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workers provide training to community volunteers but the community as a whole chooses which problems need to be tackled. "People are the magic key to solving social problems. Everyone is involved -- students, peasants, teachers, even the children. And we don't just focus on social problems. We also see the importance of preserving community recreation, celebration and well-being. Everyone takes ownership of a project."

The Nicaraguans are committed to popular participation in social services. They become educated and empowered as they solve community problems. However, they are technically inexperienced, and acutely aware of their lack of educational, material and financial resources. They persevere but also seek outside support. This is where the Social Workers Exchange Project seems to make a difference.

The next stage of our project is to host three Nicaraguan social workers coming to Albany, New York and New York City in December. They will observe a variety of social work settings -- centers for the disabled, veteran's centers, domestic violence shelters, foster care agencies, hospitals, etc. They will learn about the strengths and weaknesses of our social service system. We plan to provide them with useful practi cal information and training workshops. However, perhaps the most valuable aspects of the project will be the strengthening of our commitment to work together and to learn together, to bring more understanding between our countries for the social well-being of us all.

If you would like to contribute to this project or travel as a social worker to Nicaragua, please contact Agnes Zellin in Albany at (518) 463-2348 or (518) 489-2893 (eves.). The Social Workers Exchange Program is a project of the Northeast Division of NASW, the Sisters of Charity of Halifax, Nova Scotia, and the Bertha Capen Reynolds Society.

BCRS PROTESTS APARTHEID REFLECTED IN WELFARE SERVICES DELIVERY

Don Cooney, BCRS member from Western Michigan University, authored a letter dated November 20, 1989, which was directed to Dr. Willie Van Niekerk, the Minister of Health and Population Development in South Africa. Representing the Society, Mr. Cooney focused on the fact that South Africa practices racial differentiation in the welfare field which deleteriously effects the delivery of social services. This racial differentiation is extremely costly due to the duplication, fragmentation, and bureaucratization of service delivery. The letter goes on to point out: "The majority of the South African population (which is Black) has no political rights and therefore no access to decision-making which will influence the flow of welfare resources in their direction. And lastly, the cost of apartheid in general is escalating daily and this is one of the reasons why the government is shelving its responsibility onto the individual and the community to provide for themselves in times of need."

This letter raised the issue that 95% of all Black households as compared to 11% of all white households earned less than 3,000 Rands per year in 1980. The child welfare budget for African children is 4.1% in comparison with 35% for white children. Whites (who comprise 18% of the total population) receive eight times more resources than Africans (who make up 69% of the population).

"Boy, they were big on crematoriums, weren't they?" - *Comment during his tour of the Nazi death camp at Auschwitz in September 1987.*

From: **The Wit and Wisdom of George Bush,** by Brady and Solomon, 1989, St. Martin's Press . . .

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stay independent of the Democratic Party. Look at the example of the Left in Canada, the Left in Europe. The majority consensus in Canada is more liberal than the U.S. Democratic Party.

We have to hold our constituency up and bring it to the polls. We have the majority. How do we bring single issues together, people together? Our parents told us "don't sign the petition, you'll get in trouble!" But if one of us signs, five of us will sign. And it's less frightening. And we can start using words like "democratic socialism." Socialism at first was a big deal. But not anymore in Vermont, only out-of-state. Vermont is optimistic about its future.

N.A.B.S.W. CONFERENCE APRIL 24-28 IN LOS ANGELES

The Society plans to place a half-page ad in the Conference booklet for the 21st Annual Conference of the National Association of Black Social Workers, Inc. in Los Angeles April 24-28, 1990. Also, plans are being considered to reserve exhibit space. Assistance is needed from our many members in the Los Angeles area to help staff the table. If you live in Los Angeles and could help, please contact Michael Dover, Membership Secretary at (215) 295-3972. Also, if you are planning to attend the conference, Mike would appreciate your letting him know if you would be able to coordinate with those staffing a table with BCRS-related literature, books, etc.

Social Workers Organize For Housing NOW!

The Bertha Reynolds Society made a commitment at its annual conference in July to get actively involved in the mobilization for the Housing Now! march held on October 7, 1989 in Washington, D.C. BCRS members felt our participation was important for several reasons:

- 1. Our clients are increasingly affected by the lack of affordable housing. Many are homeless.
- 2. As the HUD scandals have unfolded it has become shockingly clear that much of the money for housing was not cut by the Reagan administration was stolen by large developers.
- 3. As progressives, we see decent housing as a basic right for all people in this country.

A committee was formed to organize our participation in Housing Now!. We contacted the Housing Now! coalition and became an official national sponsor of the action. A budget was created for outreach, with the Society deciding to finance the bulk of the costs because the mailing was also a membership outreach mailing. A mailing was done to almost 5,000 social workers. Although the mailing was late due to the slow non-profit postal permit method used and problems with the mailing service during Labor Day, nearly 25 persons pledged up to $50 to support the event and a check was sent to Housing Now! for $500 to help pay off part of the estimated $20,000 debt incurred for organizing expenses.

A banner was made by Washington, D.C. area members Dorothy Van Soest and Susan Kinoy, who was also co-chair of the Housing Now! Committee along with Judith Transue of West Virginia. The banner was carried by Dorothy and 20 students form the Catholic School of Social Services, who march along with a contingent from the National Association of Social Workers.

Many others who did not arrive in time to march with the banner mobilized to attend the march and came with clients and co-workers. According to the report prepared by Judith Transue for a steering committee meeting of BCRS, "It seems important for BCRS to continue to participate actively in national mobilizations of this kind or issues which affect our clients or other progressive issues. It is in keeping with the principles we share, as active participants in helping to form a better society, and it draws new people to us."

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