This is the first comprehensive modern analysis of public and private welfare in France, which offers a deeply researched explanation of how France’s welfare state came to be and why the French are so attached to it.

The author argues that France simultaneously pursued two different paths toward universal social protection. Family welfare embraced an industrial model in which class distinctions and employer control predominated. By contrast, protection against the risks of illness, disability, maternity, and old age followed a mutual aid model of welfare. The book examines a remarkably broad cast of actors that includes workers’ unions, employers, mutual leaders, the parliamentary elite, hauts fonctionnaires, doctors, pronatalists, women’s organizations – both social Catholic and feminist – and diverse peasant organizations. It also traces foreign influences on French social reform, particularly from Germany’s former territories in Alsace-Lorraine and Britain’s Beveridge Plan.

PAUL V. DUTTON is Assistant Professor of European History, Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff.
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Abbreviations

CAFM Caisse d'Allocations Familiales de la Moselle
CAPS Commission d'Assurance et de Prévoyance Sociales
CCAF Comité Central des Allocations Familiales
CCRP Caisse de Compensation de la Région Parisienne
CFTC Confédération Française des Travailleurs Chrétiens
CGPF Confédération Générale de la Production Française
CGT Confédération Générale du Travail
CGTU Confédération Générale du Travail Unitaire
CHAAPS Commission de l’Hygiène, de l’Assistance, de l’Assurance et de la Prévoyance Sociales
CNFF Conseil National des Femmes Françaises
CNN Congrès National de la Natalité
CNR Conseil National de la Résistance
CSAF Commission Supérieure des Allocations Familiales
CSN Conseil Supérieur de la Natalité
FMT Fédération Mutualiste du Travail
FNMCA Fédération Nationale de la Mutualité et de la Coopération Agricoles
FNMF Fédération Nationale de la Mutualité Française
FNSEA Fédération Nationale des Syndicats d’Exploitants Agricoles
GIMM Groupe des Industries Métallurgiques, Mécaniques et Connexes de la Région Parisienne
GIRP Groupe des Industries de la Région Parisienne
HCP Haut Comité de la Population
ILO International Labor Organization
MRP Mouvement Républicain Populaire
PCF Parti Communiste Français
List of abbreviations

SFIO  Section Francaise Internationale Ouvriere
UCSAF  Union Centrale des Syndicats des Agriculteurs de France
UFCS  Union Feminine Civique et Sociale
UFSF  Union Francaise pour le Suffrage des Femmes
UIMM  Union des Industries Metallurgiques et Minières
UNSA  Union Nationale des Syndicats Agricoles