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## *Support for the American Welfare State.* Fay Lomoax Cook and Edith J. Barrett.

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The chapters in the collection cover social concerns as diverse as affirmative action, the genetic causes of crime, the 'underclass' phenomenon and the incomes of welfare mothers. Each chapter is thoroughly researched and meticulously argued. The chapter on 'welfare' (which is written with Kathryn Edin) is a good example of Jenck's incisive analytical style. It demolishes popular beliefs about welfare mothers, and exposes the policy and administrative mess into which social assistance policy in the United States has degenerated. Its powerful condemnation of a system gone wrong should stimulate immediate meliorative action. This extremely readable and interesting book confirms Jenck's status as a leading commentator on critical social issues.

Fay Lomoax Cook and Edith J. Barrett. *Support for the American Welfare State*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1992. \$49.50 hardcover; \$16.50 papercover.

During the 1980s, the rhetoric of crisis permeated academic debates about social policy. The welfare state was said to be struggling with a major fiscal crisis and, at the same time, to be facing a crisis of legitimacy. The legitimacy of the social services was being undermined as programs were becoming increasingly costly, inefficient and unable to meet expectations. Reagan's electoral victories appeared to confirm the view that popular support for the welfare state was rapidly evaporating. Indeed, the Reaganites frequently claimed that the American public had rejected the welfare state and wished it to be replaced with increased individual responsibility, commercial social services and charitable provisions.

Apart from opinion polls about popular attitudes towards welfare programs published by Gallup and similar organizations, the accuracy of these claims were not seriously tested until Cook and Barrett undertook the study reported in this book in the mid-1980s. The study consisted of telephone interviews with a national sample of 1,209 respondents as well as in-depth interviews with 58 members of Congress, and it concluded that there is overwhelming support for existing social programs among both the public and Congressional representatives.

Cook and Barrett vigorously refute the belief that the public is opposed to the welfare state and that citizens are unwilling

to pay increased taxes to support expand the social services. Surprisingly, their study revealed that support for the welfare state extends to both universal and means tested programs. While the food-stamp program was the least popular, programs such as AFDC enjoyed considerable public and congressional support.

This is an important book which offers valuable insights into public opinion towards American social policy. It not only offers a lively discussion of the issues, but unlike many studies reporting survey results, it makes extensive use of the literature and specifically tests established theoretical conventions. Although the survey findings may be somewhat dated, its message remains pertinent.

Robert Mullaly. *Structural Social Work: Ideology, Theory and Practice*. Toronto, Canada: McClelland and Stewart, 1993. \$19.95 papercover.

This textbook, which has been written primarily for students of social work in Canada, offers a profoundly different perspective on social work practice than is commonly found in introductory American texts. Indeed, its emphasis on ideology, structural factors and macro-intervention may lead some to conclude that it should be prescribed for students of social policy rather than social work. But this would be a mistake, for the book's innovative attempt to introduce social work students to a political economy approach should be recognized and included in the social work curriculum. Transcending earlier publications on radical social work, Mullaly manages to provide a balanced exposition of different normative and ideological positions. This permits students to comprehend the world of ideology in a reasoned way, and to identify and understand diverse ideological positions.

Edward J. Jennings Jr. and Neal S. Zank (Eds). *Welfare System Reform: Coordinating Federal, State and Local Public Assistance Programs*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1993. \$55.00 hardcover.

During the 1980s, with the retrenchment of the welfare state, social programs have become increasingly decentralized, fragmented and uncoordinated. This trend characterizes both public