

February 1967

## Abortion: Part IV

Paul V. Harrington

Follow this and additional works at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq>

---

### Recommended Citation

Harrington, Paul V. (1967) "Abortion: Part IV," *The Linacre Quarterly*: Vol. 34 : No. 1 , Article 19.  
Available at: <http://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol34/iss1/19>

# ABORTION

## Part IV

RT. REV. MSGR. PAUL V. HARRINGTON, J.C.L.

The efforts to achieve full legal acceptance of abortion in countless situations and circumstances continue to push on and advance on the national and international scene: in debates before Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies, in forthright statements of public governmental agencies, in ever-increasing articles in popular magazines and most recently in a full length novel.

The year 1965 witnessed the presentation before the Parliament of Great Britain of the very first abortion bill in that country's history. There was much discussion, debate and controversy but final approval was given by the Parliament. However, the bill did not become law because, before this could be accomplished, the Parliament was dissolved prior to the general elections held earlier this year. The bill was reintroduced before the present Parliament and has already been overwhelmingly approved in principle by the House of Commons.

The new bill would allow for an abortion when:

- 1) There is severe injury to the mother's physical or mental health;
- 2) there is substantial risk that the child would be born with serious physical or mental abnormalities;

- 3) there is severe overstrain on the pregnant woman's capacity as a mother;
- 4) there is the status of being mentally defective, under the age of sixteen or the victim of rape.<sup>1</sup>

It has been well said: "All of these grounds suffer from the same vicious defect: the remedy for having a child when you shouldn't have had a child is to kill the child"; and "British doctors and parents will be allowed to murder children who are potentially healthy because they are also potentially diseased. If it is all right to kill a child who may be abnormal, it is certainly all right to kill a child who is abnormal. It is not morals but horrible and sentimental esthetics that draws the line at the first cry or at the entrance to the womb."<sup>2</sup>

During the original debate, the House of Lords passed, with a margin of twenty-four votes, a provision that a woman's inadequacy to be a mother, be it physical or mental, should be grounds for legal abortion, Viscount Dilhorne objected saying: "Surely, it cannot be right to destroy a potential life because it is thought that the woman will not be a good mother. Surely, the right course is not to terminate the pregnancy but to remedy the inadequacy, and our social services should remedy that."<sup>3</sup>

The Right Reverend Robert C. Mortimer, Anglican Bishop of Exeter, likewise dissented and remarked: "It seemed an extraordinary assumption of arrogance that he, any other members of the House, or any two doctors should determine whether a woman was not adequate to be a mother."<sup>4</sup>

The House of Lords also confirmed another portion of the bill, introduced by Lord Silkin, which provides that any pregnant girl under the age of sixteen years should be entitled to an abortion operation.<sup>5</sup>

During the debate in Parliament on the abortion bill, a committee of the Church of England, appointed by the Church Assembly Board for Social Responsibility, reported on December 31, 1965, that there should be a broadening of the legal grounds for abortion and recommended "legal permission for abortion when a mother's life or well-being and, indirectly, that of her family are endangered by a pregnancy; and this situation, it says, could arise when the child was conceived as the result of rape or incest, or when there is a calculable risk that the child will be born defective or deformed."<sup>6</sup>

The Parliament of the Church of England on February 21, 1966 gave less than full approval to this report and Father Canavan points out that probably even in 1968, when the next Lambeth Conference will be held, a majority of the Anglican Bishops will not be willing to adopt this report on abortion.<sup>7</sup> However, the significant fact is that a wedge

has been inserted inside the door of Anglican doctrine and, in time, this Church will ultimately accept and endorse legalized abortion in much the same way as it finally yielded to the acceptance of contraception as a moral and licit means of avoiding pregnancy.

The Lambeth Conferences of 1920, 1930 and 1958 saw the gradual change in the Anglican Church from a total rejection of to a full endorsement of contraception. It would appear that the same Lambeth Conferences will be the vehicle for the gradual breakdown of the resistance to the acceptance of abortion. Historically, the Anglicans agreed on the traditional Christian view that all life, even the life of the unborn, was sacred and that any tampering with an unborn fetus was homicide. Yet, in 1958, the Lambeth Conference presented a slightly different doctrine by saying that Christians reject abortion in the strongest terms" and permit it only "at the dictate of strict and undeniable medical necessity" and added "the sacredness of life is in Christian eyes, an absolute which should not be violated."

Russell Shaw made the obvious observation, "If the sacredness of life is really an *absolute*, it is difficult to see how it can properly be violated, even in the name of 'strict and undeniable medical necessity'.<sup>8</sup>

Whatever else may be said, the very fact that the Lambeth Conference of 1958 made provisions for even a small exception to the historically-constant Christian doctrine against abortion makes it that much

easier for future conferences to allow for greater liberty and more exceptions until, finally, abortion is given full acceptance and endorsement and will be accorded the respectability that the Conference has accorded to contraception since 1958.

