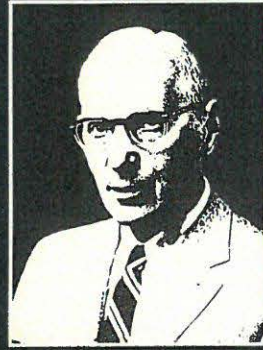


MEDICAL GENOCIDE

PART EIGHT

Albert Schweitzer said
Dr. Max Gerson was "a medical genius."
Why, then, was he
destroyed by the medical community?



DIET: THE SECRET OF LIFE

BY GARY NULL
AND LEONARD STEINMAN

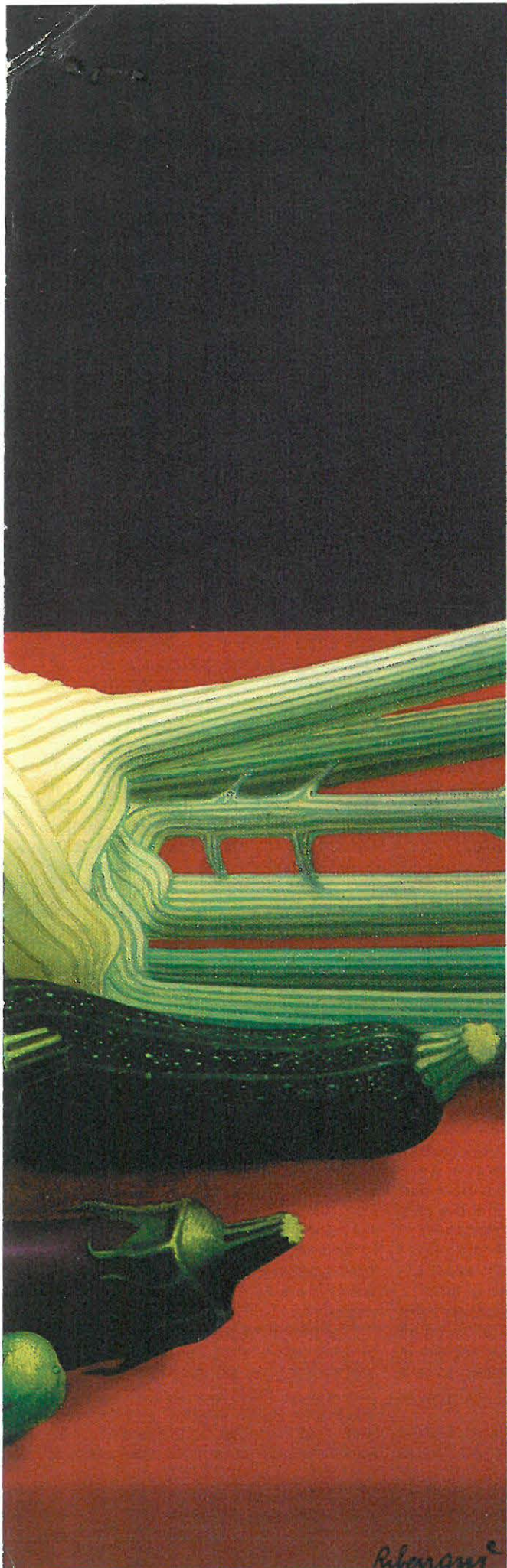
As one of the major scientific innovators of the twentieth century, Dr. Max Gerson was responsible for assembling much of the most useful information we have about the control of degenerative diseases, including cancer, by diet and nutrition. Dr. Gerson's unique approach to disease cured Dr. Albert Schweitzer's wife of tuberculosis. Schweitzer later called Gerson "a medical genius who walked among us . . . a man who was destined to be a fighter, who proved himself in this adverse fate."

By the time of his death in 1959, at the age of 78, Dr. Gerson had not wavered from his long-standing scientific and philosophical beliefs: that disease is the result of a human organism's being out of balance;

that degenerative diseases can be prevented and cured by diet therapy; that in a patient's weakened state, drug therapy hastens and intensifies the symptoms of degenerative disease; and that treatment of symptoms alone does not conquer a disease. He dedicated his life and work to the unique problems and needs of the twentieth century—the effects of contemporary civilization on the human body. "Cancer must be prevented by preventing damage to the liver," said Gerson. "The basic measure of prevention is not to eat the damaged, dead, poisoned food which we bring into our bodies. Every day, day by day, we poison our bodies."

It is very difficult today, however, to find evidence of Dr. Gerson's ideas in sci-

PAINTING BY DANIEL RIBERZANI



entific literature. Dr. Gerson rediscovered the nutritional keystone in the treatment of such chronic and degenerative diseases as diabetes, arthritis, allergies, heart disease, lupus, kidney disease, emphysema, multiple sclerosis, tuberculosis, and cancer. His work was praised in private, yet he received no public honors, no prizes, no research grants. The medical community at large respected his dedication, his credentials, and his humanitarian interests, but they refused to grant him professional recognition. In fact, near the end of his life, after a long and illustrious medical career, Dr. Gerson was relieved of his privilege to practice in a New York hospital.

