THE PEOPLE'S GAME

Football, State and Society in East Germany

ALAN McDOUGALL

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Sport in East Germany is commonly associated with the systematic doping that helped to make the country an Olympic superpower. Football played little part in this controversial story. Yet, as a hugely popular activity that was deeply entwined in the social fabric, it exerted an influence that few institutions or pursuits could match. *The People's Game* examines the history of football from the inter-related perspectives of star players, fans, and ordinary citizens who played for fun. Using archival sources and interviews, it reveals football's fluid role in preserving and challenging communist hegemony. By repeatedly emphasising that GDR football was part of an international story, for example, through analysis of the 1974 World Cup finals, Alan McDougall shows how sport transcended the Iron Curtain. Through a study of the mass protests against the *Stasi* team, BFC, during the 1980s, he reveals football's role in foreshadowing the downfall of communism.

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By Alan McDougall
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A football map of the GDR.

Abbreviations

ASK	Army Sports Club
BFC	Berliner FC Dynamo
BSG	Betriebssportgemeinschaft (factory/enterprise sports club)
CDU	Christian Democratic Union
DEFA	Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft (East German state film company)
DFB	Deutscher Fußball-Bund (German Football Association)
DFF	Deutscher Fernsehfunk (East German state broadcaster)
DFV	Deutscher Fußball-Verband der DDR (East German Football Association)
DS	Deutscher Sportausschuß (German Sports Committee)
DSB	Deutscher Sportbund (West German sports federation)
DTSB	Deutscher Turn- und Sportbund (East German sports federation)
FA	Football association
FC	Football club
FCK	FC Karl-Marx-Stadt
FCM	FC Magdeburg
FDGB	Freier Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund (Free Federation of German Trade Unions)
FDJ	Free German Youth
FIFA	International Federation of Football Associations
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
FSV	Fansportverein (fan sports club)
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GST	Gesellschaft für Sport und Technik (Society for Sport and Technology)
HFC	Hallescher FC
IM	Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter (unofficial informer)
KJS	Kinder- und Jugendsportschule (children and youth sports school)
MfS	Ministry for State Security (*Stasi*)

NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association
NOFV	Nord-Ostdeutscher Fußball-Verband (North-East German Football Association)
NSA	Nichtsozialistisches Ausland (non-socialist foreign countries)
NSRL	National Socialist League for Physical Education
OND	Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro (National Organisation of Recreational Clubs)
PDS	Party of Democratic Socialism
SBZ	Soviet-Occupied Zone
SC	Sports club
SG	Sportgemeinschaft (sports community)
SED	Socialist Unity Party of Germany
SPD	German Social Democratic Party
Stako	State Committee for Physical Education and Sport
SV	Sportverein (sports association)
UEFA	Union of European Football Associations
VP	People's Police
VSG	Volkssportgemeinschaft (folk sports club)
ZIJ	Central Institute for Youth Research
ZK	Central Committee
ZSG	Central Sports Club

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On my way into Berlin to begin work on this project, I told the taxi driver the subject of my research. His response was incredulous laughter: 'a history of Brazilian football, yes, but the GDR?!' That was the end of our conversation. Fortunately, many others have been more supportive of my interest in the strange history of East German football.

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(2010) and Lotte (2013) coincided with the start and finish of the writing process, meaning that GDR football will always be bound up with two of the happiest moments of my life.

Albert Camus wrote that 'all that I know most surely about morality and obligations, I owe to football'. The people of Liverpool have fought a long campaign for justice, against very difficult odds, since the Hillsborough disaster in 1989. I dedicate this book to the memory of the Hillsborough victims and to my two daughters. YNWA.

Alan McDougall, Toronto

1 Introduction

The socialism I believe in is everyone working for each other, everyone having a share of the rewards. It's the way I see football, the way I see life. (Bill Shankly)[1]

'*Männer! Fußball ist alles!*' (Thomas Brussig)[2]

Past and present in East German football

On 25 October 2011, Dynamo Dresden, the most popular football club in the region that once comprised the German Democratic Republic (GDR), travelled to Borussia Dortmund, the reigning *Bundesliga* champions, for a second-round match in the German Cup. After years spent struggling in the lower divisions, Dynamo were resurgent, sitting in mid-table in the second tier of German football (*2. Bundesliga*). They were no match for their hosts, who won 2–0. But the real story happened off the pitch. The game was delayed for fifteen minutes, as 4,500 Dresden fans outside the stadium clashed with police, throwing bottles and incendiary devices. When it began, unrest continued. Dynamo fans tossed fireworks onto the pitch. The referee suspended play on several occasions. Toilets were set alight, vendor stands vandalised, and 200 seats destroyed. Seventeen people were injured, including two police officers. Fifteen Dresden fans were arrested. The cost of the evening's rioting was estimated at 150,000 Euros.[3]

A month later the disciplinary commission of the German Football Association (*Deutscher Fußball-Bund*, DFB) convened to discuss the events in Dortmund, the fifth time that season that Dynamo fans had been involved in trouble. It decided to ban Dynamo Dresden from the German Cup for the 2012/13 season. The draconian punishment, the commission

[1] www.philosophyfootball.com/new_win.html.
[2] Thomas Brussig, *Leben bis Männer* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2001), p. 95.
[3] Jack-Pitt Brooke, 'A return to all riot on the east German front', *The Independent*, 30 November 2011: www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/news-and-comment/a-return-to-all-riot-on-the-east-german-front-6269683.html.

chairman argued, was justified in the circumstances: 'Never was violence in our football stadia greater than in this year. There have never been deaths in our stadia. But if it carries on like this, it's only a matter of time'.[4]

The story did not end there. The cup ban was overturned on appeal in February 2012. The DFB still imposed a 100,000 Euros fine, banned Dynamo fans from an away match against Eintracht Frankfurt on 16 March, and ordered the closure of Dynamo's ground for a match against Ingolstadt on 11 March.[5] The Ingolstadt match became the site of a remarkable act of defiance against the ruling. Dynamo fans purchased more than 32,000 *Geistertickets* ('ghost tickets') for a game in an empty stadium, thereby setting a new attendance record.[6]

More than twenty years after unification, East German football remains an unloved cousin of its affluent West German counterpart. Whereas the media at home and abroad laud the healthy state of German football, the acme of which was the presence of two *Bundesliga* clubs, Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund, in the 2013 Champions' League final, the game in the former GDR is associated with the kind of fan violence that, like communism, should have been left behind in the 1980s. A typical – and typically overstated – view comes from the football historian Hanns Leske. 'In the East', he avers, 'there is not a civilised fan culture as there is in the West'.[7] Lack of success has done little to counterbalance the perception that East German football is a hooligan's playground. Just as the region has struggled economically since the *Wende* ('turn') of 1989–90, so its football teams have struggled to compete. No ex-GDR club has graced the *Bundesliga* since 2009. The region continues to produce outstanding young players. But the only *Ostverein* to match the best of the West since 1989 has been Turbine Potsdam, a marquee club in the growing but still largely ignored world of women's football.

There is an alternative narrative. Its content reflects the ongoing divisions between Easterners and Westerners (*Ossis und Wessis*) – the so-called

[4] 'Dresden wird vom DFB-Pokal ausgeschlossen!', *kicker online*, 24 November 2011: www.kicker.de/news/fussball/dfbpokal/startseite/561125/artikel_dresden-wird-vom-dfb-pokal-ausgeschlossen.html.

[5] 'DFB hebt Pokal-Auschuss von Dynamo Dresden aus', *Welt Online*, 23 February 2012: www.welt.de/sport/fussball/article13884259/DFB-hebt-Pokal-Ausschluss-von-Dynamo-Dresden-auf.html.

[6] 'Geister-Ticket Aktion von Dynamo Dresden sprengt alle Grenzen', *LVZ Online*, 10 March 2011: www.lvz-online.de/sport/regionalsport/run-auf-geistertickets-bei-dynamo-dresden-haelt-an–stadion-schon-fast-ausverkauft/r-regionalsport-a-128739.html.

