

Mario Cuomo swaps euthanasia tales with Kremlin hosts

by Linda Everett

During his "I am not a candidate" jaunt to the Soviet Union, New York's Gov. Mario Cuomo took the opportunity to expound to the Soviet Institute of State and Law, on how he had successfully transformed his state's law to sanction murder and suicide as "constitutional rights" of all patients. No doubt, the governor's speech delighted the Soviet leaders, since Russian observers were right at that moment studying euthanasia practices in the United States under the auspices of Georgi Arbatov's U.S.A. and Canada Institute and the International Center for Development Policy.

Cuomo, we are told, has an ego that expands with the universe. He feels he has much to be proud of. In three short years, he worked at a feverish pace to promulgate the most cost-efficient "final solutions" possible for New York State's chronically ill and elderly. In fact, in the first week of October, his Task Force on Life and the Law delivered its latest proposal along these Nazi lines, a "medical care proxy" which gives patients the "iron-clad right" to authorize someone else to decide if they live or die, are treated or not, should they become unconscious, or senile and incompetent. The "proxy" will save terminally ill and AIDS patients from the "ravages of runaway medical technology," the panel says. That is to say, their non-treatment and quick deaths will cut medical costs drastically.

How did Cuomo bring smiles to Moscow's leaders? How did he get New York, once a beacon of medical research, to accept euthanasia? It started just over three years ago, when Governor Cuomo launched as ambitious a plan as any hatched by Adolf Hitler and his Dr. Brandt to shift the state's health care ethic from saving lives to weeding out "useless eaters."

In a Sept. 13, 1984 speech at Notre Dame University, the governor eviscerated the Judeo-Christian core of Western civilization and announced that politics and public policies would not be determined by morality, but on the basis of a "consensus view of right and wrong." Using jesuitical judo, Cuomo told New York: "Put aside what God expects—assume, if you like, that there is no God—then the greatest thing still left to us is life." Society, Cuomo said, must "struggle with questions of when life begins, and *under what circumstances it can be ended, when it must be protected, by*

what authority: it, too, must decide what protection to extend to the helpless and the dying, to the aged and the unborn, to life in all phases."

But what the good governor really meant was that "life" can be taken, whenever medical and legal "experts," "ethicists," and the medical insurance companies that sponsor them, form a consensus that a patient's death is better, that is cheaper, than the patient's life.

Cuomo already had a lousy and consistent track record on the sanctity of life.

- In the fall of 1983, he refused to take any action to assure that "Baby Jane Doe," a Long Island child born with spina bifida, would receive the critical treatment her parents were demanding that she be denied. Cuomo called the federal investigators who sought the child's medical records "meddling outsiders," and said that the large expenditures needed for handicapped newborns could not be made without taking into consideration the implications for the terminally ill as well.

- After consulting a private advisory board, Cuomo also refused to intervene to save a nursing home patient, G. Roth Henninger, who successfully starved himself to death after a State Supreme Court ruled in February 1984, that any attempt to save him would constitute assault and battery against the patient!

Two weeks after his Notre Dame speech, Cuomo announced, at St. Francis College in Brooklyn, the formation of a "life and the law" task force to build a consensus on such life-and-death issues as the "right to die," "Do Not Resuscitate" rules, brain death, *in vitro* fertilization, handicapped newborns, abortion, and artificial insemination.

On Dec. 22, the governor issued an executive order creating the panel, and appointed 23 individuals recommended by New York State Health Commissioner Dr. David Axelrod, who would chair the task force. The panel consisted of various religious representatives and "experts" from the euthanasia mob, known nationally for their "quality of life" line. Included was the former president of the Euthanasia Educational Council and present president and founder of "Concern For Dying," Rev. Donald W. McKinny. Another

is Daniel Callahan, executive director and co-founder of the Hasting Institute in New York.

Callahan bristles with the Nazi ethic. He wrote recently: "There are now and will be in the future better ways to spend our money than on indefinitely extending the life of the elderly. This is neither a wise social goal, an economically affordable goal, nor one the aged themselves should want. A goal of the extension of life combined with an insatiable desire for improvement in health—a longer and simultaneously better life for the elderly—is a recipe for monomania and bottomless spending."

