

political act and penalized more severely." (Meznaric,79)

In nationalist discourse, women may also be identified as the "mothers of the nation," with specific child-bearing responsibilities. As a result, the manner in which women are cast in the pre-war period deeply affects their experiences of war, as well as their post-war environment. In the case of former Yugoslavia, the notion of woman as ethno-marker carried over into the armed conflict. It is estimated that as many as 20,000 Muslim women were raped as part of a systematic attempt to both humiliate the (male) enemy and wipe out Muslim ethnicity (Meznaric,92).

The rapes that took place in Bosnia are by no means an isolated event. During World War II, the Japanese authorities forced Korean and Chinese women to serve as "comfort girls," for Japanese soldiers, and during the last weeks of the war in Germany it is estimated that over 100,000 women were raped in Berlin alone (Pietila & Vickers,1994:146). More recently, Vietnamese, Somali, and Rwandan women have also been subject to sexual assault during armed conflict.

Part of what makes women so vulnerable to sexual assault and other forms of violence during war is that modern-day armed conflict is not confined to a clearly marked battle field. Indeed, whereas in World War II civilians represented 50% of the casualties, they now average 80% (cited in Vickers,1993:24). During times of war, as most women are civilians, and often most civilians women, it should come as no surprise, therefore, that women also comprise the majority of refugees.

Refugees/Refugee Camps

A second area of specific relevance to women is the issue of refugees and refugee camps