THE THERAPY

Diet and nutrition are finally gaining recognition as powerful weapons against disease. Eminent researchers are now finding positive clinical effects of vitamin supplementation on degenerative diseases, and are publishing their studies for others to read, review, and judge. Gradually, a solid theoretical basis for studying the life-giving forces in natural, raw foods is being established.

Dr. Gerson, in his landmark book *A Cancer Therapy: Results of Fifty Cases*, wrote: "I am more than ever convinced that biochemistry and metabolic science will be victorious in healing degenerative diseases, including cancer, if the *whole body* or the *whole metabolism* will be attacked and not the symptoms. . . . The treatment . . . has to penetrate deeply to correct all the vital processes. When the general metabolism is restored, we can again influence the functioning of all organs, tissues, and cells throughout it."

How can this be done? Throughout his years of clinical observation, Dr. Gerson developed an exacting yet comprehensive diet. The goal of the diet was to re-establish normal metabolism over a period of time. The diet was designed to allow the essential organs to regain their original detoxifying effectiveness, thus restoring the digestive system and the secretory functions of the body, including the hormonal and immunological systems.

The Gerson Therapy detoxifies the body with large amounts of freshly pressed fruit and vegetable juices, a special broth designed to cleanse the body through the kidneys, and daily coffee enemas, which enable the bile ducts to release toxic material safely.

The fruit and vegetable juices provide oxidizing enzymes, which facilitate rehabilitation of the liver. In the first six weeks, the diet also includes freshly cooked fruits and vegetables, green salads, and a soup made from special greens and herbs. During this period, all animal proteins are forbidden so that the body can break down proteins already present and, to some degree, consume the cancerous tissue. After the first six weeks, yogurt, unsalted and uncreamed

pot cheese or cottage cheese, and natural buttermilk are added to the diet.

The Gerson Therapy rebuilds the liver with injections of crude liver extract, organic and inorganic iodine, and a large amount of potassium salts, as well as pancreatic enzymes and liver juice. The treatment dictates that sodium be excluded, and that the tissues be filled with as much potassium as possible. This discovery by Dr. Gerson was recently corroborated by a study at the Naval Air Development Center in Pennsylvania. It was shown there that Dr. Gerson had succeeded with low-sodium/high-potassium diets in the treatment of cancer because they reversed tissue damage. "High-potassium/low-sodium environments can partially return damaged cell proteins to their normal undamaged configuration," Dr. Gerson said.

The Gerson Therapy prohibits all canned, bottled, sulphured, frozen, smoked, salted, bleached, pickled,



"The basic measure of prevention," said Dr. Gerson, "is not to eat the damaged, dead, poisoned food which we bring into our bodies. Every day, day by day, we poison our bodies."



jarred, and refined foods. Most stimulants are excluded, as well as all butter and butterfats, oils, and fluoridated water. One of the main benefits from the Gerson Therapy, in an overwhelming number of cancer cases, is the relief of pain. In 1946, Dr. George Miley of the Gotham Hospital in New York testified before a congressional hearing on cancer research that, with use of the Gerson diet, "we have observed marked relief of pain in approximately 90 percent of the patients who entered the hospital with severe pain due to cancer." He pointed out that the only other way to abolish pain was through the use of narcotics, "which are deleterious to any patient's general health when administered over a long period of time."

Throughout the program, patients are encouraged to eat and drink as much as they wish so that a healthy metabolism is restored. They are also advised to use fruits and vegetables grown without the use of insecticides.

Dr. Gerson developed his diet therapy through years of highly controlled clinical work. Born in Wongrowitz, Germany, on October 18, 1881, Dr. Gerson studied medicine at the universities of Breslau,

Wuerzburg, Berlin, and Freiburg. From 1909 until the beginning of World War I, he worked in internal medicine and physiological chemistry in Berlin at the hospital in Friedrichshain. In 1919, he settled in Westphalia and practiced as a specialist in internal and nervous diseases. He was called to the University of Munich because of the work he had done on tuberculosis. The German government arranged a special department for Dr. Gerson's new dietary treatment of tubercular diseases. In 1933, Dr. Gerson left Germany and continued his work in Vienna, where he wrote and published. In 1935, he was appointed chief of staff at a French sanatorium near Paris. In 1936, Dr. Gerson left Europe and came to the United States, receiving his license to practice medicine in New York State in 1938. Although hailed in Europe for his work, Dr. Gerson fought a constant battle in the United States over his treatment of cancer. Fortunately, his scientific evidence was sound and his resolve strong; otherwise, we might never have received the vital information he collected in his long, productive career.

THE DISCOVERY

Dr. Gerson's cancer therapy came out of his research into a cure for his own debilitating illness: hereditary migraines. While working in Germany, Dr. Gerson sought advice from his superiors, other internists, and finally neurologists, but to no avail. Time after time he was told, "Nothing can be done." Realizing that this really meant "Nothing has been done," Dr. Gerson knew that if he wanted to be cured of migraines, he would have to find the cure himself.

