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Review of *The Origins of the Welfare State: Women, Work, and the French Revolution*. Lisa DiCaprio. Reviewed by James Midgley.

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nated in the end of welfare entitlements in 1996, despite high unemployment rates caused by a slowing economy and jobs leaving the country. In this decade, Stricker argues, the debate about poverty and corresponding policies and program is essentially idle.

This book is both an impressive account of the historical mechanics of poverty in the United States and a rich description of how politics and culture shape the poverty discussion and resulting policy interventions. Stricker's writing style is engaging, and he often uses Socratic questioning that engages the reader with his discussion. Not only is the writing in this book appealing, it is graphically pleasing as well. Illustrations, photos, cartoons, and charts pepper the pages and enhance the central argument. Accessible enough for the layperson and undergraduate student, the richly detailed appendices provide the scholar with abundant supplementary material.

While Stricker does a first-rate job of addressing the first part of his title, the "how" of "How America Lost the War On Poverty", the weakness of this book is that the second part of the title, "And How to Win It" is much less developed. Out of 243 pages, he only devotes eight to outlining "What needs to be done." What does this mean? It perhaps shows just how profoundly difficult the issue of poverty is to solve, even for a scholar who is devoted to unraveling the mystery of why the anti-poverty programs of the 60s failed. Despite this disappointing flaw, this book is a very worthwhile examination of complicated questions about poverty policy, programs, and debates over the past fifty years.

Mary Ager Caplan, University of California, Berkeley

Lisa DiCaprio, *The Origins of the Welfare State: Women, Work, and the French Revolution*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2007. \$ 40.00 hardcover.

Historical accounts of the evolution of modern day social welfare policies have made a major contribution to scholarly understanding of how the welfare systems of different countries emerged and currently operate. Numerous historical

studies have shown how the Elizabethan Poor Laws contributed to the subsequent development of social welfare in both Britain and the United States while in Germany, the introduction of social insurance by Chancellor Bismarck in the 19th-century shaped contemporary European income protection policies. On the other hand, few accessible histories of social welfare in other countries are available, and knowledge about the way social welfare policies have been molded by historical events in other countries is limited.

Lisa DiCaprio's analysis of the 18th-century historical roots of social policy in France is therefore to be welcomed. Although social policy scholars in the English-speaking countries are aware of the importance of family allowances in the evolution of the French welfare system, the struggles to extend statutory involvement in social welfare at the time of the French Revolution and the subsequent influence of these struggles on the development of country's welfare system are not well known. Filling a major gap in the literature, the author provides an interesting account of the efforts of women campaigners to secularize social welfare and create a centralized, state managed welfare system.

DiCaprio contrasts the largely church sponsored welfare system that existed prior to the revolution with the adoption of policies by the Jacobin government. The earlier practice of incarcerating the poor and other needy people in Dickensian institutions was replaced largely through the influence of French Enlightenment thinkers such as Jacques Turgot, who subsequently became Controller General, by a system of workshops where destitute, able-bodied women engaged in textile manufacture and were paid an adequate income which allowed them to care for themselves and their families in the community. Although the creation of the *atelier de filature*, as these workshops were known, was resisted by the guilds, Parisian women campaigned successfully for their expansion. Their activities were supported by the Jacobin government which introduced legislation in 1793 that would have further expanded state provision. However, with the overthrow of the Jacobins, the activism of women campaigners and the expansion of the *atelier* were halted. Nevertheless, as the author shows, these activities fostered the subsequent expansion of statutory pro-

vision and the secularization and centralization of welfare.

These activities also created a direct link between welfare and work. Rather than containing institutional provisions or providing cash transfers, needy people were given jobs in publicly run productive workshops. Unfortunately, the author does not examine the implications of this development for the subsequent development of social policy in much detail. Given the current emphasis on active labor market and welfare to work programs, the early French revolutionary experiments are of considerable interest. Nevertheless, the book makes for fascinating reading and provides an extremely detailed and richly documented analysis. Although it is highly specialized, it should be consulted by anyone interested in the way social policy is today being increasingly linked to economic activities.

James Midgley, University of California, Berkeley

Rachel A. Pruchno and Michael Smyer (Eds.), *Challenges of an Aging Society; Ethical Dilemmas, Political Issues*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007. \$49.95 hardcover.

With our rapidly increasing aging population, much attention has been given to the issues faced by the aging society. However, this book edited by Rachel A. Pruchno and Michael Smyer is unique in that it explores issues and challenges at hand with the current aging society through an "ethical" lens, and brings together experts in a wide range of fields covering sociology, social work, economics, public policy, theology, public health, bioethics, nursing and neurology. Their expertise is well tied together under the topic of aging in this volume, extending discussions from two conferences, "The Science and Ethics of Aging Well: End of Life" and "The Science and Ethics of Aging Well: Public Policy and Responsibility across the Generations."

The editors employ the three ethical principles of autonomy, responsibility and distributive justice to explore problems and prospects of aging. These principles allow them