Both the bill before Parliament and the report of the committee of the Anglican Church have been vigorously denounced by John Cardinal Heenan, Archbishop of Westminster and Catholic Primate of England and Wales. Writing in the February 1966 issue of *Westminster Cathedral Chronicle*, Cardinal Heenan stated: "Abortion is bound to feature largely in public discussions during the coming year. Until recently the accepted view of Christians and, so far as I know, of all believers, has been that direct killing of the child-to-be is immoral. It is only because of what is called the liberalizing of the law against abortion that the Catholic attitude has begun to appear eccentric—as if abstaining from killing the fetus in the womb were a Catholic foible like abstaining from meat on Friday."<sup>9</sup>

Referring to the report of the Committee of the Church of England, Cardinal Heenan observed: "It deliberately rejects what it recognizes to be the traditional Christian view that the killing of the fetus is a form of homicide."<sup>10</sup>

Turning his attention directly to the bill before Parliament, Cardinal Heenan stated: "Once we take the control of the span of life out of God's hands we have no principles to guide us. It is equally hard to frame a bill for euthanasia because

nobody can say when a patient has become too old or too ill to be allowed to remain alive. The beginning of life presents the same problem. If we desert God's law and invade His province we are at a loss where to set the limits. If it is justifiable to kill the fetus which may be born deformed because, for example, the pregnant mother has contracted German measles, it is hard to see why children who manage to be born deaf, blind or otherwise handicapped should not be immediately put to death."<sup>11</sup>

More recently in an address to the World Congress of Catholic Nurses, held in Brighton, England, the eminent Archbishop of Westminster declared: "There has been a tremendous decline in the acceptance of the moral law. Who would have believed it possible even ten years ago that in England an abortion bill will go through almost unchallenged? How strange if only Catholics were to stand up for the sanctity of life in the womb? Because of a decline in faith there has been a widespread lack of proportion in viewing the sanctity of human life. People who will parade to defend the lives of murderers, people who will lead processions and demonstrate in thousands against those who defend themselves from aggression—these are the people who will destroy life in the womb and put to death those who are growing old and have contracted incurable disease. Make no mistake, once the abortion bill has gone through, the next move will be euthanasia—the destruction of the old."<sup>12</sup>

Father Canavan comments on the report of the Committee of the Church of England thusly: "The Anglican report's significance lies in its substitution of a new moral standard for an old one. In place of the traditional principle that innocent human life is sacred and inviolable, it puts a moral balancing act, by which the fetus' right to live is weighed against the interests of the mother and her family. But once we accept the balancing act as the way in which we determine the morality of taking life, a further question arises: On this premise, how can we maintain that the infant who has just been born has an inviolable right to life that may not be weighed in the balance against anyone's interests?"<sup>13</sup>

Much opposition has arisen in Great Britain to the Abortion Bill. Doctor Joseph Dignan, Secretary of the Catholic Physicians' Guild, has announced that the Guild has initiated a massive campaign to have the bill, legalizing abortion, modified and amended to exempt a doctor, on grounds of conscience, from participating in abortions. This appears necessary since patients do not have the privilege of choosing a private physician because of the National Health Service Program. Doctor Dignan has stated that, if the campaign to amend the bill fails, "we would still refuse to perform an abortion if asked. There is no question about it, a Catholic doctor would have nothing to do with abortion of any sort. This includes general practitioners and hospital staff."<sup>14</sup>

Various lay groups are also active in opposing the abortion bill. The Catholic Link Society of Manchester, England, is distributing throughout Great Britain copies of a petition against the bill and asking as many people as possible to get as many signatures as possible. The signatures will be forwarded either to a local member of Parliament or to the Prime Minister. A group of Catholics in London has organized a national society known as the Committee in Defense of Innocent Life. This organization was founded to campaign against the current bill, to oppose abortion and to fight against the legalizing of euthanasia or the "mercy" killing of handicapped children. Thus far, a leaflet setting forth the objectives and purposes of the society, has been sent to 900,000 individuals and organizations and car stickers with the slogan "Keep the Unborn Unharmless" have been distributed. They plan to seek the united support of all members of Parliament, social workers and doctors who are known to be opposed to abortion and they will provide panels of speakers who will tour the country.

A further development finds Catholics, Anglicans and Methodists united in formulating their own petition of opposition and directed to the British government in which they describe abortion as "inhuman" and plead for the defense of the life of the "utterly defenseless child."<sup>15</sup>

It is a pity that all of this organized opposition has come only after the passage of the abortion bill has been assured. It behooves the

interested parties and groups in the United States, who do not want to see innocent life exterminated or murder legalized, to organize and unite now before petitions are made to State Legislatures, so that effective opposition can be recorded from the very beginning. Let us profit and learn by the mistakes of others!

