GENDER VIOLENCE
A DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE

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CENTER FOR WOMEN'S GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

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WOMEN'S RIGHTS AS HUMAN RIGHTS:
TOWARD A RE-VISION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:
AN OBSTACLE TO DEVELOPMENT

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First printing: June 1991
Second Printing: October 1991
Third Printing: October 1996
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Designed by Cici Kinsman, C² *Graphics*, Brooklyn, New York
Produced by Rutgers Office of University Publications
GY98–96

Printed on recycled paper

PREFACE

This booklet, first published in 1991, was the first in a series of working papers on Women and Human Rights published by the Center for Women's Global Leadership. The series promotes international discussion of critical conceptual and strategic questions regarding women's human rights and the development of a human rights agenda that incorporates women's experiences. As the IV World Conference on Women in Beijing made clear, an understanding that women's rights are human rights has come a long way toward mainstream acceptance since 1991. It seems particularly fitting therefore that the Center publish anew this initial pamphlet which lays out the theoretical basis for our work on violence against women and women's human rights.

The two papers presented here developed out of the Center's work during its first two years. Both papers seek to move the discussion of gender based violence and "women's issues" forward by linking them to major agendas of the international community—human rights and development. This is part of a larger process in which women are working to end the separation of women's concerns from mainstream agendas.

For over two decades, women around the globe have been identifying and working on the particular concerns that affect our daily lives. Initially much of this effort went into describing and defining problems that were previously invisible or not viewed as matters of public policy, whether in areas like reproductive rights or women and development. Yet, these largely remained ghettoized as "women's issues," that were treated as lesser than questions of peace, democracy, human rights, the environment and development.

In the past few years, women have increasingly moved to claim these primary agendas as our own. Women are providing new perspectives on old questions as well as demonstrating that "women's issues" are not separate but rather are aspects of these concerns. Further, we see that by neglecting women's experiences and views, society has been kept further away from the common solutions that

we need. For example, women are demonstrating that there cannot be peace in the world if there is violence at the core of society in the family, or demanding the recognition that there is no democracy if half the population is effectively excluded from political participation.

It is within this context that these two papers were originally written. "Women's Rights as Human Rights: Toward a Re-Vision of Human Rights" evolved out of several years of seminars, speeches, and discussion with many people about how to re-interpret human rights from a feminist perspective. It was originally published in English in HUMAN RIGHTS QUARTERLY (vol. 12, 1990). It has since been translated and published in many languages including Chinese, Dutch, French, Portuguese, Sinhala, and Spanish.

"Violence Against Women: An Obstacle to Development" resulted from a collaborative research project sponsored by the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), in conjunction with the Global Center. It was commissioned in order to reconceptualize violence as it affects development and to show how development planning cannot succeed if it ignores the ways that gender based violence hinders women's participation in development at many levels. It was originally published in this version in English by the Global Center in 1991. UNIFEM later revised it and added a resource section which they published in 1992 in English, French, and Spanish under the title, "Battered Dreams: Violence Against Women as an Obstacle to Development."

Many people were involved in the development of these papers and also helped to create the Center for Women's Global Leadership and thus enabled this publication. Our founding godmothers and advisors were Mary Hartman, then Dean of Douglass College and now Director of the Institute for Women's Leadership at Rutgers, and Ruth Mandel, then Director of the Center for the American Woman and Politics and now Director of the Eagleton Institute at Rutgers. While all those who have helped the Center to develop are too numerous to list here, special thanks for the original production of this booklet must be given to Roxanna Carrillo, Susana Fried, Niamh Reilly, Diana Gerace, Cici Kinsman, Lori Heise, and Susan Holcombe. Finally, I also want to thank Neida Jimenez and Linda Posluszny for insisting that we publish translations of this pamphlet as well as keep it in print in English and for doing the work necessary to make it happen.

