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# German-German Relations in the Fields of Sport, with Particular Reference to the Olympic Games 1952-1972

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## I N T R O D U C T I O N

In 1952 the Soviet Union, after years of having castigated the Olympic movement as a ‘vehicle of capitalism and imperialism’, began to realize the tremendous propaganda value of participating in the Olympic Games. In the tow of Moscow, East Germany also tried to enter the Olympic arena. Its main objective was not the development of sports *per se* but rather to use the Games for the country’s predominant ambition to be formally and internationally recognized as an independent, sovereign state. This had been an intent pursued ever since the foundation of the East German Democratic Republic (GDR) three years earlier, and was just as vehemently frustrated by the Federal Republic of West Germany (FRG), which claimed the status of being the only legal, democratically elected German state. Primarily through the initiative of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), joint German-German teams participated – with the Winter Olympics always preceding the Summer Games – in 1956 at Cortina d’Ampezzo/Italy and Melbourne, in 1960 at Squaw Valley/USA and Rome, and at Innsbruck/Austria and Tokyo in 1964; not under a German flag but rather under one with the five Olympic rings. The astonishing fact of this being possible in the middle of the Cold War, how and why this came about and under what conditions, forms the central theme of the thesis.

In government circles in both Germanys there was only limited interest in fostering inter-German sports relations. In West Germany there prevailed an overriding concern, as seen under Chancellor Adenauer, in power throughout the 1950s, in trying to re-integrate the FRG into the Western fold; at the expense of neglecting contacts with the other Germany. This would change only from 1969 onwards in the framework of

Chancellor Willy Brandt's *neue Ostpolitik*, embarking on a 'policy of change through approximation'<sup>1</sup> with other East Bloc countries – much to the dislike of the GDR. The year 1972 was a partial victory for the GDR not only in sports but also in international politics; at that time a separate East German team joined the Olympic Games at Munich under its own national flag, dresses and anthem. Yet the end of the inter-German Cold War would come only in 1987 with the visit of Erich Honecker, the East German leader, to West Germany (this, as an irony of history, to be followed only two years later by the implosion of his country).

In the meantime East Germany, for its part, had for most of the Cold War also spurned inter-German sporting relations, except for a short period from 1959 to 1961. However some maintain that, on the 'ground level', there remained an invisible bond of earlier, pre-war friendly relations between clubs and local sports organizations in West and East during most of the post-war period, especially so until the foundation of the GDR in 1949. While so-called *West-Kontakte* could be criminalized by the GDR's omnipresent *Stasi*, its state security police, there remained the possibility of meeting western sportspeople in 'all-German' summer holiday destinations like Lake Balaton in Hungary, or Bulgaria's Varna Black Sea resort.

Full normalization of sporting contacts between German sports-men and -women came only after the thaw of East-West political relations in the late 1980s. The difficulties in maintaining such contacts throughout more than four decades of separation would gradually become a remote memory even for the older generation. These and related problems have, more than two decades after German re-unification, been somewhat of a

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<sup>1</sup> This maxim, first coined as *Wandel durch Annäherung* by Brandt confidant Egon Bahr at the Evangelist Academy Tutzing/Bavaria on 15 July 1963, would become the tenet of *Neue Ostpolitik* from 1969 onwards. Quoted in *DIE ZEIT*, 8 May 2013, p. 4.

backwater of historians' attention and writings, as can be gauged by reviewing the key secondary literature of relevance.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Thousands of books in dozens of languages have been written about the Olympics. Although most of the best published scholarship is in French, German, and Italian, the materials available in English are ample enough to satisfy most non-academic readers.<sup>2</sup>

As the quotation above by Alan Guttman indicates, there exists a huge body of literature in a variety of languages, though little of this specifically addresses German-German sporting relations. In what follows, a selection of key books and journal articles are divided for convenience into two main categories. The first category contains material considered to be of general interest regarding the Olympic Games, some of which briefly touches upon the issue of German-German Olympic cooperation. The second category reviews relevant works published by German writers and academics, and is finally followed by a short assessment of the limited items of secondary literature on this topic published in English. As will become clear, there remains scope for a detailed study of the origins, evolution and consequences of one of the most curious episodes in the history of the Cold War.

### General Histories of the Olympics

Among the most important of general works on the Olympics is Guttman's *The Olympics, A History of the Modern Games* :

[It reflects] the intended and actual meaning of the modern Olympic Games (...) recounting the memorable and significant events of the Olympics in terms of their social and political impact [and demonstrating that] the modern games were revived to propagate a political message and continue to serve political purposes.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Guttman, Allen, *The Olympics, A History of the Modern Games, Second Edition*. Champaign IL: University of Illinois Press (2002), p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> Guttman, *The Olympics*, back cover.

Guttman goes back to the re-founding of the idea of Olympic Games in 1896 by Baron de Coubertin, the first modern Games of that year in Athens, and through to events of the XXVII<sup>th</sup> Games in Sydney in 2000. Particular attention is given to national – and nationalistically motivated – tendencies by member nations of the movement like that of the Greeks, the Americans and especially by the Germans trying to usurp the Games in what he calls ‘the most controversial Olympics’, Hitler’s XI<sup>th</sup> Olympics in 1936.<sup>4</sup>

A central theme of Guttman’s book is the life of Baron Pierre de Coubertin (1863-1937). In 1892 de Coubertin had written: ‘Nothing in ancient history has inspired more reverie in me than Olympia’. The book vividly details the role of de Coubertin as the undisputed creator as well as successful organizer of the modern Games, President of the IOC for 29 years, from its inception in 1896 until his 1925 retirement. During the first two decades of his IOC presidency de Coubertin faced major problems with the Greeks, then the Germans and even his own French countrymen, who insisted on developing their own national systems, but his first major success was the 1912 Stockholm Olympic Games. More breakthroughs for the efforts of the IOC followed until the outbreak of the world wars cancelled those planned for Berlin in 1916 and Tokyo 1940/London 1944. Guttman points out that the 1925 Olympic Congress tried to solve what became a long-running problem and that de Coubertin’s diplomatic talent led to a key definition, voted for by a majority of IOC members:

An amateur is one who devotes himself to sport for sport’s sake without deriving from it, directly or indirectly, the means of existence. A professional one is one who derives the means of existence entirely or partly from sport.

The relationship between amateurism and professionalism was to be central to the evolution of the post-WWII Olympic movement. Guttman’s book also has some

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<sup>4</sup> Guttman, *The Olympics*, p. 11, 13, 53 ff.

relevant comments in the context of this thesis – to be assessed in the second category of this review – dealing with German-German sporting matters during the Cold War.

Another book by Guttmann,<sup>5</sup> albeit primarily concentrated on one personality, should be mentioned here. It is dedicated to the American Avery Brundage, involved with the Olympics for sixty years and arguably the pivotal personality in what follows as President of the IOC for two decades. In June 1955 Brundage virtually dictated the formation of a German-German Olympic team, eventually accepted by East Germany for ulterior motives far from Olympic ones, and also by rather hesitant West German officialdom. His activities, successes and frustrations in fostering his dream of the 1950s will be followed throughout the main chapters of thesis, ending with his failure by the time of the 1972 Olympic Games. A high point in Brundage's involvement, reflecting also on his considerable ego, was an event at the XVII<sup>th</sup> Olympics at Rome in 1960. Standing next to Italian President Giovanni Gronchi, who marvelled at the sight of the joint German team entering the Stadium, and while commenting that such demonstration was unthinkable to have been achieved by politicians, Brundage exclaimed 'in sport we do such things'. In 1963 he would expand his belief to his colleagues at the IOC by stating:

The spectacle of East and West German athletes in the same uniform marching behind the same leaders (...) is an inspiration under present political conditions and a great service to all the German people who wish for a united country.<sup>6</sup>

The principal theme of Richard Espy's important book is that the modern Olympic Games have in fact very little to do with sports but rather – almost exclusively so – with politics. Espy's main objective is to show:

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<sup>5</sup> Guttmann, Allen, *The Games Must Go On, Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press (1984).

<sup>6</sup> Guttmann, *The Games*, p. 155.

how the organization of the Olympic Games reflect the current structure of international politics, [that] the modern Games (...) have been utilized not so much for fair play, peace and understanding as for national self-interest, survival, and pride, [while] Politics (...) is inherent in the Olympic system, and [that] the international sport organizations and the Olympic Games are variant arenas of world politics.<sup>7</sup>

Espy's book also comments on the amateurism-versus-professionalism debate, arguing that the formerly espoused 'purity of spirit and mind'<sup>8</sup> of the Olympics has given way to economic, monetary and profit-related aspects and aims entering the modern Games.<sup>9</sup>

The title of a 1996 book by Christopher R. Hill<sup>10</sup> perhaps promises more than what the work actually presents. A few examples will serve *pars pro toto*. In the chapter 'The primacy of Politics in the Olympic Movement' he disregards the political impact of the Nazi Olympics of 1936. As a kind of negative rationale he states that 'the two Germanys (...) are prime examples of the inability of the Olympic movement (...) to avoid involvement in great questions of international politics'. Surprisingly he ignores the entry of terrorism at the 1972 Munich Olympics. In his remarks on the 1992 Barcelona Games, rather than talking about politics, Hill only comments on the phenomenon of increasing 'gigantism' of the Olympics at the expense of sporting performances, 'the victory of commercialism over sport'. In summing up the author proposes that 'the world needs (...) to be reminded, as does the Olympic movement, that in a sense sport is a triviality'.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Espy, Richard *The Politics of the Olympic Games*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press (1979).

<sup>8</sup> Espy, *Politics of the Olympic Games*, pp. 5, 6, 164.

<sup>9</sup> Similarly to Espy, mention should also be made here of a book by W. Woyke *Olympic Games and Football World Championships, Mega-Events and their Significance for World Politics*, sharing the same criticism.

<sup>10</sup> Hill, Christopher, *Olympic Politics, Athens to Atlanta 1896-1996, Second Edition*. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press (1996).

<sup>11</sup> Hill, *Olympic Politics*, p. 195,

An arguably more significant work, edited by Tomlinson and Whannel,<sup>12</sup> constitutes a challenging departure from most conventional, detached academic books and journal articles in this sphere. Its contentious chapters adopt a left-of-centre, often Marxist approach. The front cover features five ragged Olympic rings, poignantly underlain with a collection of coins in various currencies. Demolishing what they regard as the myth of de Coubertin as the benevolent founder of the Olympic movement, the authors suggest that he, in collusion with the French government, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century just wanted to create groups of young men trained to counter a perceived German military threat.<sup>13</sup> When at the 1968 Mexico Games three US athletes had been seen on the victors' rostrum with clenched fists raised in a 'black-power salute' the writers concluded: 'It was the final nail in the coffin for the myth of "non-political sport"'. One contributor to the collection, James Riordan, lecturer in Russian studies at the University of Bradford, praises the Soviet Union's anti-Olympics *Workers' Olympics* and states:

In numbers of competitors and spectators, in culture, pageant and sometimes even sporting records, the Workers' Olympics easily surpassed the official Games (...) Sport was an integral part of the revolutionary movement. It is the idea of workers' oppositional sport, combining the idea of sport with socialist fellowship (...) It was to replace capitalist values with socialist ones.<sup>14</sup>

Finally in this general Olympic interest section, before proceeding to more thesis-specific writings, our attention turns to a notable collection edited by Stephen Wagg and David Andrews,<sup>15</sup> dealing with the relationships between Communism and what they call 'Olympism'. These are introduced as two of the most significant movements of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, both of them involving the promise of social improvement. It was shrewd

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<sup>12</sup> Tomlinson, A. & Whannel, G., eds., *Five Ring Circus: Money, Power and Politics at the Olympic Games*. London: Pluto Press (1984).

<sup>13</sup> Tomlinson, Whannel, *Five Ring Circus*, p. 18.

<sup>14</sup> Tomlinson, Whannel, *Five Ring Circus*, pp. 98, 99. In a similarly negative vein see also an article by Hitchens, Christopher, 'Fools' Gold. How the Olympics and other international Competitions bring out the worst in Human Nature', *NEWSWEEK*, 15 February 2010, pp. 32-35.

<sup>15</sup> Wagg, Stephen & Andrews, David L., eds., *East plays West, Sport and the Cold War, written in 17 Essays*. New York: Routledge (2007).

and clever of the Soviets, the editors claim, to centre on the Olympics as the centrepiece of their struggle with capitalism. In three essays relevant to this thesis, contributors comment on the nefarious practice of doping by both sides. As the primary culprit, the GDR is singled out since ‘for many [of their athletes], their physical and emotional health was permanently shattered’.<sup>16</sup> They also comment on the West’s Olympic boycott of Moscow in 1980, and tit-for-tat, the same by the Eastern Bloc countries of the Los Angeles Games four years later.

Only a few of the many approaches to the broad history of the Olympics could be reviewed here. A main feature of those looked at was the manner in which they provide a background and context for the study of German-German sporting relations after 1945. In this respect Guttmann is an outstanding historian-commentator on the modern Games; Espy and Hill offer highly critical opinions of today’s Olympics; and the work by Tomlinson and Whannel represents a challenging, left-of-centre view in place of more conventional conceptions of the Games.

We next move to examine some of the writing that relates more specifically to the history of sporting relationships between West- and East-Germany in the post-war era. Contrary to the plethora of literature available on the general history of the Olympics, relatively little writing can be found on this topic, which has not been a priority of German historiography. Indeed, after more than two decades since German reunification, interest in pre-1989 sporting relationships appears to be on the wane. Nevertheless, before turning to the sparse amount of material published in English, we shall assess the major contributions provided by German writers.

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<sup>16</sup> Wagg & Andrews, *East plays West*, p. 157.

### Key secondary works published in German<sup>17</sup>

A range of German material will first be summarised before elaborating on its significance in relationship to what follows in the main body of this thesis. There are only two major full-length books on the joint German Olympic teams, both written by West German writers. First, an overview of matters relating to this thesis can be found in the tome of a 436-page, folio-size work edited by Manfred Lämmer.<sup>18</sup> Of particular interest is the book's chapter entitled '*Querelle d'allemand*', *Die gesamtdeutschen Olympiamannschaften (1956-1964)* ('The all-German Olympic Teams 1956-1964'),<sup>19</sup> contributed by Andreas Höfer, Scientific Director of DOA, the Frankfurt-based German Olympic Academy, a section of *DSB, Deutscher Olympischer Sport Bund* (German Olympic Sport Federation), formerly known as NOC. Höfer introduces his contribution by stating:

Only a few examples are better qualified to highlight the ambivalence between self-determination and such from the outside, in this instance: the discrepancy between pretension and reality, than that of the all-German Olympic teams, which in their success and failure provided a cogent account of the possibilities and limitations of sports, respectively sports politics.<sup>20</sup>

The second prominent book, and the only other work written by an academic, is by Juliane Lanz, who studied Nebraska, USA and in her home country (Germany) at

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<sup>17</sup> The majority of sources used in this thesis, primary as well as secondary, are in the German language. The author, as a native of Germany who has spent the major part of his earlier professional life in countries where English is spoken, endeavoured to translate the sources as faithfully as possible. His qualifications in this regard go back to a 'Certificate of Proficiency in English' awarded in 1955 by the University of Cambridge Local Examination Syndicate, Hamburg/Germany. Occasional assistance in providing appropriate phrasing has been kindly given by friends in academia, aiming to weed out any obvious 'Germanisms'.

<sup>18</sup> Lämmer, Manfred, Hrsg./ed., *Deutschland in der Olympischen Bewegung. Eine Zwischenbilanz. Herausgegeben im Auftrag des NOK für Deutschland (Germany in the Olympic Movement. An Interim Balance, commissioned by the German NOC)*. Melsungen/Germany: Bernecker Mediagruppe (1999).

<sup>19</sup> The translation of this adage is 'The German Squabbles'. It was coined, in French-speaking Lausanne/Switzerland, by members of the IOC headquarters, frustrated by the never-ending disputes, mostly between the leaders, of the joint German Olympic teams – often to be resolved only by IOC intervention only.

<sup>20</sup> Lämmer, *Olympic Movement*, p. 209.

Rostock University, where she teaches history and sports sciences. Her book <sup>21</sup> concentrates on how cooperation between the two joint German-German Olympic teams of 1956, 1960 and 1964 actually functioned. External and internal influences are given detailed attention, and sports-political conditions in the two Germanys are examined, as are the influences of and directives issued by the IOC. In the introduction to her book, Lanz details the scope of her coverage and her main objectives:

The start of the joint team under the guidance of the German NOC resulted in a paradoxical situation. Both Germanys, with their differing political systems and models of high performance sports had to come to terms how their sportspeople would be allowed to attend the Olympic Games. This ‘duality’ by no means was one of their own will but rather so as dictated by the IOC.<sup>22</sup>

There is a third book, coming out of East Germany, which requires a mention. It may arguably be classified as a literary ‘hybrid’, as it combines a plethora of quotes and annotations – which would classify it as secondary literature – with a smaller measure of original writing. Concurrent with the problematic sporting-political relations between the two Germanys in the run-up period to the Munich Games of 1972, this highly polemic work was edited in East Berlin in 1971.<sup>23</sup> The book is subtitled ‘A documentation of the intended misuse of the XXth Olympics at Munich for the nationalistic prestige efforts by the ruling classes of the Federal Republic’. Its 143 pages are interspaced with numerous documents, a multitude of newspaper articles and photographs, copied from West German sources.

In addition to conventional book-length treatments, it is worth turning to biographical studies written in German which provide revealing insights into the roles of leading

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<sup>21</sup> Lanz, Juliane, *Zwischen Politik, Protokoll und Pragmatismu, die deutsche Olympiageschichte von 1952 bis 1972 (Between Politics, Protocol and Pragmatism, the History of German Olympics from 1952 to 1972)*. Berlin: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag (2011).

<sup>22</sup> Lanz, *Between Politics*, pp. 1-3, 5.

<sup>23</sup> Gesellschaft zur Förderung des olympischen Gedankens in der DDR, Nr. 2, Herausgeber (Cooperative Society for Promotion of the Olympic Concept in the GDR, eds., No. 2), *Nationalismus und Sport (Nationalism and Sport, No. 2)*. East Berlin: Publishers same as authors (1971).

Olympic protagonists. In this context prominent attention has been given to Willi Daume, who was West Germany's leading sports politician, industrialist and IOC member from 1956 to 1991. Jan C. Rode has traced the influence of Daume in various capacities, for example as President of the (West-) German NOC, the National Olympic Committee, and chairman of the Organisation Committee of the XXth Olympic Games at Munich in 1972.<sup>24</sup> Daume was outspoken, and occasionally got involved in intemperate disputes with high officials in government, despite the fact that his German sports movement was also dependant on state sponsorship.

Almost as important a role in German-German Olympic matters was that of Daume's counterpart (and occasional nemesis), Heinz Schöbel, prominent member of East Germany's SED government party, chairman of that country's NOC from 1955 to 1973 and in 1966 also becoming an IOC member.<sup>25</sup> Although a dedicated member of the elite of East German leadership, Schöbel, upon his taking over from his hapless predecessor Ewald in 1955, soon 'learned the ropes' of an international organisation, making special efforts – quite successfully so – to establish a strong, amicable relationship with IOC President Avery Brundage.

Also worth noting here is Hans-Jochen Vogel, Lord Mayor of Munich from 1960 to late 1972<sup>26</sup> when he left his position in the wake of the Munich Olympics terrorist tragedy. Vogel deserves respect as the politically influential, tireless promoter of Munich to become hosts of the 1972 Olympic Games. Especially, as we shall see, since he

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<sup>24</sup> Rode, Jan C. *Willi Daume und die Entwicklung des Sports in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zwischen 1945 und 1970 (Willi Daume and the Development of Sports in the German Federal Republic between 1945 and 1970)* Göttingen: Verlag Die Werkstatt (2010).

<sup>25</sup> Müller-Enbergs, Helmut et al., eds., *Wer war wer in der DDR? Ein Lexikon ostdeutscher Biographien (Who was Who in the GDR? A Lexicon of East German Biographies)* Berlin: Ch Links Verlag, (2006) p.898.

<sup>26</sup> Quirll, Rosemarie et al., eds. *dtv Lexikon (dtv Dictionary)* Gütersloh/Germany: Wissen Media Verlag (2006) vol. 23, p. 178.

attempted – in the face of constant vilification of Munich by East Berlin – to make his city a successful venue for by that point *two* German Olympic teams.

In addition to books, a range of journal articles and papers are of relevance, with some providing broad contextual information. An introduction to the intricacies of German-German relations after 1945 is provided in a journal article by Christoph Klessmann.<sup>27</sup> The author argues that, although the history of Nazi Germany has been described as ‘a past that will not go away’, the after-effects of the GDR dictatorship are, both mentally and politically, still decisively influencing the present day. Klessman claims that, despite their political separation – West Germany could well live without the GDR, the latter without the former could not – both parts of Germany *nolens volens* remained connected for large parts of the era, also so in sports. Even though the monstrosities of the *Stasi* came to light only more recently, Klessmann suggests that amongst the people in the GDR there still were many manifestations of a ‘right life in a wrong system’. This included, discouraged not only by their own political system, but also often frowned upon by the governments of West Germany, sporting contacts with Germans on the other side of the Iron Curtain.<sup>28</sup>

In a meticulously researched fifteen pages long article, Rüdiger Thomas<sup>29</sup> gives a synopsis of the background to the creation of the joint German Olympic teams. He begins by deploring that for a long time the history of sports in divided post-war Germany has been a back-water of GDR historiography. This is the more surprising

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<sup>27</sup> Klessmann, Christoph, ‘Der schwierige gesamtdeutsche Umgang mit der DDR-Geschichte’ (‘The difficult all-German Approach to the History of the GDR’) *bpb, Bundeszentrale fuer politische Bildung, (Federal Centre for Political Education)* Bonn, (2001), vol. 30/31, pp. 3-5.

<sup>28</sup> Regarding this question see also Mary Fulbrook’s book *The People’s State* (2005), pp. 236 ff., and especially her 60-minutes film *Behind the Wall ‘Perfectly Normal Lives’ in the GDR ?* (2006), where Fulbrook arguably maintains that indeed there was such a thing as ‘normal life’ in the GDR.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas, Rüdiger, ‘Getrennt vereint – Innerdeutsche Sportbeziehungen 1945-1956’ (‘Divided United – Inter-German Sports Relations 1945-1956’). *Dokumente Europäische Akademie Otzenhausen*, vol. 139, (2005).

when considering how many people, both as participants or spectators, have been enthusiasts of sports events.<sup>30</sup> An Allies' directive of December 1945 had ordered prohibition of all existing sports clubs and organisations, and confiscation of their assets. Any such activities in future were only to be admitted by local authorities of the occupying powers – which soon was interpreted by the newly forming clubs as 'permitted is everything that is not forbidden'. Initiatives for all-German cooperation began to gain ground, yet soon Thomas detected lines of division in 1948 when *DS*, *Deutscher Sportausschuss* was established in East Germany and *DSB*, *Deutscher Sportbund* in 1950, in the West. Thomas also suggests that from the very beginning of the *DS*, authorities in the East made it clear that there was to be no question of any non-political sport. In a detailed critical assessment the author assesses the various – and varying – stages of German-German sports, from an all-German 'inter-zonal' cooperation in 1947 to a total rift in 1949. This was followed by increasing reservations of the GDR in the 1950s, toeing the line of the Soviet Union which had decreed that a 'socialist state should keep away from capitalist sport'. The decisive breakthrough came only with the February VIIth Winter- and XVIth Summer-Games held in 1956 when, as Thomas comments, 'for short periods the divided Germans became re-united'. He argues 'the fact that also for the 1960 and 1964 Games a unified German Olympic team was maintained (...) must be seen as an important symbol for German common cause in times of political division'.

A further significant contribution is made by Hans-Dieter Krebs,<sup>31</sup> who critically views two important German-German agreements in the field of sport: the one between *DS*

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<sup>30</sup> Thomas, *Divided United*, especially pp. 257/258, 262, 270

<sup>31</sup> Krebs, Hans Dieter, 'Die beiden Übereinkünfte im geteilten deutschen Sport von 1952 und 1972' ('The two Agreements of 1952 and 1974 regarding divided German Sports') *Deutschland Archiv, Zeitschrift für das vereinte Deutschland (Germany Archive, Journal for a United Germany)* vol. 39 (2/2006), pp. 266-272.

[East] and *DSB* [West] of 12 December 1952, and the protocol between East and West of 8 May 1972.

Less than 22 years are between them; yet they are worlds apart. Already in their aims: in 1952 concerning all-German sports exchange, in 1972 sports relationships between autonomous Associations. But also in their having come about, their political circumstances and after-effects (...) Hallmarks between 1952 and 1972 have been the erection of the Wall, the interlude of all-German Olympic teams, and acceptance of the GDR in the Olympic movement.<sup>32</sup>

The 1952 accord evolved under the GDR's quest for a united Germany pursued at the time. Yet voices in West Germany were highly critical as Krebs suggests, citing a 1951 memorandum circulating in one of the Bonn ministries: 'we are not facing German sportspeople but nominees of the Soviet occupying power'. While the 1952 agreement had the character of an arrangement in civil law, the 1972 protocol was highly political, arrived at with the help of the IOC president Brundage. And it was also based on contractual arrangements between the two Germanys, as the author argues. He further comments that the Soviet Union had played a decisive role in the GDR leaders' acceptance of the protocol, having announced the wish for the 1980 Olympic Games to be granted to Moscow. Krebs surmises that, aware that West Germany had expressed interest in a conclusion of the 1972 protocol, Moscow had conveyed instructions to its ambassador in East Berlin 'to let the GDR leadership know of a "suggestion" to sign it'.<sup>33</sup> He concludes his article by observing that, just as the 1952 agreement lost its relevance (in growing alienation between the two Germanys), so also the 1972 protocol fifteen years after its signature became a minor footnote of history.

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<sup>32</sup> Krebs 'The two Agreements' pp. 266/267.

<sup>33</sup> As East-German historian Silke Satjukow argues in her book *Befreiung? (Liberation?)* Leipzig: Universitäts Verlag (2009) on page 262: 'The Russians were in control of the GDR to its very last day'.

For his part, Lorenz Peiffer throws light on a key decision by the IOC in the mid-1960s.<sup>34</sup> He argues that in October 1965 in Madrid it ‘drew a line under the *Querelles Allemandes*, accepted membership of the NOC of the GDR’, and introduced a period of the ‘divided or duplicated Germans on the Olympic stage’. A month later, the West German Foreign Office informed its embassies of the IOC ruling that the West German NOC ‘will now be known as that of Germany’. That of East Germany was to have recognition ‘as representatives of the geographical area of the same name’, as Peiffer comments on this official euphemism. Hectic activities by both Germanys had preceded this turn of events; with the West trying to frustrate international recognition of the East, and the latter looking to achieve just that – including such in the field of sport. ‘Today we know more clearly than before how closely both parts [of Germany] were interwoven despite their political separation’.<sup>35</sup>

The last journal article of note is by Uta Andrea Balbier,<sup>36</sup> who herself is a sports sociologist. The article is a summary of several earlier works of this author under similar titles, beginning by pointing out that the GDR achieved recognition of its existence even several years before the 1972 *Grundlagenvertrag* (Contract of Basic Agreements) concluded between the two Germanys. She argues that ‘the all-German Olympic teams from their first beginning – in the East as much as in the West – were a plaything, a toy in German political interests’, adding that in the opinion of the West German government their inception in the 1950s created a problem and not a solution. Balbier suggests that any German-German joint initiatives were anathema to the West’s

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<sup>34</sup> Peiffer, Lorenz, ‘Die Madrider Entscheidung des IOC im Oktober 1965. Ein Wendepunkt in der Geschichte der deutsch-deutschen Sportbeziehungen’ (‘The Madrid IOC Decision of October 1965. A Turning point in the History of German-German Sports Relations’) *NISH, Institute for Sports History, Hoya/Germany: Transformation, Continuity and Change in Sport History II*, vol. 17 (2002) pp. 118-124.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted by Peiffer from p. 4 of the article by Klessmann (2001).

<sup>36</sup> Balbier, Uta Andrea, ‘Kalter Krieg im Stadion. Deutsch-deutscher Sport im Schatten der Blockkonfrontation’ (‘Cold War in the Stadium, German-German Sports in the Shadow of Bloc Confrontation’) *Damals, das Magazin für Geschichte, Sonderausgabe: Der Kalte Krieg (Once upon a Time, The History Magazine, Special Edition: The Cold War)*. Leinfeld/Germany (2010) pp. 91-96.

insistence on a policy of separation from East Germany. Prior to the 1956 Cortina d'Ampezzo Winter Games the two German NOC agreed that members of the joint team should be chosen purely according to the principle of sporting performance. First differences arose over the issue which of the two German national anthems would be played in case of celebrations of gold medal winners. No such were awarded; so at Cortina, Balbier recapitulates, this contentious issue did not arise. But the 1956 Summer Games at Melbourne would most likely create such potential conflicts: this was the moment when the introduction of a 'neutral' hymn, an Ode by Beethoven, was conceived. New problems arose in the run-up to the 1960 Olympics at Rome, Balbier continues. By that time the GDR had also created its own flag and another compromise was worked out by the NOCs – a flag with five Olympic rings on a black-red-and-gold background, unified dresses, and again the Ode by Beethoven. Above all the introduction of the Olympic flag caused furore in the West and German Chancellor Adenauer is quoted as having said that the chosen flag was 'incompatible with the feelings of honour by West German citizens'. He had to give in as further insistence would have meant that only East Germany would have been invited. Balbier's comments on the Games continue through to the Olympics of 1960, 1964 and 1968, ending with Munich 1972 when the GDR for the first time entered the stadium with a separate team, behind their own flag, in GDR-emblazoned dresses and listening to their own national anthem. It was not without 'German-political irony' Balbier writes, that this for the first time took place in Munich.

Finally in this section of German publications, mention should be made of the notes of Hanns Leske,<sup>37</sup> a Berlin-based *Selbstgelehrter*, the German paraphrase for a researcher

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<sup>37</sup> Leske, Hanns, 'Eine Übersicht über deutsch-deutsche Kontakte im Bereich des Fussballs' (A Review of German-German Contacts in the Field of Football). 2-page Memo, Berlin (2011).

outside academia. These notes report that after the foundation of the GDR in 1949 and until 1961 there were intensive sports contacts between East and West; for example ‘friendly competition’ between East- and West-Berlin football clubs was accorded high priority by the GDR. Leske proposes, however, that the West viewed football encounters with GDR teams with some circumspection, suspecting – correctly so – that these were often used for purposes of political exploitation. He cites an event in June 1960, characteristic of the political dimension of inter-German football. In West Berlin, a match between *Hertha BSC* and the East Berlin *ASK*, the GDR Army sports club, was scheduled. To the dismay of West Berlin officials, the *ASK* team appeared in kits emblazoned with the GDR hammer-and-circle insignia introduced in 1959, anathema in the West and prohibited there as the symbol of the other Germany as the ‘divider state’. Frantic efforts by the *Hertha BSC* chairman to make the footballers from the East change their kit failed, and the match went ahead – trouncing the guests by 5-0, for good measure. Repercussions reached Bonn (the West German capital at the time) when the Foreign Minister addressed a complaint to his colleague the Minister of Interior, strongly protesting that the latter’s West Berlin police force had failed to interdict the game.<sup>38</sup> Reacting to the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961, West German sports associations were to break off contacts with East Germany for quite some time. ‘Games of Friendship’ were no longer wanted by either political system, Leske suggests. Under the auspices of UEFA, the European Football Association, the next German-German football match would take place only in 1965. Following the 1975 Helsinki founding of OSCE, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, sporting contacts were then organised in a German-German *Sportkalender*. Every year in strenuous

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See also: Braun, Jutta & Teichler, Hans Joachim, eds., *Sportstadt Berlin im Kalten Krieg, Prestigekämpfe und Systemwettstreit (Sports Town Berlin in the Cold War, Prestige Fights and a Battle of the Systems)* Berlin: Ch. Links (2006).

<sup>38</sup> See also: Braun, Jutta ‘Warum das Derby zwischen Hertha und ASK zu einem politischen Sündenfall wurde’ (‘Why the 1960 football game between Hertha and ASK became a political Adam’s Sin’). *Der Tagesspiegel*, (30 January 2011), nr. 20873, p. 19.

negotiations, East- and West-German sports officials agreed on dates and venues for inter-German events. While they covered also other fields of sport – the ‘incredible fascination of soccer on people’ as referred to by German football idol Franz Beckenbauer – meant that football was accorded paramount importance.

#### Critique of German secondary sources

The reviews above provide overviews of the approaches taken by German writers on the origins and development of the joint German Olympic teams. These, and similar work by other German authors, provided much useful material for the research on this thesis. Some additional observations and comments are necessary, however, to clarify as to how the views attributed to these various German writers are supportive – or otherwise – of the arguments developed in this work.

Höfer’s article (*Querelle d’allemand*), as much as the other twenty-five contributions by other writers in Lämmer’s voluminous book, can be seen – rather than as an academic contribution – as primarily a public relations piece. An indication to this effect is also a statement on page 1 of the book, informing the reader that it was ‘edited by Manfred Lämmer on Commission by the National Olympic Committee for Germany’. Höfer’s contribution, featuring scores of photographs, ranges from the end of the Second World War to the retirement of Brundage as IOC President in 1972. As well as including much visual material, much of the coverage is often anecdotal, containing peripheral references to the trials and tribulations of the German-German Olympic teams. As a result there is little systematic investigation of the emergence, operation and eventual demise of the joint teams in the wider context of Cold War confrontation – the principal focus of this thesis.

In contrast to Höfer's somewhat meandering article, the excellent book by Juliane Lanz (*Between Politics, Protocol and Pragmatism*) constitutes the opposite: a concise – and precise – academic treatise of 429 pages, the result of an impressive amount of research. It includes much painstaking work in the primary sources, and makes particular novel use of evaluations of questionnaires returned by people involved with the joint teams at the time (questioning people about an era of more than between some forty and sixty years earlier). Lanz's work thus acts as a valuable guide to the role of individual participants and key 'actors'. However, there is little sustained treatment in her work to the wider international dimension of the question: assessing, for example, the extent to which the phenomenon of the joint German teams, their creation and eventual failure, were results of a wider Cold War confrontation.

The third broad work mentioned above (*Nationalism and Sport*), edited in East Berlin, holds in contempt and vilifies virtually every person and organization in West Germany involved in preparations for the Munich Games. As such the book provides a measure of useful – albeit somewhat scurrilous – information as to the level to which German-German general and sports relations had sunk prior to the appearance of the divided German Olympic teams at Munich.

The section of biographical works (those on Daume, Schöbel and Vogel) provided us with insights into the influence on matters of the German-German teams of three crucial personalities, the latter two specifically regarding the Munich Games. Daume is particularly deserving of attention, not only on account of his unchallenged position as the top functionary in FRG sports, but also because he often attempted to make people in the West understand the frame of mind of sports functionaries in the other Germany. Rode's report is based on extensive research, yet his work does not extend to the

‘international political fabric’ and its effect on sports at the time. As for the three articles by Klessmann, Thomas and Krebs, they also contain a wealth of detailed contextual information, though they tend to focus on particular themes rather than the rounded picture of the emergence, *modus operandi*, and eventual disappearance of the joint German Olympic teams.

The penultimate article reviewed was by Peiffer, probably Germany’s foremost sports historian today. He focussed our attention on what he described as one of the most crucial decisions in the story, the 1965 vote of the IOC to dissolve the joint German teams. He asserts that the IOC decision represented a milestone on the GDR’s road to international recognition as a separate state. He also argues that, together with the IOC’s later choice of Munich for the 1972 Olympics, this introduced a sporting-political ‘re-armament’ of the two Germanys on a major scale. Finally, with her emphasis on the sociological aspects of the history of the joint German teams, Balbier takes a different view from most other German scholars. Her closing observation - ‘At no point in time was sport non-political, neither in East or West’<sup>39</sup> – perhaps brings her more than of the other writers assessed closer to the concerns of this thesis.

#### Secondary works published in English

In completing this literature review, we turn briefly to writings on the topic of the thesis in the English language, where much less of substance was found. Although, as we have seen, general Olympic histories written in English are abundant, they usually have little to say on the issue of German-German sporting relationships. The apparent dearth of topical research and ensuing literature in English has been an important motive for the conception of this thesis.

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<sup>39</sup> Balbier, ‘Cold War’, p. 96.

If only on account of its title and folio-sized 719 pages, David Miller's encyclopaedic work <sup>40</sup> will take first place in this section. A journalist rather than an academic writer and former chief sports correspondent of *The Times*, Miller indeed provides details and comments on every conceivable detail of 118 years of Olympic history, events and personalities. Miller is primarily concerned with the IOC from its inception to the present day and he does include some references to the German-German Olympic team. Although these are few and far between, they represent two of the rare instances of referrals to the German joint venture in English. The first one relates:

Recognition of the FRG-NOC was granted at the [IOC] 1951 Session in Vienna and there was indignation from socialist nations at the rejection of the GDR. Several IOC members (...) suggested recognition of both if they would agree to form a single team for Olympic participation, a proposal welcomed by Brundage. (...) The GDR, however, were reluctant to sacrifice their autonomy (...) At a subsequent [IOC] Board meeting, the GDR committee agreed to a joint team but this was denounced by the government in [East-] Berlin and rescinded. A further Board Meeting was held in 1952. The IOC continued to stretch out a helping hand (...) by stating 'It is necessary to form a special commission of West and East representatives to organise a single German team for the Games in Helsinki' (...) [Yet] continued reluctance by the GDR to cooperate meant that it was impossible (...) for any [joint] team for Helsinki.<sup>41</sup>

Miller then moves on, in his only other comments, to events in 1954 and 1956:

Approval [of acceptance of the GDR-NOC] was again refused at the 1954 [IOC] Session in Athens, some members motivated by constant abuse in the East German press. The vote was 31-14 and the GDR would have to wait another year until the Session in Paris (...) Schöbel was told the condition for acceptance was the creation of a unified team for 1956 (...) Brundage was able to claim: 'We have succeeded in something where the politicians have failed – there will be a joint German team in Cortina and in Melbourne'.<sup>42</sup>

As for other books in English, Allen Guttman's *The Olympics, A History of the Modern Games*, already mentioned in the General Histories section, features a chapter

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<sup>40</sup> Miller, David, *The Official History of the Olympic Games and the IOC, Athens to London 1894-2012*. Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing Company (2012).

<sup>41</sup> Miller, *Official History*, p. 134.

<sup>42</sup> Miller, *Official History*, pp. 145-46.

‘In the Shadow of the Cold War’.<sup>43</sup> This contains basic information on what he describes as ‘the German question which engendered considerable acrimony’.<sup>44</sup> Guttman in effect covers much of the same ground as Miller, recounting that Federal Germany’s NOC was formed on 24 September 1949 and that a rival NOC, that of the GDR, was announced on 22 April 1951. When the IOC unanimously recommended speedy acceptance of the West’s NOC, that of the GDR also asked for recognition. A meeting of the two NOCs on 17 May 1951 came to nothing as, so he writes, ‘the ideological gulf was too great to be bridged’. In a meeting in Lausanne five days later, however, called by IOC President Brundage to urge unity, ‘the negotiators agreed in principle to form a combined German team and to defer the question of a unified committee’. But when the GDR delegates returned to East Berlin [Guttman erroneously cites Potsdam as seat of their ministry] they were unceremoniously dismissed and the Lausanne agreement renounced. Never having obtained IOC approval, Guttman continues, the NOC of the GDR repeated its request on occasion of the IOC’s Athens session in May 1954. In the IOC Paris session of 1955, and after the GDR had modified their earlier rhetoric – e.g. of having ‘reviled the IOC as a conspiratorial gang of imperialist thugs’ – the IOC granted the East German NOC recognition by 27-7 votes. An important proviso was that Germans from both states had to compete as a combined team, which they did in the 1956, 1960 and 1964 Games.

On 6 October 1965, however, the IOC granted the GDR the right to introduce a separate team at the 1968 Mexico City Games. But both teams’ marching columns were still to carry the flag adorned with the Olympic rings, they would have the same anthem of the choral theme from Beethoven’s 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony played – which both they did – and they would wear the same dresses – which the GDR team did not. Guttman concludes this

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<sup>43</sup> Guttman, *The Olympics*, pp. 94-96.

section of the book by reporting: ‘At its Mexico City session, the IOC abandoned the impossible effort and voted 44-4 to extend full, complete and unqualified acceptance of the NOC of the GDR, with its own team, its own flag, its own anthem’, first to be introduced at the 1972 Munich Games. The motives for the IOC’s change of heart in the mid-1960s – a crucial concern in what follows – are not fully explored by Miller or Guttman.

Another work by Guttman, also referred to earlier, is his excellent work *The Games Must Go On*.<sup>45</sup> Mention has already been made of Avery Brundage and Guttman’s book takes special interest in this major personality. The main title of the book, Brundage’s electrifying five words spelt out after the murderous incident which threatened to end the 1972 Munich Olympics, as well as its subtitle *Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement*, are indications of the scope of this biographical study.

Brundage was an American entrepreneur and amateur athlete in the 1912 Olympics in Stockholm, President of the US Olympic Committee during the 1936 Games in Berlin, fifth President of the IOC from 1952 to 1972 and an avowed friend of Germany. While Brundage played a decisive role in the creation of the joint German-German Olympic teams, criticism is often directed at his insistent stance on amateurism, which would also play a role in the composition of the joint teams. Juliane Lanz is also outspoken on this matter:

Although this was utopia, Brundage was enthusiastic about the promotion of sports in the GDR and the other communist countries without questioning their motives. He even was particularly lenient and closed his eyes to the numerous examples of state-amateurism which were part and parcel of the system of promotion of athletes behind the iron curtain.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Guttman, Allen, *The Games Must Go On, Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press (1984).

<sup>46</sup> Lanz, *Between Politics*, p. 353.

In reaction to East Germany's repeated pledges that their athletes fully confirmed to his continuously professed high ethos of amateurism Brundage, as the saying goes, had 'his eyes in the back of his head', knowing fully well that these were empty assurances.

The scholarly duo of historians Kay Schiller and Christopher Young present a detailed, at times dense, work focussed on the background to the 1972 Olympics.<sup>47</sup> Going back to the inception of the Games in 1896, they refer among other things to the 1948 London Games from which the former World War Two enemies Germany and Japan were excluded. They argue that Italy was invited in appreciation of having abrogated its alliance with Germany in 1943 and having joined the Allied camp instead.

Their central reference to the joint German Olympic activity is the following:

The 1964 Summer Games in Tokyo and their 1968 Winter equivalent in Grenoble [where there were still German teams under the Olympic flag of the five rings, but appearing in the Stadium separately] required 14 rounds of negotiations between the two NCOs, 96 conferences between individual federations and 60 play-off tournaments to determine which athletes [from either East- or West-Germany] would participate. Perhaps more than any other sector of public life, the Olympic sport confronted its functionaries with the unadulterated fact of German division and the difficulties of dealing with governmental tensions on both sides of the border.<sup>48</sup>

Schiller and Young do however also introduce those emerging as the most important personalities of the 1972 Munich Games: first its unflinching protagonist, Willi Daume, secondly Munich's Lord Mayor Hans-Jochen Vogel, and 'no less dynamic' and third, American Germanophile Brundage, for whom Munich would be the swan-song of his career as IOC President. They also mention a group of individuals who would determine the memory of Munich 1972: the terrorists, cynically congratulating the Germans on producing an excellent Olympic Games which ended in a bloodbath, thereby offering

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<sup>47</sup> Schiller, Kay & Young, Christopher, *The 1972 Munich Olympics and the Making of Modern Germany*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press (2010).

