

Editorial Comment

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Editorial Comment

Regard for the right to life of the innocent and, above all, of the helpless individual is basic in the moral attitudes of civilized society. A society which does not accept this life as inviolable has no claim to the title of civilization. Where this right is denied or endangered, the other human rights—be they personal (liberty, integrity, property, reputation etc.), family, or social—do not count for much.

Despite this principle of the absolute inviolability of innocent human life, a recent movement to liberalize abortion laws in the various states has resulted in the anomalous situation that whereas an alleged criminal gets every aid and protection because of the law's anxiety that an innocent man should never be condemned, the helpless child in the womb is sacrificed with light scruple. Against the general current of contemporary legal thinking throughout the world that a child in the womb is a person, this movement operates on the basis that he not a person.

Control over the life of another is a power too dangerous to be left in human hands. If the principle of absolute inviolability is once breached, there is a precedent which will be employed to push open the door ever further either with the silk glove of legal reform or with the mailed fist of the totalitarian regime. It is against this background that the movement for the liberalization of abortion legislation should be judged.

As an aid in this judgment, *The Catholic Lawyer* features a symposium on abortion legislation in this issue.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward Tegen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

EDITOR