

Jane Addams: Reclaiming her Legacy- A Call to Social Workers

As social workers, we credit Jane Addams as our foremother. But, as is frequently the case with someone who becomes an icon, the depth of her work is diluted into a few sentences. And as is also often true, the more radical, political aspects of her work take a back seat to her “charitable work.” We repeatedly hear: “Jane Addams founded Hull House” We less often hear how she joined with workers to lobby the state of Illinois to change laws, to champion legislation that would both empower and protect people, and how she worked actively to wage peace.

In the last few years, as I have watched the slow erosion of many social programs, and many hard won rights, I have been thinking that we are now living in a time when it is urgent for social workers to go back to our beginnings. These beginnings were founded on a clear understanding that it was important to work with individual people in order to alleviate their suffering. And at least as important, it was imperative to work for social reform and to impact the roots causes of peoples suffering.

So yes, Jane Addams founded Hull House. In that capacity, she started a settlement house which offered medical care, child care, legal aid, classes for immigrants to learn English, vocational skills, music, art and drama. But when a severe depression swept the country in 1893, Jane Addams understood that it was not good enough to serve over two thousand people a week. She understood the importance of challenging those laws and systems, which kept people, oppressed.

Using her experiences at Hull House, Jane Addams, the Hull House residents and their supporters launched a highly effective reform movement. They lobbied the State of Illinois to examine the laws governing child labor, the factory inspection system, and the juvenile justice system. They launched the Immigrants Protective League, the Juvenile Protective Association and the first juvenile court in the country. They worked for legislation to limit the working hours of women, mandate schooling for children, recognize labor unions, and provide for industrial safety. When a Federal Children’s Bureau was created in 1912, and a federal child labor law was passed in 1916, the Hull House group saw their efforts bear fruit on a national level.

And Jane Addams did not stop there. When the Haymarket riot erupted because of oppressive working conditions, Jane Addams supported

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2006 SWAA National Meeting and Conference

Friday June 16 - Sunday Noon, June 18

*Conference Theme: Returning to Our Roots,
Social Justice Challenges in 2006*

Loyola University Lakeshore Campus
Chicago, Illinois

Hosted By: Loyola University Chicago School of Social Work
Co-Sponsors: Jane Addams College of Social Work, University of Illinois Chicago; School of Social Work, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; School of Social Work, Univ. of Oklahoma; School of Social Work, Marywood University

see page 10 for more details

POOR PEOPLE’S ECONOMIC HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN



**NATIONAL TRUTH COMMISSION
SHINING A LIGHT ON POVERTY IN THE U.S.**

**JULY 15, 2006
CLEVELAND, OHIO**

see page 11 for more details

From the Editor

The biggest news in my family's life is the birth of our daughter on April 1st... our first child! For those of you who have traveled down this road of parenthood, you can likely relate to the near-simultaneous feelings of pure glee and horrific terror as you learn to be present to such a young and delicate being. Overall, I am doing well with the joys and demands of parenthood, but the one big oversight was the compilation of this newsletter. Please accept my apologies for its delay.

However, I was able to make some design and layout changes that I hope give the newsletter a more contemporary look that also matches some of SWAA's other documents. What do you think? Please send me your thoughts or constructive critiques.

I want to acknowledge Greg Kauffman, who has been incredibly generous with his time and talent, and I want to thank him for his wonderful graphic contributions.

Speaking of contributions, this issue features a variety of articles and essays from some new voices. It is my hope that more SWAA members will see BCR Reports as a venue to share their stories and experiences in their work and in their activism. For many of us dealing with the social service industrial complex – either as workers or as service recipients – anger and despair can become overpowering forces. Hope and optimism abounds out there, and BCR Reports can be a forum to both agitate and invigorate. Please consider sharing your work and efforts with the rest of us through an article in BCR reports.



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“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*

**Social Welfare Action Alliance
(Formerly The Bertha Capen Reynolds Society)
National Steering Committee**

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National Steering Committee Teleconference Meeting February 26, 2006

Membership: Michael Dover suggested moving the database from Central Michigan University to the University of Michigan to provide an “institutional home” for the database. The NSC authorized Michael to further explore the move with University of Michigan.

The NSC approved the following membership categories and rates:

Regular	\$35.00
Student/Low income	\$10.00
Institutional	\$150.00
Sustaining	\$100.00
Lifetime	\$250.00

Financial: Susan Collins sent in a financial report as follows:

<u>Income Categories</u>	<u>Total</u>
2005 Conference Income	4,718.00
Donations	25.00
Dues and Membership	6,800.00
JPHS Subscriptions	2,023.00
<u>Miscellaneous Income</u>	<u>3.00</u>
Total Income Categories	13,569.00

<u>Expense Categories</u>	<u>Total</u>
2005 Conference	1,582.05
2006 Chicago Conference	3,020.00
Bank Charges	122.00
Charitable Donations	300.00
JPHS Subscriptions	1,987.00
Membership Expenses	1,618.43
Miscellaneous	75.00
Steering Committee	2,675.13
<u>Website</u>	<u>1,120.00</u>
Total Expense Categories	12,499.61

Net Total 1,069.39

In the bank as of 2/13/06: \$3,600.00

By-law Revision: The NSC decided not to pursue by-law revisions at this time.

Committees: SWAA now has three committees: Rank and file, Peace and Justice, and the Faculty Network.

The Peace and Justice Committee sent out a mailing to SWAA members to ascertain interest in working with the Committee. P&J has also been added to the Membership Form for those wishing to join. Moya Atkinson, Joan Dworkin, and other committee members have been working with some NASW Board members to urge NASW to reinstate its own Peace and Justice Committee.

The Faculty Network held its meeting on February 17th at the Jane Addams College of Social Work. Twenty five faculty network members attended. [Please see the separate report]

A current affinity group, the Committee for International Human Rights

Inquiry (CIHRI), has an overlapping membership with SWAA and is interested in becoming a SWAA committee. The issue of how to meet the expenses associated with CIHRI campaigns was unresolved. Marilyn Moch (co-chair of CIHRI) agreed to discuss this issue with the officers of CIHRI.

Newsletter and Website: Bill Boyd urged members to contribute to the SWAA newsletter, BCR Reports. NSC members decided to move the NSC listserv to the website from Yahoo because members were having difficulty keeping track of who was on the NSC and members were not being consistently included. This way, Bill will control the names on the list and can keep them current.

Book Fund: The NSC previously decided to concentrate the Book Fund on the books of Bertha Capen Reynolds. This is because books by members can now be obtained at discounts on Amazon.com. Laura Walther will list books on the website by members who have presented at conferences.

SWAA Conference 2006: Herman Curiel sent in a report that conference ‘call for proposals’ were placed on every seat at the opening session of CSWE and the call was also circulated at the Latino/Hispanic general meeting. Mike Dover reported on a very successful conference planning meeting held during CSWE at Loyola where the planning committee was able to tour the venue at Loyola and meet with the conference staff. [Update: As of April 12th, 22 proposals for workshops had been received, and several schools are co-sponsoring the conference. Sponsoring schools will be listed with a preliminary conference program on the website. Conference registration info and form are on the website.]

Submitted by NSC Chair Marilyn Moch

Membership Committee Update

Membership is the foundation of the Social Welfare Action Alliance. The membership Committee mailed out renewal notices in January and sent a postcard announcing the upcoming conference in May. If you have not renewed your membership, do so today! Membership forms are available at www.socialwelfareactionalliance.org.

The membership database has a new home at the University of Michigan. Membership Committee Co-Chair Michael Dover continues to monitor and maintain the database with the assistance of key faculty, staff and students at the University of Michigan.

SWAA now has five membership categories. These categories allow members to choose the level that fits their situation best. [See them listed in the NSC Meeting Report.]

Submitted by Membership Committee Co-Chair Jennifer Filipovich

Chapter Reports

Rochester

Rochester SWAA, through some American Democracy Project funds and SWAA member Margery Saunders, deviously brought Fred Newdom to campus March 1st and 2nd to give a “Distinguished Scholars” presentation to the whole campus community as well as two lobbying/advocacy workshops to SUNY Brockport social work students.

