

# **Girls and Warzones: Troubling Questions**

**Carolyn Nordstrom**  
**Life & Peace Institute**

WOMEN AND NONVIOLENCE SERIES  
GIRLS AND WARZONES: TROUBLING QUESTIONS  
(c) Life & Peace Institute 1997  
Layout: Åsa Widgren, Cover: G. Lulich Grafisk Form  
Second edition 2004  
Printed by Temdahls Tryckeri AB, Östervalå  
ISBN 91-87748-61-4

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## Foreword to 2004 edition

Girls and Warzones is the most difficult piece of writing I've ever done. My colleagues knew the toll researching and writing Girls and Warzones took on me during the time I was working on it: I would walk out of my office and they would take one look at my expression and say "Writing on your manuscript about girls again, obviously. Let's go for a coffee and put you back together." I realized one of the reasons people don't find much information about the plight of girls on the frontlines is that the mere description of the horrors they can face is debilitating. As this monograph points out, it is hard to accept the fact that we live in a world where these kinds of atrocities can, and do, take place.

But there are other, very political reasons that, seven years later, the plight of girls in conditions of violence is just as bad, and it is just as hard to write about. At the same time, there is a real point of optimism. The last seven years have shown a laudable increase in the attention being paid to girls in warzones by scholars, research institutions, and especially by non-governmental organizations. When I wrote this piece in 1997, new opportunities to improve the circumstances of women and children in warzones were opening up. The world at the time was beset with numerous wars, where political justifications for violence were low and civilian casualties were high. Working for human rights, conflict resolution, and justice for youth went hand in hand. Ground-breaking work was taking place on child soldiers, children's political identities, and gender-based analyses that covered the whole of civil society.

But when superpowers went to war in the 21st century, these opportunities began to close. With the USA-led war in Iraq and the war on drugs in Colombia, the Russian conflict in Chechnya, and the resurgence of the Palestine/Israel hostilities in the post 9/11 world, among others, justifications for war became grounded in 'just war' theory. If the purported goal of an invasion is to establish democracy, the maiming and killing of girls is unconscionable. When this takes place, it undermines the offender's ability to represent democracy. "Collateral damage" is acceptable in just war theory; the death of children is not. In such a climate, harming children does occur, and these acts are largely omitted from public discussion among the countries waging the wars.

Let me update the question I ask in this piece: Do you know how many children have been harmed and killed in Iraq (or Chechnya, Colombia, Burma, Sudan)? What percentage of all war-deaths these represent? How many are girls and how many are boys? Who are these children (urban dwellers, rural peasants, rich or poor, religious affiliation, etc.)? How many have been raped, forced to fight, or suffered starvation? How has the war for democracy affected their prospects for the future by crippling essential services like health care and education?

(Super)powers who wage and win wars often have the most extensive and sophisticated information systems - from publishing through media to telecommunications. They also tend to have the most developed ability to keep independent journalists and researchers out of their warzones. This means they have the greatest ability to omit child casualties from public accounting and to affirm just war actions. Those who so carefully worked in the late 1990s to bring the plight of children in wars to light and craft solutions now find their work less than welcome. They can, in the mere citing of statistics on child casualties, blow just war theory to bits.

Sadly, there is a seamier side to this story. After writing Girls and Warzones, I did in-depth research on illegal economies. This research demonstrated how internationally extensive such profiteering is. Such profiteering is rife in warzones. The tragically high numbers of orphans and children separated from their families and the difficulty of policing non-military crimes in war makes these locales prime hunting grounds for international syndicates engaged in the child sex and labor industry. Millions of children are forced into such work worldwide in any given year. Thus, in addition to the physical violence of the frontlines, children in warzones are subjected to international profiteers running illegal industries quite literally on the backs of children.

I have spent many days joining street children and war orphans in their daily activities in warzones since first writing this piece. This work has prompted me to re-examine the question: "So where, in the final summation, does peace come from?" It may well emerge from places mainstream theory tells us are unlikely. Peace begins when people find violence the worst threat of all. This is not merely a political process. It is forged in the center of daily life. It is carried through simple conversations, crafted in art and music, honed in folktales and literature, and

propagated in acts of charity. Even children - or maybe especially children - pick up this dialogue. During the war in Angola, for example, the street children instituted a dialogue to remind everyone to share equally what few resources they had. When one child wants to keep more than the others, to lord over others, to control, the rest respond:

*Illusion. What you are saying is illusion. Like the big shots with their big cars and big guns. Like what got us into this mess [the war, poverty, injustice] in the first place. You want more than the rest of us? Don't be like that. That's just illusion.*

The children take great exception to the common statements that the youth born and bred in war are a "lost generation." This phrase is heard from Angola through Sudan, up to the Balkans, and over to Burma. It is intended to capture a generation of children who have grown up knowing severe political violence, and who have been deprived of settled communities, stable families, schooling, and the creative nurturance that peace imparts. But there is an underside to these comments. The jagged assumption is that these children are indeed "lost," that they will be prone to violence, instability, and aggressive poverty, that they will be limited in their ability to envision and create a better future. That they have looked into the eye of war and will reflect what they have seen.

*Illusion, the children respond. We know how we came to live this way. We can see who has and who doesn't, who gives and who takes. We know we take better care of each other here [on the streets]: the people with the nice cars and big homes are not asking us home. In the mean-time, we create a life as best we can. You want to know what we need? We need to go to school. We need a place to keep our things. If we get a book or some clothes, how can we keep them on the street? We need a chance, a job, people to believe in us.*

Michael Comerford, an Irish priest and scholar working in Angola responded to this story by asking:

*Who is lost? The children, or those who drive by them without seeing?*

To conclude by putting these children's words into larger perspective: in a world girded by international laws supporting the right of the child, children today continue to be tortured, maimed, and killed in war in

numbers greater than soldiers, sold into 21st century slavery, and forced to fight carrying guns larger than they are. The silence surrounding this is not accidental, it is political. Those who have dedicated research, publication, and service work to stopping these violations of humanity remain the solution. Illuminating the truths concerning girls in war-zones is a substantial first step towards solving the harm they face.

*October 2004*

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## Foreword

Daily, it seems, we are bombarded with scenes, sounds, stories of war and violence. Perhaps we are no longer surprised that war-related atrocities are inflicted upon non-combatants, upon women and children, upon those who are understood as 'innocent' in the war-constructed contexts of rationality and irrationality. Rape camps and torture; intimidation, disappearances and detentions; attacks on the 'enemy' carried out through attacks on 'their women' -- all of these and more have become horrifyingly common, even expected, in the frontline accounts of armed conflict.

What about 'peace and violence'? What about the 'innocent' in peacetime, the women and children, the neighbors and colleagues? Images of violence, of atrocities, of modern-day slavery do not come as readily to mind, although they are not far from the surface. A careful reading of our daily news reveals disturbing similarities between war incurred violence and violence in the absence of armed conflict, in the absence of 'war'.

Child abuse is an increasing concern in some industrialized nations, although much less attention is paid to child abuse in nations of the 'economic periphery'. Yet, for example, there are direct linkages between the abuse of children in the Philippines, and the economic relations between the Philippines and the U.S., or more broadly, the economic dynamics affecting the Philippines as part of the global market system. At a more personal level, the experience of the girl child forced into prostitution in Thailand is hard to distinguish from the experience of the girl child raped during war. A child soldier drugged and forced into fighting and barbarism probably has similarities to street children in many of the capital cities of the world. One should ask what exactly are the important differences between the killing of street children in Brazil by the police and the killing of 'the children of the enemy' in wartime?

Dr. Nordstrom asks where the girls are to be found in these scenarios of war and violence, of peace and violence, in the discussions of the effects of economic violence, in concerns about violence in refugee camps? Phrases such as 'women and children', 'street children', 'child abuse' blur the distinctive reality of girls' experiences. Terms such as

'the innocent in wartime' or 'low-intensity conflict' blur the specific realities of children as distinct from those of civilian adults. When we put violence under the microscope, what are we looking for? What questions are we asking? What answers are we seeking?

Carolyn Nordstrom brings these disturbing questions out in the open in her exploration of *Girls and Warzones: Troubling Questions*. She asks why it is so difficult to gather information about the specific experiences of girls in war and peace and what, if any, the important differences between girls' experiences of violence in war and in so-called peace may be. Implicitly, she is questioning facile distinctions between war and peace. Thus, the title of 'Girls and Warzones' is not an objective statement but a troubling expansion of our parameters of discourse. Dr. Nordstrom's study grows out of years of field research in contexts of war, much of it in Mozambique. She raises the basic question of *how we define 'warzones'*.

When Dr. Nordstrom asks '*...why... are children raped, maimed, starved, overworked, and killed across wars and peacezones?*', she refutes the simplistic 'it is just human behavior' answer to human violence. Putting the spotlight on the exploitation of inequalities, on the acting out of differences in power, she leads the reader to consider the variety of ways in which social and personal inequalities construct the experiences of violence for girls, for children, for women, for groups, for communities.

I am aware, through many discussions with Dr. Nordstrom concerning this study, how shocked she is with her findings, even though she is, through her years of field research, familiar with the horrors of war. We, also, should and must be deeply disturbed and moved to response, to action. In her own wrestling with personal and professional responsibility in light of her analysis, Dr. Nordstrom offers us, the readers, some concrete ways of responding as individuals, as citizens, and as professionals. As such this study provides us with some 'action plans'; it challenges us to move forwards to stop the brutality and violence inflicted upon children and upon girls.

*Girls and Warzones: Troubling Questions*, is part of the ongoing analysis by the Life & Peace Institute on the issue of women and violence and the ways in which women can and do organize to shape nonviolent communities. In November 1993 a conference of women peace activists and researchers was held in Manila sponsored by the

World Council of Churches, Lutheran World Federation, and the Life & Peace Institute. The women attending identified a number of themes which need more analysis and urged continued study, publication, and discussion. In preparation for the conference a background analysis, *Women, War and Peace*, by Elizabeth Ferris was published as a research report. A collection of national case studies of women's organizing and several analytical essays, *Women, Violence, and Nonviolent Change*, A. Gnanadason, M. Kanyoro, and L. McSpadden (eds), has been published by the World Council of Churches and is being distributed by WCC and the Life & Peace Institute.

As always careful and detailed work is needed to bring a manuscript to publication. The work of Lena Sjöqvist, Research Assistant; Mark Salter, Communications Director; and Åsa Widgren, Communications Assistant, is gratefully acknowledged.

We are also grateful to SAREC, Swedish Agency for Research Cooperation with Developing Countries, for the funding which makes this study and its publication possible.

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*January 1997*

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## 1. Troubling questions

*In following the threads of war and its impact on the lives of girls globally, this study finds that -- experientially -- the plight of war-victims, of girls sold into sexual or physical labor, of street children, and of girls harmed in their own homes and communities is qualitatively similar in many respects. In looking at the actual lives of girls, it becomes difficult to draw easy lines between wartime and peacetime. What people tolerate in peace shapes what they will tolerate in war.*

*In following girl's stories, this study asks not only what girls in war and peace face, but why it is so difficult to gather information about girls at all. Limited studies and statistics are available, blunted by walls of silence over the state of the world's girls today. This silence hides a world of human rights abuses. It also obscures, however, an instrumental fact: girls are political actors and moral architects of their worlds. They fight and fight back, and many construct peaceful solutions for a better world. When we begin to listen to the girl's own stories, solutions begin to replace silence.*

### I. Introduction

This is a paper I did not want to write because I would be happier if the data did not exist.<sup>(Note 1)</sup>

The inception of this paper dates to a day in 1990 when I was sitting in a hot and dusty town in Central Zambezia, Mozambique. The town had just been retaken by the Frelimo governmental forces after having been under rebel Renamo control for several years. Renamo was credited with the majority of human rights abuses during the war, and the Renamo Commander who had been in charge of this town had a particularly brutal reputation. During Renamo's occupancy, the town center had been destroyed, and a sea of small mud huts spread out on the landscape in all directions on the outskirts of the city ruins. When I arrived, shortly after the arrival of the first Frelimo administrator, disease and starvation were rampant; town leaders estimated 25 people

were dying a day. This was in part due to the fact that both Renamo and Frelimo used forced settlement tactics to control the population, which meant that civilians were frequently denied access to farmlands. Virtually all trade routes had been destroyed by the war, and what resources did exist were often plundered by soldiers and armed bandits. This town had a dirt runway, and the military had stripped many of the landmines from it when they arrived. The dirt runway allowed emergency cargo planes to land, and the town was thus the recipient of a one-week feeding program administrated by several Western non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working with Mozambican emergency relief programs. The pilot of a cargo plane had given me boleia -- a free ride.

