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Simple Entertainment? *Die Muskete* and 'Weak' Antisemitism in Interwar Vienna

Summary: This article considers the impact of 'weak' antisemitism in the Viennese popular press between 1918 and 1938. It argues that, in addition to the aggressive rhetoric of right-wing forces, visual antisemitism in interwar Viennese satirical magazines was also permeated by softer undercurrents of Jewish stereotyping. Masked as light entertainment, these were perhaps less obvious than their aggressive counterparts, but nonetheless represented a dangerous aspect of popular campaigns to ostracise the Jewish population. Juxtaposing aggressive forms of antisemitism from the satirical magazine *Der Kikeriki* with 'weak' antisemitism in the humorous magazine *Die Muskete,* the article shows that the 'othering' of the Jewish population was widely asserted as a cultural fact in the popular entertainment press, and, particularly in its weaker forms, spanned all political and social lines.

Keywords: satirical magazines, caricature, interwar Vienna, Jewish stereotypes, antisemitism

If one searches for 'Antisemitism in Austria before 1939' on the website of the United States Holocaust Museum,[1] the material displayed shows exclusively caricatures from the satirical magazine *Der Kikeriki* and election posters by the reactionary Christian Social Party.[2] These two were, no doubt, the factions that were the loudest in employing antisemitic attacks and produced perhaps the crudest displays of visual antisemitism in interwar Vienna, aside from the propaganda machine of the National Socialists. However, within this perception, there is a danger of seeing right-wing forces as the *only* perpetrators. This essay aims to highlight that visual antisemitism was, in fact, much more widespread across social and political factions and that, aside from blatant attacks on 'the Jew', softer undercurrents of stereotyping in entertainment magazines

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2 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, https://collections.ushmm.org/search/?q=ANTI SEMITISM%20-%20Pre%201939%20−%20Austria&search_field=Photo%20Designation,   12.12. 2019.

represented another, less visible though no less dangerous, layer of popular campaigns to ostracise the Jewish population.

To date, caricatures and satirical magazines across Central Europe have predominantly been assessed by their function in stirring people up – as a weapon which either attacks from below, or, in relation to antisemitic visual culture, marginalises and ostracises specific groups within the population.[3] In both cases, we are talking about caricature in its extreme form, out there to provoke and to agitate. Yet there is another element to caricature, one that is much more inconspicuous and supports a more aggressive visual rhetoric with softened content, ostensibly geared towards entertainment, yet nonetheless playing its role in the shaping of public opinion. For lack of a better term, my focus is on 'weak' antisemitism in the Viennese humorous magazine *Die Muskete,* after brief consideration of examples of 'overt' or 'aggressive' antisemitism in *Der Kikeriki.*

Der Kikeriki: An interwar 'politics of fear'[4]

Der Kikeriki was published in Vienna from 1861 until 1934. In its beginnings, the publication, founded by journalist Ottokar Franz Ebersberg (using the pseudonym O. F. Berg), was liberal and pro-Jewish. This changed in the 1880s under the influence of editor-in-chief Friedrich Ilger, married to Ebersberg's daughter Annie, who owned the publication until 1925.[5] The magazine contained smaller images of poorer quality than haute bourgeois publications such as *Die Bombe* and *Wiener Caricaturen*, but more of them: some signed with initials, some anonymous. The signed caricatures largely focused on political events, while most of the blatantly racist images targeting Viennese Jewry were published anonymously [1]. The same is true of the magazine's literary contributions, which consisted of short commentaries, poems and feuilletons concerned with the harsh econom-

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3 Ernst Gombrich and Ernst Kris, 'The Principles of Caricature', *British Journal of Medical Psychology* XVII, 1938, pp. 319 – 342. – Sigmund Freud, *Wit and its Relation to the Unconscious*, London 1916. – Eduard Fuchs, *Die Karikatur der europäischen Völker vom Jahre 1848 bis zur Gegenwart*, Berlin 1903. – Christa Bader, *Der Kikeriki unter O. F. Berg* (dissertation) Universität Wien, Vienna 1985. – Herbert Rütgen, *Antisemitismus in Allen Lagern: Publizistische Dokumente zur Ersten Republik Österreich 1918 – 1938* (dissertation), Universität Graz, Graz 1989. – Julia Schäfer, *Vermessen, gezeichnet, verlacht: Judenbilder in populären Zeitschriften 1918 – 1933*, Frankfurt am Main 2005. – Hermann Hakl, *Streitschrift gegen alle: vom 'Eipeldauer' zum 'Götz von Berlichingen'*, Vienna 1975.
4 Ruth Wodak, *The Politics of Fear: What Right-wing Populist Discourses Mean*, London 2015.
5 Schäfer (note 3), p. 47.

Fig. 1: 'Weihnachten' [Christmas], *Der Kikeriki* LIX, 1919, No. 51, 21. 12., p. 3. Photo: © Austrian National Library, Vienna.

ic situation in the country, as well as theatre reviews and restaurant and cafe recommendations.

Der Kikeriki corresponded with the conservative right-wing politics of the Christian Social Party, which remained loyal to the monarchy in the early years after the World War I and had publicly displayed a rampant antisemitism ever since its former leader Karl Lueger had been Mayor of Vienna between 1897 and 1910.[6] In its German nationalism and rabble-rousing against the moneyed bourgeoisie, *Der Kikeriki* enjoyed great popularity, maintaining a considerable circulation of 25,000 copies from the 1870s onward.[7] *Der Kikeriki*'s name was taken from the onomatopoeic German word for a rooster's cry. A distinctive feature of the magazine was its frequent use of a mascot, Herr Kikeriki, who not only featured on the cover of every issue, but also appeared within the publications. In line with the publication's support for the Christian Socialists, Herr Ki-

6 S. W. Gould, 'Austrian Attitudes toward Anschluss: October 1918 – September 1919', *The Journal of Modern History* XXII, 1950, No. 3, pp. 220–231, esp. p. 220.

7 Bader (note 3), p. 18.

keriki stood for the 'small man' addressed by the magazine, while asserting a link to the party's staunch Catholicism in the form of the rooster as an emblem for vigilance in early Christian iconography:[8] With its name and mascot alone, *Der Kikeriki* claimed to be the voice of the conservative 'everyman' not afraid to speak his mind.

Der Kikeriki's aggressive antisemitism, displayed in countless caricatures directed both at concrete figures, such as Baron Rothschild, and at a Jewish population more generally, employed established historical stereotypes, both in terms of its conservative drawing style and the kinds of visual tropes used: the orthodox Jew in Hasidic clothing for example, or the moneyed assimilated Jew of the haute bourgeoisie – both figure types with exaggerated physical features such as long, hooked noses, distorted bodies and dark, exoticised. A firm part of Viennese popular culture, *Der Kikeriki* had established a broad repertoire of visual antisemitism by the late nineteenth century, which was openly aggressive and used the Jewish population as a scapegoat for all kinds of grievances, from a perceived 'Bolshevist threat' to Zionist conspiracy theories [2].[9]

Ruth Wodak's *The Politics of Fear,* which analyses right-wing populist discourse in Europe in the twenty-first century, is instructive in relation to *Der Kikeriki*'s tactics.[10] Wodak has examined the form and content of right-wing populist rhetoric in the media, arguing that parties like Austria's far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) *'successfully construct fear and ... propose scapegoats that are blamed for threatening or actually damaging our societies'.*[11] Though the author has been concerned with a much more recent phenomenon than *Der Kikeriki*, she provides a discursive analysis of populist parties and their use of the media in a relevant context: the FPÖ is carrying on the legacy of far-right conservative parties from interwar Austria by polarising society with xenophobic sentiment.[12]

In connection with *Der Kikeriki*'s attacks on both the Jewish community and its biggest political rival, the Social Democratic Workers' Party (SDAP), two phenomena stand out: 'the politics of fear' and 'arrogance of ignorance'.[13] The former refers to the technique of capitalising on traumatic events, such as the World War I and the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, in order to incite a panic in the

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8 Erwin Fahlbusch (ed), *The Encyclopedia of Christianity* V, Grand Rapids 2008, p. 263.

9 Schäfer (note 3), p. 47.

10 Wodak (note 4).

11 Ibidem, p. 1.

12 FPÖ party leaders and politicians repeatedly find themselves on the border of illegality with comments and media posts implying antisemitism, Holocaust denial and racism. See http://einzelfall-liste.at, 14. 12. 2019.

13 Wodak (note 4), p. 2.

Wieder einmal ein Zeitalter der
Chriſtenverfolgungen.

„Weißt du nicht, du Roßpipen, du ſchändliche,
daß du in anem fort provozierſt durch dein
rein ariſches Ausſehen?!"

Der moskowitiſche Friedensengel

der am 15. Juli in Wien zu ſehen war.

Fig. 2: *'Another era of persecution of Christians. / 'Don't you know, you disgraceful snotty brat, that you keep provoking [us] with your pure Aryan looks?' / The Muscovite Angel of Peace as he was seen in Vienna on 15 July.'* 'Wieder einmal ein Zeitalter der Christenverfolgung' [Another era of persecution of Christians] and 'Der moskowitische Friedensengel' [The Muscovite Angel of Peace], *Der Kikeriki* LXVII, 1927, No. 30, 24. 7., p. 2. Photo: © Austrian National Library, Vienna.

population that their lifestyle and heritage is endangered by a foreign force – such as 'the Jews'. The 'arrogance of ignorance' on the other hand describes the appeal to the 'little man' to rely on 'common sense', and the condemnation of intellectualism. This was a consistent element in *Der Kikeriki*, which presented the SDAP party leaders as haute bourgeois manipulators of the common peo-

ple.[14] By misusing social and political changes to incite fears among the population, and providing them with a *Feindbild* ('image of the enemy') built on established stereotypes (such as 'the Jewish Bolshevik' in a conflation of antisemitic and anti-SDAP sentiment), *Der Kikeriki* offered guidance to its readers with a definition of a clearly demarcated Austrian identity. They employed fear to justify the Christian Socialists' and other right-wing parties' anti-democratic, antisemitic and anti-SDAP stance, painting these elements as responsible for the destabilisation of Austrian society and signalling that action against them was necessary to 'protect the nation'.[15]

Another relevant part of Wodak's analysis is her warning that *'it would be dangerous to regard modern populism as void of serious content … and thus to downplay its reach'*.[16] The impact of *Der Kikeriki* as a propagandist mouthpiece for the political Right should not be underestimated simply because it carried out most of its attacks under the guise of humour. A seemingly lightweight popular *Witzblatt* [Humorous Paper], it gained importance in the propaganda process for its reliance on humour, which triggered emotion and established an 'emotional bond' between reader and publication through laughter, instilling a sense of trust.[17] *Der Kikeriki* thereby contributed to the legitimisation of antisemitism in the popular sphere by forging a seemingly irreconcilable difference between Austrian identity, 'Jewishness' and socialism, which separated a 'true' Austrian population of *Kikeriki* sympathisers from an imagined, unwelcomed rest.[18]

By extension, *Der Kikeriki* normalised antisemitism before violence against Jews was institutionalised by National Socialism. While its actual impact cannot be sufficiently measured, it is clear that there was a high propensity of violence against Jews in its caricatures throughout the interwar years, which slowly turned into a reality. Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius argues that this correlation between visual regimes and reality is, in fact, what constitutes the power of cartoons and caricatures. Drawing on Michel Foucault's 'notion of regimes of truth' and Stuart Hall's definition of *'visual regimes'* as *'regimented modes of seeing and perceiving'*, Murawska-Muthesius sets cartoons and caricatures on a par with photography and film, arguing that they are a *'particularly good instance of the practices of stereotyping and of the constitution and the naturalisation of 'scopic*

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14 Bürgermeister, 'Notwendige Genugtuung', *Der Kikeriki* LXVII, 1927, No. 30, 24. 7., p. 2.

15 Wodak (note 4), p. 5.

16 Ibidem, p. 3.

17 Ibidem, p. 123. – Freud (note 3), p. 146.

18 Wodak (note 4), p. 50.

regimes".[19] In other words, caricatures and cartoons, and satirical magazines by extension, helped to naturalise certain *'modes of seeing and representing the world'.*[20]

Taking this into account in conjunction with *Der Kikeriki*'s continuing popularity, one may detect a deeply engrained antisemitism in Austrian culture, in which visual stereotypes represented part of an established, much broader anti-Jewish sentiment that would eventually serve the legitimisation of antisemitic policies and mass murder by the National Socialist regime. At the same time, *Der Kikeriki* was directed at a specific part of the population, embodied by its mascot as the representative for the 'common man'. However, as outlined at the beginning, there was also a different kind of visual antisemitism, which perhaps was not as apparent and aggressive as *Der Kikeriki*'s but, precisely for that reason, spread notions of Jewish difference even more widely in the popular culture of the day. Geared towards a better-educated section of the population and presented more within the context of an entertainment, rather than an explicitly political magazine, the 'weak' antisemitism of *Die Muskete* shows that there was another way of pronouncing Jewish difference in humorous magazines, which increasingly blurred the line between pronouncedly 'harmless' illustrations and the visual differentiation of a Jewish 'other'.

An important aspect in this context is the function of humour as a diffuser, represented by *Die Muskete* as one of the few satirical magazines that continued to be published after the takeover of the National Socialist regime. In line with Patrick Merzinger's argument, that the population yearns for simple and entertaining comedy at times of oppression, under Nazism *Die Muskete* offered a sought-after, light-hearted world of escape.[21] As I suggested elsewhere, it thus survived because of its deadpan humour and conventional visual language, while the existence of its expressively political left- and right-wing counterparts (*Der Kikeriki, Die Leuchtrakete*) was not only bound to times of particular sociopolitical upheaval, but also a democratic environment.[22] Considering *Die Mus-*

19 Katarzyna Murawska-Muthesius, '1956 in the Cartoonist's Gaze. Fixing the Eastern European Other and Denying the Eastern European Self', *Third Text* XX, 2006, No. 2, pp. 189–199, esp. p. 191.

20 Ibidem, p. 191.

21 Patrick Merzinger, 'Humour in Nazi Germany: Resistance and Propaganda? The Popular Desire for an All-embracing Laughter', in Marjolein 't Hart and Dennis Bos (eds), *Humour and Social Protest*, Cambridge 2008, pp. 275–290.

22 Julia Secklehner, 'Bolshevik Jews, Aryan Vienna? Popular Antisemitism in *Der Kikeriki*, 1918–1933', *The Leo Baeck Institute Year Book* LXIII, 2018, No. 1, pp. 157–178, https://doi.org/10.1093/leobaeck/yby011, 14.12.2019.

kete as a middle-ground publication, I propose that precisely its use of bland humour, intersected with 'weak' antisemitic imagery, led to its longevity, which, in turn, shows that antisemitism was much more widespread than in extreme-right-wing publications alone. Rather than countering the aggression of magazines like *Der Kikeriki*, *Die Muskete* therefore normalised antisemitism in critical moments of Austrian history: the early 1920s, when the country wrestled to come to terms with its new state formation, and from the mid-1930s onwards, when it slowly descended into National Socialism.

Die Muskete: High-brow, haute bourgeois antisemitism?

Assessed mostly in the context of Viennese fin-de-siècle visual culture, *Die Muskete* is often treated as a less successful version of the Munich satirical publication *Simplicissimus*, based on its aims to provide the reader with humorous content that was critical, up-to-date and of high artistic quality.[23] Yet, while *Die Muskete* was a successful venture in the pre-war years with contributors such as Peter Altenberg, Stefan Zweig and Kolo Moser, it changed hands several times in the immediate post-war years and struggled financially until it ceased publication under the control of the National Socialists in 1941.[24] In comparison to the pre-war years, when attention was paid to good material and high print quality, interwar issues of *Die Muskete* were of a smaller format, printed on cheaper paper and with fewer colour illustrations.[25] Its desolate financial situation led to irregular publication, which did not stabilise until November 1924, when *Die Muskete* became a regular, bi-monthly publication under editor-in-chief Karl Robitsek, a painter of Jewish origin who issued the magazine through his own publishing house, Karl Rob Verlag.[26]

Until the mid-1920s, *Die Muskete* was advertised as a 'satirical art journal', signalling that considerable emphasis was placed on the aesthetic quality and sophistication of its literary and artistic content.[27] Several contributors were fine artists and writers, such as Robert Musil and Albert Paris von Gütersloh.

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23 Murray G. Hall, 'Die Verlags- und Redaktionsgeschichte', in idem (ed), *Die Muskete: Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte im Spiegel einer Satirisch-Humoristischen Zeitschrift*, *1905 – 1941*, Vienna 1983, pp. 7 – 18, esp. p. 9.

24 Hall, 'Die Verlags- und Redaktionsgeschichte' (note 23).

25 Ibidem, p. 10.

26 Ibidem, p. 17.

27 Ibidem, p. 15.

Generally, *Die Muskete* did not entertain one particular style but left a great degree of stylistic freedom to its contributors. This practice was not necessarily the norm: records by Alexander Moszkowski, editor-in-chief of the German satirical magazine *Die Lustigen Blätter*, show *that 'editorial tutelage ... covered not only the political content of drawings, but also included the artistic formulation of these themes'*.[28] While this comment was specifically concerned with Lyonel Feininger's contributions to *Die Lustigen Blätter*, Ulrich Luckhardt suggested that *'for turn-of-the-century caricaturists, the process as recorded by Moszkowski would have been the usual'*.[29] Given the varying styles of the caricatures in *Die Muskete*, however, it appears that greater artistic freedom was encouraged here, related to its fashioning as a humorous journal of artistic merit. Moreover, since the creative director of the magazine at the time, the Austrian caricaturist and painter Fritz Schönpflug, was himself a frequent contributor, greater room for experimentation may have been possible than elsewhere – all within the frame of high-quality entertainment.

Antisemitism in 'moderation'

Overall, *Die Muskete* was directed at the educated, upper bourgeoisie and while it did not subscribe to any particular party ideology, antisemitic tendencies were regularly featured – but only until the Karl Rob Verlag took over. One especially pertinent case study for the ways in which 'weak' antisemitism permeated *Die Muskete* until then is shown on the magazine's cover of 15 June 1924 by Viktor Weixler with a caricature titled *Film recording* [3]. It showed precisely that: director and camera man in the background, two actors at the front of the picture plane. Judging by the male actor's costume and posture, the film in question was a Western, with the director shouting to the actor *'Abeles, shoot!'* The response (mimicking an accent): *'I can't – I can't bear the smell of a corpse!'*

In terms of visual form, the caricature played safely, alluding to modernist form with strong, expressive lines, and use of a single primary colour, yet not economised to the point of abstraction. This 'careful' modernism was representative of Weixler's oeuvre overall. A trained architect, he worked predominantly as an illustrator and graphic designer, producing, for example, posters for the

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28 '*Die redaktionelle Bevormundung ... bezog sich nicht nur auf politische Inhaltsfragen der Zeichnungen, sondern schloss die künstlerische Ausarbeitung der Themen mit ein*', see Ulrich Luckhardt, *Lyonel Feininger: Karikaturen und das zeichnerische Frühwerk*, Munich 1987, cit. p. 57.
29 '*Für die Karikaturisten der Jahrhundertwende wird der von Moszkowski aufgezeichnete Weg der Entstehung einer Karikatur der übliche gewesen sein*', see ibidem.

FILMAUFNAHME

»Abeles, so schießen se schon! —«
»Ich kann nix — ich vertrag nix den Leichengeruch«.

Fig. 3: *'Abeles, shoot!' – 'I can't – I can't bear the smell of a corpse!'*
Viktor Weixler, 'Filmaufnahme' [Film recording], *Die Muskete* XXXVIII, 1924, No. 11, 15. 6., p. 1.
Photo: © Austrian National Library, Vienna.

Vienna International Trade Fair in 1924, as well as advertising posters for fashion houses.[30] Across his oeuvre, as in his caricatures, Weixler was what might be termed a 'moderate modernist'; someone, who was clearly aware of international developments in all of his fields of work but employed them in a toned-down manner. His politics could be described similarly: staying conspicuously 'a-political', his continuous teaching positions and few building projects in the 1930s suggest some allegiance with the Austro-fascist regime installed in 1933/34, without him ever taking an overt political standpoint.[31] This middle-ground position also relates to Weixler's uses of Jewish stereotyping.

By the scene's Western setting alone, *Film recording* insinuated the popular stereotype that Jews played a disproportionally high role in the American/Hollywood film industry, while the 'Jewishness' of at least one figure, the actor going by the Jewish name Abeles, was made explicit. In an interplay of references to 'Jewishness', stereotypes were constructed and re-affirmed, while avoiding outright attacks. A further element of this 'weak' antisemitism, buttressed in visual terms by the actor's prominent nose and dark features, was represented in Abeles' refusal to shoot for example, which, crudely, also implied sexual impotence to insinuate Jewish 'unmanliness' – a popular antisemitic stereotype pseudo-scientifically analysed in Otto Weininger's influential book *Sex and Character*, published in its twentieth edition by 1920.[32]

Yet while the text only explicitly makes the actor Jewish, both the director and, particularly, the actress can be identified as such by association. In reference to Lisa Silverman's analysis of Jewish identity construction, the position of the Jewish woman – a much less frequently assessed element in analyses of antisemitic imagery – especially comes to mind, given the actress's exoticisation with dramatic dark eyes and a heavily sexualised curvaceous body. Silverman has argued that *'Jewish difference [in interwar Austria] functioned as a deeply engrained system used to shape contemporary interpretations of unexpected events in unstable times'*.[33] By extension, the designation 'Jewish' in interwar Vienna did not exclusively apply to members of the Jewish community but described various aspects of contemporary culture, including 'erotic literature, newspaper publishing, and positivist philosophy' – as well as the growing

30 Ursula Prokop, 'Viktor Weixler', *Architektenlexikon*, http://www.architektenlexikon.at/de/679.htm, 12.12.2019.

31 Ibidem.

32 Otto Weininger, *Geschlecht und Charakter: Eine prinzipielle Untersuchung*, Vienna 1920.

33 Lisa Silverman, *Becoming Austrians: Jews and Culture between the World Wars*, New York 2012, p. 25.

film industry.[34] 'Jewishness' was therefore constituted in relation to certain activities, recalling Judith Butler's definitions of gender by certain performative acts.[35] Silverman also points out Weininger's combining of misogynist and antisemitic sentiments in *Sex and Character,* emphasising the (assimilated) Jewish stereotype that Jews were particularly 'feminine', which in the caricature in question is implied in Abeles' squeamishness in 'shooting'. Yet while such depictions of Jewish men were more the exception than the norm in *Die Muskete,* another Jewish stereotype highlighted by Silverman corresponds with many of the modern women shown in the magazine – Jews as consumers of luxury culture: *'Cover art and advertisements often showed figures who were marked as just 'Jewish enough' – with dark and curly hair for example – to engage codings that would generate consumer desire.'*[36]

In Roland Strasser's *Dernier cri* [Last shout], published in *Die Muskete* on 6 May 1920, the modern woman even became a luxury item [4]. The French title emphasised reference to high fashion, while the soft, impressionistic lithograph, depicted a dark-haired woman with short wavy hair, sitting at a table, marked with the sign 'luxury goods'. As in *Film Recording*, here, too, the woman was alone in a public space, at the mercy of men in the background who are watching her: *'Look how she's presenting herself as something better [than she is]!'*[37] The image conflated the luxury of the woman's fashion, her desire to attract male attention, and herself. The woman's richly ornamented dress and jewellery both stylised and objectified her, implying that she and her taste were defined by a hunger for male attention.

Both the actress and the woman in *Dernier cri* correspond with Silverman's description of the Jewish woman as luxury consumer. In both cases, 'Jewishness' is thus to be understood as a collective term for modern culture, rather than (solely) as a marker of ethnicity. Implicitly linked to a French or American ('foreign') modern culture and representing stereotypical depictions of the haute bourgeois Jewish woman in modern luxury consumer culture, they were shown as a foreign phenomenon, detrimental to the healthy life of the 'Austrian nation'.

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34 Ibidem, p. 51.

35 Judith Butler, 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory', *Theatre Journal* XL, 1988, No. 4, pp. 519 – 531, esp. p. 519.

36 Silverman (note 33), p. 84. – Darcy Buerkle, 'Gendered Spectatorship, Jewish Women and Psychological Advertising in Weimar Germany', *Women's History Review* XV, 2006, No. 4, 1. 9., pp. 625 – 636, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09612020500530778, 22.11.2015.

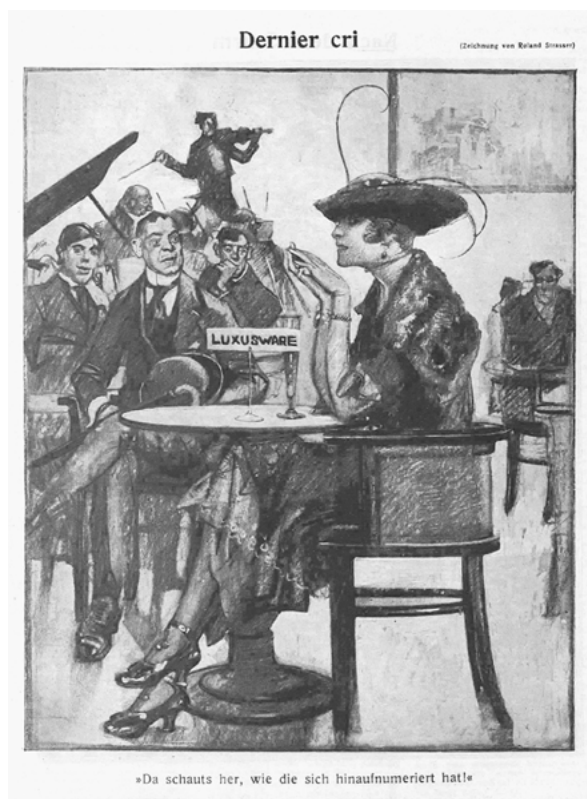**37** See *Die Muskete* XXX, 1920, No. 761, 6. 5., p. 4.

Fig. 4: *'Look how she's presenting herself as something better [than she is]!'*
Roland Strasser, 'Dernier cri' [Last shout], *Die Muskete* III, 1920, No. 761, 6. 5., p. 4. Photo: ©
Austrian National Library, Vienna.

While the 'othering' of Abeles, the film director and the actress as Jewish
stereotypes was made poignantly clear in the accompanying text and the visual
stereotyping deeply embedded in contemporary culture, *Film recording* was not
particularly hostile or violent towards Jews – especially when compared with the
caricatures depicted in *Der Kikeriki*. However, it pronounced Jewish difference as
a cultural fact, normalising perceptions of Jews as somehow 'different' from the
heteronormative (meaning Germanic) population. A hint that this was indeed
within the awareness of *Die Muskete* editors and ownership is that even such
'weak' antisemitic stereotyping ceased after November 1924, when Karl Rob
took ownership of the magazine. Notably however, the magazines encountered
several run-ins with the law for pornographic content in the years to follow,

as it was seen to endanger the morals of the young.[38] This not only gives a clear indication that the influence of humorous magazines on its readership was acknowledged – at least when deemed suitable – but in view of the change of ownership also merits further attention in relation to notions of implicit antisemitism in popular culture.

That freer sexuality was perceived as threatening is exemplified by the case of Hugo Bettauer, an Austrian journalist and writer of Jewish origin, who was assassinated by a National Socialist fanatic in 1925. Bettauer published the magazine *Er und Sie. Wochenschrift für Lebenskultur und Erotik* (1925), which was 'to offer many readers sexual education in a popular manner, to help them deal with the problems of life, especially sexual ones'.[39] The publication's second issue already had a circulation of 60,000, with approximately 200,000 readers.[40] In an aim to instigate a 'sexual revolution', Bettauer promoted abortion, campaigned for the decriminalization of homosexuality, and hired medical staff to answer questions about sex sent in by readers.[41] The magazine soon caused outrage among conservatives, and the Christian Social Party started a public campaign against Bettauer, which snowballed into a political battle between the Christian Socialists and the SDAP: the former demanded the closure of the journal, while the latter supported Bettauer's aims, particularly on the issue of abortion.[42] *Er und Sie* was prohibited after only four issues.

Er und Sie was seen as a threat to the young, particularly young women, as shown in a letter sent to one of Bettauer's colleagues, Max Ermers, after his murder: *'We want to draw your attention to the fact that your time, too, will soon have run out if the poisoning of our German youth with your smutty weekly... does not end. Do you want to make whores out of our German girls?'*[43] While the letter was an extreme example, it contained a significant aspect to which the perceived threat of a freer sexuality was linked: a foreign influence, endangering the nation. Bettauer's Jewish heritage thereby became a point of attack for the Christian Socials, who saw 'Jewish sexuality' as a threat to the 'German' nation. Just as for-

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38 Hall (note 23), p. 17.

39 '*Soll den vielen Lesern Aufklärung in populärer Weise bieten, sich mit Problemen des Lebens, vor allen erotischen, auseinandersetzen*', see Murray G. Hall, *Der Fall Bettauer*, Vienna 1987, cit. p. 41.

40 Ibidem.

41 Ibidem.

42 Ibidem, p. 47.

43 '*Wir machen Sie aufmerksam, dass in nächster Zeit auch Sie daran kommen werden, falls die Vergiftung unserer deutschen Jugend durch Ihre versaute Wochenschrift ... nicht bald aufhört. Wollt Ihr aus unseren deutschen Mädchen Huren machen?*' Anonymous letter to Max Ermers, see ibidem, cit. p. 174.

eign influences were implied in *Film recording*, so were connotations of 'Jewishness' used to imply that conservative 'Germanic culture' was under attack from 'outside forces', whose 'un-Germanic' morals it was the duty of the Austrian Right to oppose. In the cultural context of the time, the sexual openness that was so frowned upon and perceived as a threat was therefore also closely linked to 'Jewishness', and, as the case of Bettauer and *Er und Sie* illustrates, shows another facet of antisemitism in popular culture, which spiralled from announcements of Jewish 'difference' to physical violence.[44]

'Diffusing' humour in unstable times

While Bettauer's murder and the censoring of *Er und Sie* dimmed popular calls for a revolution in the bedroom, the charge for pornographic content did not mean the end of *Die Muskete* – nor of the caricature *Film Recording*, for that matter. With the rise of the National Socialist regime in Germany, Nazism also grew in Austria, even though the party had been banned since 1933. After the July Agreement between Germany and Austria in 1936, which gave the National Socialists a much freer hand in Austria, it was only a matter of time before an annexation took place, in March 1938.[45] *Die Muskete*, however, hardly seemed to register these events. Published just five days after the *Anschluss*, its cover was occupied by a baby in a lavender ballet dress with a wreath in her yellow hair, confronting the onlooker with piercing blue eyes – a baby that perfectly matched the Aryan stereotype [5]. Operating a record player, she crouches in front of a red and white lifebelt, the caption reading *'A ballet angel enlivens the red-white-red idyll 'The Blue Danube''*.[46] Looking beyond the kitsch subject matter, the re-coloured photograph was filled with ambiguity: '*beleben*' not only means 'to enliven' but also to 'resuscitate' or 'regenerate'. Equally ambiguously, the lifebelt, representative of the Austrian flag in its colours, represents both emergency and safety. As the Aryan-looking baby takes charge of the record player, looking at the viewer with piercing blue eyes, it controls the music, which alludes to the idiom '*den Ton angeben*' – 'to call the shots'. In an entangled combination of stereotypes, therefore, a baby representing National Socialist ideas took control over Austria, which was represented as a gentle country of culture

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44 An explicit example of this link can be found in Herwig Hartner, *Erotik und Rasse*, Munich 1925, pp.18–25. It connects all aspects of modern culture to 'Jewishness'.

45 Friedrich Weissensteiner, *Der Ungeliebte Staat: Österreich zwischen 1918 und 1938*, Vienna 1990, pp. 284–290.

46 See *Die Muskete* XXXIII, 1938, No. 12, 17. 3., p. 1.

Ein Ballettengerl belebt das rot-weiß-rote Idyll
„An der schönen blauen Donau"

Fig. 5: *'A ballet angel enlivens the red-white-red idyll 'The Blue Danube''*
'Ein Ballettengerl…' [A ballet angel…], *Die Muskete* XXXIII, 1938, No. 12, 17. 3., p. 1 (detail).
Photo: © Austrian National Library, Vienna.

with reference to the popular composer Johann Strauss the Younger's *The Blue Danube*. While the implication was that an Aryan force resuscitated Austria in reference to the country's failing economy and political conflicts, the figure is nonetheless a clumsy and inexperienced baby. As *Die Muskete* was produced by a Jewish-owned publishing house with Karl Rob Verlag, until it was Aryanised in autumn 1938, the cover may implicitly express a warning about the looming threat of National Socialism. The real political situation, however, showed that
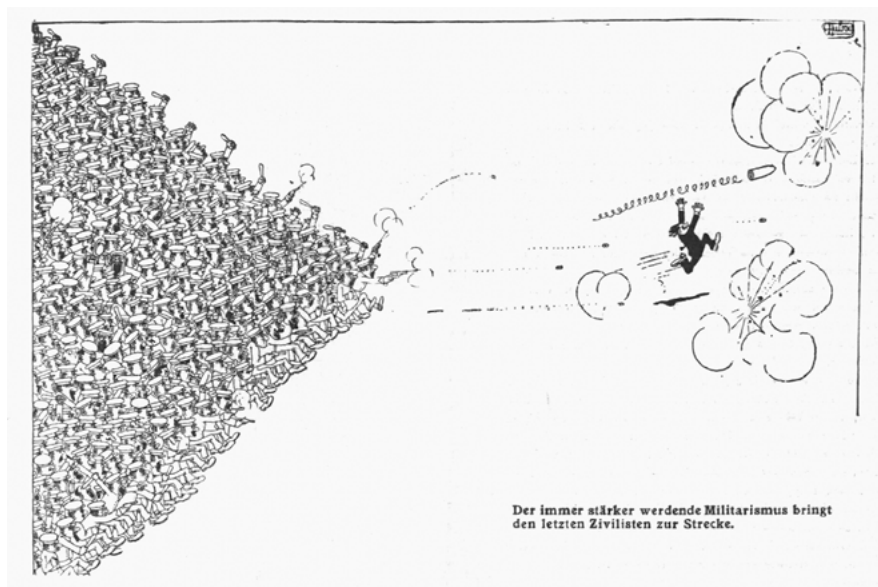
Der immer stärker werdende Militarismus bringt
den letzten Zivilisten zur Strecke.

Fig. 6. *'The ever-intensifying militarism hunts down the last civilian.'*
Hulboy, 'Der immer starker werdende Militarismus...' [The ever-intensifying militarism...], *Die Muskete* XXXIII, 1938, No. 12, 17. 3., p. 6. Photo: © Austrian National Library, Vienna.

this threat had already become a reality with German soldiers marching in the streets, and a rapid rise in untrammelled antisemitism.[47]

The wild mobs did not go entirely unnoticed in the magazine. On page six of the issue after the *Anschluss*, a caricature published under the pseudonym Hulboy pictured uniformed men packed together in a large crowd, their hands lifting truncheons in the air and their guns shooting oversized bullets at a single man, fleeing, arms raised to the sky to indicate defeat or surrender [6]. The caption reads: *'The ever-intensifying militarism hunts down the last civilian.'*[48] The caricature was unusually political for *Die Muskete* in the 1930s, but ambiguously so. Given the socio-political climate at the time, the 'hunting down' of the civilian applied as much to the antisemitism that exploded in Vienna's streets immediately after the *Anschluss*, as to the curtailing of civil liberties with the arrival of a brutal regime. Not least, the 'ever-intensifying militarism' referred to Austri-

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47 Verena Schembera, *Das 'Anschlusspogrom' 1938 in Wien* (MA thesis), Universität Wien, Vienna 2008, p. 45.

48 See *'Der immer stärker werdende Militarismus bringt den letzten Zivilisten zur Strecke'*, *Die Muskete* (note 46), p. 6.

an civilians who openly embraced the National Socialist regime in a radicalised world.[49]

Looking closer, the faces of the figures in the crowd were individually recognisable and showed a variety of faces: individuals distinguished from one another in the crowd despite their bodies forming one coherent mass. Notably, several of the figures joining the crowd for the manhunt bear stereotypical 'Jewish' features. In the contemporary climate, this ambiguity deflected from the fact that, in reality, there was a clear division between those being hunted down and their persecutors. While it is possible that Hulboy simply used a well-practiced array of 'types', the picturing of Jewish stereotypes in the persecuting crowd hardly seems coincidental. In the face of the *Reibpartien* that were taking place on the streets of Vienna at the very same time, the caricature acquired an antisemitic angle, not just in the visual stereotypes used, but also the implication that the contemporary victim-perpetrator relationship was one between the military and civilians, rather than the racially motivated witch-hunt that was institutionalised at this moment.[50]

On the one hand, Hulboy's caricature implied a great deal of scepticism towards the *Anschluss,* particularly in the light of the sarcastic comment accompanying the image.[51] On the other hand, the caricature, as *Die Muskete* overall, disguised the fact that the most pressing issue of the time was not the rise of militarism itself, but a divisive labelling of the population in order to target political opponents, Jews, as well as other minorities, in a pre-determined, racially biased way. Taking this into account, the magazine continued to practise what liberal and socialist forces in interwar Vienna have long been found guilty of: it barely stood up to antisemitism at all and, instead, used it to subvert the rhetoric of the conservative right for its own cause.[52] The antisemitic imagery in the *Muskete* issue after the *Anschluss* built on a visual language that had been common across all political camps for decades, obfuscating the nature of antisemitic pogroms that became so prevalent in Austria that even German soldiers were taken aback and had to call for order.[53]

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49 Schembera (note 47), p. 47.