Charlotte Bunch, *Executive Director*

CHARLOTTE BUNCH

WOMEN'S RIGHTS AS HUMAN RIGHTS: TOWARD A RE-VISION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Significant numbers of the world's population are routinely subject to torture, starvation, terrorism, humiliation, mutilation, and even murder simply because they are female. Crimes such as these against any group other than women would be recognized as a civil and political emergency as well as a gross violation of the victim's humanity. Yet, despite a clear record of deaths and demonstrable abuse, women's rights are not commonly classified as human rights. This is problematic both theoretically and practically, because it has grave consequences for the way society views and treats the fundamental issues of women's lives. This paper questions why women's rights and human rights are viewed as distinct, looks at the policy implications of this schism, and discusses different approaches to changing it.

Women's human rights are violated in a variety of ways. Of course, women sometimes suffer abuses such as political repression in ways that are similar to abuses suffered by men. In these situations, female victims are often invisible because the dominant image of the political actor in our world is male. However, many violations of women's human rights are distinctly connected to being female—that is, women are discriminated against and abused on the basis of gender. Women also experience sexual abuse in situations where their other human rights are being violated, as political prisoners or members of persecuted ethnic groups for example. In this paper I address those abuses in which gender is a primary or related factor because gender-related abuse has been most neglected and offers the greatest challenge to the field of human rights today.

The concept of human rights is one of the few moral visions subscribed to internationally. Although its scope is not universally agreed upon, it strikes deep chords of response among many. Promotion of human rights is a widely accepted goal and thus provides a useful framework for seeking redress of gender abuse. Further, it is one of the few concepts that speaks to the need for transnational activism and concern about the lives of people globally. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights[1] adopted in 1948 symbolizes this world vision and defines human rights broadly. While not much is said about women, Article 2 entitles all to "the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status." Eleanor Roosevelt and the Latin American women who fought for the inclusion of sex in the Declaration and for its passage, clearly intended that it would address the problems of women's subordination.[2]

Since 1948, the world community has continuously debated varying interpretations of human rights in response to global developments. Little of this discussion, however, has addressed questions of gender, and only recently have significant challenges been made to a vision of human rights which excludes much of women's experiences. The concept of human rights, like all vibrant visions, is not static or the property of any one group; rather its meaning expands as people reconceive of their needs and hopes in relation to it. In this spirit, feminists redefine human rights abuses to include the degradation and violation of women. The specific experiences of women must be added to traditional approaches to human rights in order to make women more visible and to transform the concept and practice of human rights in our culture so that it takes better account of women's lives.

In this article, I will explore both the importance and the difficulty of connecting women's rights to human rights, and then I will outline four basic approaches that have been used in the effort to make this connection.

I. BEYOND RHETORIC: POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS

Few governments exhibit more than token commitment to women's equality as a basic human right in domestic or foreign policy. No government determines its policies toward other countries on the basis of their treatment of women, even when some aid and trade decisions

are said to be based on a country's human rights record. Among non-governmental organizations, women are rarely a priority, and Human Rights Day programs on 10 December seldom include discussion of issues like violence against women or reproductive rights. When it is suggested that governments and human rights organizations should respond to women's rights as concerns that deserve such attention, a number of excuses are offered for why this cannot be done. The responses tend to follow one or more of these lines: (1) sex discrimination is too trivial, or not as important, or will come after larger issues of survival that require more serious attention; (2) abuse of women, while regrettable, is a cultural, private, or individual issue and not a political matter requiring state action; (3) while appropriate for other action, women's rights are not human rights per se; or (4) when the abuse of women is recognized, it is called inevitable or so pervasive that consideration of it is futile or will overwhelm other human rights questions. It is important to challenge these responses.

The narrow definition of human rights, recognized by many in the West as solely a matter of state violation of civil and political liberties, impedes consideration of women's rights. In the United States the concept has been further limited by some who have used it as a weapon in the cold war almost exclusively to challenge human rights abuses perpetrated in communist countries. Even then, many abuses that affected women, such as forced pregnancy in Romania, were ignored.

Some important aspects of women's rights do fit into a civil liberties framework, but much of the abuse against women is part of a larger socioeconomic web that entraps women, making them vulnerable to abuses which cannot be delineated as exclusively political or solely caused by states. The inclusion of "second generation" or socioeconomic human rights to food, shelter, and work—which are clearly delineated as part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights —is vital to addressing women's concerns fully. Further, the assumption that states are not responsible for most violations of women's rights ignores the fact that such abuses, although committed perhaps by private citizens, are often condoned or sanctioned by states. I will return to the question of state responsibility after responding to other instances of resistance to women's rights as human rights.