[7] 'Der Fußball-Osten wird eine öde Steppe werden', interview with Hanns Leske, *3 Ecken Ein Elfer*, 5 August 2009: http://cms.3eckeneinelfer.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=104%3A-interview-mit-dr-hanns-leske-der-fussball-osten-wird-eine-oede-steppe-werden-&Itemid=12.

'wall in the head' (*Mauer im Kopf*) – in reunited Germany. According to this perspective, Dynamo Dresden's initial explusion from the German Cup was just the latest example of what one fan called the DFB's 'permanent hatred of all East Germans'. The persecution complex was not unfounded. Fan unrest involving numerous West German clubs – Nuremberg, Mainz, St Pauli, and Eintracht Frankfurt – in the 2011/12 season did not lead to similar penalties.[8] The solidarity apparent in the subsequent *Geisterticket* campaign reflected a sense of embattlement that dated back to at least the mid 1990s, when the DFB demoted Dynamo Dresden to the amateur leagues due to financial irregularities. It also had roots in the late GDR, when Dresden's rivals, Berliner FC Dynamo (BFC), the team of *Stasi* boss Erich Mielke, won ten consecutive league titles amid rumours of shady practices involving bought referees.

Aggrieved by past injustices under communism and capitalism, Dynamo fans' conspiratorial theories about the cup ban fed into a wider sense of disenfranchisement. Some ex-GDR clubs – Energie Cottbus, Erzgebirge (formerly Wismut) Aue, Hansa Rostock, and Union Berlin – have enjoyed notable successes since 1991. But many of the biggest names have fallen further than Dresden, including BFC. Hard times have been the norm rather than exception in the post-*Wende* economy too. The unemployment rate in Hansa's home state, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, in April 2011 stood at 13.2%. In affluent Bavaria, home to Bayern Munich, it was just 3.9%.[9]

In the circumstances, football in the East became an important means of asserting lost or vanishing identities, of fighting back against 'a general devaluation of East German histories since reunification'.[10] Just such a reclamation motivated BFC's 2004 campaign to display three gold stars on club shirts, in defiance of a DFB ruling that granted this mark of privilege to clubs that had won the *Bundesliga* at least ten times (Bayern Munich), but not to the ten-time GDR champions.[11] Since the end of the 1990s, *Ostalgie* ('nostalgia for the East') has been expressed in film, literature, and music. Discarded socialist artefacts attract the cultish attention of online and mail-order collectors.[12] Even the most private of human activities has

[8] Brooke, 'A return to all riot on the east German front'.
[9] Quentin Peel, 'German unemployment falls below 3m', ft.com, 28 April 2011: www.ft.com/cms/s/0/23d92cda-7185–11e0–9b7a-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2d5AvXfQu.
[10] Daphne Berdahl, 'Re-presenting the socialist modern: museums and memory in the former GDR', in Katherine Pence and Paul Betts (eds.), *Socialist Modern: East German Everyday Culture and Politics* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2008), p. 354.
[11] Jutta Braun, '"Very nice, the enemies are gone!" Coming to terms with GDR sports since 1989/90', *Historical Social Research* vol. 32, no. 1 (2007), 181.
[12] Berdahl, 'Re-presenting the socialist modern', pp. 354–5.

been given GDR-specific attributes, with East Germans claiming that they had more and better sex than West Germans.[13] Football has played its part in the retroactive assertion of GDR identity. At various times the two most successful post-*Wende* clubs, Hansa and Energie Cottbus, have become vehicles for articulating Eastern solidarity.[14] This unity in the face of adversity was fleeting. But it illustrates one of the ways in which East German football retains powerful political and socio-cultural functions – and helps to explain why many *Ossis*, even if they were not from Dresden, criticised the DFB's decision to bar Dynamo from the German Cup.[15]

So: a violent, apparently untameable fan culture; a sense that the authorities are conspiring against certain clubs for political reasons; and a persistent struggle to compete against the best teams in West Germany – East German football in 2011, for all of the changes of the previous two decades, bore more than a passing resemblance to the game as it was played in the twilight years of communist dictatorship. The controversies surrounding Dynamo Dresden also highlight the multiple ways in which, even in an age when it has become a relentlessly marketed, multi-billion dollar branch of the entertainment industry, football remains a potentially discordant part of modern societies. The game is still played on a contested terrain that provides both a refuge from, and an articulation of, socio-economic ills – and a means for millions of people, as Eric Dunning argues, to assert 'a relatively high … degree of autonomy as far as their behaviour, identities, identifications, and relationships are concerned'.[16]

Revising a history of failure?

Mediocrity and an inability to compete at the highest level were, by common consent, central features of football under East German communism. Officials invested considerable resources in 'performance sport' (*Leistungssport*), in order to produce champions whose victories would illustrate communism's superiority over capitalism. In the 1970s and 1980s, this policy, based on sophisticated talent identification and training

[13] Josie McLellan, *Love in the Time of Communism: Intimacy and Sexuality in the GDR* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 1.

[14] Markus Hesselmann and Robert Ide, 'A tale of two Germanys: football culture and national identity in the German Democratic Republic', in Alan Tomlinson and Christopher Young (eds.), *German Football: History, Culture, Society* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 45–7.

[15] For a cross-section of opinion among fans in the East, the majority of which condemn the DFB's decision, see the forum discussion 'Dynamo Dresden vom DFB-Pokal 12/13 ausgeschlossen' at the *Nordostfussball* website: http://diskussionen.die-fans.de/nordostfussball/40551-dynamo-dresden-vom-dfb-pokal-2012–2013-ausgeschlossen.html.

[16] Eric Dunning, *Sport Matters: Sociological Studies of Sport, Violence and Civilisation* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 3–4.

programmes as well as systematic doping, turned the GDR, a country of seventeen million inhabitants, into an Olympic superpower.

Football played little part in the success story. The East German national team reached the World Cup finals once, in 1974. Qualifying campaigns were otherwise marked by a tendency to squander favourable positions at critical moments. East German clubs struggled in international competition too. Only FC Magdeburg won one of the three major European trophies, the Cup Winners' Cup, also in 1974. The domestic league (*Oberliga*) was small and only intermittently competitive – characteristics shaped not only by the GDR's size, and the region's relatively minor role in German football before 1945, but by communist policies. The result was an inward-looking football culture that struggled to reach the international standards that the GDR set in athletics and swimming.

West German observers and post-*Wende* historians were not alone in regarding East German football as second-rate. The same sentiment prevailed in the GDR, among supporters and functionaries alike. A 1969 report by the East German sports federation (*Deutscher Turn- und Sportbund*, DTSB) spoke witheringly, and typically, of 'the stagnation of GDR football in mediocrity'.[17] Fan petitions (*Eingaben*) to the authorities in the 1980s used similar language, discussing stagnation in the leadership of the East German Football Association (*Deutscher Fußball-Verband der DDR*, DFV), in the national team, and in club football.[18]

In fact, East German football was never as bad as the gloomy analyses suggested. Günter Schneider, the former DFV president, noted in an unpublished study that UEFA ranked the GDR seventh out of thirty-three European nations in club football in 1976. The national team was also ranked among the top third of European countries.[19] Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger's 2002 history of German football challenged the 'misconception' that the game in the GDR was 'awful and spectacularly unsuccessful'. He pointed to its accomplishments in youth football and victories by the national side and club teams against eminent West European and South American opponents.[20] Simon Kuper and Stefan Szymanski's *Soccernomics* averred that the GDR – relative to population, experience, and GDP – was not an under-achiever. The authors' 'European efficiency table', covering results between European countries in the

[17] Stiftung der Parteien und Massenorganisationen, Bundesarchiv (SAPMO-BArch), DY 30/IV A 2/18/7, Probleme des Leistungsstandes des DDR-Fußballsports, 9 January 1969.
[18] See e.g. Chapters 8 and 10.
[19] Archivgut des Deutschen Fußballverbandes der DDR (DFV), I/2, Günter Schneider, 'Dokumentation über 45 Jahre Fußball in der SBZ/DDR' (unpublished, *c.* 1996).
[20] Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football* (London: WSC Books, 2002), pp. 222–3.

period 1980–2001, ranked the GDR nineteenth out of forty-nine countries with an 'over-achievement' rating of 0.096. This placed it just behind West Germany, but ahead of England, France, and Italy.[21] In other words, East German football was marginally better than one might have expected it to be.

