

The 70273 Project

A worldwide collaborative art project
commemorating the lives of the



physically and mentally disabled
people murdered by German Nazis in 1940-41

Get involved: the70273project.org

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Teacher's Information Pack

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Contents

Introduction	4
An Idea Forms	5
Aktion T4: The Beginnings	6
Implementation of the T4 Programme	9
The Birth of The 70273 Project	12
Guidelines for Making Blocks	13
The 70273 Project Privacy Policy	15
The 70273 Project Provenance Form	16
Useful Links	18

A 70273 Project Quilt



Introduction

The Nazis falsely believed that some human beings were superior to others. They saw themselves as leaders of this superior group and aimed to develop and preserve a pure Aryan master race, taking a Social Darwinist approach towards humanity, adapted to suit their own purposes. The result was a sinister system of deliberate selection and exclusion.

Determined to select those they believed to be the most “perfect” human beings and through them develop what a “pure” and “untainted” group of people, they used a false science of race to support their ideas. They believed that each generation passed physical characteristics down to the next via a person’s blood. To create their dream race, they would need “pure” blood.

Plans were made to purify Aryan blood by preventing anything they saw as “undesirable” from “polluting” it. This meant that those they called “undesirables” could not be allowed to live normal lives, mix with the rest of the population, and have children. According to the Nazis these “undesirables” included the disabled.

It is not widely known that Hitler's extermination policies began with the widespread killing of institutionalized disabled people in Germany in the 1940s and that the eugenics theories that were the basis for Hitler's policies originated in the 1920s. Sterilization and euthanasia were not the ideas of the Nazis. Germany, however, was the only country in which the political climate allowed materialization of the final goal of sterilization and euthanasia.



Hadamar played a central role in Nazi programmes of discrimination. The sanatorium, or hospital as they were called then, which had been there since the nineteenth century, became an official killing centre for the Nazi regime. Within its confines many disabled people were deliberately murdered because they did not meet Nazi requirements for the building of a master race.

Cemetery at Hadamar Institute

An Idea Forms



While watching a multi part documentary in mid-January 2016, Jeanne Hewell-Chambers, of Georgia and North Carolina USA, sat stitching the drawings of her mentally disabled sister-in-law, Nancy. When she heard mention of Aktion T4, she knew that she just *had* to commemorate each of the 70,273 people murdered under Aktion T4, and she quickly knew that she couldn't do it by herself and that this was a project that could unite the world in kindness, creativity, and compassion. The 70273 Project was launched about two weeks later.

“The T4 Program was responsible for the murder of over 70,000 German citizens...babies, children, adults, and elderly...who had physical and mental disabilities. Developed in 1939 and carried out at six different sites throughout Germany and Austria, the T4 Program provided the Nazis with a heinous and systematic way to eliminate those individuals considered to be life unworthy of life. A variety of killing methods were tried on these victims, including allowing the babies to starve to death in their cribs, poisonous injections, and gassing. This program continued until public outcry caused it to be shut down...just at the start of what would become the Holocaust.” (<http://www.t4holocaust.net/index.html>)

Aktion T4: The Beginnings

The project that carried out the extermination of children and adults with disabilities was known as Aktion T4. The initials came from Tiergartenstrasse 4, Berlin which was the full address of the Fuhrer Chancellery. Aktion T4 was not a spur-of-the-moment idea from Hitler, but the result of a long evolutionary period based on ideas from physicians and scientists who believed in eugenics, the study of or belief in the possibility of improving the qualities of the human species or a human population by means of eradicating those presumed to have undesirable traits. When petitioned for his permission to carry out several elimination programs, Hitler gave his blessing.

Aktion T4 included several organizations:

- the Reich Committee for the Scientific Registration of Serious Hereditary and Congenital Diseases (often referred to as the “Reich Committee”) in charge of collecting information on candidates for euthanasia from questionnaires sent to hospitals,
- the Reich Committee for Scientific Approach to Severe Illness Due to Heredity (also known as the Reich Committee for Scientific Research of Serious Illness of Hereditary and Protonic Origin) set up exclusively to apply euthanasia (Greek for “good death”, also referred to as “mercy killings” by the Nazis) to children,
- the Charitable Patient Transport Company to move patients to the “receiving centres” (as the killing centres were called) where they were murdered,
- and the Charitable Foundation for Institutional Care, in charge of final disposition of the victims' remains.