The most insidious myth about women's rights is that they are trivial or secondary to the concerns of life and death. Nothing could be farther from the truth: sexism kills. There is increasing documentation of the many ways in which being female is life-threatening. The following are a few examples:

- *Before birth:* Amniocentesis is used for sex selection leading to the abortion of more female fetuses at rates as high as 99 percent in Bombay, India; in China and India, the two most populous nations, more males are born than females even though natural birth ratios would produce more females.[3]
- *During childhood:* The World Health Organization reports that in many countries, girls are fed less, breast fed for shorter periods of time, taken to doctors less frequently, and die or are physically and mentally maimed by malnutrition at higher rates than boys.[4]
- *In adulthood:* The denial of women's rights to control their bodies in reproduction threatens women's lives, especially where this is combined with poverty and poor health services. In Latin America, complications from illegal abortions are the leading cause of death for women between the ages of fifteen and thirty-nine.[5]

Sex discrimination kills women daily. When combined with race, class, and other forms of oppression, it constitutes a deadly denial of women's rights to life and liberty on a large scale throughout the world. The most pervasive violation of females is violence against women in all its manifestations, from wife battery, incest, and rape, to dowry deaths[6], genital mutilation[7], and female sexual slavery. These abuses occur in every country and are found in the home and in the workplace, on streets, campuses, and in prisons and refugee camps. They cross class, race, age, and national lines; and at the same time, the forms this violence takes often reinforce other oppressions such as racism, "able-bodyism," and imperialism. Case in point: in order to feed their families, poor women in brothels around U.S. military bases in places like the Philippines bear the burden of sexual, racial, and national imperialism in repeated and often brutal violation of their bodies.

Even a short review of random statistics reveals that the extent of violence against women globally is staggering:

- In the United States, battery is the leading cause of injury to adult women, and a rape is committed every six minutes.[8]
- In Peru 70 percent of all crimes reported to police involve women who are beaten by their partners; and in Lima (a city of seven million people), 168,970 rapes were reported in 1987 alone.[9]
- In India, eight out of ten wives are victims of violence, either domestic battery, dowry-related abuse, or among the least fortunate, murder.[10]
- In France, a very high percentage of the victims of violence are women; 51 percent at the hands of a spouse or lover. Similar statistics from places as diverse as Bangladesh, Canada, Kenya, and Thailand demonstrate that more than 50 percent of female homicides were committed by family members.[11]

Where recorded, domestic battery figures range from 40 percent to 80 percent of women beaten, usually repeatedly, indicating that the home is the most dangerous place for women and frequently the site of cruelty and torture. As the Carol Stuart murder in Boston in 1989 demonstrated, sexist and racist attitudes in the United States often cover up the real threat to women; a woman is murdered in Massachusetts by a husband or lover every 22 days.[12]

Such numbers do not reflect the full extent of the problem of violence against women, much of which remains hidden. Yet rather than receiving recognition as a major world conflict, this violence is accepted as normal or even dismissed as an individual or cultural matter. Georgina Ashworth notes that:

> *The greatest restriction of liberty, dignity and movement, and at the same time, direct violation of the person is the threat and realisation of violence... However violence against the female sex, on a scale which far exceeds the list of Amnesty International victims, is tolerated publicly; indeed some acts of violation are not crimes in law, others are legitimized in custom or court opinion, and most are blamed on the victims themselves.*[13]

Violence against women is a touchstone that illustrates the limited concept of human rights and highlights the political nature of the abuse of women. As Lori Heise states: "this is not random violence.... the risk factor is being female."[14] Victims are chosen because of their gender. The message is domination: stay in your place or be afraid. Contrary to the argument that such violence is only personal or cultural, it is profoundly political. It results from the structural relationships of power, domination and privilege between men and women in society. Violence against women is central to maintaining those political relations at home, at work, and in all public spheres.

