

## Suggested Reading: *Women in the World*

Here are several books which will introduce the reader to global women's issues. It is intended to serve as a resource for those seeking to learn more about the role of women in other societies, offering suggestions for reading by individuals and Branch book groups. It focuses on the lives of women who have made a difference in promoting peace and advancing the welfare of women, and on issues facing women in other cultures. This list is by no means exhaustive, and suggestions for inclusion of other titles are welcome: please send them to Bonnie Lincoln at [bell3bird@aol.com](mailto:bell3bird@aol.com). Please include both the author's name and title of the book. Some of the books and authors on this list may be controversial; we take no positions on this aspect of their writings.

➤ Abbassi, Jennifer and Sheryl L. Lutjens, eds., *Rereading Women in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Political Economy of Gender*. A compilation of articles on women's issues by Latin American and Latin Americanist scholars (mostly women) which first appeared in the journal *Latin American Perspectives*. While some papers are more readable than others, this is a rich lode of information to be mined as well as a window onto the feminist literature on Latin America which has developed in recent decades. The book focuses particularly on changes which have taken place in women's lives as a result of changes in the world economy.

➤ Ahmed, Leila: *Women and Gender in Islam*. This is an excellent historical review of the role women have played in Islamic societies across the centuries. A professor of women's studies at the University of Massachusetts when the book was written, in 1999 Ahmed, who is Egyptian, was appointed the first professor of women's studies in religion at the Harvard Divinity School.

➤ Albright, Madeleine: *Madam Secretary*. The autobiography of the first woman to serve as U.S. Secretary of State, this is a very readable presentation of both her personal story as a woman leading our foreign policy, and the issues with which she dealt as Secretary of State.

➤ Gildersleeve, Virginia: *Many a Good Crusade*. The former Dean of Barnard College, Virginia Gildersleeve was for many years the International Relations Chair of AAUW and its predecessor. Along with colleagues from Great Britain and Canada, she founded the International Federation of University Women in the aftermath of World War I in an effort to foster peace. She later served as a member of the U.S. delegation to the San Francisco Conference which founded the United Nations. (Out of print, but available through interlibrary loans or as a used book from Amazon.com)

➤ Glendon, Mary Ann: *A World Made New: Eleanor Roosevelt and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. As chair of the Human Rights Commission convened by the United Nations in 1947 to draft the Declaration, Eleanor Roosevelt used all of her

skills to bring such unlikely partners as France, the USSR, Nationalist China, and others together to write a document which all could sign. This is an excellent window on the formation of a statement of principles which, while often honored in the breach, still serves as the conscience of the world, as well as on the character of a remarkable woman.

➤Hirsi Ali, Ayaan: *Infidel*. The personal journey of an Islamic woman born in Somalia whose life led from a traditional childhood in Africa through rebellion against an unwanted marriage arranged by her father to refuge and citizenship in Holland, where she became a member of Parliament and a passionate advocate for the rights of Moslem women. Caught up in controversy in Holland, especially in the wake of the murder of Theo Van Gogh after he made a film in collaboration with Hirsi Ali, she now resides in the U.S. where she works with the American Enterprise Institute.

➤Hunt, Swanee: *This Was Not Our War*. This book offers the moving testimonies of 26 women who survived Bosnia's ethnic upheavals. Hunt, as the U.S. Ambassador to Austria in the 1990s, hosted some of the Bosnian peace discussions and has maintained her concern for the region through Women Waging Peace. She is now Director of the Women and Public Policy Program at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government. However, this book is about the women of Bosnia, not about herself.

➤Ilibagiza, Imaculee: *Left to Tell*. At 22, Ilibagiza and 7 other women spent 91 days in hiding in the bathroom of a Hutu pastor's home while the Rwandan genocide raged outside and her family was murdered. She credits her strong Catholic faith for her ability not only to survive but to forgive her family's killers. One needn't share her religious faith to be moved by her compelling story.

➤Mortenson, Greg and David Oliver Relin: *Three Cups of Tea*. When Mortenson was nursed to life in a remote Himalayan village following a failed attempt to climb K-2, he vowed to return and build the village a school, which turned out to be the first of many. This is his story of his efforts to educate boys and girls in Central Asia.

➤Sadat, Jehan: *A Woman of Egypt*. The widow of Anwar Sadat, former President of Egypt who was assassinated by Moslem extremists, tells her story. Mrs. Sadat was the keynote speaker at AAUW's 2005 Convention.

➤Twist, Lynne: *The Soul of Money*. An international activist who has worked with the Hunger Project, Twist examines how our attitudes toward money affect our view of the world. She proposes that consciously working to change these attitudes can empower us to make a difference in the lives of others, and make our own lives more meaningful.

➤UNICEF: *Status of the World's Children 2007*. This year's edition of UNICEF's annual report examines the status of women around the world. It can be obtained through UNP.UN.org.

➤Walker, Alice: *Possessing the Secret of Joy*. A novel written around the issue of female genital mutilation in West Africa by the author of *The Color Purple*. Walker tells

a good story which at the same time informs the reader about the issues surrounding FGM and what it does to the lives of women.

AAUW International Affairs Committee  
July, 2007