Euthanasia: result

by Nancy Spannaus

It has been argued by the self-proclaimed liberals who are now championing the movement for the “right to die” that their advocacy and practice of euthanasia is “different” from that of the Nazis who murdered at least 275,000 of the old, handicapped, and deformed. In the following review of the leading features of Nazi ideology and practice, we demonstrate that this is a complete and total lie. Today’s Nazis are operating from precisely the same outlook that Hitler and his Nazi doctors did.

We shall lean here heavily on the work of Helga Zepp-LaRouche in her 1981-82 study of the roots of Nazism, but to anyone who peruses the major works of the Nazi philosophers and their forerunners—from Friedrich Nietzsche to Arthur Schopenhauer and Stefan George—the identity of impulse and practice is impossible to miss.

We focus on four points of identity between the Nazi outlook and that of the euthanasia advocates today. First, there is the broad outlook of cultural pessimism which underlies every one of the particular tenets of belief. The core of cultural pessimism is the belief that man as a species must adapt to the problems he confronts, rather than looking forward to progressively solving them. Under such a view, there are certain eternal problems which mankind will always be visited with—war, disease, famine. Thus, he must find a philosophy which can help him deal with his despair.

Cultural pessimism is an explicit rejection of both the Judeo-Christian ethic and the history of mankind on the earth. In order to be consistent, it must deny man’s very nature as a creature endowed with rational powers in tune with those of God the Creator, and thus reject the central injunction of the Judeo-Christian ethic: that mankind increase and multiply and dominate the earth.

From cultural pessimism, therefore, the victim of Nazi ideology is logically driven into various forms of irrationalistic mysticism. Such mysticism was rampant under the Nazis, proceeding anywhere from the worship of nature, to the belief in reincarnation, spiritualism, and drugs. Perhaps the most infamous example of this kind of thinking was the embrace of the concept of the Volksgeist, or the spirit of the people, which was asserted to be an inner mystical quality specific to each particular race or nation.

A third hallmark of Nazi ideology appears in the form of Social Darwinism, the theory that only the strong of the earth
of Nazi ideology

are fit to survive. Under Social Darwinism, of course, the reasons why one group of people is stronger than another are ascribed to mystical inner qualities. These qualities need not be racial, but usually were.

Lastly, Nazi ideology embraces a cost-accounting mentality for running society which made world history in the concentration camps of Auschwitz and Dachau. According to such an outlook, an individual or group of individuals is ascribed a worth according to whatever tangible output, or use, he can add to society. Thus human beings who have been "used up," as the victims of the concentration work camps were, are fair game to be "terminated" in gas ovens or vats of soap.

By these criteria there is no escaping the judgment that Gov. Richard Lamm of Colorado is a Nazi, that the authors of blueprints for genocide like the Global 2000 program and the documents of the Club of Rome are Nazis, that all members of the depopulation lobby are on the road to being full-fledged Nazis if they are not already.

But don't just take our word for it. Let's analyze further.

Cultural pessimism

Governor Lamm makes the point loud and clear in his Berkeley lectures, quoted below—American optimism is no longer possible; we are running out of resources. This outlook he describes as "realism." We justly condemn it as a cynical lie, based on the embrace of Nazi tenets.

Whenever an individual comes up with an idea, or a technology, that can solve the problems of scarce resources which Lamm asserts, he insists that this will not work as a matter of dogma. Surely history does not prove the veracity of Governor Lamm's statements. Mankind has continually solved the problems of scarce resources which have appeared before him, by using his mind to understand and conquer the laws of nature.

This is now impossible, says Governor Lamm, because it is inevitable that every civilization collapse before a challenge too big for it. Such failure, even evil, is a natural part of human existence, and must be accepted.

Do we perhaps hear an echo of that preeminent Nazi philosopher Nietzsche, and Schopenhauer, his favorite philosopher? Nietzsche asked, "Is pessimism necessarily the sign of decay, degeneracy, failure, of weak and weary instincts? . . . Does there not exist a pessimism of strength? An intellectual affinity for the harshness, horror, evil, problematical nature of existence?"

In this quote, we hear the voice of Governor Lamm, who declares that his concept of "toughlove" calls for a recognition of the cruel realities of life, a full embrace of pessimism. We will be strong pessimists, Lamm says, if we stop trying to use our technology and resources to help every man, if we just accept the fact that all men were not created equal, and never will be.

History also shows clearly that the ideology of Nazism was aimed directly against the kind of Judeo-Christian progress epitomized by the American revolution. As Armin Mohler, one of the active participants as well as propagandists for National Socialism put it:

"Christianity came to determine the fate of the West. Together with its secular forms, the pedagogy of progress in every sphere, it created the "modern world" against which the conservative/revolutionary insurgency is aimed . . . the monstrous daring of modern science and technology, whose burden we experience in the wake of recent events with deep disquiet, only became possible on the basis of that "personal independence" that Christ gave to humanity.

Mysticism and death

Among the most famous quotes of the Nazis convicted at Nuremberg was that of Dr. Karl Brandt, who asserted with great fervor in defense of euthanasia, "When I said 'yes' to euthanasia I did so with the deepest conviction, just as it is my conviction today, that is was right. Death can mean deliverance. Death is life—just as much as birth."