We now seem to be able to run Reality Tours without having to worry about filling the bus anymore! We’ve had a recent request for a tour to be given especially for the Homeless Services Network (75 people). Three SWAA members gave a “how to organize a Reality Tour” workshop to the New York State NASW conference in Albany on March 24th, with approximately 45 folks in attendance.

Most recently, we collaborated with Let Justice Roll - a coalition of faith and community voices working to alleviate poverty in Rochester. They approached SWAA and wanted to know if we were willing to run a tour if they financed it, with the explicit goal of targeting Monroe County Legislators, the County Executive, and the new Mayor. The Tour ran on April 8th, with 12 politicians on board, along with a mix of community activists, church groups, and students. The tour was very successful, ending with lunch at a local homeless shelter and a de-briefing period.

We’ve also had a tour request from a SUNY Geneseo Education professor who has a grant to promote literacy to underprivileged school districts. SWAA is going to give a “mini tour” to teachers in the Rochester City School district on May 11th.

A few workshop participants at the NASW conference who expressed a real interest in the Tour were with the Binghamton, New York Homeless Coalition. They came to Rochester on April 8th and took the Tour to get a sense of it, with the intention of replicating it in Binghamton!

Finally, we are piloting a “Faces of the Fallen” project, with a few SUNY Brockport students gathering stories of economic human rights abuses, which we will put on our local web site and build from there starting next fall. We are currently hoping that a few SWAA members can attend the National Truth Commission in Cleveland this July.



Portland

Students at Portland State University’s Graduate School of Social Work have been organizing on many fronts this past Spring. They have invited speakers from community groups outside of mainstream social work, including Western Prison Project (www.westernprisonproject.org) and Progressive Counseling, for an ad hoc forum informally titled the Red Lunch Box series.

Students continued the organizing efforts against anti-Semitism on campus in a coalition with other organizations and departments. First, Rabbi Michael Lerner facilitated a dialogue about the incident and shared his perspective on the origins of anti-Semitism. Secondly, Portland-based Sojourn Theatre’s Artistic Director Michael Rohd conducted public interviews four community members with unique perspectives questions about free speech, hate speech, and the role of the media. Both events were well attended.

The largest effort for the students this spring was bringing SWAA’s own Mary Bricker-Jenkins to Portland to lead a workshop on the Poor People’s Economic Human Rights Campaign (www.economichumanrights.org) and the role of social workers in poor peoples organizing efforts. Mary also got to meet with local poor people’s organizations such as Sisters of the Road (www.sistersoftheroad.org) and Dignity Village (www.dignityvillage.org) and encourage their participation in the National Truth Commission in Cleveland this July. This event will hopefully act as a catalyst for the Portland chapter to continue organizing through the summer towards holding a reality tour during the GSSW new student orientation.

Are you organizing as SWAA chapter or some other activist group? Please share your efforts with us! Send your reports to info@socialwelfareactionalliance.org.

How To Organize a SWAA Chapter

Any group of 10 current SWAA members can create a Chapter. “How to Organize a SWAA Chapter” organizing packets are available from the SWAA website at www.socialwelfareactionalliance.org or by contacting Melissa Sydor at melmas1@yahoo.com or 585-262-4366. 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.

Faculty Network Meeting Addresses Teaching Social Action

The faculty network held its meeting on February 17th at the Jane Addams College of Social Work. Twenty five faculty network members attended. The discussion topic *Teaching Social Action to Social Work Students: Lessons from Katrina* was presented by Professor Jill Murray of Aurora University, Illinois. Following the discussion, the group, led by museum Director Margaret Strobel, toured the Jane Addams Hull House museum. We are most appreciative to the College for hosting the event, to Professor Patricia O'Brien for making the arrangements, and to Mike Bass for overseeing logistics on the day of the meeting. Of course, our thanks also go to Jill Murray for graciously agreeing to share her ideas with the faculty network.

Professor Murray, a newcomer to Illinois from Louisiana, discussed the ways in which she encourages students in her policy classes to become active as advocates on social issues. Her personal familiarity with the effects of Katrina on the New Orleans area enabled her to incorporate material from that current event into her teaching and in her presentation to the network. Starting with a thorough overview of the NASW Code of Ethics, with particular attention to the sections that address ethical obligations to promote social justice, she impresses upon her students the role that all social workers must play in actively carrying out this mandate. She emphasized that advocacy takes place outside of the classroom therefore material must be moved from the classroom to the outside world. Another key element is that the instructor must demonstrate through modeling or self-disclosure that this kind of activity is real for them.

Students engage in projects based on their own interests, requiring active engagement in initiating or supporting legislation or in organizing for social action. To become oriented they first follow current news stories and report back on what they learned and how it relates to policy.

Two of her students, Marie McKee and Charles Sterbes, spoke at the meeting about their experience in her class. Neither had anticipated the extent to which advocacy and social change would be part of their professional role, yet both conveyed that they had been transformed by the class experience and were committed to making change. They reported that they are starting a student group devoted to advocacy and social justice that would address homelessness in the Aurora area as a first project. The first action planned is a sleep-out in front of a local homeless shelter to raise community awareness. Marie is working to tie this event to state legislation that addresses homelessness.

The meeting took place during the CSWE annual program meeting. There were many new faculty network faces present from several different colleges and universities. Among them were La Salle, University of Connecticut, Wright State, Eastern Michigan, Lourdes, University of Nevada, Eastern Washington University, Springfield College, Metropolitan State, University of Montana, and Florida Atlantic University. The majority of the participants took the tour of Hull House.

The next faculty network meeting will be held at the 2006 SWAA conference at Loyola University of Chicago Lakeshore campus on Saturday June 17th. Specific time and place will be announced in the conference program.

We are looking for a co-coordinator of the faculty network. Please contact Joan Dworkin at jdworkin@csus.edu for details if you are interested.

Joan Dworkin

Peace and Justice Committee is Recruiting YOU!

Dear SWAA member,

Are you overwhelmed by domestic and foreign policies that favor war, occupation, and runaway profits over social welfare, civil and human rights, and environmental justice? Are you alarmed about the threat of yet another illegal and immoral war, this time against Iran? Are you terrified that U.S. imperialism fosters international terrorism and threatens the safety of the world? Would you like to network, share skills, support, and be supported by like minded social workers and students who are working in their own communities toward peace and against war, oppression, and injustice? If you find yourself nodding yes, we invite you to join the newly formed SWAA Peace and Social Justice Committee.

We are already working in a number of areas, which include:

- Expanding the SWAA website (www.socialwelfareactionalliance.org) into a space of social work community empowerment where skills and experiences are shared, articles on activism and analysis are posted, and opportunities for continuing education are available;
- Facilitating the formation of working groups that address counter recruitment, anti-war work, torture abolition, prisoner support, immigrant rights, international social work, environmental racism, or any other area of activism, advocacy, or education;
- Establishment of the Department of Peace (www.thepeacealliance.org);
- Advocating for the reinstatement of the NASW Peace and Social Justice Committee.

The Peace and Social Justice Committee will be meeting (time and place to be announced), during the SWAA Conference at Loyola University in Chicago, June 16-18, 2006. Please come and look for us there. If you are not attending the conference but want to find out more about the work of the committee, please contact Becky Sambol at catsambol@aol.com.

We also invite you to join our list serve and participate in the dialogue. To learn more about the SocialWorkers4SR group, please visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/SocialWorkers4SR>.

To subscribe, please write SocialWorkers4SR-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.

Our goal and our dream is to return to our radical roots, to build a peace and justice movement among social workers around the world, a movement that inspires, empowers, and ultimately helps bring about real and lasting peace and justice for all. Please join us.

In solidarity,

The Peace and Social Justice Committee

To contact the list owner, write SocialWorkers4SR-owner@yahoogroups.com.

www.socialwelfareactionalliance.org

JPHS

The Journal of Progressive Human Services (JPHS) is available to members of SWAA at a substantial discount. It can be ordered through SWAA using the application in this issue of the *BCR Reports*. Neither the JPHS collective nor SWAA are involved in subscription fulfillment; that is the responsibility of our publisher, Haworth Press. If you are a subscriber and have not received an issue, contact Haworth at 1-800-429-6784 or at getinfo@haworthpress.com. 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 (17/1) and the forthcoming issue (17/2) appear below.

