

creating the economic, and perhaps even the spiritual, conditions which would enhance also the greater independence of the State.

5. *A Social Policy*

Finally, and this has been mentioned especially by Professor Simey,<sup>10</sup> it is necessary to have some clear social policy and to set up a representative body invested with the task of formulating long-range and short-range social policy. This is not only important because of the necessity to coordinate the programs, which the recently appointed inter-ministerial committee will hopefully do. The State must play its part and create a widely representative policy-making body so that social security provisions may more and more become the expression of the democratic processes of the changing society. These provisions need constant re-evaluation in the light of the social changes and the experience accumulated. With a single national body devoted to the formulation of the long- and short-range social policy, new groups will concern themselves with the problems of social security, the old ideologies will have to be reviewed, and the professional groups engaged in the services will be able to offer their knowledge to a community that so clearly attempts to provide the kind of social security it wants.

Israel is a very socially conscious country. The idea of the welfare state is hardly controversial and is an integral part of the value system of the

<sup>10</sup> Simey and Kahn, *op. cit.*

country. A social worker looking at the social policy of Israel cannot but be struck by one of the meanings this policy has. On the one hand there exists extensive labor legislation, rather comprehensive social insurance schemes and fairly extensive financing of public services. On the other hand, the attitude towards social services per se is expressed by inadequate financing, by administrative shortcomings and by the low status of the Ministry of Welfare. All this cannot be explained by the kind of stigma which is attached to receiving social services. It does reflect an irrational belief in an utopian society which will be socially and economically secure and the notion that the development of a wider program of individualized help is only necessary because the society is not yet secure.

Recently emerging professional groups including sociologists, economists, public administrators, and social workers promise a more rational approach to these issues. They participate more actively in the planning and administration of government services. This development is bound to lessen the present disparity between social welfare ideology and practice, just as the training and development of high standards of professional practice in Israel should further contribute in the same direction. Hopefully, too, it increasingly will be recognized that the idea of the welfare state cannot be achieved by inordinate concentration on social insurance and labor legislation, and that there can be no social security in the absence of adequate social work programs and services.

PROTECTION OF THE CHILD IN ISRAELI COURTS  
IN SEX ASSAULT CASES

by DAVID REIFEN

Judge, Juvenile Court, Tel Aviv, Israel

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The following article was a communication to the Journal from Judge Reifen. Readers of the Journal will be interested in its report of an enlightened law enforcement procedure involving children and the role given social work in that procedure. Perhaps of even more interest is the insight this report of an institutional innovation gives into the general orientation in Israel toward children and their mental health.*

Statement of Problem

A CHILD may be involved in a sex offense in three different ways—by committing such an offense, by being a victim of it, or by witnessing it. I wish to devote my paper to various aspects of the problem of children who become victims or witnesses to a sex offense, as dealt with in Israel in recent years.

The Israel law which protects children who were involved in a sex offense makes no distinction between victims and witness-victims and accords to both groups the same means of protection. This law was motivated by our realization that a child, witnessing a sex offense, whether committed by two adults, by an adult and a child, or by children alone, may be considered a victim proper, although no offense was actually committed

against him. Moreover, a witness—victim may, at times, suffer emotionally even more than an actual victim. For instances, a child who had witnessed a rape may be more harmed by what he saw, than a child who was the victim of an exhibitionist, or one who was fondled by a sex offender.

We all know, that public feelings run high when sex offenses, mainly those committed against children, are discovered, all the more when the children are of a tender age. Usually, however, these public feelings focus on the offender, namely, on ways and means of punishing him.

Naturally, the victim is in most cases the most important source of information leading to the offender, his apprehension, and subsequent trial. But frequently, these victims are of the tender age of under ten years, as are, for example 70 per cent of the children involved in sex offenses in Israel. These children are called upon to relate their experiences to the police and to elaborate on as many details as possible. The more details the investigator is able to get from the victim, the greater the likelihood of finding the offender and of bringing him to court.