I was sitting on the ground with several women of the town who had volunteered to assist cooking food dropped off by the cargo planes. During our conversation on the impact of the war, one of the women asked me: 'Do you notice anything'? I looked around me, and all of a sudden it was obvious: 'It must be over 90 per cent boys here', I responded, and the women nodded. 'Do the NGOs that set up these programs know this'? I asked. No, the women shook their heads, they simply do not notice. 'Where are the girls'? I wanted to know. The women explained that this was a result of the way the NGO set up its emergency relief food program. In this case, 'the organizational policy' of this particular Western based aid institution insisted that mothers bring their children and sit under trees at the feeding center from sunrise to sunset for three meals. They could not get food unless they agreed to this. The NGO failed to recognize that if the townspeople did not plant crops, they would starve in the upcoming months, long after the NGO feeding programs had been abandoned. So girls were left at home to tend crops and elderly or incapacitated family members. Because the NGO specified that no food could be taken from the feeding area (ostensibly because of a Western-based fear of thievery), nothing could be taken home for those left behind. 'But what happens to the girls'? I asked again. The women shook their heads gently: they had wanted to make sure someone would take these stories back to the policy makers in the capital cities, but beyond that, it was my question to follow.

I knew children constituted a major percentage of war deaths in the contemporary world. Behind the rhetoric of soldiers fighting soldiers that fuels military propaganda and popular accounts of war around the world, children are maimed, tortured, starved, forced to fight and killed in numbers that rival adult civilian casualties, and outnumber those of soldiers. And I knew these youthful casualties -- some 1.5 million in recognized armed conflict in the last decade alone -- were largely invisible: most of the military texts, the political science analyses and the media accounts of war do not discuss the tactical targeting of children. I had seen children victims of war, lying maimed in hospitals, lying dead in bombed out villages, living or dying of starvation in refugee camps and on the streets after their families and homes had been attacked. I had, however, seen a very small percentage of all the children directly affected by war. In the cases like the feeding programs, I had seen mostly boys. Where were the girls?

The more I asked the question, the less of an answer I found. Political violence produces significant numbers of war orphans, and many of these become 'street kids'; yet the programs to assist such youth find, and deal, predominantly with boys. From the war orphans of Mozambique to the disenfranchised children on the streets of Brazilian cities, the faces looking up at us in media photos and on site feeding programs are virtually all male. Programs to help child soldiers focus predominately on male youths. In fact, programs in general to help children in war revolve primarily around child soldiers (male) and war orphan/street children (male). Girls exist in one social frame: prostitution.

The invisibility of children, and girls, in war is not at first apparent. Every war has the obligatory 'horror photo' of the child. The crying, radiation-burnt child in Hiroshima (*Life Magazine*); the naked napalm-burnt girl running down the village road in Vietnam (Associated Press); the landmine victim with amputated legs in Africa (CNN); the small corpse in Bosnia after a Serb shell hits a civilian zone (Reuters). Every war has the obligatory 'horror story' -- the ultimate dirty war parable -- too graphic, too barbaric, for photos. The major battles I have witnessed were all justified in part by referring to the rape, and often subsequent disemboweling, of a pregnant woman by the 'enemy'. The wars I have studied all stigmatized the actions of the 'other side' by telling of the rape, maiming and murder of girls. These, however, are

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cultural symbols: the story of one speaking to the ethos of war. They are also political symbols: used as policy justification, military propaganda, nationalistic declarations of loyalty, and a call to arms. This does not detract from the fact that these atrocities exist. But it is a truth of one: one person; one picture; one child's story generalized to a sweeping icon. Where are the millions of others whose plight is equally tragic? In fact, what, exactly, is the plight of the millions of others outside of the range of CNN crews, journalist's cameras, and political gaze? When we ask this question, it becomes more obvious that the images of children in war are very clearly circumscribed. While bombing victims are rife in military and media presentations, discussions of the torture of children by state security forces are rare. While starvation among refugee children is a frequent topic of analysis and photo, the rape of these children is a far more muted issue. While the forceful conscription of children into militaries is a popular study from academia to popular documentaries, the contemporary slaving of war orphans is a more hidden topic, especially when the buyers are Westerners. Moreover, military texts seldom publicly document the strategic targeting of children, although frontline realities show how frequent these strategies are.

What we hear and do not hear about the world we occupy is not an accident. If reality is socially constructed, if indeed we are the architects of our world and the cultures that give it meaning and vibrancy, knowledge is a profound resource. Shaping knowledge, and lack of knowledge, is one of the most basic elements of power. Silences -- spheres where knowledge is clearly lacking from public awareness -- is undeniably political. The question I will follow from here is what is behind the silence, and why?

## II. Troubling questions

*If children are loved and valued, why are they still being used as cannon-fodder?*<sup>(Note 2)</sup>

Cynthia Enloe changed the face of political science and international relations when she insisted we ask: 'where are the women in politics,

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in conflict, and in political solutions'?

<sup>(Note 3)</sup> I could find women... I could follow their stories. Not all, not most, by any means. But women were visible to me during my time in warzones: they told stories and traded and set up healing programs. Girls, however, were largely, dangerously, invisible. Outside of families, they disappeared from sight; they had no agency to direct their lives, to talk and trade and set up healing programs, they never spoke on the radio, their words were not recorded in newsprint, political scientists did not quote them, NGOs did not interview them. The question as to where the girls are in politics and conflict started in Mozambique, but it did not stop there: when I started looking for girls in numerous war situations, I found silences and empty spaces, punctuated only sporadically by a handful of researchers focusing on children in general and girls in particular. Their stories account for only the smallest percentage of scholarly and popular work on social and political violence and systems of in/justice. After researching and teaching peace and conflict issues for over a decade, I am little closer to answering such questions as:

- How many girls were killed in Cambodia in the 1980s? In World War II? In the current war in ex-Yugoslavia?
- I pick up Peter Arnett's book on his years as a war correspondent in some of the major hot spots of the last decades, and find almost no children. How do media experts come to publish what they do, and do not?
- How many war orphans are there in Central America? Burma? What has happened to them?
- On visits to war museums and memorials, I find predominantly displays of male soldiers on barren battlefields. In most, I do not see a single display that shows children at all, much less girls, who are wounded, imprisoned or killed. There is one exception: the Holocaust museum in Hiroshima, Japan, where children are featured prominently. But the express purpose of this museum in Hiroshima is to



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show the barbarity of nuclear war. Killing children is an undisputed symbol of amoral barbarity.<sup>(Note 4)</sup>

- How many girls were systematically tortured in Argentina's dirty war or harmed in the prisons of apartheid South Africa?
- I look through the discussions of war trials and human rights jurisprudence, and find few trials or accounts of adults who have raped, maimed, tortured or killed children in war.
- How many girls have killed or maimed others in war?
- Where are girl's words of war, of conflict resolution? Girls may feature in a photographer's picture; their plight may be told in public forums...but the girls themselves do not speak. They are spoken for. There is no way of determining how accurately.
- I look at UNICEF meetings, and at panels on human rights and their abuse, to see if any children or girls speak on their own behalf, and find virtually none.

In the warzones I have visited, girls are actors in the drama and tragedy of war along with adults. They are targeted for attack, they conceive of escapes, they endure torture, they carry food to the needy, they forge a politics of belief and action. In general accounts of war -- not the few excellent ethnographies focusing specifically on children<sup>(Note 5)</sup> -- I look for child actors, and usually find none. What I do find

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is the view that girls, children, are acted upon; they are listed as casualties -- they do not act. They are not presented as having identities, politics, morals, and agendas for war or peace.

Given the excellent studies incorporating the stories and voices of children that do exist -- demonstrating the vibrancy of agency and the philosophies forged by children themselves -- the vacuums of knowledge and the silence of non-adults in studies of war in general becomes all the more socially and politically loaded.

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## 2. Girls and warzones: following threads in Mozambique

*More than half a million children lost their lives to war-related causes in the last decade of the war in Mozambique that ended in 1992.* <sup>(Note 1)</sup>

The center of my study -- the places where war becomes, not a policy on paper, but a practice among people -- begins in towns and villages hours by flight and days by foot from the nearest capital cities. It is here that war moves from the abstract to the enacted. In this section, I will explore three locations where war impinges directly on the health and well being of girls: (a) locations that start on the frontlines of war; (b) locations beyond the borders of warzones proper; and (c) beyond war to considerations of the peace process itself.

### ***1. In war***

One day in 1991 I visited a town in north central Mozambique where local anti-Renamo militia and Frelimo governmental forces had re-captured the area from Renamo, which had controlled the area for several years. In many ways, it faced similar circumstances to the town introduced in the preceding chapter: war forces a wide diversity of people into analogous straits. A short window of opportunity opened up: the town had a dirt runway relatively free of landmines, Renamo was not attacking at the moment, and the plight of the war-ravished citizens caught the eye of an NGO with sufficient funds and an airplane to fly emergency food and materials to the town for about a week. I flew in on a cargo plane packed with corn and oil.

When I sat listening to the local citizens talk of their experiences of the war and Renamo's occupation, one concern predominated: people stressed to me that every woman and girl youth in the town had been sexually assaulted. The townspeople told me that virtually all the women and female youths had sexually transmitted diseases. In a part of the world rife with HIV and AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases can

mean a death sentence. With no clinical facilities or pharmaceuticals whatsoever, treatment was a grave concern. During Renamo's occupation of the town, females had not only been sexually assaulted and forced into concubinage and 'marriage' at the soldier's whims, they had been forced to provide manual labor. I have wondered many times why such conditions -- common both throughout Mozambique and wars around the world, have not been labeled 'rape camps', and have not generated the same international awareness and outrage as those in Bosnia and those in which the Japanese held Koreans in during World War II.

Very few non-locals or foreigners visited this town. It was not easy to reach, and there were few reasons to go there. Shortly thereafter, the war rolled over the town again: Renamo forces, attracted not merely by the strategic location of the town, but by the emergency supplies that had been flown in, renewed their attacks in the area. It was no longer safe to fly, drive or walk to the town. The emergency supply planes were diverted elsewhere, the government officials -- primary targets of Renamo -- stopped their visits. With no telephones or communications equipment, the town fell to little more than a silence on the landscape of war. The people's lives once again became invisible to the outside world.

Where war is at its worst, where suffering is at its greatest -- the least is known. It is simply too difficult to travel to the hotspots erupting around the world, too difficult to get people's stories on the frontlines. The sad truth is that no one knows what occurred in that town, and in the hundreds in Mozambique and thousands in the world like it, when the violence closes down the links with the NGOs, the reporters and the researchers. When we ask the questions: where are the girls?; what is their experience of the war?, no answer is possible. Even the most concerned of researchers can not track the lives of the girls in such towns under fire.<sup>(Note 2)</sup>

Following the plight of girls across time as well as warzones complicates an already difficult task. As stated above, hundreds of towns in Mozambique faced similar tragedies as the one described here. Literally millions of people were affected. In addition to the one million people

killed during 15 years of war, one-quarter of the population were forced to flee their homes at some point in the war, and fully one-half of the population was directly affected by war in some way. These casualties of war left some 200-300 000 orphans. During my fieldwork, I continually asked after the orphans: what became of them? People generally responded that someone took them into their own families and looked after them. There is a strong tradition of such care in Mozambique. More than once I visited friends whose families had grown by a child or two from the last time I had seen them. Invariably, when asked, the parents would explain that an attack had taken the lives of the parents of children in the vicinity, and the friends had taken the children in. This, however, is not the full story. Thousands of street children were visible on the streets of the major cities. Virtually all of them were boys. Most were orphans or were escaping difficult or abusive home lives. When I pointed out to people that not all children found homes, or else there would not be street children -- but where were the girls? -- answers were vague. People speculated that girls were easier to tend and care for than boys, they fit more readily into established families. I would silently add to myself, yes, and girls the world over do not have the options to flee in the same way boys do. Nonetheless, neither of these can stand as answers. They are speculations. In truth, no one has followed the path of the hundreds of thousands of orphaned girls to find out what has happened to them. It is simply an unknown. In the same way that I met children taken into caring homes, I also encountered girls who did not fare as well. Their story is as much a part of war.

