

## CARL DIEM AND THE OLYMPICS

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### Abstract

Carl Diem (1882-1962) was an important sports bureaucrat of his century. He was a planner and principal organizer of the Berlin Games. He served to the Olympic movement from the 1912 Stockholm Games until the year of his death. He was an energetic sports educator and traveled all around the world for consulting to various countries about sports. The purpose of this study was to examine Carl Diem's life and his creative projects about sport and the Olympics. The subject was searched based upon the literature. As a result, it could be said that Carl Diem is one of the most important people in German sport history and in the Olympic history.

**Key Words:** Olympics, German Sports.

### Introduction

No critical biography of Diem (1882-1962) has been published to date, although many sport historians presented studies on the occasion of Diem's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1982 when there was a colloquium in his honor. Hajo Bennett published a lengthy study in 1987, but Diem can still be considered one of the most disputed figures in the history of modern German sport (H. Ueberhorst, 1990).

Much is known of Carl Diem, one of the most noted figures, if not the most noted name, in German Olympic history. He was an avid athlete as a young man. Denigrating the value of his country's powerful but archaic Turner Sport Movement, an institution entrenched in the Fatherland for over a century, Diem became a dedicated enthusiast and advocator of a German sporting movement parallel to those developing rapidly in Anglo-Saxon nations. Diem followed a career path in teaching and sport administration, rising rapidly to head what became known as the German National Sports University, founded in Berlin in 1920 and moved to Cologne following World War II. He traveled widely, became a prolific lecturer and writer, and often consulted on sport and Olympic matters, particularly in Europe. As it is well known, he was a driving force behind the organization of the Games of the 11<sup>th</sup> Olympiad in Berlin, an event bathed in the glory of a "new Germany," a nation destined to lead, as Diem himself put it, "a victory

charge for a better Europe" (R. K. Barney & G. Paton, 2002).

His accomplishments were various, grandiose and so numerous as to seem in retrospect impossible of carrying out for an ordinary mortal. He was a consultant to several European nations besides his own on government sports policy. He was the inspirer and partial financier for the German excavations at ancient Olympia which recommenced in 1937. Some of his many friends compared Diem to Goethe. But unlike that other German titan whose personality soured as he aged. Diem was dynamic, accessible and cheerful to the end. The climax of Carl Diem's life was his successful staging of the Olympic Games of 1936. Not only did he manage a huge staff in a time of great political turmoil, he was a diplomat who eased the fears of foreigners and launched novel artistic trappings for the Olympics, including the first torch run from Olympia. He also wrote or edited most of the more solid publications that appeared on the occasion of Germany's first international sports festival (R. D. Mandell, 1974).

By 1938 Diem was director of the International Olympic Institute in Berlin. In 1940 he declared that "the reorientation of European sport has its geographical and spiritual center in Germany." In 1941 he proposed a stadium capable of holding 200,000 spectators so that Berlin would become "the crossroads of world sport." In 1942 he gave a lecture in Paris titled "The Olympic Idea in the New Europe" (J. Hoberman, 1995).



Carl Diem (V. Kluge, 2002)



Establishing of Sports University in Cologne (1947) (V. Kluge, 2002)

Diem's self-proclaimed goal was to involve as many people as possible in sports, and to convince them that sport was important to their lives and could be practiced well into old age. He was able to achieve this by being elected to responsible positions such as the presidency of the *Deutsche Sportbehörde für Athletik* (1908–1913, the predecessor of the German Track and Field Federation), as the full-time paid secretary general of the organizing committee of the 1916 Olympic Games, and as a member of the German Olympic Committee. As the head of the German Sport Federation (1917–1933, *Deutscher Reichsausschuß für Leibesübungen—DRA*), he was responsible for many initiatives on behalf of sport during the Weimar Republic. Although the ground had been prepared by others prior to World War I, without Diem the rapid growth of the sports movement would not have taken place in this way. His initiatives included the *Reichsjugendwettkämpfe*, an athletic triathlon (sprinting, jumping, throwing) for all school children; the *Reichssportabzeichen*, a multi-performance badge for everybody specifying differing performances by age and sex; and a *Reichsspielplatzgesetz*, a bill to standardize the available space for sport. In addition, he lobbied for a daily gym class, and for the inclusion of physical education into the *Abitur*, the final high school exam. He was the main organizer of the *Deutsche Hochschule für Leibesübungen*, the first German College of Physical Education, responsible for the preparation of sports (not gymnastics) teachers, and research into the scientific foundations of sport. In 1922 he created the *Deutsche Kampfspiele*, National Olympic Games for the period Germany was excluded from the International Olympic Games (1920–1924) (H. Ueberhorst, 1990).

