

Newfound Intrigue into Gretel Bergmann

Gretel Bergmann was a Jewish-German high jumper in the 1930s. She was banned from competing in the 1936 Olympics. Bergmann is now 101 years old and has written an autobiography of her journey and experiences titled “Ich war die grosse jüdische Hoffnung”, which translates to “I was the great Jewish hope”. This book was written in 2003 and is partially viewable on Google Books. I found this source by thinking about what interested me in this time period of German history and connecting it to my hobbies. I am very interested in the Olympics so I wanted to connect that passion to this project by looking more into the 1936 Olympics. After searching on Google about the 1936 Olympics I found a page from the Jewish Virtual Library on the Games where it had a section titled “Olympics aren’t for Jews”. Bergmann was not talked about much before the 2000s in writings, however she has boomed since 2003 and the publication of her book. Also due to the fact of her being 101 years old and the last surviving Jewish athlete who was banned from the Games peaked interest in her in the last several years. Bergmann’s original name was Gretel Bergmann, however after she moved to the United States and got married her name changed to Margaret Lambert, which is what she uses today as her name. In her book, Bergmann describes life before the Nazi takeover and the life she was forced to live during the Third Reich and beyond. She ended up immigrating to the U.S. in 1937, marrying a doctor and living her own life. Recently, though, she was drawn back to those old German times as she traveled back to Germany and then wrote this book. Immediately after leaving Germany, Bergmann swore that she would never touch German soil again, but eventually she traveled back in 1999 when she was being honored by having a stadium in Laupheim named after her. This drew her wanting to tell her story, which she previously did not want to do. This source was published in German, even though Bergmann admitted that she no longer speaks German.

Source:

Bergmann, Gretel. "Ich War Die Grosse Jüdische Hoffnung": Erinnerungen Einer Aussergewöhnlichen Sportlerin. Leinfelden-Echterding: DRW-Verlag, 2003.

There do not appear to be many publications of this book, though. Also, looking at all the other sources found in this project, none appear to have a different interpretation of this text. This text was originally in German and there appears to be no English translation other than *By Leaps and Bound* (found later in this exploration), which was also written by Bergmann as testimony for the Survivors’ Memoirs Project. It is interesting that there is no English translation for this book, because Bergmann herself has admitted that she no longer speaks German and yet her book was only published in German.

- **Guttman, Allen. *Women's Sports. A History.* New York: Columbia University Press. 1991.**

This book was found through Bergmann's Wikipedia page as one of the further readings. It is important, though, because it is one of the first published books to reference Bergmann and her story. This book's information can be found on Google Books, but no preview pages are available through Google Books. This book can be purchased on Amazon.

- **Siegman, Joseph. *The International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame.* 1992.**
<https://books.google.com/books?id=Qpipghls99IC&pg=PA205&lpg=PA205&dq=the+international+jewish+sports+hall+of+fame+joseph+siegman&source=bl&ots=gwlfQoEaEv&sig=PE7otjFkHSwU7xQweTKXjziYYDA&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwilxOyRiLflAhWKLlyYKHbsTCxAQ6AEIPzAF#v=onepage&q=the%20international%20jewish%20sports%20hall%20of%20fame%20joseph%20siegman&f=false>

In Siegman's book, Bergmann appears to be talked about twice on pages 6 and 12, as well as being referenced at the end of the book. Although the only versions of the full text of this book are only available for purchase through sites like Amazon, Google Books has some previews available, but only small previews. It appears that Siegman only briefly discusses Bergmann as being a high jumper who was not allowed to participate in the 1936 Olympics. There does not appear to be much other information than this.

- **Bandy, S and A Darden. *Crossing Boundaries: An International Anthology of Women's Experiences in Sport.* Human Kinetics: Champaign, IL. 1999.**

This book appears to only have a small section about Bergmann as it focuses more on many women's experiences, rather than just Bergmann's. This book was found on Worldcat, but the full version is not available at the UCSB library. The book is available at places such as Amazon.

- **Bergmann, Gretel. *By Leaps and Bounds.* U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum: Holocaust Survivors' Memoirs Project: Washington, D.C. 2005.**

This source is written by the same author, Gretel Bergmann. *By Leaps and Bounds* contains similar information to that of the German source for this project. This is probably due to this being the English autobiography of Bergmann for the Holocaust Survivors' Memoirs project. Bergmann and her story were recorded and told for this project in 2005, just after her book was published. This comes from the push to tell and preserve survivors' stories in the 2000s as more and more survivors started to die. This book was found on Worldcat and according to Worldcat, none of the UC libraries have access to this English book. The closest library that has this book is USC.

- Germs, G., L. Borish, and G. Pfister. *Sports in American History: From Colonization to Globalization*. Human Kinetics. 2008. Google Books. Accessed February 04, 2016.

https://books.google.com/books?id=oxNtf_9o818C&dq=gretel+bergmann&source=gbs_navlinks_s.

This book has only a page and a half on Bergmann and her story. They used Bergmann's book for information in order to write this small section. This book was the one English source that came up from searching Google Scholar to see what books have cited Bergmann's book. This book is available as an ebook for \$36.

- "The Jewish jumper and the male imposter." September 9, 2009.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8241631.stm>.

When searching newspaper databases (JSTOR and Academic Search Complete), no results come up in responds to searching "Gretel Bergmann" and "Ich war die grosse jüdische Hoffnung". It is difficult to find articles that cite this source mostly due to this being a 2003 source and newspapers do not appear to have reported on this source itself. However, newspapers have reported on Gretel Bergmann herself, but in more recent years. The oldest I could find was BBC news' 2009 article, but this article is more about Bergmann's replacement who turned out to be a man.

- Kulka, Otto Dov, Eberhard Jäckel, and William Templar. "The Jews in the Secret Nazi Reports on Popular Opinion in Germany, 1933-1945." New Haven: Yale University Press. November 23, 2010.

This book was found on Google Books as one book that references Bergmann's book. It appears that this book is not specifically about Bergmann, though. Rather, it probably uses Bergmann as a reference for one small part. This source is in the UCSB library as well as having online texts available to buy from sources such as Amazon and the Oxford Journals.

- Osborne, Simon. "I Watched the Games and Hated Every Minute." *The Independent*. July 30, 2012. Accessed February 04, 2016.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/features/i-watched-the-games-and-hated-every-minute-7987833.html>.

This is an article in the newspaper, The Independent. It states that Bergmann is the last living athlete who was banned from the 1936 Olympics. This article gives a more updated view on Bergmann and her life that even includes a recent picture of her and quotes from the interview.

- Hume, Robert. *Clearing the bar: one girl's Olympic dream*. Matador: Leicester. 2012.

This book has some interest to the Gretel Bergmann topic. It appears to be about Bergmann, however this book was found on Worldcat and I do not have

access to the full version, as UCSB and UC libraries do not hold it. It is, though, available for purchase on Amazon. It appears that this book revolves around Gretel Bergmann's story in relation to the 1936 Olympics. This book was published in 2012, which is eight years after Bergmann published her autobiography. This probably means that Bergmann's book was referenced for Hume's and likely Bergmann herself provided insight for Hume's book. However, I cannot find what references Hume uses for his book.

- **"Sharing Stories Inspiring Change." Gretel Bergmann. Accessed February 04, 2016. <http://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/bergmann-gretel>.**

Bergmann also has an encyclopedia page on her in the Jewish Women's Archive. This contains more information about her life as well as references again. Bergmann's book is cited as well as seven German books/articles. There is only one book that is cited that appears to be in English, even though this website is in English. That book is Joseph Siegman's *The International Jewish Sports Hall of Fame. Jewish Sports Legends*, which was published in 1972. Siegman's book would then be the earliest publication found about Gretel Bergmann. However, upon searching for Siegman's book I discovered that it was actually published in 1992 (see citation earlier in this source exploration). This means that Siegman's book is still one of the earliest in reference to Bergmann, but Guttman's book was published before Siegman's.

- **Wikipedia. Accessed February 04, 2016.**

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gretel_Bergmann.

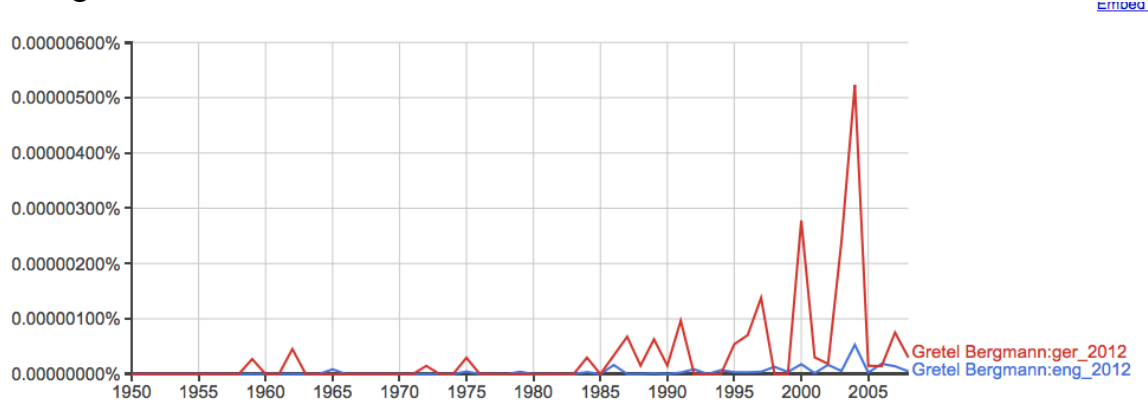
There is a Wikipedia page on Bergmann, which describes her life, honors, and commemorations that she has. She was born on April 12, 1914. It also says that another name she is known as, Margaret Bergmann-Lambert, which helps to explain the differences in names I found when initially searching her. It also says that in 2004 a documentary film was made based on her life, *Hitler's Pawn - The Margaret Lambert Story*. This story uses Bergmann's married name, Margaret Lambert. In the further reading section it shows this source as well as her contribution to the Holocaust Survivors Memoirs Project in Washington D.C. This seems to be one of the more interesting readings that could lead to more primary information. There are also two books written by other people found in this section. These have both been cited earlier in this exploration, namely the books by Robert Hume and Allen Guttman. Also this Wikipedia page talks about a sports complex in Berlin-Wilmersdorf that was named after her in 1995. Also, in 1999 the stadium in Laupheim that she had been barred from in the '30s was named after her. For the 1995 naming ceremony, Bergmann did not attend. However, for the 1999 she had a change of heart and did attend this one. This helps to show why she did not write a book until later on in life. She did not want to go back to those times, but eventually felt like her story needed to be told.

- "Gretel Bergmann" Worldcat/Melvyl Catalog. UCSB. Library.
<http://ucsb.worldcat.org.proxy.library.ucsb.edu:2048/wcidentities/lccn-no2004050477>. Accessed February 04, 2016.

Bergmann was not talked about much before her book in 2003 and I find it interesting that she is not written about and does not write anything herself until later in life well after 1936. This shows that there was a boom of people wanting to find information on her later in life, which is consistent with Holocaust survivors as historians and such had a surge in collecting survivors' testimony when survivors started to die off. Bergmann did not publish her own book until 2003. The more recent works published about Bergmann did not occur until 2009.

- Google Ngram Viewer.

https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=Gretel+Bergmann%3Aeng_2012+%2C+Gretel+Bergmann%3Ager_2012&year_start=1950&year_end=2008&corpus=20&smoothing=0&share=&direct_url=t1%3B%2CGretel%20Bergmann%3Aeng_2012%3B%2Cc0%3B.t1%3B%2CGretel%20Bergmann%3Ager_2012%3B%2Cc0



Gretel Bergmann's name does not appear in Google's Ngrams until the late 1950s. As seen in the picture above, there are small spikes in the 1950s, 1970s, and 1980s. However, the big spikes have been in recent years starting in the late 1990s and continuing on into the 2000s. The spike around 2003-04 comes from the publication of her book, "Ich war die grosse jüdische Hoffnung" in the German corpus. In the English corpus, Gretel Bergmann has no real impact until about 2004 with the publication of her book and the attention that was brought to her. If Google had more recent books in its corpus, it is likely that Gretel Bergmann would have been talked/written about much more often in both German and English from 2009-2015.