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## **STATE RESTRUCTURING OF WELFARE**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Health, housing, transport and education are sectors in the sphere of social reproduction in South Africa which have received extensive critical analysis in recent years. The welfare field has as yet been largely ignored. A premise of this paper is that this field, which includes direct social services and social security, has taken on new significance, as a site of both mobilisation and social control.

Consider the following:

- \* Minister of Law and Order Vlok, in a recent television interview, said that in the government's view, 20% of the business of state security was about the army, the police and intelligence services - 80% was about welfare. At the same time, welfare agencies are being approached to serve on Joint Management Centres (JMCs).
- \* Since welfare became an 'own affair' in the tricameral parliament, the House of Delegates has trebled its number of professional social work staff; voluntary welfare organisations cannot compete with the material benefits offered by state employment, and a growing number of professionals are being drawn into state service.
- \* In KwaZulu:

In the budget year to March 1985 the amount allocated to social pension payments comprised 53% of the budget of the (KwaZulu) Department of Health and Welfare and 19% of KwaZulu's total annual budget (KwaZulu Government, 1985:5).

Thus one fifth of KwaZulu's government expenditure is committed to just one aspect of welfare provision.

- \* With widespread unemployment, low wages and increasing poverty, welfare services are having growing demands placed on them; at the same time, central government is strongly advocating privatisation of aspects of welfare provision.

There is a need to examine the restructuring of welfare services that has happened recently, particularly in so far as this restructuring involves the strengthening of the regional level of welfare provision. New institutional arrangements are being put in place which have serious implications for attempts to develop, now and in future, an equitable and unitary welfare system for South Africa.

### **THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WELFARE FIELD**

The study of social welfare policy and administration, in South Africa and

many other countries, has traditionally been undertaken as a separate issue from the study of social, economic and political formations. A country's welfare policy derives directly from these formations, and the services provided attempt to deal with the 'social problems' resulting from them.

This tradition deprives the study of welfare policy and services of an ideological context. Consequently, it does not allow for a critical understanding of the social control and cooptation functions of welfare, nor of the role of welfare as a form of income distribution, nor its potential as an arena for mobilisation. It certainly does not help in providing a vision for an alternative welfare system.

The paucity of critical study on local welfare issues<sup>1</sup> has meant that the significance of the welfare arena goes largely unnoticed. A consideration of a single function of welfare, that of social and political control, should prove the point:

- \* control by the state of the voluntary welfare sector, by way of legislation governing subsidies and fund-raising;
- \* control by the state of social work professionals, through legislation and registration;
- \* control by professionals of individual clients, where the predominantly casework orientation individualises problems, and the professional is in a position of authority;
- \* control by the state of bantustans, by way of the budget allocations on welfare and pensions;
- \* control by employers of employees, in terms of welfare facilities and conditions at work and as part of the wage package;
- \* control by the private sector and its foundations over communities by way of the 'corporate social responsibility' budget.

By way of contrast, there is equally little study that takes as its focus *a whole* the welfare arena as a site for mobilisation: the activities of residents associations, street committees, advice centres; the growing focus on welfare demands by organised labour; and the linkages between these.

The concern of this paper is to present changes in welfare, with regard to regionalisation and restructuring, in the context of the current fiscal crisis, and as part of the 'reform process'. To get there, a brief overview of the past structure and provision of welfare is necessary.

## PAST STRUCTURE AND PROVISION OF WELFARE SERVICES

The South African state has always been explicit about its limited role in welfare provision - it has seen welfare as primarily the responsibility of the individual, the family, the community and religious groups, with the government social services stepping in where people are unable to provide for themselves, as also in the provision of certain statutory services.

Within this so-called residual approach to welfare has been embedded a fur-

ther limitation: the perceived value of citizens has been reflected in a concrete way in discriminatory provision of subsidies for institutions and professional salaries, and in social pensions. The ratio for the latter has, till recently, been of the order of 4 (white): 2 (coloured and Indian): 1 (African).

