

Contributing Citizens: Modern Charitable Fundraising and the Making of the Welfare State

Shirley Tillotson, UBC Press, 2008, hard copy \$85 and soft cover \$32.95, 240 pages or 339 pages with notes and index.

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The author of this book, Shirley Tillotson, is a professor of history at Dalhousie University and is currently the Associate Dean for the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. *Contributing Citizens* (2008) is Tillotson's second book; her first was *The Public at Play: Gender and the Politics of Recreation in Postwar Ontario* (2000). Currently, Tillotson is working on a third book, a cultural history of taxation in Canada titled, *Should Salaries and Wages Pay Income Tax?*

In *Contributing Citizens*, Tillotson examines the history of charitable fundraising from 1920s to mid 1960s; glancing back to understand the present, she considers private charities to be significant in the growth of social welfare in Canada. Like Cohen (1990), Beito (2000), Christie (2000), Valverde (1995), Finlayson (1994), Wills (1995) and others, Tillotson considers roles and relationships of private and public social welfare. However, unlike these other scholars, Tillotson contends the method of charitable fundraising introduced by Community Chests helped to make the welfare state possible (p.4). Tillotson also argues "that the ideological work of fundraisers during the interwar years had helped to make the progressive income tax model politically acceptable" and that this model "became the model of obligation on which the welfare state's revenues would be based"(p.4). Tillotson credits this new method of fundraising with: creating a sense of civic duty; bring awareness to the plight of the poor; and building a network of social leaders who advocated for the expansion of the social welfare system.

Tillotson's thesis is rather unique, as is her claim that "our present historical knowledge of the development of welfare in Canada does not prepare us to understand the coexistence of increasing charitable giving and a growing welfare state" (p.6). Our historical attention, Tillotson asserts, has been on tax-funded welfare programs and not on private welfare initiatives. This scholarly neglect, Tillotson suggests, has to do with a limited definition of the welfare state, political priorities of welfare historians, and criticisms leveled by the "new left" against the "establishment" during the 1960s and 1970s. For poor and working class members of society, advocating for enhanced government programming was seen as the only way forward. In recent times, with waning government support for social welfare, Tillotson sees a renewed interest in private sector funding and the re-emergence of associated charities "as part of the main story of the welfare state" (p.16).

In making her observations, Tillotson draws "on various bodies of Foucauldian, Gramscian, and feminist social and political theory" to help her "consider the complicated relationships between state and society" (p.16). Tillotson's findings are based on local social and political histories, and the respective fundraising efforts of associated charities in three Canadian cities. Ottawa was selected because of its bicultural component, Vancouver because of its rich history of labour and business involvement in the charities, and Halifax because Tillotson had a certain awareness of the cultural and political dynamics. To complement her efforts, Tillotson also followed professional social workers and tracked media reports of controversies about fundraising; she saw social workers acting as "transmission vectors for national and international ideas" (p.19), and controversies reported in the media, discussed at conferences, or reported in social work or business publications as also giving a broader perspective. Further to the methodology, Tillotson states "that by combining the methods of local and national histories, I have tried to bridge a gap that has troubled those of us who, though trained as social historians, regret the limitations of history with the politics left out" (p.19). To make sense of the various histories, Tillotson employs intertextual analysis, a theory borrowed from scholars of literature to understand text in relationship to other similar expressions past or present.

Contributing Citizens is an interesting book, a well-written book with a perspective not readily found in the literature at large. For students of Canadian social policy it is a must read, if for no other reason than to respond to Tillotson's claim of "scholarly neglect." Particularly noteworthy is the informative analysis of social advertising campaigns employed by the Community Chests during the 1930s in Vancouver. Tillotson concludes that social advertising appealed to people's guilt, anxieties, loyalties, and longings in order to create a "common mind" for the purpose of raising money; to this end, advertising campaigns exploited status, class, and gender (p.100). The argument is that social advertising created a widespread sense of social obligation, serving federated charities well and inadvertently making "a case for the tax-based welfare state" (p.101). Also noteworthy are Tillotson's observations with respect to racial divides in Ottawa from 1920s to 1950s and how base-broadening strategies of Community Chest fundraisers served to unite Protestant and Catholic, Anglophone and Francophone communities. It is a study of politics and personalities highlighting the role of federated charities in transcending prejudice and social exclusion. The Ottawa analysis concluded that regardless of the size of your contribution, giving money through donation or taxation gave citizens a voice. Both the Ottawa and Vancouver analysis make for a rather compelling argument on the importance of Community Chests in the development of the welfare state.

