

The Issue of Racism at the 1936 Olympics

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Although Berlin was awarded the 1936 Olympic Games by the International Olympic Committee in 1932, circumstances arose that caused many officials to doubt their decision. The ugly circumstances surrounding their doubt were the rise of Hitler's anti-Semitic programs. World reaction to Hitler's program resulted in a movement to boycott Nazi goods and services which included a movement to take away the 1936 Olympics from Berlin in an attempt to force the German government to cease its discriminatory practices against the Jews. This movement failed when on June 7, 1933 the International Olympic Committee, based on pledges from the Germans, reaffirmed its decision to stage the 1936 Olympics in Berlin.¹ In spite of the pledges made by the Germans, conflicts arose which made many of the member countries of the IOC consider the boycott of the Games, including the United States. Yet, the 1936 Olympic Games took place in Berlin.

It is interesting to evaluate the arguments that supported or opposed the United States' boycott of the Games. Many of the arguments used by individuals or organizations destroyed any rational or logic which was needed to make the final decision particularly since there were a few strong arguments from both sides. After all the dust had settled, America's decision to participate may have been the forecast of Hitler's eventual downfall when Jesse Owens, a Black American, won four gold medals which shattered the myth of Aryan racial supremacy.

The arguments posed in opposition to the U. S. boycott of the Olympics were supported by many influential individuals and groups. The major argument used by people such as Avery Brundage (President of the American Olympic Committee) and General Charles Sherrill (one of three of America's voting representatives on the IOC), was that there was no discrimination against the Jews in Germany and that Germany had pledged that there would be no discrimination; therefore, there was no reason to boycott the Games. For example, Dr. Theodor Lewald, President of the German Olympic Committee and the

¹"Reich Keeps Games, Giving Way on Jews," *New York Times*, 8 June 1933, p. 1.

organizing committee of the Olympics, made the following statement :

2. All the laws regulating the Olympic Games shall be observed.
3. As a principle, German Jews shall not be excluded from German teams at the games of the eleventh Olympiad.²

It was this pledge from the Germans that prevented any move to transfer the Games as the IOC reaffirmed its decision to award the 1936 Olympics to Germany. In addition, Dr. Karl Diem, a member of the organizing committee of the Olympics, stated that :

the preliminary contests, in which the German Olympic participants will be selected, are open to all comers provided they are amateurs and German citizens. These contests, he said are open, therefore, to all Jewish athletes who can fulfill these conditions.”

A further statement which was made by Captain Hans von Tschammer-Osten, the Reich's Sports Commissar, appeared in the 15 December, 1933 issue of the *New York Times*:

1. Neither the Reich Government nor I have as yet issued any statement regarding the barring of Jewish athletes from Turn and Sport organizations.
2. Neither the Reich Government nor I have prohibited the open participation of Jewish athletic organizations in athletic exercises.
3. The participation of Jews in athletic events has not been prohibited by proclamations issued either by the Reich Government or by myself.
4. If I should be notified that individual athletic bodies have in any way issued proclamations in opposition to the statements issued above, I shall make it my business to follow up each individual case and see to it that such actions be retracted.’

Once the pledges were made those opposed to the boycott of the eleventh Olympiad used the following information as evidence that the pledges were being carried out (However, much of the information could be interpreted as evidence for both arguments). For instance, as early as November, 1933, the *New York Times* reported that Helene Mayer would be on the German Olympic team despite her exclusion from the Offenbach

²*Ibid.*

³“Olympic Progress is Made in Berlin” *New York Times*, 27 August 1933, sec. 3, p. 2.

⁴“Protests Olympic Games,” *New York Times*, 31 May 1933, p. 27.

Fencing Club.⁵ In this case, Helene Mayer was clearly discriminated against by her fencing club (since she was not allowed membership in her club), although the Germans made an exception to allow her to participate in the Olympic Games. Consequently, the Germans, while overlooking Helene Mayer's exclusion, were able to say that there is no reason to boycott the Games because they have a Jew on their team.

In Otto D. Tolischus's article in the *New York Times*, another example of the paradox is given.⁶ He reported that the Jewish athletes in Germany had formed clubs of their own and had received approval, in theory, from Captain Hans von Tschammer-Osten to train at the Olympic training courses. However, he also noted that most of the Jewish athletes are outlawed and deprived of all training facilities.

Evidence demonstrating that the German pledges were being upheld became prevalent in the summer of 1934. This surge of propaganda from the Germans was a reaction to the American Olympic Committee's decision to send its president, Avery Brundage, to Germany to make an on-the-spot investigation so that a decision could be made to accept or decline the invitation to participate in the eleventh Olympiad. With Brundage's visit approaching, the Germans intensified their efforts to fulfill their pledges. On June 8, 1934 Tschammer-Osten named five Jewish candidates for the German Olympic Team.⁷ Later that month, the *New York Times* reported that two Jewish athletic associations had proposed 21 candidates for the German Olympic Team as a result of negotiations with the head of the Reich Field Sports Association.⁸ However, none were invited to enter the training camps, although training was being carried on intensively.

Based on Brundage's statement that he didn't notice any difference between the treatment accorded Jews and others, the American Olympic Committee accepted the invitation to the Olympics with this resolution :

In the light of the report of Mr. Brundage and the attitude and assurances of representatives of the German government, we accept the invitation of the German Olympic Committee to the 1936 Olympic Games.⁹

⁵"No Ban on Girl Fencer," *New York Times*, 24 November 1933, p. 26.

⁶"Germany's New Olympic Plant Will Have Eight Major Units," *New York Times*, 18 December 1933, p. 24.

⁷"Jewish Athletes Named," *New York Times*, 9 June 1934, p. 10.

⁸"Jews Propose 21 for German Team," *New York Times*, 19 June 1934, p. 26.

⁹"U. S. Will Compete in 1936 Olympics," *New York Times*, 27 September 1934, p. 28.

Later that year, in October, upon General Charles Sherrill's return from International Olympic Committee meetings in Berlin, Sherrill gave more reasons to trust the Germans with his statement: "The German Government has very generously provided for Jewish representation on its Olympic Team."¹⁰ In addition, Brundage (in December 1934) explained that, while in Germany, he talked with political leaders in Berlin, with Americans living there and with Jews in Germany and other foreign countries. Further, he reaffirmed his earlier statement when he said, "I was told that the German Olympic Committee planned to allow Jews to try out for the Reich team."¹¹

More evidence of the Nazis' fulfillment of their pledges was reported in the *New York Times*:

The German authorities have given a pledge that there shall be no race discrimination in the selection of these candidates. Accordingly, one of the camps, that at Ettlinger, devoted its last three weeks to training Jewish candidates from the Maccabean League and the League of German Jewish War Veterans.

This period matched the ratio borne by the number of Jews in Germany to the total German population. It was in strict accord with the letter of the German agreement with the International Olympic Committee.¹²

Further, according to an assistant of Tschammer-Osten, Greta Bergmann was allowed to compete in the "advanced" Olympic tryouts although she was not allowed to compete in the German Championship contests.¹³ This announcement to allow Greta Bergmann to advance bolstered the argument that Jews were getting the opportunity to make the German Olympic Team. Thus, the Germans were not discriminating.

However, the "coup d'etat" came on November 30, 1935, as recorded by the *New York Times*:

when the German section of the Maccabee League of Jewish athletes announced officially it was withdrawing all its candidates from participation in any sort of an Olympic training course. The Maccabee League explained that since non-Aryans are deprived of citizenship they could not in any case represent Germany in the games. Olympic requirements for competitors, the Maccabees claimed, specified that they be citizens.¹⁴

¹⁰"Sherrill Returns From Berlin Visit," *New York Times*, 17 October 1934, p. 29.

¹¹"Move Gains Force to Bar U. S. Entry," *New York Times*, 8 December 1934, p. 20.

¹²"Berlin Riots Mar Olympic Planning," *New York Times*, 26 July 1935, p. 9.

¹³"Jewish Girl Invited to German Contest," *New York Times*, 9 August 1935, p. 10.

¹⁴"Diplomats Exempt in Nuremberg Laws," *New York Times*, 1 December 1935, p. 35.

On the surface, this was a blow to the forces believing that there was no discrimination in Germany . . . their belief shattered with the realization that since the Jews were considered non-Aryans, and therefore deprived of German citizenship, they could not compete for Germany at the Olympics. BUT, the fact that the Maccabee League of Jewish athletes withdrew (although they withdrew because of frustration), in a sense, relieved the German government from the pressure to put any Jewish athletes on their Olympic team. Consequently, the withdrawal was a disappointment to the boycott forces, since the Jews in Germany were giving up their fight.

An argument related to the discrimination against Jews in Germany which forces opposed to the boycott used was the fact that discrimination existed in the United States; consequently, it was not fair to attack Germany. This argument was brought forth by Mr. Dietrich Wortmann of the German-American Athletic Club of New York. Basically, he accused the American Olympic Committee and the American Athletic Union of not observing the protocol which bars discrimination citing the transfer of the Track and Field Championships from New Orleans to Lincoln, Nebraska.¹⁵

Along this line of thinking, Avery Brundage added :

Regardless of in what country the Olympic Games are held, there will be some group, some religion or some race that can register a protest because of the action of the government of that country, past or present.¹⁶

Later, General Sherrill had this comment:

I went to Germany for the purpose of getting at least one Jew on the German Olympic Team and I feel that my job is finished. As to obstacles placed in the way of Jewish athletes or any others trying to reach Olympic ability, I would have no more business discussing that in Germany than if the Germans attempted to discuss the Negro situation in the American South or the treatment of the Japanese in California.¹⁷

Overall, Mr. Wortmann's contention was not a strong one, in that the differences of discrimination in the United States and Germany could have been debated without reaching a decision.

¹⁵ "A.A.U. Boycotts 1936 Olympics Because of the Nazi Ban on Jews," *New York Times*, 21 November 1933, p. 1.

¹⁶ "Brundage Combats Foes of Olympics," *New York Times*, 2 August 1935, p. 8.

¹⁷ "Sherrill Rebuffs Olympic Ban Plea; Scores Agitation," *New York Times*, 22 October 1935, p. 1.

An argument used by General Charles H. Sherrill was more a scare tactic than a legitimate argument to oppose the boycott. In 1933 (December), he admitted that the treatment of Jews in Germany was “outrageous and hideous.” Further, the boycott against the Olympics would have been worse because it would have provoked an “anti-Semitic feeling” in the United States.¹⁸ Again, in October, 1935, he repeated this idea with this statement:

There is grave danger in this Olympic agitation. Consider the effect on several hundred thousand youngsters training for this contest throughout the United States, if the boycott movement gets so far that they suddenly are confronted with the fact that somebody is trying to defeat their ambition to get to Berlin and compete in the Olympic Games. We are almost certain to have a wave of anti-Semitism among those who never before gave it a thought,¹⁹ and who may consider that about 5,000,000 Jews . . .

In both cases, it seemed as if General Sherrill’s statements were anti-Semitic - almost as if he was warning the Jews to ease up on the boycott, or else ! This observation was made by George N. Shuster in *The Commonwealth*: “. . . if it is possible to insult the Jew of these United States, then General Sherrill has insulted him.”²⁰

With similar thoughts as General Sherrill, Avery Brundage added that it was “un-American” to support the boycott with this statement:

To those alien agitators and their American stooges who would deny our athletes their birthright as American citizens to represent the United States in the Olympic games of 1936 in Germany . . .²¹

His statement, however, took him into a new area - the politics of the controversy.

This leads into the next to the last argument used by those opposed to the boycott; that is, it was necessary to keep the Olympics separate from politics. Colonel William May Garland, a United States representative on the International Olympic Committee, was one of the first proponents of this thesis with this declaration :

¹⁸“Sherrill Explains View on Olympics,” *New York Times*, 1 December 1933, p. 31.

¹⁹“Sherrill Rebuffs Olympic Ban Plea; Scores Agitation,” *New York Times*, 22 October 1935, p. 1.

²⁰George N. Shuster, “Gen. Sherrill and the Olympics,” *Commonweal*, (November, 1935): 40-42.

²¹“Brundage Scores ‘Alien Agitators,’” *New York Times*, 4 December 1935, p. 26.,

As I see it, the American Olympic Committee must not become involved in racial, sociological or religious controversies of any kind.²²

Although the intention of Avery Brundage's visit to Germany was to determine if discrimination against the German Jews existed, Brundage made this statement to reaffirm Colonel Garland's belief that the Olympics should be free from politics:

Frankly, I don't think we have any business meddling in this question. We are a sports group, organized and pledged to promote clean competition and sportsmanship. When we let politics, racial questions, religious or social disputes creep into our actions, we're in for trouble, and plenty of it . . .²³

Finally, the strongest argument against the boycott was the idea that sending a team to Germany would destroy the myth that Aryan youth was superior. This suggestion was first offered by A. C. Gilbert and later reiterated by Dr. Frederick B. Robinson who was the President of the City College of New York. According to Mr. Gilbert, an American team composed of members representing various nationalities and religious beliefs would make the German youth think that the edicts of their government were not as sound as they had been led to believe. Dr. Robinson declared most eloquently:

A strong representation of American Jewish athletes at the next Olympic games in Berlin would gain greater glory both for our own country and for the Jewish people of the world.²⁴

With these arguments in mind, it is important to look at the opposing viewpoint — the support of the boycott of the Olympic Games. Again, as with the preceding presentation, a major premise of this viewpoint was that Nazi Germany was discriminating against the Jews; therefore, the Games should be moved or boycotted. The action to move the Olympics from Berlin was supported by influential people as early as April, 1933, but abandoned later that year in June. For example, Avery Brundage stated:

My personal, but unofficial, opinion is that the Games will not be held in any country where there will be interference with the fundamental Olympic theory of equality of all races. The Olympic protocol provides

²²"Seeks Acceptance of Olympic Bid," *New York Times*, 22 June 1934, p. 26.

²³"Move Going Force to Bar U. S. Entry," *New York Times*, 8 December 1934, p. 20.

²⁴"Robinson Wants U.S. in Olympics," *New York Times*, 13 October 1935, sec. 2 and 3, p. 2.

there shall be no restriction of competition because of class, color or creed.²⁵

Concerning the problem of discrimination against the Jews in Germany, Brundage added that there was an incident in the United States which involved racism towards negroes at the Amateur Athletic Union national track and field championships. Because of the racism, the meet was transferred to another city. Captain Hans von Tschammer-Osten, German Sports Commissar, added fuel to the fire when he said:

German sports are for Aryans. German youth leadership is only for Aryans and not for Jews.²⁶

However, the move to take the Olympic Games away from Germany failed when the International Olympic Committee decided to keep the Games in Germany basing their decision on the pledges made by the German government on June 7, 1933.²⁷ Once this decision was made by the IOC, Brundage no longer supported the movement to move the Olympics as well as the subsequent boycott movement. Therefore, most of the arguments following the June decision of the IOC were centered towards proving that discrimination against the Jews existed and that the pledges had been violated. Information which suggested that discrimination was prevalent was exposed in August issues of the *New York Times* which reported that Jewish sport organizations were denied use of all special facilities according to an edict from Dr. Bernard Rust, Prussian Minister of Education and Culture.²⁸ Also, many of the German Athletic Associations excluded Jews from their boards, thereby depriving them of the necessary training facilities.²⁹

Although Avery Brundage no longer supported the moving of the Olympics, more and more evidence stirred many influential people to question the validity of the Germans' pledge. Included in this group of people were Bernard S. Deutsch, President of the American Jewish Congress, who requested the executive committee of the American Olympic Committee to discuss the withdrawal of the Olympic Games from Berlin or the boycott of the games by the United States. In a letter to the committee, Deutsch noted that all training facilities for Jews had been withdrawn and that Jewish athletes were barred from

²⁵"1936 Olympics May Be Cancelled Due to Germany's Campaign Against the Jews," *New York Times*, 18 April 1933, p. 18.

²⁶"Urges Olympic Sport," *New York Times*, 9 May 1933, p. 24.

²⁷"Reich Keeps Games, Giving Way on Jews," *New York Times*, 8 June 1933, p. 1.

²⁸"Nazi Stand Vague on Jews in Sports," *New York Times*, 6 August 1933, sec. 3, p. 4.

²⁹"Olympic Progress Is Made in Berlin," *New York Times*, 27 August 1933, sec. 3, p. 2.

membership in sports organizations. His feelings are typified by this statement from his letter:

In the five months which have elapsed since the pledge of Germany was given . . . the policy of the Hitler government to the Jews has become more violent and more stringent.³⁰

Deutsch's evidence and letter were quite convincing as it provoked Avery Brundage to say at the meeting, "Germany may have had its fingers crossed when it made the pledge."³¹ As a result, the Amateur Athletic Union at its national convention (1933) voted to boycott the Games unless the Hitler regime changed its attitude toward Jews in sport.

With the decision to boycott the Olympic Games unless the Germans maintained their pledge, several people jumped on the band wagon to boycott the Games using various reasons and tactics. Representative Emanuel Celler of New York did not trust Germany and wanted the Games withdrawn from Berlin as attested by this cable to the IOC :

Any government that abets Jewish persecutions and which threatens daily through Dr. Goebbels to intensify anti-Jewish atrocities cannot be trusted to keep its promise not to discriminate against Jewish athletes.³²

Samuel Untermeyer, President of the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League to Champion Human Rights, attempted to scare Jewish athletes into boycotting the Games because he felt that any Jew to participate in the Olympics was "deserving only of the contempt of his fellowmen, be they Jews or Christians."³³ Alfred E. Smith, a former governor, added that no amateur meet should be held where discrimination is tolerated.