Certainly some girls end up in families who are more interested in their labor potential than in incorporating them into the family. Some are abused in these homes; some are forced into prostitution. Yet it is important to remember that in some cases, entire networks of illegal racketeering are spawned in times of war. One example of this occurred in 1991 while I was in residence in Mozambique, the topic of the next section.

## ***II. Beyond war***

In the midst of a war where public violence is often associated with armed forces, collective civilian actions stand out. In 1991, groups of civilians gathered in one of the suburbs of the capital Maputo and

proceeded to stop and overturn certain vehicles and beat their occupants. This was not seen as a riot, but as civil indignation against illegal actions. The explanations that circulated in the media focused on *feiticeiria*: African medicine used for ill gain. In Mozambican thought, medicines used, not for healing, but to cause harm and to gain power at the expense of others, are sometimes made in ways that cause harm. For example: body parts, often of children, are said to be used in the more powerful, and dangerous, medicines *of feiticeiria*. Periodically stories surfaced throughout the country of someone who had found a dead child who had 'clearly' been killed in order to make these medicines. <sup>(Note 3)</sup>

The general word on these disturbances in Maputo was that children from the area were being kidnapped and killed in order to make these medicines. Powerful people of questionable ethics, the story went, were making money by selling these body parts, and those buying the parts were gaining illicit power. A number of the cars targeted in the attacks had South African registries, or were known to travel the dangerous route from Maputo across the border to South Africa. This was during the period when the apartheid South African government was aiding Renamo's war in Mozambique. Thus, like arms and military strategists, body parts, it was said, were moving across the border to the detriment of most Mozambicans.

A little investigation into the allegations *of feiticeiria* and the 'body parts' racketeering showed that there was a different and more insidious truth behind these disturbances. A thriving industry had sprung up around selling Mozambican children into white South African homes as domestics. It represents what the United Nations today calls modern day slavery. Children were also channeled off into prostitution (including the making of pornography) and forced labor. The attacks described above were against the people running children across the border. These children, however, were definitely alive. Tragically, many felt they were as good as dead once they were taken out of Mozambique. War orphans, those who had fled attacks and been

separated from their families, the poor and desperate, were the targets of this trade in humans.

What is curious about these events is that, while the stories of selling 'body parts' in the pursuit of 'sorcery' was widely circulated in the media, the actual selling of living children was not. A handful of industrious journalists documented the sale of children into white South African homes and businesses. The stories did not make frontpage news, nor did they tend to be carried in the international media. This may have been due in part to the concern local journalists had about who, exactly, was implicated in this system. Networks such as the selling of children internationally are not based on the work of a few alienated and amoral individuals. Business, government and military officials around the world have greased the wheels, and their own pockets, in such illegal enterprises. The fact that someone is *buying* as well as selling these children internationally is evidence of this. Allegations of such racketeering can ruin more than a journalist's career.

Thus, discussions of *feiticeiria* provide a safe means of discussing difficult events. But one of the casualties of this is that the links between war, networks of profiteers, systems of illegal border transfers and abusive labor practices are largely lost. Exactly who did the selling and buying, and how, was certainly not documented, either because the specifics were too difficult to obtain, or too dangerous to print.

The end result is that little changed in the children's plight, and their realities were largely silenced. The few media reports that dealt with the actual selling of children were general enough to represent little threat to the actual profiteers. Equally importantly, the focus on *feiticeiria* and the selling of body parts obscured the real marketing of children. And worse, this focus on 'sorcery' made the whole episode seem patently unrealistic.

When I ask 'what happens to girls in war'? few respond that some are sold against their wills into domestic and sexual service, and forced labor. Yet, as United Nations investigations are now beginning to show, modern slavery is occurring around the world at a serious rate. Forced sexual labor is a multi-billion dollar a year global industry. Girls figure predominantly, and their stories are often muted from public

scrutiny. The beneficiaries of these illegal practices work to ensure the practices remain invisible to public and judicial eyes.<sup>(Note 4)</sup>

I have not followed my own advice here in one important respect: I have not identified the actual actors in this example. There are two reasons for this. When I give an example such as this as a footnote, I do not have the research time to investigate libel laws and the impact of such naming on my ability to obtain further visas. If this piece were instead a full investigation of this racketeering, such information would be an essential part of my study. The second reason is a tendency I have noticed to 'nationalize' these abuses. People often say "oh, people from X country do that". This is a way of taking the spotlight off the fact that these crimes are truly multinational, and include actors from countries worldwide.

These accounts are war time accounts, but their relevance does not end with war. The lives of all the girls I have discussed in this presentation has been irrevocably altered: changes that will carry through a lifetime. The war in Mozambique has been over since the Peace Accord was signed in 1992. Yet at this writing, years later, the girls sold into domestic and sexual service are still unaccounted for -- many still working in illegal, and sometimes inhuman, conditions. Their war is far from over. Yet even those who have escaped their servitude may find their ordeals have not ended. A significant number pressed into sexual labor contract AIDS. Others return home to find their families no longer have a place for them. As the more carefully documented case of the comfort women of Korea shows, many endure a lifetime of stigma. Some face this disapprobation with children produced by forced sexual relations. Such children are not immune to the ravages of stigma and marginalization: the effects of the war carries into the next generation -- long after the fighting itself has been relegated to history. Moreover, some will never tell their stories: those who fall between the cracks of public awareness and justice systems are prey to the sadistic and the mercenary: some are killed with impunity.

### ***III. After war***

In perhaps one of the most profound ironies of war and peacebuilding, young girls found themselves vulnerable to the sexual predation of peacekeepers in Mozambique. Thousands of peacekeepers passed through Mozambique in the 2 years from the signing of the Peace Accord in 1992 to the elections held in 1994. Each person that passed through carried with them their own values as to what their rights as a soldier, a peacekeeper, and (because the vast majority of peacekeepers were male) as a man. Many peacekeepers were dedicated to their jobs and to the rights of the Mozambicans. A significant number, however, abused the rights of girls (and boys), as M. Poston shows in her powerful study of the sexual abuse of children in Mozambique by UN Peacekeepers.<sup>(Note 5)</sup> This is often referred to as 'child prostitution'. A term that implies a consensual agreement: prostitution is a business

transaction. In the case of children, however, it is illegal, precisely because children do not -- cannot -- engage with adults on an equal basis. Even if the child can be said to agree, this is not prostitution, it is a crime. It is also a violation of UN Covenants on human rights, the protection of the child, and protection against sexual slavery of children.

The degree to which international justice systems tolerate the sexual exploitation of children is evident in the fact that to date no UN soldier has been prosecuted or convicted for child prostitution or rape. Part of the problem, notes Fetherston,<sup>(Note 6)</sup> is that neither the UN nor the country in which the soldiers are stationed have jurisdiction over UN peacekeeping personnel. It is the national governments contributing the UN troops that have this power over their soldiers, and they are notoriously reluctant to prosecute their soldiers for sexual misconduct on peacekeeping missions. Equally disastrous in perpetuating this problem is the pervasive attitude about the rights of soldiers to act in this way. This is clearly visible in Yasushi Akashi's statement when he, as head of the UN mission in Cambodia, was approached by various governmental and NGO representatives about the physical and sexual violation of women and girls by UN troops. He responded he was 'not a 'puritan'; that 18-year old, hot blooded soldiers had a right to drink a few beers and chase after 'young beautiful things of the opposite sex'.<sup>(Note 7)</sup> Akashi moved from Cambodia to head up the UN peacekeeping mission in former Yugoslavia. In that powerkeg of sexual violations, these attitudes can only fan the flames of human rights violations.

There have always been men who prefer to have sex with underage girls and boys. Beyond the cultural cliché of having sex with a virgin that motivates a number of men, some men are simply attracted to the pathological power inequalities having sex with children entails. The plight of children forced into the sex trade has, however, increased recently with the advent of AIDS. Men have turned to younger and younger girls in seeking to avoid HIV infection. Worse, I encountered

a belief in Mozambique that a man infected with AIDS could rid himself of the virus altogether by having sex with a 'clean' (and this often meant virgin) girl -- passing the virus to her. The tragedy, of course, is that men are not avoiding HIV infection this way; instead, younger and younger girls are themselves becoming infected. In fact, preliminary medical research indicates that the younger the girl, the more susceptible she may be to HIV infection for physiological reasons.<sup>(Note 8)</sup>

While any number of nationalities were implicated in the sexual abuse of children, the Italians came into the spotlight. In 1993 Redd Barna of Norway and the International Save the Children Fund Alliances working in Central Mozambique sent a report to the United Nations detailing their concern with UN soldiers' sexual abuse of children, and the serious increase in prostitution. In this they noted that among the worst of the offenders were the Italian Blue Berets.

A member of Save the Children Fund spoke to a fifteen-year old prostitute who had just had an illegal abortion, and who said that UN soldiers paid extra for sex without condoms. Another Save the Children Fund member attended a high level UN-organized dinner in Beira last September where an official allegedly laid on car loads of extremely young prostitutes, for the after-dinner amusement of the guests. An Italian general was present throughout this dinner. Save the Children Fund points out that Article 34 of the UN's Convention on the Rights of Children prohibits the exploitation of children for sexual purposes.<sup>(Note 9)</sup>

M. Poston<sup>(Note 10)</sup> writes that while local Mozambican officials were aware of the Italian soldier's behavior, they were afraid to make complaints about UN personnel. As Poston underscores, this is a clear indication of the power relations in operation. It is useful to remember that UNOMOZ (United Nations in Mozambique) was spending some 1 million dollars a day in preparation for the 1994 elections.

Poston writes that a report was made, and some soldiers were sent home (but the numbers of soldiers discharged and their nationalities were kept quiet). The report stated that while the sexual trade in children did exist, it certainly was not restricted to the UN soldiers. To many, this constituted a bit of a whitewash. It points, however, to a deeper injustice: the sexual abuse of children is a human rights abuse racket that extends across societies and nationalities. This is neither restricted to Mozambique or to the idiosyncratic: it constitutes a system of abuse that operates internationally.<sup>(Note 11)</sup>

Barnaby Phillips of the BBC was told by young prostitutes in Mozambique that there is no shortage of foreign clients 'They come from lots of different countries. But they are usually white. It is white men who like young girls best'.<sup>(Note 12)</sup> In the same way that the Cold War was fought by superpowers on other's lands, the sexual predation of those who can pay for their (illegal) tastes carries them into the same lands. Unlike war, the repercussions of this intrusion by foreigners will not be restricted to the countries they travel to: as the same young prostitutes told Phillips, in accordance with the preferences of their clients, they use no condoms. While comprehensive statistics are not available for Mozambique, Asia Watch and The Women's Rights Project found 50-70 per cent of the women and girls working in the sex trade they interviewed in Thailand were HIV positive.<sup>(Note 13)</sup> The impact is already evident. A Community Aid Abroad report<sup>(Note 14)</sup> notes that just

four months after arriving in Mozambique, a UNOMOZ Major was sent home, and later died of AIDS. Tests later confirmed that 90 per cent of the troops of the same contingent were HIV positive. Etiquette dictates that contingents of aid, development, diplomatic personnel and sex-tourists are not routinely tested for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and the HIV virus as a group: the infection rates among these groups remains an unknown.

