

BCR REPORTS

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Social Welfare Action Alliance

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July, 2005

'Desperate' Dreams?

A Reflection on Welfare Reform and American Dream: Three Women, Ten Kids, and a Nation's Drive to End Welfare

by Jason DeParle (New York: Viking, 2004, 422 pp.)

I have seen the welfare system first hand as a volunteer outreach worker at a Boston welfare office (Department of Transitional Assistance). The other day I walked into the office to see a distraught woman sobbing disconsolately on the floor. She had unknowingly parked in the parking lot of the Burger King next door. She moaned, "I begged him not to tow me. I told him that I am homeless and don't have any money to feed my children, but he didn't listen. He still towed me." The woman had just been told that she was ineligible for shelter because she lacked some documentation. The driver of the tow truck lurks inside the Burger King waiting for people and tows someone almost every day.

Soon after that I talked with a man who had been kicked out of a shelter, along with his four year old daughter, because he got a job that paid more than the shelter eligibility limit of \$1,041 a month, the poverty level for a family of two. He does not make enough money to pay market level rent in Boston, an average of \$1,200 a month for a two bedroom apartment, and he cannot get a Section 8 federal housing subsidy because they have been frozen, and no one knows when or if they will be available again.

Next I talked with a young woman whose welfare assistance for herself and three year old child had been cut off because she missed one day at her job search program. The reason she missed it is because her child was sick and she had to stay home to care for him. She had just located a temporary job in medical technology but her child care had been cut back to half a day and she couldn't start the job until the worker approved her for full day child care.

I recently spent a summer in Finland, and a social insurance official there told me that they did not believe families should be in shelters. They made sure families had permanent housing. They also had guaranteed universal child care and universal health care. Those scenes in a Boston welfare office would not occur in Finland.

Not many people know of the daily tragedies that occur at the welfare office and until the news gets out and the voting public becomes concerned enough to elect officials who will change the system, the tragedies will continue. So I was pleased when I heard that Jason DeParle had written a book about welfare reform.

Jason DeParle has been on the poverty beat of the *New York Times* for many years, writing knowledgeably about poverty and welfare. Frances Fox Piven, a long-time observer of his work, describes him as "an exceptionally careful and sincere journalist." It is to the *Times*' credit that they have a poverty beat. When I called *The Boston Globe* and asked to speak to a reporter on their poverty beat, I was told that they don't have one (and they are owned by the *Times*).

American Dream has been reviewed by major newspapers across the country and the *New Republic*. DeParle has been interviewed by NPR and other stations, and he is on the lecture circuit talking about welfare and poverty. The widespread publicity given the book may contribute to the current Congressional debate about reauthorization of the infamous 1996 welfare bill, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act (PRWOA), which DeParle analyzed as it played out in Milwaukee.

Few people are talking about poverty. As Bob Herbert wrote in the *Times*, "Poverty is not even close to becoming part of our national conversation. Swift boats, yes, sex scenes on 'Monday Night Football,' most definitely. The struggle of millions of Americans to feed themselves? Oh no. Let's not go there."

In his campaign for the presidency, Kerry told the middle class, "I've got your back. I've got your back because I know what you're going through." He talked about working families and the middle class, but he didn't talk about the 36.9 million Americans who lived in poverty in 2003, including the 15.3 million who lived in extreme poverty (less than half the official poverty line of \$18,810 for a family of four).

From 1991 to 1999, DeParle studied welfare reform through the lens of a close acquaintance with three women and their children - Angela Jobe, Jewell Reed, and Opal Caples - whose ancestors were slaves and worked on James Eastland's plantation after slavery. When I first picked up his book and saw a young black mother with two children on the cover, my heart sank and I thought, "Oh no. Not again." Welfare and race have been intertwined in the media and in the public imagination since the 1960s. An analysis of media coverage of welfare by FAIR (Fairness and

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From the Editor

There have been some significant changes in SWAA over the last year. The most notable is the creation of a functioning website (www.socialwelfareactionalliance.org). After several years of limited web content, we now have a well designed site that, when fully completed, will contain current happenings within our chapters and a complete archived history of SWAA conferences, and publications.

Another change is the reinvigoration of the annual conference. As this newsletter goes out, hundreds of SWAA members will be gathering in Toledo, Ohio for three days of dialogue and networking. You can see the conference materials on the website.

The final notable change is the lack of a chairperson for the National Steering Committee. After the resignation of our previous chair Christie Coho (who is London-bound), we are still missing a critical link to help facilitate our process, keep us on task, and gently cajole people into action.

You will notice that this issue of the newsletter is longer than usual, with less content variety. Content is based upon member submissions, and with the exception of Betty Mandell's extended book review and committee/chapter updates, we are lacking content. Please know that this newsletter is open for all SWAA members to have their articles, rants and musings published. Editorial standards are developing; but for the time being, any content relating to the vision and philosophy of SWAA and Bertha Capen Reynolds will be considered.

I received a few criticisms about an article in the last newsletter, saying that the opinions expressed about Israel were offensive. As editor, I am reluctant to change any written sentiments other than extremely inappropriate language. However, I encourage readers to submit responses to any newsletter article for publication in the next newsletter.

In solidarity,

Bill Boyd



www.socialwelfareactionalliance.org

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. To submit an article to JPHS, send four copies of your manuscript, including a short abstract to: Marcia Cohen, JPHS Collective, University of New England, School of Social Work, 716 Stevens Avenue, Portland, ME 04103. It is important that your name and any other identifying information not appear on three of these four copies. We also encourage submissions of poetry and short (500-1000 word) opinion pieces for our Soapbox column and letters to the editors.

The table of contents of the current issue (15/2) and the forthcoming issue (16/1) appear below.

*For the JPHS Collective,
Marcia Cohen*

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CHAPTER REPORTS

Philadelphia / New Jersey: Over the past few months, SWAA members in Philadelphia and New Jersey have been actively working on a number of projects. In Philadelphia, SWAA members have done many Economic Human Rights trainings for groups of students, social and human service workers, and other community members throughout the city and other Pennsylvania communities, including Lancaster, Harrisburg, West Chester, and Kutztown. SWAA members have continued to provide field instruction and supervision for BSW and MSW students from various schools who are doing field placements with the Kensington Welfare Rights Union, and are currently finalizing plans for students who will begin their field placements in the Fall. Additionally, members have been working with the KWRU Education Committee in developing educational and organizational plans for groups around the state in our continuing statewide organizing efforts. If you would like more information about Philadelphia's SWAA chapter, contact Carrie Young at youngcarrie@hotmail.com.

SWAA members in New Jersey are working with a coalition called Atlantic City: Just Health Campaign. A recent study by Rutgers University and sponsored by UNITE HERE Local 54 concluded that 1 in 4 adults in Atlantic City have no health care. This coalition of SWAA and Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC) members, along with labor, religious, and educational leaders are bringing attention to the economic human right to health and specific problems in the Atlantic City area because of a growing low-wage service economy. SWAA members also continue to work with Poor Voices United—a member organization of the PPEHRC—and NASW-New Jersey to provide Economic Human Rights trainings for social workers throughout New Jersey, using "Heath: Crisis USA," produced by the Media College of the University of the Poor and Poor Voices United. If you would like more information about SWAA's activities in New Jersey, contact Laura Rodgers at laurarodgers@mac.com.

Many SWAA members in Philadelphia and New Jersey are also working to pull together the School of Social Work and Social Transformation (SSWST) of the University of the Poor. The University of the Poor, the educational arm of the PPEHRC, is currently planning a week-long Leadership School this summer to be held at Bryn Mawr College outside of Philadelphia. We recently had a day-long working meeting of the SSWST, focusing on building and developing our web content, organizing and consolidating our training materials, and faculty development. Anyone interested in the SSWST should contact Mary Bricker-Jenkins at mbricker@temple.edu.

Portland: Portland's SWAA chapter is experiencing a revival. Several first year MSW students had been gathering since last October to discuss their frustration with the lack of progressive content at Portland State University's Social Work program. After hearing about SWAA from one of their instructors, they decided to reorganize themselves as an active local chapter on campus. While their efforts are still developing, they intend to have a presence at the new student orientation to help build a movement towards a more "radical" social work education, and organize a MSW student tour of Dignity Village, Portland's tent city

(www.dignityvillage.org). Other projects will develop, including a possible speaking event on campus and community action. If you would like more information about Portland's SWAA chapter, contact Bill Boyd at bikerbillboyd@hotmail.com.

Rochester: Rochester SWAA members have been very active working in coalition with other grassroots community groups. On February 14, 2005, Alberta Roesser of SWAA traveled to Albany with Sister Grace Miller of the House of Mercy and Jon Greenbaum of Metro Justice to lobby against Governor Pataki's budget cuts and to show support for the Empire State Economic Security Campaign (ES2).

The "delegation" visited the offices of Assemblyperson Susan John, as well as Senators Patterson, Maziarz, and Robach. Most often, they met with their assistants except with Rochester area Senator Robach, whom they met with personally. The overall response from the politicians was that our concerns were taken seriously and that our delegation should leave feeling assured that the cuts to Medicaid were not going through. But SWAA member Roesser stated: "That is not how I felt. When Mark Dunlea of Hunger Action Network of New York State supplied Senator Robach with some specific solutions, the Senator refused to believe any of the facts that Dunlea presented. At least our representatives understood we came not only with problems but also with viable solutions."

SWAA Rochester also organized another Reality Tour in April, and once again we had a full bus! Two SUNY Brockport Social Work students coordinated the Tour for their senior project.

Two SWAA members were represented at an April 7th "Emergency rally to stop Pataki's budget cuts to Medicaid and Family Health Plus." Eight cities across New York State rallied to defend patients and local institutions from Pataki's draconian cuts in the proposed state budget.

