

Prominent signers back 'stop euthanasia' call

"It should not go unpunished that today, 43 years after the defeat of the Nazi regime, people once again dare to advocate and implement euthanasia, making themselves judges over other people's lives, allegedly unworthy of being lived. This is murder pure and simple, and incitement to murder."

So begins an "urgent appeal" issued by the Club of Life in early February, with signers from four continents. The Club is an international organization founded by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, wife of American presidential candidate Lyndon LaRouche. The Club is dedicated to fighting the policy approach to depression conditions that finds human life too "expensive" to preserve. The appeal charges that while euthanasia is often portrayed as "mercy killing," it is motivated solely by health-care cost-cutting considerations.

The appeal has many prominent signers from Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and the United States, among them:

- Dr. Ram Isahir, head of the Israeli Medical Association
- Dr. Simon Wiesenthal of the Jewish Documentation Center of Vienna
- Adrianus Cardinal Simonis, Archbishop of Utrecht, the Netherlands
- French Resistance heroine Marie-Madeleine Fourcade
- Retired Brig.-Gen. Friedrich-Wilhelm Grunewald of West Germany
- Dr. Ricardo Martín Mora, former deputy attorney general of Peru
- Dr. Leopoldo Frenkel, the former mayor of Buenos Aires, Argentina
- Retired Adm. Karl-Adolf Zenker of West Germany
- Prof. Frederick Wills, the former justice minister of Guyana
- Dr. Mana Boonkhanphol, the director of St. Louis Hospital in Thailand
- Dr. Norbert Brainin, first violinist of the Amadeus Quartet.

Other signers include doctors, lawyers, professors, and religious and political figures from Israel, Italy, Sweden, Denmark, England, West Germany, Thailand, and the United States.

The appeal sharply attacks the notion spread by "Right to Die" organizations "that one must respect the decision of the patient if such a patient wants to end a life 'not worth living.'"

It asserts: "Lurking behind the euthanasia campaign is not a shred of "respect" for the desires of afflicted persons—it is merely brutal cost accounting."

Such notorious euthanasia advocates and practitioners as West Germany's Dr. Julius Hackethal and that country's Society for a Humane Death are singled out for denunciation as murderers, as is the entire government and medical community of Holland, where "it is estimated that . . . as many as 10% of all deaths can already be attributed to euthanasia, and ever more elderly and ill people are refusing to be admitted to hospitals and care homes, because they fear being killed as a cost-saving measure."

United States no better

But the United States is little better, the statement reports.

"Emergency cases in the U.S.A. over 50 years of age are no longer given medical care if they are not able to prove that they have the financial means to pay, and it is an open secret that active euthanasia is common practice in most hospitals and hospices."

It continues: "Furthermore, there is a degree of panic among all governments of the industrial nations that the AIDS epidemic will produce a cost-explosion in health care which will shatter all cost-reduction efforts in their health systems. Treatment of a single AIDS patient costs between 2-300,000 German Marks, and the costs will soon be astronomical. Is it any surprise that these neo-Nazi ideologues have already proposed that AIDS victims should be eliminated by euthanasia?"

"Once the threshold of the inviolability and sacredness of human life is broken, when political powers turn themselves into judges over the lives of the weak and the poor, then a repetition of the barbarity of the Nazis, in far greater dimensions, will unfortunately become reality. The very existence of the African continent is threatened by the AIDS epidemic, 450 million people are threatened with death—and the governments of the North know it—without granting the help possible.

"Every human life on this planet must be protected, because every person carries within himself or herself a part of the divine. It is the respect for this absolute dignity of the individual and his right to life which differentiates us from all dictatorships. And it was the denial of this right which made the euthanasia and extermination programs of the Nazis possible.

"We, the undersigned, appeal to Western governments and politicians to implement clear measures to prohibit and punish euthanasia in any form, be it active or passive in form. We make this appeal on the basis of the same principles established in the Nuremberg trials.

"If we, who are in full possession of our mental and bodily strength, do not care for the weak and the poor, this sin of omission will be the cause of our own demise. Help us to defend the human dignity of all individuals!"