

Methamphetamine, the *Volksdroge* (1933–1938)

National Socialism was toxic, in the truest sense of the word. It gave the world a chemical legacy that still affects us today: a poison that refuses to disappear. On one hand, the Nazis presented themselves as clean-cut and enforced a strict, ideologically underpinned anti-drug policy with propagandistic pomp and draconian punishments. In spite of this, a particularly potent and perfidious substance became a popular product under Hitler. This drug carved out a great career for itself all over the German Reich, and later in the occupied countries of Europe. Under the trademark ‘Pervitin’, this little pill became the accepted *Volksdroge*, or ‘people’s drug’, and was on sale in every chemist’s shop. It wasn’t until 1939 that its use was restricted by making Pervitin prescription-only, and the pill was not subjected to regulation until the Reich Opium Law in 1941.

Its active ingredient, methamphetamine, is now either illegal or strictly regulated,¹ but, with the number of consumers currently at over 100 million and rising, it counts today as our most popular poison. Produced in

hidden labs by chemical amateurs, usually in adulterated form, this substance has come to be known as ‘crystal meth’. Usually ingested nasally in high doses, the crystalline form of this so-called horror drug has gained unimaginable popularity all over Europe, with an exponential number of first-time users. This upper, with its dangerously powerful kick, is used as a party drug, for boosting performance in the workplace, in offices, even in parliaments and at universities. It banishes both sleep and hunger while promising euphoria, but in the form of crystal meth* it is a potentially destructive and highly addictive substance. Hardly anyone knows about its rise in Nazi Germany.

Breaking Bad: The Drug Lab of the Reich

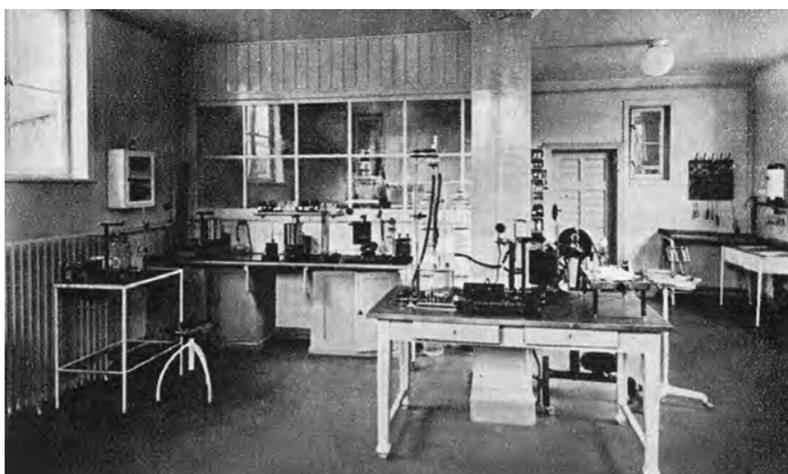
Under a clean-swept summer sky stretching over both industrial zones and uniform housing, I take the suburban train south-east, to the edge of Berlin. In order to find the remnants of the Temmler factory I have to get out at Adlershof, which nowadays calls itself ‘Germany’s most modern technology park’. Avoiding the campus, I strike off across an urban no man’s land, skirting dilapidated factory buildings, and passing through a wilderness of crumbling brick and rusty steel.

The Temmler factory moved here in 1933. It was only

* Methamphetamine in its pure form is less harmful than the crystal meth produced in often amateurish illegal laboratories, where it is mixed with poisons such as petrol, battery acid or anti-freeze.

one year later that Albert Mendel (the Jewish co-owner of the Tempelhof Chemicals Factory) was expropriated by the racist laws of the regime and Temmler took over his share, quickly expanding the business. These were good times for the German chemicals industry (or at least for its Aryan members), and pharmaceutical development boomed. Research was tirelessly conducted on new, pioneering substances that would ease the pain of modern humanity or sedate its troubles. Many of the resulting pharmacological innovations shape the way we consume medicine today

By now the former Temmler factory in Berlin-Johannisthal has fallen into ruin. There is no sign of its prosperous past, of a time when millions of Pervitin pills a week were being pressed. The grounds lie unused, a dead property. Crossing a deserted car park, I make my way through a wildly overgrown patch of forest and over a wall stuck with broken bits of glass designed to deter intruders. Between ferns and saplings stands the old wooden 'witch's house' of the founder, Theodor Temmler, once the nucleus of the company. Behind dense alder bushes looms a forsaken brick building. A window is broken enough for me to be able to climb through, stumbling into a long dark corridor. Mildew and mould grow from the walls and ceilings. At the end of the hallway a door stands beckoning, half open, encrusted with flaking green paint. Beyond the door, daylight peers through two shattered, lead-framed industrial windows. An abandoned bird's nest hides in the corner. Chipped white tiles reach all the way to the high ceiling, which is furnished with circular air vents.



The Temmler factory in Berlin-Johannisthal, then . . . and now.



This is the former laboratory of Dr Fritz Hauschild, head of pharmacology at Temmler from 1937 until 1941, who was in search of a new type of medicine, a ‘performance-enhancing drug’. This is the former drug lab of the Third Reich. Here, in porcelain crucibles attached to pipes and glass coolers, the chemists boiled up their flawless matter. Lids rattled on pot-bellied flasks, orange steam released with a sharp hissing noise while emulsions crackled and white-gloved fingers made adjustments. Here methamphetamine was produced of a quality that even Walter White, the drugs cook in the TV series *Breaking Bad*, which depicts meth as a symbol of our times, could only have dreamed of.

Prologue in the Nineteenth Century: the Father of all Drugs

Voluntary dependence is the finest state.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

To understand the historical relevance of methamphetamine and other substances to the Nazi state, we must go back before the beginning of the Third Reich. The development of modern societies is bound as tightly with the creation and distribution of drugs as the economy is with advances in technology. In 1805 Goethe wrote *Faust* in classicist Weimar, and by poetic means perfected one of his theses, that the genesis of man is itself drug-induced: I change my brain, therefore I am. At the same

time, in the rather less glamorous town of Paderborn in Westphalia, the pharmaceutical assistant Friedrich Wilhelm Sertürner performed experiments with opium poppies, whose thickened sap anaesthetized pain more effectively than anything else. Goethe wanted to explore through artistic and dramatic channels what it is that holds the core of the world together – Sertürner, on the other hand, wanted to solve a major, millennium-old problem which has plagued our species to a parallel degree.

It was a concrete challenge for the brilliant 21-year-old chemist: depending on the conditions they are grown in, the active ingredient in opium poppies is present in varying concentrations. Sometimes the bitter sap does not ease the pain quite strongly enough, and other times it can lead to an unintended overdose and fatal poisoning. Thrown back entirely on his own devices, just as the opiate laudanum consumed Goethe in his study, Sertürner made an astonishing discovery: he succeeded in isolating morphine, the crucial alkaloid in opium, a kind of pharmacological Mephistopheles that instantly magics pain away. Not only a turning point in the history of pharmacology, this was also one of the most important events of the early nineteenth century, not to mention human history as a whole. Pain, that irritable companion, could now be assuaged, indeed removed, in precise doses. All over Europe, apothecaries had to the best of their ability (and their consciences) pressed pills from the ingredients of their own herb gardens or from the deliveries of women who foraged in hedgerows. These homegrown chemists now developed within only a few years into veritable factories, with established

pharmacological standards.* Morphine was not only a method of easing life's woes, it was also big business.