One of our members was on an advisory committee for the planning of "*From Poverty to Dignity & Decency for All*." This was a community conference (an offshoot of "Let Justice Roll" organized by the National Council of Churches and the Center for Community Change) that took place on May 13th and 14th to develop an action plan to address poverty in the Greater Rochester Area. Three SWAA members attended the conference.

Alberta Roesser is also the new President of the Greater Rochester Chapter of the National Organization for Women. And Susan Ruhlin has been writing grants with Poor People United to raise funds for a human rights project house, which will house chronically homeless adult men and women.

Finally, Rochester SWAA has plans to begin work in conjunction with Rochester Voters Alliance, the Federation of Social Workers, and NASW to organize legislative candidate forums in the upcoming months in the City of Rochester, focusing on poverty issues. If you would like more information about Rochester's SWAA chapter, contact Melissa Sydor at melmas1@yahoo.com.

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! Please allow four weeks for delivery.

"Rock On, Membership Committee!"

The above comment was one of the many members have made in their comments sections of their renewal forms this year. It seemed to me a good headline for this membership committee report! More comments are at the end of this report.

The Membership Committee has been very active recently. In New York City, Pat Brownell picks up the mail regularly and sends it to Marilyn Moch in Seattle. She opens it, laboriously keeps a list of members joining or renewing and if there is a journal subscription involved. She then sends the original forms to Michael Dover in Michigan, where the Central Michigan University Social Work Program student assistant helps him enter membership information in our Microsoft Access database. Michael handles each form as well and checks on accuracy of data entry, so blame him if you see a mistake in our letters to members (which now specify the date last paid)! Seriously, call him at 989-774-3432 if you have corrections to make.

Recently, Jennifer Filipovich and I had a mailing party in Michigan in order to personally sign letters to each and every current and expired member for whom we have addresses - over 1,200! The letter is a mail merge letter so that it was addressed to each person by name, rather than Dear Member. And it included the date dues were last paid. As the letter explained, dues will now be annual by the calendar year, so it will be easier to keep track of. The response to the letter has been excellent so far, with about 100 renewals.

However, membership is still at a rather low level. Only 123 members have joined or renewed in 2005. But another 132 members provided dues from 5/1/2004 to 12/31/2004, and were still current through the old renewal date of May 1st. A provision was made for such members to pay \$17.50 to update their dues through 12/31/2005, and many took advantage of this. Another 39 members paid dues in the first half of 2004. We're considering that everyone who has been a member in the 2004-2005 period is still a SWAA member for the purposes of the membership directory which will be on the website soon. That would be a total of 322 members (including the old life member category).

The membership directory will be organized by an alphabetical list of members with address, phone and email address, as well as a zip code sorted list that facilitates organizing at the local level. There will be a list of the names of members within various areas of practice, activism and method to facilitate networking. You will have to refer back to the alphabetical list to see where people are, but contact Mike to request lists by area of interest, labels by geographical area, and so on. Finally, there will be a list of the names of people who were once members but for whom we do not have a good address. We won't be keeping this in the membership directory permanently but need your help in locating anyone you know how to get in touch with. Please email updated addresses or emails to dover1m@cmich.edu. Sadly, many of these persons may be deceased members. We are in the process of compiling an updated list of deceased members for an In Our Memory list in a future issue of the newsletter.

This year, in conjunction with the conference, there are 4x6 postcards being sent to 2,000 social workers in the region of the conference. This is both to publicize the conference (it's much cheaper than mailing full brochures as in the past) and to seek membership, using the great new website. It's an experiment with the hypothesis: People would join SWAA if they only new we existed! Stay posted for the results in the next issue. But now that we have an attractive website, every member can help recruit members to SWAA just by sending out emails and otherwise publicizing the organization. Finally, consideration is being given to producing a SWAA business card. This will be a smaller version of the postcard, with basic information about SWAA and our website address. Along with our new brochure, a few copies would be dropped into future mailings.

As the following comments show, membership in SWAA is still important to many progressive social workers and human service workers. The potential for SWAA to play an important role in social work and in social movements is great. However, we need to continue to find ways to both build membership and make the organization itself more politically relevant in the struggle for peace and justice and social welfare.

Selected Membership Feedback

Comment on front: "Seems like the membership form is totally focused on school of social work, presumably means why no agency name." On back: "I have regularly supported this organization but wonder how can you have any impact—attempting to cover 50 different areas. I don't see political activism on the list. Do you really think much of anything can be accomplished with this federal and state administration? And I don't see any focus to move curriculums of social work schools to become more current and relevant."

Let supporters know when the organization is having trouble or is unable to maintain its activities, journal. This is the third time in ten years that I have been approached as a new member. I would have willingly maintained my membership. Please send me extra brochures.

I would like to work within SWAA to make the social work profession be leaders in progressive policy development & implementation and in opposing the current policies of this administration; have a broader understanding of the effect U.S. policies globally, continue working for peace & justice.

Thanks for doing it. Radicals need to stick together in these mean times.

Get involved in health (Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security)

Your organization is wonderful and if I were 40 or 50 or even 60 or 70 instead of 80, I would be more involved with your work. I'm still active in mental health advocacy and people's rights, but I can't be active in all I believe in.

[SWAA] is practically invisible in my part of the world. In the tradition of Bertha Capen Reynolds, we need to do differently. We live in critical times. Much that we and others have built for human well-being is threatened. We must work to secure the future as we have throughout our history. We cannot "let George do it!" Initially, we must have more challenging posters, handbills, cards, etc. to alert our stakeholders with respect to critical issues facing social work and its stakeholders, neighbors, clients, etc.

Michael A Dover

FACULTY NETWORK - REACTIVATE!

SWAA Faculty Network Reactivated-Members meet at CSWE to discuss vision and next steps

In January 2005, roughly 300 SWAA faculty members received a letter from SWAA welcoming them to the newly reactivated SWAA faculty network. The welcome letter urged them to become members of the network and to strengthen their voices as faculty members. Faculty members "are in key positions to provide a voice for progressive thinking in social work and to expand the numbers of students and faculty who are informed and thinking critically about national and international issues that have an impact on our profession, the human services, and our society in general. SWAA provides an opportunity to dialogue with other like-minded people who have a stake in social work education and in human services, and to form alliances for social support and social action." Joan Dworkin, a national steering committee member who agreed to coordinate the revitalized network, worked with Michael Dover to develop the faculty list.

The faculty network held its first meeting in New York on February 28 at the annual program meeting of the Council on Social Work Education. There were fifteen attendees representing several schools of social work from different regions of the country including SUNY Brockport, CSUS, Sacramento, Florida A&M, University of Oklahoma, SUNY Stony Brook, Central Michigan University, Eastern Michigan University, Loyola University of Chicago, University of Illinois at Chicago, University of Toledo, Hunter College, and University of Connecticut. The meeting was chaired by Joan Dworkin of California State University, Sacramento. Guests were Moya Atkinson (coordinator of the petition to restore the NASW Peace and Social Justice Committee) and David Billings, Executive Director of the Peoples Institute for Survival and Beyond in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Vision for the Network

Those present discussed a vision for the network that included expanding the reach of SWAA by organizing units of the faculty network in each university that includes faculty, students, social work practitioners,

and community members involved with social services; providing a venue for exchange of ideas, opinions, and resources; and sharing strategies for action in order to make an impact on the local, state, and national scene. It was pointed out that such organizing has a multiplier effect. We also discussed the role of SWAA in providing leadership within the social work profession in framing dialogue and providing information from a progressive perspective as well as the possibility of influencing the other professional organizations. Examples of the latter that were discussed were restoration of the peace and social justice committee of NASW, restoring the NASW conference to promote unity in the profession (possible in collaboration with CSWE), re-establishing the progressive symposium at CSWE.

Activities

The discussion commenced with examples provided by Barbara Kasper from SWAA faculty members of ongoing activities. Barbara Kasper reported on activities in the Brockport area. Faculty, students, and community members work with the Poor Peoples Economic Human Rights Campaign, develop alliances with the county welfare workers union, and provide reality tours to heighten awareness of the conditions and needs of poor people. Mary Bricker-Jenkins of Temple University, who is the SWAA liaison to the Kensington Welfare Rights Union in Philadelphia, submitted a report of recent activities in the Northeast. They trained approximately 2,000 social workers in that region using a core curriculum with an economic human rights framework. Five students had field internships as part of this endeavor. Other work from a human and economic rights perspective included faculty development, research and writing, and leadership development. Mimi Abramovitz reported on a welfare rights initiative in New York that includes organizer training, independent studies for students, and field placements.

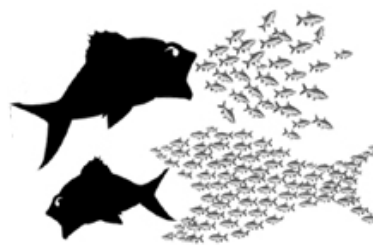
Several faculty network members attended the Undoing Racism

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Student Social Workers' Alliance for a Progressive Society

S.S.W.A.P.S.

TAKE BACK the PROFESSION!



S.S.W.A.P.S., Student Social Workers' Alliance for a Progressive Society, is an organization of student social workers committed to reclaiming the social justice tradition through advocacy and activism.

S.S.W.A.P.S. members believe that the challenge for contemporary social workers is to raise the political consciousness of all people with whom we work and to engage in collective social action. As social workers, we are ethically obligated to take action to ensure ample resources and access to services. S.S.W.A.P.S. encourages students from all methods to participate in our educational forums and social actions. These activities include supporting student advocacy efforts, sponsoring teach-ins on social justice issues, mobilizing students for demonstrations, working in coalition on critical issues, and promoting anti-oppressive dialog in a variety of settings.