Failure to see the oppression of women as political also results in the exclusion of sex discrimination and violence against women from the human rights agenda. Female subordination runs so deep that it is still viewed as inevitable or natural, rather than seen as a politically constructed reality maintained by patriarchal interests, ideology, and institutions. But I do not believe that male violation of women is inevitable or natural. Such a belief requires a narrow and pessimistic view of men. If violence and domination are understood as a politically constructed reality, it is possible to imagine deconstructing that system and building more just interactions between the sexes.

The physical territory of this political struggle over what constitutes women's human rights is women's bodies. The importance of control

over women can be seen in the intensity of resistance to laws and social changes that put control of women's bodies in women's hands: reproductive rights, freedom of sexuality whether heterosexual or lesbian, laws that criminalize rape in marriage, etc. Denial of reproductive rights and homophobia are also political means of maintaining control over women and perpetuating sex roles and power which have human rights implications. The physical abuse of women is a reminder of this territorial domination and is sometimes accompanied by other forms of human rights abuse such as slavery (forced prostitution), sexual terrorism (rape), imprisonment (confinement to the home) or torture (systematic battery). Some cases are extreme, such as the women in Thailand who died in a brothel fire because they were chained to their beds. Most situations are more ordinary like denying women decent education or jobs which leaves them prey to abusive marriages, exploitative work, and prostitution.

This raises once again the question of the state's responsibility for protecting women's human rights. Feminists have shown how the distinction between private and public abuse is a dichotomy often used to justify female subordination in the home. Governments regulate many matters in the family and individual spheres. For example, human rights activists pressure states to prevent slavery or racial discrimination and segregation even when these are conducted by nongovernmental forces in private, or proclaimed as cultural traditions, as they have been in both the southern United States and in South Africa. The real questions are: (1) who decides what are legitimate human rights and, (2) when should the state become involved and for what purposes. Riane Eisler argues that:

> *The issue is what types of private acts are and are not protected by the right to privacy and/or the principle of family autonomy. Even more specifically, the issue is whether violations of human rights within the family such as genital mutilation, wife beating, and other forms of violence designed to maintain patriarchal control should be within the purview of human rights theory and action...[T]he underlying problem for human rights theory, as for most other fields of theory, is that the yardstick that has been developed for defining and measuring human rights has been based on the male as norm.*[15]

The human rights community must move beyond its male defined norms in order to respond to the brutal and systematic violation of women globally. This does not mean that every human rights group must alter the focus of its work. However it does require examining patriarchal biases and acknowledging the rights of women as human

rights. Governments must seek to end the politically and culturally constructed war on women rather than continue to perpetuate it. Every state has the responsibility to intervene in the abuse of women's rights within its borders and to end its collusion with the forces that perpetrate such violations in other countries.

II. TOWARD ACTION: PRACTICAL APPROACHES

The classification of human rights is more than just a semantics problem because it has practical policy consequences. Human rights are still considered to be more important than women's rights. The distinction perpetuates the idea that the rights of women are of a lesser order than the "rights of man," and as Eisler describes it, "serves to justify practices that do not accord women full and equal status."[16] In the United Nations, the Human Rights Commission has more power to hear and investigate cases than the Commission on the Status of Women, more staff and budget, and better mechanisms for implementing its findings. Thus it makes a difference in what can be done if a case is deemed a violation of women's rights and not of human rights.[17]

The determination of refugee status illustrates how the definition of human rights affects people's lives. The Dutch Refugee Association, in its pioneering efforts to convince nations to recognize sexual persecution and violence against women as justifications for granting refugee status, found that some European governments would take sexual persecution into account as an aspect of other forms of political repression, but none would make it the grounds for refugee status per se.[18] The implications of such a distinction are clear when examining a situation like that of some Bangladeshi women, who having been raped during the Pakistan-Bangladesh war, subsequently faced death at the hands of male relatives to preserve "family honor." Western powers professed outrage but did not offer asylum to these victims of human rights abuse.

