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Guardian Angels?

The Viennese Police Response to Antisemitic Violence during the 1925 Zionist Congress

Abstract

In the summer of 1925, as antisemitic political parties agitated against the Fourteenth Zionist Congress, attacks on Jews increased throughout Vienna. This paper examines how the Viennese police leadership at the *Polizeidirektion Wien* responded to the attacks and protests by increasing police presence in the streets, meeting with community leaders, and monitoring the press. It then places their behaviour in the political context of the period, arguing that despite the politicised interpretations of their role during the Congress, the best explanation for police behaviour is not political affiliation, but rather their professional commitment to ensuring public safety and maintaining *Ruhe und Ordnung*.

For antisemites in Austria, especially members of the German National Socialist Workers' Party (the Austrian Nazi Party), the meeting of the Fourteenth Zionist Congress in Vienna in August 1925 provided a significant propaganda opportunity. In the months leading up to the Congress, antisemitic newspapers mocked and condemned the Zionists and demanded that the Austrian government withdraw its support for the meeting.¹ Simultaneously, members of various antisemitic organisations carried out a series of physical attacks against Vienna's Jews, using sticks and clubs to beat Jewish patrons in cafés and restaurants, while taunting their victims with chants of "Judens hinaus".² During the Congress itself, antisemites attempted to disrupt the meeting by storming the Congress headquarters, throwing stones at police, taxis, and streetcars, and endeavouring to conduct a "Jew hunt" in Leopoldstadt (the de facto Jewish quarter).³

These protests and attacks have featured prominently in historical analyses of Austrian antisemitism and the rise of the Austrian Nazi Party in the interwar period.⁴ Bruce Pauley even argued that the Fourteenth Zionist Congress marked the moment at which the Austrian Nazi Party first managed to "achieve real notoriety".⁵ Robert Wistrich, too, noted the "upsurge" of antisemitism surrounding the Con-

1 For instance, see articles in the *Deutsche Arbeiterpresse*, the *Deutschösterreichische Tages-Zeitung*, and *Kikeriki* throughout the summer of 1925; Protest Zionists in Vienna. Anti-Semites Oppose Scheduled International Congress, in: *The New York Times*, 1 August 1925, 5.

2 Bruce Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution. A History of Austrian Anti-Semitism*, Chapel Hill 1992, 194; Anti-Semitism in Vienna. A Week of Brawls, in: *The Times*, 20 July 1925, 11; Protest Zionist Congress. Vienna Hakenkreuzler [sic] Find NO Support Among Masses, in: *The New York Times*, 17 July 1925, 4.

3 Violent Rioting Starts in Vienna as Zionists Meet, in: *The New York Times*, 18 August 1925, 1.

4 See: F. L. Carsten, *Fascist Movements in Austria. From Schönerer to Hitler*, London 1977; Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution*, 102-116. Peter Pulzer briefly mentioned the Congress in the epilogue of his seminal work on antisemitic politics in Germany and Austria. Peter Pulzer, *The Rise of Political Anti-Semitism in Germany and Austria*, New York 1964, 311. See also: Robert Wistrich, *Austrians and Jews in the Twentieth Century. From Franz Joseph to Waldheim*, New York 1992, 196-197.

5 Bruce Pauley, *Anti-Semitism and the Austrian Nazi Party*, in: Kenneth Segar/John Warren (ed.), *Austria in the Thirties. Culture and Politics*, Riverside 1991, 29.

gress, arguing that these attacks and protests “poisoned the atmosphere of the city and had a devastating effect on the tourist trade”.⁶ As a moment of interwar anti-semitism and Nazi incitement, then, the Congress is well documented.

In addition to serving as a rallying point for Austria’s antisemites, the 1925 Zionist Congress also provided an opportunity for the Austrian government. The Congress was one of a series of significant international events held in Vienna in the 1920s and early 1930s, including the tenth Deutsche Sängerbundfest and the Second International Workers’ Olympics. Successfully hosting major international events provided revenue and prestige for both the Social Democratic city government in Vienna and the Christian Social federal government.⁷ Consequently, the sources of political power in Vienna, both municipal and national, had a shared interest in the Congress going smoothly.

