

After Epstein: It's time to extinguish child trafficking

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When Jewish children became prey to pedophiles and sexual deviants during the Holocaust, this did not come as a surprise; during wartime we expect unspeakable crimes to be committed against society's most defenseless. But as we know, it happens in every society, including ours today.

The Justice Department states that 5 percent of the adult population may be considered pedophiles; it considers this a conservative estimate since those numbers are based on reported cases. Each sex offender is likely to abuse many children over their lifetime, because as their child prey matures they must search for new victims.

Where do pedophiles find their prey when they don't have the resources of the late financier and convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, who was able to canvas the United States, France and Brazil in search of the underage "Perfect 10"?

Remarkably, right around the time that the Epstein scandal exploded with his arrest in July, the Washington Post came out with an alarming report about mass numbers of children in the United States who are delivered daily into the hands of sexual deviants. George Washington University Law School studied nearly 5,000 family court cases around the country and found that in spite of strong evidence of sexual abuse, the child victim is sent to live with the family member who committed the abuse at "staggering rates."

The study found that the basis for making such ill-fated decisions is the reliance on a popular quack theory, known as PAS (parental alienation syndrome), which was first introduced by a controversial New Jersey psychiatrist, Richard Gardner, who took his life some years ago. Nonetheless, his theories live on and have justified the shoveling of large numbers of children, sometimes as young as 3 and 4, into the hands of sexual predators.

So why is this a Jewish problem? The first reason is that it is happening to Jewish children. Second, as Jews we are inextricably tied to the general community, and are therefore responsible for everyone's children. In good faith we have worked very hard to build up institutions

in our community, and that includes social service agencies and social welfare programs. We donate money and time to those institutions, which are meant to help the most vulnerable.

Returning to the earlier question: Where do pedophiles, sans Epstein's prodigious resources, find a child to satisfy their desires? They network with others like themselves, those who share the same "code words" for pedophilia.

"The child is asking for it ... the child enjoys it." Or "lower the age of consent" so that younger and younger girls can pleasure older men, because these girls "want it." They "know their bodies" and should be allowed "to do as they want." By speaking the same twisted language, those of like minds find each other, in the Jewish and non-Jewish community.

Child advocates have pointed to foster-care agencies as a potential supplier of children to pedophiles. These children have no protectors; they are either orphaned, children of divorce or children from dysfunctional homes.

Child advocates point out that pedophiles who gain custody of their victims are often assisted by these agencies who testify on their behalf and cover up the abuse. This macabre, ugly scenario is known to child advocates like myself. It is not known to the public however, and for that reason the trafficking of children continues.

It's not too late to help Jewish victims, and other children alike. We can use our strong communal resources to bring an end to this scourge; we can rescue our own children from these predators so close to home.



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