**While Grievance Regarding Medical Issues Can Be Addressed In a Democratic Society, No Such Avenue Is Available In a Genocidal Totalitarian Regime Such As the Nazi Third Reich**

**Introduction**

The statement is made clear by the works “The disability Movement: From Charity to Confrontation” and “The Nazi Doctors”. “The disability Movement: From Charity to Confrontation” explains how people with disabilities were acknowledged and how medical related grievances were handled and addressed in a democratic society through programs that provide the people with physical and emotional support. They mention that grievances associated with medical issues can be addressed through organizations and laws in a democratic society. Some of the Acts and organizations mentioned include the League of the Physically Handicapped, Americans with Disability Act, March of Dimes. On the other hand, “The Nazi Doctors” describes a non-democratic society during the Hitler regime in Germany, where doctors were forced to comply with the Euthanasia Movement that involved what they termed as elimination of unworthy life.

**Analysis of how Medical Grievances are addressed in Democratic and Non-Democratic Societies**

The authors of the book, “The disability Movement: From Charity to Confrontation” explains the history that marked the struggle to achieve disability rights in the United States. The U.S has been a democratic country since the 1700s (Fleischer and Zames 47). Over time, the country has experienced shifts in policies that focused on various forms of disability such as deafness, blindness, psychiatric, quadriplegia, chronic health conditions such as heart disease and cancer and developmental disabilities. Disability activism can be dated since the 1930s when the civil rights on the same began (Fleischer and Zames 77). The country continued in the 1970s when the independent living movement was launched and in the 1990s when the Americans called for the disability Pride. Just like any other struggles with civil rights, the disability rights movement occurred in the courts and on the streets as the activists strived to achieve change in the workplace, the legal system and in the schools (Fleischer and Zames 79).

Since the 1960s, empowerment of the people living with disabilities has demonstrated transformation in identity struggles. Currently, many people have been allowed in the workforce and hence the healthcare needs of the growing elderly population are becoming more significant (Fleischer and Zames 112). The link between health and democracy can be analyzed through a philosophical framework that perceives societal development as expansion of individual freedoms. Public policies are judged according to their impact on people’s capabilities or freedoms. Public participation in making political decisions is an important constitutive aspect of public policy. In a democratic society, citizens can freely state their grievances regarding their health, and hence they have the right to be heard and responded to by the relevant authorities (Fleischer and Zames 95).

Democracy directly improves the health status of people because democratic societies protect media freedom and are more open to share health information and grievances related to health. Democratic governments are also supportive in implementing and enforcing strategies to control tobacco and alcohol through implementation of taxes as excessive use of these substances causes health related problems. In a democratic society, the government is likely to increase government spending as to improve healthcare. However, this may not be possible in non-democratic societies such as the Nazi third Reich’s totalitarian and genocidal regimes. According to Lifton, during the Hitler regime in Germany, the Nazi Doctors focused on complying with the Euthanasia Movement that involved them on what they termed as elimination of unworthy life (Lifton 45). They contributed to the killing of people with disabilities and those who were perceived to contribute nothing to the country. The idea of euthanasia movement evolved from a national meeting held in 1938 that involved government administrators who agreed that the solution to the national problem of handling the mentally ill people was to eliminate them (Lifton 239).

They started with killing children, a practice that began when a father requested for the mercy killing of his infant who had one arm and one leg missing. The then Nazi leader, Hitler, authorized physicians to carry out euthanasia in his name and any legal proceedings that would be followed against the act would be dismissed by Hitler’s orders (Lifton 96). The same project proceeded to eliminating “unproductive” elements from the society (Lifton 22). According to Lifton, the impulses behind genocide, war and euthanasia in the Nazi regime developed from the fantasy that the society had inferior elements that threatened the German political body. Ethically, doctors are supposed to be at the forefront, striving to preserve human life and granting it the integrity it deserves. However, in a non-democratic or dictatorship society, this may not be possible because the leader is so empowered that any practice that is done against his orders can have serious negative consequences on the culprits as in the case of the Nazi Regime (Lifton 152). The Nazi regime brainwashed the doctors to believe that they played a role in eliminating “inferior cells” from the “main organ” and people who were perceived to be from an “inferior race” or in a defective physical or mental state were considered to be “cancerous” in the society and needed to be eliminated (Lifton 22-23). The Hitler administration perceived doctors to be crucial in the fulfillment and evolution of extermination policies.

**Comparison of Democratic and non-Democratic Societies in Addressing Health-Related Grievances**

Following an analysis of a democratic society and one run by dictatorship, it is evident that a democratic political environment provides an ideal avenue for the evolution of civil rights and policies that advocate for better handling of medical issues. However, in a totalitarian society, even the physicians who are obligated and expected to be the custodians of health and preserve human life in the best way possible are vulnerable to follow the orders from political administrators even if it means deliberate termination of innocent human life. In such an environment, it is impossible to raise medical grievances because just like in the case of Hitler’s orders to implement euthanasia, any objections to the orders are squashed by the dictator leader’s orders. On the other hand, in democratic societies such as the United States as depicted in the work “The disability Movement: From Charity to Confrontation”, the government allows the people to freely give their medical grievances by supporting other channels to do the same through protecting media freedom. The government then reacts to the grievances by formulating, implementing and reinforcing policies that aim at positively addressing the grievances of the people to ensure that everybody including the disabled, the elderly, children and mentally ill people are respected in the society

**Conclusion**

The works “The disability Movement: From Charity to Confrontation” and “The Nazi Doctors” provide useful information that can help people, including government and health care providers, on the impacts of a democratic society on the health of the people. In order to achieve a healthier and more peaceful society, political democracy is essential in ensuring that the healthcare needs of every citizen are met and the life of every citizen is respected despite their physical or mental wholesomeness.

**Works Cited**

Lifton, Robert Jay. *The Nazi doctors: Medical killing and the psychology of genocide*. Vol. 64. New York: Basic Books, 1986.

Fleischer, Doris Zames, Fleischer Doris Zames, and Frieda Zames. *The disability rights movement: From charity to confrontation*. Temple University Press, 2012.