Both Callahan and Cuomo task force chairman David Axelrod have just completed a national study for the congressional Office of Technology Assessment on "life-sustaining technologies" and the elderly. Their report, after two years of work with other top genocidalists, attacks as "inappropriate" for most elderly incurable patients, artificial feedings, antibiotics, dialysis, ventilators, and cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Patients have the right to turn down *any* form of life-saving treatment, the OTA reports says.

This gang is ever-so-concerned with patients' "rights." Well, not really. The OTA report is quick to add: "An individual does not necessarily have a right to unlimited medical treatment or intervention." In other words, they'll be happy to kill you if you want them to, and if you don't want them to, they'll be happy to kill you anyway.

Axelrod has long proved a ruthless ally of the medical genocide lobby and sponsoring medical insurance firms. In 1983 and 1984, some New York hospitals were caught tagging terminally ill patients for early death, placing purple dots on their charts without the family or patient's knowledge. The "no code," "show code," "slow code," and "DNR" (Do Not Resuscitate) orders on patients' charts meant what they said: No attempt would be made to save patients if they underwent cardiac arrest.

Cuomo was horrified. Not because physicians stood by while patients gasped to death, but because this was not more broadly and openly practiced! Cuomo wanted *glasnost* in his hospitals: The doctors, the family, and the patient should all agree to genocide in advance.

In March 1984, under Cuomo's orders, Axelrod got the state's hospitals to formulate "Do Not Resuscitate" policies. By September, Axelrod had targeted some 10,000 terminally ill nursing home patients whom he says were incapable of making their own "DNR" decisions. He told the New York Academy of Medicine, that it is in society's interest to "articulate a consensus," that is, make it policy, to kill incompetent patients with DNR rules. "DNR," he told them, "is not so much a matter of death, but a recognition of the burden associated with the pain and prolongation of dying."

Cuomo's consensus

On March 15, 1985, Cuomo ordered his task force to define rules on brain death and give hospitals statutory au-

thority to withhold emergency life-saving care to certain "dying" patients. They delivered. On March 14, 1986, the task force moved to broaden the criteria for determining death.

The task force's sole dissenter, Rabbi J. David Bleich, professor of Jewish Law and Ethics at the Benjamin Cordozo School of Law, said that the new criteria gave living patients "the rights of a corpse." Brain death, Bleich said, "is not a judgment that further medical treatment would be of no avail. . . . It is precisely because the patient is *not* beyond medical treatment, that a determination *not to employ treatment* is advocated. . . ."

Nevertheless, on May 22, 1986, the avowedly Catholic governor announced that his task force had delivered a "unanimous" recommendation on brain death and "DNR" guidelines. The task force had simply eliminated from the vote any members who opposed the policies as euthanasia. A Cuomo watcher said flatly, "A consensus? When Cuomo, the emperor, sets his mind on something, you *have* a consensus."

By exerting enormous pressure, Axelrod got the New York State Hospital Review and Planning Commission to adopt the brain death resolution on June 18, 1987, after telling them how expensive it is to "ventilate corpses." The resolution let doctors unplug patients from expensive medical technology without fear of liability, and insurance companies could refuse payments to sustain "brain damaged" patients who were not dead and did sometimes recover.

On July 8, 1987, New York legislators succumbed to intense lobbying by both Cuomo and Axelrod and passed DNR legislation. On Aug. 11, Cuomo signed the nation's first "Do Not Resuscitate" law. It allows doctors to ignore dying patients in the midst of respiratory or cardiac arrest with no risk of criminal liability. Physicians can authorize DNR orders without the patient's permission, if he thinks the patient would suffer severe injury from discussing it! If a patient is too sick or may actually die from the shock of the physician's request to let him die, then a relative or friend can, acting in the patient's "best interest," sign the order.

On Sept. 29, moving at breakneck speed, Cuomo's task force served up what the right-to-die crowd had been demanding for AIDS patients—the "health care proxy," which will let patients "be in control of the rest of their lives."

Expanding on Cuomo's Nazification project, the New York State Supreme Court handed down two pro-starvation rulings in June:

- 1) The court allowed the wife of Daniel Delio, a 34-year-old brain-damaged patient, to starve him to death.
- 2) The court allowed an alert, mentally competent, and healthy 84-year-old nursing home patient, Theresa Laguerrier, to refuse food, and thus commit suicide.

Would Cuomo, as President, also please the Soviets? You bet. Has he not already legalized the same starvation treatment the Muscovites used to slaughter millions in the Ukraine?