Public welfare: tool of oppression or deliverance?

Amara Sharazz
Atlanta University

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.auctr.edu/dissertations

Part of the Social Work Commons

Recommended Citation
A SUBSTANTIVE PAPER

PUBLIC WELFARE: TOOL OF OPPRESSION OR DELIVERANCE?

BY

AMARA SHARAZZ

Submitted to: Atlanta University
School of Social Work
Atlanta, Georgia

April, 1977
Outline

I. Introduction
   A. Hypothesis
   B. Basic Assumptions
   C. Delimitations of Paper

II. Definition of Terms

III. Review of the Literature

IV. The Concepts of Poverty and Capitalism

V. Historical Overview of Welfare
   A. The Evolution of Relief Systems
   B. Toward the Second Phase of Public Welfare: United States of America's Initial Welfare Development
   C. The Social Security Act of 1935
   D. Examining an Economic Tactic: Welfare Subsidization

VI. Organizational Problems in Service Delivery
   A. The Disability of the Social Worker
   B. Toward the Making of Disabled Social Workers

VII. Conclusions

VIII. Appendix

IX. Footnotes

X. Sources Consulted
Introduction

Mankind always only sets itself solvable problems, for the problem itself arises when the material conditions for its solution are already present or at least in the process of coming into existence.

Karl Marx

The paper will initially focus on the historical development of the welfare system within the confines of the capitalist economic construct. It will illustrate the relationship of these two institutions to effect a more clarified rationale for the functioning of the welfare system as it presently exists.

The writer herein will operate from three basic assumptions concerning the complex machinations of the welfare system, these assumptions are:

(1) there exists a pathological feature in the system relative to the victimization of welfare recipients by the larger society. This is a reference to the manner in which the public consciousness is manipulated to concentrate on the "scape-goating" of welfare recipients. This then, diverts their anger and hostility away from the awesome power structure that has created the material conditions predisposing people to dependency on the State's "dole".

(2) the role and functioning of the welfare worker is that of handmaiden to the welfare system as they consciously or
unconsciously deliver the societal shafting and finally:

(3) the real function (as opposed to formally declared) is to abate or at least absorb the inevitable rebelliousness of the impoverished.

This writing will not afford a characterological perspective of those victimized by the welfare system, its components, its major actors, the nature and quality of their relationship.

Furthermore, it is felt that there cannot be legitimate focus on strengthening the solidarity of Black families unless important causal factors of poverty are examined.

Albeit, this paper is not specifically designed to reveal an absolute solution to what is popularly called "the welfare mess", it should, however, serve to facilitate alternative methods of obtaining solutions.

In the process of stimulating alternative thoughts, this paper will formulate certain conclusions that admittedly is designed to assume argumentum ad misericordiam characteristics. The need for this is to provide an opposing stance against those who earnestly argue that the plight of the impoverished is self inflicted and concomitant to their environmental or characterological deficiencies.
Definitions

For purposes of enhancing clarity in certain sections of this paper, the following terms are defined:

**Profit**: The value that is contained in the course of the production or laboring to produce a product.

**Exchange Value**: The quantity and quality of human labor and labor time that is necessary to produce a product.

**Surplus Value**: Production beyond the equivalent of what the laborer is being paid, of which is appropriated by the employers under the economic system of capitalism.

**Class Ideas**: Ideas connected with the organization of society; the ideas of the dominant class in society which imposes them on the rest of society through its ownership of the machinery of propaganda; its control of *education* and its power to punish contrary ideas through the law courts, through dismissals and similar measures.

**Capitalism**: The economic system in which all or most of the means of production and distribution are privately owned and operated for profit. It has been generally characterized by the concentration of wealth, particularly by the growth of great corporations, etc.

**AFDC**: Assistance to Families with Dependant Children. (Welfare, public relief.)

**CSIS**: Community Services Information System

**Exteropsyché**: One of the three psychic organs which manifests itself as coherent system of feelings related to a given subject, and opera-
tionally as a set of behavior patterns that are indentificatory in nature. Note: these psychic organs are not theoretical concepts but are scientifically proven to exist as phenomenological realities. (See W. Penfield, "Memory Mechanisms", A.M.A. Archives of Neurology and Psychiatry, 67(1952): 178-198; and Transactional Analysis in Psycholtherapy, Eric Berne.

Neopsych: Functions operationally as a set of behavioral patterns that are data processing in nature. The "reality testing" component of our personality.
Review of the Literature

This review of literature will focus on the way various writings have carried out the basic hypothesis of this paper; the fact that the welfare system (within the capitalist system) support the provision of a cheap (and constant) labor supply.

Joel F. Handler's *Reforming the Poor: Welfare Policy, Federalism and Morality* (1972), is an appropriate source to begin. His penetrating analysis of the compulsory Work Incentive Program (WIN) gives an indepth look at theoretical and programmatic failure in all its complex dimensions. Handler cites congressional anger and frustration over spiraling welfare rolls and AFDC costs as the impetus for the WIN program. However, when one views the programmatic "engineers", H.E.W. and the Department of Labor, respectively, it is not difficult to discern other prospectus that supercede the stated objective of reducing welfare costs by getting recipients to work.

