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Work for Unborn Children in Hungary

Dr. Andras Szorenyi

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I am a doctor, a gynecologist who was performing lots of abortions during a long period of my life. I experienced the long years of my sleeping conscious seemingly free from care. Then came the overwhelming happiness with my conversion. I experienced deep despair confronted with the real facts of my life and experienced the dread of my moral death if I continued abortions and in spite of this I continued because of the fear of losing my job. I was feeling the strain of coming to a decision at last and of standing by the truth and the life when I refused to continue doing abortions in my hospital.

I can remember and feel again in my soul the fear of death of my smallest brothers. I can hear “the silent screams”, but I also notice that a woman undergoing abortion is a suffering human being too, who is not able to resist alone the pressure for abortion exerted on her by the society of today.

Indeed, the abortion means tragedy to everybody. The victims are not only the unborn children suffering painful death, but also the mothers, the families, the doctors and society itself. The abortion is to be placed among the horsemen of the Apocalypse. Excuse me for my passionate tone, please. It might be understood as the result of my own post-abortion syndrome. Because of this, I had great difficulties in writing this paper and not losing sight of either of the two principles which are the keystones, in my opinion, when discussing abortion. These are the sense of cold reality and the feeling of warm affection for each and every human being.

Key Figure

The key figure in the subject is the decision-maker who, under present Hungarian circumstances, is the expectant mother. She comes to a decision by herself since the law gives permission for her to have an abortion performed with very little difficulty.

Let us see what circumstances can interfere with the only right decision — for the life — which can solely be commanded by her own morals.

The house which is built on sand soon collapses in a storm. What are those effects, historic and social experiences which can influence the morals of the decision-maker? Let us have a look at the history of Hungary which is a series of defeats in the twentieth-century.

After the First World War, our country lost two-thirds of its territory. Four million Hungarians have been living since then in the neighboring countries. As for the Second World War, we lost about one million people and because of the Stalinist principle of "collective guiltiness", large crowds of civil inhabitants were captured and carried off from Hungary to the Gulags, never to see their home again.

Then there came the Communist dictatorship with its torture changers and its punitive camps. It was followed by our Revolution and freedom fight in 1956. Four thousand martyrs died when we were crushed again by Russian boots. Then the period of protectorate came and the Kadar terror. Hundreds of freedom fighters were hanged, among them some members of the legitimate Hungarian government and even the Prime Minister himself. The dictatorship gradually softened, but the fear had already burned deeply in souls. "My God, I'd like only to survive somehow, even if the price will have to be compromise."

This opinion, based on historic experiences, became common. The practice of double morals built up, one "secret" private moral and a pretended other towards the outside world.

We Hungarians tried to console ourselves with a saying like this: "We have the most cheerful barracks in the Socialist camp." In order to make the Communist ideology supersede Christianity, the Church was crippled and pursued and deprived of its schools. The religious orders were scattered and the hierarchy was forced into certain collaboration. If somebody behaved as a true Christian, he found himself in a handicapped situation in every aspect of life. For example, if a teacher were present at his child's wedding in the church, he could expect to lose his job. Two generations have been brought up without having been taught religious or moral knowledge, listening to the hosannah to Communism. Only some grandmothers took the children secretly to Mass.

Pendulum is Swinging

Now Communism has collapsed, and the pendulum is swinging over to the boundless liberalism, to be more exact, toward the extreme individualism and the misguided crowd is lifting to the altar the values of a consumer society.

The pacemaker in this process is mass communications, the same which earlier blared glory to the Communist system. There is a striking example of it: the fuss-campaign which took place recently against entering facultative religious education into the syllabus of all elementary and secondary schools.

Communism and individualism consecutively and together destroy

families. Hungary is among the world champions in the statistics of divorces. A great majority of women are compelled to work full-time. The vocation for being mother is despised. The dignity of women is trodden down into the mud. Little school children keep seeing pornographic pictures at the street news sellers. Erotic shops are opening one after another. Chastity is almost an unknown idea among the teenagers. Such is the average morality now.

Let us see how the economic situation can influence the mother. The present Government inherited a debt of twenty thousand million dollars, at least the same is the value of the lacking investments, missed by the Kádár regime, in public health care, education, transport, and telecommunications. Heavy industry has been mistakenly overdeveloped in spite of the fact that our country has not had enough sources of raw materials. So, further pauperisation and accelerating inflation can be predicted. About 30 percent of the population is under the social minimum regarding its income. The more children who live in a family, the poorer it is. For example, the standard of living in a family with three children is the 52% of a childless one. The chance of getting to a flat for a young couple is almost hopeless.

All these factors, namely the bitter historic experiences which forced the people to be opportunists, the lack of moral education, the lying ideas indoctrinated by false prophets, the role of media when suggesting that abortion should be regarded as a method of birth control, the bad economic situation deteriorating continuously — these all have produced a concentrated attack against the goodness in every person, against human dignity and the natural longing for a child.

In the course of her decision, the woman can next be given a piece of advice on how to solve her dilemma between life and death by the doctor. This gynecologist is employed by the public health service which is in crisis, because it gets only 4% of the GDP (General Domestic Products). He had to study Marxism-Leninism for four to five years in medical school. He saw his famous professors wearing the uniform of the party army, the Worker's Guard, when they had their meeting in the auditorium and saw them with guns marching in the streets in the rows of this organization brought into existence against the revival of resistance when the national uprising in 1956 was defeated.

