

Austria's "Coubertin": Life and Death of Otto Herschmann

By VOLKER KLUGE



Athens 1896: The three Austrians Otto Herschmann (1), Paul Neumann (2), and Adolf Schmal (3) with German Olympians and members of the Philadelphia Society, on the Acropolis.

Photo: Albert Meyer

The schedule of events to mark the 50th anniversary of Munich 1972 also includes a day of remembrance. On 5 September 2022, a commemoration will be held for the victims of the attack on the Israeli team by Palestinian terrorists during the Olympic Games.

This atrocious act has a history that goes back a long way and showed its ugliest face during the National Socialist period. More than a few athletes were among the numerous victims. One of them was the Austrian Dr. Otto Herschmann, who was a medal winner in two sports. And he made a significant contribution to enshrining the Olympic Idea in his country.

With the defeat in the war of 1866 against Prussia and the simultaneous loss of Venetia to Italy, Austria's status as a great power came to an end. Emperor Franz Joseph I was forced to make far-reaching concessions. While Hungary received full autonomy through the so-called Compromise of 1867, the population of the Slavic crown lands, which continued to be governed from Vienna in the second half of the

empire, known as Cisleithania,¹ benefited from the "December Constitution".²

This law was of particular significance for Jews, as it guaranteed them unimpeded residence and the free exercise of religion. As a result, their share of the population grew within just a few years from 1.2% (1857) to 12.1% (1890) in Vienna alone. These were mostly workers, craftsmen, and small traders who settled in Leopoldstadt, not far from the city centre, between the Danube Canal and the Prater park. Many of them came from Moravia, including Herschmann's parents, who originated from the Brno area: his father, Emanuel, was from Rousínov (Rausnitz); his mother, Cäcilie, née Lampl, was from Šitbořice (Schüttboritz).

As chance would have it, Otto Herschmann was born on 4 January 1877 in the same house in Obere Donastrasse 393 (today no. 5)³ as the composer Arnold Schönberg, born in 1874, who invented the 12-tone technique. They did not grow up together, however, as the Schönbergs – the father was a shoemaker – moved a year before Herschmann was born.⁴

The Great Depression, which had its origins in the Vienna stock market crash of 9 May 1873, and for which Christian-Social and German national politicians as well as conspiracy theorists and fantasists of all stripes blamed the Jews, stoked antisemitism.⁵ Barely emancipated, the Jewish youth grew up in a hostile environment, against which they could best defend themselves through education.

Herschmann's parents – the father was a journalist and writer; the mother owned an artificial flower and feather factory – were in the position to allow their son to attend secondary school.

So that he would not suffer any professional disadvantages later, they permitted the 18-year-old to leave the Jewish religious community before he came of age.⁶

Alongside education, sport offered another opportunity to gain social recognition. In a booklet entitled *Wiener Sport* (Viennese sport), Herschmann devoted a chapter to this subject, in which he described sport as a “cosmopolitan means of unification”.⁷ He also considered the extrovert manner in which sport was practised to be “co-determinative for the impact on the rest of society, and thus for the value of sport with a view to assimilation.”⁸

He saw the only correct solution to the so-called Jewish question in “the merging of Judaism into the ethnic body politic in which it lives,” which was to be accelerated through sport.⁹

For a boy growing up on the banks of the Danube, learning to swim at an early age was an obvious choice. Swimming became Herschmann's passion. He joined the 1st Vienna Amateur Swimming Club (EWASC), which had been organising swimming tours in the Danube Canal since 1888 under the direction of a retired cavalry captain, Baron Eugen Forgatsch.¹⁰ Herschmann's role model was Paul Neumann, the youngest son of the well-known professor of dermatology, Isidor Neumann.¹¹ Thousands of Viennese cheered the 18-year-old in 1893 when he won the *Strommeisterschaft* (river championship) between Nussdorf and the Reichsbrücke under the pseudonym Emil Carpenter.¹²

For young novices like Herschmann, even just crossing the river was a big challenge. He finished his first *Donauprobe* (Danube trial) in third place. He was probably also thinking of himself when he wrote in *Wiener Sport* about the “often puny-looking boys” and their first miserable attempts at swimming: “... and years passed by during which the weedy young man ... develops, during which he exchanges the flabby forms of his body for pleasing beginnings to muscles.”¹³ He raved about a Danube swimming tour: “When you enjoy the sport to the full, the misery of life on earth vanishes.”¹⁴



Classic reading: Otto Herschmann's *Wiener Sport*. The slender book with 76 pages appeared in spring 1905 as volume 12 of the *Großstadt-Dokumente* (metropolis documents). The publisher of the 50-part series was the Berlin-based writer and journalist Hans Ostwald (1873–1940) at Verlag Hermann Seemann. The series focused on living conditions in Berlin and Vienna.

Source: Volker Kluge Archives

Athens 1896: silver or bronze medallist?

In late-1894, Herschmann read about the ancient Olympic Games for the first time, which were to be revived in Athens in two years' time – allegedly at the suggestion of the Parisian *Figaro*. A committee was subsequently set up, whose secretary, “the Frenchman Baron Koumberten [sic],” was currently sojourning in Greece, “in order to implement the plan.”

A year later, details of the programme became known, which included “nautical branches of sport”.¹⁵ More months passed before it was reported that a participation committee chaired by Count Wilczek had also been formed in Vienna, which – as in Hungary – wanted to solicit financial support from the government.¹⁶

The response was meagre, and so the committee had to rely on its own sponsors. Among the best known was member of the House of Lords Nikolaus Dumba,¹⁷ a friend of the Greek Georgios Averoff who had funded the restoration of the Panathenaic Stadium in Athens. Together with the banker Leopold Hutterstrasser, Dumba attended the EWASC championships, where Herschmann, who finished in second place, “covered the whole distance at a steady and beautiful English sidestroke pace.”¹⁸

Two weeks later, when he also won the honorary award of the City of Vienna “with a great deal of brainpower and calculation”,¹⁹ the committee agreed to pay for his and Neumann's participation in Athens. It would also have covered the costs for the man who was then the world's fastest swimmer, the Vienna-based German Eugen Wolf. However, he had private plans and was content to become German champion for the fourth time in a row in August.²⁰

Finally, on 30 March 1896, three Austrians set off for Greece. The third member of the group was Adolf Schmal, who belonged to the Vienna Bicycle Club and the "Haudegen" Fencing Club, and who had been hired as a reporter by several newspapers.²¹ The crossing with the Austrian Lloyd took place from Brindisi to Patras. The small delegation arrived in Athens on the afternoon of 5 April – and, the next day, the Games began.²²

As a cyclist and fencer, Schmal commuted back and forth between New Phaleron and the Zappeion. First, he competed in sabre fencing, in which he got off to a hopeful start. He had already won two bouts when the Greek king appeared with the princes, whereupon the jury decided to start things again. The previous results were cancelled, and, in the end, Schmal only came in fourth.²³

After the competitions in the Olympic stadium, the Games continued on the sixth day with the swimming. Nearly 20,000 spectators flocked to Piraeus, where a flag-decorated stand had been erected in the picturesque bay of Zea, where the royal family took their seats.