H.E.W. was to function primarily as a culvert for providing workers to the labor market. There existed considerable pressure for welfare recipients to participate. On the basis of a person's acceptance or refusal, this usually dictated the determination of welfare allocations within that particular family.

The burden of proof is placed on the shoulders of potential pro-
gram participants. It is they who have to provide a "legitimate" reason for not accepting servile job positions. Obviously, the bureaucracy's operative thesis; "any work is better than no work...so, take it!!" has comfortably legitamized a climate of acceptability that forces the welfare recipients into accepting menial jobs. These jobs are basically training slots that often times are too few in number, and are of questionable worth in a highly industrialized country. But after all, how else could the federal government pile up "successes" without utilizing a "body count"?

A critical corollary of the hypothesis is the operational nature of service delivery mechanisms within the welfare state. The Press On Welfare, (a selection of articles on welfare from the Israeli press) is now utilized to address this issue. In this writing, the new welfare minister proposes a reorganization of welfare services which would mean divorcing professional social work from the more mechanical process of service provision. Obviously, this proposed reorganization is based upon the acknowledgement of the priority that the dispensation of subsistence funds can assume to the detriment of Social Work.

As this situation exists in the United States, one cannot disengage these two components, and real "Social Work" is never accomplished but is merely defined in terms of welfare allocations.

This arrangement suggests for more effective human service de-
livery and moreover provides a means to measure the system's accountability and productivity to those welfare recipients it will serve.

The final area of exploration in this review is that of the role of change agents and by extension the role of students to not merely intervene but resist to fundamentally alter the capitalist system, and this particular appendage; the welfare system. *The Change Agent*, by Lyle E. Schaller, examines this role in depth. He cites the public's perceptual definition of the welfare system as primarily that of a relief giving operation. Consequently, those would be change agents operating from this false operational premise are inevitably directed toward humiliating failure. Again, not without major reconstruction of the state that has given birth to this welfare system can any fundamental changes be effected.

Thus schools must first divest themselves of these theoretical distortions, false beliefs, and myths before producing people sufficiently equipped to bring about not welfare reform, but systematic changes.
The Concepts of Poverty and Capitalism

"Anyone who is serious about social change needs an analysis of the role of welfare in Capitalism, and of concepts of poverty." 16

The notion of the welfare system serving as an aegis for the economic structure of capitalism must be examined in understanding the concepts of poverty. And more importantly; for change agents this understanding is sine qua non to developing a praxis for effective action. One cannot effect the quality of the social services that are delivered to poor people without having a knowledge base of the concepts of poverty and the constraints of social services delivery under capitalism.

Thus attention is invited to the actual stated goals of the Fulton County Division of Social Services. The primary goal as stated in the Georgia State Services Manual Transmittal No. 32 is:

"Individual and families achieving and maintaining self-sufficiency in the form of personal independence, self determination, security and strengthened family life; and individuals and families achieving and maintaining the highest feasible level of economic independence. This includes children developing their full potential." 17

Theoretically, this goal can never exist under the economic
framework of capitalism. To acknowledge this, one must understand the intended inequitable allocations and distributions of resources and wealth that is inherent in capitalism. Hence the palpability of this goal remains in serious questioning.

"...the distribution of capital ownership in a capitalist society is necessarily unequal, for if every individual shared equally in the ownership of capital, the fundamental distinction between capitalist and worker would vanish." ¹⁸

This designed unequaled distribution of wealth and income is necessary to the capitalist mode of production. Capitalism can only exist when there is an available labor market in which workers are obliged to exchange control over their labor—power in return for wages and salaries.

Thus it follows that if the lower socio-economic families that produce the reservoir of labor could achieve and maintain their highest feasible level of economic independence, etc.; there would not exist a labor reservoir; of the mainstay of capitalism.

In the forthcoming section the writer's hypotheses that cheap labor which supports the capitalist machinery is supplied (in part) through the welfare rolls, will be discussed.

It is important for the social worker to be totally aware of the risks of "feeding into" the exploitative features of capitalism when delivering social services. (In a later section of this paper,
the quality of Title XX Social Services are questioned as they relate to the role and functioning of the social worker.) However, since there is no agency methodology established for the delivery of those social services, the social worker must be aware of the urgency and need to develop a politically based methodology. The methodology employed must be apposite to having an impact as a prime determinant for social change. The methodology must address itself to the micro and macro levels of consciousness raising. This would serve as an active phase of the phenomenological revolutionary conditions that would improve the quality of existence for the exploited Black communities. The essential instruments for this critical consciousness raising should apodictically state the conditions that define the miserable life experiences of both micro and macro systems, i.e., poor housing, aggressive displacement, increased suicides, etc.

