

EIR Nuremberg Files

'Descent into barbarism': euthanasia in Holland

by Mark Burdman

One of the immortal contributions of the nation of Holland to civilization, is the paintings of the 17th-century master, Rembrandt. Through the centuries, admirers of Rembrandt have been particularly moved by his portrayals of aged people, as those who transmit wisdom and the powers of reflection to future generations.

It is, then, all the more sickening and criminal that today, that very nation has assumed the front lines, on behalf of the international "Death Lobby," to promote the murder of the elderly, and others, under the euphemism, "legalized euthanasia."

In August 1985, an official Dutch government commission drew up "conditions," or "guidelines," for how euthanasia might legally be committed. In the first days of 1986, the Dutch Cabinet forwarded a study on euthanasia to the Parliament, outlining under what specific conditions euthanasia might be defined as "legal." In the spring and summer of 1986, the Parliament will discuss legislation for "legalization of euthanasia, in one form or another," in the words of a Dutch source. All expectations are that legalization of euthanasia will occur in Holland, during the course of 1986.

Worse, the "Dutch model," as it is now increasingly being called by euthanasia advocates in Europe, is being billed, in the media in the United States, Sweden, and elsewhere, as the "wave of the future." In the United States, CBS-TV's "Sixty Minutes" program, in its first airing of 1986, favorably portrayed the work of Dutch euthanasia fanatic Dr. P. V. Admiraal; the show claimed that one in six people who died last year in Holland, died from euthanasia—a figure proudly corroborated by Admiraal himself. On Feb. 15-16, Admiraal is to be the featured speaker during two days of pro-euthanasia events at the Peoples' House in Stockholm, Sweden, which events are intended by its organizer, Berit

Hedeby of the Swedish "Exit" organization, to "force the Swedish population to give up its objections to euthanasia."

Happily, the shock effect of the Dutch case may also provide a rallying point for the opponents of euthanasia. When the Dutch government commission released its August



Rembrandt's "Bust of a man wearing a high cap, three-quarters right." The etching, dated 1630, is believed by some to be of the artist's father.

1985 findings, the Italian Catholic publication *Prospettivo nel Mondo* labeled the action "a fact of unprecedented gravity, on the edge of crime, which puts Holland outside of that culture of life that has spread in Europe."

In Holland itself, there are rearguard signs of resistance to the "Death Lobby" assault. In the same August-September period, the Dutch Catholic Bishops denounced the decision of the government euthanasia commission as a "descent into barbarism." Certain individuals and factions within the Christian Democratic Party, the predominant party in the ruling coalition, are known to be against euthanasia.

And, while Admiraal and the ultra-liberal Dutch media and political world like to project the image that Dutch citizens welcome this policy of mass murder, *EIR* has received reports of at least two *known* cases of panic, among Dutch elderly citizens, living in old-age homes where doctors had performed euthanasia, fearful, in the words of an anti-euthanasia Dutch source, "that they would be the next to go."

With such cases in mind, and with the paintings of Rembrandt motivating our conscience, we now present the case for the indictment of Dr. Admiraal and friends, for crimes against humanity, punishable under the statutes of the Nuremberg Tribunal. The main evidence presented, will be their own words.

In the footsteps of Hitler

Admiraal came to the attention of individuals outside Holland, with the publication of a mid-December, 1985 op-ed in the Swedish daily *Dagens Nyheter*, by Berit Hedeby, entitled, "Holland Legalizes Euthanasia." The article proclaimed, "Holland will be the first country in the world to legalize euthanasia." It favorably cited Admiraal, arguing that the disease AIDS will be the greatest boon to the euthanasia movement yet: "The AIDS epidemic will reap a lot of victims," Admiraal is quoted. "Why refuse them the liberation from a cruel death?"

In a private discussion during the first days of 1986, speaking from his office at a hospital in Delft, Holland, Admiraal concurred with this reported statement, and worse.

Asked about the truth of the contention of CBS-TV that one in six deaths in Holland are from euthanasia, Admiraal replied: "We think, for example, that 6,000-10,000 cancer patients, out of a total of 20,000 patients, are dying now from euthanasia. Some say the total may be well over 10,000. So, it's possible. But, nobody knows, because nobody tells. The difference with me," he boasted, "is that I *told* the prosecutor that I was performing euthanasia, and I was, nonetheless, set free last summer."

On the AIDS question, Admiraal was explicit: "There will be a problem in the future on this. The number of AIDS victims, is growing very, very, very fast. A lot of AIDS victims will ask for euthanasia. In fact, I think that the AIDS problem, in the future, will overrule the opposition to euthanasia. It will take 5-10 years, but it will come."

He then boasted that he was part of a group of doctors advising Holland's prestigious Royal Society of Medicine and Royal Society of Pharmacy, on "the right drug to use for euthanasia. We are all trying to do it, the way the government commission on euthanasia has advised. Certain criteria have to be fulfilled, in the commission's view: It has to be the end of the patient's life; there must be no cure for the patient; the family must know; another doctor must be present; it must be voluntary; and the prosecutor must be told. Of course, once the prosecutor is told, you will be set free, and everybody will accept it!"

