

13 "Gemeinschaftsfremd"

Nazi Persecution of Deviant Behavior

Various kinds of deviant behavior were considered 'asocial' or gemeinschaftsfremd (alien to the community). The fight against "asocials" was above all directed against social fringe groups: social welfare recipients, beggars, "work-shy" individuals, vagabonds, alcoholics, prostitutes, and others. They were registered by the NSDAP, the police as well as by employment, welfare, youth, and health authorities and were reported to a so-called "Asocials Committee" that decided on their committal to a work camp. The Viennese municipal administration was the first to suggest the establishment of a "labor education camp" for men. The camp was eventually erected in Oberlanzendorf in 1941 and put under the command of the Vienna Gestapo. Conditions of internment were similar to those in a concentration camp, but imprisonment was limited to several weeks: following considerable intimidation during their sojourn in the camp, the individual concerned was to be reintegrated into the production process as quickly as possible. The camp held up to 2,000 people; besides "asocials," there were mainly foreign forced laborers. There were two "labor education camps" for women: one at the hospital of Klosterneuburg and one in Pavilion 23 of the Heil- und Pflegeanstalt "Am Steinhof." Everyday life in the camp was characterized by forced labor, humiliation, and harassment. In addition, many of the women were sterilized. In the course of the war, approximately 650 women were interned in one of the two labor camps for women in Vienna. The Gestapo also committed "asocials" to concentration camps, where they had to wear the "black triangle." Roma and Sinti were likewise persecuted out of racist motives and under the pretence of being "asocials." The Main Health Office contributed considerably to the registration and deportation of the Viennese "Gypsies." With the increasing radicalization of Nazi tyranny, they were caught in the same machinery of destruction as the Jews. From Austria alone, more than 9,000 "Gypsies" (out of a total of 11,000 to 12,000) were killed in ghettos and extermination camps.

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