<sup>48</sup> Schiller & Young *1972 The Munich Olympics*, pp. 159, 37, 160

the Palestinians a showcase where they could bring their grievances to millions watching around the world.

There are very few journal articles in English that concentrate on German-German Olympic cooperation. One exception is that by Gerald Hughes and Rachel Owen,<sup>49</sup> which gives an overview of the historical development of post-war German sports. Beginning with an opinion voiced by the German weekly *Die Zeit*<sup>50</sup>, the authors note that, at the time when in 1949 Germany was split into the west-leaning Federal Republic of Germany and the Communist-dominated GDR, the Olympic ideal remained that sport and politics did not mix. But Cold War realities, they opine, overtook aspirations as the FRG insisted that a single German team should compete in the Games, while the GDR lobbied hard for acceptance of their team as that of a separate country. By the 1960s, according to Hughes and Owen, the compromise adopted in the 1950s came to be seen as anachronistic, and the IOC voted that from 1968 onwards the GDR was to have a separate status at future Olympic Games – which it did until the country disappeared in 1990.

Finally of value, at least for background content, is a journal article by Peter Beck,<sup>51</sup> which describes the political position and life of eminent, high-minded British sports defender Lord Philip Noel-Baker, especially in the dispute with George Orwell and his anti-sports polemics. Beck begins with this summary statement of Noel-Baker's belief: 'In the Nuclear Age, sport is man's best hope; his vision, most notably of the Olympic movement [is] a major force for world peace'. Noel-Baker's distinguished career

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<sup>49</sup> Hughes, Gerald R. & Rachel, Owen, 'The Olympics, Germany at Odds in the Field', *Contemporary European History* (2010), vol. 18, no. 4.

<sup>50</sup> Germany's foremost, opinion-forming weekly newspaper and magazine, with 506,000 copies sold and a readership of more than one million (status as of 21 November 2012).

<sup>51</sup> Beck, Peter J., 'Confronting George Orwell: Philip Noel-Baker on international Sport, particularly the Olympic Movement, as Peacemaker' (*European Sports History Review*, 5 2003), pp. 187-207.

‘straddling the academic, political and sporting world’<sup>52</sup> reached from the 1908 London Olympics to becoming a de-facto Minister of Sport in the Attlee post-war government, in which position he was instrumental in organizing the London Olympics of 1948. In 1959 Noel-Baker was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his contribution to international peace. Acrimony with Orwell had started over the 1945 visit to Britain by the Dynamo Moscow football team. Noel-Baker had welcomed this in a newspaper article calling it ‘a foundation (...) for friendship between the nations,’<sup>53</sup> such high opinion being riposted by Orwell with his often quoted statement that ‘international sport is war minus shooting’, plus his assessment that ‘international sporting contests lead to orgies of hatred’.<sup>54</sup> Beck recalls that even Churchill had earlier come out in criticism of Noel-Baker’s perennial pro-sports stance; commenting on Hitler’s 1936 Olympics, Churchill had written ‘Sport, when it enters the international field in Olympic Games (...) may breed ill-will rather than draw the nations together’.

## SOURCES, METHODS AND OUTLINE

The English-language literature, like the German-published, gives an outline of the main events and particular facets involved in the story of the joint German Olympic teams. But many stones remain unturned, and a starting rationale for what follows is that many valuable and pertinent primary sources have been under-utilised in previous accounts. Some relevant documents by the British Foreign Office were unearthed at the Kew National Archives in London. Vital information has been found in the two sections of the German Federal Archives at Koblenz/Rhineland and in Berlin. The Federal Archives headquarters at Koblenz houses an impressive array of documents from West

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<sup>52</sup> Peter Beck, ‘Confronting George Orwell’, pp.187-89.

<sup>53</sup> *The Times*, 5 December 1945.

<sup>54</sup> Peter Beck, ‘Confronting George Orwell’ pp. 190-91, 194; also in *News of the World* (issue of 4 September 1938).

German official sources, such as the Federal Chancellery, the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs, and that of Inter-German Relations. The Berlin section contains material originating from the former GDR. It comprises thousands of microfiches of documents relating to its state sport organisations and their interface with other government departments.<sup>55</sup>

Employing a standard historical methodology of analysing both primary and secondary sources, the thesis will attempt to address a range of connected issues, seeking to build up a more complete account of the joint German teams than has hitherto been attempted, particularly in British historiography. These include examining particular episodes that few have so far studied, such as the manner in which the erection of the Berlin Wall induced the FRG to break off all contacts with the GDR. Of special interest in what follows will be the interaction of the IOC with the NOCs of both Germanys. In this respect one of the central arguments will be the crucial role played by the IOC, and above all Brundage, in initiating the period of German-German Olympic cooperation, applauded to an extent by the general public of both Germanys, but accepted only with reservations – stemming from quite differing motives – by official quarters in both the GDR and FRG. Another theme explored will be how athletes, and leaders of the joint teams, lived up to the challenge of what their team might have been called: the ‘unloved child’, the product of a marriage of convenience.

Another key phenomenon to be explored is that of how the GDR, a country of only some eighteen million people, achieved what in the West was called the ‘medal wonder’ of 4,000 medals; and whether West German sports learned any lessons from it. The

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<sup>55</sup> Teichler, Hans Joachim & Buss, Wolfgang & Peiffer, Lorenz, eds. *Archive und Quellen zum Sport in der SBZ/DDR (Archives and Sources concerning Sports in the SZO, Soviet Zone of Occupation/GDR.)* Bundesinstitut für Sportwissenschaft (Federal Institute for Sports Sciences). Bonn (2003).

matter of wide-spread doping in the GDR will be briefly alluded to, although in practice the frightening effects on female athletes through the dispensing of androgenic steroids only fully came to light after the end of the GDR. Another intriguing subject will be the difference in public sports philosophy between West and East. The suggestion is that in the FRG emphasis was on 'sport for the wider public', while the GDR funnelled its efforts into high-performance sports disciplines, bent on gaining as many medals as possible in the Olympics and other international sporting events. The supreme aim of the GDR was to succeed in international political recognition of the country as a separate state by means of sporting excellence. And as long as this was frustrated by the insistent claim of the FRG to be the only internationally recognized, democratically elected representative of Germany – its ubiquitous *Alleinvertretungsanspruch* – the GDR would direct all its energy to at least gain the widest possible acceptance in the international field of sport with its many federations. In this effort it eventually was successful indeed.

A recurrent subject for investigation by this thesis will be whether, throughout forty-five years of political separation, the two Germanys retained a certain measure of common national interests. And if so, whether this included the field of sport. We shall see that while national communality did not exist at the level of the two governments – with, instead, East Berlin and Bonn regularly confronting each other in mutual hostility – but that some friendly contacts between the people of the two Germanys were maintained. In what follows, and above all, it will be emphasised that it can not be overlooked that German-German relations always constituted a mirroring of the international political scene characterized by the Cold War. Yet this, during the time span of the thesis, underwent many changes: from open West-East nuclear confrontation during the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, to the era of détente beginning in the 1970s. This was then

reflected in West Germany by the new *Ostpolitik*, introduced by Chancellor Willy Brandt, who was a proponent of better relations with the GDR. A remark characteristic for his posture also in sports was this:

First of all I must say, yes we are also winning a little with them: if the GDR is winning, we are also winning. If those in the GDR are victorious, they are also our compatriots. We must not all of a sudden be seen to pretend that they are from another country.<sup>56</sup>

His position was in contrast to the policy of his predecessor Konrad Adenauer, whose primary aim had been to bring his country back into the Western fold – at the expense of even attempting to build contacts with the other Germany. Correspondingly, there were believers in all-German sporting relations: Willi Daume, West Germany's top sports executive. And even Heinz Schöbel, his East German counterpart, albeit for ulterior reasons. Surprisingly, so was anon-German: American IOC president Avery Brundage who, as will be asserted, was the *spiritus rector* of the joint German-German Olympic teams. It was his conviction – and, as it increasingly would become apparent, his illusion – that sport could bring about some togetherness also in the prevalent political dichotomy between the two Germanys.

So the not only in Germany was it surprising that the phenomenon of joint German Olympic teams, with athletes from both Germanys, came about, participating in the Games of 1956, 1960 and 1964. It was also perceived as unusual internationally. This took place in the middle of the Cold War between East and West; after a difficult start, and in the events vehemently contested between the two Germanys.

In the early 1970s a depressing irony developed. While in the international sphere Cold War tensions and confrontations were decreasing, relations between the two Germanys moved in the opposite direction; arguably on account of the GDR's mounting anti-FRG

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<sup>56</sup> *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, issue of 13.10.1970, p. 22.

stance, and as it continuously claimed to be ‘the better of the two Germanys’. These increasingly hostile atmospherics would also result in the end of German-German Olympic cooperation, and the dream of Avery Brundage: the Munich Olympic Games of 1972 should witness the emergence of two separate German teams, inimically contesting each other.

In terms of structure, the thesis comprises of seven main chapters, a Conclusion, the Bibliography and an Annex. Chapters one and two provide an overview of the situation of sports in Germany after the war, with the latter also commenting on the participation of a first German team at the 1952 Olympic Games. Chapter three introduces us to the beginnings of a joint German Olympic presence, with the many political considerations and presentational problems leading up to German-German teams at Cortina d’Ampezzo/Melbourne in 1956 and Squaw Valley/Rome in 1960. Chapter four will highlight the problems which the building of the Berlin Wall created for German sports in 1961, and show despite this that a united German team still participated at the 1964 Innsbruck/Tokyo Olympics. Chapter five will witness the IOC decision of 1965 to dissolve the German-German at the Mexico City Games of 1968, describe the unravelling of German-German Olympic activities, and end with the 1966 IOC award of the next Games to be held in Munich. Chapters six and seven analyze the post-Mexico consequences for German sports, and will comment in detail on the dramatic events at Munich in 1972.

Ultimately, what the thesis – the first detailed study of its kind written in English – will show is that the history of the German-German Olympic teams is inseparable from, indeed the result of, the Cold War; this is opposed to the general opinion of historians that this episode in sports history was primarily an inter-German phenomenon. In

addition the argument will be made that, taking into consideration the decisive influence of IOC President Brundage, the joint teams' conception and realisation in a 1950s Cold War ambience, and its functioning during three successive Olympic periods, indeed constituted a 'miracle, as it was regarded at the time'.<sup>57</sup> And that even the teams' unravelling, and dissolution by the IOC, was a result and functioning of the specifics of the Cold War on German soil: the increasing political alienation of the two Germanys in the later 1960s.

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<sup>57</sup> Killanin, Lord, *My Olympic Years* (London: Secker & Warburg) (1983) p. 118.

## CHAPTER ONE

### ‘RISEN FROM THE RUINS, LOOKING TO THE FUTURE’, 1945-51<sup>1</sup>

This opening chapter provides an analysis of the general situation of a devastated Germany after its unconditional surrender in 1945, after which it was placed initially under Allied military government. Focus and discussion will be on the emergence of sport organizations in what became the two separate Germanys during this period. Attention shall be directed to the emergence of the Cold War, resulting in the dichotomy between the East- and West-German states, and how this affected sporting matters. The chapter will also examine the first post-war Olympic Games at St. Moritz and London in 1948. The main concern is to explore what part the immediate post-war years played in the eventual emergence of the concept of the joint German Olympic teams. No agreement was in place by 1951, but it will become clear that various forces were already at work, including the desire of East Germany to emerge from the shadow of its Western cousins – at least in sports-political terms – in turn stimulating West German sports leaders’ anxiety not to leave the Olympic field to East Germany. Also in this period we begin to chart the vital role played by IOC Vice President Avery Brundage, espousing his hope and belief that creation of a joint German Olympic presence would also result in improved German-German relations.

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<sup>1</sup> “*Auferstanden aus Ruinen  
und der Zukunft zugewandt,  
lass es dir zum Guten dienen,  
Deutschland, einig Vaterland.*”

(‘Risen from the Ruins and looking to the future, let it serve you for the better, Germany, one Fatherland’.)

First lines of Johannes Becher’s 1949 National Anthem of the GDR . Later the lyrics were dropped from the National Anthem as reference to Germany as ‘one Fatherland’ was no longer considered as ‘politically correct’ by the GDR. From this point onwards only Hanns Eisler’s music was played as the GDR National Hymn.

## A defeated Germany under Allied control and the beginning of the 'Cold War'

In order to understand the context in which the joint German-German Olympic teams were to come about, we first need to assess why and how Germany was divided after the Second World War. In political-administrative terms, for the first years after the end of the war there was virtually no 'German' Germany at all. Replacing the former Reich Government, an Allied Control Council was constituted in Berlin, consisting of the supreme commanders of the four victorious occupying forces. It was to oversee and direct overall German matters, while the four powers ruled and administrated in their areas of occupation according to their own interests and judgement. In the West there was the *Bizone*, the parts of Germany occupied by the United States and Britain.<sup>2</sup> This was later extended to a *Trizonia*,<sup>3</sup> which included the French sector.

British administrators were quite stern in their attitude towards the Germans. One example can be found in the final paragraph of a 'Letter by the Commander-in-Chief on Non-Fraternisation', directed by Field-Marshal B.L. Montgomery to his troops in March 1945, more than a month before the end of the war:

Be just; be firm; be correct; give orders, and don't argue. Last time we won the war and let the peace slip out of our hands. This time we must not ease off – we must both win the war and the peace.<sup>4</sup>

The US administrators began to introduce liberal-minded, democratic institutions. They espoused their specific *Sendungsbewusstsein* – the strong conviction of a mission for democratic renewal – enforcing this on the defeated Germans 'through the back door'.<sup>5</sup>

In the Eastern territories of Germany the *SMAD*, *Sowjetische Militär-Administration*

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<sup>2</sup> Meehan, Patricia, *A Strange Enemy People, Germans under the British 1945-50*. London: Peter Owen Publishers (2001).

<sup>3</sup> The long-suffering citizens of destroyed Cologne still celebrated their traditional Lent Carnival Festivities in 1948. On the occasion a hilarious yet persevering ditty was introduced, beginning with the line 'Wir sind die Eingeborenen von Trizonien' (*We're the Aborigines of Trizonia*).

<sup>4</sup> Meehan, *Strange Enemy People*, p. 297.

<sup>5</sup> Schulze, Hagen, *Kleine deutsche Geschichte* (Concise German History), Munich: C.H. Beck (1996), p.193 ff.

(Soviet Military Administration) instituted in what was to be known as *SBZ, Sowjetisch besetzte Zone* (Soviet-occupied Zone), governed along strictly authoritarian Marxist-Leninist lines.<sup>6</sup>

On 17 December 1945 the Control Council of the four Allied Powers in Berlin issued its Directive Number 23. Amongst other instructions it ordered dissolution of all former German sports and athletics associations, permitting only ‘non-military sports organisations of local character’ at the discretion of the responsible local authority of the Allied Powers. With Germany now divided into four zones of occupation – and its capital city of Berlin correspondingly into four sectors – its former national sports scenario had been totally obliterated. Much of the physical infrastructure of sport in terms of major venues was either destroyed or, if not so, requisitioned by the occupying powers.<sup>7</sup> Willi Daume, later to become West Germany’s top sports executive, correctly pointed out a ‘total destruction of sports’ substance by the Nazi regime’.<sup>8</sup> Nonetheless and with some measure of naivety, many top sports functionaries of the former regime in the West had assumed that their past positions would remain unchallenged, creating not only controversy with a new generation of sports leaders but thereby also playing into the hands of East German propaganda branding West German sports as ‘old-Nazi’. For their part and following their dogma to be ‘anti-fascist’, the new leadership of East Germany was less lenient with functionaries of the previous German sports organisation, dismissing or even prosecuting them.

In June 1947 US Secretary of State George Marshall unveiled the European

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<sup>6</sup> Until the founding of the two separate German states in 1949, the acronym *SBZ* for its communist Eastern part was generally used in sources. Named by the East *the capitalist West Zones*, these were designating the *Trizone* occupied by the Western Allies.

<sup>7</sup> In the united Germany of 2012, for comparison, there were again 126,954 football fields, hockey pitches, tennis courts, Olympic swimming pools, etc. Source: *HörZu*, Germany’s prime TV-and-Radio Magazine, issue no. 16, 13 April 2012, p. 19.

<sup>8</sup> Lämmer, *Olympic Movement*, p. 177.

Recovery Program, also known as the Marshall Plan, the most popular and far-reaching US policy initiative of the post-war years, offering US aid to nearly all West European countries. Over the next five years the United States would supply aid to the tune of more than \$13 billion (in today's dollars more than seven times this amount) in the form of direct aid, loan guarantees, food and grain,<sup>9</sup> industrial goods, machinery and many other necessities. When in early July 1947 a meeting with the European countries was convened in Paris, the Soviet delegation soon walked out, denouncing the plan as a 'capitalist plot'. Yet the Marshall Plan put the Soviets on the defensive and for many commentators effectively served to push the onus for the commencement of the Cold War on the Kremlin's shoulders.<sup>10</sup>

On 30 July 1948, British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin sent an analysis of the importance of Germany to Prime Minister Clement Attlee, writing:

A prosperous and contented Germany, built on sound democratic principles, is the best guarantee for the safety of Europe. These conditions cannot at present be secured in the Eastern Zone; it is therefore all the more important that they should be secured in the West. If our policy succeeds, Western Germany (...) as [one of the recipients] of the E.R.P., can become a most effective barrier against the spread of Communism across Europe (...) If we fail, there will be Soviet control on the whole of Germany and thereby of all of Europe.<sup>11</sup>

This quote once more demonstrates the extent to which the Cold War had already taken possession of politics. This was also the case in official circles both in the West but also in the East. It meant that whatever limited inter-German sports relations there had been immediately after 1945 would become increasingly problematic, making further

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<sup>9</sup> There was an incident, actually rather funny but most frightening for German onlookers, when sacks were unloaded by crane from a US freighter at Bremen port: the sacks were marked in bold letters 'Gift from the United States' – in the German language 'gift' translates into poison.

<sup>10</sup> Hanhimäki, Jussi M. & Westad, Odd Arne, eds. *The Cold War, A History in Documents and Eye Witness Accounts*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (2003), p.107.

<sup>11</sup> Hanhimäki, *The Cold War*, p. 95.

cooperation across the German version of the Iron Curtain<sup>12</sup> more and more unlikely. At this moment, therefore, the prospect of joint German Olympic teams seemed remote, as was also evident when the first post-war Olympics were held. We turn to these Games next particularly to focus on why neither of the two Germanys were invited to participate.

### The first post-war Olympic Games of 1948

More than twelve years had passed since the last Olympic Games. Some voices were raised against any resumption of the Olympics, largely on the grounds that they engendered more international hostility than goodwill. It could well be argued that the nationalistic excessiveness and racist overtones of Hitler's preceding Olympics of 1936, held in Berlin and Garmisch-Partenkirchen, provided some rationale for such allegations.<sup>13</sup>

Responsibilities for celebrating the first post-war Olympic event fell to St. Moritz in Switzerland, where the Vth Winter Games were held from 30 January to 8 February 1948 with only 713 participating athletes from 28 countries. However we shall direct our attention to the XIVth Olympic Summer Games held in London from 29 July to 14 August 1948. Here 4,372 athletes from 59 countries were competing.<sup>14</sup> Both events were performed without participation of a German team. The London Games took place there in compensation for the 1944 Games originally awarded to the city which could

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<sup>12</sup> Patrick, Ruth & Jackson, Bianca, eds., *Defining Moments in History*, London: Octopus Publishing/Cassell (2008), p. 246, quoting Winston Churchill in a speech on 5 March 1946 at Westminster College, Fulton/Missouri, USA: "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic an Iron Curtain has descended across the Continent".

<sup>13</sup> Findling, John E. & Pelle, Kimberly D., eds. *Encyclopedia of the Modern Olympic Movement*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press (2004) p. 127, 315.

[NB: In contrast to general encyclopedias consisting of tens of thousands of key-words in thousands of pages, this 'dedicated' Encyclopedia – in 438 pages of text and a further 154 pages of appendices – is a record of all Olympic Games from Athens in 1896 to Vancouver in 2010, as well as of the protagonists involved in these events.]

<sup>14</sup> [www.sports-reference.com/olympics/1948](http://www.sports-reference.com/olympics/1948).

not take place due to the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, like those planned for Tokyo in 1940.

British organizers had not underestimated the difficulties of the task ahead. The condition of the austerity-stricken British post-war economy, including continued rationing, even provoked a public campaign for the abandonment of the Games headed by Churchill's friend, the prominent newspaper proprietor and politician Lord Beaverbrook. Another problem was the prevailing international political situation as the Cold War between East and West had recently broken out, resulting in the Soviet blockade of Berlin and creating substantial doubt about Olympic participation of the former ally. In the event the USSR only sent a small group of observers to London.

Moreover, there was concern in the ranks of the IOC over the issue of inviting the defeated Axis powers; many members of the world controlling authority felt that it was too soon to allow them back into the international sporting arena.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand some – including the 'germanophile' Vice President Avery Brundage – held the view that any exclusion would contravene the traditional principle of a separation between sport and politics. In the end there was a compromise: Germany and Japan were not invited, albeit on the 'technical grounds' that they had not reconstituted National Olympic Committees. Yet while there had also been some hostility at the IOC to Italian participation this was a minority opinion, and no significant opposition was raised to that country being invited.<sup>16</sup> In public perception this could have been a kind of bonus for Italy having changed sides in the Second World War from Germany to the Allies in 1943.

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<sup>15</sup> Miller, David, *History of the Olympic Games*, London 1948, Chapter XXVIII, pp. 129-132.

<sup>16</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, p. 131.

In the event and as something of a curiosity, there was a single German participant after all. Helmut Bantz, former 1936 Olympic Equestrian Champion, and in 1948 still officially a prisoner of war in Britain though helping to coach the UK Equestrian Olympic team, reflected:

I felt just a little embarrassed wearing white trousers, a blue tunic with the Union Jack and a cap on my head. But my innermost feeling is one of pride, not only for wearing this uniform, but also to be allowed to participate as the only German in these Games.<sup>17</sup>

In spite of all difficulties, economic, financial and political, the conclusion emerges that the London Olympics of 1948 were a success. Phillip Noel-Baker, former Olympic champion and post-war Labour minister, ended his assessment on a positive note: ‘A search for their most particular feature might very well conclude with the simple fact that they were held at all so soon after the destruction and turmoil of World War II’.<sup>18</sup>

The exclusion of Germany from the London Olympics appears to have come as a major disappointment to sport circles in Germany. This was especially in the light of a decision by the IOC Executive Committee, taken during its 39<sup>th</sup> session of September 1946, not to exclude the German members Count Adolf Friedrich von Mecklenburg and Ritter von Halt. At the time this was perceived as a good omen for further German involvement in the Olympic movement. Yet by autumn 1948 there remained doubts in the minds of sports officials in all parts of the divided nation as to the prospect of a German return to the Olympic arena. Given the backdrop of division and aware of the IOC ruling that only one team could represent a nation, was such return to be postponed indefinitely? Officials would also have been conscious of the post-World-War-One

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<sup>17</sup> Pabst, Ulrich, *Sport – Medium der Politik? Der Neuaufbau des Sports in Deutschland nach dem 2. Weltkrieg und die innerdeutschen Sportbeziehungen bis 1961 (Sport – a Medium of Politics? The Revival of Sports after the Second World War and inter-German Sports Relations until 1961)* Berlin: Verlag Bartels & Wernitz (1980), p. 103.

<sup>18</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, p. 133-34, citing the Noel-Baker archives at the Churchill College, Cambridge.

situation, when Germany had been punitively excluded from Olympic participation for ten years: from the 1920 Antwerp, the 1924 Paris Summer Olympics and the Chamonix Winter Games.

### The emerging political structures of Germanys West and East

In addition to the IOC's reservations after the London 1948 Games regarding any future German Olympic involvement, the prospects ahead looked grim in the light of the striking manner in which the barriers between the Germanys, West and East, became formalised as the Cold War intensified in the late 1940s. Any likelihood of German-German Olympic international sporting cooperation seemed very remote.

At the end of the war, the German peoples found themselves not only in a widely devastated country but now also – against the wishes of the majority of the population in both East and West – as citizens of territories espousing antagonistic political-military systems. As one British historian observes: 'From the collapse of Hitler's Germany in 1945 to the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Cold War was the single abiding reality of the post war world'.<sup>19</sup> The resulting acrimony between the two Germanys would remain a distinctive feature for more than four decades, and most historians agree that the creation of two separate German states was both a symptom as well as a cause of the Cold War. It will also become evident that from an early stage sports and sporting policies developed in markedly different ideological directions, as well as in everyday practice.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Sandbrook, Dominic 'The Cold War in your Living Room' *BBC History Magazine*, December 2013, p. 44.

<sup>20</sup> Rode, Jan C. 'Eine Beziehungsgeschichte im Kalten Krieg: Das gesamtdeutsche Olympiateam' ('Events of a Relationship during the Cold War: The all-German Olympic Team') *SportZeiten, Sport in Geschichte, Kultur und Gesellschaft (SportsTimes, Sport in History, Culture and Society)* no. 6/3. Goettingen/Germany: SportZeiten (2006) p. 30.

By 1948 various democratic structures were introduced by the Western Allies in their territories of occupation. In an initiative by the US military government, a Parliamentary Council was convoked on 1 September 1948 to deliberate and propose a *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law) for a future West German state. The Council consisted of 65 members from licensed political parties, many delegates of whom were politicians from the pre-Nazi Weimar Republic. The Council's conclusion and pronouncement, after approval by the Western Military Governors, took place on 23 May 1949 by its Chairman (and later West German Chancellor) Konrad Adenauer, leading to the founding of the FRG on 7 September 1949. This was also the date of promulgation of a law to hold the first General Elections for the West German *Bundestag* Parliament.<sup>21</sup> In a parallel move in the *SBZ*, the East Berlin leadership appointed a *Volksrat* and introduced a new Constitution on 22 October 1949, following a declaration earlier in the month of the founding of the GDR.

There is a telling quote from a document of 'notes' dated September 1949 by Andrei Andreevich Gromyko, First Deputy USSR Minister for Foreign Affairs. On account of his usually acerbic observations Gromyko was known in international political circles as 'grim Grom'.<sup>22</sup> On this occasion Gromyko leaves little doubt as to the 'authorship' of the foundation of the two Germanys:

On September 20 (sic) 1949, a separate government was formed [in Bonn] for the western zones of Germany. In connection with this new step by the governments of the U.S.A., Great Britain and France, designed to deepen the division of Germany, we ought to react to these divisive actions by sending the appropriate notes to the governments of the three powers (...) [This] is called for not only because of the need to react to the new step by the three powers to divide Germany (...) but also by the impending formation of the Government of the German Democratic Republic in Berlin. These notes are part of a general plan of measures to be carried out in connection with this planned formation.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Schulze, *Concise German History*, p. 199.

<sup>22</sup> McCauley, Martin, *Who's Who in Russia since 1900*. London: Routledge (1997) p. 100.

<sup>23</sup> RSACH, Russian State Archive for Contemporary History, Moscow; first published in CWHIHP (Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson Center, Washington, DC), Bulletin No. 4.

The West German government stipulated what it called *Alleinvertretungsanspruch*, i.e. the right to claim to be the sole legitimate, democratically elected representatives of all of Germany – even though its legal powers were restricted to the western part of the country – in all areas of life, including that of sports. Even after founding of the GDR, the eastern part of Germany continued to be officially referred to in the West as *SBZ, Soviet Zone of Occupation*. Tit for tat, East Germany's officialdom continued to name the Federal Republic *the capitalist West Zones*.

Sport was to be perceived in the FRG as a social activity largely independent of state intervention, and West German Olympic sporting activities were conducted in line with internationally accepted standards. By contrast, under Soviet guidance the GDR set about pursuing – at all costs, in the true sense of the word – state sponsored success in sport. Olympic glory came to be regarded as one means of supporting the objective of establishing East Germany as an independent and sovereign country. Led by the FRG, however, for many years there was resistance to recognising the legitimacy of the GDR; a fundamental disagreement that set the tone for the hostility between the Germans for a generation to come.

#### The post-war situation of sports in West Germany

We next need to understand the complexities involved, given its unique post-war circumstances, if Germany – or the two Germanys – at some time in the future were to be allowed back into the fold of the Olympic movement. A particularly curious development between 1948 and 1951 was that of the National Olympic Committees (NOCs) on German soil. While IOC rules stipulated that there may be only one NOC per country, actually three were founded: that of the French-administered Saar of July 1948, becoming, as will be shown, only a footnote in Olympic history (as much as the

territory which it represented), plus one in the Federal Republic of Germany in September 1949, and another one of Germany (East) in April 1951.

Less than two weeks after the foundation of the FRG, on 19 September 1949, an invitation to attend a ceremony to establish a National Olympic Committee was formally submitted by Count Adolf von Mecklenburg, member of the IOC Executive Committee. This move marked the successful end of a long period of efforts and hopes of West German sports functionaries to this end and led to the event of its foundation on 24 September in Bonn, subscribing to the rules of amateur sports of the IOC.<sup>24</sup> This was followed up on 10 December 1950 in Hanover. Declaring a ‘Statute of voluntary Alliances’ of athletics organisations, sports-clubs and sports-unions in the FRG and West Berlin, the *DSB, Deutscher Sportbund* (German Sports Confederation) was formed. The statutes of this organisation described its brief as:

the advancement of athletics, sports and games, coordination of measures to this effect, the pursuit of common interests vis-à-vis state and the public as well as representation also in any issues transcending the immediate interest of sport. (...) In its General Assembly 16 local sports organisations and 55 national societies are represented. Counting 27 million individual memberships in more than 87.000 athletics- and sports-clubs in 90 member organisations, it is Germany’s largest voluntary civilian association.<sup>25</sup>

In the West, non-political ideals and voluntary involvement of people and organisations in sports were the order of the day. Yet, as sport was also dependent to an extent on public funding, political concessions to government wishes occasionally had to be entertained. However, and especially in hindsight to previous experiences in Hitler’s Germany, FRG Sports insisted upon, and expressly defined itself, as being autonomously organised.

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<sup>24</sup> Lämmer, *Olympic Movement*, p. 180 ff.

<sup>25</sup> BArch Berlin, call no. 322 1.3.8., (2011) p. 1.

A small, 22-page booklet under the title ‘*Sportverkehr mit der Sowjetzone – Ja oder Nein?*’ (*Sports Exchange with the Soviet Zone – Yes or No?*), published by the FRG government in 1951, summarises official attitudes.<sup>26</sup> In view of its importance it is deemed worth quoting *in extenso*:

We should have preferred a situation in which sports exchanges with the Soviet zone would constitute not a problem but rather be a matter of simple self-evidence. We would also have been prepared to remove any difficulties of organisation. But when we are facing invitations of impertinent propaganda as employed by campaigns of Soviet-German mass organisations, we should think twice about the origin of such propaganda (...) If someone on a sports ground would lecture us that only his side was the honest one, the competitor’s however that of a political rogue, or if he would turn out to be a tramp, we would first disprove of such assessment and then perhaps kick him from the field (...) What has all this to do with exchanges of sports and games between Germans? Should we differentiate between Germans in the Federal Republic and those in the Soviet zone of occupation? The tragic difference is another one: we can speak freely, we can choose and decide with whom we want to compete and conduct a game. Sports people on the other side cannot do this. No sports organisation in the Soviet zone can act out of its own free will and by following the wishes of its members. Between them and us stands the party apparatus of the SED. The old sports clubs have been dissolved. There are only sports organisations run by so-called ‘public-owned’ companies, or by communes. (...) Can a government organisation by the name of DSA ‘German Sports Committee’ claim to be representative of millions of sportspeople in the Soviet zone? If we want to look for clear answers we have to turn to the organiser of each and every sport activity in East Germany, the DSA, appointed by Soviet occupation forces.

There follow 11 pages *verbatim* of an original communiqué/set of instructions issued by the Central Committee of the SED, detailing the ‘Tasks in the Fields of Physical Culture and Sports’. These contain the usual Cold War polemics against ‘threats and attacks by USA imperialism and its lackeys’ etc., but also exhort ‘the creation of friendship between German sportspeople of East and West’. The booklet furthermore has these comments on this extensive set of GDR documents:

The DSA demands that its ‘democratic sports movement’ must assist the policies of the Soviet zone and, side-by-side with the Soviet Union and generalissimo

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<sup>26</sup> Bundesministerium für gesamtdeutsche Fragen, Hrsg. (Federal Ministry for All-German Affairs, eds.) *Sportverkehr mit der Sowjetzone – Ja oder Nein? Ein Wort an die deutschen Sportler in der Bundesrepublik* (*Sports Contacts with the Soviet Zone of Occupation – Yes or No? An Address to the German Sports People in the Federal Republic*) Bonn: Federal Ministry for All-German Affairs (1951).

Stalin, defend the communist system [called ‘the guardian of peace] actively and to the extreme, a wording originating from the concept of Russian revolutionary power politics’.

This pivotal publication shows that use of Cold War rhetoric was not a prerogative of East Berlin only, but that West Germany could respond blow for blow. On page 6 the polemical tone is particularly clear when the argument is made: ‘If the Soviet Zone invites us to friendship games between East and West (...) these are *not* the millions of sportsmen speaking to us, but rather the subjects of the Russian occupying power’. Taking stock of the gist of this highly opinionated document, it becomes clear that the West German government was determined to see sport in the FRG go its own way, to do its own thing, to maintain a voluntary ethos in sport – and in the process not to have anything to do with sport in the GDR.

#### East German sport, politics and its NOC

In the GDR there existed from the outset a close ‘synchronisation’ between sports and politics. Statements such as the following by the *SBZ* sports chairman in 1948 were common:

Sport is not a means by itself but a means towards a goal. We unequivocally are distancing ourselves from the protagonists of a so-called non-political sport movement.

No area of public life, thereby also not that of sport, is excluded from the class struggle.<sup>27</sup>

Top sports-men and -women were elevated to the status of ‘diplomats in training suits’ by official circles, with many privileges awarded to them in the country’s autocratic system.<sup>28</sup> It may be argued that sport was virtually the only field in which the GDR

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<sup>27</sup> BArch Berlin GDR-*Encyclopedia for Physical Culture and Sport*. East Berlin (1964) p. 16.

<sup>28</sup> See Holzweizig, Gunter, *Diplomatie im Trainingsanzug, Sport als politisches Instrument der DDR in den innerdeutschen und internationalen Beziehungen (Diplomacy in Training Dresses, Sports as a*

eventually would achieve international success. Yet in its initial phases, dominated from the start by the country's politics, sports in the SBZ was characterized, as Juliane Lanz notes, by 'chaotic conditions, caused by varying official concepts of organization, as well as ill-defined competences and responsibilities'.<sup>29</sup>

By the end of 1945, in Berlin alone, 25,000 sports-men and -women were officially registered by Soviet controllers and the East German authorities. Most of the organisers and coaches were members of the dissolved Workers Nazi sports organisations. Initially there were two groupings of activities: sporting sections under the responsibility of communal authorities, and others established in Soviet-style *Jugendausschüsse* (Youths' Committees) under control of the occupiers.<sup>30</sup>

In August 1946 the *SED, Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, (Socialist Union Party of Germany) was established, under pressure of the Soviet occupiers, by forced amalgamation of the former Social-Democrat and the Communist Parties of East Germany. It was a clever political move based on the experience in Weimar Germany of the 1920s and 1930s, when the two parties had been bitter enemies. It now meant that the much smaller CP became the de facto master of the very popular SDP and its huge membership.<sup>31</sup> The *SED* decided to allocate responsibility for sports to the *FDJ* (Free German Youth Organisation), which in practical terms meant that any person between the ages of 14 and 30 wanting to perform sports had to join the *FDJ*. This process of transfer from the earlier, communal responsibility would only be completed by 1948.

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*Political Instrument of the GDR in inter-German and international Relations*). Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag (1981).

<sup>29</sup> Lanz, Juliane, *Zwischen Politik, Protokoll und Pragmatismus, Die deutsche Olympiageschichte von 1952 bis 1972 (Between Politics, Protocol and Pragmatism, The History of the German Olympics from 1952 to 1972)* Doctoral dissertation, Univ. of Rostock. Berlin: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag (2011), p. 16.

<sup>30</sup> BArch Berlin *Directory to Archives and Libraries* (2006), p. 189.

<sup>31</sup> The situation of relative party strengths in 1946 was a replay of voting results in Germany in late 1924, when the Social Democrats plus a few small other 'State-supporting' parties gained 49,8% of the public vote, with the Communists' just 9%. See Schulze, Hagen, *Weimar*. Berlin: C.A. Koch (1982), p. 67 ff.

However, as the sports sections of the *FDJ* only comprised of some 200,000 members, the organisation was patently unable to cover more than a small sector of the country's population involved in sports. So yet an additional set-up was installed by the *SED*, allocating responsibility for sport of the over-30s to the *FDGB* (Free German Trade Union Organisation), a tightly-controlled mass organisation of several million members. Then, following the Soviet model, *FDJ* and *FDGB* together were to found the *DS*, *Deutscher Sportausschuss* (German Sports Panel) to create the 'all-embracing organisation of sporting activities'.<sup>32</sup>

Capping a succession of bureaucratic changes, on 1 October 1948 the *DSA*, *Deutscher Sport-Ausschuss* (German Sports Committee) – later again to be renamed *DTSB*, *Deutscher Turn- und Sportbund* (German Athletics and Sports Association) – was founded in a major ceremony in East Berlin as yet another 'socialist mass organisation' under direct government control. Hand-in-hand with these developments, and once again following the Soviet example, was a campaign in 1948/49 to establish *Betriebs-Sport-Gemeinschaften* (Companies' Sports Collectives).<sup>33</sup> Within a year, 800 of these claimed half a million members, and head of state Walter Ulbricht declared that 'companies sports unions' must become the back-bone of the new sports movement'.<sup>34</sup>

Pabst asserts that in East Germany in the first three or four years after the war, 'sport for the masses' was accorded a measure of high priority by the government. East Berlin nomenclature would entitle this *die demokratische Sportbewegung* (the democratic

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<sup>32</sup> Vinke, Hermann, *Die DDR, eine Dokumentation mit Biografien (The GDR, a Documentation with Biographies)*. Ravensburg/Germany: Buchverlag (2006), pp. 31, 47.

<sup>33</sup> In deference to Soviet usage, major East German sports clubs were given names following the use of industrial titles in the USSR, like *Dynamo Dresden*, *Turbine Potsdam*, or *Lokomotive Leipzig* – nomenclature icons still in place to the present day in the former GDR.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas, *Divided United*, pp. 259-60.

sports movement).<sup>35</sup> This was in contrast to initiatives which were subsequently started in the early 1950s, when instead ‘high performance sport’ increasingly came into official focus in order to allow the GDR to match international sporting trends elsewhere, not least in West Germany.

What becomes clear is that the shadow of the Cold War increasingly influenced German-German sporting relations. On 17 March 1951 the Politburo of *SED* demanded in a decree that ‘political activities directed towards the West are part and parcel of inter-German sports contacts’. It further pronounced that ‘the change of position of the Soviet Union to join international sports means an active functionalisation of world sports’.<sup>36</sup> A natural consequence of this hardening of attitudes, with the Soviet Union determined to use the Olympics to showcase the virtues of Communism, was that East Germany should establish and demand recognition for its own National Olympic Committee. A high-profile meeting to formulate this demand then took place in Berlin on 22 April 1951, coming hard on the heels of the creation of the NOC of the Soviet Union one day earlier.

To add yet another layer to the country’s convoluted organisation of sport, in late 1951 a further revamping of GDR sport was introduced by the *SED* politburo as this had become dissatisfied by the lack of ideological fervour of the *DS*. This was, again following a Soviet example, the *STAKO* (in approximate translation of its German monster-title: the ‘State Committee for Physical Culture and Sports at the Council of

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<sup>35</sup> Pabst, *Sport*, pp. 80-82.

<sup>36</sup> *DSB*-letter, addressed to the German Foreign Office, Bonn.

Ministers of the GDR'). The idea was to create a top government echelon for the country's sports activities.<sup>37</sup> To quote historian Teichler:

The record breaker of 167 decisions on sport matters, between the Politburo decision of 17 March 1951 and founding of *STAKO*, is not only a case of control mania and demand of leadership but also evidences sizable interest by the leadership in the development of sport, especially such of top performance.<sup>38</sup>

For ideological reasons the countries of the Soviet bloc had hitherto not been interested in the Olympic movement, scorning top sporting performances as 'bourgeois-capitalistic' (though several Communist nations did participate in their own Games called '*Spartakaden*' instead). But by 1951 a major turnaround had occurred, with the Soviets recognising the Olympics' enormous propaganda value and expecting satellite states to follow suit. For the likes of Walter Ulbricht, GDR supremo and an enthusiastic gymnast himself, this added an extra dimension to the tension between the two Germanys: 'sports-men and -women of the GDR on victor's rostrums in world- and European events will be the best answer to the self-appointed exclusive representatives of Germany and revanchists in Bonn'.<sup>39</sup>

Amidst such hard line thinking, and with Cold War hostility becoming ever more a reality, the idea of any joint German-German team emerging appeared far-fetched; it would not be the result of the internal desires of either East- or West-Germany, where sport development and officialdom were heading in very different directions.<sup>40</sup> In order to get closer to understanding how East and West did come together, attention must

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<sup>37</sup> Peiffer, Lorenz & Fink, Matthias *Zum aktuellen Forschungsstand der Geschichte von Körperkultur und Sport in der DDR (The actual State of Research regarding the History of Physical Culture and Sports in the GDR)*. Bonn: Bundesinstitut für Sportwissenschaft (Federal Sports Sciences Institute) (2003) p. 22 ff.

<sup>38</sup> Braun, Jutta & Teichler, Hans Joachim, Hrsg./eds., *Sportstadt Berlin im Kalten Krieg, Prestigekämpfe und Systemwettstreit (Sports City Berlin in the Cold War, Prestige Fights and the Competition of Systems)*. Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, (2006) p. 52.

<sup>39</sup> Lämmer, *Germany in the Olympic Movement*, p. 142.

<sup>40</sup> Additional animosity between FRG and GDR was created when in the early 1950s integration of both Germanys into Western, respectively Eastern military pacts was introduced. This meant conscription to military service in the FRG's *Bundeswehr* (Federal Army Defence Forces); and in the GDR under a less militant-sounding title, the foundation of *Kasernierte Volkspolizei* (Housed-in-barracks Peoples' Police).

therefore turn to the intervention of the IOC, spearheaded by an increasingly influential – at that point in time still its Vice-President – American, deeply concerned about German matters, Avery Brundage, heir apparent to the ageing President Sigfried Edstrom and soon to embark upon a twenty year stint as the powerful head of the IOC.