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Still bursting with pride, Admiraal exclaimed, "For the rest of the world, these developments may be news, but not here in Holland. What we are doing in Holland is different, but what we are doing in Holland, maybe will help the rest of the world to move in the same direction. So far, Holland is completely unique for the whole world. The unique thing here is the good relations between doctors and patient, which provides the basis for what we have done with euthanasia. People are open to the idea."

Evidently, the protests from those Dutch senior citizens not wanting to be murdered, had not reached his ears. Or, perhaps they had, and had been stifled with the latest, accepted "euthanasia drug."

The clincher, was when Admiraal compared the euthanasia situation in Holland with that of West Germany, which has recently been the site of an extraordinary battle over euthanasia, centering around the case of a confessed murderer, Dr. Julius Hackethal. Hackethal, who is associated with the Society for Humane Death, was indicted on Jan. 1, 1986 for giving cyanide to a 69-year-old cancer patient. The "mercy-killing" was defended by Wolfgang Zeidler, the head of the Federal Constitutional Court, who not only promoted euthanasia, but blamed the Catholic Church for being an obstacle to the introduction of such a policy in Germany. His statement was roundly denounced by Joseph Cardinal Höffner, head of the West German Catholic episcopal conference (see box). Höffner charged that Zeidler was acting against morality and against the Constitution and, "in his function as

the highest judge in the country, is also whitewashing Hackethal before his trial even begins."

Referring to this controversy, Dr. Admiraal reported that he had attended a conference of the European Congress of the Societies for the Right to Die, in December 1985, in Frankfurt, West Germany, and was "disappointed" in the German situation.

"The problem with Germany is that you can't even use the word, 'euthanasia.' The problem, of course, is Hitler. You can't use the word 'euthanasia,' with the way the population is feeling about the Hitler period. But this is all wrong. Euthanasia is not killing innocent people and the disabled, as Hitler did, but it is, rather, helping people to die in a good way. In Germany, the problem is a misunderstanding, which makes it impossible to even say the word. Hitler misused the word 'euthanasia.'"

In Holland, he said, such touchy problems don't exist. Admiraal counts on support from a large ultra-liberal base in the Dutch population, supported by gnostic elements in the Dutch Reformed Church, centered in the Dutch InterChurch Council. It is this large constituency for ultra-liberal-gnostic ideas, that has made Holland the center of the European drug trade and for the activities of the Soviet-backed "peace movement." Nonetheless, Admiraal's assertion may be shocking

to those among Holland's older citizens who fought in the wartime resistance against the Nazis.

For Admiraal and others like him, euthanasia is now Holland's most exportable product. He is in touch with the California-based "Hemlock Society," headed by British subject Derek Humphreys, which supports actively "suiciding" terminally ill patients. "I hope the United States follows the same path we are on, but it will probably take longer," Admiraal says.

Admiraal-admirer Berit Hedeby claims that the "Dutch model" had been widely discussed during the meeting of the Fifth International Congress on Euthanasia, which took place in Frankfurt last year. This will also be a subject of discussion at the next international euthanasia congress, scheduled to take place, she asserted in a recent private discussion, in Bombay, India, at the end of this year.

The organizational channel for propagandizing on behalf of these kinds of euthanasia policies, according to Hedeby, is the World Federation of Societies for the Right to Die, whose head is New York lawyer Sidney Rosoff, one of the leaders of the New York Society for the Right to Die (a euphemism for the Euthanasia Society of America). The New York Society for the Right to Die is headed by Evans Collins, a banker at the Kidder Peabody firm, and by members of the

Cardinal denounces judge for backing euthanasia

Joseph Cardinal Höffner, head of the West German Catholic episcopal conference, issued the following statement on Jan. 15, charging the highest judge in the Federal Republic, Wolfgang Zeidler, with acting against morality and against the Constitution. He demanded that the appropriate "consequences" be drawn respecting Zeidler's legal standing, and called for him to be relieved of his post.

Zeidler, the head of the Federal Constitutional Court, had given a speech in Trier the week before, at a public panel convened to discuss "mercy-killing" and abortion. In it he backed the act of euthanasia committed by Dr. Julius Hackethal, who was recently indicted and will soon come to trial for murdering an elderly patient. Zeidler cynically compared the developing human embryo to a raspberry—ostensibly to demonstrate that the Catholic Church is absurd in its antagonism to abortion.

It is with great astonishment and deep consternation that I note the following remarks by the president of the Federal Constitutional Court, Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Zeidler:

- 1) The prohibition of murder on request (§216 of the Penal Code) is "an island of inhumanity, resulting from ecclesiastical influence on our legal order."
- 2) Regarding the evaluation of genetic engineering and of human dignity, he fears "a return to religion."
- 3) It was a step forward, that over the past years religion has been expunged from the legal order.
- 4) A fertilized egg-cell is a "raspberry-like structure," an "overgrown substance from the very first hour."

These are monstrous statements, which must be refuted once and for all.

