed adequately without the participation of people living in poverty and leading the efforts to end it, the planning committee focused heavily on fundraising. Hopes and hard work resulted in the attendance of over 30 PPEHRC groups gathering for the U of P meeting and the conference events.

The conference itself started a day earlier than has been customary to accommodate meetings of several schools and colleges of the University of the Poor. The workshops were overflowing with participants, and an after dinner meeting of the U of P

School for Social Workers generated great interest among conference attendees.

Workshops held on Friday and Saturday were organized around the conference theme and most were jointly led or moderated by University of the Poor representatives. Friday afternoon, with the Kensington Welfare Rights Union, the conference took to the streets and steps of a local hospital emergency department in North Philadelphia to demand health-care rights for all. Marchers, led by Cheri Honkola, KWRU director and SWAA member, shared their personal stories of suffering and mistreatment as a result of inadequate healthcare in communities across the country. As part of an ongoing campaign, speakers promised to continue visiting hospitals and to keep calling for protection of the universal right to healthcare.

After the march, KWRU's affiliate organization, New Jerusalem-Laura, treated the SWAA conference to a picnic style community dinner. New Jerusalem is a community-based drug rehabilitation program that incorporates political activism into its recovery strategy. Emphasizing the right to recovery, members work closely with KWRU in organizing and education efforts in the midst of North Philadelphia and at national events.

With a city known for activism, a SWAA event in Philadelphia had to have more than one action as part of the agenda! In keeping with the theme of claiming economic human rights and SWAA's tradition of supporting local groups, conference

goers loaded buses on Saturday for Atlantic City, NJ to participate with the South Jersey Citizens United for Social Justice (SJCUSJ) in a rally for affordable housing in their community. The event started with the bus riders marching down the famous boardwalk to join SJCUSJ at their rally. Members of the Atlantic City group outlined economic human rights violations in their community relating to affordable housing. Then conference participants from around the country and Canada joined them with their stories of similar struggles in their communities. The support given by other PPEHRC member groups was very helpful for SJCUSJ in breaking down the isolation they often experience in doing their work.

The bus trip was not "down time;" KWRU members showed the documentary *Battle for Broad* during the trip to demonstrate some of the organizing methods, including the use of the bus for "educationals" and the use of strategy and leadership development portrayed in the film. Similarly, the ride home was used to "debrief" the demonstration and its significance in movement-building.

This special gathering ended on Sunday morning with a large number of people staying to the very last minute in order to take part in a wrap up session using Theatre of the Oppressed techniques. Finally, participants met to further process the weekend and plan for future work. ■

HOW TO ORGANIZE A SWAA CHAPTER:

"How to Organize a SWAA Chapter" organizing packets are available by contacting Mel at Communication Services at (518) 438-2826, 50 Colvin 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. ■

Hon Barbara Lee's statement on the floor in the House of Representatives, September 14, 2001

Ms. LEE. "Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart, one that is filled with sorrow for the families and loved ones who were killed and injured in New York, Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Only the most foolish or the most callous would not understand the grief that has gripped the American people and millions across the world.

This unspeakable attack on the United States has forced me to rely on my moral compass, my conscience, and my God for direction. September 11 changed the world. Our deepest fears now haunt us. Yet I am convinced that military action will not prevent further acts of international terrorism against the United States.

I know that this use-of-force resolution will pass although we all know that the President can wage a war even without this resolution. However difficult this vote may be, some of us must urge the use of restraint. There must be some of us who say, let's step back for a moment and think through the implications of our actions today – let us more fully understand its consequences.

We are not dealing with a conventional war. We cannot respond in a conventional manner. I do not want to see this spiral out of control. This crisis involves issues of national security, foreign policy, public safety, intelligence gathering, economics, and murder. Our response must be equally multi-faceted.

We must not rush to judgment. Far too many innocent people have already died. Our country is in mourning. If we rush to launch a counter-attack, we run too great a risk that women, children, and other non-combatants will be caught in the crossfire.

Nor can we let our justified anger over these outrageous acts by vicious murderers inflame prejudice against all Arab Americans, Muslims,

Southeast Asians, or any other people because of their race, religion, or ethnicity.