On February 20, 1939 in a village called Pompen, Gerhardt Herbert Kretschmar was born blind and without an arm and a leg. Some doctors speculated he was also “feeble-minded”. Gerhardt’s parents, Richard Gerhardt Kretschmar and Lina Sonja Kretschmar believed strongly in Nazi ideology of a superior race, and his father wanted the baby dead.

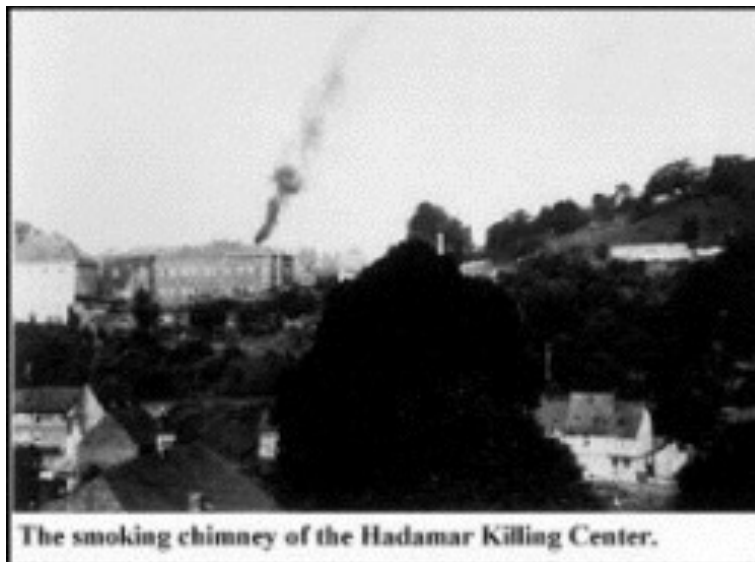
Richard had Gerhardt institutionalized in the Leipzig Children’s Clinic in the spring of 1939 when Gerhardt was just a few months old. Werner Catel, head of the clinic who later became involved in Aktion T4, later testified that Herr Kretschmar wanted him to kill Gerhardt immediately, a request Catel refused because of legal implications that were in place at the time. When Catel would not kill Gerhardt, Hitler was asked to end the child’s life.

Hitler sent Karl Brandt, his attending physician, to examine Baby Gerhardt (who was referred to as Baby K or Baby Knauer to protect the parents) and to decide whether he should live or die. After confirming that Gerhardt was blind and physically

disabled, Brandt authorized the clinic staff to kill the baby, and Gerhardt was murdered on July 25, 1939. He was five months old.

After the murder of this child proved to be successful in the eyes of Karl Brandt, it was decided to formally design a program of mass murder for those with disabilities who were regarded to be unworthy of life and thought to be impediments to the Nazi's drive to world power. Hitler appointed politicians, military leaders, and physicians to oversee and develop what became known as Aktion T4.

Although much intense discussion and debate about what to do with those members of society who were too weak or defective had occurred between political and medical members of the Nazi hierarchy, it was not until early 1939 that the first human being was euthanized by the permission and order of the government.



An elaborate system of selection was created, and six hospitals were designated as “receiving centres” for Aktion T4. When a baby was born, a nurse would register the baby, recording the health status and noting any abnormalities. If the baby had a disability, the T4 personnel were immediately notified. Medical students were trained to examine and recommend babies and children to the T4 program.

“Though they never even laid eyes on the disabled person they were evaluating, the Nazi doctors read the medical files and if, from the words on the page, the person was deemed “unfit” or an “economic burden on society”, the doctor placed a red X at the bottom of the form. Three doctors were to read each medical file, and when two of them made a red X on the page, the disabled person’s fate was sealed. Most were murdered within 1-2 hours.” (Jeanne Hewell-Chambers)

The selected babies and children were then taken to the killing centres (publicly referred to as “receiving centres”), mostly by deceiving the parents into thinking the children were going to residential asylums. A variety of killing methods were tried out on these child victims, including allowing the babies to starve to death in their cribs and a myriad of poisonous injections. Once the child was dead, the families received falsified death certificates and the standard sympathy letter.

As the T4 Programme became increasingly known among the public for what it was, families began to hide their relatives who were elderly or disabled. Eventually the T4 Program was “shut down” due to public outcry, but the cessation of Aktion T4 was a mere facade, as T4 continue to operate on an underground level during what has come to be known as the “wild euthanasia phase”, and the murder of human beings with disabilities, the elderly, the weak, and those with mental illnesses lasted throughout the Holocaust.

