

named to head the new institute, trumpeted the beginning of a "centralization" of German cancer research,³ but in many areas—notably immunology, histology, and other fields in which Jews had been prominent—basic cancer research had suffered a blow from which it would never recover.

Basic and applied cancer research are two different things, however; the Nazi war on cancer, as we shall see, was waged more on the basis of prevention than on cure. One way to look at the Nazi period, in fact, is as a time when the political center of gravity tilted slightly away from academic medicine in favor of a more public health-oriented approach to disease. One gets two very different pictures of how to control cancer when one contrasts the research projects funded by the German Research Council, for example, with those funded by the Reich Health Office or the Public Health Office of the NSDAP or Jena's Institute for Tobacco Hazards Research (see chapter 6). As callous as this may seem, the loss of many cancer scientists arguably did not hamstring the campaign to conquer cancer—conceived as a campaign to curtail smoking, to encourage early detection, and to improve the diet of large masses of people. But first, some words on victims.

THE FATES OF JEWISH SCIENTISTS

It would be impossible, of course, to trace the fates of all of those who suffered—but the experiences of a few may give a glimpse of what happened. Hans Sachs (1877–1945) worked in the area of immunology and serology at Heidelberg's Institute for Experimental Cancer Research, where he also coedited the *Zeitschrift für Immunitätsforschung*. He lost his Heidelberg position in 1935, emigrated to Oxford in 1938, and died in Dublin in 1945. Richard V. Werner (1875–1943) directed both the Heidelberg institute and that city's Samaritan Hospital (from 1916 to April 1933) while serving as chair of Baden's Regional Cancer Committee and cofounding editor of *Strahlentherapie*, the nation's leading radiotherapy journal; he fled Germany in 1934 and established a private medical practice in a cancer clinic in Brno, Czechoslovakia, until 1942 when the clinic

was taken over by Nazi authorities. Werner was fired and deported to Theresienstadt, where he died in 1943. Ernst Witebesky (1901–1969), a Heidelberg immunologist, was put on leave in April 1933; he fled to Switzerland and then, in 1934, to the United States, where he practiced medicine at Mt. Sinai Hospital in Manhattan and later taught bacteriology and immunology at the University of Buffalo. Wilhelm Liepmann, director of Berlin's Institut für Frauenkunde and the moving force behind the creation (in 1929) of a museum depicting the value of early detection for uterine cancer, was fired; he eventually obtained a position in Istanbul, where he remained until his death in 1939.⁴ Those dismissed included several naturopathic physicians (doctors stressing natural herbs and low-tech medicines): Max Gerson, for example, famous for his dietary treatments of tuberculosis and cancer, was forced from his post at Munich's University Hospital, whereupon he fled to New York and established a private medical practice (in 1938).

The total number of cancer researchers who lost their jobs may be in excess of a hundred. Almost all, it seems, were "Jewish" in the Nazi definition of that term, which looked only to ancestry rather than culture or belief. One of the few Jewish cancer researchers of any note to remain at work in Germany was the Nobel laureate biochemist Otto Warburg, who continued to direct Berlin's Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Cell Physiology throughout the period of Hitler's rule—surviving even a 1941 effort by the director of the Kaiser Wilhelm Gesellschaft to have him purged. (Viktor Brack and Philipp Bouhler, two of the most powerful men behind the so-called "euthanasia operation," apparently managed to have Warburg saved "for the world.")⁵ Warburg's mother was "pure Aryan" but his father was Jewish; the most common explanation for his having been able to stay when most of the others in his situation were forced to leave has been that Hitler may have believed he was moving toward a cancer cure.⁶ A more likely explanation, as noted by the historian Kristie Macrakis, is that Warburg's institute had been founded with heavy support from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Gradenwitz Fund, rendering him immune to the 1933 Civil Service Law, which barred Jews and communists from government employment. Intervention by