

era, accompanied by a sense that the New World Order will require the radical extirpation of the old. The transformation is cast in Nietzschean terms with the invocation of "twilight" metaphors: so we hear talk about the "twilight of tobacco" (*Tabakdämmerung*) or of race (Astel's 1935 *Rassendämmerung*), and so forth. The appeal to Nietzschean or Wagnerian imagery gave a poetic, one could say "operatic," flavor to Nazi racist skulduggery.

An equally curious aspect of Nazi cancer language is its obsessive romance with "enlightenment." Enlightenment (*Aufklärung*) was a frequent element of Nazi rhetoric, conveying roughly what we today would call "education," "outreach," or "public indoctrination." The term was featured in the names of several party organizations: Walter Gross's *Aufklärungsamt für Bevölkerungspolitik und Rassenpflege* (Office of Population Policy and Racial Care) was a kind of news bureau designed to keep Nazi party bigwigs informed in matters of national and international racial policy (the office was later renamed the *Rassenpolitisches Amt*); recall also that Goebbels's propaganda ministry was actually called "The Ministry of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda" (*Ministerium für Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*). Goebbels, Gross, and many other party officials characterized their work as *Aufklärungsarbeit*—literally "the work of enlightenment"—as did many health authorities at this time. The Reich Anticancer Committee identified one of its duties as *Publikumsaufklärung* (education of the public);⁴⁹ Brandenburg's Anticancer Committee professed an obligation to "enlighten" the population concerning the value of early detection.⁵⁰ Enlightenment had been a feature of leftist and Weimar-era rhetoric (calls for *Sexualaufklärung*, or sex education, for example), but the Nazis gave it new and more sinister nuances.

It is surprising, in retrospect, how pervasive this "enlightenment" talk was. Medical officials talked endlessly about the need for *Krebsaufklärung*, *Volksaufklärung über den Krebs*, or *Aufklärung der Volksgenossen* concerning the value of early detection. Nazi party officials showed *Aufklärungsfilme* (educational films), and antitobacco activists called for "aufklärende" articles to warn against the hazards of tobacco. One cancer office distinguished

Einzelaufklärung from *Volksaufklärung*—depending upon whether the enlightenment was directed toward the individual or the population. (Men were said to be particularly in need of enlightenment, since they were much less likely than women to visit a clinic for a routine cancer exam.)⁵¹ The word "enlightenment" is probably used more in the Nazi period than at any other time, before or since.

What does *Aufklärung* mean in the Nazi era? The verb *aufklären* most commonly means to clarify, to clear up, to educate, to inform, to instruct, to solve, to set right; an *Aufklärer* was a scout or a reconnaissance pilot, but *Aufklärung* was (and is) also used as a term for sex education or criminal detective work. As originally popularized in the eighteenth century, the noun *Aufklärung* was intended to contrast the illuminating power of science against the dark forces of ignorance and superstition. In the Nazi period, use of the word was not consciously intended to evoke any reference to "the Enlightenment." (The French *lumière* was more often derided as an early ancestor of positivist apathy and the impoverished doctrine of "science for its own sake.") The images evoked are rather those of public education, public indoctrination—as when psychiatric authorities professed an *Aufklärungspflicht* to inform their patients they were about to be sterilized.⁵² Enlightenment in the Nazi era was not something you yourself strived to attain, but rather something you did to other people or other people did to you. The idea of enlightenment as personal refinement—as in Kant's original sense of coming to maturity and making decisions for yourself—is replaced by a notion of state-directed indoctrination and state-serving elucidation. Nazi society was supposed to be transparent from above—a philosophy with far-reaching consequences, from pervasive eavesdropping to bans on attic storage.

The original notion of casting light is not entirely lost, however. An obsessive quest for clarity is apparent in the already-mentioned efforts to eliminate medical bureaucratism, and the quest for "clean speech" harmonized with the larger quest for bodily and political purity. Propaganda Minister Goebbels in March of 1942 took pride in announcing—at least to his diary—