



The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 4

Issue 3 3 & 4 (*Jan & Mar*) combined

Article 23

1977

Common Roots and Functions of the Warfare and Welfare State

David G. Gil

Brandeis University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>

 Part of the [Peace and Conflict Studies Commons](#), [Social Welfare Commons](#), and the [Social Work Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gil, David G. (1977) "Common Roots and Functions of the Warfare and Welfare State," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 4 : Iss. 3 , Article 23.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol4/iss3/23>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Social Work at ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact maira.bundza@wmich.edu.



COMMON ROOTS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE WARFARE AND WELFARE STATE*

by David G. Gil

Brandeis University

Warfare and welfare are usually assumed to serve contradictory ends and to be rooted in antithetical values, institutions and dynamics. In this essay, I propose to challenge this notion and to advance, instead, the thesis that, in spite of significant differences between them, warfare and welfare serve, nevertheless, identical and complementary functions, and are both rooted in identical societal values, institutions and dynamics.

As with other phenomena which are considered to be "social problems," such as poverty, crime, unemployment, inflation, mental illness, etc., but which are merely by-products of the "normal" workings of certain social systems, warfare and welfare can not be understood and overcome unless their philosophical and institutional roots and functions are first unraveled. This requires studying warfare and welfare from a holistic-evolutionary perspective which treats social, economic, political, psychological, and ideological dimensions of human societies as variables rather than as constants, settled once and for all. When warfare and welfare are explored in this fashion and are placed within the context of universal existential processes, the extent to which they tend to fit the internal logic of certain patterns of these processes should become discernable, and their presumed inevitability can then be demystified.

What, then, are the general functions of warfare and welfare, and from what philosophical roots and values do they derive? To explore these questions, I will focus first on welfare and then on warfare.

Welfare as a Societal Institution

In discussing welfare I am concerned primarily with formal, institutionalized practices as reflected in social policies and services of "welfare-states," whether the services are administered directly by units of government, or indirectly by government-chartered, "voluntary" agencies. I am only tangentially concerned with attitudes and acts of spontaneous and systematic cooperation and mutual aid within families and among friends, neighbors, and members of communities. There is historical and philosophical continuity and interaction between cooperation and mutual aid, and welfare-state policies and services. However

*This essay was originally published in the author's book, The Challenge of Social Equality, Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1976.

for purposes of the present exploration, I am concerned with aspects of welfare state policies and services which differ, in a fundamental sense, from acts of cooperation and mutual aid. For these differences contain the clues to the philosophical roots and societal functions of welfare as an institution.

Acts of spontaneous and systematic cooperation and mutual aid represent transactions among individuals and groups of essentially equal social, economic and political standing. They derive from a sense of mutual caring and responsibility, a shared human and community identity, common perceptions of interests, and value positions tending toward equality, liberty, self-reliance, cooperation, and collectivity orientation. Implicit in these acts is respect for the autonomy and individuality of all those involved, helpers and helped alike. The function of spontaneous and systematic cooperation and mutual aid is to compensate individuals for temporary or extended handicaps or disadvantageous conditions inherent in certain stages of the life process, or caused by natural phenomena and by the vicissitudes of living. The aim of such cooperation and mutual aid is to assure normalization of circumstances and fullest possible integration and participation in community life of those affected by adverse circumstances.

Policies and services of welfare-states, on the other hand, involve usually transactions among individuals and groups of essentially unequal social, economic, and political standing. While these services can be, and often are, administered in a humane fashion, and while they can, and often do, improve the circumstances of deprived and disadvantaged individuals and groups, their underlying function is, nevertheless, to serve as a balance-wheel for social orders based on injustice, privilege, force and structural violence. The values implicit in, and promoted by, welfare-state policies and services are inequality, domination, competition, and self-orientation. To support these assertions I will first clarify my understanding of the terms "welfare state" and "welfare," and will then sketch the evolution, dynamics, and social philosophy of welfare states. Welfare states are states in which:

1. the majority of the population are excluded from free access to, and use of, natural and human-created, productive resources;
2. such access and use are controlled by a small segment of the population who own productive resources, and/or by a state bureaucracy on behalf of the "people-as-owners;"
3. the majority of the population can not be self-reliant through, and self-directing at, work since they depend on "employment" by private and/or public owners and controllers of productive resources who also determine most aspects of production and work;

4. a system has been instituted for distribution, in kind or through money, of "essential" goods and services to "unemployed" or otherwise needy segments of the population, and for allocation of work roles under specified circumstances.