For upcoming events and information visit: www.sswaps.org



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workshop at Fordham University which was held two days prior at the beginning of APM. They were so enthusiastic about this transformational event that they encouraged David Billings to attend the Faculty Network to see if there was a way we could work together. He briefly talked about the ways in which racism is tightly woven into our society and that in order to make change it must be addressed. There was discussion of including this workshop in the summer SWAA conference at the University of Toledo.

Moya Atkinson, who had recently spearheaded a petition campaign to the NASW Board, reported that not enough signatures were collected to get this on the Board agenda in the period of time available to organize. There was discussion about continuing this effort, about having a session about it at the conference, and also about the importance of this given the current global situation.

Terry Cluse-Tolar of University of Toledo reported on the progress to date in planning the conference. The title is *Social Work and Social welfare activism: Demanding human rights and satisfying human needs*. The conference will be at the University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio, from Friday July 29 to Sunday July 31, 2005. Faculty members were encouraged to get co-sponsorships from their universities. The Ohio area offers possibilities to have sessions on rural issues and farm labor organizing. Mike Dover of Central Michigan State University, a member of the SWAA National Steering Committee has been working on the conference with Terry and other faculty and social workers from Toledo.

Faculty network members present made the following recommendations for next steps:

1. Become dues paying members of SWAA
2. Send e-mails to their colleagues encouraging them to join the network. Also, organize faculty network units on campuses
3. Publicize, present at, and attend the SWAA conference
4. Participate in the faculty yahoo discussion group. Volunteer to be a moderator for the discussion group
5. Share curriculum, information, and activities with the network. People in different parts of the country need to hear what everyone is doing
6. Develop a speaker's bureau
7. Restore the Progressive Symposium at CSWE
8. Request SWAA representation at the upcoming social work organization summit; SWAA has not been included
9. Get involved in opposing the social security privatization initiative
10. Plan a SWAA 20th anniversary event in conjunction with CSWE in Chicago in February 2006
11. Plan SWAA meetings at NASW statewide conferences and National events such as delegate assembly.

The next opportunity for in person faculty networking will be at the SWAA conference in Toledo. SWAA faculty network members who wish to become more actively involved in the faculty network should contact Joan Dworkin at jdworkin@csus.edu.

WE WANT YOU TO SUBMIT...

... articles for the next BCR Reports!!

Please forward all contributions for the next to:

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4047 NE 13th Avenue
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E-mail: bikerbillboyd@hotmail.com
(E-mail submissions are preferable)

Phone: 503-280-1251

FAX: 503-232-4640

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

Please note: The deadline for materials submitted for inclusion in the next *BCR Reports* is **September 15, 2005**.



Social Welfare Action Alliance

SWAA Book Fund Submission Policy

- Author must be an active SWAA member.
- Author must have presented at a SWAA regional or national conference.
- Author will negotiate with their publisher for the best discounted purchase price.
- Books will be sold to active SWAA members at a discount from the list price.
- Only paperback or "reasonably priced" hardcover books with general distribution potential will be considered.
- 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



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WHAT WOULD BERTHA SAY?

The bertha-swaa Yahoo! Groups listserv is our mechanism for SWAA members to speak to each other about social work and social workers. Every once in a while, a thread of dialogue develops that is merits reprinting in the newsletter.

Once recent dialogue discussed the ‘image’ of social workers in the greater community. There were some positive images of social workers portrayed in works of fiction, (including novels The Case Worker by George Konrad, White Oleander by Janet Fitch, Disciplined Minds by Schmidt, Jeff, Rowman & Littlefield, the TV show “Judging Amy”, and East Side/West Side 1960’s TV drama with George C. Scott) as well as negative images (including the TV show “Norm,” films A Thousand Clowns with Jason Robards, My Name is Joe by Ken Loach, Ladybird Ladybird by Ken Loach, the novels Pigs in Heaven by Barbara Kingsolver, Shattered Bonds by Dorothy Roberts, Pitied but not Entitled by Linda Gordon, and assorted works by David Wagner, Teresa Funicello, Grace Paley, Barbara Needy, Alice Walker, and Toni Morrison).

The following excerpts reflect the various opinions and thoughts shared on the topic:

1/22/05: “... [P]otential social workers need less ‘image building’ images and more chances to confront the negative views of social work that are (with good reason) out there... otherwise you train folks to become the very stereotype you resist - the professionalized self important do-gooders who are so full of their knowledge that they don’t listen or don’t relate to people they work with as equal human beings – both non-professional co-workers and clients.”

1/22/05: “I... also reacted negatively to my memory of how NASW has approached this issue of obsession with its ‘image’... God forbid we just call ourselves social workers, but that might mix us up with non-MSWs apparently.”

1/22/05: “... I criticized the NASW image building campaign and argued we need to rely upon our C.O., group work, policy analysis and even clinical skills (clinical case examples are powerful policy advocacy material), to better organize ourselves as a profession which can live up to its ethical commitments... so this discussion has been timely, as I’ve been once again wondering how we can use film in social work education and undergraduate education to better help students (and faculty, since we can use a reminder) to understand oppression and to explore how social workers can and should function in an oppressive world.”

1/22/05: “What happened that, as a profession, we began to focus so much of our energy and advocacy skills on ourselves: a community privileged with college and post-graduate degrees; privileged with professional status (licensure), living wage salaries and benefits; privileged with standing in the academy, the courts, etc?”

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1/22/05: "I believe it is my obligation, and the obligation of every other field instructor and faculty to explicitly and consistently address these issues with co-workers and students so that we do not participate in the oppression or disenfranchisement or devaluing of other critical human services workers."

1/23/05: "...[O]ne of the major problems students (and faculty) face is the ABSENCE of images of social workers who take or have taken radical positions in their work... that contributes to widespread misconceptions about the historical and potential future role of social workers in creating progressive social and political change."

1/23/05: "Whether they are real or figures in literature/the arts/media, the community organizers, activists and get-your-hands-dirty workers I admire deeply because they exemplify 'social work' ethics, values, perspectives and strategies are, I regret to say, rarely 'social workers.' This has been very hard for me to come to terms with. I frequently feel 'professionally lonely,' and that's one of the reasons why I value this list and two of my professors... who introduce their students to Bertha Capen Reynolds and this society and helped us found a chapter in Oregon."

1/23/05: "I would submit that the reason there is such an absence of radical social work images is because few real radicals give a flying fuck about their professional identity as social workers - they are too busy trying to connect with everybody they work with as equals, not as professionals. Indeed, a professional identity is THE major barrier to radical work within the ever more punitive social state."

1/24/05: "I guess I see it this way: What better way to ensure the continuation of a negative view of social work from all corners (this view easily extending to the people and causes we work with and support) than to consider progressive ideals as external to (rather than intrinsic to) sound professional practice? I always thought that BCR's life work made crystal clear the absolute necessity of joining these together in order for our efforts to yield real change."

1/24/05: "The available empirical evidence from the work of Reeser and Epstein [show] that while the conservative ideology of professionalism correlates negative with social worker activism, the process of professionalization - including the building of strong professional organizations and even radicals-in-the-professions organizations which is what BCRS/SWAA is (i.e. the National Lawyer's Guild of social work) - is positively correlated with social worker activism. The Guild for 60 years has been open to and tried to involve legal services workers with little success and BCRS/SWAA has done likewise with non-BSW/MSW human services workers, with little success. We are in principle open but we must re-focus on organizing our fellow workers and finding them where they are, both in our agencies and in our, yes, professional organizations."

1/24/05: "Professionalization including licensure, various regulations requiring professional social work in schools, hospitals, clinics and elsewhere is partly a class struggle against the proletarianization and declassification of social work... Failing to see this dialectical relationship between professionalization, unionization and class struggle leaves one assuming that professionalization is inherently unprogressive"

1/24/05: "Bertha wrote many things about professional practice at many stages of her life. Yes, she rejected the negative ideology of professionalism, and stressed the relationship of social work and social life. But her whole approach was to stress a humanistic direct practice and she did not from my reading advocate a politicized practice, a feminist practice, or a socialist practice. She advocated good professional social work practice. She certainly did not reject clinical aspects of practice in favor of focusing on macro practice! There was a whole general of radical clinicians in the 1920s-1940s and she was part of that! Radical social work today suffers from too close an identification with macro practice, and we need to do more to win over those whose day to day work involves working with individuals, groups and families."

2/6/05: "... [T]he discussion re: professional identity, social work and why organizing by BCRS/SWAA among "non-professional" human services workers [h]as been apparently difficult... The discussion deteriorated - and I choose that word with explicit intention - into a debate in terms that are primarily familiar only to those who have had the privilege of investing in and participating in doctoral-level seminars, writing, research and debate. So my question: Is it meaningful - in the context of the larger discussion we were having - that a 41 year old, very smart, skilled, assertive, perhaps overly confident generalist MSW who has always experienced relative privilege felt increasingly left out of the listserve discussion about how to work well and respectfully and with a goal toward genuine empowerment and partnership with non professional human service workers and our clients?"

2/6/05: "... [F]or me the discussion stopped for all the semester/weather reasons you gave... Professionalism and professional identity

are ALWAYS an issue/contradiction in the real work of service delivery and social change (and in the classrooms that prepare for it). That is the context in which they should be debated, and in conferences or newsletters about real world problems. Most of the adult human service workers I teach do not want to go to social work school, and if/when they do they struggle mightily with how not to misuse the workplace privilege they know they are buying... Most people in SWAA probably have or have not made choices to relate to NASW (and sw licensure), or to CSWE, based on job reasons, just as I have to be in a local 'women in management' group to recruit students, not identify as a manager. None of us need to claim that such job mandated associations have anything more to do with politics than being one more contradiction in our lives in the beginning of the 21st century."

2/6/05: "Thanks for taking the time to respond, and for doing so in terms that are likely to be familiar to and comfortable for any member of the human services community that might be participating."

