



TARAH BROOKFIELD

# COLD WAR COMFORTS

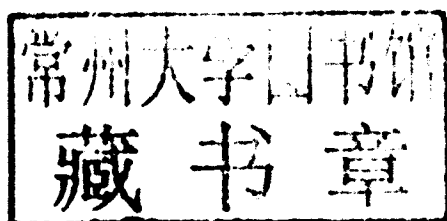
*Canadian Women, Child Safety, and Global Insecurity*



# **Cold War Comforts**

Canadian Women, Child Safety, and  
Global Insecurity, 1945-1975

TARAH BROOKFIELD



WILFRID LAURIER  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

This book has been published with the help of a grant from the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, through the Aid to Scholarly Publications Programme, using funds provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Wilfrid Laurier University Press acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund for our publishing activities.

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Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Brookfield, Tarah

Cold War comforts : Canadian women, child safety, and global insecurity / Tarah Brookfield.

(Studies in childhood and family in Canada)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Issued also in electronic format.

ISBN 978-1-55458-623-3

1. Cold War. 2. Women—Political activity—Canada—History—20th century. 3. Cold War—Social aspects—Canada. 4. Children—Legal status, laws, etc.—Canada—History—20th century. 5. Children—Legal status, laws, etc.—History—20th century. I. Title. II. Series: Studies in childhood and family in Canada

FC613.C64B76 2012 971.063 C2011-907615-2

---

Electronic monograph in PDF format.

Issued also in print format.

ISBN 978-1-55458-635-6

1. Cold War. 2. Women—Political activity—Canada—History—20th century. 3. Cold War—Social aspects—Canada. 4. Children—Legal status, laws, etc.—Canada—History—20th century. 5. Children—Legal status, laws, etc.—History—20th century. I. Title. II. Series: Studies in childhood and family in Canada (Online)

FC613.C64B76 2012 971.063 C2011-907616-0

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Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

[www.wlupress.wlu.ca](http://www.wlupress.wlu.ca)

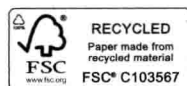
Cover design by Martyn Schmoll. Front-cover image by iStockphoto; inset photo by Associated Press. Text design by Catherine Bonas-Taylor.

This book is printed on FSC recycled paper and is certified Ecologo. It is made from 100% post-consumer fibre, processed chlorine free, and manufactured using biogas energy.

Printed in Canada

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# **Cold War Comforts**

# List of Acronyms and Initialisms

## Organizations

ARPO	Air Raid Precautions Organization
CASW	Canadian Association of Social Workers
CAVC	Canadian Aid for Vietnam Civilians
CAWV	Committee Against the War in Vietnam
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CCCRH	Canadian Committee for the Control of Radiation Hazards
CCF	Canadian Commonwealth Federation
CCND	Canadian Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CJC	Canadian Jewish Congress
CPC	Canadian Peace Congress
CPRI	Canadian Peace Research Institute
CWC	Canadian Welfare Council
EMO	Emergency Measures Organization
FCV	Friends of the Children of Vietnam
FFC	Families for Children
FPA	Family Planning Association
FPPI	Foster Parents Plan International
FWIC	Federated Women's Institutes of Canada
ICSC	International Commission for Supervision and Control
IODE	Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire

ISS	International Social Services
KYF	Kuan Yin Foundation
LON	League of Nations
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee
MCSC	Montreal Children's Service Centre
NAC	National Action Committee
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCWC	National Council of Women of Canada
NDP	New Democratic Party
NORAD	North American Aerospace Defence Command
ODS	Open Door Society
QMAV	Quebec Medical Aid for Vietnam
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
SANE	Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy
UN	United Nations
UNA	United Nations Association
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UNKRA	United Nations Korea Reconstruction Agency
UNRRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
USC	Unitarian Service Committee
VOW	Voice of Women/La Voix des femmes
VWU	Vietnam Women's Union
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
YWCA	Young Women's Christian Association