Implementation of the T4 Program

The Reich Committee for the Scientific Registration of Serious Hereditary and Congenital Diseases oversaw the preparation of a registration form designed to elicit the information it regarded useful in determining which persons were “worthy of help” and which were “useless lives” and thus candidates for “final medical assistance.”

Thousands of copies were printed and distributed to long-term hospitals, sanatoriums, and asylums. A cover letter from Dr. Leonardo Conti, chancellor of sanatoriums and nursing homes, directed attending physicians to complete the forms immediately and return by January 1, 1940. The purpose of the form was explained as “the necessity for a systematized economic plan for hospitals and nursing institutions.”

The Cover Letter

To the Head of the Hospital for Mental Cases,
Kanfbeuren,
Or his deputy in Kaufbeuren.

With regard to the necessity for a systemized economic plan for hospitals and nursing institutions, I request that you complete the attached registration forms immediately in accordance with the attached instruction leaflet and return them to me. If you yourself are not a doctor, the registration forms for the individual patients are to be completed by the supervising doctor. The completion of the questionnaire is, if possible, to be done on a typewriter. In the column "Diagnosis" I request a statement, as exact as possible, as well as a short description of the condition, if feasible.

In order to expedite the work, the registration forms for the individual patients can be dispatched here in several parts. The last consignment, however, must arrive in any case at this ministry at the latest by 1 January 1940. I reserve for myself the right, should occasion arise, to institute further official inquiries on the spot, through my representative.

Per proxy: Dr. Conti

INSTRUCTIONAL LEAFLET

To be noted in completing questionnaire:

All patients are to be reported who –

1. Suffer from the following maladies and can only be employed on work of a mechanical character, such as sweeping, etc., at the institution:

Schizophrenia,

Epilepsy (if not organic, state war service injury or other cause),

Senile maladies,

Paralysis and other syphilitic disabilities refractory to therapy,

Imbecility, however caused,

Encephalitis,

Huntington's chorea and other chronic diseases of the nervous system; or

2. Have been continuously confined in institutions for at least five years, or

3. Are in custody as criminally insane, or

4. Are not Germany citizens or not of German or unrelated stock according to their records of race and nationally.

The separate questionnaires to be completed for each patient must be given consecutive numbers.

Answers should be typewritten if possible.

INSTRUCTIONS

Diagnosis should be as precise as possible. In the case of traumatically induced conditions, the nature of the trauma in question, e.g., war wounds or accidents at work, must be indicated.

Under the heading “exact description of employment” the work actually done by the patients in the institution is to be stated. If a patient’s work is described as “good” or “very good” reasons must be given why his release has not been considered. If patients on the higher categories of diet, etc., do no work, though they are physically capable of employment, the fact must be specially noted.

The names of patients brought to the institution from evacuation areas are to be followed by the letter (V).

If the number of Forms I sent herewith does not suffice, the additional number required should be demanded.

Forms are also to be completed for patients arriving at the institution after the latest date for return, in which case all such forms are to be sent in together exactly one month after the date in question, in every year.

[DOC 825.]

The Birth of The 70273 Project

After watching the TV Documentary in January 2016, Jeanne Hewell-Chambers felt she had to find a way to commemorate the **70,273** victims of Aktion T4. An enthusiastic quilter, she decided to use her sewing skills to achieve this aim.

*“I will commemorate these **70,273** voiceless, powerless people who were so callously and casually murdered by gathering **70,273** blocks of white fabric (representing innocence and the paper the doctors read), each bearing two red X’s (representing one person), and I will stitch them together into quilts.*

I can’t change history – can’t unring that bell – but I can commemorate the lives of these 70,273 disabled people in this small way.” (Jeanne Hewell-Chambers)

How will they be commemorated? By gathering 70,273 blocks of white fabric (representing the innocence of the victims and the paper of the medical records the doctors read), each bearing two red X’s (representing one person) then stitching them into quilts that will travel the world to be displayed in museums, cathedrals and many, many more venues.

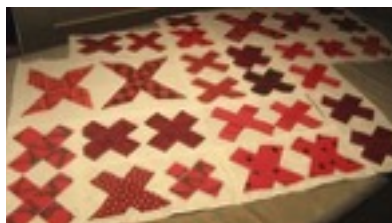
However, she quickly realised this would be a massive undertaking and so set up a blog to try to get others to help.