Fans and officials, though, did not measure success against a rational, data-based yardstick. They measured it against how bad GDR football seemed to be in comparison, first, with other sports in East Germany, and, second, with West German football. The football achievements of similar-sized countries such as Czechoslovakia (1962 World Cup finalists and 1976 European champions) and the Netherlands (World Cup finalists in 1974 and 1978) would also not have gone unnoticed. The complex history of this perceived failure – and what it tells us about the relationships between football, state, and society in the GDR – is the subject of this book.

GDR football in historiographical context

In 2002 Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger described the history of East German football as 'one of the game's most fascinating tales still waiting to be told properly'.[22] A large body of writing on GDR football exists. Rather like the subject matter, it is of patchy quality. There are encyclopaedias and histories of the *Oberliga*,[23] accounts focused on the national team,[24] biographies of star players,[25] and club histories.[26]

[21] Simon Kuper and Stefan Szymanski, *Soccernomics: Why England Loses, Why Germany and Brazil Win, and Why the U.S., Japan, Australia, Turkey – and Even Iraq – Are Destined to Become the Kings of the World's Most Popular Sport* (New York: Nation Books, 2009), pp. 284–6.

[22] Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor!*, p. 222.

[23] Hanns Leske, *Enzyklopädie des DDR-Fußballs* (Göttingen: Verlag Die Werkstatt, 2007); Andreas Baingo and Michael Horn, *Die Geschichte der DDR-Oberliga* (Göttingen: Verlag Die Werkstatt, 2004); Horst Friedemann (ed.), *Sparwasser und Mauerblümchen: Die Geschichte des Fußballs in der DDR 1949–1991* (Essen: Klartext, 1991); Michael Horn and Gottfried Weise, *Das große Lexikon des DDR-Fußballs* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 2004); Frank Willmann (ed.), *Fußball-Land DDR: Anstoß, Abpfiff, Aus* (Berlin: Eulenspiel Verlag, 2004); Frank Willmann (ed.), *Zonenfußball: Von Wismut Aue bis Rotes Banner Trinwillershagen* (Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 2011).

[24] Uwe Karte and Jörg Röhrig, *Kabinengeflüster: Geschichten aus 40 Jahren DDR-Elf* (Kassel: Agon Sportverlag, 1997).

[25] See e.g. Thomas Stridde, *Die Peter-Ducke-Story* (Jena: Glaux Verlag Christine Jäger, 2006).

[26] Club histories consulted for this book include Jörn Luther and Frank Willmann, *BFC Dynamo: Der Meisterclub* (Berlin: Das Neue Berlin, 2003); Jens Fuge, *Leutzscher Legende: Von Britannia 1899 zum FC Sachsen* (Leipzig: Sachsenbuch Verlag, 1992); Markus Hesselmann and Michael Rosentritt, *Hansa Rostock: Der Osten lebt* (Göttingen: Verlag Die Werkstatt, 2000); Annett Gröschner, *Sieben Tränen muß ein Club-Fan weinen: 1. FC Magdeburg – eine Fußballegende* (Leipzig: Gustav Kiepenhauer, 1999); Jörn Luther and Frank Willmann, *Eisern Union!* (Berlin: BasisDruck Verlag, 2010).

Much of the work, written by journalists and fans, commemorates a forty-year history that has been swallowed up since 1990 by West German dominance and the rise of football as a lucrative global brand. The introduction to a 2011 collection of essays on GDR football is tinged with *Ostalgie*, but also suggests that things have changed, and not necessarily for the better, throughout Germany: 'What blessed times, when in East as in West you could meet honest footballers on the street and give them a piece of your mind. Today top-class football has degenerated into a bloated event'.[27] East Germans' almost mocking affection for GDR football, and distance from what has succeeded it, are not only microcosms of their mixed feelings about the GDR and reunited Germany. They also reflect the complex, sometimes contradictory feelings among fans in many countries (England, for example) about what has been won and lost since their game became an integral part of the global capitalist economy and post-modern consumer society.

Scholarly studies of East German football are relatively thin on the ground. In a field that was until recently 'uncharted territory' for GDR specialists,[28] most of the literature focuses on the political instrumentalisation of the game. The Ministry for State Security (MfS, or *Stasi*) developed an extensive network of informers that included leading coaches, players, and referees.[29] It monitored fans' and players' contacts with the West, in a game that was resolutely international in scope and popularity. If a player fell foul of the authorities, the consequences could be severe – witness the possible, though unproven, *Stasi* involvement in the suspicious death of Lutz Eigendorf, a BFC player who fled to West Germany in 1979 and died in a car crash there four years later.[30]

A central issue to arise from recent research is the dysfunctional nature of authority in GDR football. Tensions and rivalries abounded, with the various interested parties – individual clubs and their industry-based benefactors, the DFV, the DTSB, the ruling SED (Socialist Unity Party of Germany), and the *Stasi* – rarely able to sing from the same hymn sheet. 'The bitter and frequent conflicts over the running of football', Mike Dennis and Jonathan Grix argue, 'offer a prime

[27] Frank Willmann, 'Vorwort', in Willmann (ed.), *Zonenfußball*, p. 7.
[28] Mike Dennis, 'Behind the wall: East German football between state and society', *GFL-Journal* no. 2 (2007), 46.
[29] See e.g. Hanns Leske, *Erich Mielke, die Stasi und das runde Leder: Der Einfluß der SED und des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit auf dem Fußballsport in der DDR* (Göttingen: Verlag Die Werkstatt, 2004); Ingolf Pleil, *Mielke, Macht und Meisterschaft: Die "Bearbeitung" der Sportgemeinschaft Dynamo Dresden durch das MfS 1978–1989* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2001).
[30] The Eigendorf case is discussed in Chapter 6.

case study of the contested nature of sport' – and the 'contested' character of the SED dictatorship itself.[31]

Another strand of the literature emphasises the external corollary to the picture of internal discord: the subversive impact of West German football.[32] The popularity of West German teams raised uncomfortable questions about national identity, undercutting the GDR's attempts to forge a separate sense of socialist nationhood. East German fans were often 'football cross-dressers', with allegiances on both sides of the Berlin Wall.[33] A fruitful means of analysing the ambiguities of this dual identity has been the only match played between East and West Germany, in Hamburg at the 1974 World Cup finals.[34]

There is also a burgeoning literature on fan culture, with a particular emphasis, as in studies of fan culture in England, on hooliganism. Spectator unrest was common in the 1950s and 1960s. But it became a serious problem in the Honecker era, when a distinctive terrace subculture emerged that was youthful, disrespectful of authority, and prone to violence. Studies have largely focused on the (often ineffective) attempts of the *Stasi* and regular police to quell the upsurge in hooliganism in the 1980s.[35] The preoccupation with a minority of troublemakers, though, tends to obscure other aspects of fan culture. The ways in which football was embedded in popular culture are only just beginning to be explored.[36]

One area that has been largely neglected is recreational football. The SED trumpeted mass sport as the basis for the GDR's international successes. In reality, the pursuit of Olympic glory was not always

[31] Mike Dennis and Jonathan Grix, 'Behind the iron curtain: football as a site of contestation in the East German sports "miracle"', *Sport in History* vol. 30, no. 3 (September 2010), 449–50.

