MORE THAN JUST GAMES
Canada & the 1936 Olympics

TEACHER’S GUIDE

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Text: Nina Krieger
Design: Kazuko Kusumoto
Research: Alia Dharssi & Manori Ravindran
Copy Editing: Rome Fox
Cover image: Gretel Bergmann, USHMM, courtesy of Margaret [Gretel Bergmann] Lambert.
Phil Edwards, Canada’s Sports Hall of Fame. Helene Mayer, USHMM, courtesy of Dr. George Eisen.
Sammy Luftspring, Canada’s Sports Hall of Fame.

Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre
50 - 950 West 41st Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Z 2N7
604 264 0499  info@vhec.org  www.vhec.org

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To coincide with the significant “teaching moment” presented by the 2010 Vancouver Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre is pleased to present an innovative exhibit and school program examining the controversies, achievements and consequences related to Canada’s participation in the Olympics held in Nazi Germany.

In 1936, Adolf Hitler’s regime camouflaged its racism and militarism while hosting the Winter and Summer Olympics. MORE THAN JUST GAMES: Canada & the 1936 Olympics offers insights into the Nazis’ antisemitic and exclusionary policies, Canada’s participation in the Games, its response to the international boycott debate and the experiences of individual athletes. A complementary exhibit, FRAMING BODIES: Sport and Spectacle in Nazi Germany, explores the relationship between athletics, politics and visual culture during the 1936 Games.

The exhibits and school program are an excellent complement to the study of the Holocaust and Canada’s response to Nazism, as well as a consideration of individual and collective moral decision-making. An investigation of the primary source material in the exhibits will foster media literacy and critical thinking skills.

The experiences and decisions of individual athletes as told in More Than Just Games offer compelling entry points for student visitors. The athletes — some Canadian Jews, some German-Jewish, others African-Canadian — navigated complex, often competing, concerns to decide whether or not to participate in the Olympic Games hosted by Nazi Germany.

Collectible sports cards — which are to be printed off in advance of your class visit to the VHEC — will provide students with a connection to an athlete that they will learn more about during the course of their visit. Capturing students’ imaginations in this way will motivate students to consider the dilemmas faced by these athletes and their fates.

Note: Although the teacher’s guide presents lessons that can be done pre and post-visit to the VHEC, the Student Readings and Classroom Activities can support learning in classrooms across British Columbia and Canada.
PRE-VISIT ACTIVITY

Adolf Hitler rides in a motorcade through the Brandenburg Gate to the opening ceremonies of the XI Olympiad in Berlin, August 1, 1936.

– USHMM, courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park
Senior secondary school teachers may wish to incorporate optional Supplemental Reading: Antisemitism: A Brief History of a Long Hatred.

To provide background information on 1) the Olympic Movement and 2) the Nazi State & the 1936 Olympics in order to deepen students’ understanding of the historical concepts, individual experiences and primary sources they will encounter during their visit to the Vancouver Holocaust Education Centre. Students will also begin considering the factors that contribute to decision-making in times of moral crisis.

TEACHER PREPARATION

• Make copies of Student Readings A & B, distributing Reading A to half the class and Reading B to the other half. 
  If incorporating the Supplemental Reading, distribute each reading to one-third of the class.
• The readings can be studied in class or assigned as a homework assignment the day before the pre-visit lesson.
• Make copies of the Sports Cards, ensuring that each student has one card.
  Please have students bring these cards to the VHEC.

Duration of activity: 60-75 minutes

PART 1: READ & SHARE

• Explain that the class will be engaged in readings and discussions in preparation for their class trip to the VHEC.
• If the readings have not been assigned as homework, give students 10 minutes to study their texts.
• Form student pairs so that one student has Reading A and the other Reading B. Each student summarizes their text for their partner, using the discussion questions as a guide. If working with the Supplemental Reading, students work in groups of three. (15 minutes)
• Debrief as a class, discussing what students found most interesting about their texts. (15 minutes)

PART 2: CHARTING IDENTITY

• Students work independently to create an identity chart filled with words and/or symbols used to describe themselves, as well as the labels others give them. Identity characteristics to include might be: gender, age, physical characteristics, as well as cultural identifiers such as ties to a particular religion, class, neighbourhood, school, and nation. (10 minutes)
• Students discuss their identity charts in pairs. Consider: what does the chart reveal about you? Are there aspects of your identity and character that are difficult to communicate in the diagram? (10 minutes)
• Distribute the Sports Cards to students and have them create identity charts for their individual athletes. (10 minutes)
• Inform students that they will learn more about their individuals during their visits to the VHEC.
POST-VISIT EXTENSION: WRITTEN REFLECTION

Students revisit their athlete’s identity chart and write a response about what they learned about their individual at the VHEC. The Athlete Postscripts (19–20) may be used as prompts. Consider the following questions:

• What was your athlete’s dilemma?
• What were the considerations that influenced the decisions and actions of your athlete regarding participation in the 1936 Olympics?
• What would you have done in their position?
• How does your individual’s fate inform your understanding of: a) Canada in the 1930s (if your athlete was Canadian) or b) Nazi Germany (if your athlete was German)?
THE GAMES BEGIN

In 1894 French educator and athletic enthusiast Baron Pierre de Coubertin hosted a meeting of representatives from nine countries at which he called for a modern revival of the ancient Olympic Games. Embracing the motto *Citius, Altius, Fortius* (Faster, Higher, Stronger), de Coubertin championed the idea of an Olympics celebrating amateur athletics and the love of sport.

AN INTERNATIONAL EVENT

De Coubertin saw the potential for the Olympics to promote international goodwill through both open competition and cultural exchange. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) was created to organize the first modern Olympic Games in Athens, Greece in the summer of 1896. Summer Olympics have been held every four years since 1896 – with the exception of the war years – and in 1924 the IOC added the Winter Games.

SPORT & NATION BUILDING

Within modern nation states, there were different attitudes towards physical activity. In Germany, Friedrich Jahn (1778-1852) saw gymnastics as a way for German boys and men to develop personal strength in order to strengthen nationalism. In Great Britain, educators and social reformers saw competitive sports as the way to toughen their males and teach fair play. In the first decades of the 20th century, and particularly after the First World War (1914-1918), competitive sports became more popular than gymnastics in Europe, North America and parts of Asia.
SPORT IN CANADA

“To strengthen the body is to improve the vehicle of almost all our activity, and to strengthen the bodies of the nation is to strengthen the nation.”
- Henry Roxborough, Canadian author and supporter of amateur sport, 1925

Olympic supporters argued for well-ordered and regulated Games promoting competition and self-improvement. Canadians created national associations for their favorite sports. The Amateur Athletic Union of Canada was the largest of these organizations, in charge of track and field, gymnastics, handball, fencing, boxing and wrestling.

JEWISH PERSPECTIVES

“A healthy self-reliant and self-respecting Jewish generation will add credit to our community, to our city and to our country.”
- One of the justifications for the Young Men’s and Young Women’s Hebrew Association of Toronto, 1925.

As with their non-Jewish counterparts, individual Jewish athletes have challenged themselves to excel in their chosen sport. Success in sports could mean recognition in both the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds. By participating in athletics, Jews were also challenging stereotypes of Jews and Jewish bodies as “weak,” “nervous,” “feminine” and “ugly.”

CHALLENGES TO THE OLYMPICS

Between the First and Second World Wars, the political left - socialists and communists - charged governments with using Olympic competition to claim a place for their nation on the international scene, or to prove the strength of their nation to both friend and foe. Critics believed that many of the national sports organizations and the IOC promoted the interests of the upper and middle classes. They responded by creating alternative sporting associations and competitions such as the Red Sport International and the Workers’ Olympics.

FROM AMATEUR TO PROFESSIONAL

The Olympics were conceived as a competition for amateur athletes who did not earn money or receive endorsements for their participation. Amateur athletes who competed against professionals or accepted endorsements could be disqualified. With the growth of professional sports, this began to change. In 1986, the IOC allowed professional athletes to participate in the Games.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. What were the Olympic ideals promoted by the founders of the Games?
2. Why did Jews participate in sports?
3. What did you find most surprising about your reading? Develop one question in response to the reading.
A poster intended to generate excitement about the Berlin Olympics shows Adolf Hitler and Reich Sports Office Director Hans von Tschammer und Osten studying the site of the 1936 Berlin Summer Games. — USHMM, Courtesy of John Loaring
In 1931, the International Olympic Committee chose Germany to host the 1936 Winter and Summer Olympics. The decision symbolized Germany’s return to the international community after its defeat in the First World War.

The liberal democracy of the Weimar Republic collapsed shortly afterwards. By January 1933, National Socialist leader Adolf Hitler had been appointed Chancellor. On March 23, 1933, the Enabling Act was forced through the Reichstag, the German parliament, turning the fragile democracy into a fascist dictatorship.

According to Nazi ideology, Germans and those of northern European descent were considered “Aryans” and members of the “master race.” Jews, along with Roma and Sinti (“Gypsies”) and Africans, were classified as “inferior” and declared enemies of the German state.

Hitler did not initially want the Olympics to occur in Germany because he disagreed with the Olympic ideals of international cooperation and peace. However, the Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, convinced Hitler that the Olympics were an opportunity to gain international approval for the Nazi government. Hitler became a strong supporter of the Olympic Games, while the Propaganda Ministry set up a special committee to promote the Olympics.

Meanwhile, Hitler’s government created laws and policies that excluded Jews from all areas of public life, including sports:

- On April 1, 1933, the Nazis declared a boycott of Jewish businesses, with guards standing in front of Jewish-owned businesses and stores to prevent customers from entering. This was an attempt to remove Jews from the cultural and commercial life of Germany and cultivate popular acceptance for further anti-Jewish measures.

- On April 7, 1933, the government created the Laws for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service, to exclude Jews and political opponents from university and governmental positions. More laws were created during the following weeks to remove Jewish lawyers, judges, doctors and teachers from their posts.

- On April 25, 1933, the Nazi Sports Office ordered public sport and gymnastic organizations to implement an “Aryans only” policy. Jewish athletes were excluded from German sports clubs and not permitted to compete against non-Jews.

- In the fall of 1935, the Nazi government implemented the Nuremberg Laws. The laws classified Jews as a race, instead of as a religious group, and stripped them of basic civil rights. Even non-practicing Jews or those who had previously converted to Christianity were defined as Jews by the Nuremberg Laws.

In the months leading up to the 1936 Olympics, the Nazi government faced international pressure, especially from the International Olympic Committee and the United States, to treat Jews fairly and allow German Jews to compete in the Games. In the end, the Nazi government allowed two “half-Jewish” Germans – hockey player Rudi Ball and fencer Helene Mayer - to participate on the German Olympic team.
Aryan: Term perverted by the Nazis to mean a so-called master race. The idealized “Aryan” was blond, blue-eyed, tall and muscular. The original term refers to a people speaking an Indo-European dialect.

Boycott: A form of activism involving the act of abstaining from using, buying, or interacting with a person, organization or country as an expression of protest, usually for political reasons.

Fascism: Ideology supporting a form of government based on a one-party dictatorship, militarism, ultra-nationalism, absolute conformity, and intolerance for civil and human rights.

International Olympic Committee (IOC): Founded in 1894, the IOC is an international, non-governmental, non-profit organization that is in charge of the organization of the Summer and Winter Olympic games.

Nazi: A member of the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP) founded in 1919 and brought to power in 1933 under Adolf Hitler. It can also be used as an adjective to describe something of or pertaining to the Nazis.

Propaganda: A form of communication designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes or behaviour of its audience. Promotes biased information, ideas or practices and is transmitted in speeches, slogans, posters, newspapers, films etc.

Weimar Republic: The parliamentary democracy that was established in Germany in 1919 (after Germany lost the First World War) and ended in 1933 when Hitler passed the Enabling Act to change the German government into a dictatorship.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why did the Nazi leadership want Germany to host the 1936 Olympic Games?

2. What were some of the steps that the Nazis took to remove Jews from public life in Germany between 1933 and 1935?

3. What did you find most surprising about your reading? Develop one question in response to the reading.
SUPPLEMENTAL READING
ANTISEMITISM: A BRIEF HISTORY OF A LONG HATRED

In illustration from an antisemitic children’s book. The sign reads “Jews are not wanted here.” Germany, 1936. - USHMM
Antisemitism means prejudice against or hatred of Jews. Intolerance for the Jewish religion developed in the early Christian era and continued over the centuries. Riots against Jewish populations were often sparked by false rumours that Jews used the blood of Christian children for religious rituals. At times, Jews were also blamed for everything from economic conditions to epidemics to natural disasters.

During the Industrial Revolution of the late 18th and early 19th centuries, Jews became more integrated into societies throughout Western Europe. At the same time, however, nationalist movements began to denounce Jews as disloyal citizens. In Germany, the "voelkisch movement" (folk or people's movement) claimed that Jews were "un-German."

The Nazi party, which was founded in 1919 by Adolf Hitler, argued for the removal of all Jews from Germany. Nazism gained popularity, in part, by blaming Jews for Germany's loss in the First World War and for the country's economic problems. This false accusation against Jews is particularly striking because Jews composed less than 1% of the German population when Hitler came to power in 1933 and were very integrated into German society.

Unlike Christian antisemitism, which was hatred of Jews based primarily on religion, Nazi antisemitism defined Jews as an undesirable "race." Drawing on eugenics, the Nazi party defined Jews as an "inferior" racial group, rather than a religious one, that threatened the purity of the "Aryan" race.

The Holocaust, the state-sponsored persecution and murder of European Jews by Nazi Germany and its collaborators, is considered to be history's most extreme example of antisemitism. Prior to the Second World War, Jews were stripped of their German citizenship and discriminated against through antisemitic laws. After the Second World War broke out in 1939, Jews and other "inferior" people, such as Sinti and Roma (Gypsies), Slavs, and homosexuals, were worked to death and murdered in concentration and death camps.

Adapted from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Holocaust Encyclopedia.

JEWs IN CANADA

At the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, there were 167,000 Jews in Canada, representing 1.5% of the population. Most lived in Montreal, Toronto and Winnipeg. The majority were foreign-born and many spoke Yiddish as their first language. They were politically, religiously and economically diverse.

During the 1920s, 30s and 40s, antisemitism was commonplace in Canada. Jews found themselves barred from public places in Canada such as hotels, beaches and golf courses. Some universities limited the number of Jews who could attend or only admitted Jews with better grades than their non-Jewish counterparts. Many hospitals barred Jewish interns and doctors, while some public schools refused to hire Jewish teachers.

The Jewish community in Canada responded to Nazism by organizing protests to warn Canadians about the dangers of Hitler's antisemitic policies. They also organized campaigns to fight antisemitism within Canada itself. In 1934, faced with the Canadian government's refusal to rescue European Jews, the Canadian Jewish Congress began public campaigns against antisemitism at home and abroad. The 1936 Olympics represented one of the first times that Canada interacted with the Nazi government. Anti-Nazi groups, Jewish organizations and the political left called for a boycott of the Olympics.
**Antisemitism:** Discrimination towards, persecution of or hatred of Jews.

**Boycott:** A form of activism involving the act of abstaining from using, buying, or interacting with a person, organization or country as an expression of protest, usually for political reasons.

**Concentration and death camps:** The Nazis established concentration camps shortly after assuming power in 1933 to imprison and isolate political opponents and those considered to be racially undesirable, such as Jews, and Sinti and Roma. Most of the approximately 1,800 camps were transit or labour camps. After the occupation of Poland, death or extermination camps were established for the purpose of systematic mass murder at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Sobibor, Belzec, Chelmno and Majdanek.

**Eugenics:** A racial theory that was popular in many Western nations at the time. According to eugenics, observation, family genealogies and intelligence tests could be used to define which groups had “superior” or “inferior” qualities.

**Jew:** Someone of the Hebrew or Jewish people. Someone who is either born into or converts to Judaism, the religion, philosophy and way of life of the Jewish people.

**Nazism:** The ideology of the Nazi party, which stressed nationalism, imperialism, anti-Communism, militarism, racism and antisemitism.

**Slavs:** Ethnic group of peoples inhabiting mainly eastern, southeastern and east central Europe, including Russians, Poles and Czechs, among others. Nazis considered Slavs to be an inferior race that was only suited for enslavement.

**Yiddish:** A dialect of High German that has Hebrew and Slavic words. Spoken by European Jews.

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**FOR DISCUSSION**

1. What is antisemitism and how did it change over time?
2. Describe the Jewish community in Canada. How did Canadian Jews respond to Nazism?
3. What did you find most surprising about your reading? Develop one question in response to the reading.
1. SPORTS CARDS: INSTRUCTIONS

2. Helene Mayer

3. Sammy Shirtlifter

4. Helene Mayer
NAME: SAMMY LUFTSPRING
DATE & PLACE OF BIRTH: MAY 14, 1916 | TORONTO, CANADA
SPORT: BOXING

Born into a working class family in the heart of Toronto’s immigrant Jewish neighbourhood, Sammy Luftspring aspired to a boxing career after seeing a match at the age of 9.

Between 1932 and 1936, Luftspring fought 105 matches with only five losses. He won many tournaments, including the Ontario amateur lightweight boxing championship in 1933, at the age of 17.

For years, Luftspring dreamed of competing at the pinnacle of amateur boxing - the Olympics. Luftspring and fellow boxer Norman “Baby” Yack planned to compete in the 1936 Olympic trials in Montreal, and go to Berlin if they made the team.

However, Luftspring’s parents and the Jewish community tried to convince him that participating in Hitler’s Games would be an endorsement of Nazi racist policies.

Did Sammy Luftspring fulfill his lifelong ambition of boxing at the 1936 Olympics or heed the appeals of his family and Jewish community and boycott the Games?

TO FIND OUT VISIT
MORE THAN JUST GAMES: CANADA & THE 1936 OLYMPICS

NAME: HELENE MAYER
DATE & PLACE OF BIRTH: DECEMBER 20, 1910 | OFFENBACH, GERMANY
SPORT: FENCING

Helene Mayer dedicated herself to fencing at a young age. By the age of 14, she placed second in foil fencing at the 1924 German championships. From 1925 to 1930 she was the German national champion. By 1936, Mayer had won competitions worldwide, including the gold medal in the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics.

Mayer placed a disappointing fifth in the 1932 Los Angeles Games and remained in California to attend university. After the Nazis’ rise to power in 1933, Mayer was expelled from the Offenbach Fencing Club and from the German Fencing Association because her father was Jewish.

However, in 1935 Mayer received a formal invitation to return to Germany and fence on the 1936 German Olympic team. She won the silver medal in the women’s foil and gave the Nazi salute on the awards podium. Since Helene Mayer was famous, “Aryan-looking,” and only “half-Jewish,” Hitler used her as a symbol of inclusiveness.

Did Helene Mayer compete for Nazi Germany because of her love of Germany or out of fear for her family?

TO FIND OUT VISIT
MORE THAN JUST GAMES: CANADA & THE 1936 OLYMPICS
Above: Phil Edwards.Canada’s Sports Hall of Fame

Below: Gretel Bergmann.

**Above:** Phil Edwards.

NAME: PHIL EDWARDS
DATE & PLACE OF BIRTH: SEPTEMBER 13, 1907
GEOGETOWN, BRITISH GUIANA
SPORT: RUNNING

Phil Edwards won five Olympic Bronze medals for Canada at three Olympiads, including the bronze medal in the 800-metre race at the Berlin Games, for which he earned the title “man of bronze.”

Born into an upper-class family in British Guiana, Edwards moved to the US in 1926 to attend New York University where he broke college records. Because he was not an American, Edwards could not race for the United States at the 1928 Olympics.

He was invited to compete for Canada and attended McGill University, where he graduated from the medical school just before competing in the 1936 Olympics.

There was controversy in the Black community about participation in the “Nazi Olympics,” but many saw the 1936 Games as an opportunity for athletes of African descent to disprove Nazi racist doctrines.

What did the Canadian Summer Olympic Team do when their hotel in London, England refused to accept Phil Edwards as a guest?

**TO FIND OUT VISIT**
MORE THAN JUST GAMES: CANADA & THE 1936 OLYMPICS

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**Below:** Gretel Bergmann.

NAME: GRETEL BERGMANN
DATE & PLACE OF BIRTH: APRIL 12, 1914
LAUPHEIM, GERMANY
SPORT: HIGH-JUMPING

Gretel Bergmann was born in a German town with a small Jewish community. A gifted athlete, Bergmann competed in local track and field competitions from the age of ten. In 1931 at age 17, Bergmann was accepted into a special sports school in southern Germany but, as a Jew, was expelled after the Nazis took power. In 1933, Bergmann’s parents sent her to London, where she won the 1934 British High Jump Championship and hoped to compete for Britain in the 1936 Olympics.

Meanwhile, Nazi Germany faced international pressure to live up to Olympic ideals of non-discrimination. To showcase a German-Jewish athlete, the Nazis ordered Bergmann back to Germany, threatening her family if she did not return.

How did Gretel Bergmann respond to this dilemma?

**TO FIND OUT VISIT**
MORE THAN JUST GAMES: CANADA & THE 1936 OLYMPICS

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NAME: JOHANN TROLLMANN
DATE & PLACE OF BIRTH: DECEMBER 27, 1907 | HANOVER, GERMANY
SPORT: BOXING

Johann Trollmann was a Sinti lightweight boxer. The Sinti are the German-speaking branch of the Roma people, often referred to as “Gypsies.” The Nazis declared the Sinti, like the Jews, to be an “inferior race.” But, Trollmann was an exceptional boxer who defeated his “Aryan” opponents.

On June 9, 1933, Trollmann fought for the German light-heavyweight title. When it became clear that he would defeat his opponent, Nazi officials ordered the referee to declare the fight a draw. However, the crowd went into a frenzy of protest and the officials 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 in Nazi Germany, Trollmann was not permitted to compete for a place on the German Olympic team.

Was Johann Trollman able to escape the fate of other Sinti who were deported to Auschwitz?

TO FIND OUT VISIT
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NAME: EVA DAWES
DATE & PLACE OF BIRTH: SEPTEMBER 17, 1912 | TORONTO, CANADA
SPORT: HIGH JUMPING

Eva Dawes was a weak child. But when her father discovered that she had a gift for high jumping, he dug a pit for her in a little-used corner of a school playground. She won a bronze medal in the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles and a silver medal at the 1934 British Empire Games in London.

Eva’s independent spirit led her to do what she believed in, even if it got her into trouble. In 1935, Eva competed in a sporting event in Moscow. The meet was not approved by the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada, which suspended Dawes as a result. But when the Olympic trials came up, the AAUC pleaded with Eva to apologize and compete. She refused. As far as she was concerned, she had nothing to apologize for.

Instead, Eva boycotted the Berlin Olympics, where she felt the “true meaning of sport” did not exist, and decided to attend the People’s Olympiad in Barcelona.

What impact did this decision have on Eva Dawes’ athletic career after the 1936 Games?

TO FIND OUT VISIT
MORE THAN JUST GAMES: CANADA & THE 1936 OLYMPICS
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NAME: IRVING “TOOTS” MERETSKY

DATE & PLACE OF BIRTH: MAY 17, 1912 | WINDSOR, ONTARIO, CANADA

SPORT: BASKETBALL

Irving “Toots” Meretsky was born in Windsor, Ontario. From 1933 to 1936, he played on the Windsor Ford V-8’s, who defeated the Victoria Dominoes to become the Canadian Senior Men’s Champions and the representatives for Canada in the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

Meretsky was the leading scorer in the championship tournament and one of the star players of the Canadian Olympic basketball team. Canada was a basketball powerhouse at the time and the game, created by the Canadian James Naismith, was a medal sport for the first time in 1936.

Nothing was going to keep Meretsky from the Olympics - including the fact that he was the only Jewish member of a team bound for Hitler’s Germany. He ventured into Jewish neighbourhoods in Berlin and was appalled to see people’s fear and the signs of oppression.

Canada won the silver medal, after losing to the US in the gold medal game.

Why did it take sixty years for Irving “Toots” Meretsky to finally get his silver medal from the 1936 Games?

TO FIND OUT VISIT
MORE THAN JUST GAMES: CANADA & THE 1936 OLYMPICS

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NAME: RUDI BALL

DATE & PLACE OF BIRTH: MARCH 27, 1910
BERLIN, GERMANY

SPORT: HOCKEY

Rudi Ball was a star on the German 1936 Winter Olympic team and the only Jew. Born to a middle class family in Berlin, Rudi Ball’s father was Jewish, and his mother was from a Lutheran family.

By 1933, Ball was one of the best hockey players in Europe. When the Nazis assumed power, Ball moved with his hockey-playing brothers to Switzerland and then to Italy.

Considered a half-Jew according to Nazi race laws, Ball was at first not allowed to play for Germany at the 1936 Winter Games. However, his friend and star teammate Gustav Jaenecke refused to compete without him. In 1936 he was summoned back to Germany to play for the national team. Without Ball and Jaenecke, Germany did not stand a chance of winning a medal.

What deal did Rudi Ball make with the Nazi state before agreeing to return to play in the 1936 Games?

TO FIND OUT VISIT
MORE THAN JUST GAMES: CANADA & THE 1936 OLYMPICS

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RUDI BALL
Star German hockey player Rudi Ball, like Helene Mayer, classified a half-Jew under Nazi racial law, was appointed to the German Olympic team. It is reported that in return for agreeing to compete for Germany, Ball’s family was granted permission to leave Germany for South Africa. During the decade following the Olympics, and even as the Nazis murdered millions of Jews, Ball was allowed to continue to play hockey, even representing Germany in international competition. Following the Second World War, Ball joined his family in South Africa. He passed away in September 1975.

GRETEL BERGMANN
In 1937, a year after being dropped from the German Olympic team, Gretel Bergmann immigrated to the United States. She swore never to set foot on German soil again. Her sporting achievements were extraordinary. The year she arrived in the United States, Bergmann placed first in the U.S. women’s high jump and shot put. She won the U.S. women’s high jump title again in 1938. In 1939 Bergmann retired from athletic competition. Sixty years later, in 1999, Bergmann returned to Germany for the first time to attend a ceremony in her honour at a sports arena named for her in Berlin. She resides in New York City.

EVA DAWES
High jumper Eva Dawes returned from Europe disappointed at the cancellation of the People’s Games in Barcelona. Suspended from the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada, Dawes was also prohibited from entering amateur competition in Canada. In 1937, a year after arriving back in Canada, Dawes moved to England, where she married. While she remained interested in sport, she never competed again. Dawes died in England on May 30, 2009 at the age of 96.

PHIL EDWARDS
Just before he left for Berlin to compete as part of Canada’s Olympic track and field team, Phil Edwards was awarded a degree in medicine from McGill University. Winner of multiple medals and one of the first African-Canadians to represent Canada at the Olympics, he was also the first winner of the prestigious Lou Marsh Trophy in 1937. Edwards went on to serve in the Canadian Army during the Second World War. He earned the rank of Captain. After the war he joined the staff of Montreal’s Royal Victoria Hospital and became a tropical disease expert. He was inducted into Canada’s Sports Hall of Fame in 1997. Edwards passed away on September 6, 1971.
SAMMY LUFTSPRING
Shortly after returning from Europe in 1936, Sammy Luftspring gave up his amateur status and turned to professional boxing. In 1938, he won the Canadian Welterweight Championship and was ranked the third best welterweight in the world. Luftspring’s hopes of challenging for the World Welterweight title were dashed when he suffered a detached retina in the ring. He was forced to give up professional boxing and turned to refereeing and business. He was inducted into Canada’s Sports Hall of Fame in 1985. Luftspring died on September 27, 2000.

HELENE MAYER
Fencer Helene Mayer, classified a Jew under Nazi racial laws, returned to Germany from the United States to join the 1936 German Summer Olympic Team. She won an Olympic silver medal. Her German citizenship was also reinstated after it had been stripped from her by the 1935 Nuremberg Laws. After the Olympics, she returned to the United States, became an American citizen and won the US National Foil Championship eight times. Ill with cancer, she returned to Germany in 1952 and died soon thereafter.

IRVING “TOOTS” MERETSKY
Irving Meretsky returned from the Berlin Olympics a member of the silver medal Ford V8s. For several years he continued to play for the team before becoming a player-coach in Port Alberni, British Columbia. In 1941, he returned to Windsor, where he coached amateur basketball and managed the Meretsky family-owned furniture store. He was inducted into the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame, the Ontario Sports Hall of Fame, and the Windsor/Essex County Sports Hall of Fame. Because only eight medals were available for the Canadian basketball team, Meretsky did not receive his Olympic silver medal until 1996, on the 60th anniversary of the Berlin Games. Meretsky died on May 18, 2006.

JOHANN TROLLMANN
German Sinti boxer Johann Trollmann was driven from the ring by Nazi racial laws. But, unlike German Jews, Sinti were allowed to serve in the German military. In 1939, Trollmann joined the German army and was wounded as he served on the Eastern Front. In spite of his military service, Trollmann was arrested in 1942 while on leave and sent to Neuengamme, 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.
CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

A Berlin street during the 1936 Summer Olympics. Carl and Erdott Diem Archive.
Victor Klemperer (1881-1960), a veteran of the First World War, was a distinguished Professor of French Literature at the University of Dresden when the Nazis came to power in 1933. Recognizing the danger of Hitler’s regime, Klemperer began to keep a diary. He chronicled a succession of antisemitic prohibitions concerning aspects of everyday existence, horrifying household searches and the deportation of friends, mostly to Theresienstadt concentration camp.

Although Klemperer had converted from Judaism to Protestantism in 1912, in 1935 he was stripped of his academic post and citizenship according to the Nuremberg Laws. He was eventually forced to work as a labourer in a factory and in 1940 was rehoused under miserable conditions in a ghetto, where he was routinely questioned, humiliated and beaten by the Gestapo (Nazi secret police). Married to a non-Jew, Klemperer remained free until receiving his deportation notice on February 13, 1945. That night the massive Allied bombing raid of Dresden took place. In the confusion caused by the firestorm, Klemperer was able to escape.

After a terrifying run-in with police in 1941, he wrote about the significance of his secret diary: “This is my heroics. I want to bear witness, precise witness, until the very end.” When a neighbour noted that he alone could not cover the main events of the war, Klemperer wrote: “It’s not the big things that are important, but the everyday life in tyranny, which may be forgotten. A thousand mosquito bites are worse than a blow on the head. I observe, I note, the mosquito bites.”

A SILENT CONVERSATION ABOUT VICTOR KLEMPERER

• Introduce Victor Klemperer to students, and explain that they are going to read a diary entry in which Klemperer discusses the 1936 Olympics. You might choose to go into biographical detail in advance of the activity, or to tell students about his identity and fate afterwards.

• Before this activity begins, it must be made clear that for the first two parts of this process, there is to be absolute silence. All communication will be done in writing. Students should be told that they will be given time to speak in pairs and as a class later. Ask students if they have questions before the activity starts to minimize interruptions once the silence has begun.

• Students work in pairs. Distribute the excerpt of The Diary of Victor Klemperer to each pair, as well as a large sheet of paper. Each student will need a marker or pen.

• Pairs read the text in silence. After both students in each pair have read, they comment on the text, and ask questions of each other in writing on their paper. The written conversation should first focus on the text but can stray to wherever students take it. Students should be given at least 15 minutes for this step.

• Still working in silence, students leave their partner and walk around reading the other sheets of papers. Students bring their marker or pen with them and write comments or further questions for thought on other pieces of papers. The length of time for this step should be based on the number groups and your knowledge of the students’ learning styles.
The silence is broken. The pairs rejoin back at their own paper. They should look at any comments written by others. Now they can have a free, verbal conversation about the text, their own comments, what they read on other papers, and comments their fellow students wrote back to them.

Debrief the process with the class. The discussion can touch upon the process (the difficulties of remaining silent, for instance) and delve deeper into the content by using the prompts on the sheets of paper to bring out students’ thoughts.

**Questions to consider**

- What does Klemperer think about the Olympics?
- What does Klemperer suggest that the Olympics reveal about Nazi racism?
- What is he anxious about? What does he think will follow the Games?
- What does Klemperer’s diary reveal about the time that other sources – photographs, documents, newspapers, history books etc -- do not tell us?
- Why is it important to consider the perspective of Jews when considering this moment in history?

**OPTIONAL JIGSAW ACTIVITY: A CANADIAN OBSERVER**

Matthew Halton was one of Canada’s most respected international affairs reporters during the Great Depression and the Second World War. His Toronto Daily Star articles were widely read and often reprinted in newspapers across the country. Halton visited Germany twice in 1933. After his second visit he wrote a series of 27 articles on the Nazification of Germany. He also covered the 1936 Winter and Summer Olympics for the Toronto Daily Star, and observed much more than sports.

Incorporate the observations of Canadian journalist Matthew Halton by assigning his reports to half the groups.

**Questions to consider**

- What do Halton’s writings contribute to our understanding of Nazi Germany?
- How do you imagine Canadians reading Halton’s articles in the Toronto Star in 1933 and 1936 responded to his reports?
- Do his remarks change your view on the Canadian debate about whether to boycott the 1936 Olympic? If so, how?
- What is the importance of journalism during the Olympics?

**EXTENSION: WRITING ASSIGNMENT**

Students use the format of a diary and/or a news report to reflect on a social justice issue in their school or community.
Thursday, August 13, 1936

“The Olympics will end next Sunday, the NSDAP [Nazi] Party Rally is being heralded, an explosion is imminent, and naturally, they will first of all take things out on the Jews. … In Barcelona four Germans have been ‘murdered’ as martyrs of National Socialism…, and even before that, they were saying that the German-Jewish émigrés were stirring up hatred against Germany there. God knows, what will come of it all, but surely and as always a new measure against the Jews. I do not believe that we shall keep our house.”

[…]

“The Olympics, which are now ending, are doubly repugnant to me. (1) as an absurd overestimation of sport; the honour of a nation depends on whether a fellow citizen can jump four inches higher than all the rest. In any case, a Negro from the United States jumped the highest of all and the Jewess Helene Mayer won the fencing silver medal for Germany (I don’t know which is more shameless, her participating as a German of the Third Reich, or the fact that her achievement is claimed for the Third Reich).

[…]

“And (2) I find the Olympics so odious because they are not about sports – in this country I mean – but are an entirely political enterprise. ‘German renaissance through Hitler’ I read recently. It’s constantly being drummed into the country and into foreigners that here one is witnessing the revival, the flowering, the new spirit, the unity, steadfastness and magnificence, pacific too, of course, spirit of the Third Reich, which lovingly embraces the whole world.”

[…]
A CANADIAN OBSERVER OF NAZI GERMANY

Halton traveled to and wrote about Nazi Germany for the Toronto Daily Star immediately after the Nazis came to power:

“I saw a parade of hundreds of children, between the ages of seven and sixteen, carrying the swastika and shouting at intervals, ‘The Jews must be destroyed.’”

“My guess is...that Hitler has come to stay until he is displaced by assassination, civil war or a disastrous foreign war.” — March 30, 1933

“The least that a Jew in Germany can suffer today for the crime of being a Jew is the loss of the ordinary rights of citizenship. What else is in store for them, apart from what the history of this year has already recorded, will soon be known.” — October 27, 1933

He also wrote about the 1936 Winter Olympics:

“They were so true to the Olympic ideal that before the games started they took down all those anti-Jewish signs which once you could see from the train when travelling from Munich south.” — February 29, 1936

While covering Berlin Summer Games, Halton slipped away from the Olympic events to meet and interview individuals who had been in concentration camps. One of those Halton interviewed was a Jewish piano player:

Jewish piano player - “There is nothing of the essential me that they could hurt with all their rods.”

Halton - “Why do you speak so carelessly? Aren’t you afraid you’ll go back to a concentration camp?”

Jewish piano player - “I know I’ll go back, I know that a year from now I’ll be dead. That’s why I speak my mind.”
THINKING ABOUT BOYCOTTS

As a class, brainstorm a definition of boycott: a form of activism involving the act of abstaining from using, buying, or interacting with a person, organization or country as an expression of protest, usually for political reasons.

Discuss boycotts, using the following questions as a guide:

• Have any students engaged in a boycott?
• What are the motivations of boycott movements?
• Are there risks associated with boycotting something?
• Do students think boycotts are effective? Why or why not?

JOURNAL ACTIVITY

• Copy and distribute Documents 1, 2 & 3 to students. Each student should have one document, each representing a different perspective on the boycott debate: 1) the Canadian Left, 2) the Canadian Jewish Congress and 3) pro-participation.
• In journals, students reflect on the point of view represented by their document. What is the argument being presented? What do they think about this argument?
• Students form groups of 2 or 3 to discuss their journals.
• As a class, debrief the different perspectives reflected by the document collection.

EXTENSION: OLYMPIC BOYCOTTS & CONTROVERSIES

Investigate other Olympic Games that were subject to boycotts or other political controversies: Mexico City, 1968 (expression of support for the Black Power movement by African American athletes); Munich, 1972 (massacre of Israeli athletes by a Palestinian terrorist group); Moscow, 1980 (boycott by the United States, West Germany and Japan in response to Soviet invasion of Afghanistan); Los Angeles, 1984 (boycott by USSR in response to Western nations’ 1980 boycott of the Moscow Games); Beijing, 2008 (concern about human rights in China); Vancouver (participation of women in ski jumping and participation of nations that ban women from competing on Olympic teams). Students research one of these Games and discuss the issues at stake, considering a variety of sources.
After coming to power, the Nazis brutally suppressed political opponents in socialist and communist parties. In response, many left-wing groups in Canada supported an Olympic boycott. A cartoon by Avrom in the November 25, 1935 edition of the Communist Party of Canada’s newspaper, The Worker, uses a hockey motif to protest Canada’s participation in the 1936 Games.

- Collection of Anna Yanovsky
The text below is from a petition that was addressed to Prime Minister Richard Bennett by S. W. Jacobs, the President of the Canadian Jewish Congress, and published in the Jewish Western Bulletin, a Vancouver-based Jewish newspaper, on August 22, 1935. The petition was accompanied by a memorandum listing 69 cases of discrimination and violence under the Nazi regime.

“Our country [Canada] has traditionally recognized its moral and legal rights, as well as its duty to speak on the behalf of those persecuted for their religious beliefs and for minority groups or races derived of their just rights.”

“In light of the humanitarian traditions by which our Government has been guided; in light of the danger to world peace, and to democratic institutions of government in this unleashing of barbarism and race hatred, and of the threat to Canadian citizens who are Jews, that is explicit in the policy of the German Government of organizing attacks upon, and denying the rights of all Jews in Germany, we respectfully call upon the Government of Canada to protest against the racial and religious persecution that now prevail in Germany, and to take every step consistent with international practice to inform the German Government of the outraged sentiments of the Canadian people.”

“We are confident that in expressing these views, our Government will speak not only for the thousands of our brethren in this country, but for all Canadians, of all races and creeds, who have given, repeatedly, evidence of their horror of oppression and of their concern for the preservation of the fundamental rights of civilized humanity.”

Background Information

The Canadian Jewish Congress, which had been inactive since 1919, was reconstituted in 1934. Canadian Jews saw a need for an organization that could help unify Jews in their fight against antisemitism within Canada and in Nazi Germany. As a part of its campaign against Nazi Germany, the Canadian Jewish Congress urged Canadians to boycott German goods. In 1935, it also began to work with labor unions, anti-fascist groups and religious groups to protest Canadian participation in the Berlin Olympics.
The text below is an excerpt from an opinion piece by Ted Reeves, a sports columnist and coach of the Queens University football team, published in the Evening Telegram on October 29, 1935.

“It may be that [...] Jews may be given the worst of it at the Berlin Olympic Games, although we do not think such will be the case. [...] To be an Olympic winner or contender, a man must have great ability, he must almost live for the sport at which he excels, he must have ambition to become the best at his athletic specialty and the courage of a real competitor.

[...]

“It is very well to say that the real spirit of sportsmanship is not in the narrow-minded hopped-up Germany of today. But what is real sportsmanship? Our notion of a sportsman is a bloke who does his best every time he pulls on his sweater and who can give or take his bumps without crying too much. Maybe other people have other definitions, but we think that any good athlete believing he has a chance to win an Olympic title and having the ambition to do so, who lets the threats of a little trouble in Berlin keep him away from the Olympic Games, well, he doesn’t rate as champion no matter how fast he can run or how high he can jump.”

THINKING ABOUT PROPAGANDA

As a class, brainstorm a definition of propaganda: a form of communication designed to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes or behaviour of its audience. Promotes biased information, ideas or practices and is transmitted in speeches, slogans, posters, newspapers, films etc.

Discuss propaganda, using the following questions as a guide:
  - What forms can propaganda take?
  - What are examples of propaganda that students can think of?
  - Optional: extend the discussion to consider how popular media influences attitudes towards different bodies: male, female, athletic, disabled, different races etc.

DECODING IMAGES

- Students work in small groups to consider images portraying idealized bodies, and their counterpart: those persecuted in Nazi Germany. One student in each group is assigned the role of recorder and one the role of reporter.
- Note: When working with challenging images, inform students that they will look at material they might find offensive. Explain that your intent is not to offend or cause distress, but to use this as a learning opportunity. Ask permission to proceed.
- Make copies of Images 1, 2, 3 & 4 and distribute copies to each group. Each group can work with a single image or with several.
- Students examine their image and respond to the prompts below. The recorder takes notes during the discussion. Groups may wish to make a chart to organize their responses. - Reporters summarize the group’s conversation with the class.

Students follow the following steps in analyzing each image:

**DESCRIBE**
Create a list of descriptive words and phrases about the image.

**QUESTION**
What questions do you have about the image?

**PREDICT**
Who do you think created the image? For what purpose?

**READ**
Read the caption and accompanying text.

**ANALYZE**
What did you learn about the photograph that you did not know before?
What did you find most interesting and why?

**REFLECT**
Compare this image to similar images you may have encountered.
A promotional poster for a national sports week sponsored by the Nazi government from May 26 to June 2, 1935. The poster promotes “Aryan” physical ideals through its depiction of German men, most of whom are blond and athletic.

Sport was an important part of the Nazis’ plan to strengthen the “Aryan race” and to unite the German “Volk,” or people. According to Nazi racial theory, only those with labelled as “Aryan” could achieve physical, and therefore moral, perfection. German sporting and leisure organizations advocated fitness in service of the nation. Athletes were expected to be extremely disciplined, demonstrate a strong will to win, and prepared to sacrifice their bodies for the state.

– Bundesarchiv, Plak 003 - 019 - 020
A poster produced by the Nazi government with the heading, “Healthy Women Through Exercise,” 1934.

Nazi sports imagery often portrayed women performing sports understood as feminine, such as gymnastics, figure skating or diving. Other depictions featured sturdy, strong German woman with “Aryan” features.

Outside of professional sports, women were encouraged to take care of their bodies in order to become good mothers. A healthy and fit lifestyle was linked to “racial hygiene”, public health measures to control reproduction aimed at strengthening the “national body”.

— Bundesarchiv, Bild Plak 003 - 010 - 005
A Nazi propaganda slide featuring two images side-by-side. The accompanying caption read: “Young men with sound limbs spend their free time in play and struggle, while stupid men with deformed hands and feet sit idle.”

The Nazi idealization of “Aryan” bodies had a destructive counterpart: the persecution of people deemed hereditarily “less valuable” or “unfit”. Drawing on Social Darwinism and eugenic theories of the late 19th century, Nazi ideology maintained that that the “Aryan” people were waged in a struggle for survival against Jews, Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), and people with physical and mental disabilities.

In order to prevent Germans with disabilities from having “inferior” children, disabled people were forcefully sterilized beginning in 1934. Moreover, after the onset of the Second World War in 1939, the Nazis launched a “euthanasia” program that killed approximately 200,000 intellectually and physically disabled Germans.

Though the Nazi government was extreme in its policies, it was not alone in its ideas. Eugenics influenced the policies of many countries in Western Europe and North America, including Canada. In British Columbia, for example, laws for the sterilization of intellectually disabled people were introduced in 1933 and repealed in 1973.
This cartoon appeared in *Der Stürmer* (The Stormtrooper), an extremely antisemitic newspaper published in Germany between 1923 and 1945.

*Der Stürmer* was removed from news kiosks during the 1936 Games as a concession to the International Olympic Committee. However the paper continued to publish, and produced a special Olympics issue in July 1936 featuring slogans and caricatures that dehumanized Jews, presenting them as a threat to Germany.

— German Propaganda Archive, Calvin College, courtesy of Randall Bytwerk
In 1948, Sir Ludwig Guttmann decided that veterans of the Second World War suffering from spinal cord injuries needed their own sporting competition. Four years later, a second competition drew competitors from the Netherlands. By 1960, a series of Olympic-style events for disabled athletes with 400 athletes from 23 countries was underway in Rome. In 1976, the first-ever Paralympic Winter Games, which merged various disability groups for an international sporting competition, were held in Sweden.

Today, the Paralympics have grown into an elite sporting event that celebrates the athletic abilities of thousands of disabled athletes. The 2008 Summer Paralympic Games in Beijing featured 3,951 athletes from 146 countries, while approximately 1,350 athletes are expected to compete in the 2010 Winter Olympics.

Analyze one or two of the images above, using the prompts outlined in the lesson:

**DESCRIBE - QUESTION - PREDICT - READ - ANALYZE - REFLECT**

**For discussion:**

- How do these images challenge your assumptions about disabled people? About athletic ability?
- Do you think the Paralympic Games can impact the status of intellectually and physically challenged people in our society? If so, how?
Leni Riefenstahl was Nazi leader Adolf Hitler’s favourite filmmaker. Her 1934 film about a Nuremberg Nazi party rally, *Triumph of the Will*, has been hailed as the most masterful propaganda film ever made. In 1935, Riefenstahl was commissioned by the Nazi Propaganda Ministry to create a documentary film about the upcoming Olympics. The resulting film, *Olympia*, featured many technical innovations and transformed the way sports were captured on film.

Riefenstahl’s strategies for idealizing the human body and athletic performance have led many to argue that Olympia is closely linked to the Nazi racial ideals. Until her death in 2003, Riefenstahl maintained that her films were "merely" art, unconnected to politics.

- Students view one of Riefenstahl’s films and/or do additional research about her life and work. Assignment: write a paper commenting on whether you think Riefenstahl’s films can be separated from politics.
The “Youth of the World” (Olympische Jugend) was written by German Olympic Committee Secretary General Carl Diem for the Berlin Games. With over 10,000 participants – including 140 dancers, 1000 singers and musicians, 1000 flag bearers and 8,500 youth – the performance emphasized the theme of heroic struggle between nations. – Carl and Liselott Diem Archive
INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

RACISM & DISCRIMINATION | SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

• What policies did the Nazi government implement between 1933 and 1936 that reflected the state endorsement of racism and discrimination?

• How did totalitarianism, antisemitism and racism affect sports in Nazi Germany?

• How were Canadian attitudes toward participating in the 1936 Olympics affected by awareness of Nazi antisemitism and racial discrimination?

• Why did some Canadian athletes boycott and others choose to participate in the Games?

• How did racism and antisemitism in the Canadian political and social landscape affect Canadian opinions about, and responses to, Canadian participation in the 1936 Olympics?

RESPONSES TO NAZISM | INDIVIDUAL & COLLECTIVE DECISION MAKING

• Why did Canada participate in the Games despite domestic and international opposition to holding the Games in Nazi Germany?

• What decisions did individual athletes face? What factors do they identify as influencing their decisions?

• What factors influenced group decisions about whether to boycott the Games? Delineate the different responses of representative groups, including the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada, the Canadian Olympic Committee, the Canadian government, the political left, the Canadian Jewish community.

• In the end, do you think the Canadian Olympic Committee made the right decision by sending Canadian athletes to the Games?

SPORT & SOCIETY | CRITICAL THINKING

• How did Nazi antisemitic policies affect the administration of German sports? What was the impact on Jewish participation in German sports and Olympic competition?

• Is it possible to separate sports from politics? Should they be separated?
PROPAGANDA | VISUAL LITERACY

• How did the German government use the 1936 Olympic Games as a propaganda vehicle to garner domestic and international acceptance?

• What means did the Nazis use to deceive the world during the Olympics? What were they hiding?

• How did the Nazis link the Olympics to their theory of a “master race”? What images did the Nazis use in posters, ceremonies and films to express the connection between the Olympics and their notion of a “master race”?

• Alongside their celebration of “Aryan” bodies, how did the Nazis portray and regulate those that were excluded from the ideal?

• How do Nazi visions of individual achievement and mass spectacle compare to those in contemporary Olympic culture?
**For a timeline of the Holocaust, see the VHEC Holocaust Education Resource, available for download at:**

http://vhec.org/teaching.html

### 1931
- **May 13**: The International Olympic Committee awards the 1936 Summer Olympics to Berlin.

### 1933
- **January 30**: Adolf Hitler is appointed Chancellor of Germany by President von Hindenburg.
- **March**: The city of Cologne prohibits Jews from using city playgrounds and sports facilities.
- **March 22**: Dachau, the first concentration camp, opens. Political opponents of the Nazi’s are detained.
- **April 1**: The first state-directed boycott of Jewish shops and businesses.
- **April 4**: The German Boxing Federation excludes Jewish boxers from participating in competitive bouts and orders the cancellation of all contracts involving Jewish promoters.
- **April 7**: The first Nazi laws excluding Jews from Civil Service, medical professions and the Arts are enacted. Schools and universities are Aryanized. Jewish children are denied access to public education.
- **April 25**: The Nazi’s Sports Office orders public sport and gymnastic organizations to implement an “Aryans only” policy. Until May, exceptions are made for Jewish war veterans and the families of Jewish soldiers who had died in the war.
- **June 2**: The Prussian Ministry of Science orders all Jewish youths expelled from village, city, county, and district groups of physical education associations and organizations.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 7</td>
<td>The Reich Youth Leadership prohibits German Jewish youth groups from wearing uniforms.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 14</td>
<td>A law is enacted to permit the forced sterilization of Roma and Sinti (“Gypsies”), the mentally and physically disabled, African-Germans and others considered “unfit.” East European Jewish immigrants stripped of German citizenship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept/Oct</td>
<td>“Non-Aryans” are prohibited from being professional or amateur jockeys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 15</td>
<td>“Nuremberg Laws,” anti-Jewish racial laws are enacted. Jews lose the right to German citizenship and to marry Aryans. Sexual relations between Jews and non-Jews are forbidden. Aryan women under age 45 cannot work in Jewish homes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 14</td>
<td>Following the lead of Great Britain, the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada votes in favour of Canada’s participation in the 1936 Olympic Games with no discussion of the boycott movement or anti-Jewish racial laws in Germany.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 3</td>
<td>The Nazi government issues an order to “remove all signs and posters relating to the Jewish question” in the region of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, so as not to endanger international support for the Berlin Games.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>February 6-16</td>
<td>The Winter Olympics open at Garmisch-Partenkirchen in the Bavarian Alps. Prior to the Winter Games, the Garmisch-Partenkirchen town council passed an order to expel all Jews in its jurisdiction, but it waits until after the Olympics to implement the antisemitic decree. Anti-Jewish signs are temporarily removed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 7</td>
<td>German troops reoccupy the Rhineland.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 12</td>
<td>The Sachsenhausen concentration camp opens. Camp inmates are kept out of public sight, withdrawn from forced labour on road construction or on railway lines during the summer of the 1936 Olympics. By the end of 1936, the camp holds 1,600 prisoners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-July</td>
<td>The Olympics stadium in Berlin is completed two weeks before the games after being plagued by construction delays.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 16</td>
<td>About 800 Roma and Sinti (*Gypsies) are interned in the Berlin district of Marzahn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 20</td>
<td>The first modern Olympic torch relay begins in Athens. The final runner reaches the Olympic Stadium in Berlin on August 1 during the opening ceremonies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 26</td>
<td>The Canadian Olympic team arrives in Berlin and is greeted by large crowds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>July 31</td>
<td>The Canadian Olympic Team places a wreath on the German Tomb of the Unknown Soldier as a sign of goodwill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1-16</td>
<td>The Summer Games take place in Berlin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 4</td>
<td>The Canadian Olympic Committee returns a fragment of the rudder of Baron von Richthofen’s fighter plane shot down behind British lines during World War I, as a symbol of goodwill and friendship from the Canadian people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 18</td>
<td>Two days after the Olympics, Captain Wolfgang Fürstner, Head of the Olympic Village, kills himself because he is dismissed from active military services due to his Jewish ancestry.</td>
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WEB SITES

• Canada Sports Hall of Fame
  http://www.sportshall.ca/accessible/index.php
  The Canada Sports Hall of Fame website contains profiles and images of Canadian athletes that participated in the 1936 Olympic Games.

