

"Most of the greatest evils that man has inflicted upon man have come through people feeling quite certain about something which, in fact, was false."

— Bertrand Russell

HOLOCAUST

SOCIETAL VALUES:

Slight regard for people with developmental disabilities; concern with economic depression and war.



Beginning in the 1930s, Nazi Germany targeted people with disabilities and the elderly as a drain on public resources.

During the 1930s, people with disabilities in Germany are referred to as "useless eaters."

In Nazi Germany, 908 patients were transferred from Schoenbrunn, an institution for retarded and chronically ill patients, to the euthanasia "installation" at Egling-Haar to be gassed. A monument to the victims now stands in the courtyard at Schoenbrunn.

At the outbreak of World War II, Hitler ordered widespread "mercy killing" of the sick and disabled. The Nazi euthanasia program, code-named Aktion T4, was instituted to eliminate "life unworthy of life."

Nazis sterilized 400,000 Germans and exterminated over 200,000 persons with disabilities.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES – OVER 200,000 – ARE THE FIRST VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST.

At Hadamar Hospital in Germany, more than 10,000 people with disabilities were killed between January and August of 1941.

The first killings were by starvation, then by lethal injection. Gas chambers soon became the preferred method of execution. After being gassed, the bodies were cremated.

Doctors, not soldiers, were put in charge of killing the elderly and people with disabilities.

As a final act of abandonment, tens of thousands of people who died in our state institutions were buried anonymously, in graves marked only by numbers. People of the time believed having names on the grave markers would be an embarrassment to the families of the deceased.



RESPONSES TO DISABILITY:

(In the US) Abandonment in institutions; few services available in the community.



Dr. Josef Mengele



In Nazi Germany a Catholic bishop, Clemens von Galen, delivered a sermon in Munster Cathedral attacking the Nazi euthanasia program calling it "plain murder."

In 1941, Hitler suspended Aktion T4, which had accounted for nearly a hundred thousand deaths by this time. The euthanasia program quietly continued using drugs and starvation instead of gassings.



In 1994, a group of self-advocates and allies began a project called Remembering with Dignity to place names on the numbered graves at Minnesota's institutions, and to get an apology from the state for years of abuse, neglect, and abandonment.

1899
Boston starts special education classes. Teachers are sent to Massachusetts Institution for the Feeble-minded at Waltham and Elwyn Institute in Pennsylvania for training.

1900
Sigmund Freud publishes *The Interpretation of Dreams*.

1901
Philadelphia, PA starts special education classes.

1903
U.S. Congress bars immigration of epileptics.

1904
Martin Barr publishes *Mental Defectives*.

1906
Rome State Custodial Asylum for Unteachable Idiots in New York opens a farm colony (The Brush Colony).

1907
Indiana passes sterilization law.

1909
Gunnar Dybwad, "Grandfather of the Self-Advocacy Movement," is born in Germany.

1910
Letchworth Village, an institution for the feeble-minded, opens in New York.

1910
Clifford Beers, a young businessman who had a mental breakdown and recovered, writes about it in *A Mind That Found Itself*.