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SOUTH AFRICAN

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CHILDREN

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January 1990

Caught in the

Crossfire:

Violence against

Children

Bonded Servants

Child Labour in

India

Prospects for

Child Refugees -

UNICEF

Nigerian Girls

Beat Boys at

School

Telling the Truth:

A Political Act

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Outlook on the Month
Childhood is an essential stage in our human development.
Those of us who were lucky enough to have the kind of
secure, contented childhood that our society assumes as it
norm know how significant the experience was in developing
the people we are now, how important the sheer joy of being
young is. Childhood is a time when the imagination can
consume one, when society allows one to be any thing one
wants to be. This experience sustains one long after
childhood had ended. Of course, for most children,
childhood is not the complete idyll it is generally made out
to be. Real life - poverty, powerlessness, parental divorce or
unhappiness, the death of people close to one - intrudes,
causing different degrees of trauma to the children affected
by them. Some of these things are to be expected: we all
have to live with the breakdown of personal relationships,
and death is an essential part of the experience of being
human.
But when a society systematically disempowers the young,
and when those in power continually exploit the young and
nothing is heard or done about it, then our society is sick,
and we all suffer. Child labour is not a practise confined to
India. It is alive and well and living all over South Africa's
rural areas. Thousands of children are severely traumatised
each year by the violence which engulfs homes and lives in

this country. The terrible thing about this violation of children is that it affects not only the children, but the adults they become, the children they have, and the nature of the society they live in. In safeguarding and protecting children we safeguard all that is most hopeful about our own lives. In South Africa today (November 1991) this hope cannot be abandoned. Children's rights must be protected.

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As promised, we are producing the back issues of South African Outlook still owing to our subscribers. This issue has now (November 1991) not only fills a gap in the series of past issues, but will, we hope, provide our readers with relevant and stimulating reading matter.

Printed by Sally Print. Methodist Inner

City Mission, Cape Town.

South African Outlook

THE IMPACT OF VIOLENCE

()N CHILDREN

by Elijah Klaason Red Cross International

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South African Outlook

THE IMPACT OF VIOLENCE

()N CHILDREN

by Elijah Klaason

In our country, there is so much violence that it has almost become the order of the day. people are dogged by violence in various ways from every mnk of society.

Nothing in hand seems reliable enough to stop the tide of violence which is gradually sapping the eomfon of humu-nity. Indeed society is under stress precisely from the effects of violence and what it does to children. For in all instances of violence which are taking place, children are the worst victims. The impact of violence on children makes the whole issue much more serious and provoking.

It is important to recognise that violence in our society has assumed many lionns. The most notable of these are the fol-lowing:

1 State inflicted violence

2 social violence

State intlieted violence is by the state and is government endorsed. It has been legalised to a great extent through vari-ous mechanisms such as:

)k Jails for Children

3k The separation 01' families through detention

:k The harassment of whole societies

5 The presence of the army in residen-tial areas

This all has 11 psychological effect on Children. Yet there are also severe phys-ical forms of violence inflicted on our children. for instance:

5 The shooting of children

5 Their wholesale murder through such noted agents us "wittdoeke"

:k The muiming :tnd raping of children by the same.

This brings me to my experiences of the major event which took place in Cross-roads and KTC.

In 1985. the young people of Cross-roads led the resistance to the forced removals to Khtiyelitsha. The state responded with force. SAP and SADF members czime ruthlessly down on the Crossroads community. many young people were shot. and some even died.

January 1990

Red Cross International

Some infants died from teztrgas.

Empilisweni Sacla Clinic, the health Centre which was based in Crossroads at that stagem had a hectic time attend-ing to the Injures who came from Nyzm-g3. thnga 11nd Guguletu. The four doe-tors from the clinic prepared an interest-ing report on their findings in this viol-ent situation. Four hundred people were treated for gunshot wounds from police bullets in the nine month period Febru-ary to November 1985. Thirteen of these people died. Over 90% of the total number were shot with Bird or Buck shot. Sixty patients suffered severe

injuries of the eye. chest. head. abdominal soft tissue and joint movement. 31 were treated for rubber bullet injuries and 16 were treated for beatings. Few people suffered from tear gas. The ages of 370 of the patients treated were:

Less than 10 years 5

10 - 15 years 36

15 - 20 years 118

20 - 25 years 6

25 - 30 years 48

30 - 35 years 36

Over 35 years 31

The brutal attack by the police and SADF created intense fear among children and bitterness among older youth. Perhaps the worst that happened which psychologically bruised our children was the destruction of Crossroads satellite camps and KTC informal settlements in 1986.

Thousands of homes were set on fire and many people were brutally killed in the fight between Crossroads men supported by the SAP and the SADF and other squatters. Thousands of people and their children were left in the open, miserable and without homes.

