

27th of January, 2011

ENIL - European Network on Independent Living honors again The International Holocaust Remembrance Day 2011. ENIL still demands an end to degrading treatment of disabled people and the closure of Europe's institutions housing disabled people.

The International Holocaust Remembrance Day is to be a day of remembrance of the 6 million European Jews and five million others including disabled people, Romani, homosexuals, and others, killed by the Nazi regime.

ENIL members, disabled people, many in need of personal assistance, would have been among the Holocaust victims. Disabled people with all kinds of disabilities were among those killed in the Nazi gas chambers. They were also used for medical experiments and in the death operation called Action T-4.

Forgotten Crimes, a report by Disability Rights Advocates (September 2001) describes the Nazi persecution and exploitation of people with disabilities.

Disability was considered as degeneracy, as a "life not worthy of life". Disabled people were the first victims of Hitler's efforts to create a master race. The elimination of disabled people was central in the Nazis' plan to "purify" the Aryan race.

How can such atrocities occur?

Why do they keep on occurring?

In Europe the past year we still have many people locked in institutions. We have also had an increase in crimes against the Romani.

What is it that allows for the indescribable inhumanity that continues?

Why are disabled people still considered as degenerate rather than allowed to represent diversity and equality?

Wealthy countries force many disabled people to be locked in institutions, and to be imprisoned at home by refusing personal assistance and community support. With the recent ratification of the UN Convention by the European Commission, ENIL looks forward to an end of this era.

ENIL honors the International Holocaust Remembrance Day as a day to raise awareness of all the atrocities of the Holocaust. A day to express the need to change attitudes that permit exclusionary behavior towards people considered different. Hate, intolerance, perfectionism and ignorance lie behind discriminating behavior and attitudes. The exclusion of people not living up to the 'norms of perfection' created by society influence the treatment of people. A relative human value still allows for people to be treated differently when we are all to treat and be treated equally.

On this day ENIL - European Network on Independent Living challenges European countries to begin or to continue definite plans for the closure of all institutions and

the adoption of inclusive social policies, in line with article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities.

Jamie Bolling

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