Over the years a system has developed whereby welfare services are delivered by a combination of government bodies and the voluntary welfare sector.

State involvement in welfare started with welfare legislation protecting children in 1913, and the Old Age Pensions Act of 1928 introduced state pensions for white and coloured people. Indians were excluded in order to discourage them from seeing South Africa as a permanent home, Africans on the grounds that their extended families and communities would support them. Both of these groups received state pensions following the Pension Laws Amendment Act of 1944 (Rycroft, 1987).<sup>2</sup>

A State Department of Social Welfare had been formed by 1937, which functioned for the whole population (Shaw, 1985:5). During the 1950s, separate state welfare departments for different races were established, though all were ruled by common welfare legislation.

Private (voluntary) welfare organisations in this earlier period tended to render services regardless of race. However, in 1957:

the Department of Native Affairs advised local authorities and all organisations providing services to Africans that it would *not* approve the control of social welfare or recreational services for Africans by voluntary white bodies or by racially mixed committees (Jinabhai, 1986:9).

Andin 1966, Circular No. 29 of the Department of Social Welfare and Pensions finally prescribed that welfare services should be administered and delivered on a racially segregated basis.

Despite protests from certain sectors at this apartheid in welfare, the fact that voluntary welfare sector had come to be heavily dependent on central government for funding, particularly for the subsidisation of social work posts, resulted in their offering little organised opposition. Some welfare organisations (for example, branches of child and family welfare, and mental health) have continued to operate on a multi-racial (as opposed to non-racial) basis, and made their own arrangements to provide, for example, parity in salaries for their social workers (state subsidisation was discriminatory until 1987).

*Regional Welfare Boards* (RWBs) serving different races were established for the first time under the 1965 National Welfare Act. Their primary function was the coordination and planning of welfare services at a regional level, as well as being a conduit for the registration of welfare organisations. In some areas (eg

for coloured welfare in Natal) RWBs never got off the ground, and this is indicative of the relatively little influence they had.

*Bantustans* with 'self-governing homeland' status, such as KwaZulu, have their own Departments of Health and of Welfare, have a body of state-employed professional social workers, and administer their own pensions. A small number of voluntary welfare organisations operate in such areas.

Until the 1970s, the involvement of the *private sector* in welfare was limited to donations to voluntary organisations, and, in some cases, seeing to the welfare needs of employees. In the last ten years, 'corporate social responsibility' commitment has grown, with companies giving an estimated R200 million per year to housing, education, and health, partly in response to international pressure. It will be seen that this has not, and logically cannot, have much impact on the narrower field of welfare.

This was the context into which the proposals for a new welfare policy were introduced.

### THE PROPOSED NEW WELFARE POLICY

Late in 1985, a document drafting the outlines of a new welfare policy was circulated to national welfare councils, state welfare departments, and a few welfare organisations. This *Report on an investigation into the present welfare policy in the Republic of South Africa* (DCDP, 1985) was conceived by the Directorate of Social Planning within the Department of Constitutional Development and Planning (DCDP). On 1 July 1985 this Directorate was transferred to the Department of National Health and Population Development (DNHPD).

According to the 1985 Annual Report of the DNHPD:

The purpose of the investigation was to bring the existing welfare policy in line with the declared policies of devolution and privatisation and the new constitutional dispensation (Republic of South Africa, 1985).

The recommendations for changes in welfare policy were underpinned by three main themes:

- \*'differentiation': the further racial segregation of welfare provision, with welfare having been classified an 'own affair' in the tricameral parliament.

- \*privatisation: concern was voiced that elements of 'welfare statism' had crept into welfare policy and provision. In the new dispensation, the state would act as a safety net only where individuals, communities and the private sector were unable to take on new responsibilities in welfare provision.

- \*devolution: many important welfare functions previously undertaken by central government would be transferred to

provincial and local authorities.