This tragic event that our children were made to experience left them nervous, confused and unsure. Consequently the vigilante groups, the police and the Defense Force became unpopular. It is interesting to note how the SADF and police members subsequently tried to win the friendship of the community they had destroyed. Young children were enticed to play football with them: some children were made to play in the Casspirs. This somehow served to sanctify violence, a dangerous development for children. Social violence is the form of violence which children encounter at home, and in organisations and through other community setups. Fighting between adults at home in front of the children is a bad lesson and can influence the way a child relates to the mother or father. I still have bad memories of the way in which my father used to fight with my mother. Street fighting by mature people often excites children to violence. The use of children by political organisations in acts of violence in crisis times does great harm to their welfare.

Children who are becoming familiarised to violence should be assisted to develop and grow in a meaningful and constructive way. In this our society and the powers that be owe a lot to our children. Schools have become a sort of army camp and in some instances children have had to write their exams at gunpoint. The trauma this causes them is unthinkable.

My concern is the fact that immature, inexperienced children are often encouraged to acts of violence without understanding the issues in question. What

they know are some superficial facts
and from these the slogans are shouted.
Subsequently you hear. " Down with so
:md so". Many children have found it
difficult to handle situations of violence
in which they have been involved. It
has emerged that some of the Children
who have been drawn into acts of neck
lacing have had nightmares others have
been admitted into mental institutions
and other have taken to drugs.
In some cases commercial concerns and
the media are detrimental to the life of
young people. The manufacturing and
selling of toys like machine guns, tankst
and army kits is enough to promote
LJ

war-like tenancies in children.

This violence has been seen at funerals which have always been solemn and respectful occasions in our tradition. The police and the army are all guilty in this matter. Our children are exposed to extensive violence. We as parents must stand up for their interests.

Together we must speak out and act in responsible ways to discontinue violence. Let us be one in condemning:

- t The presence of the army in the townships and in schools

- t Organisations which enlist children to do acts of violence

- t Violence from conflicts (at home or in the community)

- h Irresponsible artists: authors and designers who through their work focus on violence in a way that is detrimental to the society and its children

Let us begin:

- t To promote sound dialogue between parents and children for mutual understanding

- t To provide free counselling in order to tackle the emotional, psychological Stolen Childhood -

- On the care of refugees.

by Elizabeth F. Bennet, Child Development Programme, Pretoria.

In 1978 the United Nations International Year of the Child (IYC) provided the opportunity for us to focus more directly on the plight of the refugee child and the child in civil conflict.

We were coping with the aftermath of the Vietnam War and the Beirut Israeli conflict in particular.

Organisations such as UNICEF (where I was working), the United Nations High Commission for refugees (UNHCR) and non-governmental

organisations such as the Red Cross, Catholic Relief and so on were helping ensure that the fundamental needs of food, shelter, and medicine were met. However the psychological damage of being violently uprooted from the place called home, of being often preceded or accompanied by violence, of being thrust into a new, unfamiliar environment and the uncertainty of exile and readjustment is a factor that emerged, needing to be addressed more fully. The most damaging situation for a child arises where there is no vision of the future, no parents, relatives, guardians or siblings, particularly in the crucial early years. So the unaccompanied minor is severely at risk and it became apparent that children who have suffered the ravages of war, uprootedness, starvation and loss needed urgent support prior to the further problems of resettlement and re-integration. We all know that and related problems of young people. e To educate in the field of problem solving and conflict settlement, enabling young people to address differences

amongst themselves in a better way.
We shall then have done something in
the building of our Children. William
Wordsworth, in memory of a beautiful
scene from his childhood stated in one
of his poems: "The boy is the father of
the man". Indeed children are the adults
of tomorrow.
Centre for Intergroup Studies, Occa-
sional Paper No.13.
South African Outlook

mental and emotional pain is as severe as physical pain and it cannot wait, that the results of unattended mental strain can lead to mental illness and in the long term the condition can be passed on to succeeding generations, in a painful legacy of bitterness. On the optimistic side, disasters and crises can motivate forces to prompt new initiatives:

t diverting resources to child survival
l: prompting the basic rights of children

ll encouraging more studies and symposia on children under stress.

I am in the process of writing a handbook for the field worker on preventive mental health care for children in emergency situations. It is the field worker who has most influence on the daily lives of these children, often serving as substitute parents whereas the health and related services professional is scarce to begin with and usually serves a limited term of duty. this handbook is to be low cost, using local resources, requiring implementation at grass roots level and applicable in a variety of cultural settings - as such it should fit in with a basic services approach.

So far in my research, I have found that in spite of the extraordinary resilience displayed by many children in situations of stress, there are not many who are able to cope. Nor is there much evidence indicating what price these children, who appear to be coping, pay in the long term.

Children in emergencies have all the normal problems of stress compounded many times over. Since anxiety is an appropriate reaction to situations of stress, the recognition and subsequent treatment of excessive anxiety can do much to alleviate the psychological suffering of the child and the community or society as a whole. On the preventative level, an holistic approach could help forestall or reduce certain problems inherent in the emergency situation.

