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Book Presentation “Persecuted Childhood – Children and Young People as Victims of Nazi Social Administration”

06 Dec 2007

The publication “Persecuted Childhood”, which was co-funded by the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for Victims of National Socialism, will be presented to the public on Friday 7 December 2007 in the MP’s reception room at the Parliament. The President of the National Council and Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, Barbara Prammer, will welcome the guests.

The work, published by Böhlau, analyzes the Nazi system of “extermination psychiatry” from a historical, psychiatric and educational perspective. The editor is the psychotherapist and children’s psychologist and neurologist Ernst Berger. Else Rieger, non-fiction editor and staff of the Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture oversaw the editing of the book.

Young people and children were also affected by the systematic murder of mental and physically handicapped people under the Nazi regime. Corresponding measures were put in place on the entire territory of the German Reich from 1940 onward, which required the cooperation of health and welfare offices, psychiatric experts, doctors and medical personnel. The publication “Persecuted Childhood” demonstrates that the system of “extermination psychiatry” was founded on a far-reaching network in Austria, too, which comprised the entire welfare system and was rooted in the pedagogy of the Nazi era.

The repercussions of psychiatric persecution and traumatization are also described in the book. For example, the children tortured in the Children’s Welfare Institution Am Spiegelgrund were denied official recognition as victims of the Nazis until very recently. The National Fund made concerted efforts to achieve the statutory recognition of these people as victims of Nazi persecution. In 2005 National Fund’s practice of recognizing this group of victims was followed by an amendment to the Victims’ Welfare Act.