On the other hand, apprehending sex offenders is greatly hindered, because victims are often afraid and ashamed to

lodge a complaint about this type of offense. The secrecy which surrounds sex offenses results in withholding information from the police. We know, for instance, that married women, having been attacked, will often refrain from telling their husband of it, lest their innocence in the matter be doubted. In the same way, a young unmarried woman in certain societies may prefer to avoid any mention of a similar incident, fearing a loss of her reputation. Similarly, many parents, and particularly mothers, prefer to conceal the fact that their child had been the victim of a sex offense, for fear that they themselves be considered responsible, through neglect or for any other reason, for whatever happened to the child. Thus, in marked contrast to victims of most crimes, such as that of robbery and property damage, victims of sex offenses tend to ignore the police, and to keep mum about the whole affair, implying thereby a kind of shared secret between them and the offender.

At any rate, the investigation of the victim centers on efforts to gather material which may ultimately be used as evidence. It is concerned solely with the apprehension of the offender, and no particular attention is paid to the emotional upheavals caused to the child-victim. It is my contention, that such an investigation, even under the most favorable circumstances, may strongly harm the child as it forces him to re-live a most painful and traumatic experience. This becomes obvious when we watch children who have difficulties in relating the experience, sometimes to the extent of "blocking," and of repressions, leading to forgetfulness and to the giving of wrong information. These effects are harmful, whether prompted by guilt feelings originating within the child, whether caused by the influence of adults, primarily members of the

family, or whether motivated by fear of punishment.

Unaware that the child has experienced a sexual trauma, parents or teachers sometimes observe changes in his behavior. These changes may take place either immediately after the offense, or at some later date. They may take the form of vomiting, of nightmares, of depressions, or of trembling. It is often the investigation of the child's changed behavior that leads the adult to the knowledge of the experience the child is afraid or ashamed to reveal. Now, when a child is forced to appear in court, the probability of his shame or fear is increased. In court, the child is confronted with the offender, and he may be subjected to a cross-examination, which can cause him a traumatic experience even stronger than the original offense. Sometimes, the court experience and the cross-examination may bring home to him for the first time, that he was the victim of a crime. The importance attached to his stand in the witness box, as expressed by the court, often creates in the child's mind phantasies which are in no proportion to the incident itself. Evidence given in court by the child-witness becomes, at this stage, most unreliable and practically devoid of value for the proceedings. On the other hand, the child may relate the facts faithfully, if evidence were to be given under different circumstances.

In order to alleviate possible repercussions among children, many countries have made provisions that children giving evidence in court in matters of sex offenses should be heard *in camera* only. It should be pointed out, however, that this provision is still an inadequate safeguard for children. The hearing *in camera*, is still related to appearance in court, the feeling of unease is still observable, and above all, there continues

to prevail an unconscious fear of punishment.

These intense feelings, which are not reduced even when a child is accompanied to court by his parents or some other relative, may have detrimental effects on his future development. Our experience has shown, that these effects may be far-reaching, and of a long-term nature. Years after the case had been closed and forgotten by all concerned, the child, already on his way to maturity, may remain a victim of the offense and its consequences.

We would all probably agree that a victim of a sex offense needs special consideration, because of the dynamics involved in this type of offense. Of particular importance in this instance are the effect and consequence on character formation. We have therefore deemed it our duty, as citizens and members of society, to become "victim-conscious;" realizing that the introduction of appropriate measures at the level of initial investigations may prevent emotional disturbances from many children.

In any case, a child who was a victim of a sex offense at a tender age may develop behavior difficulties, neurotic traits, delinquent trends, and, in the case of girls, a tendency towards prostitution. We have known girls who were unable to marry at all or to marry successfully as the result of having undergone an experience of this kind in early childhood. Even the overprotective attitude of some mothers towards their daughters may, at times, stem from a traumatic experience which they themselves had undergone in their early childhood.

It is evident that we are concerned here with a legal problem, the emotional implications of which are serious. The judiciary in Israel has come to realize the vital role of the mental health expert in the development of the right approach

to the handling of the child-victim of a sex offense.

#### The New Israeli Law

A defendant's right to prove his innocence and to rebut a charge has been recognized as one of the fundamental human rights.