The detrimental effects of deprivation, rejection and loss on the overall growth of the child are well known.

Love and encouragement are fuel for growth and creativity which is the ultimate rehabilitation of the child at risk. It is these almost synonymous

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From the series "The Jewish Prague", by Jindrich Cech. concepts, love and encouragement, that need to be implemented in practical terms by the field worker in addressing basic emotional needs:

it the need for love and security - parent or substitute parents.

i siblings or selected unrelated children encouraged to demonstrate affection and to express their feelings.

i the need to develop - encouraging

interaction, language and play alone and with others.

i the need for praise and recognition
t the need for responsibility and participation - encouraging independence. Children will have different ways of coping with their situation, depending on the individual family structure and the nature of the conflict. Extreme withdrawal, selective contacts (wanting to be with peers exclusively), mistrust of adults, apathy, aggression, regression, self-inflictions, physical health complaints anxiety, fear, flight into fantasy and hallucinations are no uncommon ways of response.

Several low cost and locally feasible mechanisms have emerged to assist children in how to cope with their situation. They include;

t creating small family groups, instead of institutions. The family groups need to be sensitive to the specific culture. In the case of one North African camp, boys lived in a corrugated iron shelter and were exercised like soldiers because the camp superintendent did not know what else to do with them. Furthermore institutionalised Children tend to have exceptionally poor coping skills.

it Encouraging early stimulation interventions particularly for unaccompanied infants. I remember hearing about the rows of babies in camps in Vietnam. At feeding time, bottles were stuck in their mouths but no-one actually held the babies while they were being fed. In fact they had virtually no physical contact at all.

it giving abundant opportunity to play and role play.

it giving abundant opportunity to be with their peers.

Continued on pg 7

Girls take over in

Nigerian Schools

by ()lseun ()gunsetein and Akin ()gunrinde, Lagos-based journalists

(iirls are supplanting boys in Nigerian high schools. Not only have they taken away the front seats - where the most attentive students sit - they seem now to be taking most of the places in the school, as social trends lure young men out of school to pursue a faster lane to the better life.

The development is particularly acute in the two eastern states of Anambra and Imo, where authorities recently conducted a census of schools to analyze the situation and seek a remedy.

In lmo there are 468 secondary schools with an enrolment of some 926,000 pupils. but the census revealed that more than seven out of every ten high school seats in the state was occupied by a girl.

()lticials lind this alarming as it is happening in an area with traditionally high enthusiasm for formal education.

Thirty years ago in Eastern Nigeria, parents withdrew their children from farmwork in their thousands to send them to school as the route to higher living standards.

This enthusiasm continued after independence in 1960. The region provided a high proportion of Nigeriats first generation of Western-edueated elite who today occupy top positions in the civil service, academia and industry.

One explanation for the male exodus appears to be the high rate of um '11-employment among university graduates and professionals in the wake of a particularly choking structural adjustment programme. A degree no longer promises automatic prefermentl.

Nigerian fathers place greater priority on the prospects of the male child. He is usually encouraged to get trained for the most lucrative positions. ()irlls education receives less attention because it is assumed that most will marry and become mothers and housekeepers.

So as soon as it appeared that schools were no longer delivering the jobs, parents reacted to the evident demands of the economy by sending boys to learn trades such as carpentry

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or car maintenance. or to become small traders.

Time will tell whether this is a loss or a gain to the Nigerian economy. Buses certainly cannot run without mechanics nor taps provide water without plumbers.

Headteachers argue that pupils are also leaving school because of the high tuition fees and the escalating cost of books which low- and medium-ineome families cannot afford. Generally, the

male pupil is withdrawn before his sister because the boy is more valuable to his father on the farm.

The survey in Anambra state revealed that the trend has spread beyond secondary schools and into the tertiary sector.

Only 150 out of 900 graduates were males on graduation day at a leading college of education. The same was true at the state-owned Institute of Management Technology and the Polytechnic.

It is true that there are more girls than boys in the two states as a result of the Nigerian Civil war, but the ratio is nothing near the four girls to every boy common in the schools.

Apart from the external economy and the school fees, a further reason for parents and boys dwindling interest in education may be the poor education and resultant dreary facilities in Nigerians schools, 90% of which are government-run.

In the problem states efforts are being made to improve the physical conditions of schools and redundant teacher training colleges are being turned into secondary schools to reduce congestion in existing ones.

In addition, the Nigerian Council on education proposes new guidelines for guidance and counselling in all secondary schools.

