

Elderly are told to welcome euthanasia

by Linda Everett

Within days of one another, the London *Economist*, the “prestigious” journal of moral indifferentism of Adam Smith’s free enterprise economics, and the *Washington Post*, mouthpiece for the U.S. Eastern Liberal Establishment, have called for the sick and elderly to submit themselves to the “dignity” of Nazi euthanasia.

In an editorial entitled, “A time to die: Immortality is a bad thing, there are nobler aims for medicine,” the *Economist* complains that doctors spend too much effort on keeping old people alive. “Medicine,” the editors say, “has increased the quantity of life far beyond its capacity to preserve the quality of it, and a greater proportion of old age is now spent in chronic illness and misery.” Divulging a fierce hatred of medical accomplishments in the United States, the editors gripe, “The average life expectancy of an American man has risen remarkably, from just under 60 in the late 1920s to 76 in 1984. That is a big blessing for some, but only a mixed one for many others. Just as an extension of credit is no guarantee of the ability to pay, so an extension of life is no guarantee of the ability to enjoy it. Hospitals are full of people who are tragically overdrawn. For such people, the last weeks, days and hours are often the worst.”

The *Economist*, speaking in the tradition of another 18th-century British apologist for genocide, Jeremy Bentham, goes on, brazenly lying: “No calculating utilitarian, applying Bentham’s cold arithmetic of pleasure versus pain, can demand that the old be killed or starved to death to save money for the young. It is the old themselves who, for their own dignity and out of concern for their successors, must learn to demand less of the court physicians. . . . When a person (or his relatives) can see that a biography is finished, it is not for the doctors to try to write a painful extra chapter.”

The cruel irony here, is the fact that Britain’s national health care system does indeed help patients die. The United Kingdom rations health care utilizing a treatment selection criterion based on employability and age. Their policy is clear: Patients are not *entitled* to treatment. The fact that a reliable life-saving treatment exists does not imply that a person who will die without it has a right to receive it. Elderly patients who are routinely denied life-saving dialysis and hip

surgery, can neither choose to receive (or “demand,” as the *Economist* puts it) nor choose to refuse medical care. Thus, the *Economist* has signaled to the national system as well as to patients’ families, that the elderly of Great Britain are to be targeted as a class, for another racheting downwards of the health care. It is not just triage, but genocide which they demand.

‘Rational’ suicide

The *Washington Post*’s Aug. 15 cover story of its Health section, “Is It Time for Mercy Killing?” shows a similar affinity for a new Final Solution for the sick and elderly. Written by the *Post*’s self-proclaimed “patient advocate” Victor Cohn, it uses the same arguments to legitimize “rational” suicide for those “suffering dying and comatose dying, [and] those who consciously or unconsciously await the release of death,” as *New Times* magazine of Moscow did in a recent feature on mercy killing. Cohn is pushing murder, pure and simple. In fact, in an interview with *EIR*, he admitted that he would consider murder—“If I saw a suffering person.” He uses the lying premises of top euthanasia advocates in his article: “Assisted Suicide—Is It Acceptable?”; “Saving Lives, Ending Lives—Doctors Confront a Mercy Killing”; “Story of Debbie’s Death Isn’t Over.”

The article reviews all the prestigious “experts” who seek to legitimize Nazi medical murder in the United States. Last year, George Lundberg, editor of the *Journal of American Medicine*, published an anonymous essay, “It’s Over Debbie,” in which a young doctor strolls into a hospital room and administers a lethal dose of medication to take a young cancer patient out of her pain and out of her life. There are others, like Marcia Angell, physician and executive editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine*, who in last November’s issue of the journal endorsed a call by Right to Die Society physicians to help patients die. Angell says the killing of patients should be legalized. Recently she told Cohn, “I think perhaps we’re ready to consider euthanasia in very controlled circumstances. There could be some problems. But the alternative is so horrible.”

Other than death pills and lethal injections, Cohn works to legitimize killing brain-damaged patients like Nancy Cruzan, whose parents will demand U.S. Supreme Court permission this October to starve her to death.

Cohn is too astute about how cost-cutting both in managed health care and in Medicare work to deny treatment and nursing care to the elderly, forcing them into impoverishment and despondency, not to know that it is a contributory factor to the rising suicide rate of elderly people. Yet, he lies and says those suicides, along with “increased medicated survival” and rigged opinion polls allegedly showing support for assisted suicide, are all reasons to kill patients.

We have to ask the *Post* and the *Economist*, how much “choice” do the elderly have, when faced with a nation telling them the only “dignity” they’ll receive is in “choosing” death?