#### The IOC accepts the West German NOC, rejecting the Eastern one

Given the passage of time after the end of the war, the majority of members of the IOC by 1950 wanted to see a German return to the Olympic fold, especially in time for the forthcoming Helsinki Games. Remaining anti-German sentiment on the IOC was alleviated to an extent by a formal declaration from the newly formed NOC for the FDR, distancing itself from Nazi Germany's atrocities. The declaration submitted to the IOC Executive Committee in August 1950 included the following:

The German sporting youth most deeply condemns the atrocities committed by the criminal representatives of the Nazi regime which have resulted in so much suffering in almost the whole world. It hereby expresses its profound regret for these. It hopes that it will soon be permitted to join the sports youths of the entire world in order to prove that it is determined to work together on creating peace, a goal which has been foremost in the efforts of the benefactor of mankind, Baron Pierre de Coubertin.<sup>41</sup>

The Committee accepted the declaration and during its 45<sup>th</sup> session in Vienna on 8 May 1951 (somewhat symbolically on the day six years after the end of the war in Europe) and converted the former provisional membership to full status as 'NOC of Germany'. Long standing pro-German feeling on the part of Brundage was of major importance in prompting this decision.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Lanz, *Between Politics*, p. 26-27.

<sup>42</sup> Lanz, *Between Politics*, p. 28.

Yet on the same occasion, and much to the dismay of East German sports officials, the IOC rejected the application by the GDR for a separate NOC. There was some sympathy for such a move at the IOC, partly in order to encourage East German sport and not to be outflanked should individual international sports bodies such as those for athletics decided they would accept GDR competitors at their own sanctioned events. But the majority view was that approval could not be given to an NOC based in an unrecognised state, and that to do so would also entrench divisions in Germany instead of facilitating any move towards reunification.<sup>43</sup>

The decision of May 1951 intensified tensions between the two Germanys over sport for a long time ahead, though it did have the merit of forcing events in a fresh direction. Ironically, to a degree, May 1951 acted as a prelude to the eventual emergence of a single joint Olympic team. By insisting that there could only be one German NOC not two, and granting this right to the West, pressure was on the East to find some form of rapprochement, however much this grated. This lesson slowly sank in after the GDR rejected the details of the offer made by the IOC in its protocol of May 1951:

#### AGREEMENT ON GERMAN PARTICIPATION IN THE 1952 OLYMPIC GAMES

(...) The IOC today met representatives of West and East German sport to ascertain the result of their discussions on German participation in the 1952 Olympic Games. It was pointed out that under its rules only one committee for each country can be recognised by the IOC and that the German Committee is already so recognised (...) Agreement has been achieved to ensure that a German team (...) will be composed of the best German amateurs regardless of their place of residence (...) The executive Committee of the IOC notes this step forward with pleasure (...) It awaits a further report at its meeting in Helsinki in July 1952, on its recommendation that there be one Olympic Committee for all of Germany.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> BArch Koblenz, call nos. B 106/1807, B 106/1810

<sup>44</sup> Cited in Lämmer, *Germany in the Olympic Movement*, p. 193.

The protocol was signed by all attendants at the IOC the meeting, including not only the West German delegates, but also by Kurt Edel, President of the NOC of the GDR and head of the GDR delegation.<sup>45</sup> Yet upon Edel's return to East Berlin furore broke out and the three GDR delegates were heavily criticised by their government for having signed it. Indeed they were then summarily dismissed on the grounds that by co-signing this official IOC document, the delegation in Lausanne had in fact renounced their claims for a separate NOC. Propounding the view that the West German delegates had 'broken' the Lausanne Agreement, the GDR eventually sent an official abrogation of its signature to the IOC. But one of the consequences of refusing to accept Edel's view that the IOC had at least opened the door to East Germans taking part in Helsinki was that only West Germany ultimately competed at the 1952 winter and summer Olympics.

An illustration of how all this soured German-German sports relations came in a lengthy document dated 10 September by Dr. Karl Ritter von Halt, Chairman of the 'NOC for Germany', in which he penned a comprehensive West German response and rebuttal of the GDR's reasoning for abrogating the Lausanne agreement. Von Halt claimed that in May, ahead of the crucial IOC meeting in Lausanne, the two German NOCs had met and agreed, among other things, that future policy should be determined 'in agreement with the Olympic rules', including:

that sports leaders have to be free and independent and may not be full-time-employed and -paid party functionaries, and that training of so-called state amateurs is not allowed.

Von Halt went on that at the time of writing, almost four months later, no confirmation to this effect has been received from the GDR, and that the East Zone had not introduced any significant changes.

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<sup>45</sup> Rode, Jan C., *Willi Daume*, p. 42.

In practice von Halt was well aware that the structure of East German sport was alien in the west, and he spent much of the document complaining how in the state-sponsored press of the GDR:

delegates of the IOC as well as those of the NOC (West) continuously are being insulted and vilified as war criminals, hypocrites, assistant organs of Anglo-American war demagogues, etc.

On the last page of his memo von Halt concluded that he:

wishes to warn the NOC (East) not to persevere in its revocation of the Lausanne agreement. Acceptance of an NOC (East) by the IOC will never occur since this is not allowed by the Olympic statutes.<sup>46</sup>

In practice a way of circumventing ‘Olympic statutes’ was to be found, though this looked highly unlikely at the end of 1951, when the East Germans were left to reflect that they remained on the sidelines as far as the Olympics were concerned. In due course the GDR was forced to seek new methods of becoming involved in the Olympic movement, including in effect accept the compromise briefly glimpsed in May 1951 of being part of a combined team. But for the time being Cold War impasse was the order of the day.

#### East-West politics and the Berlin/Saar Dilemmas

Another dimension of the impasse concerned Germany’s foremost city Berlin. During the conferences of the – then still cooperating – Allies of the Second World War in Teheran in late 1943 and Yalta in February 1945, decisions were taken regarding the future of a defeated Germany, including the establishment of Zones of Occupation. The capital city of Berlin was to be divided into four sectors: Soviet, US, British and French. The issue was also a major point of discussion in the post-war Allied conference held in Potsdam in July/August 1945. Little did the three Allies (France was not invited to

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<sup>46</sup> BArch Berlin, call no. DR 510/403

Potsdam) anticipate at the time that, over the next 40-odd years, the division of Berlin would become one of the most contentious German issues between them. In the polemics of East German rhetoric – a stance usually prompted by the USSR – West Berlin became: ‘A separate political entity under control of the three imperialist Allied powers of the Western zones...and situated on the territory of the GDR’.<sup>47</sup> The counter view in the West was that its section of Berlin ‘a Beacon of Freedom – surrounded by a communist satellite territory’.<sup>48</sup>

German historian Rene Wiese of Potsdam University states that ‘in Berlin, German division found its very own and specific characteristics in the area of sports’, suggesting for example that:

until 1950, football in Berlin had developed in the field of organisational competition between the Western zones and the *SBZ* /GDR. When this broke down, it was integrated into the structures of football associations of the GDR on one side and those of the West on the other. For East Berlin this abrupt division was fatal. Geographical closeness to West Berlin plus the attractiveness of its popular traditional clubs resulted in a continuing flow of defecting footballers from East- to West-Berlin (...) An ‘all-Berlin’ feeling of belonging was so much ingrained in the minds of people, however, that, after the institutional division of the city, repeated attempts were made by both East- and West-Berliners – functionaries and people in the street alike – to try to create incentives to overcome the division.<sup>49</sup>

This quotation raises the question of how far there existed determination in East and West to try to retain and preserve – or otherwise – interest in what could be termed national communality. It seems clear that the desire to seek an ‘all-German identity’ was not shared by all ordinary citizens. But in both East and West there was some evidence of feelings of communality, despite official discouragement, as the case of football links in Berlin before 1950 suggest. Such links tended to become weaker over time, however,

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<sup>47</sup> BArch Berlin *DTSB*-Protocol, 17<sup>th</sup> Meeting dated 29/4/63, (42/LPS), p. 4.

<sup>48</sup> One of the frequent acclamations by *RIAS* (Radio Station in the American Sector of West Berlin).

<sup>49</sup> Braun, Jutta, *Sports City Berlin*, p. 147.

and it appears that interest of the West German public in their cousins in the East waned as many people began to accept German division as irrevocable.<sup>50</sup>

The position of sport in Berlin was inevitably overshadowed by the deteriorating relationship between East and West. In place of contacts across the zones in the immediate aftermath of war, links came to more or less a complete standstill by the late 1940s. Sometimes this was at the behest of the *SED*, with its tight control over sports policies. On other occasions it was due to the national football organisations in the FRG, which despite their professed non-political status had to take the embattled situation of the *Front-Stadt* Berlin into consideration.

The unique and difficult situation in Berlin was compounded when in June 1948, on instructions by Stalin, the GDR introduced the 'Berlin Blockade', stopping all land- and waterways-connections between West Germany and West Berlin. This potential calamity for the city was an attempt to 'squeeze out' the Western Allies from the city. But it was circumvented by the famous *Luftbrücke* (The Berlin Airlift), supplying West Berlin until May 1949 through three air corridors from the Federal Republic to the surrounded city. It involved the organisation of hundreds of thousands of flights by US and British aircraft, transporting millions of tons of food, everyday supplies and heating material to the beleaguered city; not only for the three military garrisons and their staff, but also for its 2 ½ million German civilian citizens.<sup>51</sup> On West German initiative, any sports contacts between West- and East-Germany as well as within Berlin came to a total stop during the period of the Berlin Blockade.

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<sup>50</sup> See also Fulbrook, Mary, *Interpretations of the Two Germanies 1945-1990*, chapter 5 (iii): National Identity and Political Culture. London: Macmillan Press Ltd. (2000), pp. 72 ff.

<sup>51</sup> Tusa, Ann & John, *The Berlin Airlift*. New York: SARPEDON (1988/98)

Developments in the Saar region will also be addressed here as they constituted another discrete episode in German-German Olympic sporting relationship that was largely settled by the end of the 1940s.<sup>52</sup> Partly preceding it and partly interwoven with the establishment of the West German NOC was the issue of the Saar. In late 1945 this small south-western, coal-rich land of Germany bordering France was placed under control of a French military government, with the – not too circumspect – aim to eventually become part of the French Republic. A top executive in matters of sport Dr. Emil Straus was appointed who, significantly, was also chairman of the *Mouvement pour le Rattachement de la Sarre a la France* (Movement for the Attachment of the Saar to France). Football sports clubs in *La Sarre*, which now had become its official name, preferred in 1946/47 to play against German teams in the French Zone of Occupation of Germany. When in March 1948 a separatist *Sarre* citizenship and economic integration with France was introduced, football cooperation with Germany collapsed.

In early July 1948 a ‘provisional Olympic Committee Sarre’ was formed, thereby hoping to still be invited to the London Summer Olympics.<sup>53</sup> Eventually on 23 July the IOC refused this wish since the country was considered *n’est pas encore indépendante* (*not yet independent*), an IOC precondition for being accorded Olympic Movement membership. This decision was taken despite an earlier plea of 8 July 1948 by Swedish IOC leader Sigfrid Edström sent to the ‘Members of the Executive Committee of the IOC’:

The French Ambassador to Sweden has visited me today and proposed that the independent territory of Sarre should be recognised as an Olympic country. Sarre is recognised by the great powers as an independent country (...) They have the intention to form an Olympic Committee and their Fencing Association will as soon as possible enter the International Fencing Federation.

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<sup>52</sup> Lämmer, *Germany in the Olympic Movement*, pp. 182-186.

<sup>53</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, pp. 127-134.

Provided this takes place, will you permit me to accept the Sarre as an Olympic country.

I must have your answer before the 15<sup>th</sup> of this month! (...)

Yours sincerely

(signature Edström)<sup>54</sup>

This letter did little to alleviate very delicate French-German sensitivities over the future of the territory. An irony of the matter was that, when it came to a unanimous vote to be taken by the IOC Executive Committee, it was the Frenchman Melchior de Polignac who ‘refused the acceptance of these Germans’.<sup>55</sup> Eventually acceptance of the NOC of the Saar did take place during the IOC’s Copenhagen session in May 1950. This opened the way for invitation of the Saar to be invited to the 1952 Helsinki Games – the only occasion that its team ever would participate.<sup>56</sup> Recognition of the NOC of the Saar by the IOC caused the anger and resentment particularly among East Berlin officials who, with some justification, pointed out that acceptance of the Saar had presented a precedent for their own – so far refused – request for full IOC membership

### Conclusion

This opening chapter has focussed attention on the role and decisive influence of the Allied occupying powers in Germany during the early post-war years. As Cold War tensions became ever greater, any minimal sporting contacts between the FDR and the GDR diminished even further, and officials and politicians in both the West and the East became locked into a cycle of mutual recrimination. An initial attempt for German Olympic cooperation was made at the meeting convened by the IOC in Lausanne in

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<sup>54</sup> Cited in Lämmer, *Germany in the Olympic Movement*, letter facsimile, p. 183.

<sup>55</sup> Lämmer, *Germany in the Olympic Movement*, p. 184.

<sup>56</sup> In 1955 a resounding 67% of the territory’s one million population voted in a plebiscite against a proposed *Saarstatut*, which would have sanctioned separation from Germany as well as economic integration with France. The final nail in the coffin of French designs of *Anschluss* (annexation) – and with that also the end of a separate NOC of the Saar – would be the German-French agreement of October 1956, reinstating the Saarland as 10<sup>th</sup> Land of the German Federal Republic. A decade after its inception, French aspirations of *la Sarre* becoming a part of France were consigned to a footnote in European post-war history.

May 1951; but it ended in acrimony, leaving the two sides seemingly further apart than ever. Whereas the FDR was on the way back to becoming a part of international sporting community, the GDR in effect chose to cut itself off from the prospect of any involvement in the Olympic movement. Given the intractability of inter-German relations, the early post-war years thus provide only the seeds of the later growth of joint Olympic teams. In order to understand how a real breakthrough came, how the tide of history was moved in a different direction, we need to turn attention in the next chapter to the 1952 Helsinki Games and their aftermath.

## CHAPTER TWO

### GERMANY RETURNS TO THE OLYMPIC ARENA, 1952-55

In his excellent compendium overview Norman Friedmann writes ‘The Cold War shaped our times’;<sup>57</sup> and so it did German-German sports relations. Throughout the post-war years inter-German sports contacts always were – and would continue to be so until German reunification in 1990 – a mirror of the Cold War. It will be shown here that there was very limited German-German ‘communality’ in sports. The chapter analyses the first German appearance on the Olympic scene with participation of West Germany only at the XV<sup>th</sup> Helsinki Summer and VI<sup>th</sup> Oslo Winter Games of 1952, resulting in major successes for a re-born German team. Particular resentment by East Berlin over the IOC’s refusal of May 1951 to accept an NOC for the GDR is assessed. Although the exclusion of the GDR from the Helsinki Olympics resulted from its own intransigence, an East Berlin newspaper article placed responsibility squarely on the West. Under the heading ‘The crime of fascist Dr. Carl Diem’, it was alleged:

When on 19 August the Olympic Games at Helsinki shall commence without participation of the GDR, the main responsibility, aside from the reactionary forces in the IOC, is resting with Dr. Carl Diem, the old fascist and sports leader of the Hitlerite era.<sup>58</sup>

The central argument of what follows will be that, although a joint German-German Olympic team eventually emerged post-Helsinki, this was not initiated by the two Germanys themselves but rather by outside influences, particularly by the determination and forcefulness of Brundage, the American President of the IOC. In addition to Brundage, there also will be an assessment of the role of other prominent German personalities in inter-German sporting relations who played a part in bringing about at

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<sup>57</sup> Friedman, Norman, *The Cold War Experience* London: Carlton Publishing Group (2009), p. 2.

<sup>58</sup> BArch Berlin: SED Central Committee Newspaper *Neues Deutschland*, issue of 6 July 1952, p. 2.

least superficial cooperation. The chapter will end by weighing up the factors that facilitated the seminal creation of a joint German-German Olympic team.

#### Outside concern over a German dilemma

One small contributory factor in the change that took place by the mid-1950s was the growing awareness outside Germany that the impasse found at the May 1951 meeting in Lausanne was unsatisfactory for all concerned. The following material, dating from early 1952, shows that in British official quarters there were concerns over German participation at the Helsinki Olympics and what might follow.

The documents were exchanged between the officials of the British Zone of Occupation and the Foreign Office. The first is a memo by M. S. Berenson, Youth Officer of the British Cultural Relations Group in Berlin, headed 'The sports situation in Germany, in its relation to the international field'. Regarding the Lausanne aftermath Berenson writes:

These developments have had their effect on East and West German sport. Obviously, there is an honest and healthy desire by all Germans to play together and to present the best team possible in the Olympics. This desire is exploited by the Eastern political sports machine (...) sport in Eastern Germany is a means of winning the support of the population for the Communist regime.

Berenson expresses his regret that there are no genuine efforts by the international Olympic movement to exert pressure on both Germanys to cooperate towards a joint team. Singling out East Germany as the stumbling block in this endeavour, he nevertheless fears that West Germany will eventually find itself in the position of the

sports leper (...) the morale of West Germany, and the prestige of the Western nations would sink to an all-time level. The West German sports world today finds itself in a position similar to that of 1936 (...) when it was severely criticised for not having drawn the attention of the outside world to the political abuse of sport by Germany (...) But for the [West] Germans to bring these political malpractices to the attention of the international sporting world is difficult as they would in all probability be regarded as presumptuous.

The Berenson memo was sent in copy by Major General C.F.C. Coleman of the British Berlin Sector to Sir I. Kirkpatrick, UK High Commissioner Rhineland dated 8 February 1952, with Coleman writing in an accompanying note:

I share Mr Berenson's concern (...) I hope your Excellency will take any opportunities to brief sympathetic members of the IOC not so much about the abuse of sport in Communist countries (of which they are aware) but on the relevance of this abuse to the tense situation in Germany today and the misfortunes which might result if the NOC in the Federal Republic did not receive the just rewards of its efforts over the last months.<sup>59</sup>

The second document is a letter dated 27 February 1952 by G.E. Hall of the Foreign Office addressed to P.J.E. Male, M.C., of the Office of the UK High Commissioner for Germany, Rhineland, informing him of a conversation he has had with Lord Burghley, chairman of the British NOC. Burghley had informed him how the meeting convened by the IOC with the two German NOCs at Copenhagen in February 1952 (in follow-up to the disastrous result of the Lausanne meeting of 22 May 1951) had also collapsed. The East German delegation had arrived late and then discourteously kept the IOC Executive Committee waiting until the East Germans were ready to meet it and the West Germans. IOC President Edström became furious, sent the West Germans home and refused to see the East Germans. In order to break the deadlock the IOC then sent telegrams to both German NOCs, instructing them to form a 7-persons committee of each three sportsmen-delegates, chaired by Ritter von Halt, to decide on German participation at the Helsinki Games. Hall wrote:

I am afraid the situation has deteriorated unfavourably since the Lausanne meeting but I think we shall probably have to make the best of it and await the replies of the East and West Germans to the IOC telegrams (...) As far as I can see that is the best compromise we are able to get (...) but at least the West German NOC still remains the only body recognised by the IOC and von Halt as chairman should be able to prevent communist infiltration (...) indeed, if properly handled this could be turned into admirable propaganda for the West.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> Kew National Archives, FO 371/98011.

<sup>60</sup> KNA, FO 371/98011 CONFIDENTIAL C 180 1/2.

These documents show how inter-German sporting relations at the time were causing diplomatic ripples in many quarters. As well as showing the concern of a nation which, despite its wartime experience, was leaning heavily towards support for the FDR, they suggest that in political and diplomatic circles in the West there was a desire to assist the IOC as the arbiter of the Games globally to reach a more satisfactory way forward if possible over the vexed German issue.

### West Germany at the 1952 Olympics

For the time being the agreement G.E. Hall hoped for was not reached. Despite the existence of the special committee installed by the IOC, it was only the Western of the two Germanys which was invited to the 1952 Helsinki and Oslo Games. East Germany was not included; officially on account of a convenient 'technicality' (the same as used in the run-up to the 1948 Olympics) that it did not have an NOC accredited by the IOC.

While it remained the rhetorical stance of the IOC that sport and politics must not mix, the reality had always been different, and this continued to be the case at the 1952 Games. This was the year when for the first time the Soviet Union agreed to participate. Brandishing the Olympic movement as bourgeois and capitalistic, it earlier eschewed de Coubertin's movement. It seems not unreasonable to argue that Moscow changed its mind when it began to realize the propaganda value of the Games, resulting in the NOC of the Soviet Union becoming a member of the IOC, including gaining a seat on the influential Executive Committee. With its participation the USSR now opened up another front in its Cold War fight against capitalism; sport was henceforth perceived as yet another sector in the conflict between different social systems.<sup>61</sup> Prior to joining the IOC, the Soviet Union's leadership had supported the occasional 'Spartakades', sporting

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<sup>61</sup> Miller, David, 'Enter the Soviets', Chapter XXIX in *The Official History of the Olympic Games and the IOC*, p. 133 ff.

events and ‘International Proletarian Olympiads’ in the Soviet Bloc. The latter were mass events, organised by German and also some Austrian comrades (with some financial support from Moscow), taking place in Frankfurt in 1925, in Vienna in 1931 and lastly in Amsterdam in 1937. They involved hundreds of athletes and attracted tens of thousands of spectators, participants carrying banners praising ‘The Subduing of the Capitalist Order of Society by the Victory of Socialism’. On the last evening, attendants would sing the *Internationale*, the battle-song of the international communist movement.<sup>62</sup>

Another indication of the inevitable outplaying of a sport-politics axis was the manner in which the 1952 Olympic Games stood in an even longer political shadow than that of the Cold War: namely that of the memory of the dark era of Nazi Germany.<sup>63</sup> At Helsinki the German team gained several gold medals. When on these occasions the matter of playing the German national anthem arose, the Finnish hosts had no problem in airing the sound of the internationally discredited anthem *Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles* (which had been the official anthem of Germany ever since 1922). To an extent, there still existed a brothers-in-arms friendship between Finland and Germany since the countries had been anti-Soviet military allies for some years in the Second World War.

The situation was rather different in Oslo, capital of Finland’s Scandinavian neighbour Norway. Seven years after the end of the war powerful anti-German animosity still existed in Norway. This was due to memories of a period of five years of an oppressive German occupation. Findling also notes that in 1950 the IOC Executive Committee had

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<sup>62</sup> Lämmer, *Germany in the Olympic Movement*, pp. 120 and 125.

<sup>63</sup> Woyke, Wichard ‘Olympische Spiele und Fussballweltmeisterschaften – Mega-Events und ihre Bedeutung für die Politik’ (‘Olympic Games and Football World Championships – Mega events and their Significance for Politics’) *Sport und Politik Nr. 23*, (*Sports and Politics, no. 23*). Schwalbach/Germany. (2006), p. 18.

suggested that the Germans should not participate in the proposed winter Games in Oslo, although this recommendation was not acted upon by the IOC general session.<sup>64</sup> Norwegian memories were made more painful by national embarrassment on account of the fact that one of the celebrities of the nation, the 1920 Nobel literature laureate Knut Hamsun, had been an ardent admirer of Nazi Germany. Moreover, next to numerous Oslo post-occupation court proceedings against collaborators of the Germans, the name of Vidkun Quisling, head of the German-installed puppet government and shot by the Norwegians in 1945, 'became a generic term for a traitor who aids an occupying force'.<sup>65</sup> In accordance with Olympic rules and procedures, the German national anthem was played after three gold medals were secured in Oslo, a situation that can only have strained relationships further.

In terms of 1952, whilst there was only one (West-) German team at the Oslo and Helsinki Games, there was another 'Germanic entity' that had been invited: that of the *Sarre*, the extraordinary and short-lived territorial construct of a separated part of Germany created by the French from 1947 to 1956. As noted in chapter one, 1952 was to witness the first and only appearance of this 'other' Olympic team.

#### The Stalin Note – a genuine initiative for German reunification?

What then were the prospects for East-West sports relations improving after the 1952 Olympics? The general Cold War diplomatic context did not offer much encouragement, despite an episode which had the potential to fundamentally change the existing situation of both Germanys. In March 1952 the Ambassadors of the United States, Great Britain and France in Moscow were handed a document which came to be

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<sup>64</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, p. 323

<sup>65</sup> Collins, *Dictionary of 20<sup>th</sup> Century History, The Definite Guide to the Century*. Glasgow: HarperCollins Publishers/Research Machines Plc (2004) p. 426.

known as the ‘Stalin Note’. It proposed the establishment of a united Germany free of foreign occupation forces and with a democratically elected government. Its publication was something of a political sensation. Opinion in the west varied from those who saw it as a Soviet ruse, an attempt to forestall West Germany’s planned integration into the Western military alliance, to those who welcomed at least the possibility of moves toward reunification. Reactions in Germany were generally hostile: in East Berlin there was realisation that it would have meant abolishing the very system of the GDR and its functionaries; while in Bonn political elites under Chancellor Adenauer chose to emphasise the importance of the FDR’s links with its Western allies. In his book Austrian historian Professor Steininger sharply criticizes a Western refusal to even discuss Stalin’s proposals.<sup>66</sup>

As for the implications of the Stalin Note for sport, two possible scenarios beckoned.

In the first one, had the Stalin Note been considered positively by the West, this would eventually have created a unified German Olympic team. As it was rejected, however, it secondly put an end to hopes of the GDR for a sort of inter-German political ‘co-habitation’, and further soured German-German relations, including in sports. The GDR now increased its anti-FRG propaganda war. It also began to strengthen the border with West Germany by creating special police units and constructing barbed wire fortifications. In the process, in May 1952 *Operation Ungeziefer (Operation Vermin)* was initiated, consisting of forced relocation to other parts of the country of GDR citizens living close to the German-German border. It involved families considered to be ‘politically unreliable’, or otherwise ‘undesirable’, and included demolition of their homes, even complete obliteration of some now empty villages.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Steininger, Rolf, *Eine vertane Chance, die Stalin-Note vom 10 März 1952 und die Wiedervereinigung (A missed Chance, the Stalin Note of 10 March 1952 and Reunification)* Berlin: J.H.W. Dietz (1985)

<sup>67</sup> Veen, Hans-Joachim, Hrsg./ed., *Opposition und Widerstand in der SED-Diktatur (Opposition and Resistance in the GDR Dictatorship)* Berlin: Propyläen Verlag (2000), p. 384.

### Friendly, 'unofficial' sporting contacts

In the same way that the top-level diplomatic context was not encouraging, continuing evidence of a small amount of cross-border sporting activity was unlikely on its own to lead to a major breakthrough in terms of Olympic cooperation. This activity was the *Kleine Grenzverkehr* (minor instances of frontier crossings), outside of Eastern 'political guidance', with and from West Germany. As we noted in the previous chapter, there were several examples of local football clubs in the East and West playing against each other in the immediate post-war years, though this was largely halted for a while after the Berlin airlift. But the situation remained fluid. During 1951-52 there were at least twelve football matches played between teams in East and West Berlin. Later, after a brief lessening of international tensions in the post-Stalin era under the new Soviet leader Khrushchev, this was followed by so-called 'Games of Reconciliation' between East and West in the mid-1950s, and even for a short time a joint Berlin football team.<sup>68</sup>

But the example of the popular sport of cycling illustrated the everyday realities and difficulties of achieving cross border activity. The annual *Sechstage-Rennen*, six days of races by professional cyclists in the huge, purpose-built covered stadium called Velodrome in Berlin, had always been a German national event. It attracted thousands of enthusiastic spectators also from outside of Berlin, rivalling football in public appeal. Although the Velodrome was destroyed during the war, after 1945 amateur and professional cyclists were again to take to the streets. Historian Ronald Huster, in his work on 'Duel at the Spree'<sup>69</sup>, describes how cycling events 'in', 'around', or 'through' Berlin, a city now divided into four sectors, became increasingly difficult.<sup>70</sup> During the

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<sup>68</sup> Braun, Jutta, *Sportstadt Berlin*, p. 117

<sup>69</sup> Name of the river separating East- from West-Berlin over large parts of the city.

<sup>70</sup> Braun, Jutta, *Sportstadt Berlin*, p. 287 ff.

first cycling circuit event through East Germany in 1948 it became evident in which direction future tours would develop in East and West. As Huster records, the first GDR *Friedensfahrt* (*peace tour*) in 1952, heralded as contributing to ‘world-wide...peace’, passed from East Berlin through the USSR and Poland back to Berlin. In 1955 this event, by then under the more internationally-sounding name *Cour de la Paix*, provided the GDR with an important breakthrough in terms of international recognition when the *UCI, Union Cycliste Internationale*, accepted the GDR’s Cycling Association as member with all equal rights.

Some of the cyclists of the GDR built up considerable reputations, like Gustav-Adolf Schur, popularly known as Täve. Born in 1931 near Magdeburg, Schur participated on twelve occasions after 1952 in the GDR’s international *Friedensfahrten*, was twice their leader in 1955 and 1959 and also won the Cycling World Championship in 1958 and 1959. Although a member of the state party SED only after 1958, his public appeal resulted in high political rankings, such as member of the *Volkskammer*, the GDR’s leading assembly. Schur’s fame continued even until after the end of the GDR, when from 1998 to 2002 he was elected by public vote as deputy to the *Bundestag* (the German Federal Parliament) of the reunited Germany.<sup>71</sup>

What the *Friedensfahrt* was to East Germany, the *Tour de Berlin* was to the West.

But while cyclists from the East could leave East Berlin and the GDR to be welcomed by organised, jubilant spectators in major cities of the ‘brother countries’, the latter’s activities were restricted to West Berlin. The first cycling tour through the three Western sectors was organised in 1953. Given the paucity of distances covered in these events, and also to alleviate the increasing feeling of isolation perceived by West

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<sup>71</sup> Müller-Enbergs *Who was Who in the GDR*, p. 922.

Berlin's citizens, the city's officials tried to intensify sports contacts elsewhere in the FDR. However when a 'Hanover-to-Berlin Tour' was instituted in 1958 only its first brief section took place on streets around Hanover, after which sportsmen and their bikes were packed off by bus through the GDR to West Berlin to finish their tour there.<sup>72</sup> The point made here is that, however popular cycling was in both Germanys, this sport like others had to exist under the political and practical exigencies of German separation.

### A first East-West German Sports Agreement

Probably more grounds for optimism in terms of German-German sporting relations improving came with the growing realisation in the GDR, after the Lausanne meeting of May 1951, that it would have to adjust its hard-line approach if it was ever to secure its aim of becoming internationally recognised. This lesson took a while to sink in, for a year after the Lausanne meeting the GDR authorities were still introducing unpalatable 'special conditions', demanding that West Berlin sportspeople wanting to travel into the Eastern part of the city had to fill in an inquisitional questionnaire. This included demands of information on what the GDR penal code called *Republikflüchtige* (people who have fled from the country), including their addresses. Of two passport photographs required, one was to go into a special 'political file' in East Berlin. In some instances Western travellers were directed to sign declarations condemning a so-called 'West German General War Contract', even attacking the 'Adenauer-divider-government' itself.<sup>73</sup> The measures made for a fresh period of frosty relations, with West Berlin sports organisations retaliating by barring any exchanges with the GDR.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Braun, Jutta, *Sportstadt Berlin*, p. 299.

<sup>73</sup> Pabst, Ulrich *Sport Medium der Politik? Der Neuaufbau des Sports in Deutschland nach dem 2. Weltkrieg und die innerdeutschen Sportbeziehungen bis 1961 (Sport a Medium of Politics? Rebuilding of Sport after the Second World War and inter-German sports Relations until 1961)* Berlin: Verlag Bartels & Wernitz, (1980) p. 154 ff.

<sup>74</sup> Thomas, *Divided United*, p. 266 ff.

East Berlin eventually realised that it had gone too far, however, and by the end of the year it sent signals that it was ready for talks. On 12 December 1952 negotiations took place in West Berlin, resulting in what was known as the ‘First Berlin [Sports] Agreement between East and West Germany’. East Berlin delegates revoked the earlier ‘special conditions’ and agreed ‘to accept that no special conditions apply to sportspeople from West Berlin and that the DTSB will continue its efforts to grant special concessions to sportspeople from West Berlin’. As a kind of counter-concession by the West to those granted by the East, the West German DSB advised its allied organisations ‘to accept the claim of sections of the GDR for membership in international sports organisations’.<sup>75</sup>

Definitions and connotations of what was meant by particular words and phrases in the Berlin Agreement differed widely between East and West and would be the subject of much controversy in future.<sup>76</sup> In other words scepticism remained the order of the day. The Agreement certainly produced a lot of negative comments in the West German press. *Pars pro toto* may be a quote from an article in an influential newspaper:

One can only shake one’s head. Do the representatives of the DSB really believe that the communists in future will give up propaganda possibilities in sport? Experience has shown again and again that clauses of an agreement are being interpreted by the Soviet zone at their own convenience. Very soon daily GDR practice will maintain that what should be a self-evident renunciation of the ‘misuse of the Olympic idea’, will only be practiced by the Federal Republic. Totally irresponsible is a proposal in the last point of the protocol: here no road is opened towards unification but instead the division of Germany has been sanctioned by the representatives of our DSB.<sup>77</sup>

Nonetheless German-German sports exchanges, except for a few incidents, did begin to rebuild in 1953. East Berlin’s sports sections and communities honoured the agreement

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<sup>75</sup> Pabst, Ulrich *Sport Medium der Politik?* p. 150.

<sup>76</sup> Rode, *Willi Daume*, pp. 134 ff.

<sup>77</sup> Römer, Kurt, ‘Ein Pyrrhossieg’ (A Pyrrhic Victory) *Der Mittag*, Düsseldorf (13.12.1952), front-page.

reached with the West as they did not want to risk another disruption. In more than ten categories of sport, negotiations were conducted or working groups established. And in November a first all-German swimming championships took place in Leipzig/GDR. Adopting a more conciliatory tone on the Berlin Agreement, West German DSB President Willi Daume noted:

the ground rules of international, and especially Olympic sport are that everyone should take part. Already in 1952 and 1953 the majority of our organisations had decided that we did not want to present the macabre spectacle on the international stage that Germans are attempting to exclude other Germans from world-wide sporting exchanges.<sup>78</sup>

In 1955 Daume would add a further assessment, noting that mutual give-and-take between the sports federations of East and West were cautiously progressing. By the end of 1955 the GDR was a member of 19 dedicated international sports organisations, 14 of which relating to Olympic sports disciplines. In a lucid and courageous assessment of the situation Daume wrote:

By any yardsticks of sports politics the GDR unfortunately already is a sovereign country, while at the same time and without any doubt a satellite state of the Soviet Union (...) Yet all-German sport is one of the possible attempts to spin the thread of German togetherness.<sup>79</sup>

The ‘thread of German togetherness’ remained thin against the backdrop of the Cold War. Suspicions of the other side continued to be strong. The GDR was clearly intent on using sport to attain international status as a sovereign country (and not as a ‘phenomenon’ as influential West German publications continued to describe it.)<sup>80</sup> On the other side of the equation there remained the firm determination of the West German

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<sup>78</sup> Pabst, *Medium der Politik?* p. 156

<sup>79</sup> Hütter, Hans Walter, Hrsg./ed., *Wir gegen uns, Sport im geteilten Deutschland (We against Ourselves, Sports in divided Germany)* Leipzig/Germany: Primus Verlag, (2009).

<sup>80</sup> Foremost in this campaign was press czar Axel Springer (1912-1985), owner of the largest group of newspapers in West Germany, including the mass circulation *Bild* and broad sheet *DIE WELT*. Springer had made it his obsessive aim to disparage the East German state, e.g. until his death having ordered his editors to belittle and satirize the East German state’s title always in quotation marks, as “DDR”.

government not to leave a stone unturned to frustrate this ambition of the GDR.<sup>81</sup> But the words used by Daume in 1955 pointed to an improving picture, and one that by that time included the possibility of a real breakthrough in terms of the Olympics as well as other sports.

### Who were the protagonists of a joint Olympic team?

The date 16<sup>th</sup> of July 1952 was be of crucial importance for German-German sports in years to come: it was the day when, following the resignation of Swede Sigrid Edström, Avery Brundage was elected 5<sup>th</sup> President of the IOC. He was to become the *key player* in the quest for a joint German Olympic participation. The IOC outlines the main elements of his life and career:

Born on 28 September 1887 in Detroit from a modest family, Brundage died in Garmisch-Partenkirchen/Germany on 8 May 1975. He was a prolific American amateur athlete, arts collector, and philanthropist. Without any doubt he also was one of the most outstanding presidents of the IOC. Graduating in 1909, Brundage had studied civil engineering at the University of Illinois, during which period he played basketball with the University team. In 1911 he founded the ‘Avery Brundage Builders Company’, (active in construction projects until 1947, which made him a millionaire). Becoming an all-round athlete, he competed in the 1912 Stockholm Summer Olympics in the pentathlon and decathlon events, finishing 6<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> respectively. He also won the US National All-Round Champion Title in 1914, 1916 and 1918. He got married in 1927. In 1929 Brundage became president of USOC, the United States Olympic Committee, and in 1930 gained the vice-presidency of IAAF, the International Amateur Athletic Federation. Brundage’s official entry into the IOC began in 1936 as a member, becoming vice-president in 1946, president from 1952-1972 [unique in IOC history], and honorary president for life from 1972 until his death in 1975.<sup>82</sup>

Brundage’s forthright personality was admired by many, but much disliked by others. In his later career he was to be much applauded especially for his ‘even-keeled handling of

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<sup>81</sup> Ploetz, Carl, et al. *Der grosse Ploetz. Daten, Fakten, Zusammenhänge der Weltgeschichte (The large Ploetz. Data, Facts and Interrelationships of World History)* Freiburg/Germany: Verlag Herder, 1998), pp. 1347, 1411.

<sup>82</sup> IOC Olympic Studies Centre, Historical Archives/Fonds List, IOC Headquarters Lausanne/Switzerland. Ref. CH CIO-AH A-PO5 (14/04/2011).

the 1972 Summer Olympics terrorist massacre of Israeli athletes'.<sup>83</sup> Yet a lot of criticism was directed at him for earlier derogatory statements relating to women as 'ineffective and unpleasing on the track'; and on Jews in sport. This especially when:

as USOC president, Brundage rejected any American proposals to boycott the 1936 Summer Olympics to be held in the capital of Nazi Germany, despite the exclusion of German Jews by Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich (...) On the morning of the day of the 400-meter relay race the two Jews on the 1936 US track team (...) were replaced by non-Jews (...). Brundage had pressured to have the two Jews removed at the last moment so as not to embarrass Hitler with a Jewish victory.<sup>84</sup>

Although not of German ancestry, as a student at the University of Illinois Brundage had been drawn towards German culture. Next to English he also studied German. This would be an asset in his later life as a businessman in Chicago with its tens of thousands of German immigrants. Attending the 1936 Berlin Games he became an active partisan of German culture; his long-standing earlier friendship with German sports leaders Carl Diem and Karl Ritter von Halt, which began at the Stockholm Olympics of 1912, made him increasingly pro-German. It was small wonder that he was denounced as 'pro-Nazi' by parts of the American press.<sup>85</sup> In a much-publicized speech after the Berlin Olympics in October 1936, addressing the German-American Bund, Brundage did not exactly pour oil on troubled waters when he posited:

We can learn much from Germany. We, too, if we wish to preserve our institutions, must stamp out communism. We, too, must take steps to arrest to arrest the decline of patriotism.<sup>86</sup>

Avery's period of service as President of the IOC would last until 1972. It was a time of constant threats to the Olympic ideals, overshadowed by the manifestations of the Cold War. For the IOC it was a period of forced and half-hearted promises, where more often

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<sup>83</sup> Lanz, Juliane, *Politics*, p. 403 ff.

<sup>84</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, p. 109.

<sup>85</sup> Guttman, Allen, *The Games Must Go On, Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press (1984) p. 90.

<sup>86</sup> Guttman, Allen, *The Games*, p, 91.

than not political issues rather than sporting matters ruled the agenda. A special predicament facing the IOC would be the issue of sport in ex-colonial or divided countries like South Africa, Rhodesia, Korea, China-Formosa. Above all Brundage was to play an important role by trying to get the ‘opposing brothers’<sup>87</sup> in Germany together. The unlikely success of inspiring the creation of joint German-German Olympic teams in 1956, 1960 and 1964 would become one of his major achievements as President of the IOC.

Brundage’s biographer mentions his position was that of ‘the world’s most important sport administrator’.<sup>88</sup> Although he frequently proclaimed that sports and politics should not mix, in reality he knew that the IOC was unavoidably drawn into a range of diplomatic disputes. And in the case of the two Germanys he was very willing to use sport to bend political realities. He was convinced that a successful German-German cooperation in sports could as well pave the way to closer ties between the two countries. Other incentives to this end certainly also were his vanity – his belief he could make a real difference – and the ‘Germanophile’ tendencies in his earlier life, including his strong bonds of friendship with Diem and von Halt.

How much Brundage set store by having dictated – there seems to be no other appropriate term for this – the formation of a joint German-German Olympic team is evidenced in many ways. He was to say of the decisions of the IOC, which had the power to act independently of national governments: ‘I must admit that we were pleased with ourselves with having reunited Germany at least in sport, a thing the politicians have been unable to do.’<sup>89</sup> He later repeated his point after the 1956 Cortina

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<sup>87</sup> Guttman, *The Games*, p. 150 ff.

<sup>88</sup> Guttman, *The Games*, Preface p. x.

<sup>89</sup> IOC Olympic Studies Centre, Historical Archives, Lausanne/Switzerland, RE: IOC EB Paris, 51<sup>st</sup> IOC Session, 13.-18.06.1955 – REQ006750 (27/03/2012) p. 64.

d'Ampezzo Winter Games, where for the first time a joint German team participated, commenting: 'We have obtained in the field of sports what politicians have failed to achieve so far'.<sup>90</sup> Then, at the opening of the 1960 Olympics at Rome where a German-German team was seen entering the Stadio Olimpico and Italian President Giovanni Granchi praised him and the IOC for having accomplished a miracle by a unification of bitterly divided Germany, Brundage boasted 'In sport we do such things (...) The joint German team has demonstrated to the entire quarrelling world the non-political and humanitarian nature of the Olympic Games'.<sup>91</sup>

While it is undeniable that Brundage was the *spiritus rector* of the joint German Olympic team, he could not have succeeded without the compliance and support of other key figures, both in the FDR and the GDR. More detail is therefore provided than hitherto of three prominent sports leaders from West Germany, as well as two of their counter-parts from the East.

The most important figure in West German sports was Willi Daume, whose main career details were as follows:

Born 24.05.1913 near Dortmund, died 20.05.1996 in Munich; sports leader and industrialist; 1950-1970 President of *DSB, Deutscher Sportbund*; 1961-1992 Chairman of the NOC of Germany; 1956-1991 member of the IOC Executive Committee; 1966-1973 President of the Organisation Committee for the XXth Olympic Games at Munich in 1972; 1972-1976 Vice President of the IOC; 1979-1988 President of the German Olympic Society; 1988-1991 Chairman, *Deutsche Sporthilfe (German Foundation for Sports Assistance)*.<sup>92</sup>

Daume came from a wealthy background with the family owning a major iron-foundry works in Dortmund. His biography reflects the political, societal and cultural developments in mid 20<sup>th</sup> century Germany: at the dividing lines between post-war

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<sup>90</sup> Guttman, *The Games*, p. 116, and Pabst, *Sport*, p. 257.

