Death on Demand: Dissent

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hatch of legal abortion was opened, some doctors are ready to operate almost anybody because profits are high; several million women now claim that legal induced abortion has made them physically unwell; finally, we have become more confident that Japan's population can keep right on growing without creating insuperable problems.

*Ed. Note: Appendices referred to in this article are available.

DEATH ON DEMAND: DISSENT

I am your child.
Within the silence of your womb
I grow—an unlimited guest.
Is this my tomb?

I bear your name. Without your genes
I could not even start to be.
By your imperative demand
Must I now die before I see?

You have your life and love,
Your time of laughter here on earth.
Would you deny to me my life and
children of my own?
What am I worth?

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Euthanasia or A Peaceful Death

Dr. K. F. M. Pole

I am speaking as a doctor who practises in England, where the question of euthanasia is a very live issue which, within little more than a year, has led to two attempts at introducing permissive legislation. The debates in the Houses of Parliament, the arguments in public, in private and in the press have spotlighted the manifold legal, medical and social implications. It is from an examination of those implications which—in a special Study Group—I've undertaken, together with other Catholic men and women engaged in law, medicine and public life, that I put forward my views today.

A peaceful and happy death is what we all desire. The very word euthanasia appears to promise it, and the advocates of legislation which would permit it under certain conditions thus receive support from people who, with their good intentions and emotional involvement, overlook how vaguely the term is used and what it may imply.

There are some who believe that the administration of pain-relieving medications comprises euthanasia, if by repeated dosage the patient's resistance is lowered and he dies earlier than he would otherwise have done; some speak of it when a patient is allowed to die peacefully without extraordinary efforts at resuscitation or when resuscitative measures, once started, are discontinued. If those two contingencies, sometimes referred to as "indirect" and as "negative" euthanasia, were all that was meant no one would object to euthanasia, nor would anyone think it necessary to have an Act of Parliament passed to legalize it.

It is another usage of the word that gives it a sinister meaning; it describes the actual and deliberate killing of men and women, avowedly from motives of compassion, to end their suffering and, therefore, often referred to as "mercy killing". This is the sense in which euthanasia—even voluntary euthanasia—is forbidden by Church and Law alike, and for which permissive legislation is sought by its advocates.

For those who believe in God and see themselves as His creatures and

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