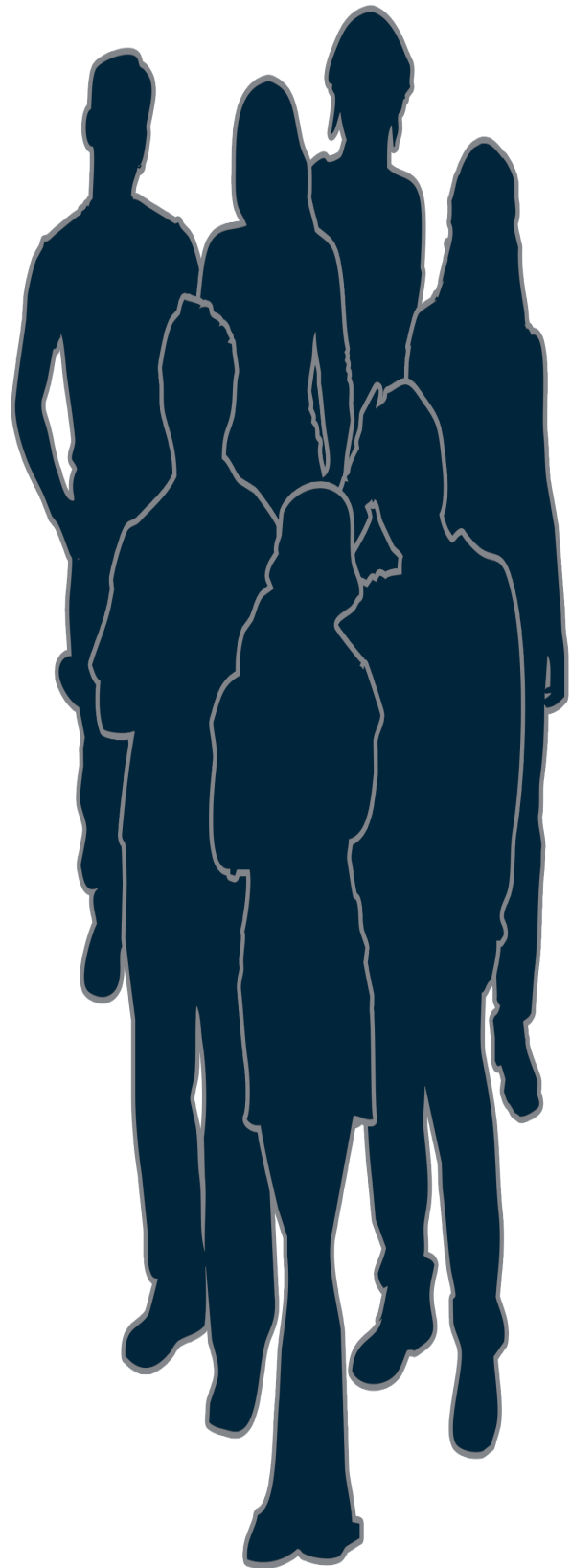
Want to join the discussion? Sign yourself up for the 'berthaswaa' listserv through Yahoo! Groups:

1. Go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bertha-swaa/>
2. Click on 'Join This Group!'
3. Sign in to with your Yahoo! ID or sign up for a new Yahoo! ID (follow the instructions)
4. Complete the sign up form and preferences, then click 'Join'
5. The group moderator will send you an email once you are signed up

Special thanks to Laura Walther for assembling this article

"Social Work can defend its standards only if it realizes the organized nature of the opposition to it, why these interests are opposed, and where its own allies are to be found."

*Bertha Capen Reynolds
Social Work and Social Living,
NASW, 1975, p. 166.*



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Accuracy in Reporting) for three months from December 1, 1994 and February 24, 1995 revealed that most of the recipients who were interviewed were black, even though the majority of recipients at that time were white. In a *U. S. News & World Report* cover story, “six of the seven pictures were of women of color, mostly African Americans. The only white woman pictured was described as clinically depressed, as if poverty only affects white people who are in some way handicapped.” Recipients shown in the media often had several children, even though families on welfare have an average of 1.9 children, slightly less than the national average.

DeParle said that he has been asked why he centered his book on African-American women, and he said it was because in Milwaukee, where he did the study, 70 percent of welfare recipients were black. By that reckoning, there should have been at least one white recipient. He could have found more white recipients in rural Wisconsin, but most journalistic studies of welfare focus on the inner city. Journalists look for compelling stories that will entertain, and black people in the inner city hold endless fascination for the American public. They are assumed to be part of the underclass, and when the media does stories on the underclass, they are always black.

Yet, in defense of DeParle’s choice, welfare policy has been powerfully shaped by slavery and Southern legislators who want to keep black people submissive and exploited. DeParle deftly weaves the genealogy of his protagonists - Angie, Jewell, and Opal - with the history of slavery and its aftermath and the history of welfare policy. When ADC (Aid to Dependent Children) was first created in 1935 as part of the Social Security Act, legislators meant it to be for white widows, not for black women. Later on those widows were folded into the other part of Social Security called the Old Age, Survivors, and Dependents Insurance (what people commonly call Social Security). In 1999 the Census Bureau showed that there were 3,795,000 children, along with their parents who received Social Security benefits because a parent was widowed or retired. A widowed mother or father with two children would have received benefits totaling \$20,712 a year. Who knew? It is one of the best kept secrets of the nation. The families just get their checks until the children grow up, with no caseworkers to pry into their private lives. What a contrast to AFDC (now TANF, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families), which has given cynical officials a scapegoat to advance their political careers and has subjected millions of women and their children to demeaning treatment, inadequate grants, and policing of their behavior.

DeParle wonders whether the stories of three welfare families can be representative of 9 million people. The answer is obvious - of course they can’t. They aren’t representative of the white population, or the rural population, or the millions of legal immigrants who suffered the most from the welfare bill because they lost food stamps as well as TANF benefits, or the welfare recipients who struggle against odds to finish their college education, or the small minority of recipients who are in two-parent families or single dads caring for their children, or the parents convicted of a felony who are denied benefits for their lifetime.

The focus on TANF also misses the disabled children whose benefits were cut in the welfare bill, the disabled immigrants who lost their SSI (Supplemental Security Income), and what Peter Adelman described as the most troubling cut (of the PRWOA), limiting food stamps to three months out of every three years for unemployed adults under age 50 who are not raising children. DeParle does not mention that in most

states there is little or no help available for able-bodied single people who have no unemployment benefits or who have used up their benefits. While his deep involvement with these three women reveals much about welfare reform, and DeParle sometimes illuminates the larger picture by citing studies, the larger context is sometimes lost and one is left to wonder just how representative these women are.

Nevertheless, DeParle has written compassionately about these women and their struggles with the welfare system and with poverty. He clearly cares deeply about them. He visited their homes, accompanied them to dentist appointments, and drove them to prisons to visit their lovers and fathers of their children. His description of their experiences gives us a fairly accurate picture of what is happening with black single mothers without a high school diploma who must rely on low-paid work to support their families.

DeParle writes vividly about welfare reform, which he calls “the Middle East of domestic policy.” He makes the opportunistic political machinations of politicians to get ahead on the backs of welfare families as compelling as a detective story, tracing the torturous fight between right-wing Republicans and the Clinton Administration to craft a welfare bill. On the far right was Newt Gingrich calling for a balanced budget that could only be achieved by ending all social supports - not only welfare, but food stamps, Medicaid, and school lunch programs. He talked of putting poor children in orphanages. He received ideological support from Robert Rector of the Heritage Foundation, who had the backing of the Christian Coalition and other conservative grassroots groups. Rector called for ending all cash, food, and housing aid to any women under age twenty-six who had a child outside of marriage. Former cabinet secretaries Jack Kemp and William Bennett urged other conservatives to “discredit the moderate pretensions of the president.”

Gingrich had powerful allies in the Republican governors, who controlled thirty state houses after the 1994 elections and who pushed for the freedom to run their own welfare programs. Some, like Tommy Thompson in Wisconsin and John Engler in Michigan, had run experimental welfare programs that received national publicity and had reduced the rolls. Clinton had approved waivers from federal welfare requirements for 40 states, setting the stage for states to run welfare programs. Massachusetts under Governor William Weld passed a welfare law in 1995, a year before the PWROA that set a two year time limit. Republican governors campaigned for block grants and Gingrich saw this as “the starting point for the block-grant revolution, with a hundred other programs to follow, from health care to housing” (126)

In a letter to the federal government, Republican governors Thompson, Engler, and Weld wrote, “We are willing to accept a reduction in funding if we are given the freedom to run these programs with few, if any, strings attached.” (126-127) Democratic governors were less certain. Howard Dean, governor of Vermont and the chairman of the National Governors Association, accused the GOP of trying to starve children. (It is no coincidence that TANF grants in Vermont are the highest in the nation.) Some Democratic governors feared a “race to the bottom,” with states competing to keep services and tax burdens low.

Clinton campaigned in 1992 on the promise to “end welfare as we know it” and talked of a two-year limit. Peter Adelman described this as “bumper-sticker politics - oversimplification to win votes.” The fine print of his plan also said, that people who “played by the rules” and

couldn't find work could continue to get benefits as before. David Ellwood, a Harvard professor, had presented Clinton with a plan that "endorsed time limits but only as part of a larger expansion of aid which would include universal health care, job training, child care, and child support 'assurance' - in effect, a guaranteed income for single mothers, since the government would make support payments if fathers did not." (103) The government could limit welfare to between eighteen and thirty-six months; then recipients would be offered a public job. When it became evident that the supports would be very expensive, Clinton lost interest in Ellwood's plan.

