

# Nazi Medicine in Portugal: British Depopulation Policy in Action

by Gretchen Small

Nov. 17—Portugal is a relatively small country, of under 10.5 million people. Like most countries, it has had its ups and downs, but it has made major contributions to the advancement of humanity along the way, the breakthroughs in navigation made by Portuguese sailors exploring new areas of the world under the audacious Henry the Navigator in the 1400s being one of its most outstanding.

Yet Portugal is now on course to disappear as a nation, should current trans-Atlantic economic policies be allowed to continue. Several years of “Troika” (IMF-European Central Bank-European Commission) dictatorship have pushed Portugal over the cliff into a demographic death spiral, its population falling every year since 2010, as births drop, deaths rise, and emigration outpaces immigration, all at an accelerating rate.

These demographic facts are well-known to the Troika enforcers; yet the most recent IMF Staff Report issued on Nov. 8 on behalf of the Troika, requires conditionalities from Portugal which will tip the country into total breakdown: stepped-up rationing of medicines, dismantling the National Health Service, further slashing of pensions, wages, and the employed workforce, and the takedown of the institutions of the state that defend the general welfare.

The government’s Oct. 30 decree that administration of innovative, often life-saving medications for cancer patients is now to be restricted to three newly created “specialized centers,” with similar centers planned for other diseases, signals that the decision has been made to openly go for mass killing of Portuguese citizens whose lives are deemed “too costly.”

The threat to Portugal is a crime against humanity, but it is not exceptional. Cyprus, Greece, Spain, and Ireland (yet again) offer similar case studies of the imposition of economic policies which are systematically wiping out whole peoples and nations. Italy is follow-

ing close behind, as is the United States under the Obama regime’s policies.

Lyndon LaRouche charged years ago that the Anglo-Dutch imperial system *willfully* seeks to depopulate the globe. Africa has been a testament to the accuracy of that charge, for those who wished to see it. Now, the same story is told by the facts coming out of Europe.

## Human Life, an Economic ‘Burden’

For the enforcers of the empire’s financier system, Portugal is doing just fine, even touted lately as a budding “success story” by the Wall Street/City of London crowd which wields the Troika. Moody’s Rating Service upgraded its rating on Portuguese bonds on Nov. 8, praising its improving fiscal policies, while the IMF simultaneously announced that Portugal is “on track” in meeting Troika conditionalities, and therefore it would receive more bailout money.

“On track,” but with much destruction of living conditions required, the IMF Staff Report on Portugal handed to IMF Board that day insisted. The IMF staff considers “the large size of the public sector and relatively high wages and pensions” as a leading element of the “deep-rooted weaknesses of Portugal’s public finances” which must be addressed. Objections are not to be permitted; “political turmoil, especially in view of the remaining large fiscal adjustment ahead” could threaten the “success” already achieved.

Notable among the dictates included in the Staff Report, is the repeated targetting of health-care costs as too burdensome to be continued at current levels. For example, Point 22 highlights areas in the “fiscal structural reform agenda where additional efforts are warranted.” There are two areas singled out, and health care is number one: “Staff expressed concerns about the lack of control over domestic arrears, particularly in the health sector. . . . Staff stressed that more effort was needed to ensure appropriate budgeting, control mech-

anisms, and effective implementation of cost-saving measures in the health sector.”

It demands “appropriate budgeting” and measures “ensuring effective savings” be taken to “contain the fiscal risks” associated with health care, with sanctions prepared against public officials who do not comply. The staff emphasized the “savings [to] come from further restructuring of the hospital network,” and they place privatization of the National Health Service on the agenda, in a note on page 63.

In a letter attached to the Staff Report, Portugal’s IMF executive director Andrea Montanino abjectly points out the measures taken so far in gouging the National Health Service, and promises greater efforts. The government reduced state expenditures on pharmaceuticals to 1% of (a shrinking) GDP in 2013; “operational improvements geared at cost control and efficiency such as the publishing of clinical and prescription guidelines continue to be implemented”; and a plan to reorganize the hospital network has been drafted, “as well as to further improve expenditure control mechanisms so as to better control and eliminate arrears.”

## Hitler’s T-4 Program Revived

How many lives were lost by reducing government expenditures on medicines to 1% of GDP is not known, but rationing of drugs to those categorized as the “non-rehabilitatable” sick, is a leading “expenditure control mechanism” being used.

