

and so forth, ad nauseam.³⁴ The Nazis ended up with as many words for murder as Eskimos (purportedly) have for snow.

Nazification was also accompanied, though, by sometimes-subtle changes in the language of cancer research. With cancer on the rise, it is perhaps not surprising that malignancy came to serve as a powerful metaphor, stigmatizing all that was undesirable in the Nazi scheme of things. Joseph Goebbels routinely castigated the objects of his contempt as "cancers" or "malignancies"—this included not just the Jews and homosexuals but the Foreign Office (*Auswärtiges Amt*) and Stalin's communist empire.³⁵ Germans were not alone, of course, in using this kind of rhetoric: an American eugenics catechism of 1935, for example, compared genetic defectives to "cancers in the body politic" and the eugenics society itself to a "Society for the Control of Social Cancer."³⁶

Medical imagery was commonly used to dehumanize racio-political undesirables. In a 1936 lecture on radiotherapy in Frankfurt, the SS radiologist Prof. Dr. Hans Holfelder showed students in attendance—including the young Richard Doll from England—a slide in which cancer cells were portrayed as Jews (the same slide depicted the X-rays launched against these tumor-Jews as Nazi storm troopers).³⁷ Jews were often characterized as tumors within the German body, though bacteriologic and pathogenic images (Jew as bacillus, virus), or even older metaphors of plagues, vermin, parasites, "fungoid growths," and so forth, were actually somewhat more common³⁸—possibly because cancer was not yet something over which health authorities were able to exercise a great deal of control. Infectious diseases had largely succumbed to public health reforms and the science-based therapies devised by Koch, Pasteur, and Ehrlich, but cancer was still on the rise—and this may be why pundits looked to an older era of medical horror for their invidious imagery.

Doctors were often the ones portraying Jews as cancers or tumors as Jews. What is also interesting, though, is that Nazi ideals penetrated the technical rhetoric of cancer research. Medical speech was supposed to be Germanized, clarified, and simplified. Foreign terms were to be abandoned in favor of homespun expressions (not *Allele* but rather *Anlagen-Partner*, not *Chromosom* but

Kernfaden, not *Bastard* but *Mischling*, etc.), and unclear bureaucratic language comes under attack (e.g., the legalese of the insurance industry).³⁹ Medical speech also sees an increased use of metaphors of racial struggle, the threat of political chaos, and the need for political unity. Bernhard Fischer-Wasels, the world-renowned father of experimental petrochemical carcinogenesis,⁴⁰ characterized the nascent tumor as "a new race of cells, distinct from the other cell races of the body"; the task of the cancer therapist was to destroy this pathological race (*vollständige Zerstörung der pathologischen Zellrasse*).⁴¹ Cancer cells are elsewhere described as anarchists, spongers (*Schmarotzer*),⁴² Bolsheviks, breeders of chaos and rebellion, and the like. Hans Auler, a beneficiary of the *Gleichschaltung* of German cancer research, in 1937 characterized cancer cells as "revolutionary cells," perhaps deliberately poking fun at communist rhetoric, while Curt Thomalla of the Propaganda Ministry spoke of cancer cells' creating "a state within a state"⁴³—a charge also leveled at Jews and homosexuals. The language of medicine was thus saturated with political ideology—sometimes consciously and deliberately, sometimes not.⁴⁴

Linguistic cleansing and reversible images of racial inferiors as cancers (and vice versa) are not the only notable aspects of Nazi cancer language. Another is the widespread talk of "problem solving." Nazi medico-political leaders often spoke about finding "radical," "final," or "permanent" solutions to Germany's problems—especially in the early war years, when plans for the radical transformation of German society reached a fever pitch. The Final Solution (*Endlösung*) to the Jewish Question is the best known and most ghastly, but similar expressions were used for countless other problems. Nazi population policy was directed toward what Interior Minister Wilhelm Frick called "the solution to the woman question" (*Lösung der Frauenfrage*),⁴⁵ while the campaign to repopularize whole-grain bread was dubbed "the final solution to the bread question" (*Endlösung der Brotfrage*).⁴⁶ A medical thesis of 1940 called for a "solution to this difficult problem of smokers" (*Lösung dieses schweren Raucherproblems*),⁴⁷ and there was talk about finding a solution to the cancer question (*Lösung der Krebsbekämpfungsfrage*).⁴⁸ A spirit of millenarian social engineering infuses the