

GEBHARDT SYMPOSIUM IN BERLIN

by Karl Lennartz

A symposium with the title “Willibald Gebhardt und die Anfänge der Olympischen Bewegung in Deutschland” (“Willibald Gebhardt and the beginnings of the Olympic Movement in Germany”) was held in the German Olympic Institute in Berlin from 31 October to 2 November 1994. The Willibald Gebhardt-Institute in Essen was the organizer. The conference was financed by the German Olympic Committee.

Twenty-three (23) historians took part. Researchers who have occupied themselves over the last decades with Willibald Gebhardt and the early years of the Olympic Movement in Germany held speeches at the conference. It began with an introduction by Roland Naul, the head of the Gebhardt-Institute; who has written numerous essays and articles on the German National Olympic Committee. Naul briefly sketched the reasons for holding the symposium and provided an outlook on the position of research into Gebhardt: “Willibald Gebhardt - Leben und Werk eines Pioniers der Olympischen Bewegung.” (“Willibald Gebhardt - Life and Work of a Pioneer of the Olympic Movement”)

Arnd Krüger from Göttingen, who wrote his doctoral thesis on the boycott attempts by the USA at the Olympic Games of 1936 in Berlin and who had written the Olympia essays in the volume on Germany in Ueberhorst’s “Weltgeschichte der Leibesübungen” (“World History of Sport”), gave an overview of the changes in central Europe around the turn of the century: “Zwischen Fin de siècle und Aufbruch. Europa und die Welt am Ende des 19. Jahrhunderts” (“Between the End of the Century and Uprising: Europe and the World at the End of the 19th Century”). The next morning Andreas Höfer from Cologne dealt with the topic “Das Bild Willibald Gebhardts in der deutschen Sportgeschichte” (“The View of Willibald Gebhardt in German Sports History”). His doctoral thesis “Olympischer Frieden. Anspruch und Wirklichkeit einer Idee” (“Olympic Peace. Claim and Reality of an Idea”) has recently been published (Sankt Augustin 1994). Höfer described the portrayal of Gebhardt in sports history of the last 70 years in the West and the East. Gebhardt has often been overlooked, misjudged and misunderstood.

Dietrich R. Quanz from Cologne spoke on “Bürgerlicher Pazifismus, sportlicher Internationalismus und die Gründung der Olympischen Spiele” (“Bourgeois Pacifism; Sporting Internationalism and the Founding of the Olympic Games”). Quanz, who has drawn attention to the connection between the international peace movement and the reintroduction of the Olympic Games in various articles over the past years, pointed to Gebhardt’s connection to persons involved with the Peace Movement.

Karl Lennartz, the head of the Carl Diem-Archives in Cologne, spoke on “Willibald Gebhardt und die deutsche Teilnahme an den ersten Olympischen Spiele 1896 in Athen” (“Willibald Gebhardt and the German Participation at the First Olympic Games in Athens in 1896”). He based his speech mainly on his research for his three-volume “Geschichte des deutschen Reichsausschusses für Olympische Spiele” (“History of the German Reich Committee for the Olympic Games,” Bonn 1981-1985), but he also pointed out numerous new sources.

Klaus Ulrich Huhn from Berlin, whose “Der vergessene Olympier. Das erstaunliche Leben des Dr. Willibald Gebhardt” (“The Forgotten Olympian. The Incredible Life of Dr. Willibald Gebhardt”) was published two years ago (in Berlin) dealt with Gebhardt’s attempts to have Berlin host the Games, and especially with the first attempts: “Die erste Bewerbung Berlins um die Austragung der Olympischen Spiele (1901/02)” (“The First Application by Berlin to Host the Olympic Games [1901/02]”).

The day ended with the research of Eerke Hamer about Gebhardt's connection to Viktor Balck and the Nordic Games: "Die Anfänge der Nordischen Spiele (1901) und der deutsche Beitrag" ("The Beginnings of the Nordic Games [1901] and the German Contribution"). Hamer began research into Gebhardt's life very early on. The Diem-Institute published his work "Willibald Gebhardt. 1861-1921" (Cologne 1971).

The Berlin journalist Volker Kluge, who is renowned for his many widely and carefully researched Olympic statistics, held his speech with the help of a self-made video film in which he showed Gebhardt's apartments on an old map of Berlin and the sports grounds and from which he derived the development of sport in the city. On that topic he showed longer film excerpts of the inauguration ceremony of the German stadium (1913): "Neue Erkenntnisse zue Familiengeschichte Willibald Gebhardts" ("New Findings About the Family History of Willibald Gebhardt").

Sieghard Below from Berlin, who has recently written various detailed sketches about Gebhardt, wrote about Gebhardt's failed attempts to build up his career life as innovator and business men and the area of homeopathy: "Willibald Gebhardt als Willßenschaftler und Untemehmer" ("Willibald Gebhardt as Scientist and Businessman").

