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## Review of *The History of the English Poor Law System*. Jianding Ding

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victims of their own histories, as well as perpetrators against their own children when they are unsuccessful in navigating the complexities of mental health stability, sobriety, and residential transience while pregnant. In approaching addicted pregnancy as a common phenomenon in the lives of women residing in San Francisco's daily-rent hotels, the book points to the need for larger public policy changes, and for the implementation of multidisciplinary coordinated efforts to support and improve the lives of these women and their children.

*Cara Kelly, Arizona State University*

Jianding Ding, *The History of the English Poor Law System*. People's Publishing House (2014), ¥54 (paperback – Chinese/English edition).

English Poor Law, the origin of the social assistance system, is the foundation of modern welfare systems. Its development in Britain played an important role in promoting Poor Laws throughout the western countries. Moreover, influenced by its economic, social and political status, English Poor Law has set a model for poor relief in western countries in modern times. It has a history of nearly 350 years from the issue of the Elizabethan Poor Law in 1601 (the Old Poor Law) through the Poor Law Amendment Act in 1834 (the New Poor Law) to the National Assistance Act in 1948. However, this part of the history still needs to be better sorted out.

This book divides the history of English Poor Law into seven stages: Late Medieval – Emerging; Late 17th Century – Implementation; 18th century – Improvements; 19th century – Poor Law Amendment Act; Late 19th and Early 20th Century – Adjustment and Decline; and finally Early 20th Century – Abolition. It thoroughly analyzes and discusses the English Poor Law from various perspectives, including social backgrounds, systematic concepts, the features of different historic stages, and basic functions and social status. The book provides valuable insights into the social functions of English Poor Law. On one hand, during the mid- to late 19th century, especially the period of Marx and Engels, the English Poor Law was considered as the cruel “Poor Law Bastille” (so-called because

poor people were confined in the work houses.) This situation of the Poor Law Amendment Act was an inevitable result of the restriction of the traditional poor relief system before the emergence of the social insurance system. On the other hand, in the late 19th century and early 20th century, in response to the appeal from the English public, the poor law authorities then had no choice but to take reforming actions, such as improving work house environments and relieving punishment, providing more stable indoor assistance to impoverished citizens, especially the basic living of those in extreme poverty. Moreover, the Poor Law Amendment Act provided both indoor and outdoor relief for the poor.

Based on these reforms, Ding points out very clearly that the classical Marxist critiques of the Poor Laws were aimed at the traditional indoor relief rather than the outdoor relief under the New Poor Law. It was actually the combined indoor and outdoor relief policy of the New Poor Law that guaranteed the realization of its fundamental goal and the basic principles of the English Poor Law to keep developing while still in its original form. This conclusion is based on a large number of historical reviews and is essential for a comprehensive understanding of the social functions of New English Poor Law.

The English Poor Law has very crucial political functions. It legitimized the concept of a national country and government in England and gradually extended the rights of receiving relief to the citizens, especially after the New Poor Law in 1834. Both the deserving and the undeserving poor, previously disqualified, were able to apply for poor relief. It also strengthened social control. The primary goal of the Old Poor Law System was to achieve social control, and to provide poverty relief to all kinds of poor people, especially refugees, who were considered to be the primary target of almost all social policies. Thanks to the New Poor Law, abolishment of the punishment in the Old Poor Law was conducive to the change of the nature and form of social controls.

The English Poor Law strengthened the power of parish government. The Old Poor Law was based on regional experimental practices that enhanced parish autonomy. Although centralization began already in the mid-19th century, regional power centers remained. The English Poor Law also had

economic functions, primarily providing a sufficient free labor force and a stable social environment for English industry.

This book, based on a comprehensive review of the literature, provides immeasurable value in understanding the origin, features and status of Britain as a welfare state, and in comprehending the emergence, functions and essence of the modern social welfare system. It will be a valuable reference source for research and study in sociology, social welfare and social work, especially as pertains to the history of English social security. As a pioneering systematic study from the perspective of a Chinese scholar, this book should also play a positive role in attracting academic attention and research on this topic in China.

*Lin Guo, Huazhong University of Science and Technology*

Jennifer Mittelstadt, *The Rise of the Military Welfare State*. Harvard University Press (2015), 344 pages, \$29.95 (hardcover).

Jennifer Mittelstadt's new book reflects the increasing scrutiny of America's military system, offering a timely critique of one of the oldest and largest of military forces, the United States Army. Centering issues of class, race, and gender in her analysis, the author juxtaposes the expansion of military benefits with the retrenchment of social welfare benefits in the civilian sector. Mittelstadt frames her account of the Army's transformation from conscription to an All-Volunteer Force (AVF) as a clash between two dominant institutions: free-market economists promoting unrestrained capitalism, and the "paternalistic and patriarchal" military leadership.

This book documents the expansion of military benefits, such as subsistence allowances and housing and education stipends, with the advent of the AVF. Following the end of the draft in 1973, benefits which had previously been available only to officers and career personnel were extended to junior enlisted members with the goal of enhancing recruitment. Consequently, more than one observer noted the irony of an expanding 'welfare state' within the American Army. Nevertheless, in response to Mittelstadt's query, "Was there a unique relationship between military service and