In making this statement, Dr. Brandt was directly in line with the thinking of the leading Nazi philosophers, denying that man's Godlike rationality was his essential character, and held up the goal of "communion with nature" as the realization of man's natural aspirations.

Again, hear Nietzsche: "To commit sacrilege against the Earth is now the most fearful sin, and to honor the inner workings of the undiscoverable more highly than the meaning of the Earth!"

Such a fascist romantic outlook leads to a hatred of machines, viewing them as an intrusion against man and nature, rather than as man's instrument in controlling and steering nature. This we see fullblown in the Nazi ideologue and author Herman Hesse's Steppenwolf:

"The inscription: "Off to the merry chase! The hunt against automobiles" I grasped the idea: It was the battle between men and machines, long in the making, long anticipated, long feared, now finally breaking out, strewing corpses and
Brilliantly inflammatory posters on every wall demanded in giant letters, blazing like torches, that the nation finally engage itself for humanity, against the machines—finally beat to death the fat, well-dressed, sweet-smelling rich, who keep their feet on people’s necks with the help of machines—along with their big, coughing, rumbling, buzzing automobiles—finally get rid of the factories and get rid of the people and give the ravished earth a little space. Grass will grow again, out of the grimy cement. Things like woods, meadows, heaths, brooks, and moors can exist again.

It is the very same mystical doubletalk that we encounter in the language of the court decisions for euthanasia and the lectures of Governor Lamm. The call for us to be like leaves and be absorbed into the ground, the depiction of modern life-saving technology as “inhuman intrusions” into the human body, reflect a view of man as mystical as that of Hesse. The ruling of the New Jersey Supreme Court (see Documentation) that it would be in the “best interest” of a patient to die is even more striking in its similarity to Brandt’s view—in effect, to die is human, death is life.

Social Darwinism

Behind the mystical romanticism of the Nazis, of course, was the belief in the irrational force of the Will which would allow the “spiritually strong” to wipe out those who are wasting resources, who are “useless eaters.” This is precisely the same outlook today that allows the aristocrats behind the depopulation lobby to assert that the world’s resources have to be preserved for the “white races,” since inferior cultures and peoples cannot be allowed to “use them up.”

It is this view that led Lord Bertrand Russell to call for periodic bloodlettings through famine and war to depopulate the world, and who violently opposed the agricultural revolution because it gave the “illusion” that the world could tolerate more people.

Hermann Hesse agreed:

Yes, there are absolutely too many people on earth. No one used to think so. But now, where no one wants to simply take a breath of air, but wants to have a car as well, now this is being recognized. Naturally, what we are doing is not rational, it is childish nonsense, just as the war was a giant piece of nonsense. Later, mankind will finally have to learn to keep its proliferation in bounds through rational means. Before that, we are reacting to unbearable conditions somewhat irrationally, but we are doing basically the right thing—we are reducing population.

Governor Lamm’s language is virtually indistinguishable from that of Hesse and the Social Darwinists. He puts it like this:

The new civilization that will form will recognize, as did the American Indians, that we need to live in harmony with nature and Mother Earth.

You call my attitude on this heartless; nature is similarly heartless. Is the lion that kills the zebras heartless? The wolves that cull the old, lame and sick from a caribou herd heartless? No. They simply are following the demands of nature. Ultimately, we are the children both of God and nature. Man comes with the same warranty that the dinosaurs had.

Cost-cutting

Bolstered by an ideology which proclaimed that a new chosen super-race must rule over a world of scarce resources; the Nazis brutally put that ideology into practice in their economics. People who were not among the chosen were chewed up and thrown away. It was physical, not mental labor, that was valued, since man was seen as culling the riches from the earth. When man could no longer carry out physical labor, he was left to die.

Here we have fascist, Nazi economics, which can be easily recognized as the very economic theory which is being implemented by the International Monetary Fund and the Federal Reserve Board of the United States today. There have been variants throughout the history of economics, one of the most popular being the “theory of marginal utility” of the British economists. Ultimately, the basis for decision-making is the same.

Thus under Nazi economics, human beings were the primary “resources,” in the sense that human muscles were used wherever possible to replace technology. Expensive technology could not be wasted, but cheap human labor could.

This same thinking provided the economic rationale for Nazi euthanasia—it was just too expensive for the state to keep the “terminally ill” alive.

And Governor Lamm? He said in Berkeley:

It is thus my opinion that high-technology medicine can be a miracle or it can be a manacle, depending upon how it is used.

Our ambivalence in this area is imposing huge costs on the patients and society. It is estimated that we spend $8 billion on people who will die within six weeks—money that is desperately needed in other parts of the health care system with a great deal more substantial benefit. We cannot, and should not, spend our societal resources to keep a flicker of life going in a hopelessly ill person who has signed a living will and wants to be released from the torture.

There is only one “difference” which the modern Nazis can claim in their implementation of euthanasia, and that is that they have convinced their victims to openly sign for it. We examine that figleaf next.