At times this can be achieved only when the defendant is confronted in court with the child-witness. However, the defendant may take advantage of the child's fear to tell the whole story in court in his presence, or he may try to cast doubts on the child's story by involving him in contradictions, thus leading the judge to acquit him. Our experience in Israel has proved that offenders often threaten children with revenge if they disclose any details and that children take these threats very seriously. We have seen children aged 12, 13, and even 14, who were allowed to appear in court on the strength of their calm and poised manner when relating the experience to the youth-interrogator, but in court, in the presence of the offender, they reacted quite differently. Some cannot reply to questions, others forget important details, still others tremble or panic in one way or another. This, of course, considerably reduces the value of their evidence.

In Israel, as in other countries where Anglo-Saxon juridical methods are applied, hearsay evidence is inadmissible in court without corroboration. A conviction in a sex offense case is possible only on the basis of corroborating evidence. These principles serve as a safeguard against mischievous, false, imaginary, or vengeful accusations. The dangers of vindictive feelings in a field which is highly charged emotionally, whether in an overt or concealed manner, cannot be overlooked.

Considering these limitations, the Parliament of Israel decided that a de-

cisive step had to be taken in order to protect children under 14 years of age, who had been involved in a sex offense. We felt that it is a matter of the utmost importance, to make appropriate legal provisions ensuring that the traumatic experience of the child be diminished and relieved through the introduction of special methods of interrogation. The mere efforts to apprehend the offender and to try him could by no means be considered satisfactory, as long as the child victim or witness remained unprotected against further emotional harm. This protection could be provided only through the application of the basic rights of defendants, and the tenets of mental health to protect the victim as well.

These principles were incorporated in an amendment to the Law of Evidence, passed by the Parliament of Israel on June 7th, 1955, which came into force on September 20th, 1955. We felt that such a law, aiming at the protection of children against traumatic experiences both during investigations and in court, is something that we owe to our children and to the mental health of our future citizens.

This law contains the following salient points:

1. A child under 14 years of age shall not be investigated, examined, or heard as a witness in court in a matter of an offense against morality, save with the permission of a youth-interrogator.

2. A statement by a child under 14 years as to an offense against morality, if committed upon his person, or in his presence, or of which he is suspected, shall not be admitted as evidence in court, save with the permission of a youth-interrogator.

3. For the implementation of this law, youth-interrogators shall be appointed after consultation with an appointment committee. This committee shall be com-

posed of a judge in the Juvenile Court, who will serve as chairman, an expert in mental health, an educator, and an expert in child care.

4. Evidence as to an offense against morality which is recorded by a youth-interrogator and any minutes or other report of an enquiry as to such an offense prepared by the youth-interrogator are admissible as evidence in court.

5. Where such evidence has been submitted to the court, the youth-interrogator may be required to re-interrogate the child and to ask him some specific questions, but he may refuse to do so, if, in his opinion, further questioning may cause the child an emotional upheaval.

6. A person shall not be convicted on the basis of a youth-interrogator's evidence, unless it is corroborated by other evidence.

The most important innovations in this law, are the following three:

A. That a child under 14 years of age, who was involved in a sex offense, may be interrogated only by a person appointed for this specific purpose.

B. That the child concerned may not give evidence in court, unless permitted to do so by the youth interrogator. And—

C. That corroborating evidence is necessary for a conviction.

#### The Functions of the Youth-Interrogator

In the spirit of the law, the appointment committee has suggested that those appointed as youth interrogators should be trained and experienced in interviewing techniques.

Professional workers who deal daily with various aspects of the dynamics of the human mind, such as psychiatric social workers, clinical psychologists, child psychiatrists, probation officers, and child care workers, seemed to us to

be the most suitable candidates for this kind of work.

As the majority of children under 14 years who were exposed to sex offenses in Israel was found to consist of girls, and on the assumption that girls, when interrogated on matters of sex, may feel more at ease with women, we appointed a larger number of women than men as interrogators.

When parents lodge a complaint with the police about a sex offense in which their child was involved, they are told that a youth-interrogator will contact them about it.