<sup>91</sup> Guttman, *The Games*, p. 105

<sup>92</sup> Rode, *Willi Daume*, p. 6 ff.

rebuilding and modernisation, as a national sports manager between the state's claims for right of intervention and the sports organisation's demand for autonomy, between the quest for better understanding between the two Germanys and the realities of the Cold War.<sup>93</sup> What emerges from secondary writing about Daume is that he considered it to be his prime task, indeed a personal objective, to try to create common relationships in all matters of sport with the 'other' Germany. As sociologist-historian Uta Balbier argues:

There can be no doubt that the impulse for a cooperative sporting competition with the GDR originated from the top management sports circles around Daume. He knew which arguments he would have to use to be listened to, having a special knack to discern other people's opinions and evaluations and to influence these in the direction of his own convictions.<sup>94</sup>

Much to Daume's irritation and occasional anger, however, his efforts for well-inclined political/sporting relations with GDR organisations were not always reciprocated by the other side. There were attempts by East Berlin hardliners to smear the reputation of leading West German sports functionaries like Daume, as well as von Halt and Diem, as 'revanchist, incorrigible old Nazis'.<sup>95</sup>

Details of West German functionaries' past in Nazi-Germany gradually came to light and GDR officials used such knowledge regularly in quarrels with their Western counterparts. In the case of Daume accusations were based on documents which the *Stasi*, the GDR security service, had dug up in files in East Berlin. The Western Allies shortly after the war had instituted what was called *Entnazifizierungs-Massnahmen*

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<sup>93</sup> Rode, *Willi Daume*, p. 27

<sup>94</sup> Balbier, Uta Andrea, *Kalter Krieg auf der Aschenbahn, Der deutsch-deutsche Sport 1950-1972, Eine politische Geschichte (Cold War on the Cinder Track, German-German Sports 1950-1972, A political Chronicle)* Paderborn/Germany: Ferdinand Schöningh (2007) p. 252.

<sup>95</sup> For details see: Collective Hrsg./eds., *Nationalismus und Sport, Eine Dokumentation über den beabsichtigten Missbrauch der Spiele der XX. Olympiade 1972 in München für nationalistisches Prestigestreben durch die herrschenden Kreise der BRD (Nationalism and Sport, A Documentation of the intended Misuse of the Games of the XXth Olympics in Munich 1972 for nationalistic Prestige Purposes by the Ruling Classes of the FRG)* East Berlin: Gesellschaft zur Förderung des olympischen Gedankens in der DDR (Society for the Promotion of the Olympic Concept in the GDR) No. 2 (1971).

(De-Nazification Tribunals). Part of the procedure was that leading professionals as well as members of the *NSDAP*, the Nazi state party – both positions that Daume had earlier occupied – were to fill in lengthy questionnaires, the evaluation of which would determine their post-war status in Germany. *Stasi* also alleged that Daume had been a member of the *SA*, Hitler's storm troopers, and that since 1943 Daume cooperated with the security service of the *SS*. The verdict of the tribunal had been Daume's indictment as *Mitläufer* (companion member), yet Daume had 'deviously managed' to have this reduced to *Unbelasteter* (with a clear record).<sup>96</sup> This for East Berlin was not only a case of connivance with the Western occupation authorities but also proof of Daume's alleged lack of judgement to admit that he had been a Nazi supporter, and hence patently unsuitable to be a leader in German sports.

A second key figure in the FDR was Carl Diem:

Born 24.06.1882 in Würzburg, died 17.12.1962 in Cologne; sports leader and writer; 1919-1933 Secretary of the Reichs Assosiation for Physical Exercises; 1936 organizer of the Berlin/Garmisch-Partenkirchen Olympics; Founder and director of the German High School for Physical Exercises; 1935 initiator of the relay race by which the Olympic flame is carried; 1947-1962 Dean of the Cologne Sports High School established by him.<sup>97</sup>

Concerning his disposition towards matters of the Olympic Games there is a rather philosophical dictum by Diem, quoted by John A. Daly:

Within the Olympic idea there inevitably develops a (...) conflict of the past with the future and of reality with the ideal.<sup>98</sup>

Even though Andreas Höfer's contribution to Lämmer's work is headlined 'Carl Diem, A Life in Sports',<sup>99</sup> there remain doubts about Diem's real impact on German-German sports relations. His early involvement was as a sports- journalist and -administrator

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<sup>96</sup> Collective eds., *Nationalism and Sport*, pp. 20, 73.

<sup>97</sup> *dtv Lexikon*, vol. 5, p. 266.

<sup>98</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, p. xvii.

<sup>99</sup> Lämmer, *Germany in the Olympic Movement*, pp. 261-265

before the First World War, when he also went on to compete for the German team at the 1912 Stockholm Games. Höfer regrets that there exists no comprehensive, reliable biography of Diem and that this deficit constitutes ‘a challenge for sports historiography which should arrive at a balanced assessment of his Life in Sports’.<sup>100</sup> In the early 1930s he was appointed Secretary of the Organisation Committee for the 1936 XIth Berlin Olympics. Guttman records:

Although Diem was sufficiently the child of his time to have been an ardent nationalist throughout the twenties, he was definitely a believer in modern sports and was able to acknowledge the achievements of athletes from foreign nations (...) Although Diem was not stigmatized by Jewish forebears, his wife was. It was also held against him that the Reichs High School for Physical Exercises had several Jews on its faculty. For these sins, Diem was denounced in the Nazi press as a ‘white Jew’.<sup>101</sup>

While Diem was honoured by the Olympic movement for his efforts to promote international sport, after the war he was denigrated by East Germany for his alleged collaboration with party leaders. Countless charges were employed, making him the bogeyman responsible for anything negative that happened to German sport in the Nazi period.<sup>102</sup> His stance in the contentious issue of participation of Jewish athletes in 1936 came under special criticism and it appears his attitude was one of opportunism. He did not oppose anti-Semitism from an ethical standpoint but from a practical one as he expected that bad international press, especially such from the United States ‘would fuel the fires of boycott movements preventing Germany from gaining prestige from the Olympics’.<sup>103</sup>

The third main protagonist in the West, the one with the longest history of involvement in matters of German sport, was Karl Ritter von Halt:

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<sup>100</sup> Lämmer, *Germany in the Olympic Movement*, p. 265

<sup>101</sup> Guttman, *The Olympics*, p. 55

<sup>102</sup> Under the heading *Zersetzungsmassnahmen* (Measures for defamation), Stasi-directive no. 1/76 specified ‘Systematical discrediting of public repute, distinction and prestige, based on untrue, yet believable, non-deniable information’. Quoted in *Die Zeit*, issue no. 10 (27/02/2014) p. 45.

<sup>103</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, p. 306.

Born Munich 02.06.1891, died there 05.08.1964; athlete and sports leader; five times Decathlon Master between 1911 and 1921; 1929-1964 member of the IOC Executive Committee; 1931-1933 Chairman of the German Sports Authority for Athletics; 1934-1945 Section Head Athletics in the Reichs-Federation for Physical Exercises; 1936 Head of the Organisation Committee for the Olympic Winter Games at Garmisch-Partenkirchen; 1944-45 and again 1951-1961 President of the NOC for Germany.<sup>104</sup>

Von Halt's career in German sports extended over the exceptionally long period of forty years. He received an apprenticeship with one of Bavaria's most respected institutions, the prestigious *Deutsche Bank* in Munich, while he also studied French and English and took preparatory courses for joining Munich university, leading to registration for a study of law and national economics.<sup>105</sup> His activities in sports started at an early age and in 1911, at the age of 20, he gained the title of German Decathlon Master. A year later he participated in the Stockholm Olympics. Von Halt had a special knack for what today would be called 'networking', and in Stockholm he would meet – and began friendships which would last for the rest of his life – with two sportspeople who would be of immense importance for his later career, especially so in his very difficult years after the war. These two men were later to become IOC presidents: Sigfrid Edström, one of the organisers of the Stockholm Games, and Brundage, von Halt's American rival in the decathlon. After obtaining his PhD at Munich University, he pursued a banking career, rejoined his former employer *Deutsche Bank* first as director of personnel and ultimately was appointed a Member of the Board in 1938.

In 1929 von Halt was invited to join the IOC, in 1937 becoming a member of its Executive Committee and remaining such throughout the war years – even though there was not very much 'to execute'. Like that of many other *Sportsführer*, his 1933 entry into the German sports organisations of Hitler's Germany had been unproblematic; in

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<sup>104</sup> Stockhorst, Erich, *5.000 Köpfe, Wer war Was im Dritten Reich (5.000 Heads, Who was What in the Third Reich)* Kiel/Germany: Arndt-Verlag (2000) p. 174.

<sup>105</sup> Lämmer, *Germany in the Olympic Movement*, p. 205.

fact the Nazis appreciated his close ties to the IOC. His membership in the *NSDAP* Nazi party was more or less an inevitability. Not so, however, his also becoming an *SA-Gruppenführer (Storm Troopers Squad Leader)*<sup>106</sup> which, after the war, would make von Halt the target of most venomous attacks by East Berlin. These diatribes were intensified by the circumstance that in 1944 he had been appointed the provisional *Reichssportführer* after the death of his predecessor, making him the leader of all Nazi sports organisations even though these de facto had long been in dissolution. After the war and likely in consequence of his last position, von Halt was kept by SMAD, the Soviet Military Administration, for five (some sources state two) years in one of their ‘special camps’: at Buchenwald, the former Nazi concentration camp.

Despite all this a firm defender of von Halt, especially after the war, was IOC vice-president Brundage, who vindicated his old friend when he came under suspicion from the Allied High Commission for Germany. Brundage wrote to the US High Commissioner John McCloy that von Halt had entered the Nazi party under pressure, had always rejected Hitler’s policies and the war that arose out of them, and that ‘Dr. von Halt is not a politician and was never a Nazi’.<sup>107</sup>

When in the early 1950s the just established NOC for Germany was looking for an influential personality with ties to the IOC, they thought of von Halt and elected him president in 1951. His reputation as an outstanding expert in matters of sports, but perhaps even more so his continuing close friendship with Brundage, were prime factors in this decision, resulting in excellent West German relations with the IOC. Although East Berlin continued to attack von Halt for his Nazi background and as a ‘Cold Warrior’, it would not be unreasonable to conclude that he was a vital asset to Brundage

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<sup>106</sup> Guttman, *The Games Must Go On*, p. 101.

<sup>107</sup> Guttman, *The Games Must Go On*, p. 100.

is seeking to improve the poisoned German-German sports atmosphere in the early 1950s.<sup>108</sup>

Only limited source material exists about senior representatives of East Germany in this field, but two notable figures in the GDR require attention, beginning with Kurt Edel:

Born 17.09.1920 in Weissenfeld near Leipzig, died 02.03.1987, athlete, sports instructor, disabled veteran of the Second World War, *verdienter Arbeiter des Volkes der DDR (Meritorious Worker of the People of the GDR)*, from 1951-1955 was President of the NOC of the GDR. He also was – as usual for a person in high function – a member of *SED*, the state party,<sup>109</sup> as well as more ominously an officer of Stasi, the feared state security organisation.<sup>110</sup>

Edel was one of East Berlin's hardliners in the propaganda battle with West Germany and the IOC, especially as far as the fight for recognition of a separate East German NOC was concerned. It is particularly ironic therefore that his most memorable action in his NOC function was to sign the Lausanne Agreement of 22 May 1951, renouncing the right of the GDR to form separate NOC next to that of West Germany. For this he was sacked from the NOC by the state leadership.

The second East German functionary to be mentioned was Heinz Schöbel, the more successful successor to a hapless Kurt Edel:

Heinz Schöbel (born 14.10.1920 in Leipzig, died 26.04.1987), *SED* member since 1946, an urbane 'man of letters' and founder as well as director of several publishing houses, from 1953-1955 member and 1955-1973 President of the NOC of the GDR, and from 1966 also member of the IOC.<sup>111</sup>

Schöbel's NOC nomination was an extraordinary affair. First of all, after the Lausanne debacle and the annoyance it had generated with the IOC, the GDR leadership came to realise that it had to mend its ways with this powerful organisation. Secondly a face-saving manoeuvre had to be found to bring this about. A most unusual initiative was

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<sup>108</sup> Lämmer, *Germany in the Olympic Movement*, p. 207.

<sup>109</sup> Müller-Enbergs, *Who was Who in the GDR*, p. 206.

<sup>110</sup> Schiller & Young., *The 1972 Olympics*, p. 161.

<sup>111</sup> Müller-Enbergs, *Who was Who in the GDR*, p. 898.

taken in this regard by IOC President Brundage, who wrote a letter to East Berlin dated 11 September 1954 in which he suggested:

if your administration is changed in the meantime so that the IOC does not have to deal with the men who failed to carry out the original agreement which they signed, it is my opinion that (...) the GDR Olympic Committee can be recognised.<sup>112</sup>

Not daring to ignore this unheard-of interference, the face-saving move by the GDR was summed up in a letter dated 27 February 1955 addressed to Brundage:

allow me to give you a report on a decision during a meeting of the members of our NOC. Owing to an overweight of professional work the President of our NOC finds himself unable to fulfill his duties (...) The meeting of the members accepted his resignation and elected unanimously Heinz Schöbel (...) as President of the NOC of the GDR (...) Yours truly, Heinz Schöbel, President.<sup>113</sup>

When in later years Schöbel became quite adept at ‘playing the old-boys network of the IOC’ he even flattered Brundage by instigating a leather-bound Festschrift:<sup>114</sup>

In addition to the two members of the GDR’s NOC discussed above, Dr. Thomas Köhler should also be mentioned here. He was the author of one of the rare books written by a former senior functionary of the GDR sports hierarchy. Köhler, coming from the background of a successful rank-and-file sportsman and through various administrative-managerial positions, rose to become Vice-President of the *DTBS*, the powerful umbrella organisation of all sports- and Olympics-activities in the GDR.<sup>115</sup>

Köhler was born in the small hamlet of Beierfeld in the poor East German region of the *Erzgebirge* (Ore Deposit Mountain Range).<sup>116</sup> His book is not only a record of sport successes and, in his later life, also of managerial achievements. He was also successful

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<sup>112</sup> Cited in Guttmann, *The Games Must Go On*, p. 154.

<sup>113</sup> Lämmer, *Germany in the Olympic Movement*, pp. 221-22.

<sup>114</sup> Schöbel, Heinz, *Die vier Dimensionen des Avery Brundage (The Four Dimensions of Avery Brundage)* Leipzig/GDR: Edition Leipzig (1968). Reprinted by International Olympic Editions, Lausanne/Stuttgart (no date)

<sup>115</sup> Köhler, Thomas, *Zwei Seiten der Medaille, Thomas Köhler erinnert sich (The two Sides of the Medal, Thomas Köhler remembers)* Berlin: Verlag Neues Leben, (2010).

<sup>116</sup> Köhler, *Two Sides*, p. 120.

in GDR academia, having obtained a PhD at the Leipzig High School for Sports. This is an example of how someone in East Germany could rise to an important position if he had chosen the ‘ideologically correct’ path. Chapter five will provide further details of Köhler’s international sporting achievements.

Hence Brundage was not alone in seeking to improve German-German sporting relationship. He could count on varying degrees of support from influential figures on both sides of the East-West divide. Willi Daume’s contribution to what unfolded was especially important. To quote his biographer:

Willi Daume is the personality who exerted the strongest and most important influence on German sports after the Second World War (...) His relations with politics were not always without friction, yet intensive, and successful in the end. (...) His inter-German Olympic negotiations between the two NOCs were signs of cooperation, as well as manifestations of either side’s demarcations.<sup>117</sup>

On the East German side, Schöbel developed good personal relations with Brundage and was sometimes also instrumental in sorting out FRG-GDR disputes.<sup>118</sup>

### The IOC’s 1955 decision

We next turn to how Brundage was able to force through his desire to make a joint German Olympic team a reality, a process that culminated in a vital IOC decision reached in June 1955. As well as being able to call upon reliable allies in Lausanne, Brundage was adept at exploiting the desires and fears of sports officials in both the GDR and the FRG. However much everyday animosity was expressed on both sides of the border (with the East particularly resenting the non-recognition of its proposal for a separate NOC), there was a growing realisation that better inter-German sporting relations were now unavoidable. This had little to do with developing feelings of

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<sup>117</sup> Rode, Jan, *Willi Daume*, pp.5, 7.

<sup>118</sup> Lämmer, *Germany in the Olympic Movement*, pp. 255-57.

German communality but rather as a matter of expediency. For East Germany it meant the prospect of not being able to enter the Olympic arena while for West Germany it caused concerns of being relegated from the Olympic Games and having to leave representation at the games to East Germany alone.

A change in the position of the IOC regarding acceptance of the NOC of the GDR looked to be in the offing following a visit by Brundage to Moscow in July 1954. He took up an invitation by the Soviet IOC Committee Member Adrianov on occasion of the All-Unions Spartakade in the city. Together with his colleague Adrianov, Brundage attended a meeting with Erich Riedeberger, member of the NOC of the GDR, who indicated the GDR's willingness in principle to form a German-German Olympic team. Although this marked the first tentative moves towards the possibility of a joint German team, no decisions were yet taken. Brundage continued to seek reassurances about East German athletes – as with all other 'state sham-amateurs' from socialist countries – in a prior meeting with Schöbel, the GDR-NOC president. Schöbel replied to Brundage's question whether his NOC was a 'political organisation' with a definite 'it is not'.<sup>119</sup> Having accepted this statement – even if only at face value – the way was open for the IOC to launch a fresh initiative it met in Paris on 17 June 1955.

Of quite some interest is the opening address delivered to his colleagues by Brundage, providing an insight into his assessment of a thorny issue. He began by noting that the IOC's refusal to grant membership to the NOC of the GDR was taken in 1951 since there already was a West German NOC and that there could not be two NOCs for the same country.<sup>120</sup> GDR delegates had then been invited, together with their West German counterparts, to Lausanne in 1951 and an arrangement for German participation with a

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<sup>119</sup> Thomas, *Divided United*, p. 269.

<sup>120</sup> IOC Olympic Studies Centre, REQ006750, p. 63.

joint team at the 1952 Helsinki Games was reached. This was later repudiated by the East Germans and also another meeting in Copenhagen turned into a failure as the guests from East Berlin did not show up at the agreed time. ‘As you may imagine, we have not looked with great favour for any subsequent appeals from East Germany.’<sup>121</sup> Brundage continued by mentioning his visit to Moscow in 1954, at which he offered to again discuss formation of a joint German Olympic team. He then explained his main pre-condition: the appointment of fresh faces on the NOC of the GDR. This request had been met, paving the way for a constructive meeting in Paris between GDR representatives and members of the West German NOC such as von Halt. ‘All those present from both East and West Germany’, Brundage reported, ‘admit that there is only one Germany, divided by political reasons beyond its control’.<sup>122</sup>

The landmark nature of the proposed agreement between the two sides that Brundage went on to describe is worth quoting in full:

They have agreed that together they will organize one team to represent both sections of Germany at the Melbourne Games next year (...) I told them that I would recommend to the IOC that it empower its Executive Board to grant temporary recognition to the East German Olympic Committee after a united team (...) was formed. The East Germans then stated that, since they had made a definite promise to cooperate with the West Germans in organizing a joint team they would like to have immediate recognition [of their NOC] (...). I therefore ask you to decide whether to give the Executive Board authority to recognize the East German Committee after a united team has been formed, or whether you wish to give its provisional recognition with the understanding that if a united team is not formed (...) the recognition will be withdrawn (...). During my meeting with the representatives of the German committees here in Paris, I took occasion to bring to the attention of the East German representatives certain newspaper clipping[s] indicating that sport is being used for political purposes in East Germany. I called their attention to Olympic regulations and told them this must be stopped if they expect IOC recognition.<sup>123</sup>

The official report of the meeting on 17 June continued with expression of opinions by other participants:

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<sup>121</sup> IOC Olympic Studies Centre, REQ006750, p. 64.

<sup>122</sup> IOC Olympic Studies Centre, REQ006750, p. 65.

<sup>123</sup> IOC Olympic Studies Centre, REQ006750, p. 66.

Mr. Wang of China-Formosa considered that the committee acted very wisely when it refused to recognize the East German committee until it had given proof of good faith (...) He is of the opinion that the IOC should not grant its recognition to Eastern Germany until the Olympic team is formed.<sup>124</sup>

Dr. Ritter von Halt of Western Germany stated 'that the Western German Olympic Committee is not opposed to the recognition of its Eastern German counterpart on principle, but I wish to insist on the adoption of the second proposal by the President, namely, that the all-German team should be formed before the recognition of the Olympic Committee of Eastern Germany is granted.'<sup>125</sup>

Mr. E. von Frenckell of Finland felt 'that the time has now come when we can grant East Germany our full confidence (...) For this reason I shall vote today for the recognition of both Germanys.'<sup>126</sup>

While both Wang and Ritter von Halt were in agreement with the qualified proposal by Brundage, Frenckell's was the most straightforward solution. Interspersed with the above were opinions by the five members from East European countries: Bulgaria, Poland, Hungary, Rumania and the USSR. Less than surprisingly they all supported an immediate recognition of their East German Committee comrades by the IOC.<sup>127</sup> At the very end of the meeting there is this all-important, indeed crucial decision:

It is decided by 27 votes to 7 that the Olympic Committee of Eastern Germany is recognized provisionally, on the understanding that, should it prove impossible to form a united team from both Germanys for the Melbourne Games, this recognition will lapse automatically.

It is understood that after the reunification of Germany, the IOC will only recognize one German Olympic Committee standing for the whole of Germany.<sup>128</sup>

### Conclusion

It is not unreasonable to conclude that, to an outside observer, this IOC initiative appeared to have come out of the blue. But in reality it was the culmination of lengthy thought and careful preparation by the IOC President, reflecting his determination to

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<sup>124</sup> IOC Olympic Studies Centre, REQ006750, p. 66.

<sup>125</sup> IOC Olympic Studies Centre, REQ006750, p. 68.

<sup>126</sup> IOC Olympic Studies Centre, REQ006750, p. 67

<sup>127</sup> IOC Olympic Studies Centre, REQ006750, p. 67

<sup>128</sup> IOC Olympic Studies Centre, REQ006750, p. 69.

pursue his idea that cooperation in the area of the Olympics would also lead to closer German-German national bonds – an endeavour, he felt, in which politicians were patently failing. Coming only a year after the Kremlin formally recognised East Germany as a sovereign state, rather than as the Soviet zone of Germany, it was possible for Brundage to find a technical means of circumventing the IOC ruling on only recognising one NOC per nation; namely that in some eyes the GDR was a separate state, though its provisionally recognised NOC was acceptable only on the grounds that it might one day revert to single body representing the whole of Germany.

Not surprisingly the 1955 formula was considered less than fully satisfactory by either the East- or the West-Germans. But it was a carefully crafted compromise, containing just enough to ensure it was difficult to reject. For the FDR an important consideration was the stipulation of an automatic withdrawal of the provisional acceptance of the GDR-NOC in the event of fruitless negotiations for an all-German team. For East Germany, it was inconceivable that it would turn down again the prospect of formal recognition of its NOC, as it had done at the cost of excluding itself from the Helsinki Games. The watershed decision of June 1955 thereby looked to have ‘squared the circle’ by opening the way for what had hitherto seemed very unlikely – the existence of joint German teams at the 1956 Olympics. Having witnessed the indispensable role played by Brundage in this remarkable turn of events, the next chapter will explore how further discussions and hard negotiations were required before the sight of East and West Germans under the same banner at the Olympics became a reality.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE GERMAN–GERMAN OLYMPIC TEAMS AT MELBOURNE AND ROME, 1955–60**

This chapter sets out to assess the final set of negotiations that produced the emergence of the joint German-German Olympic team at the 1956 Games. It will also explore the difficulties – faced and overcome only after many trials and tribulations – as to how the team should present itself at the Games. As we saw in the previous chapter, the creation of the concept of a joint Olympic team was not the result of any feelings of German communality in sports, despite some earlier sporting exchanges across the inter-German border. Instead the emergence of the team originated against the backdrop of the Cold War, and was brought about above all by the convictions and resulting actions of a few individuals, foremost so by the IOC President Avery Brundage.

The chapter will first look at the hard negotiations – and the contrasting motives of the two sides – before the joint team could make a successful first appearance at the 1956 Cortina d'Ampezzo VIIth Winter Games and at the XVth Summer Melbourne Olympics in the same year. It will continue by examining the joint German presence in 1960 at the Squaw Valley's VIIIth Winter Olympics and at the XVIIIth Rome Summer Games the same year. Primary source material relating to the West German government's reservations regarding the country's participation in the latter event will be presented and discussed. A review of the continuing East-West sports political problems, especially involving Berlin, will end the chapter, arguing that the reality of the joint team was a curious experience, based on a marriage of convenience rather than of mutual understanding.

[A joint German Olympic team during the Cold War?](#)

The creation of the German-German Olympic team in 1955 was nothing less than an international sensation as it occurred in the middle of the Cold War. It was a huge surprise that a joint team from the two antagonistic Germanys could have been established at all. This becomes even more remarkable when considering that on the other side of the globe, on the Korean peninsula, the Cold War at this time had turned into a Hot (Shooting) War, as North Korean and Chinese forces, tacitly supported by the Soviet Union, battled troops from South Korea, the United States and other Western countries. Also in Europe the Cold War was heating up with Britain investing billions in the creation of the RAF V-Force strategic aircraft fleet and its atomic bombs.<sup>1</sup>

As we saw in the previous chapter, the controversial decision of the IOC of June 1955 was accepted as a compromise by both German NOCs. German historian Pabst asserts that the NOC of the GDR envisaged that, by means of agreeing to the formation of a German-German team, its own prestige would be enhanced and a cornerstone laid for future acceptance of its international status. And Pabst further notes that the NOC of West Germany simply had to agree as its refusal of the IOC compromise would have meant that the GDR alone would have become the German representatives in matters of Olympic sport.<sup>2</sup> The latter assumption is questionable in the sense that it underplays the role of Brundage in the IOC. This autocratic figure – vide his instructions to the GDR leadership to change the leading members of its NOC – and fervent supporter of West-Germany, friend of von Halt and Daume, would most likely have done anything required to maintain and foster West Germany's interests and position in the IOC.

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<sup>1</sup> See also: BBC 2-TV Feature *Cold War, Hot Jets* (15/11/2013).

<sup>2</sup> Pabst, *Sport – Medium of Politics?* p. 241

As it happened, Brundage could satisfy that both sides moved ahead as he would have wished, though only after hard bargaining between the two NOCs in four difficult and lengthy rounds of negotiations between August 1955 and January 1956, convened in East- and West-Germany, East- and West-Berlin. Without further involvement of international negotiators, these sessions resulted in an all-important series of agreements establishing a framework for later all-German Olympic teams. Agreement was also reached on a matter of strong emotions for both sides, that of flags and hymns.

In order to arrive at nominations of athletes for a joint Olympic team, all-German pre-qualifications contests were agreed upon. But once again East- and West-German Cold War realities intruded. Concerns about top athletes' potential chances for an Olympic title and about where selection contests should be held were evident on both sides. Members of the recently formed West German NATO-allied *Bundeswehr*, officers of the police forces and other public servants were banned by the FRG from participating in pre-qualification contests across the border. Likewise, it was also out of the question to take part in pre-qualification contents in the West for staff of East Germany's *NVA Nationale Volksarmee*, affiliated to the Warsaw Pact; or of members of the East German security organisations. In addition, there was the additional concern of East German sports officials that comrades, once they had the opportunity to travel to the West, might prefer to stay there.

Against the original opposition of the East Germans and only shortly before the VIIth Winter Games of 1956 at Cortina d'Ampezzo, West Germany achieved the privilege of nominating the *Chef de Mission* on account of fielding the majority of athletes –

without East Germany getting its way on having an additional, own head of its section.<sup>3</sup>

This invited the criticism by the East Berlin supremo Walter Ulbricht:

It is not the same who assumes the leadership! From the supreme aspect of fighting for a peaceful and democratic Germany it is necessary that the GDR is to participate on absolutely equal terms; that is the minimum!<sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless in the end the GDR decided that it did not want to jeopardize its participation in the forthcoming Olympics by renegeing on the compromise reached.

Lengthy discussions and disputes continued to be the order of the day, especially concerning the politicised (and for both sides highly symbolic) matter of the flag<sup>5</sup> to be flown at the Olympics. On 24 November 1959 the West German *Sportbund* issued a communiqué, giving some of the background to how this issue unfolded:

Regarding the so-called emblem to be displayed on the Olympic tricots, this in 1956 was agreed to be the black-red-gold escutcheon overlain by the five Olympic rings. For the 1960 Games, the Committee of the Soviet Zone demanded for its athletes to wear the state symbol of the “GDR” (a wreath, with hammer and a pair of compasses). The Committee of the Federal Republic rejected this and requested arbitration by the IOC. The IOC decided in favour of the Federal Republic, i.e. the solution of 1956.

Under chairmanship of Chancellor Adenauer, on 25 November a meeting was convened at Bonn, with four Cabinet Ministers attending. Also invited were the Heads of the *Sportbund* von Halt and Daume, ‘a personality who, contrary to other figures in West

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<sup>3</sup> For the 1956 Melbourne Olympics the ratio of athletes coming from East and West was 36:133, in Rome in 1960 it was still 130:189, but in Tokyo in 1964 this changed to 194:184. Source: Hütter, *We against Ourselves*, p. 22.

<sup>4</sup> cited in Rüdiger, *Divided United*, p. 269.

<sup>5</sup> Questions have been raised over the origin of the five rings on the Olympic flag. Miller gives this account:

At the 16<sup>th</sup> IOC Session of the IOC at Lausanne in 1913, the 23 members present (...) were boyed by their own presentation at the Session of the newly devised five-ring Olympic flag, designed by de Coubertin. He had adapted the five rings (...) to signify the unity of the five continents, the interlaced rings of blue, black and red at the top and yellow beneath selected because at least on of these was included in the member nations’ flags. The rings were to signify the harmonisation of mankind, on a white background symbolising peace.

Miller, David, *The Official History of the Olympic Games and the IOC*. Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing Ltd. (2012) pp. 71-72 and 681.

German politics, continuously and vehemently strived for all-German contacts'.<sup>6</sup> Yet

Dr. Gerhard Schröder, the Federal Minister of the Interior, argued:

The difficulties are exclusively caused by the regime of Ulbricht [GDR top man at the time]. It has occurred to the communist regime at the very last moment, in a manner of speaking, to disavow the common flag of black-red-and-gold and to want to disfigure this by a satellite country's symbol (...) During the past years for reasons of cohesion, or to put it more clearly out of consideration for our countrymen in the Zone, we accepted a lot from the Ulbricht-regime, and in many matters have agreed to almost intolerable compromises (...) The Federal government is convinced that we no longer must entertain further imputations from a totalitarian communist minority.<sup>7</sup>

In the end, however, and despite the Cold War rhetoric of Minister Schröder, reason carried the day. The spokesman of the Federal government announced as follows:

Due to the unanimous vote of our NOC, the Federal Government has decided to come to terms of agreement in the question of the so-called Olympic flag. Yet, and as enshrined in the Federal Constitution, the Government underlines its position that the Federal flag may not be subject to modification; at the Olympic Games, moreover, the Federal Republic is not represented by the Government but by the German Sports Organisation. The question whether or not, under these circumstances, the German Ambassadors in Washington and Rome shall partake in an official function in the Squaw Valley and Rome Olympic Games has not yet been decided.<sup>8</sup>

Almost as thorny in the run up to the 1956 Winter Games was the matter of the national hymn for the Olympics. Some on the West German side had proposed that for victories by teams like swimming, there should be no hymn played at all, but that on the occasion of championships of individual athletes the hymn of his or her country should be played. This, however, alarmed the Bonn Foreign Office which feared that it could strengthen the GDR's efforts for recognition. So yet another concession had to be found: to be played in such instances and, as a kind of national substitution hymn, was to be the music of the 'Ode to Joy' from Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. A final bone of contention was the matter of the Olympic dresses. This finally was solved in similar fashion to the flag issue: athletes would wear tricots with the five Olympic rings.

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<sup>6</sup> Rode, *Willi Daume*, p. 264.

<sup>7</sup> Müller-Marsall, *Archiv*, vol. 3, p. 2545.

<sup>8</sup> von Eckhardt, Felix, Chief Spokesman of the German Federal Government, in a press release by *UPI, United Press International*, Bonn, 7 December 1959.

Hence for a while the problems and complexities of organizing joint teams from the two antagonistic Germanys appeared to be intractable. Concessions, and departures from formerly unassailable ideological and practical positions, were required by – and granted – from both sides. That, in many respects, was just as surprising as the creation of the joint team itself but was a price that had to be paid to proceed. Major stumbling blocks turned out to be not the team functionaries and their athletes, the ‘people on the ground’, but rather government authorities and their spokesmen in East Berlin and Bonn.

#### Sensation galore: the joint Germans at the 1956 Olympics

What then were experiences of, and reactions to, the first-ever joint German Olympic teams in Italy and Australia? There are few references in existing secondary literature to the German-German Olympic presence at the 1956 VIIth Winter Games at Cortina d’Ampezzo which began on January 26 1956; neither for example in the well-researched book by Allen Guttman *The Olympics*, nor in that of John Findling’s *Encyclopedia of the Modern Olympic Games*. There is only cursory mention of a gold medal for a West German athlete (in the women’s giant slalom) and a bronze for a team member from East Germany (in ski jumping) in another prominent historical work.<sup>9</sup> Yet there is testimony of an acerbic nature which Karl von Halt, president of the West German NOC, made in relation to athletes of the participating communist ‘newcomer sports nations’ at Cortina d’Ampezzo. He denounced them as ‘sham amateurs’; ‘damaging the spirit of the Olympic Games’; ‘out to win at an all costs attitude’;

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<sup>9</sup> Lämmer, *Germany in the Olympic Movement*, p. 232.

singling out Russian Olympic successes as ‘wins for a nameless, faceless Soviet sports machine’.<sup>10</sup>

A rather more sympathetic view on the matter was expressed by Carol Heiss, American world champion in women’s ice-skating. When interviewed by a reporter on her views on the years of state-sponsored training which athletes from the Soviet bloc were known to be undergoing, she opined: ‘Perhaps in the era of sports not everything that happens is in full accordance with the concept of amateurism. But I am convinced that all of us only are striving for honours in sports’.<sup>11</sup>

Two commentaries on the Cortina d’Ampezzo Games in the German press do however deserve attention. They were printed in *DIE ZEIT*, the leading German weekly of liberal political orientation, with a readership including some three hundred thousand subscribers. *DIE ZEIT* represented something of a *meinungsbildende Funktion* (a key influence on the formation of public opinion), often even juxtaposing opinions of Pro and Contra on an important issue of the day. In this particular instance it provided an overall positive account of the Cortina d’Ampezzo Olympic Games.

The first article was under the heading ‘Cortina in Kaleidoscope’:

The Federal Republic and the Soviet Zone, jointly represented in Cortina, may very deservedly be satisfied. Ossi Reichert from Sonthofen [West Germany], winner of gold in the women’s giant slalom, was the sensation at the beginning of the VIIth Winter Olympics. Joy in the German camp was enormous. Amongst the well-wishers sending telegrams were Wilhelm Pieck, President of the GDR, and his Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl. Although further prime medals were denied us, our male and female winter-sports athletes generally performed well (...) The German team is *the* political curiosity in Cortina. The IOC decision that Germany should appear in a unified team, formally has been executed. All German participants are wearing the same ski dress: five coloured Olympic rings and black-red-and-gold stripes. In reality, however, the fifteen participants from the

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<sup>10</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, pp. 330, 333.

<sup>11</sup> *DIE ZEIT*, Hamburg, Sports Supplement, 19 September 1960, p.1.

Soviet Zone are having their own separate organisation, with their own supervisors, and own sports practitioner. The bobsleigh crew named their sledge 'Bob of the GDR'. So far there have been no dissensions. The people responsible for the West German contingent are trying to avoid, as much as they can, that there will be any talk of politics.<sup>12</sup>

Against the backdrop of German animosity due to Cold War tensions, it seems extraordinary that the two East German leaders would have sent congratulatory messages to a West German sportsman of the joint team.

In a second article, in the same newspaper's section 'SPORT OF THE TIMES', and under the title 'Games and Prestige', a certain euphoria even finds expression:

Our German male and female ski athletes performed bravely against overwhelming international competition. Ossi Reichert's gold medal in the women's giant slalom was a sensation. Nothing less was the third place of ski jumper Harry Glass from Oberhofen [East Germany]. Thus Goddess Fortuna righteously divided her offerings between West- and East-Germany. Both contingents of the all-German team are returning with one medal each. Even if not all of our wishes were fulfilled, our athletes may still be happy about their achievements at Cortina d'Ampezzo. Especially, and foremost of all, as it was possible to get an all-German team on to the winter starting blocks.<sup>13</sup>

More widespread reaction in both parts of Germany followed upon the same year's XVIth Summer Olympics. The Melbourne Games took place under the ill-fortuned circumstances of international politics. On 29 October 1956, a mere twenty-four days prior to the opening ceremony of 22 November, war broke out between Egypt and Israel; Britain and France joined in on the Israeli side. On 4 November, following attempts to liberalize the communist regime of Hungary, Soviet troops launched an attack on Budapest and antagonism towards the Soviet Union and its Olympic athletes seemed inevitable. Egypt, Iraq and Lebanon withdrew in protest of the Israeli-British-French action against Egypt. And in protest against the Soviet invasion of Hungary, the Netherlands and Spain recalled their athletes from Melbourne, as did China. So also did Switzerland withdraw and Otto Mayer, IOC Chancellor and Swiss national protested: 'it

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<sup>12</sup> *DIE ZEIT*, Hamburg, no. 5, 2 February 1956, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup> *DIE ZEIT*, Hamburg, no. 6, 9 February 1956, p. 21.

is a disgrace that Switzerland, a neutral nation and the very country where the IOC has its headquarters, should set such a shameful example of political interference with the Olympic ideal'.<sup>14</sup>

The German-German team stayed out of the controversies for or against participation at Melbourne, and joined in the Olympic competition. The months of detailed negotiations to reach agreement were not to be undone at the last minute. Yet the evidence suggests that in reality relationships between the 138 West- and 37 East-German athletes and their staff were strained. In spite of external appearances – same tricots and clothing, flag and hymn – a West German NOC official later stated:

there was no question of a team in the sense of a sporting spirit or human camaraderie. For reasons of 'collective discipline' the leaders of the GDR section of the team had insisted towards their Australian hosts that their people should be separated from the West German part of the team and be accommodated in different hotels.<sup>15</sup>

Also in the two far-away Germanys questions about participation were raised. Only six days before the opening ceremony, this had been the official position of the West German government:

(...) During the last Cabinet meeting the issue of participation of the German team at Melbourne was discussed. For the moment the Federal government will not decree a non-participation, but under certain circumstances this might have to be taken into consideration (...).<sup>16</sup>

The East German leadership similarly voiced no intention to instruct its section of the joint German team to abandon the Melbourne Games and so the whole team continued its presence. A West German daily newspaper quoted a rather presumptuous – yet not totally incorrect – official statement from East Berlin:

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<sup>14</sup> Woyke, Richard, 'Olympische Spiele und Fussballweltmeisterschaften – Mega-Events und ihre Bedeutung für die Politik' (Olympic Games and Football World Championships – Mega Events and their Significance for Politics), *Sport und Politik*, B.L. YF.2008.a.19356, Schwalbach/Germany (2006), pp. 18-19.

<sup>15</sup> 'Melbourne-Report' for participants of the 1957 Annual Meeting of the West German NOC, p. 48.

<sup>16</sup> Statement by the speaker of the West German Cabinet in a press-conference at Bonn on 16 November 1956.

Quite obviously the West German sportspeople have to be grateful as their participation in the Olympic Summer Games at Melbourne is due exclusively to the existence of the Peace State in Germany, the GDR.<sup>17</sup>

GDR sports was beginning to establish its position inside the joint Olympic team, despite the fact that results in the Melbourne Games were in favour of the West German contingent with 5 gold, 9 silver and 6 bronze medals. The East Germans gained 4 silver and 2 bronze medals. However for boxing champion Wolfgang Behrendt there was gold, jubilantly celebrated in the GDR as ‘the first gold medal for our country’.<sup>18</sup> Whatever the outcome in terms of medals, in the overall political dimension between Germany East and West it was the GDR which arguably achieved most from Melbourne. Its section of the joint team came home to a country with a greatly strengthened self-confidence. Behrendt was elevated to the status of national hero in East Germany. GDR leader Walter Ulbricht personally awarded the boxer the decoration of *Verdienter Meister des Sport (Deserving Master of Sport)*, the GDR’s highest sports award. And as far as the relationship with the IOC as well as that between the two German NOCs were concerned, a kind of de-facto equality was achieved.

Thus, for a few weeks in Cortina d’Ampezzo and Melbourne in 1956 the divided sportspeople of Germany at least had a semblance of being re-united. Many politicians and officials in East Germany celebrated the medals gained by their contingent in the joint team. Average Germans in the East as well as in the West, according to some newspapers, felt happy about the very existence of a German-German Olympic presence.<sup>19</sup> The joint team of 1956, as much as the two to follow, may be considered as a contribution of sport to a symbolic ‘Unity of the Nation’. It is not unreasonable to

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<sup>17</sup> *Die Welt*, Hamburg, issue of 30 September 1956, p. 2.

<sup>18</sup> Lämmer, *Germany in the Olympic Movement*, p. 233.

<sup>19</sup> BILD-ZEITUNG, West Germany’s foremost boulevard newspaper on the entire front page (8 December 1956).

claim that there was hardly any other greater expression of German unity in times of Cold War division.

Looking back on Melbourne, the GDR's NOC President Schöbel stated: 'The joint German team at Cortina d'Ampezzo and Melbourne, representing the lofty ideals of friendship and peace, in front of the whole world also manifested the concept of accord between Germans.'<sup>20</sup> That sounded fine. But it would not keep Schöbel from a more partisan tone a year later, on the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Red October Revolution :

Our NOC is the true representatives of sportspeople of the whole of Germany in the political era. It is their task to assist in educating all our countrymen to become humans of socialist conviction and action who, imbued with the knowledge of societal motivation and interconnections, will strive for the vital national interest of our people.<sup>21</sup>

With the benefit of hindsight the German team in Melbourne was the beneficiary of good fortune. It may be concluded that if more countries had decided to abandon or withdraw their participation on account of a tense international situation, this could well have resulted in the cancellation of the 1956 Games altogether. There was certainly a threat to the Brundage ideal of 'non-political' Olympics in 1956, plus an ominous foreboding of what would actually happen in the Games' boycott initiatives of 1980 and 1984. But fortunately, these Games ended on a happy note. The IOC's and Australians' desire to create what could be called an oasis of amity in a desert of hostility was rewarded. At the closing ceremony athletes took matters into their own hands: rather than marching as members of their national teams, they broke ranks, joined hands,

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<sup>20</sup> Lämmer, *Germany in the Olympics*, p. 234.

<sup>21</sup> Pabst, *Sport – Medium of Politics?*, p. 245.

embraced, sang, and danced. Together they spontaneously created a memorable victory for the more humane traditions in modern sports.<sup>22</sup>

In terms of German-German Olympic cooperation the Melbourne experience can arguably be called a qualified success. In comparison with the difficulties experienced during the run-up to Melbourne regarding the formation of a joint team, there existed a certain ‘communality in purpose to win’ among the athletes from East *and* West; even though any kind of underlying harmony was not shared by the politicians on either side. Looking ahead, to the Rome 1960 Games and those at Tokyo of 1964, moreover, one is tempted to speculate that the Games were to mark a highpoint of amicable cooperation; 1956 was to be as good as it got.

#### The 1959 Squaw Valley Incident and the 1960 Winter Games

That the German-German Olympic team remained in place for another eight years after Melbourne was however not only due to Brundage’s perseverance. For both Germanys it was both a nuisance and yet a boon at the same time: for the FRG it was an unwelcome concession to the GDR but, according to the 1955 IOC formula, it would prevent the latter’s final recognition; for the GDR the very same fact was a painful reality but gave the country the chance to intensify sporting-political efforts towards international recognition. Both sides continued to give superficial support to a joint team, even if they would have preferred to see it dissolved; from the very beginning the joint team was the ‘unloved child’ of both Germanys. Regarding its own current position, the the NOC of GDR leadership put its view post-Melbourne very succinctly:

It must be the aim to overcome the provisional status and instead to achieve full equality of membership in the IOC. A corresponding application can not [yet]

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<sup>22</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, p. 152.

include the demand for two German teams for the 1960 Olympics.<sup>23</sup>

Both sides certainly always continued to blame the other when things went badly, as became evident in what became known as the ‘Squaw Valley incident’. In this instance a case of ill judgement by East German sports politicians led to an international East-West confrontation for which, without justification, the GDR then held the West German sports functionaries accountable. In the run-up to the Squaw Valley Winter Games of 1960, to be held in the border area between California and Nevada in the Sierra Mountains, East Germany sent a team of its own Ski Association athletes to the United States for pre-Olympic training in early 1959. A small item in the US Associated Press dated 17 February 1959 briefly reported:

The refusal of granting entry visas (...) was explained by the United States Foreign Office as being the fact that 8 out of its 14 staff are members of the East German state party SED, and thereby communists, for which entry into the United States is prohibited in any event.<sup>24</sup>

On 24 February an international press conference was held in the offices of the Council of Ministers in East Berlin in which serious accusations were made that Western political institutions and sports leaders had sabotaged the entry of GDR athletes into the United States. The names of Willi Daume and Ritter von Halt, with the assistance of Avery Brundage, were mentioned as the persons primarily responsible for the withdrawal of entry visas, which allegedly had been granted earlier. In the GDR party newspaper Daume was viciously attacked and his explanations of non-involvement in the affair described as ‘pure hypocrisy of a slimy liar’.<sup>25</sup> The leading East German sports magazine even raised the ante in the following week by writing ‘the Squaw

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<sup>23</sup> Staatliches Komitee der DDR fuer Körperkultur und Sport ‘Protokoll der NOC-Sitzung vom 22.3.1957’ (State Committee for Physical Culture and Sport, ‘Protocol of the NOC Meeting of 22 March 1957’) East Berlin: Source BArch Berlin.

<sup>24</sup> This and all following quotes from: Pabst, *Sport – Medium of Politics?* pp. 229-32.

<sup>25</sup> *Neues Deutschland*, East Berlin, issue of 18 February 1959, p. 4.

Valley case is the so far worst crime, the most shameful of infamies, the darkest chapter in the post-war history of German sport'.<sup>26</sup> By this action, however, the functionaries of the GDR handed West German sports a trump card. In conviction of their total innocence in the affair, Daume and von Halt started a counter-offensive, exposing the political machinations of the GDR. In an open letter dated 9 March 1959 Daume declared that neither directly nor indirectly, neither officially nor unofficially, nor in any other way had they influenced the matter of the visas.

An interview on West German television followed in which Daume raised three possible explanations for the East German attacks: that they disliked the good relations which the West German *DSB* had created with East German athletes; that East Germany intended to 'torpedo' the joint German team for the forthcoming Olympics; and finally that the GDR wanted to 'blacken the image' of West German sports management in the eyes of the world. In the end East Berlin failed to provide proof of any West German Daume/von Halt, or Brundage, involvement in the matter. Furthermore Rudi Reichert, a leading member of the NOC of the GDR,<sup>27</sup> in a meeting with his West German colleagues, on 4 September 1960 offered a sort of late apology for the Squaw Valley incident, and withdrew – or rather was ordered to do so by the *SED* – from their NOC. Members of the GDR government were rumoured to have voiced disdain at having been 'led up the road' by their own sports people.

On the West German side sports officials would lay the sordid affair *ad acta*. Yet the incident, unpleasant for both East and West and although eventually solved, was another example of the fragility of German-German sporting relations. In any event it constituted another illustration of a basic mistrust – even animosity – between the two

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<sup>26</sup> *Sportecho*, East Berlin, issue of 25 February 1959, first page.

<sup>27</sup> Müller-Engbers *Who was Who in the GDR*, p. 812.

Germanys over the ulterior motives of their Olympic cooperation in the backdrop of the Cold War.

Under the title ‘Gold and Tinsel, the VIIIth Olympic Games at Squaw Valley’, the leading West German weekly reported:

The United States Foreign Ministry caused some annoyance by their refusal to grant entry visas to journalists from the East Zone, fearing that these could ‘launch a Cold War rhetoric’. As a matter of fact sports functionaries from the East Zone had already created sufficient upset in the joint German team, as ten minutes before the start of the downhill race they had managed to persuade the West German *Chef de Mission* Herbert Kunze to exchange the – superior – West German athlete Wagnerberger against the Zone-sportsman Riedel. But when, at the very beginning of the Games, East Berlin ice speed racer Helga Haase and West German downhill racer Heidi Biebel from the Federal Republic each won a gold medal, joint jubilation won over bad tempers.<sup>28</sup>

The article cited some manifestations of the ‘sports political situation’ the team was facing abroad. An additional negative aspect side was the dependence of the team, and its accompanying retinue of staff and journalists, on the goodwill – or, in this case, otherwise – on the officials of the Games’ host-country. On the other hand and somewhat surprisingly, in the instance of major sporting successes no matter whether achieved by either West- or East-German athletes, joint jublations resulted.

The report continues under the sub-title ‘Olympic Winners and Medal Arithmetic’:

In the meantime, a lot of calculations were started as to which was the best nation? If it were the gold medals, the USSR with seven were at the top, Germany second with four, followed by the US, Sweden and Norway with each three. Others are counting the total numbers of medals won, and still others calculated according to a complicated points system (...) Yet in any event the performances of the German team are not in need of any such comparisons.<sup>29</sup>

So in the event the joint German team performed successfully at the Squaw Valley Winter Games. This was particularly the case if compared to their more meagre sporting

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<sup>28</sup> *DIE ZEIT*, Hmburg, issue no. 10, p. 38 (02/03/1960).

<sup>29</sup> *DIE ZEIT*, Hamburg, no. 10/1960, sports section p.1.

achievements at Cortina d'Ampezzo four years earlier. The team gained a total of eight medals, and was ranked an impressive second overall. In relation to the complement of 40 West- compared to 30 East-German athletes, it was an almost balanced performance. The winners of gold medals even achieved an equal result: there were two for the Eastern complement (in ski jumping and ladies' 400-m speed racing), and two for the one from the West (in the Nordic combination and the ladies' downhill race). In addition one silver medal was awarded to an East-, and two silver and one bronze medals to West- members of the team.

### The Rome Olympics and the crossfire of politics

We turn next to the more large-scale event of the Olympic year of 1960, the Summer Games, with a view to examining whether the pattern of 1956 was repeated and whether intra-German relations improved or deteriorated. The XVII<sup>th</sup> Olympic Summer Games took place in Rome from 25 August to 11 September 1960. From the 95 nations recognized by the IOC, 83 countries attended the Games – the largest number to date – counting 5,348 listed competitors, 610 of whom were women. This included the German-German team, entering the stadium and events under the same arrangement as before regarding a hymn and a flag, with the five Olympic rings and dresses as featured in the Melbourne Olympics. In the joint team there were now 189 athletes from the FRG and 142 from the GDR.<sup>30</sup>

The Games were a major success for the German-German team with a total of 45 medals won: for single performances 9 gold, 10 silver and 5 bronze for the Western complement; 2 gold, 9 silver and 4 bronze for that of the East; for teams performances 1

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<sup>30</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, p. 157.

gold, 2 silver and 3 bronze.<sup>31</sup> Nonetheless the East German sports management was somewhat dissatisfied by a ratio of 24 to 15 in favour of West German athletes' individual performances. Upon return of the GDR athletes to Berlin, and despite an orchestrated reception of public jubilation, measures were to be taken aimed at significantly enhancing future levels of sporting performance. These included concentrating on promotion of such areas of sport which would engender greater international Olympic success; a stricter pre-selection of the male and female GDR-state-sponsored athletes for the joint team; and increased financial support for the country's sports institutions such as the *DHfKL, Deutsche Hochschule für Körperkultur in Leipzig* (German Academy for Physical Culture at Leipzig), which was increasingly involved in promoting the title of PhD in Sports – like that held by Thomas Köhler, who we met earlier.

Behind the scenes at Rome it became clear that the problem of creating anything more than superficial harmony between the two sections of the joint team remained as acute as ever. In West Germany, the NOC found itself in sharp conflict with the Bonn government, and parts of the German press. Examples of the latter, *pars pro toto*, included the following from a Düsseldorf newspaper:

We are asking ourselves with utter amazement how long this despicable charade is still to continue: an all-German Olympic team, which under existing circumstances in reality is nothing other than a chimera. Our sports leader are performing a disservice to our cause when – never mind with what reasoning – they are sharing the table with the politically indoctrinated functionaries of the Zone. Thereby forgetting the fact that there exist political realities which can not be overlooked by even the most determined adherents of sporting illusions, yet totally ignorant of the world. The time has come to create unequivocal conditions.<sup>32</sup>

An ultra-conservative journal even postulated:

Is it not time to renounce when dignity is compromised? What a doubtful honour

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<sup>31</sup> Lanz, *Between Protocol*, p. 357.

<sup>32</sup> *Der Mittag*, Düsseldorf, issue of 1 September 1960, page 5.

to have Germany been seen entering the Squaw Valley stadium behind a flag-waving communist Recknagel [the gold-winning East German medallist of the joint team]?<sup>33</sup>

Moreover, any German Olympic communality did not fit at all into the concept of external politics and inter-German relations of Chancellor Adenauer and his Conservative government at the time. Adenauer's primary political goal was that of the re-integration of West Germany into the 'Western Fold', and he considered closer relations with the other Germany as an impediment to this objective. With evident concern, in a letter addressed to the Board of the *Sportbund*, its President Willi Daume reported on being confronted by these opinions of the head of the West German government:

In a meeting on 29 July 1960, one month before the beginning of the Rome Summer Games, Dr. Adenauer clearly stated that, as a matter of principle, he is against joint German Olympic teams. He explained his position by elaborating that it were preferable to direct the world's attention to the status of German division rather than to veil the situation. Besides, it is his thesis that no negotiations with the rulers of the Soviet Zone of Occupation regarding all-German matters are possible. And that this premise of his would be compromised if conditions were negotiated resulting in a joint German team.<sup>34</sup>

Daume's predicament was that of having to steer a course of caution in the matter. With undiminished determination he pursued his goal of fostering all-German sports contacts. On the other hand, however, and in his position as double President: of the *Sportbund*, as well as later also that of the West German NOC, Daume was finding himself caught between the quest for the autonomy of the German sports organisations and the Adenauer government's demands for the rights of intervention. And while such rights were tied inseparably to existing financial support for the nation's sports movement, any confrontation with the government could possibly result in a curtailing of this vital financial patronage.

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<sup>33</sup> *Rheinischer Kurier*, Cologne, issue of 11 March 1960, p.6.

<sup>34</sup> Letter by Daume to the Board of the *Sportbund* dated 26 September 1960, cited by J. Rode on p. 142.

On the Eastern side, there was a certain amount of wishful thinking, for example in an address by East German leader Walter Ulbricht. The speech quoted below must be seen in the context of a so-called peaceful solution to the German question, proposed in 1959/1960 by the GDR on a 'Confederation' of the two German entities, a plan vehemently rejected by the West German government. Evidencing some astonishing tactical flexibility – rather far from the usual East Berlin Cold War rhetoric – Ulbricht declared in his address to the comrades of *AGFA WOLFEN*, the major GDR photographic materials factory:

An example how reunification may be prepared has been the recent Olympic meeting [the Winter Games at Squaw Valley]. The sports organisations of both German states agreed on a joint delegation to the Olympic Games in the United States. The delegation was composed proportionally. In peaceful competitions the best participants were selected. And Mr. Brundage was in the pleasant situation to conclude that the Germans could indeed quite well understand and cooperate with each other. This cooperation in the spirit of Olympic understanding shows the way in which Germany should be proceeding.<sup>35</sup>

This statement by Ulbricht represented an instance of not only providing a much too rosy picture of what had actually transpired at Rome; but more importantly of almost a hallucination as West Germany had no interest whatsoever in a 'reunification' on East Berlin terms. In reality most accounts given of what the situation at Rome was like were quite different: pointing to a continued lack of cohesion and cooperation between the two sections of the joint team. German sports historian Holger Schück met Dr. Etzold, the German ambassador in Rome on 1 September 1960. Dr. Etzold was interested in the performances of the joint German team. He particularly wanted to understand its internal functioning and was told:

On the team's management level, the German-German climate could be described as frosty. Even though, for the benefit of Olympic sport, both sides tried to find common ground. Contentious matters often were referred to the IOC for a decision, whereby the West German position usually had the better cards due to the fact that NOC President Ritter von Halt had been a close friend of Brundage's for decades. The soon to come change in the presidency of the West German

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<sup>35</sup> *Neues Deutschland*, East Berlin, issue of 8 March 1960, p. 2.

NOC, to Willi Daume, will most likely result in missing this 'short wire' to the IOC. In any event the GDR undoubtedly is on the way to become accepted as an equal partner in the Olympic field.<sup>36</sup>

This view was endorsed when the Foreign Office in Bonn gave its own resume of the Rome Olympic Games:

Contacts between members of the team were limited to the essentials. The East German officials tried to keep their athletes tightly together in order to restrict contacts with the Westerners. It must also be mentioned, however, that the wish for contacts by West German athletes were just as limited. A clear separation within the team was omnipresent. Relations between individual athletes, as in Melbourne, were alright; they were often curtailed by accompanying staff. Major hindrances were separate accommodation, separate meals and separate means of arrival and departure. Over time, relations in Rome changed from impersonally-cool to humane. The German ambassador in Rome judges that about half of the athletes from the East could have been called 'system-conforming'.<sup>37</sup>

When assessing the Games of Rome in 1960 regarding German-German relations and comparing these with the 'spirit of Melbourne 1956', the conclusion is that things had not improved during the preceding four years. It was less a matter of increasing alienation within the joint team but rather one of the general political German-German malaise, aggravated by stepped-up propaganda attacks from the East. This, in turn, was prompting many acerbic comments in the West German press – the latter much in tune with Bonn official quarters which wanted to have as little as possible to do with the GDR.

In summary, the East German leadership more than the West took a positive view of the Rome Olympics, in general terms and also regarding the sporting performance of their section of the joint team. West German political leaders – and even more so some of the press in the FRG – were on the other hand increasingly critical of the German-German

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<sup>36</sup> Schück, Holger, *Von London nach Mexiko City: Querelle d'allemand (From London to Mexico City: German Squabbles)* Bielefeld/Germany, Droussent (2004) p. 322.

<sup>37</sup> Klingenberg, Hans, 'Olympische Spiele in Squaw Valley/Rom, Bericht an das Auswärtige Amt' (The Olympic Games at Squaw Valley/Rome, Report to the Foreign Office (14.9.1960). Source BArch Koblenz B94/1068 (1960).

Olympic venture; even to the extent of questioning its *raison d'être*. Only in the eyes of the ever-optimistic Brundage were the Rome Games further proof of the power of sport to create harmony. He commented that: 'To the entire discordant world the all-German Olympic team has proven the non-political humanitarian attitude of the Olympic Games'.<sup>38</sup> But in reality long-lasting difficulties continued to afflict German-German relationships across a range of sporting issue, as will be noted in a final section of this chapter.

#### Other enduring East-West problems in 1960

Prior to the Rome Olympics, and regarding the perennial Berlin conundrum, on 18 January 1960 IOC President Brundage wrote a letter to Daume concerning the GDR's continued insistence that there were a total of three Germanys: the GDR, the FRG and the 'politically separate, independent city of West Berlin', as East Berlin had chosen to call it:

Dear Daume,

It has been brought to my attention that the status of sportspeople from West Berlin may raise a question. As long as it is, in general, internationally accepted that West Berlin is part of the FRG and East Berlin that of the GDR (...) the IOC is occasioned to give its opinion that [sport in] West Berlin is under the jurisdiction of the NOC of Germany, and in East Berlin legally part of the NOC of Germany (East.)

I am surprised that a query to this effect has been raised and would once again want to stress the necessity to separate sports from politics.

With the expression of my highest regards,  
(signed) Avery Brundage.<sup>39</sup>

Also regarding the East-West problem of the divided city of Berlin, an observation by an outside observer deserves to be quoted: 'Berlin is the most charming and peaceful

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<sup>38</sup> Guttman, *Brundage*, p. 162.

<sup>39</sup> Re-translation of a letter in German, translated from the original written in English, BArch Berlin, DR 510/ 105.

volcano I ever have set foot on'; this was the impression of Emil Julius Gumble, German emigrant professor from Heidelberg University, a US citizen since 1944.

Proceeding by stratagem, the GDR tried to display their own national symbols in the West. In June 1960 a pathetic, even comical incident – had it not been so seriously indicative of strained German-German sporting relations – occurred in West Berlin, fully recalled only some fifty years later. In a newspaper article, two writers describe events when West Berlin football club *Hertha BSC* invited the East Berlin football team *Armeesportklub (ASK) Vorwärts* (ASK, Army Sports Club Forwards), for a friendly match. Cameras were at the ready to record what was described by the writers as a metaphorical 'Adam's Sin': the display of the GDR's symbol of hammer and pair-of-compasses on the tricots of these guests in West Berlin. Eight months earlier the GDR, after declaring its statehood, had created this own national symbol and flag. Together with this came the strict order that these were now to be shown in any sports event inside or outside the country. In an immediate reaction the government of the FRG prohibited such displays in its part of Germany, scorning it as *die Spalterflagge* (the dividers' flag); and convinced their NATO-allies to prohibit it likewise in their countries. In a frantic effort, the *Hertha* chairman attempted to convince the guests to dispense with wearing their emblems, alas without effect. So the East Berliners, even prior to trouncing their hosts 5-0, already scored an unequivocal victory. Shock waves of the incident reached the Bonn cabinet when the Minister of Foreign Affairs complained to his colleague, the Minister of the Interior, about non-intervention by the Berlin police. A photograph of the political *faux pas* went from hand to hand in Bonn

ministerial circles, the snapshot of which became an example of most unwelcome GDR political activity.<sup>40</sup>

A further example of attempts to enforce the display of the GDR's insignia in the Federal Republic comes in the report of another – supposedly friendly – game of football in a small provincial town. In a letter dated 23 November 1960 to the *Herr Landrat*, the head of the Borough Council in neighbouring Eschwege, the chairman of the sports club in Aue-Schwebda first expressed his thanks for the Borough Council's donation of 240 marks on the occasion of the visit of sportsmen from Grossburschla in the GDR the previous weekend. After lunch on Saturday 19 November, the 22 guests planned to march in a column to the sports grounds, and apparently tried to unfold their GDR flag. But they were persuaded by their hosts not to do so. During the first half-time of the match they were wearing tricots in neutral colours but at the end of the break they suddenly turned these to the inside, thereby now displaying the GDR name and emblem. The chairman then recalled:

Some of our own players and members of the border guard forces left the playing field and the GDR guests refused to continue to play unless they were allowed to display their emblems. Since no agreement was in sight, I had to cancel the rest of the game<sup>7</sup>.

Although that was the end of the hoped-for sporting encounter, a sort of country-folk friendliness could be established again, and the remainder of the weekend was spent sight-seeing. The chairman ended his letter by reporting:

On Monday morning the guests left. Despite disruption of the game there was camaraderie as it should be between sportspeople. It would be a pity if sports, the only still existing connection with the people on the Eastern side of the Iron Curtain, would also still collapse.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Braun, Jutta & Wiese, Rene, 'Hammer und Zirkel am Gesundbrunnen' ('Hammer and Circle at the Gesundbrunnen' [a West Berlin sportsgrounds]. *Der Tagesspiegel*, Berlin, Nr. 20 873 (30 January 2011), p. 19.

<sup>41</sup> BArch Koblenz, B/137 2745

## Conclusion

This chapter has examined developments and events in politics and their influence on German-German sports in the years 1955 to 1960. The international sensation of 1956 was analysed when the first joint German teams participated at the Winter Olympics at Cortina d'Ampezzo and the Summer Games at Melbourne. These appearances came after difficult and hard-fought negotiations between East- and West-German sports organisations. The supreme importance of IOC President Brundage in trying to improve German-German sporting relations has again been underlined. Melbourne stood under the shadows of a war in Egypt which broke out at the same time, but the German-German team avoided the disruptive, near-boycott actions of some of the other nations invited. Further German-German Olympic presences came in 1960 at the Winter Games in Squaw Valley, and at the same year's Summer Games in Rome. At Squaw Valley, an earlier East Berlin propaganda ruse once again brought the continuing inimical inter-German disputes to our attention.

Taking stock of developments across the period as a whole indicates that tensions within the joint team increased marginally between Melbourne and Rome. Interference in the operation of the team by official quarters both in Bonn and East Berlin, as much as acerbic Western press comments, contributed to mounting mutual discontent. Moreover the GDR intensified its attempts to present their national regalia like flag and tricots in the FRG, anathema to and declared illegal by the West, thereby deliberately violating terms of the mutual Sports Agreement of December 1952. German-German participation in the Games of 1956 and 1960 produced broadly successful Olympic results. Yet throughout the chapter the evidence was clear that German-German sporting relations existed under very difficult conditions, with little sign of more positive or enduring harmony emerging. As the next chapter will show, this marriage of

convenience was to suffer even further strain after a political watershed moment in the history of the Cold War took place in 1961 – the building of the Berlin Wall.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONTINUING PROBLEMS: THE BERLIN WALL AND TOKYO, THE TEAM'S LAST OLYMPICS, 1961-64

The years 1961 to 1964 were characterized by continuing animosity in inter-German relations in sports. This chapter starts with a ruling by the West German High Court of March 1961 to outlaw future display of symbols of the GDR in the FRG. Attempts by the GDR to achieve full IOC recognition remained unsuccessful. In August 1961 the Berlin Wall was erected by the GDR, leading to disruption by the West of all sporting contacts for almost two years. Yet in October 1962 President Daume of the West German *Sportbund* was approached by the IOC to open discussions on the 1964 Olympics. In early 1963 a short-lived project to assign the Olympics of 1968 to both parts of Berlin was aired. As well as assessing these developments, the chapter will examine the 1964 Games at Innsbruck and Tokyo, once again successful for the German-German team in sporting terms but constituting the last of their three joint Olympic presences.

Until this point, disagreements and arguments between the sport functionaries from West and East were discussed, and on occasion even solved, in rare meetings between the opposing parties. But by the early 1960s even the superficial harmony of the Melbourne-Rome period was hard to find. The construction of the Berlin Wall marked a new low in the history of the Cold War, and this combined with the undiminished efforts by East Berlin to have its national flag and tricots displayed on FRG territory – anathema to Bonn official circles – raised the ante of squabbles between the two Germanys until a point of almost no return in relations between East and West was reached. The joint team continued its charade at the Winter and Summer Olympics in

1964, but the run up to these Games marked the ‘beginning of the end’ for the whole enterprise.

#### Strains in sporting relations in the early 1960s

In early 1961, disaccord between the FRG and GDR reached another higher, legal level.

On 14 March the German Federal High Court issued this pronouncement of legal sanctions:

It has been established that *DTSB, Deutscher Turn- und Sportbund* of the Soviet Zone is a mass organization under strict direction of the state party, conducting its so-called ‘all-German work’ in the framework of the ‘West activities’ of the state party. Competitions between sportspeople of the FRG and the Soviet Zone per se are neither forbidden nor punishable. If however these are used to promote anti-state and unconstitutional activities of the state party against the FRG, there is no legal difference towards other punishable methods of communist subversion. The alleged sporting interest then has a culpability equal with communist propaganda for ‘peace and re-unification’ or its ‘fight against atomic death’, which, without the underlying unconstitutional communist aims, would be as little punishable as organizing ‘friendship games’.<sup>1</sup>

Even though no proof of this could be found, it is fair to assume that this ruling was rendered upon the initiatives of the Bonn government towards its judiciary as officials had become increasingly irritated by these East Berlin ‘West activities’. In any event the ruling was certainly pronounced in anticipation of further GDR political propaganda activities, similar to those analyzed in the previous chapter. It introduced a new facet of the German-German dichotomy, to be exceeded in severity only by West German reactions to the building of the Berlin Wall four months later. It inaugurated a new ‘ice age’ in German-German sports relations.

There can be no doubt that the involvement of West Germany’s highest court added a new, acerbic dimension to inter-German sporting matters. It put in jeopardy West

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<sup>1</sup> BArch Koblenz, B 145/ 3992.

German NOC President Willi Daume's continuing efforts for at least reasonable relations with Heinz Schöbel, his East German opposite number. Nonetheless on 10 May 1961 Daume sent a four-page registered letter addressed to Schöbel. This once again clearly underlined the much less than amicable, indeed near-hostile relations between the sports organizations of Germany-East and -West. Daume began his letter by stating:

For more than ten years, sports exchanges between the two parts of Germany are under continuous strain. Each of our many attempts to reduce such strains by reasonable agreements have failed in the end,

In his letter's last page he wrote, outlining future options and consequences:

Kindly take a decision either

a): for an honest, inter-German sporting cooperation, restricted to mutual sports activities but with consequences also for international sports exchanges,  
or,

b): for disintegration of German sports in the international domain as practiced by you until now.

(...) Would you decide for alternative a) it should be our mutual aim to remove all existing international difficulties (...) and we would not ask anything from you which we are not prepared to do ourselves (...).

Should you decide for b) however, it would make no sense to try to intensify inter-German sports relations (...) as they would show what they are: your attempts to come to political deals on both the inter-German as well as the international field.

(...) It is our wish that you would choose for the – within the realm of sports only acceptable – first alternative, as this represents the wishes of the vast majority of sportspeople in both parts of Germany.

With friendly sporting greetings,  
(signed) Daume.<sup>2</sup>

Given the already more than strained relations between the NOCs of West-Germany and that of the East one wonders whether Daume's letter would have any effect on the East German sports leadership; in fact it most likely made matters worse. GDR documents in the Berlin Federal Archives do not reveal any direct reply by Schöbel. Instead dated 20

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<sup>2</sup> BArch Koblenz, B 137/2745.

June 1961, a rather incoherent document headed *Erklärung* (statutory declaration) signed by Schöbel is on file. It reads:

I am declaring that the NOC of the GDR in all its activities is guided by the principles of the Olympic ideas (...) strictly observing the rules of the IOC and regulations on amateurism (...) The NOC of the GDR declares its willingness after its full acceptance by the IOC to participate with its sportspeople in the next Olympic Games at Innsbruck and Tokyo in a joint German Olympic team.

The NOC of the GDR is autonomous and independent vis-à-vis all Parties and the Government and also so vis-à-vis the *DTSB* (...) Members of the *DTSB* are amateurs. All its leaders and Members of the Board have been elected democratically (...) All decisions concerning its tasks and activities are taken by these democratically elected leaders who are having the confidence of members.<sup>3</sup>

Clearly Schöbel preferred to confront directly the rather provocative message by Daume but instead retreated behind the familiar East German position in matters of sport. The GDR's willingness to let its sportspeople participate in the next Olympics with a joint team was to be made conditional on full IOC acceptance of his country's NOC – which clearly was not forthcoming. He also asserted the total independence of his NOC from any government directives and interference. And finally he reconfirmed the amateur-status of GDR athletes, although they were in fact all government-supported and -paid 'state-amateurs'.

With both sides entrenched, problems continued to arise. One was the wish of the GDR to display what in the West was called the 'divider flag':

In February 1961, the 'Scandal of Geneva' created major attention. At the ice hockey world championship, the team of the Federal Republic was scheduled to play against that of the GDR in the try-out rounds. But West German officials cancelled this contest as it was feared that, should the GDR team have won, the West German team would have been obliged to show their respects to the flag of what they called the 'Soviet Zone'.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> BArch Berlin, DR 510/ 847.

<sup>4</sup> Lämmer, *Olympic Movement*, p. 245.

This cancellation – aside from the discourtesy towards their hosts of a world championship while being a country not involved in any East-West controversy – also ran the risk of total disqualification of the West German team. This was only avoided by the flexibility of the International Ice Hockey Federation, which agreed to arrangements for another pairing of prequalification partners.

Many of the disagreements between the two Germanys could only be resolved by the IOC, which became increasingly involved from its Lausanne headquarters. It was there, in the French-speaking part of Switzerland, that the somewhat resigned term of *les querelles d'allemand* (the German squabbles) was coined. Disputes often found a solution only by personal intervention of IOC President Brundage, who continued to firmly believe in the utopian 'peace potential' of the efforts of the IOC.

Even so, the GDR made no progress towards full acceptance in the IOC's international community of sport. In a letter of 26 April 1961 Brundage told Schöbel that, despite his appreciation of improved personal contacts, the IOC still harboured two reservations. In the first place there were no clear evidence that the NOC of the GDR 'had overcome a political domination'; secondly that there were 'continued and now even strengthened doubts about the strict adherence of sport in the GDR to the rules of amateurism'.<sup>5</sup> Brundage was also made aware of relevant disclosures by the former President of the East German Cyclists' Association Werner Scharch who had fled to the FRG, where his revelations raised concern and comments in the Western press.<sup>6</sup> Schöbel's statutory declaration dated 20 June 1961 cited above had not clarified the contentious issue to the satisfaction of the IOC. In consequence the request of the NOC of the GDR to convert

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<sup>5</sup> Lämmer, *Olympic Movement*, p. 245.

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. *DIE ZEIT*, Hamburg, issue of 19.06.1961.

its provisional acceptance into full membership was turned down by the IOC in its session at Athens in late June 1961.

Summing up sporting relations in the early 1960s between East and West we can see they were more strained than ever. The West was particularly irritated by increasing attempts of the GDR to display their national insignia on FRG territory; but also by their continued assertion of its sportspeople's amateur status. Matters further deteriorated on account of the IOC refusal to accept the GDR on equal terms with that enjoyed by West Germany – a state of affairs for which East Berlin held Bonn responsible. East Berlin perceived Brundage to prefer the FRG over the GDR. But worse was still to come, with the overall political situation between West and East about to deteriorate rapidly.

### The Berlin Wall

In the months of July and early August 1961 the GDR suddenly cancelled more than a hundred scheduled joint sport events meetings in West Germany. The East Berlin press gave the following, somewhat inventive reasoning:

In the Federal Republic the number of cases of poliomyelitis is increasing. Nonetheless the offer of the GDR to provide medication for oral vaccination has been rebuffed by the Federal government. It is therefore only too understandable that our Ministry of Health will take any measures to avoid contamination to reach the GDR. This also applies to sportspeople who had made plans to travel to attend competitions with friends in the Federal Republic.<sup>7</sup>

Early in the morning of 13 August 1961 Radio East Berlin played a song, especially composed for this day:

Our beautiful Berlin shall become cleaner  
because we have closed a human trap  
to the Cold War Mongers on the Rhine,  
and sealed it with red wax.

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<sup>7</sup> *Deutsches Sportecho*, East Berlin, issue no. 8, 3 August 1961, p. 3.

Until that date 2.7 million citizens of the GDR had fled to the West; by the date of the demise of the GDR in 1990 this figure would increase to some four million people having left their country – a veritable national exodus within a nation.<sup>8</sup> German historian Jutta Braun estimates that more than six hundred elite sports performers were amongst these.<sup>9</sup>

The truth of the matter of the earlier curtailment of travel was that the surge of people fleeing the country dramatically increased in the summer of 1961, reaching a height of 30,415 people arriving in West Berlin in the month of July. Amongst these were again many GDR sportspeople. Joachim Gauck, pastor and prominent GDR dissident, provides further details: since 1954 some 17,500 teachers, amongst them 850 university lecturers, fled the country, so did 3,500 doctors, 1,400 dentists, 300 veterinarians, plus countless nurses, skilled technicians, tradesmen, shop owners and agricultural workers. All of them were citizens who had received their training in the country but now denied it their service. The GDR was bleeding to death unless this mass emigration could be stopped.<sup>10</sup>

The erection of the Berlin Wall probably constitutes the most momentous turning point in post-war German, even European history; it evidenced the irreversible cementation – even in the literal sense of the word – of an East German Cold War stance by virtually

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<sup>8</sup> Vinke, Hermann, *Die DDR, eine Dokumentation (The GDR, A Documentation)* Ravensburg/Germany: Buchverlag Otto Maier (2008), p. 104. The German text of the banal-clumsy song was:

‘Unser schönes Berlin wird sauberer sein,  
denn wir haben den kalten Kriegern am Rhein  
ihre Menschenfalle verriegelt  
und mit rotem Wachs verriegelt’.

<sup>9</sup> Braun, Jutta, of Potsdam University, interviewed in West German TV feature HISTORY on channel ZDF ‘*Wir gegen uns, Wettkampf der Systeme*’ (*We against Ourselves, a Competition of Systems*)., 01 August 2011, 45 min.

<sup>10</sup> Gauck, Joachim [in March 2012 elected President of the German Federal Republic], *Erinnerungen (Reminiscences)*. Munich: Siedler/Random House (2009), p. 65.

imprisoning its own people. The Wall would remain in place for almost a generation, dismantled only some 28 years later with the implosion of its builders' country.

This extraordinary development raises the question of why such a huge number of GDR citizens were seeking to leave their country. Four main reasons may be suggested:

- a feeling of disappointment over the general malaise of a predominantly perceived grey-in-grey country, especially realized by GDR citizens when watching West German TV stations, and comparing their own material conditions and personal circumstances with those in wealthy, neighbouring Germany;
- resentment of the poor performance of the 'socialist planned economy', resulting in ever-present shortcomings of supply of consumer demands, for example up to a fourteen years' delivery time for the country's Trabi automobile;
- frustration over travel restrictions to any other than the countries of the Soviet bloc, especially so prohibiting trips to West Germany;
- concern over being watched: if a GDR citizen was even only suspected not to 'toe the party line' it resulted in he or she facing the activities of the ubiquitous *Stasi* State Security Organisation and its supervising, reporting and imprisonment powers, employing more than 90,000 full-time staff, assisted by some 170,000 to 180,000 *IMs* (informal collaborators) – in a country of 16 million people.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Fulbrook, Mary, *The People's State, East German Society from Hitler to Honecker*, Yale: University Press (2005).

The background to the conception of the Wall has long been shrouded in secrecy.<sup>12</sup> But German historian Matthias Uhl, recently granted access to secret files at the Moscow Presidential Archives of the Russian Federation, has uncovered the role of the main players in planning the Berlin Wall. In a conference of the Warsaw Pact leaders on 1 August 1961 the Russian General Secretary Nikita Khrushchev and East German leader Walter Ulbricht presented their plans for erection of the Wall to the other East bloc leaders. Ulbricht stressed the need to stop the haemorrhage by hundreds of thousands of GDR citizens fleeing to the West through Berlin, then being flown by one of the Western powers' airlines to the Federal Republic. By now, escaping over the already existing border fortifications of the GDR had become practically impossible. Yet the political four-power status of Berlin still allowed people to cross, almost unhindered, from the Soviet sector into that of one of the three Western Allies – the 'loophole' in the German Iron Curtain version so much resented and vilified by East Berlin leaders.

As Uhl notes, Khrushchev instructed Ulbricht in the meeting:

I have told our ambassador [in East Berlin] that to my mind there is no longer either time nor exists there an alternative for action. And to inform you of my considerations that current tensions with the West must be used to place an iron ring around Berlin (...) I am of the opinion that the ring should be formed by our army but its control should be by your troops.<sup>13</sup>

In hindsight, American historian Hope Harrison added these perceptive observations:

Ulbricht succeeded in solving the internal problem of the GDR (...) that of closing of the border. But for Khrushchev the erection of the Wall was not only a way to save the GDR. For him this also was a chance to 'wall up' Ulbricht in East Berlin, thereby limiting the possibilities that by some unilateral action of Ulbricht potential conflicts with the West would be created.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Wagner, Armin, *Ulbricht, Chruschtschow und die Mauer (Ulbricht, Khrushchev and the Wall)*, Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag (2003).

<sup>13</sup> Uhl, Matthias in *Die ZEIT*, Hamburg, issue no. 24, 4 June 2009, p. 4.

<sup>14</sup> Harrison, Hope M., *Driving the Soviets up the Wall and the 1961 Berlin Crisis*. New York: Columbia University Press (1993), p. 53.

So the Wall of 45 km around West Berlin – plus its extension North and South of some 1,200 km from the coast of the Baltic sea to the Czech border – was built and would endure as *the* symbol of German, and the world's, dichotomy for the next 28 years. In East Berlin vernacular it was called the 'Anti-Fascist Protection Wall' even though its defences were directed towards their own people. An estimated 300 to 500 persons eventually lost their lives, most of them shot by GDR border guards, killed in mine-fields or by self-firing mortars on border reinforcements.

#### The impact of the Wall on German sports relations

Reaction to the building of the Wall by sports organizations in West Germany was swift. It would be only three days until the *DSB* and the West German NOC, by means of their crucial *Düsseldorfer Beschlüsse* (the Düsseldorf memorandum), issued these statements while at the same time including strict instructions to their associated federations and clubs:

The measures of strangulation introduced by the regime of the Soviet Zone are most strongly repudiated. They contradict the principles of humanism and are in negation of any sporting ideals (...) By these measures the Zone has made inter-German sports exchanges an impossibility; it carries the sole responsibility for this. As long as normal interchanges between the Zone and Berlin as well as with the FRG remain impossible, the DSB will not allow joint sporting events to take place in the Zone or the FRG (...) The same goes for international sporting events to be held in the Zone (...) Under these circumstances negotiations about inter-German questions of sport are senseless. They will be discontinued henceforth.<sup>15</sup>

These parts of the memorandum (its full text is three times as long) are quoted here as they clearly express the outrage of West German sports leaders at the 'intolerable measure' of building the Berlin Wall. It was indeed the first time in history that a city of some four million people was divided by an impenetrable wall, separating the former German capital into two areas: one of some 400 square kilometres of the Soviet sector,

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<sup>15</sup> Pabst, *Medium*, p. 297.

the other one comprising the US, U.K. and French sectors of approx. 500 square kilometres.

Eastern reactions to the Düsseldorf decisions of 16 August also came quickly when, amongst others, the leading East German sports newspaper wrote:

A battle for peace has been won (...) Everybody who is on one's mettle, and who carries his heart in the right place, will now prove his love to our state of the workers and farmers (...) demonstrate his unmitigated hatred for the enemies of peace and fortunes of German sportsmen (...) At this hour everyone is called to volunteer to join the honourable service of the armed organs of the German Democratic Republic (...) Young sportsmen! The fatherland calls! Protect the socialist Republic!<sup>16</sup>

Former GDR sports-functionary Thomas Köhler commented on one of the many negative aspects resulting from the building of the Wall for GDR sportspeople:

As a reaction to erection of the wall, sporting relations between the FRG and GDR were broken off following the 'Düsseldorf memorandum' of 16 August 1961. GDR sportspeople could only participate in countries affiliated to the NATO alliance if they had obtained a required visa from the Allied Travel Office in West Berlin, the so-called TTD, 'Temporary Travel Documents'. Each trip would begin with a personal visit to West Berlin; and with our worry whether we would obtain the visa of the Travel Board. The East-West conflict caused many difficult hours for us as sportspeople.<sup>17</sup>

With the benefit of hindsight Thomas Köhler's sombre comments as a concerned GDR citizen expressed resignation. In the former quote, however, in a jingoistic proclamation, East Berlin's *Sportecho* threw all restraints to the wind by calling on, what they called German sportsmen, to forget all about sport and instead to rally to the flag – even to take up arms.

All the above quotes draw our attention to the significance, and far-reaching consequences, caused by the building of the Berlin Wall. With their decision to cancel inter-German sport relations, West German sports leaders were serving notice on their often proclaimed 'non-political stance' of the past, arguing that the redundancy of this

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<sup>16</sup> *Deutsches Sportecho*, East Berlin, issues of 18/19.08.1961.

<sup>17</sup> Köhler, *Two Sides*, p. 26.

premise was proven by the East's creation of the Wall. They were even moving to the complete cessation of all further German-German sports contacts. At this moment, with mutual accusations and invectives flying back and forth, another joint German Olympic involvement in the next Games of 1964 looked highly unlikely and questionable. Nevertheless moves to achieve this were soon underway.

#### Further Olympic cooperation?

A letter of 21 August 1961 by President Heinz Schöbel of the NOC of the GDR addressed to Brundage started the ball rolling in looking ahead to 1964. Schöbel called the reaction of West German sports leaders to 'certain security precautions taken by the authorities of the GDR' (i.e. the erection of the Wall), 'difficult to understand and exaggerated', constituting a 'unilateral disregard of IOC regulations'. And he concluded that a future joint German presence at Olympic Games 'would presumably be impossible'. Schöbel then suggested that 'participation of the best sportspeople from both German states should be on another basis', adding, with crocodile's tears, his concern that 'otherwise West German sportspeople would automatically remain excluded'.<sup>18</sup> It remains unclear what exactly he meant by 'another basis'.

Brundage appears to have been less than impressed by Schöbel's letter and on 28 August replied rather laconically:

As I have stated on many occasions, we consider the German team that has appeared now at four different Olympic events, a great victory of sport (...) Rest assured that the situation will be dealt with as always, in conformity with Olympic principles.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Lämmer, *Olympic Movement*, p. 245.

<sup>19</sup> Lämmer, *Olympic Movement*, p. 246.

As far as the FDR was concerned, following the *DSB/NOC* embargo of 16 August regarding cancellation of any sports contacts with the GDR, Willi Daume felt obliged to respect public opinion by also applying this decision to future Olympic cooperation with the GDR. In March 1962, however, he was faced with a dilemma: IOC Chancellor Mayer sent letters to both German NOCs urging them to ‘start negotiations on participation at the forthcoming Olympic Games on the basis of earlier agreed conditions’.<sup>20</sup> This invitation played well into the tactics of the GDR sports management. They were able to cite the wishes of the IOC and show their good will by demanding early negotiations. At the same time they intended to provoke a refusal by their opposite numbers, in order to be able to blame the West Germans for failure of negotiations. It is not unreasonable to extend the analysis a step further: by agreeing to the continuation of joint appearance, the IOC, so the East Germans hoped, might be convinced of the inevitable necessity of two autonomous teams.

The following memo, dated 30 March 1962 and written by Alfred Neumann, member of the politburo of the SED state party, provides an impression of the acerbic opinions in the highest circles of the GDR concerning West Germany and its sports movement at that time. It further reinforces evidence in earlier chapters about the superficiality of any feelings of West-East communality. The memo, here quoted in parts, was directed to the GDR Council of Ministers under the title ‘Proposal regarding support of preparations of GDR athletes for the 1964 Olympic Games’:

As representatives of the first German peace state, since 1956 sportspeople of the GDR are participating in the Olympic Games. For the first time, the aims of a German state coincide with those of the modern Olympic movement.

Imperialistic and militaristic powers in West Germany, misusing preparations for the Olympic Games for revanchist and anti-communist indoctrination of youth in West Germany, are by any means trying to sabotage participation of sportspeople of the GDR at the Olympic Games (...) The path towards war of the West German militarists, which on 13 August led to securing our state borders (...) includes

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<sup>20</sup> Lämmer, *Olympic Movement*, p. 246.

steps

1. to induce the IOC to exclude the NOC of the GDR by defamatory reasoning,
  2. to exclude sportspeople of the GDR from the Olympic Games by means of better try-out performances by sportspeople of the West Zones; to reach this goal no efforts are big enough for these people, in material and personnel respects (...)
- The situation demands all efforts to most effectively prepare the GDR sportspeople for the try-outs, politically-ideologically and sportingly.<sup>21</sup>

The leadership of the GDR in this memo claimed the right to present its country and people as being the 'better Germans', and at the same time as the only true German protagonists of the Olympic ideals. Moreover, in no uncertain terms the document vilifies the West German government, its public institutions and its sports movement. Painting a picture of West German political cunning and depravity, the West was accused of trying just anything imaginable to deny the GDR, its own organisations and sportspeople, the rightful place in the Olympic movement. Included also as an opaque side-reference was a vindication of the GDR building the Berlin Wall. It is indeed difficult to imagine a document more indicative of the deep ideological and actual chasm between the Germanys of East and West, in particular the irreconcilability of their sports movements.

Less polemical was a six-page memorandum and instruction dated 14 August 1962. It warned official circles and the press in the GDR not to assist West German sports by divulging any advances in the development of sports achieved by the GDR. The document was issued by the 'Scientific Department of the State Committee for Physical Culture and Sport' under the heading 'Publication and Exchange of Scientific Material'.

The opening paragraph at the same time forms the conclusion:

To prepare sportspeople of the GDR for the Olympic Games it is important to secure the increase in implementation and superiority in performing sports over the West Zone. All our publications are used in the Westzone to improve their organisation and training in performing sports. By this, we ourselves frequently have limited the possibility to achieve superiority over the Westzone (...)

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<sup>21</sup> BArch Berlin, DY 12/512, pp. 61-64.

scientific insights, principles of organisation and performance, basics of political, ethical and tactical education, new methods of training and techniques, recent developments of sports materials intended for training and forming of the national teams of the GDR, with immediate effect are forbidden for publication (...) Instances of neglect of these instructions will be dealt in accordance with the penal code of the GDR.

The document further urged the need for secrecy, specifying that ‘functionaries representing our socialist sports movement abroad, especially in capitalist countries, are to be thoroughly instructed not to divulge to outsiders (journalists, reporters, trainers or sportspeople) information detailed anywhere in this document’.<sup>22</sup> It constitutes yet another, very distinct example of East Berlin’s determination to bar, in this particular instance interdict, contacts with West Germany and its sports organisations. It threatens its own people in case of non-compliance with the orders.

When analyzing developments after the crucial date of 13 August 1961, the day the Wall went up, a kaleidoscopic picture ensues. While West German sport was determined to break up all contacts with the East, the GDR press even went a step further by calling for arms to defend the Wall. Köhler, one of the more level-headed GDR sports officials, had looked at consequences for his sports colleagues. In no uncertain terms, however, the GDR politburo used the occasion to ‘ideologically rearm’ its Council of Ministers against the FRG. Brundage, incorrigible optimist as ever, tried to gloss over difficulties; and seven months later had his IOC approach the FRG to prepare for the 1964 Olympic Games – in the process in fact creating an opportunity for the GDR to demand separate teams for the Games. It was, all in all, a confusing and discouraging picture; yet nothing less than characteristic of intra-German sports relations at the time.

### The IOC initiative for the 1964 Olympics

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<sup>22</sup> BArch Berlin, DY 12/512, pp. 44-49.

For more than a year after the erection of the Berlin Wall inter-German matters remained in a phase of strained stalemate and the likelihood of continuing German cooperation at the Olympics looked to be in jeopardy. Yet despite the virtual suspension of German-German sporting relations, on 20 October 1962 Willi Daume informed his colleagues of the IOC Executive Committee that, after all, his NOC had decided to try its best to achieve fielding another joint German team for the 1964 Olympic Games. Daume in fact felt himself caught in the middle: between official refusal of further contacts with the GDR, and public opinion looking for their resumption. This position resulted, it seems, also out of concern about the possibility that the GDR could become the sole German representatives on the Olympic stage should the West refuse further cooperation.

But a further twist was to come, one that, for a time in the winter of 1962-63, seemed to herald the imminent separation of the German team. Following talks with the IOC by Daume in October and by Schöbel in December 1962, both NOCs were invited to a meeting in Lausanne on 17 December. Expressing resignation rather than relief, an IOC press communiqué announcing an unanticipated outcome was released:

there is agreement for the participation at Innsbruck and Tokyo by separate German teams, united only by common protocol (...) This solution is the logical consequence of difficulties at present faced vis-a-vis formation of a fully joint team. It will better serve the aspirations of the Olympic spirit.<sup>23</sup>

However this was not to be the final word on the matter. It emerged that the *spiritus rector* of these proceedings and its result was IOC Chancellor Mayer, standing in for President Brundage who was in Chicago at the time. Brundage had not been involved in such moves at any stage and when he learned of the decisions from Daume, who

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<sup>23</sup> Archives of the IOC at Lausanne, quoted by Lämmer, p. 247.

came to visit him in Chicago, he was livid. His formal response was tersely noted in a record of a meeting of 6 January 1963:

President Brundage informed Mr. Daume that, in his opinion, there was no possibility that the International Olympic Committee would accept the suggestion of having two German teams united only with single flag.<sup>24</sup>

Flying back to Switzerland Brundage called another meeting of all parties on 8 February 1963. He then sternly revoked the decisions of 17 December 1962, returning the situation to the earlier agreements on an all-German participation (as first practiced at Cortina d'Ampezzo and Melbourne in 1956), now to also apply in the case of Innsbruck and Tokyo. As Willi Knecht reports, starting with a first meeting of the two German NOCs on 9 March 1963 in West Berlin, and until only shortly before the beginning of the IXth Winter Games at Innsbruck on 29 January 1964, there followed another eleven meetings of the two NOCs and eighty sessions of representatives of the German sports federations. In other words there were some 1,000 hours of tough negotiations, numerous personal interventions by Brundage, plus 60 pre-qualification try-outs.<sup>25</sup>

The ill-fated 'agreement' of December 1962, before being revoked at the behest of Brundage, did cast light on how far both sides were now willing to contemplate a parting of the ways. The IOC communiqué was apparently (and perhaps surprisingly) not opposed by the West at the time and it will have been welcomed by the GDR. In a commentary on the decision, found in East German NOC-protocols, a remark of Schöbel's was to the effect that 'it is about time that this illusion will be buried'.<sup>26</sup> Yet in the event the opposite happened: there *was* to be another German-German Olympic

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<sup>24</sup> Avery Brundage Collection, University of Illinois/Bonn, box 127.

<sup>25</sup> Knecht, Willi, *Nach Tokio und zurück, Sportpolitik in Deutschland (To Tokyo and Back, Sports Politics in Germany)*. Diessen/Germany: von Tucher-Verlag (1965). p. 111.

<sup>26</sup> Höfer, in Lämmer, *Olympic Movement*, p. 247

presence at the 1964 Innsbruck and Tokyo Games after all. Its cause primarily, as had been the case since the early 1950s, was the firm will and adeptness of Brundage, though the episode illustrated that his reliance on West German concern that in the event of separation they would 'share' in the joint team, leaving any Olympic presence to East Germany alone, was wearing thin.

Meanwhile the conundrum of the joint German teams reached the Cabinet at Bonn. In a letter dated 31 October 1962, the Minister of the Interior Hermann Höcherl, addressed the Office of the Chancellor, with copies to all Federal Ministers, referred to the request of the President of the *Sportbund* for governmental clarification of a confusing situation. Höcherl reiterated that there had been disruption of all sports contacts with the GDR since 13 August 1961 and prohibition of East German sporting events on West German soil since March 1962, as well as non-participation of West German teams on GDR sports grounds. On the other hand, however, in response to invitations by several international sports federations, teams from both Germanys were participating in sports competitions such as rowing in other countries. The minister stated his opinion – shared as he said by the Minister of Foreign Affairs Heinrich von Brentano – that efforts towards joint German teams should continue in order to foster human relations between sportspeople of the two Germanys. He concluded:

Our sports organisations, affected by the embargo of 13 August 1961, are pointing out that it is illogical to interdict sporting contacts with the GDR in general, while in other instances the next-to-each-other of German sportspeople is permitted. The resulting difference in the treatment of varying events is less than satisfactory. Kindly have the issue added to the agenda of one of the next Cabinet meetings.<sup>27</sup>

There is no record that the matter was indeed further discussed in another Cabinet meeting. This may be considered as less than surprising since the majority of political

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<sup>27</sup> BArch Koblenz, B 136/5555.

leaders in Bonn, including the members of the Cabinet, did not show much interest in inter-German sporting issues unless the need was very pressing.

Given the more than frosty relations between the two Germanys at the time, it was a most remarkable illustration of Brundage's power, and the freedom of the IOC to operate outside normal political rules, that he managed to keep alive the idea of a joint Olympic team in the early 1960s. Especially against the background of the Berlin Wall – which undoubtedly will have been a bitter inter-German development for him – his task was growing ever more difficult, even more so than amidst the more 'fraternal disputes' of the mid-1950s. In late 1962 the Swiss journalist Dr. Gisler, head of the sports section of the influential *Neue Züricher Zeitung*, reflected on the gulf that continued in practice between West and East:

Intelligent political schooling, based on a firm liberal position, will have to be the most important objective for any Western sports leader for the new year. Since all states espousing communist ideology included sports in their instrumentations of expansion and subversion, one is finding oneself continuously on black ice (...) Any sports leader ignoring the importance of sport being a means of Eastern politics, accepting their 'idealist' and 'fighter-for-the-good' pretensions, will do so at his peril.<sup>28</sup>

### The Olympic Games of 1968 to be held in Berlin?

Interspaced between the fall-out from erection of the Wall in 1961 and preparations for the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, we next turn attention to a little-known interlude, characteristic of the topsy-turvy attitudes of that time: plans for the Olympic Games of 1968 to be held in the divided city of Berlin. It may well be argued that, given the perennial unsolved problems of Berlin, such plans were extremely unrealistic from the very beginning. Yet Avery Brundage's unfailing hopes for the betterment of inter-German relations once again come to the fore, envisioning (as a commentator had put in

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<sup>28</sup> *Münchener Merkur*, Munich, issue of 27 December 1962, p. 5, in BArch Koblenz, B 137/2745.

hindsight) ‘Olympic Games in both parts of, or even better, in a reunited Berlin, dreaming that the great world festival of sports might break the Iron Curtain and tear down the Wall’.<sup>29</sup>

On 1 February 1963 an internal memo by Dept. 5 of the Federal Ministry of All-German Affairs was sent to the Minister of the Interior. As an annex it contained the précis of a telephone conversation received by the Minister Rainer Barzel, who reported on a call from Willi Daume, declaring his intention to support holding all-Berlin Olympic Games in 1968, a proposal he said had the support of Willi Brandt, the Mayor of West Berlin.<sup>30</sup> As Barzel explained to Daume, the matter was outside the scope of his ministry, involved political implications, and he therefore requested the opinion of the Minister of Interior regarding the initiative. On the margin of the document there is a hand-written remark by Dr. von Hovora, State Secretary at the ministry: ‘Obviously Brandt, with his support to hold the Olympic Games in greater Berlin, intends to increase his popularity again’ – a snide comment by one of the prominent people in the Christian Democrat party towards a leading figure of the opposition Social Democrats.<sup>31</sup>

The episode continued with a memo by Dr. von Hovora of the Ministry of All-German Affairs dated 2 April 1963 on a joint meeting at AA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, under the heading ‘Olympic Games 1968 in Berlin’. It reports on a session by the NATO Consultation Council on 28 February in which France rejected the proposal made. The United States and Britain agreed to the French dismissal by adding the

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<sup>29</sup> Höfer, in Lämmer, *Olympic Movement*, pp. 251-52.

<sup>30</sup> Brandt from 1969-1974 was Chancellor of the Federal Republic. Contrary to the more antagonist stance of earlier cabinets towards the East, the aim and resolve of his government was *Wandel durch Annäherung* (Change by Approximation), also called *Neue Ostpolitik*. His 1970 genuflection before the monument to the victims of the 1944 Warsaw uprising gained international attention. In 1971 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. In 1973 his government signed the *Grundlagenvertrag* (Contract of Basic Agreements) with the GDR. Brandt resigned in 1974 upon discovery that Günter Guillaume, one of his closest advisers, was a ‘mole’ undercover *Stasi* agent.

<sup>31</sup> BArch Koblenz, B 136/5556.

comment: 'the whole complex [issue] cannot be judged in its possible ramifications at the present time'. Although an application by the Senate of Berlin was meanwhile submitted to the IOC, nothing was decided yet and there was still the possibility to withdraw it, the memo said. Seizing on the 'six million people organised in the West German sports movement', von Hovora propounded an 'elastically as possible position of the government', a stance supported by the delegates of the AA.<sup>32</sup>

In April 1963 a 2-page letter marked 'Urgent and Confidential' was sent by the Foreign Office to the Ministry of the Interior headed 'Berlin as Venue for the Olympic Games'. The Bonn bureaucrats were again using Western Allies' reservations to support their own ill feeling about the matter: aside from some apparently usual political-insubstantial formulations, it quoted a statement by the American delegate at a following NATO Consultation Council: 'in any event Mr Daume's proposal will create more problems and difficulties than advantages', while the UK representative was quoted as saying: 'the plan will produce new accusations that the West wants to use international sports as a tool for politics'. In any case the impracticality of the plan was becoming obvious. It was agreed that the Mayor of Berlin and Mr. Daume be informed accordingly.<sup>33</sup>

Relating to this issue a memo also exists in an East German file: a record by Schöbel, head of the NOC of the GDR, of a telephone call from Willi Daume on 9 April 1963. Daume told Schöbel that he met Brundage at the beginning of the year in Lausanne, briefly discussing the plan for the 1968 Games to be held in both parts of Berlin. Brundage was said to be pleased at the idea, in part because no particularly attractive proposals for a venue had been received by the IOC so far. Daume confirmed that only

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<sup>32</sup> BArch Koblenz, B 137/2745.

<sup>33</sup> BArch Koblenz, B 137/164 32.

a joint German application should be considered, which he himself positively accepted. Daume also confirmed that the West German NOC would not take separate steps unless the NOC of the GDR agreed to become involved. The memo ends by mentioning 'Daume had further suggested that, we together, might perhaps already open the conversation with our [East-] Berlin mayor'.<sup>34</sup>

However party leaders in East Berlin would have none of this. They published a statement markedly different from the thoughts of an – unusually – conciliatory Schöbel. They knew perfectly well that this would scuttle any West German intentions in the project, and that it would be the final nail in the coffin of the plan to convene the Olympic Games in Berlin. This is what was printed in an article in the leading GDR party newspaper:

It is well-known that applications for holding Olympic Games have to be sent by the mayor of the town inviting the IOC. Berlin has two mayors, one of Berlin, Capital of the German Democratic Republic; the other one in the sectors of the Western Allies. For the former this should be no problem. For the latter this will only be possible through the mayor of our Capital, as West Berlin is part of the territory of the German Democratic Republic.<sup>35</sup>

This was a most impertinent statement, ignoring the fact that Berlin was a city under joint responsibility of the four victorious Allies of the Second World War. In any event it meant the end of the Daume-Brandt proposal for Olympic Games to be held in the former German capital. With the idea of Games to be held in Berlin having become nothing more than a footnote in German-German sporting relations, we now turn to the last of three Olympic appearances of the joint German team.

### The 1964 Olympics

The XIXth Winter Games at Innsbruck in Austria opened on 29 January 1964 and lasted until 9 February, with more than 1,300 athletes from 36 nations competing. One aspect

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<sup>34</sup> BArch Berlin, DR 510/105.

<sup>35</sup> *Neues Deutschland*, East Berlin, issue of 19.04.1963.

which the organizers could not control was the weather. With temperatures consistently rising above zero, it was the mildest first week in February for nearly 40 years; lugers, bobsledders and skiers had to contend with uncertain practice schedules and poor quality of their courses. The Austrian army mobilised 3,000 soldiers to deliver 40,000 cubic meters of snow from higher Alpine slopes, while six snowmaking machines were imported from the United States.<sup>36</sup> For the first time in the Games, the Olympic flame was lit in Olympia in Greece and carried through an extended torch relay across the continent to Innsbruck, implementing an idea of the German Olympic sports official Carl Diem.

In spite of the numerous difficulties experienced at the Games, in terms of sporting performances the event was again a success for the German-German team. For the Winter Games a joint team of 96 athletes was fielded, 56 coming from the Federal Republic and 40 from the GDR. The team won a total of 8 medals, an even 4 for each contingent: 1 gold and 3 bronze for the West German one, 2 gold and 2 silver for that of the GDR.<sup>37</sup>

Thomas Köhler, member of the GDR contingent of the team, wrote about Innsbruck:

Despite the fact that we were a common team we rather considered ourselves as sporting competitors. At a press conference I was asked to comment on our relationship with the West German contingent to which I replied 'It was as good as could be. We were helping them when this was possible, they were helping us. We got along well together.'<sup>38</sup>

Koehler's comments were written with hindsight, in his book published in 2010, yet they still were an apparently adequate observation on the spirit existing between the two sections of the joint team at Innsbruck. His rather positive picture is in contrast to

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<sup>36</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, pp. 346-47.

<sup>37</sup> Lanz, *Politics Protocol*, pp. 60, 358.

<sup>38</sup> Köhler, *Two Sides*, p. 38.

previously analyzed accounts of inter-German Olympic sporting rivalry and political-ideological antagonisms, and was not shared by all observers at the time. Using the titles ‘Under the Five Rings’ and ‘Gold and Silver Desired a Lot’, a West German weekly reported on the Winter Games:

The joint German team had travelled to Innsbruck with quite some ‘advance laurels’ so the general impression was one of disappointment. Is that justified? It’s true that the amount of medals gained is lower than those at Squaw Valley, but expectations were exaggerated (...) Even for journalists from the Zone, twice times Gold for their tobogganers [one was Köhler] was not enough; ‘we are having a thirteen-times world champion in fly-fishing’ one of them stated – ‘but then what’s fly-fishing?’ (...) They concentrated on agitation to which their socialist-professional ethos obliged them, distributing a pamphlet ‘The sportspeople of the GDR at the Olympic Games’ – with a minute annex ‘The sportspeople of the Federal Republic’.<sup>39</sup>

This expressed the ongoing reservations of the majority of the West German press – and of much of the ruling circles at Bonn, – towards sporting contacts with the GDR, and especially over the joint Olympic team. It was an attitude which Daume continued to stand out against. Yet he had to concede that, despite things going relatively well at Innsbruck, German-German sports relations continued to be difficult. As we have observed on various earlier occasions, Willi Daume – arguably as the only West German sports leader, perhaps only next to von Halt – had always tried his best to come to at least reasonable relations in sports with East Berlin; the only remaining tie we still have, as he once said. Concerning Innsbruck, and ever the diplomat, Daume said that the very realisation of the joint German team was better than expected.<sup>40</sup>

In the aftermath of Innsbruck, further general concern was expressed by participants in a meeting in April 1964 of the Ministers for the Interior of the German Länder with Daume as President of the *DSB, Deutscher Sportbund*. The ministers voiced their

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<sup>39</sup> *Die Zeit*, Hamburg, sports pages 33 and 29, issues of 7 and 14 February 1964.

<sup>40</sup> Rode, *Willi Daume*, pp. 259/260.

anxiety that renewed Olympic cooperation for the 1968 Games might result in the NOC of the *Zone* (their derogatory synonym for GDR) being granted full IOC status. Even though an *Aufwertung* (political upgrading) of the *Zone* by NATO countries was not anticipated, Daume explained that the IOC had ‘not accepted the GDR as a country, but as a territory’. Anyway the Foreign Office voiced reservations and wished to maintain any designation like *gesamtdeutsch* (all-German) until eventual reunification. The *DSB* delegates expressed doubts that the IOC would accept such political sophistry. Daume was praised for his efforts towards the German-German Olympic team, ‘constituting one of the few symbols of German unity, but at the same time as a means of rejection of accreditation of the Soviet Zone’. The All-German Ministry explained changes in TTD rules, not allowing sportspeople of the *Zone* to travel to the West as national but only as individuals, forbidden to display any symbols of the GDR. The representative of the Senate of West Berlin stated that no German-German sporting contacts should be conducted without the inclusion of Berlin, and that there were to be no direct contacts between organisations in West Berlin and those in the Soviet Zone.<sup>41</sup>

The XVIIth Summer Games were the more important ones in the Olympic calendar, taking place in Tokyo from 10 to 24 October 1964. Among the best organized thus far, they became known as ‘the technology Games’, ‘the television Games’, even the ‘science fiction Games’. After the Japanese exploits of the Second World War, they symbolised the nation’s return to the international fold. Participating in the Games were 5,558 athletes – 4,826 men and 732 women – from 94 nations, 16 of them for the first time.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Protocol of discussions of the ‘Commission of Interior Ministers of the Länder of the FRG with the Presidency of the Sportbund on 28 April 1964’. Source: BArch Koblenz, B 137/2746.

<sup>42</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, pp. 165, 168, 171.

After strenuous, sometimes even bitterly fought pre-qualification trials in both parts of Germany and in both sections of Berlin, the GDR nominated 194 and the FRG 182 sportspeople for the German-German Olympic team. According to the rules agreed upon earlier, this numerical balance for the first time accorded the GDR the privilege of appointing the prestigious position of Olympic *Chef de Mission*. This was a remarkable success for GDR sports as it meant fielding the majority of athletes from its country's 18 million people, compared to West Germany with a population more than three times its own. In the event only 167 athletes from East Germany and 169 from the West participated in the Games, the latter with a much higher ratio of medals gained than the athletes from the East in the German-German team:

	Gold	Silver	Bronze
FRG	7	11	13
GDR	3	8	3
Joint	0	3	2

Nonetheless the Tokyo Summer Games represented a first major success in the quest of the GDR to become the foremost of the two Germanys in the field of Olympic sport. Moreover, the Games were another outward success story for the German-German team, taking an impressive fourth place – out of 94 countries – finishing only after those of the United States, the Soviet Union, and host country Japan.<sup>43</sup>

On the side-lines of the 1964 Tokyo Games a personal melodrama unravelled. Karin Balzer, nee Richert, member of the GDR section of the joint German team and a citizen of Magdeburg, East Germany, won the gold medal in hurdles. In July 1958, when already a prominent sportswoman in the GDR, she had absconded from the GDR to Ludwigshafen in West Germany together with her coach and partner Heinz Balzer, wanting to start a new private life and also one in sports in West Germany. But party, sports management and state security in the GDR decided to bring her back by any

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<sup>43</sup> Lanz, *Politics Protocol*, pp. 61, 358.

means. Accompanied by two *Stasi* officers, her father was forced to travel to Ludwigshafen from Magdeburg to persuade the two to return to the GDR. Initially they refused, but threats by the *Stasi* agents to take ‘measures’ against the families of the two refugees in the GDR, forced them to re-emigrate.<sup>44</sup> In public, GDR propaganda declared that the couple were ‘repentant sinners, returning of their own free will, and disenchanted by the coldness of capitalism’. Upon their return, they were reintegrated into the country’s sports system; yet not without reservations. When Karin Balzer stood on the rostrum in Tokyo to receive her gold medal, her husband was not present: due to a perceived ‘increased risk of the couple absconding to the West’ he had been prohibited by GDR authorities from travelling to Tokyo. He could only hear of his wife’s triumph on GDR radio.<sup>45</sup> The Karin Balzer story was indicative of the extent to which the authorities of the GDR would go – especially the *Stasi*, the country’s omnipresent Ministry of State Security – to keep a tight rein on actual or potential dissidents; even if, and most likely more so, when they were members of the German-German Olympic team.

A rather caustic newspaper article was written after the end of the Tokyo Games by Adolf Metzner, leading German sports commentator of *Die ZEIT*. He praised the ‘unexpectedly surprising’ result of the German joint team, although ‘its agony in the Olympic field appears to extend itself endlessly’. He specifically puts the term ‘all-German’ for the team in quotation marks, observing:

If one hears from our people in the Olympic village how the GDR apparatchiks have issued a ‘non-fraternisation-ruling’, and if one knows that many of the middle-German sportsmen do not speak a word with their West German comrades, even not returning a greeting from them and refusing small presents, one should not shed another tear for this farce. Sports simply cannot overrule politics.

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<sup>44</sup> Time witness report of Karin Balzer at Chemnitz of 1 June 2008.

<sup>45</sup> Braun, Jutta et al., *Spitzenathleten auf der Flucht aus der DDR (Top Athletes fleeing from the GDR)*, Brandenburg/Germany: Zentrum deutsche Sportgeschichte (Archives of German Sports History) (2011), p. 74.

Metzner also took Avery Brundage to task, writing that he still followed his German-German illusion ‘on account of its radiance effect’. He equally reflected on how Brundage was aware of the problems of amateur status in the West versus that of the ‘state amateurs of the East’, in which contentious matter lies and hypocrisy were the order of the day. Metzner compared the ‘gigantic competition in sports’ between the Soviet Union and the United States to that over the Sputnik, calculating that this time the United States had won: in Gold medals 36-to-30. A long way behind in the rankings came Japan with 16, and Italy, Hungary and Germany with each 10 gold medals. Resignedly Metzner wrote that there was ‘the other side of the coin’ of our many precious medals: ‘most likely everything will plod along the trodden path of the German-German farce’. In any case the many defeats by East Germany in the run-up qualifications ought to be a warning signal. In a summing-up Metzner voiced his conviction that – following the successful Americans example – help for top athletes must be organised in a way to promote individual initiative. If there must be a system at all, it will have to be one which is ‘neither limiting, let alone destroying, the freedom of personality.’<sup>46</sup> The unstated implication of Metzner’s conclusion was that the increasing success of GDR sports was achieved by exactly the opposite concept: an ideologically oriented, top-down-selected, strictly authoritarian group-approach.

Looking back at the Tokyo Games the question arises as to how relations had developed on the ‘ground level’ between the athletes from East and West. In her doctoral dissertation issued as a book Juliane Lanz quotes a report by the German Embassy at Tokyo. The document relates that there was camaraderie in the team, however ‘not

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<sup>46</sup> *Die Zeit*, Hamburg, no. 44 of 30 October 1964, Sports Supplement p. 15.

exceeding a minimum, yet better than during earlier Olympic Games'.<sup>47</sup> The diplomats felt that 'continuation of the joint team was possible as well as desirable, although despite internal separation the external impression maintained was that of a common team'. They added their opinion that 'although creation of separate teams in the future would remove many existing problems, this would not be in the interest of the Foreign Office'.<sup>48</sup>

By way of contrast a key memorandum, submitted in English by the GDR to the IOC, reported that 'the sportsmen of the two parts of Germany are strangers among each other, one does not know each other', adding that 'in separate teams and with fronts cleared it would become possible to return to amicable relations, normal communication, and sporting interchange'.<sup>49</sup> Overall the impression which the joint team seems to have left behind after Tokyo was one of weary resignation; especially in the aftermath of the construction of the Berlin Wall, the feeling had grown that a point of no return had been reached, with athletes being forced to go through the motions of appearing jointly because no other way could be found. On both sides the feeling of 'never again' was becoming commonplace; which four years later would exactly be the case in Mexico City.

### Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed the seminal event of the erection of the Berlin Wall in 1961 and its consequences for sports. It dealt with the many ongoing animosities existing between sports politics pursued by East- and West-Germany and assessed the lukewarm interest of West German officialdom, and parts of the press, towards a joint Olympic

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<sup>47</sup> Lanz, Juliane, *Politik, Protocol*, pp. 343ff.

<sup>48</sup> Sattler, Archive of the Foreign Office, Report PAAA B94/1353, 13 February 1965.

<sup>49</sup> Schumann, Statement for the IOC, Avery Brundage Collection, University of Illinois/Bonn, box 129, (undated, presumably January 1965).

team. It raised the question why, and despite the erection of the Wall, the 1964 Olympics still witnessed a joint German team. The discussion found part of its answer in the continued interest of East Germany to further its international presence; and on the other hand in the assumed concern of the West German NOC that, had it not cooperated in maintaining the joint team, this might quite well have resulted in ceding German representation at the Olympics to the GDR.

But the decisive influence in 1962-63, as for many preceding years, was the intervention of the still powerful septuagenarian Brundage. He acted to re-instate German-German presence at the 1964 Olympics despite the sceptics and against the prevailing feeling in both West and East. To outward appearances the Innsbruck and Tokyo Olympic Games resulted in another major sporting success for the German-German team, with a strong showing in the medals table. But in some respects the writing was on the wall. Even Brundage was finding it difficult to maintain his long-held position, having to fend off a brief move to separate the team into two parts, and the sight of two separate marching columns in Tokyo - though still under the earlier protocol of Olympic flag, tricots and hymn – boded ill for the likelihood of continuing with further German-German cooperation for much longer. The end of the experiment in sporting communality was near at hand, and forms the major subject matter of the next chapter.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### STRAINED RELATIONS FROM THE OLYMPICS AT TOKYO TO THE ENDING AT MEXICO CITY, 1964-68

The ‘marriage of convenience’ that had been in place since the early 1950s came to an end a decade later and hence the question arises: why did this happen in the mid-1960s, and not earlier or later? The previous chapter showed how the German-German team was already under threat particularly after the Berlin-Wall-crisis, but nevertheless survived to continue into 1964; and it was observed that IOC President Brundage always managed to hold sway, whatever the feelings were of those on the ground in the two Germanys. Here the aim will be to show that by 1965 any residual support for continued Olympic cooperation was outweighed by acceptance that the two teams should go their separate ways, a view – surprisingly – that even Brundage came to accept. Special attention is given in what follows to the vital 1965 IOC resolution paving the way for the discontinuation of further joint appearances. This was followed by the 1968 decision to fully recognise the NOC of East Germany, and the appearance of the now ‘duplicated Germanys’ at the Winter and Summer Games of 1968. To an extent it was ironic that separation came about in mid-1960s, for as we shall also see this was a time when the 1972 summer Olympics were awarded to Germany (to Munich) for the first time since 1936. And furthermore, there was even some evidence of a renewal of German-German sports relationships following their total disruption as a consequence of erection of the Berlin Wall.

#### Ending the FRG sports embargo, and cross-border sports visits

Two weeks after the decision in 1965 by the West German sports management to rescind its ban on sporting contacts with the GDR and urged by an initiative of the IOC, President Willi Daume sent a circular letter to all member organisations of his West

German *Sportbund* calling on them to ‘renew sporting contacts with the Soviet Zone and to intensify these within the framework available’.<sup>1</sup> Although the sporting *Grenzverkehr* (cross-border exchange) of the days prior to the erection of the Berlin Wall could now be revived, in fact until January 1968 relatively few such encounters actually took place. In the Federal Republic in 1966 there had been 30 all-German events with 535 participants, and in 1967 40 competitions with 707 active sportsmen. In the GDR 52 such sports meeting took place in 1966 involving 915 sportsmen and -women, and in 1967 there were 48 meetings with 832 active sportspeople from both Germanys. Despite earlier definite arrangements, another 274 events were cancelled by the GDR in 1966 and 1967 with dubious explanations or excuses, 100 of would have taken place in the FRG and 174 in the GDR.<sup>2</sup> In spite of efforts by West German sports organisations to further German-German contacts there obviously was very little interest in such on the part of the GDR leadership.

Another aspect of the question, however, was that somewhat surprisingly, the *kleine Grenzverkehr* (minor border crossings in relation to sport on a more personal level between the two Germanys) continued to exist, viewed with a measure of concern in West German official circles.

In the German Federal files at Koblenz four key documents confirm the existence of such minor German-German sporting exchanges. The first two are quoted below *in extenso* since they reflect the frame of mind of West German officials regarding sports at the time. The first one is a memo dated July 1964 by the F.O. (Foreign Office) Dept. I 6 addressed to their colleagues of Departments I 1 and I 3 under the heading *Kleiner*

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<sup>1</sup> Knecht, Willi, *Die geteilte Arena (The divided Arena)*. Berlin/Nuremberg: Presseverlag Bahr KG (1968),p. 72.

<sup>2</sup> Knecht, Willi, *Divided Arena*, p. 73.

*Sportverkehr über die Demarkationslinie* (Minor sports exchanges across the line of demarcation):<sup>3</sup>

Regarding volume of the minor sports exchange there exists a certain obscurity also in authoritative circles. West German Sportbund president Daume, in a recent meeting with the Minister of the Interior, explained that the Sportbund has little or no influence on local clubs, resp. at the lower level. It were indeed so that club chairmen could freely organise German-German sports exchanges if they considered such as appropriate for sporting, social, political or traditional reasons. In the context of the ‘open German discussion’ propagated by the *SBZ* such events however, and should they be increased in numbers, are of a certain importance. It would be appreciated if your files could provide details of such travel events, and their volume. According to reports disseminated in *Neues Deutschland* [the GDR party newspaper] they must be not inconsiderable.<sup>4</sup>

The next document is the reply to F.O. Dept. I 6 by Dept. I 1, also dated July 1964, under the same heading:

According to findings available at this department, corroborated by the senior Sportbund office manager of Mr. Gieseler by telephone today, there is no record of a sizable volume of sporting exchanges (...) across the demarcation line. Aside from events tolerated by the German Sportbund, some minor so-called all-German sports events and sports talks are taking place in Middle Germany [yet another ‘politically correct’ West German term for the GDR ], which were arranged in a more or less conspiratorial manner from inside the Zone. Contact partners inside the Federal Republic in such instances – if they were sports people at all – exclusively are clubs and groupings outside the German Sportbund and amenable to communist infiltration. Events of this kind are being used by *SBZ* publicity organs in order to agitate against the Federal Republic and the German Sportbund.

These two documents were quoted *in extenso* because they reflect a measure of unease in official Bonn circles about the effects such visits may have: namely that East German agitators were possibly meeting ‘less informed’ West German sportspeople who were unable to discern, let alone to repudiate, any conspiratorial argumentation.

The third document is a letter by the Federal Minister of All-German Affairs dated 6 April 1966, addressed to the ‘Athletics Club of 1886’ in Bischofsheim, West Germany.

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<sup>3</sup> [The ‘line of demarcation’ was another F.O.-term for the inter-German border, deemed ‘more politically correct’ in West German official perception.]

<sup>4</sup> BArch Koblenz, B/ 137 274

It confirms receipt of a letter by the club's manager in which he requested the Minister's approval for a planned Club visit to a club in Sangerhausen, East Germany. The Minister writes that he would 'very much welcome a sporting encounter with the handball sportsmen of your Club in Sangerhausen'. However, he adds the admonishment:

I suggest that discussions there will be held based on life experience and general knowledge which each visitor will bring along, so that declarations of a political nature, as they are only too often propagated by functionaries of the SBZ, can be avoided.

The document finally quoted here is dated March 1966. It is a letter by BSG (Company Sports Club) Sangerhausen GDR, addressed to the Athletics Club of 1886 in Bischofsheim FRG. Sangerhausen was a small provincial town west of Leipzig in the former GDR, Bischofsheim a not much bigger one close to Frankfurt in West Germany; they are some 400 km apart. The letter contained a confirmation of the forthcoming visit of the latter's sportsmen, 'welcome especially since sportive contacts which are in existence now since nine years have been reopened after a 4 four year's disruption by your sports leadership'. The letter continues by giving the assurance:

your sportsmen, their spouses and accompanying staff are cordially welcome and we shall do everything in our power to fulfil your wishes, allow entry of your personal cars into our country, to waive the usual fees for road use and the obligatory exchange of your [into our] currency.  
We are adding our sports greetings with the hope that everything will proceed according to our (sic) plans. Faithfully yours etc.,

What appears from these four examples is that, in spite of major political Cold War differences, a measure of friendly sporting relations between people of the two Germanys continued to exist, albeit that these were primarily promoted by the GDR for political purposes. Clearly emerging also, however, was apprehension in F.O. quarters over these inter-German contacts. In Bonn's view these visits could come at the price

that ordinary West German visitors to the East could become unduly impressed by highly indoctrinated GDR state sports functionaries.

An important perspective on cross border relationships also comes from a West German newspaper in 1966, which carried this article headed *Pförtner* (Door Keepers):

One has to face the bitter realisation that even the top managements of some of our sports organisations simply are unable to be discussion partners for functionaries of the Soviet Zone. Aside from the towering superiority of a Willi Daume (...) nothing, or at best very little, is happening to enhance West German sports leaders' sports-political self-improvement – either by lack of time, non-availability of information material, or just by failure of interest in the matter. They are amateurs and individualists, for good measure (...) As much as functionaries from the Zone are imbued with the extracts of communist indoctrination and instructed to misuse sports as a back-door to politics, if they would be acting as equal partners they would stop them at the threshold. As long sports managers of free Germany are dispensing with sports-political training, replacing discussion of details with generosity however, they will remain in the role of door keepers who – be it by negligence or dullness – are opening the door for the thief.<sup>5</sup>

This highly critical article in the country's leading daily paper gives expression to some of the wide-spread frustration of West German intellectuals at the time. In almost dialectical terms, reminiscent of East Bloc vernacular, it points out the indifference – even utter helplessness – of West German sports leadership vis-à-vis a highly effective East German propaganda machine. It constitutes another example of a central theme of this thesis, namely that the antagonism between the two Germanys primarily characterized their relationship in sports politics, rather than any feelings of communality.

Prominent historian-sociologist Uta Barbier regrets that the phenomenon of German-German sporting exchanges across the border between the two Germanys has not found much interest in historic research and historiography. She arrives at this conclusion:

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<sup>5</sup> Pförtner, K., *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, nr. 5, 7 January 1966, p. 6.

The facts of inter-German sports exchanges are offering a fascinating field for research (...) these concern one of the very few areas of society in which the contacts between people in East and West were never interrupted. By this token they are part and parcel of a common German history after 1945.<sup>6</sup>

Whilst the point that a certain amount of common national interest did indeed persevere must be conceded, the extent to which it was always subordinate to deep-seated antagonism can be underlined by looking next in a little more detail at ongoing East German efforts to prevent the country's top athletes from absconding to the West.

#### ZOV Sportverräter, a GDR 'Operative File Tracksuit Traitors'

East German propaganda activities conducted against the West grew steadily during the 1950s, and after the 1961 erection of the Berlin Wall verbal attacks against the Western 'class enemy' were accompanied by stronger than ever practical measures against GDR dissidents. With the aim of recording all occasions of flights from the country, specifically by athletes, in a high-priority operation the *Stasi* created a register of such occurrences. Its aim was:

to investigate reasons, motives and circumstances of sportspeople illegally leaving the GDR, possible detractors, helpers and their backers, inter-connections in the GDR, hostile activities directed towards the GDR (...) of any sportspeople, sports functionaries, sports physicians, trainers and masseurs, either having been induced to leave the GDR from the outside or absconding on their own initiative.<sup>7</sup>

A count thus far brought to light 615 cases of *Republikflucht* (flight from the GDR, acts punishable by penal law, involving long jail sentences), 431 of which took place after 1960; a final figure, so the report remarks, may be considerably higher. It also remains unclear why some of the absconding athletes were included in the *Stasi* file while others were not. In any case until the end of the GDR, all of them were branded as 'traitors'. The arrest warrant, obligatory after any flight or flight attempt, already provided

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<sup>6</sup> Balbier, Uta Andrea, 'Jenseits des Kalten Krieges, Neue Perspektiven' ('Beyond the Cold War, New Perspectives') in: *Moden und Trends im Sport und in der Sportgeschichtsschreibung, Nr. 133 (Fashion and Trends in Sport and Sports Historiography, no. 133)*. Berlin: Edition Czwilina dvs (2003), p. 195.

<sup>7</sup> BArch Berlin, 11673/61 (29.12.1961).

stigmatization of the perpetrator.<sup>8</sup> Aside from disillusionment with the very system of the GDR – which sportspeople shared with the majority of their countrymen and women<sup>9</sup> – there may well have been another factor inducing top athletes to flee from their country: all of them had travelled abroad, and experienced the lure of Western life. As middle distance runner Jürgen May, who in 1964 was a member of the joint German Olympic team, put it: ‘It always was very difficult for me to envisage that one day, when my career in sports would have come to the end, for the rest of my life this would only have to be between the coast of the Baltic sea and the forests of Eastern Thuringia’.<sup>10</sup>

The East German regime always denied that there were personal, let alone political motives which induced sportspeople to desert their country. Instead rhetorical stereotypes were used to camouflage the true reasons; the escapees were either described as helpless victims of unscrupulous ‘traders in humans’ or as ‘reckless betrayers of socialist ideals’.

Another – not totally unfounded – castigation by East Germany was that these figures, as other prominent defectors, were depreciating the financial and other support given to them by the country’s ‘farmers and workers’, efforts which only had enabled them to rise to their status in the first place.<sup>11</sup> Members of their families staying behind were sometimes subjected to what had been a feared method employed in the past in Nazi Germany: *Sippenhaft* (punitive measures taken against relatives). A case in point was that of GDR athlete Ralph Pöhland. Following his flight, a wave of repression was unleashed by the *Stasi*: both his parents were dismissed from their jobs, other relatives

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<sup>8</sup> BArch Koblenz: (FRG Agency Report on the former GDR, *Stasi und Sport*, Berlin (1994) p. 33.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter Four.

<sup>10</sup> Interview by Dr. Rene Wiese (Centre for German Sports History, Berlin) (06.04.2011).