As a result of strong reaction from the welfare sector against aspects of the proposed policy, the DNHPD's Directorate of Social Planning agreed to reconsider and redraft it. Assurances were given that the welfare sector would again be invited to comment on the revised proposal. This has not happened: the proposal was sent to the Cabinet for consideration, has been approved, and was supposed to be publicly available in November 1987.

This paper argues that significant changes in welfare with reference to restructuring and regionalism have happened, and are currently happening, independently of their formal articulation in, and cabinet acceptance of, a 'new' welfare policy.

## RECENT CHANGES

This section details changes that have taken place in the administration and delivery of welfare services, particularly regarding the tricameral parliament, the transferal of African welfare to provincial level, and the changing role of the Regional Welfare Boards.

### Welfare as 'own affairs':

The racial segregation of social services over the years has been outlined above, and one could then wonder whether the prescription of welfare as an 'own affair' under the new constitution would make any difference at all.

In the four years since the establishment of the tricameral parliament, at least two significant changes have happened which derive directly from welfare becoming an 'own affair'. In October 1987, the House of Representatives passed its own Community Welfare Act of 1987. Prior to this, welfare for all people in 'white South Africa' fell under (largely) common legislation (the most recent version being the three welfare acts of 1978). There is speculation, but no proof, that the House of Delegates may follow with its own legislation.

The Community Welfare Act replaces the National Welfare Act No. 100 of 1978 for coloured people. There are elements in this new act which are improvements on the National Welfare Act, in particular the broadening of the scope and definition of welfare, which is a welcome move away from the narrowly-defined emphasis on professionalism in the past. However, it further entrenches apartheid in welfare - the Welfare Advisory Council for example, now has to be composed entirely of coloured people. It is ominous that separate welfare legislation is being passed by the tricameral parliament at the very time that a large part of the welfare sector and the broader public is calling for unitary welfare policy and structures. It should be noted also that KwaZulu passed its own version, the KwaZulu National Welfare Act, in 1986.

The second change deriving from welfare as 'own affairs' has been that the Houses of both Representatives and Delegates have used their statutory power to

determine rates of state subsidisation for welfare institutions independently of rates set by other 'Houses'. While Pretoria controlled welfare budgets for coloured and Indian people, the per capita subsidy per month in children's homes was the same. Under the tricameral parliament, these subsidies have increased, with the coloured subsidy being higher than that for Indian children, and both being higher than the House of Assembly subsidy.

Now, this is good news for children in, and managers of, children's homes. But it sets the scene for welfare being further used as a vehicle for patronage by each parliament for its constituents, with potentially racially divisive implications.

#### **State African welfare to second-tier government:**

In 1986 there was a substantial change in the system of administration and delivery of state-provided welfare services for African people. The Abolition of Development Bodies Act No. 75 of 1986 dissolved the previous Development Boards, with Provincial Administrators replacing Boards. In the case of Natal, the transfer of Natal Development Board functions was effected in February 1987, and involved:

the incorporation of some 5000 additional members of staff into the (provincial) Administration's new Community Services Branch, with a budget of some R187 million (Hindle, 1987:123).

Social welfare for African people in Natal is now located within the Directorate of Community Administration in this provincial Community Services Branch.

At about the same time, Section 15 of the Provincial Government Act No. 69 of 1986 enabled certain functions administered by the Minister of Constitutional Development and Planning to be assigned to a Provincial Administrator. African community development and welfare was assigned to the Natal Administrator on 1 October 1986. This involved, inter alia, the transfer of approximately 90 professional social workers to the provincial level.

On 1 April 1987, under the same legislation, the Natal Provincial Administration was assigned the administration of social pensions for about 52 000 African pensioners (Hindle, 1987:124).

#### **A new role for Regional Welfare Boards:**

There are 27 RWBs in the Republic.<sup>3</sup> They are statutory bodies, and are meant to be composed of non-civil servants (except for the Secretariat who are chief social workers in state departments of welfare). Board members are appointed by ministers of welfare, from a list of nominees compiled by, inter alia, representatives of welfare organisations and social work training institutions.

