

ideology of "one for all and all for one" (*Gemeinnutz geht vor Eigennutz*) that was yet another hallmark of Nazi thought: as one anti-tobacco activist put it, nicotine damages not just the individual but the population as a whole.⁶¹

Cancer prevention also fit with the Nazi emphasis on nature and natural modes of living.⁶² Hitler, we should recall, was a vegetarian and did not smoke or drink; nor would he allow anyone else to do so in his presence—excepting the occasional woman.⁶³ (As already noted: Benito Mussolini of Italy and Generalissimo Franco of Spain were also nonsmokers, a point not lost in Nazi health propaganda; attention was also drawn to the fact that Roosevelt and Stalin smoked cigarettes, while Churchill smoked cigars.)⁶⁴ Vegetarianism got a boost: more than one writer for *Hippokrates* revived Friedrich Beneke's nineteenth-century recommendation that cancer patients adopt a vegetarian diet.⁶⁵ Karl Kötschau, professor of "organic medicine" at Jena since 1934 and chief spokesman for the natural healing movement, launched a tirade against the lead arsenate pesticides used on wine grapes,⁶⁶ and Weimar-era worries over the health effects of lead from water pipes and toothpaste tubes were revived. Efforts were made to control food additives and to limit the oversalting of prepared foods.⁶⁷

This emphasis on a return to nature led to some curious alliances. German Seventh-Day Adventists with their theology of health reform endorsed the regime in the summer of 1933, rejoicing in the fact that the nation was now in the hands of a man "who has his office from the hand of God, and who knows himself to be responsible to Him. As an anti-alcoholic, non-smoker, and vegetarian, he is closer to our own view of health reform than anybody else." The Adventist stress on temperance and healthful living seemed to fit with the new swing of things, though their aversion to pork must have raised some eyebrows. The sect was banned on November 26, 1933, and it took some clever politicking by its leader, Hulda Jost, to produce a reversal.⁶⁸

Homeopaths likewise joined with Nazi enthusiasts to argue that mercury could cause memory loss and that arsenic could cause depression. The homeopathic stress on the potency of rare (or absent!) trace elements fit well with the idea that powerful bodily

disturbances were likely to come from our surrounding ourselves with exotic substances like mercury, lead, and arsenic. The idea of prevention fit well with this notion that health could be restored by avoiding exposure to rare but powerful agents corroding the German *Volkskörper*.

EARLY DETECTION AND MASS SCREENING

The emphasis on prevention gave the Nazi war on cancer new hope: there is an *optimism* to the anticancer effort that distinguishes it from programs of the Weimar era (see fig. 1.2). Felix Grüneisen, general secretary of the Reich Anticancer Committee, in 1933 hailed a coming era of "planned cancer combat" on an unprecedented scale.⁶⁹ Nazi officials rejected the timid, "ostrich-like" approach of previous efforts and promised renewed strength in this area.⁷⁰ Medical journals cited the Führer's brag that *impossible* was simply not a word in the proper Nazi's vocabulary.

Early detection was a centerpiece of Nazi-era cancer propaganda. Physicians lamented the number of late-stage cancers presented in their offices—especially among women, given the growing conviction that tumors of the uterus or breast found early stood a much greater chance of being healed. The claims made for early detection sometimes sound grandiose: Hans Hinselmann, inventor of the colposcope (an illuminated optical device used to screen for uterine and cervical cancer), predicted in 1938 that if his device were widely used, mortality from these diseases would virtually disappear. He also cautioned that physicians who failed to use it were complicit in the annual deaths of 400,000 women from uterine and cervical cancer worldwide.⁷¹

Calls for early detection were not, of course, entirely new in the Nazi period. Georg Winter, chief physician at the University of Berlin's Women's Clinic, had noticed around the turn of the century that nearly three-quarters of the women seeking treatment for uterine cancer at his office were showing up too late to be helped. In December of 1902 he launched a campaign in Königsberg (where he was now director of the university women's clinic)