Under these, education ministries in Nigerians 21 states must start a compulsory guidance and counselling service and train more career counselors, while universities have been asked to pep up teaching and research in guidance and counselling. The goal is that every secondary school will

Continued on pg 8

ABOVE: Even the holy child (see "Virgin and displaced and knew what it was to be on the childhood, which often draws on stories of J8 has been displaced over and over again in the the right to a "real" childhood. free from want has to be fought for. Poverty and powerlessness children in the family group in the photograp

ith the Flight into Egypt") was lost and side of history. The (romantic) myth of lllldh00d On the shores of Lake Galilee,)erienees of many children. That is why ll worry cannot just be assumed; it also ibute to shortening the childhood ol' the Indiaais children:

trapped in slavery

by Aisha Ram, a development writer in New Delhi

NEW DELHI, INDIA: "I would get up at 5.30 am and work at the cow-sheds, washing the cattle and feeding them. Then after a bath and breakfast I went to the construction site to work as labourer. My daily wages were Rs 10 a day (less than US\$ 1), but I never saw this money. It was given to the landlord to whom my father and I were bonded seven years ago. When I got back from the construction site, I again tended the cattle and irrigated my masteris crops."

This is the story of Devindran, only 14 years of age, of Karapanur village in the Southern state of Tamil Nadu, but it could be the story of any of the one to live million children in bonded labour in India. The figure is imprecise because there has been no comprehensive survey of the problem. But according to the Bonded Labour Liberation Front (BLLF) of India, there are about five million families in bonded labour and if each family has even one child bonded the number would be five million. The children work at carpet and cloth weaving, "bidis" (indian cigarettes) production, match-making, lock-making, rag-piek-ing or in the glass industry. All are exploited and if they attempt to revolt or fail to work to the satisfaction of their master, they are thrashed.

Little Chandru, aged 11, is a rag picker in the clutches of a waste retailer in Bangalore. Unlike Devindran, Chandru is a street child.

He was sold into bondage by his mother for a paltry Rs250 (approx US\$17). He is bonded but escaped through a drain and came to Delhi with activists of the Rag Pickers Education and Development Scheme to present his case before a South Asian seminar on child servitude.

For three years he has been picking rags and waste from garbage bins for a retailer to whom he is bonded. "I get up with the first rays of the sun," says Chandru. All day he scours dustbins and garbage dumps for plastics, old shoes, or odd bits of paper. Sometimes he picks up garbage worth Rs 30 (US\$ 0.30- 0.60).

Bangaloreis streets are full of boys like Chandru. In the evening they eat and sleep together in a public park or under a bridge. Sometimes they even get together and go to a cinema. They are all exposed to infections and are often bitten by strange dogs which,

like them, rummage in the dust bins. Because of the Rs2,500 (US\$149) loan taken out by his mother, Chandru may not sell his finds to other retailers. He has lost track of his parents in the three years he has lived on the streets. Eight-year-old Sukhrazia is a picture of poverty.

In a dirty vest and loin cloth; hair shorn so she looks like a boy (to avoid sexual assault), she has yellowing teeth, an infected, oozing ear and a vacant look on her face.

Her day is spent taking her landlord's cows to pasture. For this she is paid R55 (US\$ 0.30). Her father, who borrowed R5200 (US\$12) some years ago, is a bonded labourer. When he seeks his freedom, he is told that the interest on his loan is Rs3,000 to Rs 4,000 (US\$180-240) and he would have to pay this off before getting his freedom.

There seems no end to the exploitation of the 150,00 children engaged in the Uttar Pradesh carpet industry in the north of the country. A mafia of child procurers collect them from their village homes on payment of amounts varying from R5200 to Rs1,500 to sell them to carpet manufacturers. Some are the children of landless agricultural labourers hit by drought or other calamities. Some are development destitutes _ tribal villagers displaced by dams and other projects.

Parents part with these six to eight year olds and they are assured their children will be educated, fed and clothed and taught a skill. But once in the clutches of the carpet manufacturers they are made to work 10 to 16 hours a day.

Two years ago, Bhagwanias, a widow, borrowed RS200 (US\$ 12) from a carpet manufacturer in Ghazipur village.

Continued on pg 8

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I encouraging group activities,
acting ottd and group discussion
It regulating daily events -
instruction, daily ceremonies.
I encouraging privacy and rccm
identity by providing each child
place to sleep, mat, toy, and usefulness
in the community.

I giving the opportunity to continue
certain family or subcultural functions
such as food preparation, language,
schooling and religious activities -
rclicli agencies are becoming increas-
ingly aware that missionary zeal con-
fuses and doesnt serve any useful
purpose. Catholic Relief in fact
encourages traditional worship.

I providing vitally important safety
and protection as well as food and
shelter.

()n the preventive level, these basic
interventions could help alleviate some
of the mental strain inherent in the
situation. And then there are those
who suffer from mental illness and
they would require help on the thera-
peutic level which is dependant on the
available resources. One would need
to look at both traditional and estab-
lished methods of healing.

With regard to children in civil cone
tlict, and certainly in South Africa,
children have been witnesses to, victim
of and active in direct hostilities and
gruesome atrocities. in addition to
damage to health, handicaps, and loss
of life, less visible is the psychological
and social harm inflicted upon
children by armed conflict and viol-
ence, not the least of which is the loss
of childhood. As Freud and
Burlingham point out, war has an all-
embracing impact on childrenls devel-
opment, attitudes, experience of
human relations, moral norms and
outlook on life. In situations of armed
conllict, the child becomes familiar
with destruction, ravage, violence and
hostility, which, apart from stimulating
destructive aggressive behaviour, pro-
motes an attitude favouring the use of
force and violence as a means of
resolving conflict.

