



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

Office of the Assistant Secretary  
for Health  
Washington DC 20201

November 13, 1981

Honorable Carl M. Levin  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Levin:

I am sorry that the answer to your most recent letter cannot be as complete as I would like to make it. My files are in Philadelphia locked up and I am here in Washington.

The enclosed copy of Alexander's article from the New England Journal of Medicine provides some fragmentary documentation of what he has told me much more extensively and which appear in his collected papers donated to Tufts University. I have highlighted sentences here and there indicating the medical involvement in the beginning process as well as some of the time relationships.

I do know that the list of those chosen for extermination was put together over a long period of time and included not only the mentally ill but also the feeble, the infirm, some tuberculosis patients, some amputees from World War I, and a number of children called "monsters." The extermination process began some years before Hitler's first direct order for euthanasia was issued in September 1939. How many of the 275,000 were already exterminated before the order and how many after is not clear.

I do know from what Alexander has told me that the same green psychiatric forms that were used to exterminate "psychiatric" patients before the order went out were used for a considerable time after the order even though the reasons for extermination shifted from "mercy killings" to reasons of politics, ideology, race, etc.

Also enclosed is a book review of Medical Holocausts with certain pertinent passages highlighted.

Sincerely yours,

C. Everett Koop, M. D.  
Deputy Assistant Secretary  
for Health