

Shadow Mimicking the Darkness: Hans Asperger's Relation to National Socialism

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Childhood Influences

- Mother was a dedicated Catholic and Father was a stern disciplinarian
- Member of Neuland-Bund (Wandering Scholars)
- Extreme dedication to Catholicism, outdoor activities, and community
- Nazism became increasingly prevalent



Figure 1: "A Roman Catholic Service." <https://www.pegasusarchive.org/pow/General/PicFrenchCatholics.htm>.



National Socialism in Austrian Medicine

- Empowered preexisting ideas of eugenics, Social-Darwinism, and Anti-Semitism
- Forced many doctors to retire from practicing
- T4 program began in September 1939



Figure 2: "Aktion T4 (Diakonie Neuendettelsau)." <https://picryl.com/media/action-t4-diakonie-neuendettelsau-31482a>.



Time Within the Clinic

- Joined the University of Vienna's Pediatric clinic in 1931
- Promoted to manage the ward in 1935
- Interacted with several prominent believes of National Socialism
 - Franz Hamburger
 - Erwin Jekelius

Figure 3: "Franz Hamburger." https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz_Hamburger.

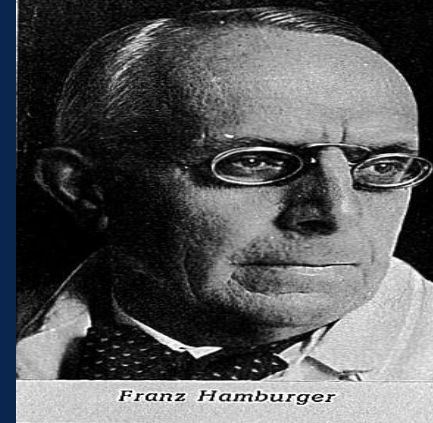


Figure 4: "prof-dr-erwin-jekelius." <https://dirkdeklein.net/2016/09/20/amspiegelgrund-clinic-the-killing-of-children/prof-dr-erwin-jekelius/>.



Figure 5: "University Children's Hospital, Vienna." https://commons.Wikimedia.org/wiki/File:University_Children's_Hospital_Vienna_doctors_and_nurses_i_Wellcome_V0029027.jpg.



"Autistic Psychopaths"

- Conducted research on multiple individuals displaying common autistic characteristics
- Described several children, focusing on the idea of "Gemut"



Figure 6: "Dr. Hans Asperger with a young boy at the Children's Clinic at the university of Vienna in the 1930s."
<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2016/01/20/F463603652/was-dr-asperger-a-nazi-the-question-still-haunts-autism>.



Hertha and Elisabeth Schreiber

- Sent several children to Am Spiegelgrund
- Member of a committee overseeing children in the Gugging Care Facility
- Viewed as being cooperative with National Socialist ideals



Figure 7: "Otto Wagner. Am Steinhof." https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Otto_Wagner,_Am_Steinhof_0088.JPG.



Conclusion and Legacy

- Sufficient evidence exists to believe that Asperger knew what could happen to his patients
- Ultimately never officially endorsed the Nazi Party
- Continued to describe and research Autism until his passing
- Research went undiscovered to the wider world until 1981



Figure 8: "Am Spiegelgrund Memorial." <https://www.flickr.com/photos/kluge/15305523732>.



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