Then there are those children who are
abducted for training in armed con-
llict. Studies have shown that abducted
children tend to develop anti-social
behaviour - delinquency, prostitution
and tlrug-addiction. More acceptable
problems such as mistrust, low self-

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esteem and chronic depression are
also linked. Norman Garmezy has
found that intelligence, as defined
within cultural context, social compet-
ence and self-esteem which can be
fostered through schooling, all contrib-
ute to a childis ability to cope with
highly stressful events.

Children in trouble through being
involved in civil conflict are usually

seen as convenient scapegoats for many of the shortcomings of an unequal society which has failed to recognise, let alone guarantee, their right to justice. By an odd inversion of logic, those who call for harsher punishment, speak as though ignorant of the conditions that contribute to youth crime and with no cognisance of the fact that the system creates crime. Robert Adams emphasises that adults have shaped the contemporary circumstances which offer children the certainty of powerlessness, repression, class, ethnic and gender inequalities, the likelihood of scholastic failure, poor and non-existent jobs, a poor self-image and ultimately the possibility of imprisonment and/or death. Paradoxically, when young people respond to these conditions by misbehaving, vandalizing, disrupting the school system, murdering or breaking the law, adults often react as though these young people are either inherently bad, or as if they are acting out deep-seated personal problems, and they are seen to be capable of bringing society to a state of collapse. In many countries, South Africa included, present conditions regarding secure accommodation for children in care varies from the unsatisfactory to the positively alarming. The practise of placing children in secure accommodation without their having committed a criminal offence, without any judicial proceedings, without any opportunity to represent against it contravenes natural justice and the European Convention on Human rights. In writing this handbook, after I have completed the field work for refugees and children in civil conflict and in detention, I am most in need of the therapeutic professional practitioner's input, keeping in mind that the information is at all times directed to the field worker - the attendant, the prison warden.

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have at least one career counsellor to guide pupils in Choosing viable subjects that will lead them to lucrative professions.

Crises, however, tend to be double edged. For the girls who replace the boys, this is a rare opportunity to get a longed-for education. They are as able as boys to become civil servants, doctors, or any other kind of professional.

Moreover, the value of their learning need not diminish when they become mothers. It is well documented that families benefit more from an educated mother than from a professional father.

The nation may seem to lose formally, yet it gains at the family level with unquantifiable benefits for society later. A national deficiency might nevertheless result if girls continue to concentrate on traditional Arts subjects and neglect the sciences, as is currently the case in many countries. The answer may lie in encouraging girls to study all disciplines so that they too can become agronomists, engineers, and physicists. /PANOS

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In return she pawned her two sons - Umashanker, 12, and Gogi, 16. For two years the boys worked without pay. Bhagwanias struggled and saved R5200 to buy their freedom. But the manufacturer demanded interest of Rs4,000, beat her up and threatened to cut off the hands of her children. Desperate, she approached BLLF and finally got the boys released. They now work for another manufacturer and earn a wage which is still a pittance. So far, 25,000 children in the carpet industry have been freed in Uttar Pradesh. But every day more and more are sucked in. Demand is high for Indian carpets abroad and the government promotes their export. High demand means more jobs, so more Children are employed. They are preferred to adults because they pick up skills faster, are easier to control and earn much less - if paid at all. BLLF says particles of carpet fibres get into the Childrens lungs and cause disease. In dark workplaces Children develop weak eyesight. Their backbones become distorted and they cut their fingers tying carpet knots. There are an estimated 44 million

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SPOTLIGHT ()N

MIGRANT WOMEN

Although migrant women often have higher employment rate than native women and may even outnumber their male compatriots, they have generally been neglected in studies of international migration. In recent years, however, migrant women, as distinct from

"migrant workers and their families", or simply "Migrant wives", have been gaining visibility.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, foreign women, notably, Turkish and Yugoslav, have higher employment rates than German women. The same is true for Portuguese women in France. Over 70% of Yugoslav females in Western Europe are economically active and in the FRG, they account for 51% of Yugoslav workers. Yet the concept of the male migrant worker and his "passive dependants" persists, even in the United States where for most of the last half century (since 1930) immigration has been female-dominated.

"While it is true that female migrants have been neglected by research or represented in a stereotyped manner, we do have considerable knowledge at our disposal," said Dr. Mirjana Morokvasic of the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS), "the real question is why this knowledge has had so little impact on policy-making. On the media and on the main body of migrant labourers in India, despite the 8.8 million claimed by the 1981 census. This is not surprising because the many child welfare and bonded labour laws in India are not implemented properly. Under the Children Pledging of Labour Act of 1933, a penalty of Rs 550 (US\$3) should be levied on giving away children for money. But it is not enforced, says Ms Neera Burra, a sociologist specialist in child labour. The Child Labour (Protection and Regulation) Act 1986 came into force despite strong opposition from NGOs which wanted child labour totally abolished. The government argued it could not abolish child labour since many children had to work for very survival.