## **Archives**

AO	Archives of Ontario, Toronto, ON
CEA	City of Edmonton Archives, Edmonton, AB
CTA	City of Toronto Archives, Toronto, ON
DCA	Diefenbaker Centre Archives, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, SK
LAC	Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, ON
MUA	McMaster University Archives, Hamilton, ON
SWHA	Social Welfare History Archives, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN
UBCSC	University of British Columbia Special Collections, Vancouver, BC
UCOA	UNICEF Canada Office Archives, Toronto, ON

UMA	University of Manitoba Archives, Winnipeg, MB
URIA	University of Rhode Island Archives, Warwick, RI
UWA	University of Waterloo Archives, Waterloo, ON
YUA	Clara Thomas Archives, York University, Toronto, ON

## **Terms**

DEW	Distant Early Warning
ICBM	Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
MAD	Mutually Assured Destruction
Sr-90	Strontium-90



# Acknowledgements

I always enjoy reading acknowledgements because authors are usually so giddy that the book is *finally* finished that they are full of glee, love, and good humour. More importantly, acknowledgements are excellent reminders that, although writing and research can feel like a solitary experience, nurturing a book from beginning to end is greatly dependent on the generosity of so many people whom the author encounters on his or her journey. I am incredibly lucky to have been surrounded by wonderful mentors, peers, colleagues, oral history participants, and family from the time this book was only the flimsiest of ideas for a dissertation.

*Cold War Comforts* began as a dissertation in the Department of History at York University. I am eternally grateful that Kathryn McPherson did not laugh when I suggested a thesis project based on the vague connections between 1950s fallout shelters and international adoption in the 1970s. As my supervisor, Kate pushed me to develop my ideas into something coherent and meaningful, particularly by reminding me that a good story was incomplete without answering the persistent question “So what?” I was joined at York by two indispensable thesis committee members, Molly Ladd-Taylor and Marcel Martel, who went above and beyond to offer feedback, advice, and support on every word written. For future York grad students, I present to you—your thesis committee dream team!

The York History Department was also brimming with encouragement from other faculty members and fellow students. Bettina Bradbury always

had time to offer encouragement and guidance. Myra Rutherford, Craig Heron, Marlene Shore, and Jennifer Stephen were gracious with their wisdom and their interest in my project. The same can be said of my fellow York classmates and friends, particularly Susana Miranda, Kristine Alexander, Greg Kennedy, Sean Kheraj, Natalie Gravelle, Jason Ellis, Sarah Glassford, Jenny Ellison, Christine Grandy, and Lisa Rumiel. I also benefited from the social and professional networking of the Toronto Area Women's Canadian History Group, where I met Samantha Cutrara, Alison Norman, Robin Grazley, and Jennifer Bonnell. I am very lucky to be part of this new generation of historians and genuinely awesome people who are so willing to support each other through graduate work and beyond.

I would also like to acknowledge the substantial funding I received for the dissertation stage of this project from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Doctoral Fellowship, the Avie Bennett Historica Dissertation Scholarship in Canadian History, and the John A. Macdonald Fellowship in Canadian History.

Once I finished my PhD, I was fortunate to have found a similarly supportive environment to continue the research and writing for *Cold War Comforts* at Wilfrid Laurier University. I benefited from the interdisciplinary nature of the Laurier Brantford campus and the company of my fellow historians in Brantford and Waterloo. I am appreciative of the energy and support radiating from my Laurier colleagues, including James Cairns, Rebecca Godderis, Katherine Rossiter, Trish McLaren, Katherine Bell, Stacey Hannem, Charles Wells, Ken Werbin, Lisa Wood, Rob Kristofferson, Geoff Spurr, Peter Farrugia, Terry Copp, and Cynthia Comacchio. Laurier generously provided me with research and travel grants that allowed me to make the transition from dissertation to book. This included the funding to work with two excellent research assistants, Annalise Clarkson and Heather Gauthier.