I have observed four basic approaches to linking women's rights to human rights. These approaches are presented separately here in order to identify each more clearly. In practice, these approaches often overlap, and while each raises questions about the others, I see them as complementary. These approaches can be applied to many issues, but I will illustrate them primarily in terms of how they address violence against women in order to show the implications of their differences on a concrete issue

1. Women's Rights as Political and Civil Rights. Taking women's specific needs into consideration as part of the already recognized "first generation" human rights of political and civil liberties is the first approach. This involves both enhancing the visibility of women who suffer general human rights violations as well as calling attention to particular abuses women encounter because they are female. Thus, issues of violence against women are raised when they connect to other forms of violation such as the sexual torture of women political prisoners in South America.[19] Groups like the Women's Task Force of Amnesty International have taken this approach in pushing for Amnesty to launch a campaign on behalf of women political prisoners which would address the sexual abuse and rape of women in custody, their lack of maternal care in detention, and the resulting human rights abuse of their children.

Documenting the problems of women refugees and developing responsive policies are other illustrations of this approach. Women and children make up more than 80 percent of those in refugee camps, yet few refugee policies are specifically shaped to meet the needs of these vulnerable populations who face considerable sexual abuse. For example, in one camp where men were allocated the community's rations, some gave food to women and their children in exchange for sex. Revealing this abuse led to new policies that allocated food directly to the women.[20]

The political and civil rights approach is a useful starting point for many human rights groups; by considering women's experiences, these groups can expand their efforts in areas where they are already working. This approach also raises contradictions that reveal the limits of a narrow civil liberties view. One contradiction is to define rape as a human rights abuse only when it occurs in state custody but not on the streets or in the home. Another is to say that a violation of the right to free speech occurs when someone is jailed for defending gay rights, but not when someone is jailed or even tortured and killed for homosexuality. Thus while this approach of adding women and stirring them into existing first generation human rights categories is useful, it is not enough by itself.

2. Women's Rights as Socioeconomic Rights. The second approach includes the particular plight of women with regard to the so-called "second generation" human rights such as rights to food, shelter, health care, and employment. This is an approach favored by those who see the dominant Western human rights tradition and

international law as too individualistic and identify women's oppression as primarily economic.

This tendency has its origins among socialists and labor activists who have long argued that political human rights are meaningless to many without economic rights as well. It focuses on the primacy of the need to end women's economic subordination as the key to other issues including women's vulnerability to violence. This particular focus has led to work on issues like women's right to organize as workers, and opposition to violence in the workplace, especially in situations like the free trade zones which have targeted women as cheap, nonorganized labor. Another focus of this approach has been highlighting the feminization of poverty, or what might better be called the increasing impoverishment of females. Poverty has not become strictly female, but females now comprise a higher percentage of the poor.

Looking at women's rights in the context of socioeconomic development is another example of this approach. Third world peoples have called for an understanding of socioeconomic development as a human rights issue.[21] Within this demand, some have sought to integrate women into development and have examined women's specific needs in relation to areas like land ownership or access to credit. Among those working on women in development, there is growing interest in violence against women as both a health and development issue. If violence is seen as having negative consequences for social productivity, it may get more attention. This type of narrow economic measure, however, should not determine whether such violence is seen as a human rights concern. Violence as a development issue is linked to the need to understand development not just as an economic issue but also as a question of empowerment and human growth.

One of the limitations of this second approach has been its tendency to reduce women's needs to the economic sphere, which implies that women's rights will follow automatically with third world development, or socialism. This has not proven to be the case. Many working from this approach are no longer trying to add women into either the Western capitalist or socialist development models, but rather seek a transformative development process that links women's political, economic and cultural empowerment.

3. Women's Rights and the Law. The creation of new legal mechanisms to counter sex discrimination characterizes the third approach to women's rights as human rights. These efforts seek to

make existing legal and political institutions work for women and to expand the state's responsibility for the violation of women's human rights. National and local laws which address sex discrimination and violence against women are examples of this approach. These measures allow women to fight for their rights within the legal system. The primary international illustration is the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.[22]

The Convention has been described as "essentially an international bill of rights for women and a framework for women's participation in the development process . . . (which) spells out internationally accepted principles and standards for achieving equality between women and men."[23] Adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979, the Convention has been ratified or acceded to by 104 countries as of January, 1990. In theory these countries are obligated to pursue policies in accordance with it and to report on their compliance to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

