

## FROM CIVIL RIGHTS TO SCIENTIFIC RACISM: THE VARIETY OF AMERICAN RESPONSES TO THE BERLIN OLYMPICS THE LEGEND OF JESSE OWENS AND THE 'RACE QUESTION'

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Jesse Owens' exploits at the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin created an American athletic legend. They also fashioned him, according to most historians, one of the most important symbols in the mid-twentieth century United States of the changing racial dynamics between African-American culture and the European-American dominated national culture. As historian William J. Baker, Owens' best biographer, noted, Owens' Olympic victories transformed him into an icon for American popular culture and pushed him onto the pages of even the most ardently racist segregationist newspapers in the American South.<sup>1</sup>

Most historians have cast Owens as a race-relations pioneer. They generally paint him, along with other athletes such as Joe Louis and Jackie Robinson, entertainers such as Paul Robeson, Marian Anderson, Lena Home and Louis Armstrong, and literati such as James Baldwin and Richard Wright, as one of those extraordinary blacks whose accomplishments in the 1930s and 1940s impressed even white America and paved the way for the Civil Rights movement of 1950s and 1960s. American history textbooks mention Owens in that context.<sup>2</sup> A recent documentary about the 1930s portrays Owens as a hero welcomed by mainstream white America.<sup>3</sup> In spite of fact that Owens found his life limited by racism when he returned to the United States from Berlin--Hollywood did not want a black "Tarzan," amateur athletic officials did not want a black sprinter who refused to do their bidding, and politi-

cal insiders did not want a black leader who still supported the "party of Lincoln" against the growing power of the Democratic Party in African-American communities--Owens even viewed himself as a racial trailblazer whose victories helped persuade many white Americans to extend the promises of equality and liberty to African Americans.<sup>4</sup>

While the traditional view of Owens as a precursor of the Civil Rights era certainly contains merit, the racial debates engendered by Owens' four gold medals in 1936 produced a much more complicated legacy. Owens became a symbol to a variety of groups seeking to alter, or defend, American ideas about race. The American press heralded Owens' achievements. *Time* anointed Owens as the "No. 1 hero" of the Olympics.<sup>5</sup> *News Week* cried "that the ebony shoulders of Jesse Owens tower above any other individual who competed."<sup>6</sup> His four gold medals, the performance of the rest the United States' "black auxiliaries," and their assault on the doctrines of "Aryan supremacy" sparked international interest.<sup>7</sup>

Rumors abounded in Berlin that Adolf Hitler intentionally snubbed Owens and the rest of the American black athletes since he did not want to meet with people whom Nazi race philosophy considered "subhuman."<sup>8</sup> Editorials in Dr. Goebbels newspaper, *Der Angriff*, fueled the dispute. "Actually, the Yankees, heretofore invincible, have been the great disappointment of the games," surmised *Der Angriff*. "Without these members of the black race--these auxiliary helpers--a German would have won the broad jump," boasted the paper. The dependence on American blacks confirmed the Nazi suspicion that "the fighting power of European athletes, especially the Germans, has increased beyond all comparison," in relation to that of American whites.

The racial controversies surrounding Owens and the other "black auxiliaries" were not restricted to Nazi party propaganda. "There is something extremely humorous, as well as entirely satisfactory, in the way that Negro Americans are carrying off all the honors in Berlin," quipped Oswald Garrison Villard in *The Nation*. "Already it is clear that if the United States triumphs at the end of the games it will be because of the representatives who in many states of the Union are disenfranchised; who are segregated and discriminated against in many parts, and in all cities, of the Union," continued Villard. He

found their victories “highly amusing” in light of the fact that they took place in front of the leader “of spurious Aryanism, so that noble champion of sports and of humanity was compelled to congratulate the German winners in his private room at the stadium in order not to have to shake hands with any of the dark victors from the United States.” Villard had bought into the media-created myth about the supposed Owens-Hitler confrontation.