#### ***IV. A cautionary note against 'othering' violence against children***

*When my mother died I was very young,*

*And my father sold me while yet my tongue*

*Could scarcely cry 'weep! weep! weep!'*

*So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.*

*(William Blake, 'The Chimney Sweeper')*

As I write these words on Mozambique, I look across my desk to see a report on children in the United States. The U.S. Advisory Board on Child Abuse and Neglect have recently finished a 2½ year nationwide study, and found levels of fatal abuse and neglect far greater than even experts in the field had previously realized. The report, entitled *A Nation's Shame: Fatal Child Abuse and Neglect in the United States* found abuse and neglect in the home a leading cause of death for children. Possibly more shocking, the vast majority of abused and neglected children are under the age of four. This abuse, claiming the lives of at least 2000 children and seriously injuring more than 140 000 each year, has been declared a public health crisis. 'When it comes to the deaths of infants and small children...at the hands of parents or caretakers, society has responded in a strangely muffled, seemingly disinterested way' stated panel members.<sup>(Note 15)</sup>

In some cases, the level of abuse children suffer in 'peaceful societies' may rival, or surpass, that of countries at war, as the above report demonstrates. The report reminds me of a conversation I recently had

with a female police officer in a 'peaceful' farming community in Central California. She was telling me of some of the cases of child abuse and murder she had seen in the last year. In one case, a parent had attached raw lamp wires to a socket and to their child's genitals to stop the child from wetting the bed. She lamented that incidents such as these seldom even made the newspapers; had they occurred in the context of war, they would certainly be considered severe human rights violations. I am sure that the children who suffered a similar fate at the hands of military torturers during the dirty war in Argentina<sup>(Note 16)</sup> and the girl in California would find fewer differences than similarities in their experiences.

In my opinion, it is both dangerous and unrealistic to look at the abuse of children in war, in another country, in another culture, in a different context as if that were somehow different, more barbaric, than the patterns of abuse that characterize our own everyday cultures, in peace or in war. In fact, I will argue, what people tolerate in peace and in the domestic sphere configures what takes place in war. As Burton notes:

There is probably no phenomenon that can accurately be labeled international conflict that is not a spillover of domestic system failings and domestic politics. These system failings and their political manifestations reflect failure to satisfy human needs, needs of identity, of participation and of distributive justice.<sup>(Note 17)</sup>

Rather than seeing 'war abuses' or 'child (s)exploitation' as 'outside' the rules and boundaries of 'average' or 'normal' society, perhaps we should be asking instead what it is that makes such behaviors possible *wherever* they are found, and what patterns of in/tolerance link them. The plight of girls living in violent conditions challenges us to question how artificial the boundaries between war and peace really are.

### 3. Following the threads globally: troubling answers

*A nation collapses when a majority of her youth wake up in the morning facing nothing but despair, fear and frustration.*<sup>(Note 1)</sup>

#### I. Some statistics

As I write about the dilemmas and atrocities, the silences and the solutions that have taken place in Mozambique, similar occurrences are taking place throughout the world. Many of these stories are as muted to public awareness as the ones I have presented above.

- In the last decade, approximately 2 million children have died in wars; between 4 and 5 million have been physically disabled; more than 5 million have been forced into refugee camps; more than 12 million have been left homeless and 10 million psychologically traumatized.<sup>(Note 2)</sup> 28 million minors lived in warzones in 1995.
- More children are killed in wars today than soldiers. 'These', writes UNICEF, 'are statistics of shame'.<sup>(Note 3)</sup>
- Children are as likely as adults to be captured and imprisoned.<sup>(Note 4)</sup>
- A UNICEF sponsored survey of children in Southeast Rwanda after the 1994 conflict found that 75 per cent had seen members of their family massacred. More than 25 per cent had buried their own parents.<sup>(Note 5)</sup>
- 1 in every 130 people in the world has been forced to flee their homes and communities, and 70-80 per cent of the world's refugees are women and children.<sup>(Note 6)</sup> Children account for more than half of all refugees. For females, however, refugee means anything but refuge:



United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) research shows that refugee women are subject to sexual violence and abduction at every step of their escape -- from flight to border crossings to life in camps. Even when the threat of rape is gone, the stigma of violation remains. Many refugee women who have been raped are shunned by their families and isolated from their communities. The problem is so great that UNHCR recently issued guidelines to its field workers on responding to sexual violence against refugees<sup>(Note 7)</sup>

- Recent estimates show that upwards of eighty per cent of girl and women refugees are sexually assaulted.
- 100 million anti-personnel mines with lethal lifespans as long as 50 years sown in about 60 countries; another 100 million mines believed to be stockpiled ready for use.<sup>(Note 8)</sup> Children are the most common victims of landmines, often long after wars have terminated. Girls suffer landmine casualties in the greatest numbers, as their traditional labors -- fetching water and firewood -- expose them to greater injury.<sup>(Note 9)</sup>
- Some of the most lethal wars are the most invisible: UNICEF focused emergency resources on the 'silent global emergency of diseases and malnutrition that continue to claim some 35 000 young lives every day'.<sup>(Note 10)</sup>

*Many more children will face lives of disruption and violence, and will die equally traumatic deaths that are not included in these statistics.*

Expanding on this theme, Asia Watch and The Women's Rights Project provides an excellent example: they begin their publication *A Modern Form of Slavery: Trafficking of Burmese Women and Girls into Brothels in Thailand*<sup>(Note 11)</sup> with the following quote:

'Lin Lin' was thirteen years old when she was recruited by an agent for work in Thailand. Her father took \$480 from the agent with the understanding that his daughter would pay the loan back out of her earnings. The agent took 'Lin Lin' to Bangkok, and three days later she was taken to the Ran Dee Prom brothel. 'Lin Lin' did not know what was going on until a man came into her room and started touching her breasts and body and then forced her to have sex. For the next two years, 'Lin Lin' worked in various parts of Thailand in four different brothels, all but one owned by the same family. The owners told her she would have to keep prostituting herself until she paid off her father's debt. Her clients, who often included the police, paid the owner \$4 each time. If she refused a client's demands, she was slapped and threatened by the owner. She worked everyday except for the two days off each month she was allowed for her menstrual period. Once she had to borrow money to pay for medicine to treat a painful vaginal infection. This amount was added to her debt. On January 18, 1993 the Crime Suppression Division of the Thai police raided the brothel in which 'Lin Lin' worked, and she was taken to a shelter run by a local non-governmental organization. She was fifteen years old, had spent over two years of her young life in compulsory prostitution, and tested positive for the human immunodeficiency virus or HIV.

Human Rights Watch goes on to note that in the last two years Thai NGOs estimate a minimum of 20 000 women and girls have suffered a fate similar to Lin Lin's.<sup>(Note 12)</sup> I have chosen to quote Human Rights Watch here to underscore the fact that this is not 'mere' biology at play -- men pursuing natural impulses; this is not a 'simple' crime -- tacitly condoned and thus mildly illegal consensual sexual relations as market exchange. These are criminal acts and human rights violations. While such forced sexual slavery flourishes in many countries, the institutions that have developed around war facilitate such trafficking. Profiteering on the abuse of children is not isolated to countries or regions. The networks that make such trafficking possible are

international - they are in every sense of the word multinational, and multi-billion dollar a year, industries with global linkages. They cover every continent, North and South, West and East. The girl in Mozambique who was kidnapped and sold into domestic and sexual labor during the war to Apartheid South Africa and Lin Lin would in all likelihood feel a great deal of kinship; they would certainly find the systems that allowed and perpetuated these injustices, and the abuses they were subjected to, similar. Both, moreover, would know that these systems exist in part because of the complicity of some state officials. As Human Rights watch takes care to point out: from border guards to the police that patronize brothels, from government officials who condone these practices to judicial systems that prosecute the victims of sexual slavery and not the traffickers or patrons (underage sex is a crime) -- official and government systems are strongly implicated in the functioning of systems that profit on children. The patrons of the girls like Lin Lin are as international as the profiteers who provide them and the people who transport them. 'A review of the 160 foreigners arrested in Asia for sexual abuse of children between 1992 and 1994 showed the accused to be 25 per cent American, 18 per cent German, 14 per cent Australian, 12 per cent British and 6 per cent French.'<sup>(Note 13)</sup>

The modern day slavery the UN is concerned with stopping is not always sexual: children are sold to businesses as diverse as carpet manufacturers and mines. They are forced into armies, into sweat shops and into domestic work. Often the work is debilitating, sometimes it is lethal. It is nearly always unjust in terms of compensation and representation. Over 50 million children today work under unsafe or unhealthy conditions.<sup>(Note 14)</sup>

*These considerations only open the door to the many kinds of 'wars' children around the world are currently suffering. Moving out beyond Mozambique, the statistics that are available are disturbing: \_*

- The number of under-18s involved in prostitution probably exceeds 2 million. Best estimates suggest a figure of 1 million for Asia alone-and 300 000 for the USA.

- As many as 200 million children in the world under 15 years old spend most of their waking hours working.<sup>(Note 15)</sup> The reported rates for boys are higher than for girls. As in the adult population, female economic activity is more likely to be underestimated, due to the nature of the work girls engage in.<sup>(Note 16)</sup>
- About 1 million children globally will be infected with HIV by the year 2000 (in just 3 years). As many as 10 million children will have lost one or both parents to AIDS.<sup>(Note 17)</sup> Most countries are largely bereft of the infrastructure to care for such numbers of orphans, raising again the question, where are the orphaned girls?
- There are 100 million street children in the world. Many of these children 'disappear, are beaten, illegally detained and confined, sexually exploited, tortured and systematically killed by agents of the state.'<sup>(Note 18)</sup> Bruce Harris notes 'If that many people were in one country they'd have a seat at the UN'.<sup>(Note 19)</sup>
- Put the plight of street children together with the above figures for the number of children orphaned not only by war but by AIDS, and the systematic oppression of these children will stand as one of the crucial human rights issues of the upcoming century.<sup>(Note 20)</sup>

- The United Nations reveals that a quarter of the world's women are violently abused in their own homes. This figure moves up to 50 per cent in Thailand; 60 per cent in Papua New Guinea and the Republic of Korea; and to 80 per cent in Pakistan and Chile. In the USA domestic violence is the biggest single cause of injury to women.<sup>(Note 21)</sup> Figures as severe as these rival the worst war statistics. A nagging question remains, however, what are the statistics for girls? For children in general?
- Between 40 to 60 per cent of known sexual assaults have been committed against girls 15 years of age and younger worldwide, regardless of region or culture. The vast majority of child sexual abuse involves older men abusing young girls. In 60 per cent of all cases, the victim knows the perpetrator.<sup>(Note 22)</sup>
- *90 per cent of the world's children live in countries that have ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child. 168 countries as of 1995. It is the most widely ratified human rights convention in history.*

## II. Conclusion

I have chosen to consider these arenas of concern together to underscore the fact that the distinctions between war-zones and peace-zones are not only blurred, they are interfused.

The institutions that develop around profiteering involving the abuse of children are not isolated to countries or regions; to 'war' or 'peace'. The networks that make such trafficking possible are international -- they are in every sense of the word multinational industries with global linkages. Any hard and fast divisions between 'war(zones)' and 'peace(zones)' is not only misleading, it is dangerously wrong. Such

divisions obscure the processes by which abuses of power and privilege -- and by extension the solutions to these -- can be carried out.<sup>(Note 23)</sup> It is only by understanding the ways in which abuses are constructed across social and political settings that people can work to dismantle them.

International systems involving the exploitation of children are constructed by people, used consciously by people, maintained within societies, and tolerated in significant ways within legal practice irrespective of actual laws. They exist, even flourish, across divisions and zones of contention. It is here that profit is realized. These systems of abuse put billions of dollars into specific people's pockets. Specific people benefit, or think they benefit, from exploiting, or ignoring the exploitation, of children. Importantly, the majority of the world's citizens do not engage directly in these systems of abuse: the latter therefore cannot be deemed 'part of human (criminal) nature' or the 'consequences of inequalities and war'.<sup>(Note 24)</sup>

In challenging the belief in the naturalness of separating war(zones) and peace(zones) the mechanisms supporting these systems of abuse become more clear. Social habits move fluidly across conflict zones; they are put into place by people whose actions resonate across war and peace. To put this point bluntly: would we as readily find the physical and sexual abuse of children in war if child prostitution did not flourish in many countries, if domestic violence and adult-child incest were not tacitly allowed by virtue of the fact that these crimes are so very difficult to uncover formally and prosecute? Many of those who take sex tours to patronize underage girls and boys are unlikely

to find the abuse or exploitation of children in war, or in peace, a significant cause for concern. Those who are encouraged to use physical and sexual violence against noncombatants and youths in war also have families and personal lives themselves -- and a number carry these kinds of abusive actions back into their communities with them. Studies consistently show that domestic violence (physical and sexual) increases dramatically during war; and that people in uniform show significantly higher rates of domestic and sexual violations both in war and peace.<sup>(Note 25)</sup> That legal systems have so rarely prosecuted violators of children's rights, and in fact have often engaged in persecuting the victims themselves<sup>(Note 26)</sup> shows that this is not an idiosyncratic set of practices, but a system of social practices that permeate civil, judicial, governmental, and military structures. This should not be overgeneralized -- many people work diligently for human rights, and they have set up institutional systems that work to rectify the injustices perpetuated in the contemporary world. When we can answer the question of where are the girls with hard facts and not a few anecdotes based on a few examples alone, we will know the latter are succeeding.

