

emerging field of social work which conflicted with those that the organization previously advocated.

The NCFM was ahead of its time in advocating that men as well as women be held accountable for their sexual behavior, that unwed mothers should be encouraged to keep their children, and that their lives should not be irrevocably damaged when they chose to do so. For example, it assisted its clients in taking fathers to court to obtain child support. It also provided job training and daycare for unmarried mothers so that they could adequately provide for their children and themselves and not become a burden on society.

Katherine G. Aiken's book shows how one organization contributed to the feminist agenda of decreasing women's oppression. It is an excellent example of the positive changes that are possible through awareness and acceptance of the common denominators among people. I found this book to be very readable. I recommend it as a positive model for women's shelters as well as individuals seeking to end women's oppression.

Women, Families and Feminist Politics: A Global Exploration

Kate Conway-Turner and Suzanne Cherrin
New York: Harrington Park Press, 1998.

Reviewed by Joyce B. Castle

At a time of increasing attention to the role and place of women in society and of ongoing debates on what it means to be a feminist, a book that deals with the reality of women's lives from a global perspective is welcome indeed. I was anxious to read this text precisely because of its international scope—here was a text promising to address the most important aspects of women's lives around the world.

The introductory chapter proved to be excellent reading. It presents the organization and conceptual framework of the text, and clarifies the perspective of the authors. Conway-Turner and Cherrin claim to be promoting cultural relativism, "the recognition that one culture cannot be arbitrarily judged by the standards of another" (4). They suggest that the major contemporary categories of feminism—liberal feminism, socialist feminism, and Marxist feminism—fail to fully illuminate the diversity among women worldwide and they caution Western feminists to temper their enthusiasm to liberate women around the world and to avoid Western constructions of women by race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

The six chapters beyond the introduction deliver the larger message of the

book, that: “women’s lives are orchestrated within the confines of family, community, and societal structures” all of which “are part of, and connect to, the larger culture and the world community” (11).

Family structures are the focus of the first two chapters. Chapter 1 deals with traditional meanings of marriage within various societies and the ways in which these subsequently affect women’s treatment in the family. Chapter 2 explores diverse structures beyond the monogamous, heterosexual family formation and the different place of women in alternative family formats around the world. The remaining four chapters cover what Conway-Turner and Cherrin identify as the other global concerns of women—reproduction and sexual standards, women’s work, health care, and violence. The primary data and the case studies included in all the chapters add reality to the discussions and bring women’s voices to the forefront. Taken together, the chapters point out that while women’s issues are similar worldwide, they “vary enough to make comparisons informative and useful for a feminist future” (209).

I found the strength of the book to lie in its organization and comprehensive coverage of the key concerns presented. I also found the book sufficiently scholarly to warrant its use in university courses on women’s issues. Yet from my position as a professor of education, I was struck by the paucity of attention to the topic of education for women. Beyond a few pages in the chapter on women and work, issues of women’s education around the world received minimal attention. I also found the concluding chapter somewhat disappointing; it was too brief, it contained too many over-generalized platitudes, and it failed to celebrate some of the wonderful progress that has been made by women around the world. These reservations aside, I did enjoy this book and I did learn a good deal. I recommend it to anyone interested in women and the future of women worldwide.

An Unconventional Family

Sandra Lipsitz Bem
Hartford/London: Yale University Press, 1998

Reviewed by Rachel Josefowitz Siegel

This short memoir (209 pages) is fascinating, deeply moving, and thought provoking. We are drawn into the 30-year history of a remarkably creative marriage and family.

Sandra Lipsitz Bem is a professor of Psychology and former Chair of