



Schmidt Testimony on the Euthanasia Program
1946

AFFIDAVIT

I, Gerhard Schmidt, Director of Haar-Eglfing Insane Asylum, after having been duly sworn, do hereby make the following statement:

I was licensed as M. D. by the University of Berlin (1930). In 1935, I became an assistant at the Institute for Legal Medicine in Berlin. I worked in Bavaria since 1937 at the ,Public Hospital, Munich-Schwabing, and also at the Research Institute for psychiatry in Munich. Since 1935, I have been familiar with the system of public asylums, mental hospitals, and similar institutions in Germany. I know that public institutions of this kind were under the supervision and control of the provisional administration of the Laender at the district level. All these public institutions were under the supervision and control of the Reich Ministry of the Interior in Berlin at the highest level. The Reich Minister of the Interior was, as I know, Dr. Wilhelm Frick. As Reich Minister of the Interior, he was chief of the Medical Department of the Reich Ministry of the Interior from 1933 until August 1942 when he became Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia.

After the beginning of the war in 1939, I learned from a colleague, Dr. Lemberger, who was in charge of an asylum in occupied Poland, that it was planned that the inmates of his asylum should be killed. About 1940, I became acquainted for the first time with the fact that inmates of asylums in Germany itself were being killed. I became acquainted with this fact first through an industrialist. A short time later, I learned it from my colleagues and from many other people it was a so-called open secret at such killings were not only planned, but were actually being carried out. I was advised about these happenings not only by my colleagues, but also by relatives of people who had been killed.

It is typical, that despite the fact that this whole affair was an open secret, a psychiatrist who was in the Institution of Haar-Eglfing, where such things happened, said he could not give any official answer.

The organization of mass-killings was as follows:

First, the physicians of mental and similar asylums had to fill out questionnaires which were sent to a central agency in Berlin. Then the order came back from the central agency in Berlin, that the persons listed should be taken out from one asylum and sent to another asylum where they were killed. The killing was done frequently by injections. For these organized mass-killings, the authorities used different administrative procedures. I can give the following example for the killing of children: The names of newly born children who were deformed or partly paralyzed, or mentally deficient, were submitted to the health authorities and finally to a Reich agency in Berlin-W.9 P. O. B. 101. A short time after the reports were filed, the County Health authorities of the respective districts, received an order that these children should be sent to a special institution for special modern therapy. I know from hundreds of cases, that this "special modern therapy" was nothing less than the killing of these children, for instance, in the institution of Haar-Eglfing and others.

I read dozens of such orders which said that this procedure of assignment of such children to institutions was "in agreement with the Herrn Reich Minister des Innern (Hr. Reich Minister of the Interior) ."

Another method of killing so-called "useless eaters" was to starve them. This was done particularly in a period, when for reasons I do not know, the killing itself was not possible, because possibly of transportation difficulties from one institution to another.

At the end of 1942 a conference took place in the Bavarian Ministry of the Interior which is under the direct supervision of the Reich Ministry of the Interior about the procedure for starving such people to death. In this conference, the directors of the asylums were instructed that "useless eaters" who could not work very much, should be killed by slow starvation.. This method apparently was considered very good, because the victims would appear to have died a "natural death". This was a way of camouflaging the killing procedure.

I know from the files of the institution where I am now director, that several hundred people were starved to death. In analyzing the whole system of these mass-killings, I can state as a psychiatrist, familiar with such cases, that hundreds of the people killed would have been absolutely able to perform a certain amount of simple work under supervision -- among them, according to my knowledge, some people who had brain injuries from the First World War. Among the people who were killed were also aged people who were a little feeble-minded. So far as the children were concerned, they had mainly brain diseases, but not hereditary diseases, except in a very few cases. In any normal society, such children, mentally deficient, and aged people would have been treated and cared for in the proper way and not killed as "useless eaters".

Signed : Dr. Gerhard Schmidt
Dr. Gerhard Schmidt

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 28th day of March 1946.

Dr. Robert M. W. Kempner,
Office of the U. S. Chief Counsel