

continually vacillating feelings about the quality of life in their homeland vs. life in Canada were obvious -- the harsh climate was unanimously mentioned as a drawback to life in Canada. As refugee children's voices are rarely heard, their narratives are particularly noteworthy.

A feminist reader will be looking for an analysis of the particular difficulties faced by refugee women, but she won't find that analysis here. The women do discuss hardships they have endured as refugee women (such as the death of a spouse, or raising a disabled child as a single mother), and the corresponding economic and emotional consequences. But, *Safe Haven* reveals its ideological bent by subordinating the women to their place in the nuclear family.

As over eighty percent of the world's 23 million refugees are women and their dependents, the international refugee population would have been more accurately represented in *Safe Haven* by the experiences of more women-headed families, or of women who sought refuge on their own. *Safe Haven* also lacks an analysis of class, and its effect on whether or not one is able to seek refuge. All of the families interviewed in the book were from the middle classes, a situation which enabled them to afford to seek refuge abroad. This luxury is rare amongst the majority of the world's refugees.

As literature on refugees is rare, especially literature containing the words of refugees, *Safe Haven* contains valuable information for those interested in the experiences of refugees settling in Canada. It is not, however, the book for those seeking an analysis of refugees' narratives.

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***Muriel Duckworth: A Very Active Pacifist.***  
Marion Douglas Kerans. (Fernwood Publishing, Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1996); photographs and brief chronology; +238 pages; ISBN 1-8956686-68-7; \$19.95

Muriel Duckworth's biography gives new meaning to the phrase "life begins at 50." For it was in these "golden years" of postmenopause that Muriel blossomed as a public figure. A recipient of many honours, including the Persons Award, the Order of Canada, the United Nations Global Citizen, and several honorary doctorates, Muriel Duckworth, accomplished some of her most substantial work for peace and social justice after raising three children, as well as undertaking various roles in community education. In 1960, at the "tender" age of 52, Muriel was only just beginning her long and illustrious career as a peace activist and global citizen *extra ordinaire*. At an age when her spouse Jack was preparing for retirement, she was founding numerous Canadian women's organizations, as well as working with women at international levels to build world peace. Indeed, one of the finest features of the biography by Marion Douglas Kerans is that it poignantly reveals the essence of Muriel's life, in the words of Adrienne Rich: "...to cast my lot with those, who age after age, perversely, with no extraordinary power, reconstitute the world." (A. Rich, *The Dream of a Common Language, Poems, 1974-77*, NY: 1978)

In this account, Kerans skilfully reveals the philosophy which lies at the heart of Muriel Duckworth's feminism and peace work. In Muriel's own words: "women of the world are not our enemy, and we aren't going to behave as if they are." It also highlights Muriel's utter faith in the power of ordinary people to make a difference. The biography by Kerans clearly demonstrates Muriel's steady support for strategies of non-violent conflict resolution, specifically the inclusion of all parties in diplomatic negotiations, and the critical importance of having representation of women. As Kerans outlines, these approaches were readily reflected under Muriel's leadership in the Voice of Women (VOW) throughout both the Cold War and the Vietnam War. There were more than a few raised eyebrows when she and other VOW members met with Soviet women at a conference in Moscow to discuss the threat of nuclear escalation between the communist and capitalist super-powers. Muriel was also at the forefront of facilitating

international dialogue between Canadian and Vietnamese women from both North and South Vietnam, when VOW brought them to Canada during the Vietnam war, to share their stories of the devastation and to create a better understanding of the need for diplomacy.

A central achievement of *Muriel Duckworth: A Very Active Pacifist* is the contribution it makes in recording Muriel's experiences within the Canadian women's peace and feminist movements in the latter half of the 20th century. As a founding member of the Nova Scotia chapter of the Voice of Women (VOW), Muriel played a significant role in integrating peace issues with community issues, including anti-racism, social justice, feminism, and environmental issues. The many stories of protests, lobbying and organizing give the reader a sense of the struggles faced by women activists in this period

In addition to this however, Kerans has provided a "window" into the conditions and experiences of Canadian women in the 20th century. Using the methods of oral history, this narrative sensitively portrays Muriel's experiences as a young woman growing up in rural Quebec, launching her university studies at McGill in the mid-1920's, and gradually "evolving" throughout marriage and motherhood, into a passionate pacifist, feminist and community activist. A leading strength in this work is Keran's ability to profile Muriel through interviews and other primary sources such as personal letters. This chronicle of Muriel's life has highlighted some of her most formative influences. Her mother Anna had a strong influence on her social conscience and feminism, as did Muriel's spiritual and intellectual journey in the Student Christian Movement (SCM) in Montreal and in the Union Theological Seminary (UTS) in New York City. Kerans has succeeded in weaving together a narrative which underscores the connections between the private and public, the personal and political, the spiritual and the social.

While we are fortunate that Marion Douglas Kerans has laid the groundwork in this eloquent and timely account of Muriel Duckworth's life, there is a need to broaden the

story by placing it in the context of Canadian women's history, and more specifically, the history of Canadian women's peace movements. This narrative would have benefited from such a perspective. The significance of Muriel's life far outreaches her achievements as an individual, and would be better understood by locating it within the fabric of Canadian society, especially prominent Canadian social movements. From the "social gospel" to civil rights, as well as spanning two generations of feminist and women's peace movements, Muriel's experience as a resourceful and privileged Canadian woman bears further examination.

While the Kerans' biography provides a rich description of Muriel Duckworth's life, and yields precious primary research in a hitherto unmapped territory of Canadian women's history, a more thorough analysis of Canadian women's peace activism is a task which remains for future historians.

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***Aborting Law: An Exploration of the Politics of Motherhood and Medicine.*** Gail Kellough. (University of Toronto Press, Toronto, Ontario, 1996); bibliography; index; x + 340 pages; ISBN (paper) 0-8020-7741-2; \$19.95

Gail Kellough's *Aborting Law* sets out to explain the abortion debate in Canada through a meticulous analysis of the discourses and codes that form both the terms of the debate and the material conditions for women who seek abortion services. She succeeds, showing how and why reproductive autonomy for Canadian women remains trapped in "rhetoric about rights and responsibilities" (5), while the material conditions for autonomy remain elusive.

Kellough argues that legal "choice" for women is configured through either property or welfare rights, a dialectic that cannot reconcile