

Tories Pro Vita

The Newsletter of the SPUC Conservative Group

Number 1

Spring 2001

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THE PRO-LIFE STRUGGLE CONTINUES!

The last half-century has seen a marked decline in the respect shown to innocent human life in the United Kingdom. In the 1950s there was still capital punishment for murder but, if a woman convicted of murder and sentenced to death could show that she was pregnant, her sentence would have been commuted to life imprisonment for the sake of her unborn child. This was a centuries-old tradition throughout the civilized world. Even during the Reign of Terror in Revolutionary France in the 1790s, a Princess of Monaco was able to obtain a temporary stay of execution by claiming that she was pregnant. Today, progressive opinion, while holding an abhorrence of capital punishment for murderers, believes that the life of an unborn child is of little consequence.

CHANGING VIEW OF HUMAN LIFE

Looking back over this last half-century, Conservatives can appreciate the view of the second Viscount Falkland: 'When it is not necessary to change, it is necessary not to change.' The changing view of human life is reflected in the change of the attitude towards children, from that of the Psalmist, 'Lo, children and the fruit of the womb: are an heritage and gift that cometh of the Lord.' to that of the purchaser of a consumer product who may legitimately reject the product if he changes his mind, it is not

what he wanted, or it is imperfect in any way.

In retrospect, the withdrawing of the penalties for would-be suicides may perhaps be seen as the first step down the road paved with good intentions. The law before the 1961 Suicide Act had declared a view of society that a person had no right to take his own life; whereas today, many believe that suicide is a right. Allowing people to think that their own lives could be of little consequence leads to the view that the lives of others could have no merit.

TRIUMPH OF EMOTIONALISM AGAINST THE TRUTH

The passage of the Abortion Act 1967 opened a major breach in the defence of innocent human life. It represented a triumph of emotionalism against the truths of science and morality. Despite the widely-known fact that at the moment of conception a new human has been formed, the location of the unborn child within his mother's womb allowed hard cases to make bad law. Further, the right to life of the unborn child from the moment of conception derives simply from the fact that he is a human. It does not depend on whether his conception was planned or even on whether, once his presence is known, that he is welcome. Further, there are no acceptance tests to pass before he attains his right to life. An unborn handicapped human has the same right to life as a born handicapped human.

The SPUC Conservative Group comprises those members of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children who are also members of the Conservative and Unionist Party: *Conservatives and Unionists protecting human life from the moment of conception until the time of natural death.*

The next step on the downward path was the development of *in vitro fertilization* (IVF) whereby sperm was used to fertilize an egg or several eggs; the fertilized eggs are then implanted in a womb. The production of life may seem better than its destruction, however, there are essential aspects to IVF that make it unacceptable: the production of so-called 'spare' embryos, whereby more embryos are produced than are required for implantation in a womb, a process reminiscent of the growing of carrots that are planted in excess of requirements and then thinned out; the experimentation on embryos in order to improve techniques; the development of a consumer mentality towards children.

Abortion and IVF affect the early stages of life, just after conception. At the other end of the continuum of life is euthanasia where someone is deliberately killed before natural death occurs; this is clearly distinguished in intention from the giving of pain-relieving treatment where the secondary but unintended result can be the hastening of death.

ABORTION AND EUTHANASIA

A major difference between euthanasia and abortion is that candidates for euthanasia have votes whereas those for abortion do not. In consequence the campaign for euthanasia takes various subtle forms: the withholding of food and drink from patients in a so-called vegetative state that results in their deaths from starvation or dehydration, under the pretence that the provision of food and drink is medical treatment; the development of so-called 'living wills' in which people are encouraged to state under which conditions, perhaps several decades in the future, they would refuse medical treatment. Once 'voluntary' euthanasia is established, whether by law or merely by practice, the stage would be set for the introduction of compulsory euthanasia: anybody who refuses voluntary euthanasia and uses expensive medical resources is being selfish and deserves to have their opinions ignored.

The recent introduction of the Morning-After Pill illustrates the intellectual dishonesty of its advocates. Although marketed as a contraceptive, one of its major effects is to prevent the implantation of a fertilized egg in the lining of the womb. A device that destroys a fertilized egg is too late to prevent conception and so cannot be described as a contraceptive: it is an abortifacient.

CLONING OF HUMAN EMBRYOS

Parliament's recent acceptance of regulations permitting the cloning of human embryos is the latest downward step in the movement against innocent human life: an embryo is produced simply in order for experiments to be performed on him. No matter that the claimed intention is to benefit someone else: it is wrong to perform destructive experiments on Brown in order to benefit Jones.

Although much of the pressure that has undermined the pro-life position has come from the parties of the Left, Conservatives are not totally clean on pro-life issues. Many Conservative MPs, though not the majority, have voted for legislation that threatens innocent human life and the Conservative administrations of 1970-74 and 1979-97 did nothing to reverse that legislation: indeed, it was during Margaret Thatcher's premiership that the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act was passed. Nevertheless, Conservatives are not bound by the errors of past Conservative administrations and past Conservative MPs. Where society has walked in the wrong direction, it is necessary to turn and head in the right direction. In past decades, society has moved in the wrong direction against the interests of the weak and vulnerable. It is the duty of the Conservative and Unionist Party, along with others, to reaffirm in principle, and to re-establish in practice, the sanctity of innocent human life.

Tories Pro Vita is sent automatically to members of the SPUC Conservative Group. If you are not a member of this Group but would like to join: if you are already a member of SPUC, contact the Membership Department and ask for your records to be updated with the fact that you are a member of the Conservative and Unionist Party; if you are not already a member of SPUC: contact them at the address below; ask for a Membership Application Form; complete it and return it, stating that you are a member of the Conservative and Unionist Party.

Printed and published by SPUC, 5/6 St Matthew Street, London, SW1P 2JT.