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Braun, Jutta

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# Football History: A German Perspective on Current Research Fields

*Jutta Braun*<sup>\*</sup>

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**Abstract:** »Fußball-Geschichte. Über einige aktuelle Forschungsfelder aus deutscher Perspektive«. In the last 25 years, German football has experienced several turning points. First, the collapse of communism in 1989 rendered necessary a complete reorganisation of the sport and football landscape in eastern Germany. Second, in parallel with the award in the year 2000 of the right to host the 2006 FIFA World Cup in the Federal Republic of Germany, a significant upturn took place in academic research on football. The reappraisal of the National Socialist era, in particular, has experienced a noticeable upswing since the year 2000. The present article focuses on several key thematic areas that shape current research and will shape research in the future. They include, first, the question of the character of the *Vereine* (here: football clubs) under the conditions of a communist dictatorship, and second, an increased interest in the biographical component of the history of the development of football. At the same time, it is clear that by now the question of a memory culture in football is no longer limited to national perspectives such as the reappraisal of the "Miracle of Bern." Rather, the dynamic development of European football renders possible the emergence of European realms of shared memory. At the same time, a boom in public engagement with football history can be observed in Germany and elsewhere. This holds true for both the social commemoration of footballers who were victims of war and tyranny and for popular cultural publications. In recent years, therefore, there has not only been an increase in the "museumisation" but also in the media marketing of football history. Thus, football history itself has become a market that is served by various stakeholders, such as clubs, companies, and the media.

**Keywords:** German football, German unity, GDR, FRG, transformation, collective memory, World Cup, public history, culture of remembrance, biography.

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## 1. Introduction

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Football history in the last quarter of a century in Germany has been shaped by two significant events. The first was the upheaval of 1989/1990, which marked a watershed not only in German history but also in European and world history

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<sup>\*</sup> Jutta Braun, Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam, Am Neuen Markt 1, 14467 Potsdam, Germany, braun@zzf-pdm.de.

(Conze et al. 2009). In Germany, it gave rise to what is known in the by now extensive field of research on the process of German unification as a “double transformation” – that is, a radical change that primarily affected eastern Germany but also had an impact on western Germany (Kollmorgen 2011; Dienel 2011). While an institutional transfer took place primarily from west to east, both the old and the new *Länder* were obliged at the same time to address new global challenges (Bösch 2015). And in its own unique way, football, too, was affected by the opportunities and risks associated with this double transformation.

The second significant event was FIFA’s decision in the year 2000 to select Germany as the host country for the Football World Cup in 2006. This generated a momentum, the intellectual impact and publicity effectiveness of which should not be underestimated. First, there was a marked increase in academic engagement with Germany’s footballing past – and especially with the period during the National Socialist era. This surge in interest in historical issues was actively promoted by research commissioned by the German Football Association (Deutscher Fussball-Bund, DFB) and by a “memory culture” offensive. Second, the 50th anniversary of the “Miracle of Bern” (Germany’s victory over Hungary in the 1954 FIFA World Cup final), which was further hyped up in the run-up to the World Cup in 2006, triggered a new boom in public interest in sport history. This new dynamic in memory culture culminated in the ceremonial opening of the first German Football Museum in Dortmund on 25 October 2015.

The 25th anniversary of German unity on 3 October 2015 affords an opportunity to trace the impact of the aforementioned developments on research on the history and culture of football with the aim of showing what new fields have emerged as priority areas of football history during this period – and, above all, what fields are likely to emerge in the future. On the occasion of a sport history conference at the Center for Contemporary History in Potsdam in September 2015, various new empirical and methodological deliberations were outlined.<sup>1</sup> This HSR Forum presents some of the approaches discussed at that conference and recent related research projects on football history.