In this role functioning the social worker minimizes the risks of unwittingly supporting or feeding into the exploitative features of capitalism.
Historical Overview

"...Western relief systems originated in the mass disturbances that erupted during the long transition from feudalism to capitalism beginning in the sixteenth century."²

This period found the masses of people driven from the rural areas into the cities.³ England discovered sheep as one of its most profitable markets. The attraction of the profitable exchange value of wool production influenced the capitalistic rapaciousness of the entrepreneurial ruling class. Consequently, serfs and landowners found themselves forced from and often cheated out of their land. As a result, the cities were unable to attend to the masses of destitute mendicants, who posed a serious threat to civil disturbance. As a matter of course, there had to be a program designed to abate the violent insurgence and massive protests of the impoverished. In the year 1601, the first formal public welfare policy was developed through the Poor Relief Act by the English Parliament.

"Early 'Elizabethean' welfare policy was a combination of punitive as well as alleviative strategies which discouraged all but the most desperately poor from seeking aid, and provided only minimal assistance to those persons already unable to care for themselves. Primary reliance was placed upon institutional care--county work houses, poor houses, or
alms houses. The 'able-bodied poor', those we call the unemployed, were sent to county work houses, while the worthy poor, widows, aged, orphans, and handicapped were sent to poor houses."4

In fact, to be poor, without capital was considered a transgression upon the state. All poor families had to be registered with the Poor Relief Act rolls. Those mendicants that were caught begging to ruling class families were punished severely. Meanwhile, capitalism continued in its expansion and dimensions, but its growth could not match the degree of population increase. There resulted a surplus of starving unemployed who fell victim to the onset of capitalism.

"Everywhere, however, the main principle was the same: an unemployed and turbulent populace was being pacified with public allowances, but these allowances were used to restore order by enforcing work, at very low wage levels. Relief, in short, served as a support for a disturbed labor market and as a discipline for a disturbed rural society."5

The discipline for a disturbed rural society and support for a disturbed labor market shows itself as being horrendous and grotesque forms of dehumanization that public relief recipients experience if they are to receive aid. It is important to acknowledge this fact when examining just how the labor market swells with laborers who are willing to accept inadequate wages. The wages paid to the impoverished work force are barely higher than relief assistance. But the exploited laborers assume that she/he is choosing the lesser of the two evils by fearfully rejecting welfare and choosing the latter.
Toward the Second Phase of Public Welfare—United States of America's Initial Welfare Development

In the United States, prior to that of the Great Depression, public welfare in its contemporary context had its inception in 1917:

"...with the adoption of the Illinois Administrative code. The entire state government has reorganized into a number of departments, the directors of such were appointed officials to serve collectively as a sort of state cabinet. The department of public welfare was administered by a director without the usual policy making or administrative board."6

With the Illinois 1917 adoption, a domino effect resulted throughout the nation. Each state began to identify with that concept of welfare structure. However, that concept of welfare structure unfortunately identified also with the punitive Elizabethan system of old.

"Prior to the 1930's, care of the poor in the United States resembled the early patterns of poor relief established as far back as the Poor Relief Act of 1601."7

From the 1930's to 1935, America experienced millions of people unemployed, destitute, and riotous. Local governments and influential business corporations were not willing to respond
to the plight of the destitute. Only until insurgence on a massive level erupted with serious riots and lootings did the government divorce itself from the previous laisse faire attitude.

"But then the destitute became volatile, and unrest spread throughout the country. It was only when these conditions, in turn, produced a massive electoral convulsion that government responded."  

The government responded by establishing the Social Security Act of 1935.  

The overt philosophy of federal intervention in local welfare programs was to relieve the chaotic management and financial burden of local government by creating a trichotomy of federal, state, and county control. It was also purportedly designed to consist of a multifarious range of public social services. These services would stem from federal legislation and revenues for single parent families, physically and mentally handicapped, delinquency, and neglected individuals. Because of their inauspicious circumstances these individuals would have to rely upon financial and social services aid from the welfare system, hopefully to eventually achieve self-sufficiency, financial independency. Hence the welfare system was federalized in 1935 by congressional passage of the Social Security Act. Notably, because of the substantial amounts of funding, the federal government can and does maintain strict and complete adherence to the broad specifications of the Social Security Act to
qualify for funds.

"The Social Security Act lists seven basic requirements which states must meet before federal subvention will be approved for the categorical aid programs within the states. In general, these specify that a state must:

1. Have a plan which covers all political subdivisions within the states.

2. Include a certain ratio of financial participation by the states.

3. Have a single state agency to supervise administration of the program.

4. Provide opportunities for fair housing for recipients as applicants before the state agency.

5. All Welfare agency personnel must be employed on a merit system basis.

6. Make such reports as the Federal Government may require.

7. Provide safeguards against disclosure of information concerning applicants and recipients, except for purposes divertly connected with the Administration of Aid."