Assemblyman Percy E. Sutton of Manhattan has entered before the New York Assembly a measure, called the "Humane Abortion Act" and hearings were held by the Committee on Public Health. This bill was presented in order to liberalize the existing statute, which is eighty-three years old and which permits abortion only when the life of the mother is threatened and endangered. Similar bills to legalize more liberal abortion have been introduced in the past before the New York Legislature but none of these has ever been approved.

The Sutton bill provides for legal abortion when the continuance of the pregnancy would seriously affect the physical or mental health of the mother, when the pregnancy resulted from rape or incestuous relations, when there was definite risk that the child might be born with a physical impairment or mental defect.

In addition, this bill provides for the creation in each hospital of a medical committee, consisting of five members, whose responsibility would be to determine whether or not, under the given circumstances an abortion can be performed. This bill also requires the written opinion of

two doctors and the consent of the expectant mother. In the case of rape or incest, the facts must be presented to the District Attorney, who must concur before an abortion can ensue.

It would appear that the strict requirements of this bill should bring consolation to the citizen and a realization that the matter is being seriously considered and that all possible safeguards and protective measures are being invoked to prevent abuse. Yet, it is crystal clear that nothing is being achieved by these stringent stipulations and that the important question is being ignored: a board of hospital members cannot authorize the killing of an unborn child. Two doctors do not have the right or the prerogative to encourage or to order the murder of a fetus. The prospective mother, who should be the guardian and protector of the life within her, does not have the privilege of becoming its executioner. The District Attorney, who, by his office, has the responsibility to protect life and to proceed legally against others who threaten or abuse the life and welfare of citizens or who commit assault or murder, must not or cannot exploit his authority in order to justify homicide. No human legislation and no mere act of any Legislature can grant to an individual the right or prerogative of violating God's law and of allowing, justifying, ordering or even tolerating murder, homicide or killing of an innocent human being.

This is the central point and the only important consideration of the

entire discussion: human life is created by God and by Him alone and, therefore, only God has the right and the control over life — when it begins, how long it continues and when and under what circumstances it is terminated! No single individual, no group and not even society itself has any prerogatives or privileges concerning the termination of life.

The rights and prerogatives of God over life cannot be usurped by individuals or by groups; people cannot give unto themselves privileges concerning the conception and the termination of human life, which they do not have. *This is precisely why Legislators and Parliaments are out of order even to consider for approval bills that would authorize and legalize abortion under any circumstances.* This is precisely why nothing of importance is achieved by having the validity of abortions verified by hospital committees, doctors, district attorneys; no one of them singly nor all of them corporately and collectively have any right or authority to sanction the killing of an innocent fetus for whatever human indication — medical, psychiatric, personal, socio-economic or otherwise. It is rash, presumptuous and daring for such to believe that they have the right or the power to contravene the Law of God and to assume unto themselves rights and prerogatives which belong only to God.

The abortion bill, pending before the New York Assembly, was returned to committee for further study.

Americans for Democratic Action, at its nineteenth annual Convention in Washington, D. C. this past Spring, took a position on abortion for the very first time at a national gathering. The delegates favored the recommendations of the American Law Institute that would allow abortions when the pregnancy resulted from rape or incestuous relations, when the continuance of the pregnancy would be injurious to the mental health of the mother or when there was danger of the child being born deformed.

The organization, however, went far beyond the recommendations of the American Law Institute and adopted a proposal, introduced by the Chairman of ADA in New Jersey, Irwin L. Solondz, which would permit an abortion for other reasons that were deemed sufficient by the expectant mother herself. This could include non-medical reasons. Here is prima facie evidence of the deterioration of the moral climate of at least a segment of our American populace. Here is the first indication of what could have been expected — carte blanche permission to murder the innocent unborn for any reason or for no reason.