The priority areas of recent studies include, first, football *Vereine* (clubs) as the subject of historical-sociological research. The word *Verein* stood for quite disparate phenomena. In the course of the 20th century, this general term covered both civil-society and state-controlled organisations. The potential of *Vereine* to include or exclude social groups – in the wake of a political upheaval, for example – should not be underestimated. And it is by now questionable whether, or in what way, the decades-long differences between the systems in eastern and western European football are also reflected in persistently different *Verein* cultures and in different levels of organisation of participation in sport (Braun 2015).

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. <<http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/tagungsberichte/id=6245>>.

The second important research field in recent years has been the critical re-examination of the socio-cultural significance of numerous “historic matches.” Considering that the interpretation of football is always a seismograph of changes in a society’s cultural self-perception (Pyta 2006, 19), it is not surprising that this resulted in some reassessments. Hence, not only the interpretation of major national successes, such as Germany’s 1954, 1974, and 1990 World Cup titles, is changing. Building on research conducted by Nora and Assmann (Nora 2001; Assmann 2006), the question of the emergence of *realms of shared memory* in the popular field of European football is also one that is increasingly being asked (Pyta and Havemann 2015).

A third research field, which is still in its infancy, is the *biographical component* of the game: Who were the footballing protagonists – be they players, managers, officials, or even sport journalists? How did their background shape their behaviour? How did their upbringing shape their tactics? And how did their influence shape the system? In the light of the experience of two dictatorships in Germany in the 20th century, it is hardly surprising that German sport history has hitherto focused primarily on the “profiteers, the members of the resistance, and the victims” of dictatorial systems and political conflicts (Blecking and Peiffer 2012; transl. J.B.).

And finally, in recent years, sport history has increasingly built a bridge to *public history* – a term that can denote quite different ways and methods of communicating history to the public (Bösch 2009; Hochmuth and Zündorf 2015). In football, it refers, first, to a culture of remembrance that commemorates players who were victims of state despotism. Second, it refers to a thriving culture in football that is initiated and sustained mainly by fans. This so-called *Memorialkultur* (Herzog 2012) symbolically embodies fans’ personal bonds with a *Verein*. And third, there is a flourishing popular football culture in different media. Another phenomenon that can currently be observed is the “museumisation” of football, the boom and success of which is attributed to the fact that it successfully integrates all three public history trends in the history of sport.

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## 1. *Vereine* between Tradition and Transformation

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### 1.1 Meaning-Giving and Integration as Guiding Principles

The historian Markwart Herzog has correctly pointed out that, in modern society, *Vereine* offer a trans-generational anchor point for traditional bonds, and thus personal life-orientation (Herzog 2012a, 15). The big traditional *Vereine* in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), most of which were founded around the turn of the last century, can indeed look back on a long history. However, football’s meaning-giving powers extend far beyond its sports-related core business. In the eyes of many sociologists, social educators, and politicians,

football is an instrument of social integration par excellence. The German Football Association (DFB) is also committed to the objective of social integration. In its current statutes, the association emphasises the “promotion of integration and diversity” as one of its explicit operational objectives. For some time now, the DFB has placed particular emphasis on the integration of migrants, and when implementing this objective it also reacts to current developments. Since May 2015, for example, a project entitled “1:0 for a Welcome,” which is being conducted under the aegis of the DFB’s Egidius Braun Foundation, has been supporting *Vereine* who help refugees. The DFB is being supported in this regard by the Federal Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration. Why policymakers have discovered football as an excellent field of social policy activity in recent years is easily explained because the almost 60,000 teams in over 25,000 *Vereine* with 80,000 matches every weekend during the season are indeed what Diethelm Blecking calls a “socially unrivalled interface between the social groups and between individuals” (Blecking 2015, 153). It is no wonder, therefore, that *Vereine* are considered to foster more than the integration of marginal groups: For some time now, sport sociologists have emphasised sports volunteering in *Vereine*, for example, as an ideal “school of democracy”.<sup>2</sup>

In the light of so much social-pedagogical added value, it should not be forgotten that a socio-integrative function is by no means an intrinsic feature of sport, or of football. Rather, history shows that – especially during the National Socialist era – the *Vereine*, in particular, proved extremely susceptible to the virus of radically excluding even long-term members on political or religious grounds.

## 1.2 Exclusion and Persecution under National Socialism

Although research on sport under National Socialism began in the 1980s and 1990s (Teichler 1991; Bennett 1983), a systematic study of life in *Vereine* and associations during the National Socialist era did not get underway until the turn of the century. One impetus came from academia because, besides sport scientists, historians also increasingly began to address this thematic field (Eisenberg 1999; Pyta 2004). A second impetus came from the DFB in 2001. Whether because of criticism of the DFB’s memory-policy abstinence or because Germany was awarded the right to host the 2006 FIFA World Cup, the association commissioned a study on the role and involvement of the DFB during the National Socialist era, which was presented in 2005 (Havemann 2005). Both this monograph by Nils Havemann and numerous subsequently

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Sebastian Braun, 11 September 2013, cf. <<http://www.dfb.de/news/detail/braun-vereine-sind-eine-schule-der-demokratie-80396>> (Accessed November 30, 2015).

written *Verein* histories (Herzog 2006; Schulze-Marmeling 2011) relentlessly shed light on the way football adapted to the new situation under National Socialism. Research controversies were therefore inevitable. Some observers saw them as a belated repetition of the federal German *Historikerstreit* (historians' dispute) in the second half of the 1980s, or of similar debates (for example, between "intentionalists" and "functionalists") about the nature and mechanisms of the National Socialist regime (Rosenfelder 2006; Eisenberg 2007; Herzog 2015). One bone of contention was the extent to which the DFB's behaviour in adapting to the National Socialist regime was primarily attributable to a reactionary and anti-Jewish attitude on the part of its functionary caste or whether it was motivated more by calculated self-interest on the part of the association. By contrast, there is consensus among researchers as to where differentiation is permissible and necessary. For example, initial regional studies (Bahro 2015) have revealed that the football *Vereine* were sometimes more cautious when it came to introducing and enforcing National Socialist principles than, say, the gymnastics *Vereine*, who integrated the *Führer* principle and the so-called "Aryan sections" into their statutes in a particularly compliant way (Bahro, Braun and Teichler 2009). Future research will show what regional, sport-type specific, and milieu-specific factors were responsible for these differences at *Verein* level.

### 1.3 *Verein* Life without *Vereine*: Research on the GDR

For years now, one fundamental line of research on the GDR has been devoted to studying the extent to which people came to terms with everyday life under communist rule and succeeded in using and interpreting the prevailing circumstances to their own advantage and according to their own personal "sense-making" (Lindenberger 1999). Mary Fulbrook argues on the basis of her empirical findings that the citizens of the GDR ultimately experienced everyday life in the SED-ruled state as "a perfectly normal life" (Fulbrook 2011). Both approaches are suitable for opening up access to the social significance and acceptance of football in state socialism. In contrast to the FRG, a system of free, civil society *Vereine* could not be rebuilt in the GDR after the war. Rather, a radical new formation of state-organised and -controlled entities – the so-called *Sportgemeinschaften* (sports communities; SG) and *Betriebssportgemeinschaften* (enterprise sports communities; BSG) – took place (Spitzer et al. 1998).<sup>3</sup> In taking this approach, the GDR broadly followed the Soviet example. The same applied to the adoption of forms of organisation, such as the Dynamo Sports

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<sup>3</sup> After the end of the Second World War, the Allied Powers initially dissolved all existing *Vereine* because of their involvement in the regime. In the Western zones, the model of a civil society *Verein* culture as it had existed before the National Socialist deformation was soon re-established. However, in East Germany (and in all other states in what was to become the Eastern bloc) a very different path was taken.