Beside the above listed requirements, the federal government seemingly adopted a "laisse faire" policy toward the operational mechanics of state and local administration. There is very little direction provided at the national level. The "how" of
policy planning, decision making, operations, and even definition of need remains within the operational framework of the local level. Despite the furor over massive bureaucratization of the federal government, and despite the jeremiad diatribes against federal control, all states adhere steadfastly to the federal requirements if they want some federal tax money.

Richard Clegy in his book, *The Administration in Public Welfare*, cites an example of an attempted rebellion by Mississippi to deny assistance of families with illegitimate children. When confronted with the cessation of federal funds, compliances were grudgingly resumed. He feels that,

"It is very evident that federal money is the ruling power in public assistance programs throughout the United States, and that without this factor there would be little semblance of uniformity in the approach of state government to the problems of aiding the needy."
We see America for what it is, the Fourth Reich...and we recognize our course of action.

H. Rap Brown

The Social Security Act of 1935

This section of the paper involves the most recent historical change in public welfare development. This is a newly developed Federal program that purportedly will better enable the welfare social service departments to meet the clamoring demands of the poor, and also their advocates. It is in fact a complicated piece of legislative verbiage known as Title XX of the Social Security Act of 1935. Regardless of all the fiery rhetoric over Title XX poor people will remain just as poor after the smoke has cleared. Thus, this section will not be treated indepth. However, because of the increased responsibility the federal government has legislated to the state level, it merits at least minimum consideration.

Supposedly, Title XX will elucidate the "what and how" of service delivery. Since the states now have more responsibility, they are now required to explicitly define what services are performed, and the method of delivery. The services must be apposite to one or more goals.

1. Economic self-support
2. Self-sufficiency
3. Preventive child abuse
4. Preventive institutional dependancy
5. Appropriate provision of institutional care.

The federal government is now pressuring for quantifiable service provisions for state reports. However, this will never be strictly enforced because the Title XX Act was loosely written, and flexible in interpretation. As a result, most states will continue to report the same, old services that they have never been rendering in the first place. As an example, the state of Georgia’s AFDC program provides twenty-four listed services. Almost always when a client is referred by a social worker to a legal source this is documented as "legal service". When a client is given information concerning a vacancy in a slum dwelling, this can be reported as housing improvement. And even if a destitute mother is experiencing a more than usual financial crisis, and is counselled to sell her television, this can be reported as a quantifiable service provision.

This author has actually witnessed a caseworker giving an address of a school to a client (even though it was alphabetically listed in the telephone directory) and recorded this as educational services under Title XX. Because of the lack of resources and skills the main thrust of casework service delivery is primarily information and referral and paper work.

As stated in a previous section of this paper, federal money is always a stimulus of all states to conform to Federal demands.
However, if the overall analysis of the theme of this paper is believed, then it follows that the

"adequate welfare system would directly and fundamentally conflict with the operation of the basic capitalist institution. Under capitalism, we can never expect a welfare system which significantly reduces inequality." 13

In this light, it can be understood just how the government can set a 2.5 billion ceiling for spending on an inadequate social service welfare system. Despite the furor over how the new Title XX money should be spent, the fact remains that this ceiling has been in effect since 1972. What is happening is that the legislative verbosity of Title XX only shifts more responsibility to the states to quiet the clamor of the poor.

Considering the expanding dimensions of capitalist imperialism and the misery it breeds for the poor, coupled with the current population explosion, the system will inevitably become intolerable in its function.

The Federal Government has allotted the State of Georgia $57 million for the fiscal year of 1975, from the 2.5 billion for the Title XX services. 14 This allotment is based on a matching fund basis. Also under Title XX, new guidelines were developed as to what services must be given definite priority. As a matter of course, the Federal share of matching funds for Planned Parenthood services is a whopping 90%.
The Title XX regulations stipulate that noncompliance with the provisions of their definition of Family Planning Services will result on the reduction of Federal financial participation. As noted in an earlier section of this paper, when states are confronted with the cessation or reduction of federal funds, there definitely will be compliance. We may be assured that state wide efforts will be escalated to control the population. There will be large amounts of tax dollars spent on genocidal programs in the name of "planned parenthood." Upholding the civil liberties of defenseless low income women is wholly foreign to the over all gains of capitalist imperialism. These women will experience the most sophisticated attitudinal and behavioral modifying techniques in succumbing to "birth control."

Inherent in the dollars priority of Title XX is the war against the political impact of the poor. The fact that in number there results a source of power and strength, will force the ruling class to take drastic preventive measures to abate historical revolutionary conditions.

"Those who wish to prove that the government has a policy of genocide can realistically point to the fact that Russia, China, and 73 other countries have signed the 1969 United Nations agreement outlawing genocide - but not the United States."15
Examining an Economic Tactic: Welfare Subsidization

Many low wage earners of industry are on welfare via work incentive dollar allocations.