*For the JPHS Collective,
Marcia Cohen*

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Books by Bertha Capen Reynolds

Learning and Teaching in the Practice of Social Work (1985; originally published 1942)

Reynolds stresses the need for the professional social worker to be educated as a whole person. She describes the stages of conscious intelligence in the process of learning and relates them to the motivation for learning.

Social Work and Social Living (1987; originally published 1951)

The practice and philosophy of social work are critically examined. Reynolds argues, based on her experiences with labor unions, that the orientation of social agencies toward psychological dynamics makes it difficult for clients to seek help.

Between Client and Community (1982; originally published 1934)

Caseworkers are often caught between the conflicting needs of their clients and the community, especially in times of rapid change. Reynolds examines how these conflicting demands can be resolved.

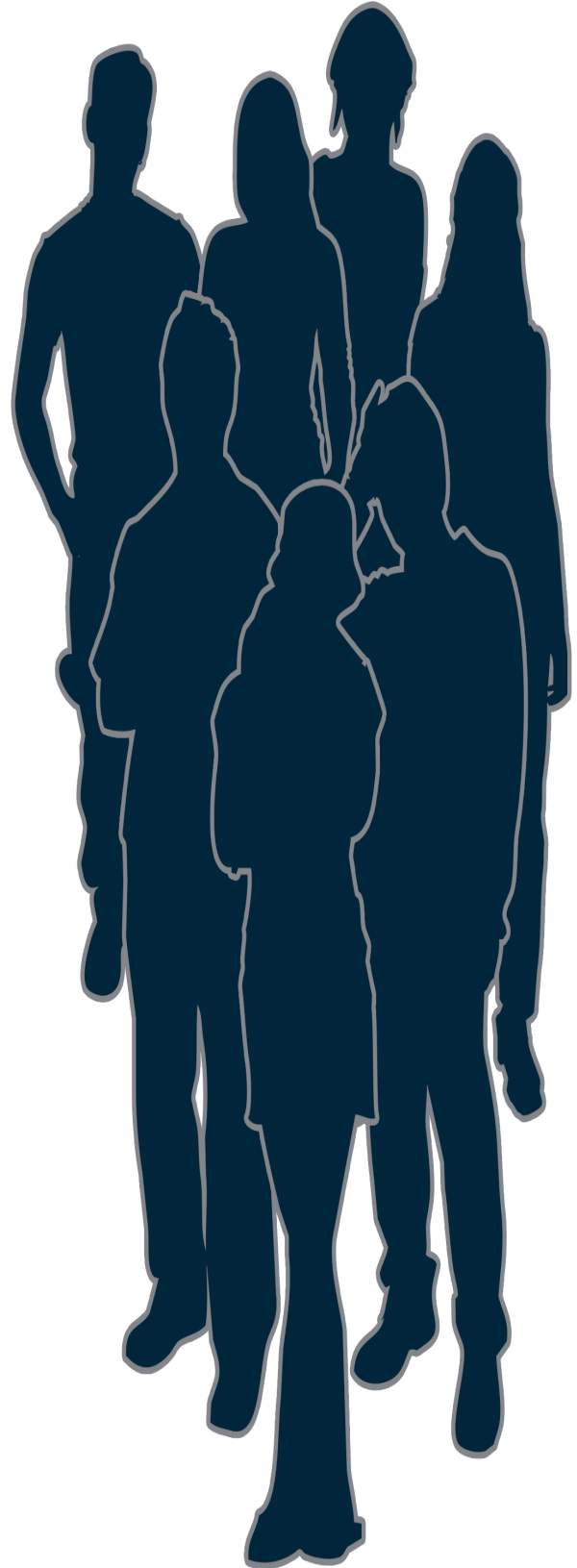
Uncharted Journey (1991)

Reynolds' inspirational autobiography dedicated to "young social workers who are facing realities and shaping our profession with courage and creativity." Covers the development of her practice philosophy and the source of her career from 1914-1964.

The Years Have Spoken (1988)

A collection of annual greetings sent by Reynolds to her friends from 1935-1973. This limited edition includes her annual original verse and narrative describing the condition of the world that year and how she had been affected by these events.

*TO ORDER Bertha's Books, go to
www.socialwelfareactionalliance.org*



From the bertha-swaa listserv: Liberal Professors

During the SWAA Conference in Toledo in 2005, we discussed issues raised by conservatives targeting our members and other social work professors. The following is a summary of an article which identifies the conservative players and arguments in these attacks. Specific stories have been omitted in this summary, but the entire article is available from the Guardian archives, the archives of Portside (<https://lists.portside.org/pipermail/portside>), which published this article to the web, and the bertha-swaa listserv archives, Digest #889 (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bertha-swaa>).

Few would argue there are direct parallels between the current assaults on liberals in academe and McCarthyism. Unlike the McCarthy era, most threats to academic freedom - real or perceived - do not, yet, involve the state. Nor are they buttressed by widespread popular support, as anti communism was during the 50s. But in other ways, argues Ellen Schrecker, author of *Many Are the Crimes - McCarthyism in America*, comparisons are apt. "In some respects it's more dangerous," she says. "McCarthyism dealt mainly with off-campus political activities. Now they focus on what is going on in the classroom. It's very dangerous because it's reaching into the core academic functions of the university, particularly in Middle-Eastern studies." Either way, a growing number of apparently isolated incidents suggests a mood which is, if nothing else, determined, relentless and aimed openly at progressives in academe. Earlier this year, Fox News commentator Sean Hannity urged students to record "leftwing propaganda" by professors so he could broadcast it on his show. On the web there is Campus Watch, "monitoring Middle East studies on campus"; Edwatch, "Education for a free nation"; and Parents Against Bad Books in School. In mid January, the Bruin Alumni association offered students \$100 to tape left-wing professors at the University of California Los Angeles. The association effectively had one dedicated member, 24-year-old Republican Andrew Jones. It also had one dedicated aim: "Exposing UCLA's most radical professors" who "[proselytize] their extreme views in the classroom." Shortly after the \$100 offer was made, Jones mounted a website, uclaprofs.com, which compiled the Dirty 30 - a hit list of those he considered the most egregious, left-wing offenders. Top of the list was Peter McLaren, a professor at the UCLA's graduate school of education. McLaren... believes the list was a McCarthyite attack on academe, with the aim of softening up public hostility for a more propitious moment: "This is a low-intensity campaign that can be ratcheted up at a time of crisis. When there is another crisis in this country and this country is in an ontological hysteria, an administration could use that to up the ante. I think it represents a tendency towards fascism."

These issues are not confined to university campuses... but it has primarily been universities that have been on the frontline. Right-wing firebrand David Horowitz is involved with Campus Watch, Jihad Watch, Professors Watch and Media Watch; he was also connected to discoverthenetworks.org... A few years ago he founded a group, Students for Academic Freedom, which boasts chapters promoting his agenda on more than 150 campuses. The movement monitors slights or insults that students say they have suffered and provides an online complaint form... Over the past three years Horowitz has led the call for an academic bill of rights in several states. The bills would allow students to opt out of any part of a course they felt was "personally offensive" and force American universities to adopt quotas for conser-

vative professors as well as monitor the political inclinations of their staff. The bill has been debated in 23 states, including six this year.

"The aim of the movement isn't really to achieve legislation," says Horowitz. "It's supposed to act as a cattle prod, to make legislators and universities aware. The ratio of left-wing professors in Berkeley and Stanford is seven-to-one and nine-to-one. You can't get hired if you're a conservative in American universities." Horowitz accuses those who accuse him of McCarthyism of being McCarthyites themselves. "All they do is tar and feather me with slanders," he says. "It's the politics of Stalinism." Political assaults on intellectuals are not new. Nor are they specific to the US. At the dawn of Western Civilization, Socrates was executed for filling "young people's heads with the wrong ideas." Mao targeted professors for particular humiliation during the Cultural Revolution. "These things go in cycles," says Mark Smith, [director of government relations for the professors' union, the American Association of University Professors]. "Horowitz did not invent this. He's capitalizing on an ongoing anti-intellectualism and fear of the other"... "There is a cunning behind the battyness," says Todd Gitlin [professor of journalism and sociology at the Columbia School of Journalism]. "It's not just the self-aggrandizement. It's an assault on one of the few social enclaves that the right doesn't control. There is a scattershot bellicosity whether the fortunes of the political right are up or down. They find it useful for fundraising if nothing else." Others argue that while the individual accounts are troubling, their ultimate effect on academe can be exaggerated. "Clearly these things are disturbing," says Jon Wiener, professor of history at UCLA. "But I don't think they are happening because students are demanding it. The Bruin Alumni Association [turned out] to be one ambitious, well-funded guy. There are some frightening moments, but then things seem to return to normal." But however many people are involved, the attacks do make a difference, claims Gilroy. "Of course it has an effect," he says. "There's a pre-written script you have to follow and if you chose not to follow it, then there are consequences, so you become very self-conscious about what you say. To call it self-censorship is much too crude. But everybody is looking over their shoulder."

