

11-1-1983

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Recommended Citation

May, William E. (1983) "[Book Review of] *The Abortion Holocaust: Today's Final Solution*, by William C. Brennan," *The Linacre Quarterly*. Vol. 50: No. 4, Article 17.

Available at: <https://epublications.marquette.edu/lnq/vol50/iss4/17>

The Abortion Holocaust: Today's Final Solution

William C. Brennan

Landmark Press, St. Louis, 1983, 225 pp., \$6.95, paperback.

"The central horror of any holocaust — whether it involves the extermination of Jews by the Nazis, the massacre of Russians by the Soviet regime, the eradication of Cambodians by the Khmer Rouge, or the slaughter of unborn children by medical doctors — is the systematic destruction of millions looked upon as indiscriminate masses of subhuman expendables." So writes William C. Brennan, professor of sociology at St. Louis University, early in this well-documented and thoughtful study.

The purpose of this work is to provide massive evidence that the same tactics of deception, double talk, and double think that were used in Nazi Germany both to justify and expand abortion and to kill postnatal discards have been and are being used in the United States to support abortion and to use the victims of abortion as guinea pigs in inhuman experimentations.

In the early chapters of his study, Brennan traces the campaign in pre-Nazi Germany and pre-*Roe v. Wade* America by members of the medical profession and other prestigious groups to get rid of the legal protection that had previously been given unborn human life. In these chapters, he also shows how abortion, once made legal both in Nazi Germany and in post-*Roe v. Wade* America, became a "search and destroy" mission for those deemed eugenically unfit. Both in Germany and in America, grossly inflated statistics of maternal deaths attributed to illegal abortion were manufactured to manipulate public opinion. In both nations, subtle and not-so-subtle pressures were subsequently exerted to push abortion as the most efficient and economical way to solve social "problems."

It is also in these early chapters that Brennan shows the role that Hitler played in advocating and promoting abortion. Like many Americans today Hitler did not, of course, wish to have "wanted" children aborted, and for ideological reasons, he "wanted" Aryan babies so that the master race could dominate the world. Yet he was an ardent proponent of abortion for the "unwanted" child, in particular, the child of racially inferior Jews and Eastern Europeans — as many contemporary Americans are ardent proponents of such "unwanted" children as those afflicted with Down's syndrome, Tay-Sachs disease, and poor, unmarried, and black mothers.

By far, the bulk of the work is devoted to a comparison of abortion in America today with the killing of postnatal discards in the Third Reich. In the chapters of the study devoted to this comparison, Brennan magnificently develops three key themes: 1) the power of technology to conceal victims and reduce mass killing to the trivial level of a technical procedure; 2) the power of terminology to relegate the victims to less than human status; and 3) the role of physicians as credentialed executioners.

Brennan's method in developing these themes can be illustrated by focusing on the second theme: the semantic subterfuges used to conceal from view the reality of the holocaust and role of the media in propagating this deception.

In Nazi Germany, according to the media, Jews were not "killed"; rather they were "selected" for "evacuation." They were "emptied" from their ghettos. In addition, they were not referred to as human beings, but rather as "parasites," "trash," or "garbage." Similarly, in America today, the media, including pres-

tigious medical journals, do not speak of killing unborn infants by abortion. Rather, talk is of "emptying the uterus of its contents," or of "evacuating the product of conception," or of "terminating a pregnancy."

Brennan is brilliant in exposing the linguistic distortions used both in Nazi Germany to conceal the barbarism of genocide and in contemporary America to hide the killing involved in abortion.

This work is sure to evoke outrage from those who are aware of the barbarity of abortion, and especially — if it is not ignored — from those who defend abortion for daring to compare what they defend to the atrocities of Nazi Germany. One can only hope that this work will help open the eyes and hearts and minds of many who may, unfortunately, have been deceived by the rhetoric of abortion advocates. In 1970, an editorial in *California Medicine* (cited by Brennan) observed: "The considerable semantic gymnastics which are required to rationalize abortion as anything but taking a human life would be ludicrous if they were not put forward under socially impeccable auspices." Unfortunately, elitist groups in the United States have been quite successful in their rationalizations of this barbarity. Brennan's sobering work, so devastatingly chilling and massively documented, may help to unmask the ugly reality of the holocaust of abortion in America today.

— William E. May
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In Good Conscience: Abortion and Moral Necessity

David Mall

Kairos Books, Inc., P.O. Box 708, Libertyville, Ill. 60048, 1982, 212 pp., \$18.50 cloth, \$8.50 paper.

This stimulating book, a work of rhetoric and moral analysis, seeks "to make persuasion easier for those who uphold the 'pro-life' position" (p. ix). It offers a "meta-rhetoric" resting on Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development. Mall does not take Kohlberg's theory purely at face value, but rather analyzes it critically throughout his book while using it as a tool "to increase the reader's awareness of and sensitivity to the moral reasoning patterns used in the abortion debate" (p. 2). He believes that the rhetorician's task is to help people change their patterns of moral thinking.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part deals with some theoretical considerations and with an exposition of the stages of moral development. Here Mall notes that morality needs to be grounded in human nature and he contends that, at least at the advanced levels, moral judgment is linked to certain outcomes. In particular, advance in moral reasoning leads one ultimately to a "pro-life" position. "Moralizing that favors abortion is really an anti-development" (p. 41). Following Kohlberg, Mall argues that justice is central to morality and forms the basis for civil society. Yet he goes beyond Kohlberg in arguing that further consid-