It occurred to him that to gain relief, it might be necessary to actually change his body chemistry. Dr. Gerson was already convinced that contamination of foods by artificial fertilizers and processing harmed the body chemistry. He posited that by restoring normal metabolism through diet, he might be able to improve his migraine condition.

The first mammalian food is milk, and this was how Dr. Gerson began treating himself. He then decided to imitate adult animals and eat only raw foods. His migraines disappeared completely and, through experimentation and modification, he discovered a diet that controlled his headaches.

Gerson's diet worked on other migraine patients, and he published his results. Then he made another startling discovery.

One of his migraine patients, a man whose debilitating headaches were jeopardizing his job, also had a disease that was considered incurable. The disease was *lupus vulgaris*, sometimes known as tuberculosis of the skin. It attacks the face as well as other parts of the body. However, to this man, having his crippling migraines treated was far more crucial.

After Dr. Gerson treated him, his migraines disappeared—but so, in fact, did the lupus. Dr. Gerson was elated by this discovery, and began successfully applying the migraine diet to other lupus patients. After a short time, he applied the therapy to other forms of TB, also with positive results. Throughout Europe, the media hailed Dr. Gerson's work as a great discovery. Soon other victims of lupus were coming to Dr. Gerson, and they, too, were cured.

Migraine and lupus were only two of the many conditions that Dr. Gerson would ultimately submit to his nutritional theories and treatments. Dr. Gerson had found that many of his patients suffered from other chronic degenerative conditions, such as arthritis and vascular disease. When diet therapy continued to bring more positive results in victims of these illnesses, Dr. Gerson began to suspect that he had stumbled upon some truths about metabolism and the effects of modern life. He realized that it was his duty to take these related truths, synthesize them, and piece together the puzzle of a curative for some of civilization's woes.

THE THEORY

Said Dr. Gerson in the landmark book, *A Cancer Therapy*: "What is essential is not the growth itself or the visible symptoms; it is the damage of the whole metabolism, including the loss of defense, immunity, and healing power. It cannot be explained with or recognized by one or another cause alone. . . . In particular, in degenerative diseases and in cancer, we should not apply a symptomatic treatment or only one that we can fully understand; we need a treatment that will comprise the whole body as far as we know or can imagine it."

"Cancer is not a single cellular process," he went on to say. "It is an accumulation of numerous damaging factors combined in deteriorating the whole metabolism." This theory is borne out by the frequent appearance of degenerating functions in cancer patients. For example, one of Dr. Gerson's patients was diagnosed as having a brain tumor accompanied by failing vision. Another patient, diagnosed as having giant-cell sarcoma, found that as the disease progressed, she lost her ability to concentrate and remember. Still another patient with a malignant melanoma had also suffered from rickets, encephalitis, and recurrent sore throat. Said Dr. Gerson of this problem: "In cancer patients, frequently a combination of several degenerative diseases is observed. I found cancer frequently combines with chronic osteoarthritis, high, or low blood pressure, chronic sinus trouble, or other chronic infections. . . . I think that the origin of the cancerous disease is more probably where the reactivation of the oxidating enzymes, one of the finest developed functions of the liver, is impaired."

This theory applies to the studies that have shown a high incidence of cancer in people with weak liver-intestinal systems. The theory has also been corroborated by a study in which cancer was induced in rabbits by rubbing a tar substance on their ears. Cancer appeared when the liver showed pathological change. There was also damage to the kidneys, spleen, and lymphatic apparatus—the organs whose main function is to rid the body of poisons.

Further evidence showing the validity of Dr. Gerson's theory has been found in studies in which mice were injected with cancer tissues or extracts. A defensive, healing reaction resulted. However, said Dr. Gerson, "the reaction was different in cancer patients. There, all different types of experiments had only a minimum or temporary effect, as the cancerous body had lost its defense and healing power."



Dr. Gerson was far ahead of his time. As Albert Schweitzer said, "He leaves a legacy which commands attention and will assure him his due place."



A related study confirmed that tumors could be controlled by a general restriction of caloric intake as well as a restriction of calories derived from fats. This proved that tumor formation is dependent not only on the *degree* of caloric restriction, but on the *composition* of the diet.

The body's inability to defend itself in a deteriorated condition became the cornerstone of Dr. Gerson's theory. The next step was developing a regimen based on the healing process of the body's metabolic system.

Dr. Gerson then addressed his efforts to what he called the "external metabolism," that part of the environment that includes the life of the soil and the cultivation of food. He later wrote, "Whatever grows on a poisoned soil carries poison too. . . . We no longer have living, normal food. Our food and drink is a mass of dead, poisoned material, and one cannot cure very sick people by adding poisons to their systems." As another direct result of clinical observations, Dr. Gerson noted which foods brought on migraines.

