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Stolleis, Michael. *Origins of the German Welfare State: Social Policy in Germany to 1945*. New York: Springer, 2013.

In this concise volume, author and legal scholar Michael Stolleis provides an overview of the development of the modern German welfare state. Stolleis' analysis focuses on labor law and social policy, while acknowledging the influence of economic, social, and cultural factors thereon. *Origins of the German Welfare State* does not emphasize a complete understanding of its subject; rather it seeks to provide insight into the development of German social policy in relation to the political/historical eras in which it finds itself, leading to a deeper understanding of the foundations of social policy.

Stolleis begins his chronological analysis with a consideration of medieval views on charity and social help, forming the basis for his discussion of social protection before 1848. Stolleis notes that while these basic sorts of social protection were not meaningfully altered prior to this point, they gradually produced a more socially aware society. Before the implementation of social insurance schemes, professional groups, such as the Miner's Associations of the Wilhelminian German Empire, lent credence to the idea of protection within a group. Following miner's strikes in Silesia, there was a push for the reform of these institutions, leading eventually to the establishment of Bismarck's state social insurance.

Turning to an examination of social insurance in 1870-80's Germany, Stolleis discusses the challenges faced by Bismarck in implementing his social insurance scheme, as well as the motivations behind it, one of which being the stabilization of a young, fragile state. The author considers the development of state insurance in the Empire in terms of its areas of focus: support for the sick, accident insurance, insurance against disability, and labor legislation. This discussion segues into a consideration of the adjustments made to Bismarck's state insurance due to the onset of the First World War, focusing accordingly on changes directly related to the war effort; this is succeeded by an evaluation of the changes effected by the Weimar administration in wake of the war. Lastly, the author evaluates the changes made to the social state during the National Socialist era. As Stolleis adroitly states, social policy became "mutated on a large scale, [becoming] an instrument of pacification and discipline wielded by a regime that was rapidly shifting its focus to war" (132).

While Stolleis' thesis is quite broadly defined, he manages to glean a greater understanding of the function of social policy within different societal parameters, as well as the changes effected by their associated governments. The work is a strong overview of the role and function of social policy within Germany throughout its history until 1945. However, the book does not closely examine many of the root causes of economic or political climates leading to changes in the social system, rather stating only that these influences existed and were the cause for change; this focus on how the social system functions at its core, rather than spending too much time on deeper analyses of the causes of changes to social policy, affords the reader

a direct, succinct analysis from which to extract an understanding of social policy in Germany and on the whole.

Stolleis has crafted a strong, concise introduction to the development of German social policy, one suitable for nearly any academic seeking a strong overview of the subject, rather than an in-depth analysis of the policies and the related socio-historical position in which they are found; additionally, the author's in-depth list of citations provides many avenues for possible further reading.

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