

The Netherlands must not legalize euthanasia!

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche, the president of the German Civil Rights Movement Solidarity, issued this statement in March 1993.

Old people and the physically and psychologically ill will soon be without rights in Holland, and it will be possible for their physicians, even without their consent, to kill them. The new euthanasia law voted in by the government and the parliament, which sanctioned a long-standing, already intolerable unofficial practice, will without doubt lead to the mass murder of helpless patients, and can thence justifiably be compared to the *Kristallnacht* against the Jews in the Third Reich.

The spokesman of the Vatican, Monsignor Sgreccia, Secretary of the Papal Family Council, was absolutely correct when he compared this new law with the policies of the Nazis and warned that it would have the same consequences. Henceforth in Holland, a human life can be ended when it is no longer considered “economically profitable.” The monsignor’s statement caused immediate uproar and indignation; the papal nuncio was summoned to the Foreign Ministry and the Vatican was accused of having misinterpreted the law.

Indeed, the Dutch government denies absolutely having legalized euthanasia, claiming instead that they have merely codified existing medical guidelines. What this means in practice is that the same doctor who actively or passively has helped someone die, can pronounce a “natural” cause of death, and can rest assured that he has followed “all the rules.” It is not likely that a doctor would accuse himself and write a report that he had violated the law!

Even before this law was passed, Holland was notorious for its de facto toleration of euthanasia.

According to evidence from their Justice Department, there occurred about 5,000 euthanasia cases annually; according to the opponents of euthanasia, there were at least 10,000 cases, that is, 10% of all deaths in Holland! A few years ago, Baroness Adrienne von Till d’Aulnis de Bourneuil, the former president of the Dutch Association of Voluntary Euthanasia and executive member of the World Association of Euthanasia Organizations, emphasized in a speech that in these cases, there would be “discreet” agreements with the

police, judges, and elected officials.

Already during the 1960s, Holland was flooded with propaganda according to which euthanasia would solve the problems caused by medical progress which often only “uselessly” prolonged life. Thus J. Ekelmans, a few years before he was to become president of the Dutch Euthanasia Association in 1973, wrote that people who could no longer live with others “in mutual real communication” no longer possessed the right to defend their lives — under which he understood cases of Alzheimer’s disease, and severely brain-damaged traffic accident victims, who were in no way capable themselves of expressing their wish for euthanasia.

His successor, Professor Mutendam, went yet further and demanded that in cases where the “desire for euthanasia” were lacking — thus the victim himself wished to stay alive — the family ought to play “an important role.” It is clear what this means in a society where hedonism and egoism are accepted models of relationships.

When the law was still being formulated, it was characterized on target by Dr. Rutenfrans of the Catholic University of Nijmegen: “It is the result of a compromise between Christian Democrats, who are satisfied that euthanasia shall remain formally prohibited, and the Liberals, who are also satisfied, since euthanasia can be practiced and is de facto not punished.”

The Vatican has not misinterpreted the law, but rather has seen through the cheap trick of the Dutch government, which in the face of possible resistance from Catholic and Protestant circles to a bare-faced legalization of euthanasia, would simply leave it up to the doctors and lawyers, to put an end to a “life not worth living.”

Should this law go into effect — it is still not ratified by the Senate — this would threaten to break the dam for similar developments everywhere. For under the conditions of the rapidly worsening world economic situation, cost-benefit thinking with regard to human life will increase.

Principles of the Club of Life

The basic principles of the Club of Life, which I founded in 1982 as a counterpole to anti-life propaganda of the Club of Rome, read:

“The coincidence of a new world economic crisis and an ever more pronounced cultural pessimism signifies the danger, that the value of the individual life and the worth of man be no longer seen as inviolable. The brutality with which entire groups of people de facto are put into the ‘useless eaters’ category, irrespective of these being old or sick people or people from the so-called Third World, signifies the danger of a new fascism.”