In Darmstadt the owner of the Engel-Apotheke, Emanuel Merck, stood out as a pioneer of this development. In 1827 he set out his business model of supplying alkaloids and other medication in unvarying quality. This was the birth not only of the Merck company, which still thrives today, but of the modern pharmaceutical industry as a whole. When injections were invented in 1850, there was no stopping the victory parade of morphine. The painkiller was used in the American Civil War in 1861–65 and in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71. Soon morphine fixes were doing the rounds as normal procedure.² The change was crucial; the pain of even seriously injured soldiers could now be kept within bounds. This made a different scale of war possible: fighters who before would have been ruled out for a long time by an injury were soon coddled back to health and thrust onto the front line once again.

With morphine, also known as 'morphium', the development of pain relief and anaesthesia reached a crucial climax, both in the army and in civil society. From the worker to the nobleman, the supposed panacea took the whole world by storm, from Europe via Asia and all the way to America. In drugstores across the USA, two active ingredients were available without

* The forerunners of these companies were the Christian monasteries, which produced medications on a large scale even in the Middle Ages, and exported widely. In Venice (where the first coffee house in Europe opened in 1647), chemical and pharmaceutical preparations had been manufactured as early as the fourteenth century.

prescription: fluids containing morphine calmed people down, while drinks containing cocaine, such as in the early days Vin Mariani, a Bordeaux containing coca extract, and even Coca-Cola³, were used to counter low moods, as a hedonistic source of euphoria, and also as a local anaesthetic. This was only the start. The industry soon needed to diversify; it craved new products. On 10 August 1897 Felix Hoffmann, a chemist with the Bayer company, synthesized acetylsalicylic acid from willow bark; it went on sale as Aspirin and conquered the globe. Eleven days later the same man invented another substance that was also to become world famous: diacetyl morphine, a derivative of morphine – the first designer drug. Trademarked as ‘Heroin’, it entered the market and began its own campaign. ‘Heroin is a fine business,’ the directors of Bayer announced proudly and advertised the substance as a remedy for headaches, for general indisposition and also as a cough syrup for children. It was even recommended to babies for colic or sleeping problems.⁴

Business wasn’t just booming for Bayer. In the last third of the nineteenth century several new pharmaceutical hotspots developed along the Rhine. Unlike other, more traditional industries, the chemical industry didn’t require as much in terms of overheads to get business going, only needing relatively little equipment and raw material. Even small operations promised high profit margins. What was most important was intuition and specialist knowledge on the part of the developers, and Germany, rich in human capital, was able to fall back on an inexhaustible stock of excellent chemists and engineers, trained in what was at

the time the best education system in the world. The network of universities and technical colleges was recognized as exemplary: science and business worked hand in hand. Research was being carried out at top speed and a multitude of patents were being developed. Where the chemicals industry was concerned, Germany was the ‘workshop of the world’. ‘Made in Germany’ became a guarantee of quality, especially for drugs.

Germany, the Global Dealer

This didn’t change after the First World War. While France and Great Britain were able to acquire natural stimulants such as coffee, tea, vanilla, pepper and other natural medicines from colonies overseas, Germany, which lost its (comparatively sparse) colonial possessions under the terms of the Versailles Treaty, had to find other ways – stimulants had to be produced synthetically. In fact, Germany was in dire need of artificial assistance: the war had inflicted deep wounds and caused the nation both physical and psychic pain. In the 1920s drugs became more and more important for the despondent population between the Baltic Sea and the Alps. The desire for sedation led to self-education and there soon emerged no shortage of know-how for the production of a remedy.

The course was set for a thriving pharmaceutical industry. Many of the chemical substances that we know today were developed and patented within a very short period of time. German companies became leaders in the global

market. Not only did they produce the most medicines, but they also provided the lion's share of chemical raw materials for their manufacture throughout the world. A new economy came into being, and the picturesque Rhine Valley became a Chemical Valley of sorts. Previously unknown little outfits prospered overnight and grew into influential players. In 1925 the bigger chemicals factories joined together to form IG Farben, one of the most powerful companies in the world, with headquarters in Frankfurt. Opiates above all were still a German speciality. In 1926 the country was top of the morphine-producing states and world champion when it came to exporting heroin: 98 per cent of the production went abroad.⁵ Between 1925 and 1930, 91 tonnes of morphine were produced, 40 per cent of global production.⁶ Under the obligations of the Versailles Treaty, Germany reluctantly signed the League of Nations International Opium Convention in 1925, which regulated the trade. It was not ratified in Berlin until 1929. The local alkaloid industry still processed just over 200 tonnes of opium in 1928.⁷

The Germans were world leaders in another class of substances as well: the companies Merck, Boehringer and Knoll controlled 80 per cent of the global cocaine market. Merck's cocaine, from the city of Darmstadt, was seen as the best product in the world, and commercial pirates in China printed fake Merck labels by the million.⁸ Hamburg was the major European marketplace for raw cocaine: every year thousands of kilograms were imported legally through its port. Peru sold its entire annual production of raw cocaine, over five tonnes, almost exclusively to Germany for further processing. The influential 'Fachgruppe

Opium und Kokain' (Expert Group on Opium and Cocaine), put together by the German drugs manufacturers, worked tirelessly on a close integration of the government and the chemicals industry. Two cartels, each consisting of a handful of companies, divided up between them the lucrative market 'of the entire world';⁹ the so-called 'cocaine convention' and 'opiates convention'. Merck was the business leader in both cases.¹⁰ The young Weimar Republic, swimming in consciousness-altering and intoxicating substances, delivered heroin and cocaine to the four corners of the world and rose to become a global dealer.

The Chemical Twenties

This scientific and economic development also resonated with the spirit of the age. Artificial paradises were in vogue in the Weimar Republic. People chose to flee into worlds of make-believe rather than engage with the often less rosy reality – a phenomenon that more or less defined this very first democracy on German soil, both politically and culturally. Many were reluctant to admit the true reasons for the military defeat and repressed the shared responsibility of the imperial German establishment for the fiasco of the First World War. The malicious legend of the 'stab in the back' gained currency, claiming the German army had only lost the war because of internal sabotage from the left.¹¹

These escapist tendencies often found expression either in sheer hatred or in cultural excess, most of all in Berlin. Alfred Döblin's novel *Berlin Alexanderplatz* identified the

city as the ‘Whore of Babylon’, with an incomparably grubby underworld, a place seeking salvation in the most appalling, barely imaginable, excesses, particularly drugs. ‘Berlin nightlife, oh boy, oh boy, the world has never seen the like! We used to have a great army, now we’ve got great perversities!’ wrote the author Klaus Mann.¹² The city on the Spree became synonymous with moral reprehensibility. When Germany’s currency collapsed – in autumn 1923 one US dollar was worth 4.2 billion Marks – all moral values seemed to plummet with it as well.

