

The Story of the Olympic Hymn: the poet and his composer

By Volker Kluge

The Olympic Hymn by Richard Strauss was recognised by the IOC in 1936 as official. As the Organising Committee of the XI Olympiad was not in the position of paying Strauss the 10,000 marks he demanded, it had the score printed in large quantities and sold them for one mark. The profit benefited the composer, but the lyricist was left empty-handed.

Photos: Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, Volker Kluge Archive



The Olympic Hymn was a work commissioned for the Games of the first Olympiad. The composer Spyros Samaras, a friend of IOC President Demetrios Vikelas, had first presented the work the end of January 1896 at an evening event of the Parnassos Literary Society in Athens. When the cantata was performed on the opening day by the combined military bands and sung by a 200-strong choir, it caused such a patriotic frenzy that the Greek King himself called for an encore. In the *Official Report* of the Games the composition was described as an 'immense sensation'.¹

Yet three and a half decades later Samaras's work was effectively forgotten, as the IOC asked Count Clary to organise a competition to create a 'hymne olympique'.² The contest called for required a musical piece for orchestra created after August 1928. Olympic medals shone enticingly as prizes: Gold for the first, Silver for the second, Bronze for the third. For performance rights the winner would be awarded 500 dollars.³

The invitation permitted all National Olympic Committees to choose the best hymn nationally and send them to the American Arts Festival by 1st May 1932.

Thereafter a jury made up of IOC and US representatives would choose the winner. In fact, the prize jury consisted only of Americans. Their countryman, pianist Walter Bradley Keeler⁴ was awarded first prize.⁵

Bradley Keeler's work, written in the style of an Anglo-American church hymn, was played on 30th July 1932 at the opening ceremony of the Games of the Xth Olympiad, as the Olympic flag rose to the top of the mast. For this the Organising Committee had assembled a band with 300 musicians: the Olympic choir – 1200 women and men – sang the lyrics composed by Louis F. Benson. The text, which called on the athletes no longer to fear the hand of the tyrant and to keep faith with liberty, was printed in the day's programme so many spectators sang along.⁶

The hymn proved popular, which is why the poet Alfred von Kessel translated it into German.⁷ The translation was probably intended for the IOC Session in Vienna, but when this was opened on 7th June 1933 in the Academy of Sciences, the choir did not perform Kessel's text but a revised version which was one verse shorter. This was by the American composer Dr. Paul Kerby, who also conducted the orchestra.

Kerby had reduced the 'Anti-tyrant hymn' to a harmless 'welcome and friendship song', in which the Cologne music researcher Elizabeth Leckie Schlüssel suspects a manipulation to compromise the artistic value of the Bradley Keeler work. Her suspicion was increased by a notice by Carl Diem. In Los Angeles he had praised the hymn as 'splendid' but a year later as General Secretary of the Organising Committee for Berlin 1936, he disparagingly wrote that he wanted to draw the Schiller-Foundation's attention to the author of the text after the performance at the Vienna Session.⁹

In fact it was strange that on the last day of the Session that the IOC recognised Bradley Keeler's composition as official but at the same time agreed to a proposal by Count Clary and the German member of the Executive Committee, Theodor Lewald, to organise a new competition, all without abandoning the 1932 hymn.¹⁰ For this reason some authors believe they recognised the changed balance of power in Germany, though they overlook the fact that the National Socialists imagined themselves to be in a 'struggle for liberty'.¹¹

Apart from that, Lewald's reasoning 'that Germany in the whole world was recognised as the real land of music'

was not without foundation. By the end of 1932 – before Hitler's 'seizure of power' – he had already asked the composer Richard Strauss for a hymn.¹² Strauss declared himself willing to that in early 1933, on condition that a suitable text was presented to him, whereupon Lewald had turned to the poet Gerhart Hauptmann. He was able to announce Hauptmann's agreement at the foundation of the Organising Committee which he headed.¹³

An unknown, unemployed actor wins the prize

However Hauptmann produced nothing, so in autumn 1933 Lewald approached the German Academy of Poetry for support. In the meantime this had been 'gleichgeschaltet' (brought into line) by the National Socialists.¹⁴ On 28th October 1933 the Academy commissioned ballad writer Börries von Münchhausen to invite entries for a restricted competition among named authors considered loyal to the regime. However only seven poets took part they entered nine poems. In March 1934, in agreement with Lewald, the first prize, which carried a cash reward of 700 marks, awarded to a 'wonderful Siegfried poem'¹⁵, whose author was Wilhelm von Scholz.¹⁶

Münchhausen thought his idea of celebrating the popular hero Siegfried, well known abroad through Richard Wagner's opera, as the first German sportsman was 'inspired'. It also seemed to him appropriate to oppose 'to the overestimated sagas of Greek antiquity the equally valuable German saga' and 'not let Germany be forced into a secondary role by words like Olympia, Olympiad, stadium, etc'. Lewald however thought the 'song of Siegfried' was ultimately too 'eigendeutsch' (thoroughly German), and for that reason organised a second competition with a single prize of 1000 marks, this time open to all.¹⁷

This resulted in an avalanche. At the final date for entries of 30th June 1934 Münchhausen, called to be the only judge, found himself faced with a mountain of around 3000 poems, the sight of which he described as 'the most arduous work and in view of the poor quality of most entries the most torturous'.¹⁸ In a second reading he reduced the pile to 118 poems, which then went down to 50. Finally four entries were left. These he presented to Strauss for the final selection. The composer decided on a song with three verses, written by an unemployed Berlin actor and poetry reader Robert Lubahn.

On 21st September 1934 Lewald received the beaming 31 year old. The privilege of being the first to publish the prize-winning poem was reserved for the *Olympic Press Service*¹⁹, thereafter the text was at the disposal of all newspapers.²⁰ According to the wish of a State Secretary, it was soon to be translated, so that the song could also be sung abroad.²¹ The English version runs:

Olympic Hymn

By Robert Lubahn

*Nations! Be the Nation's guest.
Come in through the open gates!
Glory to the nation's feast!
Peace shall be its fight-device.
Young strength wants to prove its courage,
Ardent game Olympia!
Wants to praise your glare in actions,
Purest goal: Olympia!*

*Pride and prime of many countries
Joined the festive competition;
All the ardour thereon glowing
Is uniting highly and freely.
Strength and mind approaching timidly,
Road to sacrifice Olympia!
Who is now to wear your laurels,
Glorious chord: Olympia?*

*Since all our hearts are beating
In a raising union,
Should in actions and in speeches
Right of power be sublime.
Joyful be the champion's victory,
Victory feast Olympia!
Gladness be yet in succumbing,
Feast of peace: Olympia!²²*



The translation of the original text of the Berlin poet and reciter Robert Lubahn (1903–1974). Below: The title page of the 1896 Olympic Hymn by Spyros Samaras and Kostis Palamas.



This song of consecration was a welcome relief from Von Scholz's song of praise for Germanic heroism. The first verse greeted the guests, emphasised the peaceful character of the Games. Lubahn did not only celebrate the victors, but in the third verse also paid homage to the losers: "Gladness be yet in succumbing". Münchhausen even went so far as to compare the lines that ended after every verse with the cry of rejoicing 'Olympia!' with Friedrich Schiller's poem *Ode to Joy*.²³ In an article he wrote:

The last verse finally raises the moral content in the initially somewhat abstract and non-sensual sounding word of 'Right of power' ['Rechtsgewalt'] that sits above everything. The poet has here captured the concept of 'fair play', of the chivalry of struggle and the unconditional justice of the verdict in a single German word, which, as soon as one has engrossed oneself in it, appears extraordinarily successful. 'Right of power', that means the highest fullness of power which is always due to the highest justice, the basis of all states, all cultures and all of civilization and thus also the basis of all competitive sport – that is 'Right of power'.²⁴

of the Olympiad is by far the best you have written, and will perhaps remain the only great poem of your life'. Additionally he advised:

Don't let yourself be roped into expressing any views about the poem, every change makes it worse! It is precisely with a young unknown in such a situation that the cursed advice of well-meaning outsiders comes: It's just this word I don't like; 'only that expression'; 'nothing but this rhyme should you change.' And then you change and change until the beautiful work is changed to death.

*You have your thousand marks, the poem will be printed, – everything else is irrelevant, even if Strauss sets it to music. Do you think that in the open air [of the Olympic stadium, author] in that noise a single word will be understood?*³²

As advised by the 'poet prince', Lubahn decided to fight when Lewald offered him a compromise:

*I hope that the misgivings against your hymn will disappear if we undertake a few small changes, viz. when in verse 1) the text has: *F r i e d e sei dem Völkerfeste! Ehre soll der Kampfspruch sein*, [Peace be to the festival of nations! Let honour be the battle-cry] and in verse 3) instead of 'Right of Power' we put *Eidestreu* [faithfulness to our oath]. This word has a good meaning, as immediately after the playing of the hymn, the Olympic oath ... is sworn.³³*

Joseph Goebbels was personally behind this request, as Diem later admitted. "The Propaganda Minister probably sought a chance to place his foot in the door of the Olympiad, and he chose as an objection what went most against the grain."³⁴ That 'honour' had a higher status than 'peace' was in keeping with the Nazi credo. Only three weeks after the Olympic Games came the annual march of the brown and black columns in Nuremberg under the motto 'Reich party day of honour'. And as far as 'Right of power' was concerned, these had long been among the forbidden words. The phrase had been replaced by the oath of loyalty to be sworn to the 'Führer'. It was no accident that the slogan of the SS on its belt buckles, introduced in 1932, was 'Our honour is faithfulness'.

There is no mention of all this in the *Official Report*. From it we only find that Lubahn had agreed to the 'trifling changes'.³⁵ The opposite was true: the modified text was never authorised by the author.³⁶ The proofs, among them a comparison of the versions, of which he described one as a 'falsified version'³⁷, can be found in his estate.

In early December 1934, Lewald had invited him to a meeting, which according to Lubahn's notes took place under the following circumstances: "Lewald pulled a coffee pot cosy over the telephone and indicated

to Lubahn that he should accept that he was not the first to read his (Lewald's) post".³⁸ On this day, Lubahn obviously showed himself ready to compromise, which Lewald either did not understand or want to understand. Whatever: next he informed Strauss that the author had agreed to the textual changes, and even encouraged the composer to fit other words to the music. When Lubahn had seen through this game, he wrote to Lewald:

You certainly remember, Excellency, how long ago in conversation with you I finally agreed that such a version in discussions about how the hymn should sound to the satisfaction of all interested parties might be proposed. I did that out of personal consideration for you, as you after your expressions at the time were in a difficult position in respect of the wording of the hymn. That I would never authorise what was proposed or any other version of the hymn, I left you in absolutely no doubt ...³⁹

An unauthorised hymn which Strauss dedicated to Hitler

In the meantime Strauss had understood the political significance of the Olympic Games and come to terms also with the Winter Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, for which he wished to have a box reserved for himself and his family.⁴⁰ However neither boxes nor complimentary tickets were envisaged, as the President of the Organising Committee, Karl Ritter von Halt, informed Lewald.⁴¹ On his urgent request Halt permitted special accreditations, really intended only for officials.⁴²



In 1935 Richard Strauss fell into disfavour with Propaganda Minister Goebbels for a time, but three years later when this photograph appeared during the 'Reichs-Musiktage' in the Düsseldorf Tonhalle, good relations had been restored. The composer was later upset at criticism of his behaviour and settled after the war in Switzerland, where he died in 1949.

'Peace Festival of Olympia!' – At the same time when the poet Robert Lubahn fled to Switzerland, the composer Richard Strauss insisted on conducting the Olympic Hymn at the opening of the Games. A giant choir dressed entirely in white intoned it at the very moment the last torch-bearer in the Olympia to Berlin relay reached the stadium.

Photos: Volker Kluge Archive



After completing his composition Strauss regarded Hitler's verdict as very important, but it took some time until a suitable appointment could be made. When Strauss in late March 1935 at the Berlin State Opera became aware of several concerts directed by guest conductors, he finally received an invitation to the Reich Chancellery on the 29th March, in the minutes of which there was subsequently noted: "the performance took place in the Führer's accommodation. The hymn has been accepted."⁴³ The public learned that the Berlin 'heldentenor' Franz Völker had sung the song to Hitler, Göring, Funk and Lewald, and was accompanied by Strauss on the piano. The original score had been dedicated by the composer to his 'Führer' in his own handwriting.⁴⁴

Scarcely had Hitler given his blessing to the still 'unauthorised' hymn than the marketing began. Before that it was however necessary to placate the obstinate lyricist. Lewald invited him to the Organising Committee meeting on 5th April, at which he gave him the joyful message that the 'Führer' had authorised the hymn and that the performance had been wonderful. From then on all the rest passed off rapidly. Lewald explained to Lubahn that he now had to sign a declaration to pass the copyright to the Organising Committee. "With words: 'Excellency, I sign with complete trust!' I signed my name under the declaration laid before me", recalled Lubahn later, full of regret for that moment, since meanwhile a certain Dr. Streicher had come in. "I still remember the curious circumstance that I broke off in the middle of signing my surname to greet him, then went back to the document and added the missing letters of my name."⁴⁵ Lubahn's shyly made request not to pass on the copyright to third parties, was met by

Dr. Streicher with the remark, that after the dissolution of the Olympic Organising Committee these rights would automatically revert to the author. The whole episode lasted seven minutes.⁴⁶

Six weeks later Diem sent Lubahn a contract. And he could hardly believe his eyes when in the 'agreement' he read that on that April day he had given "the exclusive rights to the exploitation and distribution of the 'Olympic Hymn' composed by him to the Organising Committee." And not only that: at the same time he was said to have empowered the committee to pass the copyright and user's rights 'for all time coming' to Strauss and after his death to his heirs.⁴⁷ Full of indignation, but founded in detail, Lubahn rejected the demand.⁴⁸

Lewald tried in vain to mollify the poet with the message from Strauss Jr. whereby he had in the case of the contract "dealt with a procedure of the music publisher Fürstner which had not been sanctioned by his father".⁴⁹ To be sure that changed nothing about the contents of the contract. As Strauss regarded the hymn as his private property, he followed his usual practice of passing it on to the well-known Adolph Fürstner music publishing house for marketing purposes. Its owner Otto Fürstner – son of the Jewish founder of the firm had emigrated that year to London, where in a new business he exploited all the publishing rights he had brought to England.⁵⁰ The licences that had remained in Germany he leased to his long-serving attorney Johannes Oertel.

Lubahn did not even accept Lewald's argument that the composer had refused any fee, because he regarded the hymn as 'his contribution to the Olympic Games'.⁵¹ The sacrifice presented as a generous gesture was only half the truth, for Lewald had long since put forward

the proposal to Strauss as compensation to offer for sale facsimiles of the hymn. "I imagine that, if the price is fixed at 1 RM, many thousand copies can be sold in the stadium, that later all the gymnastic and sports clubs, which are several tens of thousands, will be induced to acquire the hymn by the Reichssportführer".⁵² This had been agreed to by Strauss. The score was printed in great numbers and sold with the imprint on the title page 'Property of the composer for all countries'.⁵³

Everything seemed in a hopeless mess. One the one hand Lewald had German law on his side. This permitted a composer with a new work to encroach on the text author's copyright. "So the composer can use the text for his composition without permission of the poet and without his agreement perform it in connection with this composition", Lubahn was told by the lawyer Lewald.⁵⁴ On the other hand there was little doubt that the contract could be regarded as a 'gross violation of good manners'.⁵⁵

In addition Strauss, who had already threatened to have the music printed without words, was inclined to avoid a legal dispute which would be damaging to his reputation, after the Gestapo in the early summer of 1935 had intercepted a letter to Stefan Zweig, in which he had expressed himself disparagingly about the Reichsmusikkammer (Strauss had been President since 1933), "to do good and protect against greater misfortune".⁵⁶ When Goebbels found out about this, he had forced Strauss, who was concerned about his Jewish daughter-in-law Alice⁵⁷ and the two beloved grandchildren, to resign from his post. This decision did not diminish his international fame in any way.

On 15th February 1936, the penultimate day of the Olympic Winter Games, Strauss invited the IOC Executive Committee to tea at his Garmisch villa, where the singer Julius Patzak sang the Olympic hymn accompanied on the piano by Strauss himself. Diem wrote in his diary:

*It is really a great work, and the IOC was as much flattered as we were delighted. It is not an everyday occurrence that one of the greatest living musicians writes the Olympic hymn and plays it himself to the Executive Commission.*⁵⁸

When the song of consecration was performed on 19th June 1936 for Goebbels as well by the Berlin Philharmonic and sung by the Kittelschen choir, even the Propaganda Minister was content. In his diary he noted: "Philharmonia rehearsal of the Olympic hymn of R. Strauss. It is really wonderful. The lad can certainly compose."⁵⁹ To be sure, Hitler had ignored the wish of the now dismissed President of the Musikkammer to receive him in audience – a letter requesting this remained unanswered –, but in the end Hitler backed off from his intention to install, instead of Strauss, his successor Peter Raabe as conductor.⁶⁰

The lesser known artist produced the more significant performance

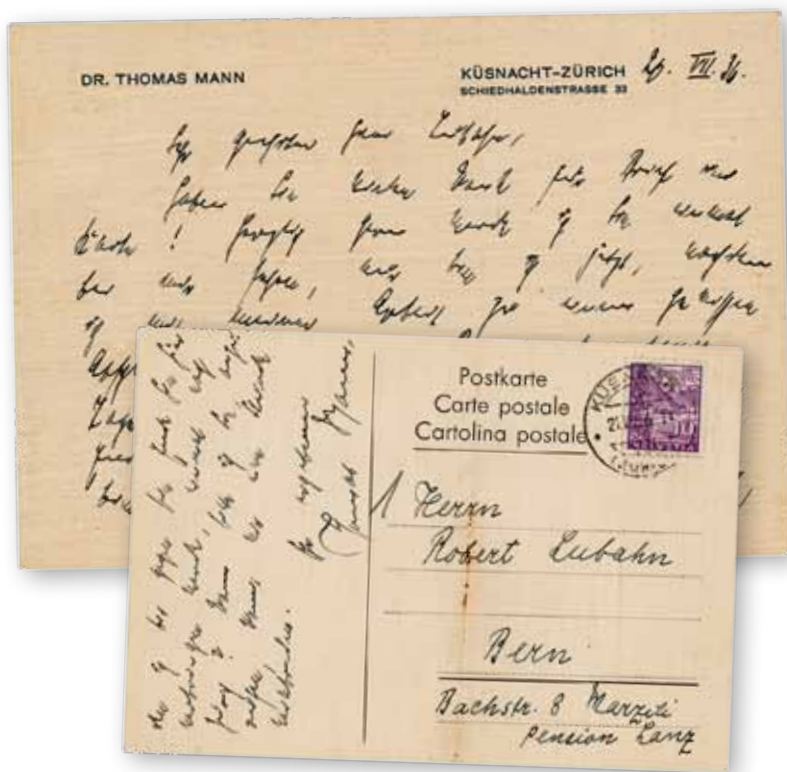
Four weeks before the Olympic Games everything was ready, only the signature of the text author was still missing, with which he was to dispossess himself. Diem demanded of him in vain to sign a new, shorter (though in content the same) version of the agreement. Lubahn, whose economic situation had worsened further through his mother's illness, maintained his position; in addition he spoke resentfully about Diem, who had given his first name in his *Olympiade Book* as 'Erich'.⁶¹

Lewald now called on an old confidante, the lawyer Heinrich F. Albert. In 1904 when Lewald had been Reich commissar for the World Exhibition in Saint Louis Albert had been his attaché but on this occasion Albert also came up against a brick wall.⁶² After six months of silence, Lewald now feared that the dispute might well end up in court, which is why the lawyer wrote no fewer than three letters to Lubahn between 1st and 16th July 1936. These contained an ultimatum that Lubahn sign within three weeks.⁶³

Lubahn's answer bears the date of 20th July and the place of dispatch 'Swiss journey'. There was no evidence that he was intimidated, more the opposite: If Lewald actually maintained, wrote Lubahn, that he had never asserted reservations about the publishing rights, he must unfortunately establish 'that he consciously had told an untruth'.⁶⁴ When two days later he demanded



A curious breakdown in the 'perfectly' arranged Games of 1936: in the programme for the opening celebration, the music of the first verse of the hymn altered by Goebbels was depicted, but underneath could be read the original lyrics by Robert Lubahn.



After his flight from Germany, Robert Lubahn turned in July 1936 seeking help from Thomas Mann (1875-1955) who had emigrated to Switzerland. They met several times, but in the end even the winner of the Nobel prize for literature was unable to help him secure permanent residence.

Right: Lubahn also corresponded with Hermann Hesse (1877-1962), who had lived in Tessin since 1919. A staunch anti-Nazi, who received the Nobel prize for literature in 1946, Hesse managed to have the Swiss immigration-authorities extend Lubahn's residence permit.

Photos: Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach

that Lewald send him 'at once' the original of the 'declaration' of 5th April 1935.

Now his former mentor also became involved. Münchhausen compared Lubahn with Michael Kohlhaas, that literary hero from a novella by Heinrich von Kleist, who had fought against an injustice he had suffered using the motto 'Fiat iustitia, et perat mundus' ('Let there be justice, though the world perish') and for that had been sentenced to death by the aristocracy 'for disturbing the peace'. The Baron did not threaten such a punishment, but: "Do you realise that probably you face prison for serious libelling of an official at the moment at which the infinitely kind, deeply just and simply charming human being State Secretary Excellency Lewald hands over your last letters to the court?"⁶⁵

Lubahn was no longer to be chased away by this. He had long since settled in Switzerland by the time that at precisely 17.16 on 1st August 1936 in the Berlin Olympic Stadium the huge choir dressed in white, directed by Strauss, intoned his hymn. At the moment of the entry of the torch-bearer blasted out the rousing shout 'Friedensfest Olympia!' [Feast of peace: Olympia!]. His absence meant he remained unaware of a curious fact that in the *Daily Programme* for the opening day the original text of his poem was to be found, while above it had been placed the sheet of music with the falsified version.⁶⁶

Although the IOC recognised the song of consecration at the IOC Session⁶⁷, which because of its timelessness certainly cannot be counted among Nazi aesthetics, and

criticism paid it the highest recognition, today's music critics number it among the weaker of Strauss's works. "The gigantic jumps of the song's melody, which even in the first four bars cover a tenth and then rises to the triple crossed A, contradicts the character of a hymn. Strauss achieved neither singability nor memorability" wrote Albrecht Dümling, who was of the view that the composer created performance music that was not very encouraging to sing. "Obviously in this case the less well-known artist brought the more significant performance."⁶⁸

At the time when the athletes in his home town were fighting for medals and noisy festivals were being celebrated, Lubahn was preparing to emigrate. From Berne he sought contact with Thomas Mann, who since 1933 had been living in Küsnacht near Zurich. Mann's deprivation of citizenship had just been set in train by the German legate Ernst von Weizsäcker, father of the later Federal President, because of a letter published in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, as the Literature Nobel prizewinner "had quite clearly taken up a position against the Third Reich and replied to the tolerance shown until now by the German authorities with scornful remarks."⁶⁹ In his diary the author of *Buddenbrooks* wrote: "For tea Herr Robert Lubahn, author of the 'Olympic Hymn', who reported on his grotesque experiences with this product, which have driven him out of the country".⁷⁰

That Lubahn had already inwardly broken with Germany is shown also by his connection with Romain Rolland, whose books had been burned in 1933. The Frenchman, a Nobel laureate of 1915 and Honorary





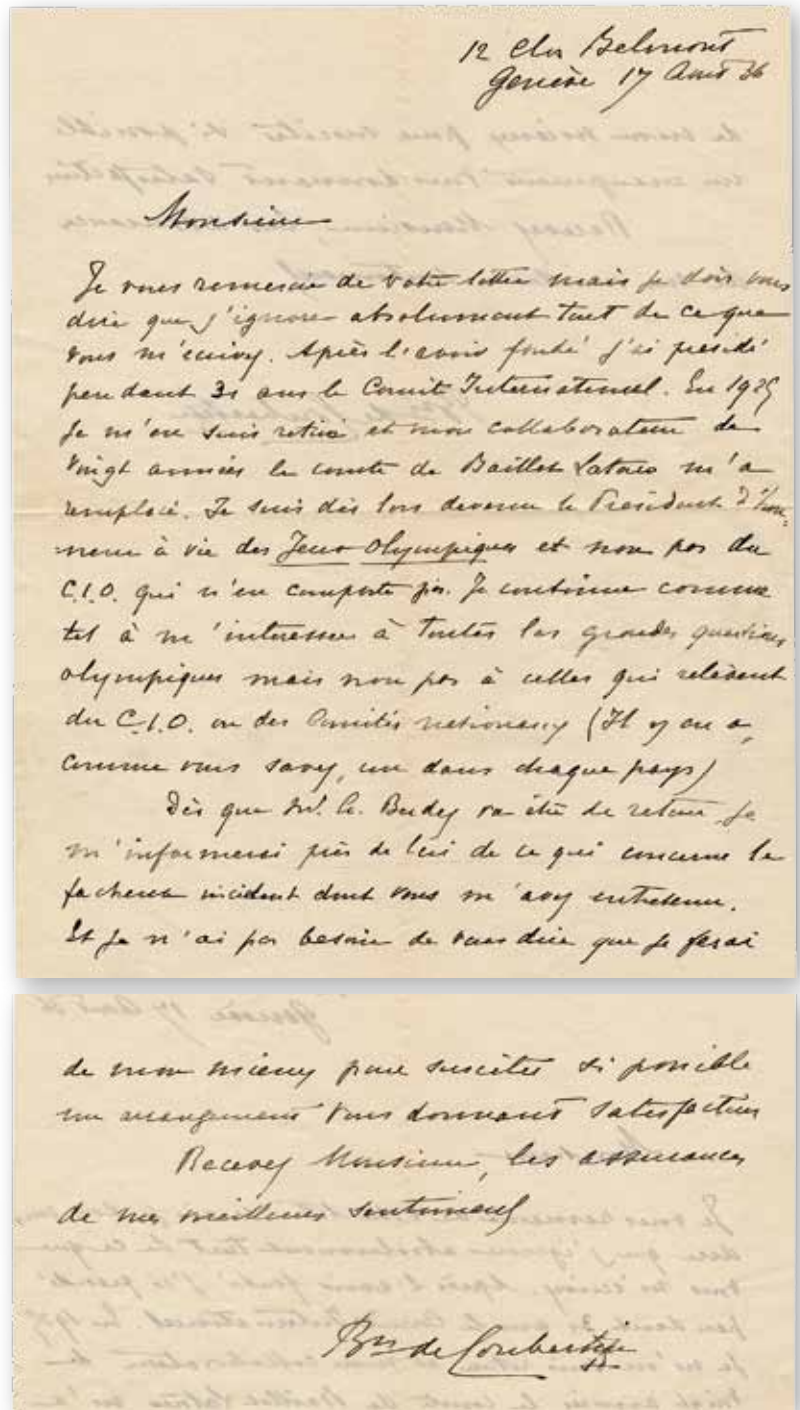
President of the World Committee against War and Fascism (WKKF), wished him courage: "Yes, fight on for peace and justice, for without justice, there will never be a stable peace".⁷¹

Besides that Lubahn had turned to the IOC and shown them the original version of his hymn.⁷² One day before the opening of the Games he also sent copies of his entire correspondence to Lausanne, these were forwarded to André G. Berdez in Berlin.⁷³ Yet the IOC Secretary, on whom the 'Hymne de Paix' had made a great impression, saw no need to act.⁷⁴

For Lubahn it was not just about his authorial rights. He had hesitated for some time before writing to IOC Honorary President Pierre de Coubertin, to ask him: "how the continuing spiritual and artistic formation of the re-awakened Olympic Idea is wished for and thought about by you!". In an eight page letter he reported to Coubertin how the hymn had been changed and how, out of consideration for the 'half-Jew' Lewald, who was allowed to keep his presidential post only thanks to IOC intervention, he had not dared to take the step of making the matter public. "I myself never authorised such defacements".⁷⁵ But Coubertin's answer was of little help. He wrote that he had withdrawn from the IOC after 31 years and handed over the correspondence to Count de Baillet-Latour.⁷⁶

No artistic career followed a steep ascent

Did Berlin know of Lubahn's activities? Perhaps they were submerged in the intoxicating Olympic summer. Had it been otherwise, contacts like those to Professor



Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze⁷⁷, who in 1933 had founded an 'International Aid Committee for German expatriates of Jewish descent', by reason of which he had been expelled by the Gestapo to Switzerland, might easily have brought Lubahn a spell in a concentration camp. Even abroad Lubahn was by no means secure. Yet at the end of 1936 when he was removed by the immigration authorities, Siegmund-Schultze procured him a breathing space.

All attempts to earn his money as a lyricist and build a life in Switzerland had failed. It was true that Hermann Hesse, the German author, who lived in the canton of Ticino and was a decided opponent of

Coubertin's response to Lubahn on 17th August 1936 in which he promised to contact IOC Secretary André G. Berdez on the latter's return from Berlin. Coubertin did not see himself able to offer further help.

Photos: Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach, Volker Kluge Archive

In May 1954 the IOC announced a competition for a new Olympic Hymn, for which there were 387 entries from 40 countries. A jury of twelve famous composers, among them Pablo Casals, decided by 11 votes to 1 in favour of the composition by the Pole Michał Spisak. The prize-winning hymn with a text from Pindars *Olympic Odes* was performed for the first time at a gala in the Monte Carlo opera house and thereafter played at the 1956 Olympic Games. But it did not prove popular. It was unsuitable for fanfares. In addition there were disputes over copyright which proved impossible to solve so it was soon consigned to the archives.

Photo: OSC/IOC Archives



war, testified to his 'literary gifts', but even with the argument that Lubahn was not one of those 'quickly and fashionably productive literary figures' who would be 'often unwelcome competition for domestic writers' no authority could be convinced.⁷⁸ Even Thomas Mann, who had again met Lubahn and praised his poems, had to admit that he could not help.⁷⁹

In the summer of 1938 Lubahn returned to Germany. From September to December where he was forced to work by the 'Organisation Todt' on building the 'Westwall', a 630 km long line of defence along the frontier from the Netherlands to Switzerland. After that he found a job as assistant in the Berlin tax office. He explained his two year absence as being a result of losing his voice, which as a vocal performer, he could prove had previously forced him to rest. All hope of being able to work as an artist disappeared with the start of the Second World War, which he experienced as 'service in Russia'. After war and captivity he was one of the young German authors who described their experiences especially in the magazine *Das Karussell*.⁸⁰

He had soared like a comet onto the literary carousel (Karussell), and just as quickly did it cast him aside – not least through the business sense of a famous musician, who perhaps did not even know about all that. An artistic career remained denied to the poet of the Strauss hymn. He wrote a few more poems, plays, a radio play and a novel that nobody knows. For a while he taught speaking technique.⁸¹ He died in 1974 in Stuttgart.

* * *

At the 1948 Games in London, organisers thought it unsuitable to use a hymn by a composer who had done a deal with the National Socialists. Instead Roger Quilter's choral anthem 'Non nobis, Domine' was

played, with words by Rudyard Kipling. At the 1950 IOC Session, The Chairman of the London Organising Committee, Lord Burghley and Austria's IOC Member Mautner von Markhof called for the annulment of the 1936 resolution and allow future organisers to use their own compositions. The proposal was accepted. In the Minutes it states: "The IOC thus no longer has an official Olympic hymn".⁸²

Yet as early as 1954 the Monegasque IOC Member Prince Pierre offered a prize of 1000 dollars for the creation of a new hymn, which the Pole Michał Spisak, who lived in Paris, won. But as the work, composed in the twelve-tone technique was difficult to play and the IOC discovered that the composer demanded royalties for each performance, the piece was soon cast aside. Two years later the original hymn by Samaras was performed at the 1958 IOC Session in Tokyo and restored as the official Olympic anthem. ■