As support for cold-turkey time limits grew among Congressmen, Henry Aaron of the Brookings Institutions wrote Ellwood that "a feral mood is loose on the hill," (116) and advised him to resign. Ellwood hung on until it became clear that the Republicans had no intention of going with his plan, then resigned as Clinton's welfare advisor in 1995 and returned to Harvard, "where he spent the next few years in disillusioned exile, wondering where Clinton's core convictions lay." (137) Mary Jo Bane, co-author with Ellwood of the book *Poor Supports*, also resigned.

When the Republicans gained control of Congress in 1994, they latched on to Clinton's time limit rhetoric and proposed an absolute time limit of five years, and an end to entitlement to assistance. They proposed to send a fixed amount of money in block grants to the states, without a federal guarantee of assistance to families.

Clinton won the argument about orphanages and school lunches, but remained silent on the rest of the bill and left Democratic Congressmen with no support for an alternative to the Republican plan. He vetoed two bills submitted by the Republicans, one of which contained cuts to Medicaid. Although Medicaid provides health care to the poor, it also pays for nursing care for the middle class, and hospitals, doctors, and pharmacists benefit from it as well as middle class families. Clinton was not willing to go against those powerful lobbies.

The Republican strategy was to expose Clinton as a hypocrite who wouldn't deliver on welfare reform despite his rhetoric. When Clinton refused to sign a bill that would block grant Medicaid, the Republicans separated welfare and Medicaid and sent the bill containing five year time limits and block grants for AFDC. Vice President Al Gore urged him to sign it. Most of his cabinet urged him to veto it. Just before he signed it, Donna Shalala, the secretary of Health and Human Services, rushed an Urban Institute study to him that predicted the bill would move 2.6 million people into poverty, including 1.1 million children. It did not sway Clinton. He had seen polls that made him believe that if he did not sign the bill he would lose the election to Bob Dole, and he signed the bill anyway.

Most of the Democrats voted for the bill, including John Kerry (Kerry even bragged about his vote during his presidential campaign). DeParle chastises them for their timidity and says that even Ted Kennedy approved of workfare. Yet he does not mention that Kennedy voted against the bill. He also does not mention Paul Wellstone and Patsy Mink and their fierce opposition to the bill. With the assistance of her daughter Gwendolyn Mink, Patsy Mink crafted a humane welfare bill and submitted it to Congress, where it was ignored. Both Wellstone and Mink have since died - Wellstone in a plane crash, and Mink from pneumonia, and welfare activists still mourn their deaths.

Although he chronicles Clinton's crass opportunism, DeParle still calls him a liberal. Peter Edelman, who resigned his post as assistant secretary at the Department of Health and Human Services after Clinton signed the bill, said, "Now no one could ever say again with

any credibility that this President is an old liberal." Howard Zinn, when asked if the left was too easy on Clinton, said, "The moderate left (liberals) had high hopes for Clinton and were not prepared to battle against his policies. As a result, Clinton got away with a lot, from the passage of so-called welfare reform to his foreign policy - he was the first to raise the specter of weapons of mass destruction as an excuse to bomb Iraq." (Howard Zinn's latest book, *Voices of a People's History of the United States*, contains Adrienne Rich's letter refusing the 1997 National Medal for the Arts in protest of the dismantling of welfare.)

Lest anyone have any illusions that Hillary disagreed with her husband, DeParle quotes her as saying, "We have to do what we have to do. I hope our friends understand." She believed that if Clinton vetoed the bill a third time, he would be handing the Republicans a windfall to win the election. When she spoke of friends, she probably had in mind Peter Edelman and his wife Marian Wright Edelman, president of the Children's Defense Fund whose slogan "No Child Left Behind" was kidnapped by the Bush Administration as the title for their education act. The Children's Defense Fund fought valiantly against the act but they couldn't call out troops to fight as the Christian Right did.

DeParle says the left was quiescent in this fight, but that is not accurate. The pro-reform forces got most of the media attention, but there was protest. In their effort to prevent passage of the bill, the leadership of the National Organization for Women (NOW) went on a hunger strike and their legal defense fund continued to organize against welfare reform, but NOW was not able to summon large numbers of their membership to the fight. Many feminists were so committed to getting into the work force that they saw nothing wrong with forcing welfare mothers to do the same. Public service unions opposed the bill because they saw it, rightly, as a potential threat to their jobs. However, they did not mount a large or sustained fight against it. Like most of the American public and many people in the left, they did not like AFDC and did not define care-taking as work that should be supported by taxes. DeParle tells of a conversation with a man he describes as a "lefty labor organizer," John Gardner, a school board member in Milwaukee who had long called for abolishing welfare and replacing it with public jobs. Despite some criticisms of Wisconsin's welfare reform, he "reveled at the sight of so many poor women groping their way into jobs." (326)

There were many welfare rights groups fighting against welfare reform. I helped to found one of them, Survivors, Inc., along with some welfare recipients who were students at the University of Massachusetts. The Welfare Law Center in New York City helped these groups to coordinate their activities through an e-mail listserv.

Legal services advocates fought against welfare reform. The Catholic Church and the National Council of Churches opposed it. The American Friends Service Committee, the Unitarian/Universalist church, and the United Church of Christ opposed it. Many academics fought against it, including Gwendolyn Mink, Frances Fox Piven, Richard Cloward, Barbara Ehrenreich, Linda Gordon, and Nancy Fraser, among others. But all of these people were powerless to turn back the tidal wave of reaction because there was no large voting constituency demanding to keep a safety net for low-income parents and their children.

DeParle chose Milwaukee to study welfare reform because Governor Tommy Thompson had showcased his Wisconsin Works (W-2) plan as a model for the nation. Thompson's opponent in the Republican primary described him as a "two-bit hack," and the head of the state Democratic Party declared her "bra size larger than Thompson's IQ." (62)

However, Thompson had presidential ambitions and he aimed to get there through his promise to cut the welfare rolls. Although Wisconsin had lost nearly half of its manufacturing jobs in just 20 years, “welfare, compared to deindustrialization, was an issue politicians could more readily address, and voters were screaming for change.” (62)

The W-2 program, crafted by Jason Turner (who later went on to head New York City’s workfare program), was based on a work first philosophy. It converted a voluntary plan that emphasized education to a mandatory program that emphasized work. Everyone would be forced to work in order to get a check. For those who couldn’t find private employment, the state would create thousands of community service jobs. And it would offer subsidized child care and health care, not only for welfare recipients but also for other low-income parents. Jason Turner was a right-wing idealist who believed that work had the power to save the soul. “It’s work that sets you free” he said, “not realizing that he was quoting the motto on the gate to Auschwitz.” (162)

Before the W-2 program was fully implemented, Turner created a “Pay for Performance” program that enlisted county government and non-profit groups for community service positions, where recipients went sent to sweep floors, answer phones, or sort the mail. And he reduced their checks for every hour they missed. The program cut the rolls dramatically, 66 percent in the two years until the transition to W-2 was completed. Outside Milwaukee, the rolls fell even faster - 93 percent over the two-year run-up to W-2. Turner and others were amazed and pleased at the precipitous decline in the rolls.

DeParle asks why “so many ostensibly destitute people” declined to work for welfare. One reason was that they were already working without reporting it. Although only 12 percent of the recipients had said they were working, 31 percent appeared on the quarterly wage earners list. “Over the course of a year, more than half of the people on welfare worked.” (168) One of the women DeParle studied, Jewell, was included in that statistic.

Many of the jobs that Turner set up were “transparently dull or dumb. In the most notorious case, women were sent to sort coin-sized toys called ‘pogs’ into piles of different colors. When they finished, a supervisor dumped them, and the next crew started again.” Faced with tedious or

demeaning tasks, thousand of Milwaukee women had the same thought as Jewell: “I ain’t gonna be doing that! I’ll work and get my own money!” (168) When Angie received a work notice she looked for a job, but resisted the notion that welfare hassled her into it. “I was looking for a job anyway,” she said. (171) But the rules just left her poorer, since she could no longer double-dip. All three women whom DeParle studied had worked even before welfare reform because they couldn’t survive on a welfare grant. Welfare grants were always and everywhere inadequate to support a family and had to be supplemented by wages and/or family and friends.

Another reason for the decline in the rolls was that Turner’s system also punished the innocent because of errors in bureaucratic paperwork. A Congressional investigation found that 44 percent of the penalties imposed on people were in error. Not everyone left for a job. “Some turned to relatives, some to boyfriends. Some were too sick, depressed, or addicted to navigate the bureaucratic chaos. Even seeking a medical exemption demands an ability to function that some people didn’t possess. One of the saddest sights DeParle encountered in Milwaukee was that of Amber Peck, a fifty-ish woman who lost her check, her apartment, and after a drug binge, her spot in a homeless shelter. She said that while she had understood the work rules, she couldn’t bring herself to comply. “I stay depressed all the time.’ Then gripping two shopping bags filled with old clothes, she picked her way across an icy church lawn to lie on the hard, lonely floor.” (169)

DeParle shows us that working was not atypical behavior for recipients, but it would have been helpful for him to cite the studies that show how typical it was before welfare reform. Some welfare scholars believe that there were as many former recipients employed before welfare reform as there were afterwards. Official records of reported work before welfare reform showed that about 70 percent of recipients left the rolls within 2 years but, because their jobs didn’t pay enough to support a family and pay for health insurance and child care, many returned to welfare. A study that tracked recipients for 10 years found that 60 percent left welfare within the first year of receiving AFDC. Half of them without a high school diploma who left welfare for a job returned within a year, while half of the women with high school diplomas who left welfare for work returned within 2 years.

Welfare recipients have always been in and out of the work force, often because of their child care responsibilities. They have traditionally used AFDC as a substitute for unemployment insurance, for which they are usually ineligible because much of their work is temporary or part-time. Some people believe that if unemployment insurance were expanded to include those low-wage workers who are not now eligible for it, it could provide a more dignified income supplement to women who would otherwise have to go on welfare. This is not likely to happen under the current federal administration, but at least nineteen states have already put programs on the agenda to extend either temporary disability insurance or unemployment benefits to workers with care-giving needs.