The police are in possession of a list of youth interrogators, and those are called upon when the necessity arises, on a basis of rotation. The victim's statement is never taken at the police station, but either at the child's home or at the youth-interrogator's home or office. This measure is intended to protect the child from any detrimental effects which an investigation at a police station is liable to cause him. This factor of environment, intangible as it may seem, is nevertheless vital and essential, particularly as it pertains to the taking of a first statement from the child. The abolishing thereby of emotional effects and of the child's exposure to an atmosphere charged with guilt feelings and fears of punishment in a police interrogation, has already given gratifying results.

In addition, our experience has shown that youth-interrogators are capable of getting much more information from the victims than even the most experienced police interrogator. Contrary to the latter's approach directed by his habit to investigate offenders, the measure of success in the interrogation of a child-victim depends on an approach of understanding and special attention. The professional and understanding manner may open the heart of the child and thus

make it possible and even convenient for him to talk. We have seen that an expert's contact with a child-victim results in diminishing the traumatic effects of the experience and even obliterates them at times. At the same time, important and relevant information is extracted.

Perhaps the following case would best illustrate this point: A youth-interrogator visited a 9 year-old girl, whose parents complained that a sex offense had been committed against her. At that point the child was completely unable to talk. At the second interview which took place the following day, she was still very timid and the youth-interrogator realized that the child would not be able to disclose the necessary information in a direct manner. So she asked the child what the dwelling of the man looked like. After some hesitation, the girl took a sheet of paper and a pencil, drew a room and a roof, and then, while drawing, explained more freely, "Here is a table with three chairs. Above it is a lampshade, and there, in the corner, is a bed. Here was the man, and I was standing there. Suddenly, he drew me up to the bed, and . . . I don't know what happened next."

After having recounted this, the girl looked up anxiously, silently waiting, and as if wondering what the youth-interrogator's reaction would be. She was extremely relieved when the woman continued to talk to her in the same normal way. After this, the girl was able to talk further and reveal all details, which in this case were most important. She could even express the fear that possibly she herself was to blame, because she went to the man's room in the first place. It was evident that the talk with the youth-interrogator relieved her of her guilt feelings and was of great significance to her.

However, the youth interrogator's work requires certain essential quali-

fications, additional to his regular professional training. Among them are knowledge of legal and court procedures, particularly in regard to sex offenses.

Frequently, the child's statement is not sufficient, and physical examinations, a visit to the place where the offense had occurred, and an identification parade, are needed. These actions, if and when needed, are part and parcel of the youth-interrogator's task. At times it may be difficult for him to decide whether or not the victim should be allowed to be present at the identification parade. On one hand, this procedure may be essential to the final identification of the offender, and its success is therefore in the public's interest. On the other hand, again, it may be a shocking experience for the child. Here we have noted repeatedly the importance of an expert action, guided by the child's individual needs as well as by considerations for the benefit of society at large. Indeed, our experience in Israel has proved this guidance by the youth-interrogator to be invaluable, and his presence to grant the victim the support and confidence for which he longs.

The youth-interrogator may also face the dilemma of having to handle a child who needs attention in order to overcome a traumatic experience, while his job requires at the same time a concentration on procedural and legal aspects. He must constantly be aware that the material he obtains may produce important evidence in court and must therefore be concrete and factual. Often the police method of question and answer has to be applied, the reason being that children sometimes tend to repress or to forget important details while relating the story. These situations necessitate careful attention, and recourse to close study and examination cannot always be avoided. Although the youth-

interrogator may be inclined to accept the child's "right" to this attitude from the therapeutic point of view, he can thereby defeat the end of the investigation itself.

Moreover, the youth-interrogator has to bear in mind the possibility that he himself may be cross-examined in court about the material which he obtained from the child. Therefore, it is relevant and valuable to note not only the factual material, but also such details as gestures, facial expression, and so on.

It should be mentioned at this point that in countries where tape recordings are admitted as evidence in court, the youth-interrogator would have a stronger position in relation to hearsay evidence. This device may dissipate hesitations and objections which occur in many places due to the inadmissibility of hearsay evidence.

The youth-interrogator can also be instrumental in the field of prevention. He is geared to understand and to evaluate mental and social conditions, and he can accordingly take immediate steps to transfer the cases in need of special care to the appropriate agencies. Many times, his interference comes just in time, both from the point of view of the child's mental health and the welfare of the community.