Association, and of army football in the Army Sports Club (ASK) Vorwärts (Braun 2013). Hence, it must be asked whether the GDR example should not be regarded as a successful case of “inventing traditions” (Hobsbawm and Ranger 2012). For, as a rule, the football supporters accepted the artificially implemented entities. This was even the case when teams were transplanted overnight from one part of the country to another at the stroke of a pen by the SED sports leadership and were suddenly involuntarily confronted by a completely new crowd of regional supporters. One last reform on the orders of the party took place in 1965/1966, when ten *Leistungsschwerpunkte* (performance centres) were established in GDR football, which to this day roughly represent the still well-known football clubs in the former GDR. It was an ambivalent new beginning: On the one hand, the clubs were more strictly controlled and enjoyed greater privileges. Outwardly, however, with the new designation “FC,” a link was established to pre-war civil society traditions. This was also motivated by a desire to counter the prospering football culture in the Bundesliga with an equal attraction. Despite all the imposed structures, the term *Verein* – whether for a BSG or for a *Klub* – hung on stubbornly in common parlance until the demise of the GDR. Accordingly, one current research project on football in the GDR aims to find out how *Verein* life functioned in East Germany without *Vereine*, and whether, or in what way, it was taken for granted as a part of a “perfectly normal life,” despite the fact that it was controlled through and through by the state (Braun 2013).

#### 1.4 “Renaissance of Civil Society” and “Double Transformation” after 1989

East German football experienced a further significant caesura in 1989/1990. The GDR undoubtedly represents a special case among the historical upheavals that shook the entire Eastern bloc at the end of the 1980s. In the GDR’s case, it was not only a matter of converting perishing *Realsozialismus* (actually existing socialism) into a democratic system but also of quickly implementing the merger with the FRG. Hence, football also initially experienced a phase of direct *transition* from one political system to another. This phase refers essentially to the years 1989 and 1990 until the realisation of state unity and the establishment of “football unity” (Merkel 1999). The latter included, first, the structural fusion of the East German Football Association (DFV) with the DFB. This was followed, second, by an integration of the league systems: Within the framework of the so-called “2+6” provision, the best two teams of the last GDR season were integrated into the 1. Bundesliga (first division), and the next six were integrated into the 2. Bundesliga (second division) (Barsuhn 2006).

However, the long-term development of the transformation proved problematic. The GDR clubs and BSGs were forced to rapidly switch from state funding and support to self-organisation and, especially, self-financing. This rarely

went smoothly. Moreover, eastern Germany experienced an economic recession that had a disastrous effect on support from potential sponsors and considerably impeded the successful transition “to the market product” (Ahrens and Steiner 2015; Tegelbeckers 2000). In addition, football in the former GDR experienced what unification research terms a “double upheaval” (Kollmorgen 2011): Besides having to adapt to the consequences of German unity, football clubs in eastern Germany were forced without prior preparation to participate in the commercialisation that had had such serious consequences for international football since the beginning of the 1990s. For example, a European Court of Justice decision in 1995 (known as the Bosman ruling) gave EU football players the right to a free transfer at the end of their contracts. This led to a massive increase in the migration of players within the EU (Taylor 2006) and thus in the proportion of foreign players in the Bundesliga. Adaptation succeeded, in part. For example, in a match against VfL Wolfsburg on 6 April 2001, Energie Cottbus became the first Bundesliga club to field a starting lineup comprised only of foreign players. The integration of the eastern German clubs also coincided with a “sea change in football reporting,” in which private television not only triggered a further commercialisation boom but also implemented a shift from classical sports reporting to entertainment show and infotainment (Tegelbeckers 2000). Nowadays, almost all the former GDR clubs are in the third division. In her contribution to this HSR Forum, *Katharina Barsch* explains the reasons for the rapid economic change at the level of European football. According to her findings, the path dependence of individual developments tends to make the clubs that are successful at European level anyway even more successful. Her approach could therefore offer a possible explanation for the lack of success of many eastern German clubs.