When asked what it means to not be “dependent” on welfare and working, Angie replied, “I never think about shit like that! I always work, anyway. It means I be a broke motherfucker for the rest of my life!” (171) This pretty much sums up DeParle’s findings about work for unskilled black women without a high school diploma. By 2001, 58 percent of employed former recipients had incomes below the poverty line. About one-third of former welfare recipients around the country had neither jobs nor welfare.

Angie, who worked as an aide at a nursing home and sometimes worked two jobs, was the only one of the three women who found emotional satisfaction in her work. The others worked only because they had to in order to support their family. Advocates of welfare reform waxed eloquent about the value of a work ethic but Angie, the only one of the three women who could be described as having a “work ethic,” earned \$7.50 an hour at back-breaking work in a nursing home industry where more than one in six nursing aides get injured each year, and where work is more dangerous than in coal mines or steel mills. By the end of 1996, the year she left welfare, Angie had worked nine months and earned \$8,200. Her income was supplemented by \$4,700 from a combined state-federal bonus of Earned Income Tax Credit.

The Earned Income Tax Credit, which had expanded at the start of the Clinton years, raised more children out of poverty in 1996 than all other government programs combined, although it provides less money to the very poor and nothing to those without money. Employers like the program because it subsidizes wages and may reduce the incentive of workers to fight for higher wages. It has functioned more to offset the

decline in wages than to better workers' conditions. In 2003 the government began an attempt to cut back the EITC through stricter eligibility requirements and investigation of claimants.

DeParle was impressed by a study of the welfare-to-work program called GAIN in California. This study compared six California counties, five of which had favored education and training, hoping to prepare recipients for higher-paying jobs. The sixth, Riverside County, had stressed basic job-search classes and encouraged most people to take the first jobs they could find. "After two years, Riverside had raised its participants' earnings by more than 50 percent, making the program about three times as effective as its rivals." (112) The Riverside philosophy quickly became the philosophy nationwide: work first. DeParle comments, "The idea of forsaking education in favor of 'dead-end' jobs may sound cruel, and the thought can be taken too far... But it's often what recipients want, at least initially." (112) Angie and Jewell had failed repeatedly in classroom settings. Yet when DeParle discusses Angie's inability to get raises or work her way up in the job, he says that she would have been helped by on-the-job training.

The economist Robert Solow analyzes the Riverside experiment more closely than did DeParle. While the Riverside experiment achieved slightly better results than the other five counties, "even the Riverside results suggest that the job prospects for former welfare recipients are pretty grim." Two-thirds of the people selected for the Riverside experiment held a job at some time during the first three years of their exposure to GAIN, 10 percentage points more than the average for all six counties. "But the Riverside advantage diminished year by year and, besides, although it is big enough to be noticed it is not big enough to solve the problem."

Solow also examined a study in Michigan, where the state ended a program called General Assistance in 1991. The program paid \$160 a month cash benefits to non-elderly poor adults without dependent children. A follow-up study of 426 ex-recipients found that about 65 percent of them had worked at a regular job or at casual labor at some time during the period. Their total average earnings in the month before the survey averaged \$596 for the better-educated and \$377 for the less-well-educated. A third of the sample never worked at all during the two years, and very few of those who

worked were able to work steadily.

Solow concludes from these two studies that "the transformation of welfare into work is likely to be the transformation of welfare into unemployment and casual earnings so low as once to have been thought unacceptable for fellow citizens." He says that a decent welfare-to-work transition would require creating jobs and other supports. DeParle points out that the reason the Republican governors were willing to take on the welfare program was that Congress did not require the creation of jobs, an expense they were not willing to incur.

Solow predicted that putting large numbers of welfare recipients into low-paid jobs would depress wages on the lower end of the labor market and displace some currently employed workers by workers who will accept a lower wage. The Urban Institute estimated that the bottom one-third of the labor market would experience depressed wages. While this was never publicly discussed by the people who passed the welfare bill, it was probably one of their motivations, as well as their desire to break public service unions and to privatize welfare.

Although the law prohibits the direct substitution of welfare recipients for currently paid workers, some localities have circumvented this requirement by not renewing expired employment contracts with paid workers. In Baltimore, a thousand workers had lost jobs to welfare trainees by mid-1997, despite the fact that city workers had only two years before won a city ordinance guaranteeing a living wage to anyone employed under contracts with the city. In New York City, thousands of workfare participants now do the work once done by higher-paid city workers.

Solow concludes that time limits are incompatible with the substitution of work for welfare. He believes that we should go back to the notion of "packaging - i.e. the recognition and acceptance of the fact that many welfare recipients will simply have to combine earnings and public assistance if they are to lead tolerable lives."

No one liked the old AFDC program, including recipients. It was stingy and demeaning, but it guaranteed low-income parents a safety net and it gave many women a safe haven from violent and undependable men. DeParle tells of Hattie Mae Reed, Jewell's mother, who had done domestic work on the Eastland plantation. She went

on welfare in 1960 and "the check gave new powers. Rather than promote 'dependency,' which was later seen as a major failing, its effect was the opposite: it gave her a degree of independence she had never known. To begin with, it reduced her reliance on men, so it decreased the predatory violence in her life. It also bolstered her leverage in a rigged labor market designed for exploitation. Now she had options besides chopping cotton and washing white people's clothes." (35-36) But she couldn't live on welfare alone. "From the start, she juggled three sources of cash - welfare, boyfriends, and jobs - just as Jewell, Angie, and Opal would do." (36)

The welfare check also helped many women get an education that made it possible to get a well paid job. Whoopie Goldberg was helped by welfare. J. K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter stories, was also helped by welfare, as were thousands of other professionals. I personally know three professors who had once received welfare. An advocacy campaign called Welfare Made a Difference collected stories of people who have been helped by welfare to establish careers. Here are two of the 27 stories that they published in their booklet:

Carmen Arroyo, Assemblywoman, Bronx, New York: My daughter developed very bad asthma. I had to be day and night in the hospital and I could not work. I spent my savings and I had to go on welfare against my desires. They (welfare) helped me buy winter clothes for the children and protect them because they were all developing asthma.

Vivyan Adair, Professor, Clinton, New York: Today, I have a Ph.D. and am productively employed as a professor at a beautiful, private, liberal arts college. My happy and healthy 14-year-old daughter and I are contributing and conscientious full citizens and members of the central New York community and of the nation. But my life has not always been this happy. I grew up in a poor family and as an adult found myself in an abusive and unhealthy relationship with the father of my infant daughter. Welfare provided me with the means to escape the abuse, depression and hopelessness of our life together. I would go so far as to say that pre-reform welfare saved my life. Because of the safety net that welfare provided for me when I had no one to turn to, no resources, and almost no hope, I was able to feed, clothe and house my daughter without being forced to go back to the man who had torn our lives apart so destructively. I was able to go to school so that eventually I could enter the professional workforce and lift my family out

of poverty on a permanent and fulfilling basis.

The PRWOA does not allow higher education to count as work. It allows only 12 months of vocational training. States can count more, but by 1998, 35 states did not count education and training as a work activity. Maine is the most generous with its "Parents as Partners" program that subsidizes parents to attend four-year colleges. Denying college education to parents does not bode well for their future ability to climb out of poverty. One study of six states found that 87 percent of recipients who graduated from two- or four-year college were still off welfare six years later. A study by the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee found that as of 1998, only one out of six former welfare recipients in Wisconsin had a job that lifted her out of poverty. Meanwhile, the average salary of someone with a one- or two-year degree from Milwaukee Area Technical College ranged between \$20,000 and \$24,000.

Since the PRWOA was passed, there has been a precipitous drop in college enrollment among welfare recipients. Enrollment of welfare recipients at City College of New York plummeted from 27,000 in 1994 to 14,000 in 1998; at Milwaukee Area Technical College in Wisconsin, the number dropped in four years from 6,455 to 274. The numbers of low-income students who attend college will drop even more now that the federal Pell grant has been cut. Nearly a quarter of low- and moderate-income college students who currently qualify for federal Pell grants will see their awards reduced or eliminated under a change in federal rules that Congress allowed in its recent spending bill. And Pell grants for prisoners were cut off by Congress in 1994.

The Republicans wanted to avoid the expense of creating jobs so they retained the rhetoric of work while avoiding the substance of work programs by allowing states to count people as "working" whenever they left the rolls, whether they really were working or not. They gave "caseload reduction credit" for cutting people off the rolls. "When fully phased in, the law required states to meet a work rate of 50 percent, a standard no state had ever met. But if they cut their rolls in half (as twenty states subsequently did), they wouldn't have to run a work program at all." (128) Nothing in the bill required states to provide services to anyone. "Putting people to work was a discretionary activity. The core curriculum was getting them off the rolls." (129)

But across the nation, people who stayed on

the rolls had to work or attend a job search class. DeParle described job search classes as ranging between mediocre and terrible.

States used their block grants in different ways, sometimes even diverting money for programs other than welfare such as building highways or balancing the budget. Although there was a lifetime federal time limit of 5 years, some states had a shorter limit. Texas set some time limits as short as a year. Michigan and Maine set no time limits at all, using state funds for families who exhausted their federal aid. Oregon invested in casework. Most states invested in child care, although not nearly enough to fill the need and much of it was of poor quality. Vermont helped rural recipients to buy cars to get to work, but in some states there was no way for inner-city women to get to suburban jobs, a problem that Angie faced when she wanted to work at a suburban nursing home for higher wages. Massachusetts exempted recipients from work requirements until their youngest child was 6, although it later lowered this age to 2; Wisconsin required mothers to work when their child was 3 months old. (The federal bill allowed exemption from the work requirement only for mothers of children less than 3 months.)

