

The 'first to perish': Child euthanasia in the Third Reich.

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The 'First To Perish' Child Euthanasia in the Third Reich

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Abstract

In an attempt to improve racial fitness, racial policy in the Third Reich targeted many groups, including physically and mentally handicapped children. An early program identified disabled children who were systematically selected and then transferred to various hospital centers where they were actively euthanatized. The program, directed by mainstream German physicians, was begun on the eve of war and was a harbinger of the evils to come. This article highlights the "scientific thought" that provided the rationale for this policy together with the details of implementation of the active euthanasia program and profiles one of the major participants, Werner Catel, DrMed, who was a distinguished pediatrician.

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