However, the structural transformation of football in eastern Germany cannot be analysed solely from the scientific perspective of an – unsuccessful – economic transformation. By focussing only on competitive football, one too easily overlooks the fact that, from a social history perspective, a spectacular new beginning opened up for sport, and thus also for football, in 1989/1990. Besides freedom of the press and freedom of assembly, the civil rights movement in the GDR had always demanded freedom of association (*Recht auf Vereinigung*) – that is, the right to re-establish a system of free, civil society *Vereine* (Pieroth and Schlink 2010). Hence, after the passing of the Associations Act in February 1990 in the still-existent GDR, free, civil society *Vereine*, including sports *Vereine*, were established once again. This process – which researchers rightly recognised as the “awakening of civil society” – represented a dramatic turning point in eastern German social and sport history (Jarusch 2009). And, indeed, 1989/90 marked the beginning of an upswing in grassroots sport in eastern Germany. Recent regional studies have revealed that the number of *Verein* members there has doubled since 1989/1990 (Barsuhn 2015). Nonetheless, there is still a clear east-west divide in so far as the level of organ-



isation in the new *Länder* – that is, the percentage of people who are members of a sports *Verein* – is still significantly lower than that in the old *Länder*. The social history explanations for this are still a subject of dispute among policy-makers and scientists. Besides financial aspects, significant differences in the *Verein* culture in eastern and western Germany are highlighted. These differences include the absence of a tradition of “passive membership” and the greater competitive orientation of *Verein* sport in eastern Germany (Braun 2015). Further historical-sociological research is called for to determine why four decades of separate development in sport led to marked “differences in unity” (Probst 1999) that are still visible today.

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## 2. Changing Interpretations of Realms of Footballing Memory

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The year 2000 – the 100th anniversary of the DFB – was a catalyst for academic engagement with football. In that year, the 43rd Convention of German Historians (*Historikertag*) in Aachen featured a section on the history of the Bundesliga, which was led by the Stuttgart historian Wolfram Pyta. However, it would be over ten years before the first general work on the Bundesliga was forthcoming (Havemann 2013) – although, as the sport philosopher Gunter Gebauer noted, the Bundesliga is a “realm of memory” for Germans (Gebauer 2005, 463). One reason for the delay is certainly that sport history in general is a relatively young sub-discipline of history and for many years it was limited to the albeit intensive research activities of the professorial chairs located in sports science faculties. In the present HSR Forum, *Nils Havemann* discusses whether the football Bundesliga can be considered a “second economic miracle.” Havemann analyses the Bundesliga’s laborious path to becoming a model for economic success. In its inaugural season (1963/1964), the Bundesliga generated revenue equivalent to 11.2 million euros. In 2011, it succeeded in taking in two billion euros. From a historical perspective, it is astonishing how long the officials resisted commercialisation. The Bundesliga was not established until 1963 – which was very late compared to other footballing nations. The first years were nonetheless shaped by a black economy that was protected by stakeholders in politics and industry and was aimed at covering up the fact that players were actually paid professionals.

Not only the Bundesliga but also the international presence of the Federal Republic of Germany’s national football team (“the DFB eleven”) with its political and cultural history perspectives remained a research lacuna for a remarkably long time. While general historical science is sometimes aligned with the rhythm of anniversaries (which places individual researchers in acute danger of being given the much-feared label “calendar-day historian”), this appears to be particularly true of sport history. Hence, the occasion of the 50th

anniversary of the 1954 “Miracle of Bern” boosted research immensely (Brüggemeier 2004; Kasza 2004; Raithel 2004). In turn, the 2006 World Cup in Germany – the so-called “summer’s fairy tale” – provided an impetus to examine in depth the history of inter-German sport relations (Young and Tomlinson 2006; Braun and Wiese 2006; Braun and Teichler 2006). Moreover, a historical re-interpretation of the 1974 World Cup was published in 2014 to coincide with the 40th anniversary of that event (Schiller 2014).