Under of the Act, employment literature."

Overcoming "Gender Blindness"

But what is now moving some specialists to overcome "gender blindness" in migration studies? Among a number of explanations Morokvasic cites new social aspects of migration flows in Western Europe during the 1970s and 1980s when labour migration was largely halted but family reunion continued. Feminist questioning of the place of women in society in general has also contributed.

Born in Yugoslavia herself, she sees another positive change in the fact that, as social scientists and in the media, migrant women are developing a new approach which is "giving rise to a different outlook" towards this group. For Morokvasic, the most important factor, however, "is that today women's economic participation is better known,

thus more visible."

With regard to research, Morokvasic said, the "triple burden" (gender, social Class and migrant minority group), theme "which has presented a stereotyped image of migrant women mainly as victims, is less present, while" she concluded, "the new approach, on the contrary, is tlying to show the positive side of the migration of women, their economic, cultural and social contribution to their countries of residence."

Betty Werther, Unesco Sources.

children in hazardous activities was to be stopped. In nonvhazardous industries, children can work for four to five hours. Industries are meant to educate the children the employ. In reality, labour inspectors sent out to monitor the law are often bribed by businessmen so exploitation goes on. The few honest inspectors are hampered by lack of transport facilities and staff to conduct raids in distant areas.

The solution is for the government to make the industries truly accountable. Subsidies could help banish child employment. But, says Ms Burra, the carpet business, with its export incentives, is so prolitable that it does not need to employ children at all.

/PAN()S

Truth-Telling and Peacemaking

A Reflection on Ezekiel

Walter Bruggeman (The Christian Century)

The government in ancient

Jerusalem was busy doing the things governments do: deploying ambassadors, developing new weapons systems, designing new technologies, dealing with cost overruns, securing more funding, levying taxes and holding press conferences. It was busy pursuing the things that would bring security (or the impression of it): power, money, technology. But the more it worked on security and defense, the more precarious public life became. The government held press conferences to give assurances. It engaged in manoeuvres and war games. It showed the flag and reiterated the slogans, and received innocent applause. All of these activities, however, had an increasingly empty ring.

While its leaders made the war effort, ancient Jerusalem staggered toward death, invaded by the empire, occupied by armies and, eventually levelled, spent in self-deception and self-destruction. All the technology, power, money and deployment had not brought safety and peace. Most of the people in Jerusalem had not notice the gathering darkness, the ominous violence, the fearful emptiness, the growing brutality that prepared the way for death.

"You cannot have peace if you lie to each other"

Some, however had noticed - a very few. They were regarded as cranks. There was Jeremiah, who reprimanded and spoke out of his dismay. There was Ezekiel, who had fantasies and hallucinations. Call them prophets. They were hostile and abrasive. Their speeches were unwelcome. But they noticed what no one else noticed. That is their significance. That is why we preserve their words - they were the only ones who saw death coming. Ezekiel, the one who hallucinated, did not challenge the common notion that you need technology, muscle and power for security. He never even commented on that assumption. He did not think efforts at defense and security were important, but he did not argue about it. When he saw death coming, he interrupted the planning and deployment with a different agenda. You cannot have peace if you lie to each other, he said. You cannot have well-being if you do not speak the truth to each other. All the weapons in the world will not save you from your lies.

"You cannot have
well-being if you do
not speak the truth
to each other"

Ezekiel did not blame the king, the
government, the military or the war
planners for this terrible death to
come. He blamed the religious com-
munity, the clergy, the prophets: "

My hand will be against the
prophets who see delusive visions
and give lying messages" (13:9).

Ezekiel blamed the religious com-
munity because that community is
responsible for truth-telling.

But the prophets had failed; instead
of telling the truth, they deceived
and distorted; " When the people
build a wall" (the wall of the city,
Wall Street, walls of finance,
defense, security and privilege; walls
that divide and protect; walls that
include and exclude; walls of policy
which are highly doubtful in their
social implications and in their
theological presuppositions), "the
prophets paint those walls with
whitewash." They cover the reality
with high-sounding and soothing
phrases, so that social experience
looks good even though it is a wall
of brutality, exploitation and abuse.

They mislead the people, saying
"peace" when there is no peace
(v.10). They call war "peace" and
self-interest "generosity", and greed
"opportunity", and brutality "national
interest", and exploitation "the free
market". It is no wonder that the
government and the corporate
leadership have lost their way. They
have lost their way into the mad-
ness because the religious commun-
ity has engaged in a terrible white-
wash of deception - romantic white-
wash among liberals, legalistic
whitewash amongst conservatives.