Goods and services distributed, and work roles allocated, in accordance with institutionalized arrangements of welfare states constitute the "welfare" portion of the provision system of these states. Welfare provisions vary widely among welfare states at any point in time, and over time within each welfare state, in terms of type and scope, circumstances of eligibility, and characteristics of eligible segments of populations.

Modern welfare states vary also in economic and political institutions and philosophies. They include oligopoly-capitalist democracies such as the United States, mixed capitalist-socialist democracies such as western and northern European states, and state-monopoly-capitalist, socialist states such as the Soviet Union and certain eastern European states. A common characteristic of modern welfare states, irrespective of economic and political institutions and philosophies, is the emergence of large, hierarchically structured bureaucracies who administer the welfare services of the state and who regulate the access of dependent individuals and groups to needed provisions, services and/or work roles. People in welfare states tend to develop a sense of dependence and insecurity in relation to the work context and to welfare services. Also, since the institutions and philosophy of welfare states sanction and promote manifold inequalities among individuals and groups in society, human relations tend to be competitive, individuals and groups act selfishly, and the existential milieu is alienating and not conducive to human self-actualization.

Modern welfare states tend to be industrialized, urbanized and secular. They are often labeled "developed." However, while industrialization, urbanization, secularization, and "development" have been important factors in the evolution of many modern welfare states, they are not essential aspects. Different variants of welfare states predate those processes and many contemporary welfare states rank low on some or all these dimensions. It seems that the only essential aspects of welfare state societies are dispossession and separation of most people from productive resources, legitimation of such expropriation and separation as "law and order" by the state, and institutionalization of compensatory and control mechanisms by the state to protect the status-quo and, simultaneously, to assure the survival of a dependent, but conforming, population.

The Evolution of Welfare States

All social orders are creations of the human mind and of human actions, or rather of the thoughts and actions of countless humans communicating and interacting through space and time. Social orders emerge through the gradual institutionalization of collective responses to existential imperatives intrinsic to the human drive to survive in natural settings which are always characterized by relative scarcities of life-sustaining resources, and which always require human work to secure such resources. Essentially then, different social orders are different solutions to the same existential problems, namely, to satisfy the biological, psychological, and social needs of their members. Societies can, therefore, be compared and evaluated in terms of the extent to which they succeed or fail to satisfy these needs.

There are four related existential domains for which social orders must evolve institutional structures and dynamics to assure their continuity and viability: management of resources, organization of work and production, distribution of rights, and governance. Parallel to their institutional structures, social orders require a "symbolic universe" which interprets, justifies and sustains these institutions, shapes the consciousness of people, and also interprets nature, the supernatural, the concept of human nature, perceptions of interests and value positions relevant to the institutional order. The legitimization of the social order, socialization into it, and social control of individuals living in its orbit, are the result of mutually reinforcing interactions of a society's "material" institutions and "symbolic universe".

Before describing the emergence of institutionalized welfare and the evolution of the welfare-state, some observations are indicated on the notion of self-reliance. Self-reliance is the opposite of dependence and thus the real antidote of welfare, since dependence is the condition which leads inevitably to the institutionalization of welfare measures. The self-reliance of individuals and of human groups is possible when they are in a position to satisfy their needs by producing for themselves life-sustaining and life-enhancing resources. In order to produce needed resources, individuals and groups must have free access to, and free use of, natural resources such as land, water, air, sunlight, minerals, wildlife, vegetation, energy, and human-created resources such as tools, scientific knowledge, technology and skills, for all production involves bringing together natural resources, human-created resources, and human capacities. Self-reliance then requires freedom to bring these components together in ever new combinations.

It is important to note that self-reliance does not require that individuals or groups produce everything needed for their existence, for self-reliance is not the same as self-sufficiency or autarky. However

self-reliance is predicated upon exchanges among different individuals and groups of their respective products on fair, non-exploitative, flexibly-egalitarian terms. Rough measures for fair exchanges are the equivalence of efforts invested in products, the importance of products in terms of a hierarchy of human needs, and the degree of scarcity of natural resources used in production.