<sup>11</sup> Braun, *Top Athletes*, p. 73.

and acquaintances were put under surveillance by *Stasi-IMs*, their ‘Informal Collaborators’. Even his athlete friend Andreas Kunz, punished for continuing to maintain contacts with Pöhland after his escape, was excluded from further sport – under the pretext of ‘reasons of health’, the official explanation given.<sup>12</sup>

Parts of the West German ‘yellow press’ also made use of sometimes dramatic escape experiences. A particularly spectacular story hitting the papers was that of the flight of freestyle swimmer Axel Mitbauer, after 1967 a member of the GDR National Team. When information reached the *Stasi* that Mitbauer was planning to flee, they interrogated him for seven weeks in prison. Upon release his sporting career was destroyed: he received a life-long ban from performing sports, and was even barred from using any of the country’s sports facilities. Mitbauer then decided that his only way out was fleeing to the West. On the evening of 17 August 1969 in Boltenhagen, the most western of the GDR spas on the Baltic coast, Mitbauer applied thirty tubes of Vaseline to his body and took to the waves. Orientating himself by the stars he reached the Lübeck bight in West Germany, totally exhausted after swimming more than twenty kilometres. He rested on a light-buoy from where, to his great luck, a passenger ferryboat passing on the way to Lübeck picked him up. He had hardly arrived in Lübeck when journalists of the *BILD-Zeitung*, West Germany’s mass circulation daily, pounced on him, starting a fight with other sensationalist newspapers over ‘exclusive rights’ to print the story of another GDR refugee. He had almost miraculously made it and soon would be interviewed on West German TV as well, to be seen also by many viewers in the GDR – possibly envious of his audacious feat.<sup>13</sup> When news of Mitbauer’s flight reached East Berlin, *SED* party leaders and *Stasi* officials were shocked. Measures were

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<sup>12</sup> Braun, *Top Athletes*, p. 77.

<sup>13</sup> Braun, *Top Athletes*, p. 79.

introduced to ‘scrupulously investigate any connections of all high-profile GDR athletes’.<sup>14</sup>

However, sportspeople fleeing from the GDR could not always count on being gladly or without reservation received upon arrival in West Germany. In most instances their arrival in the country was simply accepted as a fact that another former GDR citizen, or in this instance an athlete, had changed sides. If it was the case of a prominent figure it would hit the sports pages of some of the popular newspapers, and instead of being seen as a welcome event this was then seen by some FRG sports officials as a potential impediment to improving relations with their GDR counterparts. This even more so as contents of the agreement in a German-German sports protocol were supposed to protect sport in West Germany from any day-to-day problems with the GDR. Especially sensational reports in the media on flights of high-profile sportspeople from East to West sometimes were received with apprehension by Western sports managers. So the need for at least superficially friendly relations with the East German sports leadership occasionally took precedence over the fate of former East German athletes – an instance of West German naivety vis-à-vis East German ideological resolve.<sup>15</sup>

Worse than the experience of some of the top sports people fleeing their country was the fate of people killed at the Wall. There are no records kept by the GDR of people having lost their lives by trying to overcome it. Yet it seems fair to assume that sportspeople will have been among them. Intensive investigations by West German official and

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<sup>14</sup> Spitzer, Giselher, *Sicherungsvorgang Sport. Das Ministerium für Staatssicherheit und der DDR Spitzen-Sport (Security Issue Sport, The Ministry for State Security and GDR Sports top Performances)*. Schorndorf/Germany: ZAIG (2005), p. 466.

<sup>15</sup> Braun, Jutta, ‘Klassenkampf im Flutlicht’ (‘Class Conflict under the Floodlights’) in: Teichler, Hans Joachim, ed., *Sport in der DDR. Eigensinn, Konflikte, Trends (Sports in the GDR, Obstinance, Conflicts, Trends)*. Cologne: Links (2003), p. 97.

historical institutions have now published these figures of people killed at the Wall around West Berlin:

Records are revealing that at least a total of 136 people were either shot dead, lost their lives in trying to cross the wall, or committed suicide when failing to have done so. 98 of these were citizens of the GDR; 30 were other people from East- and West-Germany who made no attempt to overcome the wall but were shot or got killed accidentally; 8 were GDR border guards killed on duty by other border guard comrades, by deserters, by a person assisting intending refugees, and by a West Berlin policeman.<sup>16</sup>

In GDR official language called *Grenzverletzer* (border violators) and mentioned in another West German source, the numbers of persons established as killed in trying to overcome GDR borders (including those for Berlin, indicated here as higher than the above-quoted figure of 98), are as follows:

at the Berlin Wall	202
at the Western border of the GDR	331
drowned in the Baltic Sea	181
plus outside of GDR borders	<u>51</u>
or a total of	765. <sup>17</sup>

Other figures are quoted in a geographically more comprehensive compendium. Horrific as the above numbers are, here more than 215 fugitives are recorded as having drowned during escape attempts, ending in their deaths by trying to flee from the shores of the GDR across the Baltic Sea to the Danish island of Falsen.<sup>18</sup>

Little can be added to this depressing chapter of recent German history, which even extended to a process known as *Freikauf*, the phenomenon whereby inmates of GDR

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<sup>16</sup> Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung, und Stiftung Berliner Mauer (Centre for Contemporary Historical Research, and Foundation Berlin Wall) *Die Todesopfer an der Berliner Mauer 1961-1989* (*Death Toll at the Berlin Wall 1961-1989.*) Potsdam/Germany: Ch. Links (2009) pp. 18-19.

<sup>17</sup> BStU, Wissenschaftliche Reihe des Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen DDR (BStU, Scientific Publications Series of the Federal Commissioner for the Archives of the Security Service of the former GDR). Berlin: Vandenhoeck (2009) p. 254.

<sup>18</sup> Kaminski, Lukasz et al. eds., *Handbuch der kommunistischen Geheimdienste in Osteuropa 1944-1991* (annual of Communist Secret Services in Eastern Europe 1944-1991).Göttingen /Germany: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht (2010), vol. 3, p. 312.

prisons could literally be bought by West Germany. German historian Zerback found that, of course to the relief of the people freed, but at the same time as boon to a GDR economy perennially short of foreign exchange, between 1963 and 1989 33,755 jailed political prisoners were released from GDR prisons and allowed to emigrate to West Germany. Zerback calls this, somewhat frivolously, ‘one of the major export commodities of the GDR.’<sup>19</sup>

This section has highlighted a particularly depressing system, unique to East Germany, by which GDR citizens wanting to flee from the country and caught in the process – or in preparation for this – were penalised, jailed or worse, lost their lives. The particular relevance of these observations to sport is to put in the spotlight the ‘home conditions’ in which members of the GDR component of the joint Olympic teams found themselves. Far from being concerned about communality, most East German athletes were preoccupied with the ubiquitous presence of detested *Stasi* agents.

#### The ‘divided’ or ‘duplicated’ German Olympians of 1965<sup>20</sup>

The second half of the 1960s witnessed decisive events marking a turning point in German-German sporting relations. Once again the figure of IOC President Avery Brundage, the original *spiritus rector* of the concept, and realisation, of the joint German Olympic teams, comes into focus. As we have seen, he was able to engineer the creation of joint Olympic teams in the mid-1950s because, for a while, it suited both partners. East Germany hoped to gain international recognition via the medium of Olympic sports, while West Germany feared that if it did not cooperate, the field would be left clear for the GDR to become Germany’s sole representative at the Games.

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<sup>19</sup> Zerback, Ralf, ‘Die Anerkennung’ (‘The Recognition’) in *DIE ZEIT*, Hamburg: issue no. 36 (30 August 2012) p. 20.

<sup>20</sup> Lämmer, *Olympic Movement*, p. 267.

Besides, there were Willi Daume's – and a few other West German sports functionaries' – continuing efforts to come to an at least a reasonable amount of mutual understanding, to which end a joint Olympic team was expected to be helpful.

By the mid-1960s Brundage was still a powerful figure. During the 62<sup>nd</sup> IOC Tokyo session of October 1964 Brundage still managed to have the minutes include his statement that 'the single united German team represented a great victory for the fraternal spirit which unite sportsmen throughout the whole world'.<sup>21</sup> But at the same time Brundage's personal authority was no longer unassailable. Now aged in his late seventies, he only narrowly succeeded in being re-elected as President in 1965, with his rival Lord Exeter receiving only two votes less than those accorded for the incumbent – in some ways a vote of no-confidence, and an omen of change to come. In addition, as Höfer comments, Brundage's undiminished pursuit of the dream that German Olympic sporting cooperation would also result in political rapprochement between the two Germanys met with increasing scepticism; even with sardonic smiles from his IOC colleagues.<sup>22</sup> Not only was the prospect of any reunification in Germany a distant prospect in the mid-1960, but by then there was a danger of the IOC being outflanked by other sporting organisations; in athletics the global governing body had already accepted that separate East and West teams should participate at the 1966 European championships.

The scene was thus set for significant change. A little more than ten years after the seminal instruction of the IOC of June 1955 which established a German-German Olympic team, during its 63<sup>rd</sup> Session at Madrid in October 1965 the IOC took another decision of watershed consequences. This would cut, once and for all, the Gordian knot

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<sup>21</sup> By Courtesy of IOC Lausanne: 62<sup>nd</sup> Tokyo Minutes, p. 75.

<sup>22</sup> Lämmer, *Olympic Movement*, p. 250.

of the *Querelles d'allemand* by which the IOC had been plagued for years. The minutes record the discussions and the final decision taken. On October 8, the second day of the session, Brundage introduced agenda point 16: 'Application from the East German Olympic Committee for complete independent recognition [by the IOC]'. He recounted the history of the two German National Olympic Committees since the war, the acceptance of that of West Germany, followed by rejection of the one of East Germany and its later conditional acceptance, leading to agreement of joint German Olympic teams in 1956, 1960 and 1964. He mentioned that 'application of the agreement has created many difficulties, and before Tokyo the East German NOC has asked for its complete and independent recognition', further adding that 'a secret vote of the IOC would determine the issue.'<sup>23</sup>

IOC Executive Committee member Adrianov (USSR) and IOC Chancellor Albert Mayer (Switzerland) joined the discussion, the latter 'exposing at length all the difficulties and all the political interferences which have come to light during the last ten years', adding that 'we could, if absolutely necessary, allow one more united team for Grenoble and declare the separation definitive for the Mexico Games'. Daume, as NOC head of West Germany then spoke, refuting Mayer's arguments and stating 'the West German NOC is not responsible for governmental interference which it did not solicit'. In turn Schöbel, as head of NOC of Eastern Germany, refuted Daume's arguments and spoke of 'the tense situation which undeniably exists between the athletes and the officials of the two Germanys'.<sup>24</sup> A long debate followed but finally the assembly decided to postpone the vote to the next day. At the end of the day's proceedings there was the general feeling between IOC members that the period of joint German Olympic appearances was about to end. One can only surmise that Daume now

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<sup>23</sup> By courtesy of IOC Lausanne: 63<sup>rd</sup> Madrid Minutes, p. 77.

<sup>24</sup> All quotes from 63<sup>rd</sup> Madrid Minutes, p. 77

considered the prospect of continued cooperation a lost cause and felt unable to stem an atmosphere of more than disinterest in the matter amongst his colleagues.

On October 9, the third day of the Session, the meeting resumed with Brundage announcing that several members had met and finally found a solution satisfactory to both parties, confirming that Messrs. Daume and Schöbel agreed with this solution. The motion was presented and voted by raised hands and accepted by a very large majority:

The East German NOC has given notice that the arrangement to field a joint team in the Olympic Games is no longer acceptable (...) [As a result] the West German Olympic Committee will revert to affiliation for Germany and the East German Olympic Committee is fully affiliated for the geographical area of East Germany (...) However in the 1968 Winter Olympic Games and the Olympic Games in Mexico City there will be separate teams but they will march under the same banner, use the same hymns and the same emblem.<sup>25</sup>

In some ways this was a typical example of Brundage diplomacy. By using the phrase ‘geographical area’ (or sometimes ‘territory’) any formal recognition as the legal status of the GDR had been cleverly sidestepped. But the issue remains as to why Brundage agreed to abandon his long-cherished dream of bringing the two Germanys together through Olympic participation. Lorenz Peiffer, Professor for German Sports History at the University of Hanover, in 2002 observed that no real ‘rationale for this decision has never been given, neither by the IOC or its President Brundage’.<sup>26</sup> In a telephone interview with this author on 16 September 2012, Peiffer confirmed his earlier view and remarked that Brundage’s action was presumably arrived at by accepting the realities of the international Cold War dichotomy of the mid-1960s and its influence on the German-German sports scene. Peiffer argued that, in addition, Brundage was probably also worn down to have to listen to the constant aggressive anti-FRG/pro-GDR sniping

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<sup>25</sup> By courtesy of IOC Lausanne: 63<sup>rd</sup> Madrid Minutes, p. 79.

<sup>26</sup> Peiffer, Lorenz ‘Die Madrider Entscheidung des IOC im Oktober 1965. Ein Wendepunkt in der Geschichte der deutsch-deutschen Sportbeziehungen’ (The October 1965 Madrid Decision of the IOC. A Turning Point in German-German Sports Relations) *Continuity and Change in Sports History II*, vol. 17, Hoya/Germany (2002) p. 119.

from his colleagues Andrianov of the USSR and Stoytchev of Bulgaria in IOC Executive Member meetings.

German sports historian Holzweiszig posits an additional hypothesis. In his book *Diplomacy in Training Suit* he suggests that Brundage's change of mind may have come about as he was worried about his chances for re-election as IOC President. For this, as mentioned above, he was dependent on a majority vote by his IOC Committee colleagues, almost all of whom had grown weary of squabbles over the continuation, or otherwise, of the joint German Olympic team. In addition, Holzweiszig reports, the GDR undertook major efforts to woo Brundage to support its position in its efforts to discontinue the joint team. Amongst others things Brundage was invited on an official visit to East Berlin where he was extensively lauded, overwhelmingly congratulated on his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday, and received by Walter Ulbricht, the GDR head of state<sup>27</sup> – all of which will have impressed a figurehead not averse to flattery.

In an attempt to put a brave face on the IOC Madrid decision, the F.O. in Bonn rather cautiously commented three days later:

Government circles regret that continuation of the joint German team in its present form could not be agreed upon. They believe, however, that the solution found is preferable to one of completely separate teams since at least the concept of communality remains preserved by symbols. Besides, the fact that our NOC continues to be accepted as 'NOC of Germany' is welcome.<sup>28</sup>

Another document by the Bonn F.O. asserted – to some extent devaluing its above reaction – that the IOC was an 'association of private people, not acting on instructions by their governments (except for members of the Soviet bloc), the decisions of which

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<sup>27</sup> Holzweiszig, Gunter, *Diplomatie im Trainingsanzug* (Diplomacy in Training Suit), Munich: Oldenbourg (1981), pp. 41-42.

<sup>28</sup> Press release dated 12 October 1965 by the Secretary of State of the Foreign Office, concerning the IOC decision of 9 October 1965. BArch Koblenz, AA vol. IV/1603.

are irrelevant by international law'.<sup>29</sup> In any case the Federal government saw no need to view the Madrid IOC ruling as a reason to modify its stance regarding its basic foreign policy position, i.e. that of continuing to deny the GDR an independent, autonomous international status.

The IOC decision of October 1965 had quite different effects on the two German NOCs. The subsequent appointment in 1966 of Heinz Schöbel as a member of the IOC reinforced what was by then altogether obvious: the GDR would have no further truck with any idea of cooperation, having achieved its aim of securing recognition for its status in sport in impressive fashion. Schöbel is reported to have established a good rapport with Brundage in the process, described by Höfer as 'sympathy based on a measure of mutual respect'.<sup>30</sup> West Germany had no option other than to accept the split-up of the joint Olympic teams. After the death of West German NOC- and IOC-member Ritter von Halt in 1964, a dedicated believer in furthering joint German Olympic presence, it was only Daume who remained as one of the few personalities still promoting some kind of measure of joint German international sports presence – in the face of at best lukewarm interest by the Bonn government

#### East- and West-German Olympic sport to go their own way

After the IOC decision of October 1965 in favour of future separate German Olympic presences, albeit with the agreed 'interregnum' of the Grenoble and Mexico City Games of 1968, German sports and its involvement in the Olympics entered a new phase. Yet strained political and sporting relations between the two Germanys remained, and would even increase in the run-up to fully separate German attendances at the 1972

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<sup>29</sup> BArch Koblenz, AA vol. IV/1604.

<sup>30</sup> Contribution by Andreas Höfer in: Lämmer, *Olympic Movement*, p. 304.

Olympics. To the relief of the IOC Lausanne headquarters, however, the International Committee no longer had to involve itself so closely in the bickering.

In 30 October 1965 the Central Organisation of the West German *DSB Sportbund* issued the following communiqué:

The status of both West- and East-Berlin were unequivocally confirmed. On the strength of this, the *Sportbund* is in a position to fully resume its obligation to foster human encounters in divided Germany. The athletics- and sports-clubs of the *DSB* will resume sporting encounters with the associations of the [East German-] *DTSB, Deutscher Turn- und Sportbund*.<sup>31</sup>

This statement, little as it may have impressed officials of the GDR, put an end to all prohibitive measures concerning contacts with the GDR which were introduced by the West with the *Düsseldorf Memorandum* in August 1961. By mid-February 1966 Bonn officially reacted to the communiqué of the *Sportbund* by announcing financial government support for the re-established inter-German sporting contacts:

For promotion of all-German sports exchanges, the German Sports Organisation has been allocated Federal funds to the tune of DM 500,000 (from account 606) for travel expenses and sporting encounters in the Federal Republic including West Berlin: DM 10.00 per day for every sportsperson from the Soviet Zone, with a maximum of DM 30.00.<sup>32</sup>

Following up the decisions taken at the Madrid Meeting, in its 65<sup>th</sup> Session in Rome on 26 April 1966, the IOC took two further two steps which further encouraged the separation of the German teams. One was the appointment of East Berlin's Heinz Schöbel, head of the NOC of the GDR, as member of the elite club of the IOC. The other was the award of the 1972 Summer Games to the West German city of Munich, together with that of the earlier Winter Games of the same year to Sapporo in Japan. The Munich award was allocated after the German Federal government gave assurances

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<sup>31</sup> BArch Koblenz, B/137 2773.

<sup>32</sup> BArch Koblenz, B/137 2746

to the IOC that there were to be no restrictions on entry of representatives of the GDR into West Germany. This would apply to the Olympic Games' participants and their accompanying staff, as well as to visitors from their country. The Olympic teams of the GDR and the FRG were to participate 'in two separate, autonomous teams'.<sup>33</sup>

The final confirmation of Munich for the event was greeted with much joy in West Germany, ending a period of intensive canvassing for these Games. GDR-NOC President Schöbel must have congratulated, presumably through gritted teeth, his West-German counterpart Daume on the IOC's decision. Schöbel's hesitation regarding the choice of Munich reflected the intense concern of the East German political leadership. This focussed on the unpalatable features of Munich as perceived by the GDR, more details of which will be assessed in the next chapter.

Another incident from around this time provides further proof of the continuing difficulties in sporting relations between the two Germanys 'on the ground'. The matter concerned East Berlin's insistence on displaying its national symbols at major sporting events, and Bonn's resolute refusal to allow their display. An episode at the European Rowing Championships in Amsterdam in August 1966 caused furore in West German government circles. The female athletes of the GDR entered their boat in the neutral dresses prescribed by the rules of all NATO-affiliated countries as requested by the FRG. But on having taken their seats, the women produced the GDR symbols of hammer and circle on large buttons, fastening them to their tunics. Pandemonium broke out and upon instruction by their team leader the West German women's rowing team left the championship in protest.

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<sup>33</sup> Müller-Marsall, *Archive*, vol. 4, pp. 3972/3973.

The incident became one of the subjects of a top-level meeting in Chancellor Ludwig Erhard's office in October 1966 under the cumbersome heading 'Issue of handling the matter of emblem, flag, hymn and name of *SBZ*, the Soviet Zone of Occupation at international sporting events with participation of sportspeople from Middle Germany'. Participants at the meeting were the Chancellor, two Cabinet Ministers, sixteen high-ranking government officials and six senior delegates of German sports organisation, led by Daume as NOC President. Daume argued that if West German sport also withdrew itself at similar events in future, it would be limiting itself 'to small sporting exchanges with Switzerland, even having to return the invitation for Munich 1972 (...)' It cannot be estimated highly enough that the entire world entrusted us with this assignment but we must realise that even the Western world has gotten tired of our inter-German problems'. Daume also pointed out that 'the Madrid formula of October 1965 was valid for Olympic sports only; that the Soviet Zone was member of 48 international sports organisations and could insist on its own ceremonial protocol' and that 'further insistence on West Germany being the sole international representative in sports is no longer tenable'. Daume further asserted that 'by accepting the usual protocol procedures at international sporting events this will in no way imply accreditation of the Zone as a separate state'. He ended his skilfully presented contribution by pleading for 'the only way of a reasonable compromise to allow our people to remain on the international field of sports' and 'not to manoeuvre ourselves into isolation and leave the field to the Soviet Zone'.<sup>34</sup> Even so, the meeting ended inconclusively; with only the Minister of the Interior urging that 'a common approach by sports and the government is called for'.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> BArch Koblenz, BMI Sp 1 - 370 930/1.

<sup>35</sup> BArch Koblenz, BMI Sp 1 - 370 930/1, p.5.

The manner in which the context of German sporting relations was shifting fast was further underlined at the Athletics European Championship from August 30 to September 4 1966, held in Budapest. The Championship was organized by IAAF, the International Amateur Athletic Federation, which as noted earlier agreed to allow the entry of separate teams from the FDR and the GDR. Despite earlier agreement that, as in Grenoble and Tokyo, the German teams would participate under the Olympic flag and with the Beethoven hymn, the GDR national flag was displayed and its hymn played. A declaration by the Marquess of Exeter, as President of the IAAF, that the ‘display of GDR flag and hymn did not imply recognition of its status as a state’ was rather nonsensical, Metzner asserts.<sup>36</sup>

Also in terms of sporting performance the GDR won the day in Budapest, winning eight times Gold compared to only two for West Germany.<sup>37</sup> As a result questions began to be asked how such astounding achievement could be possible by a fledgling sporting nation. Some observers began to point to the increasingly successful selection of young, ‘new-blood’ athletes in the GDR, combined with the results of systematic coaching by an armada of full-time trainers. In any event, developments at Budapest were a harbinger of the changes which would become apparent at the Mexico City Olympics a year later: not only the dissolution of the joint German-German Olympic team, but also the dramatically superior performance by athletes from the GDR.

Behind the scenes the period between the IOC decision to abandon a joint German Olympic team, and the actual emergence in February 1968 at Grenoble of a modified German Olympic presence, appropriately called by Krebs *die doppelten Deutschen*<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Metzner, Adolf, *ZEIT ONLINE Sport*, 9 September 1966, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup> Metzner, Adolf, p. 2.

<sup>38</sup> Hans-Dieter Krebs in: Lämmer, *Olympic Movement*, pp 267 ff.

(the duplicated Germans) thus witnessed important changes in sports. After the IOC accepted the realities of two existing German states, the GDR redoubled its efforts to make its mark by becoming a leading performer on the global Olympic stage. Until this time sports in West Germany appeared to be rather less ambitious, even complacent. In fact sports leaders in the Federal Republic were yet to understand – and to learn from – the astonishing advances of sport in the GDR. In 1967 the *SED* Politburo moreover took the decision to decisively enhance efforts in the country's sports movement, with the objective:

that, by 1980, the GDR team shall gain a place amongst the world's six top performing Olympic nations. And that, in international championships, GDR sportspeople will succeed over West Germany in the most important mass sports categories.<sup>39</sup>

In working towards this aim the GDR sports management took a far-reaching step in 1968. As East Berlin sports functionary Köhler (whom we met earlier) relates, in future only 85% of Olympic sports categories were to be specifically promoted in the GDR. Deleted from Olympics-related support were activities like alpine racing, basket ball, canoeing, hockey, water polo, modern pentathlon, equestrian jumping and tennis. Instead targets were to be such activities as expected to garner the highest possible results in medals. The effects of these changes were nothing less than fundamental: there was going to be the differentiation of GDR sports into two categories. 'Sport I', to be promoted intensively within all means available, and 'Sport II', not to be pursued for the Olympic Games.<sup>40</sup>

If only spurred on by the efforts of the GDR, sports circles in the Federal Republic also started an initiative to further sports on a national scope, establishing the *Stiftung*

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<sup>39</sup> Spitzer, G. et al., eds. *Arbeitsrichtlinien für die Leistungssportkommission vom 7. November 1967* (*Working Instructions for the Commission for Performing Sports of 7 November 1967*,) in: 'Schlüsseldokumente zum DDR-Sport' (Key Documents on GDR Sports), Aachen/Germany (1998) p. 140.

<sup>40</sup> Köhler, *Two Sides*, pp. 118/119.

*Deutsche Sporthilfe* (Foundation for German Sports Assistance). Contrary to what the GDR created as a state-sponsored and controlled activity, however, this was a non-government venture, to be financed amongst other means by sales of a wide series of postage stamps. And, it was anticipated, also by voluntary contributions from commerce and industry. Josef Neckermann, wealthy owner of Germany's foremost mail-order house and six-times Olympic winner in dressage, was appointed Chairman of the new organisation, holding this position from 1967 to 1988. In addition to financial assistance to the West German sports movement, a major objective of the *Sporthilfe* also was to present itself 'as an answer of democratic society to the countries of state sports'.<sup>41</sup>

#### The 1968 Olympics – The Winter Games

The 1968 Olympic Games at Grenoble and Mexico City saw the IOC's decision of 1965 about separate German teams put into practice. Germany's sporting division became visible around the world, even though the German flag, over-imposed with the five Olympic rings, was still carried in front of two now separate marching columns.

The Xth Olympic Winter Games took place in Grenoble at the French Alps in February 1968. According to Findling: 'Almost every aspect of the Games came under criticism for one reason or another. Excessive political intervention, commercialism (...) even the attitudes of the athletes were regarded as contradictory to the true spirit of the Olympic Games'. Yet despite this, 1,065 male and 228 female athletes from 37 countries participated in the Games.<sup>42</sup> In principle the entry of a GDR contingent into NATO-allied France was prohibited. And it was only in 1967 that a special confirmation from Prime Minister Georges Pompidou was obtained that the French government would take

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<sup>41</sup> Lämmer, *Olympic Movement*, pp. 268/269.

<sup>42</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, p. 351,

no action to prevent the travel of the East Germans to France. So French President Charles de Gaulle could indeed open the Games on 8 February.

At Grenoble the East German Thomas Köhler was not only a senior functionary of the now quasi-autonomous GDR-section of Germans but once again a most successful athlete in the men's luge – also called light toboggan – competition. At Innsbruck in 1964 he already had won a Gold medal, as well as becoming the GDR's first World Championship. Now at Grenoble he contributed with one Gold and one Silver medal to the GDR's team overall result of 1 Gold, 2 Silver and 2 Bronze medals. This tally was not far short of the West German team's performance, which resulted in 2 Gold, 2 Silver and 3 Bronze.

IOC President Brundage chose this occasion to launch a fresh assault on creeping commercialism and professionalism in sport. He had once said: 'We should never have created the Winter Olympic Games, but how can we stop them now?'<sup>43</sup> Brundage fired off a circular letter complaining of violations of the rules requiring that the games be held in one place, stating that they were scattered 'over the entire district'. He also castigated commercial exploitation: 'we had Olympic butter, Olympic sugar, Olympic petrol'. The International Ski Federation was accused by Brundage in his circular with failure to fulfil its promise to remove advertisements from ski equipment. Worst of all, numerous winter athletes boasted openly of their enormous sub rosa income – and dared the IOC to take punitive action against them. It was all too much for him and Brundage refused to attend Alpine events at Grenoble.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Guttman, Allen, *The Games*, p. 197.

<sup>44</sup> Guttman, Allen, *The Games*, p. 198.

He might have been relieved, however, that for the first time an inter-German scandal which was to rock the Grenoble Games was not submitted to him for arbitration. Köhler recounts this ugly incident, sad yet characteristic for German-German relations at these Games. Already at the 1964 Innsbruck Winter Games, athletes and some trainers had hit on the idea that heating the runners of their luges prior to starting would increase their speed during the run. The procedure was subsequently prohibited by IOC rules, yet continuation of the practice now led to a major scandal during the Grenoble Games. The incident further harmed already hostile German-German Olympic relations as now two separate German teams participated, each wanting to demonstrate its own superiority. After the second run of the luges, the head of the GDR team was publicly ordered via stadium loudspeakers into the control room where he was informed that the three GDR girls ‘on account of having warmed their runners’ had now been disqualified from the Games. Köhler reported:

International sports friendship had not been as strong as we had expected. Some were mobilizing against us: foremost of these was the management of the team of the Federal Republic. This called for a meeting of all managers of participating countries, except the one of the GDR and of the jury chairman, demanding not only exclusion the three GDR women athletes, but that of the entire team of the GDR from the Games. Only seven of the invitees voted for this; so this most unfriendly West German initiative came to naught.<sup>45</sup>

Pandemonium followed as excuses and explanations as opposed to more accusations were flying forth and back; but the disqualification of the GDR women’s luges team remained in place.

The scandal reached the media, being orchestrated as a conflict between the two Germanys. The GDR sports journal *Junge Welt* wrote: ‘Every one of us has to ascertain his place in the class struggle against the number-one enemy of our nation, West German imperialism. Nothing associates us with the enemies of sports in Bonn.

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<sup>45</sup> Köhler, *Two Sides*, p. 68.

Everything for our socialist fatherland, the GDR!'. West Germany's mass circulation tabloid *Bild* retorted: 'Everything points to the fanatical ambition of the political apparatchiks wanting to internationally advance the "independent" team and to destroy the last remnants of sportive decency (...) The GDR sportswomen were remote-controlled by powers not interested in Olympic competition but in political prestige'.<sup>46</sup>

Another nadir in East-West sports political relations during the Grenoble Olympics was the flight of ski athlete Ralph Pöhland, potentially a gold-winning member for the GDR Olympic team. In early February 1968, only days prior to the beginning of the Games, Pöhland absconded from his team with the assistance of his West German Olympic ski colleague Georg Thoma. He was then driven over the French-German border by Thoma to his hometown Hinterzarten in the Black Forest. On the GDR TV's weekly anti-West Germany program *Der schwarze Kanal* (the black channel) the commentator said:

This young man Pöhland wanted to be an Olympic competitor. First for us, then he became a traitor was coaxed to the West and wanted to start for the other side. But he was just cheap Bonn ammunition for the Cold War prior to the Grenoble Games.

What was not mentioned was that his father was arrested for conspiracy.

A final revealing episode at the Grenoble Winter Olympics related to a protocol of discussions after the Games with 'comrade Walter Ulbricht'. In his function as Chairman of the GDR State Council, Ulbricht had called a meeting with the country's leading sports functionaries at their headquarters in the ski-resort of Oberwiesenthal/Saxonia. In a summary the Chairman observed and decreed:

Our class enemy by means of using sporting exchanges wants to gain influence on our citizens and penetrate our country. It is therefore necessary to meticulously plan every event and to only arrange participation if this will be to the benefit of the GDR.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Köhler, *Two Sides*, pp. 69-71.

<sup>47</sup> BArch Berlin, SAPMO DY/30/IV A2/18 p. 4.

Taking stock of events at Grenoble a picture of the irreconcilable positions of the sections of the former joint Olympic team and their backers emerges. The image of some remaining connectedness – by the separated teams still carrying German flags, albeit with the superimposed Olympic rings – was nothing more than a chimera. From Grenoble onwards there no longer existed any German-German communality, in sports or otherwise.

### The 1968 Summer Games

By the time of the Summer Olympics in Mexico the dissolution of the German-German joint team had become established fact. During its 60<sup>th</sup> Session in December 1962 at Baden-Baden the IOC accepted Mexico City's bids to host the XIXth Olympic Summer Games. Rejecting competing invitations by Detroit, Lyons and Buenos Aires – as well as the short-lived project to hold the Games in the divided city of Berlin – Brundage and his colleagues were justifiably pleased with themselves when they chose Mexico City as the location. Following the first Olympics ever held in Asia, at Tokyo in 1964, and in an effort to bring up to date the universalistic ideals proclaimed by the Olympic Charter, it seemed appropriate that another developing nation should be the next host.<sup>48</sup> However enthusiasm faded when less than two months before the Game's planned opening, an ominous Cold War development – similar to what happened ahead of Melbourne in 1956 – threatened the event: on 21 August 1968 troops of the Warsaw Pact countries invaded Czechoslovakia, ending the 'Prague Spring for Socialism with a Human Face' led by Prime Minister Alexander Dubcek. Political liberalization in the neighbouring country had found much sympathy in West Germany, but the GDR had mobilised its *Volksarmee* forces, and armoured units stood at the ready to invade Czechoslovakia. Yet East Berlin hesitated in their deployment as it was wary that an

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<sup>48</sup> Guttman, Allen, *The Olympics*, p. 129

intrusion would remind the world of an earlier German act of war, that of Hitler's callous attack on the country thirty years ago. Threatening developments came in the Olympic City of Mexico itself when university students, urged on by the world-wide students' unrest of the late 1960s, called a general strike. On 2 October troops were called in and fired into the crowd, killing between 100 and 500 protesters.<sup>49</sup>

Despite these ominous preceding events, there were no threats of boycott as in Melbourne and a calm eventually settled on Mexico City, where the the Summer Games were opened on 12 October 1968 and lasted until the 27<sup>th</sup> of the month. Although concern about Mexico's high altitude of 7,400 feet and its effect on their sporting performance was raised by some participants, 4,750 male and 781 female athletes from 113 nations attended the Games.<sup>50</sup>

The historian Lanz reports that, although still behind the same German flag with the five Olympic rings, the German athletes entered the stadium in Mexico City in two separate marching columns and wearing dresses of different colour. She suggests that the effects of the GDR's program of intensified high-performance sports were clearly in evidence at Mexico. It was these results which placed the GDR in the overall national rating on position five, three in front of that of the FRG. In absolute numbers West Germany gained 26 medals, indeed one more than the East German contingent; but 9 times Gold and 9 times Silver and 7 times Bronze for the GDR counted more than the 5 times Gold, 11 times Silver and 10 Bronze medals awarded to the athletes of the FRG.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, pp. 175/-76.

<sup>50</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, p. 178.

<sup>51</sup> Lanz, Juliane, *Politics, Protocol*, p. 359.

Willi Daume must certainly have been most saddened by developments in German Olympic sports. In an interview five months before the Mexico City Games he had correctly anticipated East German determination to make the 1968 Olympics *their* success, describing their resolve as '*Endkampf – das ist das Mass*' (Final victory – that will be the measure).<sup>52</sup>

In 'Standard Compendiums'<sup>53</sup> published after Olympic Games in both Germanys, ideological differences between East and West found telling expression, linked to the Cold War and its rhetoric. While the GDR version on 1968 started with a chapter entitled 'Our team, its friends and enemies', the compendium of the FRG began with an introduction on the history of Mexico and featured a description of the Games' magnificent opening ceremony. There were no comments on the East-West conflict in this issue, while the East German version contained detailed comments on the German-German competitive struggle.<sup>54</sup>

#### The 67<sup>th</sup> IOC Session of 7-12 October 1968

Finally in this chapter we turn to a ground-breaking ruling by the IOC, long aspired to by East Berlin. Its timing was cleverly chosen by the IOC: it was announced only a few days prior to the beginning of the Mexico City Olympics and without doubt had a decisive impact on the GDR's standing at the Games; its legalistic validity, however, would come into force only five days after the ending of the Games.

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<sup>52</sup> *Mannheimer Morgen* newspaper (22.5.1968).

<sup>53</sup> These were books on events and records of Olympic Games of specific years. In the FRG it was edited by *Deutsche Olympische Gesellschaft* (German Olympic Society), Dortmund (1968); in the GDR by *Gesellschaft zur Förderung des olympischen Gedanken* (Society for the Promotion of the Olympic Concept), East Berlin (1968).

<sup>54</sup> *Der Spiegel*, no. 45/1968 of 4 November 1968, p. 169.

On 12 October the IOC announced the following regarding the future Olympic status of the GDR:

Finally, the German question was brought to a vote and with a great majority it was decided that, being effective as of 1<sup>st</sup> November 1968, the teams of the East German Olympic Committee would be called D.D.R. [GDR] and the team will have its [own] flag, hymn and emblem.<sup>55</sup>

This status, so long fought for by East Berlin, on the face of it appears to indicate a de facto acceptance of the reality of the existence of two German states. It is worth emphasising, however, that the IOC wording was deliberately diplomatic. First of all, it was related to German sports organisations *only* and could not be interpreted as the acceptance of the existence of a separate German state – aside from the fact that this would have been outside of the remit of the IOC anyhow.<sup>56</sup> Besides, the date of implementation of the IOC decision was such that it would have no bearing on the appearance of the East German team the Mexico City Olympic Games which were to start in another few days: it was to take effect only after the end of the Games on 27 October.

The day following the IOC ruling, *Neues Deutschland*, the daily newspaper of the East German state party *SED*, proudly commented the decision in a leading article on page 1:

The struggle for complete recognition has been long and strenuous. But in the end it has been successful since it was taken in the spirit of understanding between peoples. Just as extensive has been the opposition by the West German revanchists. But those people faced another defeat at Mexico City. Their claim for sole representation of Germany once more proved to be untenable. The socialist sports movement will be represented at Munich in 1972, fully and with equal rights, and with the symbols of the First German State of Workers and Farmers.

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<sup>55</sup> Courtesy ICO Lausanne Headquarters: 67<sup>th</sup> Session protocol, pp. 583, 599/600. See also the University of Illinois Brundage Collection, box 94.

<sup>56</sup> Mutual acceptance of the existence of two separate German political entities would only be ratified in the *Grundvertrag* (Basic Treaty) concluded between FRG and GDR on 21 June 1973. It also included matters of sport. Even then, however, some five years after the IOC ruling of October 1968, the *Grundvertrag* upon West German insistence fell short of full diplomatic acceptance of the GDR as a separate State. This was in evidence e.g. by not erecting a normal FRG Embassy in East Berlin, or one such of the GDR in Bonn, but rather by establishing ‘Ständige Vertretungen’ (Permanent Representations) in both capitals.

West German official reaction to events was sedate. According to a news item carried by dpa, the West German press agency, Bonn State Speaker Günter Diehl declared ‘the IOC decision is irrelevant in terms of international law. But the Federal Government will still consider the matter at a later date.’<sup>57</sup>

On three successive dates, however, the East German *Neues Deutschland* took the opportunity to present events in their own manner of interpretation. On 15 October 1968, for example, under the headline ‘Serious Attacks against the IOC’ it wrote:

The decision of the IOC to accord the GDR its full rights has caused clamour in the West German and West Berlin press. In commentaries and leading articles the newspapers are expressing their disappointment that the Bonn policy of claiming sole German representation received a defeat at Mexico. They do not even shy of massive threats against the IOC, the Olympic idea, and personal defamation of IOC members.

Then, most surprisingly, some FRG newspapers were quoted by *Neues Deutschland* in a very selective fashion – remarkable in the sense that the very possession of Western print media was considered punishable in East Germany.<sup>58</sup> A quote from *Die Welt*, Hamburg, ran as follows:

FRG sports leaders represented in the IOC have received a crass defeat (...) The IOC decision is facing the West German NOC and its government with the alternative to either cancel the Olympic Games of 1972, or then to oblige the FRG President to pay respects to the GDR’s symbol of Hammer and a Pair of Compasses.

*Süddeutsche Zeitung* from Munich was quoted as:

Bonn has been surprised by the decision (...) Our own people – not to even talk of the whole world – would have no understanding if the Munich Games were to be endangered (...) The IOC decision now creates clear conditions. One may regret or welcome them. But neither one nor the other changes the fact that one has to face them.

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<sup>57</sup> Both quotes from Müller-Marsall, *Archive*, vol. 5, p. 4663.

<sup>58</sup> When in May 1984 arriving by car from West Germany at the Erfurt border check-point for a two-weeks’ tourists visit to the GDR, this author and his wife and were queried whether we had with us any *westliche Drucksachen* (Western print media), or ‘literature not in keeping with socialist concepts’. If so, such would be confiscated and destroyed. Prior to proceeding we had to declare that we did not carry any such material.

An article from the Essen-based *Westdeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* was cited, stating:  
The Bonn Minister of Interior has called the IOC decision ‘unfriendly’. In reality, however, especially when looking to the future, it is an act of reason. The IOC cannot be expected to pursue its past policy on Germany in further years (...) it is a demand ever more proving to be redundant.<sup>59</sup>

The next day, on 16 October, the East Berlin party newspaper continued its articles on the IOC decision under the headline ‘Furious attacks by Bonn directed at the IOC’:

With defamations and insults, the West-German and West-Berlin ever-hostile and bellicose press is reacting to the IOC decision. However also in press organs of West Germany voices are heard urging to be careful in respecting the existing realities confirmed by the IOC

The newspaper went on to quote further West German newspapers like the *Kölner Stadtanzeiger*, Cologne:

Bonn was surprised. Has the GDR’s persistent progress in the sports arenas of the entire world not been registered by Bonn? (...) GDR sportspeople will continue, in their manner and very impressively, to prove the existence of the GDR (...) The Mexico IOC decision is but a symptom – yet an important one as far as public opinion is concerned – that existence of the GDR has become a fact. Should we not understand this symptom, we will not be spared of future surprises.

And it continued by citing the *Osnabrücker Zeitung* from Lower Saxony:

The IOC ruling fully takes into consideration the demands of the international public. Its decision of 44-to-4 votes very clearly reflects the opinion of not a small part of world opinion.<sup>60</sup>

On 17 October 1968, in the last of three of articles regarding the IOC decision taken at Mexico City, *Neues Deutschland* came to the summaries quoted below. The article was headlined ‘Invectives against the IOC are isolating the Bonn government’:

With its embittered attacks against the decision of the IOC to acknowledge the full and sovereign rights of the GDR, the Bonn government has manoeuvred itself into increased isolation. A political magazine close to its ruling circles even demanded that the FRG should not participate in the 1972 Munich Olympics ‘if the GDR would optically be presenting itself on the occasion’ (...) In commentaries and reports the international press rejects the Bonn presumption for sole representation and welcomes the decision of the IOC (...) An opinion

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<sup>59</sup> ZEFYS, Archives of Staatsbibliothek Berlin: *Neues Deutschland*, East Berlin, vol. 23, no. 286, 15 October 1968, p.7.

<sup>60</sup> *Neues Deutschland*, East Berlin, vol. 23, no. 287, 16 October 1968, p. 7.

poll by the West German Social Sciences Institution comes to the conclusion that a great majority of West Germans is considering the Mexico decision to be reasonable; only 18% of the persons interviewed are against it.<sup>61</sup>

The text of the IOC ruling made it quite clear that it exclusively concerned ‘the teams of the East German Olympic Committee’. Yet the wording of the *Neues Deutschland* articles – and to some extent the carefully selected quotes from West German newspapers – were intended to inform readers that more had been achieved: a de facto acceptance, somehow arrived at via the IOC, of the GDR as a separate state. It was a case of false presentation, indeed a deliberate mis-information, consisting of a craftily designed attempt to make the country’s general public believe that its status as an independent, sovereign state now was a fact, which was still not the case.