Everything whirled apart in a toxicological frenzy. The icon of the age, the actress and dancer Anita Berber, dipped white rose petals in a cocktail of chloroform and ether at breakfast, before sucking them clean. Films about cocaine or morphine were showing in the cinemas, and all drugs were available on street corners without prescription. Forty per cent of Berlin doctors were said to be addicted to morphine.¹³ In Friedrichstrasse Chinese traders from the former German-leased territory of Tsingtao ran opium dens. Illegal nightclubs opened in the back rooms of the Mitte district. Smugglers distributed flyers at Anhalter station, advertising illegal dance parties and ‘beauty evenings’. Big clubs like the famous Haus Vaterland, on Potsdamer Platz, and Ballhaus Resi, notorious for its extravagant promiscuity, on Blumenstrasse, attracted potential fun-lovers in droves, did as smaller establishments like the Kakadu Bar or the Weisse Maus, where masks were distributed on the way in to guarantee the anonymity of the guests. An early form of sex-and-drugs tourism from western neighbours and the USA

began, because everything in Berlin was as cheap as it was exciting.

The world war was lost, and everything seemed permitted: the metropolis mutated into the experimental capital of Europe. Posters on house walls warned in shrill Expressionist script: *'Berlin, take a breath / bear in mind your dance partner is death!'* The police couldn't keep up: order collapsed first sporadically, then chronically, and the culture of pleasure filled the vacuum as best it could, as illustrated in a song of the times:

*Once not so very long ago
Sweet alcohol, that beast,
Brought warmth and sweetness to our lives,
But then the price increased.
And so cocaine and morphine
Berliners now select.
Let lightning flashes rage outside
We snort and we inject! [. . .]*

*At dinner in the restaurant
The waiter brings the tin
Of coke for us to feast upon –
Forget whisky and gin!
Let drowsy morphine take its
Subcutaneous effect
Upon our nervous system –
We snort and we inject!*

*These medications aren't allowed,
Of course, they're quite forbidden.*

*But even such illicit treats
Are very seldom hidden.
Euphoria awaits us
And though, as we suspect,
Our foes can't wait to shoot us down,
We snort and we inject!*

*And if we snort ourselves to death
Or into the asylum,
Our days are going downhill fast –
How better to beguile 'em?
Europe's a madhouse anyway,
No need for genuflecting;
The only way to Paradise
Is snorting and injecting!¹⁴*

In 1928 in Berlin alone 73 kilos of morphine and heroin were sold quite legally on prescription over the chemist's counter.¹⁵ Anyone who could afford it took cocaine, the ultimate weapon for intensifying the moment. Coke spread like wildfire and symbolized the extravagance of the age. On the other hand, it was viewed as a 'degenerate poison', and disapproved of by both Communists and Nazis, who were fighting for power in the streets. There was violent opposition to the free-and-easy *Zeitgeist*: German nationalists railed against 'moral decay' and similar attacks were heard from the conservatives. Though Berlin's new status as a cultural metropolis was accepted with pride, the bourgeoisie, which was losing status in the 1920s, showed its insecurity through its radical condemnation of mass 'pleasure culture', decried as 'decadently Western'.

Worst of all, the National Socialists agitated against the pharmacological quest for salvation of the Weimar period. Their brazen rejection of the parliamentary system, of democracy, as well as of the urban culture of a society that was opening up to the world, was expressed through tub-thumping slogans directed against the degenerate state of the hated 'Jewish Republic'.

The Nazis had their own recipe for healing the people: they promised ideological salvation. For them there could be only one legitimate form of inebriation: the swastika. National Socialism strove for a transcendental state of being as well; the Nazi world of illusions into which the Germans were to be enticed often used techniques of intoxication. World-historical decisions, according to Hitler's inflammatory text *Mein Kampf*, had to be brought about in states of euphoric enthusiasm or hysteria. So the Nazi Party distinguished itself on the one hand with populist arguments and on the other with torch parades, flag consecrations, rapturous announcements and public speeches aimed at achieving a state of collective ecstasy. These were supplemented with the violent frenzies of the Brownshirts during the early '*Kampfzeit*', or period of struggle, often fuelled by the abuse of alcohol.* '*Realpolitik*' tended to be dismissed as unheroic cattle trading: the idea was to replace politics with a state of social intoxication.¹⁶ If the Weimar

* The foundation of the NSDAP on 24 February 1920 took place in a beer hall, the Hofbräuhaus, in Munich. In the early days, alcohol played an important part in the masculine rituals of the far-right party and its SA. This book barely touches on the role of alcohol in the Third Reich, because it deserves a discussion in its own right.

Republic can be seen in psycho-historical terms as a repressed society, its supposed antagonists, the National Socialists, were at the head of that trend. They hated drugs because they wanted to be like a drug themselves.

Switching Power Means Switching Substances

... while the abstinent Führer was silent¹⁷

Günter Grass

During the Weimar period Hitler's inner circle had already managed to establish an image of him as a man working tirelessly, putting his life completely at the service of 'his' people. A picture was created of an unassailable leader-figure, entirely devoted to the Herculean task of gaining control of Germany's social contradictions and problems, and to ironing out the negative consequences of the lost world war. One of Hitler's allies reported in 1930: 'He is all genius and body. And he mortifies that body in a way that would shock people like us! He doesn't drink, he practically only eats vegetables, and he doesn't touch women.'¹⁸ Hitler allegedly didn't even allow himself coffee and legend had it that after the First World War he threw his last pack of cigarettes into the Danube near Linz; from then onwards, supposedly, no poisons would enter his body.

'We teetotallers have – let it be mentioned in passing – a particular reason to be grateful to our Führer, if we bear in mind what a model his personal lifestyle and his position on intoxicants can be for everyone,' reads an announcement

from an abstinence association.¹⁹ The Reich Chancellor: ostensibly a pure person, remote from all worldly pleasures, entirely without a private life. An existence apparently informed by self-denial and long-lasting self-sacrifice: a model for an entirely healthy existence. The myth of Hitler as an anti-drug teetotaler who made his own needs secondary was an essential part of Nazi ideology and was presented again and again by the mass media. A myth was created which established itself in the public imagination, but also among critical minds of the period, and still resonates today. This is a myth that demands to be deconstructed.