Institutionalized welfare measures commonly associated with the welfare state are rooted in societal processes, structures and dynamics which first undermined, and eventually prevented altogether, opportunities for genuine independence and self-reliance on the part of major segments of populations. The evolutionary process leading to this outcome will now be sketched.

The first and most fundamental step in the fateful process which eventually destroyed opportunities for self-reliance for the majority of individuals in many human groups, and which then led via charity to the welfare state, was the establishment by individuals of claims to exclusive control over territories and natural resources on these. This step was also the beginning of a process leading to warfare and the warfare state. Appropriations for use by one individual and his family was one feasible, and sensible, approach to solving the issues of resource-management and provision during early stages of human evolution. The purpose of this solution was to assure owners and their relations a steady flow of life-sustaining, needs-satisfying provisions, and thus to reduce existential insecurity. This choice, at the dawn of human history, became gradually the root of the powerful institution, ideology and dynamics of exclusive property rights, the archetype and core of many ancient and modern societies.

The choice of individual appropriation of life-sustaining resources was by no means inevitable, nor is it inherent in human nature as is often erroneously assumed. There is ample evidence throughout history, all over the world, that many human groups created social orders using an opposite principle, according to which life-sustaining resources of nature should not be appropriated by individuals for exclusive use and control, but should be freely available for use by all members of a group to sustain and enhance everyone's existence. Hindsight suggests that this egalitarian, cooperative, collectivity-oriented approach to solving issues of resource management and provision constituted a far more sophisticated choice than appropriation for exclusive individual use of resources especially when these alternative approaches are compared and evaluated in terms of the extent to which human needs are satisfied throughout a population, and in terms of efficient use of scarce resources.

The principle of private property as a basis for individual security has had significant institutional, ideological, psychological, and behavioral consequences for human groups who evolved their social systems around that principle. Since owning land and other natural and human-created resources was considered desirable, owning more such property came to be considered even more desirable. This attitude, and actions based on it led to efforts to increase one's holdings, to the emergence of an acquisitive, selfish and competitive mentality, and to human relations shaped by these practices and mentality. As long as enough resources were available for everyone to appropriate a sufficient share to assure his existence, this system worked adequately. However, when all available resources had been appropriated, the mentality and dynamics of acquisitiveness and competition caused people to try to increase their holdings by taking from others by force and cunning.

As the holdings of some people increased while those of others decreased a new, serious problem emerged: Who would work with the natural resources to assure the continuous production of needed provisions? Up to that stage in evolution everyone had worked with his own resources preserving thus his independence and self-reliance. Yet, as the holdings of some individuals increased, they could no longer put them to effective use, working by themselves. Besides, there was also the problem of guarding and defending the holdings amassed in competition with others who constituted an ever present threat, especially since their own holdings were no longer large enough to sustain their existence through work. One ingenious solution to these complementary dilemmas seems to have been to induce the losers in the competition for property to work on, and to guard, the property of the winners. In this way additional human capacities would be available to the owners of property, while the owners, in turn provided work opportunities and a limited share of life-sustaining products to those who had lost control of sufficient natural and human-created resources, to sustain themselves, and who had consequently nothing left but their own human capacities. This arrangement became the second major step on the road to dependence and welfare, for it gradually accomplished the complete structural separation of major segments of the population from the real sources of genuine freedom, independence, self-reliance, and self-determination through self-directed work, namely equal access to, and use of, productive, natural and human-created resources and facilities.

In passing, mention should be made here of an early variation on the themes of increasing property holdings and recruiting a willing work force from among expropriated segments of the population. This variation was the organization of expeditions for the purpose of expanding control over territories and resources beyond the domain of one's own group and recruiting by force an enslaved work force from among the inhabitants of conquered lands; that is, institutionalized warfare emerged.

An essential next step on the road to the welfare-state were efforts to condition and control the property-less and severely deprived masses of slaves and workers on whose work everyone, including the property owners, depended for survival. The solution to this difficult problem was found in hierarchical organization of work and authority which involved a fine gradation of privilege and power filtered down to workers as inducement for loyalty to their masters, the owners of property. This system resulted in multiple divisions of the work force into competing vertical segments and horizontal strata which received different material and symbolic rewards and power, exercised different levels of authority, and developed different interests, life-styles, aspirations, motivations, reference groups and loyalties.