I am honoured to be included in Wilfrid Laurier University Press's Studies in Childhood and Family in Canada Series, home to so many other books that inspire my teaching and research. From the early stages of my proposal, I had the pleasure of working with series editor Cynthia Comacchio, whose touch always had the effect of immediately improving my words and ideas. Editor Ryan Chynce's patience and advice was much welcomed by this first-time author. I appreciate Rob Kohlmeier's and Benjamin Lefebvre's work putting together the book's final touches. I would like to thank each of the three anonymous reviewers for taking the time to evaluate my scholarship and offer perceptive feedback.

My research only exists because of the foundation laid by other scholars of women's and children's history. Furthermore, Karen Dubinsky, Dominique Marshall, Karen Balcom, Veronica Strong-Boag, Mona Gleason, Franca Iacovetta, Tamara Myers, and Frances Early generously shared their research and offered advice at critical stages of my project's development.

The research and writing of this book was made possible by the assistance of helpful archivists, librarians, and staff across Canada and the United States. Many thanks to the family members and colleagues who gave me access to the personal papers and photographs of the activist women and organizations featured in this book. Most importantly, this research would be incomplete without the personal experiences shared by the oral history participants who trusted me with their stories and memories. It was such an honour to talk to you and include your perspectives in my book. I would like to single out the participation of one person in particular, Julie Medeiros. Many years ago she told me the story of how she came to Canada and included me in her journey to explore her Cambodian roots. I am so grateful that she is my friend and that she allowed me to include her story in this book.

At its heart, this book is about families of all different kinds, those made by blood, marriage, and other circumstances. I am blessed to be part of many families who have welcomed me into their lives as a daughter, wife, sister, aunt, cousin, niece, daughter-in-law, and friend. To the Brookfields, Lunds, Stewarts, Brauns, Whites, Joyces, Marissinks, and Hatchers, thank you for always asking about the book and assuring me it would be a best-seller! My good friend Melissa Stubbs deserves a special mention for being an enthusiastic cheerleader and hand-holder for over twenty years. There are not enough words to describe the encouragement and love (and teasing) I received from my husband, Dennis, throughout this journey. Finally, in a book about mothers and children, it seems fitting to dedicate this book to two important people in my life: my mother, Margaret, and my daughter, Juliet.

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# Introduction

Vigilant would best describe Ottawa resident Goldie Josephy's state of mind in the 1960s and 1970s. Throughout these decades Josephy could be regularly found on Parliament Hill carrying a nuclear disarmament picket sign, holding a memorial outside the American embassy on the anniversary of Hiroshima, and participating in a march advocating an end to the war in Vietnam. When not actively demonstrating for peace, Josephy, a married mother and recent Jewish immigrant from England, was glued to her typewriter, where she wrote letters almost daily to heads of state and newspapers, expressing her distaste for militarism, imperialistic foreign policy, and nuclear weapons. From the same typewriter she corresponded with her South Korean foster child, Myung Hi, whom she sponsored through the Unitarian Service Committee. Josephy's house was often the site of meetings for peace groups and became the temporary home to several American youths dodging the draft. In between demonstrations and stuffing envelopes, Josephy made time for private reflection, attending the Quaker peace retreat on Grindstone Island with her husband and two sons. She also organized the Ottawa visits of Nobel Peace Prize recipient Linus Pauling and anti-Vietnam War crusader Dr. Benjamin Spock. Josephy's vigilance caused one journalist to remark that it appeared she "worked 80 hours a week for 18 years without pay."<sup>1</sup> When asked to explain her drive, Josephy stated, "I had two beautiful children and decided if I wanted them to grow up with arms and legs attached we can't have another war."<sup>2</sup>