The functions of the youth-interrogator are clearly defined in the law. Yet, his alertness to the overall situation is a significant feature of the whole method.

Two cases may well illustrate this argument at this point: One is concerned with the case of an eight-year-old girl who was a victim of an indecent assault. The youth-interrogator paid three visits to the home of this girl, all at different times of the day, but never found the parents there. The girl always said that her parents had just left. The home was extremely neglected, and so were

the children. This little girl was together with, and in charge of, two younger siblings aged six and three.

It was found that the offender, the family's neighbor, knew about this state of affairs, took advantage of the fact that the children were left alone for long hours, and visited them constantly when the parents were away. On his visits, he used to bring the children small gifts, so as to bribe them not to reveal anything.

The youth-interrogator, who had previously gathered all the information about the sex offense committed there, informed the local social agency of the plight of these three children. Later, upon inquiry, she was told that the social agency was taking steps to bring the children to the Juvenile Court, as in need of care and protection. Thus, in this case, not only the girl who had already become the victim of a sex offense was taken care of, but also her younger siblings, who were otherwise liable to become further victims of various mishaps.

The second case was that of a 13-year-old girl with whom a young man had sexual intercourse and who was further a victim of his attempts to make a living off her by inducing her to become a prostitute. She was a dull girl, and the man's promises of money, frequent visits to the movies, fashionable new dresses, and so on, fascinated her. Fortunately, at the very beginning of her "career," the affair was discovered. The youth-interrogator to whom the case was referred, realized that the girl was already beyond control and that no improvement could be expected because the girl's parents were unable to prevent their daughter from going astray. The girl was therefore brought before the Juvenile Court, which sent her to an educational institution with a view to her eventual rehabilitation. She has since

adjusted fairly well and there are good prospects for her recovery.

#### Reaction Patterns of Victims

Obviously, the reaction patterns of victims depend on their personality makeup, their age, the atmosphere prevailing at home, and last but not least, on the circumstances and the character of the offense.

Generally it may be said that whenever force had been used, detrimental effects are almost inevitable. The nature of the offense induces many children to conceal what happened to them. Some children do not seem resultantly disturbed at all, but others pretend not to be disturbed and still others have strong guilt feelings. Some children are ashamed of whatever happened to them, others tend to show off and tell their friends rather proudly of their experiences in this field. Innocent or half-innocent provocations by children also play a contributing role in the offense. Often, children get involved in sexual play out of curiosity or are dragged into it by accident. Some continue for longer periods without disclosing it out of fear of punishment by parents or of scorn on the part of friends.

We have seen that the offender will often pose as a nice and friendly man. He will talk kindly to the victim, be generous in promising presents and even actually give them. He will take the child for a walk and be prepared to show him interesting pictures. His simulated kindness is an important factor as it may motivate a child to follow and get involved with him. One wonders whether the lack of such kindness at home may not indirectly make feasible the offense.

There are other children who manifest a sort of passive acceptance and seem to be absorbed in the promises made to them to the extent of ignoring the of-

fense itself. A girl 9 years old, for example, who was fondled by a man, repeatedly said later to the youth-interrogator: "But he promised me a doll and he never gave it to me. . . ."

Another aspect that we have gathered from the experience of our youth-interrogators is that the offender is very often a relative of the victim or a friend of his family, a neighbor, or even just an acquaintance. This may also partly account for the offender's success in seducing the child, who is not suspicious to begin with because the offender is familiar to him.

Another noteworthy feature, also gathered from the youth-interrogators' work, is that the offense complained of may well not have been the first one for the same victim. The child had not spoken of previous cases, either because of fear of punishment or fear of the offender and his threats, or else because of passivity and indifference. As long as the repeated offense was within the limits of a sex play or the act of an exhibitionist, and no actual intercourse was involved, sex offenses by the same person with the same child sometimes continued for weeks and even for months. This seems to us to counter the hypothesis that only a small percentage of sex offenders repeat this type of offense.

