

Lickint by this time was heavily involved in Nazi tobacco politics, though he never joined the Nazi party. Prior to 1933, in fact, his sympathies were clearly with the Social Democrats—which caused him some grief when the political winds shifted. In 1940, he narrowly escaped political difficulties when Karl Astel, president of the University of Jena and director of Jena's Institute for Tobacco Hazards Research, checked into his political background and found that he had been a member of the Social Democratic party, the Association of Socialist Physicians (VSÄ), and the Liga für Menschenrecht, a human rights organization. Lickint had actually lost his medical license in 1934 for failing to indicate on his civil service form—required of all government employees to prove Aryan ancestry and political loyalty—that he had once been a member of the VSÄ. The court ruled that Lickint's membership in the VSÄ constituted membership in a communist association, though a later investigation decided that the Chemnitz branch to which Lickint had belonged had leaned more toward the SPD (social democrats) than the KPD (communists). Reich Health Leader Leonardo Conti came to his defense during the investigation, arguing that the minor infraction of 1934 paled by contrast with his groundbreaking tobacco work. Conti may have been influenced in this matter by the fact that his mother, Nanna Conti, was not just head of Germany's primary midwife association (the Reichsfachschaft der Deutschen Hebammen) but also a member of the governing board of the German Antitobacco League, the leading anti-tobacco association and the publisher of *Reine Luft*.⁴⁴ What the episode does show, though, is that an antitobacco stance could put you in good stead with Nazi authorities—provided, of course, that you were not of Jewish ancestry and were willing to admit to the error of your ways.

NAZI MEDICAL MORALISM

Lickint in 1939 was praised as the physician "most hated by the tobacco industry,"⁴⁵ but he was only one of many authors derogating tobacco at this time. Tobacco was said to hinder the military

prowess of the German soldier; tobacco temperance was needed to preserve the soldier's "physical fitness and military readiness."⁴⁶ Luftwaffe physicians found that nicotine hampered a pilot's ability to function, and forensic physicians found that smoking contaminated the blood with carbon monoxide.⁴⁷ Smoking was said to cause automobile accidents, prompting criminal penalties for accidents caused by driving "under the influence" (of cigarettes!).⁴⁸ Rudolf Friedrich, a Viennese physician, reported that 80 percent of the men he had examined with ulcers were smokers, and blamed smoking for the skyrocketing incidence of stomach distress since the First World War.⁴⁹ Karl Westphal and Hans Weselmann argued that tobacco was the single most common cause of gastritis—but also that since gastritis had been linked to stomach cancer, tobacco was probably also a cause of gastric malignancies.⁵⁰ This was especially damning, given that stomach cancer was the leading cause of cancer death among European (and American) men in the 1920s.

German physicians were also aware that smoking was a major cause of heart disease (see figs. 6.5 and 6.6).⁵¹ Nicotine abuse was often blamed for Germany's increased incidence of heart attacks; heart disease was sometimes said to be the single most serious illness brought on by smoking.⁵² Late in the war, nicotine was suspected as a cause of the coronary heart failure suffered by German soldiers on the eastern front. Military physicians debated the point: a 1944 report by an army field pathologist found that the thirty-two young soldiers he had examined—all of whom had died from heart attacks at or near the front—had all been "enthusiastic smokers." The author cited the Freiburg pathologist Franz Büchner's view that cigarettes should be considered "a coronary poison of the first order"; he also recognized, though, that certain "spiritual changes" brought on by the war were likely to have contributed to the disease.⁵³

Reproductive politics played a major role in Nazi-era opposition to smoking. Smoking women were said to be less marriageable, given that they age early and tend to lose their beauty.⁵⁴ Werner Hüttig of the NSDAP's Office of Racial Policy pointed out that nicotine had been found in the breast milk of smoking mothers, and