“Now I’ve done the math, and there’s no way I can do this by myself, so I’m asking for your help. You don’t have to have ever held a piece of fabric except to button or zip it.” (Jeanne Hewell-Chambers)

Jeanne asked for help, and help immediately came from all over the world. To date, she has heard from people in more than **115** countries.

As of May 2017, Jeanne has received around 8,000 blocks. Many more are needed to reach the target 70,273 blocks.

Could your students help?



Guidelines for Making Blocks

If you would like to make blocks for the 70273 project here are a few things to remember:

- The base must be white fabric (representing the paper medical records) and on the base there should be two red X's (representing the death sentence). Just about any kind of fabric can be used to make the base – 100% cotton, cotton/poly blend, wool, felt –are all okay as long as it's white. Please do not use upholstery fabric because it's thicker than other fabric, making it harder to stitch or double knit fabric because stretches and requires special sewing techniques.
- Blocks must be one of these sizes:
 - 3.5" x 6.5" (9 cm x 16.5 cm);
 - 6.5" x 9.5" (16.5cm x 24.2 cm); or
 - 9.5" x 12.5" (24.2 cm x 31.8 cm).
- The two red crosses can be made of fabric, ribbon, and braid etc, drawn with fabric markers, sewn, glued, of different sizes or more artistic. Please be as creative as you like, but please make sure the blocks all have a white base with two red X's and when completed, be one of the sizes mentioned above.
- Please don't sign the blocks or place other names on the blocks - no visible writing or words. Why? Because we need to keep the focus on the 70,273 souls we're commemorated. The Makers' names will appear on a label that is permanently attached to the back of the quilt.
- You can dedicate your blocks in honour or in memory of someone in particular, and unless the maker wishes to remain anonymous, these names will be given alongside the maker's name on labels and exhibition materials.
- For proper credit to be given and for your blocks to be included in quilts, The Provenance Form must be completed (please print), signed and placed in the bag with your completed block/s. Each maker must submit a Provenance Form, and multiple blocks made by the same maker can be attached to the form.
- If the block/s have been made by children who are not yet of legal age, please ask their guardian complete and sign the Provenance Form giving permission.

- When completed, they could be posted to Jeanne Hewell-Chambers / POB 994 / Cashiers, NC 28717-0994. Alternatively, UK Ambassadors for The 70273 Project can be contacted at Coxhoe Village Hall, Front Street, Coxhoe, County Durham. ENGLAND, or by email to: (chrissyfitzgerald@hotmail.co.uk or margaret_jackson11@hotmail.co.uk) We will willingly come to your school to collect your completed blocks together with completed Provenance forms.

The 70273 Project Privacy Policy

When you participate in The 70273 Project, you trust us with your information, and we take that seriously. This Privacy Policy is meant to help you understand what data we collect, why we collect it, and what we do with it. This is important; we hope you will take time to read it carefully.

COLLECTION AND USAGE OF INFORMATION:

The only information collected is what's on the Provenance Form – name, mailing address, email address. This information is collected so that proper credit can be given for creative submissions and to indicate that you give The 70273 Project, Inc. permission to use your blocks in quilts and images of your blocks in digital and print media.

After providing the information, participants can exercise the option to remain anonymous by ticking the appropriate box on the Provenance Form. If you elect to remain anonymous, your name will not appear anywhere in connection with The 70273 Project, and you will not be contacted.

Your personal contact information will not be given to anyone – not to advertisers, individuals, organizations, or businesses – and it will not be sold to any entity for any amount of money.

The security of your Personal Information is important to us, but remember that no method of transmission over the Internet, or method of electronic storage, is 100% secure. While we strive to use commercially acceptable means to protect your Personal Information, we cannot guarantee its absolute security.

THE 70273 PROJECT PROVENANCE FORM, INFO

Please note:

~ For proper credit to be given and for your blocks to be included in quilts, this form must be completed (please print), signed, attached with safety pin to block(s), and mailed with block(s) to Jeanne Hewell-Chambers / POB 994 / Cashiers, NC 28717-0994.

~ Only your name and country of residence will be used to give you credit for your blocks. Everything else will be kept strictly confidential. Should you elect to remain anonymous, you will not be mentioned in any way. We collect only the information on this form, and none of your information will be sold or shared - ever. To view The 70273 Project Privacy Policy, visit <http://thebarefootheart.com/the-70273-project-privacy-policy/>.