**Findings of Youth-Interrogators**

We are faced with the problem of what attitude to adopt towards a child's complaint of a sex offense. In many instances, there is a tendency to see in such a complaint a mere phantasy, or a child's boast or nonsense. Many a time, the policeman, inviting a youth-interrogator to investigate a certain case, would volunteer personal opinion that most likely there is nothing to it. Why, the suspect himself is a father of small children, and how could it be conceived,

therefore, that he would commit an indecent assault on other children? However, we have noted only rare cases of children who made up this kind of a story. There are, indeed, some children who add something from their own phantasy or hide some important detail for no apparent reason, but essentially they relate what really happened. The difficulty to distinguish between real facts and imagination is particularly apparent in the child of pre-puberty age.

We have further observed that in cases where no outspoken sex consciousness existed, say up to ten years of age or so, children usually turned to their parents when molested, whereas, when sex-awareness is already there, and mainly with children aged over 12 years, reluctance to confide in the parents is manifest. At the same time, if the matter comes to the parents' notice indirectly their reaction is likely to be more rejecting of the child than otherwise, occasionally with far-reaching results for the child.

It is astonishing to note, to what extent even small children sense their parents' attitudes and reaction patterns.

As I mentioned before, it is up to the youth-interrogator to decide whether or not to let the child give evidence in court when the need arises. So far we can say that about one-third of the offenders are actually brought to court eventually, and of them over 25 per cent plead guilty. In these cases no further evidence is heard. In the remainder of the cases, and when a child is allowed to give evidence in court, the presence of the youth-interrogator during the hearing is required. Undoubtedly the child derives moral support from the presence of "his" youth-interrogator, while participating in the proceedings whether in the witness box or in the judge's chamber.

Of more than one thousand children,

twenty per cent were allowed to give evidence in court. Some eight per cent of them were under the age of ten.

Startling figures are available in Israel as to the age of victims. Twelve per cent are under the age of five years, 58 per cent in the age group of five to ten years, 15 per cent in the ten to twelve age group, and 15 per cent, between the ages of twelve and fourteen. Of those who were interrogated, 72 per cent were girls. Yet it has been observed that the number of boys increases from one age group to another, and in the last one, that of twelve to fourteen years, boys constitute some 44 per cent. Some kind of homosexual activities and growing manhood feelings, combined with curiosity, may account for this rise. With girls, the opposite seems to be true. Sexual awareness of girls at pubescence and the sensitivity which forms part of it operate in the direction of increasing inhibitions. Girls in the later age groups become more inhibited and withdrawn, a factor which operates preventively. Boys, on the contrary, become more aggressive and outgoing, with opposite results.

We have mentioned earlier that 70 per cent of our interrogated children were under ten years of age. This may indicate that sex offenses of a special type find most convenient victims among children of this age. The offenses committed against them were almost without exception of the indecent act type and not actual sex relations.

At a guess one would assume that these offenders must have been interested in a sexual outlet, short of relations proper.

We were also interested to find out the sort of places which serves the offenders for the commitment of the offense in order to conclude from it details such as, was the assault premeditated or impulsive, was the victim drawn to a hide-out

or some other convenient place, and so on. Details such as these could reveal much about the type of offense committed. For example, it may be assumed that indoors there would be more likelihood of sex play, fondling, and coitus proper, whereas outdoors the offender, fearing detection, would probably perform a hurried action.

As a result of this survey, it turned out that 46 per cent of the offenses occurred indoors, in places such as the child's or the offender's home, shops, staircases, or unfinished buildings. A further 13 per cent were committed in orange groves and sand dunes. We assume that in these instances the victim went with the offender to the hide-out. But it can by no means be inferred from this that the victim knew what was going to happen.

In 36 per cent of the cases, the offenses were committed in streets and public places. Although exhibitionists belong to this category, it would be erroneous to suggest that they constitute the majority.

Only 5 per cent of the cases were committed in the vicinity of schools. This may be due either to the fact that children are accompanied to and from school by an adult, or that they tend to go in groups, or else that they have been warned by parents and teachers not to talk to strangers. Offenders may also regard these areas as unfavorable, as they may be seen by others and consequently be easily identified.