Villard thought that the triumphs of American blacks would have an effect in United States as well. “Nearly all of them are or have been university students; they have shown stamina, courage, good manners, self-control, loyalty to the team, and in the reports of the drinking that took place on the Manhattan on the voyage over there has been no intimation that any of the colored men were among the offenders.” Villard admired the black champions for their lack of petulance at not having been recognized by Hitler, and imagined that they were “rather relieved not to have to take the blood-stained paw of that monster.” Besides, surmised Villard, American blacks were beyond feeling hurt. “We Americans have trained them too well for that with our own discrimination, our own slights, our own insults, which do not even spare their women, which often poison their childhood and youth, precisely as the Jewish children in Germany are tortured to their very souls by being told in their schools that they are inferior beasts, mere contact with whom is leprous.”

Villard hoped that the feats of Owens and other American black athletes might “shame” Congress into passing the anti-lynching bill which Southern members annually blocked, or enable the President to receive the Olympians at the White House to wash away the stain of discriminations against black civil servants, or that the army might “let down its caste bars and give a really square deal” to American blacks. “Perhaps West Point with its 1,800 cadets might find room for more than one Negro student and not subject those admitted to the brutal ostracism which has made life at West Point for Negroes who endured the ordeal call for greater strength, moral and physical, than was ever displayed at an Olympic.”

Villard’s hope was encouraged by the new breed of Southern editors who gave “more generous and friendly” reaction to black triumphs than they had in past years. “I do not wish to be unduly optimistic, especially as long as lynching continues, but I think

we have gone a long distance from the days when the whole South roared in outrage because Theodore Roosevelt invited the most distinguished Negro of his time, Booker T. Washington, to luncheon at the White House,” Villard commented. He felt the American South had come a long way from the “spirit which led some Southerners of the basest type to kill Negro soldiers returning from France in order to ‘teach them their place’ because they had been associating so freely with Frenchmen--and women.” He concluded with an ode to the spirit of black Americans. “There is nothing more wonderful in all the United States than the patient endurance of wrong, injustice, and oppression by the Negroes--too patient by far. But in spite of it they are steadily coming to the front with their great singers, great actors, writers, and poets,” wrote the critic of American culture and society. “And now they win the greatest honors at the Olympics--to share them with us white Americans!” Villard had turned the “black auxiliaries” into an argument for social emancipation. His grandfather, William Lloyd Garrison, would have been proud.”

Some Americans shared Villard’s feelings, as the New York *Times*’s letters columns confirmed. One reader wrote that American blacks had exploded the notion of Aryan supremacy. But, while Americans recognized their exploits in track and field, in other sports society discriminated against them. “In this country Negroes are among our best baseball players, but there isn’t a single Negro player in the big leagues,” the writer lamented. He thought that “jim-crowism” in baseball and other sports should be stifled. “There is no place for racial discrimination in the American plan of fair play and sportsmanship.”<sup>11</sup>

The media outpouring about the refusal of Hitler to shake the hands of black champions stuck in the craw of another writer. “One unfamiliar with the facts would assume that this situation was an uncommon one, and that Jesse Owens was being subjected to some strange and novel treatment,” he observed. The writer scolded that such hypocrisy was “to the thinking Negro, more detestable than the honest though deplorable actions of Hitler.” At least Hitler had the honesty to keep his actions consistent with his philosophy. “Is it a startling revelation that the Owens who was only snubbed in Berlin is denied the privilege of rising to the full height of his ability in the social, political and economic fields of his home-

land?" The writer, "speaking for only one of America's millions of Negroes, would welcome tolerance in fact rather than meaningless words."<sup>12</sup>

A New Jersey writer used the example of black Olympians to forward the cause of integration. "The American 'black auxiliaries,' as the Germans fancifully labeled our Negroes, have left much for Nazi anthropologists to explain," mused the writer. "Their performance in so materially aiding the United States this year ought to leave also much food for thought to the prejudiced white citizen of this country." The writer described American sport as an institution free from racial prejudice. "There are definite standards to be met and whoever has the intelligence, stamina and speed to meet these standards gets his chance," believed the writer. He wondered if American blacks could make a much greater contribution to American civilization if the integrated model of sport was applied to American society as a whole. But curiously, the writer, after noting that none of the black winners came from a Negro college, spent a great deal of the letter attacking those institutions as fomenters of segregation.

J.E. Spingarn, president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, thought that black Olympians had proved two things to "fair-minded" observers. "First, that the American Negro does not belong to an inherently inferior race." Indeed, in "at least one important human activity," blacks had proved themselves "if anything, superior to the white race." The second axiom which Spingarn derived from the Eleventh Olympiad was that "the theory that miscegenation inevitably produces an inferior stock has been knocked into a cocked hat." He noted that many of the black Olympians had racially mixed genes and that the mixture of white and black blood produced "a highly superior strain" of athlete.<sup>14</sup>

The New York *Times* reported that the triumphs of black Americans were the "sensation" of Europe. Only in the pages of *Der Angriff* and in Hitler's box had the correspondent seen "presumptive evidence of racial feeling." Most of the foreign Olympians treated the black Americans with open admiration, particularly the French. The British, "guided perhaps by imperial considerations," were somewhat reserved, and the reaction of the South Africans was to "openly deprecate" black accomplishment. The German team seemed warmly disposed toward American blacks, a fact underscored by the budding

friendship of Owens and German long-jumper Lutz Long, the silver-medalist in his specialty. According to the New York reporter, "what may be called the social success of the American Negroes largely is due to their own tact. They are perfectly well aware there is a race prejudice in the air and they carefully avoid places where they might not be welcome."<sup>15</sup>

In an editorial the New York *Times* revealed that America's "black auxiliaries" were "not the only problem for Nazi race philosophers." The success against Aryan competition of India in field hockey and Argentina in polo with teams that mixed Aryan and non-Aryan members presented certain difficulties for the advocates of Nazi racial theories. While not invalidating the central point made by the essay, the editors made somewhat unfortunate choices in singling out those two nations if one takes into account the racial perspectives of the British in India, and the fact that Argentina during the 1930s was a great admirer of Hitler and his racial theories—it being the most Europeanized in terms of race of all the Latin American nations. "It all goes to show that mankind outside present-day Germany is imperfectly totalitarian," jibed the editor. "It accepts racial inconsistencies and nationalist anomalies for the sake of a good game of polo or hockey or a fast 100-meter sprint."<sup>16</sup>

The fastest one hundred meter sprinter in the world brought the complexity of American race relations into a startling focus the subject rarely enjoyed. The biography of Jesse Owens read that he was twenty-two, married and that "at home, as well as on the track, he toes the mark. He spends much of his time pasting up a scrapbook of pictures and stories about himself. He neither drinks nor smokes."

Owens was born as one of eight children, his father a former cotton picker and then a garage worker in Cleveland, Ohio. At Ohio State University Owens got his best grades in physical education and his worst in psychology. His classmates had gilded a pair of his shoes for Ohio State's trophy room and the Democratic State Legislature helped him through school by paying him \$717 a session to run errands as a page. *News-week* announced that "the Democrats now want him to run for office." His favorite politician was President Roosevelt, favorite actress Janet Gaynor and favorite pastime, drawing. "His ambition is to cash in on professional offers and

teach industrial art or physical education. Whatever he does in the future, he has, by his marvelous feats on track paths, already done much to repair the shattered illusions suffered by his race when Joe Louis took it on the chin from Max Schmeling," concluded *News-Week*.<sup>18</sup>

Harried by fans and the press, Owens quickly found himself caught up in the rough-and-tumble world of fame, public relations and politics. He refused to run in an A.A.U. mandated meet in Stockholm and ran afoul of athletic authorities, decided to turn professional only to discover that many of the supposedly lucrative offers he had been promised evaporated, and then got used as a pawn in a variety of political schemes and entertainment power-plays. And yet, despite some tarnishing, he maintained a lustrous image in many American minds.<sup>19</sup>

Jesse Owens and his four gold medals became the undisputed stars of the Eleventh Olympiad in American minds. He seemed to have the requisite personality traits which a "good" representative of his race would possess. As a black athlete he was cast in the role of a "natural." One anecdote had Australia's kangaroo mascot gaping at Owens' long jumping ability. The kangaroo "could be seen almost any time thereafter furtively studying the form of the American."<sup>20</sup> The analogy from the animal kingdom to Owens' abilities was typical of the metaphors sportswriters used to characterize black athletes. White athletes triumphed through intelligence. Black athletes gained victory due to the dictates of biology.

In an article for *The Saturday Evening Post* Owens's Ohio State track coach recalled being stunned by the raw speed, despite a lack of technique, of the sharecropper's son from Alabama. Technique, after all, was hardly to be expected of a natural. Snyder found Owens a properly self-effacing example for his race. He remembered that "I didn't have any trouble with him. We got along great." Snyder described Owens' performance in Berlin, both as an athlete and as "a sort of instinctive ambassador of good will," as magical. The Ohio State athletic mentor, who accompanied the United States team as an assistant track coach, made sure he did not let his star "get stuck up and strutting a cakewalk." But then Jesse had always been a "good boy." Snyder insisted that the trouble Owens had with A.O.C. officials after the Games stemmed from the poor care that they gave the American star during

the Olympics and their desire to "use" Owens and other American stars on the European summer track circuit in order to bring money into the A.O.C. coffers. The coach came to the conclusion that "they were using Jesse for bait," and that if anyone "was going to use the boy for bait, it seemed to me that he ought to use himself and get something tangible out of it for himself." In Snyder's view the charges of "unethical" and "ungrateful" behavior thrown at Owens by the American sporting officials, and his suspension by the A.A.U., were unconscionable attempts by the American athletic powers to keep Jesse a slave in the American amateur athletic system.

Not that Snyder himself was above a bit of exploitation. After all, he had used Owens to win several Big Ten track championships. He concluded his *Saturday Evening Post* essay with an explanation of why black athletes excelled in the sprints and jumps--he believed that several physiological and cultural factors were involved--in which he left the distinct impression that black track stars would be welcome to enroll at Ohio State in the future.<sup>21</sup>

Owens returned to the United States and a hero's welcome in his hometown of Cleveland, Ohio.<sup>22</sup> A little more than a week later he traveled to New York to join the national celebration of the United States' 1936 Olympic performance. Since the Olympians returned on different vessels at different times, they were housed at the New York Hotel Men's Association quarters until the parade and festivities began on September 3.<sup>23</sup> On September 2, former New York governor Alfred E. Smith, who along with Mayor Fiorello La Guardia and other Catholic politicians had led the fight to prevent American participation in the "Nazi" Olympics, greeted a group of seventy-five athletes at the Empire State Building.<sup>24</sup> The next day America's Olympians, "headed by the invincible Jesse Owens," paraded through the streets in open automobiles from the Battery to Randall's Island. Ticker-tape and confetti fell sporadically on the procession during their transit through the financial district. "Nowhere, however, was the delirious enthusiasm that marked the great welcomes of a decade ago in evidence," commented the *New York Times*.<sup>25</sup> The parade route had been specially devised to include Harlem, in order to honor the contributions of America's black athletes to the team.<sup>26</sup> But even in Harlem, although flags hung from a few apartments and several thousand people lined the

streets, “there was little indication of any great exultation over the feats of Owens and the other Negro stars,” remarked one observer. At Randall’s Island Stadium the team was honored by American dignitaries. Sports heroes and heroines like Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey, Gertrude Ederle, Helen Jacobs, Gene Tunney, Jay Berwanger and others were on hand to present the Olympians with commemorative medals.<sup>27</sup>

During the presentation ceremony Mayor La Guardia, by now as vocal a supporter of the American Olympians as Avery Brundage, described the athletes as “splendid examples of American youth and American sportsmanship.” When Owens received his medal La Guardia stopped the show. “Now the moment has arrived when New York City takes its hat off to the leading member of the 1936 Olympic team,” he shouted. “Jesse, on behalf of New York City I hail you as an American boy. We are all Americans here; we have no auxiliaries in this country.” After La Guardia’s accolades Owens turned to “Bojangles” Robinson and presented the dancer with the first gold medal the Ohio State runner had won in the Olympics. “An Olympic medal is the highest honor an athlete can win and I treasure mine above all my other possessions, but I want to make a presentation to Bill Robinson, the mayor of Harlem, for all he has done for me, for all of us,” said Owens.<sup>28</sup>

While Americans cheered Owens for his contributions to the nation, and a few pundits and oracles peered through the narrow fissure that the “black auxiliaries” had opened into the very nearly taboo subject of race relations in the United States; Dr. Charles D. Snyder, Professor of Experimental Physiology at Johns Hopkins University read a different message from the results of the Berlin Olympics. In an article for *Scientific Monthly* in October, 1936, he set out to correlate Olympic victories with national population in order to construct a true index of athletic nationalism. “Perhaps it has occurred to others besides myself that the absolute scores accredited to the various countries in the Olympiad just ended in Berlin somehow do not represent their respective relative positions of excellence,” began the professor.

In constructing his index Snyder took the populations of the competing nations, the Associated Press point tabulations from Berlin, and a statistical formula which posited an “ideal” score based on the

total amount of points available at the Games and the combined populations of the participating countries. Snyder’s statistical manipulations revealed an interesting pattern. Germany and the United States dropped from the Olympic lead to ninth and fourteenth place respectively in Snyder’s formulations. At the top of the professor’s list resided the “snug little countries of northern Europe.”

Snyder sardonically remarked that “when Owens was winning his wonderful races a great cry went up in the American press proclaiming that once and for all the myth of superiority of one race over another had been smashed.” While he admitted that blacks did well in short races, he noted that “we must remember that the Negro boys were trained by white men in the white man’s institutions.” Snyder argued that instead of the “Nazi” Olympics smashing the myth of racial superiority, a scientific understanding of the results proved that indeed certain races were superior. His research led him to conclude that the “great northern races” were racially dominant in sport. While noting that the little republics of northern Europe which topped his lists suffered relatively little political or economic instability, he insisted that racial purity was the key factor in their success.<sup>29</sup>

In the March, 1938, issue of *Scientific Monthly* Snyder elaborated on his racial theories. In an article entitled “A Study in the Demographic Distribution of Cultural Achievement,” he lent the aura of objectivity to his hypotheses by asserting that in examining national character, “it goes without saying that the most reliable of all these studies are those that have been carried out with the spirit and the techniques of modern science.” To measure cultural achievement he focused his understanding of modern scientific technique on three categories of national standing; the number of Nobel Prizes awarded, the number of citations in the International Who’s Who for 1937, and the number of record-holders and points won by place winners in the Olympic Games between 1912 and 1936. He compared the scores in each category to a statistically derived ideal score based on population and the total prizes available. Sweden, Norway, Switzerland, Denmark, Finland, Holland, Austria and Estonia topped Snyder’s cultural achievement roster. The United States and Canada (which Snyder counted as a single cultural unit for the purposes of his study)

ranked fifteenth. At the bottom of the list lay Spain, the Soviet Union and India.

Snyder addressed skeptics who might argue that since the Nobel Prize Committee consisted of Scandinavians and the publishers of the *International Who's Who* were British, each group would necessarily be biased in favor of their own countrymen; by insisting that "to offset these misgivings it is only fair to state that, since no specific evidence exists to support them, we must believe that everything has been done to insure a selection of only competent, upright and fearless judges and that those selected have performed their duties to the best of their abilities." That the Olympic results revealed national skill and cultural achievement in an impartial fashion went without saying. Such was the pervasiveness and power of the mystique of sport.

Snyder prefaced his conclusions with a caveat. He admitted that he was using a Western "yardstick" to measure the concept of culture. With that admission out of the way, he announced that the "center of occidental cultural achievements" lay in western and northern Europe. In addition, "comparing the ratings in artistic and intellectual with those in the athletic achievements gives definite statistical confirmation to the belief that peoples who excel in the one excel also in the other fields of achievement." And he found that the smaller rather than the larger nations of Europe topped the list of cultural achievers.

He admitted that a complete explanation of the supremacy of smaller states would only emerge from more thorough scientific study. "But having raised the query," he felt obliged to offer a "brief prolegomenon" of the outcome such research might produce. "At the outset one may say without fear of contradiction that those peoples who satisfy so well our measures of cultural achievement will be found to be made up of less divergent varieties of *homo sapiens* than are those of the less successful groups," he posited. "The prospective corollary to this proposition doubtless also will be found to hold; namely, that amongst a people where the individuals diverge too greatly in blood and breeding there will be extreme diversity in temperament and conflict of ideals, less balance between dreaming and doing, between debate and decision, more time lost in planning and performing."

Heterogenous nations, hypothesized Snyder, failed to develop interest in the social welfare re-

gardless of the intelligence level of the nation. They could not develop, much less carry out, a national mission. What then should Americans, or any Western people do, "who wish to prolong their cultural ideals and national existence," wondered the Snyder? "In view of all the foregoing it seems that among the first things to do is to abandon the prevalent timidity and reluctance toward an open discussion of race problems, and of eugenics which aims not only at the eradication of hereditary (as well as endemic) diseases and low-grade mentalities, but includes also a thorough consideration of hereditary mental attitudes and behavior patterns." Snyder insisted that sexual problems had "vastly improved since they have been brought out into the open; our race and eugenics problems will likewise benefit by bringing them out into the light."

Snyder thought the solution should proceed along political as well as intellectual and educational paths. "Since the majority of our people are of northwestern European origins, it is quite reasonable that the control of affairs should finally rest in the hands of leaders selected from such stocks," he asserted. Snyder thought that if the races which should lead allowed power to fall into the hands of minorities, they had only themselves to blame. Indeed, "there is some indication that these minorities are already on the way toward the control of affairs." Snyder urged "our somnolent majority" to awaken before it was too late and "take measures for the maintenance and improvement of the quality of our population." He argued for limiting immigration "exclusively to selected stock" from Nordic nations, legislating more stringently against interracial marriages, promoting "enlightened" sterilization laws, and adopting a system of political representation which favored "individuals and groups who innately sympathize with and give most intelligent support to the ideals of our western culture." Snyder even allowed that if the proper measures were undertaken quickly, "perhaps then all this still may be accomplished in peaceful ways and within the frame of a democracy. Perhaps then even America will know finally what she wants and where she is going."<sup>30</sup>

Americans tend to forget too easily that science in their nation often served the interests of racism. Certainly Snyder was not alone in his Aryan theorizing in United States scientific circles. His proposals for an American set of race statutes and policies, which in spirit closely resembled Nazi laws, were

not exactly an aberrant philosophy in the United States. The idea of racial purification through eugenics policies enjoyed significant expert and mass popularity in the 1930s. In fact, the United States had more eugenics legislation on the books during that decade than the Third Reich did. The historian Madison Grant cried long and loud for the preservation of racial "purity" in order to preserve the American way of life. Many scientists were working to topple racial constructs and biological theories of intelligence during the 1930s. But the questions were still very much open in the intellectual world which existed before the Second World War.<sup>31</sup>

Once again, through the racial discussions engendered by the performances of Jesse Owens and the "black auxiliaries," sport had opened up doors in political culture. Sport and politics do not mix, read the cliché. But in the minds of the very people who most frequently used that homily, sport was an intensely political experience. A.O.C. treasurer Gustavus Kirby, the old guard member of the Olympic expedition, bragged "that the American system makes the contestants in the Games the representatives of the people and not of the government." One could hardly imagine a firmer linkage of the liberal tradition and sport. The Olympian representatives were supposed to convince the rest of the world to convert to the American way of life. Avery Brundage recited the litany of the sporting republic. "Sport is essentially democratic because under fair rules there is equal opportunity for all," he announced. Brundage wielded sport as a totem for warding off the "foreign" ideological currents of the 1930s. "It is a poor field for the growth of radical ideas," he wrote. Sport defined his America, and gave him hope for the coming millennium; "a world imbued with the virile and democratic qualities of the sportsman, a world where fair play rules personal and national relationships."<sup>32</sup>

Americans turned to sport to define themselves and their place in the world. But contrary to Brundage's assertion, the world of athletics was not necessarily a poor field for radical ideas, as witnessed by the debate about race relations sparked by America's black Olympians, or Snyder's images of a eugenically-engineered utopia. Consumer culture had altered the scope of sport, but it had not rid sport of its political connections.

The Berlin Olympics marked the conversion of the entire globe to the belief that the modern Olympic Games were contests between social systems and ways of life. In fact, that belief so inspired people that the other vision of the Olympics as an institution for fostering international understanding and harmony, for so long a concurrent, if uneasy, partner of athletic nationalism, seemed to drop almost completely out of the realm of perception during the "Nazi" Olympics. References in 1936 to the dream of Olympism and world peace were few and mainly cynical. For those who know the history of the world in the decade after 1936, the collapse of Olympism becomes all the more tragic.

There would be no Olympic Games in 1940, nor in 1944. And knowing why the Olympics were not contested serves only to increase the irony of the Eleventh Olympics. Jesse Owens became a useful tool in the effort to define, promote, and point out the shortcomings of an "American way of life." While Owens and his fellow "black auxiliaries" drew attention to the problem of racial stereotyping and scientific theories of racial purity and superiority, many ignored their feats and found other lessons, and other tools, at Berlin. As the American team left the Olympic Village in Berlin, which was being returned to its original purpose as a military training facility for German infantry officers, they heard the distant rattling of machine guns.<sup>33</sup>

#### Notes

1. William J. Baker, *Jesse Owens: An American Life* (New York: Free Press, 1986), 109.
2. One test claimed Owens "confounded Nazi racial theories." Paul S. Boyer, Clifford E. Clark, Jr., Joseph Kett, Neal Salisbury, Harvard Sitkoff, and Nancy Woloch, *The Enduring Vision*, 2nd ed, (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1993), 888.
3. "To Be Somebody," part 6 of *The Great Depression*, produced by WGBH-TV, Boston (Alexandria, Va.:PBS Video, 1993).
4. Baker, *Jesse Owens*, See also Jesse Owens, with Paul Neimark, *Blackthink; My Life as Black Man and White Man* (New York: Putnam's 1970); *I Have Changed* (New York: William Morrow, 1972); *Jesse: A Spiritual Autobiography* (Plainfield, N.J: Logos International, 1978).
5. "Olympic Games (cont'd)" *Time* 28 (August 17, 1936), 37-40.

6. Olympics: Germany, Unofficial World Champions: U.S. Second, "Newsweek" 8 (August 22, 1936), 20-21.
7. Time noted that several other American blacks won gold medals: Archie Williams in the 400 meters, John Woodruff in the 800 meters and Cornelius Johnson in the high jump. In addition, Ralph Metcalfe, Mark Robinson and David Robinson won silver medals in 100 meters, 200 meters and high jump respectively. "Olympic Games (Cont'd)", 37-40.
8. Allen Guttmann, *The Games Must Go On: Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 78-79; Richard D Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics* (New York: Macmillan), 227-229.
9. "Olympic Games (Cont'd), 37-40. Der Angriff blasted the United States for the unsporting use of its black auxiliaries." The Nazi paper insisted that blacks were not the real representatives of the American "race". But without them the United States "would be somewhere back in the dust." The day after Der Angriff's editorial two white Americans, Ken Carpenter and Gordon Dunn, finished first and second in the discus. The best German finished fifth. The Literacy Digest found Der Angriff's analysis a remarkably "ill-timed editorial." "Non-Aryan Victors in Nazi Olympics," *Literacy Digest* 122 (August 29, 1936), 33-34.
10. Oswald Garrison Villard, "Issues and Men," *The Nation* (August 15, 1936), 185.
11. "Letters to the Sports Editor," *New York Times*, August 29, 1936, 11.
12. "Letters to the Sports Editor," *New York Times*, October 10, 1936, 10.
13. "Letters to the Sports Editor," *New York Times*, October 10, 1936, 14.
14. "Letters to the Sports Editor," *New York Times*, October 15, 1936.
15. "Negro Olympians Win Many Friends," *New York Times*, August 7, 1936, 13.
16. "Topics of the Times: Race at Berlin," *New York Times*, August 10, 1936, 18.
17. "XI Olympics: James Cleveland Owens' Name Led All the Rest", *News-week* 8 (August 15, 1936), 23-26.
18. *Ibid.* *News-week* provided inaccurate information concerning at least his love for Roosevelt. Owens stumped vigorously, and profitably for the Republican candidate, Alf Landon, against Roosevelt in the election of 1936. Baker, Jesse Owens, 132-138.
19. Baker, Jesse Owens, 109-145, Mark Myreson, "America's Athletic Missionaries: The Olympic Games and the Creation of a National Culture, 1896-1936" (Ph.D. diss., University of Arizona, 1989) 876-885.
20. "Non-Aryan Victors," 33-34.
21. Larry Snyder, "My Boy Jesse," *The Saturday Evening Post* 209 (November 7, 1936), 14-15 and 97-101.
22. "Cheering Thousands Greet Owens in Demonstrations at Cleveland," *New York Times*, August 26, 1936, 27.
23. "Venzke Blasts U.S. Olympic Officials," *New York Times*, August 29, 1936, 9.
24. "Greets Olympic Team," *New York Times*, September 25, 1936, 17.
25. "Olympic Stars Get Welcome of City," *New York Times*, September 4, 1936, 21.
26. "City Plans Parade For Olympic Team," *New York Times*, August 22, 1936, 15.
27. *Ibid.*; "Olympic Stars Get Welcome of City," 21. Among the reasons for the tepid reception of Owens in Harlem were the animosity toward his decision to turn professional, the lack of appreciation for track as a sport, and the fact that Owens rode in at the head of a parade with former heavyweight boxing champion Jack Dempsey- who Harlem had never forgiven for his refusal to fight black challengers- and the rest of the "black auxiliaries" were segregated to the back of the procession. Baker, Jesse Owens, 127.
28. "Olympic Stars Get Welcome of City," *New York Times*, September 4, 1936, 21.
29. Charles D. Snyder, "The Real Winners in The 1936 Olympic Games," *Scientific Monthly* 43 (October 1936), 372-374.
30. Charles D Snyder, "A Study In The Demographic Distribution of Cultural Achievement," *Scientific Monthly* (46), March 1938, 261-267.
31. Thomas F Gossett's *Race: The History of an Idea in America* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University, 1963) stressed the breakdown of racist constructions in scientific theory among the intellectual community during and after the 1920s. Stephen Jay Gould's *The Mismeasurement of Man* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1981) indicated that racially based

conceptions on intelligence exerted much influence in twentieth century scientific circles.

32. Gustavus T. Kirby, "Report of the Treasurer," in Report of the American Olympic Committee: Games of the XIth Olympiad, ed. by Frederick W. Rubien (New York: American Olympic Committee,

1936) 59; Brundage, "Report of the President," in Report of the A.O. C., 27-38.

33. "U.S. Team Leaves Olympic Village," New York Times, August 19, 1936, 27.