1) The prohibition of murder on request is an expression of respect for the dignity of man. It protects the dying person from becoming the object of the decisions of third persons. The Catholic Church has repeatedly emphasized, that there does not exist a transition between letting a person die, and actively bringing about his death. In the former case, we are dealing with passive assistance for the dying; in the latter, with intentional killing.

Proskauer family, a New York Jewish-name family, whose 1930s claim to fame was in the same tradition: attempting to prevent American Jews from mobilizing against the Hitler regime.

In various countries, there exist national-euthanasia, or "right to die" societies. In Holland, there exists one of the most explicit, the Association for Voluntary Euthanasia, which is listed in the Amsterdam phone book, under the word "Euthanasia." In Australia, too, there is a Voluntary Euthanasia Society, and regional "voluntary euthanasia" groups. But, in most countries, the discrediting of the word "euthanasia" from the Hitler years, has engendered curious cover names, as in the organizations named Exit, in both Sweden and Britain, and the Society for the Right to Die with Dignity in France.

The perversion of constitutional law

The proponents of the "Dutch model" of state-legalized and state-"guided" euthanasia, have chosen Sweden as their next front, with the anticipated visit of Admiraal to Sweden for a Feb. 15 public forum and press conference, and a Feb. 16 private seminar with leading Swedish doctors and lawyers.

In preparation for this event, Hedeby is active on all

2) The dignity of man has its insurpassable foundation and exaltation in the precepts of Christian ethics. These are also binding upon the Federal Republic of Germany's Basic Law, which was adopted in "responsibility before God and men," and which guarantees the "inviolability" of the "dignity of man."

3) If over the past years religion has been expunged from the legal order, then this represents a loss, a step backward. The connection between right, law, and ethics, is inabrogable.

4) On Feb. 25, 1975, the Federal Constitutional Court declared that "the life developing within the mother's body . . . as her legal private possession, [is] protected by the Constitution (Art. 2, Sec. 2, Par. 1; Art. 1, Sec. 1GG)." It is the obligation of the state to protect the development of life. The human being is "human from the very beginning." This fact is not a mere juridical, or peculiarly Catholic statement, but is based on the relevant scientific knowledge. The assertion that the fertilized egg-cell is a "raspberry-like structure" exhibits remarkable ignorance.

In his remarks, the president of Germany's supreme constitutional body has not only departed from the Basic Law, he has spoken contrary to the Constitution. Our Constitution is protected by Article 20(4) of the Basic Law.

fronts, contacting government officials, the media, and leaders of the medical and legal professions, to win support for euthanasia. She has held private discussions with a Swedish television team, which is planning a late-January trip to Holland, to prepare favorable coverage on Admiraal's activities.

Hedeby's main collaborator, former Swedish Chief Judge Bertil Wennergren, is preparing a media barrage on behalf of changing the criminal codes of Sweden to expedite euthanasia. Wennergren cites the cases both of Holland and Switzerland; in the latter, statutes expediting euthanasia exist, but the issue lacks the parliamentary initiative and popular pro-euthanasia propaganda that exists in Holland.

The main argument being cited by Wennergren and Hedeby is so lunatic, that it would seem to have to have originated from a radical Calvinist standing on his head. In a December 1985 piece in *Dagens Nyheter*, "The Swedish Constitution Prescribes Euthanasia," Wennergren's argument was that constitutional guarantees of "individual free will" allow for euthanasia, as long as the euthanasia is "voluntary," since "free will" provides the "right" to kill oneself!

This argument, according to Hedeby, will form the basis for challenges to legal systems, in all Western countries. In a private discussion, she exclaimed, "The wish for euthanasia must be expressed by the patient himself. If we stress this, then we should absolutely succeed, since all countries guarantee free will. In fact, it is *against* the law, it is *criminal*, to treat a person against his free will. In that sense, the Swedish Constitution, and many other constitutions, prescribe euthanasia! Everything is okay, as long as we stick to free will!"

The shrill Ms. Hedeby, however, has little concern for the "free will" of Swedish citizens, to be freed from the psychological and political terrorism of the Euthanasia Lobby. She says: "I will *force* the Swedish population to accept euthanasia! This country has been in a quiet atmosphere for centuries! But we cannot avoid this question any longer, and keep giving meaningless medical treatment to keep people alive who are 80 years old, and very sick, and who are sent to so-called intensive care. This is a crazy situation! We must have a new society! Even the words, 'death with dignity,' mean nothing to me. In some cases, yes, we must give a morphine overdose, to help people die. But passive euthanasia is often not enough. I will struggle to have all these hospitals *stop* these meaningless treatments! All these life-sustaining treatments are a form of torture!"

Ms. Hedeby, however, had better beware. There is a certain brand of traditional conservatism in the Swedish population, and in segments of the medical profession, that could be mobilized in reaction against her chilling advocacy of murder. Indeed, in 1979-80, when it was revealed that she had "helped" an ill journalist friend commit suicide, there was a virtual lynch-mob atmosphere in certain quarters in Sweden, and Hedeby spent six months in a Swedish prison, as a result.

Should a Nuremberg Tribunal be reconstituted, to try her ilk, she might not get off so easy, the next time around.