

WORLD FEDERATION OF DOCTORS WHO RESPECT HUMAN LIFE

Noordwijkerhout, May 13.

Delegates from Western Europe and the United States have founded a "World Federation of Doctors who respect human life", after a week end congress in Noordwijkerhout, Holland. The main purpose of the new body is to coordinate worldwide efforts to prevent the voluntary destruction of human life by medical technicism.

"In front of the concerted attack on human life by pressure groups and vested interests, we felt necessary to provide our colleagues and those responsible for legislation with an instrument to spread the real facts and data on all aspects involved in the normal development of human life from its conception to its end" said Dr. Philippe Schepens, from Belgium, general secretary of the federation.

The delegates launched a worldwide appeal to doctors from any race and creed to join the organization and to create similar entities in the countries where they still don't exist.

The federation also aims at promoting a supranational law with regard to abortion and euthanasia, in which the respect of life is clearly stated.

Immediate support for the federation was pledged by the "International Institute for the right to life" in Strasburg, represented here by Mr. Haitsma Mulier.

According to the newly elected president of the World Federation, Dr. Karel Gunning, "nearly 60.000 doctors from Western Europe and the United States have so far signed statements proclaiming that the unborn child is an individual human being from the very conception onwards, developing into a personality both in mental and physical respects".

Among fundational member organizations of the Federation one can count the "Europaische arzteaktion" (Germany), Nederlandse Artsenverbond (Netherlands), "Association des medecins pour le respect de la vie" (France), "Belgische geneescheren vereniging voor de verdediging van het leven (Belgium) and the "Pro Life Committee", USA.

THE FOUR M's

"There is an international abortion-euthanasia movement", said Professor Dr. Paul Marx from St. John's University, Minnesota, USA. "It is well financed and led. The tactics of propogandising for abor-

tion-euthanasia fall into four broad categories, the four "M's of Money, Media, Manpower and Manipulation". For him it is a matter of avoiding "a nightmare that destroys the foundation of civilization and humanity".

This pro-abortion movement, says Dr. J. C. Wilke the author of the well known "Handbook on Abortion" from the U.S., is an elitist movement and does not have the support of most of the people". Another American, Dr. Herbert Ratner, editor of the "Child and Family Quarterly" said: "The road to social maturity is not to kill the unwanted but to convert the unwanted into the wanted".

The effects of abortion in European countries where abortion has become legalized were criticized by a number of Speakers. Dr. Melbo from Oslo stated that the amount of abortions in Norway has risen from some 1000 before the law was passed to over 12000 a year now. "Increased contraception has not prevented abortion, but on the contrary, it has increased it and especially among unmarried girls".

The British abortion act of 1967 has recently been under heavy fire. Some 80,000 people marched to Parliament on April 28 in protest. Dr. Peggy Norris told to the Noordwijkerhout congress that "abortion has become the most frequent operation in hospitals in Britain and in the United States".

Doctor Margaret White, a general practitioner and a Magistrate in a London suburb stated that some half million abortions have been committed in Britain since the 1967 act. "The consequences for the mothers involved have been depression, permanent sterility and latent morbidity." But abortion, she contends, has affected the whole nation, it has become an easy substitute for housing and social help. It has made life cheaper; it is paving the way for euthanasia.

The French Professor Jerome Lejeune, a world authority in genetics, recalled that departing from the chromosomal structure it can be proved that the particularities of each human being are programmed since the very conception. There is no other moment of man's development when one can define the beginning of life, he concluded.

For Dr. Henri Lafont from Paris, president of the A.M.R.V., "public opinion has a distorted view of what abortion really means. A medical association must only play an educational role but must also encourage doctors to take an active part in defending life and in defending their own clinical freedom, as a pre-condition for safeguarding medical ethics". The demographic aspects of these problems were analyzed by Dr. Emmanuel Tremblay secretary general

of the militant association "laissez les vivre" (let them live), who exposed the dangers of a rapid regression of the European population due to contraception and abortion.

Among the social consequences of abortion quoted by other experts, were the rapid increase in venereal diseases, which has become the commonest infectious disease in many countries, more usual than measles. The spiraling of crime and violence may also be partially attributed to the failure of family morals involved in the abortist attitude. Children battering is only one aspect of this. One speaker mentioned that in Japan, with the highest abortion rate known, 200 children are killed after birth each year, some thrown out of train windows.