As industry in this country swells, so does the demand for cheap labor. The low wage scales for labor, particularly industrial regions are maintained by the subsidization of public assistance. This can be understood from the compressed observation that follows. The industrial management exploit the worker for his real or surplus value of labor. The capital deficit is met by the expenditures of the welfare programs that are based solely upon revenue from the working classes. There are approximately 180,000 recipients on welfare in Milwaukee County that exist within 49,000 families. Some recipients earn from $7,200.00 to $12,000.00 as reported by the Milwaukee Sentinel and are receiving public assistance payments combined with other benefits as day care, medicaid, food stamps, etc. This can be permitted by the "thirty plus a third" rule that serves as an established loophole by the federal government to insure a reservoir of cheap labor for capitalist profit. A Federal Law permits welfare recipients to discount the first thirty dollars of their monthly net earnings, combined with the exclusion of one-third percentage of whatever money that remains. This determines the AFDC grant amount. For reinforcement of incentive, the recipients are awarded a further discount of twenty-
one percent of the monthly income for work related costs, (i.e. taxes, transportation expenses, social security.) Thus, there exist numerous recipients receiving the typical underpay of unskilled and semi-skilled labor, and simultaneously receiving sizable grants from the welfare program.* This undoubtedly reinforces the economic fiber of capitalist mercantilism, and is notably peculiar to those states that are densely occupied by industrial plants and productive factories that subsist off a cheap labor.

Historically, capitalism has parasitically maintained itself by the economic exploitation and labor of the Black families who are at the very bottom of the nation's socio-economic structure. Little do most ineligible recipients realize the impact they have on the maintenance of the forces that oppress them and these forces cannot exist unless oppression is insured.

However, the actual socio-political purpose of generous work incentives offered to welfare recipients while they maintain labor roles could lead to cyclical and otiose arguments. A tenable hypothesis is that cheap labor to support capitalist machinery (in large part) is supplied through the welfare program. This inescapable fact contributes to the glee of management leaders that find themselves extricated from the usual bargaining strains of the labor unions.

* The county of Milwaukee's 1977 County Executive budget lists the expenditures for total Public Welfare for the year 1976 (revised estimates) as $137,007,051.
The credibility of this economic tactic seems to heighten when its age old existence has been realized. This tactic (welfare subsidization) can be traced back as far as the 18th century as illustrated below in an historical overview.

In 1795, a subsidy system was developed in Speenhamland to supposedly subsidize pauper earnings that fell far short of a low income wage scale. This was a scheme designed to subsidize the wage deficit of agricultural workers. A published scale was matched against the wage earnings and occurred "when exceptional scarcity of food let to riots all over England, sometimes suppressed only by calling out the troops." Since the parishes have been historically involved in public relief, there occurred varying alterations of this subsidy system because of their influence. Pivens and Cloward highlights the "roundsman" arrangement, where a mendicant was directed to secure work from households who paid meager sums, and the parishers contributed or subsidized because of the deficit. Thus employers could increase in capital by exploiting the labors of the mendicants. Sometimes the parish authorities would contribute the entire sum, leaving the employers in a position to relish this fashion of indentured servitude.

"The most recent example of a scheme for subsidizing paupers in private employ is the reorganization of American Public Welfare proposed in the summer of 1969 by President Nixon: while relief recipients would be channeled into the labor market were not precisely elaborated in his initial proposal, the general parallel with the events surrounding Speenhamland is striking."
Albeit, there was no specificity developed to accomplish this tactic, remnants of this plan, as previously illustrated, can be found in states that are densely occupied by industrial plants and productive factories that need cheap labor. The apotheosis of this economic 'ruse de guerre' is the welfare operations of Milwaukee County, Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

Thus far the historical developments of the Welfare system within the confines of the capitalist economic construct has been examined. However, the examination is not complete without acknowledging a component of the welfare system that purportedly addresses itself to strengthening the solidarity of the Black Family and community. This examination focuses on the Department of Social Services, and through evaluation the issue of how it operates as an appendage and not a buffer against capitalism will be courted.
Organizational Problems In Service Delivery

As federal dollars are poured into the states for welfare operations, the county levels bear the responsibility of the actual provision of services to the indigent income eligibles. All county service provisions are under the rubric of state policy and planning, and as a rule are articulated through a social service delivery outline in the form of a state manual. The bureaucratic structure of the Georgia Department of Human Resources is outlined as attached. (See attachment #1.)

Attention is invited to the charted positions of Divisions of Community Services and Divisions of Benefits Payments. These two divisions are a comprisal of county level Family and Childrens Services. On the level of Service Division II in the county chart, (see attachment #2), lies the direct responsibility of service delivery. As aforementioned, the surveillant federal government has little attachment to the "how" of service implementation. Unfortunately, they neither provide distinct, transpicuous definition of the services that are to be delivered. The state policy and plans for public social service to be provided by the county to the poor evolves on impressively sounding service labels. As a AFDC social worker, one nesciently
boasts of services provisions as "home management, education, legal, housing, health," etc. In reality, these apocryphal AFDC services are not available through the welfare social service program. Moreover, social services caseworkers and the like are barely qualified to render simple information and referral services. And what further stultifies workers in their performance of substantive service provision is the inevitable lack of resources, particularly during a faltering economy.