## 4. Why children?

*Q: What did you do?*

*A: I held my M-16 on them.*

*Q: Why? A: Because they might attack.*

*Q: They were children and babies?*

*A: Yes. Q: And they might attack? Children and babies?*

*A: They might've had a fully loaded grenade on them. The mothers might have thrown them at us.*

*Q: Babies?*

*A: Yes.*

*Q: Were the babies in their mother's arms?*

*A: I guess so. Q: And the babies moved to attack?*

*A: I expected at any moment they were about to make a counterbalance.*

Paul Meadlo (Court-Martial Testimony)<sup>(Note 1)</sup>

So why, then, are children raped, maimed, starved, overworked and killed across wars and peacezones? Several factors offer possible explanations.<sup>(Note 2)</sup> I have explored (para)militaries' use of dirty war terror tactics

against civilians in an effort to control populations through intimidation and fear.<sup>(Note 3)</sup> Dirty war tactics that target civilians with gruesome tortures and killings have become common to wars in general in the second half of the 20th century, and do not yet appear to be abating as we move into the 3rd millennium. From tortures conducted behind prison walls to mutilations conducted in public squares for whole towns to see, violations of human codes of ethics and morality are employed to break political will through sheer terror. A classic example of this kind of terror tactic -- found in wars throughout the world -- is summarized in Lina Magaia's book<sup>(Note 4)</sup> on the war in Mozambique *Dumba Nengue: Run For Your Life. Peasant Tales of Tragedy in Mozambique*, which opens with the following true story:

It happened at night, as it always does. Like owls or hyenas, the bandits swooped down on a village in the area of Tanninga. They stole, kidnapped and then forced their victims to carry their food, radios, batteries, the sweat of their labor in the fields or in the mines of Jo'burg where many of those possessions had come from.

Among the kidnapped were pregnant women and little children. Among the little ones was a small girl of nearly eight... And the hours went by and dawn broke and finally there was a halt. They put down their loads and the bandits selected who could return home and who had to carry on. Of those who had to keep going, many were boys between twelve and fifteen. Their fate was the school of murder -- they would be turned into armed bandits after training and a poisoning of their conscience. Other were girls between ten and fourteen, who would become women after being raped by the bandits. Others were women who were being stolen from their husbands and children.

To demonstrate the fate of the girls to those who were going back, the bandit chief of the group picked out one, the small girl who was less than eight. In front of everyone, he tried to rape her. The child's vagina was small and he could not penetrate. On a whim, he took a whetted pocketknife and opened her with a violent stroke. He took her in blood. The child died.

Here, the ability to control terror equates to the ability to control populations. As girls generally represent the most vulnerable and innocent members of society, their abuse renders the most terror: society is most undermined by the violation of those considered most 'inviolable'. A society that is effectively undermined, dirty war theory postulates, is a society whose members will be unable to marshal the personal or political will to resist.<sup>(Note 5)</sup>

A second reason why children are maimed, molested, and killed in war has to do with the subjugation and humiliation of 'the enemy'. This war is a symbolic one, fought out on the physical bodies of those least able to protect themselves and least implicated in the war effort. The message in war is that if a state is so weak as to allow this to happen to its children, how can it possibly have the political and moral strength to govern a population? Mankekar sums up the relationship between (constructions of) childhood -- especially that of girls as the quintessential innocents -- and nation in drawing attention to 'the synecdochic

relationship between the purity of girl-children and the purity of the nation...'.<sup>(Note 6)</sup>  
 'Significantly, the purity of childhood seems to implicate nothing less than the moral state of the nation'.<sup>(Note 7)</sup> By extension, I would add here, the impurity of a nation's children, strategically deployed in war, questions the impurity -- the very viability -- of the nation itself.

Yet these explanations do not address the fact that a number of people both in and out of war are perpetrating the same violences upon their own children, families and communities.<sup>(Note 8)</sup> Given this consideration, I am increasingly finding a third reason for the abuse of children in war, or in peace. Beyond the constructions of terror and their relationship to socio-political power, beyond notions of purity and a nation's morality, appears a tragic fact: children are abused by those with more power and strength simply *because they can be*.

To explain: many of the world's discourses on war, from Sun Yat Sen to Clauswitz, from The Seven Samurai to John Wayne, revolve around the notion of a moral contest between *equals*. This belief continues to pervade both popular and military ideologies. The ideology of contests between equals appears, however, to be a dangerous myth that hides a seamier truth: violence is often conducted against those who by their very nature cannot fight back. To a large degree, global statistics on violence show that whether in battle or in domestic life, the more powerful harm those who pose little threat. I have already pointed out that the UN figures show children's deaths outnumber soldier's deaths in war today. Noncombatants constitute the vast majority of war deaths. That is to say, the unarmed and undefended are largely the targets of the armed. The trend continues through civil life: on the streets, muggers prey on the weaker; in the homes UNs statistics show the vast majority of violence revolves around men abusing women, adults abusing children. Racism also tend to follow

domination through unequal force: rarely does one adult confront another in a racist attack: the norm is that an armed group attacks a smaller group, or a single, unarmed person. This can be found from homophobic assaults to ethnic-targeting. The same holds true in rape: while it is estimated that underage boys are sexually assaulted with a frequency that is close to that of girls, this rate falls off for adult men much more than it does for women. Simply: boys (and girls) are raped because they can be. Women are raped by men (though in less numbers than girls). Men, however, are less often raped: they pose too much of a threat.

There are people who do fight for their survival and that of their nation, and a number of them embrace what has been called 'just war' tactics. I do not mean to belittle those whose lives are on the line, and who fight according to publicly accepted codes of behavior. I would expect that such people are equally outraged that power and the search for gain has so frequently degenerated to exploitation of inequalities.

A look at the statistics on violence (as I have stressed, however) shows the degree to which the exploitation of inequalities defines people's lives today. Child labor, child prostitution, child abuse, children's casualties in war exist because adults *can*. As the statistics in this paper show, girls suffer the worst because they are the most vulnerable, the least powerful and the easiest to silence. Children have little recourse to rectify their own problems in the face of these pathologies of power. In the world today, most children find themselves in an impossible situation.

The underlying political-legal philosophy on which they (western political systems of government) are based is the classical one, that there are those who have a right to expect obedience and others who have a moral obligation to obey. Empirically, however, we have to conclude that the right of the elite to expect obedience is a right derived from possession of the power necessary to impose values and institutions on others.<sup>(Note 9)</sup>

The major civil and human rights abuses children face are perpetuated by adults. Yet children must rely on adults to protect their rights.<sup>(Note 10)</sup> Children do not have direct access to UN fora and decision-making councils; to direct representation in courts of law; to State policy forming committees; to NGO grants. In fact, children may find it difficult to elicit police protection, find a hospital on their own, or learn about what their rights are and are not in the many local, national and international laws and conventions. Children are bound by laws that they have no input in drafting or voting on. They are governed by institutions they can in no way control themselves -- institutions that may or may not protect their rights. A child who faces abuse at the hands of an adult learns not all adults uphold the laws of the land; they also learn that only adults can rectify the situation. How is a child to know which adults will uphold their rights and which will violate them?

## 5. Solutions

*Much of the tragedy befalling children is preventable... Brutality, violence, rape and torture -- all would stop tomorrow if the will to stop them existed, or if the rest of us devised means to compel them to be stopped..*<sup>(Note 1)</sup> *'The world must foster a culture that dissuades combatants from directing violence against those who least deserve it and are least able to defend themselves'.*

Graca Machel, Chairperson, *Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children.*

The most important of all solutions, in fact, the act upon which all solutions ultimately depend, is lifting the veil of silence that surrounds the many wars to which girls are subjected. This silence, as I suggested in the introduction of this study, is about politics and power, both fundamentally implicated in any form of human rights abuse. Solutions cannot be implemented if we do not know how many girls are targeted in war, sold into forced labor, harmed in their homes and communities -- or if we do not know who is doing this and why. We cannot seek answers to these questions until we begin *asking* the questions.

Asking is not a simple thing. While many, adults and children alike, suffer from the harm inflicted on girls in particular and children in general, many also reap benefits from this harm. Silence protects the gain industrialists make on child labor; protects the police and military who target children; protects the child-sex tour operators and patrons...any of whom we might find as our next door neighbor. Respected government officials and professionals are as implicated in systems that allow the exploitation and harm of girls as the shady criminals and sociopaths portrayed in popular media.

*Most* people do not harm children. But to speak out, to demand answers and changes, involves risk. It may involve speaking out against trusted leaders, powerful industries, government-military officials,

friends and neighbors. It may involve the threat of retaliation. It may involve subjecting our own lives and assumptions to scrutiny.

Silence, however, lies uncomfortably close to complicity. It speaks as loudly as words and deeds. If silence is about a politics of power, if it benefits some at the expense of many, then silence about human rights abuses of any kind for any reason is, ultimately, a political act. And politics, ultimately, is about morals. Popular social belief may try to convince 'the masses' that they have no power, no voice, as single individuals. Nonetheless, silence and not-acting are as much acts of power as speaking out and acting. Silence, like challenging silence, is an act of voting in the most basic sense.

In the following pages I will present four levels of solutions to the problem of children's rights in this context. All rest on 'un-silencing' the plight of girls worldwide. Each involves a complementary process in working for change. The first is asking questions, the second gaining knowledge, the third is putting this knowledge into action, the last giving girls agency -- giving girls, themselves, the ability to question, gather knowledge, and put this knowledge into action.

## I. Questions

The first question is direct and simple. We need to ask: when the word 'human' is used, as in the term 'human rights violations', does it include a serious consideration of children? When the word 'child' is used, does it really mean girls and boys, or just boys?; youths/teenagers or all children? Too often child means 'boy', as in child soldier and street children, and frequently this refers to older children. The referencing of boys can be subtle: for example, in a 1995 talk on 'Children and War' in Armidale, Australia, Ed Cairns explored the psychological impact of war on children. His materials, excellent and insightful in themselves, focused almost exclusively on males, and referenced females only in terms of sexual assault. Too often girls are considered *only* as silent victims of (sexual) assault -- devoid of agency, moral conscience, economic potential or political awareness. The focus on older youths is equally subtle: portrayals of 'child soldiers' tend to show boys 12-15 years old; the fighting or torture of 5 year olds is seldom discussed. In the same vein, the category 'girl prostitute' tends to portray 12-16 year olds; the sexual predation that exists in the sex

industry on children below 8 years is infrequently referenced. The term child victim of war seldom considers the experiences of infants.

## II. Knowledge

The second path toward forging solutions rests on the premise that you have to know a problem to solve it. As this paper has consistently argued, the sad fact of the matter is that we simply do not have adequate information on what happens to girls either in war or peacetime. In war we need to ask: what percentage of casualties are girls? How many are tactically targeted for torture or terror-warfare? How many girls, as well as women, are in rape camps? What do they face, if they survive, when they return home? We need to ask girls to tell their own stories of war, its impact, and potential solutions, rather than assuming the right to speak for them. If people misrepresent girl's experiences and opinions, the latter have little recourse to rectify the misinformation: they have virtually no access to publishing, media, public presentations, formal organizations. It is woefully easy to silence children's own words and realities.

