

Nazi doctor kills cancer patient

by Lena Mletzko

After the Second World War, Nazi criminals were hung in Nuremberg for what is being re-introduced in the Federal Republic of Germany today: euthanasia, the "elimination of lives deemed not worthy to be lived." What the Allied states defined as "crimes against humanity" is now being sold as "dying with dignity" and *Sterbehilfe* ("death help") by a propaganda campaign which the Nazis dared not openly wage for fear of the German population's outrage.

A West German physician, Dr. Julius Hackethal, deliberately killed a 69-year-old patient on April 18 by serving her four grams of cyanide, which she drank after she had been convinced that her "voluntary" death was part of a pilot project to help other people to die with dignity. This is now being used in the way Hackethal intended: as a test case for German court decisions and future legislation to overcome public resistance against the legalization of "active death help" and the elimination of old, sick, or handicapped people, who live "at the expense of society" in an increasingly difficult economic situation.

Dr. Hackethal murdered Hermy E. in his private hospital on Lake Chiemsee, near Munich. Her face had been disfigured from 13 operations to treat skin cancer; but she was mentally alert and physically strong. Dr. Hackethal convinced her that she was very ugly, her life would be miserable, and her death would help others who wanted to die but were prevented from doing so by the law.

After Mrs. E. had swallowed the poison and died, Hackethal said: "This was one of my best operations in 39 years."

The international Club of Life, headed by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, has filed a suit charging Hackethal, his co-conspirator Hans-Henning Atrott, and the German Association for Death with Dignity (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Humanische Sterben—DGHS) with "incitement and aid to murder and public promotion of crimes." The Club of Life is demanding Hackethal be forbidden to practice medicine, and is testifying at the judicial hearing at which he is charged with manslaughter. The activities of Hackethal et al. must be judged as crimes against humanity, as these are defined in the Nuremberg statutes, the Club of Life maintains.

The euthanasia policy which Adolf Hitler launched in secret is today trumpeted by his ideological descendants through television and the popular press.

In October 1939, Hitler signed an order delegating

Reichsleiter Phillip Bouhler and Dr. Karl Brandt (the administrator of the secret euthanasia program) the power "to enable as yet unnamed doctors to mercifully kill those who are judged, as far as is humanly possible, through a critical examination of their diseased condition, incurably ill." This authorization and the subsequent Aktion T-4, which liquidated more than 70,000 human beings within 17 months, was not in accordance even with National Socialist legal norms, and therefore had to be kept secret because—after various tests with popular films and so forth—German opinion was not considered ripe enough to accept it.

Today the murder of Mrs. E. is being used to kick off an unprecedented public relations campaign. Hackethal announced that he was going to continue "helping people to die." Next time, he said, he would use "death drops," containing an overdose of sleeping pills.

Henning Atrott of the DGHS boasted: "The debate on 'active death help' has made a huge and very significant leap forward." More doctors will now "confess" to having "helped patients to die."

Who are these new Nazi doctors? Dr. Hackethal is inspired by the teachings of the anthroposophy cult, and his flagrant quackery led health insurance companies to withdraw his license years ago. So he opened his own private clinic, treating patients with "unconventional" methods. Atrott heads the DGHS, an organization founded in 1980 which advocates the repeal of West German laws forbidding the killing of someone who desires it.

A year ago Atrott proudly announced that 2,500 Germans had ordered a how-to manual called "Suicide by Prescription," which identifies the fatal dosage of various drugs. "In the last two and a half years alone, 500 of our members died in a dignified way," Atrott reported. Up to 20 members commit suicide each month.

On the board of the DGHS are Otto Schily, the terrorist lawyer who is a member of parliament for the terrorist-environmentalist Green Party and who was hosted by the U.S. State Department last year; Heinrich Albertz, one of the godfathers of the German "peace movement"; and Jürgen Seifert, a lawyer who has persistently fought to protect terrorists from state prosecution.

Dr. Hackethal and Atrott launched their "pilot project" 15 months ago. Mrs. E. was chosen as their first victim. Hackethal was well aware that he was going to commit a crime which sends the perpetrator to prison, so he assembled expert legal advice to find a hole in German law: Since suicide is not illegal, helping people to commit suicide should not be illegal, either, he argues.

Atrott induced Mrs. E. to join his society just 24 hours before her death. He confessed that he had to work to persuade her of the necessity of her voluntary death. After she had been convinced to "commit suicide," she was filmed for "documentation" saying she would like to die. Hackethal declared as the film concluded, "Tonight I am going to fulfill my promise."