In the past the functions of the boards were chiefly the determination of wel-

fare needs, and the planning and co-ordination of regional welfare. They have also had a role in regulating the registration of welfare organisations seeking state subsidisation for their work. Natalia RWB has since its inception acted as KwaZulu's agent for registering welfare organisations.

One bizarre and uniquely South African effect of this proliferation of racially separate RWBs is this: an organisation wishing to provide a welfare service in all regions to all race groups has to make application for registration as a welfare organisation twenty-seven times over. It has happened that such applications have been passed by some RWBs in some areas, while rejected by others. In Natal, a (non-statutory) Natal Council of Regional Welfare Boards was formed in 1987, attended by the members of each of the four boards, to discuss matters of common interest such as these multiple applications for registration.

Three things have changed recently which will affect welfare overall, and which especially will influence regional welfare. First, in about 1984, RWBs were asked to redefine their geographical boundaries in line with the state's new planning regions. This appears to have happened in other areas; it has not happened in Natal.

Second, it is interesting that, regarding the role of RWBs in the registration of welfare organisations, the first version of the new welfare policy proposed that this function be taken away from the boards. This was a response to the fact that certain boards serving Indian and coloured people refused to follow government policy of segregation in welfare. The report notes:

There are regional welfare boards that do not register an organisation if there is any reference to a population group in its constitution. There are also regional welfare boards that register welfare organisations with multi-national executives. Registration ... by regional welfare boards in the way it is done at present *is thus politicised* (emphasis added; DCDP, 1985:26,27).

The proposed solution has been to transfer the power of registration to Administrations for 'own affairs'. As the revised policy is not yet available, it is not known at this point whether this function will remain with RWBs or be assigned to 'own affairs' departments.

Third, and most important, the RWBs are about to take on a major new responsibility in the regional distribution of welfare resources. Some background needs to be given to understand the importance of this.

The economic climate has changed in welfare. The entire basis for subsidisation has recently altered from posts and agencies to programmes. There is a new and intense concern with evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of programmes, and greater attention will be given to preventing overlapping of services.

Comments of government welfare officials and private welfare workers in in-



interviews for this paper capture the changed ambience:

'Welfare is now being seen as a business.'

'From now on, funds will be given not according to the need, as before, but according to what money is available, which will be less than before'.

'We have been told, no more expansion. We have to get more effective at managing welfare'.

'We will have to sell ourselves to big business'.

There are improvements in the new subsidy system. The increased emphasis on the role of paraprofessionals and voluntary initiative is an encouraging move away from the preoccupation with 'professionalism'. The evaluative component should potentially lead to more effective management and delivery of services financed by the taxpayer.

RWBs have been allocated a completely new role. In collaboration with regional offices of state departments, they will now become centrally important decision-makers in determining priorities for regional spending. The welfare budget will still of course be determined by parliamentary vote. But the decisions about how this gets spent, and accountability to the constituency of welfare organisations for the reasons, lies with RWBs.

Whether the RWBs, comprising mostly people in full-time employment elsewhere, will be able actually to manage this massive amount of monitoring and assessment, is not at all clear. But 'Head Office' has, in important ways, moved to the regions.

### **SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESTRUCTURING**

This section critically analyses the implications of the above changes, paying special attention to the Natal/KwaZulu region.

#### **Devolution or centralisation?:**

There is no doubt at all that substantial restructuring of welfare has been taking place in the past few years, with a noticeable increase in activity at the regional level.

As far as officials interviewed were concerned, this shift is to be welcomed:

'We can now make decisions much closer to the people we are serving.'

'There is no longer the delay in sending child court orders to

Pretoria and back: Head office is here and we can do things more efficiently.'

'For the man in the street the changes make no difference - he comes to the same office and sees the same people (referring to the transfer of African welfare from DCDP to NPA). But it is easier administratively.'

