

hidden, can be much larger than 500 per year." (*Statistics of Induced Abortion, International Conference on Abortion*, Sept. 1968, Washington, D.C.)

Most of the supporters of The Pill—the same physicians, who are minimizing deaths from The Pill—are in the forefront decrying deaths from illegal abortion as a rationale for relaxation of the abortion laws. They do this with humanistic fervor. All can lament these deaths, for each human life is precious. But where is their concern for women dying from The Pill, which match in number the deaths from criminal abortion? They dismiss the number of deaths from The Pill as inconsequential, a comment no abortion advocate has yet made concerning deaths from abortion.

Incidentally, these same physicians take pleasure in referring to the rhythm method of conception control as Vatican roulette (a term which at best can only be applied to unsupervised calendar rhythm). In Vatican roulette, however, when the woman loses, she at least gains a baby, a baby who very quickly becomes a precious asset. With The Pill, the woman plays real roulette—Russian roulette: when she loses, she loses her life!

It seems that Dr. Louis Hellman, who as Chairman and official spokesman of the Committee on Obstetrics and Gynecology of the FDA which weighs Pill safety, has become particularly negligent in his public interpretation of the English findings.

The Hellman Committee came into being because of the dissatisfaction of FDA with the reports of previous committees: the Searle sponsored American Medical Association Conference (Sept. 10, 1962), the Wright Committee of the FDA appointed by Dr. Goddard's predecessor (Aug. 4, 1963) and the World Health Organization Committee (December 6, 1965). To its credit, the Hellman Committee was the first of all committees to introduce a cautionary note. *Time Magazine* (8/19/68) expressed it as follows: "On the key issue of whether the pills are ready safe, the formal report took refuge behind a double negative 'The committee finds no adequate scientific data, at this time, proving these compounds unsafe for human use.' A committee spokesman for human use." A committee spokesman translated: "We wanted to put a word of caution, to put a yellow light, not a green light, on the matter." The committee's spokesman was subsequently identified by the Associated Press as the chairman, Dr. Hellman (*Washington Post* 8/16/66).

With subsequent proof of The Pill as a cause of death and serious disease, logic would dictate that Dr. Hellman switch from the yellow light to the red light. His public statements indicate his acceptance—sometimes perhaps with reluctance—of the validity of the English reports: "Discussing risks of birth control pills . . . Dr. Hellman said studies in Great Britain have shown that the pills have caused thromboembolism. But he said the risks are extremely small." (*Chicago Sun-Times* 1/22/68). "Dr. Hellman . . . concedes that there is a cause-and-effect relationship between birth control pills and sometimes fatal lung clots . . ." (*Science News* 2/3/68). According to Herbert Black and Carl Cobb of the *Boston Globe*, however, Hellman, "has been widely misquoted on his assessment of the British Study." In his statement to the *Globe* Dr. Hellman stated: "The study has demonstrated a very real relationship, but is only suggestive of a cause-and-effect relationship" (2/21/68).

But, lo and behold, it is not a red light he has "put on the matter" but a green light, as indicated by subsequent public statements: "I think the British data is conclusive. I think it proves, and this is a new item conclusively, what we have suspected for some time, that there is a cause and effect relationship between the taking of oral contraceptives and clots (but the British figures) should not be taken in themselves as at all alarming. It's a very small risk. The British say the risk is less than having a baby. Perhaps this isn't the proper way to evaluate the risk. I don't think personally that the way to talk about this risk is in comparison with the things we do every day that we don't have to do . . . I think the pill . . . has proved remarkably safe over the seven or eight years that it has been used . . . I would not hesitate a bit in prescribing it for teenagers . . . I don't think there is anything in the immediate future that will cast any serious doubt on the safety (of The Pill) beyond what we know right now." (*The Today Show*, 5/2/68). "There's no sense trying to hide the risk. These very responsible figures show (the) danger . . . The risk of thromboembolism in pregnancy is the same as that from The Pill. And the over-all risk of death in pregnancy is considerably higher" (*Medical World News* 5/24/68).