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Guardian (UK) April 4, 2006
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/usa/story/0,,1746227,00.html>

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POOR PEOPLE'S ECONOMIC HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN



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**July 15th
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**July 16th
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**July 17th
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March with us in a call for the human right to health care in this country!

Vigils to Mark the Third Year of the Iraq War

During a candlelight vigil I held at my house to protest President Bush's illegal wiretapping, I found many of the participants from nearby towns felt isolated in their anti-war position. Because a friend and I had been seeking some way to energize our community in opposition to the war, we decided to organize a series of vigils commemorating the third year of the Iraq War, in each of the different towns that our new friends lived.

The American Friends Service Committee provided the tools for putting on the vigils through their Wage Peace campaign, such as posters, media contacts, and a general guide. The most difficult aspect of the planning phase was finding out if we needed permits and how to obtain them. In some instances, calls to the police station resulted in endless series of telephone transfers and voice messages. The result was that letters to police chiefs detailing time, location, and nature of the event sufficed. A police spokesperson in one of the towns said that there had never been a protest there before and so there was no protocol.

To achieve a turnout in areas not known for their activism, we knew we had to advertise widely. We put the vigil information up on the websites for CODEPINK, United for Peace and Justice, Virginia Grassroots Coalition, and Progressive Democrats of America-Virginia. We sent out a press release to radio and television stations and local newspapers. We also sent out emails, with surprising results: a local Democratic Committee asked us to make a presentation at their monthly meeting, which we were not able to do as it conflicted with the timing of one of the vigils. In addition, we notified congressional candidates in the area, so they would know where their potential constituents will be leading them.

The first vigil was in Fredericksburg on March 17th. We had a key spot at a busy intersection staked out and noted numerous police cars in the area. We also realized that we were standing directly in front of the VFW hall with our signs stating, "Bring The Troops Home Now," "Not One More Death, Not One More Dollar," as well posters detailing the local costs of war. Six of us stood out there for two hours, enjoying both the honks and thumbs-up of approval as well as the catcalls and obscene gestures of disapproval, not to mention the heckling of someone from the VFW hall. We judged it a success, especially due to the hearty thanks of a member of the local Democratic Committee who had read about the vigil on a website and recognized that her group should be organizing such events.

The next day we headed out to Manassas to meet up with the Prince William Peacemakers, a member of which had come to the wiretap-

ping vigil, for their anti-war vigil. The demonstrators welcomed us to their event, which has been occurring weekly since before the Iraq War started. We learned a lot about making signs and responses to passers-by who disagreed with our message. Some of these veteran demonstrators followed us down the street to our vigil site two hours later. A reporter and photographer showed up and interviewed us extensively. Most gratifying was the unexpected appearance of several people who had learned about the vigil from our postings on websites. Ten of us braved the wind and cold with anti-war signs, in a town with predominantly pro-war leanings.

On Sunday, we held our final vigil in Woodbridge. For the two hours prior, we received a flurry of phone calls from people requesting directions, in addition to emails from people expressing their regret that they could not join but asking to be included in future actions. At the vigil, the same reporter spent considerable time again interviewing our group of about 15. To my friend and me, it seemed that the honking horns were continuous. We were also satisfied by the appearance of a congressional candidate, and his campaign manager who spent quite a while holding an anti-war sign up to passing cars. Other participants included members of local Democratic committees, some of the Prince William Peacemakers, and people who had read about the vigil on websites.

The following Monday our vigils made front-page news in the local newspapers, complete with photographs of our anti-war signs and participants, in addition to many of comments fully quoted. The article drew attention to the Prince William Peacemakers and their activities predating the war, alerting people to the fact that an anti-war contingent is alive and well within the community.

We realized our goal of initiating conversations about the war by holding anti-war vigils in places where people feel constrained by visible militarism. It included debating the war with proprietors of copying shops who were reluctant to make anti-war posters because they or their spouses were veterans, as well as with the police officers who we called about the permits. Although I felt intimidated by the pro-war sentiment in my community, I also recognized that that the reluctance to speak was the very thing I was fighting against. My friend and I agreed that morally our only choice is to speak out against the war. We are developing a list of anti-war contacts that is growing ever longer. As we told the reporter, this is only the beginning; we intend to continue holding vigils throughout our community with the hope of building a strong anti-war voice.

Pam Harms
HarmsJK@aol.com

Here is the reference and link to the article in Potomac News (Prince William County) of Pam's activism:

Protesters mark war anniversary

By Elisa A. Glushefski

eglushefski@manassasjm.com

Monday, March 20, 2006

<http://www.potomacnews.com/servlet/>

[Satellite?pagename=WPN%2FMGArticle%2FWPN_BasicArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=1137834819476&path=!news](http://www.potomacnews.com/servlet/Satellite?pagename=WPN%2FMGArticle%2FWPN_BasicArticle&c=MGArticle&cid=1137834819476&path=!news)

SWAA at the Marches

SWAA members have reported to BCR Reports on peace and immigrant support activities. Here are some of the recent reports:

California

Natalia Salinas participated in the immigration march in Los Angeles on March 25th. She reports that it was the largest march she had ever attended and was glad to hear anti-war and pro-worker chants. She was less pleased with the US flags being handed out and hopes to see some red ones during the nationwide general strike on May Day which she urges all SWAA members to join.

In early March, Alaina Cantor participated in a rally regarding HR 4437 in the largely Latino Fruitvale neighborhood of East Oakland where she works at the community health center. She says, "I was proud to join the CEO and many other coworkers at this rally, and I called/contacted several other social workers to come out and take part in the very vocal opposition to this horrific piece of legislation."

District of Columbia

Moya Atkinson took part in a weekly vigil on the West Lawn of the Capitol on March 18th, followed by a demonstration and march from Cheney's house to the Naval Observatory to Dupont Circle. On March 20th, she marched/walked with a group from the Lincoln Memorial to the Pentagon. Fifty-one of her co-marchers were arrested.

Iowa

Katherine van Wormer reports that she has been in a number of anti-war demonstrations recently including two on the University of Northern Iowa campus against ROTC. The ROTC demonstration brought back memories of 1970 and the few years following.

Pennsylvania

In Philadelphia in March, KWRU and the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign co-sponsored a large anti-war rally with the Brandywine Peace Community.

Washington

On March 11th, Marilyn Moch donned the orange vest of a local group called the Peacekeepers and joined a demonstration in front of the INS Detention Center in Tacoma, marching from there to a meeting of security professionals in the nearby Sheraton to protest HR 4437 and INS immigrant detention policy. The Peacekeepers were formed after the Battle of Seattle to help keep the peace between demonstrators, police, and anti-demonstrators.

On March 18th, again as a Peacekeeper, Marilyn participated in Seattle's anti-war demonstration along with hundreds of others, including a local senior singing group, the Raging Grannies, who had recently learned they were on the FBI watch list for their peace activities.

Continue to let us know of your activities on the [bertha-swaa](mailto:bertha-swaa@socialwelfareactionalliance.org) listserv or by emailing us at info@socialwelfareactionalliance.org and we will continue to remind our members that SWAA is always on the marches.

Marilynn Moch



Claiming the Universal Right to Housing in North America

Mainstream media portrayals of deplorable housing usually depict so-called slums of Brazil, India, or African nations. But the United Nation's Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted unanimously on December 10, 1948 by General Assembly, covers all peoples of all nations. It has become increasingly apparent that the right to housing, along with many of the economic human rights spelled out in the UDHR, is being violated in the developed world, and that women and children are especially vulnerable when this happens.