Present at the Congress were representatives of pro-life youth movements. Herman Spicker, president of the German J.A.L. assured the assembly of the support of the youth organizations in Europe in this struggle for life.

There was a general consensus in admitting that widespread contraception has resulted in more abortions. Contraception explained Prof. Lopez Garcia of the University of Navarre, Spain, "a profound erotization of the neurophysiological mechanisms". It implies the inability of facing an unwanted pregnancy, and leads ineluctably to abortion.

Special resolutions on these matters were adopted at the end of the congress:

The World federation of doctors who respect human life, erected on May 12th, 1974, at Noorwijkerhout-Holland representing colleagues from:

Austria, Belgium, France, Canada, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, USA, declares as follows:

1. This federation adheres to the Declaration of Geneva of 1948, and reiterates that its members will maintain the utmost respect for human life from the time of fertilization until natural death.

2. This federation, furthermore, upholds the fundamental, unconditional individual right to Life, regardless of its state of development or mental, physical or material circumstances, and notwithstanding any changes that may occur within society.

3. Doctors should not kill or harm their patients, doctors cannot therefore take part in selective killing in order to solve a psychological, socio-economic or demographic problem.

4. Experience has shown that legalised abortion fails to reduce the number of illegal abortions significantly, although it does lead to an escalation of the total number of abortions.

There is good medical evidence that a liberal abortion policy induces younger women to accept abortion as a birth-control method of choice.

5. This federation also adheres to the United Nations Declaration of Rights of the Child, which states that: "the child, by reason of this physical and mental immaturity, needs special safe guards and care including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth".

6. There is no medical evidence to suggest that handicapped children would, themselves prefer not to have been born, neither is there evidence to show a causal relationship between the unwanted pregnancy and the rejected child.

7. The specialities of obstetrics and gynaecology, which honor and revere womanhood and procreation, find that liberal abortion degrades and humiliates women, and that liberal abortion creates more moral, psychological and physical problems among patients than it solves in the way of improved "quality of life."

8. This federation agrees that in countries in which abortion is legalised under whatever safeguards, the clinical freedom of doctors has been subjected of inevitable and unacceptable pressures.

In the interest of the dignity of human life, of the health of our patients and in the integrity of the medical profession, therefore, we appeal for the withdrawal of proposed or existing abortion laws.

We urge governments to take positive steps to help women with unintentional pregnancies and children whose conception was unintentional by adopting adequate social and economic measures.

Dear Doctor:

This is a worldwide effort. This statement originated in France. The dramatic presentation of ten thousand signatures at a Paris press conference one year ago effectively stalled a well orchestrated attempt to legalize abortion in France.

Since then, other countries have been collecting signatures and continue to do so. To date France has over 17,000 signatures out of a total of 50,000 practicing physicians; Belgium 4,000 out of 12,000; Holland 3,500 of 15,000; and Canada just beginning, has over 3,000.

The first meeting of the WORLD FEDERATION OF DOCTORS WHO RESPECT LIFE has just been held in Holland. The first major project, unanimously decided upon, was to extend the collection of

WORLD FEDERATION OF DOCTORS 503

signatures to other countries. All of the present pro-life doctor's groups in the United States have agreed to cooperate in gathering signatures.

We urge you to sign and return promptly.

DECLARATION OF DOCTORS

From the moment of fertilization, that is from the earliest moment of biologic existence, the developing human being is alive, and entirely distinct from the mother who provides nourishment and protection.

From fertilization to old age — is the same living human being who grows, develops, matures and eventually dies. This particular human being with his or her characteristics is unique and therefore irreplaceable.

Just as medicine is at the service of life when it failing, so too it should serve life from its beginning. It should have absolute respect for human life regardless of age, illness, disability or degree of dependence.

When confronted with tragic situations, it is the duty of the doctor to do everything possible to help both the mother and her child. The deliberate killing of an unborn human to solve social, economic, or eugenic problems is directly contradictory to the role of the doctor.

Address

Name

Professional
Status

Signatures