

## 11 "Permanently Unreformable"

Nazi coercive education in the Reichsgau of Vienna

Corrective training under the swastika meant transforming the person into a conformist member of the National Socialist Volksgemeinschaft. If somebody was unable or unwilling to comply with the regime's radical norms of obedience, discipline, performance, and hatred of "the others," he or she fell into the clutches of a coercive pedagogy that at times rivaled the concentration camps for cruelty. The most important Viennese institution in this context was the Städtische Jugendfürsorgeanstalt "Am Spiegelgrund" (Spiegelgrund Municipal Youth Welfare Institution). Not only were handicapped children selected and killed here (Pavilion 15), but also "problematic" and "antisocial" youths from all over Vienna were interned here. In cooperation with the juvenile courts, the city of Vienna committed hundreds of "problematic" children and youths to Spiegelgrund, with the intention of putting them under observation by psychiatric and psychological experts and of breaking them through cruel discipline. A network of educational councilors, welfare officers, public health officers, psychiatrists, and teachers guaranteed the continuous surveillance of young people in Vienna. Those who did not conform to the norms of the militarized youth education system risked being sent to Spiegelgrund. Despite all the brutality at Spiegelgrund, things could still get worse: if someone was classified as "unreformable" at Spiegelgrund, he or she could be committed to a "youth protection camp" - a young people's concentration camp under SS leadership that was hardly any different from other concentration camps. Such camps existed in Uckermark/Brandenburg (for girls) and Moringen/Lower Saxony (for boys). The Reichsgau of Vienna topped the league when it came to committals.

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