Jeremiah T. Mahoney, a former Supreme Court Justice and President of the Amateur Athletic Union, who was a strong supporter of the boycott movement presented a new "twist" to the existence of discrimination against the Jewish athletes when he said, "There is no room for discrimination on grounds of race, color or creed in the Olympics."³⁴ Because of the Olympic code which recognizes in the realm of sports the equality of all races and faiths, the Games should be boycotted. Further, in a letter to Dr. Theodore Lewald, he noted several

³⁰"Olympics Unit Here Reopens Nazi Row," *New York Times*, 9 October 1933, p. 13.

³¹*Ibid.*

³²"Sacred Fire' from Olympics Will Be Carried in Long Relay to Open 1936 Games in Berlin," *New York Times*, 23 May 1934, p. 24.

³³"Jews Urged to Shun Olympics in Berlin," *New York Times*, 12 August 1934, sec. 2, p. 6.

³⁴"May Ask New Pledge," *New York Times*, 26 July 1935, p. 9.

instances of discrimination against the Jews in Germany and that the Germans are only "fulfilling" their pledge on a technicality (Greta Bergmann, a high jumper, did not compete in the German national track and field meet because she was not a member of one of the German Athletic Associations according to the Germans ; thus, they have fulfilled their obligation. However, Mahoney points out that she could not join the association because she was Jewish). This point was reiterated in an editorial appearing in *Scholastic* magazine which stated that the protest movement in the United States is based on the fact that in Germany, "non-Aryans" (Jews) are refused equal opportunities with members of Nazi sport clubs to train for the Olympics.³⁵

The final bit of evidence supporting the boycott movement's accusations of discrimination against the Jews came when the Maccabee League of Jewish Athletes withdrew all its candidates from participation in any sort of Olympic tryouts. The Maccabee League explained that, as non-Aryans, they were not German citizens and therefore could not participate in the Olympics, since Olympic requirements specified that they be citizens.

A second argument that supported the boycott was that discrimination was a blow at fair play in sports. The American Jewish Congress advocated this position as evidenced by this emotional appeal :

. . . the discrimination against Jews in Germany is contrary to all the tenets of sportsmanship, and that the strength of the teams to participate would be weakened in view of the fact that no Jew in America or in other countries could, in self-respect, undertake to appear in Germany under present conditions.³⁶

The board of directors of the National Federation of Settlements also believed that the discrimination in Germany was a violation of fair play in sports and a violation of the Olympic code as expressed in the following statement :

We have a stake in the issue as to whether American athletes shall take part in the Olympics at Berlin, when to do so strikes a blow at fair play in sports. We regard this in no sense sheerly a Jewish problem. All minority groups are under the ban in Germany, whether Socialist, Democratic, Catholic, Jewish, Communist, trade union or liberal. Their athletic organizations

³⁵ Jack Lippert, "Olympics in Hitlerland," *Scholastic*, (November 1935): 26-27.

³⁶ "Protests Olympic Games," *New York Times*, 31 May 1933, p. 27.

have been disrupted. No one who differs from the Nazi mold has a fair chance to try for Olympic honors. We do not need to take the word of refugees, Gentile or Jewish, who have had to leave Germany because of political suppression or economic persecution; the official German statements carry their own condemnation. The decision to permit one German Jew to qualify, announced by General Sherrill of the A.O.C., is as ridiculous a compromise as it would be to exclude all but one Irish athlete from the American contestants. In the name of the fair play and sportsmanship that our settlement clubs strive for, we urge the adult athletic organizations of the country to refrain from participating in the Olympics if they are held in Germany.³⁷

Finally, a very strong case was developed to prove that Germany was using the Olympics in the political arena as a showplace for Nazi youth; therefore, the United States should not participate in the Olympics and allow the Germans to do this. Although Avery Brundage firmly believed that politics should remain separate from the Olympics, the boycott movement charged that Hitler and the German government were in fact playing politics with the Olympics and not the boycott movement. Samuel Untermyer stressed this point in his reply to Brundage's statement that sports should remain separate from politics:

Answering your argument on your return from Germany that as this question is restricted to sport, no political implications can be considered, may I refer you to the Bible, Proverbs, chapter twenty-six, verses eighteen, nineteen, in which King Solomon declared as follows: 'As a madman who casteth firebrands, arrows, and death: so is the man who deceiveth his neighbor and saith am I not in sport.' Sport cannot be made the football for all iniquities of the Hitler regime.³⁸

The German government's involvement in the Olympics became so pervasive that Sidney L. Mayer in his introduction to Judith Holmes's Book, *Olympiad 1936: Blazer of Glory for Hitler's Reich*, wrote this comment:

In short, Hitler made sport an arm of political propaganda to an extent that had never before been attempted.³⁹

³⁷"The Olympics," Survey, (December 1935), 368.

³⁸"Move Gains Force to Bar U.S. Entry," *New York Times*, 8 December 1934, p. 20.

³⁹Judith Holmes, *Olympiad 1936: Blaze of Glory of Hitler's Reich*, (New York: Ballantine Books, Inc., 1971).

As early as 1933, Hitler exposed his intention of using the Games for political means with this statement:

I will do everything possible to advance the Games, as well as all sports interests.⁴⁰

Then, in January (1934), Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels, the German Minister of Propaganda, took over the publicity of the Olympics, marking the first time in Olympic history that a government had been involved with the Olympics. Sidney Mayer analyzed this move by the Nazis:

The Nazi propaganda machine . . . wanted to show the world that not only was Germany again a great power, that it was the happiest, richest country in the world despite the jealousies of her rivals — Hitler wanted to indicate that the Aryan race, particularly the Germans, were physically superior to inferior breeds.⁴¹

In 1935 appearing in three separate journals or newspapers, the writers suggested that since Germany is using the Olympics as propaganda for Hitlerism, the withdrawal of the United States team would strike a blow at Nazi propaganda. This was concluded by Frederick T. Birchall of the *New York Times*, Jack Lippert, *Scholastic* magazine's sports editor, and an editorial appearing in *Nation*.⁴²

Finally, the sentiment that withdrawal from the Games was a method of showing the Germans that the United States disapproved of their actions was expressed by Mrs. Sonja Branting, arbiter in Domestic Relations at Stockholm:

Withdrawing from the Olympic Games is one method of demonstrating to the Nazi government the solidity of the world's disapproval of the persecutions being carried on in Germany. American athletes play a leading part in the Olympics and the Germans are anxious for the approval of Americans.⁴³

Now that the arguments for both viewpoints have been presented, one can now evaluate them and make a rational decision concerning America's participation in the 1936 Olympics (thank G-d for historical hindsight!). The movement to with-

⁴⁰"Hitler Promises Full Support for the 1936 Olympic Games," *New York Times*, 17 March 1933, p. 25.

⁴¹Judith Holmer, *Olympiad 1936*.

⁴²"Berlin Is Nervous as Another Purge Is Believed Near," *New York Times*, 27 July 1935, p. 12; Jock Lippert, "Olympics in Hitlerland," *Scholastic*, (November 1935): 26-27; "Hitler's Olympic Games," *Nation*, (October 1935): 426.

⁴³"United States Urged to Spurn Olympics," *New York Times*, 20 September 1935, p. 4.

draw the Olympics before June 7, 1933 may very well have succeeded in moving the Olympics to another city. However, their charge of "Discrimination!" was not enough, particularly when Germany pledged to observe all the laws regulating the Olympic Games. Consequently, the International Olympic Committee voted to keep the XIth Olympiad in Berlin. Late in the controversy, the argument that discrimination violated the Olympic code of fair play and equality may have been strong enough to move the Games. However, it surfaced late in the game or "after the fact."

Thus, once the IOC decided to keep the Games in Germany (or after June 7, 1933) the arguments concerning discrimination were not effective and became a "should have" type issue. Therefore, the American controversy blossomed into an argument in a sense over the method the United States could best show the Nazis that their ideology was wrong. One viewpoint was to boycott the Games; thus, showing our disapproval of the Nazis. However, Nazi propaganda could have shot this idea down by saying that the United States was scared and lacked the courage to face the Aryans in sport. The opposing viewpoint was the idea that America's participation in the Olympics could destroy the myth of Aryan supremacy as A. C. Gilbert felt that an American team composed of athletes from various nationalities and religious beliefs would make the German athletes think that the edicts of their government weren't as sound as they thought them to be. By proving that Aryan supremacy was a myth and not reality, the Americans could strike a blow at the Nazis. In effect, this was accomplished when a Black American, Jesse Owens, won four gold medals. Jesse Owen's victories were hard to accept, as Hitler refused to congratulate Owens as he did all his German victors. Although Germany came away with the most gold medals, their Aryan supremacy was dealt a severe blow by the Americans. Therefore, the American attendance at the Berlin Olympics was essential,