Meanwhile, organizations like the Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign (PPEHRC) have been mobilizing people in the United States to claim their rights along side organized poor and disenfranchised people from around the world. These two forces came together in October, 2005 at the North American Regional Consultation for Women and the Right to Adequate Housing in Washington, D.C. Mr. Miloon Kothari, the United Nations Special Rapporteur, along with lawyers, educators, social workers, students, and members of various grassroots organizations came together to participate in trainings, to initiate dialogue regarding the right to adequate housing, and to testify about the consequences of the violation of that right.

The UN Regional Consultation Process

In 2002 the United Nations commissioned a study to address concerns regarding women and housing across the world. Consultations have occurred thus far in East Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, and recently, North America. Two more regional consultations are scheduled for Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. Results from this study will be part of the final report entitled *Women, Housing, and Land*, that will be presented next year in Geneva.

Men and women came to the North American consultation from across the continent: Pennsylvania to Kentucky, California to Prince Edward Islands, Wisconsin to Montreal, Maine to Saskatchewan and Illinois to British Columbia. Most of them came despite the burdens and chaos they faced at home with the objective of uniting across racial and geographic lines to end systemic violations of universal rights. At the consultation, presenters and observers were given the opportunity to attend educational trainings about the right to housing presented by The American Civil Liberties Union, the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty, and the Center on Housing and Evictions. Participants developed insight and skill in presenting a violation within a human rights framework.

The last two days of the three-day consultation were dedicated to the testimonies and to Mr. Kothari's summation and comments. Testifiers were from the grassroots organizations, including PPEHRC member groups such as the Kensington Welfare Rights Union (KWURU), Portland Organizing to Win Economic Rights (POWER), Chicago's Coalition to Protect Public Housing, Louisville's Women in Transition and more. PPEHRC member participation was funded in part by a grant from the Association for Women in Social Work (AWSW), and social workers, as members of these groups, participated in organizing and preparing for the event.

The Testimony

Testimonies were presented by panels organized by theme, a mechanism that revealed the systemic nature of the violations. The first panel addressed domestic violence and the inability to find adequate housing. The women presenting spoke not only of the physical, emotional, and sexual abuse that they experienced at the hands of their spouses and partners, but also of the minimal assistance received from police, shelters, and landlords. One woman testified that while she was out getting her infant formula, her landlord permitted her husband into the home to change the locks despite an order of protection being in force. The landlord denied her access to retrieve any of her belongings because she had not signed the lease and therefore had no "right" to the home. With tears and anger in her voice, she explained that when she moved to the apartment with her husband she was not permitted by the landlord to sign the lease because she was not employed. Another woman shared that when she filed for a protection from abuse order (PFA), she and her children - but not the abuser - were forced to leave the home. Other women testified that it was difficult to find housing on their own because landlords often refuse to rent to women who have a documented instance of domestic violence. What became evident during this panel was that women in these situations are plagued by a multitude of oppressors in their own home and in the surrounding community. As one woman stated, "No wonder women feel it is better to just keep your mouth shut and take it."

The second panel discussed the difficulty aboriginal women have in obtaining housing. They identified such interlocking barriers as the loss of tribal identity, poor relations between the tribal community and the surrounding community, and racism. They verbally painted pictures of drugs, domestic violence, and gun shots outside their homes. One woman described her attempt to move to a safer neighborhood. Unable to afford the rent, she said she was forced back into terror, back to her old residence where she prays her young children will not be murdered. Clearly, if the surrounding community is not safe, then neither is the home.

The third panel focused on forced evictions, displacement, and community destruction. These women shared how they were manipulated when development and gentrification came to their communities. Some were offered Section 8 housing but were not informed that they would be paying more for rent and would also be paying for all their utilities. Some were offered project housing, but with no guarantee that these placements would be permanent. With only a few days to pack and move, there was little time to clarify and investigate the options. One woman, notified that her home was to be demolished, was forced to move on short notice, but a year later her old home was still standing and decaying. Urging the need to save project housing, one man said, "It takes a village to raise a child. And in these projects you have a village. But those villages are being taken away." Not only are people losing their "villages," but it is increasingly difficult to obtain alternative housing because of high costs and waiting lists that can be multiple years long.

The fourth panel addressed age discrimination in housing. Testimony revealed that some landlords, generally those renting to the poor, lack accountability. A woman from Saskatchewan stated that some landlords were taking down signs indicating that their properties were con-

demned and then re-renting the home. Others stated that they are afraid to ask the landlord to fix things because it could lead to an eviction.

The testimonies concluded with a focus on the unjust removal of children because of inadequate housing. Women shared their stories of either being removed from their mother's care or having their children removed from their care because of inadequate housing. One woman shared that if she could find an affordable three-bedroom home then she could have her children returned from foster care. The child welfare agency has rules about the number of bedrooms required for her family but cannot make available an apartment she can afford, so the agency is moving towards termination of parental rights. Women on this panel admitted to the mistakes they had made that had presented risks to their children, but in each case they had followed recommendations and sought help. The only remaining barrier to reunification of their families was their inability to find affordable housing deemed suitable by the child welfare agencies and courts.

The Global Context and Summary of the Consultation

At the close of the consultation, Special Rapporteur Mr. Miloon Kothari summarized and contextualized the weekend's events. Three-fourths of the private land in the world is owned by only 2.5% of the population, he stated. He spoke of the common denominator in all stories across the global community: poverty. According to Mr. Kothari, rapid globalization is harming housing because, despite the growth in wealth, prosperity is not being adequately distributed and homelessness is growing. He underscored that the right to adequate housing is an inherent right of all persons regardless of race, gender, religion, age, and other similar factors. Everyone has the right to access and sustain a secure home and community. He stated, "housing cannot be separated from food, utilities, security, health, work, and freedom of discrimination." The poor are being forced out of their communities, and inadequate housing is having a greater impact on women and placing them at greater risk for violence, harassment, and homelessness.

This consultation is just one part of the fight to achieving basic human rights and just one means of holding governments accountable for denying these rights. These points and others will be made in his final report to the United Nations.

As social workers, we consistently work with disadvantaged populations. We see the challenges they face daily but most of us do not know what it is like to experience these hardships. An important shift in our thinking occurs when we see people not only as "clients," but as victims of human rights violations. In fact, many of us are having our rights violated as well, and this forms the basis for a new partnership with people living in poverty. Many social workers are members of PPEHRC groups and other organizations claiming human rights around the world. These groups are demanding accountability from their governments and the resources to meet basic needs. Aligning with them makes both good sense and good practice.

Joni Perry is an MSW student at Temple University School of Social Administration in Philadelphia. She and Bryn Mawr student Leigh Howard are completing their field placements at the Kensington Welfare Rights Union/Poor People's Economic Human Rights Campaign. Both participated in the Consultation. Joni can be reached at ribbittie98@yahoo.com.

DC Central Kitchen Deserves the Contract!

Events of the past week

Last week when the Washington Post reported that food delivery to a number of city homeless shelters had been interrupted because of the city's failure to deliver a contract to the DC Central Kitchen (DCCK), the DC Anti-War Network (DAWN) weekly action group was able to mobilize and act quickly. We had already been preparing and distributing food and other supplies on a weekly basis since mid-January, so we wondered not if we could do something, but how large scale an effort we could manage.

A conversation with staff at the Franklin Shelter that afternoon confirmed that there would be a meal delivered that evening, but beyond that they knew of no future arrangements for meal service to the shelter's 240-275 residents. At the DAWN meeting that evening, we passed a level three endorsement to raise funds to purchase food and supplies for the Franklin Shelter. On Wednesday, we contacted the shelter and committed to begin providing meals on Thursday and every Thursday thereafter until the crisis was resolved. As it turned out, by Friday, the response to our outreach was so generous that we raised enough to cover our costs for at least two weeks of meal delivery. We were very heartened by the response and deeply grateful to everyone who contributed.

Thursday evening we arrived at the Franklin Shelter, half an hour late due to rush hour traffic and slightly frazzled because we had tried so hard to be on time. Two of us had spent the day cooking and preparing 250 homemade bean, rice, and potato burritos. I know that sounds starchy but they were really delicious and nutritionally balanced when combined with the fresh and colorful chopped salad we prepared to go with them. A third person helped with last minute shopping, wrapping burritos, and delivering the food to the shelter. Two other people delivered 70 jugs of juice. I have to say that our small group felt really empowered by what we had been able to accomplish so quickly.