Following their seizure of power on 30 January 1933, the National Socialists suffocated the eccentric pleasure-seeking culture of the Weimar Republic. Drugs were made taboo, as they made it possible to experience unrealities other than the ones promulgated by the National Socialists. ‘Seductive poisons’²⁰ had no place in a system in which only the Führer was supposed to do the seducing. The path taken by the authorities in their so-called *Rauschgiftbekämpfung*, or ‘war on drugs’, lay less in an intensification of the opium law, which was simply adopted from the Weimar Republic,²¹ than in several new regulations which served the central National Socialist idea of ‘racial hygiene’. The term ‘*Droge*’ – drug – which at one point meant nothing more than ‘dried plant parts’* was

* Etymologically, the term comes from the Dutch *droog*, meaning ‘dry’. During the Dutch colonial age, this referred to dried luxuries such as spices or tea. In Germany all pharmaceutically usable (dried) plants and plant parts, mushrooms, animals, minerals etc., were called ‘*Drogen*’ (drugs), and the word later came to be applied to all remedies and medications – leading to the word ‘*Drogerie*’, meaning a chemist’s shop.

was considered breakable when it came to detecting consumers of illegal substances.²³ The chairman of the Berlin Medical Council decreed that every doctor had to file a 'drug report' when a patient was prescribed narcotics for longer than three weeks, because 'public security is endangered by chronic alkaloid abuse in almost every case'.²⁴ If a report to that effect came in, two experts examined the patient in question. If they found that hereditary factors were 'satisfactory', immediate compulsory withdrawal was imposed. Although in the Weimar Republic slow or gradual withdrawal had been used, now addicts were to be subjected to the horrors of cold turkey.²⁵ If assessment of the hereditary factors yielded a negative result, the judge could order confinement for an unspecified duration. Drug users soon ended up in concentration camps.²⁶

Every German was also ordered to 'convey observations about drug-addicted acquaintances and family members, so that corrective action can be taken immediately'.²⁷ Filing systems were put in place in order to establish a thorough record, enabling the Nazis to use their war against drugs to feed into a surveillance state quite soon after they came to power. The dictatorship extended its so-called 'health leadership' into every corner of the Reich: in every administrative district there was an 'anti-drug consortium'. Doctors, chemists, social security authorities and representatives of the law such as the army and the police were all involved, as well as members of the National Socialist People's Welfare, establishing a full-blown anti-drug web. Its threads converged in the Reich Health Office in Berlin, in Principal Department II of the Reich Committee for the People's Health. A 'duty of

health' was postulated, which would go hand in hand with the 'total containment of all demonstrable physical, social and mental damage that could be inflicted by alcohol and tobacco'. Cigarette advertising was severely restricted, and drug prohibitions were put in place to 'block any remaining breaches of moral codes in our people'.²⁸

In autumn 1935 a new Marital Health Law was passed which forbade marriage if one of the parties suffered from a 'mental disturbance'. Narcotics addicts were marginalized into this category and were branded as 'psychopathic personalities' – without the prospect of a cure. This marriage prohibition was supposed to prevent 'infection of the partner, as well as hereditarily conditioned potential for addiction' in children, because among 'the descendants of drug addicts an increased rate of mental deviations' had been observed.²⁹ The Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring took compulsory sterilization to its brutal conclusion: 'For reasons of racial hygiene we must therefore see to it that severe addicts are prevented from reproducing.'³⁰

Worse was to follow. Under the guise of 'euthanasia', those considered 'criminally insane', a category including drug users, would be murdered in the first years of the war. The precise number of those affected is impossible to reconstruct.^{31,32} Of crucial importance to their fate was the assessment on their file card: a plus (+) meant a lethal injection or the gas chamber, a minus (-) meant a deferral. If an overdose of morphine was used for the killing it came from the Reich Central Office for Combating Drug Transgression, which had emerged out of the Berlin Drug Squad in 1936 as the first Reich-wide drug police authority.

Among the ‘selecting doctors’ a mood of ‘intoxicating superiority’ prevailed.³³ The anti-drug policy served as a vehicle for the exclusion and suppression, even the destruction, of marginal groups and minorities.

Anti-drug Policy as Anti-Semitic Policy

The Jew has used the most refined means to poison the mind and the soul of German people, and to guide thought along an un-German path which inevitably led to doom. [. . .] Removing this Jewish infection, which could lead to a national disease and to the death of the people, is also a duty of our health leadership.

Medical Journal for Lower Saxony, 1939³⁴

From the outset, the racist terminology of National Socialism was informed by linguistic images of infection and poison, by the topos of toxicity. Jews were equated with bacillae or pathogens. They were described as foreign bodies and said to be poisoning the Reich, making the healthy social organism ill, so they had to be eradicated or exterminated. Hitler said: ‘There is no longer any compromise, because such a thing would be poison to us.’³⁵

In fact the poison lay in the language itself, which dehumanized the Jews as a preliminary stage to their subsequent murder. The Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935 and the introduction of the *Abnenpass* (Proof of Aryan Ancestry) manifested the demand for purity of the blood – this was seen as one of the supreme goods of the

people, and one most in need of protection. Needless to say, this produced a point of intersection between anti-Semitic propaganda and anti-drugs policy. It was not the dose that determined the poison, but the category of foreignness. Propagated as the standard work on the subject, the central, entirely unscientific thesis of the book *Magische Gifte* ('Magic Poisons') posits: 'The greatest toxic effect is always produced by narcotics alien to the country and the race.'³⁶ Jews and drugs merged into a single toxic or epidemiological unit that menaced Germany: 'For decades our people have been told by Marxists and Jews: "Your body belongs to you." That was taken to mean that at social occasions between men, or between men and women, any quantities of alcohol could be enjoyed, even at the cost of the body's health. Irreconcilable with this Jewish Marxist view is the Teutonic German idea that we are the bearers of the eternal legacy of our ancestors, and that accordingly our body belongs to the clan and the people.'³⁷

SS Hauptsturmführer Criminal Commissar Erwin Kosmehl, who was from 1941 director of the Reich Central Office for Combating Drug Transgressions asserted that 'Jews play a supreme part' in the international drug trade. His work was concerned with 'eliminating international criminals who often have roots in Jewry'.³⁸ The Nazi Party's Office of Racial Policy claimed that the Jewish character was essentially drug-dependent: the intellectual urban Jew preferred cocaine or morphine to calm his constantly 'excited nerves' and give himself a feeling of peace and inner security. Jewish doctors were rumoured to be 'often extraordinarily addicted to morphine'.³⁹

In the anti-Semitic children's book *Der Giftpilz* ('The Poisonous Mushroom') the National Socialists combined their twin bogeymen, Jews and drugs, into racial-hygiene propaganda that was used in schools and nurseries.⁴⁰ The story was exemplary, the message perfectly clear: the dangerous poison mushrooms had to be eradicated.

While the selection strategies in the battle against drugs were directed against an alien power that was perceived as threatening, in National Socialism they almost automatically had anti-Semitic connotations. Anyone who consumed drugs suffered from a 'foreign plague'. Drug dealers were presented as unscrupulous, greedy or alien, drug use as 'racially inferior', and so-called drugs crime as one of the greatest threats to society.⁴¹

It is frightening how familiar many of these terms still sound today. While we have driven out other Nazi verbal monstrosities, the terminology of the war on drugs has lingered. It's no longer a matter of Jews – the dangerous dealers are now said to be part of different cultural circles. The extremely political question of whether our bodies belong to us or to a legal-social network of social and health-related interests remains a virulent one even today.

