

abused children", that "all of the criminals at San Quentin prison ... studied had violent upbringings as children", and that "all assassins ... in the United States during the past 20 years had been victims of child abuse.... That is quite a toll for society to pay for not intervening."⁴²

110. A recent study⁴³ explains how child abuse may cause later delinquency. A child normally passes through certain phases of psychological growth. If normal passage through these stages is impeded by the trauma of abuse or neglect, delinquent behaviour can be the result. The satisfaction of the child's basic needs and the development of a sense of trust can be effected. For instance, if an infant who is hungry is fed and cuddled its sense of trust will develop. On the other hand, if basic needs are neglected and it is punished for crying, development of trust will be impaired and with it the ability to relate appropriately to other people. Such infants may later display a poor capacity to cope with frustration, an inability to generalize from what they learn and a failure to seek and expect help from other adults. These difficulties may be expressed later in delinquent behaviour.⁴⁴ There are critical periods in a child's life for normal development to take place. If such a stage is blocked, for example by extreme neglect, normal development may not be attainable later.⁴⁵

111. An important aspect of a child's development is the building or establishment at an early age of its own self-esteem. If this sense does not develop there is a potential for trouble because it is the insecure and inadequate child who most easily feels threatened, and who resorts to violence as a primitive way of restoring dominance.⁴⁶ "A great deal of human violence seems to be the worm turning; the person who has felt comparatively weak and helpless suddenly reversing this role."⁴⁷

112. Where abuse occurs during the period when the child has first learned to walk, it is usually because the parents have unrealistic expectations and these come into conflict with reality. The excitement of the first step gives way to uncontrolled irritation over the consequences of this increased mobility. The insatiable curiosity of the very young is no longer limited as it begins to investigate its surroundings on its own: anything within reach will be explored by hand and mouth, and, in the process, may be damaged, broken or swallowed. Such parents often feel problems of feeding, toilet training, bed wetting and temper tantrums can be effectively dealt with by harsh punishment. The abuse makes the child feel hostility, but this is turned inward toward itself resulting in guilt, shame and doubt. It has been shown through research that repression of normal behavior during early childhood through unreasonable disciplinary practices such as abuse can contribute to delinquency.⁴⁸

113. There is no doubt that violence in the home toward children has an impact on their later behaviour: