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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

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Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Marschik, M. (2018). Depicting Hakoah: Images of a Zionist Sports Club in Interwar Vienna. *Historical Social Research*, 43(2), 129-147. <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.43.2018.2.129-147>

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Depicting Hakoah. Images of a Zionist Sports Club in Interwar Vienna

*Matthias Marschik**

Abstract: *»Ansichten der Hakoah. Bilder eines zionistischen Sportvereins im Wien der Zwischenkriegszeit«.* The SC Hakoah was not only Vienna's most prominent "Jewish" (Zionist) sports club of the Interwar years, but also part of the Viennese popular sports culture. The media constantly covered the club and its members. A closer look at the sports reporting reveals that different genres of the media (texts, photographs, and caricatures) produced different meanings. In this way the depiction of the Hakoah Sports Club was part of a complex culture producing "Jewish difference" between the poles of Antisemitism and "Jewish Vienna." The analysis clearly demonstrates that the different "genres," i.e. texts, pictures, and caricatures, produced diverse messages to Viennese Jews: Their inclusion should be based on "assimilation," although it had to be clear that they always remained identifiable.

Keywords: Jewish Sports, Interwar Vienna, Visual Culture of Sports, Jewishness.

1. Introduction

The history of the famous sports club, Hakoah Vienna, which was founded in 1909, has been well researched. This is especially true for the club's most successful sporting years between 1920 and 1938 as well as for the brutal termination of all its activities immediately following the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany ("Anschluss") in March 1938 (Bunzl 1987; Jüdisches Museum 1995; Betz, Löscher and Schölnberger 2009). In the interwar years, Hakoah undoubtedly enjoyed a unique status in the world as a Jewish club. It was an integral part of the popular mass cultural phenomenon of Viennese sport. Hakoah was extremely well-known on account of its successes in football, swimming, and athletics and enjoyed a great deal of media attention. This is very different from the situation in the neighbouring Weimar Republic, where Jewish and Zionist sport – compared with the sporting achievements of individual Jewish men and women – was never part of popular culture (Peiffer and Wahlig 2014, 2015).

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Yet, it is important to note that Zionist sporting activities, like Zionism itself, remained associated with minority groups – even in Vienna. The reason for this was that the Jewish sports scene had become more diverse (Marschik 2011). There were not only Jewish sportsmen and women, clubs and associations that were clearly committed to Judaism and/or Zionism, but also individuals that neither wanted nor felt obliged to identify with their “Jewishness” in the context of sport (Colpan, Hachleitner and Marschik 2016). But it is not solely this imbalance, which entails structural deficits in research. The retrospective focus on Hakoah as a Zionist sports club and its almost inevitable reduction to victim status, contributes to the imbalance of research. Hence, certain aspects have often been neglected so far. Aspects formulated in the field of Jewish Studies, such as “Jewish difference” (Silverman 2012) and “Performance” (Hödl 2008), beg for a more precise definition – particularly with regard to the analysis of popular cultural practices. The present paper focuses on Hakoah, however, because the club saw itself as a representative of “Jewish sport” and was also frequently regarded as such. The general public at the time did not believe that all sporting activities of Jewish men and women were connected with Hakoah. It is true, however, that the image people had of this club, as well as the club’s image of itself, contributed to the performative construction of “Jewish difference” in the context of sport (Marschik 2003).

This paper intends to contribute to this area of research, by focusing on the differences in Hakoah’s presentation in different sorts of mediatized texts. Special regard will be given to different forms of visualization beyond the primarily textual level, i.e. photography and caricature, which can provide key insights in this respect. The word “image” should be understood both literally and metaphorically, since there are two forms of image analysis. It is possible to examine the concrete visual representations of Hakoah, whereas analyzing the images created by a text (“iconic turn” or “visualistic turn”) also entails a change in the research perspective. Following Klaus Sachs-Hombach’s (2003) reading of W.J.T. Mitchell’s differentiation of picture and image, it is possible to study not only concrete pictures of Hakoah but also the related images of the club. The term “map” may be used both to describe a picture’s thematic topography (Sachs-Hombach 2005, 15) and as a framework with which to analyze the images associated with Jewish sporting activities.

2. Methodology

Interwar Vienna’s everyday cultures were characterized by the establishment and popularization of visual images – films, advertisements, and print media (Sandner 2014). Thus, at least the mass media were not only expanding but also developing a greater affinity for images (Pfurtscheller 2016). Especially illustrated weeklies became a popular source of images in Vienna and beyond

(Faber 2001). Forms of popular culture such as film, operetta, music halls, and sport were the preferred topics of these publications. The technological advances in photography and, more importantly, printing made it possible to report on events as and when they happened. Illustrated magazines, which usually contained mostly images and only short texts, were tailored to a mass readership. This new genre was mainly characterized by a reversal in the importance of images and text. The images no longer served to illustrate or provide a background to the text, but rather the texts served to explain the photographs, which now became the primary medium for conveying the message.

In a research project on “Jewish Sports Officials in Interwar Vienna,” completed in 2017, extensive data on representations of Jewish sporting activities in the media were produced (Hachleitner, Marschik and Spitaler 2018). The following thoughts are based on the findings of this project and they are focusing primarily on the representations of Hakoah in popular illustrated magazines and satirical journals not connected with the club. The leading question is if different media (written texts, photographs, and caricatures) produce different images of the Zionist sports club Hakoah. In the following, representations of the Hakoah sports club will be analyzed using illustrated magazines and so-called “humoristic” papers (Haider and Hausjell 1991).

The analysis will concentrate on the illustrated magazines *Das interessante Blatt* and *Wiener Bilder*, the latter was published from 1896 to 1939 as its Sunday supplement. Both magazines were founded by Vinzenz Chiavacci and like the majority of such publications had Christian-social leanings. The photographs were often obtained from renowned international agencies, but young Austrian photographers, above all Lothar Rübelt, found selling their work to illustrated magazines a lucrative business (Holzer 2013, 114-5). The Social-Democratic magazine *Der Kuckuck* (Riesenfellner and Seiter 1995), published from April 1929 to February 1934, will serve as a corrective to these middle-class media. The topic of caricature will be covered by two publications. First of all, the *Illustrierte Sportblatt*, published weekly until 1928. In contrast to the traditional sporting press, it used several photographs and caricatures. Secondly, the satirical magazine *Kikeriki* will be scrutinized. This originally liberal satirical publication became strongly anti-Semitic from 1900 onwards. In the 1920s it supported the Austrian DNSAP and as a result was banned in 1933.

The images were chosen following qualitative, discourse-analytical considerations, while a preliminary quantitative count provided important clues as to changes in terms of content. The results will be presented following the respective types of media, i.e. photography and caricature. Then, their messages will be contrasted and compared to the ascriptions and constructions of meaning in written texts.

3. Photographic Representations

Between 1909 and March 1938 a total of 21 images were published in *Das interessante Blatt* (IB) which had some reference to Hakoah. The earliest photograph is of a football match between the clubs Rapid and Hakoah in February 1921, the last one being of a swimming competition in August 1928. The majority of images were published between 1925 and 1927. Most of them focused on football (10) and swimming (9), with two photographs depicting athletics. Fourteen of the photographs were of sportsmen, while five of them, all of swimmers, were of women. There was an even number of pictures of competitions and scenes before or after the event. Ten photographs showed Hakoah teams or athletes during or after victories, whereas only five captured Hakoah in defeat. The photographs showed mainly those sports in which members of Hakoah were the winners. Five images contained neutral scenes such as team shots without any reference to competition results.

Figure 1: Swimmer Hedy Bienenfeld Being Congratulated by Her Opponent



Source: *Das interessante Blatt*, October 14, 1926, 6.

The selection of motifs does not at first appear in any way significant. The sporting activities of Hakoah are presented as attractive and competitive and as an established part of the Viennese sports scene. Surprisingly, unlike with other clubs, there are no shots of winners in victory poses, but the images clearly show that Hakoah athletes remained victorious and continued breaking records. A caption referring to the victory of the footballers over Westham United even talks of a “Triumph for Austrian Football” (IB September 13, 1923, 13). There are numerous scenes in which defeated athletes can be seen congratulating a winning member of Hakoah [Figure 1]. Hakoah is presented as a successful club and special emphasis is given to its international performances and their national significance.

Figure 2: A Sympathetic Fritz Löwy Portrayed as a Winner



Source: Das interessante Blatt, July 7, 1927, 4.

Nevertheless, the overall picture of Hakoah in *Das interessante Blatt* is curiously anemic. This is due to factors not visible in the photographs. Examples include representations of the great successes of Hakoah, such as winning the football championship in the 1924/25 season, and representations of masculine athleticism and feminine attractiveness, such as in the sports photographs by Lothar Rübelt (Pfundner 2010), who was responsible for almost half of the images. At the same time, textual references to confrontations between Hakoah and non-Jewish clubs, latent anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish feelings were not reflected in the images. Although the images integrated Hakoah into the national sports context, they downplayed the club's distinguishing features. For example, the hands of medal-winning Hakoah swimmer Fritzi Löwy are conveniently covering the Star of David on her swimsuit [Figure 2].

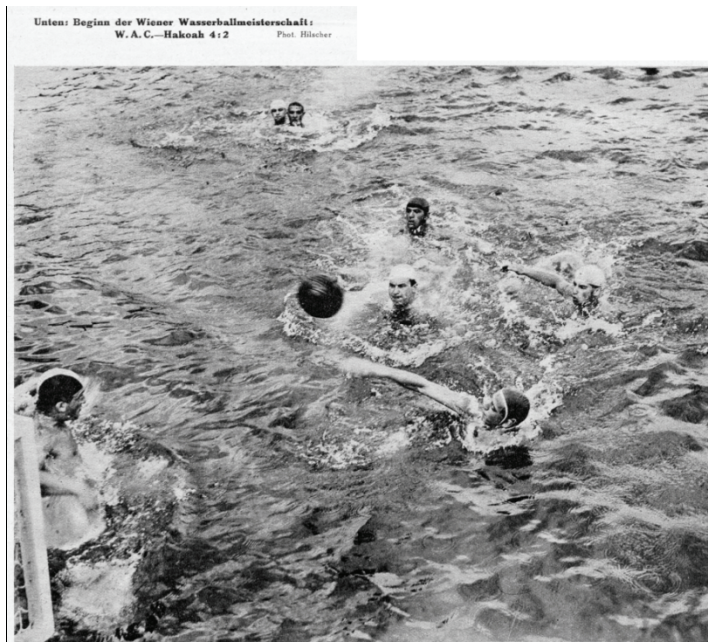
In late 1928, national sports coverage was transferred to *Wiener Bilder*. By 1938 this publication had printed ten photographs relating to Hakoah, the last being in 1932. Three pictures contained motifs from football, three from swimming, and the rest from athletics, wrestling, hockey, and weightlifting. Eight of the pictures were of men and two of women. Five of the pictures showed sports scenes, three depicted scenes arranged by the photographer, and two of the pictures are snapshots taken on the fringes of the competition.

The change to *Wiener Bilder* also brought a change in the tenor of the Hakoah reports. Only two pictures recorded Hakoah victories, whereas five depicted its defeats. Again, there was not a single picture of female athletes in victory poses, and there was also an absence of any reference to victories or records. There were no longer any images relating to the club's successes. Not only high-profile wins for Hakoah in swimming were omitted but there wasn't any reference to great stars such as Bela Guttmann, Hedy Bienenfeld, Jewish Olympic-medal-winners Nikolaus "Mickey" Hirschl, and Robert Fein. A successful Hakoah swimming competition was illustrated with a photograph of a medal-winning Hungarian squad.

Although Fritzi Löwy was presented as the champion of the River Danube swimming competition in Vienna, the picture was printed without any reference to Hakoah. In short, there is an absence of all Hakoah's great successes and of everything of which the club was especially proud. The only positive and idealistic representation concerned a photograph of weightlifter Franz Weiss, who was, however, pictured as the winner of a beauty contest, which can be seen as an anti-Semitic reference to the vanity often ascribed to Jews.

From 1932, coverage of Hakoah in both publications ceased, even though the club had enough newsworthy sporting successes – from swimming records to Olympic victories. This is surprising because from 1934 Austrofascist sports policy even supported Jewish sport in two ways, albeit half-heartedly. Athletes, even Jewish ones, were used to demonstrate the nation's strength, and Jewish men and women could be recruited for Austria to assert itself against Germany (John 2003, 246).

Figure 3: A "Neutral" Scenery of a Losing Hakoah Squad in a Water Polo Match



Source: *Der Kuckuck*, June 14, 1931, 4.

Until 1934, Hakoah must be seen within the context of Red Vienna, and the majority of Jews seem to have supported social democracy, the least anti-Semitic force in the country's political spectrum. Some interesting insights can be gained from the way Hakoah was represented in the social-democratic illustrated magazine *Der Kuckuck*. It must be noted, however, that the social-democratic press focused on the sporting activities of the working class, whereas middle-class sports were given only marginal coverage. This accounts for the fact that during the six years in which *Der Kuckuck* was published, Rapid Vienna also featured only five times as a photo motif and Austria Vienna only three times. There are only three pictures of Hakoah. One of them shows the defeat of the water-polo team against the team of Vienna's Athletic Club, while another picture shows the defeat of footballers against Hungaria at Rapid's grounds. A third picture, rather than showing the successful Hakoah wrestler Hirschl, instead showed his opponent. Despite the limited coverage, it is clear that there was a deliberate effort to keep Hakoah low-profile. Even in *Der Kuckuck* the articles about Hakoah were neutral, but the images presented the club as a loser. Opponents were depicted as strong and masculine, whereas successful Hakoah athletes were not featured. Media coverage was therefore duplicating the view of the conservative picture press. Neutral imagery ac-

quired negative connotations as a result of the context in which it was used, but greater significance must be attached to those aspects omitted from the images. The photograph taken by Albert Hilscher of the Hakoah water-polo match depicts a random sports scene devoid of any means of identification (spectators, stadium, sports clothing, etc.) except for the caption, which merely refers to Hakoah's defeat (surprising given the team's strength) [Figure 3].

4. Drawings and Caricatures

In addition to photographs, drawings also played a crucial role in the visual representation of Hakoah. Caricatures are felt to make facts more tangible. In the context of anti-Semitism and sport, they have a special function in a media system that comprises multiple modes (Rase 2008, 250). One example is the way Hakoah was depicted in *Illustriertes Sportblatt*. The last page of the magazine always featured a full-page and later half-page caricature, which often referred to Jews in sport. Team manager Hugo Meisl and the presidents of the football association Ignaz Abeles and Siegfried Deutsch were popular subjects for caricature. Hakoah itself was also a frequent subject with eight caricatures between 1922 and 1928 depicting the club and its principal members.

Two aspects are obvious. For one thing, caricatures of Jews contained unmistakably Jewish clichés, such as the hooknose, the Star of David, or characters speaking with a Yiddish accent. For another, allegedly "Jewish" characteristics were emphasized such as vanity, business acumen, and negotiating skills. Caricatures of Hakoah also frequently played on anti-Jewish stereotypes. They rarely, however, resorted to open anti-Semitism. When, for example, Hakoah's team manager was caricatured as very obviously "Jewish" and seen offering his players to a butcher to make into sausages following the team's defeat, this could also have applied to non-Jewish clubs. And in caricatures depicting and exaggerating the differences between the poor Zionists of Hakoah and the more affluent and assimilated Jews of FC Austria, Jews were clearly caricatured as such, but without strong anti-Jewish condemnation. Only in a few isolated cases were caricatures openly anti-Semitic, for example in the depiction of the travel preparations for a summer tour to Galicia. The caricature featured a player putting on an old hat with side locks that had clearly been glued to it, either because he felt that he was going to a place where he did not need to be ashamed of his "origins" and wanted to dress in a deliberately "Jewish" manner, or because he wanted to be liked by the East European Jews.

A popular subject for caricatures in *Sportblatt* was the Hakoah tour of the United States. The caricatures clearly focused, however, on "Jewish" business acumen, the sole aim of which was financial gain. Jews – in this case the players – were portrayed, at least to begin with, as victims by having to perform as cabaret acts to top up their meager earnings from football or facing the prospect

of having to stay in the United States until old age before they had earned enough money. Occasionally, anti-Semitism was also expressed ironically, such as in caricatures depicting the players anxiously preparing for their sea crossing. The subject of impure and therefore water-shy Jews is hard to miss [Figure 4]. At the end of the tour, the roles of victim and perpetrator were reversed. Whereas at the beginning it was the Jewish profiteers who were being accused of pressuring players to participate in the U.S. adventure, it was now the Hakoah officials who were being characterized as the losers of the tour. When several players remained in the United States, Arthur Baar was caricatured as Hakoah's desperate chairman. Due to the shortage of players, he was forced to fill his team with bizarre figures: an Alpine herdsman wearing lederhosen and the Star of David, an altar boy, and even a member of a student fraternity with a dueling scar (usually a reactionary symbol), a beer mug, and a dueling bandage, which could be used either to hide or to underline the "typically Jewish" nose.

Figure 4: Jews Afraid of Water Are "Training" for Their Tour to America



Source: Illustriertes Sportblatt, March 27, 1926, 8.

This was intended as a reference to Jews being everywhere or creeping in everywhere [Figure 5]. One thing that all of the drawings had in common was the exaggerated caricature of Jews, and another was the lack of a consistent anti-Semitic tenor.

Figure 5: After the Loss of Their Most Prominent Players after the Tour to America, the Hakoah Has to Engage all Sorts of Players



Source: Illustriertes Sportblatt, July 17, 1926, 8.

Figure 6: Team Coach Hugo Meisl Is Depicted as an Integral Part of Viennese Football Culture



Source: Wiener Bilder, November 15, 1931, 7.

The accentuation of “Jewishness” is one striking feature of Hakoah’s representation in caricature. One example is the frequent and prominent usage of the Star of David and of Hakoah’s club emblem. The emblem is barely recognizable in many of the photographs, leaving the club’s “Jewishness” virtually erased, whereas caricaturists made the Star of David more than obvious, thus emphasizing that these were Jewish athletes. Another example concerns team manager Hugo Meisl. *Wiener Bilder* marked Meisl’s 50th birthday by printing a portrait of him without any reference to the generally known fact that he was Jewish [Figure 6]. Moreover, his picture was framed by two photographs of the most popular Viennese clubs, Rapid and Austria. Meisl was therefore embedded in the context of Vienna’s football culture.

Figure 7: Hugo Meisl and his Team Doctor Rudolf Brichta Give Birth to a New Squad

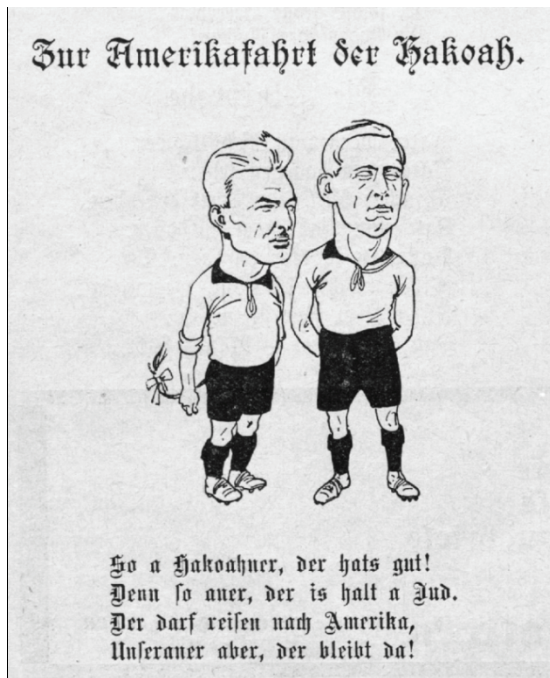


Source: *Illustriertes Sportblatt*, August 18, 1923, 16.

This contrasts with a caricature published in *Illustriertes Sportblatt* which depicts the team manager thinking about the line-up of the national team and which clearly shows unmistakable and stereotypical Jewish attributes, including the exaggerated hooknose [Figure 7]. He is assisted by the Jewish team physician, Dr Brichta, who can be seen giving him a bottle filled with Jewish good advice (“Ezzes”) as medicine. This underlines the message that the fate of national football is in Jewish hands.

A counterpoint was the representation of Hakoah in *Kikeriki*. Unlike in *Illustriertes Sportblatt*, the focus of *Kikeriki* was on constant and, above all, unambiguous anti-Semitic polemic expressed in the texts and specifically in the many caricatures that were a hallmark of the publication. Alongside commentaries and poems, two caricatures were published in *Kikeriki* in 1926 that also dealt with the tour of the Hakoah footballers.

Figure 8: Hakoah-Players before Their Departure to America



Source: *Kikeriki*, March 21, 1926, 4.

