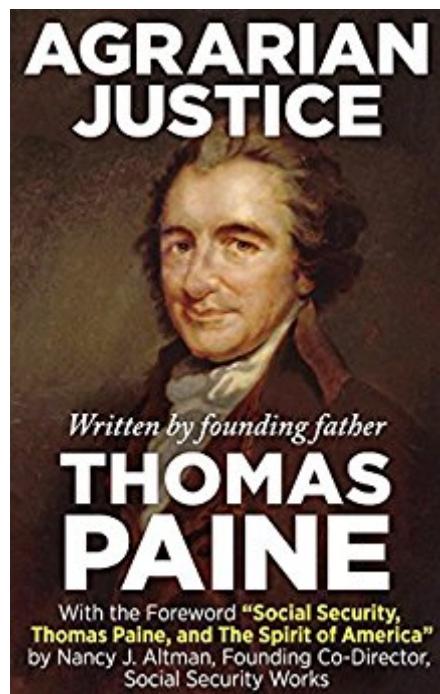


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# Agrarian Justice: With A New Foreword, "Social Security, Thomas Paine, And The Spirit Of America"



## **Synopsis**

When President Franklin D. Roosevelt introduced Social Security to the American people, he described it as "a return to values lost in the course of our economic development and expansion." • A return to values indeed. Our Social Security system, which celebrates its 80th birthday this year, was founded in the 20th century, yet the concept of a national program of Social Security benefits dates back to the founding of the nation. Founding Father Thomas Paine published his pamphlet, *Agrarian Justice*, in 1797. There, Paine proposed old-age and disability benefits, funded by a tax on estates. In *Agrarian Justice*, Paine makes the compelling case that the fruits of our great wealth and productivity are most beneficial when they are used to support economic security and dignity for all Americans. This new edition of *Agrarian Justice* includes a Foreword by best-selling author and Social Security expert Nancy Altman. The Foreword highlights how Social Security embodies the values animating our nation's founding and the ideas set forth by Founding Father Thomas Paine in *Agrarian Justice*.

## **Book Information**

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## Customer Reviews

Thomas Paine's eye-opening analysis of income inequality within the United States strikes a surprising resonance with the reader. For most, this resonance will be founded in the disturbing revelation that Paine's ideas on the estate tax are blatantly spurned during one of the worst period's of economic inequality in our nation's history. In fact, the foreword makes note of pointing out the 114th Congress repealed the "death tax" in April. Unlike the plainly skewed foreword, Paine's argument does not rely on partisanship nor an agenda. Like he so clearly states in multiple lines, his ideas are about principles: core American principles such as justice and equality. Paine's usage of ethos and pathos in this way allows any reader (policy wonk or CSPAN avoider) to bask in truly inspirational Revolutionary writing. Although incredibly well-written, I find it disappointing that the most refreshing read I've had on economic inequality in 2015 was written more than 200 years ago.

This book brings us back to our founding fathers and their desire to build a nation that would care for all members of our nation and to do so because that is what our nation does. We need to care for everyone, because we want to, not because we want to make people dependent on hand outs. We want to support them so they can build a strong foundation for their lives and truly become strong members of our nation.

Thomas Paine was way ahead of his time, he proposed the same ideas that Democrats espouse today. So the idea of helping those who are the least among us is not a new idea and he went even further and proposed that young adults just starting out in life be given a helping hand so that they wouldn't fall into poverty. My hero!!!

I found it extremely interesting that as far back as the founding of our nation, universal health care had been proposed. That it was looked upon as a right of citizenship. This was really an eyeopener. So glad that I was pointed toward this book.

While not as fiery and passionate as Common Sense, this is still a good read. I thought the first half the book (where someone explain modern Social Security through the context of Agrarian Justice) was very well done and informative. I would recommend reading this to anyone interested in knowing more about Social Security and learning the arguments for expanding it.

Tomas Paine was one of our most brilliant founding fathers, who through his words and deeds

helped to shape the foundations of our nation. This adds clarity to the discussion of social welfare rolls in the US and the place of Social Security in that roll. A very good read. The only reason I did not give it the fifth star was that the introduction is a bit long winded and seems to assume the reader is an idiot. But Paine's words are worth sifting through the bluster for.

Paine's vision for the French Revolution has been overtaken by history, but his plan for an Estate Tax is still worth reading. Nancy Altman's Foreword is really much more accessible and aimed at our current political and economic situation. I recommend her essay to all who wonder about social security.

I was amazed to learn that the idea of Social Security goes back to Thomas Paine. Conservatives and libertarians trying to get rid of Social need to learn that Social Security Idea goes back to the time of the Founding Fathers.

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