When we arrived at the shelter, we were thanked and told by shelter staff that there was no need for us to deliver any more food, as the shelter had a new contract with Nutrition, Inc. One of us spoke by phone Friday afternoon with Thomas Gaskins, president of Nutrition, Inc. Mr. Gaskins maintained that Nutrition, Inc. was only helping out at a few shelters for a few days, but that his company was not pursuing a food service contract for the city's homeless shelters.

About DC Central Kitchen

Meanwhile, DCCK has proven its commitment to community service to DC residents and deserves to be awarded that food service contract. Seventeen years ago, when the city was broke and there was no virtually no food delivery system in place for homeless DC residents, Robert Egger bought a refrigerated truck with his first grant and began serving meals.

DCCK now provides 4,000 daily meals 365 days a year to 100 agencies including transitional homes, substance abuse treatment centers, adult education and job training agencies, community and youth centers, children's after school programs, and senior citizen programs as well as emergency shelters.

The city's primary contribution has been free rent and utilities for DCCK, which represents a mere fraction of operating costs. For the past two years, DCCK has been trying to get the city to recognize the severity of the situation. The city's homeless population is not only growing at a rapid rate, it is also aging. In addition to the growing senior population, the city's homeless population counts more and more children among its ranks. According to DC Hunger Solutions, approximately 175,000 residents depend on emergency food from food banks, pantries, and soup kitchens and one out of three children in the district "lives on the edge of hunger" (www.dchunger.org).

DCCK has struggled to absorb the rising costs of providing nutritionally appropriate balanced meals to DC's diverse and growing homeless population. After 17 years, the city finally made a temporary financial commitment to DCCK. The \$50,000 a month the city granted to DCCK over a four month period ending April 30 represented less than half of a percent of the money spent by DCCK over the last 17 years. On Tuesday, May 1, DCCK sent a letter to the city shelters notifying them that it would be forced to suspend meal service until the city government made a decision to improve the system and invest in a higher level of nutrition for residents.

DCCK does a lot more than serve food. Its food delivery enables the area agencies it serves to refocus their limited resources on their clients' other needs. DCCK also helps people get into mental health and substance abuse programs and conducts four 12-week culinary training programs every year. Since 1990, the DCCK culinary training program has graduated 600 former residents of shelters, halfway houses, and transitional programs. DCCK has 50 full time employees, 20 of whom are training program graduates. All employees receive full benefits and living wages.

I recently talked to Mike Curtin, chief operating officer for DCCK. He maintains that DCCK will be able to do even more if they get the food service contract for the city shelters. He is confident that "exponential benefits will be gained by the city if we get the contract." He explained that they are not serving fewer meals since they stopped delivering food to Blair, 801 E, Franklin, Emery, and La Casa shelters, but have redirected the food to other destinations where it is also needed.

Both Mike and Robert have been fasting since Tuesday when they discontinued food service to those five shelters, out of respect for the men and women in those shelters. They will continue their fast until the city makes a commitment to move forward to award a contract for food service.

Privatization: a weapon in a weaponless war

I hope that the Community Partnership for the Prevention of Homelessness, the agency entrusted with awarding contracts for services to the homeless, is not considering a food service contract to any private company. The privatization of public social services is a significant contributing cause of poverty and the concomitant increase in the concentration of wealth distribution. When fat contracts are handed off by governments to the private sector, there is much fancy talk about improved efficiency and cost effectiveness, but in reality access to social services is reduced and even eliminated. Those who can afford it least suffer loss of employment and income.

At the next DAWN meeting, someone commented that he didn't know DAWN had gotten into the food business. I told him we were not in any business and asked him, "Don't you understand that the war on the poor is a real war and we are anti-war activists?" He responded, "I didn't think you were involved with that kind of war."

Privatization is a cornerstone neoliberal strategy in nameless, weaponless wars that kill slowly and covertly, not just in Washington DC but also in East Los Angeles, Mexico, India, Ghana, and other developing countries around the world. There are no troops to call home from these wars. Indeed, even if all the troops were brought home from Iraq today, a weaponless war would continue under the auspices of the World Bank, the IMF, and the corporate interests they represent. It is absolutely vital that anti-war activists begin to understand this.

What will happen next?

I admit that I am not feeling optimistic, given the city's track record of pandering to corporate interests. Ironically, while the food service crisis was unfolding this past week, ground breaking began for the \$600 million baseball stadium and plans were announced to tear down low-income housing and terminate a federal contract that pays rent for 211 low income families. The city has already shut down both the Randall and Gale shelters. The long term goal is understood to be the cleansing of the downtown area for development. The homeless are being hounded into southeast where they will be out of sight, out of mind. Does any one actually believe that any "We Are, Inc." will advocate for vulnerable DC residents, let alone for the homeless?

When it comes to privatization, the direction of money flow is one way- out of our communities.

Think about this: a private company that provides food for profit would have no interest in helping homeless people get jobs because there would be less people to feed and that would cut into profits. The cost to the city per shelter resident is \$24,000. The cost per incarcerated individual is \$42,000 per year.

Then think about this: meals prepared by DCCK rely heavily on donated ingredients as well as monetary grants and donations. According to a study by the Kellogg Business School at Northwestern University, for every dollar donated to DCCK, \$2.86 is returned to the community in food alone. This figure does not account for the return to the community in training programs, much less the return of hope and restored dignity when people get second chances.

DAWN weekly action group: connecting the dots between the wars.

One of the first decisions made by this year by the newly formed DAWN weekly action group was to begin weekly service to homeless DC residents. Every week, almost always on Saturdays, we have distributed packaged and home-cooked food, socks, toiletries, and other items when we have them, to 30-40 people in northwest DC. On foot with our shopping cart, we cover a slightly different route each week within an area between the Canadian Embassy and Franklin Square. Our original goal was to begin connecting the dots between global and local poverty and war, and between the wars abroad and the local war on the poor here in DC. Going out week after week has surely brought the connections home to those of us who participate.

In addition, as we have continued our service over the weeks and months we have begun to get to know some of the people we meet on the streets, in the parks, and around Metro stations. Through our growing connections and relationships, we are discovering how people manage to survive and build community primarily through their own resourcefulness and creativity.

When we run out of supplies, it is often while hands are still outstretched toward us. I need to tell you that I am haunted all week when that happens. We are learning directly from people about how their lives are impacted by the city's criminal neglect.

The folks at DC Central Kitchen give a damn. Their decision to suspend food service was made out of desperation, and it has finally brought attention to a growing crisis. I can only hope that, just this once, the city and its appointed decision making bodies will do the right thing and award the contract to DC Central Kitchen.

Becky Sambol
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Urban Geocentrism: Another Dimension of Cultural Competence

When we talk about "cultural sensitivity" and "cultural competence," we are usually thinking in terms of ethnicity. Often we do not consider geographically-related differences in life styles and belief systems to be "culturally" noteworthy. But "culture" - the sum total of ways of living that is transmitted across generations - can have very powerful geographic roots. Culture and the resulting behaviors of a population can be quite different between rural and urban areas, with considerable diversity among rural environments even within the same geographic regions. These differences can precipitate misunderstandings, miscommunications, and unintentional disrespect, because most people naturally live and relate in terms of expectations and assumptions based on their own cultural upbringing and experiences. We need to learn that other people do not necessarily believe, behave, or communicate in the same ways that we do, and we must be careful not to make value judgments based on these differences. In order to be culturally sensitive, workers must be educated regarding the customs of local populations, taking into consideration socioeconomics, language and linguistics, religion, ethnic diversity, local social systems, communication patterns, priorities, pace of living, and even local humor.

The effects of "geocentrism" in city and country

Unconscious geocentrism and lack of awareness of the need for cultural competence with regard to rural issues significantly affect state-wide systems of social services. Along with the fact that most rural areas are underserved, or even unserved, any services that might be available often are insufficient, inaccessible, or inappropriate because fundamental differences between urban and rural cultures are not recognized.