Josephine was one of thousands of Canadian women who mobilized to protect children's health and safety during the nuclear arms race and outbreaks of war between the dropping of the first atomic bomb in Hiroshima and the end of the Vietnam War. Technically Canada was at peace between 1945 and 1975; however, the economic, cultural, and political rivalry between the United States and Soviet Union meant it was a peace that demanded caution and preparation for war. The state of global security (or rather insecurity) was characterized by the existence, evolution, and stockpiling of nuclear weaponry, which, if deployed, promised to end life as it was known. Meanwhile dozens of violent conflicts erupted in Europe and Asia, drawing the attention of foreign allies eager to offer military assistance to protect their economic and political ventures. In this explosive climate, the Canadian government, in both its successive Liberal and Conservative forms, made several investments to keep the Cold War from getting hot, or, failing that, to ensure Canada emerged on the winning side. This meant Canada would continue the course the nation began in the Second World War and remain active in international affairs by helping its allies and monitoring the activities of its enemies. In the diplomatic arena, hope was pinned on the United Nations (UN) becoming the foremost peacemaker, and the Canadian government donated funds and leadership so the fledgling organization had the resources to avert war and build stability through relief, economic development, social justice, and later, peacekeeping. Meanwhile, militarization offered a more familiar solution. Canada helped form the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1949 and the North American Aerospace Defence Command (NORAD) in 1958, devoting land, troops, and finances to build and maintain defensive perimeters. Throughout the Cold War, the federal government was preoccupied with balancing the nation's security responsibilities with shifting commitments to internationalism, continentalism, multilateralism, and Canada's own sovereignty. As a result, Canada continued to nurture close alliances with Britain and, more importantly, with the United States, with whom Canada aligned their foreign policy and national defence plans, at least until the mid-1960s. On the home front, with an eye to the worst-case scenario, the government implemented a civil defence program to educate its citizens on the rudimentary tools they could use to survive a nuclear war. A system of surveillance was put in place to monitor and persecute communists and other groups construed as threats to Canada's domestic security.<sup>3</sup>

During this thirty-year period the traditional family unit, both in Canada and abroad, was deemed inadequate to survive Cold War threats without new resources and external support. In particular, children's minds and

bodies were seen as vulnerable to an assortment of atomic-age dangers as varied as atmospheric radiation caused by weapons testing, communist ideology, and the possibility of a third world war fought with nuclear weapons. To protect their own children from these risks, some Canadian women found solace in following the government-sponsored civil defence program or remained alert for communist insurgents. Another cohort of women believed that security could only be achieved through peace, so they championed diplomacy and cross-cultural understanding through the UN or joined the disarmament movement. Concurrently, armed conflict of a more conventional kind flourished in this era. While many women focused on surviving or diverting a possible nuclear attack on Canada, other women directed their attention and concern towards the welfare of children living in sites of Cold War conflicts. The civil wars, revolutions, and multinational conflicts arising in Greece, Korea, China, and Vietnam were proof that humankind did not need to employ a cocktail of uranium and nuclear fission to cause great destruction. To assist children displaced, orphaned, injured, or otherwise harmed by war, Canadian women raised money for foreign relief, volunteered in overseas orphanages and hospitals, and arranged international adoptions.

These women's varied responses represent divergent paths to securing children's health and safety amid global insecurity. The welfare solutions varied, depending on the time period as well as the activist women's different opinions on the causes of war and Canada's responsibilities at home and abroad. Yet what united these women's activism was their shared concern for children's survival amid actual and imagined Cold War fears and dangers. Projecting their identities as both Canadian citizens and women, this collective demand for war-related child welfare characterized the genuine interest many women had in protecting or improving children's health and safety, as well as offering women a legitimate space in which to operate in the traditionally male realms of defence and diplomacy. Despite pursuing different paths to peace and security, Canadian women from all walks of life, living in all parts of the country, dedicated themselves to finding ways to survive the hottest periods of the Cold War. Their activism directly impacted the lives of children in Canada and abroad, and it influenced changes in Canada's education curriculum, immigration laws, welfare practices, defence policy, and international relations. An analysis of these interconnected social movements offers insight into how women employed maternalism, nationalism, and internationalism in their work, and how it shifted constructions of family and gender in Cold War Canada.