50 In the so-called *Reibpartien*, members of the public forced opponents of national socialism and Jews to brush off pro-Austrian slogans and p ropaganda from the streets and pavements, while Jewish stores were robbed and synagogues occupied by the SS. Weissensteiner (note 45), p. 295.

51 *Die Muskete* (note 48), p. 6.

52 Rütgen (note 3), pp. 60 – 64.

53 Schembera (note 47), p. 47.

Notably, in the same issue, just days after the annexation, Weixler's carica-
ture *Film recording*, first published in 1924, reappeared [7]. With a change of text,
the director now instructs the two actors, *'Tempo, tempo! Bring a little more life
into this death scene!'*[54] The fact that the caricature no longer commented on an-

Fig. 7: *'Tempo, tempo! Bring a little more life into this death scene!'*
Viktor Weixler, 'Tempo, tempo!', *Die Muskete* XXXIII, 1938, No. 12, 17. 3., p. 9. Photo: © Austrian
National Library, Vienna.

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54 See *Die Muskete* (note 46), p. 9.

tisemitic stereotypes implies that they had been normalised to such an extent in the Austrian entertainment press by that time, that they represented a habitual part of visual culture, which no longer needed referencing. Meanwhile, the graphic forms of the image, stripped of colour (and of its author's signature), heightened the characters' 'Jewish' features, emphasising black hair and eyes in bold, opaque black, and crooked noses and strange bodies with strong outlines. Avoiding any means of shading or greyscale, this was antisemitism in black and white extremes. Notably, these stereotypes, far from increasing in frequency in subsequent issues of *Die Muskete* as Austria was incorporated into the Third Reich, slowly vanished. Thus began the erasure of graphic evidence of Jewish life in Vienna, while the figures' real counterparts either escaped into exile, or were sent to concentration camps from November 1938 onwards.[55]

'Weak' antisemitism as continuity and persistence: conclusions

As the only satirical magazine that continued to be published throughout Austria's authoritarian regime under Austro-fascism, the *Anschluss* and Nazism, *Die Muskete* highlights that it was the bland, nondescript and nostalgic that could survive political changes and upheaval. Rather than explicitly supporting the ideology of National Socialism after March 1938, *Die Muskete* provided an alternative reality, a reassuring fantasy, for its readers, which reaffirmed a heteronormative world of old times: not only did it sport sexist jokes about relationships and women as subservient, pleasing objects – which fit seamlessly with the patriarchal politics of the Austrian dictatorship and National Socialism alike – but the magazine's focus on domestic and entertainment settings gave readers permission to imagine that, in those private spheres at least, they could live in a state of freedom and autonomy. But the kitsch world of waltz nostalgia was denied to anyone but the German male readership: all others were excluded, or mocked and sexualised as inferior. *Die Muskete* thus served the National Socialists more than it may have anticipated in its attempt to eradicate difference on all levels. To be apolitical at such difficult times was to be complicit.

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55 After the Night of Broken Glass (*Kristallnacht*) on 9–10 November 1938, the deportation of male Viennese Jews to concentration camps started. Donald McKale, *Hitler's Shadow War: The Holocaust and World War II*, New York and Oxford 2006 (2002), p. 109.

Used twice over the course of the interwar years, in different political contexts, the case study of Weixler's *Film recording* in *Die Muskete* in this context is telling. Clearly, not all satirical and humorous magazines attacked the Jewish population straightforwardly in interwar Vienna, as was the case in *Der Kikeriki*. Rather, the caricatures from *Die Muskete* provide an insight into how prevalent antisemitism was in the popular culture of the day with implicit references and statements. They show that there were two levels of visual antisemitism that pervaded Viennese satirical magazines in the interwar years; one relating to the violence and aggression that went hand in hand with National Socialism and other far-right politics; the other in the more nebulous and subtle features of everyday popular culture, which did not necessarily present the Jews as enemies, but implicitly accentuated that there was a difference between them and a native, hegemonic nation amid seemingly care-free issues, ostensibly geared towards entertainment. Where aggressive, racist antisemitism could easily be spotted and accorded to the politics of the Christian Socials and the National Socialists, this 'weak' antisemitism shows that the 'othering' of Jews was a deeply ingrained practice in the Austrian press and found its way into the public sphere through myriad implications – tied not least to representations of class and gender. Through the continued use of 'weak' antisemitic stereotypes in varying forms, the 'othering' of the Jewish population was asserted as a cultural 'fact', which served to legitimise the violence against them in reality. While this practice was decidedly more forceful in right-wing publications, the half-hearted reactions to aggressive antisemitism in publications such as *Die Muskete*, in the end, emphasised that the 'othering' of the Jewish community was not only a National Socialist phenomenon but spanned all political and social lines.