A policy of rationing high-cost medications for certain diseases (cancer, HIV, and rheumatoid arthritis, to start) was adopted in September 2012, after Portugal’s notorious National Ethics Council on Life Sciences (CNECV) provided the Health Ministry the justification for rationing expensive medicines to meet Troika conditions, in its “Finding on a Model of Deliberating on Financing the Cost of Medicines” (64/CNECV/2012).

Hitler’s T-4 euthanasia program, out of which grew the concentration camps, began with the assertion that under Germany’s economic conditions, the defense of the good of the greatest number, required the state to be rid of “useless eaters,” such as the mentally ill, the deformed, and the non-rehabilitatable ill.

The CNECV, too, started from the premise that the dictatorship, today financial, must not be touched.

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#### CONTENTS

- Introduction by Helga Zepp-LaRouche
- Greece, and a Marshall Plan for the Mediterranean Basin
- Spain: Bridge to African Development
- The Rebirth of Italy’s Mezzogiorno
- Africa Pass
- The Transaqua Project
- North Africa: The Blue Revolution
- What Europe Can Learn from Argentina
- A German Economic Miracle for Europe

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Health care in Portugal is limited by the “world financial crisis,” and by budget restrictions contained in the memoranda of understanding signed with the Troika, they wrote, while acknowledging that the first Troika memorandum had already demanded a one-third cut in public expenditures on medications by 2010. “To defend the treatment of health as a separate ‘sphere’—exclusively focused on potential health benefits, without weighing the inherent costs—is not relevant to current reality,” the Ethics Council wrote. Ergo, on the grounds of achieving “the best good possible” for the greatest number—i.e., not for everybody—“rationing” of medications for HIV-positive patients and cancer patients, and biological agents for patients with rheumatoid arthritis is ethical—die who may die.

In a January 2013 debate with the head of the CNECV, the head of the Portuguese Medical Association, Dr. José Manuel Silva, warned that the Council’s argument raised the specter of “Nazi medical ethics,” by subjugating ethics to financial and commercial interests.”

The rationing proceeded at first in disguised forms. Hospitals and clinics whose budgets had been slashed, facing sanctions if their medications bills were not paid off within three months, began refusing to purchase medications ordered by doctors. Repeated protests were raised by doctors treating Hepatitis C patients, that use of new anti-virals which have a cure rate of 30-40%, approved by the European authorities due to their “spectacular therapeutic benefit,” were being denied in some hospitals.

Now, a year later, the disguise is being ripped off, and rationing is being systematized. On Oct. 30, the Health Ministry issued Decision No. 13877-A/2013, restricting access to “innovative” cancer and ophthalmological agents not yet approved for general use in Portugal to three newly designated “Specialized Centers for Exceptional Use of Medications (CEUEM).” Doctors can no longer administer those drugs by applying for an “Exceptional Authorization” from the Health Ministry, but must go through the CEUEM.

Similar “specialized centers” are expected to be announced for AIDS, tuberculosis, and hemodialysis.

### **Denial of Medical Care Is a Crime**

Sixty-five oncologists have issued a joint letter protesting this decision as endangering the rights of the pa-

tients, doctor-patient relations, and the autonomous technical exercise of the medical profession, and requesting that the Medical Association of Portugal take up the case. The Association issued a blistering statement on Nov. 1, denouncing the decision as an assault on patients’ health that lays the basis for rationing of these drugs, and “condemns to death” patients living in outlying regions of the country. It demands its immediate withdrawal. The Medical Association charged that the national drug control agency, INFARMED, has been deliberately stalling approvals of new, costly drugs, “in many cases for several years . . . an explicit and intolerable form of rationing.”

Dr. Silva announced on Nov. 16 that the Medical Association is calling on doctors and patients to report cases where medicines have been denied, so that the association can investigate them. The association will file criminal charges of denial of medical care in any cases where drugs were denied on anything other than technical-scientific criteria.

Withholding access to innovative treatments for administrative or bureaucratic reasons “are cases of rationing, and this is inadmissible,” Dr. Silva declared.

Oh no, no one’s access to medicine is hurt, Health Minister Paulo Macedo replied. This is merely a measure to ensure “equal access” by imposing “common rules” for prescribing such medications.

As Pennsylvania’s Dr. Mark Shelley remarked in his Oct. 24 press conference releasing his call, “Doctors Against Murderous Obamacare,” “Whenever there is a program being created which is unpalatable, let’s say, it always gets called the opposite. . . . [In Hitler’s euthanasia program,] the company with vans that loaded children with polio to be taken to the death camp, to the killing center, was called the Charitable Transport Company for the Sick. . . . And then they had the organization by which they decided whether people should be euthanized or not, which was the ‘Realm’s Work Committee for the Cure and Care.’”