However, it is also clear that there remains strong centralised state control over policy-making in welfare and the composition of the regional bodies:

- \* In both the DCDP and Department of Development Planning, social workers are now employed only at senior policy-making, coordination and planning levels - they no longer render direct services in the field, as before. Officials in African welfare made it clear that the NPA would not be in a position to make independent regional policy changes - these would be referred to DCDP or Development Aid.
- \* The RWBs for Indian and coloured people have repeatedly called for unitary, non-racial regional welfare boards, and their calls have simply been ignored.
- \* RWBs continue to be ministerial appointments: while the formal welfare sector in a region contributes to a nominations list, there is no election process.
- \* RWBs are now more accountable to the constituencies they serve, in the sense that they will have to explain why applications for subsidy are turned down - they will have to take the rap, but have no say in the size of the budget they have to distribute.
- \* The perceived 'politicisation' of the registration process by certain RWBs has led central government to recommend that this function be taken away from them.

Three quotations from a paper by Natal Provincial Secretary Hindle on the new provincial system, are useful in understanding the political dynamics currently at work. Regarding the transfer of the African welfare function to NPA:

Effectively, the DCDP divested itself of all its executive functions, to concentrate on its primary policy-making functions (Hindle, 1987:124).

This transfer resulted in the establishment of the Community Services Branch, which:

... deals with a number of issues which are very sensitive politically and ones which are closely involved with the current security situation (Hindle, 1987:126).

However, at the same time the repeal of the Provincial Finance and Audit

Act means less provincial financial autonomy, and now:

... compliance with Treasury instructions means that many powers held formerly by the Executive Committee and the Provincial Secretary now have to be exercised by the Minister of Finance and the Treasury; this is centralisation, not devolution (Hindle, 1987:126).

These moves in the welfare field appear to fit rather accurately Glaser's view of the new role and functions of metropolitan and regional bodies:

In certain respects these initiatives will centralise rather than decentralise: they devolve administrative functions rather than real powers ... The central state will continue to appoint and regulate many of the new regional bodies. But they are also part of a serious central state attempt to offload the responsibility for contentious decisions about resource allocation onto regional and metropolitan organs. This, in theory at least, will depoliticise the role of the central state and decentralise conflict (Glaser, 1987:385).

#### **Deepening racial divisions:**

Hamre (1986) notes that in the last decade there has been a substantial decrease in the gap between white and black pensions. The central state has made a commitment to equalisation of state pensions for all races. However, one thrust of the draft proposed new welfare policy is to take even further the racial segregation of welfare services, from policy-making down to direct services at grassroots level.

The resistance to this policy by the Natal Welfare sector was, at first, strong, possibly because many organisations in this region have worked hard to integrate their services, in some cases simply ignoring government policy.

Calls for a unitary welfare system have been made over the years. It was a central recommendation of the 1976 Theron Commission on coloured welfare; mainstream and alternative welfare and community organisations have advocated it; and even some (government appointed) Regional Welfare Boards.

The Natal Council for Regional Welfare Boards attempts to play a coordinating function (in particular, it considers applications from organisations operating multi-racially which affect more than one RWB). However, its scope is limited, and in the words of a board member:

Certainly if you sit on a white board you glean no knowledge of the problems of black welfare (Shaw, 1985:9).

There is one particular area of the Durban metropolitan region which symbolises the insanity of racially divided welfare - where Phoenix, KwaMashu, Newlands East and Inanda meet. Thousands of people live in a mixture of informal and formal settlement, in are in formal and informal employment. They comprise different socio-economic groups and races, but are faced by and large with similar needs for health, education, housing and employment. In such a situation, the overseeing of welfare by:

Regional Welfare Boards operating along ethnic lines ... makes social planning on a geographical basis for the whole community almost impossible (Templeton, 1985:3).