He also took note of foods that caused the recurrence of various degenerative diseases and cancer.

Dr. Gerson found that chemically fertilized soil produced fruits and vegetables with a decreased potassium content, accompanied by a rise in the sodium content. When he saw that plants grown in naturally fertilized soil produced an excess of potassium over sodium, Dr. Gerson began to think that a high-potassium/low-sodium diet would probably maintain a healthful balance in the metabolism. He maintained that cancer develops particularly in the various organs in which sodium is physiologically reabsorbed, or stored up—in the pancreas, for example.

In addition, his laboratory experiments showed him that "in chronic diseases, sodium and calcium, both negatively charged, invade the weaker, positively charged organs; accordingly, potassium is lost from these organs, opening the door to further negative metabolic transformations. *Here the disease starts, not the symptoms.*"

Dr. Gerson's theory of how positively and negatively charged minerals (potassium and sodium, respectively) influence other body materials and processes was revolutionary. What we have inherited in the way of metabolism through evolution is an adaptation to the natural composition of the soil. If that composition is altered, it would follow that human metabolism would also be altered. This theory was carefully considered in the 1970s and early 1980s. A significant number of experimental observations made clear the physiological advantages of a high-potassium/low-sodium diet, not merely for the outward appearance of well-being, but at the cellular level.

Modern methods of artificial fertilization and food processing affect us because, as Dr. Gerson has shown, the natural mineral balance becomes reversed. First, the potassium content of food is considerably reduced; often, the food is boiled, which reduces the potassium even more. When table salt, or sodium chloride, is added to the food, it increases the imbalance.

There is further evidence to support this theory. As far back as 1950, in an analysis presented by the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, it was shown that potassium deficiency occurs in the following diseases: leukemia, diabetes, glaucoma, chronic arthritis, acute and chronic asthma, sinusitis, cancer (mostly in moderate and advanced cases), and other degenerative diseases. In addition, table salt has been found to be a cancerous growth agent, and Dr. Gerson had shown how the loss of potassium from the cells invites the subsequent invasion of sodium—and excessive water retention, or edema.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer often talked about the effect of modern civilization on the human body. In 1954, he noticed an "increase of cancer with increased use of

salt by the natives [of central Africa] . . . curiously enough, we did not have any cancer cases in our hospitals before."

These facts prove beyond a doubt modern man's need for a better diet. Dr. Gerson attempted to address this need by devising a salt-free, high-potassium diet that would establish a healthy metabolism for those who have been "ravaged" by modern civilization.

THE WAY TO HEALING POWER

Dr. Gerson developed the practical application of his detoxification and health-building theories over a long, arduous period of scientifically controlled study. While working in Berlin, he published 14 papers in various German medical journals on the effects of diet on the treatment of tuberculosis and lupus—and the medical world buzzed with disbelief. In order to quell suspicions about the validity of his treatment, a committee consisting of an internist, a radiologist, and a specialist in tuberculosis was established to monitor Dr. Gerson's progress on cases considered incurable by conventional methods.

It was here that Dr. Gerson obtained his most astonishing results, which were published in his book *Dietary Therapy of Lung Tuberculosis*. But it was 1933, and the political situation prevented the long-awaited public demonstration of his findings for the Berlin Medical Association.

Dr. Gerson went on to do his clinical work in Vienna and France, and he lectured at universities and before medical associations throughout Europe. During this time, he published an additional 12 papers on various aspects of his therapy.

In 1936, Dr. Gerson finally came to the United States, where he continued his research. But he encountered considerable prejudice—such an across-the-board lack of cooperation that it made it impossible for him to publish in scientific journals. And this was at the time that Dr. Gerson was pursuing some of his most important work.

In 1943, his article "Cancer, a Deficiency Disease" was rejected by the *New York State Journal of Medicine*. In 1944, his paper on "Dietetic Treatment of Malignant Tumors" was rejected by other publications. In fact, it was not until 1945 that Dr. Gerson was able to publish any new work concerning his treatment of degenerative diseases. A full ten years had elapsed since his last paper. "The Gerson Diet in Home Practice," was published in Germany.

On the face of it, a connection between an inability to publish and an outright conspiracy against Dr. Gerson by the medical world at large seems tenuous at best. The letters of rejection state what appear to be reasonable objections to publication: "The journal is not one that specializes in oncology." . . . "The hypothesis needs more complete data." . . . "There is no room in the next issue." And if it had been Dr. Gerson who complained

about unfair treatment, many would call it simply sour grapes. However, it was not Dr. Gerson who cried foul, but Raymond Swing, an ABC radio journalist. In a letter to Senator Claude Pepper, Swing suggested that Dr. Gerson be called to give testimony before the Senate concerning Senator Pepper's proposed bill for cancer research. "Let me say," Swing wrote, "that I also hope that you will not yield to the demand which is sure to be made by reactionary [orthodox] medical leaders to make sure that all government money spent on cancer research be under their supervision and control. The orthodox people have failed, and the country must not allow them to hold back the striking new work of the unorthodox."

