

political divisions.

Women Divided is an excellent guide to the gendered nature of the conflict in Northern Ireland, the role of the State in fostering and maintaining sectarian divisions, the importance of feminist organizing, and the imperative of constructing a peace that challenges entrenched inequalities based on class, religion, and gender. With theoretical and practical sections dealing with the roots of the conflict, the economic and social underpinnings of colonialism, the role of women in a divided society, and the value and challenges of feminist campaigning, Sales clarifies the conflict and argues strongly for women's active and principled involvement in the "peace process."

WOMEN, ETHNICITY AND NATIONALISM: THE POLITICS OF TRANSITION

Rick Wilford and Robert L. Miller,
Eds. London and New York:
Routledge, 1998.

BY SHAHRZAD MOJAB

The last two decades of the twentieth century witnessed the unprecedented rise of national movements globally. Ironically, this upsurge reached its climax when, in the wake of the fall of the Berlin wall, the triumph of "market democracy" was messianically proclaimed as the "end of history," while at the same time, others declared the fall of all "national borders" under the impact of globalization. Some feminist perspectives celebrated "differences," identities, the fragmentation of women, and challenged the "sisterhood is global" slogan. Totalizing the idea of "difference," they denied any possibilities of sameness or universalism. In this intellectual and political mi-

lieu, efforts to question these perspectives are welcomed. Wilford and Miller's edited volume must be read in this context.

The volume, according to the editors, "grew out of a series of research seminars held in Northern Ireland during 1993 and 1994." However, its theme, "women, ethnicity and nationalism," emerged from the original theme of the series, which was "the Economic and Political Participation of Women." This anthology consists of ten chapters. Three chapters review and conclude the debate on the interlocking relationships between ethnicity, women, and nationalism. Rick Wilford provides a useful survey of the literature in the first chapter. This is followed by Nira Yuval-Davis's chapter, "Gender and Nation," which illuminates further some of the theoretical tensions in the literature about gender, nation, and nationalism, as well as women's rights to citizenship. Chapters three to nine contain cases from Northern Ireland, South Africa, Russia and the former Soviet Union, post-socialist societies, Yemen, Lebanon, and Malaysia.

Finally, Robert Miller's "Conclusion," tries to pull this diverse collection together by making two important points. First, Miller argues that except for Northern Ireland [note that the book went to the press before the 1999 peace deals] all other societies included in the collection have gone through "a regime change in the recent past." Miller, however, warns us against the simple equation of political transition with "democratization." Miller argues, realistically, that political democratization "does not in itself automatically lead to an improvement in women's position: indeed, it may have the contrary effect." He concludes the book with the following statement:

Any assumption that a transition from a repressive to an ostensibly less authoritarian regime, even when accompanied by a heightened involvement of

women in politics, will by itself lead to an improvement in political processes, appears naive when set against the reality of lived experience.

Second, based on the cases presented in the book, Miller notes that, instead of women's full political participation in societies in transition, they may have recourse to or be forced into other alternatives. He identifies four such instances: "compliance with a male-dominated nationalist project of maternity and ... acting as the symbol of the nation's sanctity...;" "exegesis, where women can attempt to 'square the circle' by reinterpreting the dominant patriarchal ideology to their own benefit...;" "silence, where the domestic role becomes so all-pervading that women become completely invisible in the public sphere...;" and "exile, where women must leave their community (and perhaps nation) of origin in order to seek self-realization."

Although the book does not claim to settle theoretical debates about nationalism, it is a welcome addition to the growing literature on women, nationalism, ethnicity, and citizenship. The case studies cast doubt on the currently fashionable theoretical privileging of difference and identity, and the celebration of religious, ethnic, and national particularisms. While some feminists choose to "feminize" nationalism, the evidence presented in the book and a growing literature on women and war provides a very grim picture of heavy toll that nationalist, ethnic, and religious conflicts take on women. In war or peace, nationalism continues to be a patriarchal project failing to address gender equality; at best, in Western nation-states, nationalists have reluctantly accepted legal equality.