The Celebrity Doctor of Kurfürstendamm

The word 'JEW' was smeared on the plaque of a doctor's surgery on Bayreuther Strasse in Berlin's Charlottenburg district one night in 1933. The name of the doctor, a specialist in dermatological and sexually transmitted diseases, was illegible. Only the opening hours could still be



Mixing an anti-drugs campaign and anti-Semitism – even in a children’s book. ‘Just as poisonous mushrooms are often difficult to tell from good mushrooms, it is often difficult to recognize the Jews and confidence tricksters and criminals.’

clearly seen: 'Weekdays 11–1 and 5–7 apart from Saturday afternoon'. The overweight, bald Dr Theodor Morell reacted to the attack in a way that was as typical as it was wretched: he quickly joined the Nazi Party to defuse future hostilities of that kind. Morell was not a Jew; the SA had wrongly suspected him of being one because of his dark complexion.⁴²

After he had registered as a Party member, Morell's practice became even more successful. It expanded and moved into the lavish rooms of a nineteenth-century building on the corner of Kurfürstendamm and Fasanenstraße. You joined, you flourished – that was a lesson Morell would never forget, right until the end. The fat man from Hessen hadn't the slightest interest in politics. The satisfaction that made his life worthwhile came when a patient felt better after treatment, obediently paid the fee and came back as soon as possible. Morell had developed strategies over the years that gave him advantages over the other doctors on Kurfürstendamm with whom he vied for well-to-do clients. His smart private practice was soon seen as one of the most profitable in the area. Equipped with the most up-to-date technology – all originally bought with the fortune of his wife, Hanni – over time it had the whole of high society beating a path to the door of Morell, a former ship's doctor in the tropics. Whether it was the boxer Max Schmeling, various counts and ambassadors, successful athletes, business magnates, high-powered scientists, politicians, half of the film world: everyone made the pilgrimage to Dr Morell, who specialized in new kinds of treatment, or – as some mocking tongues had it – in the treatment of non-existent illnesses.

There was one field in which this modish, egocentric doctor was considered a pioneer: vitamins. Little was known at the time about these invisible helpers, which the body itself can't produce, but which it urgently needs for certain metabolic processes. Injected directly into the blood, vitamin supplements work wonders in cases of under-nourishment. This was precisely Morell's strategy for keeping his patients interested, and if vitamins weren't enough, he deftly added a circulatory stimulant to the injection mixture. For male patients he might include some testosterone with an anabolic effect for muscle building and potency, for women an extract of nightshade as an energy supplement and for hypnotically beautiful eyes. If a melancholy theatrical actress came to see him to get rid of stage fright before her premiere in the Admiralspalast, Morell wouldn't hesitate for a moment, but would reach with his hairy hands for the syringe. He was said to be an absolute master of the injection needle, and there were even rumours that it was *impossible* to feel the prick as his needle went in – in spite of the size of the implements at the time.

His reputation went beyond the boundaries of the city, and in the spring of 1936 his phone rang in the consulting room, even though he had categorically forbidden his nurses to disturb him during surgery hours. But this was no ordinary phone call. It was from the 'Brown House', Party headquarters in Munich: a certain Schaub on the line, introducing himself as Hitler's adjutant and informing him that Heinrich Hoffmann, the 'Official Reich Photographer of the NSDAP', was suffering from a delicate illness. It was the Party's wish that Morell, as a

prominent specialist in sexually transmitted diseases who was well known for his confidentiality, should take on the case. They didn't want to consult a Munich doctor for such a discreet matter. The Führer, in person, had sent a plane for him, which was waiting at a Berlin airport, Schaub added.

While Morell couldn't stand surprises, he also couldn't turn down an invitation like that. Once he arrived in Munich, he was put up at state expense in the grand Regina-Palast-Hotel, treated the pyelonephritis that Hoffmann had contracted as a result of gonorrhoea – 'the clap' – and was invited with his wife to take a trip to Venice by his influential patient by way of thanks.

Back in Munich the Hoffmanns gave a dinner in their villa in the elegant district of Bogenhausen with the Morells present. There was spaghetti with nutmeg, tomato sauce on the side, green salad – the favourite dish of Adolf Hitler, who was, as this evening, often a guest at Hoffmann's house. The Nazi leader had been closely connected with the photographer since the 1920s, when Hoffmann had made considerable contributions to the rise of National Socialism. Hoffmann, who owned the copyright for important photographs of the dictator, published large numbers of picture books called things like *Hitler as No One Knows Him* or *A Nation Honours Its Führer* and sold them by the million. There was also another, more personal reason that linked the two men: Hitler's lover, Eva Braun, had previously worked as an assistant for Hoffmann, who had introduced the two in his Munich photographic shop in 1929.

Hitler, who had heard a great many good things about

the jovial Morell, thanked him before dinner for treating his old comrade, and regretted not having met the doctor before; perhaps then his chauffeur, who had died of meningitis a few months earlier, would have still been alive. Morell reacted nervously to the compliment, and barely spoke during the spaghetti dinner. The constantly sweating doctor with the full face and the thick round glasses on his potato nose knew that in higher circles he was not considered socially acceptable. His only chance of acceptance lay in his injections, so he pricked up his ears when Hitler, in the course of the evening, talked almost in passing about severe stomach and intestinal pains that had been tormenting him for years. Morell hastily mentioned an unusual treatment that might prove successful. Hitler looked at him quizzically – and invited him and his wife to further consultations at the Berghof, his mountain retreat in the Obersalzberg near Berchtesgaden.

There, a few days, later, during a private conversation, the dictator frankly admitted to Morell that his health was now so poor that he could barely perform any action. That was, he claimed, due to the bad treatment given to him by his previous doctors, who couldn't come up with anything but starving him. Then if there happened to be an abundant dinner on the programme, which was often the case, he immediately suffered from unspeakable bloating, and itchy eczema on both legs, so that he had to walk with bandages around his feet and couldn't wear boots.

Morell immediately thought he recognized the cause of Hitler's complaints and diagnosed abnormal bacterial flora, causing poor digestion. He recommended the preparation Mutaflor, developed by his friend the Freiburg

doctor and bacteriologist Professor Alfred Nissle: a strain of bacteria that had originally been taken from the intestinal flora of a non-commissioned officer who had, unlike many of his comrades, survived the war in the Balkans without stomach problems. The bacteria are kept in capsules, alive, and they take root in the intestine, flourish and replace all the other strains that might lead to illnesses.⁴³ This genuinely effective concept convinced Hitler, for whom even processes within the body could represent a battle for *Lebensraum*, or 'living space'. Extravagantly, he promised to donate Morell a house if Mutaflor actually did cure him, and appointed the doctor as his personal physician.

When Morell told his wife about his new position, Hanni was less than enthusiastic. She commented that they didn't need it, and referred to his thriving practice on Kurfürstendamm. Perhaps she already sensed that she would rarely get to see her husband from now on, because a very unusual relationship would form between Hitler and his personal physician.

Injection Cocktail for Patient A

He alone is responsible for the inexplicable,
the mystery and myth of our people.

Joseph Goebbels⁴⁴

The dictator always hated being touched by other people, and refused treatment from doctors if they inquired too

invasively into the causes of his ailments. He could never trust a specialist who knew more about him than he did himself. Good old general practitioner Morell, with his cosy harmless air, gave him a sense of security from the very beginning. Morell had no intention of questioning Hitler to genuinely find the root of his health problems. The penetration of the needle was enough for him; it was a substitute for serious medical treatment. If the head of state was to function, and demanded to be made immediately symptom-free, whatever his complaints, Morell hesitated no more than he would when treating an actress at the Metropol Theatre, but instead prepared a 20 per cent Merck glucose solution or a vitamin injection. Immediate removal of symptoms was the motto, followed not only by the bohemian circles of Berlin but also by 'Patient A', as he appeared in Morell's books.

Hitler was delighted by the speed with which his condition improved – usually while the needle was still in his vein. His personal doctor's argument convinced him: for the Führer, with all the tasks he had to perform, his energy consumption was so high that you couldn't wait until a substance found its way into the blood in tablet form via the digestive system. For Hitler it made sense: 'Morell wants to give me a big iodine injection as well as a heart, liver, chalk and vitamin injection. He learned in the tropics that medicine must be injected into the veins.'²⁴⁵

The busy ruler lived in constant fear of not being able to function properly, that he wouldn't be able to do everything he needed to do, and that he wouldn't be able to perform due to illness. Since he believed no one else was capable of carrying out his duties, from 1937 Morell's

unconventional methods of treatment quickly gained in importance. Several injections a day were soon the norm. Hitler became used to his skin being punctured, and having what was assumed to be a potent substance flowing into his veins. Each time it happened he felt instantly better. The fine stainless steel needle that conjured up ‘immediate recovery’ was fully in line with his nature: his situation required constant mental alertness, physical vitality and hands-on decisiveness. Neuroses and other psychological inhibitions had to be switched off at all times, as if by the push of a button, and he himself needed to be permanently refreshed.

Soon his new physician seldom left the patient’s side, and Hanni Morell’s fears came true: her husband had no time for his practice any more. A locum had to be installed at Kurfürstendamm, and Morell later claimed, oscillating between pride and fatalism, that he was the only person who had seen Hitler every day, or at least every second day, since 1936.

Before every big speech the Reich Chancellor now allowed himself a ‘power injection’ in order to work at the peak of his capabilities. Colds, which could have kept him from appearing in public, were ruled out from the start by intravenous vitamin supplements. To be able to hold his arm up for as long as possible when doing the Nazi salute, Hitler trained with chest expanders and also allowed his body to snack on glucose and vitamins. The glucose, administered intravenously, gave the brain a blast of energy after twenty seconds, while the combined vitamins allowed Hitler to address his troops or the people wearing a thin Brownshirt uniform even on

cold days without showing a sign of physical weakness. When he suddenly lost his voice before a speech in Innsbruck in 1937, Morell quickly alleviated the nuisance with an injection.

At first his digestive problems improved as well, and so the promised estate for the personal physician was given to Morell, on Berlin's exclusive Schwanenwerder island, next door to the propaganda minister, Goebbels. The elegant villa, surrounded by a hand-forged iron fence, at 24–26 Inselstrasse,* wasn't a complete gift: the Morells had to buy it themselves, for 338,000 Reichsmarks, although they did receive an interest-free loan of 200,000 RM from Hitler which was later converted into a fee for treatment. The new home didn't just bring advantages to the celebrity doctor, who had now been elevated to the highest social stratum. Morell had to employ domestic servants and a gardener, and his basic expenses soared, even though he wasn't automatically earning more. But now there was no turning back. He enjoyed his new lifestyle too much, as well as his immediate proximity to power.

Hitler had also become more than used to the doctor, brushing aside any criticism of the man who many people in the hard-fought-for inner circles found less than appetizing: Morell wasn't there to be sniffed at, Hitler professed, he was there to keep him healthy. To give the former society doctor a hint of seriousness, Hitler awarded him an honorary professorship in 1938.

* The building was 'Aryanized', having been previously owned by the Jewish banker Georg Solmmen.

Volkswagen – *Volksdrogen*

The first years in Morell's treatment developed into an extremely successful period for Hitler, who was cured of his intestinal cramps and, always dosed up on vitamins, was healthy and agile. His popularity grew unstintingly, chiefly due to the fact that the German economy was enjoying a boom. Economic independence became a fixed point in Nazi politics: it would produce a higher standard of living but also meant that war was inevitable. The plans for expansion were already in the desk drawers.

The First World War had made it clear that Germany had too few natural raw materials for armed conflict with its neighbours and so artificial ones had to be created: synthetic petrol produced from coal as well as 'Buna' (synthetic rubber) were at the centre of the development of IG Farben, which had gone on growing in power within the Nazi state and had consolidated its position as a global player in the chemical industry.⁴⁶ Its board described itself as the 'Council of the Gods'. Under Göring's tutelage, the economy was to become independent from all imported materials that could be produced in Germany itself. Of course, that also included drugs. While the Nazis' war on drugs brought down the consumption of heroin and cocaine, the development of synthetic stimulants was accelerated and led to a new blossoming within the pharmaceutical companies. The workforces of Merck in Darmstadt, Bayer in the Rhineland and Boehringer in Ingelheim grew and wages rose.

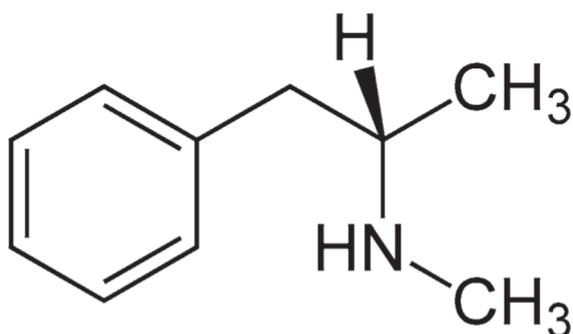
Expansion was also on the cards at Temmler. The head

chemist, Dr Fritz Hauschild,* had noticed how the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936 had been influenced by a substance called Benzedrine, a successful amphetamine from the USA – and still a legal doping product at the time. At Temmler all development resources were now pooled in that direction, since the company was convinced that a performance-enhancing substance was a perfect fit for an age in which everyone was talking about new beginnings. Hauschild turned to the work of Japanese researchers who had synthesized an extremely stimulating molecule called N-methylamphetamine as early as 1887, and crystallized it in its pure form in 1919.† The drug was developed out of ephedrine, a natural substance that clears the bronchia, stimulates the heart and inhibits the appetite. In the folk medicine of Europe, America and Asia, ephedrine had been known for a long time as a component of the ephedra plant, and was also used in so-called ‘Mormon tea’.

Hauschild perfected the product and in autumn 1937 he found a new method of synthesizing methamphetamine.⁴⁷ A short time later, on 31 October 1937, the Temmler factory patented the first German methylamphetamine, which put American Benzedrine very much in its shadow. Its trademark: Pervitin.⁴⁸

* After the war Hauschild became one of the leading sports physiologists in the GDR, and in the 1950s he and his institute at the University of Leipzig provided the impetus for the GDR’s doping programme, which made the worker-and-peasant state an athletic giant. In 1957 the inventor of Pervitin was awarded the National Prize of the GDR.

† It was on sale there under the trademark Philopon/Hiropon, and later used by kamikaze pilots in the war.



The molecular structure of Pervitin.

The molecular structure of this pioneering material is similar to adrenalin and so it passes easily through the blood and into the brain. Unlike adrenalin, however, methamphetamine does not cause sudden rises in blood pressure, but works more gently and lasts longer. The effect occurs because the drug tickles out the messenger substances dopamine and noradrenaline from the nerve cells of the brain and pours them into synaptic gaps. This puts the brain cells in excited communication with each other and a kind of chain reaction takes place. A neuronal firework explodes and a biochemical machine gun starts firing an uninterrupted sequence of thoughts. All of a sudden the consumer feels wide awake and experiences an increase in energy; the senses are intensified to the extreme. One feels livelier, energized to the tips of one's hair and fingers. Self-confidence rises, there is a subjectively perceived acceleration of thought processes, a sense of euphoria, and a feeling of lightness and freshness. A state of emergency is experienced, as when one faces a sudden danger, a time when an organism mobilizes all its forces – even though there is no danger. An artificial kick.

Methamphetamine does not only pour neurotransmitters into the gaps but also blocks their reabsorption. For this reason the effects are long-lasting, often more than twelve hours, a length of time which can damage the nerve cells at higher doses as the intracellular energy supply is drawn into sympathy. The neurons run hot and brain chatter can't be turned off. Nerve cells give up and die off irrevocably. This can lead to a deterioration in the ability to find words, in attention and concentration, and a general depletion in the brain where memory, emotions and the reward system are concerned. The lack of stimulation once the effect fades away is a sign of empty hormone stores, which have to fill up again over the course of several weeks. In the meantime fewer neurotransmitters are available: the consequences can include a lack of drive, depression, joylessness and cognitive disturbances.



The sugar-coating room at Temmler.

Although such possible side-effects have been investigated by now, further in-depth research was put on the back-burner at the time because Temmler were over-eager, bursting with pride over their new product. The company smelled a roaring trade and contacted one of the most successful PR agencies in Berlin to commission an advertising campaign the like of which Germany had never seen. Their publicity model was the marketing strategy for another rather stimulating product, produced by none other than the Coca-Cola Company, which – with the catchy slogan ‘ice cold’ – had enjoyed enormous success with their brown brew.

In the first weeks and months of 1938, when Pervitin was beginning to go from strength to strength, posters appeared on advertising pillars, the outsides of trams and on the buses and local and underground trains of Berlin. In a modern, minimalist style they mentioned only the trademark and referred to its medical indications: weakness of circulation, low energy, depression. It also showed the orange and blue Pervitin tube, the characteristic packaging with curved lettering. At the same time – another trick by this branch of business – all the doctors in Berlin received a letter from Temmler saying bluntly that the company’s aim was to persuade the doctors personally: what people like themselves they also like to recommend to others. The envelope included free pills containing 3 milligrams of active ingredient as well as a franked postcard to be returned: ‘Dear Doctor, Your experiences with Pervitin, even if they were less than favourable, are valuable to us in helping to limit the field of indication. So we would be very grateful to you for a message on this card.’⁴⁹

A substance in its test phase. Just like the old dealer's trick: the first dose is free.

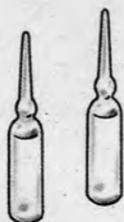
Representatives of the Temmler factory visited large-scale practices, hospitals and university clinics all over the country, delivered lectures and distributed this new confidence- and alertness-boosting drug. The company's own account said, 'reawakening joy in the despondent is one of the most valuable gifts that this new medication can give to patients.' Even 'frigidity in women can easily be influenced with Pervitin tablets. The treatment technique is as simple as can be imagined: four half-tablets every day long before bedtime ten days a month for three months. This will achieve excellent results by increasing women's libido and sexual power.'⁵⁰ On the Patient Information Leaflet it also said that the substance compensated for the withdrawal effects of alcohol, cocaine and even opiates. It was marketed as a kind of counter-drug to replace all drugs, particularly illegal ones. The consumption of *this* substance was sanctioned. Methamphetamine was regarded as a kind of panacea.

The substance was also claimed to have a system-stabilizing component: 'We live in an energy-tense time that demands higher performance and greater obligations from us than any time before,' a senior hospital doctor wrote. The pill, produced under industrial laboratory conditions in consistently pure quality, was supposed to help counteract inadequate performance and 'integrate shirkers, malingerers, defeatists and whiners' into the labour process.⁵¹ The Tübingen pharmacologist Felix Haffner even suggested the prescription of Pervitin as a 'supreme commandment' as it amounted to 'the last effort on behalf of the whole': a kind of 'chemical order'.⁵²

Stimulans

für

Psyche und Kreislauf



Depressionen
Hypotonie
Müdigkeit
Narkolepsie
postoperative
Rekonvaleszenz

Pervitin

1-Phenyl-2-methylamino-propan-hydrochlorid

T E M M L E R - W E R K E / B E R L I N

An advertisement for the supposed panacea Pervitin. It stimulates the psyche and the circulation and has an undefined impact on depression, hypotonia, fatigue, narcolepsy and post-operative depression.

Germans, however, didn't need an order to take the buzzy substance. The hunger for powerful brain-food was already there. Consumption wasn't decreed from above and it wasn't top-down, as you might have expected in a dictatorship; it was entirely bottom up.⁵³ This so-called 'speedamin' landed like a bomb, spread like a virus, sold like sliced bread and was soon as much of a fixture as a cup of coffee. 'Pervitin became a sensation,' one psychologist reported. 'It soon gained acceptance in a very wide range of circles; students used it as a survival strategy for the exertions of exams; telephone switchboard operators and nurses swallowed it to get through the night shift, and people doing difficult physical or mental labour used it to improve their performance.'⁵⁴

Whether it was secretaries typing faster, actors refreshing themselves before their shows, writers using the stimulation of methamphetamine for all-nighters at the desk, or hopped-up workers on conveyor belts in the big factories raising their output – Pervitin spread among all social circles. Furniture packers packed more furniture, firemen put out fires faster, barbers cut hair more quickly, nightwatchmen stopped sleeping on the job, train drivers drove their trains without a word of complaint, and long-distance lorry-drivers bombed down freshly constructed autobahns completing their trips in record time. Post-lunchtime naps became a thing of the past. Doctors treated themselves with it, businessmen who had to rush from meeting to meeting pepped themselves up; Party members did the same, and so did the SS.⁵⁵ Stress declined, sexual appetite increased, and motivation was artificially enhanced.