[32] See e.g. Christian Becker and Wolfgang Buss, 'Das "Wunder von Bern" und die DDR', *Deutschland Archiv* vol. 37, no. 3 (2004), 389–99; Jutta Braun and René Wiese, 'DDR-Fußball und gesamtdeutsche Identität im Kalten Krieg', *Historische Sozialforschung* vol. 4 (2005), 191–210; Hesselmann and Ide, 'A tale of two Germanys', pp. 36–51.

[33] Mike Dennis and Norman LaPorte, *State and Minorities in Communist East Germany* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2011), p. 124.

[34] See e.g. Thomas Blees, *90 Minuten Klassenkampf: Das Länderspiel BRD–DDR 1974* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1999); Elke Wittich (ed.), *Wo waren Sie, als das Sparwasser-Tor fiel?* (Hamburg: Konkret Literatur Verlag, 1998).

[35] See e.g. Mike Dennis, 'Soccer hooliganism in the German Democratic Republic', in Tomlinson and Young (eds.), *German Football*, pp. 52–72.

[36] See e.g. the essays on fan culture in Willmann (ed.), *Fußball-Land DDR*, pp. 93–117, as well as the recollections of BFC fan Andreas Gläser in *Der BFC war Schuld am Mauerbau: Ein stolzer Sohn des Proletariats erzählt* (Berlin: Aufbau Taschenbuch Verlag, 2003) and Jena fan Christoph Dieckmann in '"Nur ein Leutzscher ist ein Deutscher"', in Wolfgang Niersbach (ed.), *100 Jahre DFB: Die Geschichte des Deutschen Fußball-Bundes* (Berlin: Sportverlag Berlin, 1999), pp. 311–36.

compatible with grassroots needs. Historians have recently examined holes in the GDR's self-styled image as a *Sportland* ('sports nation'), particularly during the Honecker era.[37] Though the DFV was the GDR's largest individual sports association, football has not yet figured greatly in these discussions.[38] Overcoming the neglect of the everyday history of football – how it was played, organised, and enjoyed by ordinary East Germans – is an essential aspect of this study.

Scholarly literature on GDR football can be summarised as erratic and un-theoretical. Only occasional attempts have been made to provide over-arching conceptual frameworks that place the game in the context of the structures and social realities of the SED dictatorship.[39] The opposing poles of discussion – insider perspectives on the game and revelations about *Stasi* collusion – tend towards nostalgia and denunciation respectively. In this regard, football reflects the post-*Wende* historiography of GDR sport, which initially pitted defenders of the system against scholars, doctors, and ex-athletes bent on exposing the corruption at the heart of the *Sportswunder* ('sports miracle').[40] Blanket *Stasi* monitoring of performance sport and the extensive state-sponsored doping programme constituted the case for the prosecution.[41] Coaches and administrators went on trial for supplying athletes with performance-enhancing drugs from a young age in the country's elite sports schools. Being an unpredictable, skill-based game, football did not feature prominently in the doping debates. Though the national team received pharmaceutical assistance as early as 1965, and doping appears to have been widely practised when GDR teams played on the international stage, state resources were concentrated in other areas. In domestic football, doping was strictly forbidden.[42]

[37] Jutta Braun, 'The people's sport? Popular sport and fans in the later years of the German Democratic Republic', *German History* vol. 27, no. 3 (2009), 414–28; Jonathan Grix, 'The decline of mass sport provision in the German Democratic Republic', *The International Journal of the History of Sport* vol. 25, no. 4 (March 2008), 406–20.

[38] An exception is Alan McDougall, 'Playing the game: football and everyday life in the Honecker era', in Mary Fulbrook and Andrew Port (eds.), *Becoming East German: Socialist Structures and Sensibilities after Hitler* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2013), pp. 257–76.

[39] See e.g. Dennis, 'Behind the wall'; Dennis and Grix, 'Behind the iron curtain'.

[40] Mike Dennis and Jonathan Grix, *Sport under Communism: Behind the East German 'Miracle'* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 6–9.

[41] On *Stasi* involvement in performance sport, see Giselher Spitzer, *Sicherungsvorgang Sport: Das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit und der DDR-Spitzensport* (Schorndorf: Verlag Hoffmann, 2005).

[42] Giselher Spitzer, *Fußball und Triathlon: Sportentwicklung in der DDR* (Aachen: Meyer & Meyer, 2004), pp. 54–69.

Recent work on GDR sport has branched out from the initial focus on doping and surveillance.[43] There is a growing literature on spectatorship, with football leading the way, and a similar accretion of new research on recreational sport, where football has figured less prominently.[44] Studies have increasingly placed GDR sport in an international context, particularly through the lens of the country's fraught sporting relations with West Germany.[45] The salience of this approach was borne out in 2013, with the revelations in a Humboldt University study that West Germany, like its much-vilified socialist counterpart, had engaged in the systematic doping of its performance athletes.[46] Cold War sport had its dark secrets on both sides of the Iron Curtain.

In Christiane Eisenberg's view, sport's 'multidimensionality' is its greatest asset, 'since it takes the historian to the so-called ligatures of society, to the contact zones and weaving and knitting of the dimensions that hold society together'.[47] In the GDR, these sporting ligatures brought together the political as well as the social and cultural. No social history of East German football can be written with the politics left out, given the highly politicised nature of SED rule. Equally, no political history of the game should neglect its deep roots in the GDR's social and cultural structures. This study incorporates both perspectives, providing an account that is 'political' not, or not only, in the sense of policy and administration, but also in its analysis of how social and cultural practices shape, and are shaped by, the political environment around them.[48] A paradoxical function of the game, and of sport more generally, is that it is at once a 'dependent and

[43] A summary can be found in Kay Schiller and Christopher Young, 'The history and historiography of sport in Germany: social, cultural and political perspectives', *German History* vol. 27, no. 3 (2009), 326–7.

[44] On mass sport, see e.g. Jochen Hinsching (ed.), *Alltagssport in der DDR* (Aachen: Meyer & Meyer Verlag, 1998); Molly Wilkinson Johnson, *Training Socialist Citizens: Sports and the State in East Germany* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008); Uta Klaedtke, *Betriebssport in der DDR: Phänomene des Alltagssports* (Hamburg: Verlag Sport & Co, 2007); Dan Wilton, 'The "societalisation" of the state: sport for the masses and popular music in the GDR', in Mary Fulbrook (ed.), *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961–1979: The 'Normalisation' of Rule?* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2009), pp. 102–29.

[45] See e.g. Uta Balbier, *Kalter Krieg auf der Aschenbahn: Der deutsch–deutsche Sport 1950–1972. Eine politische Geschichte* (Paderborn, 2007); Jutta Braun and Hans Joachim Teichler (eds.), *Sportstadt Berlin im Kalten Krieg: Prestigekämpfe und Systemwettstreit* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2006); Kay Schiller and Christopher Young, *The 1972 Munich Olympics and the Making of Modern Germany* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010), ch. 6.

[46] 'Studie enthüllt systematisches Doping in der BRD', *Spiegel-Online*, 3 August 2013: www.spiegel.de/sport/sonst/studie-der-humboldt-universitaet-systematisches-doping-in-der-brd-a-914597.html.

[47] Schiller and Young, 'The history and historiography of sport in Germany', 318–19.

[48] Olaf Stieglitz, Jürgen Martschukat, and Kirsten Heinsohn, 'Sportreportage: Sportgeschichte als Kultur- und Sozialgeschichte', in *H-Soz-u-Kult*, 28 May 2009, 24–5: http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/forum/2009–05–001.

regulated' aspect of human agency and at the same time an 'independent and spontaneous' aspect of it.[49] As the communist authorities discovered, football could be bent into many political shapes, sometimes with considerable success, but it retained an ungovernable core that allowed it to survive as a relatively free enclave of leisure activity.