We need to follow these questions out from war to map the international systems of exploitation of children: what children are 'bought' by whom and sold to whom for what purposes? What governmental, business and il/legal networks make this possible, and what are their interrelationships? Who benefits, and how? If public opinion continues to see the exploitation of children as the random product of anti-social fragments of society, and not as a well developed transnational industry, however illegal, the mechanisms by which this industry can be dismantled or made just will not become evident.

Simultaneously, we need to follow these questions inwards to the center of society. As the information given here demonstrates, what people tolerate in peace determines what they will tolerate in war. Equally, injustices of war carry over into peacetime. To be more specific: those who tolerate domestic child abuse and underage sex tourism in peace time -- UN information suggests over a third of the population worldwide for the former alone -- are likely to tolerate (arguably similar) abuse of children in war as well. As to the second part of the equation: studies worldwide consistently show that domestic violence rises significantly during wars, and that men in uniforms



of any kind are more likely to be physically and sexually abusive against people in their own families and communities.<sup>(Note 2)</sup> Where, then, does the war end?

To begin to unravel these dilemmas, it is important to consider the very conceptual systems and habits of discourse that surround discussions of girls and human rights abuses. For example: analyses of conflict and war seldom link the stories of girls raped or battered by enemy soldiers and girls raped or battered by friendly soldiers or family members. That these two sets of girls might well see their plights as very similar is seldom considered. Why does the first constitute part of war's discourse, while the latter does not? Why has so little research been done on investigating the similarities and differences -- not as constructed or analyzed by researchers -- but as *experienced* by the girls themselves? If physical and sexual violence is a politics of power, are these two realms of experience really so different? These questions challenge the degree to which we can, or should, distinguish war from not-war; the extraordinary from the everyday. War does not supplant everyday life, it takes place *in* everyday life.

If we return to the point raised in the introduction that virtually every war produces the obligatory horror picture of the quintessential child war victim, without offering any deeper insight into the realities each and every child faces, a potential answer to these questions emerges. These images of young war victims share one uncontested message: this is an unconscionable atrocity. No political, social or moral system formally condones war practices that violate children. There are 70 000 documents in the world today ensuring human rights.<sup>(Note 3)</sup> None propose toleration of the violation of noncombatant children. Thus the mere invocation of the girl casualty is a moral statement: 'They who did this are immoral; they are the enemy'. The lines are drawn, the politics moralized, the (in)justice defined. How then, can violations of children *within* one's own community, or the community of allies, be discussed in the same breath? These acts are equally

reprehensible by the definitions used. The 'we' can no longer be differentiated from the 'they'. To maintain the illusion of firm distinction -- the un/just -- human rights violations between communities and within communities are clearly separated in discussion and analysis. Some analyses have broken down these barriers. To demonstrate the commonness of the separation I am speaking of here, however, consider how often media, literature and public presentations simultaneously discuss war atrocities against children and domestic abuse of children.<sup>(Note 4)</sup>

Solutions thus rest on recognizing the realities of justice and abuse around the world, not as abstract categories but as very human realities taking place in the lives of very real people. If countries are to deal realistically with issues of children's rights, they will have to face serious introspection -- raising questions and conundrums that have economic as well as social significance. Australia and Sweden, for example, have legislated that their citizens can be held legally responsible and prosecutable for the crime of having sex with underage children in foreign countries. In other words, a person can be prosecuted in Australia for having sex with a child in Thailand. Moreover, Australia is now grappling with a more economically challenging issue: should the country ban the import of products made by child labor? Governments, businesses and private citizens alike clash over the complex dilemmas linking profit, free trade, international ethics and personal morality.<sup>(Note 5)</sup>

### III. Action

The third level of solution in considering the issue of 'girls and war' involves the conventions and protocols protecting human and children's rights. The Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most widely ratified treaty in existence. By 1995, 168 countries were signatories. Yet it exists side by side with some of the most severe children's rights violations. It is easy for an adult to sign a protocol supporting the rights of children; and it is easy for an adult to ignore that treaty

in practice. Adults who work to require compliance with the statutes of these treaties find it quite difficult, often impossible, to do so. The letter of the law is not the dialogue of social practice.

I am, therefore, more concerned with the *implementation* of children's rights protocols than in the writing and ratifying of them as an end in themselves. Implementation means different things for different social actors. Like many people, I do not hold a position with a government agency, a police force or military, a legal system.<sup>(Note 6)</sup> I cannot prosecute or imprison those who violate children's rights. I cannot forge protocols and laws, nor enforce them. As an ordinary citizen, however, there is much I can do. It seems to me that one of the most important arenas of action is giving children public voice.

Consider the impact, for example, if media representatives were to be encouraged to interview children in warzones as well as adults; if children's solutions to violence were sought as seriously as officials; if children were asked to be present at formal bodies dedicated to the rights of children, and if such bodies included children's representatives who *are* children. I am reminded of a recent conversation I had with one of the more successful University Presses in the USA. One of the editors was telling me that the editorial staff had decided an upcoming 'hot topic' they were going to pursue was 'children'. I said I thought it would be great if they devoted at least one publication to children

writing about children. The thought had never occurred to the press: it sounded revolutionary. We, as a society, have become so used to adults speaking for children and children being denied any public voice that the thought of giving children a platform to speak on is 'unthinkable' -- in the basic meaning that it remains 'un-thought'. Moreover, consider the impact if, in the above examples, children did not mean boys, or mostly boys, or mostly teenage boys, but a full and representative range of children.

At a more formal level, consider the impact if everyone working with a non/governmental or research organization made sure to address honestly children as well as adults, girls as well as boys and peacetime as well as crises intervention in their work. This is not as simple as it seems. Silence is powerfully encoded in the institutions of the world, even those devoted to children's rights. The impact of this varies from context to context. For example, on a recent trip to Southern Africa, I visited the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation in Johannesburg, South Africa. Specialists there had developed what I consider to be an innovative program. While going into neighborhoods to counsel children affected by violence, they discovered that they could not, and should not, separate sexual abuse of children, physical violence and the impact of years of political violence. As the head of the Trauma Centre explained to me:

We are finding 40 cases of incest a day at our centers. But these children often mention in the course of counseling that they saw someone killed recently. And these actions relate to patterns of violence left by decades of political fighting. If we are to address trauma, we have to address all these levels. And we have to address our own place in this: children's parents, friends, sibling, counselors, we have all been affected by the war and the violence spawned throughout communities.

Shortly thereafter I was in Angola, talking to a European delegate of a children's rights organization. I asked for information on issues such as those I raised for Mozambique at the beginning of this paper. The person responded: 'Enforced domestic labor, incest, child abuse... we don't even know if that happens here'. My first thought was 'Well, shouldn't you know?' But I realized how difficult it is to break habits of *not-asking questions*. I myself found in many contexts that if I tried

to broach these questions, especially in formal NGO settings, I was met with looks that made me feel as if I was violating social sensitivities. Yet there are always models to follow. For example, Christian Children's Fund in Angola has led the way in conducting studies on the impact of war on children with attention to girls, and in implementing programs based on these studies. And on the ground, the Save the Children's Child Reunification Program has set up mechanisms to help children reunited with their families face a wide range of social problems.

As a final consideration in this vein I turn to the example of research -- whether it be academic, journalistic or popular. Consider the impact if researchers were encouraged to investigate and document the international networks supporting child sexual and domestic labor; the (para)military networks that allow the strategic targeting of children; the community networks implicated in violating children's rights; and, if those researchers were encouraged to present their findings in the public media. One of the most common responses I hear concerning my work is: 'you'll be killed if you follow that line of research'. The point is not whether it is true or not (and the fact that I have been doing this work for over 15 years without incident seems to imply it is not as dangerous as many believe), but that this belief *stops* people from doing this research, and from publishing it.

There is a subtle but important endnote to this discussion. One of the most powerful, and difficult, things to change concerning wars and human rights abuses is the very way we are taught to see and define these actions. There is a widespread belief throughout the world that war entails a breakdown in inhibitions. This breakdown is what leads to human rights abuses. It is Hobbes' war of all against all in the absence of controls; it is the man as animal school of human behavior; it is the war is hell platitude. The corollary to this is that as it is human nature, it is a fact of life -- immutable, unchanging, enduring. The same belief is often applied equally to adults -- from abusive parents to traffickers in children -- who harm children. This is the 'human nature contains violent nature' ideology. Thus many laws and human rights protocols, as well as NGOs, take the approach that expects atrocities against humanity and then seeks to apply damage control.

Since I am trained as an anthropologist, I spend as much, if not more, time on the frontlines of wars as I do in the offices of power-brokers.

Many researchers do not get this opportunity, and thus what many do not have the chance to see is how people act in the midst of violence. It has been my experience that in the midst of aggression, *most* people do not engage in violence, but work to prevent it. Violence -- whether in war or in peacetime -- is perpetrated by the minority, and it is this minority that benefits from these ideologies of 'war is hell' and 'changing the reality of evil is impossible'. Statistics indicate that 80-85 per cent of the soldiers in World War II refused to fire their weapons in battle<sup>(Note 7)</sup> (people interviewed said they were willing to die for their country, but not to kill), and that this is common throughout the wars of the world, have not dented this strange belief in the inevitability of aggression. Neither has the data showing that most human rights abuses -- in war and in peacetime -- are committed by people who themselves have been subjected to harsh violence. It is not easy to train people to kill. Time spent on the frontlines can easily demonstrate that. No fundamental evil is unleashed from the fonts of human nature in the heat of battle or greed for gain. These are actions people have learned, and have learned are possible. In many cases, they have been carefully taught, often by being in abusive systems themselves. If we accept that abuse and aggression are natural to human nature and society, we do not work to dismantle them altogether. As important an act as dismantling the systems that allow abuse is believing that we can.

#### **IV. Giving girls agency**

Girls, even very young ones, often have a well developed moral, political and philosophical understanding of the events in their lives and worlds. Years of research on the frontlines of war have taught me that children as young as several years of age have profound experiences and opinions on conditions of justice and injustice, violence and peace, in their lives. Children fight and are fought against. Both sides of the equation are deleted from public awareness: if media and analytical sources do not discuss the strategic targeting of children, they discuss even less children who fight and kill in war. UNICEF broke ground when it reported that a survey they had sponsored in south-east

Rwanda conducted after the genocidal conflict of 1994 found that almost 56 per cent of the children interviewed said they had seen children kill people, and 42 per cent saw children kill other children.<sup>(Note 8)</sup>

If silence surrounds issues of children killing and being killed, it also surrounds children's anti-war activities. Children worldwide have been involved in sophisticated peacebuilding efforts. From *Youth for Peace* in Northern Ireland to the peacebuilding work of the YWCA of Sri Lanka and the youth's groups of South Africa, children have been working to forge viable platforms for peaceful co-existence.<sup>(Note 9)</sup> As adults, our real obligation is to recognize and support these initiatives. Some countries have been quite successful in incorporating children into the peace process, and provide models for other regions grappling with disruptive violence. For example, since 1992 all schools in Northern Ireland have been required to include conflict resolution activities designed to build cross-communal understanding within their core curriculum. At another level, of the 99 organizations listed as being involved with conflict resolution and reconciliation by the Community Relations Council of Northern Ireland, over half have a youth focus or are working to develop the youth sector.<sup>(Note 10)</sup>

Nevertheless, it is important to consider gender in these examples. The facts presented in the paragraph above do not tell us whether these programs focus their resources predominately on boys as political and economic actors. A reading of Gettleman's article 'Women, war and development in Ethiopia'<sup>(Note 11)</sup> shows that his discussion of programs to assist youth in war-ravaged economies revolves almost exclusively

around political, economic and educational agendas for boys: and this in an article on females. It reflects a larger prejudice in development in general: Gettleman's article, like so many, only references girl's programs for street prostitutes. Unlike the programs for street boys, however, those for girls do not provide vocational training and education for skilled (and sometimes unskilled) labor competitive with that for boys. The lack of political, economic and educational development programs for girls is a symptom of many societies' failure, western and nonwestern alike, to see women as political, economic or educated actors. This attitude pervades the core ethos of many development organizations.

