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Carlotta Fava, Alessia Molinaroli, Lucrezia Platè, Alice Podrecca

T4 and Lebensborn: towards "perfection"

Reichsleiter Bouhler und
Dr. med. Brandt
sind unter Verantwortung beauftragt, die Befugnisse namentlich zu bestimmender Ärzte so zu erweitern, dass nach menschlichem Ermessen unheilbar Kranken bei kritischster Beurteilung ihres Krankheitszustandes der Gnadentod gewährt werden kann.

<<A week later, a man brought her an urn which contained her daughter's ashes. He told her she had committed suicide[...]>>
Her Alois, from the book by H. Schneider *Il piccolo Adolf non aveva le ciglia*, Einaudi

<<I understood that the structure, which seemed to be a mental hospital, in reality was a lager for the victims of euthanasia project>>
book by H. Schneider, *Il piccolo Adolf non aveva le ciglia*, Einaudi

Lebensborn (source of life) was a project started in 1935 by Heinrich Himmler Reichsführer to "Aryanise" the Reich population; it was promoted in order to increase birth rate. It concerned young women, especially Norwegian women (as Norwegians were considered the most perfect Arian race), and SS officials: genetically perfect children were conceived in change meetings in Lebensborn centres; between 1940 and 1945, 10-12 thousand infants were born, and 6 thousand of them were brought up in these institutions called Lebensborn.

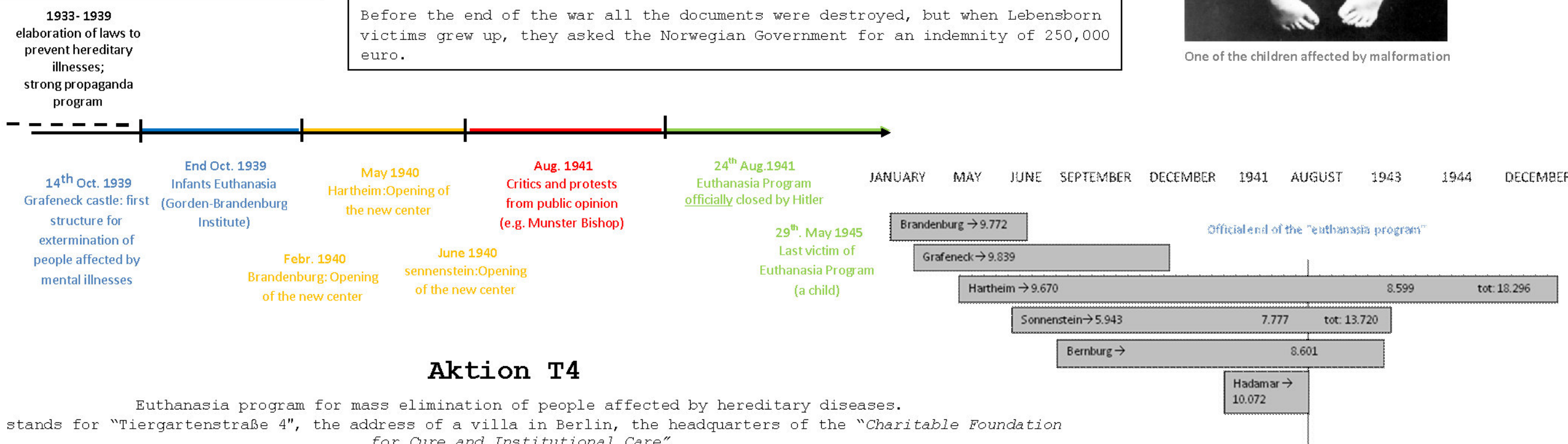
Some of them were adopted by Nazi families, which were given money and food by the State; these perfect Arian children were considered as properties of the State-Party, and they were baptised with a special Nazi ceremonies, with a SS official celebrating the rite and a SS dagger on the infant chest.

"Lebensborn kinder" were victims of many abuses: they were discriminated against, beaten, treated cruelly and put into mental hospitals.

Before the end of the war all the documents were destroyed, but when Lebensborn victims grew up, they asked the Norwegian Government for an indemnity of 250,000 euro.



One of the children affected by malformation



Aktion T4

Euthanasia program for mass elimination of people affected by hereditary diseases.

T4 stands for "Tiergartenstraße 4", the address of a villa in Berlin, the headquarters of the "Charitable Foundation for Cure and Institutional Care"

The victims:

They were chosen among the list of patients of every German hospital: if they were considered unable to work, their medical was marked with a "+" and therefore they had to be eliminated; on the contrary if they were still useful to the country, a "-" would spare their lives.

The first to be eliminated were:

- People affected by mental illnesses
- People who had physical handicaps (blindness, dumbness) or even the elderly

In some structures (ex: Brandeburg) also "irretrievable" criminals found death along with politic opponents.

THE PROTOCOL OF DEATH

- Withdrawal of the patients
- In the centers, they were undressed and weighed; their identity were confirmed with an inaccurate visit
- Numbers were assigned to each person; those who had golden teeth had a special mark
- They were taken in groups to gas chambers
- The corpses were burnt in crematoria near the structure (any golden teeth was taken away)

"My adoptive parents were always kind to me, but their daughters considered me as a sort of "parasite"; they were very aggressive to me."
Barbara, a Lebensborn kinder



Euthanasia Centres and their intermediate Mental Homes

Bernburg
Alt-Scherbitz, Görden, Jerichow, Königsutter, Neuruppin, Sachsenberg, Teubitz, Uchtspringe

Grafeneck
Schussenried, Weinsberg, Weißenau, Winnental, Zwißalten
Hadamar
Andernach, Eichberg, Galkhausen, Herborn, Idstein, Scheuern, Weilmünster, Weinsberg, Wiesloch
Hartheim

Sonnenstein
Arnsdorf, Großschweidnitz, Waldheim, Zschadras

GAS as the final solution

After some experiments with lethal injections, at the end of the summer 1939, a more efficient and quick weapon substituted this method: carbon monoxide (CO), which was tasteless, colorless and painless.



Hartheim castle (near Linz, Austria): constructed in the XVI century, in 1898 it became hospital for children with mental or physical diseases; from 1939 to 1944 it was used by the Nazis as the main euthanasia centre.



"60000 Deutsche Marks: the costs of these hereditary diseases for the National Community for a life-time. People, that's your money. Read: New People"