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978-1-107-05203-1 - The People's Game: Football, State and Society in East Germany

Alan McDougall

Excerpt

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# 1 Introduction

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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)<sup>1</sup>

'Männer! Fußball ist alles!' (Thomas Brüssig)<sup>2</sup>

## 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.<sup>3</sup>

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

<sup>1</sup> [www.philosophyfootball.com/new\\_win.html](http://www.philosophyfootball.com/new_win.html).

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Brüssig, *Leben bis Männer* (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2001), p. 95.

<sup>3</sup> 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](http://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/news-and-comment/a-return-to-all-riot-on-the-east-german-front-6269683.html).

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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'.<sup>4</sup>

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.<sup>5</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

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'.<sup>7</sup> 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

<sup>4</sup> '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](http://www.kicker.de/news/fussball/dfbpokal/startseite/561125/artikel_dresden-wird-vom-dfb-pokal-ausgeschlossen.html).

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

<sup>6</sup> '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](http://www.lvz-online.de/sport/regionalsport/run-auf-geistertickets-bei-dynamo-dresden-haelt-an-stadion-schon-fast-ausverkauft/r-regionalsport-a-128739.html).

<sup>7</sup> '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](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).

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'wall in the head' (*Mauer im Kopf*) – in reunited Germany. According to this perspective, Dynamo Dresden's initial expulsion 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.<sup>8</sup> 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%.<sup>9</sup>

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'.<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>11</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup> Even the most private of human activities has

<sup>8</sup> Brooke, 'A return to all riot on the east German front'.

<sup>9</sup> 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](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/23d92cda-7185-11e0-9b7a-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2d5AvXfQu).

<sup>10</sup> 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.

<sup>11</sup> 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.

<sup>12</sup> Berdahl, 'Re-presenting the socialist modern', pp. 354–5.

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been given GDR-specific attributes, with East Germans claiming that they had more and better sex than West Germans.<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup>

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'.<sup>16</sup>

### 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

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

<sup>14</sup> 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.

<sup>15</sup> 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>.

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

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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'.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup>

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.<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup> 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

<sup>17</sup> Stiftung der Parteien und Massenorganisationen, Bundesarchiv (SAPMO-BArch), DY 30/IV A 2/18/7, Probleme des Leistungsstandes des DDR-Fußballsports, 9 January 1969.

<sup>18</sup> See e.g. Chapters 8 and 10.

<sup>19</sup> Archivgut des Deutschen Fußballverbandes der DDR (DFV), I/2, Günter Schneider, 'Dokumentation über 45 Jahre Fußball in der SBZ/DDR' (unpublished, c. 1996).

<sup>20</sup> Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football* (London: WSC Books, 2002), pp. 222–3.

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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.<sup>21</sup> 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’.<sup>22</sup> 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*,<sup>23</sup> accounts focused on the national team,<sup>24</sup> biographies of star players,<sup>25</sup> and club histories.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>21</sup> 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.

<sup>22</sup> Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor!*, p. 222.

<sup>23</sup> 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: Eulenspiegel Verlag, 2004); Frank Willmann (ed.), *Zonenfußball: Von Wismut Aue bis Rotes Banner Trinwillershagen* (Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, 2011).

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

<sup>25</sup> See e.g. Thomas Stridde, *Die Peter-Ducke-Story* (Jena: Glaux Verlag Christine Jäger, 2006).

<sup>26</sup> 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 Fußballlegende* (Leipzig: Gustav Kiepenhauer, 1999); Jörn Luther and Frank Willmann, *Eisern Union!* (Berlin: BasisDruck Verlag, 2010).

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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'.<sup>27</sup> 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,<sup>28</sup> 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.<sup>29</sup> 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.<sup>30</sup>

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 DTSCB, 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

<sup>27</sup> Frank Willmann, 'Vorwort', in Willmann (ed.), *Zonenfußball*, p. 7.

<sup>28</sup> Mike Dennis, 'Behind the wall: East German football between state and society', *GFL-Journal* no. 2 (2007), 46.

<sup>29</sup> 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).

<sup>30</sup> The Eigendorf case is discussed in Chapter 6.



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case study of the contested nature of sport' – and the 'contested' character of the SED dictatorship itself.<sup>31</sup>

Another strand of the literature emphasises the external corollary to the picture of internal discord: the subversive impact of West German football.<sup>32</sup> 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.<sup>33</sup> 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.<sup>34</sup>

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.<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup>

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

<sup>31</sup> 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.

<sup>32</sup> 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.

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

<sup>34</sup> 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).

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

<sup>36</sup> 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.<sup>37</sup> Though the DFV was the GDR's largest individual sports association, football has not yet figured greatly in these discussions.<sup>38</sup> 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.<sup>39</sup> 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').<sup>40</sup> Blanket *Stasi* monitoring of performance sport and the extensive state-sponsored doping programme constituted the case for the prosecution.<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>37</sup> 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.

<sup>38</sup> 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.

<sup>39</sup> See e.g. Dennis, 'Behind the wall'; Dennis and Grix, 'Behind the iron curtain'.

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

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

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

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## 10 Introduction

Recent work on GDR sport has branched out from the initial focus on doping and surveillance.<sup>43</sup> 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.<sup>44</sup> Studies have increasingly placed GDR sport in an international context, particularly through the lens of the country's fraught sporting relations with West Germany.<sup>45</sup> 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.<sup>46</sup> 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'.<sup>47</sup> 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.<sup>48</sup> A paradoxical function of the game, and of sport more generally, is that it is at once a 'dependent and

<sup>43</sup> 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.

<sup>44</sup> 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.

<sup>45</sup> 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.

<sup>46</sup> '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](http://www.spiegel.de/sport/sonst/studie-der-humboldt-universitaet-systematisches-doping-in-der-brd-a-914597.html).

<sup>47</sup> Schiller and Young, 'The history and historiography of sport in Germany', 318–19.

<sup>48</sup> 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>.