One further important mechanism for solving problems of conditioning and controlling the work force was to withhold opportunities for work and survival from a sizable segment of the work force, except in times of war. The ever present prospect of unemployment and its disastrous existential consequences posed a constant threat, especially to the lowest layers of the work force, those who were expected to perform the least desirable work. That threat, and the frequent experience of actual unemployment, developed not only into a major mechanism for disciplining the work force but also for keeping the shares of workers in the aggregate product of their work relatively low, ensuring thus the continuation of wealth accumulation on the part of owners.

The developments sketched here schematically in an oversimplified manner have taken thousands of years. They were far from smooth and were accompanied by fierce conflicts and struggles within and among various human groups. Empirical evidence of the stages mentioned in this sketch can be found throughout the history of many civilizations all over the globe. However, with time a societal pattern began to emerge with which we are now very familiar, a social order in which the ownership and control of natural and human-created wealth are concentrated in the hands of a small segment of the population while the rest of the people are essentially deprived of productive resources except for their human capacities which, in the case of most of them are usually not fully developed. Those who own no property can not be self-reliant through self-directed work, the fruits of which they may enjoy proudly. They are forced to depend for their existence on work opportunities provided by property owners on terms that suit the owners' interests to further increase their wealth and control through profit-generating, rather than needs-satisfying, use of productive resources. Furthermore, the propertyless work force continues to be divided into countless layers and interest groups through differential rewards, opportunities, and penalties built into the system, and they are forced to compete among themselves to obtain the rewards and avoid the penalties. Sex, race, ethnicity, nationality, age, formal education, certification, and licensing are all used to increase the internal divisions of the work force, and to prevent its unification and organization around its under-

lying, true existential interest: to liberate the productive resources and facilities in order to achieve self-reliance, freedom and self-determination through self-directed work.

Most now existing social orders have come a long way from the earliest steps of appropriation of territories and natural resources. They evolved through many social, cultural, scientific, and technological stages, from a gathering and hunting economy to agriculture and industry, and from slavery to serfdom and wage-labor. However the basic organizing principle of property rights and relations has remained relatively constant as the core of the changing social-economic orders. Those who managed to own and control productive resources appropriate for the time and developmental stage of their societies gained usually also political influence and power. This, in turn, enabled them to assure the legitimacy of the established divisions of wealth, division of labor and organization of production, and distribution of goods, services, civil and political rights, and social recognition and prestige. Those who gained political influence and power also created the concept, the institution and the ideology of the state, the central function of which became to assure and protect the status-quo of privilege, injustice, inequality, domination and exploitation in every sphere of life, which had emerged over hundreds of generations. The state defined the status-quo as "law and order" and thus legitimated the results of ages of lawlessness and disorder, injustice, force, violence, and cunning. The state was committed to maintain and defend the established order by all possible and necessary means, including covert and overt force, against any attempt to bring about significant changes in the prevailing distributional patterns, policies, and processes.

Certain aspects of the "symbolic universe" and of the consciousness and psychology of people, which evolved in interaction with the institutional developments sketched above, should now be noted. The emerging social orders came to be thought of as "natural" and as the only "right" orders. Eventually they were interpreted as the "will of God," and their rulers were believed to hold office "by the grace of God." Priesthoods, at first hesitatingly, and later enthusiastically, bestowed their blessings and full support on established orders and affirmed the sanctity of private property and its guardian, the state, in spite of contrary prophetic messages in the Scriptures and other sacred sources.

Humans were thought to be unique, at the peak of nature, apart from the rest of nature rather than harmoniously integrated into it, nature's masters designated by God. These notions led in time to an exploitative attitude toward natural resources, and to mindless waste and destruction. Human nature was thought to be evil, and, indeed, humans displayed evil attitudes toward one another, and tended not to trust others. Furthermore, humans came to be thought of as unequal in worth and as entitled to different rights, depending on the amount of property and power they managed to acquire. Success in the acquisitive drive was interpreted as indication of superior qualities, as evidence of virtue and of God's blessing, and hence, as a basis for social recognition and prestige. Conversely, failure in the acquisitive drive was interpreted as due to individual shortcomings, to sinful ways, to God's condemnation and rejection, and, hence, a basis for societal contempt, disapproval and rejection.

