

Operation ‘Euthanasia— Never Again!’

Helga Zepp-LaRouche, president of the Civil Rights Solidarity Movement (BüSo) in Germany, released this petition on Dec. 30. It was translated from German.

When the magnitude of the crimes of the National Socialists [Nazis] became clear in 1945, the horror of the entire world and of Germany was expressed in the words which were, at the same time, felt to be a sacred obligation: “Never again euthanasia!” Now, 65 years later, we are again confronted with potentially the same policy, which is passing from a clandestine rationing of medical care into an open “regulation,” of marking certain categories of patients, already not getting good care for a long time, now, not to get even adequate care. The latest announcement of the president of the German Medical Association, Prof. Jörg-Dietrich Hoppe, must be viewed as a break in the dam toward such a policy; it announces that the German medical profession, on the basis of an altered sentiment among physicians, will alter its professional code on the subject of assistance in dying. It will no longer be possible to maintain that assisted suicide, since it is not prosecuted under criminal law, is prohibited as unethical according to the physician’s code of conduct.

Professor Hoppe’s statement came only a few days before the director of the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, Dr. Donald Berwick, appointed by President Obama, introduced a new rule, effective Jan. 1, 2011, which, from now on, will compensate physicians in the United States, for any patients they persuade, under the pretext of planning for the end of life, to refuse life-saving measures in emergencies. This rule had been explicitly rejected in 2009 by the U.S. Congress, during the debate on the health-care law, after Lyndon LaRouche had warned that this policy was in the tradition of Hitler’s Tiergarten-4 guidelines of 1939. What now comes newly dressed up as a “regulation”—thus bypassing the Legislative branch—will, under conditions of brutal austerity policies, and in combination with the Independent Payment Advisory Board already known as a death panel, create a deadly mecha-

nism, subordinating the value of human life to the question of cost.

A Radical Change

There is no doubt that Professor Hoppe is as much aware of the inhuman health-care policies in Great Britain and the United States, as he is of its connection to the gigantic bailout package for the banks which had gambled everything away, and the gouging of the living standards of the population to pay the costs of this bailout. One can only guess what pressures were applied on him: As recently as the 33rd annual conference of the German Medical Association in May 2009, in a dramatic keynote speech, he had demanded a public debate on the hidden rationing of health care that was already occurring in Germany, and that a decision must be made on this policy, either “to improve financial support for health care within the public, statutory health insurance, or to transparently and publicly accept the expert recommendation that we ration medical care.”

Previously, the 66th annual meeting of the German Legal Association had taken the position that the assistance of a physician in a death was not only permissible from the standpoint of criminal law, but even an ethically defensible form of terminal care. Hoppe had responded to this at that time by declaring it to be in the most profound conflict with the spirit and content of the physician’s duty: “Clearly and definitely to say: Assisted suicide is no task for a physician, and dear colleagues, may it never become one!”

Then, in August 2010, the Allensbach Institute published a survey, which claimed that one-third of the physicians surveyed pronounced themselves in favor of physician-assisted suicide. And now, when there can no longer remain the slightest doubt that the governments of the United States and the nations of Europe, as well as the European Commission, have decided that, through gigantic bailout packages for the banks, they will reduce existing government indebtedness by draconian cuts in health care, among other things, Hoppe wants to “liberalize” the physician’s code of conduct and make this the theme of the upcoming 34th annual conference of the Medical Association!

This author conducted an interview with Professor Hoppe during the 33rd Medical Association conference in Mainz, on this subject [published in *EIR*, June 5, 2009]. The following question was posed:

Zepp-LaRouche: “Is there not the danger, that if the financial and economic crisis massively increases, a sort of triage or rationing in health care, based on cost considerations, would again lead to euthanasia—as with the Nazis? In America and also in Great Britain, assisted suicide is quite openly discussed, and Obama advisor Ezekiel Emanuel has written about how much money could be saved, if doctors were allowed to actively assist suicide. I find this monstrous!”

Hoppe: “Yes, it certainly is. I made that very clear in my opening speech; the Medical Assembly approved it, and we will also craft a resolution on this topic. I believe that the Medical Assembly will absolutely stick to its guns on this, defending the position that we have adopted. Among our neighbor countries—one in the north, one in the west, one in the south—there are examples which show us how we do not intend to do it.”

The ‘Slippery Slope’

Dr. Leo Alexander—a medical advisor to the prosecutors in the criminal trials against 16 Nazis who were held responsible at the Nuremberg Tribunals for their leading role, in the Hitler era, in the mass extermination of human beings whom they regarded as useless eaters—exposed the core of the philosophical principle which had led to these horrible acts, in 1949, only three years after that tribunal. He described it as “rational utility,” a Hegelian and Benthamite doctrine whose consequence was that ever-larger population groups were treated like cattle and killed, because they allegedly drew too many resources from society, or were undesirable in other ways. Hundreds of thousands of German citizens, not to speak of millions of citizens of other countries, were sent to their deaths on

Nazis Plan to Kill Incurables to End Pain; German Religious Groups Oppose Move

By The Associated Press.

BERLIN, Oct. 7.—The Ministry of Justice in a detailed memorandum explaining the Nazi aims regarding the German penal code today announced its intention to authorize physicians to end the sufferings of incurable patients.

The memorandum, still lacking the force of law, proposed that “it shall be made possible for physi-

overnight has become a widely-discussed word in the Reich.