Bentley Kassal, the Chairman of ADA in New York defended this very liberal position as "an absolute right of the individual."<sup>16</sup>

In the winter of 1966, a national meeting was held in San Francisco of the Society for Humane Abortion. The report indicates that five hundred well-dressed men and women attended. The meeting was marked

by emotional appeals to stop viewing abortion as a criminal offense. Doctor J. Bryan Henrie, an osteopath from Oklahoma, and self-confessed abortionist, informed the delegates that he had performed five thousand abortions himself and called for complete abrogation of all laws prohibiting abortion. He stated that the only norm for determining the question of an abortion is the qualifications of the doctor, who would perform the operation and there should be no limitation on the person on whom it is to be performed by reason of her circumstances. The Society regards abortion as a surgical procedure rather than a criminal offense and considers that laws, relating to abortion, perpetuate the idea that abortion is wrong.<sup>17</sup>

Education Minister Mohamed Currim Chagla of India, told the sixth annual Convocation of the Academy of Medical Sciences at New Delhi that legalized abortion is the only solution to India's population problem as contraceptives would only touch the fringe of the problem. He declared "a woman must have the right to have an abortion. Doctors should be given the power to abort a child if a woman does not want to have one as against the present power to perform abortion only when the mother's life is in danger."<sup>18</sup> This declaration, like so many others, is merely gratuitous and completely ignores the only true issue — Who is going to give the woman the right? Who is going to give the doctor the power? Human individuals, themselves the recipients of life

from God, cannot bestow such rights and powers. Society — merely a collection of human individuals — cannot grant these prerogatives. Legislative assemblies are powerless to give such authorizations. The philosophical truism and axiom is very pertinent to this discussion — "you cannot give what you do not have!"

It must be recalled that there is something more basic, more fundamental, more important than the mere indications which supposedly justify recourse to abortion under any and all circumstances and this something is the sacred, inviolable nature of human life: the right to be born, the right to life and a complete understanding of the fact that God alone has the prerogative to terminate a life.

In December, 1965, the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago polled 1,484 people across the country as to their attitudes towards abortion. This number represented men and women; Catholics, Protestants and Jews and the results were reported on the basis of sex and religious affiliation. They were questioned about six different situations when abortion might be sought as a solution: when the mother's health is in danger; if the woman became pregnant as a result of rape; if there was a strong chance of serious defect in the baby; if the family cannot afford more children; if the woman is not married and does not wish to marry the man involved; if the woman is married but does not want any more children. From the

percentages reported, it was apparent that, in all questions, those of Jewish Faith favored abortion much more than Catholics and Protestants and, in some instances, up to 100% both of the men and of the women; that Protestants were the middle group and Catholics favored abortion the least; that men proposed abortion as a solution more than women but in some questions that there was not too much difference; that, generally, the highest percentage favoring abortion, was found when the questions referred to the well-being of the mother and the lower percentages were found when economics were involved or the condition of the child.<sup>19</sup>

Recently, in the State of Vermont, the Prevention Subcommittee of the Governor's Committee on Mental Retardation suggested that abortion be authorized where there appears to be a high risk of mental retardation of an unborn child and that legal sterilization of the mentally retarded might be advisable in some cases.

Vermont Governor, Phillip Hoff, stated that he had "extreme reservations" about these proposals. Most Reverend Robert F. Joyce, Bishop of Burlington, blasted "the planned, deliberate sacrifice of life so society may not be bothered with those who might be a burden" and said the result would be that: "the State would no longer be the servant of man. . . . he would be a slave of the state" with his right to life based on a "prejudgment of his usefulness."<sup>20</sup>

Much constructive research has

been conducted recently on the amniotic fluid, which surrounds the fetus and already predictions are being made that the knowledge and evidence can be used to indicate when abortions might be performed. Constructive information being employed for destructive purposes!

In one area, Doctor Cecil B. Jacobson, an obstetrician and geneticist at George Washington University Hospital has announced that, by withdrawing amniotic fluid by needle and by mapping the chromosomes, a way has been developed of detecting, as early as the fifteenth week of pregnancy, the presence of severe inherited defects such as mongolism. With this procedure, he has been able to assure two pregnant women who had previously given birth to deformed children, that they were carrying normally developing babies. On two other women, he found grossly abnormal fetuses. In a recent issue of *Medical World News*, Doctor Jacobson announced that an important result of the test is to open new possibilities of abortion for a mother facing the certainty of producing a badly deformed child and stated: "I don't believe anyone is going to stand up against abortion for approved, determined genetic defect. . . . This is a good diagnostic tool if we get the abortion laws changed."<sup>21</sup>

The newspaper of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. editorialized on Doctor Jacobson's remarks thusly: "It is sad to contemplate that there are those who can view this suggestion as being a humanitarian approach to life. If this recommen-

dation were to be carried out to its logical extension, every individual who suffered from debilitating infirmities might eventually be subjected to euthanasia. Equally significant is the fact that Doctor Jacobson's solution completely disregards the inherent right of the unborn infant, indicating that an unborn infant simply has no unqualified right to live. . . . Finally and most significant is the fact that Doctor Jacobson permits man to make a judgment that is reserved to God."<sup>22</sup>