In a sense, all of the FRG’s Football World Cup titles reflected the problematic nature of inter-German relations. In 1954, the citizens of the nation that had been divided only a few years previously sat harmoniously in front of their radios in East and West Germany to listen to the World Cup coverage and applaud the victory of manager Sepp Herberger’s team. In 1974, 13 years after the building of the Berlin Wall, and one year after both states were admitted as full members to the United Nations, the inter-German World Cup match in Hamburg was styled as a “class struggle,” and the goal scored by East Germany’s Jürgen Sparwasser to give the GDR an unexpected 1:0 victory was declared a genuinely political issue. At the same time, however, the fact that the “DFB eleven” had won the World Cup title again did not give rise to any visible euphoria. This was seen as an indication that national identification patterns in general were in the doldrums as a result of the increasing consolidation of German partition (Schiller 2014). In 1990, in time for the renaissance of national consciousness after the collapse of communism in Europe, Germany’s sporting triumph in the World Cup arrived hand in hand with German unification, although the simultaneous occurrence of the two events was ultimately a coincidence. With the much-invoked “summer’s fairy tale” – the hosting of the World Cup at home in Germany – the year 2006 saw the Germans return to unself-conscious national sporting enthusiasm. However, the fact that only one eastern German venue – Leipzig – was chosen reflected a west-east divide in national football culture and infrastructure. And finally, amid the national jubilation about Germany’s 2014 World Cup title, numerous experts asked why so few eastern German players had been chosen for the World Cup squad – even less players from the new Länder were fielded in 2014 than in 2006.

Researchers have meanwhile intensively studied the interpretation of the social implications of the 1954 “Miracle of Bern.” Pyta explains the great importance of the event in Germans’ memory store with reference to a) the symbolic void that had arisen as a result of the National Socialist regime and the Second World War, and b) the associated de-legitimisation of the national idea. He argues that the victory of the national team successfully epitomised a new beginning for German society and, what is more, one that was built on supposedly German virtues such as comradeship and hard work (Pyta 2006). On the other hand, in his monograph, Franz Brüggemeier relativises the significance of the “Miracle of Bern,” arguing that its radiance had been short-term in nature and lacking in sustainability (Brüggemeier 2006). In this HSR Forum, *Diethelm*

*Blecking* shows how the myth of 1954 was revived and inflated in the national identity – in particular as a result of retrospective reconstructions such as the popular 2003 feature film *The Miracle of Bern*, which was produced and directed by Sönke Wortmann, and the appropriation of the anniversary by German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's government. Thus, Blecking's findings undoubtedly confirm the diagnosis of the special nature of football as a cultural phenomenon – namely, its constant openness as a projection screen for (new) interpretations (Pyta 2006, 19).

In his contribution, *Kay Schiller* arrives at a similar conclusion. He argues that the Germans' rational, sober reaction to the victory of manager Helmut Schön's squad against the Netherlands in the 1974 World Cup final was not only the result of a dimmed national self-concept. Rather, this attitude was in keeping – culturally and otherwise – with a time during which the student movement and the spread of liberal lifestyles freed the zeitgeist from the shackles of traditional attitudes. Research on Germany has indeed detected a veritable scorning of things national in the 1970s in particular, especially among the young generation. It was not without reason that *Ekel Alfred* (nasty Alfred), the petit bourgeois main character in the 1970s German television series *Ein Herz und eine Seele* (Bosom Friends) presented the politicisation of the inter-German duel as an expression of conservative torpor. Only years later, when broad-based research conducted after 1990 revealed for the first time the – quite ambivalent – reactions in the GDR to Sparwasser's goal, did it become clear that the “90 minutes of class struggle” had indeed played a special role for many people in the GDR – not to mention for the SED leadership. The inclusion of the East German experience in the view of history rendered necessary a modification of the interpretation of the historical significance of the inter-German duel between the poles of sport and politics (Wiese 2009). With regard to the degree of nationalisation of international tournaments, the European Football Championship held in West Germany in 1988 undoubtedly has a special status. On the one hand, it can be regarded as an example of a highly politically charged event. However, the excitement did not occur during the tournament itself but rather in the run-up to it. A bitter dispute took place between the DFB and the federal government under Chancellor Helmut Kohl because, when submitting its application to host the tournament, the DFB had not included West Berlin as a venue. The association feared that the protests of the eastern European UEFA members because of the inclusion of the “frontline city of Berlin” would endanger the FRG's chances of hosting the championship. By contrast, the federal government and Berlin politicians regarded this as treason. In fact, the Kohl government went so far as to intervene by sending a diplomatic note to UEFA and making clear that it would prefer to forgo hosting the 1988 European Championship if West Berlin was not included. The dispute was the biggest crisis to date between the DFB and the federal government. As regards the controversial autonomy of sport, it was at most comparable with the