In medical circles the question was raised as to just when a man is incurable and when his life should be ended.

According to the present plans of the Ministry of Justice, incurability would be determined not only by the attending physician, but also by two official doctors who would carefully trace the history of the case and personally examine the patient.

In insisting that euthanasia shall be permissible only if the accredited attending physician is backed by two experts who so advise, the Ministry believes a guarantee is given that no life still valuable to the State will be wantonly destroyed.

The legal question of who may request the application of euthanasia has not been definitely solved. The Ministry merely has proposed that either the patient himself shall “expressly and earnestly” ask it, or “in case the patient no longer is able to express his desire, his nearer relatives, acting from motives that do not contravene morals, so request.”



A Nazi euthanasia poster (“This genetically defective person will cost the economy 60,000 Reichsmarks in his lifetime—Comrades, this is also your money”) and *New York Times* coverage, Oct. 8, 1933, on the Nazi policy and the Germans who opposed it.

the basis of this “principle.”

This belief in utilitarianism—many would probably describe it as pragmatism—has crept back in, in the past decades in the United States and Europe, and now plays a decisive role in health-care policy.

Dr. Alexander also warned of the danger of the “slippery slope,” on which there is no stopping once the first step is taken. He wrote:

“Whatever proportions these crimes finally assumed, it became evident to all who investigated them that they had started from small beginnings. The beginnings at first were merely a subtle shift in emphasis in the basic attitude of the physicians. It started with the

acceptance of the attitude, basic in the euthanasia movement, that there is such a thing as a life not worthy to be lived. This attitude in its early stages concerned itself merely with the severely and chronically sick. Gradually the sphere of those to be included in this category was enlarged to encompass the socially unproductive, the ideologically unwanted, and finally all non-Aryans. But it is important to realize that the infinitely small wedge-in lever from which this entire trend of mind received its impetus was the attitude towards the non-rehabilitable sick.

“It is, therefore, this subtle shift in emphasis of the physicians’ attitude that one must thoroughly investigate....”

In his 1949 article, analyzing the path of the Nazis to medical mass murder, Dr. Alexander found numerous warning signs that American physicians were also instilled with this “Hegelian, cold-blooded, utilitarian ideology,” which can correctly be designated as Nazi ideology. He noted: “Physicians have become dangerously close to being mere technicians of rehabilitation. The essentially Hegelian rational attitude has led them to make certain distinctions in the handling of acute and chronic diseases. The patient with the latter carried an obvious stigma as the one less likely to be fully rehabilitable for social usefulness. In an increasingly utilitarian society, these patients are being looked down upon with increasing definiteness as unwanted ballast....”

The Issue Is the Image of Man

Today, it must cause the greatest alarm that, given an unprecedented breakdown crisis of the global financial system, which far overshadows the Depression of the 1930s, we have already slid so far down the slippery slope. We must assert with total clarity: The trans-Atlantic world is threatened with a new fascism.

There is a way out, and it is the package of measures that Lyndon LaRouche has proposed for some time. They include, first and foremost, the removal of President Obama from office under the 25th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, and this, above all, because the so-called Obamacare violates the Constitution. This must be followed by the immediate re-introduction of the Glass-Steagall standard, and thus, a two-tier banking system, by which the toxic waste of the blown-out financial titles will be cleared away; and then, in the

tradition of FDR and the New Deal, the NAWAPA economic reconstruction must be realized for the United States, and similar programs for Eurasia, Africa, and Latin America.

If we put the physical economy back into the primary place, and with it, the creative human being as the essential source of the wealth of society, then we will never again have a view of mankind that subjects us to utilitarian thinking; rather, we will again be able to supply good health care, as was the case in America with the Hill-Burton Act, and in Germany, in the period before the health-care reforms of Ehrenberg, Geissler, Blüm, Seehofer, Schmid, Lauterbach, and Rösler.¹

Nothing needs to be changed from the standpoint taken by the brilliant personal physician of Goethe and Schiller, the doctor Christoph-Wilhelm Hufeland, who warned 200 years ago:

“When a sick person is tormented by incurable ills, when he himself wishes for death, when pregnancy engenders illness and danger of death, how easily can the thought arise in the soul of the healthy person one: Should it not be permitted, yes even be one’s duty, to free that sufferer somewhat earlier from his burden, or to sacrifice that life in the womb for the welfare of the mother?”

“As good as such reasoning appears to be, as much as it may be supported by the voice of the heart, yet it is false; and a medical practice founded on it would be in the highest degree wrong and criminal. It well-nigh annihilates the very essence of what it means to be a physician. He should and may do nothing other than to sustain life—whether it is happy or unhappy, whether it has value or not, is no concern of his. And if he but once presumes to abandon this one consideration of his profession, the consequences will be incalculable, and the physician will become the most dangerous person in the state!”

All physicians and others engaged in health care, as well as all other citizens who feel bound by the principle, “Never again euthanasia,” are hereby called upon to make sure that the “liberalization” of the professional ethics of physicians announced by Professor Hoppe, be rejected for what it really is.

1. Former health ministers, politicians, and other medical policymakers in modern-day Germany.

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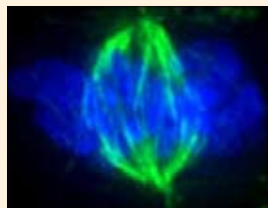
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