

Club of Life rips Huxley and euthanasia

In the discussion at the Bonn conference concerning the treatment of comatose patients, Karen Steinherz, a representative of the Club of Life, took up the background of the so-called "bioethical sciences":

I am a Jewess and have studied Jewish theology. The contributions of this conference are especially unbelievable in respect to the history of euthanasia in Germany. I advise you urgently to read the book *Tödliche Wissenschaft [Deathly Science]*, by the Cologne geneticist Benno Mueller-Hill. There he writes that the so-called "science" during the period of National Socialism was nothing other than biological determinism in its most extreme form. The Nazis feared that the minorities in the country would propagate more rapidly than they, the Aryans. On account of this, they decided on extermination. Biological determinism is always the "political excuse" for such and similar acts.

In 1954, the British author Aldous Huxley wrote *Brave New World*, a collection of "scientific" essays in which he declared himself in favor of the elimination of the elderly, sick children, and the crippled. He received much support for the preparation of the book from neurologists in Great Britain and from Harvard, which today teaches and practices "eugenic science," as well as from the department of neuropsychopharmacology at the University of California. It was his aim to build up a three-class society, such as you are preparing today in Europe through the Maastricht Treaty. There would be an elite class, a small middle class, and an impoverished third stratum, who, with poorly paying jobs, would be provided with practically no medical services. This is the context in which this conference is to be viewed. . . .

You may be certain that we know what is behind your plans, and that we are communicating this to the population. I must add, that I am ashamed for the organizers and the European Commission, who use enormous sums of money to prepare criminal plans and conferences, instead of allowing this money to flow into the urgently required rehabilitation centers for coma patients.

to be cleared out of the way before you can practice euthanasia with utter freedom from constraint. "Active death-assistance" could then, as one participant expressed it, be carried out in practice perfectly "legally"—despite the fact that the law absolutely forbidding it is still on the books.

An example of the bioethicists' inhuman notion of man, was stated by Schotsmans: "The earthly life of a human being certainly has a fundamental value; however, the persisting and irreversibly vegetative life of a PVS patient no longer offers the necessary conditions for attaining higher human values such as love for his fellow man and for God.¹ If the prolongation of a life no longer offers any hope at all for [the patient] to realize these higher values, then the grounds for preserving this life by using artificial means are reduced."

'Now the killings can really get going'

The German representatives played no less a role in this matter than their British and Belgian colleagues; for example, Dr. (non-medical) Bettina Schöne-Seifert, from the Göttingen University philosophy department, who is considered to be a supporter of the Australian radical bioethicist Singer. The tenor of her speech was summed up by one conference participant: "Now the killings can really get going!"

Schöne-Seifert demanded a "professional 'consensus'

concerning when the diagnosis of a *permanent* loss of consciousness ought to be considered as established from a rational standpoint." The public is going to have to be steered into such a perception, she said, and the use of patients' living wills, and their recognition as legally binding in coma cases, must become widespread. "When there is no indication of how a particular PVS patient might have wanted to be treated, I personally see good grounds for presuming to go ahead and allow her or him to die (that is, as directed by the guidelines recommended in 1995 by the Swiss Academy of the Medical Sciences)."

Disagreements arise

Many of the approximately 100 guests, and even a few of the speakers, were unwilling to put up with these statements. The Club of Life clearly articulated its point of view at the beginning of the event, in a leaflet entitled "It Was Once Said: Euthanasia Never Again! Have We Forgotten Already?" In addition, representatives of preventive-care workers, the nursing field, and some doctors mutinied against the euthanasia plans being propounded. From the political domain, the only resistance came from the European Parliament delegate of the Greens, Hiltrud Breyer. Several participants walked out of the conference early, "in horror."

Other significant resistance came from the self-help group Schaedel-Hirmpatienten in Not (Cranial-Brain Patients in Peril). In their speeches, its chairman, Armin Nentwig, and the neurosurgeon and coma expert Dr. Andreas Zieger, drew the comparisons to Nazi Germany. They made it clear that

1. Although the term "persistent vegetative state" (PVS) may be widely used (especially by advocates of non-rehabilitation or killing of comatose persons), in fact, this term is scientifically meaningless. Its use is inherently misleading, and tends to demean and confuse.—*Translator's note*