- 1 N.G. Politis / Charalambos Anninos, *The Olympic Games in 1896*, second part, Charles Beck, Athens; H. Grevel and Co., London, 1897, p. 60.
- 2 Minutes, 29th IOC Session, Barcelona 24th April 1931, p. 3, IOC Archives/ Olympic Studies Centre.
- 3 The musical contest for an Olympic hymn, in: *Blätter für Volksgesundheit und Volkskraft, Zeitungsdienst und Bekanntmachungen des Deutschen Reichsausschusses für Leibesübungen*, Berlin, Vol. 20, No. 5, p. 10.
- 4 In her dissertation *Zur Rolle der Musik bei den Eröffnungs- und Schlussfeiern der Olympischen Spiele von 1896 bis 1972*, Cologne 2001, Elizabeth Leckie Schlüssel suspected that the name Bradley Keeler was a pseudonym. Since then his existence has been verified. Walter Bradley Keeler was born on 13rd February 1856 in South Salem, Westchester, N.Y. He studied in Stuttgart and during his stay in Germany met the composer Franz Liszt, who was so impressed by his talent that he gave him a rose. After Bradley-Keeler's death in Switzerland in November 1932 his widow presented the rose to the Yale School of Music. A scholarship was subsequently endowed in his memory.
- 5 *XI Olympiad Berlin 1936, Official Report*, Vol. 1, Wilhelm Limpert Verlag, Berlin (1937), p. 121.
- 6 *Official Program*, Xth Olympiad Los Angeles USA, Saturday, July 30, 1932, p. 20. The decisive verse runs: "Come, athletes, to our field, ... leap, In strength renewed to fear, The tyrant's hand no longer, And freedom's troth to keep."
- 7 The translation which was found in the papers of Erich Mindt (1894–1945), former director of the Museum of Physical Education in Berlin, is now in the Deutsches Sport & Olympia Museum Cologne.
- 8 Leckie Schlüssel, p. 243. Her dissertation is also available as an E-Book.
- 9 Carl Diem, *Ausgewählte Schriften*, Vol. 3, Reiseberichte, Richardz, Sankt Augustin 1982, p. 94.
- 10 Minutes, 32nd IOC Session, Vienna 9th June 1933, p. 2. The counterproposal by IOC Vice-President Godefroy de Blonay, to recognise the Bradley Keeler Hymn as the only official one was rejected by 14 votes to 7.
- 11 Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, second part, Franz Eher Nachf., München 1927, p. 686.
- 12 *Official Report Berlin 1936*, p. 121.
- 13 *12 Uhr Blatt*, 25th January 1933.
- 14 After 88 German writers and poets in autumn 1933 had given a 'pledge of most faithful fealty' to Hitler, prominent literary figures like the Literary Nobel Prize winner Thomas Mann had withdrawn from the Academy in protest. Others, like the Jewish writers Franz Werfel and Leonard Frank, were excluded.

- 15 Börries von Münchhausen, *Das Weihelied der Elften Olympiade*, in: *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2nd October 1934.
- 16 Wilhelm von Scholz, „Siegfriedgesang“, in: *Die Gedichte, Gesamtausgabe*, Paul List Verlag, Leipzig 1944, p. 432–433. Alfred von Kessel was second, third prize went to Gustav Frenssen (1863–1945), who like Scholz and the doctor and poet Gottfried Benn (1886–1956) had also signed the ‘pledge of loyalty’ to Hitler. Although Benn’s hymn did not receive an award, he published his ‘Olympic Hymn’ on 20th May 1934 in the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*.
- 17 *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2nd October 1934.
- 18 Börries, Freiherr von Münchhausen, *Das Weihelied der Elften Olympiade*, Privatdruck 1935, p. 10. Münchhausen had originally the intention of publishing the 50 best poems in a single volume, but no publishing house was interested. Thereupon he decided on a private publication limited to 300 copies, in which he described the history of the hymn’s origins and did not hesitate to quote from the most bizarre (and partly absurd) entries, without revealing the authors.
- 19 „Olympic Hymn for 1936 selected“, in: *Olympia-Pressedienst*, 28th September 1934.
- 20 *Reichssportblatt*, Vol. 1, 7th October 1934, pp. 950–951, et al.
- 21 Deutsches Literaturarchiv (DLA) Marbach, Börries von Münchhausen to Walter Zickler, 17th October 1934.
- 22 DLA, Estate Robert Lubahn.
- 23 *Weihelied*, p. 14.
- 24 *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, 2nd October 1934; *Neuköllner Tageblatt*, 7th October 1934.
- 25 DLA, Lewald to Lubahn, 11th October 1934.
- 26 Volker Kluge Archive, Strauss to the Marktgemeinderat Garmisch (copy), 1st February 1933.
- 27 Strauss an Zweig, 21st December 1934, in: Richard Strauss/Stefan Zweig, *Briefwechsel*, herausgegeben von Willi Schuh, S. Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt/Main 1957, p. 90.
- 28 Bundesarchiv (BArch) R 43 II/729, sheet 168, Strauss to Lewald, 20th December 1934.
- 29 DLA, Lewald to Lubahn, 25th October 1934.
- 30 *Weihelied*, p. 12.
- 31 DLA, Lubahn to Münchhausen, undated draft.
- 32 Ibid, Münchhausen to Lubahn, 1st October 1934.
- 33 Ibid, Lewald to Lubahn, 5th November 1934.
- 34 Carl und Liselott Diem-Archiv (CuLDA), Cologne, undated MS by Carl Diem.
- 35 *Official Report Berlin 1936*, p. 122.
- 36 E-mail from Eve Wörner, Reutlingen, 23rd July 2011.
- 37 DLA, comparison ‘original text’ and ‘falsified version’, undated.
- 38 E-mail from Eve Wörner, 24th July 2011.
- 39 Ibid, draft of letter Lubahn to Lewald, May 1936. The original is no longer to be found.
- 40 Volker Kluge Archive, Lewald to Halt, 28th December 1934.
- 41 Ibid, Halt to Lewald, 10th January 1935.
- 42 Ibid, Lewald to Halt, 15th January 1935.
- 43 BArch, R 43 II/729, sheet 206, 29th March 1935.
- 44 RSA, Lewald to Strauss, 1st April 1935.
- 45 DLA, Lubahn to Lewald, 20th June 1935. The identity of Dr. Streicher has not yet been established.
- 46 Ibid.
- 47 DLA, Estate of Robert Lubahn, undated agreement.
- 48 DLA, Lubahn to Lewald, 20th June 1935.
- 49 Ibid, Lewald to Lubahn, 20th December 1935.
- 50 Adolph (originally Aron) Fürstner (1833–1908) was the great-uncle of Captain Wolfgang Fürstner, under whose direction the Olympic Village in Döberitz was erected in the years from 1934–1936. Fürstner, shot himself three days before the end of the Games for private reasons. He had been the deputy commandant of the village. After the Berlin Gau leadership of the NSDAP had tried in vain to have him relieved because of his ‘non-Aryan’ relatives. Cf. Roland Kopp, Wolfgang Fürstner (1896–1936), *Der erste Kommandant des Olympischen Dorfes von 1936*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt/Main 2009.
- 51 *Official Report*, p. 122.
- 52 RSA, Lewald an Strauss, 1st April 1935.
- 53 Volker Kluge Archive, *Olympic Hymn*, Text by Robert Lubahn, Music by Richard Strauss, Verlag Adolph Fürstner, Berlin W (for the German Reich), Fürstner Ltd., London W 1 (for the other countries). There are no figures for the number of copies sold.
- 54 DLA, Lewald to Lubahn, 24th January 1936.
- 55 Ibid, Lubahn to Lewald, 7th January 1936.
- 56 Strauss to Zweig, 17th June 1935, in: Gerhard Splitt, *Die Musikforschung*, Vol. 58, No. 4/2005, pp. 406–414.
- 57 Alice Strauss (1904–1991), lived in what the Nazis described as a ‘privileged mixed-marriage’ with Strauss’s son Franz (1897–1980). She was the daughter of the Jewish-Austrian industrialist Emanuel Grab (1868–1929), whom Kaiser Franz Josef in 1915 had raised to the hereditary nobility. When the Republic of Austria abolished aristocracy after the First World War, the family adopted the name ‘Grab-Hermannswörth’.
- 58 Carl Diem, *Tagebücher*, Vol. 9, 8th November 1935–20th September 1936, pp. 58, Carl-Jürgen Diem Archive. According to Diem’s description in *Ein Leben für den Sport*, A. Henn Verlag, Ratingen, n. d. (1974), p. 183, had issued an invitation to his villa a week earlier and sung the hymn himself: “I have seldom heard such a fragile old man’s voice. He felt that himself, invited us again after a week and had by then ensured the help of the singer Patzak, and now the hymn sounded splendid”.
- 59 Elke Fröhlich (Ed.), *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, Vol. 2, K. G. Saur, München 1987, p. 630.
- 60 BArch, R 43 II/730 sheet 24, Lewald to Lammers, 21st April 1936. Lewald had informed the Chief of the Reich Chancellery that Strauss “laid great emphasis on conducting his composition himself”.
- 61 Carl Diem, *Das Olympiade-Buch*, Philipp Reclam, Leipzig, 1936, p. 10. This was not the only factual error made by Diem. In *Ein Leben für den Sport*, p. 182, he gave Lubahn the first name Erwin.
- 62 Heinrich Friedrich Albert (1874–1960) represented the Imperial Empire until the First World War as Trade Attaché in New York. In the Weimar Republic he was part of the Cuno Cabinet as First State Secretary of the Reich Chancellery. He was a lawyer but many in the NS regime harboured reservations about him. These disappeared when he proved himself an indispensable helper with the ‘Germanisation’ of the Ford Motor Company AG (FMCAG). He split it off from 1937 into the armaments industry as chairman of the board of directors. Cf. Johannes Reiling, *DEUTSCHLAND: Safe for Democracy?*, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart 1997.
- 63 DLA, Albert to Lubahn, 1st July 1936, 11th July 1936, 16th July 1936.
- 64 Ibid, Lubahn to Albert, 20th July 1936.
- 65 Ibid, Münchhausen to Lubahn, 6th August 1936.
- 66 Organisations-Komitee der XI. Olympiade, *Tagesprogramm*, 1. August 1936, p. 15.
- 67 Minutes 36th IOC Session, Berlin 31st July 1936, p. 10, IOC/OSC.
- 68 Albrecht Dümling, *Zwischen Autonomie und Fremdbestimmung. Die Olympische Hymne von Robert Lubahn und Richard Strauss*, in: *Richard Strauss-Blätter*, Internationale Richard Strauss-Gesellschaft (Ed.), Hans Schneider, Wien, December 1997, No. 38, pp. 68–102.
- 69 Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes, Ernst von Weizsäcker to the Foreign Office, Berne, 6th May 1936.
- 70 Thomas Mann, *Tagebücher 1935–1936*, S. Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt/Main 1978, p. 355.
- 71 DLA, Rolland to Lubahn, 18th December 1936.
- 72 Ibid, Lubahn to IOC, 25th July 1936.
- 73 Ibid, 31st July 1936.
- 74 Ibid, Berdez to Lubahn, 11th August 1936.
- 75 Ibid, Lubahn to Coubertin, August 1936. The exact date could not be found as only the German draft exists.
- 76 Ibid, Coubertin to Lubahn, 17th August 1936.
- 77 Friedrich Siegmund-Schultze (1885–1969), a Lutheran theologian, was in 1914 the co-founder and Secretary of the World Federation – A Communion of Churches. During the First World War, together with the peace activist Elisabeth Rotten he organised the ‘Quäker-speisung’ [Children power] for Berlin school pupils.
- 78 DLA, Hermann Hesse, attestation for the Swiss immigration authorities, Montagnola, 20th August 1937.
- 79 Ibid, Mann to Lubahn, 21st May 1937, 20th August 1937.
- 80 Robert Lubahn, *Herbstes Aufbruch*, in: *Das Karussell*, Vol. 1, order 4. The ambitious literary monthly appeared from 1946 to 1948, published by the Harriet-Schleber-Verlag in Kassel.
- 81 In the estate preserved in the DLA are inter alia the novel *Die Generation*, the play *Der wahre Zauberschlüssel* [The true magic key] and the radio play *Gespinnste* [Spooky stories]. Among the publications is also the nature study book *verein wegen Vicher*, Thienemanns Verlag, Stuttgart 1948.
- 82 Minutes, 45th IOC Session, Copenhagen 1950, p. 22, IOC/OSC.