### **Demographic Death**

Troika policies, before this new phase, pushed the country over the edge into demographic death. Health Minister Macedo addressed a Nov. 8 seminar on “Demographics, the Birth Rate and Public Policy,” organized by the CNECV. Macedo (a banker by profession) acknowledged the “negative side” of what he called a “demographic transition,” but his concerns

are financial, not human. The conclusion he drew from the loss of people, and youth in particular, is that Portugal can no longer afford current state services, and therefore must proceed immediately to enact a “reform of the State which makes Public Administration less burdensome.” (Not to mention the money saved by closing those happily no-longer-needed maternity hospitals.)

The backdrop to that discussion was the latest report issued by Portugal’s National Institute of Statistics (INE) at the end of October, which showed that Portugal’s population had fallen to 10.49 million people by the end of 2012, 55,000 fewer than in 2011. It was the third consecutive year the population had fallen. The first decline, from 2009 to 2010, was tiny, just under 800. That rose to 30,000 in 2011.

In 2012, some 18,000 more people died than were born—triple that figure for 2011, the INE reports. The Portuguese Demographic Society, however, reports that the number of births in 2013 is coming in 10% below that in 2012, itself a 7.2% drop over 2011. In the central region of the country, births are down this year by 20%! Infant mortality is reported to be beginning to rise as well.

At the same time, emigration, overwhelmingly of young people, has risen to levels not seen since the 1960s under the Salazar dictatorship, and is surpassing the dwindling immigration into the country.

The result is a country with less than 15% of its population under the age of 15, and 20% of its people over the age of 64. The average age of Portuguese in 1960 was 28 years; by 2011 it was 42 years.

A major driver of the demographic death spiral is the crushing of the country’s productive labor force, and most particularly, of its younger generations. In undercounted official figures, overall unemployment runs at 16%. That 37% of the nation’s youth are unemployed is “a quasi-criminal waste of this young generation,” in the words of former Lisbon University head António Sampaio da Nôoa. The INE reported also that 434,000 youth between the ages of 15 and 34 neither study nor have a job, and have been abandoned entirely. Note that 130,000 of those nearly half million abandoned are not counted as unemployed—dropped from labor force statistics, because they gave up looking for a job.

Such statistics reflect the breakdown of a society which has let its future be thrown onto the scrapheap.

Marriages have fallen to 3.3 marriages per 1,000 (they were 4.4 per thousand in 2007). Fully 45.6% of the babies born in 2012 were born out of wedlock.

An average of 84 people a month committed suicide in 2013, and the coldest and darkest days of the year are yet to come, the Institute of Legal Medicine reported in October. The majority of those were among the elderly (over 70), but suicides by young people are rising, too.

In a Nov. 8 address in Lisbon, Dr. Constantino Sake-llarides, former head of the National School of Public Health and president of the European Association of Public Health, cited the more than 30% increase in cases of depression, 35-50% increase in attempted suicides, and a tripling of recovering drug addicts returning to heroin use from 2010 to 2012, as among the “practical effects” of reigning financial policies on the Portuguese, along with the increasing numbers of patients who, for economic reasons, are not going to doctor’s appointments or taking their medicines.

### **Now Comes the Dictatorship**

The IMF Staff Report threatens that if Portugal’s Constitutional Court continues to rule Troika-demanded austerity measures unconstitutional, as it has done several times now, it “will complicate policy making and heighten economic uncertainty.” The Vichyite government of Prime Minister Pedro Passos Coelho is therefore pushing a “reform” of the state, the intent of which was crudely spelled out by Defense Minister José Pedro Aguiar-Branco (a corporate lawyer) in a Nov. 6 address to the National Defense Institute. Aguiar-Branco raved against the “all-absorbing social state,” which he alleges creates “the temptation for a totalitarian state,” and he called for Portugal’s Constitution to be rewritten to eliminate this “danger.”

These brazen attacks on the Constitution follow J.P. Morgan’s May 28, 2013 memorandum, “The Euro Area Adjustment: About Halfway There,” wherein the British House of Morgan argues that the major obstacle to imposing financial fascism over Europe is the existence of the anti-fascist constitutions which were adopted in Europe following World War II. Portugal’s Constitution, adopted in the wake of the bloodless overthrow of the 50-year-long Salazar dictatorship in 1974, is a prime target for removal, as it still contains many of general welfare provisions for which that “Carnation Revolution” was carried out.