Finally, we must be careful not to embark on an open-ended war with neither an exit strategy nor a focused target. We cannot repeat past mistakes.

In 1964, Congress gave President Lyndon Johnson the power to "take all necessary measures" to repel attacks and prevent further aggression. In so doing, this House abandoned its own constitutional responsibilities and launched our country into years of undeclared war in Vietnam.

At that time, Senator Wayne Morse, one of two lonely votes against the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, declared, "I believe that history will

record that we have made a grave mistake in subverting and circumventing the Constitution of the United States...

I believe that within the next century, future generations will look with dismay and great disappointment upon a Congress which is now about to make such a historic mistake."

Senator Morse was correct, and I fear we make the same mistake today. And I fear the consequences. I have agonized over this vote. But I came to grips with it in the very painful yet beautiful memorial service today at the National Cathedral. As a member of the clergy so eloquently said, "As we act, let us not become the evil that we deplore." ■

BOOK DONATIONS NEEDED!

The National Steering Committee collected funds from among ourselves and presented Fred Newdom with a full set of the books from the SWAA Book List as a start to replacing the library he lost when his house burned down last Spring. Now we are looking to add to that library. If you have duplicates of any social work books you have really found useful, indispensable, classic...well, you know them if you have them...and are willing to part with them, send the names (and authors) to Marilynn Moch at MochCIHRI@aol.com. She will compile a list for Fred and let you know which ones he would really, really appreciate having. Thanks to all! ■

NASW HISTORY VIDEO

On September 5, NASW President-Elect Terry Mizrahi met with Carmen Ortiz Hendricks, Dava Weinstein, and Ruth Wilson to discuss the recent release of a social work history video by NASW that failed to give even passing mention to Bertha Reynolds and other important social work activists. The announcement of the video release had generated letters and petitions from SWAA members and others protesting the limited picture of social work illustrated by the video and, specifically, the exclusion of Bertha Reynolds.

The video is designed as a public relations instrument for the image of social work and does contain some important social change references. However, those in the meeting agreed that for use with the recruitment of social workers, students, instructors, and academicians, the video needs to be accompanied by a teaching guide with information on the contributions of other social workers, including Bertha Reynolds. Although the video will never be an adequate description of social work for SWAA members, this addition and others discussed in the meeting are important reminders that the profession of social work includes uncomfortable issues of social justice, peace, and struggle.

Add your voice to the protest. Write to Terry at NASW, 750 First Street-NE, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20002. ■

In recent days we have received a wide range of comments on last week's tragedy, but none hit a more responsive chord with us than the following statement from James Garbarino, PhD. James is Co-Director, Family Life Development Center at Cornell University and co-author with Claire Bedard of "Parents Under Siege: Why You Are The Solution, Not the Problem, in Your Child's Life" NY: The Free Press, 2001.

The September 11 attack on America means many things to America's children and, youth. Much of the initial response by parents, educators, and mental health professionals has focused on coping with the trauma and the fear. But as the days pass and issues of retaliation become the focus of attention a whole new set of issues emerges. What will our response teach children about revenge and compassion?

Tibet's Dali Lama is a world leader in teaching about compassion. One of his most important lessons is that "true compassion is not just an emotional response, but a firm commitment founded on reason." It is easy to feel sympathy of the victim's of violence – human decency demands it. But it is much more difficult to feel true compassion for our enemies – unshakable understanding of how violence and rage arise in human beings, understanding that endures the bad actions of those human beings.

I learned this anew in the case of Nathaniel Brazil, the 13 year old boy who shot and killed his teacher in Lake Worth, Florida, May 26, 2000. Before he committed the murder, most of us would have found it easy to feel sympathy for him because of the difficult circumstances of his life. But after his deadly act many people changed their emotional response from sympathy to rage – and many wished he be executed, or at least imprisoned for life. One friend of the murdered teacher even said in public that he hoped the buy would be raped and tortured every day while

he was in prison This response reveals that the feeling people had for this boy was sentimentality not true compassion as the Dali Lama defines it.

