
Euthanasia in America

How Americans came to love the policies their fathers died to stop

by Linda Everett

In 1975, when the Karen Ann Quinlan case exploded in New Jersey, it took only eight months of the media's "pull-the-plug" histrionics to get Americans to jump on the right-to-die wagon. At that time, public opinion polls reported 39% of people polled agreed that a person had a right to end his life, when faced with an incurable disease. By 1982, the number climbed to 45%, and in 1983 to 62%. All polls involve trickery, even those of the American Medical Association, which cheerfully announced that the majority of Americans don't mind starvation for some patients. But what influences Americans to give up policies their forefathers fought to protect?

EIR's Oct. 2 Feature covered U.S. legislation and court decisions supporting euthanasia since April 1984. This report gives examples of the role that the media, government, Catholic Church, and medical groups have played in gaining acceptance for genocide as medical policy.

Dying cheaply, 'with dignity'

One of the major culprits in manipulating popular opinion is the medical insurance industry. In 1985 the Prudential Foundation launched a nationwide initiative called "Bioethics in the Community: A Program of Local Decision Making." The program aimed to get community support to shift the fundamental basis of U.S. health care from saving lives, to medical triage, health care rationing, and euthanasia—all "democratically" arrived at by the brainwashing mechanism of "patients' rights" and "quality of life" ploys. The Hastings Center Institute of Society, Ethics, and the Life Sciences, of Briarcliff Manor, New York, long the linchpin of all aspects of U.S. euthanasia operations, trained applicants and evaluated their progress.

The New Jersey Citizens' Committee on Biomedical Ethics received a Prudential grant, along with \$86,000 from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, and monies from other insurance and drug companies. Directors of that committee are also top guns in Gov. Jim Kean's notorious Commission for the Ethical and Legal Delivery of Health Care. The attor-

neys that delivered the country's most advanced euthanasia court ruling are also on the Citizens' Committee and are contributing to national and state groups. This network held over 600 rigged public forums throughout the state, took polls, fed the results of what "the people" wanted into the governor's commission, the legislature, and the courts, receiving enormous media coverage in the process. Prudential's euthanasia squad also operates Oregon Health Care Decisions and groups in several other states.

Blue Cross/Blue Shield, as one of the major insurers in the country, began in January 1986 to promote a model hospice benefit. Now, all New York insurance companies and group insurance plans are required to provide the hospice option. Other states are mandating the same.

Working with the insurance companies since spring 1984 have been organizations allegedly committed to improving the welfare of the elderly, who are now stomping for the Society for the Right to Die and Concern For Dying. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), the Gray Panthers, Senior Citizens, and the Older Women's League (OWL) are all geared up to get members to sign living wills, hold forums, and campaign to get every state to pass living wills laws.

Other institutional activity includes:

Sept. 20-23, 1984: World Voluntary Euthanasia Conference, Nice, France. Derek Humphrey of Hemlock Society announces, "Active voluntary euthanasia is an idea whose time has definitely come—internationally." Dr. Cristiaan Barnard calls for killing patients as doctors see fit. Five French physicians confess to routinely killing patients and sign a manifesto calling for other physicians to campaign to make euthanasia legal.

Feb. 8-9, 1985: Second National Voluntary Euthanasia Conference, California. Hemlock Society speakers promote suicide clinics, "rational suicide" for everyone, including children, and using economic pressures to get the elderly "to do your dying early," not burdening your family.

July 1985: Concern For Dying (formerly the Euthanasia

Education Council) calls for "assault" on U.S. hospitals to put living wills on every patient's hospital chart.

Oct. 3, 1985: The AIDS Foundation of New York City says treating AIDS patients "is a pocketbook issue," and the patients should go to hospices.

Nov. 5, 1985: Death cultist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross announces plans for 250-acre hospice for infants with AIDS in Virginia.

Jan. 16, 1986: Derek Humphrey, founder of Hemlock Society, proposes a law allowing doctors to give lethal injections to terminal patients. The Humane and Dignified Death Act is sent to legislators in Florida, California, and Arizona. Humphrey says current laws springing from the idea that life is sacrosanct "must change."

Sept. 25-27, 1986: Hemlock Society's Third Annual Voluntary Euthanasia Conference, in Washington, D.C. Suicide enthusiasts swap murder stories, "self-deliverance" methods, and plan an effort to spring wife-killer Roswell Gilbert from his Florida jail. Derek Humphrey and wife, Ann "Wicked" Wickett, launch a new lobbying arm, Americans Against Human Suffering, to legalize lethal injections, with \$50,000 from Hemlock's coffers.

Sept. 11, 1987: Hastings Center wants hospitals and nursing homes to develop policies based on its "Guidelines on the Termination of Life-Sustaining Treatment." The "ethics" think tank intends the report to "advance debate" on the use of economic considerations in decisions concerning life-sustaining treatments.

Sept. 20, 1987: Delegates of California State Bar Association pass the first resolution in the United States promoting physician-assisted suicide. The "Dignified Death Act," sponsored by Hemlock Society sympathizers in the Beverly Hills Bar Association, would allow physicians to give lethal injections to terminally ill patients who ask for it as early as 10 days after a physician predicts they have six months to live.

Your friend in death: the news media

A nation cannot be beguiled into giving up its inalienable right to life without massive cooperation from the press. Hitler used films depicting his targets for euthanasia as "a cancer" burdening society. So, in the United States, the news media have become increasingly shameless in promoting euthanasia, for larger and larger categories of people.

Sept. 23-25, 1984: *New York Times* runs feature series, "Many See Mercy in Ending Empty Lives," promoting hospital "mercy-killings," murder-suicide pacts as rational, commonplace events compared to "empty lives."

December 1984: *New York Times* kicks off a six-week Nazi extravaganza. Here are just a few titles: "Negotiated Death: An Open Secret," "To Suffer a Prolonged Illness or Elect to Die: A Case Study; Medical Tools Force New Life-and-Death Choices," "Movement Seeks to Advance Rights of Dying," "Intensive Care Units: Doctors Ask 'Who Lives, When Is It Time to Die?'" "Dying Days for Patients in

Hospital: Some Agonizing Choices," "For Doctors and Patients, Decisions on Death," "Medicine, Law and the American Way of Death," "N.J. Supreme Court Broadens 'Right to Die' for Terminally Ill to Include Feeding."

June 5, 7, 1985: *Wall Street Journal*: "Why Can't I Put My Mother to Sleep?" Allen Otten claims dogs get the humane right to euthanasia, why not people? Using bankers' ethics, Otten calls for stopping "wrongful life" suits by having handicapped children aborted.

July 15, 1985: *Washington Post*: "Final Requests: Preparing For Death." Calls for the elderly to "plan the final stages" early by signing away their lives with living wills.

September 1985: NBC reporter Betty Rollin launches her new book, *Last Wish*, which tells how she and her husband researched murder/suicide methods, allegedly at her mother's request. Rollin claims she could not find more attentive doctors or decent medical care to ease her mother's cancer pain.

March 16, 1986: Former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare Joseph Califano asks: "Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Pays?" in his new book on *America's Health Care Revolution*. He attacks "waste and abuse" in U.S. health care system.

September 1986: "Managing Our Medical Miracles"—seminars on media and society at Columbia University kick off 10-part TV series of roundtable "debates." Life/Death topics include physicians overdosing patients to let them die, triaging expensive neonatal intensive care units, high school sex clinics, AIDS testing, and medical malpractice.

Sept. 24, 1986: "Who Lives, Who Dies, Who Decides"—a three-hour brainwashing session designed by Pacific Presbyterian Medical Center in California to give maximum rigged "opinion-forming" effect on 8,000 legislators, doctors, religious and health care workers participating in 100 centers across the United States. Questions forced viewers to accept medical rationing and triage as necessary—exactly what their rigged poll later showed.

December 1986: *Life* magazine produces 12-page feature on voluntary euthanasia, highlighting the Hemlock Society.

Jan. 11, 1987: NBC-TV airs movie about Roswell Gilbert, who blew his wife's brains out because she had Alzheimer's disease. Gilbert, from prison, pleads, "What else could I do?" At least 14 elderly citizens died in suicide-murder pacts directly after viewing the film.

March 1, 1987: "In Defense of Voluntary Euthanasia"—secular humanist Sidney Hook says he's ready to die, in a *New York Times* commentary.

March 5, 1987: "Suicide in Paris: Together in Final Anguish," full-page feature for seniors in *Washington Post*, says legal euthanasia is an alternative to violent "mercy murders" and murder/suicides. Hemlock Society's Derek Humphrey says, "Some couples want to die together, even if one of them isn't sick. Who is to criticize them?"

March 6, 1987: NBC-TV's "Headlines on Trial" "debates" euthanasia. Moderator Arthur Miller manipulates audience to rally for starvation as their "right."

March 13, 1987: After a rash of teen suicides in several states, Concern for Dying suicide advocate Margaret Pabst-Battin and Hemlock Society's Curt Gerbesi call for assisting suicides, in *Washington Times*.

May 24, 1987: CBS-TV Movie "Baby Girl Scott" targets doctors as mad scientists wielding modern medical technology against distraught parents who want their child, born with multiple disabilities, to die. Doctors are accused of experimenting to save life "just to prove you can do it."

June 1, 1987: ABC-TV movie for Memorial Day invites you to commit suicide, plugs the Hemlock Society, which assisted in "When the Time Comes." A young cancer victim plans suicide with a friend when her husband refuses to kill her, before she is "hooked to a machine and a vegetable."

July 1987: Actor Richard Dreyfuss promotes Hemlock Society and Americans Against Human Suffering with an appeal to a quarter of a million people to help legalize lethal injections. His 1981 film, *Whose Life Is It Anyway?* features him as quadriplegic who wins the right to starve to death in a hospital.

September 1987: *Omni* magazine pushes new class of "dead people." In "Redefining Death," *Omni* explores harvesting organs from "human vegetable farms" using "late-20th-century corpses" or a "new class of dead people." The new criteria suggested for declaring a patient dead will now include not only patients diagnosed as "brain dead," but also those who have lost consciousness, as in a coma or persistent vegetative state!

Sept. 8, 1987: The *Washington Post* allows Daniel Callahan of Hastings Center to plug his new book *Setting Limits: Medical Goals in an Aging Society*. He states, "There are now and will be in the future better ways to spend our money than on indefinitely extending the life of the elderly. This is neither a wise social goal, an economically affordable goal, nor one the aged themselves should want."

Oct. 12, 1987: NBC-TV runs Columbus Day movie, "Right to Die," starring Raquel Welch as psychologist with ALS or Lou Gehrig's disease, based on a true story. The family works with Concern For Dying lawyers and doctors to arrange her death during a home visit as "negotiated" with the hospital. Welch says of the right to die, "These inalienable rights are at the very core of what we're supposed to represent as Americans."

The nazification of American medicine

On Feb. 14, 1985, Dr. James H. Sammons, chief executive officer of the American Medical Association, told the *American Medical News*, "It does cost more to keep people alive than to let them die." Congress, Sammons said, intends to ration medical care for the elderly, "because that is exactly

what the budget does and it is exactly what Gramm-Rudman does."

A month later, Dr. Leo Alexander, the chief medical witness at the Nuremberg Trial of the Nazi doctors, warned that the right-to-die movement in this country is causing an acceptance, like the Nazis promoted in the 1920s and '30s, of euthanasia and of a concept of a life no longer "worthy to be lived." These sentiments were echoed in May by Dr. André Wynen, the secretary general of the World Medical Association, who cites Colorado Gov. Richard Lamm and escalating health costs as making euthanasia the (final) solution once again, in eliminating the burden of expensive extended care of the elderly.

But the calls for euthanasia from the medical profession continued:

May 1985: Dr. Lee Salk of Brown University releases a study that claims saving high-risk newborns with advanced medical technology, only contributes to these children committing suicide when they become teenagers.

July 17, 1985: Massachusetts Medical Society manipulates a vote of its governing board to announce support of starving coma patients. The vote is entered as court "evidence" supporting a family request to starve coma patient Paul Brophy to death.

Jan. 2, 1986: A new study conducted by the Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis found that increasing numbers of people with kidney failure "choose" to end their lives by stopping dialysis. Stopping dialysis therapy accounted for 22% of deaths in one large dialysis program. Half of these were of patients in coma or senile. Seventy-five percent of these terminations were initiated by doctors, 25% by family.

Feb. 13, 1986: New study tells doctors to help AIDS patients die. Dr. Harry Hollander of University of California says that only 55% of AIDS patients want to be kept alive with a respirator should they get AIDS-related pneumonia; the rest wanted to go to a hospice.

March 15, 1986: American Medical Association determines that it is "ethical" for physicians to kill patients in coma or persistent vegetative state by withholding food, water, medicine, and "heroic" procedures. Patients need not be terminal. The AMA Judicial Affairs Council collaborated with the Hastings Center on its recommendation.

Oct. 6, 1986: *New York Times* commentary by Dr. Alan R. Feinstein of Yale Medical School, who complains that doctors won't kill his 90-year-old mother, whom he sees as a useless financial and physical burden.

December 1986: Conference at Center For Biomedical Ethics at Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio endorses experimentation on human embryos and use of human cells from allegedly aborted babies for brain transplants in Parkinson patients. Cells used from "cast-off fetuses" are only good if taken from a child who is still alive. The child

must be delivered, have the cells removed, and either be killed in the process or afterwards.

Feb. 27, 1987: American Medical Association promotes physician-assisted suicide in *American Medical News*. For the third time, *AMN* reports on a physician with AIDS who is campaigning to put the Americans Against Human Suffering and the proposal to legalize lethal injections on 1988 California ballot.