Ms. Junelle Sparks, the Fulton County Program Director of Services is quoted below as per her apposite analysis of the problems of substantive service provisions.

"...most of our staff really know very little about service delivery. We have tried to do the best we could in the area of staff development, but I would say that not more than fifteen or twenty percent of our staff is really doing what we could call minimum service delivery. This does not mean that they are not trying; it means they do not have the experience or the training to do the job in this county."

Straightforward and humane public social service administrators as Ms. Sparks, who apparently are sincere in efforts are paralyzed when attempting to make sense out of a bureaucracy that is controlled by the politicians that are in hock to the capitalist power figures. In rephrasing a statement that Trotsky made about Stalism, they are the syphilis of the social reform movement of today.
Since the blatant shortcomings of the county social services delivery system have been explored, there is now a need to turn to what can be done about them. Obviously radical changes are required to address the real social service needs of the Black Family. The acknowledgement of the existence of inadequate social service provision dictate honest responses from social workers. Hence, the theme of this paper now focuses on the problems confronting the "risk takers" who attempt to effect change.
The "Disability" of the Social Worker

Being a man is the continuing battle of one's life and one loses bit of manhood with every stale compromise to the authority of any power in which one does not believe.

H. Rap Brown

Most social workers assuming the role of change agent often find themselves ill-equipped in challenging agency shortcomings. There most often exists considerable concern over agency failures, but there also exists marked intimidated, thus, unsuccessful efforts toward the amelioration of these failures. More sorrowful are the social workers who feel intimidated to a point of assuming the peccant characteristics of the agency while expounding militant rhetoric. This assumed chameleon role becomes visible each time the worker is confronted by the demands of the poor people to produce real services. The agency is then defended to the hilt because of the workers neurotic guilt over his trepidation in confronting agency change. This often leads to a displacement of hostility toward poor people, particularly the ones in unusually severe crisis and are demanding on the spot relief.

Moreover, social welfare workers, purportedly assuming the role of change agent, often err in strategy because of their myopic view of the organizational purpose. The remonstrations of most "change agent" administrators are merely camouflaged apologies for the dysfunction of social service agencies. It must be understood that the administration has no political interest in actuating a 'pro bono publica' operational
system for line staff (caseworkers.) To render quality services to economically exploited and oppressed Black families is foreign. The antibiotic for treating the syphilitic elements of the social services welfare system cannot be recognized until the true (covert) operative goals of the agency are politically defined.

"As long as the efforts at change are based on a perception of the welfare system as primarily a relief-giving operation, these efforts are doomed to failure, regardless of how sensitive the change agents may be to people and to people's needs... the desired changes in an organization are not likely to be achieved, regardless of the strategy of change, unless people perceive what are the actual operative goals of the organization or system... most organizations are part of a system which is part of a larger system, which in turn is part of a still larger system, and so on. Unless the entire system is changed, there is a limit of the changes that can be accomplished and accommodated in any one part of the total system." 26

Moreover, in perceiving the actual operative goals of the agency, the administrative priorities and goals imposed upon social workers must be questioned. Social caseworkers constantly find themselves involved in massive clerical functions that are non-essential to rendering quality services to problem ridden Black families. The voluminous amount of daily paperwork that must be accomplished precludes the effectiveness of the worker and the quality of the services (if any) rendered to the poor. Agency priorities are further in question when focusing upon the perennial theme of the required workshops and training sessions. Of all the apposite workshops that could be conducted for staff training, the agency remains fixated with "workshops" such as planned parenthood, counselling the recalcitrant client, etc. One may
encounter a few workshops relative to understanding the minority client, albeit never are there workshops geared to explore the attitudes, rigid mindsets, and the affected ego functionings of the ethnically different caseworkers? There is a definite cause for alarm when one considers the power and control that ill trained caseworkers have over Black families. Most caseworkers have a startlingly poor background in the techniques of understanding human behavior, and more importantly, the dynamics of the Black experience. The latter holds true even to many Black social casework professionals who have systematically become acculturated into the Anglo-Saxon experience. Hence, one of the many dangers lies when social workers are suggested to modify the maladaptive behavior of clients, using a psychoanalytic framework reference, ego reality based modality and even some social diagnostic social systems framework, without a concrete political foundation. Furthermore, most workers haven't the experience of accomplished awareness of their own personal exteropsychic and neopsychic interactions. This has a damaging impact upon the empathy and objectivity needed when making life affecting decisions on Black families.

Moreover, most traditional methods tergiversate away from complementing the survival skills and subjective qualities of Black people. These are the skills and qualities that have maintained a race of people through over four hundred years of the most abominable conditions under Anglo-Saxon domination.

