

Editorial

More Killing

Will New York State become one of the early testing grounds for a "death with dignity" law?

The possibility is shaping up that way. For instance, according to Women for the Unborn, an extremely active pro-life group in Long Island, the executive director of the American Euthanasia Foundation has already declared that this state will be one of the first to receive such a bill.

In a letter to the Fort Lauderdale News, Vincent F. Sullivan reportedly declared:

"After consultation with Rep. (Walter) Sackett, we find that we will be able to pass our Death with Dignity bill in the next session of the (Fla.) legislature.

"Then we move into Oregon and New York in that order where we have been assured by the lawmakers of comfortable passage."

Such a bill undoubtedly will be couched in the most humane of terms but we must remember euthanasia is active killing as versus the simple measure of merely turning off life-support systems for the terminally ill.

And regardless of the nobility of terms used for such killing, we must remember that in this present day climate of the disregard for life, they will eventually degenerate.

A Fable

Once there was a farmer who had a horse who was getting fat because he was eating too much and there just wasn't that much work for him to do.

The farmer, figuring he had better ways to use his money, decided on gradually reducing the amount of feed he gave the animal each day, with the idea that in that way the horse wouldn't notice the difference. The animal thus would be able to continue his chores — perhaps even more efficiently without the added weight. And the farmer would conserve feed.

"How did it work?" a neighbor asked the farmer.

"Fine," said the farmer, "except that just when I got him down to no food, the dang thing up and died on me."

As there are sound arguments for population control, we must be careful of the methods employed. Abortion, euthanasia and enforced sterilization all tend to eradicate civilization instead of strengthening it.

This Is Freedom?

Chilean bishops recently joined in a statement which accused the ruling junta of torture, arbitrary arrest and lengthy detentions, of causing large-scale unemployment, of making job dismissals for arbitrary reasons and of establishing an economic policy that had shifted the burden to the poor.

Since then Cardinal Raul Silva Henriquez has been quoted by Vatican Radio as saying that the very issuance of the statement "constitutes the best proof of the right to dissent which exists in Chile and of the existence of law in our country, as we had to touch upon many delicate subjects."

Obviously the bishops' statement and the cardinal's don't quite jell and from this remote point it is difficult to make clear judgments. Still we think it is fairly obvious that the cardinal was being political in his declaration as reported by Vatican Radio. For although he stated "we had complete freedom to publish it (the bishops' statement)," he also added that the junta had been informed beforehand of its contents and had adopted "the noble attitude" of respecting the bishops' freedom to issue it.

We hardly feel that when such an important group as the bishops in a Latin American country have to clear a statement with the government it constitutes "complete freedom." And it is very easy for a government to be "noble" when it musters this kind of authority.

Opinion

Rules Needed For Letters

Editor:

The appearance of two letters with respect to support of the Community Chest (April 24 and May 8) leads to some suggestions for improving your letters column. It is basic principle in carrying on a conversation that if Mr. A raises, say, two points, Mr. B. should reply to at least the main one before raising others.

In the case of the letters on the Community Chest, the first letter raised three questions, all of which were ignored in the second letter. Two of the questions were about the morality of contributing to a fund when part of the money goes toward a group which advocates the killing of human life.

The letter of May 8 ignored the moral question completely. The same tactic is used by many irresponsible opponents of state aid to God-centered schools: instead of discussing the moral questions involved, they discuss costs.

The second letter stated, correctly, that "about 1% of the funds of the community Chest goes to Planned Parenthood. It would be interesting to know if the writer would drink water that had only about 1% sewage in it. Incidentally, a better picture of the financing of Planned Parenthood is that 29% of its income in 1973 came from the Chest.

I believe your letters column would be much improved if letters which ignore the main points already raised on a given issue were returned to the writer. They could be accompanied by a form letter which would simply say that, if the writer wishes to address himself to the points already raised, before raising new ones, his letter would be considered.

A principal reason that letters to the editor columns are often so bad is that they fail to follow this policy. Rational discussion is effectively prevented, and the whole thing goes around in circles. The same is true in discussion groups and private conversations.

