

## **Psychiatrists admit they created the euthanasia program and ideology that fueled Hitler's holocaust**

It is cold, hard documented fact that German psychiatrists devised the "scientific" justification for euthanasia before World War II, before even Hitler came to power. It is also a documented fact that they established the gas chambers and killing centers in the concentration camps and trained and apprenticed others on how to kill. This is documented from psychiatry's own words and documents.

In 1920, Alfred Hoche, a professor of psychiatry, and Karl Binding, a jurist [a scholar in the science or philosophy of law], published *Permission to Destroy Life Unworthy of Life*, equating killing as a "healing treatment."<sup>[i]</sup> They advocated the outright killing of mental defectives, stating that, "For the idiots... the continuation of life for society as well as for the person himself has no value."<sup>[ii]</sup>

The first psychiatric "killing test" (gassing experiment) was conducted at Brandenburg psychiatric institution in 1940, where 18 patients were murdered while psychiatrists and staff watched. Following the experiment's "success," the euthanasia program began in earnest.

Few are aware of psychiatry's role because, as the German Society of Psychiatrists finally confessed in 1999, information has been paralyzed and suppressed. Indeed, in 1990, Johannes Meyer-Lindenburg, ex-president of the Germany Society of Psychiatrists, addressed the annual meeting of the American Psychiatric Association and, while acknowledging the "failure of psychiatrists" to "insist on basic ethics" to "prevent the Holocaust of so many of their patients," asked his colleagues to reconsider German psychiatry in light of its wartime heroes and laudable achievements instead. Australian psychiatrist Ernest Hunter said that Meyer-Lindenburg, "constructs an image that denies the active role of the profession at every level."<sup>[iii]</sup>

Yet, as A. Mitscherlich and F. Mielke chronicled during the Nuremberg Medical Trials in 1947, "Their atrocities were so unrestrained and at the same time organized with such technical bureaucratic coldness, malice and bloodthirstiness, that no one can read about it without feeling the deepest shame."<sup>[iv]</sup>

In 1995, after 20 years of in-depth research, CCHR helped write and publish the book [\*Psychiatrists: The Men Behind Hitler\*](#), a book that prompted the President of the then German Society of Psychiatrists to write to the Minister of Interior asking for his help to silence CCHR. CCHR increased its efforts and in August 1999, the German Society of Psychiatrists publicly admitted psychiatrists had been "active in and primarily responsible for the different euthanasia organizations."<sup>[v]</sup> In its publication called "In Memorium," written for an exhibit on psychiatry's role in the Holocaust, and shown at the annual congress of the World Psychiatric Association in Hamburg, the following admissions were made:

- During the National Socialist regime, "...psychiatrists killed their patients."<sup>[vi]</sup> **Michael von Cranach, director of Kaufbeuren Clinic**
- "There were doctors who were active in and primarily responsible for the different euthanasia organizations. They guided and directed the different euthanasia campaigns.

They were the so-called T4 experts, psychiatrists in responsible positions, mostly clinic directors who observed and controlled the selection of those to be killed. They advised those mainly responsible, and themselves suggested actions and carried them out...laid the scientific foundations of the euthanasia program and used the victims for research purposes. There were psychiatrists in institutions who were identified with these actions and who carried out with conviction the registrations in Berlin, the transfers and the killings."<sup>[vii]</sup> — **German Society of Psychiatrists**

Other psychiatrists have condemned psychiatry's role also:

- "Responsibility exists on all these levels. The images of doctors involved are variously inhuman, possessed or banal. However, the greatest responsibility lies before the brutal acts which capture and hold attention, at the level of ideas. The racist science of the Third Reich was not a consequence of political events—it was the ideological agenda. While not a Nazi creation, it was central to the party's platform, refined to provide a bio-medical vision of racial purity that galvanized support and gave direction to political events that focused hatred and violence." — **Dr. Ernest Hunter, M.D., psychiatric consultant, "Dimensions of Medical and Psychiatric Responsibility in the Third Reich," *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 1993**
- "The responsibility of doctors and the profession of medicine, in which psychiatry must be seen to figure prominently, may be examined on several levels:
  - as providers and refiners of the ideological and intellectual foundations for race theory and medical killing;
  - as influential supporters lending legitimacy to an immoral regime, both silence and complicity;
  - as planners and administrators within the bureaucracy of state sanctioned killing;
  - as designers and refiners of systems for expeditious killing;
  - as executioners;
  - as beneficiaries of the suffering and deaths of their victims (through payment for processing euthanasia evaluations of psychiatric patients, power within the state medical system, and advancement through 'research'); and
  - as survivors, who have frequently fared far better in the aftermath of the War and the Holocaust than other supporters of the murderous regime."<sup>[viii]</sup> — **Dr. Ernest Hunter, M.D.**
- "During the 1930s the German public were prepared for the killing of psychiatric patients by sophisticated propaganda, including emotional films in which degraded psychiatric patients were used to present an argument for their own ultimate annihilation." — **Dr. Ernest Hunter**
- "Ultimately, over a quarter-of-a-million sterilizations were performed. The major force in this program being Dr. Ernst Rüdín, a Swiss psychiatrist who became professor in Munich and who had been a student of Emil Kraepelin (German psychiatrist)." — **Dr. Ernest Hunter**
- "Medical observers from the United States and Germany at the Nuremberg Trials, concluded that the Holocaust might not have taken place without psychiatry."<sup>[ix]</sup> — **Peter Breggin, M.D., psychiatrist, "Psychiatry's role in the Holocaust," *International Journal of Risk and Safety in Medicine*, 1993**