When these issues are en-gendered, they provide models for children across divisions of war and peace. The organizational and educational programs dealing with conflict resolution in Northern Ireland could well be implemented in my home town of Oakland, which had the distinction until a few years back of being the most violent city in the USA. Of course, such an action would force Americans to confront the serious truth that the majority of the violence children face is domestic. Contrary to the media 'horror photos' of (predominately black) teenagers with automatic weapons under banners 'Violence in America', recent research shows that nearly 70 per cent of all male youths who engage in violence are doing so against an adult man who is harming their mother.<sup>(Note 12)</sup> As is so often the case, we are left to wonder when female youths engage in violence.

From the schools of Northern Ireland to the youths trying to protect their mothers in Oakland, a pattern emerges that shows children to be far more politically aware, more morally developed, and more actively involved in conflict and its resolution than most studies and media portrayals suggest. I am reminded of a letter I recently received from the Nairobi journalist, Miriam Kundu, whom I met when we served together as Election Observers in Mozambique. She had traveled and reported extensively on the genocide in Rwanda. The letter explained part of her incentive. In the letter was a sheet of paper with a child's drawing of a man, called Rwanda, hung by a rope around his neck from

a tree. Standing by the hanging victim were two other men: one a person in indigenous African dress, with the title African Countries across the chest; the other a man in a suit with a UN insignia saying to the first: 'Don't just stand there and stare at him, can't you do something?' The journalist had written the explanation along the side of this art piece. Her daughter, Mzanza, had seen a cartoon like this in a Kenyan local daily, and apparently it caught her eye: she re-drew it, put it in an envelope and gave it to her mother as 'a surprise note'. When her mother asked her why she had given it to her, her daughter replied 'Please write about it, Mum'. Her daughter is ten. The journalist concluded her letter by saying 'She tickled my sense of responsibility, you can be sure!' This lesson lingers with me: a reminder that adults do not necessarily impart moral responsibility to youths in a one way process. Responsibility -- realizing that we are all architects of our society and that society extends across the whole of human experience in the world -- can flow from youths to adults as well.

Sitting on my desk as well is a cartoon from my local newspaper. It shows two Western looking soldiers firing an anti-tank weapon. One looks up quizzically and says: 'We hit a UN convoy? We're sorry.' and the other adds apologetically: 'We thought they were civilians'. I am left to wonder where, exactly, societies draw their moral-political compass from? Not all children are as wise as the journalist's daughter from Nairobi; not all adults are represented by this political cartoon. But some are; and who holds the reins of power?

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*Forgiving or Forgetting? Churches and the transition to democracy in the Philippines*, John J. Carroll S.J. and Bernadeth Y. Paso, 1999, is a historical account of the unfinished Philippine revolution and the role of the church. It is a report about the struggle and the risks churches take in order to be agents of change and reconciliation. 74 pp.

*Reaching Reconciliation: Churches and the transition to democracy in Eastern and Central Europe*, ed. Lucia Ann McSpadden, 2000. The book includes three separate manuscripts: East German Churches in the aftermath of unification by Hans Baer, Reconciliation in the shadow of the Soviet past by Joan Löfgren and The Polish Church in the reconciliation process by Halina Grzymala-Moszczyńska. 244 pp.

*Iglesias Evangélicas y derechos humanos en la Argentina*, Pablo R. Andíañach/Daniel Bruno, 2001 (available only in Spanish). The book covers the period 1976-1998. 160 pp.

*Recovering Memory: Guatemalan Churches and the Challenge of Peacemaking*, Paul Jeffrey, 1998. Examines the role of religious non-state actors in transforming conflict in Guatemala. 128 pp.

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*Ready and Willing... but still waiting, Eritrean refugees in Sudan and the dilemmas of return*. Gaim Kibreab, 1996. Examines the dilemmas facing the nearly 400 000 Eritrean refugees living in Sudan. 222 pp.

*Trading Places, Alternatives models of economic cooperation in the Horn of Africa*. Ed. Lucia Ann McSpadden, 1996. Published in cooperation with Pastoral Environmental Network in the Horn of Africa (PENHA). A compilation of essays, putting forward practical and progressive proposals for enhancing cooperation within the Horn. 142 pp.

*Building the Peace: Experiences of Collaborative Peacebuilding in Somalia 1993-1995*, Wolfgang Heinrich, 1997. The story of LPI's Horn of Africa Programme in Somalia evaluates the programme supporting grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Somali communities, and offers insights for the future of both peacebuilding and a lasting peace in the Horn. 290 pp. *Please note that this book is out of stock, but available at the LPI library.*

## **OTHER RESEARCH REPORTS**

*Child Soldiers. Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration in Liberia*. Teferi Sendabo, 2004. Seeks to answer the questions why children participate in war and what methods can be used in the rehabilitation and social integration process. 140 pp.

*Keeping the Peace: Exploring civilian alternatives in conflict prevention*, Lisa Schirch, 1995. Examines the activities of civilian peace teams and the contribution to the theory and practice of civilian conflict interventions. 134 pp.

*After the Revolutions: Democracy in East Central Europe*, ed. Mark Salter, 1996. This collection of papers examines numerous issues raised by political transformations in progress in the region since 1989. 104 pp.

A series of six reports has been published within the research project ***Militarisation, economic penetration and human rights in the Pacific***. (1998) 2002.

*The Redemptive Value of Truth Telling* by Fr. Michael Lapsley, S.S.S., 1999

*Forgiveness and Justice in Northern Ireland after the peace agreement* by Duncan Morrow, 1999. 10 pp.

*Post-Conflict Reconciliation Programming: Preliminary Observations* by John Prendergast, 1997. 60 pp.



Notes page 1.

Note 1 Graburn, N., 'Severe child abuse among the Canadian Inuit', ed. N. Scheper-Hughes, *Child Survival* (D. Reidel: Dordrecht, 1987), p. 211.

Notes page 4.

Note 2 UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 1996* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1996), pp. 10-11.

Notes page 5.

Note 3 Enloe, C., *The Morning After* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1993). See also Enloe, C., *Bananas, Beaches and Bases* (Pandora: London, 1989).

Notes page 6.

Note 4 This extends to popular culture: consider the 1995 movie *Outbreak*, where virtually the entire cast, representing Society in general, is depicted graphically as they die a hideous death from a militarily-engineered virus. Not a single child is shown either ill or dying in the movie. The implication, logically, should be that children as well as adults die. But the social injunction against actually saying, and worse, against showing this, results in a complete, and completely unrealistic, sanitization of children's suffering.

Note 5 To give but a few examples: Veena Das' inclusion of children's realities during the 1985 rioting in India. Das, V., 'Our work to cry: your work to listen', ed. V. Das, *Mirrors of Violence: Communities, Riots and Survivors in South Asia* (Oxford University Press: Oxford). Ed Cairn's work on children and political violence in Northern Ireland. Cairns, E., *Children and Political Violence* (Basil Blackwell: London, 1995). See also *Caught in the Crossfire: Children in Northern Ireland* (Syracuse University Press: Syracuse). Marcelo Suarez-Orozco's study of the strategies of torture direct specifically at children. Suarez-Orozco, M., 'The treatment of children in the "Dirty War": ideology, state terrorism, and the abuse of children in Argentina', ed. N. Scheper-Hughes, *Child Survival* (D. Reidel: Boston, 1987). Neil Boothby's work with unaccompanied children in conflict conditions. Ressler, E., Boothby, N. and Steinbock, D., *Unaccompanied Children: Care and Protection in Wars, Natural Disasters, and Refugee Movements* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1988). R.W. Connell's book of children's voices describing their political identities: Connell, R. W., *The Child's Construction of Politics* (Melbourne University Press: Melbourne, 1971). Dorothy Allison's recent novel *Bastard Out of Carolina* based on her own childhood of severe physical and sexual abuse, throws open the question of how much experiential separation really exists between what is called war and peace in terms of human rights violations and the suffering of children. See Allison, D., *Bastard Out of Carolina* (Plume: New York, 1992). See also Allison, D., *Skin: Talking about Sex, Class and Literature* (Firebrand Books: Ithaca, 1994). For a wide-ranging collection of articles, see Stephens, S. (ed.), *Children and the Politics of Culture* (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 1995).

Notes page 9.

Note 1 UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 1996* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1996).

Notes page 10.

Note 2 It is important to underscore the fact that the adage 'no news is good news' is dangerously false in this context.

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Note 3 Whenever I heard these stories I always asked people to show me some evidence of such murders: a body or body part, hospital or funeral records, actual family accounts. I have never found any actual evidence.

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Note 4 The following is an example I know of personally. It revolves around the larger issue that the fifteen years of post-independence war in Mozambique produced an estimated 200-300 000 war orphans, and the question of what happens with these orphans. The answer for one child came to light when she was dumped unceremoniously at a hospital. A group of men associated with a project under the auspices of a European Embassy in Mozambique were making and marketing pornographic films. Their actions came to light when the dog they were forcing one girl to have sex with mauled her. The doctors at the hospital were unable to save the child. The hospital staff, and those they called in to witness the atrocity, were outraged. They petitioned the government to treat this as a formal crime; and the government representatives involved were equally outraged. Yet no reports hit the presses; no formal court proceedings took place. Officials associated with the European Embassy who counted the pornographers as countrymen stepped in to quiet the situation. The Embassy wielded not only considerable influence, but considerable funds. Leverage was quietly, and effectively applied. The major offenders were simply escorted out of Mozambique without any reprisal. The crime was hushed. Moreover, the network that existed to produce these films was not exposed to public or judicial scrutiny. In other words, it was left intact. It represents what I call here the politics of invisibility. This point is an important one: atrocities such as using war orphans for pornography do not rest on a few men making a few films. They function as part of a large transnational network of production, distribution, exploitation and financial gain. This network is largely unaffected by deporting a handful of men from a single locale. The fact that the Embassy assisted, whether to save face and reputation, or because it was implicated in some way, demonstrates the considerable linkages, and power, such war-profiteering systems are based in. The only way such a system of exploitation is undermined is by exposing the system in full, and this is precisely what was hidden in this, and similar, occurrences.

Notes page 15.

Note 5 Poston, M. M., *Guns and Girls: UN Peacekeeping and Sexual Abuse in the Context of Gender and International Relations*, MA Dissertation, School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia: Norwich, UK, Aug., 1994. My own data from Mozambique supports her conclusions.

Notes page 16.

Note 6 Fetherston, A. B., 'UN peacekeepers and cultures of violence', *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, Spring 1995, pp. 19-23.

Note 7 See Fetherston, (note 6), p. 22. See also Fetherston, A. B. and Nordstrom, C., 'Overcoming *habitus* in conflict management: UN peacekeeping and war zone ethnography', *Peace and Change*, vol. 20 no. 1 (Jan. 1995), pp. 94-119.

Notes page 17.

Note 8 Asia Watch and The Women's Rights Project, *A Modern Form of Slavery: Trafficking of Burmese Women and Girls into Brothels in Thailand* (Human Rights Watch: New York, Dec. 1993). See also UNDP report 'Young Women: Silence, Susceptibility and the HIV Epidemic'.

Note 9 Quoted in Poston (note 5), p. 35.

Note 10 See Poston (note 5).

Notes page 18.

Note 11 French, M, *The War Against Women* (Hamish Hamilton: London; Summit Books: New York, 1992), p. 30, asserts that 'sex tourism was proposed as a development strategy by international aid agencies'. To support this claim she refers to the work of Marie Mies, Professor of Sociology at the Fachhochschule in Cologne and author of numerous books and articles on women's rights and issues worldwide. Professor Mies analyzes the collusion between the tourist industry, the sex industry and governments aiming to make sex tourism one of the main areas of 'export production' in *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Wide Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour* (Zed Books: London, 1986), pp. 137-143. Dr. Mies's work illuminates the international linkages and development of this appalling 'growth industry' as one example of how 'the world market [connects] the remotest corners of the world'.

Note 12 Phillips, B., 'Mozambique: teenage sex for sale', *BBC Focus on Africa*, vol. 15, no. 2 (Apr.-June 1994).

Note 13 See Asia Watch and The Women's Rights Project (note 8).

Note 14 Community Aid Abroad, Australia and OXFAM, UK. and Ireland, *UN Interventions in Conflict Situations*, Feb., 1994.

Notes page 19.

Note 15 The report also found that most physical abuse fatalities are caused by angry fathers, stepfathers or boyfriends while mothers are most often held responsible.