A doctor wrote: 'Experimenting on myself, I also observed

that both physically and mentally one may receive a pleasant boost in energy, which for six months has allowed me to recommend Pervitin to manual and clerical workers, fellow colleagues who are temporarily short of time, and also speakers, singers (with stage fright) and examination candidates. [. . .] One lady likes to use the medication (c. 2 x 2 tablets) before parties; another successfully on particularly demanding working days (up to 3 x 2 tablets daily).⁵⁶

Pervitin became a symptom of the developing performance society. Boxed chocolates spiked with methamphetamine were even put on the market. A good 14 milligrams of methamphetamine was included in each individual portion – almost five times the amount in a Pervitin pill. ‘Hildebrand chocolates are always a delight’ was the slogan of this potent confectionery. The recommendation was to eat between three and nine of these, with the indication that they were, unlike caffeine, perfectly safe.⁵⁷ The housework would be done in a trice, and this unusual tidbit would even melt the pounds away, since Pervitin, a slimming agent, also curbed the appetite.

Another part of the highly effective campaign was an essay by Dr Fritz Hauschild in the respected *Klinische Wochenschrift*. In this, and again in the same journal three weeks later, under the headline ‘New Specialities’, he reported on the extremely stimulating effect of Pervitin, its ability to increase energy and boost both self-confidence and decisiveness.⁵⁸ Associative thought became much faster and physical work easier. Its multiple applications in internal and general medicine, surgery and psychiatry seemed to give it a wide field of indication, and at the same time to stimulate scientific research.



Hildebrand-Pralinen erfreuen immer

Making housework more fun: methamphetamine chocolates:
'Hildebrand chocolates always delight'.

Universities all over the Reich pounced on these investigations. First to engage was Professor Schoen from the Polyklinik in Leipzig, who reported ‘psychic stimulation lasting for several hours, sleepiness and weariness disappearing and making way for activity, loquacity and euphoria’.⁵⁹ Pervitin was fashionable among scientists, perhaps not least because at the start there was so much pleasure involved in taking it yourself. Self-experimentation was only common courtesy, after all: ‘First of all we may report on our personal experiences based on self-experimentation after repeated consumption of 3–5 tablets (9–15 mg) of Pervitin, which were what enabled us to draw conclusions about its psychical effects.’^{*60} More and more advantages came to light. Possible side-effects remained in the background. Professors Lemmel and Hartwig from the university in Königsberg testified to greater focus and concentration and advised: ‘In these eventful times of conflict and expansion it is one of the doctor’s greatest tasks to maintain the performance of the individual and where possible to increase it.’⁶¹ A study by two brain researchers from the southern town of Tübingen claimed they had demonstrated an acceleration of the thought process through Pervitin, along with a general increase in energy. Inhibitions of the decision-making process, inhibitions generally and depressive conditions had been ameliorated. An intelligence test had demonstrated a distinct improvement. A Munich-based Professor Püllen released data from ‘many hundreds of

* This is approximately the quantity taken in a typical contemporary dose of crystal meth.

cases' supporting these statements. He reported a generally stimulating effect on the cerebrum, the circulation and the autonomic nervous system. He had also, with a 'high dose of 20 milligrams administered once only, established a distinct reduction in fear'.⁶² Hardly a surprise that Temmler should have supplied doctors with these positive results by mail, and ensured that they were regularly updated.

Pervitin was a perfect match for the spirit of the age. When the medication conquered the market there actually seemed to be a reason for thinking that all forms of depression had come to an end. At least those Germans who profited from the Nazis' tyranny thought so, and that was most of them. If, in 1933, many had still believed that the new Chancellor's career would be short-lived, and didn't think him capable of very much, a few years later everything looked very different. Two miracles had occurred, one economic and one military, covering the two most urgent problems for Germany in the 1930s. When the Nazis took power there were six million unemployed and only 100,000 poorly armed soldiers; by 1936, in spite of a continuing global crisis, almost full employment had been achieved, and the Wehrmacht was one of the most powerful military forces in Europe.⁶³

Successes in foreign policy mounted up, whether it was a matter of the remilitarization of the Rhineland, the annexation of Austria or 'bringing the Sudeten Germans home to the Reich'. The Western powers did not punish these breaches of the Versailles Treaty. Quite the contrary, they made greater and greater concessions because they hoped to prevent a new war in Europe. But diplomatic

successes didn't mollify Hitler. 'Like a morphine addict who can't give up his drug, he couldn't give up his plans for new seizures of power, new surprise attacks, secret marching orders and grand parades,' the historian Golo Mann wrote, describing the character of the emperor from Braunau.⁶⁴ The Allies misjudged the situation: Hitler would *not* be mollified by diplomatic success. Hitler was *never* content. Boundaries had to be crossed in every respect and at all times, and state borders in particular. From the German Reich to the Greater German Reich to the planned Teutonic World Reich: the constant hike in doses was in the nature of the National Socialist cause, and this lay first and foremost in the hunger for new territories. The slogans 'Home to the Reich' and 'A People without Space' summed it up.

Dr Morell, the personal physician, was even directly involved with the defeat of Czechoslovakia. On the night of 15 March 1939 the Czech president, Emil Hácha, in poor health, attended a more or less compulsory state visit to the new Reich Chancellery. When he refused to sign a paper that the Germans laid in front of him, a *de facto* capitulation of his troops to the Wehrmacht, he suffered a heart attack and could no longer be spoken to. Hitler urgently summoned Morell, who hurried along with his case and his syringes and injected the unconscious foreign guest with such a stimulating medication that Hácha rose again within seconds, as if from the dead. He signed the piece of paper that sealed the temporary end of his state. The very next morning Hitler invaded Prague without a fight. During the following years, Hácha sat at the powerless head of the 'Protectorate of Bohemia and

Moravia', to which parts of his country had been reduced, remaining Morell's loyal patient. In that respect, pharmacology worked as a way of continuing politics by other means.

During those first months of 1939, the last months of peace, Hitler's popularity reached a temporary peak. 'Look at everything this man has achieved!' was a standard proclamation, and many of his countrymen also wanted to put their potential to the test. It was a time when effort seemed to reap rewards. It was also a time of social demands: you *had* to be part of it, you *had* to be successful – if only so as not to arouse suspicion. The general upturn also produced a concern that you might not be able to keep up with the new rapid pace. The increasingly schematic nature of work placed fresh demands on the individual, who became a cog in the works. Any help was welcome when it came to putting yourself in the mood – even chemical help.

Pervitin made it easier for the individual to have access to the great excitement and 'self-treatment' that had supposedly gripped the German people. The powerful stuff became a sort of grocery item, which even its manufacturer didn't want to keep stuck just in the medical section. 'Germany, awake!' the Nazis had ordered. Methamphetamine made sure that the country *stayed* awake. Spurred on by a disastrous cocktail of propaganda and pharmaceutical substances, people became more and more dependent.

The utopian ideal of a socially harmonized, conviction-based society, like the one preached by National Socialism, proved to be a delusion in terms of the

competition of real economical interests in a modern high-performance society. Methamphetamine bridged the gaps, and the doping mentality spread into every corner of the Reich. Pervitin allowed the individual to function in the dictatorship. National Socialism in pill form.