

reproductive performance of the German Volk (see figs. 6.18–6.20). Tobacco, like alcohol, was said to be sapping the strength of the German people—at work, at school, in sports, in the bedroom and the birthing clinic, and on the field of battle (experiments conducted by the German military in the late 1930s found that smoking impaired a soldier's marksmanship and reduced his ability to march for long distances).¹⁶² What we find is a merger of the earlier moral critique with an increasingly medical critique. The moral element is not lost but is in fact strengthened through the incorporation of the Nazi-era rhetoric of bodily purity, racial hygiene, performance at work, and the "duty to be healthy." *Gesundheit über Alles* is one of the hallmarks of Nazi ideology.

This leads us to the larger question of why Germany had such a powerful antitobacco movement, given that in the 1920s it was the United States—not Germany—which possessed the world's most powerful organized opposition to alcohol and tobacco. A clue is to be found in John C. Burnham's discussion of American attitudes toward tobacco at this time. Burnham's argument is that, in the United States, the moralistic certainties that had led to alcohol prohibition and tobacco temperance in the 1920s were under attack by the 1930s. Several of the "diseases" crusaded against at the height of Prohibition (masturbation, for example) turned out to be pseudodiseases, and it was easy to believe that the same might turn out to be true for tobacco. Where, after all, was the evidence that smoking caused impotence or led to crime? The public grew weary of such imaginative scaremongering, and the burden of proof shifted from the defenders of tobacco to its accusers. The net effect was to stymie the medical critique: critics of smoking were easily tarred as advocates of the same kind of puritanical prudery that had brought us Prohibition and cautions against dancing, coffee drinking, card playing, and many forms of sexual expression. American physicians rarely criticized tobacco in the 1930s or 1940s, and those who did object to tobacco use—at medical meetings, for example, where the smoke was often so thick that physicians were unable to see the slides—were easily and often dismissed as prudes or even cranks.¹⁶³



FIG. 6.18. A rain of "Tobacco Capital" is ruining German health, labor power, purchasing power, and racial goals. Source: *Reine Luft* 23 (1941): 117.