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Instead of an Introduction

This book is dedicated to the generation of athletes who played a pivotal role in the development and life of athletics on the territory of Yugoslavia, called the First and Second Yugoslavia, a generation that was interrupted by two world wars, who had truly limited chances to prove themselves in modern sports, and yet managed to make an immense contribution to its development and forever engrave their names into the sports' history of all the new countries that had formerly been part of the joint country of South Slavs, whether they admit to this joint sports history or not. The popularity of athletics is the result of the "work" done by the athletes who represented the Kingdom of Yugoslavia at the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936. These Games were controversial in many ways. Impeccably organized, rich and modern, but also marked by the first forms of resistance to the host country's Nazi regime, fascism (which was still fairly dormant at the time but preparing to leap, and bring evil to the rest of the world). By organizing a boycott of the Nazi salute to Chancellor, Adolf Hitler, the athletic team of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia set an example for all athletes from every part of the world. They demonstrated how an Olympian should carry him/herself in times of hardship, how they should be respectful of those worthy values, and how they should point out threats to the Olympic allures, which, in essence, meant threats to the free world.

The 11th modern Olympic Games in Berlin took place from August 1 to 16, 1936, and are still the most talked-about Games in the history of the Olympics. For numerous reasons: they featured a remarkably large number of participants from 49 countries, with a total of 4,066 athletes, including 328 women, strings of technical novelties were introduced, the organization was outstanding, and an unexpected hero was born, the black American, Jesse Owens, who won an incredible four gold medals in the 100 and 200-meter dashes, the 4x100-meter relay, and the long jump. Many considered these Games to be the "Jesse Owens Games" because such athletic superiority

**National Team of the Kingdom
of Yugoslavia during the Opening
Ceremony of the 1936 Olympic
Games in Berlin.**

had never been seen before. Well, such was the company of Olympic athletes (athletics was still the leading sport of the time) that our representatives, seventeen men and five women, from Yugoslavia were up against at these Games. The following athletes made up the team from Yugoslavia: Ivan Vane Ivanović (110 and 400-meter hurdles), Jovan Mikić (triple jump), Milan Stepišnik (hammer throw), Veljko Narančić (discus), Aleksa Kovačević (shot-put), Ivo Buratović (long jump), Julije Bauer Pluci (100-meter dash), Pedro Goić (hammer throw), Rudolf Markušić (javelin), Nikola Kleut (discus), Jaša Bakov (pole vault), Hans Mohr (high jump), Stane Šporn (marathon), August Banščak (400-meter hurdles), Emil Goršek (800 and 1500-meter run), Ive Krevs (5000-meter run), and Miroslav Dobrin, Secretary-General of the Yugoslavia Olympic Committee, coach and team leader. It was also the first time that Yugoslavia had female athletes at the Games: Flora Hoffmann and Vera Romanić (100-meter dash), Jelena Stanojević (javelin), Zulejka Stefanini (80-meter hurdles) and Vjera Neferović (discus).

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