Selected Bibliography on the Protection of Children's Rights

By Eva Singer*

The notion that the protection of children's rights is not entirely a national concern but indeed a prevailing responsibility which deserves international attention is not of a recent date. As long ago as 1924, the League of Nations proclaimed the Declaration on the Rights of the Child, followed by the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child, adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 1386 (XIV) of 20 November 1959.

The evolution of the protection of children's rights recently reached a significant peak. With the adoption of the Draft Convention on the Rights of the Child by the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of a Convention on the Rights of the Child, established under the United Nations Commission on Human Rights as a pre-sessional Working Group, in December 1988, the international Community has shown its willingness to undertake binding obligations towards this vulnerable group among its citizens.

Future research in this field which covers both economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights will inevitably be influenced by this new instrument which is to be considered by the General Assembly later this year.

Thus, it seemed timely to elaborate a selected but in no way comprehensive bibliography on the relevant human rights questions arising in relation to the specific rights of the child. The frame in which this bibliography appears does not allow for an exhaustive document, moreover, as the aim is to supply scholars and practitioners with a useful tool for further investigations as well as to provide the newcomer in this field with a basis to build upon, it seems more reasonable to limit the quantity of titles. In no way is this to be interpreted as a division on the grounds of quality.

As mentioned, the protection of children's rights covers a broad field of already established human rights. The bibliography has therefore been divided into several sections according to the principal connection with these human rights in the publication. The main criterion for the selection of materials has been the international point of view, thus a vast quantity of publications concerning the conditions within a particular country has been omitted although one section has been allocated to publications on the situations of children in specific parts of the world. Furthermore, the selection is based on the assumption that French and English texts are readable for the majority of persons concerned, without prejudicing against the highly qualified documents that are published in other languages. With the intention to supply the scholar with the most recent works in this field, where possible, the inclusion of titles dating from before 1975 has been avoided.

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A. Documents prepared by bodies of the United Nations
Within the framework of the United Nations, several bodies have elaborated various studies and reports concerning different aspects of children's rights and social conditions. Of the specialized fora dealing with human rights issues the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities and their Working Groups on a Draft Convention on the Rights of the Child and on Contemporary forms of Slavery, the former Working Group on Slavery and Slavery-like Practices are the most noteworthy.

In addition the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization, and the United Nations Children's Fund have been concerned with the plight of children from their field of concern and have thus contributed to furthering international awareness in this matter.

Documents prepared by bodies of the United Nations include the following:


