

Questionnaire on Tobacco Abuse and Lung Cancer (1939) and Himmler's Declaration against Alcohol Abuse (December 1937)

Abstract

The Nazi regime energetically promoted healthy living. The regime introduced restrictions on smoking in public and advocated for lower alcohol consumption and less caloric diets. Efforts were made by researchers and ideologues to root out the causes of social "sin"—two of which were associated with tobacco use and alcohol abuse. The two featured excerpts illustrate how impartial research and the propagation of Nazi ideology operated in concert to encourage Germans to live more healthfully and protect the *Volk*.

In 1939, Dr. Franz Hermann Müller was a physician at Cologne's Bürgerhospital. He is famous for his pioneering research on the relationship between tobacco use and the development of lung cancer. This questionnaire was a part of his medical thesis, for which he interviewed over 100 Germans, both smokers and non-smokers, and their immediate relatives. His study uncovered that those who smoked more than six packs of cigarettes a day were more likely to develop lung cancer than casual or moderate smokers. The questions are similar to those in current lung cancer studies.

The second excerpt, a statement by Heinrich Himmler (1900–1945), head of the SS, on the overconsumption of alcohol, is representative of the National Socialist response to studies such as Dr. Müller's. Here, Himmler underscores the regime's stance by connecting low alcohol consumption to the maintenance of a healthy *Volk*.

Source

I. Questionnaire from Franz H. Müller, "Tobacco Consumption and Lung Carcinoma" (1939)

1. Was the deceased, Mr., a smoker? Answer: If so, what was his daily consumption of cigars, cigarettes, pipe tobacco? (Please be precise, using figures if possible!)

[...]

2. Had the deceased smoked in the past, but then stopped smoking? Answer: Up to what age? Answer: If yes, what was his daily consumption of cigars, cigarettes, pipe tobacco? (Please answer precisely, with figures!)

3) Had the deceased smoked more heavily in the past, but then reduced his smoking? Answer: Up to what year of life? Answer: In this case, what was his daily consumption of tobacco products before and after? (Please provide precise details!)

4) Can you tell me if the deceased was exposed to polluted air for a longer period of time, either at work or outside of it? Did the polluted air contain substances such as smoke, soot, dust, tar, fumes, combustion and exhaust gases, coal and metallic dust, chemical substances, cigarette fumes, or similar substances?

[...]

Source: Franz H. Müller, "Tabakmissbrauch und Lungencarcinom," *Zeitschrift für Krebsforschung* 49 (1939), pp. 62–63.

Translation: GHDI staff

II. Himmler's Declaration against Alcohol Abuse (December 1937)

Germany needs the strength of every individual German for the preservation of its national and economic freedom. Therefore, no German has the right to impair his physical or mental strength through alcohol abuse. In doing so, hurts not only himself but also his family and above all his nation.

Source: AW, Nr. 11-12/1937, p. 91; reprinted in Bernd Söseman (in collaboration with Marius Lange), *Propaganda: Medien und Öffentlichkeit in der NS-Diktatur: eine Dokumentation und Edition von Gesetzen, Führerbefehlen und sonstigen Anordnungen sowie propagandistischen Bild- und Textüberlieferungen im kommunikationshistorischen Kontext und in der Wahrnehmung des Publikums*, vol. 1. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011, p. 486.

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