"Mississippi placed its faith in the Lord, with Governor Kirk Fordice asking churches to pick up the charity load. 'God, not government, will be the savior of welfare recipients,' he said." (208) DeParle visited a catfish processing plant in the Mississippi Delta where recipients "left town at dawn on a company bus and spent their days severing fish heads in a jungle of conveyor belts and saws. The job paid the minimum wage and annual turnover ran 300 percent." The manager observed pleasantly, "You work in the cold, you work in the wet - and of course you're around guts." (217) He praised the state for barring aid to anyone who quit.

"Many families got lost in the chaos - dropped from the rolls whether God proved their savior or not." (209) Some states used harsh tactics to discourage people from applying. New York City, under Jason Turner, forced people to attend a four week job search program before coming on the rolls, and front-line workers made aggressive attempts to verbally dissuade people from applying.

Much of Wisconsin's W-2 program was privatized, with profit-seeking corporations invited to join nonprofits in submitting bids. State officials said this would make the program more efficient, but in fact it was an excellent case example for what's wrong with

privatization. Both the private corporation, Maximus, and the non-profit organization, Goodwill, were rife with corruption. Auditors found reckless extravagance at Maximus. The director of Goodwill was using his welfare dollars as a marketing fund, spending money earmarked for client services to seek contracts in other states. These two leading players in privatization, who handled half the state's cases, "became the two leading emblems of waste and abuse." (308) Before Maximus was audited, they had received a prestigious Innovations in American Government Award, which is cosponsored by the Ford Foundation and Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Award administrators called W-2 "one of the nation's best examples of government performance." (248)

Maximus and Goodwill lost their contracts in Wisconsin. The YWCA withdrew from the W-2 program, "bleeding red ink," and another (UMOS) ran up multiple fines for casework failures. The largest remaining organization was Opportunities Industrialization Center, whose president was indicted for his alleged role in a kickback scheme. The state appointed a full-time monitor to oversee the program. "Like a gang-ridden school, Wisconsin's largest welfare agency was being run with a cop in the hall." (332)

The following year, Maximus won a \$100 million contract to run the New York City welfare program, where Jason Turner became the welfare commissioner. The city comptroller challenged the Maximus contract in court on the grounds of "corruption, favoritism, and cronyism," but an appeals court upheld the contract. Turner is now a consultant, "with clients as far away as Slovakia and Israel; the latter country is setting up a version of W-2 called 'Israel Works.'" (333)

Although the W-2 program promised individualized casework, it didn't deliver. DeParle said the worse scandal was "the scandalous absence of casework. With the rolls down 90 percent, the state was collecting more than \$40,000 in federal payments for every family left on the rolls. Yet Opal had bounced between seven caseworkers at three agencies, at least two of whom had been on drugs themselves. And none of them had made the slightest difference in her life." (308) Opal quit her job and sold her furniture to buy cocaine. She moved to a crack house and continued to get welfare until the state took her baby from her and placed it in foster care. Three of her other children were cared for by her mother,

and Angie cared for one of them. With no children in her care, Opal lost her welfare check and did not follow up on DeParle's efforts to get her into treatment. When W-2 first began, DeParle made Opal the poster girl of welfare reform in *The New York Times Magazine* by writing about her leaving welfare and getting a job. By the time the paper hit the stands, Opal had lost her job.

Shortly after the welfare bill was passed, Barbara Ehrenreich attended a conference on "welfare privatization" held in Washington, D.C. A brochure advertised the conference as an ideal setting for companies seeking to: "*Capitalize on the massive growth potential of the new world of welfare reform/ Gain a leading edge in the market while it is in its early state/ Profit from the opportunities available.*" The welcoming address was delivered by William D. Eggers of the Los Angeles-based Reason Foundation, a libertarian think tank that exists to promote the privatization of government services. He announced that welfare privatization is now "probably the hottest area of privatization in the country." Lockheed Martin, Electronic Data Systems (EDS), Andersen Consulting, Unisys, and a host of smaller companies were proposing to take over welfare programs. Lockheed and EDS had lobbied for the bill to contain more funds for "information technology," a specialty of high-tech, defense-oriented firms. Enforcement of the five-year time limit of the bill "will require a vast investment in technology to track individuals, through name changes and geographical moves, for decades on end - creating a veritable Foucaultian panopticon of surveillance and a growth industry for the finger-imagists and information technologists."

Ehrenreich said that Electronic Benefit Transfer cards which are similar to ATM cards were one of the privatizers' favorite innovations - and the theme of a World Research Group conference in April 1996. Food stamps are now distributed nationwide through these cards. DeParle mentions the computer program used in Wisconsin called CARE, which workers had enormous difficulty mastering. Massachusetts uses a computer program called BEACON which has had endless bugs in it, stymieing workers, penalizing clients, and giving legal advocates a lot of work by its mistakes. It is run by a private corporation. It actually makes it harder for workers to do good casework because they are glued to the computer program as they interview clients, and they often have to call in supervisors for help in navigating the program.

Some public employees at the conference

asked how these companies plan to make a profit on welfare programs. Answers were vague, but the W-2 experience gives clues, which square with Ehrenreich's speculations. "One possibility is that the firms will take their profits out of the services and allotments intended for the poor; this will be especially tempting if... the companies are paid solely for 'caseload reduction,' as opposed to being paid for finding long-term, decent-paying jobs for welfare recipients. It is no great trick to achieve effective levels of 'application dissuasion' - by, for example, locating a welfare office several bus rides out of town and opening it at odd and erratic hours." Another source of profit will be to displace the present unionized workers by nonunion, corporate employees or even by machines.

By the end of DeParle's study in 1999, Angie was off welfare and still working at the nursing home but struggling to make ends meet. She said she was just "treading water." The more she worked, the more her work expenses increased. "There was bus fare, babysitting, work uniforms, and snacks from the vending machine." (283) Angie also lost her health insurance when she left welfare, although the kids remained on Medicaid. DeParle says that "absent a dramatic increase in skills, it's hard to see how she can work her way up to a significantly better standard of living." (336)

Angie was almost always depressed. One study showed that 42 percent of families on welfare met the criteria for clinical depression, more than 3 times the national average. What some people call "laziness" in welfare recipients is actually a sign of depression. An Urban Institute study showed that almost half of parents receiving welfare either said they were in poor general health or scored low on a standard mental health scale. One-third said that their health limits their ability to work.

Jewell was off welfare and working as a nurse's aide. She lost most of her food stamps after she failed to file the monthly earnings reports required of people who work. She also lost her health insurance for two years. She was hospitalized with bleeding ulcers and her wages were garnished to pay the bill, which she did not consider unusual. She said, "Anybody that works is gonna get their check garnished. Everybody in Milwaukee owes a hospital bill." She would like to become a nurse or have her own beauty salon, but chances of that seem slim. Her lover Ken got out of prison and

they are living together. Ken kicked his drug habit and had a steady job delivering pizzas. DeParle wrote Ken's story up in the *New York Times Magazine* as a success story.

Michael Steinborn, a dedicated caseworker at Maximus, knocked himself out trying to help desperate clients in a dysfunctional system. But dealing with clients' crises burned him out and he moved into a job trying to line up prospective employers. He and his girl friend, the child's mother, had split up. His second child was born with severe medical problems and needed months of hospitalization. The mother felt no longer able to work with a disabled child and went on W-2. Michael felt ashamed to have his own children on welfare, but he said the checks, with his child-support payments, helped nurture their daughter to health. He said, "The irony kills me: I'm telling people this isn't the way, and my own family ends up on the system." (333)

Proponents of welfare reform argued that it would be good for the children as well as the mothers because a working mother is a good role model. DeParle saw no evidence of this in the families he studied. When he told his middle class friends about Angie working, they often asked, "Were the kids proud that she works? - taking it as an article of faith that the answer had to be yes." Angie's answer to that question was "I don't think the kids think about that. They'd like it if I'd just sit around with them all day." They ask, "Why you always at work?" (p. 321)

Angie didn't expect any of her four children to graduate from high school. After she got off welfare her children's absenteeism increased. Keshia, Redd, and Von were absent from school 26 percent of the time. Her children's childhood "passed on a sea of boredom, dotted by landfalls of chaos." Her son Redd dropped out of school at the age of 15. He was unemployed at the age of 17 and thinking of selling drugs, saying, "I'm tired of not having no money." (186) Governor Thompson had put in place a Learnfare program which tried to keep kids in school by reducing the checks of families with school truants. When researchers at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee found that it failed to boost school attendance, Thompson attacked them as liberal ideologues and canceled their contract. (76) The right-wing ideologues who put welfare reform in place didn't want to hear any bad news. Most new initiatives that Congress passes contain provisions to study the effect of the bill, but there was no provision to study the effects of the welfare bill. It is possible that school absenteeism increased after mothers left

welfare because they were not able to supervise the children.

Angie's daughter Kesha got pregnant at the age of 17 and dropped out of school. The baby's father was 14. She moved in with a 24 year old boy friend, and took a job as a check out clerk at a grocery store. At the age of 19 she had another baby. Kesha had to care for the younger children while Angie worked, which made it hard for her to do school work.

One of the goals of welfare reform was to cut down on teen pregnancy. The arch-conservative Charles Murray, author of *Losing Ground*, believed that teen pregnancy was at the root of all society's problems. When talking about overpopulation in Third World countries, President Clinton extolled the value of educating women, as women are less likely to have children when they are educated and have a future to look forward to. But he did not apply this excellent insight to women on welfare when he signed the welfare bill. While the bill requires teens to finish high school or get a GED while on welfare, it does not enable them to go on to higher education. Research has shown that the most powerful factor in the decision to delay pregnancy until later in life is an adolescent's commitment to education and a future career apart from motherhood. Teens that have high educational expectations and school success are more likely to use contraception effectively.

