

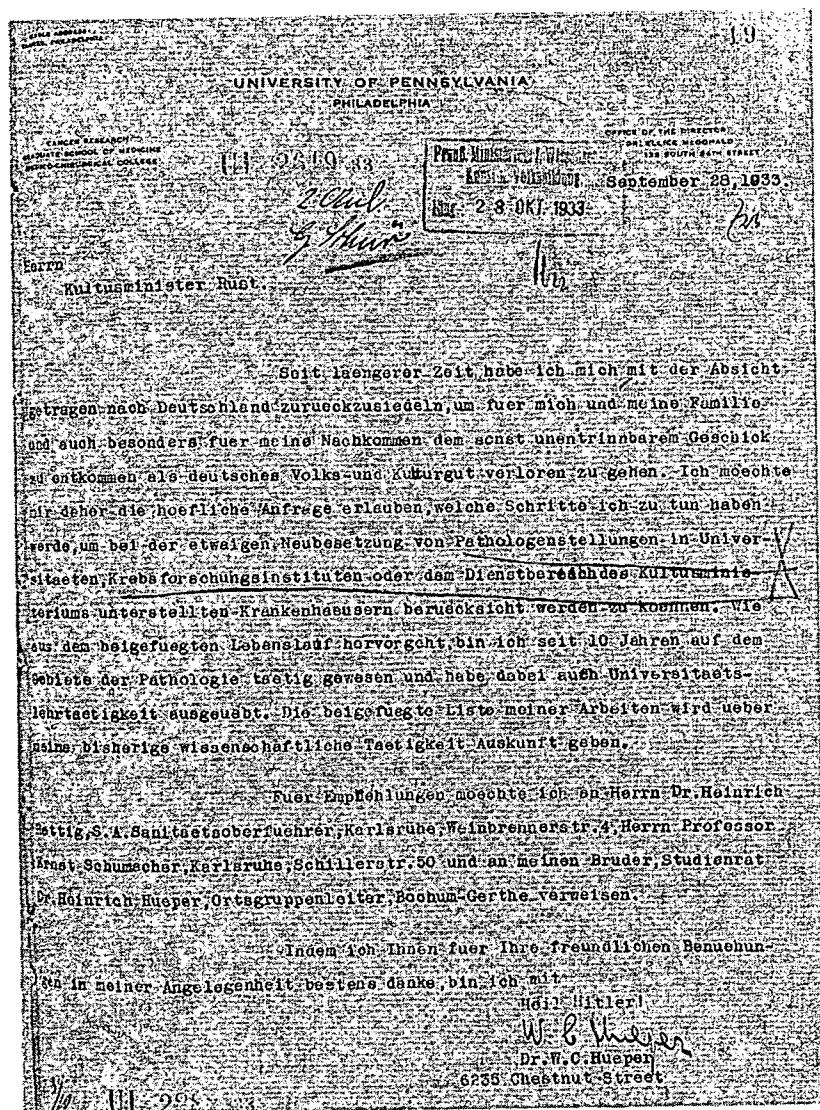


FIG. 1.1. Letter of September 28, 1933, from Wilhelm Hueper to Nazi culture minister Bernhard Rust, requesting an academic position in the new Reich. Hueper is widely regarded as the "father of American occupational carcinogenesis" and the inspiration for the cancer chapter in Rachel Carson's famous *Silent Spring*. Note the "Heil Hitler" above the signature. Source: Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin-Dahlem, Rep. 76 Va Sekt.1 Tit. IV, #5, vol. 27, p. 19, with thanks to Michael Hubenstorf.

become "the father of American occupational carcinogenesis," the man who tried to alert medical officials to the hazards of unventilated uranium mining, and the man who, more than any other, brought the cancer hazards of pollutants in our food, air, and water to scientific attention. Hueper was the guiding light behind the ominous cancer chapter in Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (titled "One in Every Four"), and it was Hueper who, only months before his death in 1979, was showered with honors for his work on occupational and environmental cancer.²

How could the hero of *Silent Spring* have found hope in the Nazi movement? What were German fascists saying and doing about cancer that might have led a man such as Hueper to bet his future on the Thousand Year Reich?

TRIUMPHS OF THE INTELLECT

A great deal is known about science and medicine in the Nazi era. We know that while certain kinds of science were destroyed, others flourished. Sciences of an applied nature were especially encouraged, as were sciences that fit within the larger program of Nazi segregation and extermination.³ We know that physicians joined the Nazi party in very large numbers, that about 60 percent of all biologists joined the party,⁴ and that roughly 80 percent of all professors of anthropology—most of whom were physicians—were members.⁵ We know that the Nazi regime maintained a large medical surveillance capacity, as part of its program to "improve the strength of the German nation",⁶ we know that there is a curious blend of the modern and the romantic in Nazi culture—a blend Jeffrey Herf has characterized as "reactionary modernism."⁷

Part of our story has to be understood in light of the fact that Nazism took root in the world's most powerful scientific culture, boasting half of the world's Nobel Prizes and a sizable fraction of the world's patents. German science and medicine were the envy of the world, and it was to Germany—the "land of scholars and poets"—that many academic hopefuls flocked to cut their scientific teeth.