In another area, it was also discovered that, by the withdrawal of some amniotic fluid, the sex of an unborn child could be pre-determined with complete accuracy. The importance of this determination, as far as abortion is concerned, is that: "By knowing in advance whether a fetus is male or female, the doctor can determine the odds against the child being defective when a parent is known to carry a sex-linked disease. Hemophilia, for example, can be inherited only by a boy. This opens the possibility of therapeutic abortion if the mother who is a carrier of hemophilia has a male fetus."<sup>23</sup>

Lawrence Lader, an outspoken and active proponent of legislation of abortion, has recently written a book on the subject, obviously setting forth the case for liberalization of existing laws. Two of his statements are worth noting: "Any woman at any time should be able to procure a legal abortion without giving a reason"; and, "An embryo or fetus has no rights whatsoever

since it is only protoplasm and no different from an appendix that a woman may or may not choose to have removed."<sup>24</sup> In a recent meeting with physicians, population experts and sociologists at Harvard University, Lader announced very apodictically: "Abortion is the inalienable right of all women" and the right to abortion is "a fundamental right of humanity and no law on earth can deny it."<sup>25</sup>

It is interesting to note that the right to abortion is now listed, along with the rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, as inalienable. The right to abortion and the right to life are mutually exclusive and contradictory. Thus apparently, the right to abortion, at least in the value scale and estimate of Lawrence Lader, replaces the right to life. The material in his book is more emotional and hysterical than factual and logical. As reasons justifying the legality of abortion, the author refers with great humaneness and concern to individual hardship cases.

Lawrence Lader gathered his information from interviews with ex-abortionists, abortion racketeers, Protestant and Jewish physicians and clergymen, who are known for their advocacy of easy abortion, hospital reports and limited statistical data.<sup>26</sup>

The new vehicle (just to show that every possible means of mass communications is being used to "sell" abortion to the public) is the novel. Lael Tucker Wertebaker, who previously wrote a very descriptive account of her husband's sui-

cide, now attempts to incorporate the usual arguments and the justifying circumstances for abortion in the literary form of a novel. She does all of this through the main characters and their situations. The reasons and the situations very closely parallel the well-known positions of all the organizations and individuals who are working tremendously hard to liberalize the present laws on abortion and to replace them with directives that are more "humane and liberating." In the story, the plight of the young pregnant, unmarried girl who dies as a result of an illegal abortion becomes the obsession and driving force that prompts her father, a trained and respectable surgeon, to divide his time between the practice of orthodox medicine in the morning and the performance of illegal abortions in the afternoon. This latter fact provides the title for the book, *The Afternoon Women*. The main characters or patients provide the situations and reasons which justify the liberalization of existing abortion laws: a middle-aged widowed grandmother, who has become pregnant by a young man during the course of a secret affair; the mother of four who just could not care for any additional children; a severely neurotic, single, career girl who has had three previous abortions.

In reviewing this book, Doris Grumbach states, "the remarkable thing about Mrs. Wertebaker's book is the climate of sweetness and light with which she manages to surround this unsavory subject. Her case for legalized abortion is immersed in the atmosphere of

'John's Other Wife' and 'Ma Perkins' and there is an air of happy picnic days about the whole waiting period of the story. . . . The whole case for abortion is argued in such a way that the novel is more a thesis than a story, and the characters only spokesmen for what Mrs. Wertebaker feels strongly about."<sup>27</sup>

All of the popular magazines have, in recent months, carried feature articles on the issue of abortion, e.g., October, 1966, issue of *Glamour*; October 8, 1966 issue of *Saturday Evening Post*. While prepared and written by different persons, they all have much in common: they are all slanted and oriented towards the liberalization of abortion laws and the absolute legalization of abortion; they all concentrate on the personal and the individual, to the exclusion of the universal and the absolute; they all present the hardship cases that tug at the heartstrings and clamor for humane and loving solutions that only abortions can provide; they all indict the Catholic Church as being out-of-step, prehistoric, ancient, conservative, obstructionist in her refusal to abolish the cold, valid and impersonal principles of the past in favor of the warm, personal and relevant solutions of the present that are based solely on individual preference and the exigencies and demands of the particular situation; they all are highly charged with emotional hysteria to the complete exclusion of reason and logic; they all are propaganda vehicles for the organizations and individuals that are frantically attempting to make abortion respectable and acceptable to the masses!

The arguments, approach, emotional tone, vehicles of propagandizing are very reminiscent of the campaign to sell contraception of a generation ago. This campaign has only recently been completely successful with the adoption of liberal contraception laws by the last stronghold of opposition. The similarity between the previous campaign for contraception and the present campaign for abortion is so close that Father Canavan has entitled his most recent article *History Repeats Itself*.

