

Jocelyn Motyer Raymond — *The Nursery World of Dr Blatz*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991. Pp. xiv, 260.

William E. Blatz (1895-1964) may not be a name as familiar as that of Benjamin Spock, but for the generation of Canadian parents rearing children before the aid of *Baby and Child Care* (1946), Blatz was the "Expert". He set up the model St Georges nursery school at the University of Toronto and led the movement to popularize nursery education in Canada. He founded the Institute for Child Study which until the 1960s was one of the principal research facilities in North America. He co-authored two manuals for parents and parent educators (in addition to many articles and several more books on children and on human behavior). He served for a brief period as the educational consultant to the Dionne quintuplets, an experience that gave wide exposure to the man and his theories of childrearing. During World War II, Blatz established and operated a model nursery in England to train badly needed nursery school personnel and supervised day care programs in Canada. And he shaped the post-war Ontario day care policy, the first in Canada. This is a man who deserves a complex, analytical biography that gives play to his unique contributions to child welfare, but also views these contributions in a broad historical context.

Such is not to be found in *The Nursery World of Dr Blatz* by Jocelyn M. Raymond. Raymond's study is an engaging and often entertaining narrative biography of a "lost" twentieth-century figure. But it is also a deferential, indeed, reverential study of Blatz the private man and his public accomplishments. Moreover, the author's failure to provide a critical, historical perspective has made this book a missed opportunity. For her, the "world" of Dr Blatz is a narrow one that does not encompass the broader company of North American mental hygiene, child guidance and child psychology, nor does it include the larger field of changes in Canadian childhood and family life. Instead, the world of William Blatz is the small circle of family and devoted associates who created the University of Toronto Institute for Child Study and supported the doctor's career.

William E. Blatz, the son of German immigrants, grew to young adulthood in Hamilton, Ontario, earned an M.D. from Toronto in 1921, and went on to the University of Chicago to study psychology. Psychology in the 1920s was a discipline on the move. Its practitioners were expansionists who saw many uses for the competing theories of human emotions, motivation, personality and behavior, and public receptivity was high. But Blatz, the newly minted Ph.D., was also lucky; he came of age professionally just as the Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene was beginning to shape preventive mental health programs and successfully appealing to the U.S. Rockefeller for money to build its preserve. Rockefeller money came with Rockefeller strings. In practice, this translated into sponsorship of university programs for child study research and parent education. Blatz was appointed to direct one of two centers established in Canada. Following lines developed in the United States for professionals interested in the psychology of childhood, Blatz immediately attached himself to a clinic for the juvenile court. Then, at the University of Toronto, the new director established a nursery school laboratory for research projects, and an educational program for parents.

Blatz's court work is not given much attention and the greater part of the book focuses on the child study department at the University of Toronto and the pragmatic development of a nursery program. With loving detail, Raymond describes the trial and error procedures that created nursery school routines (and ignores the obvious similarities that these methods share with the time and motions studies prized by industrial efficiency experts). In passing, the author discusses the role of mothers in Blatz's scheme for research (as observers and record keepers) and the work of the women professionals who hovered around Blatz and made his Institute and his nursery laboratory a success. Gender issues are, however, not a primary focus of this history. Raymond observes that nursery education was an alien concept to Canadian parents in the 1920s, but public opposition to both the nursery school and the parent education programs soon shifted to public applause thanks to the work of Dr Blatz. Exactly who this "public" was has been left unexamined; class analysis is also not a significant factor in this biography.

The most arresting part of the book is the account of Blatz's role in the rearing of the Dionne babies. The experience certainly "made" the career of Dr Blatz, and Raymond is right to focus attention on this episode. After this experience, Blatz moved on to war work, training day care supervisors in both England and Canada. His impact on post-war day care legislation is noted, but not examined in detail. These were the peak years of Blatz's career; Raymond suggests that his influence began to fail in 1956 along with his failing health.