The welfare bill contained a provision called the "family cap" which denied assistance to a child born after a family was on welfare. When Rutgers University researchers studied its effects, they found that it did not decrease pregnancies but it did slightly increase the abortion rate. The state of New Jersey squelched the study, fearing the wrath of the Catholic church.

Tommy Thompson left as governor of Wisconsin to become national secretary of Health and Human Services. (He recently resigned that post after President Bush's re-election.) "Having shown so little oversight of his own program, he gained oversight of the welfare system nationwide." (331) And he had not improved the lives of Wisconsin welfare recipients. A study by the University of Wisconsin found that people who entered W-2 fared no better in earnings or employment than a similar group who did not. W-2 had served as a deterrent, "but for the average client, its services made no difference." (332)

Officials triumphantly proclaimed that

welfare reform was a success because the rolls dropped dramatically. Between August 1996 and September 2003 the welfare rolls shrunk 54 percent. In September 2003 there were 4,880,037 individuals receiving assistance. Three million families - more than 9 million people - had left the rolls nationwide since 1996. A boom economy before the recession of 2001 accounted for some of the decline and tough sanctions and restricted eligibility accounted for a large portion, but DeParle believes that much of the decline was due to "message effects. From the TV news to waiting-room posters came the same strident message: 'Get off the rolls!'" "Scared, angry, or simply confused, all kinds of families stopped thinking of the welfare office as a place to get help." (210)

Whites left faster than blacks, and blacks left faster than Hispanics. By the end of the decade, blacks and Hispanics outnumbered whites by a ratio of two to one nationwide. (The rolls were 39 percent black, 25 percent Hispanic, and 31 percent white.) The racial composition had become what the public had always thought it was. Discrimination in the work place and by landlords accounted for part of this, but blacks were more disadvantaged in education and health, and Hispanics faced both discrimination and language difficulties. The overall poverty rate in the nation was 12.1 percent, but the poverty rate for African-Americans in 2002 was 24.2 percent; for Hispanics 21.8 percent; for children 16.7 percent; for female-headed families 26.5 percent. The national unemployment rate in 2002 was 5.8 percent. Among people age 16 to 19 the total rate of joblessness was 16.5 percent. The rate for African-Americans in that age group was 29.8 percent, and the rate for Hispanics was 20.1 percent. These figures understate the actual picture since people who have stopped looking for work are not counted in the unemployment figures.

Eligible families stopped applying for other programs, such as Medicaid and food stamps. Nationwide, about two-thirds of the adults who left welfare lost Medicaid even as the number of uninsured grew. By 2004, the government said that 45 million people had no health insurance, and Families USA said 81.8 million were without health insurance for all or part of 2002 and 2003.

The 2003 report of the U.S. Conference of Mayors said that soup kitchens and food pantries are swamped. Requests for emergency assistance increased 88 percent. Forty percent of cities were unable to provide an adequate quantity of food and

predicted an increase in requests in 2004. More than 12 million American families either did not have enough food or worried about someone in the family going hungry in 2003.

There was a steady increase in the number of abused and neglected children referred to foster care between 1995 and 2001. Children whose mothers had higher income returned home more quickly than children of mothers with low incomes.

DeParle doesn't discuss discrimination against women, which keeps women's wages at 75 percent of men's wages. Forty percent of female headed families lived in poverty in 2002, compared to a national poverty rate of 12.1 percent. Employed former recipients of welfare and recipients combining work and welfare earned, on average, between \$8,000 and \$10,800 a year in 2000. As many as one in seven families who left welfare from 2000 through 2002 had no work, no spousal support and no other government benefits. That is up from one in 10 in a 1999 study.

In twenty-five major cities surveyed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors in 2003, the average demand for emergency shelter increased by 13 percent in a year and requests for shelter by homeless families increased by 15 percent. On average, 30 percent of the requests for emergency shelter by homeless families were unmet during the past year. People remain homeless an average of 5 months. The length of time people are homeless increased during the past year.

In the face of facts like this, it might be more accurate to call DeParle's book *American Nightmare*. But DeParle doesn't go where his study leads him. As Frances Fox Piven says, his dislike of welfare and his fixation with the idea that work is the solution, overrides what he actually learns from his study. With the poverty rate growing every year, it takes a leap of faith for DeParle to say, "The country knows now what it didn't know a decade ago: that antipoverty policy can enjoy a measure of success." (326) He does, however, recognize that inequality is growing and the economy has given the common worker proportionally less and less. "Trading welfare checks for pay stubs, (Angie and Jewell) staked a moral claim to a greater share of the nation's prosperity." He calls for "the rudiments of a package of workers' aid" - health care, child care, wage supplements, transportation aid. (327)

But he doesn't call for support for care taking. DeParle doesn't think that care taking is

work. He refers to mothers who are not in the paid work force as “doing nothing” or as “idle.” In fact, they are caring for children and that is work. DeParle quotes Daniel Patrick Moynihan as having some doubts about whether single mothers should be forced to work, but DeParle expresses no such doubts himself.

Gwendolyn Mink says we do indeed need to end welfare – “but as poor mothers experience it, not as middle class moralizers imagine it.” The Committee of 100, a group of academics which includes Gwendolyn Mink, has proposed a caretaker’s allowance that would support parents in caring for children. The Wages for Housework movement, centered in Los Angeles and London, advocates the same thing.

There has been a recent spate of media coverage of middle class mothers agonizing over whether to leave their jobs and stay home with their children, including the popular sitcom “Desperate Housewives.” Poor mothers don’t have that choice. The double standard for middle-class mothers was revealed when Congress passed a law in 1998, two years after passing the welfare reform bill, giving tax deductions to middle-class mothers who choose to stay home to care for their children. Theresa Funicello, author of *Tyranny of Kindness*, has proposed a refundable caretaker’s tax credit that would provide a tax refund for caretakers of children, the aged, and the disabled. This would be a universal program that would benefit the middle class as well as the poor, and so would have more political support than the current welfare program with its high administrative costs and its abusive treatment of clients.

DeParle says that the next step in reform has to deal with the fathers. None of the children in his study had a functioning father. DeParle notes that the “marriage initiative” proposed by the Bush Administration to spend \$300 a million a year of welfare money into marriage promotion efforts was met with derision by the left. Yet he says, “rather than dismiss it, why not see it and raise it one - with an equally large ‘fatherhood initiative’ to help inner-city men find jobs and reconnect with their kids.” (p. 330) DeParle is certainly right to call for more jobs for black men, but it is not likely that any marriage initiative will increase their likelihood of getting married. Men are not likely to marry unless they have some chance of helping to support their families. William Julius Wilson points out the correlation between black men’s high unemployment rate and their low marriage rate. He proposes a program similar to the

WPA to create government jobs. The best marriage program is a jobs program.

Most of the men connected with Angie, Jewell, and Opal had been in prison, sometimes on drug-related charges. DeParle doesn’t discuss the racist criminal justice system. Human Rights Watch reports that in 11 states, black men are twelve to twenty-six times more likely to be incarcerated than white men; in Washington, DC, those rates are 49 times greater than for whites, and many if not most of these imprisonments are drug-related. Fifty-two percent of black male high school drop-outs have prison records by the time they reach their early thirties. The racist treatment of black men in the criminal justice system is certainly connected with their inability to get married.

Jacob Hacker, reviewing *American Dream* for the *New Republic*, says that DeParle fails to ask if the welfare bill was what the American people wanted. By not discussing this, DeParle reinforces the general assumption that “Americans are, by and large, hostile to government attempts to address social problems and simply don’t care about poverty, inequality, or hardship.” Hacker says that surveys showed that while Americans wanted welfare recipients in the workforce, they were willing to spend more to help them do this. While people didn’t like the much-maligned welfare system, large majorities of the American public say that government should help people who have bad luck or who cannot help themselves.

Reauthorization of the PRWOA has been debated in Congress and will soon come up for a vote. Republicans want tougher work requirements and more limitations on education and training. Democrats, along with some moderate Republicans, want increased federal money for child care, arguing that mothers cannot be expected to work if they don’t have child care. President Bush has proposed to cut \$1 billion from TANF in his 2005 budget.

The Bush Administration and a Republican Congress promise tougher times ahead for domestic programs. Even Social Security, the third rail of politics, is under attack. That will be easier to defend than any public assistance program for the poor, but the outcome is by no means certain. There are sometimes openings on the state and local levels for progressive change. Massachusetts legislators, for example, are now debating how to get health insurance for all state citizens and are proposing to create public state-wide early childhood education.

Welfare activists are lobbying the state legislature to preserve some of the benefits in the state welfare program that federal legislation doesn’t allow.

DeParle admired Angie and Jewell for their strength and resilience. They struggled through stressful and dangerous low-wage jobs, garnisheed wages, overcrowded housing, evictions, lights shut off, children’s illnesses, broken down and stolen cars, depression and bleeding ulcers, to provide for their children and to care for each other. Fannie Lou Hamer, a black welfare mother and civil rights leader, told the Democratic National Convention in 1968, “I’m sick and tired of being sick and tired.” Angie and Jewell are sick and tired, but they keep on keeping on. We must do the same, for their sake, for the sake of millions of other people living in poverty, and for our own sake because we want to live in a more humane society. It may seem like the task of Sisyphus to roll the rock up the hill only to have it roll down again, but Albert Camus tells us that Sisyphus, a happy man, liked his job.

Betty Reid Mandell

“The real choice before us as social workers is whether we are to be passive or active... We must first of all know that we have allies.... In using the organizations we have we shall find others in the community also fighting in organized ways for the same issues in human welfare.”

*Bertha Capen Reynolds
Social Work and Social Living,
p. 175-6*

*See
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