To end this assessment of XIX<sup>th</sup> Olympic Games on a lighter note, journalist Peter Brügge related an amusing incident at the Mexico Games. It was especially remarkable when compared to the tragic circumstances bordering on civil war in the city at the time. It was an episode, puncturing as it were, the myth of (West-) German ultra-efficiency. Olympic tradition prescribed that at the closing ceremony of any Games the next Olympic venue was honoured, in this instance Munich. So West Germany’s genuine flag (not the one with five Olympic rings superimposed) should have been hoisted and the authentic German hymn played. The West German delegation’s officials were initially willing to conform with plans to display a jointly agreed flag, but after the IOC decision recognising the separate status of the GDR frantic attempts were made to find the FDR flag. By a stroke of good luck, members of the Munich Games Organisation Committee had a ‘right’ flag with them at Mexico City. But alas, it had the wrong dimensions: 7-by-1.50 meters, instead of the 4.50-by-3 meters required for the stadium

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<sup>61</sup> *Neues Deutschland*, East Berlin, vol. 23, no. 288 (17 October 1968) p. 7.

mast. In panic, the Munich officials somehow stapled this flag to a Mexico-sized piece of cloth and, rather sheepishly, handed the concoction to the perplexed officials of the stadium.

The hymn to be played at the closing ceremony presented another dilemma : the stadium band only had notes of the Beethoven hymn ‘Ode to Joy’ as performed at the earlier appearances of the joint team, and played these. Fortunately Mexican NOC President Ramirez Vasquez had prepared a tape ready for the event: with the German anthem’s proper words of ‘Unity, Justice and Freedom’ and the music by Haydn, which he now instructed to be played over the stadium loudspeakers system, drowning out the band. Brügge quizzed: was all this *den Deutschen zur Ehre? Oder zur Lehre?* (To honour the West Germans? Or to teach them a lesson?)<sup>62</sup>

### Conclusion

The ground covered in this chapter suggests that the decisions by the IOC in 1965 and 1968 to eventually terminate joint German Olympic participation were not as surprising as they first appear, reflecting widespread acceptance that the experiment had run its course. Any advantages to be gained by cooperation now seemed a thing of the past. The 1968 Olympic Games at Grenoble and Mexico City constituted the de facto end of German-German Olympic cooperation – which always had been problematic – with full confirmation of the split in evidence only four years later at the 1972 Munich Olympics. The following chapter will examine the 1972 appearance of two completely separate, autonomous German teams. That point in time of Olympic history marks a fitting moment to the end the thesis: not only because the Games were held in Germany for the first time since 1936 but also because Munich witnessed the sad aftermath of all

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<sup>62</sup> *Der Spiegel*, no. 45/1968 of 04.11.1968, p. 169.

previous efforts to secure German-German sporting rapprochement. 1972 was also the moment, fittingly, when the chief architect of the whole joint German Olympic enterprise, Avery Brundage, finally stood down after twenty years at the helm of the IOC.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE AFTERMATH: THE RUN-UP TO AND THE MUNICH GAMES, 1969-72

The Cold War between East and West witnessed some lessening of tension in the late 1960s, notably between the USA and the Soviet Union, though the opposite held true between the two Germanys. Following the era of joint cooperation in the Olympics, the four years after the 1968 Games were characterized by serious soul-searching in both the FDR and the GDR. It was the time between the *de facto* separation at Mexico of the German joint team, and the forthcoming event in Munich four years later which featured two German teams, now also divided *de jure*. This final chapter will examine the contrasting reactions in west and east to the demise of the experiment of Olympic cooperation.

Realising the assertive and increasingly successful evolvment of GDR sports, West Germany decided that more must be done to support its top-performance sports. East Germany for its part, once it came to terms with the decision to hold the 1972 event at Munich – a decision that caused it great anguish – intensified efforts to ensure it would be regarded as the leading athletic nation of the two Germanys. In the event, as we shall see, the 1972 Games were to be dominated by the shadow of terrorism, in the form of an unprecedented attack on the Israeli team by Palestinian militants. But as far as the entry of two autonomous German teams into the Olympic arena was concerned, Munich confirmed what became apparent with ever increasing clarity from 1969 onwards: the marriage of convenience that produced the joint teams in Melbourne, Rome and Tokyo had now given way to an acrimonious divorce.

### Reactions in the two Germanys to the Mexico Olympics

The Mexico Games were generally regarded as a triumph for the GDR. It was a resounding success for its team that it could win 25 medals, 9 of them in the coveted gold category. This compared to an overall number of only 14 medals awarded, 3 of which were gold, to its section of the joint German team at the 1964 Tokyo Games. The 1968 outcome greatly enhanced the self-confidence of the leaders of East Germany's state sports organisation, and vindicated results of the reorganisation of GDR sports. Undoubtedly it also significantly raised the country's aspirations and its determination to aim for even better Olympic results at Munich in 1972.

The balance sheet in Mexico City turned out to be much less impressive for the FRG. While in the still joint team at Tokyo the West Germans with their contingent had won a total of 31 medals, 7 of which in gold, for their now separated section in Mexico these figures had shrunk to a total of 26, and of these only 5 in gold.<sup>1</sup> Josef Neckerman, President of the FRG's 'Foundation for the Assistance to German Sports' and himself a former multiple Olympic gold champion in dressage, commented after the end of the Mexico Games:

From the West German point of view of the results achieved by our athletes in Mexico City were nothing less than a disaster. It is a matter for the sports support organisations to come to the rescue (...) Issues of sport always are receiving attention only half-a-year prior to Olympic Games (...) In several instances our functionaries have failed completely. Besides, it would have perhaps been better to invest more money in [training of] fewer athletes (...) The most important conclusion to arrive at from the mistakes made at Mexico is to create a better climate in our Olympic team for the Munich Games.<sup>2</sup>

It is worthwhile noting that it required the appearance of a relative newcomer on the West-German Olympic sports scene to point out its shortcomings. As a prominent

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<sup>1</sup> Lanz, Juliane, *Politik, Protokoll*, p. 358

<sup>2</sup> Knecht, Willi, *Partnerschaft auf Raten, Versäumnisse und Perspektiven bundesdeutscher Sportpolitik* (Partnership in Instalments, Omissions and Perspectives of Federal German Sports Politics), Frankfurt/Germany: Limpert Verlag (1970), pp. 33-34.

businessman in his own right, Neckermann's critical remarks could not fail to be heeded by West German politicians. For example Dr. Manfred Wörner, one of the leaders of the CDU/CSU majority group in the *Bundestag*, the Bonn parliament, stated:

We are fully aware that in today's society, in today's world, the performance of a people is not only measured by its sporting performance but also by the number of medals gained (...) We believe that it is absolutely essential to formulate a four-year program for top performances of our teams at the Olympic Games (...) And we will have to relinquish the anachronistic ideals of the classical amateur (...) For today's high-performance sport much time, sizable efficacy and also much money will have to be invested.<sup>3</sup>

The statement heralded a planned change in West German sports towards more involvement by parliament and government. But this was not unproblematic as it was in contrast to the self-assessment of the German sports movement which always had considered itself to be 'un-political', organising itself on a voluntary basis and deciding on its aims and operation in open debate between its members.

In a major speech to the *DSB, Deutscher Sportbund* in April 1970 its President, and Chairman of the West German NOC, Willi Daume, decided the time had come to take a stand. He set out a detailed statement of the principles of West German sports policy:

Demands have been voiced to remodel German sports and its organisations for the aim of top performances and an obsession of obtaining medals (...) This 'medal fever' not only includes the natural quest for sporting results, which I support. But it also involves nationalistic tendencies, which I reject (...) If one views Olympic results under this premise one must also accept the conditions under which they are achieved in the other Germany (...) where a limited choice for professional development is in contrast to chances for potential sports stars of obtaining various privileges (...) These are circumstances unknown here (...) Our talented sportsmen do enjoy hundreds of professional opportunities (...) But what do they gain, should they indeed become Olympic or World champions – other than passing glory? (...) Should we, on occasion, indeed win less medals than the GDR, we also have *less* of other things – 15,000 km of barbed wire, political prisoners, a muzzled press, and people being killed when trying to escape from their country.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> BArch Koblenz, Protocol of 5<sup>th</sup> *Bundestag* election period, 212<sup>th</sup> session (05/02/69).

<sup>4</sup> Knecht, Willi, *Die ungleichen Brüder* (The dissimilar Brothers), Mainz/Germany: Hase & Köhler (1971), pp. 51-52.

This remarkably bitter attack was not only meant to be for the general benefit of the DSB president's compatriots, but was especially directed at some critics of his organisation. It must be seen, however, also in another context: the increasing controversy and animosity, consisting of exchanges of verbal and written accusations between the two Germanys, that developed in the aftermath of the Mexico experience.

An example of the extent to which cooperation between the two Olympic teams was becoming a distant memory came in a 1971 book published in the GDR under the cumbersome title: *Nationalismus und Sport., Eine Dokumentation über den beabsichtigten Missbrauch der Spiele der XX. Olympiade 1972 in München für nationalistisches Prestigestreben durch die herrschenden Kreise der BRD* (Nationalism and Sports. A Documentation on the intended Misuse of the Games of the 20<sup>th</sup> Olympics at Munich for the nationalistic Prestige Aspirations of the Ruling Classes of the FRG).<sup>5</sup> The Introduction to this work stated:

Nationalism and sport – the pact against the Olympic spirit has been made. This documentation evidences which irons are to be forged to our end. At the same time the documentation outlines what must be done to soonest extinguish the dangerous fires of nationalism, chauvinism, revanchism and anti-communism which are threatening to outshine the Olympic flame at Munich.

The work was a propaganda exercise in which snippets copied from West German newspapers purported to support claims about the depravity of Western ideology. In ten chapters, with titles such as 'The Olympic Idea of our Times, its Realisation and Travesty' and 'Sworn Enemies of Olympia', the content centred on the alleged misrepresentation of the Olympic Charter by West Germany. Particular venom, as on earlier occasions, was directed at Carl Diem, denounced as the sworn enemy of the aims

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<sup>5</sup> *Gesellschaft zur Förderung des olympischen Gedankens in der DDR, Hrsg.* (Society for the Promotion of the Olympic Ethos in the GDR, eds.) *Aktuelle Schriftenreihe, Nummer 2* (Topical Subjects, No. 2). East Berlin: Publishers same as authors (1971).

of the Olympics. Probably irked by Western opposition to what was called by it the ‘sham state-amateur status of paid athletes from the Eastern bloc’, the book took special issue with the many millions of income of President Josef Neckermann’s ‘Foundation for German Sports Assistance’. It quoted two West German newspapers:

Cheques and cash contributions from the various sources – Olympia postage stamps, Olympic certificates, Olympic occasions, events like sportsmen’s dress-balls or concerts by Karajan, donations from industry or individuals, licences for using the *Sporthilfe* logo – are amounting to many millions.<sup>6</sup>

In 1968 a million was collected, three in 1969, next year it will be six, thereafter 10. And for 1972 we need 15 – makes altogether 35.<sup>7</sup>

In similar vein an article in the leading East German newspaper, once again quoted *pars pro toto* for the GDR press, had this to report:

Kiel in West Germany will be the venue of the 1972 Olympic Sailing Regatta, and during pre-event tests the same as recently in Sweden [GDR flags were torn down] now happened in Kiel (...) To the excuse of the FRG guards one might say that they perform their duty in a country where bank raids and murders are the order of the day. To the extent that a day without an attack will be marked as an exception (...) The question arises how an orderly progress of Olympic Games can be expected there (...) At least replacement flags were available, probably because it was expected that they would be needed (...) in the country assigned to host the Olympic Games!<sup>8</sup>

The above text set the tone for the increasingly belligerent, vicious manner of expression used by all of the GDR media towards the Federal Republic in the early 1970. Since 1968 the days of any measure of German-German accommodation in sports politics, at least having tried to live in a reasonably acceptable atmosphere of competition and respect for partnership, were over and never to return. As a metaphor from the world of boxing might have put it: ‘The gloves had come off’ in German East-West relations.

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<sup>6</sup> *Die Welt*, West Berlin, issue of 24 November 1970.

<sup>7</sup> *Sport-Illustrierte*, Munich, Nr. 19 of 1 September 1970.

<sup>8</sup> *Neues Deutschland*, *Organ of the SED Central Committee*, East Berlin, issue of 31 August 1971.

## The return to a cold climate in the run-up to the Munich Olympics

In the following section we will assess the troubled run-up to the 1972 Olympic Games, both on the international scene as well as that of the two Germanys. Not only did tensions increase between East Berlin and Bonn after the period of joint cooperation ended, but the choice of Munich for the Games created a major dilemma inside the GDR.

Ahead of the opening of the Munich Games the four former Allies of the Second World War, the United States, Britain, France and the Soviet Union, sought to reach a final agreement over the status of Berlin, which had continuously soured inter-German sports relations. In June 1972 a 'Four-Power Agreement on Berlin' came into force, the most important clause of it being the renewed common responsibility for – and decisions over – the divided city. The USSR, to the ire of the GDR, thereby assisted in consigning to the dustbin East Berlin's dubious claim that 'free West Berlin' constituted a 'separate political entity', a kind of third Germany. Instead the Four Power Agreement posited that West Berlin, although not being part of West Germany, would be entitled to have 'special relations' with the FRG, including international matters to be conducted for it by Bonn. One of the articles also regulated exchange of visits between the East- and Western-sectors of the city, including facilitation of inter-city sports exchanges.<sup>9</sup> This came too late, however, to have any effect on the decision for the two Germanys to go their separate ways at the Olympics.

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<sup>9</sup> Müller-Marsall, *Deutschland-Archiv*, vol.6, pp. 5720-23.

Another minor example of an attempt at cordial relationship in the aftermath of the joint team era came with the recognition by the FRG that more enemies than friends were made by its constant intervention in the matter of presentation of the GDR's insignia at international championships abroad. So soon after the Munich Olympics it was decided that no objections should be made to the GDR displaying its status symbols during the 1972 Games, and at international competitions in other countries. Later these were also allowed during international championships held in the Federal Republic. Any kind of West German government intervention or protest was finally abandoned in February 1970.

In his speech during the opening ceremony at the magnificent new Munich stadium on 26 August 1972, West German President Gustav Heinemann, welcoming the athletes of the world to Germany, asserted:

the Games alone will not be able to banish disputes and discord, violence and war from the world, even for a short time, yet [shall be] a milestone on the road to a new way of life with the aim of realizing peaceful coexistence among peoples.<sup>10</sup>

Yet in reality the GDR propaganda machine did have a major problem with the city of Munich as venue of the 1972 Olympics, and the level of discord on this issue overshadowed small examples of cooperation such as that over displaying symbols and flags. Munich was not only the city where Hitler's Nazi party had been founded in 1920, but beyond doubt it was the axiomatic *Hauptstadt der Bewegung* (Capital of the Movement) from 1933 to 1945. Furthermore it was the home base of the *Landsmannschaften*, the associations of former, then ejected citizens of Silesia and East Prussia – now parts of Russia and Poland – who were clamouring for an illusionary return to their home lands. Finally, considerable GDR scorn was directed at the city for

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<sup>10</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, p. 186.

housing two very powerful radio stations which it called *Hetzsender* (instigation radio transmitters), Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, run by the United States, beaming news and political propaganda to the countries of the East bloc. GDR propaganda directed against West Germany invented formula “ $2 \times 36 = 72$ ”, alluding to Hitler’s 1936 propaganda Olympics as precursor to what they alleged the FRG was intending to make of the 1972 Games.<sup>11</sup>

A West German newspaper sardonically responded:

There is a ‘low tide’ on the GDR agitation scene against the FRG. Aside from all kinds of archive material and non-sports ‘events’, its journalists are now trying to not let it be forgotten that the 1972 Olympics are still threatened by ‘Revanchists’ and ‘Neo-Fascists’, directing their attacks against a participation of the GDR at the Games. Yet it cannot be overlooked that some ‘sand is getting into the agitation machinery’ of the GDR, caused as side-effects of a changed political stance of the FRG vis-à-vis the USSR.<sup>12</sup>

Yet protesting too vigorously against the Games to be held in such a ‘tainted’ city, let alone considering a boycott against it, would have scuttled East Berlin’s dreams of beating West German sports on its own territory. Once the era of joint cooperation was over, both sides – but particularly East Germany – was determined as a matter of pride to go all out to win the most medals in Munich.

A memo by the Bonn Foreign Office, written by G. Klein and dated 12 July 1970, presented the department’s view of the GDR’s dilemma regarding the Munich Olympics. It proposed that the East Berlin leaders initially positioned themselves as the foremost opponents to Munich. When they realised that this would not produce dividends, they devised ‘rather clever tactical manoeuvres’, in Klein’s words, in two directions. First, they became determined that the GDR would try to vindicate itself as

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<sup>11</sup> BArch Berlin, SAPMO ZPA, IV A2/2028/35, file Norden.

<sup>12</sup> *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, issue of 1 September 1970, p.4.

far as possible not only in the field of sports, but also by taking part in the event's cultural program, including its Scientific Congress. Secondly, Klein believed, the East would use the period of the run-up to the Games to create an image of doubts about the motives of the hosts. The memo concluded that fanatical sporting preparations by the GDR for Munich would go hand-in-hand with its criticism and polemics against Munich to the very last day.<sup>13</sup>

The tense relationship between the West and East over sport in the early 1970s was played out against a changing diplomatic backdrop. The process of *Détente*, a new phase in the history of the Cold War since the mid-1960s, saw various efforts to improve relationship between the Federal Republic and its East European neighbours – though for the time being the GDR remained an exception. Serious attempts were made at disarmament by the USA and the Russians, and generally improved relations between Eastern European nations under Soviet influence and the countries of Western Europe and North America were on the agenda.<sup>14</sup>

Also in West Germany a major change in the political scene came after Willy Brandt, formerly Lord Mayor of West Berlin – in which position he developed the desire for a fundamental improvement in German relations – led his Social Democratic party to win the 1969 general elections. Winning over the so far near-hegemonic German CDU/CSU Conservatives, he gained the position of Federal Chancellor in a coalition government with the German Liberals. Part of Brandt's agenda was to come to forge better relations with East European neighbours Poland and the Soviet Union – and perhaps in time to attempt the same with the GDR. Together with prominent Cabinet member Egon Bahr, the motto *Wandel durch Annäherung* (change by convergency) was coined by them for

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<sup>13</sup> BArch Koblenz, B137/8502

<sup>14</sup> Palmowski, Jan, *The Oxford Twentieth Century World History*, Oxford University Press (1997) p.169.

this objective. On occasion of the Chancellor's journey to Warsaw in December 1970 to sign the German-Polish Treaty, he gained world-wide attention by his genuflection in front of the memorial for the former Jewish ghetto. It was to become a symbol of Germany's new *Ostpolitik*. In recognition of his achievements Brandt was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1971.<sup>15</sup>

In an article of March 1970, a few days prior to a first-ever meeting of Willy Brandt as Chancellor with Willi Stoph, de facto-Prime Minister of the GDR at Erfurt/East Germany, a French newspaper under the heading 'An important Turning Point of the 'German Nation', commented:

Heads of government of two states which for twenty years were entangled in one of the most merciless civil Cold Wars of the planet, representatives of the two 'socialisms' which have not stopped from excommunicating each other, the gentlemen Brandt and Stoph have decided to meet each other at Erfurt (...) The meeting, even though – to all probability – it will hardly result in concrete or immediate results, will nevertheless be marking a most important date in a development which both sides, unisonous, are qualifying as the 'German Nation' (...) In Brandt's great design the Erfurt meeting takes a central place (...) At a point in time when negotiations are taking place in Moscow and Warsaw, the Chancellor appears on GDR territory in a most impressive manner as pilgrim of détente without exclusions and without anathema.<sup>16</sup>

In 1970, as well as a new accord with Poland, another treaty was signed by West Germany with the Soviet Union. In due course the 1973 'Prague Agreement' was to 'normalise the relationship between the FRG and Czechoslovakia, including entering into full diplomatic relations, establishing embassies in Bonn and Prague'.<sup>17</sup> Many of these diplomatic initiatives, resulting from Chancellor Brandt's new *Ostpolitik*, were seen with concern, even apprehension by East Berlin. For the time being the two Germanys remained mutually suspicious, captives of the unresolved issue of their respective international status. With the FRG maintaining that it was the only rightful,

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<sup>15</sup> Waske, Stefanie, 'Brandt', *ZEIT MAGAZIN* Hamburg, no. 40 (29 November 2012), pp. 40-41, 47-48.

<sup>16</sup> Müller-Marsall, *Archive* vol. 5, p. 5083, quoting from *Le Monde*, Paris, issue of 14 March 1970.

<sup>17</sup> Müller-Marsall, *Archive* vol. 7, pp. 6159-61.

democratically elected of the two, Chancellor Brandt could not – and did not want to – fully recognize the GDR as a sovereign state. Against such a backdrop, East Berlin was more determined than ever that it would showcase its right to be a fully-recognised international state by performing exceptionally at the 1972 Olympics.

Ahead of the Games, East German leader Erich Honecker ordered a far-reaching ‘sporting rearmament’ of his country. Fifty million marks were poured into sports coffers, targeted top performances were identified, medals to be won calculated. The GDR eventually employed 592 full-time athletics trainers at the time – compared to just 45 in the FRG.<sup>18</sup> So the GDR presented itself at Munich with a well-prepared and highly motivated Olympic team. Its aim was to demonstrate itself as the number one sporting power in Germany and, at the same time, to prove the superiority of socialism over capitalism. In the ongoing struggle of systems, the 1972 Summer Games would consist not only of sporting challenges for both German NOCs. Klaus Wolfermann, javelin thrower athlete of the West German team, would describe the atmosphere existing between the two German teams at the Munich Olympics by saying: ‘It was class struggle pure and simple’, quoting a trainer of the GDR team boasting ‘We will show you West Germans who really are the stronger Germans’.<sup>19</sup>

### The XI<sup>th</sup> Olympic Winter Games at Sapporo, the problem of amateurism and the end of the Brundage era

Before turning the XXth Summer Games at Munich, we shall look at the preceding Olympic event of the year 1972, that of the Winter Games in Japan from 3 to 13 February of the same year, followed by the end of Avery Brundage’s long tenure as

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<sup>18</sup> Kemper, Hella in: *Krieg und Spiele, ein deutsches Duell* (War and Games, a German Duel) in *ZEIT-Geschichte*, no. 3/2012, p. 87, quoted from *Der Spiegel*, Hamburg, issue of 17 August 2009, p. 102 ff.

<sup>19</sup> Wolfermann, Klaus, in FRG-TV feature HISTORY on channel ZDF: *Wir gegen uns, Wettkampf der Systeme* (We against Ourselves, a Competition of Systems), 01 August 2011, 45 min.

head of the IOC. Sapporo had originally been allocated the V<sup>th</sup> Winter Games of 1940, but in 1938 Japan withdrew as there was little prospect for an ending of its ongoing war with China.<sup>20</sup>

As an Olympic venue, Sapporo has always been in the shadows of its famous, same-year's sporting competitor of the city of Munich, but arguably undeservedly so. In total 1,128 athletes, 911 males and 217 females, plus 527 officials from 35 countries attended the events at Sapporo. It was the very first time that two autonomous German Olympic teams were to make their appearances on the international sports scene. Following their earlier records of successful Olympic participation while still a joint German team, the now separate teams also performed well. The GDR athletes gained a total of 14 medals: 4 gold, 3 silver and 7 bronze; their colleagues from the FRG went home with only 5, 3 of gold and each one of silver and bronze.<sup>21</sup> The Olympic results at Sapporo were an indication of things to come at Munich. With a small team, half the number of the West German one, in the ranking of nations the GDR team took second place after the Soviet Union, while the team of the FRG was placed only sixth.<sup>22</sup>

Autocratic protector of amateurism that he was, IOC President Brundage was 'bursting with rage' at what he witnessed in Sapporo. He arrived with a list of forty athletes he would like to have seen barred. But it became obvious that this would have scuttled the whole event.<sup>23</sup> The athlete to become a contentious 'cause celebre' was Austrian skiing ace Karl Schranz. Upon Brundage's initiative, three days before opening of the Games the IOC decided to exclude this first-place-favourite athlete in Alpine events from the

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<sup>20</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, p. 359.

<sup>21</sup> Lanz, *Politics, Protocol*, p. 359

<sup>22</sup> Lämmer, *Olympic Movement*, p. 278.

<sup>23</sup> Guttmann, *The Games*, p. 125.

Games. Schranz had been reported to earn upward of \$60,000 a year for promotion of a manufacturers' products. In a press statement Schranz wrote:

This thing of amateur purity is something that dates back to the nineteenth century when amateur sportsmen were regarded as gentlemen and everyone else was an outcast. The Olympics should be a competition of skill and strength and speed – and no more.<sup>24</sup>

Before he ended his presidency Brundage had to make some concessions to changing times (the word 'amateur' was finally removed from the Olympic charter in 1974), and the Schranz scandal acts as a useful reminder that the issue of amateur status had played an important role in the past history of the joint German-German Olympic team. As assessed in chapter one, West German NOC member Karl Ritter von Halt from the very beginning of inter-German sports castigated GDR athletes as 'sham-, government-paid non-amateurs'. Pertinent to this discussion is the experience of a former East German member of the joint German Olympic team. IOC rules expressly ruled out any pecuniary emoluments to sportspeople. And East Berlin sports management repeatedly confirmed to the IOC that no such existed in the GDR. However evidence to the contrary exists in a sworn affidavit by the former GDR rowing-boat athlete Heinz-Joachim Neuling. He was a five-time champion in the GDR and participant of the joint German team at the 1960 Olympic Games. Neuling fled to West Germany in 1962 and deposited the following statement:

I received payments which according to Olympic and other amateur rules were not permitted (...) For being part of the successful German-German team at Rome I was paid 2,000 marks as a 'premium' (...) Payments to successful sportspeople were 7,000 marks for the winner of a gold medal, 5,000 for silver, and 3,500 for bronze (...) Breaking of records were awarded by payments of up to 2,000 marks (...) Payments were always made by hand of officials of the East Berlin *DTSB*; they were effected on the recipient's pledge of the most strict discretion.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, p. 360.

<sup>25</sup> Knecht, Willi, *Deutsche Sportler zwischen Ost und West* (German Sportspeople between East and West), Cologne: Kiepenheuer & Witsch (1969) p. 50.

And although East Germany on various occasions<sup>26</sup> deviously confirmed the status of its athletes as that of amateurs, West German sports leaders – knowing very well that this was far from the truth – had to live with it. The IOC was of course also aware of such gross breaking of its own rules. But it chose to accept the unacceptable: there were the ‘state-sponsored amateurs’ of all communist countries – plus even of some others – and refusing their acceptance in the Olympic movement would have meant exclusion of a large part of the sporting world from the Olympics.

A few days prior to the opening of the XXth Olympic Summer Games at Munich, the IOC convened at Munich for its 73<sup>rd</sup> Session from 21 to 24 August 1972. Upon the announcement of his resignation after the Munich Games by Brundage, the IOC elected John Lord Killanin from Ireland as its new President for an eight-year term. By unanimous vote, Avery Brundage was appointed IOC Honorary President for life. Also elected was Willi Daume, Chairman of the German NOC and head of the Organisation Committee of the Munich Games, as Third Vice-President of the IOC for a term of four years.

During this session Brundage gave a lengthy ‘speech of farewell and legacy’. He made a special point of his strong personal involvement in the matter of the joint German Olympic teams, reflecting :

Despite Cold War and ideological differences, on the fields of sport unanimity reigned between the East and the West. At this moment there are 74 IOC members and 130 NOCs which promote and protect the Olympic movement. Problems of countries divided by war, unsolvable by politicians, were overcome (...) To the amazement of the world’s politicians, during the last four Games one flag was carried in front of a united East- and West-German Olympic team (...) The Games must remain an era of free competition between athletes and not one of controlled competition between nations. Should they become the latter, it would mean their end (...) For many years, we have attempted to preserve the

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<sup>26</sup> See e.g. chapter four, quoting the GDR’s ‘statutory declaration’ dated 20 June 1961 that it was (...) ‘strictly observing the rules of the IOC and regulations on amateurism’.

amateurstatus of the Olympic Games but under present circumstances this proved to an impossibility (...) It was a major mistake that Winter Games have been introduced. Hardly one fourth of the 130 NOCs are showing an active interest in them, and the events became the monopole of a few countries (...) Olympic regulations, often non-adhered to, have come into question (...)<sup>27</sup>

Such observations represent but a fraction of the strongly opinionated views and instructions that Brundage's IOC colleagues – as well as the wider world – were treated to over the previous decades. That, however, was the price the international world of Olympic sports had to pay for enduring arguably the most forceful as well as successful IOC President ever. Brundage's forte has been to bring his thoughts and actions into correspondence with the 'powers that be' and tendencies of his time. Yet the central question as to how he succeeded in exerting his personal power remains something of an enigma. The protocol of the 73<sup>rd</sup> IOC session ended with these lines:

President Avery BRUNDAGE was given an extended standing ovation for his work during the past twenty years and the outstanding manner in which he presided over the destinies of the IOC, and also his very substantial financial contributions during that period.<sup>28</sup>

### The XX<sup>th</sup> Olympic Summer Games at Munich

Starting on August 26 1972 and lasting until September 11, the Munich Games were officially opened by West German President Gustav Heinemann. Addressing participants, their retinues and some 80,000 spectators in front of the new, magnificent buildings of the Olympic sites, he welcomed them to Munich. He added the caveat, however, 'the Games would not be able to banish (...) violence' – foresighted words indeed, as even during these very Games, violence and murderous terror would overshadow events.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Mueller-Marsall, *Archiv*, vol. 6, pp. 5764-66.

<sup>28</sup> Courtesy of IOC Lausanne: protocol of the 73<sup>rd</sup> IOC Session at Munich, p. 36.

<sup>29</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, p. 186.

As far as the atmosphere between the now autonomous German teams was concerned, the 1972 Games underlined how far the cooperation of the 1950s and 1960s was an aberration. According to historians Schiller and Young: ‘At Munich the sports clash between the two German rivals retained the quality of a highly condensed and rarefied version of Cold War enmity’.<sup>30</sup> Hans-Joachim Winkler, Head of the department of Political Sciences at the University of Hagen/Germany, offered this analysis:

Similar to what in the past the United States had meant for the USSR, today the sportspeople of the Federal Republic represent the most important competitors for the GDR. With ferocious contention, Munich will constitute the culmination of an inimical sporting competition’.<sup>31</sup>

As it happens, both German teams individually did very well in sporting results at Munich. In the final medal tally of nations, place one at Munich was taken by the USSR while the United States moved to place two, followed by a jubilant GDR in third place. West Germany followed as a fourth and its athletes gained a total of 40 medals: 13 gold, 11 silver and 16 bronze medals. But this was truly outshone by its cousins from the East by winning 66 medals: 20 gold, 23 silver and 23 bronze, resulting in an GDR-to-FRG ratio of 66-to-40.<sup>32</sup> Especially striking was the fact that the GDR’s total of 20 gold medals was arrived at on the basis of a population of approximately 18 million people, while the Federal Republic’s 13 time gold were obtained out of a potential of some 80 million people. In any event the GDR’s impressive Olympic results constituted a convincing justification of the GDR’s huge preparatory efforts in the run-up to Munich. It also would vindicate its leadership’s ambitions not only in sport, but beyond these, their aspiration for further international political acceptance.

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<sup>30</sup> Schiller, Kay, & Young, Christopher, *The 1972 Munich Olympics and the Making of Modern Germany*. Berkeley: University of California Press (2010), p. 184.

<sup>31</sup> Winkler, Hans-Joachim, *Sport und politische Bildung. Modellfall Olympia (Sports and political Culture. Model case Olympia)* Opladen/Germany: Leske Verlag (1972), p. 176.

<sup>32</sup> Lanz, *Politics, Protocol*, p. 359.

However, the Munich Games stand in the memory less for the results of the athletes than for what has been known as a ‘murderous Breach of Peace’<sup>33</sup>:

On the evening of 4 September 1972 the Israeli delegation returned to the Olympic village around half past midnight from seeing a musical at the city centre. A mere stone’s throw from the theatre, eight members of a Palestinian terrorist commando (...) were receiving final instructions (...) at the main station. After mingling with tourists for several days and even attending the Olympic volleyball tournament, they were about to begin their ‘Operation Ikrit and Biram’.<sup>34</sup>

Little over twenty-four hours later (...) all but three of the Israelis athletes number would be dead.<sup>35</sup> Following a first-ever intrusion into the so far sacrosanct ‘Olympic Peace’ at the preceding Mexico City Games (caused by display of anti-racial protests by two American athletes), this was the second occasion on which ethnic/religious/political issues of dispute and confrontations – albeit this time involving murderous deeds – engulfed and even threatened to endanger the continuation of a major international event like the Olympic Games.

Early in the morning of September 5, the Palestinians seized eleven members of the Israeli team in a raid on their apartments in the Olympic village, killing one Israeli outright. There followed a day of siege and unsuccessful negotiations, in which the terrorists demanded the release of more than 200 Palestinians jailed in Israel, and that of two German terrorists in German prisons. German officials – who included Munich Mayor Vogel, Foreign Minister Genscher and later in the day Chancellor Brandt – would finally allow the terrorists to move with the hostages in two helicopters to a nearby military airport, to board a specially arranged flight to a Middle Eastern destination. As the terrorists and their hostages made their way to the waiting airplane, a

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<sup>33</sup> Lämmer, *Olympic Movement*, pp. 280-81.

<sup>34</sup> The names of two Palestinian villages allegedly destroyed by Israeli forces in an earlier ‘ethnic cleansing operation’.

<sup>35</sup> Schiller & Young, *1972 Munich Olympics*, p. 194

police detachment opened fire. In the ensuing gun battle, all the ten remaining Israeli hostages, a German police officer and three of the Palestinians were killed.

During the evening of the same day in a sombre meeting the IOC Committee voted to continue the Games. A memorial service was held the following day of September 6 where German President Heinemann expressed his grief and sorrow. Outgoing IOC President Brundage mourned the loss of 'our Israeli friends' observing:

the greater and more important the Olympic Games become, the more they are open to commercial, political, and now criminal pressure (...) I am sure that the public will agree that the IOC Committee cannot allow a handful of terrorists to destroy this nucleus of cooperation and goodwill we have in the Olympic movement.<sup>36</sup>

Brundage then declared September 6 a day of mourning, announcing that the Munich Olympics would continue the next day, with all events one day later than originally scheduled. The IOC President ended his address with the famous words, in fact the credo of his life: 'The Games Must Go On'.<sup>37</sup>

The public in both Germanys had hoped for a wide and generous coverage by their respective media of the first appearance separate, autonomous Olympic teams at the summer Games. In the event, however, this did not materialize as the events of the terrorist attacks inevitably took over all national and international reporting from Munich. Daume – as head of both the West German NOC and of the Munich Organisation Committee – found a proper definition of events: 'At its apex, the spirit of the so joyful Munich Games was brutally destroyed'.<sup>38</sup>

### Reflections on the Munich Games

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<sup>36</sup> Findling, *Encyclopedia*, pp. 187/188.

<sup>37</sup> Guttman, *The Games*, pp. 253-54; also University of Illinois, Avery Brundage Collection, box 249.

<sup>38</sup> *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, issue of 26 August 1982, p. 18.

How then were the 1972 Olympics reflected upon in West and East Germany? Although written after the Mexico Games and a long way ahead of those at Munich, an article by the journalist Dietrich Strothmann provided an astonishingly foresighted analysis of what ‘Munich’ would come to mean for German sport. Strothmann wrote:

By 1972 it will be a matter of fact that the flag of the GDR will not only fly in the sports arenas of the East but also so in Western stadiums (...) And it can be taken for granted that the common neutral flag with Olympic rings has been seen at Mexico City for the last time (...) The GDR, already member in 48 international sports organisations, will become part of the ‘Olympic Ball’ with its name and flag. Unless we are completely wrong, Munich 1972 shall witness optical proof of this (...) Sports leaders have every right to demand a ‘clear table’ from the government: they are tired of having to pay for political prevarication at Bonn. It is not for sports to suffer from officials’ indecision.<sup>39</sup>

Articles in the leading West German daily newspaper expressed the sense of how high hopes to showcase the modern nation had been cruelly dashed:

The 1972 Games at Munich were meant to go down in Olympic history as the ‘cheerful Games’. But they became a tragedy (...) That they came to Munich at all was due to the ‘par excellence’ efforts of Daume and Munich’s Lord Mayor Vogel (...) East and West, the GDR and the FRG, were facing each other as enemies; the Cold War had now reached the Olympic Movement, although for three Winter and three Summer Games the illusion of an Olympic communality had been preserved. But the pretence was ended by the IOC’s decision to accept an autonomous NOC of the GDR (...) Yet never before and never again the Games were imbued with a feeling so much in harmony with the character of youthfulness (...) They gave self-confidence to the country (...) But still and forever there will remain a shadow over the XX<sup>th</sup> Olympic Games.<sup>40</sup>

The observations of the two journalists who penned these articles can be seen as thoughtfully concise and inevitably sombre. The intrusion of terrorist activity unavoidably overshadowed other aspects of the Games that, in normal circumstances, would have gained more prominence: the high level of sporting achievement (especially so in the case of the GDR); the impressive efficiency of the organisers; the pride felt by enthusiastic and welcoming crowds, at least until tragedy struck.

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<sup>39</sup> *Zum Kampf der Fahnen und der Hymnen, deutscher Sport im politischen Zwielficht* (On the Struggle of Hymns and Flags, German Sport in political Dissension) *DIE ZEIT*, issue of 28 October 1968, no. 44, p.4.

<sup>40</sup> Kaiser, Ulrich & Haffner, Steffen in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* no. 171, p. 26 (25 July 2012) and no. 204, p. 3 (01 September 2012).

Whether the Games shifted opinion about the wider relationship between the two Germanys remains a matter of conjecture. Officialdom in both countries still to an extent adhered to past opinions and prejudices. At the same time, however, there was some evidence for public opinion at large that the Munich experience helped to forge a new German *status operandi*. Sports historian Lorenz Peiffer summarizes from a West German public opinion poll conducted only six days after the end the Games:

54% of West Germans would be pleased by the successes of the team of the GDR; 8% of citizens expressed a positive view of the GDR; and 53% of the people interviewed – almost twice as many as five years earlier – were in favour of full political recognition of the other Germany.<sup>41</sup>

Yet it would be another ten months before the *Grundvertrag* (Basic Contract) signed between the two Germanys would basically change the political scene.<sup>42</sup>

Finally in terms of German reactions, it is revealing to examine how two GDR newspapers summarised the outcome of proceedings in Munich:

‘Unofficial Countries’ Rankings			
	G	S	B
USSR	50	27	22
USA	33	30	29
GDR	20	23	23
FRG/West Berlin	12	11	16 <sup>43</sup>

‘This is the current balance of medals gained, in the same order as above, by GDR teams during Olympic Summer Games:

Melbourne 1956		
1	4	2

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<sup>41</sup> Peiffer, *Olympic Summer Games 1972*, p. 22.

<sup>42</sup> Concluded on 21 June 1973 was the *Contract concerning the Basics of Relations between the FRG and the GDR*. Amongst other agreements it confirmed mutual acceptance of borders, territorial integrity and independence, renounced sole representation claims, defined cooperation in various fields including that of sport. Yet, until automatic lapse of the agreement in October 2009 by accession of the GDR to the FRG, fundamental disagreements remained: the FRG never accredited the GDR sovereign international status; and on its part in 1974 the GDR removed an article endorsing ‘perpetuity of the German nation’ from its constitution. Müller-Marsall, *Archive*, vol. 6, pp. 5884, 6003-04.

<sup>43</sup> *Neues Deutschland*, East Berlin, issue of 11 September 1972, p. 8.

Rome 1960			
3	7	7	
Tokyo 1964			
3	11	5	
Mexico 1968			
9	9	7 <sup>44</sup>	

So while in the first article the GDR ranking was presented as speaking for itself, as it were, the second began a process that was to become commonplace in later times: it ‘airbrushed’ out of history the very existence of joint German-German teams at those events.

A more balanced conclusion about Munich comes from the British Ambassador, writing in confidence to the Foreign Secretary in London on what had transpired and its implications:

The massacres will be remembered more than the Games. The very size of the Games and the world-wide interest in them make this inevitable.

The cost of the Munich Games was enormous and the organisation efficient and tactful (...) It was an amazing feat to mobilise and train the 6,000 officials, hosts and hostesses, who throughout displayed an almost celestial courtesy.

The USSR and Eastern Europeans dominated the results, particularly the East Germans.

The Communist countries as a whole, perceiving in the Games the opportunity to pursue the cold war by other means, no doubt hoped that success (they occupied five out of the first nine places in the medal table) would enhance the prestige of their systems – though to be fair it must be said that these countries regard sport as a social activity requiring much official support to keep the citizens healthy.

The Games are, as at present organised, so big, so popular, so expensive, so much a focus of worldwide attention that the temptation to exploit them for non-athletic ends is irresistible.

However, despite all deviations from the true purpose of the Games (...) it was also a great event for the enormous crowd of spectators, most whom were evidently enjoying themselves a great deal (...) Anyone who managed to meet participants (...) must have been struck by the almost fraternal feelings running between them that transcended national frontiers.

East Germany’s outstanding results call for some comment. Their team was not

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<sup>44</sup> *Berliner Zeitung*, East Berlin, issue of 10 September 1972, p. 3.

particularly large, but they (...) came third in the medal table. It is as though the East Germans, denied international recognition on the diplomatic stage, were determined to make their mark in this most public forum; and what was striking was the extent of applause their athletes received from the predominantly West German crowd (...) I suspect that it also reflected their desire to show warmth and hospitality to those cut off from them by forces outside their control.

I am not convinced that East Germany will necessarily secure political or economic advantages on the world stage because of their success at Munich (...) The East Germans incidentally were supported by a large clique, who came from East Germany for the occasion, and who were housed a long way outside Munich and were kept away from contacts with the inhabitants of the city.<sup>45</sup>

It was notable that Ambassador Henderson commented positively on Munich 1972, despite the tragedy of the massacre; his report displays a measure of empathy for the organizers of and participants at the Games. He makes much of ‘fraternal feeling’ within the crowd, the desire of Germans to find common purpose in sport where it existed so little in everyday life. Yet the realities of politics and diplomacy overwhelmed communal feeling, as they had before, during and after the breakup of the joint venture between west and east in the mid-1960s. Special attention was accorded by Henderson to the GDR and what it might gain from the Munich Games: an interesting aspect of the document is that it mirrors one of the arguments developed in this thesis, namely that the country’s sport was primarily designed and financed to influence international politics.

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<sup>45</sup> Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Diplomatic Report No. 431/72, Germany 25 September 1972. ‘By Her Majesty’s Ambassador at Bonn Nicholas Henderson, to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs’. The National Archives, Kew, London, FCO 33/1821.