#### **Privatisation and welfare:**

Government is exhorting the welfare sector to 'sell' particular welfare programmes to private enterprise.<sup>4</sup> Though a full discussion of the problems of privatising welfare, compared to other sectors such as health and transport, is beyond the scope of this paper, three factors are pertinent here:

- \* The state, in December 1987, refused to allow donations to welfare organisations to be tax-deductible.
- \* Welfare, in the sense of child care, care of the physically and mentally handicapped, crime prevention, treatment of drug abuse, is way down the corporate social responsibility agenda of the private sector. They are in the business of profit maximisation and political stability, and (in their terms) rightly concentrate on black education, manpower training and housing (Lund, 1986a:55).
- \* The private sector has already objected to new fiscal demands that are being made by the introduction of Regional Service Councils for the development of infrastructure in black areas. Thus it is likely that this sector will balk at increasing their funding of welfare programmes.

Some few welfare programmes, motivated by more organised, resourceful and articulate organisations, may well succeed in obtaining private sector sponsorship here and there. This has distributional implications for the less organised, poorer communities, particularly in rural areas.

When the state talks of privatisation in welfare, it means not only increased private sector involvement but also more voluntary initiative and 'self help' by individuals and communities. However:

The need for social services has been created through economic, social and demographic changes and the satisfaction of that need cannot be left to either the private market or the family (George and Wilding, 1985:138).

And in South Africa, we need to add to George and Wilding's list of

'changes' the political repression which has resulted in greater demands being placed on social services.

### **Implications for the Natal-KwaZulu welfare relationship:**

Statewelfare for Africans in Natal and KwaZulu has been delivered via two separate structures: the KwaZulu Department of Welfare and Pensions (previously the Department of Health and Welfare) and now the Community Services Branch for the province. Both institutions render social services and administer social pensions in their respective areas of jurisdiction.

There have been no statutory channels of communication for welfare between the two; however, senior KwaZulu officials are regularly invited to attend Natalia RWB meetings and activities. Also Natalia RWB has acted as KwaZulu's agent in the registration of welfare organisations in KwaZulu.

Now, with the advent of the Joint Executive Authority (JEA), a two-person, JEA subcommittee for welfare has been established. The influence and scope of this subcommittee's deliberations have yet to be determined.

It is possible that the new regional arrangements will have an immediate influence on one particularly important welfare area early on - that of social pensions. Pensions are paid on a bi-monthly basis to African people, whether they have been administered by DCDP or KwaZulu. The NPA Community Services Branch will now be responsible for about 52000 social pensions; KwaZulu pays pensions to approximately 250000 people.

The administrative system has been very similar in KwaZulu and Natal, though KwaZulu has had a far greater number of payout points (approximately 1000). It is known that a consequence of this has been 'boundary hopping' of Natal residents to KwaZulu payout points, for easier access.

The intention of the Social Pensions and Allowances Division of the NPA Community Services Branch is, as early as possible in 1988, to pay social pensions on a monthly, rather than bi-monthly basis. Any person familiar with the pension system, and the economic importance of pensions particularly in the rural economy, will understand the weighty ramifications that will ensue.

First, there will be a degree of chaos. Along the fuzzy boundaries that demarcate some areas of Natal and KwaZulu, it is doubtful whether all pensioners know or care if their pension derives from KwaZulu or Natal - the point is, does it come or not? Pensioners will have to decide whether to trade off the advantages of KwaZulu accessibility versus the advantages (for some) of more frequent payments from Natal.

The creditable flexibility that has marked officialdom's attitude to 'boundary hopping' will come under stress, and one can speculate that within a short period of time KwaZulu will be pressured to follow the monthly system, in order to placate its pension constituency.

KwaZulu does not have the capacity to do this. The penetrating *Report of the Committee of Enquiry into the payment of social pensions in KwaZulu* (Kwa-

Zulu Government, 1985) showed the cost of pensions under the present system to be 95% of the welfare budget and 19% of the total annual budget. Ardington, who was responsible for much of the research for this report, has pointed out that calculations were based only on the money actually paid to pensioners; were administrative salaries and transport costs to be taken into account, the fiscal and administrative drain would probably be doubled (Ardington, personal communication).