While the Convention addresses many issues of sex discrimination, one of its shortcomings is failure to directly address the question of violence against women. CEDAW passed a resolution at its eighth Session in Vienna in 1989 expressing concern that this issue be on its agenda and instructing states to include in their periodic reports information about statistics, legislation, and support services in this area.[24] The Commonwealth Secretariat in its manual on the reporting process for the Convention also interprets the issue of violence against women as "clearly fundamental to the spirit of the Convention," especially in Article 5 which calls for the modification of social and cultural patterns, sex roles and stereotyping, that are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either sex.[25]

The Convention outlines a clear human rights agenda for women which, if accepted by governments, would mark an enormous step forward. It also carries the limitations of all such international documents in that there is little power to demand its implementation. Within the United Nations, it is not generally regarded as a convention with teeth, as illustrated by the difficulty that CEDAW has had in getting countries to report on compliance with its provisions. Further, it is still treated by governments and most nongovernmental organizations as a document dealing with women's (read "secondary") rights, not human rights. Nevertheless, it is a useful statement of principles endorsed by the United Nations around which women can organize to achieve legal and political change in their regions.

4. Feminist Transformation of Human Rights. Transforming the human rights concept from a feminist perspective, so that it will take greater account of women's lives, is the fourth approach. This approach raises the question of how women's rights relate to human rights by first looking at the violations of women's lives and asking how the human rights concept can be changed to be more responsive to women. For example, the GABRIELA women's coalition in the Philippines simply stated that "Women's Rights *are* Human Rights" in launching a campaign last year. As Ninotchka Rosca explained, coalition members saw that "human rights are not reducible to a question of legal and due process. . . . In the case of women, human rights are affected by the entire society's traditional perception of what is proper or not proper for women." Similarly a panel at the 1990 International Women's Rights Action Watch conference asserted that "Violence Against Women is a Human Rights Issue." While work in the three previous approaches is often done from a feminist perspective, this last view is the most distinctly feminist with its woman-centered stance and its refusal to wait for permission from some authority to determine what is or is not a human rights issue.

This transformative approach can be taken toward any issue, but those working from this approach have tended to focus most on abuses that arise specifically out of gender, such as reproductive rights, female sexual slavery, violence against women and "family crimes" like forced marriage, compulsory heterosexuality, and female mutilation. These are also the issues most often dismissed as not really human rights questions. This is therefore the most hotly contested area and requires that barriers be broken down between public and private, state and non-governmental responsibilities.

Those working to transform the human rights vision from this perspective can draw on the work of others who have expanded the understanding of human rights previously. For example, two decades ago there was no concept of "disappearances" as a human rights abuse. However, the women of the Plaza de Mayo in Argentina did not wait for an official declaration but stood up to demand state accountability for these crimes. In so doing, they helped to create a context for expanding the concept of responsibility for deaths at the hands of paramilitary or right-wing death squads which, even if not carried out by the state, were allowed to happen. Another example in the United States is the developing concept that civil rights violations include "hate crimes," violence that is racially motivated or directed against homosexuals, Jews, or other minority groups. Many accept that states have an

obligation to work to prevent such human rights abuses, and getting violence against women seen as a hate crime is being pursued by some.

The practical applications of transforming the human rights concept from feminist perspectives need to be explored further. The danger in pursuing only this approach is the tendency to become isolated from and competitive with other human rights groups because they have been so reluctant to address gender violence and discrimination. Yet, most women experience abuse on the grounds of sex, race, class, nation, age, sexual preference, politics, etc. as interrelated, and little benefit comes from separating them as competing claims. The human rights community need not abandon other issues but should incorporate gender perspectives into them and see how these expand the terms of their work. By recognizing issues like violence against women as human rights concerns, human rights scholars and activists do not have to take these up as their primary tasks. However they do have to stop gate-keeping and guarding their prerogative to determine what is considered a "legitimate" human rights issue.

As mentioned before, these four approaches are overlapping and many strategies for change involve elements of more than one. All of these approaches contain aspects of what is necessary to achieve women's rights. At a time when dualist ways of thinking and views of competing economic systems are in question, the creative task is to look for ways to connect these approaches and to see how we can go beyond exclusive views of what people need in their lives. In the words of an early feminist group, we need bread and roses too. Women want food and liberty and the possibility of living lives of dignity free from domination and violence. In this struggle, the recognition of women's rights as human rights can play an important role.