conflict between the National Olympic Committee and the Schmidt government in connection with the boycott of the 1980 Olympic Games (Braun 2015, 421 et seq.). On the other hand, however, this episode was in the tradition of a certain distance on the part of all federal governments towards football events. Only in the 1990s, when the media presence of football and the number of spectators began to increase steadily, did politicians start to tap into, and celebrate, the footballing world as an image enhancer for their own policies and for national prestige.

What is interesting about the episode of the award of the right to host the 1988 European Football Championship to Germany is that the European level – in this case the sports officials – came into play as a relevant power factor in the Cold War. One current research trend is to recall the importance of this little researched European contact level for the history of the diplomacy and culture of football. For example, attention has been drawn to the fact that during the East-West conflict, the early European football tournaments were among the few arenas in which contacts between people from the Eastern and Western Blocs could be openly maintained at all (Mittag 2015, 55). Recently, the “Football Research in an Enlarged Europe” (FREE) project presented a number of its findings. Funded by the European Union, the project was both interdisciplinary and – with a total of nine project locations – trans-national. It is remarkable that one European realm of memory identified by the authors was an extremely negative event – namely the Heysel disaster, which was interpreted throughout Europe as a symbol of a barbaric decline in moral standards (Kech 2015). It would certainly be worthwhile relating this collective European shock to current discussions among historians about the disappearance of the experience of violence in Europe in the second half of the twentieth century (Sabrow 2012a). For, especially in the 1980s, fan culture remained a reserve of condemned but constant violent incidents. This was the case not only in England and Germany but also elsewhere, especially in the GDR and the Soviet Union. One key question addressed by the inter-disciplinary FREE project related to the special European communication space created by the existence and fostering of a European football scene. In the course of this ongoing discussion, *Wolfram Pyta* in his contribution to this HSR Forum also asks whether in the light of competitions such as the extremely media-present Champions League it is legitimate to speak of a Europeanisation of football. Ultimately, the question is whether by providing a common cultural (or, in this case, sport-cultural) reference level, football could be one of the few areas that succeed in breathing life into the EU’s hitherto often feebly fulfilled aspiration to be a European community rather than just an economic and monetary union. By now, not only historians but also scholars of German literature are exploring images of the self and the other in football. In his contribution, the Germanist and media scholar *Rolf Parr* investigates the phenomenon of national stereotypes in international football. On the basis of the media discourses on the

various World Cups and European Championships, he analyses the characteristics attributed to the individual national teams in the press. In contrast to what one would usually expect from stereotypes, they turn out to be used in a surprisingly flexible and fluid way. The re-attribution of characteristics by the media is not determined only by the course of the sports game itself but also borrows from other social discourses. This is a further indication of the close interconnections between football and society and the fact that football is not just a sports game but also a “social game.”

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### 3. Biographies: Idols, Victims, and Traitors

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A scientifically sound biographic approach to football’s protagonists is more the exception than the rule. In this albeit booming industry, popular science descriptions of the players and the managers are the dominant form. Moreover, authors frequently adopt a worm’s eye view, venerating the lifetime achievement of the individual in question. Rarely has an author succeeded in capturing the cultural and social impact of an era-typical player’s life and the contemporary image of football in society that he embodies. However, it is obvious that the social standing of a football protagonist does not necessarily grow at a rate proportional to his sporting successes. Thus, it is telling that in surveys conducted to determine who are the most popular Germans, the football managers Sepp Herberger and Franz Beckenbauer make it into the ranking while Helmut Schön notoriously never does. That is surprising, considering that Schön was the most successful West German national football team manager of all time. Under his leadership, the West German team won the European Championship title (1972) and the World Cup title (1974); they were runners-up in the 1966 World Cup and the 1976 European Championship; and they came third in the 1970 World Cup (Wiese 2015). Obviously, therefore, popularity does not depend only on sporting success but also on the importance that this success has for a country from a particular political or cultural standpoint.