Among these power players were Vienna’s leading police officers, who also saw the Congress as an opportunity for international recognition. In the months leading up to the Congress, the Viennese police took the antisemitic attacks and the potential for violence seriously. They responded thoroughly and preventatively, receiving commendations from the Zionists and international observers for their containment of the protests. This is somewhat surprising given that the Viennese police are usually perceived in the context of Austria’s move towards authoritarian dictatorship and incorporation into the Nazi police state. With good reason, they are often painted as a force for conservatism, repression, and anti-Communism.⁸ Their brutal response to a Socialist protest on 15 July 1927 has been held up as proof of this tendency.⁹ Furthermore, several police officers were involved in the failed Nazi putsch that resulted in the death of Chancellor Engelbert Dollfuss in July 1934.¹⁰ And finally, the enthusiasm of many police officers during the ‘Anschluß’ in March 1938 and their participation in Nazi anti-Jewish policies is also well documented.¹¹ This raises the

6 Wistrich, *Austrians and Jews in the Twentieth Century*, 196 f.

7 John Warren, “Weiße Strümpfe oder neue Kattern”. Cultural Decline in Vienna in the 1930s, in: Deborah Holmes/Lisa Silverman (ed.), *Interwar Vienna. Culture between Tradition and Modernity*, Rochester 2009, 34.

8 For example, Verena Moritz, Johann Schober. Der Wiener Polizeipräsident und die “bolschewistische Gefahr”, in: Barry McLoughlin/Hannes Leidinger/Verena Moritz (ed.), *Kommunismus in Österreich 1918–1938*, Innsbruck 2009, 102-122.; Gerhard Jagschitz, Die Politische Zentralevidenzstelle der Bundespolizeidirektion Wien. Ein Beitrag zur Rolle der Politischen Polizei in der Ersten Republik, in: *Jahrbuch für Zeitgeschichte*, Vienna 1978, 49-95; and Mark Lewis, The Failure of the Austrian and Yugoslav Police to Repress the Croatian Ustaša in Austria, 1929–1934, in: *Austrian History Yearbook* 45 (2014), 189.

9 On the events of 15 July 1927, see: Wissenschaftliche Kommission des Theodor-Körner-Stiftungsfonds und des Leopold-Kunschak-Preises zur Erforschung der Österreichischen Geschichte der Jahre 1918 bis 1938 (ed.), *Die Ereignisse des 15. Juli 1927. Protokoll des Symposiums in Wien am 15. Juni 1977*, Munich 1979; Winifried R. Garscha/Barry McLoughlin, *Wien 1927. Menetekel für die Republik*, Berlin 1987; Wolfgang Maderthaner, *Der Tag des Feuers. Der 15. Juli 1927 in Wien*, Vienna 2007; Norbert Leser/Paul Sailer-Wlasits (ed.), *1927. Als die Republik brannte. Von Schattendorf bis Wien*, Vienna 2001.

10 Gerhard Jagschitz, *Der Putsch. Die Nationalsozialisten 1934 in Österreich*, Graz 1976, 71-72; Kurt Bauer, *Hitlers zweiter Putsch. Dollfuß, die Nazis und der 25. Juli 1934*, St. Pölten, 2014.

11 Franz Weisz has discussed the involvement of Vienna’s police officers in the Nazi takeover in 1938 and their subsequent role in the Viennese Gestapo in several articles: Franz Weisz, Die Machtergreifung in Polizeipräsidium am Schottenring in Wien am 11. März 1938 und die Anfänge der Gestapo, in: *Archiv für Polizeigeschichte. Zeitschrift der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Polizeigeschichte* 10 (1999), 39-45; Franz Weisz, Die NS-Machtübernahme in den Wiener Bezirkspolizeikommissariaten, in: *Jahrbuch des Vereins für Geschichte der Stadt Wien* 49 (1993), 195-212; Franz Weisz, Die Machtergreifung im österreichischen Innenministerium in Wien im März 1938 und der Aufbau der Gestapo, in: *Archiv für Polizeigeschichte. Zeitschrift der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Polizeigeschichte* 13 (2002), 2-8. See also: Weisz’s dissertation on the Viennese Gestapo: Franz Weisz, *Die geheime Staatspolizei Staatspolizeileitstelle Wien 1938–1945. Organisation, Arbeitsweise und personale Belange* (Dissertation), University of Vienna, 1991. One Viennese police officer who became especially involved in the deportation of Vienna’s Jews was Karl Ebner; see: Thomas Mang, *Die Unperson Karl Ebner. Judenreferent der Gestapo Wien. Eine Täterbiografie*, Bozen/Bolzano 2013; Thomas Mang, “Gestapo-Leitstelle Wien – Mein Name ist Huber”. Wer trug die lokale Verantwortung für den Mord an den Juden Wiens?, Münster 2004.

question: what explains the conduct of Vienna's police during the Fourteenth Zionist Congress?