The result was that Dr. Gerson was invited to appear before a Senate subcommittee that was considering appropriations for cancer research. Here, for the first time, patients were brought before the Senate in a dramatic demonstration



Dr. Gerson believed that disease was the result of a human organism's being out of balance, and that degenerative diseases can be prevented and cured by diet therapy.



of a positive treatment for cancer. Leading clinics had given up on these five cancer patients, who were subsequently restored to health by Dr. Gerson. He explained how he had successfully treated his first cancer patient in 1928, and how, since January 1946, he had been successfully treating cancer patients in New York at the Gotham Hospital.

His first case was a 15-year-old girl who had been treated for a tumor in her spinal cord. She had been paralyzed, and her father had been told that she would die. When she came to Dr. Gerson, she couldn't walk or feed herself. In front of the Senate, approximately eight months after beginning Dr. Gerson's treatment, she could move her arms and hands, and her tumor had vanished. Now, over 40 years after her appearance before the United States Senate, this woman, who in 1945 was given approximately six months to live, is still alive. "I have been tested throughout the years," she writes, "and there is no sign of any tumors." She concludes by saying, "I truly hope that our government will soon open their eyes to the truth even if it does hurt the can [sic] food business."

The second case presented was a young soldier who had a basal-cell carcinoma of the neck that had grown into his skull. He had been operated on, but could not receive radiation therapy because of the risk of brain damage. After about six weeks of the Gerson Therapy, he showed improvement, and at the time of his appearance in front of the Senate subcommittee a year later, there was no sign of cancer at all.

Another case was particularly dramatic. The patient had had a malignant lymphatic sarcoma that had resulted in very large tumors of the abdomen, neck, groin, and other places. After going to two hospitals, she was informed that nothing more could be done. A year on the Gerson diet changed her life completely. When she was presented to the Senate, there was no sign that she had ever had cancer.

The final case was a woman who had had recurrent breast cancer. She had undergone mastectomy and radiation treatments, but then she had been told that nothing more could be done. Three weeks after starting on the Gerson diet, her cancer began to disappear. Nine months later, it was completely gone.

TRAGEDY AND TRIAL

Dr. Gerson's testimony at the Senate Subcommittee Hearings on Cancer Research in 1946 should rightfully have been the turning point in his career. At the hearings, a fellow researcher summarized the persuasive results of the Gerson Therapy—results never before accomplished by any therapy. The Gerson Therapy went further toward the abolition of pain, he said, "than any other method today." The researcher also confirmed that the therapy retarded the spread of cancer and reduced the size of malignant growths, actually causing them to disappear, and that it controlled acute infections, a chief cause of death in cancer patients.

But Dr. Gerson was finding that his work was coming under mounting attack. In November 1946, the American Medical Association published a damaging editorial in its own journal. "Fortunately for the American people," it read, "this presentation [before the Senate] received little, if any, newspaper publicity." The editorial belittled Dr. Gerson's startling results by reporting them in this way: "Indeed [Dr. Gerson] admits lack of any actual cure, claiming *only* that patients seemed improved in health and that some tumors were delayed in growth or became smaller [italics mine]." The editorial went on to cast aspersions on Dr. Gerson's financial backing and said that "the journal has on several occasions requested Dr. Gerson to supply details of the method of treatment but has thus far received no satisfactory reply." And this appeared after Dr. Gerson's repeated, futile attempts to publish scientific papers in the journal!

This editorial was followed by several investigations. Meanwhile, reporter Raymond Swing of ABC, who had covered the hearings in the Senate, broadcast a summary of the testimony on his radio show on July 3, 1946. Anonymous letters were then sent to the radio station warning both Swing and the station not to broadcast any more information about the Gerson treatment.

In the latter part of 1946, Samuel Markel, the president of Dr. Gerson's research foundation, arranged to set up a demonstration for physicians. Of the 100 doctors he invited, only 30 attended. And of all these, only one congratulated Dr. Gerson on his work with melanoma, an extremely resistant cancer. Yet this same doctor was warned by his colleagues to be quiet after his display of appreciation. After this demonstration, the Research Foundation asked the AMA to make a statement about its results. But, according to Dr. Gerson, his request was never answered.

Afterward, Dr. Gerson was investigated five times by the Medical Society of the County of New York. After each of these investigations, the foundation requested, and was denied, a statement.

Finally, a review of Dr. Gerson's work was published in the AMA's journal in 1948. The review was called "Frauds and Fables." Dr. Gerson's foundation threatened a lawsuit. Swift action by Gerson's lawyer forced the journal to stop publishing the article in subsequent printings, but the damage had been done. In 1950, Dr. Gerson's affiliation with the Gotham Hospital in New York was terminated.