Throughout, Blatz is presented as a non-conformist and a controversial psychologist. Neither fish nor fowl, a believer in neither Watson's behaviorism nor Freud's psychoanalytic constructs, Blatz went on to construct a unique framework through which to view child development and child behavior. His "security theory" — that a personal sense of security or well-being can come only through development of a spirit of independence, risk-taking and decision-making, and that patterns of independent behavior must be learned in childhood — was not fully articulated until his last publication, *Human Security* (1966, printed posthumously). But Raymond believes these notions of security and independence shaped Blatz's ideas about childrearing from the early years at Toronto, and that he was relatively uninfluenced by the flow of psychological theories surrounding him. We are told that the publisher rejected a preface to *Human Security* which would have located its place within current perspectives on child psychology. If not in the original, such a perspective surely would have been useful in the biography.

Raymond is a biographer clearly very fond of her subject. Because of that involvement, readers are able to gain a very personal view of the Blatz world. But the intensity of this dedication, coupled with an apparent unfamiliarity with recent research on the history of women and the family, and on the mental hygiene and child guidance movements, in both Canada and the United States, has resulted in a biography without historiographical content. Furthermore, Raymond seems unaware of the critical commentary available on historical memory and the uses of oral history.

Thus, the value of Raymond's work lies in the suggestiveness of her story. The life of William Blatz speaks to many concerns of twentieth-century historians: the exploitation of female professionals in a time before equal opportunity mandates, the shifting relationship between parents and professional experts, the social consequences of a distinction between day care and nursery school, and the transition from

physical to psychological concerns in the field of child welfare. *The Nursery World of Dr Blatz* suggests that here is an individual and a subject deserving of more study. It should not be seen as a definitive account of this eminently interesting physician, psychologist, and educator and parent advisor.

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John Richards, Robert D. Cairns and Larry Pratt, eds. — *Social Democracy without Illusions: Renewal of the Canadian Left*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1991. Pp. 210.

In a time of recession, one would have expected a questioning of capitalism and a turn to socialism. Perhaps because of the collapse of socialism in Eastern Europe, this has not happened. The three provincial NDP governments completely reject pure socialism. This turn away from traditional social democratic views is echoed on the intellectual front in this new collection. These writers have formulated a critique of the old social democracy in an attempt to get the NDP to face up to what they describe as the new economic realities.

The essays originate from a conference on the economics of social democracy held at McGill University in the spring of 1988. The collection, however, includes pieces of general social interest but not specifically on social democracy. In a short review, the most useful thing to do is to discuss the main thrust of the book. Consequently, it will only respond to the criticisms of Messrs. Richards, Cairns, Blakeney, Milner and McCallum which boil down to two main points: the NDP has a negative attitude towards the market and that trade unions are unwilling to co-operate with employers to implement an industrial strategy for the Canadian economy.

Professor Robert Cairns argues that social democrats must understand the tension between the market and a democratic state. The Marxists tried to solve this difficulty by abolishing the free market all together. In contrast, Professor Cairns wishes the NDP to acknowledge the important role that a market plays in constraining monopolies by competition. He asserts that human greed can be a positive force as long as it is harnessed to collective goals. Accepting the moral legitimacy of the market means understanding that there is a constraint on the scope of social policy and the size of the public sector relative to GNP. But he also believes in the welfare state and regards it as necessary to overcome "the drag on economic growth exercised by politically organized groups that lose from technological and social change" (37). Henry Milner maintains that the experience of Eastern Europe shows that central planners cannot manage a complex economy (59) and that a well functioning market is necessary to realize a productive industrial economy (60). Finally, all writers wish social democrats to accept technological change.

It is true that social democrats would resist the proposition that greed can be a useful ingredient in the economy. But this is on an ideological level. In policy, the NDP accepts the market as a given one. Example: public ownership is no longer a moral imperative in federal NDP policy. Now, the criterion is completely pragmatic: is it better for the economy that a specific enterprise be publicly owned? Moreover,