## Women Mobilizing for War and Peace

There is a long-established history in Canada of gendered mobilization around issues of war and peace. Despite the unique circumstances of the Cold War, the insecurity it generated and the expectations for civilian engagement were aspects that were familiar from the First and Second World Wars. Research on women's contributions in the First World War, primarily in the field of health and welfare, demonstrates how the majority of middle-class women in English Canada militarized their mothering by caring for lonely, sick, and wounded soldiers and the families they left behind.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile Ruth Roach Pierson's pioneering book *"They're Still Women After All": The Second World War and Canadian Womanhood* illustrates how amid the influx of women's paid labour in masculine workplaces, the maternalistic spirit persisted in women's unpaid war work during the Second World War.<sup>5</sup> Whatever the form of war work taken on, the dominant view of Canadian women's world war contributions is one of active engagement and patriotism, demonstrated by sending their sons off to fight and their own transition to battlefield nurse, munitions worker, or Red Cross volunteer. Although this mobilization is often the hegemonic view of women's war work, scholars have also called attention to the women who resisted the state's call to arms. These included the pacifist and socialist women who protested their nation's involvement in global conflicts and women living in French Canada who were less moved to sacrifice their sons to distant imperial causes.<sup>6</sup> This established pattern demonstrates how the threat of war and the desire for peace has long provoked communities of women to take a stand and labour toward causes they hoped would improve their world, nation, and family's well-being.

Scholarship on the World Wars helps historicize women's Cold War identities as either warriors or peacemakers or a combination of both. It also demonstrates the effect war has on deconstructing or reinforcing traditional understandings of gender. As Sharon Macdonald notes, the intrusion of war into a society "makes it difficult to maintain traditional social order, and boundaries, such as those of gender, may well break down."<sup>7</sup> Historians have shown how, during the First and Second World Wars, traditional gender roles became flexible, at least temporarily, especially in terms of the division of labour. This occurred most obviously when women replaced enlisted men in factories, on farms, and in non-combatant positions in the armed forces, but also when women became the heads of their households in their husbands' absence. Despite these aberrations, men and women's wartime roles were usually rooted in particular understandings of male and female behaviour,



with the ideal man taking on the role of protector in the form of soldiering and the ideal woman acting as a caregiver whose labour reinforced men at the front.

The Cold War challenged the traditional gendered division of labour established in the World Wars. Since the mechanics of the conflict differed greatly, the gender dichotomy was not as simple as men becoming soldiers and women becoming their auxiliary non-combatants, tucked safely behind the front lines. Rather, the superpowers' reliance on nuclear weapons diminished the need for countries to arm themselves with able-bodied men. Instead of sending thousands of soldiers across long distances to defeat an enemy, it became possible over the course of the Cold War to send hundreds of bombs for the same purpose. The change in technology and warfare also served to turn the home front into a battlefield, a concept foreign to Canadians accustomed for more than a century to their wars being fought at least an ocean away. Furthermore, with the exception of the Korean War and Canada's contribution to staffing NATO bases, Canadian men did not leave home in the Cold War, so there was no need for women to replace them in traditionally masculine spaces. Lawrence Wittner concludes that these particularities meant that in the nuclear age "women could no longer protect children by caring for them at home and men could no longer guarantee their safety by soldiering."<sup>8</sup> Therefore, women were expected to defend the new war zone alongside men, and they participated in two main forms of Cold War defence: preventing an outbreak of war and minimizing the cost of war to civilians, particularly children.

Despite the expanded nature of their war work, women's participation in each form of activism featured in this study were usually contextualized in maternalistic terms and performed through acts of caregiving, not unlike their work in the First and Second World Wars. This demonstrates the pervasive spirit of maternalism in Canadian women's activism more than half a century after it was first imbued with political energy in the international suffrage and social gospel movements of the late nineteenth century.<sup>9</sup> Even after the federal franchise was extended to white Canadian women in 1919, female activists continued to rely on maternal identities and rhetoric when seeking social, political, and economic reforms.<sup>10</sup> During the Cold War, politically active women positioned themselves as performing work in accordance with the qualities associated with motherhood—care, nurturance, and morality—especially as the work related to children, who were believed to be the most vulnerable to Cold War threats and violence. Individually and through their work in organizations, they practised maternalism