THE LONG BATTLE

After his conflict with the AMA, Dr. Gerson turned once again to Europe, where a German medical journal gladly accepted the papers that had been rejected by U.S. journals. Two of these were landmark reports—"No Cancer in Normal Metabolism" and "Cancer: A Problem of Metabolism"—which contained most of his theoretical work, an outline of his diet, analyses of X rays, and case histories.

He was also invited to the 1952 International Cancer Congress in Berchtesgaden, where he displayed X rays of his patients. He was then invited to the University of Zurich, where he encountered one of the leading cancer specialists in Europe, who had written several books; one of them, on bone cancer, had been translated into 12 languages. On a 1957 radio talk show, Dr. Gerson recalled this meeting: "When he saw my cases and X rays, he told me, 'Dr. Gerson, the American physicians must be very proud that you found this cancer cure—and please don't let anybody tell you that this is not a cure.'"

More than 25 years after Dr. Gerson found it necessary to publish in Europe, cancer researchers testing unorthodox methods still find the international cli-

mate more receptive to such work.

Even though Dr. Gerson gained wide recognition in Europe, the battle in America continued to brew: In 1954, in response to the fifth investigation of his work by the Medical Society of the County of New York, Gerson said, "I have always stated to the medical profession and any investigating body, I am eager to interest them in the results of my cancer treatment; therefore, I highly appreciate your desire to see the real proof, the records and the X rays of these results."

Dr. Gerson then expressed his wish to present these cases to the entire medical society by publishing them in the *New York State Medical Journal*. But Dr. Gerson was not published in U.S. medical journals after 1949.

Dr. Gerson described his last investigation in the 1957 radio interview. At this time, he was under investigation by the Licensing Board of New York State and his malpractice insurance had been dis-

“Physicians approach . . . almost completely cured patients,” wrote Dr. Gerson, “and try to have them return to their hospitals. Here they manage with orthodox treatments to kill them.”

continued. "The last time, six professors came—outstanding professors from our best hospital. . . . I asked some of the patients to come, and I demonstrated ten of these. After that I told them that I had 24 X rays of very well cured, even remarkable cases; but they said they had seen enough, that they had no more time. They spent about two and a half hours, then I didn't hear anything from them."

On March 4, 1958, a year before his death, Dr. Gerson was suspended from the Medical Society of the County of New York. Before his death, laboratories that Dr. Gerson used for blood-testing and urinalysis work, as well as for X rays, were threatened with economic ruin if they continued to associate with him. Patients were being told by other doctors that Dr. Gerson charged \$2,000 or more for the first consultation, whereas Gerson actually charged only \$25.

As a result of the activities of the AMA's journal and the New York County Medical Society, Dr. Gerson was prevented from demonstrating patients at cancer conferences, such as the October 1953 hearings on causes and controls of a dozen major diseases, including cancer, that

were held by the House Commerce Committee. In a letter to his attorney, Dr. Gerson said that "many of my patients informed [the chairman of the hearings] about my results in cancer and requested that he invite me to demonstrate before the committee." In addition, Dr. Gerson sent a letter to the chairman, who never replied to him.

In 1957, Dr. Gerson wrote to a close friend about what discouraged him the most: "The most difficult and inhuman part of the aggressive measures taken against me is that the physicians approach the best and almost completely cured patients and try to have them returned to their hospitals. Here they manage with their orthodox treatments to kill them. I lose in this manner somewhere between 25 and 30 percent of my best cases." In one such case, a patient of Dr. Gerson's who had refused orthodox treatment was repeatedly telephoned by physicians and nurses, even though they had previously told her that nothing more could be done.

This kind of harassment continues today at the Gerson Therapy Center, which is located near the California border in Mexico. Dr. Curtis Hesse, former chief administrator, described in a recent interview some of the ordeals the patients go through. "It is quite a story that the patients come with," he said. "We've actually had people call the patients while they were here in residence at the hospital. They traced them down here and called, haranguing. It's really something how some of these doctors seem to take their chemotherapy very personally—when one of their patients decides not to take it."

The Gerson Therapy, practiced with so much success in Mexico (40–50 percent improvement in terminal cancer patients and 80 percent improvement in early to moderate cancer), has been placed on the American Cancer Society's Unproven Methods List. This makes it impossible for its proponents to continue their work; grants dry up, and the doors to publication are closed.

When asked about the Gerson Therapy, the American Cancer Society (ACS) stated that the therapy was still on the Unproven Methods List, even though this list is "reviewed approximately every six months for new information." A spokesperson said, "To date, we have not gotten to revising any information we have on the Gerson theory of cancer treatment." When asked if the ACS had added the recently published supporting evidence of Dr. Gerson's work from the *Journal of Physiological Chemistry and Physics* of 1978, the spokesperson said they had not seen the information.

G. Congdon Wood, assistant vice-president for professional education at the ACS and director of the Unproven Methods Information Office, said: "We don't have the facilities or the staff to make a full-time effort on this, and we're not really

authorized to do this anyway. The Unproven Methods Committee actually makes the decisions, which are based on information received from a number of sources, partially from the medical literature, partially from government agencies such as the FDA or the National Cancer Institute, or in some instances from information obtained from attorneys and various legal bodies, such as the state attorney generals."

But what happens to a treatment whose proponent was expelled by the medical society of his county and state, who was banned from publication in medical journals, and who was rejected by the National Cancer Institute (NCI)? On what basis can the unproven methods committee make its decision? Even when information is published and available, as in the 1978 *Journal of Physiological Chemistry and Physics*, it doesn't seem to reach the right people.

When asked why he was not aware of this information, Wood said, "You can't be familiar with every single journal." Perhaps the ACS, which already spends over 75 percent of its annual income from contributions on nonresearch activities, should buy subscriptions to journals that will keep them up to date.

THE PROOF

Unable to publish in medical journals, his treatment still on the ACS Unproven Methods List, Dr. Gerson knew how important it was to document his theories and case histories before his death. Working against time, he was finally able to publish, in 1958, *A Cancer Therapy: Results of Fifty Cases*, a definitive 250-page treatise on his theory and methods of treatment, and an additional 170-page detailed account of 50 case histories, including X rays and medical records. (When contacted recently, both the NCI and the ACS denied having seen this book.)

Time and time again, administrators in government and private agencies have denied the validity of Dr. Gerson's therapy. However, NCI documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act portray the facts in a completely different light.

As early as January 1945, C. C. Little, then manager-director of the ACS, wrote the following to a doctor: "It seems to me since Dr. Gerson has frankly stated in detail what his diet is and in addition has given the theory on which he personally believes its claimed efficiency is based, that his material should receive publication and proper attention and criticism by the medical profession. I sincerely hope that it will be possible to arrange this."

In fact, the ACS also wrote Dr. Gerson in 1949 asking for six copies of the above-mentioned article, referring to it as one of the "outstanding articles on cancer published during the past ten years." This stands in stark contrast to a letter posted ten days later to a supporter of Dr. Ger-

son's in which the AMA's Oliver Field states, "We have no knowledge of any report published in medical literature describing the medication or the course of treatment by Gerson." Meanwhile, Dr. Gerson's article "Some Nutritional Factors Influencing the Origin and Development of Cancer" had been published in 1946.

Yet, as late as May 1984, the ACS and the House of Representatives Select Committee on Aging still contended that the "Gerson method of treatment for cancer was of no value." In the very same report, the ACS presented its dietary recommendations, which are almost exactly those advocated by Dr. Gerson over 40 years earlier!

Dr. Gerson was unable to receive grant money and also could not publish, for related reasons. The NCI handpicks the people who sit on its peer review boards



One of the main benefits from the Gerson Therapy in an overwhelming number of cancer patients is the relief of pain, testified Dr. George Miley before a congressional hearing.



from among those who are prominent in their specific fields of research. These specialists tend to be monocultural—that is to say, they are qualified only in their area of specialization. Often, much too often, they simply could not care less about the work of their "good friends and colleagues."

This type of thinking can be viewed as one explanation for Dr. Gerson's work not being funded or published. While Dr. Gerson submitted articles, both theoretical and clinical, to virtually every major scientific journal in the United States, they were all rejected, probably at face value, because no one had the experience or knowledge to judge its efficacy.

Medical societies and research centers in this country, be they private or public, have a highly politicized infrastructure, which has unfortunately manifested itself in a blatant patronage system. Those most skilled in obsequiousness become the policymakers. It is from this pool of people that selections are made for peer review boards, editorships of magazines and scientific journals, and heads of re-

search projects. Most of the people, if not all, hold more than one position of power. The chairman of a pathology department at a large teaching hospital may also be on a peer review board, be an editor of a journal, or a consultant to a pharmaceuticals manufacturer. It behooves an institution such as a large teaching hospital affiliated with a major university to have an individual well connected in different areas of government and private research, for then that institution is all the more likely to get large research grants.

In theory, the peer review system for allocating grants seems fair and reasonable. Sometimes these reviewers make on-site visits—and sometimes the grant applicant is called to Washington for an interview by the review board. The proposal is then rated numerically. In theory, then, the peer review system seems very scientific. However, in practice, it is not scientific at all. The chairman of the peer review committee averages the various scores, but the final decision is up to him. He has the power to kill a grant or let it go through. Theoretically there is an appeals process, but again, in practice it is basically useless, for the system can be manipulated fairly easily.

Although it may have been formed with the best of intentions, it seems that the system of peer review breeds corruption; people who have political clout can get what they want. If the NCI wants a grant approved, it puts people on the peer review board who will approve it. One doctor described a peer review board as an old boys' club: The "boys" sit around and hand out money to each other.

One would imagine that there is some way to check whether these funds are being used properly, but again, this just is not the case. Reports are required from the grant recipient on how many people he hired, how much lab and office space he had to use, how much equipment he had to buy, the drugs, chemicals, etc., necessary for the experiments, but there is absolutely no check on the *quality* of performance or the results. More often than not, the reports are not read or reviewed, but simply filed away when the grant is completed.