Considering the above views, it follows then that there must be a revision of the methods of staff training; there must also be efforts to extricate the worker from the shackles of inconsequential administrative demands. This notion is enthusiastically supported by another quote from the coordinator of Social Services of Fulton County.
"It is interesting to note that the theme of workshops, training sessions and the bulk of written material from the State Office deals with CSIS, not casework techniques. Now, we are well aware that CSIS was implemented to reflect services, services delivered, service needs, etc., but somewhere along the line, the tail began to wag the dog and that poor dog (us) is exhausted... To comply with the requirements, supervisory staff became supervisors of forms, printouts, and numbers. Staff was pressured to meet the requirements to the point of feeling that this was the only function. Any service delivery to clients was almost moonlighting...

We feel very strongly that this emphasis and apparent lack of concern for service delivery is not what is needed nor wanted by clients, the public and certainly not by social work staff. We think the goal should be a good, well-defined, service delivery system designed to meet the needs of the clients, in this community (state as well as country.)"

But how can a well-defined service delivery system designed to meet the needs of the client exist without first focusing on an effective method of service implementation? Social work, as the primary instrument for service delivery has failed miserably in ameliorating the wretched conditions of the Black communities.
Toward the Makings of Disabled Social Workers

They are playing a game. They are playing at not playing a game. If I show them I see they are, I shall break the rules and they will punish me. I must play their game, of not seeing I see the game.

Richard Lang, M.D.

Solutions to resolving the ineffectiveness and erroneous attitudes of most social workers stem from determining the nature and style of academic training. Social workers lacking the where-with-all to affect organizational change are usually academically programmed for failure. This can result from the infantile positions that student social workers must assume while training. The nature and style of academic training is structured toward a sophisticated inhibiting of efforts in the name of "acquired professionalism". Furthermore, the student's behavior and attitude are rigidly modified to complement the temperament of the school officials and most instructors. The behavior modification is horribly successful when endeavoring under the conditioning system of guillotining grades. This is more damaging to the revolutionary and creative spirit of the student when an oppressive field placement has stifled the impulses for autonomous expression. Often a student finds that because of the student infantalized status, there is no opportunity to existentially excell in an intern learning experience. In addition, because of the acute anxiety over what grades are to be received from agency and school alike, the student must assume a chameleonic role.
"One of the most dismal aspects of the process being described is that students knuckle under in order to obtain a degree." 29

A real paradox exists when supposed change agent students compromise at times when there should be open confrontation to any suspected pathological feature of agency or school.

"But most students succumb. They surrender their dignity, their capacity for critical reflection, and become the pliable materials out of which the 'professional' is molded. Some surrender consciously, although usually gradually. In time, their adaptation comes to be justified by the belief that if they did not submit, they could not earn a degree and ensure their future job prospects. These students say what they think they are supposed to say, and leave unasked the question that genuinely troubles them...once employed in the field, they continue to knuckle under, for there are promotions to be won, titles to be earned. The patterns of submission learned in the schools of social work are thus reproduced in the field. And of course, there, patterns serve the bureaucracies of the welfare state well; they ensure that employees will not challenge and question, confront and disrupt." 30

There must somehow exist an academic environment to facilitate clinical and administrative social work expertise that is tailored to nurture good substantive development and revolutionary spirit. This must be an academic facility that is diametrically opposed to reinforcing capitalist class values of subservient behavior. The academic atmosphere should be dynamic in speaking to the methods of examining capitalist class ideas. This statement is predicated on the notion that the existing class ideas are designed for controlled behavior and attitudes that are necessary for the maintenance of a capitalist society.
Inherent in this notion is the argument that,

"under capitalism we can never expect a welfare system which significantly reduces inequality."31

Thus the institution, through examination, will also focus on whether or not there is support of capitalist class ideas that possibly are inherent in its pedagogical features. There is particular merit to the examination if there is discovered adopted class values that are antithetic to nurturing the revolutionary spirit that is vital in working toward societal change that leads to strengthening the solidarity of the Black family.

Some schools employ a basic social work developmental model geared to effective autonomous expression. One particular model can be realistically translated into a non-oppressive humanistic (albeit risk taking) praxis for action to liberate the exploited from a poor quality of existance.32 However, most students, even when exposed to such an authentic, legitimate learning situation as defined, often become thwarted in their change agent development. The reason points again to the behavior modifying constraints imposed upon the student to obtain a degree. Hence, the praxis becomes mere rodomontade when real student action is necessary, because the student fears that one's academic life is abruptly terminated when confronting any dysfunctional feature of that institution. Notably, this misfortune occurs before the student had completely mastered the praxis, and this requires years of experiential development.
None-the-less, the students may effectively remedy their many plights by securing the means for their needs through collective confrontation. This strategy negates the necessity of having to resort to submissive prophylactic techniques for survival. Hence, the patterns of submission usually learned in the schools or social work would not be reproduced in the field. And again, it must be clearly understood that the nature and style of academic training greatly affect the quality of the social worker.