Football's singular role is beginning to feature in more socially oriented histories of East German sport. A broader range of scholarly work exists on the game's contested role in the Third Reich, where (as in the GDR) it was hugely popular and often regarded with distrust by the authorities. Recent studies have covered all manner of subjects: the DFB, coaches such as Sepp Herberger and Otto Nerz, individual clubs, Jewish footballers, fans, the media, and star players.[50]

Not only the game itself, though, but also the way in which its history in the Third Reich is written, has been contested. Football's own *Historikerstreit* (historians' dispute) occurred following the 2005 publication of Nils Havemann's officially commissioned study of the DFB under Nazism, *Fußball unterm Hakenkreuz* ('Football under the Swastika'). Havemann argued that the football association 'did not try to spread any particular political worldview into society'. It was motivated by business rather than political principles – and the acquiescence of leading functionaries to Hitler's regime needed to be viewed in this light. 'Like the majority of the German population', Havemann asserted, the DFB's support for the Nazi dictatorship was based, at least in the early years, on the latter's compatibility with pre-existing goals rather than on ideological affinity. The attitude of DFB functionaries to Nazism 'often wavered . . . between convinced support and open opposition, between engaged cooperation and unenthusiastic refusal'.[51]

Many historians were sceptical. They attacked the essentially apolitical view of the DFB that Havemann presented, in which 'timeless' phenomena such as 'striving for power, careerism, desire for economic profit . . . fear, jealousy . . . opportunism . . . egocentricity, vanity, and ignorance'[52] effaced ideological motives for collaborating with National Socialism. To many

[49] Schiller and Young, 'The history and historiography of sport in Germany', 319.

[50] See e.g. Rudolf Oswald, *"Fußball-Volksgemeinschaft": Ideologie, Politik und Fanatismus im deutschen Fußball 1919–1964* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2008); Lorenz Peiffer and Dietrich Schulze-Marmeling (eds.), *Hakenkreuz und rundes Leder: Fußball im Nationalsozialismus* (Göttingen: Verlag Die Werkstatt, 2008); Dietrich Schulze-Marmeling (ed.), *Davidstern und Lederball: Die Geschichte der Juden im deutschen und internationalen Fußball* (Göttingen: Verlag Die Werkstatt, 2003); Markwart Herzog (ed.), *Fußball zur Zeit des Nationalsozialismus: Alltag – Medien – Künste – Stars* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2008).

[51] Nils Havemann, *Fußball unterm Hakenkreuz: Der DFB zwischen Sport, Politik und Kommerz* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 2005), p. 24.

[52] *Ibid*., p. 29

scholars, this was a troubling reaffirmation of an old idea, advanced by the DFB for the best part of sixty years, namely that football was essentially an innocent victim of Nazism. Havemann drew particular criticism for in effect exonerating DFB functionaries of the charge of 'genuine', racially based anti-Semitism in their pragmatic decision to ostracise Jewish players and administrators from as early as April 1933.[53]

The Havemann controversy, played out in the lead-up to Germany's hosting of the World Cup in 2006, provided a sharp reminder of the difficulties of disentangling sport and dictatorship in twentieth-century Germany. No similarly discordant debate on GDR football has emerged. Football was never the main story in East German sport. The DFV, moreover, was a communist creation. Whatever room for manoeuvre it sought or gained, it lacked the independent antecedents of the DFB, which predated Nazism by thirty-three years. But many of the questions raised by Havemann's study – how to assess football's collusion with, yet apparent distance from, the political system in which it operated – are relevant to the game's ambiguous role in the history of the GDR.

Sport's established role in the history of the Third Reich reflects a sense that sports history is 'on the advance'.[54] It is certainly taken more seriously by historians today than in the early 1960s, when C. L. R. James, in his pioneering account of cricket and colonialism, *Beyond a Boundary*, wrote of his astonishment that social histories of Victorian England could be written without reference to the era's 'best-known Englishman', the cricketer W. G. Grace.[55]

James was a Marxist who loved sport. This made him unusual. Given the importance that it assumed in communist regimes such as the GDR, it is instructive to note Marxist hostility to sport, a 'ritual', in Theodor Adorno's words, 'in which the subjected celebrate their subjection'.[56] Adorno's unsmiling attitude was brilliantly parodied in a Monty Python sketch in which Marx, appearing on a television game show alongside Mao, Lenin, and Che Guevara, effortlessly answers questions about the class struggle, but misses out on the big prize (a 'beautiful lounge suite') because he does not know who won the 1949 FA Cup final. (The answer, as any self-respecting Marxist should have known, was Wolverhampton

[53] *Ibid.*, pp. 155–72. A summary of the critical responses to Havemann's work is provided by Dietrich Schulze-Marmeling, 'Von Neuberger bis Zwanziger – der lange Marsch', in Peiffer and Schulze-Marmeling (eds.), *Hakenkreuz und rundes Leder*, pp. 579–85.

[54] Stieglitz, Martschukat, and Heinsohn, 'Sportreportage', 24.

[55] C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (London: Yellow Jersey Press, 2005), p. 208.

[56] David Inglis, 'Theodor Adorno on sport: the *jeu d'esprit* of despair', in Richard Giulianotti (ed.), *Sport and Modern Social Theorists* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 85.

Wanderers, who defeated Leicester City 3–1).[57] Though the GDR styled itself as 'the workers' and peasants' state', its concepts of leisure and culture were essentially petty bourgeois. Ulbricht wanted the workers to read *Faust* and listen to Beethoven,[58] rather than spend their time on the more proletarian pursuit of football.

Scholarly attitudes to football's place in modern European history are now more advanced. Even neo-Marxist critiques of the game as a means of maintaining social order have been posited with greater sophistication in the past thirty years.[59] Recent football histories have not only included politics, but also tied the game to social and cultural perspectives – belying, at least in part, the Uruguayan writer Eduardo Galeano's lament that 'contemporary history texts fail to mention [football], even in passing, in countries where it has been and continues to be a primordial symbol of collective identity'.[60] Simon Martin's history of Italian football under fascism emphasises how the sport not only 'manufactured consent' for Mussolini's regime, but also fostered local and regional identities.[61] Robert Edelman's study of Spartak Moscow highlights how the Soviet Union's most popular football club provided a rallying point for relatively free expression.[62] Taking a contemporary controversy as its starting point – the red card given to French captain Zinedine Zidane for butting an Italian defender in the chest during the 2006 World Cup final – Laurent Dubois's 2010 monograph examines the centrality of race and empire to the history of French football.[63] Each example suggests football's importance in reflecting and shaping social and political processes, and in providing a cultural framework for generations of European males. In football, Tony Mason wrote in 1989, 'one enthusiast need only utter two words to another to betray the vast amount of sharing

[57] Ben Carrington, 'Sport without final guarantees: Cultural Studies/Marxism/sport', in Carrington and Ian McDonald (eds.), *Marxism, Cultural Studies and Sport* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007), pp. 20–1.

[58] Axel Körner, 'Culture', in Mary Fulbrook (ed.), *Europe since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 157.

[59] Jeffrey Hill, 'Sport and Politics', *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 38, no. 3 (July 2003), 373–4. The work of John Hargreaves and Richard Gruneau in the 1980s departed from the more conventional neo-Marxist analysis of Bero Rigauer a decade earlier (in which he argued that sport was essentially a mirror of work in capitalist societies).

[60] Eduardo Galeano, *Soccer in Sun and Shadow*, trans. Mark Fried (London: Verso, 1998), p. 209.

[61] Simon Martin, *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini* (London: Berg, 2004).

[62] Robert Edelman, *Spartak Moscow: A History of the People's Team in the Workers' State* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009).