This is an important lesson to consider as our nation responds to the terrorist assault of September 11. It is quite one thing to talk in public about "bringing the perpetrators to justice" and quite another to speak of exacting our revenge. It is one thing to understand the origins of terrorism and quite another to portray the struggle as simply one of "evil versus good."

Terrorists typically are caught up in their own scenarios of revenge and retaliation Often they have experi-enced personal suffering or family loss, or historical victimization, and are seeking a way to give meaning to that suffering through acts of violent revenge. Mostly, they are individuals who are offered a political or ideological interpretation for their situation by their leaders. Sometimes these leaders are pathologically calculating and cold in their exploration of their followers. Sometimes these leaders themselves are plotting revenge for what they have experienced as victims of political oppression. For them, the terrorist acts they commit are not "unprovoked assaults," but rather are their own, sometimes warped version of "bringing the perpetrators to justice."

All this is not to excuse the terrorist. No one of good faith or sensitive heart could or would do so. But if we are to do more than continue to escalate the cycle of violence we must do more than feel

outrage and practice more than retaliation. We must seek a deeper understanding – of individual terrorists and of the causes they represent. We must not fear this understanding. We must not reject those who ask for understanding. We must remember the wisdom that teaches "if you want peace work for justice." And remember what Ghandi taught when he said, "you must be the change you wish to see in the world."

The coming days and weeks will teach children and youth a great deal about justice, compassion, and revenge. They will learn lessons from what our government does on our behalf. Our goal should be to teach them at least three lessons: First, compassion and understanding are founded in strength not weakness. Let us celebrate the helpers and those who speak and act for justice and due process rather than for blood revenge. Second, protecting the stigmatized from scape goating and "guilt by association" is an important goal of public institutions in a time of national crisis. In the wake of the first Pearl Harbor at the start of World War II we rounded up Japanese-Americans and detained them as suspected enemies of the state. We must guard against that mentality if it is indeed Arabs and Muslims who are to blame for the catastrophe of September 11. Third, understanding and compassion in the face of hate and fanaticism are virtues, not something to be afraid of. It is more a matter of our good and their evil. Dehumanization is the enemy. Each individual has a story to tell, a human story. Even as we oppose, hunt for, and bring justice to the terrorists we should remember this. Perhaps we can even understand something about the conditions abroad that give rise to this fanatical hatred of America.

Our kids are watching and listening. ■

WHAT IS TO BE DONE? THOUGHTS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE 2001 SWAA CONFERENCE

Like its predecessors, the Philadelphia conference was an opportunity for learning, participating, socializing, and mobilizing – in short, for engaging in the full sweep of activities customarily associated with our annual gatherings. As several people half-jokingly remarked, there was also something of a “revivalist” air at the meeting. Nor should this be surprising, given that SWAA members are indeed fervent “believers” eager to “witness” on behalf of their creed of social justice, as they did during two conference-related “actions.”

Nevertheless, while such enthusiasm is essential to organizational well-being, it is not enough to ensure SWAA’s ability to weather the current difficulties. To accomplish that vital task, SWAA must seek to define itself in politically and professionally credible ways – in short, to mobilize support behind a clear sense of identity and purpose based on a comparably clear understanding of how and why American politics and society have entered the current state of crisis.

Has SWAA already defined itself in ways adequate to recruit the young – the lifeblood of our organization – to join our ranks? One must doubt this to be the case. Rather than focusing on the causes and depths of the current crisis, SWAA has, symbolically and actually, settled for “actions” that are substitutes for action, insofar as they are little more than sentimental (read “liberal”) gestures more effective in salving middle class consciences than in effectively promoting progressive objectives. “Actions” do have political significance, but only in terms of the need to display and confirm our internal unity rather than affect events outside our ranks. Specifically, “actions” function like other spectacles, notably college athletics, which, as Murray Sperber has most

recently pointed out in his *Beer and Circus*, in knitting together disparate groups under one banner – in our case, the cause of social justice as an abstract ideal. Yet, while the “acting out” of such rituals may help to preserve organizational unity (admittedly no mean thing, in progressive circles), they are no substitute for the self-assessment urgently required in current circumstances.

