“Euthanasia letter.” Reprinted at the *Harvard Law School Library Nuremberg Trials Project: A Digital Document Collection*. Last accessed August 28, 2015. [http://nuremberg.law.harvard.edu/php/pflip.php?caseid=HLSL\_NMT01&docnum=1988&numpages=3&startpage=1&title=Letters+sent+to+the+relatives+of+deceased+patients+[euthanasia+program].&color\_setting=C](http://nuremberg.law.harvard.edu/php/pflip.php?caseid=HLSL_NMT01&docnum=1988&numpages=3&startpage=1&title=Letters+sent+to+the+relatives+of+deceased+patients+%5beuthanasia+program%5d.&color_setting=C).

*When a person was euthanized, his family was notified of his passing, but not of the actual cause of death. While there was not a standard form letter to notify the deceased’s family of the patient’s death, the letter reprinted here is fairly typical of the letters sent to families*.

State Mental Institution Brandenburg on the Havel

Brandenburg / Havel, 20 February 1940

Dear Mr. [*blank*]

We regret to inform you that your son, who in the meantime had to be transferred to our institution, has died here unexpectedly as a result of abscessed tonsils on 17 February. We are sorry to say that all our medical efforts were in vain. He died softly[[1]](#footnote-1) and without any pain. With his serious and incurable disease death means relief for him,

Due to the present danger of epidemic here, the body of the deceased had to be cremated immediately according to police request. We are asking you to inform us at your earliest convenience whether you want the urn with the earthly remains interred at any special cemetery. In that case we ask you to name the cemetery and give its correct address so that we can have the urn transferred to the administration of that cemetery. If you have no special wishes as to the burying or if you fail to inform us within a month, we will have the urn buried here free of charge. The belongings of the deceased had to be burned due to the danger of spreading the disease.

We enclose two copies of the death certificate which you will carefully keep in order to submit them eventually to the authorities.

Heil Hitler!

[signed] Dr. Meyer

1. A less literal translation: He passed away peacefully. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)