

Stop Nazi Health Care!

On May 9 Lyndon LaRouche launched an all-out campaign against the Nazi health-care proposals which are being put forward by members of the Obama Administration. “This is not an ordinary political campaign,” LaRouche said. “This is an existential question for the United States, and the state of humanity demands that this evil be defeated. Anything in the direction of these budget-cutting proposals, which measure human lives in dollars and cents, and declare whole sections of the old and the sick to be ‘useless eaters,’ is a violation of human rights.”

LaRouche was responding to a series of proposals coming out of OMB chief Peter Orszag, in particular, which aim to apply a new measurement of “cost-effectiveness” to health care, in order to cut \$700 billion from U.S. health-care costs. In sync with this drive, leading sections of the Democratic Party, and even the President himself, are floating the idea of setting up an “independent commission” to decide on means of cutting Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid costs—in the name of fiscal responsibility and paying for only “effective” care.

Such an approach to health care was denounced most clearly by the late Dr. Leo Alexander, a psychiatrist who was a key medical advisor to the U.S. Prosecution team at the Nazi doctors trial at the Nuremberg Tribunal. Writing in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 1949, Alexander identified the “small beginnings” of the monstrous crimes against the sick in Nazi Germany as “a subtle shift in emphasis,” . . . “the acceptance of the attitude . . . that there is such a thing as a life not worthy to be lived.” A “utilitarian philosophy,” he continued, “puts you on the path to monstrous crimes.

Such a “utilitarian” approach has been increasingly pervading U.S. medical practice for decades, especially since the introduction of health maintenance organizations (HMOs), in 1973. But now, under cover of the need to “save money” in the midst of the economic and financial breakdown crisis, this approach is taking off. What else can you call an analysis which measures life in “Quality-Adjusted Life Years,” estimated at \$100,000 a year?

In fact, LaRouche argued, the basic problem with medical care in the United States is the cost of regulating and manipulating doctors and medical facilities. Administrative costs, imposed by insurance companies, and particularly the HMOs, conservatively comprise more than 25% of health-care costs. Yet, the Obama Administration plans to do almost *nothing* to cut those costs.

“It’s time to eliminate all HMOs, and return to the Hill-Burton standard of providing medical facilities adequate to provide for the population,” LaRouche insisted. “We can save money by eliminating the HMOs, who are nothing but parasites, fattening themselves off the system.”

Proposals in the right direction have been put forward by both Rep. John Conyers, who calls for a system of “Medicare for all,” and by economist James Galbraith, who has called for not only *increasing* Social Security and Medicare benefits, but for lowering the age of eligibility for Medicare to 55.

“If we set up a system of Medicare for all, and rebuild our economy following a bankruptcy reorganization, as we must, we can provide for our people,” LaRouche added. “Nazi medicine cannot be tolerated.”