Sustained attention to the formidable challenges confronting us – and, more broadly, the Left as a whole – would be the first step towards organizational renewal. SWAA’s commitment to participatory democracy is of course a plus in this regard, i.e., as long as members are willing to constrain that excessive individualism that is the bane of the Left, as of American society in general. Given its epochal consequences, a substantive focus on globalization would seem especially apposite, but attempting to predict the outcome of such an internal review is unrealistic and, indeed, undesirable. One can only say that a period of intense self-assessment is as good for an organization’s spirit as it is for an individual’s soul.

Up to this point I have emphasized what I see as SWAA’s weaknesses,

but it is axiomatic that a properly conducted self-assessment also recognize our collective assets, i.e., beyond our common commitment to democratic discourse, important as this may be. The high educational caliber and deeply-held political values of SWAA’s members are especially relevant in this regard. Recognizing this fact, our collective self-assessment might incorporate a focus on how to narrow the “theory-practice” gap so as to better deploy our collective talent and training in the fight for social justice. In short, how can we better reconcile academic norms (“publish or perish”), under which so many of us labor, with the need to more effectively combat current political trends? SWAA might, for example, consider creating a prototypical and accessible political publication that would help to bridge the distance between sterile academic discourse and shallow commercial journalism. Serious attention to this suggestion would only be a starting point for a prolonged process of self-reflection (not least because there are also many social work practitioners and other non-academic members of SWAA) but that process can be part of the solution, if undertaken with the requisite candor and courage.

There is, in any case, no time to lose given the lateness of the hour and the urgency of the need for progressive renewal. ■

– David Katz
Michigan State University

SWAAAction Electronic Toolbox

As many readers know from their participation in the *bertha-swaa* email list, SWAA has a website currently online. Granted, some parts remain under construction (as is my knowledge of website building!). Nevertheless, I invite you to scout around the site and see what is there, what’s to come, and what may be missing. Your ideas of links or categories are welcome as we build and expand our Internet presence. I am particularly interested in Teach-In materials you would like to have on the website, particularly on the topics of poverty, TANF reauthorization issues, and any aspects concerning the progressive/radical response to the September 11 NYC/PA/DC tragedies/response.

The website address is:
http://www.geocities.com/michel4justice/SWAA_Home.html

To subscribe to our email list, which currently has 92 members, send an email to: michel4justice@yahoo.com ■

DOING MY CIVIC DUTY

Recently, I received a summons for jury service for the Franklin County Common Pleas Court, and my period of service began on September 4, 2001. On Thursday, September 6, my name was picked as part of a panel of prospective jurors for a trial before Judge Nodine Miller. I am still stunned by what happened in that courtroom.

Before the bailiff led us into the room, she called our names and organized us into three lines. The first group consisted of twelve people, who entered first and sat in the jury box. There was a second group that was seated in the first row set aside for the audience, and I was in the third group which sat in the second audience row. I did not count the total number of people in the panel, but there were about 25 or 26 of us altogether.

After we were all seated, I looked around the room and noticed that something seemed unusual. With the exception of the defendant, everyone in the room was white. That included all of us on the jury panel, the judge, the prosecution team, the defense attorney, the bailiff, and the court reporter. There were also a few other people in the room from time to time; I don't know who they were, since none of them took part in the proceedings, but they, too, were white. Only the defendant was not white; he was a young black man facing two charges, one of which was sexual battery.

After Judge Miller asked the twelve people in the jury box to talk a little about themselves, she turned the process over to the prosecution and then to defense. Not once did the prosecution raise any concerns about the fact that the defendant was a black man facing an all-white jury pool. During his questioning, the defense attorney did raise race

as an issue with some of the jury pool, with regard to their ability to be able to make a fair and impartial decision based on the merits of the case. Both prosecution and defense, without going into much detail, made it clear that the case would likely hinge on the testimony of a single accuser, a white woman.