### Developments in his period

Germany was to have staged the 1916 Olympics in Berlin. There were even negotiations to have the first ever Olympic Winter Games in Berlin and on the Feldberg in the Black Forest in the same year. The job of selecting and preparing the athletes and first full-time administrator for the German Olympic Committee and Sports Federation was given to Carl Diem. In 1921 a Sport Badge was introduced for men, women, and young people. It

created considerable interest and has been in existence ever since. Daily physical education lessons were demanded but a small increase was all that could be achieved. A Reich's school conference for physical education in 1920 helped to strengthen the role of sport versus *Turnen* in the school system and eventually in the rest of society. A *Turnen* and sport duty year was demanded to replace compulsory military training banned after the war. Although it did not become mandatory, it increased the public awareness of sport. Annual school championships were successfully introduced for both sexes emphasizing mass participation and athletic quality in a wide range of track and field events. Tax deductions and reduced railway fares for sports clubs were introduced. A Sports Space Bill demanding 5 sq.m. of space for everyone was brought in—and failed. But it encouraged cities to increase considerably the amount of sports space available for everybody (A. Krüger, 2001).

In 1933 no one really had known the Nazi position in sports. Thus, the first half of 1933 was replete with action by traditional leaders of the bourgeois sports movement to jockey for a good position under the new circumstances. Carl Diem even applied for the job of the *Reichssportführer* (Empire's Sport Leader), supported by military, his old friend and training pal Walter von Reichenau, who later became an IOC-member. Despite such "jockeying," Nazis chose Hans von Tschammer und Osten to be responsible for all sports in the newly created office of *Reichssportführer*. Tschammer und Osten was a brutal regional Storm Trooper (*SA*) leader and elected as a member of parliament for the central German district of Anhalt. His storm troopers had killed several workers, sportsmen, and children. At the same time Tschammer und Osten was made a government official in the Ministry of the Interior - where elite sport was bureaucratically arranged in Germany. He eventually rose as high as under-secretary of state. From the start the Nazis developed two main strategies: 1-to assure propaganda within Germany, and 2-to break the cultural isolation of the Reich's government by propaganda abroad. To achieve these functions a Propaganda Committee was formed under the chairmanship of a *Propaganda Ministry* official called Haegert. He had easy access

to Goebbels and kept his boss informed of all matters related to the Olympic Games. This Committee functioned as part of the Olympic Games Organising Committee (OC) chaired by Lewald and for which Diem, as Secretary General, took central responsibility. Represented on the OC, were the city of Berlin, the German Railway Office (as official German travel agency abroad), and all other official German institutions that might be affected by the Olympics. The Propaganda Committee of the OC, chaired by Haegert, became most influential in the struggle for the soul of the German people at home and the image of Nazism abroad. It was this concerted propaganda effort that made the Olympic Games of Berlin the first truly modern Games (A. Krüger & G. August, 1998).

Whereas the Nazi regime showed itself relatively well behaved in the days prior to and during the Berlin Games, it sought immediately afterwards to extend systematically its influence over the Olympic Movement, not altogether unsuccessfully, as borne out, for example, by the following: 1-the founding of the International Olympic Institute in Berlin (it was financed by the Ministry of the Interior and placed under the authority of the Reichssportführer), 2-the incorporation of the IOC's official bulletin into Carl Diem's *Olympische Rundschau*, 3-the award of the Olympic Cup to the *Krufft durch Freude* association, 4-the presentation of the Olympic Diploma to Leni Riefenstahl for her film about the 1936 Games, and 5-Werner Klingeberg's assumption of the position of IOC Secretary General. The IOC was obliged to look on helplessly as the half-Jewish Theodore Lewald, whose prestige within the Committee had reached its apogee with the splendour of the Berlin Games, was forced to resign on the instructions of the National Socialists in order to make way for a party member, Walter von Reichenau, who, by an irony of fate, became a "resident" of Baillet-Latour's country in May 1940 as Commander of the Germany's 6<sup>th</sup> Army. Lewald's successor on the IOC's Executive Committee was the convinced National Socialist Karl Ritter von Halt (K. Lennartz, 1994).

From 1938-45 Diem was director of the International Olympic Institute, an honorary appointment with little political influence. He was also, however, the director of the foreign affairs section of the *NS Reichsbund für Leibesübungen* [National Socialist Association for Physical Culture] (1939-1945), but he was also close to *Reichssportführer* Hans von Tschammer und Osten, and was his frequent traveling companion. V. Tschammer made Diem responsible for the German team to the *Lingjade* in Stockholm (1939) and the preparation of the European Sports Conference in Munich in 1942. An European Sport Federation under Italian and German leadership was to be formed with Carl Diem as its secretary general. V. Tschammer also asked Hitler's help in getting a full professorship for Diem at the University of Berlin.

This did not materialize due to opposition to the Minister of Education (H. Ueberhorst, 1990).

### Carl Diem and the olympics

The symbols of the Olympics – the five rings, the torch relay, the flame, the oath, the hymn, and the anthems – which were introduced in the inter-war period, reflect the ultranationalism of the time, and have political overtones. In 1936, Carl Diem initiated the torch relay to symbolize international 'connection' and 'communication'. It was none other than Spiridon Louis who presented Hitler with a sign of peace, an olive branch from Olympia (N. Crowther, 2004). The Olympic symbols which are displayed, during the Games; for it is precisely these ceremonies, rituals and symbols, and the festival character which they confer on the Games, which distinguish the latter, as a four-yearly festival of youth, from an ordinary world sports championships- which is what the Games would be without those ceremonies, rituals and symbols. Carl Diem expressed the same idea with even deeper feeling when he wrote in 1961: "*The Olympic Games cannot be considered as an assemblage of sports competitions; neither can they be considered as events designed to test the limits of human capacity. On the contrary, they are especially concerned with the development of the aesthetic dimension and of the beauty which emerge on the occasion of these festivals and form an integral part of it*". It may thus be inferred that both Pierre de Coubertin and Diem were seeking to develop the game aspect within sport and to create a festival and a celebration in an atmosphere of excitement and emulation. They created modern symbols designed to assist direct understanding among people and they shaped the Olympic Games into a major element of universal culture (C. Durantez, 1985).

The first modern Olympics had no torch relays and this can mean that we overlook the fact that this element of Olympic symbolism also stems from ancient times, although not only in Olympia. Ancient torch races, *lampedromia* (λαμπαδρομια), were initiated in Greece on a religious basis even before the first Olympic Games were staged. But it was precisely during this same first ancient Olympic Games in 776 B.C. that torch races were introduced. When pilgrims arrived at Olympia to worship Zeus they competed for the privilege of lighting the flame for the great sacrifice in Zeus's honor. In order to select such a person there was a race of nearly 200 meters, ending at the spot where the High Priest waited, holding the torch in his hand. Then the torch was passed to the winner of the race and he was awarded the honor of lighting the fire at the altar. This is the basic difference between the ancient and contemporary Olympic flames – the ancient one was used in the temple, while the modern one is lit directly at the stadium (W. Liponski, 2008).

During the Olympics of Antwerp (1920) and Paris (1920) there was no Olympic flame above

the stadium. There was one however in Amsterdam (1928) and Los Angeles (1932). Those torches were lit without any greater ceremony and without, of course, any relay. It was in 1936 during the Berlin Olympic Games that the Olympic Torch, as suggested by Carl Diem, was initiated and continued until today, finally linking the modern tradition with ancient *lampaderomia* (W. Liponski, 2008). According to Diem, these races (*lampas*, *lampadedromia*) must originally have developed as competitions in connection with funerals, and their initial purpose must have been to transport a flame from a sacred fire to some place in the hills. Subsequently devotional races of this kind must gradually have taken on a more general ritual significance, but they always started at one altar and ended at another. Relay races with torches were not always conducted on foot; in *The Republic of Plato* we find a passage referring to races of this kind on horse-back. In Athens the famous relay races were held over a distance of 1,600 metres, from the altar to Eros standing in the Plato Academy - where the fire was lit to the honorary necropolis of Kerameikos, whither it was taken. Diem makes the following comment on the bas-relief in the British Museum in London, which depicts the Thracian deity Artemis Bendis - represented by the goddess Artemis-receiving the victor with a torch: "*At the goddess's side there are two bearded athletes, dressed in tunics, one of them handing over a torch. He is followed by eight other athletes in two teams of four. The first one is also carrying a torch. Thus we have two torches, two instructors and two teams of four men, representing a 4 X 400 meter race over a distance of 1.6 kilometers*" (C. Durantez, 1985). According to Henri Pouret, the Olympic Torch is a symbolic gift which Greek antiquity has passed to us. Pouret rightly associates the Olympic flame with the myth of Prometheus: "the symbol of the Hellenic legend teaches us that fire was stolen from the Gods and offered to the humans". And he continues: "What a beautiful symbol for men and for Olympism, this relay-race, which becomes reality, a connecting link between the athletes (W. Liponski, 2008).

While the Olympic flame was introduced at the 1928 Olympic Games, a torch relay did not precede the lighting of the flame cauldron. However, at the Closing Ceremony, an "unknown hand spelled out on the scoreboard "May the Olympic torch pursue its way through the ages". This may have given ideas to the organisers of the 1936 Olympics to introduce a torch relay ceremony

at those Games. Whilst Borgers (1996) concedes that it has not been possible to determine who should be given credit for the introduction of the flame at the 1928 Olympic Games, Carl Diem is generally given credit for the idea of introducing the torch relay at the 1936 Olympic Games. Another theory proposed by Borgers (1996) and Müller (1996) is that the idea of such an event may have been sown in the minds of the German NOC by Pierre de Coubertin as early as 1912, and may have also influenced the organisers of the 1928 Amsterdam Olympic Games (J. Cahill, 1998).

An interesting case happened in the summer of 1996. After having consulted the relevant sources properly and intensively, Walter Borgers, member of the Diem-Archives in Cologne, published a documentation on the torch relay on behalf of the IOC (Olympic Torch Relays, Kassel, Fuhr 1996). He was able to prove in detail that the idea had been developed by Carl Diem in the 1920s and that it had become consolidated since 1934. On the occasion of the IOC-Session 1934 in Athens, Lewald in his office as president of the Berlin organizing committee and IOC-member, proposed to stage a torch relay from Greece to Berlin. The IOC agreed to this proposal. After this session, on a trip of the IOC from Athens to Olympia, this plan was discussed during a siesta in Tegea on 22 May (K. Lennartz, 1994).

As indicated earlier, the details, the symbolism and the aesthetic character of the Flame ceremony were all imagined by Diem. With the assistance of a Greek (John Ketseas), he studied the development of the ceremony of taking the first flame in the enclave of the Sacred Altis. He himself worked out in Germany the designs for the instruments to be used. The general lines of the ceremony were worked out by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) at successive meetings. The torch used in Berlin looked like a metal rod; the handle was shielded by a plate or guard. The model was conceived by Diem on the basis of designs on ancient pottery; it was executed by the artist Lemeke and manufactured free of charge by Krupp (C. Durantez, 1985). The torches were encased in a reinforced covering in order to give them the required durability. The length of the torch including a cone-formed grip was 27.7 inches, its diameter 1.15 inches and its weight 1.5 pounds. The top of the torch consisted of a special inflammable substance so that it could be rapidly ignited when the flame was transferred from runner to runner (OCOGs. 1937).



The Olympic Torch Holder (OCOGs. 1937)

The first torch relay to be found in connection with Carl Diem was staged by students of the Deutsche Hochschule für Leibesübungen in 1922 to commemorate his 40<sup>th</sup> birthday and simultaneously the beginning of the Deutsche Kampfspiele which were a kind of national Olympics. In Diem's estate there are various documents relating to the beginning of the planning for an Olympia-Berlin torch relay (K. Lennartz, 1987). The entire ceremony was conceived by Diem as a simple and moving progression of steps of great aesthetic purity, carried out in an atmosphere of deep spirituality. While on the way from Olympia to the seat of the Games, the runners generally stop at nightfall. Diem had imagined that halts or rest breaks of this kind might be made in places where there were ancient monuments or buildings in which the flame could be deposited in bowls specially placed there for the purpose. Diem hoped that in this way the inhabitants of the city in question might feel the call of the spirit of the ancient world which gave birth to the Games - a call symbolised by the fire crackling in the great bowl in the shadow of the night. The practical development, and the aesthetic dimension, of the ceremonial of the bringing and the lighting of the Olympic fire, were conceived and worked out in detail by Carl Diem to a high degree of appropriateness and perfection. The ceremony of the fire, which has taken place in Olympia every four years since 21 July 1936, and all the ceremonial surrounding its onward journey-relays, festivals, protection of the flame, etc.-have remained practically without change in the form in which the German professor of genius originally formulated them. He had a thorough knowledge of the practice of sport in classical times, and he built up the modern ceremony on the basis of acts with a similar content performed in ancient times. Thus to light the fire initially a parabolic mirror is used which concentrates the sun's rays on the fuel and sets it alight; this recalls the old conical bronze vessel which the winner of the first race at Olympia used to bear away the flame from the altar of Hestia; the flame was subsequently kept burning in

the Prytanea until the next Olympiad, when the fire was allowed to go out, the altar was cleaned and fresh wood was placed on it, to be lit from the flame brought by the new Olympic victor (C. Durantez, 1985).

Coubertin was deeply attracted by the new Olympic symbol which had come into being thanks to the imagination of "my great friend, that genius Carl Diem". At the closing ceremony he addressed the runners who had brought the fire from Olympia as follows: *"And you, athletes, remember the fire, lit by the rays of the sun, which you brought from Olympia to give light and warmth to your time. Be careful to keep that fire alight in the bottom of your hearts so that it may still be burning brightly at the other end of the earth when you meet in four years' time to celebrate the 12<sup>th</sup> Olympiad on the distant shores of the great Pacific Ocean!"* (C. Durantez, 1985).

The German organising committee made a great effort to provide a worthy form of Olympic ceremony and on the trip to the IOC session in Athens (1934) discussed a uniform and other paraphernalia that would distinguish IOC members. Diem, who regarded the IOC as "the high court of body culture", reasoned that such distinguishing paraphernalia ought to resemble a university chancellor's official garb, if not a robe, then a large golden chain. The IOC agreed. The Berlin sculptor Walter E. Lemcke, who also designed the Olympic bell for the 1936 Games, was commissioned to design the chain in cooperation with the president of the Berlin Games Organising Committee, Theodor Lewald. Six medallions representing ancient Greek athletes are embedded in the bronze gilded chain. At the 1937 session in Warsaw it was decided that the chains were to remain at the site of the last Games (similar to the storing of the Olympic flag) and then presented to the IOC members at the session directly preceding the following Games. It was decided that the Olympic chains should be worn only at official events during the Olympic Games and not at normal sessions. The city in which the Olympic Games are held stores them until the next Olympic Games in the same

manner as the Olympic flag. Following the 1936 Games, the chains remained in Berlin and on the day after the Games closed, were presented to Berlin's Mayor, Lippert, together with the Olympic flag (K. Lennartz, 1997).

On the eve of the opening of the Games, before this very backdrop, Carl Diem staged a spellbinding choral performance entitled "Olympic Youth". The performance was a *mises en scene* of the link between the ideas of "youth" and of "dying for the Fatherland", ideas which at the same time

were embodied in the architecture. Whereas the first three acts offered themes featuring the colorful and playful hustle and bustle of children and youths, the fourth and final act revealed "the true meaning" (Carl Diem) of the Games. It showed the "struggle of heroes" and the "lamentation of death". A solitary speaker dressed in white, rhapsodized: The holy meaning of all play: triumph of the Fatherland! The Fatherland's highest commandment: self sacrifice and death in times of crisis (T. Alkemeyer & A. Richartz, 1995).



IOC President Baillet Latour (L) and Theodor Lewald (R) at Berlin Games (K. Lennartz, 1997)



The Chancellor's Chain-German Sport University (K. Lennartz, 1997)

In 1938, Diem had been successful in beginning to publish and edit *Olympic Bulletin* (formerly and presently, *Olympic Review*). Renamed *Olympische Rundschau*, it was printed only in German and circulated without cost to all members of the Olympic family throughout the

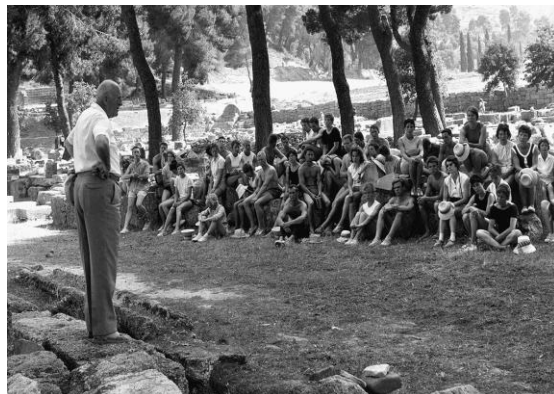
world, Diem published the Baron's last letter to him in the first edition under his editorship. In 1938, too, Diem was successful in carrying out another of Coubertin's last wishes, transferring from Lausanne and establishing in Berlin, the concept of an International Olympic Institute. Luckily for the

survival of the early archival record of the Modern Olympic Movement under the aegis of Pierre de Coubertin, Diem was not immediately able to effect the transfer to Berlin of the Modern Olympic Movement's archival records and papers. But this act he fully intended to accomplish at a future date (R. K. Barney & G. Paton, 2002).

The concept of "Olympic Studies Centre" was actually formulated by Pierre de Coubertin shortly before his death in 1937: "I think that an Olympic Studies Centre [...] would help more than anything in the maintenance and progress of my project and in protecting it from the diversions that I fear may affect it". Following on from this initiative, Carl Diem created the International Olympic Institute in 1938. In this early stage, "Olympism" referred to a blend of three main values: Greek classicism (humanism), the value of sport in the education of young people (education) and new international relations of industrial society (modernity), thus transferring the early experiences of the universal expositions to the Olympic Games (M. Moragas, 2006). Pierre de Coubertin, who was bitter and tired of being ignored during that period and encouraged by Carl Diem, proposed that an Olympic Institute be created in Berlin. He intended to donate to it all his personal archives concerning Olympism. The Institute was established in 1938, after Coubertin's death in 1937, but Coubertin had

since decided to bequeath his archives to the IOC. The Carl-Diem archives in Cologne now contain a large proportion of the archives of German Olympic history (C. Bianchi, 2002).

The practical manifestation of the educational vision of Pierre de Coubertin was the creation of the International Olympic Academy in Ancient Olympia, on a site a javelin's throw from the ancient stadium, due to the efforts of Carl Diem and Jean Ketseas. The International Olympic Academy (IOA) was established in 1961. At its first Session, thirty students from twenty-four countries took part. This occasion coincided with the end of the excavation of the ancient stadium at Olympia - an idea of Carl Diem's in 1957 - and its opening to the public. The entire IOC, after holding its Session in Athens, came to Olympia for the event. Participants in the early years lived and worked in tented accommodation, but there is now on the IOA premises a substantial campus, including accommodation for over 200 people, large lecture hall with multi-translation facility, a library, study rooms, and many sporting and social facilities. The centrepiece of IOA activity was to be a yearly meeting of the Main International Session for Young Participants, which would be the place from which the Olympic ideals would be renewed and taken out into the world (J. Parry, 2003).



Olympic Academy (1961) (V. Kluge, 2002)



80 year old Carl Diem with students from the Sport University (1962) (V. Kluge, 2002)

### Conclusion

As the founding rector of the German College of Sport in Cologne (he received the title

and position of a full professor) Diem was honored by many clubs, organizations, federations, and by the Federal German Government, receiving the

highest decorations. It can truly be said that no other person in this century has provided German sport with as many fruitful ideas as Carl Diem. That a man like Diem was attracted to the movement is hardly surprising; as we have seen, Coubertin's potent combination of sport, international competition, pagan ritual, and body cultism had long appealed to sports-minded German males for whom racial nationalism and a right-wing military outlook were wholly compatible with devoted service both to the Olympic movement and to the Nazi regime (J. Hoberman, 1995). He was invited to the London 1948 Olympics as a guest of honor—the only German at the Games—and was very active in founding the International Olympic Academy at Olympia on behalf of the IOC. He also made the organizational and technical preparation for the excavation of the ancient stadium at Olympia (H. Ueberhorst, 1990).

Diem, who enlisted in the German army on August 1, 1914, the first day of The Great War, served in Belgium and France during the entire period of the war. He was seriously wounded at St. Quentin, recovered, and fought courageously in the bitter battles at Champagne and the Argonne (R. K. Barney & G. Paton, 2002). He also survived the II. World War and became the “Nestor” of postwar West German sport, his political past either ignored or unknown. As a self-styled cosmopolitan in the German nationalist sense of the term, Diem regarded himself and was seen by many others as a German humanist, a “homo universalis,” in the tradition of Goethe. At the same time, his political record has been concealed or falsified by sympathetic German colleagues within the sports studies establishment. A contributing factor to the successful reinvention of Carl Diem has been his image as a deep thinker and even an anti-Nazi. In 1957 the publicist of the German Gymnastic Federation called him “the first and perhaps the last universal spirit produced by modern physical culture.” Fifteen years later, the same official called Diem one of the “great cultural figures of our century”. In 1962, Willi Daume, the other grand old man of the postwar West German sport revival and a longtime IOC insider, called Diem “the most creative and far-reaching personality” of modern sport. As late as 1986, the newly elected president of the German Sports Federation (DSB) hailed Diem's alleged resistance to the Nazi takeover of German sport”. In 1961, Diem served as cofounder of the International Olympic Academy in Greece (J. Hoberman, 1995).

Carl Diem possessed the most active and most creative mind in the sports movement (A. Krüger, 2001). He maintained that all of his actions were in the best interest of sport and of no political significance. By claiming that sport was outside the political sphere he was able to disclaim responsibility for this chapter of German history. To quote from his *Ein Leben für den Sport* (A Life for Sport): “In summary, one may say that sport was able to preserve itself almost completely from

the political corruption of the Nazi era. Sport succeeded in this better than other spheres of culture. The rise of sport, particularly the athletic successes of the 1936 Olympic Games, has been the result of the systematic work of the Weimar Republic. Under National Socialism a system which had been already growing developed further”. In this *World History of Physical Education and Sport* (1960), he even claims that Hitler allowed the sport movement to function independently (H. Ueberhorst, 1990).

The Olympic Games of 1936, notwithstanding the political situation at the time, will go down in the history of sport as an Olympiad in which the organisation approached perfection, which was most deeply impregnated with the Olympic spirit and at which the spectators were most enthusiastic, most open in the expression of their feelings and most numerous. Carl Diem played an important and decisive part in ensuring the success of the Games as a sporting event; he succeeded in coping with difficulties and incidents of all kinds and managed to keep the Games within the framework of festivity and spirituality he had imagined for them (C. Durantez, 1985). Although Diem's role in the Third Reich is still disputed today, there is no doubt that he organized the Olympic Summer Games the way the Nazis wanted them. His drama *Olympische Jugend* (Olympic Youth) was staged at the Olympic Stadium on the evening of the opening day, featuring the themes of heroic struggle and death (H. Ueberhorst, 1990).

The established, aging disciples of Diem have held to the view that Diem's sports education was and essentially humanistic. They support Diem's contention, (after 1950 or so) that the Olympic Games of 1936 were an oasis in a difficult time. Indeed, Diem's triumphs and the resultant applause and other rewards, he received in the first years of Adolf Hitler's Reich seem to have led him into an apparent personality transformation. He tended to see the Nazis as respectable heirs to the grand traditions of German culture. His rhetoric picked up the pseudo-Nietzschian enthusiasm favored by the official propagandists. In fact, one might believe from much of Diem's writing in the period 1937-1941 that his plans for sport had always been paramilitary, super-patriotic and totalitarian (R. D. Mandell, 1974).

Diem needed a solid base from which he could strengthen the German sports movement, so he founded the *Deutsche Reichshochschule für Leibesübungen* (Central Institute of Physical Education and Sport). An ardent fan of everything in American sport, he copied the American way of running their physical education and athletic departments. He became the head administrator and lecturer for organizational theory. It was here that sport-related research was ahead of its time. The athletic heart, previously considered a physical risk, was thought to be an asset. The American spirit of the roaring twenties was inspired by behaviourism and so the athletes were considered “Mortal

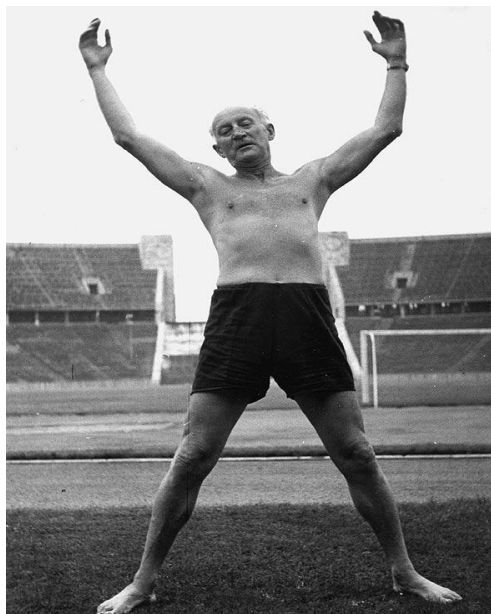


Engines” (A. Krüger, 2001). The debate sawulders and occasionally flares up. Carl Diem dedicated his great World History of Sport to Willi Daume, later to be the president of the organizing committee of the Summer Olympics of 1972. On the magnificent site in Munich, streets, squares, and boulevards were named after great sports heroes of the past. There Pierre de Coubertin, Spiridon Loues, Jesse Owens and even Helene Meyer, the half-Jewish

fencer in 1936, are immortalized. But so equivocal is the reputation of Germany's great sports philosopher that Dauae decided he could not be celebrated at an international sports festival offered by the Germans of our time. Significantly and perhaps sadly, there is no Carl-Diem-strasse at the site of Germany's second Olympic Games (R. D. Mandell, 1974).

