

Special Exhibition

The Sidney Kimmel and Rena Rowan Exhibition Gallery

Concourse Level

Passes Not Required

July 19, 1996 – July 27, 1997

THE NAZI OLYMPICS BERLIN 1936



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In August 1936, Adolf Hitler's Nazi dictatorship hosted the Summer Olympics. Softpedaling its antisemitic agenda and plans for territorial expansion, the regime exploited the Games to deceive foreign visitors with an image of a peaceful, tolerant Germany.

The International Olympic Committee awarded the 1936 Summer Games to Berlin in 1931, two years before Hitler took power. Nazi racist policies, including the exclusion of Jewish athletes from German sports clubs and competition, prompted opposition from abroad. In the United States, many amateur sports leaders and newspaper editors urged a boycott of the 1936 Games. But in the end, the boycott effort narrowly failed, and 50 countries sent teams to Berlin.

Using historical photographs, film, and the testimonies of athletes, **THE NAZI OLYMPICS Berlin 1936** documents the Nazification of German sport and the boycott controversy. The facade of a beautified Berlin is stripped away to expose Nazi propaganda, press censorship, Germany's remilitarization program, and the arbitrary arrest and imprisonment of "enemies of the state." Olympic pageantry and competition brought only a brief pause in the anti-Jewish campaign.

THE NAZI OLYMPICS Berlin 1936 highlights the stories of athletes who boycotted, participated in, or were barred from the Games. Nazi commentary on the victories of track star Jesse Owens and other African Americans and the exclusion of German Jewish high jumper Gretel Bergmann from the Olympics underscore the virulence of Nazi racism. After the Games, Germany's expansionist policies and the persecution of Jews and other victims of Nazi racism accelerated, culminating in World War II and the Holocaust.

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Hours: 10:00 AM to 5:30 PM Daily

Admission: Free (Passes Not Required)

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

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