As the afternoon wore on, some of the jury pool were excused by peremptory challenges. Eventually, twelve white jurors were seated in the case. I was next in line to be examined as a prospective alternate, since two alternates would be chosen as well. I was called to take a seat in one of the two remaining chairs in the jury box, and the judge asked the same questions she had of the rest of the panel and then told me to talk a little about myself. At the end of my presentation of self, I told the judge that I could not in good conscience sit on an all-white jury, where the defendant was a black man accused of the sexual assault of a white woman.

As a professor of social work who teaches courses on minority issues, I think that I am quite familiar with racial matters in the U. S. I understand how significant race is as a social force, what racism is, how it is manifested as an institutional force, and how it differs from prejudice. In response to questions from the prosecutor and especially from the defense attorney, I tried to explain what these issues and concepts mean and how they could factor into any decision.

I know that my responses fell on deaf ears as far as the judge was concerned; she didn't seem to be paying much attention to my answers. Even though I was adamant that I could be fair and impartial in making a decision based on facts that would be presented,

the prosecution clearly wanted me off this panel and issued a peremptory challenge. The judge then excused me.

I walked out of that courtroom in a state of shock and disbelief and anger. How was it possible that on September 6, 2001, in a courtroom in Columbus, Ohio, that a black man would have to face a jury consisting of twelve white people, when he was charged with sexual assault on a white woman? This is the classic image of race in America. These are the allegations that were used for decades to justify the lynchings of black men throughout this country, including here in the north. How is this possible?

This incident is a clear instance of institutional racism. I'm sure that most of the people in that courtroom believe that they are not prejudiced, but institutional racism and discrimination can occur without people being prejudiced. They can occur without people intending for them to occur or even being conscious that they are occurring. That is the point: institutional racism refers to established laws, customs, and practices that systematically reflect and produce racial inequities in our society. When racist consequences are part of institutional laws, customs, or practices, then the institution is racist. It does not matter whether the individuals who carry out those practices have racist intentions.

How could Judge Miller allow this to happen in her courtroom? She did not say one word that would show concern about whether this defendant could receive a fair and impartial hearing in that room. How could the prosecution not raise a concern? Don't they care about justice being served? Why didn't others speak up, including some of the other members of the jury panel?

Continued ▶

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The defendant might be guilty as sin. I don't know, and I'll never know. But he cannot receive a fair and impartial hearing in this case. Even if he is acquitted, there will always be a cloud over the verdict. If he is convicted, many of us will not believe that the jury was not influenced by racial beliefs and ideas about black men and sex. He did not face a jury of his peers – a jury that would reflect this community.

I ask again: How could this happen in Columbus, Ohio, in the year 2001? What worries me most is how often does this occur? Hardly anyone in the courtroom seemed to care, which suggests that this situation is not unusual. I would like to think that we as a society have changed. But I see no difference between what happened in that courtroom last week, and what I saw growing up. I'm 55 years old, so I had the chance to see the reality of Jim Crow segregation with my own eyes. I grew up in the north, where racism was perhaps a little more subtle than in the south, but I grew up in a racist society. What I saw last week tells me that not much has changed.

As a postscript, I might add that I was part of another jury pool in the same courtroom before the same judge this afternoon. Once again, there were about 25 of us in the pool, and, once again, we were all white. That is two panels out of the four of which I have been a part. This time, the defendant was white, but he was not facing a jury of his peers any more than the defendant last Thursday, since the pool clearly does not reflect the racial characteristics of this community. Apparently, this is an all too common circumstance in the Franklin County Common Pleas Court.

The rest of my jury duty service was not as disturbing, but certainly did nothing to restore any faith I might have had in the so-called "justice" system. I was on one

other panel that involved a criminal case, and I received a peremptory challenge there, too. All the prosecutor needed to know that time was that I was a social work professor. I was also on a panel for a civil case, and the corporate attorneys only needed a couple of questions to figure out that I would not suit their purposes.

I lost my faith in the "justice" system a long time ago. Over the years, my research has often involved it, directly or indirectly, and I've taught about this "system" in social policy classes. As a long-time political activist, I've had encounters with all the components of the "justice" system for some 35 years, much of which time I've been under surveillance by various "authorities." The first time I became aware of that was in 1966 when two FBI agents visited me in my dorm room at the University of Illinois and threatened to have me thrown out of school for my activities – which were simply exercising my constitutional rights to freedom of assembly and speech. I threw them out of my room, but I didn't get thrown out of school.

