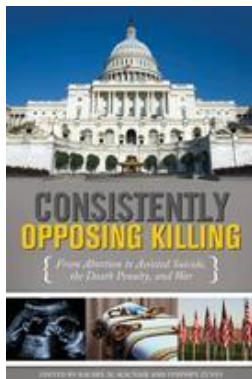


# Consistently Opposing Killing: From Abortion to Assisted Suicide, the Death Penalty, and War



*an anthology on the consistent life ethic – that right-to-lifers would be more effective if they also opposed other forms of killing, and the same is true for peace and justice movements.*

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"Some of us who went through the anti-war struggles of the 1960s and early 1970s are now active in the right-to-life movement . . . We are moved by what pro-life feminists call the "consistency thing" – the belief that respect for human life demands opposition to abortion, capital punishment, euthanasia, and war. We don't think we have either the luxury or the right to choose some types of killing and say that they are all right, while others are not. A human life is a human life; and if equality means anything, it means that society may not value some human lives over others."

-- Mary Meehan, *The Progressive*, September, 1980

"I'll begin by indicating how I became aware, very belatedly, of the "indivisibility of life" . . . because I think it may be useful to those who are interested in bringing others like me . . . to a realization that the "slippery slope" is far more than a metaphor. . . I remain an atheist, a Jewish atheist . . . For me, this transformation started with the reporting I did on the Babies Doe. While covering the story, I came across a number . . . who were convinced that making it possible for a spina bifida or a Down's syndrome infant to die was the equivalent of what they called "late abortion." . . . These infants were *born* . . . they were entitled to at least the same rights as people on death row – due process, equal protection of the law. So for the first time, I began to pay attention to the "slippery slope" warnings of pro-lifers. . . And I began to find out, in a different way, how the stereotypes about pro-lifers work. When you're one of them and you read about the stereotypes, you get a sort of different perspective."

- Nat Hentoff

"My own decision to become publicly active in the pro-life movement was, I admit, rather selfish. I followed the news stories while a newborn child was starved at an Indiana hospital because he was born with Down's syndrome. The years I had spent fighting for federal architectural standards, for equal access and equal employment suddenly didn't make sense. If the new strategy was to eliminate those of us with disabilities at birth, then that was where I would stand up for our rights. . . . Having looked at the world with the perspective of a man with a physical disability, I saw an attitude - and a mechanism - of oppression, as tangible as racism, that held people like myself at the margins of society. . . . If being open to the experience of one's disability can lead to action in the pro-life movement, what about in the peace movement? A disabled veteran of Vietnam is not likely to have a romanticized idea of war. The disabled children of hibakusha (survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki) don't need to ask if it is a sin to build nuclear weapons."

- Scott Rains, disability-rights activist

"If women must submit to abortion to preserve their lifestyle or career, their economic or social status, they are pandering to a system devised and run by men for male convenience . . . Of all the things which are done to women to fit them into a society dominated by men, abortion is the most violent invasion of their physical and psychic integrity."

- Daphne de Jong, New Zealand writer



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