



### RUDI BALL

Born to a middle class family in Berlin, Rudi Ball's father and paternal ancestors were Jewish, and his mother was from a Lutheran family. Considered a half-Jew according to Aryan laws, Rudi Ball was initially not allowed to compete for the German hockey team at the 1936 Winter Olympic Games. However, his friend and star teammate Gustav Jaenecke refused to compete without him. As the star of the first matches, Rudi Ball was cheered on by his German fans. After being injured, Ball could not compete in the rest of the series.

Rudi Ball, in a guarded yet revealing interview with Canadian journalist Matthew Halton, explained his participation in the 1936 Games. When asked as to whether he considered himself to be "primarily a Jew, or a German," Ball replied, "I belong to the Jewish faith, but to the German nation." But, as Halton noted, "Ball never spoke of the Germans as 'we.' It was always as 'they.'"

Rudi Ball scores the first goal for Berliner SC in the Spengler Cup tournament against Cambridge University, Davos (Switzerland), December 31, 1931. Berliner SC won the game 4 points to 1, but lost the Spengler Cup Final against Oxford University. – *Swedish Ice Hockey Historical and Statistical Society*



### HELENE MAYER

Mayer was born to a Jewish father and non-Jewish mother in Offenbach, Germany, a famous fencing centre. At 14 years of age, she was a runner-up in foil fencing at the German championships and from 1925 to 1930 was national champion.

Mayer won a gold medal in the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics. In a controversial gesture, she waved the flag of Imperial First World War Germany rather than the flag of the democratic Weimar Germany. It would not be her last controversial Olympics gesture.

In 1933, Mayer's Offenbach Fencing Club expelled the "half-Jew" who was the club's most successful fencer. However, in 1935 Mayer received a formal invitation to fence at the Olympics for Germany. Mayer won the silver medal and at the medal ceremony wore a swastika and gave the Nazi salute. Some emphasize that she competed out of love for Germany. Others insist that she competed out of fear for her family in Germany.

Helene Mayer, one of two "half-Jewish" athletes permitted to compete in the 1936 Olympics, date unknown. – *USHMM, courtesy of Dr. George Eisen*



## GRETEL BERGMANN

Fearing an Olympic boycott, the International Olympic Committee extracted promises from the German authorities that there would be no restrictions on the participation of Jewish athletes. To showcase a German-Jewish athlete, the Nazis ordered Gretel Bergmann, who had moved to London, to return home to train, threatening her family in Germany would suffer if she did not comply.

Bergmann was born in the small town of Laupheim, Germany. A gifted athlete, Bergmann competed in local track and field competitions from the age of ten. Bergmann excelled in the high jump, and in 1931 was sent to a special sports school in southern Germany. However, when the Nazis took power, Bergmann was expelled from her sports club and school. She left Germany for the United Kingdom.

Forced to return to Germany, Bergmann tied the German women's national high jump record in 1936. As soon as German Olympic officials were confident that the Americans would participate in the Olympics, they sent Bergmann a letter stating that her "poor performance" meant that she could not be a member of the German Olympic team.

The Nazis offered Bergmann a standing-room ticket to view the track and field events. Both devastated and defiant, Bergmann refused the ticket and left Germany in 1937.

Gretel Bergmann, competing in the high jump in Stuttgart, 1936. Four weeks before the Olympics, she matched the German record of 1.60 metres – the height that ultimately won the gold medal at the Berlin Games. – *USHMM, courtesy of Margaret (Gretel Bergmann) Lambert*



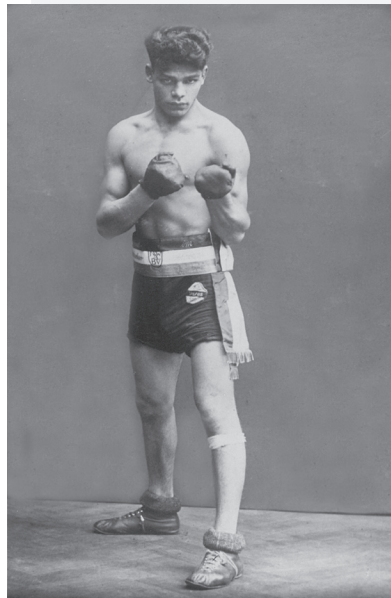
## LILLI HENOCH

In the decade before Hitler rose to power, Lilli Henoch established herself as the best female athlete in the Berlin Sports Club (BSC). In addition to setting world records in track and field, Henoch was captain of the BSC handball team and a member of the club's hockey team, the Berlin champions of 1925.

In 1933, just 14 days before Hitler was named Chancellor of Germany, Henoch was elected chair of the BSC women's athletic section. She was highly esteemed by her peers, who praised her in a BSC publication: "If you ever need an example of club loyalty and selflessness, call her name. And the air around us will become clean."

After the "Aryanization" of sports in Germany, however, Henoch was ousted from the BSC, so she put her energies behind a Jewish sports club. In 1942, Henoch and her sixty-year-old mother were deported. They were shot and buried in a mass grave in Riga, Latvia.

Lilli Henoch in a 1922 publication of the Berlin Sports Club. – *University of Potsdam (History of Sports) in cooperation with the "Zentrum Deutsche Sportgeschichte Berlin-Brandenburg e.V"*



## JOHANN TROLLMANN

Johann Trollmann was a Sinti light-heavyweight boxer born in Hanover, Germany. On June 9, 1933, he fought for the German light-heavyweight title. In a racially charged decision, Trollman was denied victory. The crowd went into a frenzy of protest and the officials belatedly declared Trollmann the winner. Days later, Trollman's title was taken from him.

In a courageous mockery of Nazi ideology, Trollman faced his next competitor with his hair dyed blond, his body powdered white, and he refused to return punches. Remarkably, he lasted five rounds.

With the Aryanization of sports, Trollman was not permitted to compete for a place on the German Olympic team. However, unlike German Jews, Sinti were allowed to serve in the military. In 1939, Trollmann joined the Germany army and was wounded as he served on the Eastern Front. In spite of his military service, Trollmann was arrested in 1942 and sent to a subcamp of Sachsenhausen. As he grew weaker from performing slave labour, he was forced to box with camp guards who delighted in beating him. In 1943, Trollmann was reportedly murdered by a guard.

Johann Trollmann, circa 1932. – *Dokumentations- und Kulturzentrum Deutscher Sinti und Roma*