Life itself came to be viewed as a permanent contest in a zero-sum game, with everyone struggling "to get a larger piece of a finite pie." People developed selfish, inegalitarian and competitive attitudes toward one another and a jungle mentality of mutual fear, suspicion, and mistrust, envy and jealousy. They came to view themselves as subjects and everyone else as potential objects to be used and exploited. They manipulated one another pragmatically, in accordance with "the rules of the game," for their individual ends. They related to one another through formal roles rather than as whole, feeling and caring human beings. They became lonely, isolated and alienated. To compensate for their emotional deprivations they escaped into substitute gratifications, illusions, drugs, alcohol, and mental ills.

Attitudes toward work came to reflect the emerging institutional contradictions. Originally, work was respected as an important source of human wealth and as the means for human survival and for the enhancement of the quality of life. There was also pride in a well executed job and the resulting product, and enjoyment of the fruits of their labor. These original and functional attitudes towards work, the original work ethic, were destroyed when people were expropriated, their access to resources and productive facilities was subjected to control by others, direction of their work was removed from them, and products were taken away from the producers, in short, when work became exploitative. These developments caused work to be viewed as an unavoidable chore and evil. The joy of creativity had gone out of it. Besides when owners of wealth began to withdraw from work and to develop a cult of leisure and an ethic of work avoidance, according to which engaging in physical labor was debasing and demeaning of the person, negative attitudes toward work began to permeate the consciousness of the population. Henceforth,

people tried to work as little as possible and to shift work onto others, especially when it was intrinsically unpleasant and dangerous. Gradually also, in order to increase output, profit, and efficiency measured by economic criteria only, most work processes were structured in a manner that undermined the possibility of intrinsic gratification. Work became boring, mind-killing, and offensive to the senses. Using the worker's intellect at work became counter-productive, an obstacle to speed and efficiency. Furthermore, work took place within the general competitive context of the struggle for survival and advancement and within hierarchically structured huge bureaucracies. This too added to the oppressive experience of work and increased alienation from work and frustration from the unrewarding human relations of most work places.

Clearly, institutional developments had resulted in massive disincentives to work. To counteract these trends a work-ethic had to be resurrected on an illusionary base. The only real work incentive given the institutional reality and ideological developments, was the fear of starvation. To this a myth had to be added, according to which hard work was a direct road to success and wealth as well as an indirect road to salvation, for after all, work was "sacred". With the aid of this myth the commitment to work on the part of those who had to work was to be shored up. There was enough truth in this myth to render it believable in spite of overwhelming contrary evidence. And so the myth continued to survive and to sustain exploitative work processes of a production system where labor, a function of humans, is employed by capital - lifeless matter, in the interest of the owners of capital. This production system is a far cry from a mode of production fitting the original work-ethic, a system where whole humans freely employ resources to advance their existential interests.

Having sketched the institutional evolution and the symbolic universe of social systems organized around privately owned and controlled productive resources and facilities, the functions of institutionalized welfare policies and services in such societies can now be spelled out. Essentially, institutionalized welfare fits into such social systems as a safety-valve or balance wheel. It constitutes an effective and even "efficient" line of last defense which can be adjusted flexibly to changing circumstances and to recurrent threats to the systems stability.*

Social orders fitting more or less the dynamics discussed here have caused throughout their evolution, and continue to cause at present, immense suffering of many millions of propertyless and income-less human beings. When people have no wealth and when

*Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, Regulating the Poor: The Functions of Public Welfare. New York: Pantheon, 1971.

their income ceases, or is insufficient to sustain a minimal existence because of age, illness, accidents, death of bread-winners, unemployment, low wages, lack of education and skills, discriminatory practices, etc., all of which are quite "normal" occurrences in these societies, their very survival would be threatened, unless they received voluntary aid from relatives, peers, neighbors, and other caring individuals, or unless some formal institutional mechanisms are established to assist them. No doubt institutionalized charity and welfare are rooted partly in the neighborly, humanistic response to suffering, in a common human identity, in a collective sense of guilt, and in a desire to stop suffering and to satisfy human needs. Yet these humanistic elements were never strong enough to bring about an open challenge to the systemic roots and forces which render dependency and its correlates and consequences inevitable.