**Summing-Up**

I have endeavored to outline a new Israel law, which aims at the protection of children under 14 years of age, victims and witnesses of sex offenses, who are included in the same category.

Youth-interrogators, appointed to implement the new approach, contribute significantly also to legal concepts and traditions. They alone are entitled to

interrogate the victim and to give evidence in court on his behalf.

I would like to stress again that aspects of mental health which carry the possibility of protecting child-victims and the elementary rights of defendants have been reconciled in this new method, as employed in Israel.

Although most offenses against children under 14 years are in the nature of indecent acts, the emotional upheaval caused by such an incident may affect his character formation. This is of interest particularly as some 70 per cent of child-victims are under the age of ten, and the largest single group of victims is made by girls 5-10 years old.

While the experience we have gathered covers only six years, a period too short to draw final conclusions, we feel that we are on the right path. At the same time we are aware of the difficulties involved in implementing a law which is not based on traditional legal conceptions.

We maintain that since this law has come into force in Israel, more people

have reported such offenses to the authorities instead of trying to conceal them. Parents are grateful for an understanding and professional approach which helps their child and them as well. This new approach, while preserving intact the legal rights of the defendant, now focuses attention on the needs and the mental health of the child-victim. And we hope to develop further this approach for the sake of the child, the family, and society at large.

#### References

Bach, W. "Kindliche Zeuginnen in Sittlichkeitsprozessen," *Psychologische Praxis*, Heft 21, (1957). S. Karger, Basel—New York.

Antilla, I. "Sex Offences on Minors and Their Perpetrators," excerpt from *Alaikaisin Kohdistuneet Siveellisyyshokset Ja Nüiden Tekijat*, Finland, 1956.

Landis, J. T. "Experiences of 500 Children with Adult Sexual Deviation," *Psychiatric Quarterly Supplement*, Part 1, 1956.

Reifen, D. "Protection of Children Involved in Sexual Offences: A New Method of Investigation in Israel," *Journal of Criminal Law, Criminology and Police Science*, Vol. XLIV, No. 3, 1958.

## YOUTH IN SEARCH OF SIGNIFICANCE; THE ILLUSIONS AND IDEALS OF BELONGING \*

by GRAENUM BERGER

Consultant, Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, New York

#### An Impromptu Prologue

IF I had lost my prepared paper en route to this conference, my reading of three news items in this morning's *New York Times*<sup>1</sup> would have given me sufficient copy to confirm my thesis that all is not well in this world.

The first headline reads "Schools, unions and industry scored on job training. . . . Efforts to prepare teen-agers here for employment were indicated. . . ." In some cases, the Taconic foundation report by Mrs. Mary Conway Kohler stated, "youngsters have been trained for practically non-existent jobs."

#### Frustration

The second articles with a six-column spread blared "Dance dress simple for eight graders. . . . At the Goddard Gaieties 'Roaring Twenties' dance Friday held at the Town Tennis Club, boys were *uniformly* attired in conservative *Brooks Brothers Suits*" (italics, my own).

#### Frivolity

The third story was more modestly presented in type: "Boy kills parents

\* Presented at a meeting of the Child Study Association of America, New York, March 12, 1962.

<sup>1</sup> March 12, 1962.

and two brothers . . . A 17-year-old high school senior, voted the 'most intellectual member of his class' claimed that his parents 'were always mad at each other—they couldn't get along and couldn't seem to lick their problems—I figured they would be better off if they didn't have anything to worry about.' "

#### Finality

#### An Abstract

The profound veneration paid to rapid change and technology has literally destroyed our respect for history, has ushered in relativistic market-place personal and social values, has weakened and possibly corroded the relationships between the generations, and has given increasing importance to the peer group, the impersonal institution and the state rather than the family unit as the instrument for the socialization and humanization of youth.

Youth, in the process of growing up with all the strains normally existent at this crucial stage in life, is deprived of the traditional rootings and *rites de passage*, which would have eased his path to the opposite sex, to his academic career, to his future employment, and to his role as an adult citizen. He is thus almost forced to live in the present. Gangs, delinquency, and drug addiction