

# MEMBERS FORUM

20 July 1997

Dear Wray,

Bill Mallon and I are working on a book on the 1908 Olympic Games and are seeking the full results of the individual heptathlon gymnastics competition. Places 1-19 are given in the Official Report but most of the placings from 20-97 remain elusive. Tony Bijkerk has traced the finishing positions of all the Netherlands competitors down to Jonas Slier in 96th place, thereby confirming that all competitors were actually given an individual placement. Placings for competitors from Bohemia and Hungary are also known but if you can help with any other information, please contact either Bill or myself.

With kind regards,  
Yours sincerely,

Ian Buchanan

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5 June 1997

Dear Editor,

This is in reply to the letter of Ruud D. Paauw (Summer 1997, pp.48f.) concerning the lack of a monograph about Carl Diem. As I am currently writing a monograph for the University of Illinois Press on German sports (Tough as Krupp-steel. The Social and Political History of Nazi Sports), I will of course have a chapter on Carl Diem but not a monograph on him either. In my *Die Olympische Spiele 1936 und die Weltmeinung* (Berlin, 1972) and *Dr. Theodor Lewald. Sportführer ins Dritte Reich* (Berlin, 1975), and *Spurt*

*und Politik. Von Turnvater Jahn zum Staatsamateur* (Hannover, 1975), I have dealt a great deal with Carl Diem and his close collaborators in all of their activities and have followed them up to the present day.

If you research Carl Diem, you are dealing with the most creative personality in the history of German sport in this century, who - for the better or the worse - was involved in most German decisions concerning sports roughly from 1912 to 1952. With him you are in the middle of a controversy which looks very similar to the one around the Goldhagen thesis. If you assume that leading personalities in a public sphere like sport - which was instrumentalized for aims like the physical preparation for War - had a chance to say "no", then Carl Diem has had a special responsibility when he said an emphatic "yes" to the Nazi regime. With many of his acts Diem worked hand in glove with the military, then with the Nazis, then the young Republic. From which of his deeds do you want to define his actions?

The *Sozial- und Zeitgeschichte des Sports* (Vol. 1, 1987, no. 1, pp. 1-125), the German journal of sport history, had a special issue dealing only with Carl Diem. In the recent political discussion whether Carl Diem streets, stadia, gym halls etc. should be renamed (for a victim rather than a provider of the condition of the holocaust), the whole ambivalence of the role of Carl Diem became vivid again. Experts came up with long essays concerning Diem's role in the whole process of the perversion of sports of all levels for the benefit of the Nazis - nobody was denying Diem's involvement, but according to one's political position one was finding excuses or not. But can you find excuses for a brilliant man who sold himself and his expertise (personally on the payroll of the Nazis) to the Nazis, was a Nazi propandagandist on many different levels at home and abroad, gave eventually

pep talks to 15 year olds to heat them up for battle?  
Even if you take his whole working life into consideration and the importance that he had for many positive developments in German sport, I find it difficult - after Auschwitz - to count myself to the Carl Diem fan community which is so strong in Germany and elsewhere.

Of course, the ambivalence of his role would make a good book, but one could be sure that it would neither be concise nor complete, but just the beginning of a series of books as Carl Diem is still splitting the group of German sport historians right down the middle. Look for the next issue of the *Sozial- und Zeitgeschichte des Sports*, it is supposed to carry the next 40 page paper on the Diem controversy.

Sincerely yours,

signed:

Prof. Dr. Arnd Krüger,  
Institut für Sportwissenschaften,  
Georg-August-Universität Göttingen,  
Olympian 1968, 1500 meter.

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30 June 1997

#### CONCERNING CARL DIEM

Dear Ruud D. Paauw,

I read your letter in the *Journal of Olympic History* (1997, 2; pp 48-49) with great interest. Carl DIEM and his position in the National Socialist State have been criticised on a number of occasions. This appears to have occurred in waves. It began as early as 1947 when Heinrich SORG, the sports advisor of the Social Democratic Party attempted to prevent Diem from founding a National Olympic Committee. It continued when Diem became the sports advisor of the Federal Republic of Germany's new government in 1949. Accusations reappeared prior to the 1972 Olympic Games in Munich and again in recent years. The points upon which the criticism has been based have remained the same throughout: activity in the sports administration of the Third Reich and supposedly anti-government statements in his written work. The waves also occur when, after longer periods of 'forgetting', journalists "find" works by Diem and think they have discovered something new.

With the support of the Social Democrats the Green Party has tried for a number of years to rename streets named after Diem, of which there are approximately 100 in

Germany. This is usually unsuccessful, e.g. in recent months in Cologne where the Carl-Diem-Weg passes through the German Sport University and in Frechen, a small town in the vicinity of Cologne. The Sport University examined the accusations and requested a statement from one of the harshest critics of DIEM in scientific circles, Prof. Hans Joachim TEICHLER (Potsdam). Teichler concluded that Diem was definitely not a National Socialist and advises against renaming the street in Cologne. A professorial committee of the German Sport University came to the same conclusion. The German Sport Association (DSB) also acted the same when an expert team decided almost unanimously that the DSB sport prize named after Carl Diem should continue bearing that name. Perhaps the greatest expert on sport during National Socialist times: the recently deceased Prof. Hajo BERNETT (Bonn) also frequently criticised Diem. However, even he wrote that he felt a modification of the street name would "dishonour Diem's name". Bernett conducted a survey amongst sport scientists active during the National Socialist period and thereafter and concluded that none considered Diem a National Socialist.

Thank you Mr. PAAUW for considering Norbert MÜLLER and myself as "eminent researchers". Of course I have also considered writing an extensive biography on Diem. However, I know exactly (and I assume likewise for Norbert Müller) that would entail at least ten years of exclusive Diem research, despite the fact that I can say without being presumptuous that I have read a lot and know a lot about Diem. I am, however, not a Diem researcher; the major emphasis of my work is the Olympic Games and I still intend to publish a number of books on this topic. I once asked Hajo Bernett whether it wasn't his duty to write this book as an expert on sport in the Third Reich. His answer was "Diem is too big for me". My colleagues and I acknowledge the problem that there is no critically balanced "Diem"-biography. Maybe we can find a younger scientist who will undertake this for his/her habilitation project. It would be a great advantage if the project was undertaken by more than one person.

Mr. Paauw, you state in your letter that Diem was an "Olympic Tycoon". He definitely was. However, he was also a tycoon as sport journalist, sport author, scientific writer, head of many sport associations, organizer of many large sport events, professor and as founder and chancellor of two sport universities. You will find some of his functions listed in the appendix. Despite the limited space available in this Journal I feel it is now appropriate to consider some of the major points of criticism against Diem:

1. Diem had four important positions in German sport when the National Socialists came to power in 1933: he was general secretary of the German Reich Department of Physical Exercise (Deutscher Reichsaussschuss für Leibesübungen, the roof organisation of all associations),

vice-chancellor, i.e. head of the German Physical Exercise University [Deutsche Hochschule für Leibesübungen, this has been replaced by the Sport University (Sport Hochschule) in Cologne], secretary of the German Olympic Committee (NOC) and general secretary of the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games Organizing Committee. It is well known that the Organizing Committee was founded six days before HITLER became chancellor of the Third Reich. Theodor LEWALD, a half Jew and president of the German Reich Department of Physical Exercise, the NOC and the Organizing Committee was Diem's partner. Lewald was soon facing strong prejudice in the German Reich Department of Physical Exercise. Many German sport functionaries were already members of the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP). He was forced to resign. A committee composed of three members of the board of directors dissolved the organization without possessing an appropriate mandate and made it available for the newly appointed Reich Sportführer. Diem automatically lost his position as general secretary through this dissolution. He, however, also applied for the position of Reich Sportführer himself.

He hoped to keep politics out of the organization and to maintain the present structure. This was definitely a deceptive idea; there was no politics-free space.

Hans von TSCHAMMER und OSTEN, the Reich Sportführer appointed by Hitler, also assumed the position of president of the NOC and appointed a new secretary. In the months prior to the National Socialists coming into power, Diem had had problems with National Socialist students at the Physical Exercise University. Both he and his wife who was quarter Jew were dismissed on the first of May, 1933.

**I**n 1933 the German Reich Committee for Physical Exercise extended Diem's employment contract until the age of 65 (1948). The German Reich received legal succession to rights and obligations in 1933. Therefore, Diem could not legally be made redundant or left without pay. On the other hand the Reich Sportführer used this situation to bind Diem to the duties of his position.

Hitler did not want to, nor could he, dissolve the Organizing Committee because, despite contradicting his party's ideologies (that the Olympic Games belong to the bourgeois sport of the 19th century) he intended to stage the Games and use them for his regime's propaganda purposes abroad. Therefore, he needed an Organizing Committee and the connections to the IOC. If the Reich Sportführer had been appointed president of the Organizing Committee then the IOC would have been forced to relocate the Games away from Berlin. Thus Lewald and Diem maintained their positions after they had been assured the Games would proceed according to the Olympic rules. In the IOC Sessions

of 1933 (Vienna) and 1934 (Athens) the German IOC members could even promise that Jews could participate at the Games in the German team if they qualified in accordance with the responsible authorities. Anyone who knows something about organizing Olympic Games recognizes the necessity of state assistance for an Organizing Committee. This was even more pronounced in the past. Lewald and Diem were therefore, soon forced into ever increasing compromises although on the surface the Games appeared to adhere to the rules. However, the cunning propagandist Hitler visited the stadium every day and knew how to manipulate the Games to his advantage. In a number of cases Lewald and Diem ingeniously managed to prevent him from being even more in the limelight. Until 1928 the presentation ceremony was held on the final day of the main week of the Olympic Games and the state leaders (usually monarchs) presented the gold medals. Today's form of ceremony with the winner's rostrum first appeared in Los Angeles in 1932 although it was by no means embedded in the Olympic rules. Diem wrote what he termed a piece of Olympic protocol in the Official Report and staged the presentation ceremony in the same manner as in Los Angeles.

2. The major present criticism against Diem was a speech on the 18th March 1945 held in the dome theatre of the Reich sport field to soldiers of the Volkssturm and new recruits of the Hitler Youth. Idealistic instructions were normal in National Socialist organizations as was the case in many dictator regimes. They also formed part of the Volkssturm and young recruit education. Diem therefore, held an exhortation speech on this night. It is difficult to imagine that he was the force behind this. The leadership principle of ordering and obeying played a major role in the National Socialist regime. I am of the opinion that Diem was ordered to give a speech by a superior, perhaps by Karl Ritter von Halt. In the speech, of which we possess handwritten notes Diem used the standard topos of the National Socialist Party and did not mention the usual terms, "Führer, Volk und Vaterland" but talked about themes of the antique, of Sparta and the poet "Tyrtaios". It is certainly not correct to now state that Diem was thus responsible for these young people dying a few weeks later in the last battles for Berlin. It appears remarkable today that representatives of the national middle class that were raised in the emperor's era still differentiated between Germany and the National Socialist regime and as they worded it later, were thus fulfilling their soldiering duties. Some critics regard Diem as an antisemitist. They refer to a letter he wrote as chairman of the department of Foreign Affairs of the Reich Sportführer in which he requests that it be investigated whether the president of the International Shooting Association Jean CARNOT and his general secre-

tary PARMENTIER were Jews as had been suggested by Hungarian shooters. Diem had known both of them for a long time and knew that neither was Jewish and intended to remove this accusation and consequently any danger for both. There are many examples proving that Diem helped Jews during the Third Reich. He was called a “white Jew” in the press of the National Socialist smear campaign just prior to 1933. Even in 1933 the region (Gau) of Berlin of the NSDAP (GOEBBELS was Gau leader) accused him of being friendly to Jews and criticised that he had employed disproportionately many Jews. He risked a lot in his position as Secretary General of the Organizing Committee by continuing with the employment of the onetime director of the German Physical Exercise University, Professor Alfred SCHIFF and the cycling functionary Fredy BUDZINSKY. On overseas trips to London he visited the emigrated ADAM family on a number of occasions. Fritz ADAM had been patron of the German Physical Exercise University and supplier for the German Olympic team. The famous sports doctor Ernst JOKL, who was also founding president of the World Physical Exercise Council and was forced to emigrate to Israel in 1933 and Dr. Ernst SIMON who lived in Israel both vehemently defended Diem against all accusations after the war.

**I**n summary I feel Diem was one of the greatest sport leaders of this century whose major contribution was to implement many standard institutions without which today’s Olympic movement cannot be imagined. He was conservative, national not nationalistic, in favour of a strong army but not militaristic.

Like many other sport functionaries he definitely made the mistake of thinking he could continue serving sport within the National Socialist regime. I must personally mention that as an adamant supporter of the social democrats, who has for example been active in the council of a medium size town for 25 years, that many of Diem’s conservative and political ideas seem foreign and that I reject many of them. However, this does not prevent me from admiring his contributions and achievements and from being director of the establishment which among other things stores his written work, collections and files and makes these available for scientific research. Today I would no longer name a street after Diem, but I would just as vehemently defend those who did this after his death and find it an appropriate means of remembering him.

*Prof. Dr. Karl LENNARTZ*

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**ADDENDUM:**

Positions and activities of Carl DIEM

1882 born on June 24th in Würzburg.  
1887 move to Berlin.

1899	founder of the Sport club Marcomannia
Berlin.	
1903	secretary of the German Athletic Association.
1904	founder and
1905-1920	chairman of the Association of Berlin (later
Brandenburger)	Athletic Clubs (VBAV).
1906	Team captain and journalist at the Olympic Games in Athens.
1907-1913	Editor of the newspaper publisher SCHERL.
1911	First version of the Playground Law.
1912	Chef de mission at the Olympic Games in Stockholm.
1912/1913	Introduction of the German Sports Badge (later Deutsches Sportabzeichen).
1913	First meeting with Baron Pierre de COU BERTIN at the Olympic Congress in Lausanne.
	Study trip to the USA.
	Appearance of the memorandum ‘The German Stadium’.
1913-1916	General Secretary of the Olympic Games in Berlin.
1914	Leader of the German team at the Baltic Games in Malmö.
	Participant at the Olympic Congress in Paris.
1916	Draft of the Compulsory Sport Law.
1917	Second draft of the Playground Law.
	Appearance of the memorandum “Daily hour of exercise”.
	Suggestion for introducing a Department of Scientific Research.
1917-1933	General secretary of the German Reich Department of Physical Exercise (Deutscher Reichsausschusz für Leibesübungen, DRAfL).
1919	Application to introduce the Reich Youth Games.
	Appearance of the memorandum “Reich Playground Law” for the German National Assembly.
	Appearance of the memorandum “German Physical Exercise University”.
1920	First Reich Youth Games.
1920-1933	Vice chancellor of the German Physical Exercise University, Berlin.
1921	Honorary doctorate of the University of Berlin Medical Faculty.
1922	Staging of the Deutsche Kampfspiele (similar to National Olympic Games) in Berlin.

1923	Organization of the first German Congress for Physical Education in Berlin.	University of Berlin.
	Plans for a German Sport Forum.	1947-1962 Co-founder and chancellor of the Sport University Cologne (after 1965: German Sport University Cologne).
1925	Organization of the Congress of Physical Education for Women in Berlin.	1948 Honorary professor of the Philosophical Faculty of the University of Cologne.
	Delegate at the Olympic Congress in Prague.	Second memorandum for founding an International Olympic Academy in Greece.
1926	Appearance of the memorandum "Daily hour of exercise" for the German Reichstag.	Honorary guest of the Olympic Games in London.
1928	Accompanies the German team to the Olympic Winter Games in St. Moritz.	1949 Guest of the 2nd Lingiadefahrt.
	Organization of the Congress for Gymnastics Teacher Instruction in Berlin.	Founding member and secretary of the National Olympic Committee (until 1952).
	Chef de mission at the Olympic Games in Amsterdam.	1949-1954 Chairman of the Rhine Gymnastics Association.
	Leader of a German athletics team to Japan and China.	1951 Co-founder of the German Olympic Society (Deutsche Olympische Gesellschaft, DOG).
	Study trip to the USA.	1952 Leader of the first Olympic Youth Trip to Helsinki.
1930	Marries Liselott BAIL (4 children).	1954 Advisor of the Icelandic government on sport issues.
1930-1933	Teaching contract at the University of Berlin.	Initiative for introducing the Advisory Board for Training Facilities of the German Sport Association at the Sport University Cologne.
1931-1937	General secretary of the Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games in Berlin.	Leader of the first DOG-student trip to Greece.
1932	Chef de mission at the Olympic Games in Los Angeles.	1955 Ten year plan for building training facilities.
	Guest lectures at the University of Los Angeles.	Advisor of the Indian government on sport issues.
	German representative at the International Congress for Recreation.	1956 Member of the German Olympic team at the Olympic Games in Melbourne.
1933	Advisor of the Turkish government on guidelines for youth and school sports.	Receives the Olympic Diploma of Merit from the IOC.
	1 May, dismissed from all teaching duties.	First initiative for founding the International Conference for Sport and Physical Education (ICSPE), later the Conference for International Exercise and Physical Sports Science (CIEPSS).
	Dissolution of the German Reich Department of Physical Exercise.	1959-1961 Advisor of the Japanese Olympic Committee for the Games in Tokyo in 1964.
1934	Appearance of memorandum (first draft) "The torch relay" for Olympia Berlin.	1960 Advisor of the government on sport issues.
1936	Staging of the Olympic Games in Berlin.	Co-founder of the ICSPE in Rome.
	Draft of "The torch relay" for Olympia Tokyo.	Honorary guest at the Olympic Games in Rome.
1938	First draft for founding an International Olympic Academy in Greece.	Rebuilding of the German Sport University Cologne.
	Advisor of the Bulgarian government on guidelines for youth and school sports.	1961 Opening session of the International Olympic Academy (IOA) and handing over of the uncovered antique stadium in Olympia.
	Correspondence member of the American Academy of Physical Education.	Advisor of the Argentinean government on sport issues.
1938-1945	Director of the International Olympic Institute (IOI) in Berlin.	Honorary doctorate of the George Williams
1939	Organizer of the Lingiadefahrt of the German team.	
1940	Member of the German Archaeological Institute.	
1945-1947	Director of the Institute of Physical Education and School Hygiene at the	

1962 College in Chicago.  
Honorary citizen of Olympia.  
Diem dies on the 17th December in  
Cologne.

Diem wrote more than sixty (60) books and more than 3000  
articles.

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