Generally, the needs of people in rural areas are occasionally mentioned but more often are ignored. Power is urbanized. Resources are "centralized" (which means located in the cities) and most policies and

practices are developed by people from urban cultures in accordance with the manner by which they recognize needs; how many workers in state level positions were raised way out in the country? Most funding for programs and services go to the cities. Of course people in outlying areas are permitted access to these programs... if they can get there. Access to and use of social services can be affected by travel distances, topography, availability/use of transportation, availability/use of technology and fear. Many rural folks can be intimidated by the size, geographic configuration, and traffic density of big cities, and they may feel disrespected or mistreated by 'city folks,' sometimes because they are.

There are many examples of problems which can be approached in terms of cultural competence. One of the big issues we have been experiencing recently in rural Tennessee counties has to do with the placement of troubled youth in group homes that are located in rural areas. Many of these teenagers are violent offenders from the inner cities; they are placed into this alien environment where they have not chosen to be, and enrolled in a little country school. Imagine the resulting culture clash as a troubled teen from the inner city, secretly terrified of the bears in the woods, is plunked down in Cowpaddy, U.S.A. with a bunch of "hicks," with no idea what to expect from the country environment, perhaps intimidated even by the strange noises at night. The other kids and the adults speak a foreign language where even the regular words may not mean what they seem, where the signals for social relating are different, expectations are different, and accurate predictions upon which to base one's behavior cannot be made. The troubled teen, stigmatized to begin with by being "from the group home," surely does not fit in at school, and becomes more frightened and angry, acting out in explosive and violent ways. Meanwhile, the other students and the teachers have no idea how to relate with and deal with these youth. They are not familiar with urban street culture and have no experience with this particular type and level of violence. Teachers and school officials - who really do want to help the kids and sincerely want to see things work out - have no earthly idea how to make that happen. They get no support from the group homes or state agencies but get plenty of blame for not providing appropriate services.

Conversely, we have situations where mentally/behaviorally troubled individuals from the country have been moved from residential facilities near their homes that are staffed with local providers to "centralized" facilities in the big cities where everything is different from anything they know. Their adjustment is difficult, and transitioning back into the community by way of this unfamiliar, non-negotiable environment is impossible.

Rural realities and urban policies

Systems in rural communities tend to be based on trust; policies and requirements emerging from urban culture may not be appropriate to meet rural needs. For example, in the district where I live, we have a tremendous need for respite care providers for mentally/emotionally disturbed children. Often, extended family members or even neighbors help with the care of these children, but this can place a huge financial burden on them. There are mechanisms for providing financial compensation, but these require the caregivers to undergo background checks and other forms of official scrutiny. People would rather make do with not enough than, as one grandmother said, "take the time and spend the gas to go get a background check to prove I'm safe

enough to care for my own grandkids here where everyone knows me.”

Ideally, service delivery systems should emerge from the individual communities, and not be imposed on them from the outside. Of course, for this to be successful we need adequate funding, staffing, and training. Given the limitations of our resources, this approach can be difficult. We can raise the level of cultural competence in the field, however, by increasing the awareness of urban workers about rural cultures, fostering respect for individual differences, and educating service providers as to regionally appropriate ways of communicating and relating. “Rural culture” varies greatly and can be very different in different communities, reflecting the local geography and generational influences. If service delivery systems are to be effective, they must be individualized according to the needs of each community.

State and federal policymakers must realize that solutions to the challenges that people in rural communities face have to be community-based, but also that adequate outside support is critical. Even more important are the ways in which these supports are offered and delivered. Families in rural communities are deeply rooted in those communities, and outsiders remain outsiders and generally are viewed with suspicion until they prove themselves by displaying ongoing respect for the local people and their customs.

Merril Harris, M.Ed is a retired schoolteacher who raised five adopted children with special needs on her hill farm in Tennessee. Her professional training is in special education, but she spends much of her time functioning as a case manager for families in her community. For this and her work with several community organizations and state boards, she was named Tennessee Child Advocate of the Year in 2003. She can be contacted at merril@myway.com.

Social Workers and Social Responsibility

A quick search of Google reveals a wide variety of professions and disciplines “for” social responsibility. Among those are physicians, computer scientists, educators, librarians, corporate businesses, attorneys, and psychologists. The University of Barcelona even offers a Masters in Corporate Social Responsibility. Regardless of the differences among the missions of those various professions, what they share in common in regard to social responsibility is the idea that we are obligated to consider the impact of our actions on people and the environment.

At the beginning of the 20th century, social work was pioneering the changes we take for granted today, such as the 40-hour workweek, safe working conditions, and voting rights. In spite of the benefits, advantages, and changes brought about by those early advocates for social justice, issues abound today in both in the inner city and in rural areas. Crime, unemployment, poverty, poor housing, and lack of health care remain deeply entrenched in the urban landscape. Lack of access to water, plumbing, transportation, health care, and housing are still issues in poor communities of the southern and southwestern parts of the United States. Immigrant workers in America live in migrant work camps that bear chilling resemblance to the impoverished black townships of South Africa. Globally, military conflicts devastate people and change their lives in ways from which it will be impossible to com-

pletely recover.

Harry Specht created quite a stir in 1994 with his book Unfaithful Angels: How Social Work Has Abandoned Its Mission. He charged that the profession had retreated from our mission to eradicate social problems, retreated from macro practice and community practice and issues related to social and economic justice and instead established and embraced “the Church of the Individual Repair” in the name of professionalism. The polarizing debate continues to this day. As stated recently on a discussion board for social work educators, social work as a profession talks Jane Addams and walks Mary Richmond.

Not only should we be mindful of the heritage of macro practice social work, but of its possibilities to change the structure of the world in which we live. Mack McCarter shares the process of Shreveport-Bossier Community Renewal “to align our daily lives with the transcendent cause which marches us out of our small thinking into a new universe of possibilities” (2006, p.16). McCarter states they do this by asking large questions. If we adapted his large questioning process, we could start with the question of ‘what kind of world do we want?’ According to McCarter, questions that result in a dialogue toward that kind of world are:

- What kind of society makes possible that kind of world?
- What kind of person makes possible that kind of society?
- What kind of environment makes possible that kind of person?
- What must we do to make possible that kind of environment?

Those questions are the heart of what progressive social work does. With a focus on person-in-environment, we are especially equipped to understand the person and the environment in which he or she is shaped. We understand that individuals both affect the environment and in turn are shaped by it. We understand that no amount of time in the Church of the Individual Repair will address the deeply flawed social system that wounds us. Only addressing that deeply flawed society, creating the kind of environment that will nurture and support us, will accomplish that.

Social Workers for Social Responsibility (Socialworkers4SR) is about:

- Thinking large;
- Asking what must we do to make possible the kind of world we want;
- Finding out how we create the kind of world where each of us knows we are obligated to consider the impact of our actions on people and the environment, and to make decisions for the well-being of people and the environment;
- Creating a peaceful world by peace-building, education, and standing against violence in its many forms, including war, torture, immigrant abuse, and death penalty.

We invite you to join socialworkers4SR as we expand another means of creating the kind of world that values all of us. Email with a request to join by writing SocialWorkers4SR-subscribe@yahoogleroups.com.

Brueggemann stated “The poorest people of the earth, who bear the brunt of the world’s problems are constructing a social revolution, and they are doing it mostly without the help of mainstream North Ameri-

can social work” (2006). If we are thinking large, that is not where the story ends.

Susan Allen

Co-chair SWAA Peace and Social Justice Steering Committee

Member and moderator SocialWorkers4SR

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Cyber Activism: Connecting Social Workers from Unalaska to Mississippi

“When I was attempting to get NASW to reverse its position on eliminating its Peace and Social Justice Committee, I wondered how we could communicate with social workers who were peace and social and economic justice activists or who might want to become involved in peace and justice work” said peace activist and social worker Moya Atkinson, from the DC area. Atkinson obtained assistance to set up the listserv “socialworkers4sr” with the intention of contacting all those social workers who had signed the petition to reinstate NASW’s Committee. Frustrated by lack of addresses for many of the 371 signatories, Atkinson sought alternative ways to reach those social workers.