The first drawing showed the players departing: two small figures in football jerseys and with over-sized heads. Their faces looked pleasant enough but the anti-Semitism was more than obvious from the fact that one of the players had a devil's tail (*Kikeriki*, March 21, 1926, 4). The drawing's four-line commentary struck a self-pitying note with the remark that, although Hakoah was allowed to go to America, "our kind" had to stay home.

Figure 9: Hakoah Players Returning to Vienna: The "Jew" Is Back



Source: Kikeriki, June 20, 1926, 8.

The second caricature depicted the players' return from the United States. Alluding to Lohengrin, the text stated that a real Jew would only ever be happy "at the quay in Vienna" (*Kikeriki*, June 20, 1926, 8). The caricature showed a poor East European Jew with the stereotypical hooknose and garlic [Figure 9]. The reference to sport and to the trip made by Hakoah was unclear. It almost appears as if *Kikeriki* found itself obliged to include the Hakoah trip in its publication but was unable to find anything specific on which to report. This anti-Semitic depiction came to nothing, whereas the unwillingness of many players to return remained a talking point.

5. Summary

The successful performance of Jewish athletes in an interwar climate of, at the least, latent anti-Semitism presented a challenge for the media. Whereas Hakoah's successes could be relativized in texts, the published photographs, true to Roland Barthes' concept of a picture's noeme or essence ("that-which-has-been," Barthes 1989, 87), provided permanent evidence of the outstanding sporting achievements of Jews. It was possible for readers to see from the photographs that Jewish men had an athletic build, that Jewish women were fast (and in the gendered photojournalism of the 1930s also pretty, see Marschik and Dorer 2014), and that Jewish footballers were at their peak in terms of fitness and technique.

Hakoah, of course, had positive and even idealised images of itself published in the form of texts and pictures. These self-images of Hakoah athletes, published in Hakoah's own or in Zionist magazines, newspapers, and brochures and showing attractive women and strong men, were rarely printed in the national press in the interwar years. Exceptions were the bodybuilder Franz Weiss and swimmer Hedy Bienenfeld-Wertheimer, who made it onto the front cover of *Raucher-Zeitung* (August 3, 1931, 1). One of the main reasons for this was that although 34 percent of photographers in Vienna were Jewish (Auer 1997; Holzer 2013, 131), hardly any of the sports photographers working for illustrated magazines were Jews, and certainly none of them were famous Jews. The first conclusion to be drawn from this is that the visual presence of Hakoah lacked positive images. There was a lack of idealized images of Hakoah and of their successes.

Texts, photographs, and also caricatures depicting Hakoah did not reflect Hakoah's own positive self-image. They also failed, however, to reflect the xenophobia and hostile climate in the stadiums, where verbal and physical assaults on Jews, and in particular on members of Hakoah, were almost a daily occurrence. The toughness of Hakoah footballers and the rowdiness of their supporters frequently mentioned in the texts was also absent in the photographs. If the media failed to reflect Hakoah's idealized self-image and the anti-Semitic attitudes to the club that existed, this raises the question of what realities were being created by the media in the context of a discursive construction of truths, and what specific functions were being attributed to the images created by the photographs and caricatures.

The material, although far away from being representative, allows us to formulate the theory that the function of photographs was *inclusive*, while that of caricatures was *exclusive*. The photographs were used to represent sporting activities performed by Jews, including even the Hakoah as a specifically Zionist club, as an integral part of regional and national sport and of the Austrian community in general and thus render it neutral to a certain extent. By contrast, the caricatures depicting Jews performing sporting activities, and especially

Hakoah, were aimed at excluding Jews. Whereas photographs emphasized commonalities, caricatures almost always focused on “Jewish difference.”

Even though the proportion of Jewish authors, particularly in the field of sports journalism, was relatively high compared with the proportion of Jewish photographers, there existed a clear hegemonic imbalance in the performative processes of negotiating “Jewish difference.” The iconic discourses can therefore be regarded as deliberate disciplining strategies. Their essential purpose can be assumed to be that of demonstrating to Jews (and not just Jewish athletes) the places where they should be and the way they should look and act. These images served as signposts showing Jews the accepted paths they could follow to gain acceptance. Within the multimodal media landscape the photographs were attributed the task of creating an image of complete “assimilation.” The photographs were intended to create an image of the accepted Jew disappearing in society. Caricatures, by contrast, had the task of showing that Jews could always be made identifiable by illustrating “Jewish difference.” According to Schulz-Hombach, two maps were drawn. One showed an Austria in which the Jewish population was included but had to assimilate to the point of no longer being recognizable, and the other created images of exclusion if Jews refused to give up their Jewishness. Exclusion and inclusion were clear alternatives.