[63] Laurent Dubois, *Soccer Empire: The World Cup and the Future of France* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2010).

that is possible for them both, the product of a long involvement of time, attention and money'.[64]

'Is it wise', asks David Goldblatt in his recent global history of the game, 'to recount the history of the modern world without some reference to [football]? Whether the historians like it or not, football cannot be taken out of the history of the modern world and the history of the modern world is unevenly, erratically, but indisputably etched into the history of football'.[65] East German football might not exist in quite the void that Galeano and Goldblatt describe, but it deserves closer attention than it has hitherto received. The social and political history of the people's game presented here attempts to address the deficit.

German football before 1945: a brief history

Football arrived in Germany, as it arrived throughout the world in the late nineteenth century, via Britain's informal empire – the network of expatriates, from itinerant dockworkers to engineers, who spread and consolidated the commercial predominance of the country that invented the modern game. Football's origins in places as far flung as St Petersburg and Buenos Aires involved first sightings of 'the crazy Englishmen' with their stitched leather balls, playing a simple but unfamiliar game.[66]

In Germany, football was initially the preserve of a small number of middle-class Anglophiles. Working-class interest in the game, widespread in England and Scotland, was absent for a number of reasons, from the apparent lack of pre-industrial 'folk-football' traditions to the hostility of working-class organisations, such as the SPD (the German Social Democratic Party), to leisure-time pursuits that distracted the proletariat from revolution.[67] Most of the football clubs that emerged in the Wilhelmine era were founded by teachers, doctors, lawyers, architects, engineers, and university professors.[68]

Between 1890 and 1914, football established a foothold in German sports culture. The DFB was formed in Leipzig in 1900. Its founding goals included 'the creation of unified playing regulations, the establishment of

[64] Tony Mason, 'Football', in Mason (ed.), *Sport in Britain: A Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 182.
[65] David Goldblatt, *The Ball Is Round: A Global History of Football* (London: Penguin Books, 2006), pp. xii–xiii.
[66] *Ibid*., ch. 5.
[67] On football's origins in Germany, see e.g. Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor!*, pp. 15–27; Christiane Eisenberg, 'Football in Germany: beginnings, 1890–1914', *International Journal of the History of Sport* vol. 8, no. 2 (1991), 205–20.
[68] Havemann, *Fußball unterm Hakenkreuz*, p. 33.

regional associations, the fixing of general German football rules as well as the elimination of English football expressions'.[69] The latter aim reflected the shadow cast over German sports by the *Turnen* (gymnastics) movement that emerged at the beginning of the nineteenth century in response to Prussian military losses to Napoleonic France. In the late Wilhelmine era, *Turnvereine* (gymnastic clubs) had more members than the SPD, Germany's largest political party. They were generally middle-class, conservative, and hostile to 'the English disease' of football.[70] The DFB's founders, keen to establish football's political *bona fides* in an era of strident yet insecure nationalism, took up the cause of Germanisation. A list of terms drawn up in 1902 replaced the English 'corner' with *Eckball*, 'goal' with *Tor*, 'captain' with *Führer*, and 'forward' with *Stürmer*.[71]

Football, though, was hardly an ideal representative of the German nation, any more than it was later an ideal representative of the socialist GDR. The British influence was strong, in everything from club names to coaching. Most importantly, the working class slowly made incursions into the game. The basis for football's growing appeal was, arguably, less its nationalist tendencies than its ability to articulate local and regional identities in a young country with strongly federal traditions.[72]

During the First World War, many Germans encountered the game for the first time. There were the famous matches between British and German soldiers during the Christmas 1914 truce on the Western Front. Behind the front line, troops played regularly, as football eclipsed *Turnen* in terms of cross-class popularity.[73] Football's post-war boom owed much to these wartime experiences. The game became part of a Weimar mass culture that also included cycling, boxing, cinema, and music.[74] In 1914, the DFB numbered 2,233 registered clubs and 189,294 registered members. By 1928, it boasted 6,879 clubs and 865,946 players.[75] The last pre-war national championship final between Fürth and VfB Leipzig drew a crowd of 6,000. The replay of the 1922 final between Nuremberg and Hamburg in Leipzig attracted 60,000 people to a stadium designed to hold 40,000.[76]

[69] Lorenz Peiffer and Dietrich Schulze-Marmeling, 'Der deutsche Fussball und die Politik 1900 bis 1954: Eine kleine Chronologie', in Peiffer and Schulze-Marmeling (eds.), *Hakenkreuz und rundes Leder*, p. 17.
[70] Goldblatt, *The Ball Is Round*, p. 161.
[71] *Ibid*.; Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor!*, p. 23.
[72] Wolfram Pyta, 'German football: a cultural history', in Tomlinson and Young (eds.), *German Football*, p. 5.
[73] Peiffer and Schulze-Marmeling, 'Der deutsche Fussball und die Politik', p. 20.
[74] See e.g. Eric Weitz, *Weimar Germany: Promise and Tragedy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), ch. 7.
[75] Havemann, *Fußball unterm Hakenkreuz*, p. 62.
[76] Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor!*, pp. 42–3.

Football's newfound status as a mass spectator sport was reflected in, and reinforced by, the building of venues. The Weimar Republic facilitated 'Germany's golden era of stadium construction'.[77]

Expansion boosted the DFB's depleted coffers and allowed it to strengthen its organisational stranglehold on the game. But football's working-class popularity was deeply suspicious to the conservative, anti-communist DFB leadership, who continued to present the game as a healthy, selfless means of contributing to German nationalism. The organisation clung to the ideals of amateurism – a position that would later be adopted, with similar ambiguities, by Nazi and GDR sports functionaries. Chairman Felix Linnemann described professional football in 1927 as a 'symbol of the downfall of a nation'.[78]

The *Gleichschaltung* ('bringing into line') of sport did not proceed from a rigid blueprint after Hitler became Chancellor in January 1933. Though the Nazi Party criticised professionalism in football, cycling, and boxing (hence the ambivalent relationship between the regime and star heavyweight Max Schmeling), it adopted often flexible policies towards pre-existing associations and clubs.[79] The same applied to international sport. Transatlantic boxing contests, football friendlies, and Olympic competition, in Barbara Keys' words, 'offered the Nazis a way to assert national power, while also opening avenues for the infiltration of internationalist ideals and values'.[80]

Not everyone benefited from this relatively tolerant approach. Communist and SPD sports organisations were shut down in 1933, while Jews (initially at least) were ordered into separate clubs. Individual sports were often a step ahead, anticipating the regime's wishes before they became binding orders. In April 1933 the DFB used the pages of *kicker*, a magazine founded by Walter Bensemann, a Jew now exiled in Switzerland, to emphasise that 'members of the Jewish race as well as people who are members of the Marxist movement are no longer acceptable in leading positions of the regional [football] associations'. FC Nuremberg, the dominant force in German football during the 1920s, expelled its Jewish members in the same month.[81]

[77] Simon Inglis, *The Football Grounds of Europe* (London: HarperCollinsWillow, 1990), p. 276.
[78] Peiffer and Schulze-Marmeling, 'Der deutsche Fussball und die Politik', pp. 25–6.
[79] For an overview of the Nazi organisation of sport, see Arnd Krüger, 'Strength through joy: the culture of consent under fascism, Nazism and Francoism', in Krüger and James Riordan (eds.), *The International Politics of Sport in the Twentieth Century* (London: E & FN Spon, 1999), pp. 69–76.
[80] Barbara Keys, *Globalizing Sport: National Rivalry and International Community in the 1930s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), p. 116.
[81] Peiffer and Schulze-Marmeling, 'Der deutsche Fussball und die Politik', pp. 30–1; Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor!*, pp. 62–4.