Degrading His Profession

He was eye-witness to degrading his profession to be the obedient servant of politics. The doctor, like his every colleague, is a state employee. Public health care is declared to be free of charge. He gets a little salary, perhaps less than a worker's wages. This is why he is not able to resist the prevailed habit in Hungary, that is to accept tips from his patients as a taxi-driver, waiter or barber if the tip is given. Consequently, the doctor is likely to discriminate between patient and patient. She will give a tip or

won't; will be a "profitable" patient or only a nuisance. He does his best to become the master of his profession. He is proud of the results of intrauterine diagnostics because he can screen the suspected abnormal children to be killed by abortion. His attitude to medicine has been based on technicalities. If the law permits the abortion, he carries it out, perhaps feeling unpleasant, in case of social indications too, only because the woman is not married or if married she has two children already, or she has no child at all but is more than 35 years old.

Can we expect from him a truly pro-life attitude when he gives his medical advice?

And the woman decides to have the abortion.

This has happened in 4.5 million abortions in such a little country like Hungary with its 10 million inhabitants during the last 40 years. Nowadays too, 300-350 unborn children have been killed daily and 90% of them because of social indications.

Thus, the average number of live-born children decreased to 1.9, the pensioner's rate increased to 24% of the total population, so the Hungarian society is getting older and older. The population has been continuously decreasing since 1981.

And we are among the world's firsts in alcoholism, too. The picture of a society in deep crisis is taking form before us; better said, the picture of a civilization in deep crisis in the center of which is the suffering human being.

The abortion has been procured! The house built on sand has collapsed and under the ruins there lie victims — the unborn and painfully murdered children, the aborting women hurt in their souls who didn't want to be or were not able to be brave enough to surmount the difficulties. A further victim is the dignity of medical profession, because the medical society gives a helping hand with planned parenthood and abortion to the politics to solve the social problems as if those were medical cases and finally, and mainly, the victim is the future.

The future of a cannibal civilization which devours its own children is able to destroy even its own future, the future of us all, of mankind.

Moral Renewal Needed

A complete moral renewal is needed for the world; it has no other choice! The picture would be entirely dark, if I could not give an account of those heroic efforts made by others — true men and women who act for the protection of life. If I left someone out of this report, please, forgive me.

The Hungarian Society for the Protection of Unborn Children has been established for two years. It carries out enlightening activities by way of publications and a counseling service. They have a non-stop telephone number for mothers-to-be in Budapest. They are building a home for mothers-to-be and are collecting signatures against abortion. This year

they succeeded in organizing a conference: "Together for Life Without But and If". It was the very first meeting to publish the sad and true facts. It was finished with a consensus for life signed by the top representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, the Optimal Family Planning Counselling, the National Institute for Health Care, the National Institute for Obstetrics and Gynecology and of the Scientific Council for Health Care. Unfortunately, the law on abortion has not changed at all.

The "Pacem in Utero" association has put forward a motion against these present legal rules. Now, the Hungarian Constitutional Court is dealing with the case. When its opinion is declared, there will be, I suppose, a furious debate about that in the parliament and new legal rules. Mass communications have already begun campaigning against "the restrictions on the women's rights to abortion." There is not a word about the fact that an unborn child is a human being too, who has his/her own right to live. Even the most widely known professor of medical ethics declared in the greatest Hungarian daily newspaper: "Do not prohibit strictly the abortion; leave the legal abortion possible further on, more or less in the same circle in which it is permitted at present."

The Hungarian Association of Families with Many Children was founded in 1987. The association shows a positive family picture as the basic unit of society and strengthens respect for motherhood and life, responsibility for marriage and future generations. Their four-day family conference where well-known representatives of the Hungarian intellectual life spoke, was held this year. The proliferers appear more and more frequently from the circle of doctors in the organizations mentioned earlier, as well as in the Hungarian Christian Medical Fellowship, in the Society of Christian Intellectuals and in some other Christian organizations.

Beginning Work

We are at the beginning of the work. As far as I know, only one Christian Family Planning Counseling organization is working in Hungary and it is open for only two hours in a week. Such is the situation of the natural family planning in Hungary. So far I scolded the media a lot. Now let me praise a periodical entitled *Yes*, a Roman Catholic magazine which is almost the only publication that says yes for life. I have to say thanks here, for personal reasons, to our suffering Church. If I had not participated in the Marriage Encounter courses I would not be here to speak.

The duty is enormous and the task facing us is almost hopeless. Nevertheless, we have to act and have to trust in the power of love. Every individual has to be helped to show up the good. The family as the basic unit of society has to be helped with all possible means. The organizations which respect human life have to be strengthened in behalf of political love, in behalf of the principle of solidarity. We should try to bridge the

continuously widening gap which can be found between the intellectual-technical and the moral achievements of man. Unfortunately, the medicine of today offers many examples of this.

In Hippocrates's age, it was a custom to throw out a newborn child to die and yet that age required such high morals and dignity from the doctors that they had to maintain respect for human life even in cases of unborn children. Let us compare this with the present situation.

Let somebody else say the conclusion instead of me — a poor, illiterate, despised, ragged and worn out gypsy woman who had a lot of children. She once came to the so-called doctor having an early pregnancy again. The doctor wanted to persuade her to submit herself to abortion. "Please, Doctor, exterminate your own race!" came the answer. Every work of it could be the key word in a paper to characterize the problem of abortion.

"Please, Doctor, exterminate your own race!"

Racialism, eugenical selection, holocaust — I do not dare to continue the line of prompt associations. The spirit of Nazism believed to have been forgotten seems to be frightfully revived again.

Finally, in conclusion, I'd like to say thanks in my mind to this poor sister of ours who was able to teach us what true love is.
