From the Editors

written by Betty Reid Mandell, Marvin Mandell | January 23, 2010

EXACTLY 40 YEARS AGO we received an article from Poland with views of the Soviet system close to ours: We saw it as a new form of exploitation, and we opposed it with the same vigor we opposed capitalism. We published the article, by Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski, in our spring and summer '66 issues as "An Open Letter to the Party." When both men were released from prison, they founded KOR, an organization that succeeded in uniting workers and intellectuals. From that came Solidarity.

This is our legacy bequeathed to us from the former editors, Julie and Phyllis Jacobson. The kind of social change we have envisioned is bottom up — democratic — and that is exactly the kind of change that millions of people have struggled for — in Poland, later in Czechoslovakia, finally throughout all Eastern Europe, including the Soviet Union. (We also support struggles for political and economic democracy in the societies distorted by post-Communist adaptation of "shock therapy" and "free market" nostrums.) More recently, the struggle has been fought in China, Georgia, Ukraine, throughout Latin America, in France, and, yes, with the recent activism for fair immigration laws, in the United States itself, where the past 40 years have seen bottom-up struggles by Blacks, feminists, gays, and antiwar protestors as well.

Our lead article, by Jesse Lemisch, exemplifies this kind of commitment in exposing the Weather Underground's attempt to substitute a tiny minority for a mass movement. And in his review of Samuel Farber's *The Origins of the Cuban Revolution Reconsidered,* Larry Beeferman writes, "Castro had a commitment to a left-wing, anti-imperialist agenda, but that commitment was married to another critical one, top-down organization." In his "Soul of Socialism," Ron Aronson writes, "Both Communists and Social Democrats paid homage to the workers, but they also spoke for them and kept them from power." Finally, reviewing Moishe Postone's *Time, Labor, and Social Domination:A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory,* Loren Goldner concludes, "Marx's focus was always on the self-emancipation of the proletariat."

For this issue we have a special section devoted to something affecting sooner or later almost all people: caregiving. We should say not almost but *all* people since all of us were children; most of us will grow older; many of us must care for elders and/or children; and many of us are disabled. The left has paid more attention to people in the waged economy than to unwaged care workers. Deanne Bonner says in her article, "Wages of Care," that care workers should be paid, and she argues with the reasons given against this idea. At one time the government did give parents a form of wages for care work through Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) grants, but the Clinton-era welfare "reform" act of 1996 changed that. Gwendolyn Mink, in our interview with her, talks about the consequences of that "reform" and the strategies activists have used in the struggle to get a more humane welfare system. Lorraine Cohen, in her article "Winning a Welfare Battle and Building Bridges," describes a notable victory in that struggle.

The emotional and physical stress of caring for an aged parent is eloquently described by Janice Regolsky Babcock in her article "Stress on the Long Term Care Giver: Get Me an Excedrin, fast!" Ravi Malhotra writes about giving power to the disabled to control the conditions of their own care in his article, "Empowering People with Disabilities." In her article, "Foster Care," Betty Reid Mandell discusses how poor parents and their children are treated in the foster care system. Looking toward a more humane system of caregiving, Helen Lachs Ginsburg and Marguerite G. Rosenthal, in their article "The Ups and Downs of the Swedish Welfare State," analyze the effects of

neoliberalism on Sweden, one of the most progressive welfare systems in the world.

The rest of our articles and reviews cover a large spectrum, ranging from a teenager running from the Nazis in World War II to a poem about Sudan, to causes and implications of the recent Hamas victory.

We would be delighted to receive your comments.

MARVIN AND BETTY

Footnotes