She contacted SWAA and met with the faculty committee during a CSWE meeting and was invited to attend the SWAA Steering Committee meeting. Members accepted a proposal to start a Peace & Social Justice Committee at SWAA. Realizing that the listserv could now realistically be put into use, Atkinson also sent announcements about the listserv to state NASW chapters. A message to NASW/Mississippi netted the addition of a new member, who forwarded the message to a social worker in remote Dutch Harbor in the Aleutian Islands. The core group is currently located in the DC/New Jersey/New York area, but the hope is that anyone who has a social work background will join the listserv, whether or not they are members of any social-work-related group with the goal of connecting social workers across the country.

The purpose of Social Workers for Social Responsibility is to apply the research, knowledge, and practices of social work to promote durable peace at the community, national, and international levels. As social workers, we strive to foster peace, social justice, and sustainable development. The impetus for this group listserv is to give social workers a stronger and more cohesive voice.

Contact us at SocialWorkers4SR@yahoogroups.com to join the listserv.

Susan Allen, Co-chair SWAA Peace and Social Justice Committee

Special thanks and acknowledgement to Moya Atkinson and Anne Anderson for their contribution. Anne is coordinator of Psychologists for Social Responsibility, a social worker, and member of the NASW Metro DC Chapter’s Peace and Social Justice Committee.

A View (of/from) France

For someone from The Bronx, the recent actions in the streets of French cities are familiar. Anger generated by poverty, unemployment, inadequate housing, lack of health care, intimidation by police, and discrimination because of skin color or language difference are some of the common elements. Laws passed for the benefit of business, with no regard for the needs of people are means to maintain control, whatever the geography. Burning automobiles in Paris and abandoning buildings in New York City demonstrate frustration and despair because of denial of equity.

Marching in Marseille, Lille, Rennes and other cities around the country in opposition to a statute allowing young people to be fired without cause from jobs just obtained shows the strength of French labor and youth organization. “Flexibility does not mean more jobs; it just means more power to the companies. This is an excuse to deregulate the labor market, but they are not fooling us,” declared a student demanding secure job prospects. High school and university students from the prestigious Paris Louis Le Grand High School marched side by side with those from Seine-Saint Denis (where riots occurred last Fall). They in turn joined with civil servants, train conductors, teachers, and trade unionists in a strike against the new labor law.

The millions in the street were in coalition addressing many issues, as banners indicated “No Globalization,” “No Outsourcing” “No Privatization,” and “No to Market Dictatorship.” Parents stated, “This is about them,” pointing to children 3 and 5 years old. “It [is] about their future.” Despite different complaints and some disruption, the mood was mainly festive.

Today, April 10th, the French government rescinded that labor law. It is a small victory in a universal struggle which still has a long way to go.

Bertram Allan Weinert, DSW

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“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.*

From page One

the workers even though it cost her a significant loss of donor support. To make up for the loss, she generated revenue for Hull House by lecturing and writing.

In 1915, she organized the Woman's Peace party and the International Congress of Women in an effort to avert World War I. When the United States ultimately joined the war, Jane was expelled from the Daughters of the American Revolution and became the target of much criticism. But she kept on. She was elected the first president of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, helped found the American Civil Liberties Union and the NAACP. This increased the criticism that people directed at her. She was accused of being a communist, a socialist and an anarchist. But she kept on. In 1931, she won the Nobel Peace Prize.

(Note: The preceding material was based on information contained in The Lincoln Library of Essential Information, Frontier Press Co. [1924] as reported at www.lkwdpl.org/wibohio/adda-jan.htm and also the Hull House Museum's website at <http://wall.aa.nic.edu:62730/artifact/HullHouse.asp>)

Today social work has evolved into a profession that Jane Addams might not recognize. We have academic credentials, with a strong body of writing and research upon which to rest our work. We have professional licenses in many states. Many of us have specialized in clinical practice, performing necessary and valuable services to individuals who suffer from a wide range of symptoms and stressors. We work in private offices, agencies, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, aids clinics, substance abuse programs, and much, much more.

But how many of us are working for social change, and to eradicate some of those societal ills which contribute so mightily to our clients suffering? After all, social work was predicated on a deep understanding that our environment can oppress us in ways that make it hard for us to function and to achieve our full potential. Our beginnings are radical and controversial. But I think that the constant struggle to get funding, to comply with governmental requests, to write grants, to maintain our 501 (c)3 status, to conduct a private practice under the watchful eyes of managed care companies have diverted some of our energies away from the mission to accomplish real social change.

Yet there is an absolutely urgent need for us to reclaim our roots. There is a steady and unrelenting erosion of support for social programs and for people in the US today. In many areas where we thought we had made gains, we are going backwards and losing ground. Instead of a War on Poverty we seem to have a war on poor people. Katrina brought this into our living rooms. Fifty years after Brown vs. Board of Education, many of our school districts are absolutely segregated (See [The Shame of the Nation: The Restoration of Apartheid Schooling in America](#) by Jonathan Kozol, 2005). Instead of drug treatment, we have laws like the Rockefeller Drug Laws in NY State, which have destroyed lives and whole families. Poverty rates increase. The numbers of hungry children in our country rise. Many people have no health care. Affordable housing is an elusive dream. Those of us who work with poor people know how deeply these oppressions impact our client's mental health. And years after Dr. Martin Luther King, years after Selma, years after Montgomery, racism continues to exact a devastat-

ing price across the county.

In fact, some of us have come to believe that racism is the single most critical barrier to building effective coalitions for social change in our country. For this analysis, I am wholly indebted to the People's Institute for Survival and Beyond.

(Note: The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond is a national collective of experienced organizers and educators dedicated to building an effective movement for social change, and consider racism the primary barrier. Their highly acclaimed "Undoing Racism" workshop has been given nationally and internationally for more than 25 years. See www.thepeoplesinstitute.org.)

In the United States of America, racism is the virus in the computer that infects every single program. We can only have successful movements in the country to work against poverty, war, injustice and violence, if we confront racism and work against it at every level.

With this in mind, some social workers in the New York Area have formed the Anti-Racist Alliance, an organizing collective of human service practitioners and educators whose vision is to bring a clear and deliberate anti-racist structural power analysis to social service education and practice. We work for racial justice from a common understanding of racism as presented by the Peoples Institute for Survival and Beyond. See www.antiracistalliance.com.

The goal of the Anti-Racist Alliance is to infuse social work education and practice with an understanding of structural racism and principles of effective anti-racist organizing. We believe that effective anti-racist organizing will give us the tools we need to challenge poverty, militarism, substandard education, the criminal justice system, unemployment, violence against women and the myriad of other ills that affect our country today. We think that Jane Addams would be part of our collective.

This is a call to the Social Work Profession to reclaim our roots. Many of us do wonderful and important work. But social work is about social change. How much are we changing and impacting the systems which are making us and our clients sick. If we look around, the obvious answer is "not enough." We need to remember how to change systems and institutions. We need to re-teach and re-learn effective organizing. Like Jane Addams, we need to see clients as potential allies in building a movement and we need to keep our focus on racism, because if we do not, we will fail in our efforts to come together.

Many social movements are co-opted by institutions which want to maintain the status quo. I think that whole areas of the social work profession have been co-opted in this way. But we have never been about preserving the status quo. We are strongly rooted in movements for change. Hull House proved not to be an end in itself, although it was an incredible model which helped thousands of people. Rather, Hull House served as a springboard and an inspiration to spur a movement for social reform, and to make important, systemic changes. In 2006, is time to go backward to go forward?

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April 3 2006
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Join the only organization of
social workers and human service workers
dedicated to activism for social and economic justice.



Who We Are

The Social Welfare Action Alliance (SWAA) is a national organization of progressive social workers and other human service workers. Founded in 1985, the Alliance is based on principles that reflect a concern for social and economic justice, peace and coalition building with progressive social movements. These principles articulate a need by social service workers for a practice and theory that responds to progressive concerns.

SWAA chapters determine their own agendas, provide forums for discussions and debates around local, national and international issues. Local chapters are represented on the national steering committee to help shape the organization's direction. In addition, the Alliance holds annual national gatherings that focus on critical issues, tools and ideas for action to promote social change.

“The real choice before us as social workers is whether we are to be passive or active.”

– Bertha Capen Reynolds

Join the local chapter of the
Social Welfare Action Alliance



**Social Welfare
Action Alliance**

A National Organization of
Progressive Workers in Social Welfare

Formerly Bertha Capen Reynolds Society

www.socialwelfareactionalliance.org

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