The recent volume of Lawrence Lader on abortion is almost identical, in its purpose and message, to a volume prepared in 1928 by Margaret Sanger, entitled *Motherhood In Bondage* and whose avowed purpose was to make contraception respectable. This volume contained seventeen chapters—all of them presenting in heart-rending terms the intimate confessions of "enslaved mothers" who are "condemned to unwilling pregnancies." The authoress presented birth control as "the surest instrument of the emancipation of enslaved womankind." Highly-charged, emotional and hysterical language is found in both volumes.

This writer has remembered verbatim for twenty years two particular passages from Margaret Sanger's introduction:

When I am confronted with arguments against Birth Control, arguments which are as a rule presented by learned theologians or indefatigable statisticians, this dim far-off chorus of suffering and pain begins to resound anew in my ears. How academic, how anaemically intellectual and how remote from throbbing, bleeding

humanity all of these prejudiced arguments sound, when one has been brought face to face with the reality of suffering.

There is pathos in those recitals of the young wife's effort to retain the romantic love of her husband, even though her youthful beauty has been immolated on the altar of enforced maternity and made a living sacrifice to the cruel gods of reproduction.<sup>28</sup>

*What cool, reasoned, factual logic!*

The same vehicles of communication, the same approach, the same propaganda that gave us legalized contraception are being used, without any change in stress or emphasis, to bring respectability to abortion and no doubt will again be used in later years to legalize infanticide and euthanasia.

In commenting on the articles that have appeared in the popular magazines, in which the case for legalized abortion is presented, and in referring particularly to an article, which appeared in the October 19, 1965 issue of *Look* magazine, entitled "The Growing Tragedy of Illegal Abortion," Father Canavan said: "It is a good example of a journalistic technique that can be used against any moral or legal principle. A writer describes a situation that is causing people to suffer: women with too many children . . . parents whose children are born badly deformed, children whose aged parents are dying in pain and ought to be put out of their misery, etc. He then points out the barbarity and mindlessness of laws that prevent people from taking the most realistic and effective means to relieve the suffering. The writer notes with regret that opposition to reform of

these laws comes from reactionary elements in the Catholic Church and that this is putting a strain on community relations, or, as we say today, on the ecumenical movement. The conclusion is clear: if the Church will join the 20th century and ally itself with progressive forces, we can all move forward to a more humane society."<sup>29</sup>

Father Canavan also observes: "The *Look* article is also important as being symptomatic of a major shift in the value structure of our society. . . . the morality of a particular action such as abortion. Modern society is secular and its public philosophy is becoming steadily more secularized. The only values that it recognizes are those that can be realized in this world. As a consequence, the greatest evil that it knows is earthly human suffering. For the modern secularized mind, suffering is never a cross to be borne; it is a problem to be solved, and no allegedly absolute moral principle may be permitted to stand in the way of a solution. . . . Furthermore, the values that modern man wishes to foster and protect are principally interior ones that reside in human consciousness: happiness, freedom, authenticity, etc. Physical or material values, such as the integrity of the sexual act or the sanctity of physical human life, are sometimes an obstacle to realizing these 'personal' values. They, therefore, may be suppressed to the extent that they stand in the way. Out of this system of values has grown the notion that man has a right to total control over his reproductive system whether the control is exercised by

interfering in the reproductive function through contraception, or by suppressing the function altogether through sterilization, or by eliminating the function's natural result through abortion."<sup>30</sup>

It is strange that the popular magazines, which offer a forum to the proponents of legalized abortion for an in-depth and extensive presentation of their case, *just never seem to feature an article by those who oppose the liberalization of existing laws* whereby the falsity and speciousness of the propaganda of the former could be pointed out, challenged, rebutted and answered. Equal time just does not exist. *Our opponents seem to have a monopolistic control over the mass media of communication.*

However, there is some consolation in the fact that there are instances in which an effort is being made to limit or restrict the further advance of abortion. There are some writings by responsible people which clearly demonstrate the evil of abortion and present valid arguments to counteract the propaganda of the proponents: The Police Security Chief in Stockholm, Sweden, recently pointed out that Swedish women who travel to Poland for abortions might be subject to blackmail and thus pose a security problem for Sweden.<sup>31</sup> Recently, the Association of French-speaking Doctors of Canada submitted a brief to the Committee on Health and Welfare of the House of Commons wherein it was stated that intra-uterine contraceptive devices may cause abortion and their distribution

should be halted. "Since abortion is essentially condemnable on moral and legal grounds . . . the distribution of intrauterine devices should be forbidden or at least postponed until the way they work has been explained precisely enough to exclude any possibility of abortion."<sup>32</sup> Russell Shaw, has recently authored a booklet entitled *Abortion and Public Policy*. In this work, he sets forth the most common reasons that are used to justify abortion and critically evaluates the proposed statute on abortion as suggested in the Modern Penal Code, presented by the American Law Institute, and concludes that the statute is unacceptable. Shaw points out in summary fashion what has been the impact and effect of easy abortion laws in Japan, Sweden and Hungary and demonstrates that the experience of these countries proves that with unlimited legal abortion, the numbers of illegal abortions increase by an equal or greater proportion than the increase of the legal abortions. This latter fact is certainly never mentioned or hinted at by the proponents of easy abortion; they carefully never discuss this aspect but try to lull the individual citizen into a quiet complacency and to make him think that, with legal abortion, all the horror and suffering of the executions in the dark rooms of private alleys will automatically disappear from view.