The point is that I wasn't too surprised by much of what I saw. I knew going in that I would never be on a jury in a criminal case. But the experience I had in the past two weeks really has me concerned. There was a time when some juries were willing to act independently, regardless of what judges or prosecutors might do. Now prosecutors especially are much better at picking and choosing who will give them what they want.

Partly, they get what they want in Ohio because of how prospective jurors are selected: from the voter registration lists. Since only about half of potential voters register, that leaves out a lot of people, many of whom have lost their faith in the political system. Further, no more than 10% of the people I saw waiting around in the jury

commission room were people of color, so juries in this community are not going to reflect it, under the best of circumstances. All of the prosecutors, and nearly all of the other attorneys I saw were white. All of the judges and bailiffs I saw were white, as were all the people in the jury commission office.

So for many of us, this is a pointless exercise to go through. That is especially the case here, where we are part of a pool for two weeks, regardless of whether we get selected or not for a jury. For those who end up on juries, they go back in the pool as soon as a decision in a trial is made. So some people I saw sat on three or four different juries. The trial in the case where the defendant was black actually only lasted one day, so I saw some of the people who were in that group with me on another case the following Monday.

Even though we were constantly reminded that this was our "civic duty," it is a coercive system. We cannot withdraw, and Ohio law now allows virtually no exemptions from appearance. When I threatened not to return after the experience with the black defendant, I was told I would be held in contempt for not showing and probably jailed for at least one night.

That means that we are forced to participate in a system that is corrupt and immoral and racist and sexist. In fact, the judicial system takes on an appearance of credibility by forcing all of us to participate in it.

During these two weeks, there was one word that was never said by anyone: justice. ■

– Keith Kilty
Ohio State University

JPHS

The Journal of Progressive Human Services (JPHS) is available to members of SWAA at a substantial discount. It can be ordered through SWAA using the application in this issue of the BCR Reports. Neither the JPHS collective nor SWAA are involved in subscription fulfillment, that is the responsibility of our publisher, Haworth Press. If you are a subscriber and have not received an issue, contact Kathy Rutz at 1-800-HAWORTH. If you want to submit an article to JPHS, send four copies of your manuscript and abstract to: David Prichard, JPHS Collective, University of New England, School of Social Work, Hills Beach Road, Biddeford, ME, 04005. It is important that your name and any other identifying information not appear on three of these copies. We also welcome submissions of short (500-1000 word) opinion pieces for our Soapbox column, letters to the editors, and poetry.

The Table of Contents of the recently published Fall 2001 issue (12/1), and the early Spring 2002 issue (12/2) appear below. We have just about finalized issue 13(1), the table of contents of which will appear in the next issue of *BCR Reports*. Stay tuned!

— Marcia Cohen

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D.C. CHAPTER SOCIAL WELFARE ACTION ALLIANCE STATEMENT ON THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 ATTACKS

We grieve the lives lost in the 9/11 attacks. As an alliance of poor, disenfranchised people and social service advocates, we devote our work to healing suffering and to preventing the circumstance that cause it. We extend our condolences to the families that have been shattered, the coworkers bereaved, the helping professionals overwhelmed, and to all those with lives profoundly damaged. We know that as survivors we are forever changed. Yet, now more than ever, we must protect and retain the democracy, human rights and ideals that best represent our country.

We work and struggle for freedom and justice every day. We believe we must not think and act like the terrorists by taking revenge on innocent civilians. Our country's previous responses to terrorist attacks, including bombs in Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Sudan, did not deter violence. Instead, new and worse terrorism was fueled by the violence of such actions. Now anger and fear threaten to reduce justice and freedom.

Fear must not drive us to become like the terrorists. We believe that sanctions imposed by the U.S.A. against countries accused of sheltering terrorists have only deprived families of food and medicine. No government has been weakened by this punishing foreign policy. Therefore, in pursuit of real freedom and justice, we encourage our government to spend the more than \$40 billions allocated by Congress not for war, but to rebuild and heal New York and Arlington, VA.