Antisemitic violence relating to the Congress began approximately one month before the opening on 17 August. The most significant of these early antisemitic incidents occurred at ten o'clock in the evening on Friday, 17 July, at the Kursalon in the Stadtpark.¹² Approximately thirty young Nazi supporters entered the establishment and began harassing and attacking the patrons. Nine people, including one waiter, were injured in the attack. The responding police officers used their sabres to bring an end to the fighting and eventually arrested and detained twelve of the participants. In response to the escalating antisemitic violence, the Viennese police established special police protection at cafés and other sites of potential trouble in order to protect Jewish patrons and prevent disorder.¹³ As incidents continued throughout the city over the following weeks, the police dedicated significant manpower to preventative measures. *The Times* reported on the police presence: "At various open air restaurants one still sees a fairly strong cordon of police protecting, to the amusement of the general public, Jewish diners from any possible anti-Semitic opponents."¹⁴

The police presence in the cafés forced the violence out of these establishments and onto Vienna's streets, frequently Praterstern, a square and transit meeting point with a somewhat unsavoury reputation in Leopoldstadt.¹⁵ On 30 July and 2 August, large clashes occurred there between Nazis on one side and groups composed of workers and Jews on the other. In order to stop the brawls, the district police had to call for mounted reinforcements and to use their sabres once more.¹⁶ Then on the 14 August, just days before the opening of the Congress, riots in the inner district resulted in more stone throwing, brawling, and antisemitic chanting. An elderly woman was injured in the fray. The police managed to calm the protests and prevent further property damage and personal violence.¹⁷

The police also responded to antisemitic press attacks on the Zionists. In mid-July, the police noted that the *völkisch* and especially the National Socialist press had begun denouncing the Congress. In response, the police met with two right-wing newspaper editors and emphasised the economic and public relations advantages of the Congress in an attempt to curb their criticism.¹⁸ Despite their hopes that these reminders would stop the press from attacking the Zionist Congress and the Austrian government, the police continued to monitor the antisemitic press. On 17 July, the police sent a case against Josef Müller, the editor of the Nazi newspaper *Deutsche Arbeiterpresse*, and one of the paper's authors, Adolf Bauer, to the prosecutor's office.¹⁹ The police recommended that they be charged with violating either § 300 (in-

12 Archiv der Bundespolizeidirektion Wien (ABW), Schober Archive, Box 27/1, Pr.ZI.IV-3582/25, Exzesse im Stadtparke am 17. Juli 1925, 18 July 1925. Anti-Semitism in Vienna, in: *The Times*, 20 July 1925, 11. Ein neuer Sturm der Hakenkreuzler. Eine große Rauferei im Stadtpark, in: *Neue Freie Presse*, 18 July 1925, 1; *Die Hakenkreuzler überfallen die Besucher im Stadtpark*, in: *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 18 July 1925, 7.

13 Anti-Semitism in Vienna, in: *The Times*, 28 July 1925, 7; *Die Hakenkreuzler überfallen die Besucher im Stadtpark*, in: *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 18 July 1925, 7; Wistrich, *Austrians and Jews in the Twentieth Century*, 196-197.

14 Anti-Semitism in Vienna, in: *The Times*, 28 July 1925, 7.

15 ABW, Schober Archive, Box 18: Tagesnotizen 1925, "Hakenkreuzler", 30 July 1925.

16 Anti-Semitic Riots In Vienna, in: *The Times*, 31 July 1925, 9; Rioting in Vienna, in: *The Times*, 3 August 1925, 7. ABW, Schober Archive, Box 18: "Tagesnotizen 1925", "Hakenkreuzler", 30 July 1925.

17 Anti-Semitism in Vienna, in: *The Times*, 15 August 1925, 9.

18 They met with the editors of the *Deutsche Arbeiterpresse* and the *Deutschösterreichische Tages-Zeitung*. ABW, Schober Archive, Box 27/1, Pr.ZI.IV-1272 Internationaler zionistischer Kongress in Wien (im Nachhange zum Ber. vom 16. März 1925, Pr.ZI.IV-1272), 15 July 1925.

19 ABW, Schober Archive, Box 27/1 1925, PR.Z.IV 1368/4/25: "Extraausgabe der 'Deutschen Arbeiter-Presse' §300, bezw. § 302 St.G.", 17 July 1925.

citement against state or municipal authorities) and/or § 302 (incitement of hostilities/resentments against national, religious, class, and other groups) of the Austrian penal code, which carried potential sentences of up to six months. The Vienna criminal court found that the paper had violated the law and that the edition should be confiscated. As of 21 July, the police had confiscated 1,500 copies.²⁰ As the press attacks continued, the police brought further cases against Josef Müller and the *Deutsche Arbeiterpresse*.²¹ They also noted the increasingly virulent language used by the *Deutschoesterreichische Tages-Zeitung* and confiscated various Nazi flyers.²²

Ahead of the Congress, Police President and later Chancellor Johann Schober met with concerned leaders on both sides. On 15 July, he received representatives from the Verband deutschvölkischer Vereine (League of German Völkisch Clubs) and Karl Schulz, Chairman of the Austrian Nazi Party. They promised Schober that there would be no protests during the Congress itself and that they could control the behaviour of their members.²³ After the meeting, the police nonetheless assured the Austrian government that they would take appropriate precautionary police measures to protect the Congress.²⁴ The Police President also reassured nervous members of the Vienna Jewish community such as the President of the Israelitische Kultusgemeinde, the community organisation, Alois Pick, who spoke with the police on 27 July about the community's fears that the Congress would lead to an escalation in unrest and to attacks against Vienna's Jews. According to the police summary of the meeting, Pick himself was convinced that the Vienna police were the best in the world and that they had the situation well in hand, but felt obligated to pass on his community's concerns nonetheless.²⁵

During the Congress itself, 6,000 police officers, nearly the entirety of Vienna's police force, protected the participants and attempted to monitor and quell anti-semitic protests. They formed cordons around the Congress venue in the inner city, patrolled the bridges crossing the Danube Canal into Leopoldstadt, and occasionally arrested protestors. The two most dramatic days of protesting occurred on 17 and 18 August, around the opening events of the Congress. On 16 August, the police announced that they would not allow a scheduled antisemitic demonstration to occur the following evening because of concerns about violence and unrest.²⁶ Newspapers across the political spectrum detailed the police reasoning for the prohibition on their front pages.²⁷ A special statement from Police President Schober on 17 August 1925 in the *Neue Freie Presse* went into even more detail. In addition to empha-

20 ABW, Schober Archive, Box 27/1 1925, PR.Z.IV 1368/7/25. "Deutsche Arbeiter-Presse, Beschlagnahme", 21 July 1925; Anti-Semitism in Vienna, in: The Times, 28 July 1925, 7.

21 ABW, Schober Archive, Box 27/1 1925, PR.Z.IV 1368/15: "Extraausgabe der ‚Deutschen Arbeiter-Presse‘ vom 20. August 1925", 22 August 1925; Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Archiv der Republik (OeStA/AdR), Gruppe 04/4.1: „Berichte der Wiener Polizeidirektion“, Karton 7, PR.Z.IV-1368/7/25, "Deutsche Arbeiterpresse", Beschlagnahme, 21 Juli 1925; G.P.P. Z597, Deutsche Arbeiterpresse, Beschlagnahme, 8 August 1925; G.P.P. 599, "Nationalsozialistisches Flugblatt, Beschlagnahme", 8 August 1925.

22 ABW, Schober Archive, Box 18: Tagesnotizen 1925, "Hakenkreuzler", 30 July 1925. OeStA/AdR, Gruppe 04/4.1, Berichte der Wiener Polizeidirektion, Karton 7, PR.Z.IV-1272/24/14, ZIV Zionistenkongreß in Wien. Im Nachhange zum Berichte v. 27./7.1925, PR.Z.IV-1272/9, 5 August 1925; OeStA/AdR, Gruppe 04/4.1 Berichte der Wiener Polizeidirektion, Karton 7, G.P.P.Z. 587, Flugzettel Beschlagnahme, 6 August 1925.

23 Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution*, 109.

24 ABW, Schober Archive, Box 27/1, Pr.Z.IV-1272 Internationaler zionistischer Kongress in Wien (im Nachhange zum Ber. vom 16. März 1925, Pr.Z.IV-1272), 15 July 1925.

25 ABW, Schober Archive, Box 18: Tagesnotizen 1925, "Zionistenkongress", 27 July 1925.

26 Pauley, *From Prejudice to Persecution*, 110. OeStA/AdR, Gruppe 04/4.1 Berichte der Wiener Polizeidirektion, Karton 7, V.B. 6207/1 V.P., Geplante Protestkundgebung gegen den Zionistenkongress am 17. August 1925, 15 August 1925.

27 See articles on the front pages of the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, *Reichspost*, *Neues Wiener Journal*, *Der Morgen*, and *Die Neue Zeitung* among others from 17 August 1925.

sising the importance of upholding Vienna's and Austria's reputations and the efforts of his police force to maintain public order, Schober also noted that the police had a duty to protect both people and property, and that the business community did not want any major disturbances.²⁸

However, this explanation did not stop the antisemitic protestors from assembling. By five o'clock in the afternoon, the police had blocked off the protest area (the square in front of the Votivkirche). The crowd (which the Socialist paper *Arbeiter-Zeitung* estimated to consist of 3,000 men and women) ignored the prohibition and warnings.²⁹ The police tried to break up the demonstration, which led to antisemitic chanting and shouting, stone throwing, and marching on the Ringstraße. Many of the chants, including "Abzug Wache" ("Withdraw the Guards") and "Abzug Judenschutztruppen" ("Withdraw the Jewish Protection Troops"), were directed at the police.³⁰ In total, over a hundred people were arrested and several dozen were injured. The protestors damaged private property, including the window of the illustrious Café Museum.³¹ The next day, police arrested 73 protestors who attempted to break into the Congress venue. However, this marked the last of the violent protests. A peaceful 8,000-person protest occurred on 22 August, but no further violent events were recorded and no more arrests were made.³²

How should one then account for the conduct of the Viennese police leadership during the Congress? The dedication with which the police dealt with antisemitic violence certainly did not reflect pro-Jewish or pro-Zionist sentiments, nor did it result from moral or ideological opposition to antisemitism. Rather, Police President Schober's commitment to international police professionalism drove police actions and behaviour. The years since the fall of the Habsburg Empire in 1918 had seen a concerted push on Schober's part to improve and expand the city's police force. His efforts focussed on developing more advanced training courses,³³ institutionalising criminological education,³⁴ and fostering international connections with other nations' police forces.³⁵ The creation of the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC), now known as Interpol, in Vienna in 1923 was an essential component of

28 Hans Schober, Die Ursachen des Versammlungsverbots, in: Neue Freie Presse, 17 August 1925.

29 Zionistkongress und Radau, in: Arbeiter-Zeitung, 18 August 1925.

30 Zionistkongress und Radau, in: Arbeiter-Zeitung, 18 August 1925.

31 The *New York Times* estimated that the protests cost four million dollars in property damage. The Vienna Riots. Renewed Attempts Checked. Zionist Congress Opened, in: The Times, 19 August 1925; \$4,000,000 Loss in Vienna Riots. Police Precautions Effective in Preventing Recurrences of Anti-Semitic Violence, in: The New York Times, 19 August 1925; Zionistkongress und Radau, in: Arbeiter-Zeitung, 18 August 1925.

32 ABW, Schober Archive, Box 18: Tagesnotizen 1925, "Teilnehmer an der deutschvölkischen Kundgebung am 22. August 1925".

33 In the early 1920s, the Viennese police expanded their training programme for members of the Sicherheitswache (the uniformed police force) into a two-year course: Günter Bögl/Harald Seyrl, Die Wiener Polizei. Im Spiegel der Zeiten. Eine Chronik in Bildern, Vienna 1993, 138-141.

34 Vienna's police used the criminological institutes at the universities in Vienna and Graz to disseminate criminological and forensic knowledge within the force. In 1924, the Polizeidirektion Wien established the Criminological Institute of the Vienna Police Directorate, under the leadership of Siegfried Türkel, which offered lectures open to the police and training courses designed for the detective corps (Kriminalbeamte). Articles on criminological and forensic topics also frequently appeared in the police journal *Öffentliche Sicherheit*. Roland Grassberger, University Institute of the Criminologic Sciences and Criminalistics in Vienna, in: Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology 23 (1932) 3, 395-403; Kamila Staudigl-Ciechowicz, Zur Entstehung der Wiener Kriminologie und Kriminalistik in der 1. Republik, in: Journal on European History of Law 2 (2011) 1, 29-35.

35 Schober became famous in the international police community, frequently corresponding and meeting with other police chiefs. Just a few months before the Zionist Congress, in May 1925, Schober was a prominent attendee at the International Police Conference headed by the New York City Police Commissioner Richard Enright. Johann Schober, Der III. Internationale Polizeikongreß in New York 1924, in: *Öffentliche Sicherheit* 15, 16 August 1925, 1. Great Police Heads of Europe on Ship: Mayor's Committee, in: The New York Times, 10 May 1925.

this effort.³⁶ This combined focus on training, criminology, and international cooperation defined the concept of professionalism for the Viennese police. Their leadership encouraged the use of international advances in science, technology, and training to solve crimes and to ensure public safety and maintain *Ruhe und Ordnung*. Indeed, the phrases *öffentliche Sicherheit* and *Ruhe und Ordnung* appear throughout police documentation.³⁷

The international aspect of this police professionalism was especially important, and was clearly at work during the Zionist Congress, which brought many foreign visitors to Vienna. In his 17 August article in the *Neue Freie Presse*, Schober was explicit about the importance of Vienna's reputation, and how unruly antisemitic protests might harm it. He wrote: "Their [the Polizeidirektion's] superhuman efforts to make the state of public safety in Vienna better than in other world cities are in vain if a handful of adolescents rioting, like in the Stadtpark [...] damage Vienna's reputation."³⁸ In fact, international attention had been a factor in police and government preparations for the Congress from the very beginning. The police had knowledge of the Congress as early as March 1925, when two Viennese Zionists approached the police to inquire about whether any security concerns would prevent them from holding the Congress in Vienna.³⁹ The police reported that they were not aware of any, so planning moved forward. Schober's report to the Chancellor and the other government ministries about this meeting implied that the Congress would provide the city with an important opportunity. He emphasised that 350 Americans would be among the 8,000 Zionists attending the meeting and highlighted previous meetings in Zurich and Karlsbad/Karlovy Vary. In particular, the report went into significant detail regarding how the Czech government had handled the Karlsbad Congress.⁴⁰

In addition to being technically advanced, professional police work was also supposed to be apolitical, with police conduct in keeping with Austria's constitution.⁴¹ However, the Viennese police were in fact dedicated to political policing, monitoring Nazis, monarchists, and especially Communists under the auspices of a political police office established in 1920.⁴² Rather than work in opposition, their commitments

36 On the founding of the International Criminal Police Commission and Vienna's role, see: Mathieu Deflem, *Policing World Society. Historical Foundations of International Police Cooperation*, Oxford 2002, 124-152; see also: Cyrille Fijnaut, *The International Criminal Police Commission and the Fight against Communism, 1923-1945*, in: Mark Mazower (ed.), *The Policing of Politics in the Twentieth Century*, Providence 1997, 111-113; and Malcolm Anderson, *Policing the World. Interpol and the Politics of International Police Co-Operation*, Oxford 2004, 38-42.

37 The phrase *öffentliche Sicherheit*, which translates to *public safety*, served as the name of the police journal (1921-1938 and 1954-Present). The phrase *Ruhe und Ordnung* functions similarly to the English phrase "law and order", but the emphasis on *Ruhe* or calm/peace as opposed to law (*Gesetz*) is an important distinction.

38 "Ihre übermenschlichen Anstrengungen den Zustand der öffentlichen Sicherheit in Wien besser als in anderen Weltstädten zu gestalten, sind vergeblich, wenn durch die von einer Hand voll unreifer Leute verübten Ausschreitungen, wie im Stadtpark [...], das Ansehen Wiens geschädigt wird." Hans Schober, *Die Ursachen des Versammlungsverbots*, in: *Neue Freie Presse*, 17 August 1925, 1.

39 ABW, Schober Archive, Box 27/1 1925, Pr.Z.IV-1272 Internationaler zionistischer Kongress in Wien, 16 March 1925.

40 Ibid.

41 In the inaugural issues of the police journal *Öffentliche Sicherheit*, Heinrich Dehmal discussed the goal of the journal, emphasising the importance of the new republic's constitution. He argued that police should not be involved in politics: "Denn je mehr die Polizei von der Politik ferne gehalten wird, umso besser wird sie funktionieren." Heinrich Dehmal, *Was will die "Öffentliche Sicherheit"*, in: *Öffentliche Sicherheit* 1 (August 1921) 1, 5.

42 Jagschitz, *Die Politische Zentralevidenzstelle der Bundespolizeidirektion Wien*; Mario Muigg, *The Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior in the 20th century*, in: *SIAK-Journal. Zeitschrift für Polizeiwissenschaft und Polizeiliche Praxis* 3 (2009), 15; Mario Muigg, *Geheim- und Nachrichtendienste in und aus Österreich. 1918-1938*, in: *SIAK-Journal. Zeitschrift für Polizeiwissenschaft und polizeiliche Praxis*, 3 (2007), 64-72. On Schober's anti-Communism, see: Verena Moritz, *Johann Schober. Der Wiener Polizeipräsident und die "bolshewistische Gefahr"*, in: Barry McLoughlin/Hannes Leidinger/Verena Moritz (ed.), *Kommunismus in Österreich 1918-1938*, Innsbruck 2009, 102-122.

to professionalism and political policing frequently reinforced each other. The police used *Ruhe und Ordnung* and public safety as justifications for their surveillance of political groups and expanded their training and improved their technology to better respond to political disorder.⁴³

Schober spelled out this philosophy to the press:

“[The antisemitic leaders] learned their lesson and understand at last the Vienna police mean business and will shrink at nothing in carrying out their duty. Of course, we cannot infringe on political freedom and cannot prevent protests and demonstrations against the Zionists or anybody else, but we can surely make the organizers of such demonstrations agree to our terms to insure law, order and public safety. My chief conditions are that meetings and demonstrations must assume full responsibility for law and order under penalty of the statute and that the slightest sign of troublemaking would be put down by the police with full severity.”⁴⁴

He highlighted the ideals of law, order, and public safety, stressing the duty and power of Vienna’s police force. He also denounced any suggestion of political motivations when he stated that “of course” the police could not “infringe on political freedom”. In the eyes of the police leadership, chanting antisemitic slogans, attacking Jewish citizens, brawling in the streets, and printing inflammatory newspaper articles disrupted *Ruhe und Ordnung* and threatened public safety. In turn, protecting Jewish citizens and Zionist visitors, breaking up street brawls, and confiscating press materials all fell under the rubric of maintaining public safety and restoring *Ruhe und Ordnung*. As such, they represented professional duties, not politicised actions.

Press reports show that the role of the police in protecting the Congress was subject to plenty of political interpretation. In doing so, the press occasionally used professionalism as a lens through which to discuss police actions. For instance, supporters of the Austrian government, the international press, and the mainstream Austrian press largely expressed admiration for the conduct of the police. The international press criticised the antisemitic protestors and their violent disruptions, but international observers generally seemed impressed by the conduct of the government and the police. For instance, writers for the *New York Times* and *The Times* focussed on the professional work of the police, noting their patience, their effectiveness, and calling them “tremendous”.⁴⁵

Zionists responded with reluctant gratitude towards the Austrian administration, including the police, while nonetheless expressing their outrage at the antisemitic violence. At the end of the Congress, the President of the Zionist Organisation Chaim Weizmann thanked the Austrian government and the Police President of

43 British police officer Norman Kendal visited the police forces of Berlin, Dresden, and Vienna in 1930. In his report, he noted this combination. He wrote: “In all three place, and particularly at Berlin, it is obvious that the amount of money spent on wireless installations could not possibly be justified, except for the fact that at the back of their mind all the time is the fear of political trouble. They believe it necessary to have a complete reserve method of communication in case the telegraph and telephone should be tampered with. In the meantime they are making use of their systems for purposes of original investigation and urging other countries to adopt wireless for police work.” See: The National Archives, MEPO 3/2036, Visit to the Police at Vienna, Dresden and Berlin, 17. Several scholars have explored the political policing roots of international police co-operation and its technical advancements; see: Richard Bach Jensen, *The International Anti-Anarchist Conference of 1898 and the Origins of Interpol*, in: *Journal of Contemporary History* 16 (1981) 2, 323-347; and Fijnaut, *The International Criminal Police Commission and the Fight against Communism*.

44 Vienna Racialists Guarded in Parade. 20,000 Take Part in Demonstration against Zionist Congress, but without Discord, in: *The New York Times*, 23 August 1925, 9.

45 The Vienna Riots. Renewed Attempts Checked. Zionist Congress Opened, in: *The Times*, 19 August 1925; \$4,000,000 Loss in Vienna Riots. Police Precautions Effective in Preventing Recurrences of Anti-Semitic Violence, in: *The New York Times*, 19 August 1925, 8.

Vienna specifically.⁴⁶ For Rabbi Stephen Wise, one of the American representatives at the Congress, police actions were secondary to the actions of the Austrian anti-semites. He said: "I speak with sorrow rather than anger of the anti-Jewish demonstration in the streets of Vienna. True, the police protected the congress, but police protection is a sorry substitute for communal hospitality. The police and soldiery had the situation well in hand, otherwise there can be little doubt that there would have been bloodshed in the streets of Vienna."⁴⁷ The Zionist leadership's comments focussed primarily on condemning the protests themselves. They expressed approval and perhaps gratitude for the police protection, but ultimately considered the necessity of their involvement a tragedy. In doing so, they called attention to the problem of antisemitism in Vienna.