- "German psychiatrists proposed the killing of mental patients before Hitler came to power. Then in Nazi Germany, organized psychiatry implemented involuntary eugenical sterilization and euthanasia, ultimately killing up to 100,000 German mental patients. The six psychiatric euthanasia centers utilized medical professionals, fake death certificates, gas chambers disguised as showers, and the mass burning of corpses. . . . Eventually, 250,000 to 300,000 patients were murdered throughout Europe according to the Allied estimate at the Nuremberg Doctors' Trial."<sup>[x]</sup> — **Peter Breggin, M.D.**
- "...It should be realized that this program was merely the entering wedge for exterminations of far greater scope in the political program for genocide of conquered nations and the racially unwanted. The methods used and personnel trained in the killing centers for the chronically sick became the nucleus of the much larger centers in the East, where the plan was kill all Jews and Poles and to cut down the Russian population by 30,000,000."<sup>[xi]</sup> **Leo T. Alexander, psychiatrist, U.S. Army Representative at the Nuremberg Trials**
- "The tragedy is that psychiatrists did not have to have an order. They acted on their own. They were not carrying out a death sentence pronounced by someone else. They were the legislators who laid down the rules for deciding who was to die; they were the administrators who worked out the procedures, provided the patients and places, and decided the methods of killing; they pronounced a sentence of death in every individual case; they were the executioners who carried it out—without being coerced to do so—surrendered their patients to be killed in other institutions; they supervised and watched the slow deaths."<sup>[xii]</sup> — **Frederic Wertham, psychiatrist, quoted in *A Sign for Cane***
- "The euthanasia centers played a central role in developments leading to the larger holocaust. . . . When the giant extermination centers were set up in the east, a psychiatrist from the euthanasia program was. . .one of the first commandants. Consultants from the euthanasia program helped set up these extermination camps and personnel from the program initially staffed them. . . .Furthermore, the first systematic murders of concentration camp inmates took place in the euthanasia centers under the direction of teams of psychiatrists led by Werner Heyde."<sup>[xiii]</sup> — **Peter Breggin, M.D.**
- "...something like 40 percent of German psychiatrists had joined the SS by 1933. They weren't forced into the SS. They just joined it naturally because the beliefs were very, very similar. . . . Hitler was promoting the idea that white people were top of the tree in some way, and so were the psychiatrists. . . ." — **Craig Newnes, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, UK, quoted in CCHR's documentary: "Psychiatry: An Industry of Death"**
- "Academic medicine in Germany on the whole stood waist-deep in the Nazi sewer, and bears heavy responsibility for the disaster that followed. After 1933, degeneration [racial purity] became an official part of Nazi ideology." Subsequently, "the notions of degeneration and heredibility became identical" and "synonymous with Nazi evil."<sup>[xiv]</sup> — **Edward Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry: From the Era of the Asylums to the Age of Prozac*, 1997**
- "The significance of racial hygiene did not become evident to all aware Germans until the political activity of Adolf Hitler and only through his work has our 30-year-long dream of translating racial hygiene into action finally become a reality." — **Ernst Rüdin, German psychiatrist, circa 1930s**

*Find out for yourself about what led to the Holocaust and how psychiatry's genocidal ideology spawned other crimes against humanity. Watch CCHR's documentary, "[Psychiatry: An Industry of Death](#)."*

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[i] Ernest Hunter, M.D., "The Snake on the Caduceus: Dimensions of Medical and Psychiatric Responsibility in the Third Reich," *Australian & NZ Journal of Psychiatry*, 9 Apr., 1993, 27:149-156.

[ii] Lenny Lapon, *Mass Murderers in White Coats*, (Springfield, MA, Psychiatric Genocide Research Institute, 1986), p. 78.

[iii] Ernest Hunter, M.D., *Op. Cit.*, 27:149-156.

[iv] *In Memorium*, (German Society of Psychiatrists), Aug. 1999, p. 9.

[v] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

[vi] *Ibid.*, p. 9.

[vii] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

[viii] Ernest Hunter, M.D., *Op. Cit.*, p. 154.

[ix] Peter Breggin, M.D., "Psychiatry's role in the Holocaust," *International Journal of Risk and Safety in Medicine*, Vol. 4 (1993), pp. 133-148.

[x] *Ibid.*, pp. 133-148.

[xi] *Ibid.*

[xii] *Ibid.*

[xiii] *Ibid.* [xiv] Edward Shorter, *A History of Psychiatry: From the Era of the Asylums to the Age of Prozac*, (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., New York, 1997), p. 99.

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