At the end of symposium Manfred Lämmer, the head of the German Olympic Institute, gave an outlook of the other work of the Gebhardt research within the framework of the centenary celebrations of the Olympic Movement in Germany. In 1995, there is to be another Gebhardt Symposium which will have as its theme the "international" Gebhardt. Further plans include the publication of a critical edition of his writings - probably in two volumes.

To give the readers *Citius, Altius, Fortius* who are not likely to be acquainted with Gebhardt, I have attached a brief biographical sketch from the work of Karl Lennartz and Walter Teutenberg entitled "Die deutsche Mannschaft of 1896" ("The German Team of 1896") (Kassel 1992).

Karl August Willibald Gebhardt

Personal Data

Born:	17 January 1861, Berlin
Died:	30 April 1921 in an automobile accident
Education:	Schooling at the Friedrich Grammar School, completed Grammar School in 1879; studied chemistry in Marburg for three semesters and Berlin for seven semesters; completed doctoral thesis (Dr.phil.) in 1885.
Occupation:	Chemist and hygienist, scientist in the area of sport hygiene (the power of light)
status:	Married to Katharina Zurkalowski

Olympic Activities

1895-1896	Secretary of the Committee for Germany's Participation in the Athens Olympic Games of 1896; member of the working committee of gymnastics
1895-1909	First German member of the IOC
1896	Head of the German team at the Olympic Games in Athens
1896	Referee (track & field, rowing) in Athens, given a vote of thanks at the victors' ceremonies at the end of the Games in Athens and hands over a laurel wreath to the Crown Prince
1897	Participant at the Olympic Congress and the IOC Session in Le Havre
1899-1901	Secretary of the Committee for Germany's participation in the Olympic Games of 1900 in Paris

- 1900 Participant at the “Congress for Physical Education” in Paris - was elected to the executive committee of the “Comité internationale pour l’éducation physique.”
- 1901 Participant at the IOC Session in Paris.
- 1903- 1904 Secretary of the Committee for Germany’s participation in the Olympic Games of 1904 in St. Louis.
- 1904-1917 Member of the German Reich’s Committee for the Olympic Games
- 1904-1906 Secretary of the German Reich’s Committee for Olympic Games, he remained in the executive committee as a member until 1908.
- 1904 Participant at the IOC Session in London.
- 1904 Leader of the delegation of the second group of German athletes at the Games of St. Louis; following that study he journeyed through the U.S.A. and had a stay at a sanatorium in the United States.
- 1905 Participant at the IOC Session and at the Olympic Congress in Brussels.
- 1906 Accompanied the German team at the Olympic Games in Athens.
- 1906 Participant at the IOC Session in Athens.
- 1917 Tried in vain to stop the German Reich’s Committee for the Olympic Games renaming itself the German Reich’s Committee for Physical Exercises by writing a letter to the members’ meeting in order to stop them from turning their back on the Olympic Idea.

Sporting Career

Associations: Berlin Fencing Club from 1895; fencer and tennis player

Sporting Functions

- 1891 Co-organizer of a sports exhibitions in Berlin
- 1895 Co-founder and vice-president of the German Federation for Sport, Games, and Gymnastics. This organization was against the participation of Germany at the Olympic Games
- 1895 Co-organizer of the exhibition for Sport, games, and Gymnastics of the federation in Berlin
- 1897-1900 Founder and president of the German part of the German and, Austrian Fecning Association
- 1895-1921 Committee Member of the Berlin Fencing Club

writings

Üeber substituirte Amide der Kohlensäure und Thiokohlensäure (On the Substituted Amides of Carbon Acids and Thiocarbon Acids), Doctoral thesis, Berlin, 1885.

Soll Deutschland sich an den Olympischen Spiele beteiligen? Ein Mahnruf an die deutschen Turner und Sportsmänner (“Shall Germany participate in the Olympic Games? A reminder for German Turners and German Sportsmen”), Berlin, 1896.

Die Heilkraft des Lichtes. Entwurf zi einer wissenschaftlichen Begründung des Licht-Heilverfahrens (Phototherapie) (The healing power of light. Plan of a scientific proof of the healing process of light [phototherapy]), Leipzig, 1898.

Komitee für die Beteiligung Deutschlands an den olympischen Spielen zu Paris 1900 (Hg.) (Committee for Germany’s Participation in the Olympic Games of Paris, 1900 [ed.], *The Participation of Germany at the Olympic Games of Paris 1900*, no date, no place [Berlin 1901]).

“Aus Entartung zu freudiger Kampfkraft.” (“From degeneration to joyful energy.”) In: *Kraft und Schönheit*, I(1901) 2, pp. 12-13.

“Der Sport auf der Weltausstellung in St. Louis,” (“Sport at the World’s Fair in St. Louis”) In: *Sport im Bild*, 9(1904) 12, pp. 186-187; 41, pp. 646-647; 42, pp. 662-663.

“Die olympische Bewegung und die Schule” (“The Olympic Movement and School”) In: Bericht über den I. Internationale Kongreß für Schulhygiene, Nürnberg - 4-9 Septembere 1904, Nürnberg 1904, Vol. 3, pp. 109-116.

Honors

1896 Officers’ Cross of the Order of the Redeemer given to him by the King George I during the Games in Athens.

Royal Vasa Order of Sweden.

Crown Order 4th class from Russia.

There is a Willibald Gebhardt Institute, a research institute for sport and society, at the University of Essen.

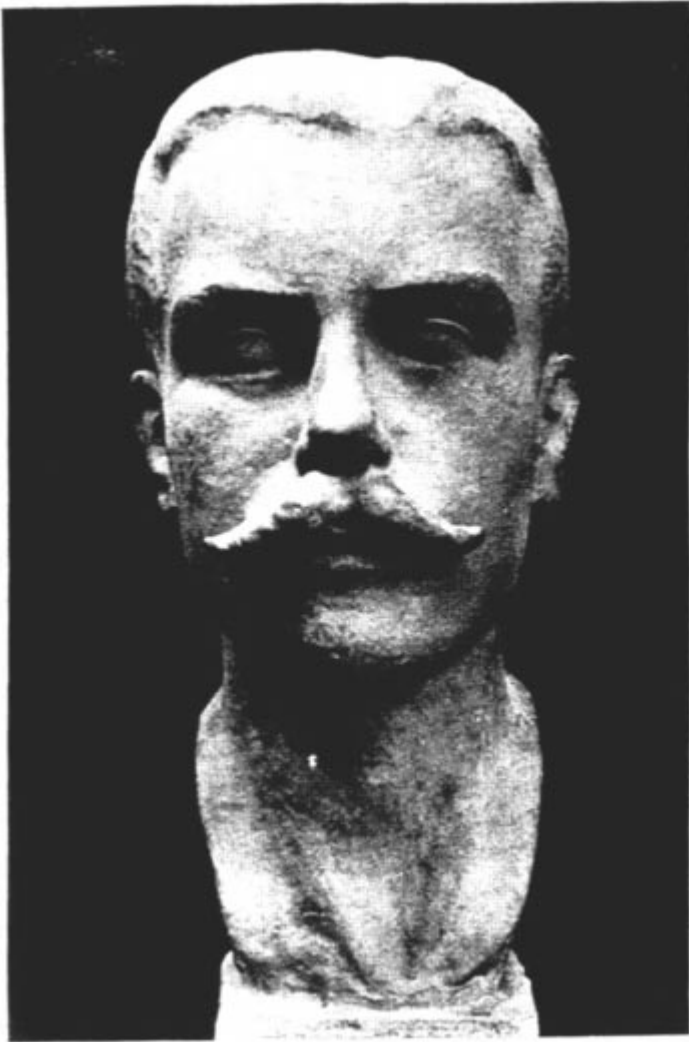
Literature

Zessler-Vitalis, Erich. *Was jeder Sportsmann von der Olympiade wissen muß! (What Every Sportsman Should Know About the Olympiad!)*, Hannover 1928.

Hamer, Eerke. *Willibald Gebhardt. 1861-1921*, Beiträge zum olympischen Gedanken No. 3, Köln 1971.

Below, Sieghard and Neumann, Frank. “Dr. Willibald Gebhardt und die Allgemeine Ausstellung für Sport, Spiele und Turnen 1895 in Berlin” (“Dr. Willibald Gebhardt and the General Exhibition for Sport, Games, and Gymnastics of 1895 in Berlin”) In: *Theorie and Praxis der Körperkultur* 39(3) [1990]: pp. 200-203.

Below, Sieghard. “Karl August Willibald Gebhardt,” In: Jahrbuch 1993 des Sportmuseum Berlin, Berlin 1993, pp. 89-97.



Left: Bronze bust of Willibald Gebhardt by the sculptor Hans Füssel.

Below: During the Olympic Games of 1936 in Berlin, Mrs. Katharina Gebhardt invited the 1896 German participants to Berlin for coffee. The guests in the photograph are from the left: Karl Neukirch, Kurt Doerry, Berthold Küttner, Katharina Gebhardt, Karl Galle, Gustav Schuft, and Fritz Manteuffel.





There are probably only two photographs of the IOC Session of 1896 in Athens. This is the more unusual of the two. The other is in almost every book on the Olympics. In this photograph one can see the seven IOC members present and the organizing committee. From the left (standing): Georg Streit (secretary of the organizing committee and attache of the German team), Iph. Kokkides (president of the reception committee), Jirí Guth-Jarkovský (IOC), Demetrius Vikelas (IOC President), Franz Kemény (IOC), Pierre de Coubertin (IOC Secretary-General), Aleksei Butowksy (IOC), Willibald Gebhardt (IOC), Viktor Balck (IOC). From left (sitting): Prince George (chairman of the committee for nautical competitions), Crown Prince Constantine (president of the organizing committee), and Prince Nicholas (chairman of the shooting commission).