What 10 years ago seemed to many people as exaggerated, is today unvarnished reality. And in the meantime, the truth has come out about Mr. Henning Atrott, former president of the “Society For Humane Dying” (DGHS) in Germany, and the subject of a feature story in *Der Spiegel*

("The Cyanide Gang"). Atrott and his aides have revealed themselves as an association of cynical cyanide dealers, whose methods are reminiscent of the intrigues of the international drug mafia.

Atrott is nothing more than a criminal without a conscience, shamelessly sucking the maximum personal profit from the suffering of other people. And those in Holland in the government and the parliament, who now de facto have given euthanasia free rein, are not much better.

For what does it mean to act recklessly against people who are weak and have no means to defend themselves? With such axioms underlying one's thinking and actions, the step from egoism to fascism is only a small one.

Recently, in another context, Hans Barbier wrote in a commentary in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* that egoism is the "plumbline of collective action" of society, and that it was an injustice to the citizens of the West, and wrong, to accuse egoism — since we have it to thank for our economic benefits — of being a painful disease. And these are in fact the premises of the so-called free market economy. It is naked Social Darwinism, in which the young and strong brutally use their elbows to shove the old and weak out of the way!

'Lead or Leave' fascists

Since the financial establishment in the United States has come to the consensus that it can no longer afford pensions, social security, and health care, a new yuppie organization has been founded, heavily financed by people such as Ross Perot and Lee Iacocca, among others, called "Lead or Leave," who are promoting their monstrosities at the universities. They assert that greedy old people, because of their high living standards and the high cost of their health care, are taking away the resources from the young. To prevent this, they have announced a war between generations. That is how fast yuppies become fascists.

Is there not the great danger, that under conditions of a depression which is becoming more acute, ever more and more people will be declared "useless eaters"? Do we not already have alarming numbers of citizens who have accepted the brainwashing of the Club of Rome, that the so-called Third World is "overpopulated" (and hence that famines such as in Somalia also have their advantages)?

The decision of the Dutch government is a frightful alarm signal, which tells us how far things have gone. Holland must be accused worldwide, condemned, and expelled from the community of nations until it repeals this law.

One of the purposes, and not the least important, of the founding of the Civil Rights Movement Solidarity was to function as an international resistance movement, to parry such fascist dangers, and to defend the inalienable rights of all people on this planet, implicit in their being created in *imago viva Dei*, in the living image of God.

Everyone who wants to defend life in these times must join us.

Interview: P. van Duijvenboden

'Care criteria' pushed for euthanasia

The following interview with Mr. P. van Duijvenboden of the Dutch Patients Union (NPV) was conducted by written correspondence by Jutta Dinkermann, a representative of the Club of Life, on April 13, and has been made available to EIR with Mr. van Duijvenboden's consent. The NPV is based in Veenendaal, Netherlands.

Q: What are the goals and tasks of the Dutch Patients Union?

Van Duijvenboden: We represent the interests of patients in Dutch health-care institutions and, of course, those of our members in particular. Our goal is to protect human life from the time of conception to death, doing this on the basis of God's word. Among the most important of the tasks of our union is counseling and informational work, handling of complaints, and training of volunteers in home care. The NPV was founded in 1982. With 55,000 members, it is the largest patient organization in Holland.

Q: Can you tell us what the practice of euthanasia in Holland has been? Can you give the number of people affected by euthanasia?

Van Duijvenboden: In Holland, euthanasia is criminal by law. In recent years, however, a discussion has emerged whether it should remain so since, in practice, euthanasia is done anyway without punishment. A government investigatory commission was established to investigate how frequently euthanasia occurs, and was named after its chairman, Remling, then the attorney general with the Dutch Supreme Court. Of course, this commission naturally covered only those cases of euthanasia that in fact were reported by doctors. The number of cases not reported is thus unknown.

The results of this investigation, which were presented in September 1991, and the concluding evaluation led to the newly proposed change in the law, which was discussed in the lower house and passed in February of this year. The discussion by the upper house, the Senate, will take place in May 1993; a decision is expected by mid-September.

Q: What will the new Dutch euthanasia law change?

Van Duijvenboden: On the one hand, euthanasia on request will remain punishable; on the other hand, this legislative