Notes page 20.

Note 16 Suarez-Orozco, M., 'The treatment of children in the "Dirty War": ideology, state terrorism and the abuse of children in Argentina', ed. N. Scheper-Hughes, *Child Survival* (D. Reidel: Boston, 1987).

Note 17 Burton, J. W., 'Conflict resolution as a function of human needs', eds R. Coare and J. Rosati, *The Power of Human Needs in World Society* (Lynn Rienner: Boulder, 1988), p. 195.

Notes page 21.

Note 1 Abitbol, E. and Louise, C., *Up in Arms: The Role of Young People in Conflict and Peacemaking* (International Alert: London, nd.), p. 27.

Note 2 UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 1996* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1996), p. 13.

Note 3 UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 1995* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1995), p. 2.

Note 4 See UNICEF, 1995 (note 2), p. 18.

Note 5 UNICEF *1995 Annual Report* (UNICEF: Geneva, 1995), p. 28.

Note 6 Lang, H., 'Women as refugees: perspectives from Burma', *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 1 (Spring 1995), pp. 54-58.

Notes page 22.

Note 7 United Nations, *The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics* (United Nations: New York, 1995), p. 47.

Note 8 See UNICEF, *Annual Report (note 5)*, p. 28.

Note 9 United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 'Statement of the First Regional Consultation on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children', Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 17-19 Apr. 1995.

Note 10 See UNICEF, *Annual Report (note 5)*, p. 6.

Note 11 Asia Watch and The Women's Rights Project, *A Modern Form of Slavery: Trafficking of Burmese Women and Girls into Brothels in Thailand* (Human Rights Watch: New York, Dec. 1993), p. 1.

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Note 12 See Asia Watch and The Women's Rights Project (note 11).

Notes page 24.

Note 13 UNICEF, *The Progress of Nations 1995* (UNICEF: New York, 1995), p. 34.

Note 14 United Nations, *The Rights of the Child*, Fact Sheet No. 10 (UN: Geneva, Switzerland, 1990).

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Note 15 See UNICEF *Annual Report (note 5)*, p. 37.

Note 16 See United Nations (note 7), p. 117.

Note 17 See UNICEF *Annual Report (note 5)*, p. 43.

Note 18 Millett, K., *The Politics of Cruelty* (W.W. Norton: New York, 1994), p. 294.

Note 19 Bruce Harris interviewed by Richard Swift, *New Internationalist*, July 1995, p. 31. Harris, who works with a NGO dedicated to children's rights in Guatemala, continues with an

example: 'Guatemala City is divided into 15 zones. We've only worked in four but we've initiated 195 law suits and are suing 123 policemen and 48 members of the military for the torture and murder of children'. And this in only one quarter of one city in the world.

Note 20 See Millett (note 18), pp. 292-293. She writes: 'Death squad culture has created a new scenario now, a manner of locating and apprehending a target, the scapegoat vanishing only to reappear as the mutilated example of an existence that will not be tolerated: communism, destitution, overpopulation, feral childhood. These are the street children... Their presence is offensive in the eyes of society: conspicuous, a blemish to the public image, not only an embarrassment before visitors but a threat to tourist income. Their very being suggests the stray, an insult to order and ownership and family cohesion. There is about them an inevitable lawlessness because they are also indigent and dependent for sustenance upon garbage or petty crime, sleeping in the open in ditches, ravines, culverts, or protected only by cardboard and other scraps of material. The children of no one, wandering outside a social order where children are dependent for existence upon being the acknowledged property of adults. Unacknowledged, then, without public resources of any kind, deprived of any type of collective support that might constitute 'permission' to exist, they exist anyway; without permission, that is without parents or sponsors'.

Notes page 26.

Note 21 See UNICEF 1995 (note 3), p. 26.

Note 22 United Nations, *The World's Women 1995: Trends and Statistics*, Social Statistics and Indicators Series K, No. 12 (United Nations: New York, 1995), pp. 160-161.

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Note 23 This understanding is obscured by another *puissant* rhetoric, and I underscore the word rhetoric here: that of the inherent naturalness of abuse and violence. This rhetoric covers such cliches as 'war is inevitable; collateral damage (civilian casualties) is undesirable but inevitable; rape is male biology and inevitable...' What is defined as reprehensible but is practiced, like the abuse of children, represents sites of social and political silencing.

Note 24 As Cynthia Enloe's *The Morning After* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1993) stresses, a great deal of energy goes into perpetuating the notion that certain facets of social and political life are 'natural'. Serious analyses following these constructions of 'the natural order of power and social relations' shows the efforts that go into maintaining these 'beliefs', and the complete lack of supporting evidence that these 'truths' are supposed to be based on.

Notes page 28.

Note 25 Nordstrom, C., 'Rape: politics and theory in war and peace'. Working Paper no. 146, Peace Research Centre, Australian National University, Canberra (reprinted: *Australian Feminist Studies*, May 1996); Ashworth, G., *Of Violence and Violation: Women and Human Rights* (Change: London, 1986).

Note 26 See Asia Watch and The Women's Rights Project (note 11), p. 1.

Notes page 29.

Note 1 Hammer, R., *The Court-Martial of Lt. Calley* (Coward, McCaan and Geoghegan: New York, 1971), pp. 161-162. Quoted in O'Brien, T., *In the Lake of the Woods* (Flamingo: London, 1995), p. 138.

Note 2 I have never been a sociobiologist; but even the most dedicated sociobiologists that seek to explain human behavior through the logics of biology and its relationship with human communities can find no reason for child abuse. It in no way furthers the good of the community or the individual: physical abuse harms the full potential of the person, and sexual abuse not only cannot perpetuate the genes of the male, it harms the reproductive capacity of the person when she reaches adulthood. In talking over this topic with the sociobiologist Vince Sarich, he confirmed that while, in his view, much of human behavior had its roots in the logics of survival, it was more likely that cooperation and community rather than aggression and violence marked the bases of the human condition. In his opinion, the extent of violence in the current epoch was an aberrancy -- a spike way above the much lower level of violence normally characterizing society. Future generations, he postulates, will show a much reduced level of violence and aggression, and will look back at this era as rather barbarous. Coming from the cultural perspective rather than the biological one, I find my views intersect with Sarich's here: the level of violence in the contemporary world is neither natural nor characteristic of human society and culture. In fact, I would argue that it can reach a level where it becomes antithetical to healthy society and culture.

Notes page 30.

Note 3 Nordstrom, C., 'Creativity and chaos: war on the frontlines', eds C. Nordstrom and A. Robben, *Fieldwork Under Fire: Contemporary Studies of Violence and Survival* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1995); 'The backyard front', eds C. Nordstrom and J. Martin, *The Paths to Domination, Resistance, and Terror* (University of California Press: Berkeley, 1992), pp. 260-274; 'The dirty war: culture of violence in Mozambique and Sri Lanka', ed. K. Rupesinghe, *Internal Conflicts and Governance* (St. Martin's Press: New York, 1992), pp. 27-43; Nordstrom, C., 'War: intricacies and complications', *Life & Peace Review*, vol. 6, no. 4 (1992), pp. 6-8; *Warzones: Cultures of Violence, Militarisation and Peace*, Working Paper no. 145 (Peace Research Centre, Australian National University: Canberra, 1994).

Note 4 Magaia, L., *Dumba Nengue: Run For Your Life. Peasant Tales of Tragedy in Mozambique* (Africa World Press, Inc.: Trenton, 1988), pp. 19-20.

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Note 5 In truth, however, dirty war practices are ultimately ineffective in controlling a population. As Foucault has written, resistance starts the moment power is abused.

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Note 6 Mankekar, P., 'To whom does Ameena belong?: towards a feminist analysis of childhood and nationhood in postcolonial India', paper presented at Stanford University, 25 June, 1995, p. 4.

Note 7 See Mankekar (note 6), p. 19.

Note 8 It is important to ask, contrary to conventional 'wisdom', what exactly the difference is between a soldier abusing a youth in a rape camp during war and abusing a youth in his own community -- as both an epistemological and an ontological reality.

Notes page 33.

Note 9 Burton, J. W., 'Conflict resolution as a function of human needs', eds R. Coare and J. Rosati, *The Power of Human Needs in World Society* (Lynn Reinner: Boulder, 1988), p.196.

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Note 10 The novelist Tamara Jane summarized this situation with an apt example. Knowing I was writing a piece on girls in conditions of violence, she called one day to tell me about a television special she had seen in the USA. The show was examining the State of Washington's unique legal decision ruling that children over the age of 12 could not be forced to return to their homes if they did not want to. The show examined the plight on one girl. Facing serious physical and sexual abuse at home, she ran away at the age of 12. Unable to find legal employment because of her age, she became a street prostitute. Also, because of her age, she was very popular, averaging clients every half hour. When she was 13 years old, one of her clients murdered her. The show was criticising the State of Washington's ruling that she did not have to be returned home when she ran away. On her own, the show said, she simply could not take care of herself, and she paid with her life. The show ended on this note. Tamara Jane explained that the show left out what to her was the most salient point: every half hour an adult had sex with this underage girl during her working hours. Adults that the show was arguing were in a better place to make decisions for this girl than she was for herself. Adults that in some cases worked in the law enforcement, social services and legal profession. Adults, like her family, that physically and sexually abused her. Clearly, many adults never abuse children. But the ones that do are represented in all social classes and professions. Legally, political agency is given to all adults and withheld from all children.

Notes page 35.

Note 1 UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 1996* (Oxford University Press: Oxford, 1996), p. 11.

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Note 2 Ashworth, G., *Of Violence and Violation: Women and Human Rights* (Change: London), 1986.

Note 3 This figure is cited in: Clements, K., 'Introduction', ed. K. Clements, *Peace and Security in the Asia Pacific Region* (United Nations University: Tokyo, 1992), p. 10.

Notes page 39.

Note 4 I would like to extend my thanks to Gavan Mount at Australian National University for his conversations with me on this topic.

Note 5 Dwyer, M., 'Trading the work of children', *Financial Review*, 26 July, 1995.

Notes page 40.

Note 6 New and sophisticated work on the plight of children in both wartime and peacetime is being undertaken by several NGOs. There is the NGO Groups for the Convention on the Rights of the Child with a Sub-Group on Refugee Children and Children in Armed Conflict.

The United Nations has commissioned a study, asking Graca Machel (former Minister of Education in Mozambique) to conduct a study on Children in Armed Conflict in conjunction with UNICEF and the UN Centre for Human Rights. The First World Congress on Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children was held in Stockholm in August 1996; organized by the Swedish government in conjunction with UNICEF, ECPAT, and the NGO Group for the Convention on the Rights of Children. The latter is planning to undertake a study of the sexual exploitation of children in war to compliment both the work to be presented in Stockholm and Graca Machel's study, recognizing that peacetime and war time violations are not often considered together. A more comprehensive and responsible approach to these problems is anticipated. There are a number of other committed NGOs dealing with these issues, ranging from Save the Children to Defence for Children International and International Children's Rights Monitor.

Notes page 43.

Note 7 Grossman, D., *On Killing* (Little, Brown and Company: Boston, 1995).

Notes page 44.

Note 8 UNICEF *1995 Annual Report* (UNICEF: Geneva, 1995), p. 28.

Note 9 An excellent resource on children and war is: Abitbol, E. and Louise, C., *Up in Arms: The Role of Young People in Conflict and Peacemaking* (International Alert: London, nd.). This is a far ranging and sensitive investigation of children in conflict situations; and as such, it is interesting to note that while the whole text is devoted to children, the sections looking at 'Women' deal with exactly that: 'women'. Women's physical and sexual violence, and women's initiatives are discussed, *not girls*. Reflecting a common current in the literature and media, this works to enforce two dangerous ideas: that women are interchangeable with children, and are thus infantilized; and that girls drop out of public recognition altogether.

Note 10 See Abitbol and Louise (note 8).

Note 11 Gettleman, J., 'Women, war, and development', *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 1 (Spring 1995), pp. 39-42.

Notes page 45.

Note 12 This statistic and many similar ones were available in the public show on Women and War, University of California Berkeley campus, May 1994, by Emily Graves, Dana Gerstein and Monica Bereni..