June 8, 1987: Doctor tells *Medical Economics* magazine that doctors, lawyers, and judges should approve nursing home and hospital patients for lethal injections. He has 350 elderly, demented, or paralyzed candidates himself.

June 15, 1987: Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals orders U.S. hospitals to make "Do Not Resuscitate" (DNR) policy for "irreversibly ill" patients or lose Medicare funding and accreditation.

July 10, 1987: *Journal of the American Medical Association* gives "how to" analysis of what murder methods are "legal" with the country's latest pro-euthanasia laws and court decisions in each state.

July 30, 1987: International meeting at Rochester University on brain transplants of aborted human cells, embryonic pig tissue, and the patient's adrenal gland.

Cost-cutting—the government's role

The congressional Office of Technology Assessment, started in 1972 by Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.) and his adviser, Club of Rome member Michael Michaelis, is notorious for its brutal depopulation policies and cost-cutting studies aimed at the nation's elderly. The OTA's latest study, "Life Sustaining Technologies and the Elderly," was prepared by an advisory panel consisting of the country's most ruthless "ethicists" and cost-efficiency experts. The OTA and Congress intend to eliminate five lifesaving technologies from elderly care: antibiotics, respirators, kidney dialysis, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, and basic nutrition and hydration with naso-gastric tubes or intravenous feeding.

Other government actions in the same direction include:

June 6, 1985: Sen. Albert Gore (D-Tenn.) launches National Commission on Bioethics, with Senator Kennedy.

Aug. 2-9, 1985: National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws approves "Uniform Rights of the Terminally Ill Act," giving you the right to be denied food and fluids even by spoon-feeding, which each state will use to expand existing living will laws.

Oct. 1, 1985: House Select Committee on Aging holds hearings on "Death and Dying." Sen. Jacob Javits (R-N.Y.), euthanasia lobby call for national "death with dignity" legislation.

Nov. 7, 1985: President Reagan nominates Otis Bowen for Secretary of Health and Human Services. Bowen, formerly of Advisory Council on Social Security, endorses killing handicapped infants and using living wills to cut costs.

Dec. 12, 1985: Senate confirms Otis Bowen as Secretary of Health and Human Services.

March 4, 1987: Surgeon General C. Everett Koop says the United States cannot afford medical care of AIDS patients. Instead, volunteers and hospices will be used.

April 1987: "Compassionate Pain Relief Act." Euthanasia enthusiast Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) sponsors bill to legalize heroin for cancer pain relief.

U.S. Catholic Church: Life is not absolute

The most shocking thing about the growth of the euthanasia movement, is the fact that large sections of the religious community, even the Catholic Church, have participated heavily in its promotion.

While the Vatican has long been a fierce stalwart against euthanasia, the U.S. Catholic Conference, "ethicists," Catholic nursing orders, and the Catholic Health Association, have long ago conceded the battle. Their "respect for life" includes starving and dehydrating patients to death. The Pope demands that "science, even when it cannot cure, could and should help the sick person, since, had it ceased to fight for life and commit itself to curing diseases, medical science would not have been able to progress," yet state Catholic conferences co-write right-to-die bills and lobby for living will legislation.

Part of the Catholic Church's capitulation involves its promotion of hospices as a medical "alternative." Other shocking church actions include:

July 26, 1985: Pro-life Office of National Conference of Catholic Bishops and the American Jewish Congress call for no medical "heroics" for handicapped infants.

Sept. 29, 1985: National Right to Life Committee passes an explicitly pro-euthanasia "Patient's Rights Act" which offers starvation, dehydration, and other degradations.

March 1986: The United Church of Christ announces its endorsement of suicide in its *Hospice Newsletter*, published by the UCC's Board for Homeland Ministries. The March issue is devoted solely to the Hemlock Society and their campaign to legalize assisted suicide. While the newsletter has condoned passive euthanasia in the past, this marks a new offensive supporting the lethal injection.

May 9, 1986: Archbishop Roger Mahoney of Los Angeles condemns euthanasia, but in *The Tidings*, he condones the starvation suicide plans of cerebral palsy patient Elizabeth Bouvia: "If taking food artificially or even naturally, in a patient's honest judgment is a source of significant pain, discomfort, or risk or even dehumanization added to what he is already experiencing or will experience about his condition, one can defend the patient's right to say 'No more.' This is a reasonable decision worthy of human being. . . . For it is not a decision to end one's earthly life, but to tolerate that life's passing away (as we must all some day) rather than adding new burdens to this already present in one's life."