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Sheryl Tynes. *Turning Points in Social Security: From "Cruel Hoax" to "Sacred Entitlement".* Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996. x + 253 pp. $39.50 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8047-2579-8.

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Sheryl Tynes attempts to explain Social Security's origin and development and how the nation's perception of it has radically changed over time. She begins with the early private pension plans that were in effect even before the 1930s. The work next notes how the efforts of Long and Townsend in the Great Depression had the effect of making Social Security seem moderate, which helped its adoption. Tynes details the process of creation and redefinition of the program, presenting the 1950s and 1960s as key periods, when increased numbers were brought into the system and increased benefits doled out. Throughout, Tynes demonstrates how the rhetorical language used in the battles changed and led to later problems with the program, and how organizational and group dynamics affected changes. After the 1970s, changes were seen as controversial, and only retrenchment occurred. Tynes concludes by arguing that the different pressures in each period and from each interested group have led to the status quo. However, she holds that Social Security is currently quite accepted, and includes a discussion of the program's future. Oddly enough, the work ends with a plea that we worry about America's children, describing them as more ignored than the elderly; yet this issue, for the most part, is emphasized only in the last ten pages of the work.

This book has some commendable virtues. It has many figures and tables, and is very well-researched, having over fifteen pages of bibliographic material. The work broadly covers the subject at hand, from before the genesis of Social Security up to 1990. Finally, it offers a widespread view of the process, in that it does not focus on any one single factor, but suggests a more multifaceted analysis.

However, there also are a number of disconcerting elements. First, Tynes offers up multiple theoretical models in the beginning, and discusses how she differs with each. The overall effect of this approach is to muddy the waters and greatly increase the complexity of this work. Second, she ignores or avoids some historical issues. For example, she comments that common-sense notions of the inverse relationship between "guns or butter" (military versus domestic expenditures) make the expansion of Social Security during the 1950s and 1960s seem anomalous. World War II, the Cold War, and the Korean War could have deflected resources away from Social Security. However, the Vietnam War was enormously expensive and is never even mentioned. Her analysis also deals with Dwight Eisenhower's victory in 1952 and Barry Goldwater's loss in 1964 only in terms of their positions on Social Security. While I am making no claims about her argument on the issue, to focus solely on this matter is a serious weakness.

On the whole, this work presents a wide-ranging examination of why Social Security developed the way it did; we need to consider its future on the basis of this analysis–and other sources.

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