Politics and the Olympics – CBC Digital Archives
  http://archives.cbc.ca/sports/olympics/topics/3568/
  The CBC Digital Archive provides an account of politics in the Olympics Games from 1936 to 2008 drawing on CBC radio and television clips.

• The Nazi Olympics: Berlin 1936 – Online exhibition by the USHMM
  http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/olympics/
  An online exhibition prepared by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum that tells the story of the Berlin Olympiad, concurrent events, and their political implications using photographs, promotional posters and original documents. The website also contains links to relevant videos and other resources.

• Steven Spielberg Film and Video Archive: Olympics (Berlin 1936)
  This online film archive presents archival film footage of the Games held by the Steven Spielberg Film and Video Archive at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, including sporting events and newsreels of the opening ceremonies.

READINGS


  Baker profiles the life story of the most noted participant in the 1936 Olympics with an emphasis on Owens’ struggles against racial discrimination. The book includes an examination of the myth surrounding Owens’ supposed snubbing by Adolf Hitler at the Berlin Games.

available at the VHEC Library

In a study of how the 1936 Olympics were exploited for political ends, British journalist Hart-Davis provides an account of the 1936 Berlin Olympics that focuses on the political and social circumstances leading to the Games.


In a study of the landscape of Canadian sport in the inter-war period, historian Bruce Kidd deals with the influence of continental leagues like the NHL, the power of the media, the participation of women, and the role of nationalism in amateur Olympic sports bodies.

Kidd discusses key players in the 1936 Olympic boycott movement in Canada, as well as the events which led a Canadian team to be sent to the People's Olympics in Barcelona.


In her memoir, Margaret Lambert, also known as Gretel Bergmann, recounts her experiences as a German Jewish athlete banned from participating in the 1936 Olympics, her subsequent escape from Germany, and her eventual return trip to that country many years later.


Clay provides a comprehensive history of the 1936 Olympics that considers both the athletic competitions as well as the political climate of the Third Reich. The book includes numerous photographs of the events and pageantry, extensive notes, and an epilogue evaluating the place of the Games in the context of the history of Nazi Germany.


In his autobiography, Luftspring, a Jewish boxer selected to represent Canada at the 1936 Olympics, discusses his decision to boycott.


Mandell examines the historical framework of the 1936 Olympics within the context of German attitudes towards sport and individual competition. The book summarizes the political atmosphere of Germany in 1936 and the jingoistic and propagandistic purposes of the Games for the Nazi leadership.


Mogulof presents a biography of Helene Mayer, winner of the gold medal in fencing at the 1928 Olympics, who was allowed to compete as the "token Jewish Olympian" on the German team after a boycott threat pressured the Nazi government to allow her to compete. The biography includes numerous photographs, a chronology of Mayer’s life, endnotes, and a bibliography.
READINGS | CONTINUED

In this illustrated book with images from events and ceremonies, Rippon presents a comprehensive, journalistic narrative of the planning and realization of the Summer and Winter Olympics, with particular emphasis on the Nazis’ use of the Games as a propaganda tool.

Rosenberg examines the Canadian Jewish reactions to the Canadian 1936 Berlin Olympic Boycott Movement by focusing on the response of the Canadian Jewish Congress.

This detailed biography of Jesse Owens focuses on his experiences during the 1936 Games.

This book provides an account of Jewish athletes in the Olympic Games from the first modern Olympics in Athens in 1896 through to the Munich Olympics in 1972. Taylor analyzes the intersection between sports and politics by focusing on how Jewish Olympic athletes used sport to combat oppression, social prejudice and inequality.

RECOMMENDED FILMS AVAILABLE AT THE VHEC

This documentary explores the Nazi regime and Hitler’s life from the perspective of Nazi aesthetics in art, architecture and popular culture, analyzing the relationship between aesthetics and the Nazi definition of “superior” and “inferior” races.

In this German documentary about the life of Leni Riefenstahl, the filmmaker addresses her life for the first time on camera. At 91, Riefenstahl lucidly discusses important aspects of her career, such as Triumph of the Will and Olympia, both of which were produced under the Nazi regime.
RECOMMENDED FILMS AVAILABLE AT THE VHEC | CONTINUED

• **Olympia.** Directed by Leni Riefenstahl. 1938; Pathfinder Home Entertainment, 2006. (DVD: 204 minutes).

Hailed as one of the greatest movies of all time, *Olympia* is a documentary of the 1936 Olympics written, produced and directed by Hitler’s favorite filmmaker, Leni Riefenstahl. Although Riefenstahl maintained that *Olympia* was a work of “art” unconnected to Nazi ideology, Riefenstahl’s idealization of the human body and athletic performance has led many to argue that *Olympia* is closely linked to Nazi ideology.


This award-winning documentary features the story of eight Jewish female swimmers, who were the core of Austria’s 1936 Olympic team, although some refused to participate. The swimmers came from Hakoah Vienna, a Jewish sports organization that was created in 1909, after the Austrian government passed a law to forbid Jews from participating in Austrian sporting clubs.

*Adapted from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Bibliography on the 1936 Olympics:*

Advance preparation will ensure that your students get the most out of their visit to the VHEC. In addition to doing the Pre-Visit Activity with your students, we encourage you to introduce general concepts, chronology and vocabulary of the Holocaust in advance of your visit. The following resources offer excellent support material about the Holocaust, and Canada’s relationship to this history.

**VHEC HOLOCAUST EDUCATION RESOURCE**

This resource contains guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust, frequently asked questions, a timeline, a glossary, recommended readings and websites.

**OPEN HEARTS - CLOSED DOORS: The War Orphans Project**


Recommended for Intermediate Students / Available in English and French

Following the Second World War, a group of young Jewish orphans immigrated to Canada from the devastation of Europe. *Open Hearts - Closed Doors: The War Orphans Project* is an online teaching exhibit that chronicles the lives of these orphans as they emerged from the events of the Holocaust into displaced person camps and eventually to new lives in Canada. This multimedia website uses the orphans’ own words and artefacts as well as primary documents and photographs to provide students with a powerful learning experience about the Holocaust and the broader history of Canadian immigration during the 20th Century.

The site provides extensive support for students and teachers in middle and secondary schools, social studies and language arts classrooms. The teacher’s guide, web links, maps, biblio-videographies and pop-up glossary terms can be browsed online or downloaded as printable classroom materials. The bilingual site offers French teachers a valuable resource for Holocaust Education.
TOO CLOSE TO HOME:
Antisemitism & Fascism in Canada, 1930s–40s

Available for download at: [http://vhec.org/teachersguides.html](http://vhec.org/teachersguides.html)
Recommended for Secondary Students.

Too Close to Home: Anti Semitism & Fascism in Canada, 1930s-40s draws attention to a shameful part of Canadian history -- a time when Nazi ideology and antisemitism permeated Canada’s cultural and political landscape and was reflected in Canada’s restrictive immigration policies.

This artefact folio provides secondary school students and teachers with primary source materials from Canada in the 1930s and 1940s. These materials paint a picture of the times and address the issues of antisemitism, Fascism, Nazism and immigration in Canada during the Holocaust, fostering student appreciation of how Canada’s present-day diversity and multicultural identity evolved out of a more exclusionary past.