~ If sending multiple blocks by multiple makers, please complete a form for **each** maker (even if they're minors) and pin to all the blocks they created. (You don't need a form for each block, only for each Maker.)

~ If you are sending blocks made by family members who are not yet of legal age, please note their relationship to you and sign the form on their behalf using your name.

~ If your block(s) are part of a monthly Adventure, please indicate which adventure in the space provided on the form.

~ If desired, email the following information to WhollyJeanne@gmail.com to keep me from getting carpal tunnel (or inadvertently giving you a new name) from all the typing:

ANY SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS YOU WANT TO MENTION (OPTIONAL)

Facebook	Twitter	Pinterest	Blog/Web site URL
Google +	Instagram	Other:	

PHOTOS AND SHORT BIO (OPTIONAL)

Your name and "70,273 CONTRIBUTOR" in the subject.

Photos must be high resolution (300 dpi) and at least 5"x7" or 1500 x 2100 pixels in size.

Kindling for Bio (optional): Tell me a little more about yourself and about this block, like why or how you created it. How did you find out about The 70273 Project? What touched you about this project? What was your inspiration for making this particular block? How did it feel making it? What type of work do you do? How do you spend your days?

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Thank you for being a part of The 70273 Project.

[www.The70273Project.org](http://www.The70273Project.org)



**THE 70273 PROJECT PROVENANCE FORM**  
(to be signed & returned with blocks to  
Jeanne Hewell-Chambers / POB 994/Cashiers, NC 28717-0994)

**REQUIRED INFORMATION: (see other side of form for confidentiality info)**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of Quilt: \_\_\_\_\_

# of Blocks or Commemorations enclosed: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Town: \_\_\_\_\_ Your Country: \_\_\_\_\_

**OPTIONAL INFORMATION:**

\_\_\_\_ I wish to remain anonymous. (If you chose to remain anonymous, only non-personally identifiable information (i.e., geographic location) will be used and no attribution will be given.)

Block(s) created in memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

Block(s) created in honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

(If you'd like me to let them know, I'll need their mailing address and/or email address.)

By the submitting of blocks or other contributions, I agree that:

- Unless I choose to remain anonymous, Jeanne or a person appointed by Jeanne has my permission to use my name, likeness, geographic (city/state/country) and other information I've provided her in 70273 blog posts, in promotional or exhibition materials, and/or in any other audio, video or print media relating to The 70273 Project;
- Any blocks or other contributions become a permanent part of The 70273 Project and will not be returned;
- I, for good and valuable consideration, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, do hereby irrevocably transfer and assign to Jeanne Hewell-Chambers / POB 994 / Cashiers, NC 28717, her successors and assigns, in perpetuity, all right, title, and interest, throughout the world, including any copyrights and renewals or extensions thereto, in the blocks or other contributions as submitted;
- I will receive no monetary compensation from my participation in The 70273 Project other than any goodwill and publicity that I may receive relating to my contribution.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

If blocks are created by minor, a parent or legal guardian must also sign this form below for them to be included in The 70273 Project.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Relationship to Minor Date

## **For More Information**

### **BOOKS**

Spitz, Vivien, and Elie Wiesel. *Doctors from Hell: the Horrific Account of Nazi Experiments on Humans*. Boulder, CO: Sentient Publications, 2005.

Wachsmann, Nikolaus. *KL: A History of the Nazi Concentration Camps*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2015.

### **LINKS**

#### **The 70273 Project**

- Launch post: [www.The70273Project.org](http://www.The70273Project.org)
- Subscribe to the blog: <http://eepurl.com/CkEZz>
- Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/the70273project/>
- Twitter: @whollyjeanne (#70273 or #the70273project)
- Pinterest: <http://www.pinterest.com/whollyjeanne/the-70273-project>
- Instagram: <http://www.instagram.com/whollyjeanne> (#70273 or #the70273project)

#### **AKTION T4 and EUTHANASIA**

- <http://hmd.org.uk/education/case-study-t4-euthanasia-programme>
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child\\_euthanasia\\_in\\_Nazi\\_Germany](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Child_euthanasia_in_Nazi_Germany)
- <http://www.historyplace.com/worldwar2/holocaust/h-euthanasia.htm>
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Euthanasia>
- <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005200>
- <http://www.disabilityhistory.org/t4prog.html>
- <http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1338&context=honorsprojects>
- <http://www.disabilityhistory.org/t4prog.html>