Yet institutionalized welfare does not merely refrain from confronting and challenging the structural obstacles to self-reliance and human liberation which are inherent in the social orders of welfare states. Being themselves created and maintained by these social orders, welfare institutions and their policies and services aid in many ways in the preservation of these social orders and their ideologies. A central function performed by the welfare system is the pacification of suffering and oppressed groups during periods of potential rebellion, a cooling off of potentially explosive moods. No doubt, were the entire welfare system to cease to function tomorrow, those now dependent upon it for sustenance and survival could not be stopped from rebelling and from severely threatening the prevailing social order. Clearly then, by assuring through the welfare system an utterly inadequate mode of existence for masses of deprived individuals and groups in the population, the privileged segments of welfare-states succeed to assure the maintenance of the existing inegalitarian order at relatively little cost.

Further contributions which the welfare system makes to maintenance of the prevailing social order of welfare states are the socialization and control of marginal segments of the work force. These people are blamed through the ideology of the welfare system for their failure to be self-supporting and self-reliant in a context which is structured to prevent them from ever becoming self-supporting and self-reliant.* They receive some minimal aid from the welfare system in a dehumanizing manner that tends to undermine their self respect. That aid is kept systematically below the level of the lowest going wages, and as soon as some undesirable jobs become available assistance is withdrawn and people are forced back into the marginal positions of the productive system. This kind of

*William Ryan, Blaming the Victim, New York: Pantheon, 1971.

assistance is actually an indirect subsidy to businesses who depend on this marginal work force. Frequently, also, the welfare system provides more direct subsidies to businesses, through tax-cuts and wage support for "manpower" training programs, in accordance with a theory according to which benefits would "trickle down" to poor segments of the population from stimulation of business activity and greater profits.

The controls used to discipline the marginal segments of the work force reach, however, far beyond those directly affected. Segments of the work force slightly above these marginal segments live under the constant threat of being pulled down to the welfare level unless they work diligently at their jobs. The treatment of those receiving welfare is designed to deter those slightly better off from ever applying for welfare and to differentiate themselves in any possible way from welfare recipients. The only way to stay off welfare and off unemployment compensation is to hold on tightly to available jobs, however frustrating these jobs might be.

It may be noted in support of the characterization of institutionalized welfare as serving primarily system-maintenance functions that even progressive proposals for welfare reform such as massive income re-distribution do not challenge the principle of private ownership and control of productive resources, which is the central obstacle to human liberation and to the establishment of an egalitarian social order in which alone people can regain self-reliance and self-determination. Further evidence comes from welfare states with the most liberal welfare policies and services such as the Scandinavian countries. These societies too, maintain privileged segments within their populations and although the circumstances of the non-privileged segments tend to be far more tolerable than in less developed welfare states, the fundamental issues of human liberation, namely, free access to productive resources, self-reliance, and equality of rights to free and full-development and self-actualization through self-directed work, remain essentially unresolved.

Summing up the discussion of institutionalized welfare in the context of welfare states, we found that the key institutions of human existence in welfare-state societies function in a manner which assures privileged conditions in all spheres of life for a small segment of the population at the top of a finely graded pyramidal social structure, and enforced dependence and severe deprivation for a fairly large segment of the population at the bottom of the pyramid. People between the group on top and that at the bottom find themselves in a continuous competitive struggle to move upward and to avoid being pushed downward.

The severe deprivation experienced by those at the bottom has often been interpreted as violence inherent in the very structure of the system, a form of violence that does not destroy life with a single blow, but which obstructs the full and free development of the life potential of many millions of people through the "normal" processes of the social order. Many minds and souls are slowly being killed as one of the externalities of the workings of welfare-states. Moreover, not only the most severely deprived segments suffer from this "violence of peace". The whole order seems to be maintained in balance, and everyone's development seems inhibited, by ever present latent force and by ideological indoctrination. It is highly unlikely that human beings would otherwise submit themselves voluntarily to conditions of severe injustice which prevent the full actualization of everyone's human potential.