The antisemitic newspapers, on the other hand, mocked the police involvement, frequently portraying the police as stooges of the Left and of the Jews. They emphasised police weakness and ridiculed their presence. For example, as early as June, the Congress became a favourite target of the antisemitic satirical magazine *Kikeriki*. Just before the Congress began, the magazine ran a cartoon portraying the Zionist Congress as a Trojan horse pushed into the city by Social Democratic Mayor Karl Seitz and Police President Schober.⁴⁸ Thus, even before the Congress had begun, the magazine attempted to identify the police as aligned with both the Left and the Zionist cause.

The 30 August edition of *Kikeriki* was dedicated almost exclusively to covering the events of the Congress. The issue's front page featured a satirical cartoon proclaiming "6,000 Policemen for 3,000 Zionists: Every Jew has Two Guardian Angels".⁴⁹ The image shows two chubby policemen with Stars of David on their uniforms floating behind a sinister and shabbily dressed Jewish figure. In this cartoon, the satirists at *Kikeriki* mocked police professionalism in several ways. First, they immediately undermined any notion of political neutrality by referring to them as the guardian angels of the Jews. Second, by making the policemen overweight, they implied that the policemen were lazy and ineffective, and perhaps even corrupt. This portrayal was a direct challenge to the ideals that Schober had attempted to instil in the Vienna police force. The leaders of the Austrian police had made great efforts to encourage sport and physical fitness, frequently hosting sporting competitions and highlighting them in their monthly police journal *Öffentliche Sicherheit*. Third, the cartoonist depicted the floating policemen as weak and foolish. One is depicted riding a children's toy horse and both are armed with feathers instead of sabres or pistols. These are not skilled and professional upholders of law, order, and duty, but rather corrupt, ineffective oafs serving the Jews and the Zionists.

The left-wing press frequently linked their critiques of the police to broader critiques of the Christian Social government, depicting them as united in their leniency towards the Nazis. For example, the Social Democratic paper *Arbeiter-Zeitung* responded to the police report concerning the Stadtpark incident with mockery. They facetiously referred to police reporting as tactful and delicate, arguing that they portrayed serious violence in a harmless manner in their reports. They linked this supposedly disingenuous reporting to what they viewed as the government's friendliness to the Nazis.⁵⁰ The Communist paper *Die Rote Fahne* went even farther in their

46 Close Of Zionist Congress, in: The Times, 1 September 1925, 11.

47 Wise Sees Politics in Vienna Rioting, in: The New York Times, 8 September 1925, 17.

48 *Kikeriki* 33, 15 August 1925, 8.

49 *Kikeriki* 35, 30 August 1925, 1.

50 Die Hakenkreuzler überfallen die Besucher im Stadtpark, in: *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, 18 July 1925, 7.

coverage. They insisted that the police had mostly arrested non-Nazi participants.⁵¹ A month later, in their coverage of the prohibited 17 August protest, which emphasised disorder and chaos, *Die Rote Fahne* portrayed Schober with a caricature captioned “The Best Police President in the World: ‘I guarantee calm and order’”.⁵² In doing so, they mocked his fame and his alleged skill.

The international nature of the Fourteenth Zionist Congress provided an opportunity for Police President Schober to demonstrate to an international audience that the Viennese police were a professional police force capable of maintaining order and ensuring public safety. During the Congress and the accompanying antisemitic protests, the police leadership used many of the tools at their disposal, including increasing police presence in the streets, meeting with community leaders, and monitoring the press, to maintain order in the city. They received commendation from Zionist leaders and international observers for their success in limiting the violence and protecting the Congress and its participants. Newspapers on the Left and Right attempted to undermine this image by portraying police actions as politically motivated and unprofessional. To these observers, the police were alternatively stooges of the Left and guardian angels of the Jews, or protectors and allies of the Nazi movement. However, in this case, Schober and his leadership corps were not driven by political ideology, but by their own conception of proper and professional police conduct and the importance of their international reputation.

51 Schluß mit den Hakenkreuzprovokationen, in: *Die Rote Fahne*, 18 July 1925, 2.

52 Cartoon in *Die Rote Fahne*, 18 August 1925, 1. Caption: “Der beste Polizeipräsident der Welt: ‘Ich garantiere für Ruhe und Ordnung.’”

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