ENDNOTES

1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted 10 December 1948, G.A. Res. 217A(III), U.N. Doc. A/810 (1948).
2. Blanche Wiesen Cook, "Eleanor Roosevelt and Human Rights: The Battle for Peace and Planetary Decency," Edward P. Crapol, ed. *Women and American Foreign Policy: Lobbyists, Critics, and Insiders* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987), 98-118; Georgina Ashworth, "Of Violence and Violation: Women and Human Rights," Change Thinkbook II (London, 1986).
3. Vibhuti Patel, *In Search of Our Bodies: A Feminist Look at Women, Health and Reproduction in India* (Bombay: Shakti, 1987); Lori Heise, "International Dimensions of Violence Against Women," *Response*, vol. 12, no. 1 (1989) : 3.
4. Sundari Ravindran, *Health Implications of Sex Discrimination in Childhood* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 1986). These problems and proposed social programs to counter them in India are discussed in detail in "Gender Violence: Gender Discrimination Between Boy and Girl in Parental Family," paper published by CHETNA (Child Health Education Training and Nutrition Awareness), Ahmedabad, 1989.
5. Debbie Taylor, ed. *Women: A World Report, A New Internationalist Book* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 10. See Joni Seager and Ann Olson, eds., *Women in the World: An International Atlas* (London: Pluto Press,1986) for more statistics on the effects of sex discrimination.
6. Sometimes a husband will disguise the murder of a bride as suicide or an accident in order to collect the marriage settlement paid to him by the bride's parents. Although dowry is now illegal in many countries, official records for 1987 showed 1,786 dowry deaths in India alone. See Heise, note 3 above, 5.
7. For an in-depth examination of the practice of female circumcision see Alison T. Slack, "Female Circumcision: A Critical Appraisal," Human Rights Quarterly 10 (1988): 439.
8. Everett Koop, M.D., "Violence Against Women: A Global Problem," Presentation by the Surgeon General of the U.S., Public Health Service, Washington D.C., 1989.
9. Ana Maria Portugal, "Cronica de Una Violacion Provocada?," Fempress especial "Contraviolencia," Santiago, 1988; Seager and Olson, note 5 above, 37; Heise, Note 3 above.
10. Ashworth, note 2 above, 9.
11. "Violence Against Women in the Family," Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Office at Vienna, 1989.
12. Bella English, "Stereotypes Led Us Astray," *The Boston Globe*,January 5, 1990, 17, col. 3. See also statistics in Women's International Network News, 1989; United Nations Vienna, note 11 above; Ashworth, note 2 above; Heise, note 3 above; and Fempress, note 9 above.
13. Ashworth, note 2 above, 8.
14. Heise, note 3 above, 3.

15. Riane Eisler, "Human Rights: Toward an Integrated Theory for Action," *Human Rights Quarterly,* 9 (1987): 297. See also Alida Brill, *Nobody's Business: The Paradoxes of Privacy* (New York: Addison-Wesley, 1990).

16. Eisler, note 15 above, 29.

17. Sandra Coliver, "United Nations Machineries on Women's Rights: How Might They Better Help Women Whose Rights Are Being Violated?" in Ellen L. Lutz, Hurst Hannum, and Kathryn J. Burke, eds., *New Directions in Human Rights*, (Philadelphia: Univ. of Penn. Press, 1989).

18. Marijke Meyer, "Oppression of Women and Refugee Status," unpublished report to NGO Forum, Nairobi, Kenya, 1985 and "Sexual Violence Against Women Refugees," Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, The Netherlands, June 1984.

19. Ximena Bunster describes this in Chile and Argentina in "The Torture of Women Political Prisoners: A Case Study in Female Sexual Slavery," in Kathleen Barry, Charlotte Bunch, and Shirley Castley, eds., *International Feminism: Networking Against Female Sexual Slavery* (New York: IWTC, 1984).

20. Report given by Margaret Groarke at Women's Panel, Amnesty International New York Regional Meeting, February 24, 1990.