In the 1920s, according to Tillotson, the fiscally conservative, business elite favoured expanding the ranks of taxpayers so more citizens would be interested in curtailing the extravagant spending of politicians. This raises the question of

whether there was a similar motive at play with the federated charities in order to fight demands from social work agencies. Or, on the other hand, would expanding working class donors bring a greater awareness of social need and consequently their support for the welfare state? In her analysis, Tillotson found both positions were, in fact, present. So, even though the motives of the Community Chest organizers might well have been to control social spending and restrict the welfare state, it did not happen.

It is true; our historical knowledge in Canada does not prepare us to understand the coexistence of increased charitable giving and a growing welfare state. Supporters of the public system have been critical of the private, and the reverse is true. The thinking, for the most part, has been dichotomous with supporters of the private system viewing their efforts compared to the public efforts as altruistic rather than based on self-interest, as caring rather than impersonal, as voluntary rather than compulsory, as responsible rather than corrupt. In reverse, supporters of the public system view their efforts relative to the private system as rational rather than sentimental, as inclusive rather than exclusive, as democratic rather than ruled by the elite, as professional rather than amateurish. The historic reality, according to Tillotson, is not that dichotomous and she contends that the Community Chests movement with their "ideologically messy and multi-faceted methods ... creatively contributed to historical change" (p.237).

Contributing Citizens takes us to a point of reconciling the divergent points of views on the historical developments; perhaps it is a more accurate reflection of events. However, as a trained social worker with an interest in social policy there are two things that are not clear in this book, and by raising them I realize I may be guilty of the same dichotomous thinking Tillotson is attempting to dispel. Nevertheless, Tillotson claims to have made her observations by drawing on various bodies of Foucauldian, Gramscian, and feminist social and political theory. Given that Gramsci was a Marxist and known for his views on cultural hegemony as a means of supporting capitalism, this aspect of the theoretical framework appears to have produced an unusual conclusion. For this reader, there is also some question about how feminist social and political theory could lead Tillotson to her observation about making charity masculine, her point being that

The addition of ambitious young men to the ranks of leadership in private charity was hard on the careers of women social workers, but in a still-sexist public sphere this gender shift in social work leadership was not a bad thing for the weight of influence that the chests could bring to bear in public policy processes. (p.230)

For me, these conceptual linkages were not clear. What was also not clear is where this leads. As a historian, was Tillotson only concerned about setting the record

straight, or was there something to be learned for the future? After all, she acknowledged this story was inspired or appalled by government attempts to dismantle social programs (p.6). Is there something in this history that will provide insights on how to address child poverty or reduce homelessness? Is there something about what transpired in Canada between the 1920s and 1960s that can be applied to the culturally diverse society of the present, a society in which the mantra is "lower taxes and smaller government"? How do the supporters of private and supporters of public systems overcome their dichotomous thinking?

Contributing Citizens, even with the questions raised by this reader, is an interesting history of the developments of social welfare in Canada. It is a book I would recommend to anyone interested in the history of social welfare and it would serve well as a supplementary text to an advanced course in social welfare policy.

Women's Health in Canada: Critical Perspectives on Theory and Policy.

Edited by Marina Morrow, Olena Hankivsky, and Colleen Varcoe.
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Although there has been some recognition of women and their specific health care needs, current health care strategies have failed to offer sufficient guidelines in support of their importance. Furthermore, ongoing budget constraints have often resulted in deleterious health effects, especially upon those women who have already experienced difficulty in accessing much-needed care. Many proposed health care initiatives have not been fully endorsed or implemented by both levels of government, despite the growing need to appreciate and understand women's health from different frames of reference. In addition, current ideologies have often conceptualized women's health from a very narrow perspective that has often discounted the complexity of women's lives and their specific needs.

This book is intended to offer its reader an appreciation of the current status of health care in Canada and its effects upon women. Its unique ability to critically explore the many issues that affect women in Canada provides an informative resource that can be used by academics, healthcare providers and policy leaders that have an interest in exploring health care from different perspectives. Rather than focusing upon the traditional biomedical model, the editors Olena Hankivsky, Marina Morrow, and Colleen Varcoe have included valuable contributions from