What will surely happen will be that some system of uniformity will be sought; the Joint Executive Authority is the likely body to deliberate on this. If this happens, it will confirm, for the welfare field, the contention that the new second-tier system:

... is designed to facilitate the transition to multiracial regional authorities that cut across bantustan boundaries in the long run (Cobbett et al, 1986:153).

## CONCLUSION

There has been a lack of research attention to the welfare field in the past - it has not been brought into the mainstream of critical debate about current state policy. This paper has attempted to show how recent shifts in welfare policy are linked to the restructuring that has arisen from the 'reform process', and has considered some of the implications for the Natal/KwaZulu region.

Some questions present themselves immediately, which require further theoretical and practical analysis. First, what is the potential for organisation in the welfare sector, in terms of the client group, in order to effect the change to an equitable and unitary system? It would appear, at present, not to be optimistic. The welfare constituency almost by definition comprises the very poor, the inarticulate, the less organised. It also has comprised, until recently (through increasing unemployment), largely women, who particularly in rural areas are still structurally excluded from most formal community decision-making roles. There is a need to understand with greater accuracy and specificity the potential for, and constraints on, effective organising around welfare issues.

Then, the private but state-subsidised welfare sector faces difficult choices. It may be expected that closer regional surveillance of welfare, at the same time as the establishment of Joint Management Centres, may bring stricter political control of movements in the welfare field. Some organisations are already re-considering acceptance of state subsidies in the light of this. The expected amendments to the Fund-Raising Act No. 107 of 1978, together with the Promotion of Orderly Internal Politics Bill, which will probably restrict the work of certain organisations, will be an added impetus to the search for alternative sources of funding. If welfare organisations do this, are they not doing precisely what the government, from another angle, intends - they 'privatise', in the sense of relieving the state of its responsibilities for welfare provision?

This leads to a further question of strategy: should organisations stay outside 'the system' or go in and attempt to influence and change it? Attention needs to be given to a concrete analysis of the 'space' provided by institutional arrangements in welfare for this strategic assessment to be properly made.

Questions arise, too, for social workers as to appropriate forms of professional organisation, and their linkages with other professional groups such as doctors, nurses, planners, teachers.

Finally, where are the South African economists who should be doing the monitoring and analysis of welfare spending, such as is done for housing, health and education? Without a systematic historical and contemporary economic understanding of the state and capital commitments to and reversals from welfare, the calls for a 'welfare state' in post-apartheid South Africa will remain at the level of glib rhetoric.

Unfortunately the only forces that presently seem cognisant of the potential of the welfare terrain in terms of both mobilisation and control are those committed to containing the process of fundamentally transforming South African society. Planning and organising around welfare issues cannot be left for the agenda of some future non-racial government. Welfare is a fertile field for legitimacy and patronage: this holds for the present state, as it will for any government to come.

## NOTES

1. There has recently been a growing critical focus on the welfare terrain, for example Jinabhai, 1986; Lund, 1986a and b; Patel, 1985; Rycroft, 1987; Starke, 1986; Templeton, 1985. These contributions are for the most part unpublished, or distributed in small numbers.
2. Rural Africans were granted pensions after urban Africans on the grounds that rural support systems were stronger.
3. A word about the names given to these Boards in the Natal region is in order. In its efforts to replace racial naming with euphemisms, the state has come up with the following:  
for white welfare: Natal Regional Welfare Board  
for African welfare: Natalia Regional Welfare Board  
for coloured welfare: Regional Welfare Board for Durban and Natal  
for Indian welfare: Regional Welfare Board for Natal, Transvaal and Cape of Good Hope.
4. For a further discussion of current attempts to privatise aspects of welfare, see Lund, 1986a; Ramasar, 1987.

(Much of the material on which this paper is based was gained from interviews with officials in a number of state welfare bodies. I am grateful to them for their assistance. I acknowledge with thanks also the financial assistance of the Maurice Webb Race Relations Unit. This paper was first presented at the

Workshop on Regionalism and Restructuring, University of Natal, January 1988.)

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