21. Feminist discourse on human rights can draw on third world perspectives on human rights that are often not well known in the West, such as those found in: Philip Alston (editor), *International Aspects of Human Rights* (UNESCO, Paris, 1984); Smitu Kothari and Seithi Harsh (editors), *Rethinking Human Rights* (Lokayan, Delhi, 1989); Jose Zalaquett, *The Human Rights Issue and the Human Rights Movement* (World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1981); and articles in many publications such as the *Asian Newsletter on Human Rights* and the *Boston College Third World Law Journal.* Rebecca J. Cook lists many sources on women and human rights internationally in "Bibliography: the International Rights to Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex," *Yale Journal of International Law,* 14:161, 1989.

22. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, G.A. Res. 34/180, U.N. Doc. A/Res/34/180 (1980).

23. "The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women," Summary of CEDAW prepared by the International Women's Rights Action Watch, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, Minneapolis, 1988.

24. CEDAW Newsletter, 3rd Issue (13 April 1989), 2 (summary of U.N. Report on the Eighth Session, U.N. Doc. A/44/38, 14 April 1989).

25. "The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women: The Reporting Process - A Manual for Commonwealth Jurisdictions," Commonwealth Secretariat, London, 1989.

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This article was first published in *HUMAN RIGHTS QUARTERLY*, Vol. 12, No. 4, Nov., 1990, pp. 486-498 and in *WOMEN'S HEALTH JOURNAL, ISIS INTERNATIONAL*, No. 19, 1990, pp. 4-12.

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VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: AN OBSTACLE TO DEVELOPMENT[1]

Human development is a process of enlarging people's choices. The most critical of these wide-ranging choices are to live a long and healthy life, to be educated and to have access to resources needed for a decent standard of living. Additional choices include political freedom, guaranteed human rights and personal self-respect. Development enables people to have these choices.

Human Development Report, 1990

I. INTRODUCTION

A new vision of international economic and social development is eloquently elaborated by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in its Human Development Reports, published each year since 1990. These reports focus on the human aspects of development as an indication of whether the goals of development are being achieved. This concept questions the approach of the three previous UN Development Decades which measured development only through statistical indicators such as growth and national income. The human development approach expands the use of indicators by looking at how they impact on the lives of women and men. These broad indicators include: nutrition and health services; access to knowledge, secure livelihoods and decent working conditions; security against crime and physical violence; satisfying leisure time; participation in the economic, cultural, and political activities of their communities; access to basic

services; and control over the necessities of life. From this perspective, the goal of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy, and creative lives.

The United Nations Decade for Women (1976–1985) helped to focus attention on the critical importance of women's activities for economic and social development. However, after fifteen years of efforts to integrate women into development, there is a growing body of evidence indicating that women are still only marginal participants in and beneficiaries of development programmes and policy goals. Women remain in a disadvantaged position in employment, education, health, and government.

In spite of the slow process of change, the UN Decade and women in development efforts in general have been successful in identifying problems critical to women's participation that were not previously understood as development issues. One such area that has emerged is violence against women. Violence against women has previously been seen — when seen at all, and often it is totally invisible — as a private matter, a cultural and family issue, or at best, pertinent to social welfare policies. Within the United Nations, violence against women has been discussed in relation to peace, and there are increasing efforts to include it in the human rights agenda. These approaches underscore the multiple aspects of such violence but they do not cover the totality of the picture. There are still large gaps in our knowledge of the dimensions and effects of violence against women on the development process itself. Lack of statistical data is one of several problems in seeking to map the dimensions of this issue. Nonetheless, we have reached a point where we can begin to understand how violence as a form of control affects women's participation in the development process.

The emergence of violence as a crucial issue for women and development in the Third World has arisen from grassroots women's endeavours rather than being initiated by outside authorities or international agencies. Violence is increasingly identified as a priority concern among various regions of the world, and/or as a problem that limits women's participation in or capacity to benefit from development projects. Women have taken leadership in making violence against themselves visible, and in addressing its causes and manifestations, as well as its remedies. From the Uganda Association of Women Lawyers, to the Asia and Pacific Women, Law and Development Network, the Trinidad Rape Crisis Centre, the Inter-American Commission of Women and the Fiji Women's Rights Movement,