Such lies, said Ezekiel, will lead to
death. There will be a deluge of rain
and hail and wind (v,11). It will
break the wall of policy, deception,
brutality, indifference and cynicism.
There will be a great destruction,
and the cowardly religionists must
answer for their failure.

This is the scene in Jerusalem. The
political leadership is focused on
power and technology. The religious
community - priests, prophets,
laypeople - lives in the midst of the
power and technology and wealth -
Which is where the religious com-
munity always must live, because it
is precisely this community in the
midst of power that knows that
truth-telling is the condition for
peace. Without truth-telling, no
peace-making.

"They call
peace and self-
interest opportun-

ity"

We also know that truth-telling is
dangerous and costly. We do not
war

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like to hear or speak the truth, so we tone it down and cover it over. We mouth pleasing slogans which please and seduce and deny. We say "God loves us", "World without end", "saved by Grace". All the while, however, we know about peace and truth. We know that we are the ones who must speak. And when we speak the truth, the whole civil community, even with its enormous power, has a possibility of peace. "about hurt, which is real, and about hope"

What would we say if we spoke the truth that gives peace and makes freedom? For us the truth is not advice on foreign policy, not strategy for how to prevail, not arguments about taxes, all of which are important issues. Rather, what is needed today, like what was need in Ancient Jerusalem, lies deep underneath such issues: the truth about human hurt and human hope.

A conversation on these topics is lost in our society, lost because hurt is so repugnant that we would rather not notice it. The conversation is lost because hope is so unlikely, so unsettling and so embarrassing that we would rather not risk it. But when we do not notice and do not risk, we lose the chance for peace. Ezekiel warned about lies which prevent peace. Our lies which block peace are about hurt, which is real and about hope, which we find too demanding.

The church is a conversation about human hurt: "Your hurt is incurable, and your wound is grievous. There isno medicine for your wound, no healing for you" Jer. 30:12-13) The deep hurt in the body politic and in our bodies, the wound of not caring and not being cared for, of not belonging, of being unrelated and unconnected, are wounds endemic to our social situation. We cover up the alienation we feel and the angry fear that is strong among us. the circle of concealed hurt grows wider. It touches our young, so fearfully driven to success and

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security, so tempted to disengagement. When we reach out to the hurt we touch homelessness as well as unopened homes, unshared food and hard, tired hearts. Those hearts authorise policies of cynicism all around us.

We countenance cries of vengeance, policies of brutality, thirst for capital punishment, police terror, and slogans to justify our advantage. We prattle about "standard of living" and we fail to notice the deep links between cynical policies, extravagant

living, and failed human lives.
Of course, our continued self-deception is a whitewash. The homeless are like us, the brutalised are children, the bayonets kill parents. We translate acts into great public jargon so as too ignore the torn flesh, violated bodies and enraged spirits of real humans. There is, we know in our sanity, an anguished connection between our vacuous homes and homelessness, between our fearful craving for repression and the violence so close to policy. We whitewash so we need not notice the savaged minds, hearts and bodies, treasured only by God. As the truth-telling stops, so we become more brutal. The conversation stops because we dare not speak. We do not know what to say. It is all too unutterable.

"As the truth-telling stops so we
b e c o m e m o r e
brutal"

Alternatively, the church is a conversation of human hope:

For a brief moment I forsook you,
but with great compassion I
will gather you.

In overwhelming wrath for a moment
I hid my face from you.
But with everlasting love I will have
compassion on you....

For the mountains may depart
and the hills be removed,
but my steadfast love shall not depart
from you,
and my covenant of peace
shall not
be removed,

says the Lord, who has" compassion
Oll you

//s. 54:7-m/

We have grown sober and grim. We believe the beer commercial that "it doesn't get any better". We suspect that there are no new gifts because we do not believe in a God who can override the way things are. The problems that beset us are almost all insoluble. The world is full of scarcity and we must scramble to get and hold on to our share. We become fearful and defensive, and if need be brutal. There is little talk among us about the lame walking, the hungry fed, the lepers cleansed, the dead raised. There is no caring embrace of resurrection or new life, no remembrance that God can act beyond our imagining for the sake of human well-being. Our ears are empty of the daring cadence of "I have a dream," for we have only nightmares. We have so little hope in a God who promises, and who walks in the ruins to raise a new world - such talk sounds too awkward or has been captured by relig-

ious cheapness - that we grow silent. The news is that the lies and the whitewash need not continue. It is not true that human hurt must be endless, or that brutality must continue forever in our silence. It is not true that human hope must be stifled and suffocated by our frustrated cynicism. These are not truths but old habits, rooted in unfaith. We lie because we have forgotten how to believe.

The truth is that hurt hurts badly, and all our hurts are held in community. When one member suffers, all suffer together. The truth is that hope is open and the world is not closed. The world is indeed fatigued waiting for governments and armies to devise peace. The truth is, peace cannot be devised. It can only be permitted where the truth is told about hurt and hope.