Such willing conformity, combined with the Nazi leadership's disinterest in the everyday running of football, bought the DFB some breathing space. Football, at least until 1936, was granted what Havemann has called 'supervised autonomy'.[82] Nazi restructuring allowed the DFB to reassert its commitment to amateurism, a principle espoused by both parties, while quietly building up more professional structures. The *Gauligen* (regional leagues), which were introduced in the 1933/4 season, reduced the number of top-flight clubs in Germany from 559 to 133. As in the GDR, players had jobs, but trained and played like professionals.[83]

The chief aim was to improve the national team. Outsiders at the 1934 World Cup finals in Italy, Otto Nerz's squad surprised everyone by defeating Austria's 'wonder team' to finish third. At the 1936 Berlin Olympics, however, Germany was embarrassingly eliminated by Norway in front of a 'very agitated' *Führer* (as Joseph Goebbels, also in attendance, noted in his diary). Worse followed at the World Cup finals in France two years later. Under new coach Sepp Herberger, and with a squad bolstered by the post-*Anschluß* influx of outstanding Austrian players, Germany lost at the first hurdle to Switzerland. The crowd pelted the German players with rotten fruit. Divisions between the Austrians and Germans were blamed for the humiliating exit.[84] Football, as David Goldblatt notes, 'would not yield entirely to the Nazi Party'.[85]

The Second World War disrupted Herberger's plans for Germany's football rehabilitation. The 1942 World Cup finals, slated for Germany, were cancelled. League football, as in the First World War, continued. Long before the final national championship was contested in 1944, however, it was an organisational shambles, with players regularly called up to the front and teams representing the Luftwaffe or the SS making up the numbers.[86] By this time, the DFB no longer existed. The second *Gleichschaltung* of German sport in the mid 1930s reduced its influence, especially over youth football, responsibility for which was given to the Hitler Youth. In 1940, the rump DFB leadership dissolved the organisation and placed its assets in the hands of the sports federation, the National Socialist League for Physical Education (NSRL).[87]

The game survived, but it was subsumed in the compromises and tragedies of the war years. Footballers' experiences during this period embraced active support for the regime (the ex-player and concentration

[82] Havemann, *Fußball unterm Hakenkreuz*, p. 117.
[83] Peiffer and Schulze-Marmeling, 'Der deutsche Fussball und die Politik', p. 34.
[84] Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor!*, pp. 77–8, 82–5.
[85] Goldblatt, *The Ball Is Round*, p. 311.
[86] Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor!*, pp. 87–96.
[87] Havemann, *Fußball unterm Hakenkreuz*, pp. 173–213.

camp guard Otto Harder), a more neutral path of 'keeping one's head down' (as epitomised by Sepp Herberger), and racial victimhood. In March 1943, the Jewish national team player Julius Hirsch was deported from Karlsruhe to Auschwitz, where he was murdered.[88] When the war ended in May 1945, football – like much of Germany – lay in ruins.

Football in East Germany before 1945

The region that constituted the GDR played a peripheral role in German football before 1945. The powerhouses were located in the West (teams such as Schalke in the Ruhr) and the affluent South (most notably Nuremberg). Between 1903 and 1945, only two clubs from what became East Germany were national champions: VfB Leipzig (1903, 1906, and 1913) and SC Dresden, who triumphed in the war-weakened contests of 1943 and 1944.[89] The most famous national team line-up of the pre-Herberger era, the 'Breslau XI' that thrashed Denmark in 1937, contained not a single player from the eastern *Gaue* of the Third Reich.[90] In a 2008 volume on football in the Third Reich, none of the thirteen essays on club football dealt with an East German club. Hamburg, Munich, Vienna, and Gelsenkirchen were among the venues visited. Leipzig, Dresden, and Chemnitz were nowhere to be found.[91]

The imbalance is understandable, but it is also somewhat misleading. Football was no less popular in eastern Germany than elsewhere. The English import, for example, attracted widespread middle-class interest in Leipzig. In 1896 VfB Leipzig was formed as a breakaway from a gymnastics club where football was barely tolerated as an intrusion on patriotic drills.[92] Britannia Leipzig, formed three years later, was the brainchild of fourteen young men who caught the football bug and, fearful of what their fathers might think, included a secret oath (renouncing, among other things, cigarettes and lemonade) in the club's founding statutes.[93] When the DFB came into existence in 1900, it did so, not insignificantly, in Leipzig. In this sense at least, East Germany can be viewed as 'the fount . . . of German football'.[94]

[88] Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor!*, pp. 97–100; Werner Skretny, 'Julius Hirsch: der Nationalspieler, den die Nazis ermordeten', in Peiffer and Schulze-Marmeling (eds.), *Hakenkreuz und rundes Leder*, pp. 493–4.
[89] Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor!*, p. 292.
[90] *Ibid.*, pp. 79–81.
[91] Peiffer and Schulze-Marmeling (eds.), *Hakenkreuz und rundes Leder*, pp. 342–472.
[92] Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor!*, p. 24.
[93] Fuge, *Leutzscher Legende*, p. 7.
[94] Stephen Wagg, 'On the continent: football in the societies of North West Europe', in Wagg (ed.), *Giving the Game Away: Football, Politics & Culture on Five Continents* (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), p. 118.

Though less successful, the game in the East was subject to the political and socio-economic influences that shaped its ascent in other parts of Germany. Football's rising popularity in the inter-war period, for example, led to the state-supported construction of purpose-built stadia in Rostock, where the 20,000-capacity *Volksstadion* was built with the support of workers' organisations between 1923 and 1928,[95] and Halle, where a new stadium with a capacity of 35,000 was opened in 1936. Having been named in 1939 after the martyred Nazi Horst Wessel, it later became, after the war, the Kurt Wabbel Stadium (in honour of a local wrestler killed at Buchenwald) and, still bearing the hallmark features of Nazi stadium design, the home of *Oberliga* side Hallescher FC.[96]

In the Nazi era, as previously, football was centred on the vibrant club cultures of the West and the South. But the Saxon *Gauliga*, one of sixteen regional competitions created in 1933, was no less popular. As was the case elsewhere, it was weakened by the demands of the war, as players were called up to the Eastern Front, stadia fell into disrepair (or were appropriated for other purposes), and mismatches became common.[97] By this time, clubs and functionaries in the East, like their counterparts in other parts of the Third Reich, had eliminated all Jewish influences from the game. Schild Leipzig, for example, faced constant difficulties after 1933. Their ground was vandalised. Police informers spied on meetings and social events. During the nationwide pogrom *Kristallnacht* ('the night of broken glass') in November 1938, Nazi thugs broke into Schild's clubhouse and tried to set it on fire. A month later the club – like all others within the two major Jewish sports organisations, Schild and Makkabi – was dissolved on Gestapo orders.[98] Such persecution was hardly concealed from the DFB. In Leipzig and elsewhere, it triggered no protests. In their brief portraits of the Nazi era, GDR club histories generally make little or no reference to the fate of local Jewish players.[99]

The careers of the early stars of GDR football were shaped and disrupted by Hitler's dictatorship, war, and the post-war transition to communism. Their stories form part of the collective biography of the Hitler Youth (or 'reconstruction') generation, born between 1919 and 1931, that played

[95] Hesselmann and Rosentritt, *Hansa Rostock*, pp. 18–19.
[96] Werner Skretny, 'Die Stadionbauten der NS-Zeit: "Es wird schon bezahlt"', in Peiffer and Schulze-Marmeling (eds.), *Hakenkreuz und rundes Leder*, p. 147; Inglis, *The Football Grounds of Europe*, p. 97.
[97] Jens Fuge, *Der Rest von Leipzig: BSG Chemie Leipzig* (Kassel: Agon Sportverlag, 2009), p. 13.
[98] Havemann, *Fußball unterm Hakenkreuz*, pp. 168–70, 275–6.
[99] See e.g. Fuge, *Leutzscher Legende*, pp. 8–10; Luther and Willmann, *Eisern Union!*, pp. 27–32.

a pivotal role in raising East and West Germany from the rubble after 1945.[100] Local idol Herbert Voigtlander (b. 1920) began his goalkeeping career at VfB Chemnitz in 1930, switched to handball in 1938, survived 'Hitler's mad war', and became an important figure in various Chemnitz teams after 1945. Heinz Satrapa (b. 1927) spent his formative years at VfL Zwickau, before becoming the leading scorer in the Horch Zwickau side that claimed the inaugural *Oberliga* title in 1950. Satrapa's clashes with the socialist authorities ensured that he never played for the national team. His more politically reliable contemporary, Günter 'Möppel' Schröter (b. 1927), played until 1944 for Brandenburger BC. He enjoyed an illustrious post-war career at Dynamo Dresden and Dynamo Berlin and captained the GDR between 1958 and 1962.[101]

Information about the formative years of such players is sparse. The silence reflects what W. G. Sebald called 'the individual and collective amnesia' about the Third Reich that characterised the Hitler Youth generation, who focused energies on the forward-looking task of 'systematically rebuild[ing] our badly destroyed homeland' (as Voigtlander put it in 1949),[102] rather than looking back on the discredited past.[103] Exceptions to the rule were those willing to construct an anti-fascist narrative out of their experiences under Nazism. Fritz Gödicke was a prominent and controversial figure in the early years of GDR football as a player, coach, and administrator.[104] Born in 1919 in Zeitz, he joined the workers' sports club, Freie Turnerschaft Zeitz, in 1931.[105] Between 1933 and 1938 Gödicke played for SV (sports association) Zeitz, a move that goes unremarked in his autobiographical writings, but must have been related to the dissolution of socialist and communist sports clubs after the Nazis came to power. In 1938 he moved from Zeitz to Leipzig 'in order to become a better footballer', joining Tura 1899. Gödicke's recollections of the

[100] On the Hitler Youth generation, see e.g. Alan McDougall, 'A duty to forget? The 'Hitler Youth generation' and the transition from Nazism to communism in post-war East Germany, *c.* 1945–49', *German History* vol. 26, no. 1 (2008), 24–46; Dorothee Wierling, 'The Hitler Youth generation in the GDR: insecurities, ambitions and dilemmas', in Konrad Jarausch (ed.), *Dictatorship as Experience: Towards a Socio-Cultural History of the GDR*, trans. Eve Duffy (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 1999), pp. 307–24.

[101] Horn and Weise, *Das große Lexikon*, pp. 295–6 (Satrapa); Leske, *Enzyklopädie*, pp. 450–1 (Schröter), p. 509 (Voigtlander). See also the interview with Voigtlander, 'Torwächter lernen nie aus!', *Die Neue Fußball-Woche*, 11 November 1949, 16.

[102] 'Torwächter lernen nie aus!', 16.

[103] W. G. Sebald, *On the Natural History of Destruction* (Toronto: Knopf Canada, 2003), p. 10.

[104] Biographies of Gödicke can be found in Horn and Weise, *Das große Lexikon*, p. 130; Leske, *Enzyklopädie*, p. 162.

[105] Archivgut des DFV, XV/63/4/1 (Nachlaß Fritz Gödicke), Person. u. berufliche Entwicklung, n.d.

1938–45 period focus on Tura's role 'as a centre for former workers' sportsmen' and its clandestine function as a place for 'illegal meetings of the communists'.[106]

Called up in June 1943, Gödicke's unpublished notes give a detailed chronological overview of his stint in the Wehrmacht, but contain little reflection on what he saw – 'a curious blindness to experience' also apparent in accounts of the Allied air raids on German cities during the Second World War.[107] Wounded on the Eastern Front in January 1944, he fought in the rearguard action on the Western Front in late 1944 and early 1945. Gödicke was taken prisoner by the Americans near Leipzig in April 1945 and held in a camp where he reconnected with some of his Tura team-mates. He was released in late June, almost immediately joined the communist party, and became a leading figure in the rebuilding of sport in Leipzig.[108] A modest part of the Chemie Leipzig squad that won the league in 1951, Gödicke was by then better known as an administrator (he was the *de facto* head of GDR football between 1950 and 1952). His later career as a coach included a successful spell at Wismut Aue (1955–8) and a less fruitful stint as national team coach (1958–60).[109]

Gödicke's autobiographical sketches are those of a self-consciously anti-fascist footballer. They present a narrative in which uncomfortable aspects of the game's existence during the Third Reich (the persecution of Jews, for example) are absent and in which the post-war motif of selfless reconstruction, based on salvaging the workers' heritage of German sport, is to the fore. The necessity for an apparent fresh start, for wiping the historical slate clean at *Stunde null* ('zero hour'), was no less imperative in football than in other areas after 1945. Gödicke's story replicated the 'pragmatic pact of silence' that allowed the SED regime and the Hitler Youth generation to come together in unquestioning activism,[110] in the process 'obscuring a world that could no longer be presented in comprehensible terms'.[111]

How football was (dis-)organised in the GDR

Football's post-war reorganisation was sluggish in the Soviet-Occupied Zone (SBZ). Matches were largely confined to the communal level until 1947. Only in 1948 did the Soviets sanction the creation of a zone-wide

[106] Archivgut des DFV, XV/63/4/3 (Nachlaß Fritz Gödicke), Erste Aktivitäten auf sportpolitischem Gebiet in Leipzig bis zur Gründung des FDJ-Sportes (1945–1948), n.d.
[107] Sebald, *Natural History*, p. 20.
[108] Archivgut des DFV, XV/63/4/1, Person. u. berufliche Entwicklung.
[109] Horn and Weise, *Das große Lexikon*, p. 130.
[110] McDougall, 'A duty to forget?', 27.
[111] Sebald, *Natural History*, p. 10.

sports body, the communist-led German Sports Committee (DS). The inaugural SBZ championship that year was a slapdash affair, with qualifying rules that varied from region to region. A football office (*Sparte Fußball*) was not formed within the DS until July 1949, the same month in which the DFB was re-founded in West Germany. One of the office's first actions was to introduce a league competition for the 1949/50 season. The opening matches took place in September, one month before the founding of the GDR.[112]

In December 1950 the DS football office was renamed the 'football section' (*Sektion Fußball*). In July 1952, it became a full member of FIFA, the international governing body of football.[113] Two years later, the football section was – along with the DFB and the Saarland FA – one of twenty-nine founder members of UEFA, the governing body of European football. In her study of the globalisation of sport in the 1930s, Barbara Keys argues that 'it was in elite sport ... that modern states came to see the greatest political benefits to participation in international culture'.[114] This recognition underpinned the determination of GDR administrators to secure membership in international sports organisations during the 1950s. East Germany, despite its reputation, was never a 'closed society'.[115] However haltingly, the country was part of European football culture.

Despite signs of progress at home and abroad, the 'lawless state of affairs'[116] that prevailed in East German football after 1945 was not easily or quickly overcome. Administrative waters were muddied by the creation in 1952 of the State Committee for Physical Education and Sport (Stako), under the leadership of Manfred Ewald, an administrator with little sympathy for football. Between 1952 and 1957, the organisation of sport essentially passed from the DS to the Stako, though the former remained in existence. The dual structure did football little good. It coincided with a frenetic period of restructuring that culminated in 1954 in the creation of eight new *Oberliga* teams and the relocation of Dynamo Dresden to Berlin and Empor Lauter to Rostock.[117] As tensions between the DS and the Stako made clear, administrators tended towards polyphony rather than symphony when it came to football.

[112] Football in the SBZ is discussed in Chapter 2.
[113] Horn and Weise, *Das große Lexikon*, p. 385.
[114] Keys, *Globalizing Sport*, p. 179.
[115] Jan Palmowski, 'Between conformity and *Eigen-Sinn*: new approaches to GDR history', *German History* vol. 20, no. 4 (2002), 502.
[116] SAPMO-BArch, DR 5/1276, letter from Ludwig L. to *Die Neue Fußball-Woche*, 5 February 1954.
[117] The restructuring is discussed in Chapters 3 and 5.