The author points to disturbances and distresses, physical, psychiatric and emotional, which many times result as inevitable side effects of abortion. He concludes by giving a summary history of the objection of

Christianity to abortion from the first century up to the present time, based on the fact that abortion is murder and violates the right of God over life and violates the right of a conceptus to life.

Doctor Herbert Ratner, Public Health Director in Oak Park, Illinois, in the May, 1966, issue of *Report* magazine, characterizes the present drive for easier abortions as misguided humanitarianism and states that abortion "represents a somewhat barbaric throwback." He considers the suggestion, that abortion should be allowed in the case where the pregnancy resulted from rape and states that the claims of rape would be "astronomical." He asserts: "Usually when an unmarried girl comes into a doctor's office and says she is pregnant on the basis of one exposure, rape or otherwise, sympathetic inquiry will disclose that she has been having intercourse several times weekly for many months."<sup>33</sup>

In a recent discussion on the population problem, Doctor Duncan E. Reid, Chief of Staff at Boston Hospital for Women, declared: "Pregnancy control through legalized abortion, which has vastly reduced recent birth rates in Japan, was distasteful to Judaeo-Christian ethics and the death rate and other consequences of permissive abortion laws would not be acceptable in our society."<sup>34</sup>

While Doctor Herbert I. Posin, Associate Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at Boston University Medical Center, does not oppose abortion on



principle, he does strongly advise that the decisions for abortion should not be made by the medical profession but by small committees of responsible citizens. He points out: "Except in the rare case where serious mental illness is involved, the abortion question is mainly a human and social problem today and society should take responsibility for its own pity and tenderness."<sup>35</sup>

In an address to the Catholic Physicians' Guild in San Francisco recently, Rev. Bernard Haring, C.S.S.R., stated that the criminal act itself is less harmful to society than the acknowledgment of the crime and the acceptance and tolerance of the crime by society and the community. He added that the new being is a full-fledged human being from the very moment of conception and that he has rights that should be respected and must be protected. Father Haring continues that the chief duty of the state is to promote life because of "the dignity of the human person, respect for life, the concept of motherhood and the consequences for the ethics of doctors." The very image of the United States is at stake in this controversy over abortion: "If at this moment America decides that physicians have the right to kill on the probability that the birth of the child could provoke some future danger to the mother, how could this nation still say, 'we are promoting the dignity of man in the world?'" Father Haring concluded by stating: "If we cannot defend this most innocent of lives, then life is no longer worthwhile."<sup>36</sup>

California has been in the news

again recently concerning matters related to abortion. Two doctors in the San Francisco area, both obstetricians—Doctor Paul J. Shively and Doctor Seymour Smith—performed illegal operations on ten women, who had been stricken with German measles, and the operations were performed in hospitals and with the full knowledge and consent of the institutions' abortion committees. Charges have been filed against these two doctors and they are in danger of having their licenses to practice medicine revoked and facing criminal prosecution. It was remarked: "Never before in the state's history had a doctor been prosecuted when, according to his best medical judgment, he felt that the woman's life would be ruined if she bore a hopelessly deformed child, and therefore, terminated the pregnancy in an accredited hospital with the consent of an abortion committee. As a matter of fact this is the first time anywhere in the United States that a doctor has been charged under such circumstances."<sup>37</sup>

The California State Bar Convention asked its Board of Governors to sponsor legislation similar to the Beilenson Bill, previously rejected, which would permit abortions in cases of rape, incest, grave danger to the mother's health or likelihood that the child would be born defective.