Thus, the student and concerned university professionals alike, must strive to contribute toward an end result, that provides for a better quality of existence for every one.
Conclusions

The nature of the welfare system's evolution within capitalism; its concomitant production of welfare workers who steadfastly (consci-
ously/unconsciously) maintain its oppressive operation and the educa-
tional system's theoretical programming of masses of maintenance person-
nel have constituted the critical areas of attention in this paper.

The consequences of this relationship serve to validate with ease the hypothesis that the welfare system within the confines of capitalism affords the production of a constant and cheap labor source.

Because various conclusions/resolutions have been posited within the body of this paper, this writer will not draw further conclusions in any specificity with the exception of one issue. Rather, the writer after discussion of this specific issue will move to more global propo-
sitions to effect the resolution of the problems attendant to the welfare system.

Particular attention is invited to the last section of the paper. Toward the Makings of Disabled Social Worker. The author considers this section as the foremost, long range and concrete resolution to the pathological societal conditions that exist. This particular section points toward an avenue of extrication from the capitalist class ideas that prevail to control the natural healthy impulses to rebel against oppres-
sion. Specifically, this avenue is the radicalizing of the propaganda machinery known as education. Since practitioners in the social work profession are assumed to be the vanguard in the promotion of social reform, it follows then that there must be particular and legitimate emphasis on the type of education social worker's receive. It cannot be the usual "obedience to authority" type of education to which all schools of social work adhere.
Footnotes


3During the hectic period following the collapse of Charlemagne's empire in the ninth century, medieval nations strengthened their local governments through the stability provided by the feudal system. In this system the nucleus of the economy was the products of the land resulting from the labors of the serfs. In feudal society, the serfs relinquished a portion of their products and specialized crafts to the lords and vassals for the right to work on the land under protection. Centuries later feudalism inevitably gave way to the newly developing marketing nations that were becoming economically entrenched in the growth of trade. As the growth of trade progressively increased so did the demands on the serfs to produce more products and crafts for commercial market demands. The old class system began to concern itself with production for consumption and more importantly, production for profit. The exploited masses found themselves forced with a lancing degree of poverty concomitant with the expansion of capitalism. The conditions for grass roots insurgence was courted by the atrocities of the industrial ruling class.


5Cloward and Piven, op., cit., p. 30

Dye, op. cit., p. 90

Cloward and Piven, op. cit., pp. 76-77

Dye, op. cit., pp. 88-90


ibid., p. 22


Georgia Department of Human Resources, *Title XX Social Services: Proposed Plan Summary.* 1975


"36 County Welfare Employees Also Getting Aid", Milwaukee Sentinel, 17 September, 1976, Part I, p. 12

Cloward and Piven, op. cit., pp. 29-30

Cloward and Piven, op. cit., p. 30

Cloward and Piven, op. cit., p. 30

Cloward and Piven, op. cit., p. 32


The Forum. (A publication of the Services Advisory Panel), Fulton County Family and Children Services. Number 1, p. 6 (mimeographed)


As an example see Attachment III

Junelle Sparks, Don't Play It Again Sam. Annual Report Service Division II, 1975. Fulton County DFACS


ibid, pp. xx-xxi

Edwards, op. cit., p. 251
Atlanta University School of Social Work, Towards A Practicum and Conceptual Matrix for AUSSW. 1972 (mimeographed)
APPENDIX
January 22, 1976

TO: Services Units
FROM: Amara Turner - Sharazz - Caseworker I
SUBJECT: Seminars

In concert with my letter dated March 21, 1975, subject workshops/Seminars; I wish to place emphasis on two unusually dynamic symposia that will be conducted at Morehouse College, Dansby Hall, under the progressive direction of Gwendolyn Roquemore.

On the third of February 9:30 a.m. through 11:00 a.m. Mr. James U. Bunkley, Metro Region Alcoholism Coordinator and a most noted defender for oppressed minorities will conduct a seminar that should prove very instrumental in promoting insight and awareness into the problematic structure of alcoholic treatment.

On the 12th of February 9:30 a.m. through 11:00 a.m. Dr. Bobby Wright, an innovating nationally known psychologist, operating purely from the phenomenological framework of Black Psychology, which is very necessary and the only germane treatment model applicable to minorities; will conduct his seminar.

I'll have more information within the next few days if I&R is requested; or you may contact Gwendolyn Roquemore; Community Psychology and Drug Counselor Training Program Morehouse College (681-2800/281).

cc: Junelle Sparks
    Jane Blume
    Lafayette Lynch
    Marta Fernandez
January 26, 1976

TO: Amara Turner-Sharazz, Caseworker I

FROM: Jane B. Blume, Casework Supervisor III

SUBJECT: Seminars

Thank you for making us aware of the seminars being conducted at Morehouse on February 3, 1976 and on February 12, 1976. In view of the Title XX push during the first three months of this year and some other training we're implementing, I don't feel that we can afford to send any caseworkers to these seminars. I am considering, however, the possibility of making them available to a limited number of supervisors.

I appreciate your continued interest in staff development.

JBB:cg

CC: Junelle Sparks
    Lafayette Lynch
    Marta Fernandez