The policies and services of institutionalized welfare in the welfare state were shown to fit into this system like a hand fits into a glove. Welfare is an essential component of a broad range of mechanisms through which the inegalitarian, oppressive and covertly violent social orders of welfare states pacify, condition, and control their populations, and defend and perpetuate their social systems. Clearly, these systems could not survive without elaborate defenses. The conclusion is inevitable: a central function of institutionalized welfare is the defense of privilege, the perpetuation of dependence and injustice, and the prevention of genuine self-reliance. Its roots are a philosophy, consciousness, values and dynamics of inequality, acquisitiveness, selfishness, domination and competition.

Warfare as a Societal Process

While welfare tends to destroy human life potential slowly and somewhat covertly, warfare employs overt, destructive force and violence for the same objectives, the attainment and defense of privilege at home and abroad. Warfare, although its dynamics and ideology are not less complex and contradictory than those of welfare, may nevertheless be less difficult to comprehend, since its roots, functions, and values are usually less disguised.

As indicated, when discussing the evolution of the welfare-state, claims to exclusive ownership and control of territories and natural resources are likely to have been first steps on a course that has often led to warfare. Such claims by individuals and groups of humans imply the establishment of a privileged position in relation to others. If others respect such claims, and if similar claims by others are also respected, no conflict leading to warfare need arise, especially if every group manages to sustain its existence on the territory it claimed, and if exchanges of different goods and raw materials take place among different groups on fair, egalitarian terms.

History suggests, however, that relations among humans all over the globe were frequently defined and perceived in conflict terms and many groups permitted their conflicts to erupt into "cold" and "hot" warfare, rather than settle them by attempting to redefine the context in common human interest terms.

Conflicts that lead to warfare were always related to efforts to defend or increase existing privileges with respect to control over territories or natural and human resources, to establish such new privileges, or to challenge privileges and claims established previously by other groups. It seems that the declared causes of warfare were hardly ever valid in an objective, absolute sense. Rarely if ever, was warfare the only available course toward survival and enhancement of the quality of life for the groups involved. However, in the subjective perception of those involved warfare usually was viewed as the only alternative open to them.

Warfare is more likely to be initiated by human groups who developed internally in accordance with inequalitarian and acquisitive institutional patterns and values, than by egalitarian and cooperative societies. Warfare in such cases is merely an extension outward of the behavioral patterns and the mentality that shapes internal human relations and institutions. Inequalitarian, acquisitive groups, as we have seen, are divided and polarized internally and will often engage in internal "civil" wars. Extrapolating the conflict model of human relations, and of the life context in general, unto external relations appears to them perfectly logical and natural. When those in power in such groups present an external war as being in the interest of the whole group, or in the "national interest," they are consciously or unconsciously distorting reality. While they may believe their own claims, warfare is unlikely to ever be in the true existential interest of those who are induced or forced to do the actual fighting. Those who do derive advantages from warfare are less likely to do the actual fighting. For the only ones who tend to come out of warfare with advantages and increased privileges are rulers, planners, commanders, providers of war supplies, and owners of productive resources. The fighting men, the ones who take the risks and losses, are usually members of propertyless groups who also tend to be deprived and oppressed during "peaceful" periods at home. External warfare may also be used to deflect public consciousness from internal grievances and from intense internal conflicts between small, powerful, dominant elites, and the rest of the population. At such times, phrases like "national security" and "national interest" become important codewords and myths. Illusions of "national unity" are fostered and people's minds become confused as to the real dynamics of the situation. Appeals to nationalism prior to and during times of war, usually succeed to interrupt efforts concerned with real internal problems of a population, partly, also because warfare tends to eliminate unemployment and thus can create illusions of prosperity.

Presumed threats to the national security and suspicion of foreign secret agents, and of foreign enemies, are also handy excuses for secret, and, at times, open repressive measures at home, and for equating internal critics and opponents with foreign enemies which makes it more easy to deal with them as enemies.