<b>Carl Diem's Life &amp; Activities</b>
24 <sup>th</sup> June 1882 Was born in Würzburg
1887 Moved to Berlin
1899 Founder of the Sports Club Marcomannia Berlin
1903 Secretary of the German Sports Authority for Athletics
1904 Founder and 1905-1920 Chairman of the Association of Berlin (later Brandenburg) Athletic Associations (VBAV)
1906 Team coaches and journalist at the Athens Olympic Games
1907-1913 Editor of the newspaper publisher Scherl
1908 Organizer of the 1 <sup>st</sup> Indoor Sporting Event and 1 <sup>st</sup> Large-relay Race Potsdam-Berlin
1908-1913 Chairman of the German Sports Authority for Athletics
1911 Draft “Law Playground”, 1 <sup>st</sup> Text
1912 Head of Delegation of the athletes and journalists during the Olympic Games in Stockholm
1912/13 Introduction of the Reich Sports Badge
1913-1916 Secretary-General for the Olympic Games in Berlin 1916
1913 First visit to Baron Pierre de Coubertin Study in the U.S.
1914 Head of the German team at the Baltic Games in Malmö Participation in the Olympic Congress in Paris
1916 Draft “Sports Compulsory Law”
1917 Draft “Playground Law”, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Text Memorandum introduction of daily gym class Proposal for the appointment of a committee for scientific Research
1917-1933 Secretary General of the German Reich Physical Education Committee (DRAFL)
1919 Application for the National Youth Competitions Imperial Playground Law Memorandum to the German National Assembly Memorandum German University for Physical Exercise
1920 1 <sup>st</sup> Reich Youth competitions
192-1933 Vice President of the German College of Physical Berlin (DHFL)
1921 Honorary Doctorate from the Medical Faculty of the University of Berlin
1922 Implementation of the Germans Fight in Berlin
1923 Head of the German team at the Gothenburg Fighting games 11.06.-15.07. (within the city 300 <sup>th</sup> anniversary)
1924 Organization of the First German Conference on Physical Education in Berlin Plan for a German Sports Forum
1925 Secretary of the German Olympic Committee Organization of the Conference of Physical Education of Women in Berlin Delegate to the Olympic Congress in Prague
1926 Memorandum to the daily gym class Reichstag
1928 Accompanied the German team at the Winter Olympics in St.Moritz Organization of the session for gymnastics teacher in Berlin Chef de Mission at the Olympic Games in Amsterdam
1929 Head of a German track and field team (Trip to Japan / China) Study in the U.S.
1930 Marries Liselotte Bail (the couple were born four children Diem) Organization of the Olympic Congress in Berlin
1930-1933 Lecturer at the University of Berlin
1931-1937 Secretary of the Organizing Committee for the XI. Olympics in Berlin
1932 Chef de Mission at the Olympic Games in Los Angeles Guest lectures at the University of Los Angeles Representative of Germany at the International Congress for Recreation
1933 Adviser of the Turkish Government to draw up guidelines for the youth and school sports 1 <sup>st</sup> May released from all teaching careers Dissolution of the German Reich Committee for Physical Exercise
1934 memorandum Olympic Torch Relay Berlin Implementation of the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin Design Tokyo Olympic Torch Relay (Continued) 1 <sup>st</sup> Draft on the establishment of the Olympic Academy in Greece Advising the Bulgarian Government to draw up guidelines for the youth and school sports Corresponding member of the American Academy of Physical Education
1938-1945 Director of the Internatone Olympic Institute (IOI) in Berlin
1939 Secretary of the Organizing Committee for the planned Olympic Winter Games in 1940 in Garmisch-Partenkirchen
1939 Appointment as provisional leader of the Gau of the National Socialist Reich League for overseas Gymnastics

1939-1945 Lecture tours to the soldiers at the front
1939 Organizer of the German Riding Team
1940 Member of the German Archaeological Institute
1945-1947 Director of the Institute of Physical Education and School Hygiene at the University of Berlin
1947-1962 Co-founder and principal of the Sports University in Cologne (from 1965: German Sport University Cologne)
1938-1945 Director of the International Olympic Institute (IOI) in Berlin
1939 Secretary of the Organizing Committee for the planned Olympic Winter Games in 1940 in Garmisch-Partenkirchen
1939 Appointment as provisional leader of the Gau of the National Socialist Reich League for overseas Gymnastics
1948 Honorary Professor at the Faculty of the University of Cologne
Second memorandum on the establishment of the Olympic Academy in Greece
Guest of honor at the Olympic Games in London
1949 host of the 2 <sup>nd</sup> Lingiade
Founding member and secretary of the National Olympic Committee (until 1952)
1949-53 Voluntary Adviser at the Federal Ministry of Sports, Interior introduction of the Federal Youth Games
1949-54 1 <sup>st</sup> Chairman of the Rhenish Gymnastics Federation
1951 Co-founder of the German Olympic societies (DOG)
1952 Head of the first Olympic Youth trip to Helsinki
1954 Adviser of the Icelandic government on matters of sport
Initiative to establish the practice outpatient facility of the German Sports University in Cologne at the Sports DOG-leader of the first study trip to Greece
1955 ten-year plan for the Übungsstättenbau
Adviser to the Indian government in matters of sport
1956 Member of the German team for the Olympic Games in Melbourne.
Awarded the Diploma of the IOC Olympic
The first initiative to found the World Council for Physical Education and Sport (ICSP), later Council of Sport and Sport Science (CIEPSS)
1959-1961 Advisor to the Japanese Olympic Committee for the Games in Tokyo and Sapporo in 1964
1960 Advisor to the Government of the Union of South Africa in matters of sport
Co-founder of the World Council for Physical Education and Sport in Rome
Guest of honor at the Olympic Games in Rome
Beginning construction of the Sports University in Cologne
1961 Opening Session of the International Olympic Academy (IOA) and handing over of the exposed ancient Stadium at Olympia
Adviser to the Argentine Government in matters of sport
Honorary doctorate from the George Williams College Chicago
Honorary Citizen of Olympia
Died in 1962, 17 December in Cologne (V. Kluge, 2002)



Carl Diem is in Olympic Stadium in Berlin (V. Kluge, 2002)



Diem with teachers of the University in the early 50s (V. Kluge, 2002)

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