Kenneth O'Loane
331 Seneca Pkwy.
Rochester, N.Y. 14613

Jail Plight Decried

Editor:

We are deeply concerned with the recent grand jury report on the County Jail in Auburn

COURIER-JOURNAL

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan
President

Anthony J. Costello
General Manager

Carmen J. Viglucci
Editor

Rev. Louis J. Hohman
Episcopal Advisor

Vol. 89 No. 4 May 29, 1974

Published weekly by the Rochester Catholic Press Association. Subscription rates: Single copy 15c; 1 year subscription in U.S. \$6.00; Canada and South America \$8.50; other foreign countries \$9.50. Offices, Richmond Building, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. (716) 454-7050. Second class postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.



"YOU SHOULD SEE HIM IN A RESTAURANT!"

because we fear when all is said and done, more is going to be said than done. When all the smoke of the grand jury's fire has cleared, what is going to be left?

How long will human beings be confined 24 hours a day without benefit of physical exercise, educational opportunities or a chance at rehabilitation? How long will minimal requirements be permitted to create minimal feelings of hope and self-worth while officials fail to take positive steps to correct the abuses we know exist.

A correctional institution fails to live up to its name if it does not provide for the needs of the individual. Every person deserves the same concern; every human being should have the opportunity to grow. Can we expect a person to be rehabilitated in an institution that provides only the basic necessities of food and shelter?

Who are those who are in our County Jail? For the most part they are young people from our own community who have made mistakes and alcoholics and addicts who need professional counseling. Yet the facilities here do not begin to meet their needs or compare with the efforts of state institutions to do so.

Confined offenders are not our "enemies." They are fellow human beings most of whom will one day move freely in our midst either better or worse for their jail experience. If worse, either they have failed themselves or we have failed both them and ourselves.

Charleen Sawchuck,
Chairperson
The Cayuga County Human
Development Committee
Seneca-Cayuga Region
Catholic Diocese of Rochester

Right to Guns A Necessity

Editor:

We would like to comment on "The Gun Control Issue" (Courier-Journal 5/15/74). In history, the obstacle to tyranny has always been the ability of a citizenry to rise to its own defense. For this reason tyrants in the process of bringing whole populations under their absolute control, invariably have had to devise means for removing from their intended subjects all arms which would be used in forcible resistance. The corollary of this lesson from history is that wherever freedom has survived, it always has been reinforced by a well-armed citizenry.

Here are some examples from recent history. Under Stalin, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and Hungary were easily disarmed since the privately owned guns in these countries were registered. The same was true in China,

Mao Tse-tung also having the advantage of firearms registration, had little difficulty imposing on the Chinese people history's bloodiest reign of terror after removing their weapons.

By contrast, Finland in 1940, with a population of only 4 million (but with an unusually large number of trained riflemen) was able to resist and humiliate the mammoth armies of the USSR whose population totaled 170 million.

Many more examples could be given to show how the registration of guns is usually followed by confiscation. The right to own and bear arms is guaranteed by our Constitution. Our Founding Fathers knew only too well the dangers to disarmed citizenry. Many people around the world now bear witness to this unheeded warning, which they apathetically refused to believe—only to become victims of total enslavement. Those who won't learn from the mistakes of the past are doomed to repeat them.

Mr. and Mrs. Nicholas Hober
101 Lapham St.
Rochester, N.Y. 14615

Chest Thanks Community

Editor:

Now that the pavement pounding is over, it's time to thank the 189,000 Rochester area residents who contributed a record-breaking \$13,038,000 to this year's United Community Chest/Red Cross Campaign placing Rochester just behind Toronto among the 12 largest United Funds.

Over 820,000 new dollars were raised by the thousands of volunteers who obtained 7,100 more pledges than last year.

Monroe County's per capita gift is now \$18.26 — the highest in the country and far exceeding the \$11.49 of second ranked Cleveland, Ohio.

For this generous expression of support, the Chest, Red Cross and the 93 Chest supported agencies are deeply grateful.

Louis A. Langie Jr.
President

Frank M. Hutchins
1974 General Campaign
Chairman

Opinions to the editor should be addressed: Letter to the Editor, Courier-Journal, Richmond Building, 67 Chestnut St., Rochester, N.Y. 14604. They should be no longer than 1 1/2 pages, typed double-spaced. Names and addresses should be included. The paper reserves the right to edit all letters.