

Not all Nazi leaders were so fastidious. Goebbels was a careful dresser—his wardrobe contained more than a hundred different uniforms—but a gourmet he was not, as recalled by his biographer:

Probably nowhere in Berlin-West was the food as scanty or bad as it was at the Goebbels' house. The minister simply didn't care about his food and continued to show a distinct partiality for his favorite dish, herring and boiled potatoes, which was frequently served to company. It became customary for his guests to eat their fill at a restaurant before showing up at his house, and during the war it was general knowledge that when one went to the Goebbelses' he got no more to eat than his allotted ration points permitted.⁶²

Readers might wonder at this point what a discussion of the predilections of Hitler et al. is doing in a book on Nazi cancer combat. The answer, I would say, is that Hitler's habits and predilections—and even his body—assumed an unusual significance in a regime obsessed with health, bodily purity, and the potency of its all-powerful and image-conscious leader. Hitler was supposed to embody the ideal German, an understanding that, when taken literally, led to some rather obvious contradictions. (The most famous joke from the era asked: "What is the ideal German? Blond like Hitler, slim like Göring, masculine like Goebbels. . . .") Hitler's body became the object of veneration and emulation—so much so that Red Army soldiers upon entering Berlin confronted legions of men sporting Hitler-style mustaches, several dozen of whom were interned on suspicion of being the German leader. Every German must have known that Hitler did not smoke or drink, a maxim often repeated in party literature. The oddities of the Führer's body led to predictable ridicule—the mustache designed, perhaps, to cover up a "Jewish nostrility," the genital deformity that led to countless sneers and Britain's most famous army song (sung to "Colonel Bogey's March": "Hitler has only got one ball; / Göring has two but very small; / Himmler is very sim'lar, / And Goebbels has no balls at all"). Hitler may have tired of the public scrutiny; a 1937 directive ordered that no further attention be drawn to his person or his habits. The commercial exploitation of his vegetari-

anism seems to have prompted the halt (the organic food industry was using the Führer-ly lifestyle to sell its products),⁶³ but the dictator may also have feared that the ridicule-to-veneration ratio would not remain low forever.

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST ALCOHOL

Alcoholic overindulgence was a frequent target of the Nazi push for a more "natural" way of living. As in the United States, the organized temperance movement dated from the nineteenth century: a German Antialcoholism Association had been founded in 1883, about which time a journal, *Auf der Wacht* (On guard), was launched to publicize the dangers of drink—and occasionally tobacco.⁶⁴ The movement was never as strong as its counterpart in the United States, where federally mandated Prohibition ruled from 1919 until 1933, but the German movement was by no means inconsequential. By the time Hitler seized power, the organization had 19 regional and 254 local associations, plus 16 women's groups. The Berlin women's branch alone had a thousand members. More than a hundred centers had been established to provide assistance to alcoholics, and efforts had been launched to keep young men from drinking.⁶⁵

Support for temperance and/or abstinence came from across the political spectrum. In Austria, the leading abstinence organization was the Workers' Abstinence League (*Arbeiter Abstinentenbund*), a socialist body better organized even—or so some claimed—than the Austrian Social Democratic party itself. Alcoholic temperance was embraced by the nature-loving *Wandervogel* movement, by Catholic student fraternities, and by the Protestant churches. The financial deprivation of the immediate post-World War I period put a damper on certain kinds of social drinking (e.g., the ritualistic orgies of many student fraternities), and much of this same sense of austerity can be seen in the Nazi Students' League, founded in 1926. Hitler about this time forecast that students of the future would be judged not by their capacity for beer but by their capacity to remain sober.⁶⁶