James Francis Cardinal McIntyre, Archbishop of Los Angeles, declared, "The Bill, as well as the action of the state bar convention in approving it, is shocking, scandalous and further evidence of increasing disrespect and irreverence for basic law and

divine moral principles. . . . At the present time, in parts of the state of California, the licenses of several physicians are in jeopardy for this type of offense and this bill will justify them and open the door widely for a general practice of taking innocent human life. This life has equal rights to that of the born child. Who will favor the taking of the life of an infant because it may not be wanted? Has our American way of thinking become so dehumanized?"<sup>38</sup>

In March of 1966, Dr. Andre E. Hellegers of Johns Hopkins University Medical School lectured at Georgetown University on abortion law. He declared: "I suspect, as we all suspect, that the proposed changes in the law have little to do with what is medically necessary, but are designed to deal with a rather major social and public health problem of illegal abortion."<sup>39</sup>

Commenting on the figures, usually given by the proponents for legalized abortion, as to the number of illegal abortions performed each year (1,200,000) and the number of women who die as a result of these procedures (circa 10,000), Doctor Hellegers stated: "I doubt that any first-year student in an epidemiology course could get past the first semester if he attempted to draw conclusions about the United States from a sample such as this."<sup>40</sup>

Those favoring the liberalization of abortion laws constantly refer to the 10,000 deaths per year of the pregnant women who seek relief through abortion in the unhygienic

and unsterile surroundings of the illegal market. They speak of what a calamity and a catastrophe it is; how much needless and unwarranted suffering and death; how broader laws would remedy this criminal situation. Doctor Hellegers replies: "of this figure one can say, unequivocally and without fear of contradiction, that it is absurd." This certainly implies that our adversaries have been grossly misrepresenting and overexaggerating the figures, which represent the only basis upon which they cry for remedial legislation.

An editorial writer properly comments: "the conclusion seems to be that we are being asked to 'liberalize' the abortion laws in order to solve a problem of illegal abortion whose dimensions we simply do not know."<sup>41</sup>

1. NCWC News Report by John Greaves, *Boston Pilot*, June 25, 1966; *Boston Globe*, July 23, 1966; *America*, August 13, 1966.
2. *America*, August 13, 1966.
3. Religious News Service Report, *Boston Pilot*, February 26, 1966.
4. *Ibidem*.
5. *Ibidem*.
6. Rev. Francis Canavan, S.J., *History Repeats Itself*, *America*, May 21, 1966.
7. *Ibidem*.
8. *Abortion and Public Policy* NCWC Family Life Bureau.
9. Religious News Service Report, *Boston Pilot*, February 26, 1966.
10. *Ibidem*.

11. *Ibidem.*
12. NCWC News Report by John Greaves, *Boston Pilot*, June 25, 1966.
13. *History Repeats Itself, America*, May 21, 1966.
14. NCWC News Report, *Boston Pilot*, September 17, 1966; *America*, October 8, 1966
15. *Ibidem.*
16. *Boston Globe*, April 25, 1966.
17. NCWC News Report by Joan Johnson, *Boston Pilot*, February 5, 1966.
18. NCWC News Report, *Boston Pilot*, March 5, 1966.
19. Religious News Service, *Boston Pilot*, March 19, 1966
20. *The Register*, August 28, 1966.
21. *Boston Herald*, October 4, 1966.
22. *Catholic Standard*, September 15, 1966.
23. *Boston Herald*, October 4, 1966.
24. *Abortion*, by Lawrence Lader, (Bobbs).
25. *Boston Globe*, April 21, 1966.
26. Book Review, *America*, June 25, 1966.
27. *America*, April 23, 1966.
28. *Motherhood in Bondage*, by Margaret Sanger, Brentano's New York pages, XV, XVIII.
29. *America*, May 21, 1966.
30. *Ibidem.*
31. *Boston Globe*, June 4, 1966.
32. NCWC News Report, *Boston Pilot*, June 25, 1966.
33. NCWC News Report, *Boston Pilot*, April 2, 1966.
34. *Boston Globe*, June 22, 1966.
35. *Boston Globe*, February 20, 1966.
36. NCWC News Report, *Catholic News*, New York, August 11, 1966.
37. *Glamour*, October, 1966.
38. NCWC News Report, *Boston Pilot*, October 1, 1966.
39. Editorial, *America*, April 16, 1966.
40. *Ibidem.*
41. *Ibidem.*

[Monsignor Harrington is Vice-Officialis for the Archdiocese of Boston.]

*Part I of this discourse appeared in LQ, Nov. 1965; Part II, Feb. 1966, and Part III, May 1966.*

DURING THE PAST FEW YEARS, THE LINACRE QUARTERLY HAS INCREASED IN QUANTITY AND, WE HOPE YOU WILL AGREE, IN QUALITY. WITH THIS HAVE COME ADDED EXPENSES FOR PRODUCTION. TO CONTINUE TO SUPPLY THE JOURNAL TO OUR READERS, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION VOTED TO INCREASE THE ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATE TO \$4.00. BILLING WILL REFLECT THIS CHANGE, EFFECTIVE AS OF DECEMBER 9, 1966. WE ARE SORRY THIS IS NECESSARY BUT THE REALITY OF MOUNTING COSTS IS NOT ABSORBED IN THE FORMER \$2.00 RATE.