This brief discussion of selected aspects of warfare suggests that it is always related to the creation, maintenance and protection of privilege, occasionally for an entire group, but usually for the privileged segments of groups organized on inegalitarian, acquisitive principles, and guided by conflict and zero-sum models of human relations and human existence. Such human groups are usually organized as formal states, and they are thus the very same social systems we encountered under the label "welfare-states" in the preceeding discussion. Clearly, warfare serves identical and complementary ends to welfare and both derive from the same roots, dynamics, values, and ideology. Both have also domestic and foreign versions. In the case of welfare, the foreign version is called "foreign aid" which comes never without strings, the strings being protection of the self-interests of the donors and their privileged circumstances. In the case of warfare, the domestic version is forceful repression of rebellious groups and civil wars, which are intended to maintain the status-quo of privilege at home.

Warfare and welfare also interact in many ways and thus reinforce each other as they pursue their common objectives, at times jointly, at other times separately. It is perhaps not mere coincidence that the warfare establishment and the welfare establishment operate through similarly structured bureaucracies, that they tend to use a similar vocabulary, e.g. "target populations," "intervention strategies," "war on poverty," etc. and that top officials will move in the United States, a leading example of the warfare-welfare state, from the Department of State, to the Department of Defense, and from there to the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and finally to the Department of Justice, the one that defines institutionalized injustice as the "law of the land".

The warfare and welfare state is designed to perpetuate inequality and injustice among humans at home, and among the peoples of the world abroad. It employs a multi-dimensional approach to defend the privileged circumstances and the corresponding power relations which emerged over generations through systematic elaborations on the simple principle of private ownership and control of scarce productive resources.

Epilogue

What suggestions can be derived on the basis of this depressing analysis of the roots, functions, dynamics, values, and ideology of the warfare and welfare state?

Problems of welfare can not be fully comprehended, nor overcome effectively, within the context of currently dominant conceptions of the welfare state which treat the fundamental organizing principles of the social order as constants. Welfare state reforms however comprehensive, merely introduce new variations on the underlying theme of managing dependence and preventing genuine self-reliance. Such reforms can not solve the fundamental problems, although they may ameliorate deprivation and are thus desirable in these limited terms.

Real solutions to welfare must begin with a radical redefinition of the issues, goals and values. Dependence must be related to its causes in the manner productive resources are now owned and controlled, work and production are organized, rights and responsibilities are distributed, and decisions are made and implemented. There is only one solution to the welfare state: to abolish its institutionalized version by liberating productive resources and assuring access to these resources to all humans on equal terms so that they may become free, independent, productive, and self-reliant citizens of self-directing, democratic and cooperative communities.

Problems of warfare too, cannot be overcome without fundamental redefinitions of the issues. Here too, amelioration that moves toward disarmament or reduction of war threats is desirable, but is only a temporary answer. Issues of warfare cannot be solved by degrees but only by qualitative changes. Like in the case of the welfare state, the underlying causes must be confronted and eliminated. The causes were identified as competitive pursuit of privilege at home and abroad. Hence the answer is the elimination of all privileges and equalization of access to the world's resources for all the world's people within a context that stresses the underlying common existential interests of all humans everywhere. Not surprisingly, the solutions to warfare and welfare are identical since their roots, functions, dynamics, and values were found to be identical.

Finally, it seems that solutions to issues of warfare and welfare require the gradual transformation of the welfare state and its alter-self, the warfare state, since states are the guarantors of privilege and injustice. The competing welfare-warfare states which now dominate the world with disastrous consequences for the quality of life of all humans, including the most privileged segments, and which threaten the chances of survival of humankind, will have to be transformed into a coordinated, egalitarian, cooperative federation

of self-reliant, free communities, each directing its own affairs and life-style through genuine democratic processes, each guaranteeing to its members equality of rights and responsibilities, and all participating in exchanges of raw materials and human-created goods and knowledge on fair, egalitarian terms.*

These then are the logical conclusions of reasoned analysis. Transforming this logic into new existential possibilities, in spite of overwhelming odds, is the crucial task for political practice by humanistic movements committed to genuine liberation and self-actualization for humans everywhere.

*For a systematic discussion of solutions to the problems of the Warfare-Welfare State see the essay, "Resolving Issues of Social Provision," in my book The Challenge of Social Equality, Cambridge, Mass.: Schenkman Publishing Co., 1976; see also my essay, "Social Policy and the Right to Work" in Social Thought, January, 1977.