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Foreword to the Special Issue

Chauncey Alexander
National Association of Social Workers

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Foreword to the Special Issue

Social warfare has become institutionalized as a social benefit in the culture of the United States in contrast to social welfare which remains in the status of a marginal activity. This fact is a disgusting and ludicrous reflection of the morals and deceit of the leadership control of our nation.

The complete integration of warfare conceptions and practices into the social fabric acts antithetically to counter the growth of mores that advance the quality of Americans' lives. The dominance of the economic structure (capital production, Federal budget and bureaucracy) by the military-industrial marriage under the sanction of national defense, the perpetuation of the mythology of weapons strength, the ideological control of communications, the permanent educational structures and operations of the military demonstrate the universality of the social warfare phenomenon. Dependency upon the warfare economy is accepted as natural and necessary.

On the other hand, social welfare is **not** accepted as a fundamental social benefit essential to the well-being of all and a desirable part of the social structure. Rather, it is treated as a residual requirement to be gained through qualification on individual merit by a special group of citizens. Social security is employment-qualified, medicare is age-qualified, AFDC is single-headed family-based. Few social welfare programs are universal or comprehensive.

The societal position of social welfare in 1976 is contrasted with social warfare in the simple illustration: the defense budget projections received automatic additions for inflationary factors, the welfare budgets did not.

Yet the necessity for social welfare measures continues to escalate, challenging the entrenched position of the warfare base for a greater share of national resources. Each societal institution - health, education, justice, employment, religion and even the military - increasingly requires a social services component to remain functional. This development, with its claim on part of national and local expenditures, creates the opposition to the warfare mentality and special interests.

The analysis and exposure of the warfare-welfare dialectics is a singularly important task, one that continues the historic mission to raise humans to a new level of social life. Eventually the social welfare outlook must substitute for the social warfare tradition if we are to survive.

The National Association of Social Workers, representing 70,000 professional members, has always participated in this crusade through its

policies and actions. It supports and applauds the contributors to this publication for their leadership in trying to change the conception and nature of social benefits for the American people.

Chauncey Alexander