Why, then, does the peer review system, as practiced today, still exist? To put it simply, you don't bite the hand that feeds you. It seems that everyone knows that the integrity of the peer review system is a myth, but no congressman is willing to say anything against cancer research. And since Dr. Gerson would not play politics with his "good friends and colleagues," he was excluded from the funds they were charged with allocating.

THE LEGACY

Since Dr. Gerson's death, his work has mainly been carried on by his daughter, Charlotte Gerson Straus, president of the Gerson Institute in Bonita, California. At first she devoted herself to the awesome task of keeping *A Cancer Therapy* in print

and properly distributed. More than once, publishers reviewing the book were threatened by the FDA. Finally, Charlotte and her mother had the book reprinted themselves. Soon Charlotte began to lecture regularly to concerned groups across the country. Interest in Dr. Gerson's ideas grew until it was apparent that a "Gerson clinic" was needed—a place where patients could be treated and doctors could be trained in his method.

The clinic was established in Mexico, California, the home of the Gerson Institute, was no place for the Gerson Therapy because of a statewide "antiquackery" law forbidding doctors to use "any but the orthodox methods in the treatment or diagnosis of cancer." A spot six miles south of Tijuana was chosen.

The La Gloria Hospital/Gerson Therapy Center opened in July 1977 with three patients; it is still going strong today, with an average caseload of about 18–20 patients. It is headed by a young doctor named Arthur Ortuno, who, along with five other doctors, handles cancer patients as well as patients with rheumatoid arthritis, diabetes, heart disease, lupus, multiple sclerosis, and other degenerative diseases.

"The center isn't like any cancer ward that you'd find in the States," said former director Dr. Curtis Hesse. "It has been set up to be pleasant. People have hope. Everyone's there helping each other; when they go back home, they keep in contact just to find out about the triumphs and also the difficulties they've had. It is good fellowship." Even some "healthy" people visit the center to detoxify themselves, for preventive purposes.

However, there are some patients—even some who are terminally ill—that the center does not accept or cannot help. Dr. Hesse explained: "Ironically, the main problem we usually have in this treatment is not always cancer, or disease, but the other medications and treatments that the patients have already undergone. For the

degenerative diseases, it is very difficult if they've taken a lot of anti-inflammatory agents, especially in rheumatoid arthritis or in multiple sclerosis. We have difficulty undoing the damage that has been done by the medication. In cancer, we do not, as a general rule, accept any patient who has undergone chemotherapy. From past experience, we know that liver damage and damage to other organs, as well as the immune system, have been such that they do well for a two-to-three-week period but then go downhill."

Today, it is interesting to note that while the NCI is starting to take a closer look at diet and nutrition, it is not exploring Dr. Gerson's work. When asked why not, an NCI spokesperson said, "As you know, the results of some of his work have been looked at, and I don't think there was any indication that the patients he treated really responded very well to his regimen." When asked where this information had been obtained, the spokesperson quoted a 1947 letter from the New York County Medical Society, which stated that there was no "scientific evidence of objective improvement."

Yet positive results continue to be demonstrated at the Gerson Therapy Center. Dr. Hesse described these results: "As a general rule, the more malignant the disease, the quicker the body responds to the treatment. For example, malignant melanoma [considered to be incurable by conventional methods] is one of the most deadly cancers known, yet we see within two to three weeks a good response, whereas some of the other cancers, like lymphoma, a slower-growing cancer, sometimes take longer to show a decrease in tumor size."

When asked if he felt there was any cancer he couldn't treat, Dr. Hesse responded, "The only ones we don't feel we've had the best success with are those which have extensive liver damage, because the basis of our program is detoxification and recovery of the liver itself.

We also have had limited success if the tumors have grown into the brain and destroyed the ability of the body's vital systems to function normally. Then the body just cannot mechanically cleanse itself." Dr. Hesse also pointed out that removal of one or more of the body's detoxifying organs—the pancreas, stomach, adrenals, or colon—may also cause the treatment to fail.

All in all, however, the improvement rate from the Gerson Therapy seems to be higher than from most other nontoxic therapies. Also, the gap between its improvement rate in cases of early or moderate cancers (80 percent) is substantially better than that of conventional therapy. Also, the Gerson Therapy has been shown to heal the whole body, thereby causing improvement where there has been accompanying degenerative disease. In the end, the healthy body conquers all, as Dr. Gerson stated over 30 years ago.

It took until February 1984 for the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* to print a letter entitled "Preventive Oncology: An Opportunity for Clinical Cancer Centers." It is unfortunate that the author chose to focus on how one can make money off the nutrition trend. The only perceivable difference between the letter and Dr. Gerson's work 40 years ago is that now the information is marketable.

Clearly, Dr. Gerson was far ahead of his time. As Albert Schweitzer said, "He leaves a legacy which commands attention and will assure him his due place."

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