What would happen if all of us in the church resolved to undertake truth-telling about the fabric of human caring authorised by God, caring which undercuts and overrides all our usual postures? What

would happen if we were to speak of the possibility of homes and food and access to health care, and of valued elders, and cherished children come home? ()I orphans claimed, barriers removed, land reformed, and mortgages cancelled and slaves liberated? of rivers cleansed and mountains dancing and trees hushed in wonder? ()I acts of risky generosity, of people giving extravagantly, keeping only what is necessary - and in watching God's newness well up from this human gesture?

The world need not stay as it has become. The change we wish for depends on truth-telling of a quite local kind which becomes as contagious as it is subversive. Ezekiel watched over Jerusalem. He watched as his people slowly, painfully, began to notice. He watched the lying stop and then he saw the hating, the killing and the fearing stop. That old brutal world was finally overcome. Then the prophet noticed a new reality from God, made possible because the lying stopped. He heard God say what God had refused to say for the long season of lying:

"I will make with them a covenant of peace... I will send down the showers in their season... The trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in the land; they shall know that I am the Lord when I break the bars of their yoke, and deliver them from the hand of those who enslaved them. They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts of the land devour them, they shall dwell securely and none shall make them afraid. And I will provide for them prosperous plantations so they shall no more be consumed with hunger in the land... They shall know that I, the Lord their God, am with them, and that they...are my people says the Lord God. 134:25-3()1. God promises peace-making. That peace-making by God only happens, however, when there is truth-telling - costly, urgent and subversive. That is the work of the church. The issue, since Ezekiel, is clear: when we lie, we die. When we speak truthfully about human reality, God sends us peace.

11

Finding a Voice

by Jawadur Rahman, a development journalist
Madaripur, Bangladesh: Rahela and Sharifun (fictitious names) each have a different story to tell but both have a common theme: they have been abandoned by their husbands.
Daughter of a poor farmer in a village

near the town of Madaripur about 50 miles (93km) south of Dhaka, Rahela was given in marriage to a neighbour's son two years ago. Abandoned by her husband, She had been living with her parents for about a year. Rahela has no children. She alleges that her husband engaged a quack to induce an abortion, against her will, before he threw her out of his house. He wants to marry another girl, she says. Sharifun's father is also a poor farmer living in a village near Madaripur. Before marriage, Sharifun used to work as a domestic servant. She was married to a cousin four years ago. She says her husband married her against the will of his mother who never accepted her as a daughter-in-law. Sharifun says her husband drove her away to please his mother. Sharifun returned to her parents, taking her son with her. The son died recently. He was two years old. Rahela and Sharifun sought help from the Madaripur Legal Aid Association's office. The association has filed a case seeking maintenance from the husband on Sharifun's behalf, and organised a "Salish" for Rahela.

A Salish is a meeting held by non-partisan persons acceptable to both sides in a dispute. The aim is to thrash out a settlement. It is a traditional way of redressing grievances and settling disputes, particularly in the village. The decision of a Salish is based on social and moral values and common sense and is, therefore, usually in harmony with the spirit of the law, if not always with the letter.

The Salish called by the association to solve Rahela's problem could not be held, since her husband did not turn up. But his father did. He said he had no idea what had prevented his son from coming. It takes a day to come to Madaripur from the place where he works in a factory. Rahela's father-in-law says he will not object should his son decide to take his wife back. She does not want to return to her husband. She prefers maintenance to a reunion with him. But she says she will accept her guardian's decision. Rahela's father, who was with her, appeared eager to send her back to her husband with the intervention of the Legal Aid Association.

The poor throughout Bangladesh are either unaware of their rights or do not have the capacity to protect them. In the eyes of the law both rich and poor are equal and all have been guaranteed fundamental human rights by the constitution of the country. But all this often proves of little practical help to the disadvantaged because of social conditions.

Women are the most disadvantaged. There are hundreds of cases of women

being subjected to various forms and degrees of cruelty. Divorce on flimsy grounds, refusal by husbands to pay maintenance in cases of separation, non-payment by husbands of the dowry promised at the time of marriage, and maltreatment and torture by husbands and in-laws are the lot of many women.

To deal with these injustices, in recent years, laws have been enacted to protect the rights of women who often suffer silently.

Making the people aware of their rights and using the law to protect those rights are sorely felt needs. The Madripur Legal Aid Association is helping to fulfil them.

Founded in 1978 by a group of enthusiastic people, the association aims to raise peoples awareness of their legal rights: give legal protection to women against arbitrary divorce; help abandoned women get maintenance from their husbands through negotiation or legal measures; and give legal assistance, irrespective of sex and religion, in cases affecting person or property. Based in the town of madripur, the association has branch offices in all four "upazilas" (sub-districts) Of Madaripur districts. It uses a panel of lawyers to conduct civil and criminal cases for it Clients - and it pays the costs of cases.

The association also holds workshops on human rights and seminars to promote legal aid throughout the country.

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