War cannot be just if it punishes the innocent. Starting a war will cause further harm to our population, to the soldiers, to their families, to the whole society, in addition to murdering and adding to the suffering of multitudes of other vulnerable human beings. The domestic price of our most recent war, in the Persian Gulf, was Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, family disruption, bereavement, chemical contamination, cancers, birth defects, and many unseen long term costs. Perhaps the greatest price of The Gulf War was that we became the target of terrorist attacks. The 9/11 attackers deliberately aimed at our most significant economic center. Subsequently our economy declined dramatically. We believe a war economy will not restore stability, but will instead lead to greater losses of jobs and human services. The most vulnerable of our population will suffer the first blows, but soon all of us will feel it. Waging war will surely worsen our situation here at home. Instead, we need to restore the Public Health System, including mental health services, and to provide water, gas, phones, housing, jobs, and school all now in increasing disrepair and jeopardy.

War makes us a less democratic society, unable to care for our people. We who seek economic human rights, see that this war is already giving unequal power to the war

industries, which will determine the outcome of future elections by controlling the economy and the media. Believing in freedom, we oppose infringements on civil rights and personal freedoms issued in the name of national security. War and a state of emergency, can not realistically, protect us FROM people who are willing to die to kill others. The perpetrators of the 9/11 war crimes can and should be brought to trial. Just as our vast intelligence services identified and apprehended Timothy McVeigh, the worst terrorist to operate in the United States until now, they can locate and bring to trial the perpetrators of these attacks. The U.S. government would undoubtedly earn the support of the world community by capturing these criminals.

Bread, not bombs!

But we believe that greater peace and security would grow from a show of good faith in foreign aid, debt relief, and just trade practices. This would gain more allies for the United States than a show of military force. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ghandi taught us that hate does not decrease hatred and neither does violence reduce violence.

We stand for peace and economic human rights! We poor and disenfranchised people and our allies in the field of human services have a duty to advocate for healing and to protest against harm.

We stand against demonizing any race, class, or culture. We must educate our population about the real economic and social conditions in the Middle East and the real price of war. We must hold our government accountable and demand that it act in the true best interests of us all.

Our only path to real safety is through international peace, stability, and economic human rights.

DC-SWAA contact: Athena 202-332-6615 Email wteague@erols.com ■

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:

Laura Walther
c/o SWAA Book Fund
Columbus Circle Station
P.O. Box 20563
New York, New York 10023

CHAPTER UPDATES:

Ann Arbor/University of Michigan:

The University of Michigan chapter of SWAA continued its theme of politics and social work by presenting a panel discussion featuring social workers who hold political office or policy positions. Don Cooney, SWAA member and professor at Western Michigan University, spoke as part of the panel and graciously brought a van load of students to the event. Jean Robinson, an Ann Arbor City Council member, Floyd Robinson, who serves on the NASW policy committee and was a former policy director for SWAA member and Detroit City Council member Maryann Mahaffey, and the UM's School of Social Work Assistant, Dean Tim Colenback, also spoke.

Brett Seabury, a professor at UM and faculty advisor for the SWAA chapter, presented a workshop on "banditry" skills social welfare activists can use to social and economic justice at the annual SWAA conference held this year in Philadelphia. Several students from UM also attended the conference.

Our chapter recruited new members by presenting information at School of Social Work new student orientations and by holding a kick-off potluck. We are also partnering with other groups and individuals to address the events of September 11, 2001 and finding necessary alternatives to war.

Seattle: Though we are still struggling to pull a SWAA Chapter together in Seattle, we do have a listserv of our local members and allies for information sharing and have engaged in some coordinated actions. In August, Chapter members contributed over \$200 to place us among the sponsors of the Walk and Jazz Festival in which we also marched. Sponsored by the Black Dollar Task Force, the walk contributed to the 5000 Endowment Fund to provide loans to loan minority businesses in the Central Area where resident businesses are being threatened by gentrification. After September 11, we coordinated with students at both the Seattle and Tacoma campuses of the U of W School of Social Work to visit area mosques and an Islamic grade school to offer friendship and support. Each visit generated a unique and valuable discussion. Some mosques were aggressively courting outreach to the non-Muslim community, some were nervous and asked for allies to help them be better understood, and some just happy to see us. The school had been closed for the week of September 11 out of fear for the safety of the children, so to see their smiles as we handed each one a flower upon their return was their gift to us. Now all of us have to work for the safety of their families abroad.