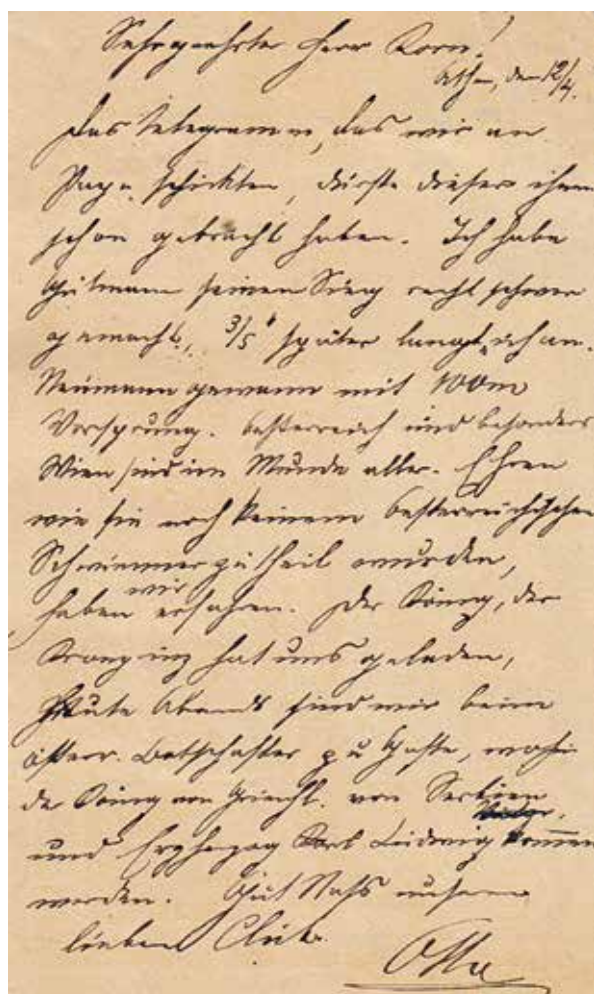
Numerous athletes had registered. For the 100 m distance alone, 34 names were listed in the programme, including number 29, "Otto

Heirichmann".²⁴ At the competition, however, only 13 people appeared,²⁵ who were taken out to sea in a launch at an air temperature of 18 degrees and a water temperature of 13½ degrees Celsius. Lined up next to each other in front of a rope, they swam off, after a pistol shot, towards the shore, where a red flag marked the finish.

According to the German professor Ferdinand Hueppe, who belonged to the eight-member panel of judges chaired by Prince George, all of them used the hand-over-hand stroke, which was also known as "Spanish" or "sailor swimming". For the two longer distances, the energy-saving sidestroke was preferred.²⁶

The winner was beyond all doubt: Alfréd Hajós, whose official name was still Arnold Guttmann at the time.²⁷ What is disputed, however, is who finished second behind the 18-year-old Hungarian. The *Official Report* and the *Akropolis* named the Greek Efstathios Chorafas as the one,²⁸ while most Austrian papers reported it as being Herschmann.

At first, the Austrian press had declared Herschmann third not in the 100 m, but in the 500 m event, which was won by Paul Neumann.²⁹ However, a few days later, on 22 April 1896, when the swimmers were expected to



A postcard Otto Herschmann sent to the president of the 1st Vienna Amateur Swimming Club, Gustav Korn, one day after the 100 m competition in 1896.

"We are on everyone's lips," he writes. Invitations by the Greek king and Austrian ambassador are also mentioned. Source: Rüdiger Fritz Collection

Above: Olympic swimming competition in the Bay of Zea. You can see the starting cord stretched between boats, with the line of participants parallel to it. Whether the photo truly dates from 1896 is unclear; it may have been taken in 1906.

Photo: Volker Kluge Archive

return, a correction was made: Herschmann was now considered second in the 100 m.³⁰

It is possible that his postcard, which he sent to EWASC President Gustav Korn on 12 April, had arrived in the meantime. It read: "... Georg [?] has likely already brought you the telegram that we sent to him. I made Gutmann's [sic] victory quite a challenge for him. I came in $\frac{3}{5}$ " later."³¹ Since Herschmann was also a journalist, he substantiated this information four days later. In the *Allgemeine Sport-Zeitung (ASZ)*, he wrote that the Austrians "won two first and one second prizes".³² Schmal achieved the second victory on the last day of competition in the 12-hour cycle race.

However, Alfréd Hajós was not convinced. In his memoirs, he referred to a friend named Kertész, who had been an eyewitness to the 100 m event and had seen the US American Gardner Williams come in second and Herschmann third.³³ He maintained that "with complete resoluteness", according to Hungarian historian Dr. Ferenc Mezö, who was later a member of the IOC.³⁴

The wording found in the yearbook of the Austrian NOC from 1913 – indeed, at a time when Herschmann was its president – also reads misleadingly. According to that, he was "owner of the Olympic bronze medal at Athens 1896".³⁵ At that time, bronze was awarded to the runners-up. Or was the author thinking in terms of the categories of gold, silver, and bronze that would later become commonplace?

Founding era: WAC, athletics association, student sports festival, and beauty contest

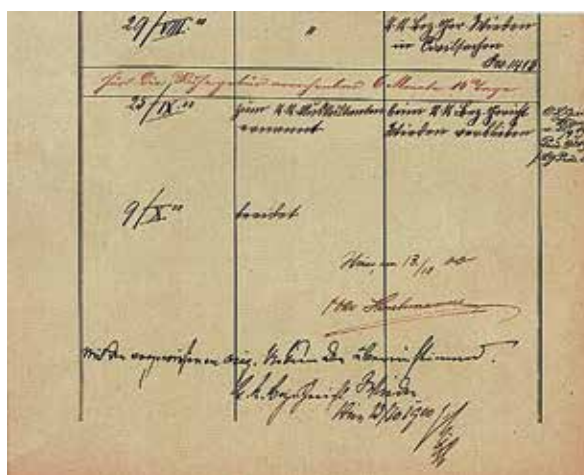
Herschmann returned from Athens enthralled. He considered it a shame, though, that none of his compatriots had competed in athletics. Once he had found out from conversations with American and British participants that they trained in clubs with several branches of sport, he got the idea of setting up such a club in Vienna – "organised according to the English model".³⁶ Five weeks later, this became a reality. Together with other like-minded people, he decided to found the Wiener Athletiksport Club (WAC), not only for swimmers but also track and field athletes as well as fencers, cyclists, tennis players, winter sportsmen, and hockey and football players.³⁷

Before Herschmann left the EWASC, he represented its colours once more on 2 August 1896 at a "Championship of Europe" in Vienna, which Hajós won, ahead of defending champion Wolf. Herschmann, who finished fifth, said his farewells two weeks later with victories in swimming and diving, declaring that he "now wanted to devote himself to theoretical sport."³⁸ In addition to his law studies at the University of Vienna, which Herschmann had begun in 1895, he



Identity card for Dr. Otto Herschmann issued by the Austro-Hungarian Imperial and Royal Ministry of Justice on 9 October 1900.

Source: Austrian State Archive



worked diligently to set up the WAC. He took over the office of second secretary. Shortly after it was founded, it had already amassed 150 members, including aristocrats like Prince Auersperg, who contributed an indoor riding arena that was used as a winter stadium. ASZ publisher Victor Silberer placed the premises of his Aeronautical Institute in the Prater at the club's disposal for the warmer seasons.³⁹

Two years later, the WAC had doubled its membership. It owned clubhouses in the city centre and in the Prater, where it built its own sports field in 1898. Herschmann used to demonstrate athletic disciplines there that he had seen at the Olympic Games, such as discus throwing, shot put, pole vault, and hurdling. In the same year, they were also included in the programme of an international meeting to which the WAC extended invitations to mark the occasion of the imperial Anniversary Exhibition.⁴⁰

That was new for Vienna, and the numerous visitors were able to witness the birth of Austrian athletics. However, two years passed before a national association was formed. Silberer was elected its president, and Herschmann, deputy president.⁴¹

"Allow me!"

**Dr. Otto Herschmann,
Court Advocate.**

Photo: Österreichischer
Zentralverband für gemeinsame
Sportinteressen (Olympisches
Komitee für Österreich), Österreichs
Sport 1913.



Just 23 years old and about to receive his doctorate, Herschmann was appointed to the eight-member executive committee that made preparations for Austria's participation in the next Olympic Games in 1900. The steering committee, which included nobility, princes, and counts, issued an appeal for donations to be able to "represent Austria in its entirety" this time.⁴²

The result was again mediocre. In terms of numbers, the fencers had the strongest representation in Paris, with eight participants. Two WAC athletes qualified for the athletics, one of whom, the discus thrower Cornelius von Lubowiecki, then missed the start due to oversleeping. The three swimmers were the most successful, taking three second places and one third.

A certain "Othon Sterschmann" – Otto Herschmann, who was a member of the international panels of judges for the athletics and swimming – was also present. Furthermore, he reported on the swimming competitions, making no secret of his satisfaction about the fact that the professionals, "who toil[ed] their way down the long stretch for money, [were] far outstripped by young, enthusiastic amateurs."⁴³

Nevertheless, Herschmann respected professional athletes, who deserved gratitude if they demonstrated "honest sport" without any tampering, he wrote.⁴⁴ Regarding the "amateur question", he did not support the strict English definition. Rather, he represented

liberal views, which he considered necessary because sport had captured broad layers of the population, and it was therefore right that the rules be adapted to social conditions. He found these modern, "yet they do not imply any disparagement towards the amateur concept, but rather an improvement of it ..."⁴⁵

At the beginning of the 20th century, Herschmann was one of a group of young lawyers in whom the public prosecutor's office of Vienna placed high hopes. He belonged to the so-called fine society. At festivities, he was seen with attractive young ladies on his arm, whose families were considered wealthy. Yet, since he remained a bachelor all his life, it seems the right one was never among them. He did not escape calamity: in the spa town of Baden, his father threw himself in front of the express train from Trieste. A letter he was carrying with him stated that he wanted to end his torturous life because of a "nervous ailment of the mind".⁴⁶

Alongside his professional career, Herschmann discovered the development of sport in the empire as his mission. He facilitated promotional events, where he acted as an evangelist. Together with Felix Schmal, the brother of the Olympic cycling champion, he wrote the rule book for Austrian athletics. Thanks to his initiative, the first Viennese student sports festival came about in 1900, and he even organised the first beauty contest, in which professors, painters, and sculptors made up the panel of judges.

Herschmann did not hold back on criticism in his publications. He found it strange that none of the political parties – especially the Social Democrats – had yet discovered sport, which he described as the "stepchild of the state". "It has not yet been incorporated into the public education programme, and, in sport like in most welfare institutions, it has been left to private bodies to undertake the great ethical work of physical education ..."⁴⁷ Particularly the international presence was a complete failure, he wrote. Nowhere was there a major sports festival, and unlike Hungary and Bohemia, Austria was not even represented in the IOC.

When Silberer, too, took that same line,⁴⁸ the emperor's private secretary, Prince Alexander zu Solms-Braunfels, was admitted to the IOC in 1905 – not through the obligingness of President Pierre de Coubertin, but "through diplomatic channels".⁴⁹

An "impeccable type" and a "gentleman athlete"

Herschmann was far too much of an athlete to have been satisfied with being a mere administrator. He went on to win championships in diving, competed in wrestling matches, play water polo and table

tennis, and finished fifth in the national skeleton championships. However, it was fencing, above all, that he embraced as a new challenge.

The emperor's son-in-law, Archduke Franz Salvator, had brought fencing master Luigi Barbasetti from Trieste to Vienna in order to introduce Italian fencing methods. In December 1894, he opened the Salle Barbasetti in St. Annahof.⁵⁰ In his wake, Giovanni Franceschini, another fencing master from the south, moved to Vienna, where he was employed by the WAC in late-1896. His most talented student was Herschmann, who was described as "the impeccable specimen of the Viennese fencer and gentleman athlete".⁵¹ Another newspaper wrote: "Most of all, ... Franceschini can be proud of his student, Dr. Otto Herschmann, who started fencing with Franceschini ten years ago, never had any other teacher, and is, today, the best fencer in Austria-Hungary and one of the best in Europe."⁵²

When, against Coubertin's wishes, the Greeks were once again hosts of the 1906 Olympic Games in Athens, also known as the "Intercalated Games", Herschmann was again part of the Austrian team. Thanks to a generous donation from Count Hans Wilczek, it consisted of 35 athletes. This time, however, Herschmann could not live up to his good reputation as a sabre fencer. In the semifinals he only won two bouts, resulting in his premature departure. He was lacking in concentration as he fenced and had probably overreached himself. He was also a member of four panels of judges.⁵³

The Austrian Central Committee, founded especially for 1906, only existed for a brief period, like the previous ones. Two years later, a new one was founded, which set itself the task of "achieving, perhaps even surpassing, the fame of the Olympic Games" with the "1908 celebrations in Vienna in honour of the emperor".⁵⁴ This goal failed, as did the intention to send around 60 athletes to London. Only 50 of the required 30,000 crowns were available at all, although 2,000 "begging letters" had been sent to aristocrats and members of the "moneyed nobility". Ultimately, only the WAC was able to send seven athletes to the Games.⁵⁵

Among them was the Jewish fencer Fritz Flesch. He was supposed to be accompanied by Herschmann, who shortly beforehand had won the "Tournament in Homage to the Emperor" in sabre fencing in front of the young, later legendary Italian Nedo Nadi. However, he had to cancel for personal reasons.

Eight years after his doctorate, Herschmann was included in the coveted list of Viennese court lawyers.⁵⁶ From then on, he could not complain about a lack of clients. His reputation was enhanced by spectacular cases, such as an incident that took place on a luxury

liner off Spitsbergen. A certain Count Sternberg had given a eulogy for the practice of duelling, whereupon the writer Dr. Emil von Hofmannsthal, who was present, dared to contradict him. Because he had consequently been insulted, Hofmannsthal, who was chairman of the Anti-Duelling League, sued the Count and had Herschmann represent him in court – apparently with success, because he then asked the lawyer for a foreword to his book *Code of Honour for Duelling Opponents*, which became a guide for the courts in creating an honorary board of counsellors to settle disputes without the use of arms.⁵⁷

Aristocrats over a Jewish advocate

Solms-Braunfels was a member of the IOC for four years without taking part in a single conference. Instead, he wrote letters to Coubertin, in which he criticised the recognition of Bohemia with the Czech Dr. Jiří Guth as an IOC Member, without success. The Austrian prince resigned even before the start of the 1909 Session in Berlin. As his successor, he recommended the lawyer Dr. Gustav Magg, who had been involved in the founding of a Central Sports Committee the year before. In 1909, Magg also took the helm at the WAC, which had managed without a president for 14 years. He died a few weeks later. Herschmann gave the funeral oration.

Thus, Austria once again had no vote on the international stage. A first step to change this was

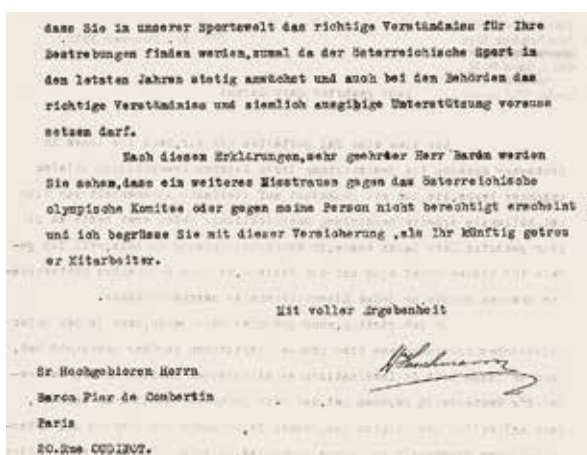


The selection committee for the 1912 Olympic team: Baron Richard von Bienerth (former prime minister, then governor of Lower Austria/left), NOC President Otto Herschmann (in the middle), and WAC Vice-President Gustav Korn.

Photo: Illustriertes Österreichisches Sportblatt 1912

Excerpts from
Herschmann's letter of
12 February 1912 to
Coubertin, which he
wrote in German
"to avoid misunder-
standings". He pledges
support to the IOC
President and asks
him to stop distrusting
him and Austria.

Source: OSC



taken at the end of 1910. The sports associations were convinced of the need for an umbrella organisation, which was constituted on 23 February 1911 as the Austrian Central Association for Common Sports Interests (Olympic Committee for Austria). The chairman of the Viennese Sports Club, Hans Hornacsek, became president.

After the inaugural meeting, Herschmann, who had been elected 1st vice-president, met with the Hungarian Jules (Gyula) de Muzsa to negotiate the question of Austria's representation in the IOC. Both a member of parliament and the IOC, de Muzsa encouraged him and promised to support his inclusion at the next Session in Budapest. As a result, Herschmann was nominated by the Central Association as a "particularly suitable expert on the situation".⁵⁸

But Coubertin ignored the decision. At the beginning of the Session, "to the applause of the entire committee", he proposed the election of Prince Otto zu Windisch-Graetz, whom, in 1902, Emperor Franz Joseph had permitted to marry one of his granddaughters.⁵⁹ Less than six months later, Coubertin co-opted another aristocrat: Count Rudolf Colloredo-Mannsfeld, President of the Austrian Lawn Tennis Association.

Herschmann needed time to cope with the rejection. Not even Coubertin's conciliatory letters changed anything in that regard. Only after Herschmann had taken over the leadership of the Central Association

at the end of 1911 – Hornacsek had resigned⁶⁰ – did he reply to Coubertin in German, "by way of exception" and "to avoid any misunderstandings".⁶¹ The ill feeling had completely vanished, he wrote. The choice of Windisch-Graetz was met with unanimous satisfaction. He offered Coubertin support and assured him "that further distrust of the Austrian Olympic Committee or of my person does not appear justified".⁶²

The authorities in Vienna had other concerns. The policy of trialism, which aimed to bring about equilibrium with the Slavic population as the third pillar in the Habsburg Empire, failed once again in the Imperial Assembly elections in June 1911. To integrate the peripheral forces better, the government felt compelled to make concessions, especially to the Czechs. They were allowed to have their own part of the team at the 1912 Olympic Games in Stockholm and march in behind Austria – and ahead of Hungary – as "Autriche" with the addendum "Tschèques".

Furthermore, the Czechs, whose nationality was thereby recognised by Vienna, were allowed to carry a smaller white-and-red banner with the coat of arms of the Kingdom of Bohemia in addition to the black-and-yellow imperial flag, and both of these would have been hoisted as well, if the Czechs had won a medal.⁶³

The Austrians, who, for the first time, were able to send a large expedition thanks to state funding, did not have need of the notes of the "Emperor's Hymn" either. They did not provide any Olympic champions. The best performers were the fencers, who won silver with the sabre team and bronze with First Lieutenant Richard Verderber in the individual foil. Dr. Pipes and Dr. Zborzil also took silver in the tennis doubles. The women's swimming relay team got bronze.

At a cost of 63,000 crowns, this was not a terrific haul for the Austrians, as can be read in the report to the Foreign Ministry, signed by Windisch-Graetz and Herschmann: "...yet, it can still be said that amidst truly overwhelming competition, they did not do a bad job ..."⁶⁴

The press saw it differently. The performance was called a failure and even a fiasco. The "main blame for this outrageous disgrace" was placed on Herschmann.⁶⁵ However, he was the least at fault. In the sabre team, which consisted of seven officers from the Wiener-Neustadt gymnastics and fencing training course plus Herschmann as the one civilian, he shone with "unmatched calm, elegance, and energy".⁶⁶ Together with Verderber, he was the mainstay of the team, which lost only to the Hungarians, with a score of 5–11. To date, he remains the only NOC President to win an Olympic medal during his term in office.

Objective observers rightly saw the reasons for the weak results not in individuals but in the "petty

Herschmann (no. 5) focused on young people. First School, Gymnastics, and Sports Festival organised by the Austrian NOC, attended by Archduke Karl Franz Joseph (1, in uniform), Minister of Education von Hussarek (2), IOC Member Prince zu Windisch-Graetz (3), and Athletics President Hans Pfeiffer (4).

Photo: Illustriertes Österreichisches Sportblatt 1913



club work" and "lack of seriousness with which sport is practised here. ... It will take a great deal of work and some strong will to even halfway change this situation."⁶⁷

Herschmann, who had been awarded the First-Class Order of Vasa by the Swedish king for his contribution to the success of the Olympic Games, had long been aware that change could only be achieved by reforming school sport. In May 1913, the NOC organised a two-day school, gymnastics, and sports festival in Vienna to provide some impetus, and even the emperor's great-nephew, Archduke Karl Franz Joseph, appeared as a representative of the emperor.⁶⁸ None of the other prominent figures could stay away. The press celebrated the military-organised event as a milestone in the development of the educational system, noting that the students from the country looked fresher than the "big city boys".⁶⁹ Girls were not invited.

To be better prepared for the Olympic Games 1916, which had been awarded to Berlin, Herschmann had asked IOC founding member William M. Sloane if he would give a lecture in Vienna. On 28 May 1913, having accepted a guest professorship at the University of Berlin, the American spoke on the subject of "The Olympic Games and their moral significance for young people".⁷⁰

He took this opportunity to invite Herschmann to the United States to study the conditions there. In November, Herschmann was received by the leaders of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) in New York, from where a four-man German delegation including Carl Diem had just set off. He held meetings with AAU President James E. Sullivan and his loyal aide,

Daniel J. Ferris. In search of a coach to prepare Austria's athletes for 1916, he visited the Boston Athletic Association. He also met with Austrian-born Leo Friedrich, who wanted to build a large stadium in Vienna.

After Herschmann's return, the NOC's General Assembly awaited him, where new elections were on the agenda. Herschmann provided a report, and, at the end, he surprisingly declared "that due to professional and private circumstances, he was no longer in a position to accept re-election as president."⁷¹ He suggested that Colloredo-Mannsfeld be his successor, who was then elected by acclamation.

The press reported Herschmann's resignation without making any comment – some of them with regret. The *Fremden-Blatt*, which praised him as the "Austrian Coubertin", read: "However our sport may continue to develop, and whatever fruit the sporting idea will bear in Austria, Dr. Herschmann sowed the seed for future greatness, and the Austrian Olympic idea will forevermore be linked to his name."⁷²

The ASZ only furnished information about the election of Colloredo-Mannsfeld a month later, without mentioning Herschmann's resignation.⁷³ That was strange, since in November 1913 the newspaper had still criticised his US journey as a "pleasure trip" and a "pompous staging of Austrian preparations". "A costly and time-consuming excursion, certainly a very significant sacrifice for a man who is not a man of independent means. That is up to him, though, provided he defrays the expenses out of his own pocket and does not use the funds of the body he heads."⁷⁴

The hateful article bore the thumbprint of Silberer, who probably blamed Herschmann for his having to

Although almost 50 years old, Herschmann proved, in the mid-1920s, that he was still part of the world elite of sabre fencers. At the WAC tournament, he was narrowly defeated 12–10 by two-time Olympic champion and Italian champion of 1922 and 1923, Oreste Puliti. Tactically, they were like-for-like. It was not least because of results like these that the Austrian NOC decided to send a fencing team to the Paris Games in 1924, to which the Alpine Republic had once again been admitted.

Strengthened by Herschmann's international authority, the foil fencers performed respectably there. He was supposed to compete himself in the sabre fencing; but that didn't happen. Since they ran out of money, the fencers had to go home early. Afterwards, one report read: "Participation on the part of the sabre team thus fell through."⁸⁵

Herschmann therefore also escaped the scandal surrounding sabre fencing, which was overshadowed by the traditional rivalry between Hungary and Italy. When the Hungarian referee Dr. György Kovács suspected in the singles final that Puliti had been "handed" victories by his comrades to help him win the gold medal, the accused man threw a tantrum. Puliti was disqualified, and, at that point, the rest of the Italians also refused to take part. They left the arena while singing the fascist anthem.

The argument escalated when Puliti and Kovács met two days later at the Folies Bergères variety theatre. A battle of words broke out again, and when the Hungarian then received a slap in the face, the police intervened. The IOC Executive Committee, chaired by Coubertin, disqualified Puliti from the Games and reprimanded the team.⁸⁶ However, the strict sanctions demanded by the Italian NOC were never imposed.

Kovács was not content with that. As the accused party, he challenged Puliti to a duel, which was to be carried out with heavy sabres in Vienna under the direction of Herschmann. However, since the 1917 ban on duels issued by Emperor Karl still applied in Austria,⁸⁷ the parties moved to Nagykanizsa, Hungary, near the Yugoslav border, where the rivals were let loose on 12 November 1924.

The duel was treated as a "world sensation" by the media. A Budapest studio even shot a film. But after his return, Herschmann felt compelled to correct the all-too-adventurous reports. The duel was fought without masks and with bare torsos, but not with heavy sabres – rather, light ones with rounded tips. Thrusting was forbidden. Four bouts of 10 minutes each were fought. After sufficient blood had been shed, the fighters were so fatigued in the final bout that they willingly accepted Herschmann's suggestion that the duel be ended. Puliti apologised.⁸⁸



Herschmann took it all sportingly. There were wonderful actions, he reported. In return for arbitrating the duel as well as for his part in introducing the Italian fencing method to Austria, he was awarded the Officer's Cross of Honour by King Vittorio Emanuele III and received an enthusiastic celebration in Cremona in 1926. But the "king of sports journalism", Dr. Willy Meisl, saw things differently: "The only thing missing is for Mussolini to send a telegram and the Olympic Committee to lift the disqualification hanging over Puliti."⁸⁹

Derided, plundered, condemned, and murdered

A little later, the black-and-brown spiderweb had also spread in Austria. The Great Depression promoted the authoritarian "corporative state" (*Ständestaat*), which was modelled on Mussolini's Italy in order to reverse the parliamentary democratic order that had emerged in November 1918. Like in Germany, National Socialism was growing strongly, even if the attempt of July 1934 to seize power with a putsch initially failed.

Although there were no anti-Jewish laws, anti-Semitic sentiment was increasing. Herschmann, who had been elected President of the Austrian Amateur Fencing Federation in 1924 and who led the training for sabre fencers for Amsterdam 1928, also felt the effects. There were calls for a boycott, which also impacted economic life. In 1937, he had to file for bankruptcy.⁹⁰ He had to move out of his elegant office in Herrengasse opposite the Hofburg.

It is not known what Herschmann's experience was of the "annexation" to Nazi Germany. A vague notion of the hell the Jewish population had fallen into can be gleaned from the newspapers of the time. From 11 March 1938 onwards, when the German Wehrmacht marched in, not a day went by without

Herschmann (first row, middle) as president of the Austrian Amateur Fencing Federation and jury chairman among the finalists in sabre fencing at the national championships of 1927.

Photo: *Illustriertes Sportblatt* 1927

new harassment. Favourite hate figures were Jewish lawyers, whose practice was banned on 31 March. Although there was a transitional period for front-line soldiers or those whose families had lived in Austria for at least 50 years, things were different in practice. A mob broke into lawyers' offices and plundered private homes. There was ill-treatment and there were arrests and deportations – mostly to the Dachau concentration camp.

Dismissal was often tied to the condition of emigrating in a few days. However, before that, the "Reich Flight Tax" (*Reichsfluchtsteuer*) had to be paid, which amounted to a quarter of one's assets, though, usually, one no longer had any left.⁹¹ Evidence for this exodus is provided by Vienna's rolls of solicitors, which went down from 78 to 39 pages in one year. Of 2,542 lawyers who had been registered on 13 March, 1,755 had been struck off by 31 December 1938.⁹²

Like others, Herschmann disappeared almost overnight. He was dead to his relatives. According to a letter in which his cousin, who had married in Italy, asked the Prince Regent of Liechtenstein, Prince Franz II, to exile her sister's family: "My cousin, the Viennese lawyer Dr. Otto Herschmann, ... has already gone to the cemetery, never to return. He lived for his Kaiser, he fought so bravely for his Kaiser in the World War that he received all sorts of decorations, and now he, the brave dragoon, has died for his Kaiser."⁹³

In the newspaper editorial offices, on the other hand, where entire departments had been replaced by the Nazis, there were cheers. "Finally rid of them," read one headline. Herschmann was named first –

even ahead of the publisher of the *Telegraf*, Karl Franz Bondy, who was insulted as a "Jew of the press". Such people had represented Austria abroad for years, it was said, so that Austrian delegations could have been taken "for the representatives of a Berber tribe".⁹⁴

It was proved in the summer of 1939 that Herschmann was still alive. He was described as a member of a "gang of counterfeiterers" who helped acquire a passport for Hugo Alfred Winter, the former owner of an amusement park in the Prater.⁹⁵ On 7 November 1939, Herschmann, who was acquainted with Winter, was arrested and, together with others involved, charged in the Vienna Regional Court. He was sentenced to a fine of 1,000 Reichsmarks. But he was spared further time in prison, since a fine of this magnitude fell under Hitler's "amnesty", which was intended to impress the civilian population after the invasion of Poland.⁹⁶ Winter later perished in Auschwitz.

The expulsion of the Jews, who now had also had to bear a Jewish first name and, as of 1941, wear the yellow star, stopped upon the commencement of the Second World War. Those who had not yet been able to escape into exile had to do forced labour. They were evicted from their homes and housed in "collective apartments". There was practically nothing that wasn't forbidden.

The mass deportations to the General Government (a Nazi-occupied zone in central Poland), and thus to death, began on 15 March 1941, when the first of 45 trains left Vienna's Asperg railway station. The transports increased after the Wannsee Conference of 20 January 1942, at which the "Final Solution" was decided under the direction of SS-Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich.

Heydrich, the head of the Security Police and the SD (*Sicherheitsdienst*), also had other ambitions. He was a sabre fencer, although not first-rate. However, after ordering the arrest of the 1912 Belgian Olympic champion Paul Anspach he hoped to take over as President of the International Fencing Federation (FIE).⁹⁷ But then there was a quarrel with Reichssportführer Hans von Tschammer-Osten, who had promised the Italian finance minister Paolo Thaon di Revel this post at Mussolini's request.⁹⁸

The dispute ended when an attempt was made in Prague on Heydrich's life, after he was appointed Deputy Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia in September 1941. He succumbed to his injuries on 4 June 1942. An immediate reaction to this was "Operation Reinhard", a murder action led by the former Viennese Gauleiter Odilo Globocnik, which killed 1.8 million Jews and 50,000 Roma.

Herschmann, who had been crammed into a "collective apartment" at Gonzagagasse 1/17 with

Fencer and mass murderer: SS Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, organiser of the Wannsee Conference where the "Final Solution" of the so-called Jewish question was decided upon in 1942. Herschmann was one of the victims of Operation Reinhard.



Photo: Reichssportblatt, 18 February 1941

XXVII-803
Vermögensverzeichnis 14. Juni 1942

nachfolgender in die Ostgebiete evakuiertes Juden:

Name: Herschmann Otto Ios. Wohn-Dr. 100014
 geboren am: 2.1.1877 in: Wien
 Wohnort: 1. Gasse 1/7
 Ehefrau: _____ geb. am: _____
 Kinder: _____ geb. am: _____
 _____ geb. am: _____
 _____ geb. am: _____

Ich erkläre, folgende bewegliche Vermögenswerte, Rechte und Ansprüche zu besitzen:

a) Bargeld: RM 20.-- Befehlsschein Nummer 100.--
Berlin
 b) Wertpapiere: _____
 c) Sparkassen und Sparbuchkonten: _____
 d) Versicherungspolizen: _____
 e) Schmuck: _____
 f) Kunst und Möbel: _____
 g) Sonstiges (in Jhr und Währung): _____

Vor mir unterfertigt: _____
 Unterschrift



The last time he was seen: On the day of his deportation, Herschmann's "assets" consisted of 20 Reichsmarks and 100 Reichsmarks that were owed to him. Next to it: Sobibor extermination camp disguised as an "SS Special Commando". The commander was an Austrian police officer called Franz Stangl, who fled to Brazil via one of the "ratlines" after the war. Tracked down by Simon Wiesenthal, he was sentenced to life imprisonment in West Germany in 1970 for the murder of 400,000 Jews. Photo/Source: Austrian State Archive; Bildungswerk Stanislaw Hantz/Universität Stuttgart (Eds.). *Fotos aus Sobibor. Die Niemann-Sammlung zu Holocaust und Nationalsozialismus*, Berlin: 2020.

eight other Jews,⁹⁹ received the order to be "evacuated to the eastern regions" on 14 June 1942. It was a Sunday. Before that, he had to draw up a list of assets under the supervision of a "custodian"; it consisted of a single line: "Cash: RM 20.00". In addition, there is a note: "Bar Association RM 100.00 Berlin".¹⁰⁰ A fee that was never paid.

Herschmann was taken to a collective camp and, from there, rode in an open truck to the goods station, where the 27th transport with train Da 38 to Izbica was sent off at 7:08 pm. The route was changed along the way. It led directly to the Sobibor extermination camp, which had been constructed in April.¹⁰¹ The train arrived at 8:15 am on 17 June. None of the 949 passengers survived. The 15 police officers who had escorted them each received 260 Reichsmarks on their return to Vienna.¹⁰²

More than two years later, the Viennese tax office remembered Dr. Oskar [sic] Israel Herschmann. It was said that he still owed the office 210 Reichsmarks in income tax for 1940/41, and it was requested that this sum be transferred from the "assets confiscated from the obligated party".¹⁰³

* * *

After the end of the war, Austria liked to present itself as "Hitler's first victim". Its own share in things was downplayed. There was little interest in fates like that of Dr. Otto Herschmann. Silence prevailed, although many had witnessed the persecution of the Jews.

In 1980, journalist Erich Kamper from Graz was the first to recall Herschmann, though without mentioning the Holocaust.¹⁰⁴ He did not publish his later research results¹⁰⁵ in Austria, but, rather, in the magazine of the German Olympic Society (DOG).¹⁰⁶

Herschmann became known to a wider public when a street in the Simmering district of Vienna was named after him on 11 September 2001.¹⁰⁷ On the explanatory panel accompanying the street sign, he is referred to as "top athlete and sports official". No space was given to his tale of woe. ■

- 1 The Latin naming goes back to the river Leitha (Hungarian: Lajta), which represents a geographical border. Cisleithania, for the western and northern part, therefore means "this side of the Leitha", while the eastern part of the empire was called Transleithania (beyond the Leitha).
- 2 Government Gazette (RGBl) No. 142/1867, Basic Law on the General Rights of Nationals for the kingdoms and countries represented in the Imperial Council, 11 December 1867.
- 3 Jewish religious community (Israelitische Kultusgemeinde – IKG) Vienna, A, birth register 1877/33, no. 4893. The street was renumbered in 1882.
- 4 Alexander L. Ringer, *Arnold Schönberg. Das Leben im Werk* (Stuttgart: 2002), 4. Herschmann's sister Rosa, who was three months younger than Schönberg, may have met the later composer as a child.

Otto Herschmann
street sign in Vienna's
Simmering district –
on the site of the
former gas works.



- 5 Shortly after the opening of the Vienna World Exhibition, the so-called Panic of 1873 was triggered when the reckless speculative investment bubble burst.
- 6 IKG Vienna, register office (Matrikenamt), exit book 530. Men reached adulthood at the age of 24. However, this could be reduced with the consent of the court and the guardian, for example, in order to run a company independently. The age of majority was reduced to 21 in 1919, then to 19 in 1973, and 18 in 2001.
- 7 Otto Herschmann, "Das Judentum und der Sport," in *Wiener Sport, Großstadt-Dokumente*, vol. 12, ed. Hans Ostwald (Berlin und Leipzig: no year [1905]), 19–27.
- 8 *Ibid.*, 26.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 26.
- 10 Baron Forgatsch, Honorary President of the EWASC, also took part in swimming tours himself. In 1898, together with club member Hans Agnelli, he covered the 61 km route from Vienna to Bratislava in 6:55 h without a boat escort. They carried their clothing with them in a "swimming bag".
- 11 Isidor Neumann (1832–1906), born in Moravia like the Herschmanns, became the head of the first clinical department for syphilis in 1881. Emperor Franz Joseph I bestowed the aristocratic title of "Edler" and a further title, "von Heilwart", upon him in 1905, for successfully combatting the epidemics in Bosnia and Herzegovina. His children were entitled to bear this name as well. But they lost it with the introduction of Law on the Abolition of the Nobility, § 2.2., 3 April 1919, National Law Gazette (StGBI) no. 37/1919 and no. 392/1919.
- 12 *Das interessante Blatt*, 17 August 1893. The later Olympic champion Paul Neumann (1875–1932), who belonged to the Vöslau branch of the EWASC, needed 12:55 min for the roughly 5 km downstream route.
- 13 Herschmann, "Schwimmen und Rudern," *Wiener Sport*, 33.
- 14 *Ibid.*, 34.
- 15 *Wiener Salonblatt*, 11 August 1895.
- 16 *Neues Wiener Journal (NWJ)*, 12 February 1896. Johann Graf Wilczek (1837–1922), who owned the second largest coal mine in the Habsburg Empire, was known as a philanthropist and patron. He was also a sponsor of the Austro-Hungarian North Polar Expedition, which in 1873 discovered an unknown group of islands, part of modern-day Russia, named after Emperor Franz Joseph I. The second largest island was named "Wilczek Land".
- 17 Nikolaus Dumba (1830–1900) came from a Macedonian family that emigrated to Austria during the Ottoman occupation and became rich through the cotton trade. He became a very important patron of music.
- 18 *Allgemeine Sport-Zeitung (ASZ)*, 8 March 1896. The championship was held over four lengths totalling 136 m, for which Wolf needed 1:55 ³/₅ min. Neumann came third. With the sidestroke, known since antiquity, the swimmer would move forward using asymmetrical arm and leg movements. Lying on one's side, the upper arm would be used like an oar, while the legs performed a horizontal scissor stroke.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 15 March 1896.
- 20 Born in Germany, Eugen Wolf grew up in Düsseldorf and moved to Vienna, where he studied at the Technical University. He became a member of the EWASC, but continued to take part in the German Championships, which he won four times in a row (1893–1896) for the 100 m distance. On 23 July 1893, he swam an (unofficial) world record on a 50 m lane in Elberfeld in still water, attaining 1:17.0 min. In November 1896, Wolf was elected chairman of the EWASC. He became a publisher and, among other things, developed a stencil made of metal. He undertook several trips around the world and was involved in tourism.
- 21 Cf. Volker Kluge, "The business trip of 'Herr Filius,'" *JOH*, vol. 26, 1, 2018, 36–47.
- 22 *Cook's Welt-Reise-Zeitung*, March 1896, 3. The Comité International des Jeux Olympiques, as the IOC was then called, had concluded a contract with Cook & Son for transport for the Olympians from 1896 to 1904. The price in 2nd class was 133.40 guilders (fl), which, based on today's purchase value, equates to roughly 450 euros. The private quarters were provided by the German association "Philadelphia".
- 23 *JOH*, vol. 26, 1, 2018, 40.
- 24 Programme Sports Nautiques Olympiques Internationaux 1896, Courses de Natation, 4–5. The eight-page programme included three competitions a piece for amateurs and sailors in the (Greek) Navy, over the lengths of 100 m, 500 m, and 1200 m. In the end, the sailors only competed in the 100 m. No particular swimming style was prescribed.
- 25 Pierre de Coubertin, Timoleon J. Philimon, N.G. Politis, and Charalambos Anninos, *The Olympic Games B.C. 776. – A.D. 1896*, vol. 2 (*Official Report*) (Athens: 1897), 95–97.
- 26 Ferdinand Hueppe, "Griechenland und die jetzigen und einstigen Olympischen Spiele," *ASZ*, 25 December 1896. The Prague-based doctor Ferdinand Hueppe (1852–1938) accompanied the German and Austrian participants to Athens. He was a co-founder of the German Football Association (DFB) in 1900 and its first president until 1904. The Briton John Trudgen (1852–1902) is credited with being the inventor of the hand-over-hand stroke. He learned this technique from indigenous peoples during his stay in Argentina and introduced it to England in 1873.

- 27 Alfréd Hajós (1878–1955) was officially called Arnold Guttmann until 1896. Since the millennium celebrations of the Magyar Empire took place in the same year, he took the name "Hajós", which means "seaman" in Hungarian. He also wanted to emphasise his closeness to water. In Athens, he was listed as "Hoyos Guttmann", or, in the registration list, as "Hajos (Guttemann)".
- 28 *Official Report*, 96; *Akropolis*, 31 March 1896.
- 29 *NWJ*, 13 April 1896; *Teplitz-Schöner Anzeiger*, 15 April 1896; *Innsbrucker Nachrichten*, 17 April 1896; *Dillinger's Reise- und Fremden-Zeitung*, 20 April 1896.
- 30 *Die Presse*, 22 April 1896.
- 31 Collection Rüdiger Fritz, Halle/Saale.
- 32 "Die Österreicher in Olympia," *ASZ*, 26 April 1896. Hueppe confirmed this version in *ASZ*, 25 December 1896. Cf. Bill Mallon/Ture Widlund, *The 1896 Olympic Games. Results for All Competitors in All Events, with Commentary* (Jefferson: 1998), 104.
- 33 Hajós Alfréd, *Igy lettem olimpiai bajnok* (Budapest: 1956), English translation: "Recollections of an Olympic champion," *Olympisches Feuer*, vol. 6, November 1956, 26.
- 34 Ferenc Mező, *Sechzig Jahre Olympische Spiele* (Budapest: 1956), 43. Mező found a confirmation in *Sport Vilag*, 19 April 1896.
- 35 Austrian Olympic Committee, *Österreichs Sport 1913*, 5.
- 36 *ASZ*, 26 July 1896.
- 37 The journalist and later *ASZ* owner Friedrich Burger (1867–1956) was one of the WAC co-founders. In the commemorative publication to mark its 50th anniversary in 1946, he referred to its founding as his "patent". He also mentioned "one of the Viennese swimmers" without specifying Herschmann by name.
- 38 *ASZ*, 23 August 1896.
- 39 Victor Silberer (1846–1924), who founded the *ASZ* in 1880 as the first European sports newspaper, was Austria's chief sports sponsor before the First World War. On 1 August 1885, he opened the Aeronautical Institute with the ascent of the Vidobona balloon on the former fireworks field in the Prater, where he offered military and scientific courses.
- 40 *ASZ*, 4 September 1898. The exhibition to mark Emperor Franz Joseph I's 50th anniversary on the throne took place from 7 May to 18 October 1898 in the Prater. The programme included the World Championships in weightlifting and cycling, the European Championships in Graeco-Roman wrestling, and the international athletics meeting on 28 August 1898, which also featured athletes from Budapest and Prague.
- 41 Austrian State Archives (ÖSTA), AdR E-uReang AHF H.
- 42 *ASZ*, 9 January 1900.
- 43 *Neues Wiener Tagblatt (NWT)*, 21 August 1900. The only professional competition for the 4,000 m, which was held on the Seine River between Pateaux and Asnières, was won by the Brit Samuel Greasley (1867–1926) in 1:08:33 h. The prize money was 41,500 francs. In the amateur competition, his compatriot John Jarvis (1872–1933) won in 58:24 min.
- 44 "Sport und Artistentum," *NWT*, 25 March 1900.
- 45 "Zur Amateurfrage," *ASZ*, 14 October 1900.
- 46 IKG, Register Office (Matrikenamt)/Baden/Sterbebuch 307, 66. *Badener Zeitung*, 5 April 1902.
- 47 *Wiener Sport*, 69.
- 48 *Ibid.*, 70. *ASZ*, 16 September 1904.
- 49 *Illustriertes Sportblatt*, 15 April 1911.
- 50 Barbasetti (1859–1948) dislodged the hitherto dominant "Hungarian style" of sabre fencing, taught by József Keresztessy at the National Fencing Institute in Pest. Silberer had bought the St. Annahof in Vienna's Annagasse 3, which also housed a ballroom.



"The Kneeling Jew" on Helmut Zilk Square in Vienna: The bronze monument designed by Alfred Hrdlicka commemorates the *Reibpartien* where Jews and anti-fascists were forced to scrub pro-Austrian slogans from the streets and squares after Germany annexed Austria in 1938. Photo: Gabriele Kluge

- 51 *NWJ*, 2 April 1906.
- 52 *Das interessante Blatt*, 12 April 1906.
- 53 Herschmann was a member of the following panels of judges: athletic competitions and gymnastics, fencing (foil), nautical competitions (diving), and athletic plays.
- 54 "Aufruf an die Bevölkerung von Wien und Österreich!", *Wiener Neueste Nachrichten*, 20 January 1908. With festivals and a parade to mark the 60th anniversary of Emperor Franz Joseph I's reign in the summer of 1908, the aim was to evoke unity in the multi-ethnic state and boost sluggish tourism.
- 55 The only medal – bronze in the 400 m freestyle – went to the swimmer Otto Scheff (1889–1956). The Berlin native, who sometimes spelled his name "Sheff", had already won the gold medal in Athens in 1906 at the age of 16. The later lawyer was the son of the Jewish publisher Hans Heinrich Sochaczewski (1861–1922), who settled in Vienna in 1898 and became known as "Harry Sheff". He published several novels under the pseudonyms "H.H. Schefsky" and "Victor von Falk". Dr. Otto Scheff had been working as a lawyer since 1922, which he was forbidden to do in 1938 as a Jewish "half-breed" ("Mischling"). Formerly also President of the Reich Association of House and Landowners, he survived until 1945 as a broker. From 1945 to 1953, he represented the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) in the National Council.
- 56 Government gazette (Regierungsblatt) no. 98, *Amtsblatt zur Wiener Zeitung*, 5 June 1908.
- 57 Emil von Hofmannsthal, *Ehrenkodex für Duellgegner* (Vienna and Leipzig: 1910). The book did away with the notion that a woman needed a man to protect her honour and that a worker was not considered capable of satisfaction. Herschmann did not fundamentally reject duelling in his foreword, "out of regard for social tradition and military opinion," but advocated for clarification by means of an honorary board of counsellors as a "substitute".
- 58 *ASZ*, 16 April 1911.
- 59 Minutes, IOC Session Budapest 1910, 4. Although Otto zu Windisch-Graetz (1873–1952) came from a family that did not belong to the high nobility, the emperor consented to him marrying Elisabeth (1883–1963). Previously, Windisch-Graetz had been given the title of prince. Elisabeth, who was reviled as the "Red Archduchess" due to her social democratic views, had to renounce all claims to the throne. After the First World War, the two divorced. To escape the law on the abolition of nobility, Windisch-Graetz took on Yugoslav citizenship.
- 60 *ASZ*, 17 December 1911. Hans Hornacek (1862–1938), authorised signatory of the Wiener Apollo-Werke and vice-president of the Central Sports Committee in celebration of the "Kaiser Jubilee", cited the reason for his resignation as exhaustion.
- 61 Letter from Herschmann to Coubertin, 13 February 1912, Olympic Studies Centre (OSC).
- 62 *Ibid.*
- 63 Swedish National Archive: Stockholmsolympiaden 1912, letter Český Výbor Olympijský v Praze to Olympic Organising Committee Stockholm 1912, 24 June 1912. In a consultation on 9 June 1912 with Austria's Minister of the Interior, Karl von Heinold, it was also agreed that Dr. Jiří Guth should continue to remain in the IOC under the country name "Autriche" with the addition "C.O.T." (Comité Olympique de la Bohême).
- 64 ÖSTA, HHSIA MDÄ AR F_60-208-1, Austrian Olympic Committee, 6 August 1912.
- 65 *Wiener Sonn- und Montags-Zeitung*, 26 August 1912.
- 66 *ASZ*, 23 July 1912.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 11 August 1912.
- 68 *Illustriertes Österreichisches Sportblatt*, 31 May 1913. After the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on 28 June 1914 in Sarajevo, his younger brother Karl Franz Joseph (1887–1922) succeeded him as heir to the throne. After the death of Franz Joseph I, he became Karl I, the last emperor of Austria-Hungary.
- 69 *Ibid.*, 6. Eduard "Edi" Engelmann (1894–1960) was particularly celebrated. The son of the founder of the Vienna Ice Skating School, who had the same name, achieved 3.01 m in the standing long jump.
- 70 *ASZ*, 4 May 1913. Sloane (1850–1928), who spoke fluent German, studied philosophy and linguistics in Berlin and Leipzig from 1872 to 1876. During Coubertin's travels through North America in 1889 and 1893, he gave him access to the universities in order to get to know the US educational system.
- 71 *Die Zeit*, 21 December 1913.
- 72 *Fremden-Blatt*, 20 December 1913.
- 73 *ASZ*, 22 February 1914. In late-1913, the printers went on strike, which is why some editions were cancelled, but this only had an impact in January and February 1914.
- 74 *ASZ*, 8 November 1913.
- 75 *Ibid.*, 14 May 1911. In 1902, Silberer became a member of parliament (Landtag) of Lower Austria and, in 1907, he joined the Imperial Assembly. From 1904 to 1913, he was a member of the Municipal Council of Vienna.
- 76 Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Munich: 1925), 59.
- 77 George F. Kennan, *The Decline of Bismarck's European Order. Franco-Russian Relations, 1875–1890* (Princeton: 1979), 3.
- 78 *ASZ*, 8 April 1920. Copland, AAU champion in the 110- and 220-yard hurdles, set an (unofficial) world long jump record of 7.09 m in 1890. He made himself unpopular among the Austrian athletes when he forbade them to eat gulash and drink beer ahead of the international match against Hungary in 1914. Then he gave them a dietetic menu.
- 79 ÖSTA (War Archive), land register sheet/Vienna, box (Kt.) 622.
- 80 Reichsgesetzblatt ("Imperial Law Gazette") (Military Law), 5 December 1868. This meant that male Jews between the ages of 21 and 42 were also subject to compulsory military service for a period of 12 years (three of which were active).
- 81 *Fremdenblatt*, 12 July 1916.
- 82 ÖSTA (War Archive), MBA, no. (ZL) 547023, box (Kt.) 492. The settlement of Dobronoutz (Ukrainian: Dobrynivtsi, Romanian: Dobronauti) belonged to the Duchy of Bukovina in the Habsburg Empire. Today it is part of Ukraine.
- 83 *Illustrierte Kronen-Zeitung*, 12 November 1918.
- 84 "Der Fechtsport vor dem Kriege," *Körpersport, Jahrbuch 1934* (Vienna: 1934), 60–61.
- 85 *Wiener Morgenzeitung*, 18 July 1924.
- 86 Minutes, IOC EB meeting, 23 July 1924, 38.



Herschmann's last accommodation was a "collective apartment" at Gonzagagasse 1/17 in Vienna, where he lived with eight other Jews until he was deported.

Photos: Gabriele Kluge

- 87 ÖSTA (War Archive), ANST MONDT BRUNN/GEB. no. 1273/17. The Austrian authorities instructed the border authorities to perform increased surveillance. In the event of a border crossing, the duel opponents were threatened with an entry ban of five years.
- 88 *Die Stunde*, 15 November 1924. Otto Herschmann, "Fechtsport und Duell," in *Der Fechtsport. Commemorative publication (Festschrift) of the Austrian Fencing Association on the occasion of the 1931 European Championships* (Vienna: 1931).
- 89 *Sport-Tagblatt*, 14 November 1924.
- 90 *Der Tag*, 25 February 1937.
- 91 Cf. Barbara Sauer/Ilse Reiter-Zatoukal, *Advokaten 1938* (Vienna: 2010), 29–71.
- 92 Lists of lawyers from 1938 and 1939, Bar Association, Vienna.
- 93 Liechtenstein National Archive, RF 181/371/004. Letter from Rosa Creazzo-Lampl, Bologna to Prinzregent Franz II. The application was rejected on 12 July 1938 because of "impending foreign infiltration".
- 94 *NWJ*, 25 November 1938. The anonymous author may have been the newspaper's sports director, Max J. Leuthe (1879–1945). He had been a member of the illegal NSDAP and the SS Standard 11 since 1932. Cf. Matthias Marschik, *Bewegte Körper* (Vienna: 2020), 399. Publisher Karl Franz Bondy (1883–1945) managed to escape to London. The well-known *Telegraf* sports editor Alexander Meisel was murdered in Sachsenhausen concentration camp in 1942.
- 95 *Ibid.*, 25 July 1939. Winter's amusement park, Venedig in Wien (Venice in Vienna), was run in the Prater, where also wrestling matches were held.
- 96 *Illustrierte Kronen-Zeitung*, 9 November 1939. Reichsgesetzblatt (Imperial Law Gazette), 14 September 1939.
- 97 Cf. Hans Joachim Teichler, *Internationale Sportpolitik im Dritten Reich* (Schorndorf: 1991), 344–347.
- 98 Bundesarchiv Berlin, Tschammer estate, NS 2528/3. Paolo Thaon di Revel (1888–1973) was the fascist finance minister from 1935 to 1943, Olympic champion with the épée team in 1920, and an IOC Member from 1932 to 1964.
- 99 IKG Wien/II/NAM/WOHN/Hauslisten I, 1941.
- 100 ÖSTA-1037208/0001-ADR/2013.
- 101 Cf. University of Stuttgart (ed.), *Fotos aus Sobibor – Die Niemann-Sammlung zu Holocaust und Nationalsozialismus* (Photos from Sobibor: The Niemann Collection on the Holocaust and National Socialism) (Berlin: 2020).
- 102 Yad Vashem Documents Archive, trial documentation, file no. 30: "Experience report: Re: Transport detail for the transport of Jews from Vienna – Aspang station to Sobibor on 14 June 1942". In Lublin, the SS let 51 able-bodied men between the ages of 15 and 50 get out. The remaining 949 Jews were transported to Sobibor and immediately killed. Two of the SS leaders responsible, Helmut Oswald Pohl and Ernst Lerch, were arraigned in 1972 at Klagenfurt Regional Court (25VR 3123/71). The main hearing was broken off after two days due to the resignation of the public prosecutors and was not resumed. Lerch, who had been Globocnik's adjutant in Lublin, had been running the Tanzcafé Lerch in Klagenfurt since the 1950s, where the well-known Austrian jazz singer Udo Jürgens began his career.
- 103 ÖSTA-1037208/0001-ADR/2013, 21 September 1944, State Finance Directorate for Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland.
- 104 Josef Strabl (ed.), *Wir Sportreporter. 100 Jahre österreichische Sportpresse* (Vienna: 1980), 49–51.
- 105 IKG to Erich Kamper, 25 January 1982.
- 106 Kamper, "Gestorben im Vernichtungslager Izbica," in *Olympisches Feuer*, vol. 32, no. 3–4, 1982.
- 107 Vienna-Simmering, Town Hall Correspondence, 6 November 2001.