This also becomes apparent by the fact that “assimilated” Jewish clubs and sportsmen only barely complained officially or privately about discriminating or biased media, while Hakoah and the Zionist press did this all the more often: the daily newspapers and, even more, the sporting periodicals allegedly reported less and less balanced about Hakoah sportsmen and – women – their performances were rarely validated and crowd disturbances were always blamed on Hakoah supporters. A closer look at the partly heavy complaints in the Zionist newspapers, however, shows that the rebuttals were not directed against the sport reporting in general but almost exclusively against Jewish editors, which were not close to Zionism: “assimilated” and “converted” Jews allegedly bore the blame for the anti-Semitic tone of the reports. They were primarily responsible for the Viennese sportswriting being skimmed off “the sewage of the cafes.” Even more: German Nationalists and non-Zionist Jews were equated: “The Antisemitism of the assimilated and Swastika terror: this is the united front against Hakoah” (*Wiener Morgenzeitung*, May 31, 1925, 13).

The visual dimension led to widely conflicting demands being placed on Jews, who were expected to integrate and at the same time accept that this would never be possible. The photographic composition marking the birthday of Hugo Meisl presented the kind of Jewish activity that was accepted since it contributed to the nation’s success. In the case of assimilation and success, Jewish activities were rewarded by temporarily erasing their “Jewishness” from public discourse. But there was always the threat of sanctions in the event of behavior that did not conform to the accepted standard, since Jewishness could always be made recognizable in caricatures. A similar case of double-dealing

was evident with regard to Hakoah. On the one hand, the club received offers to assimilate and, on the other, it was threatened with sanctions.

The change from the 1920s to the 1930s that can clearly be seen in the photographs points to an increase in anti-Semitism and also to a sense of disappointment by the fact that the Zionists had not accepted the offers of “assimilation” (the photographs of Austria Vienna, which was regarded as the club of “assimilated Jews,” created completely different images). This is the reason why the images of important successes of Hakoah were successively replaced by photographs of a club that was unsuccessful in sporting terms and why the caricatures increasingly emphasized the obvious features of what was considered Jewish. Even in the guise of altar boys and members of student fraternities, the Jew is still recognizable. The last logical step was to end this divergence by means of a ban on images, which can be seen from the mid-1930s. The only option was to continue describing Jewish sporting activities but without printing photographs of Hakoah and Jewish athletes, essentially making the athletes “invisible.”

Figure 10: Hakoah in the Lead!



Die erste Leichtathletikveranstaltung des Jahres. Der Waldlauf um den Lufhof bei Wien, welchen die Läufer Blödy und Frankl (Hakoah), überlegen die ganze Strecke führend, gewonnen.

Source: Wiener Bilder, March 11, 1928, 6.

The seemingly opposing messages of photographs and caricatures were not a contradiction but two sides of the same coin. A synthesis is established through the constant processes of performative negotiation of “Jewishness.” Jews are by no means victims of their visual representation but through their sporting

success and the work of Jewish photographers and sports editors actively contribute to shaping the image of Jews and Jewish athletes [Figure 10]. The visual representation of Hakoah also underlines the imbalance of power in the construction of “Jewishness” (Hödl 2006, 9). At the same time, the image of Hakoah illustrates the undeniable significance of “Jewish difference”: it always has to be taken into account, including in the sports scene of the interwar years.

The message conveyed by photographs and caricatures of Hakoah to Viennese and Austrian Jews refers to Jews in general and is not limited to Jewish sportsmen and women. Because sport in interwar Vienna created a mass culture whose influence was felt far beyond the sporting world, the message was directed not just at athletes and their fans but at all Jews. In the new and modern world of sport, however, the message could be conveyed more easily and directly because it was defined – at least by the middle classes – as “apolitical.” The case of Hakoah is certainly not the only example of how some things could be said on the sports pages that would have been unthinkable elsewhere. To understand the message conveyed by images of Hakoah to Jews in general, however, it is necessary to consider these photographs and caricatures both in the context of media coverage and in a much broader cultural context in which sport has become an obvious part.

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