Rochester: Our chapter has continued to work with the Rochester Poor People's Coalition. In June, we assisted in getting four local poor people from the RPPC to attend this year's SWAA conference in Philadelphia. SWAA

members also sponsored two clients to attend as well. The conference proved to be an excellent place for education and exchange regarding organizing around poverty issues for all who attended.

SWAA worked with the RPPC and a Social Policy class from the Greater Rochester Collaborative MSW Program to plan and participate in the second annual summer series of neighborhood marches. Members of all three organizations and the community marched through an inner city neighborhood to educate others about economic human rights and encourage people to join the struggle against poverty. (The students in this Social Policy class also teamed up with a member of the RPPC (or a resident of the House of Mercy) and wrote letters to state and local politicians about legislation related to poverty and welfare reform).

Currently, we are planning (with RPPC and SUNY Brockport Social Work students) the second "speak out" against welfare policy and reform as well as a Rochester Reality Tour (with a "dry run" due in late November).

Also, with the help of several SWAA members, two RPPC members have been able to attend Barbara Kasper's macro practice course at SUNY Brockport.

In another development, SWAA member Judy Gradford has been instrumental in organizing the newly-formed Human Service Workers Coalition: "On June 20th the first meeting took place. The group is sponsored by the Communications Workers of America and its local affiliate, Federation of Social Workers, IUE/CWA 381. The Rochester SWAA Chapter is a supporter of the Coalition and encourages their members to participate."

"This fledgling organization hopes to become a powerful force for workers and the Rochester community. The Human Service Workers Coalition is worker focused and promotes organizing and advocacy. Our aim is to critically examine our human service delivery system, empower workers and strengthen services for those who use them."

"At our third meeting in September, five new members joined us at that meeting. We shared work experiences, provided support to workers who were going through trying times with their agency, learned about our Weingarten Rights and had a presentation on Barbara Ehrenreich's book, *Nickel and Dimed: On (not) Getting by in America*. It was an exciting and productive meeting where members began to see the value and possibilities that this organization could offer."

"Our group continues to meet and grow. While we are still grappling with an agreed upon name we are clear about our mission:

"We human service workers hold in our hands the tools to heal the deep hurts of our troubled world. It is only by healing these hurts, righting oppression, and promoting justice that we can hope to make our community a safer more human place. We dedicate ourselves to healing and to a quest for justice both for ourselves and the people we serve." ■

Maine Poor Organize with Help of KWRU and SWAA Members

A new low-income organization called P.O.W.E.R., Portland Organization to Win Economic Rights, formed this summer, assisted by a visit from the Kensington Welfare Rights Union and SWAA members David Wagner and Marcia B. Cohen. On May 31, about 150 people rallied in Portland to protest the lack of affordable housing, and over 200 participated in a conference the next day at the University of Southern Maine entitled, "The New Economy, Same Old Poverty." The conference cosponsored by USM's Department of Social Work and the Preble Street Resource Center (a low-income provider), featured KWRU leaders such as Cheri Honkala and Willie Baptist as keynote speakers. Over the summer, low income people met and formed P.O.W.E.R., which is dedicated to demanding housing, health care, income security, and jobs at livable wages for all. Since the Portland area has a 1% vacancy rate and approximately 1,500-2,000 people homeless in the course of a year, action around housing is the first agenda item for the group. For more info., contact Dee Clarke at minglyte@aol.com or Dave and Marcia at Professors@aol.com. ■

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

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FAX: 716-395-2366

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

Please note: The deadline for materials submitted for inclusion in the next *BCR Reports* is **January 15, 2002.**

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Response to the Call to Join the SOCIAL WELFARE ACTION ALLIANCE

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