The book, like all texts, may be read differently. In my reading, it provides yet another body of evidence, which calls for the centring of universalism and internationalism in women's struggles against patriarchy. As the blurb on the back cover

of the book notes, "for women the 'end of history' is little more than a clever phrase." Under the universally present regimes of patriarchy, whether traditional or (post)modern, women continue to struggle against gender relations constituted by national, ethnic, tribal, and religious particularisms.

RAPE: A CRIME OF WAR

Shelley Saywell, Dir. Montreal: National Film Board of Canada, 1997.

SCHOOL FOR RAPE : THE BURMESE MILITARY AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

Betsy Apple. U.S.A.: Earthrights International, 1998

BY PAM McDERMID

The video, "Rape: A War Crime" and the publication, *School for Rape: The Burmese Military and Sexual Violence* are two examples of the efforts of women worldwide, to expose, and publicize sexual abuse as one systemic expression of two societies misogynist philosophies. In these cases, the perpetrators are the military, employees of the state, and the abuses are part of national military strategy.

The two resources share a tacit understanding that rape is an act of violence using sexual means, not a violent act of sex. It is a form of violence usually, but not exclusively, directed toward women and girls. Apple points out that rape is often overlooked as a tool of psychological warfare and that this surprise element increases its destructive power. In Burma, the *Tatmadaw* (military) routinely use rape as a method to

spread political terror and increase political control. The video emphasizes that, in Serbia and Croatia as elsewhere, rape is not incidental to war but is part of a strategy to win a war.

Apple presents a comprehensive explication of the cultural context of rape in Burma and the structural factors contributing to its continuance. The condensed social and political history included is very helpful in understanding the current situation. Apple describes the military's use of the anti-women aspects of the culture in the training of its soldiers. There are quotations from women interviewed during the preparation of the report, which give a more personal feel to a somewhat formal text. Recommendations and strategies for change are also included.

Rape, A Crime of War, uses several "local tour guides" to take viewers through the experience of women in Bosnia Herzegovina. The personal accounts of the Muslim and Serbian women about their horrific treatment at the hands of the military are frequently given in calm, almost dispassionate voices. The contrast between the information and the delivery of it increases the power and poignancy of the testimony.

The experiences of these women illustrate the contemporary situation of women; these acts are being perpetrated in the 1990s. The prisoner of war camp inmates in the film look almost identical to the survivors of the death camps in Nazi Germany. It is a sharp reminder of how far we have not come in our development as civilized societies.

The video emphasizes the point that rape is no longer acceptable as a war strategy. It is now considered as a war crime or crime against humanity and will be prosecuted. There is considerable legal information featuring lawyers from South Africa, Canada, and the United States, related historical data, and comparisons with situations in other countries such as Rwanda. The breaking of the silence and the first instance of

prosecution at the world court in the Hague is encouraging. However the difficulty of conducting the prosecution is dishearteningly familiar to anyone who has worked in the field of abuses against women.

Both resources are excellent for those interested in women's situation in contemporary wars in various parts of the world. They are a reflection of women's continued subservient status in society but changes are occurring. The impact of the video is stronger: the women's voices convey the horror, spark anger, and demand debate of the issues in a way that the book does not. There is a greater feeling of involvement and intimacy. However, the book is a rich source of information on Burma (Myanmar) and, though it is "slow" in some places, the analysis is enlightening.

GENDER TRANSFORMATIONS

Sylvia Walby. London: Routledge, 1997.

BY PATRICIA BAKER

Sylvia Walby's *Gender Transformations* is an ambitious project. Her intent is to describe and analyze "[f]undamental transformations of gender relations in the contemporary Western world." These transformations have occurred, Walby argues, as a consequence of several factors, in particular recent increases in women's education and paid employment, as well as the development of new forms for the political representation of women's interests. Moreover, Walby argues that gender transformations occur variably across time and space, and have wide ranging implications for economic, class, social, ethnic/racial, national, and political relations, and changes both within and across nation states.

The basic, though complex and