In the meantime, (auto)biographical recollections have been written by or about GDR players and managers. What is characteristic about these works – in contrast to the biographies of West German protagonists – is that they do not focus solely on recalling sporting events or private circumstances but also address the political system – in this case that of the GDR – at least to the extent that it intruded into football and influenced the actions of the protagonists (Genschmar and Pätzung 2007; Berger 2009; Stridde and Biermann 2005). Among these works are biographies that describe how the protagonist turned away from the system in the GDR. Hence, they come close to the “conversion biography” category (Sabrow 2012). However, there are also continuity biographies that postulate unstinting loyalty even after the system collapsed.

One field of interest that has been growing in recent years is the reconstruction of the life courses of footballers who were victims of the National Socialist regime. Their fates ranged from the impossibility of continuing their sporting career to physical annihilation. While an in-depth portrayal and appreciation of one prominent figure, Julius Hirsch, the “national player whom the Nazis murdered” (Skrentny 2012), has meanwhile been written, there are regional studies devoted to the most thorough on-site coverage possible of the athletes and footballers who were victims of marginalisation and persecution (Peiffer 2012; Bahro 2009). Lorenz Peiffer and Henry Wahlig recently presented a biographical compendium of the life courses of 192 Jewish footballers (Peiffer and Wahlig 2015). Moreover, in the summer of 2015, in collaboration with Hans Joachim Teichler, Berno Bahro and the Centre for German Sport History, Peiffer and Wahlig jointly presented a selection of biographies of persecuted athletes within the framework of an exhibition on the occasion of the European Maccabi Games from 27 July to 5 August in Berlin’s Olympic Stadium.<sup>4</sup>

Two research fields promise to be particularly fruitful in the coming years. The first is research on the biographies and the influence of sport journalists. Had it not been strengthened by the media, football would not have achieved even a fraction of its current impact. Only because press, radio, and television reports capture fleeting moments are spectators in a position to constantly recharge the sporting events with meaning. However, with a few exceptions, the history of the media intermediaries – the sports journalists – has not yet been written. One such exception is the outstanding biography *Stimme von Bern* (Voice of Bern), in which Erik Eggers reconstructs the life of the German sports commentator Herbert Zimmermann while at the same time writing a piece of generational and media history (Eggers 2004). Sports reporters in various political systems are always in danger of being “too close.” This applies, on the one hand, to their closeness to the subject of the report. In 2007, for example, the sports journalist Jens Weinreich lambasted his fellow sports journalists because of their alleged lack of critical distance. According to Weinreich, they were basically only “fans who had managed to climb over the barrier.” However, Eggers (2006) has identified a very different type of closeness – namely, the attempted or successful exertion of influence by politicians on sports journalists in dictatorships and democracies.

A second category of scientifically sound biographical works that are practically non-existent and that constitute a research desideratum is the life and work of football officials. To be sure, the influence and multi-functionality of these protagonists has not always been as pronounced as in the case of Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder, who was not only president of the German soccer club VfB Stuttgart but who also held ministerial posts in the state of Baden-Württemberg

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<sup>4</sup> <[www.juedische-sportstars.de](http://www.juedische-sportstars.de)>.

and eventually became president of the DFB (Mayer-Vorfelder 2012). For many years, men like Mayer-Vorfelder and Hermann Neuberger dominated football policy in the FRG at regional and national level with extensive networks in politics and industry. In his impressive study of the organisational and economic history of the Bundesliga, Havemann (2013) shows just how important these interconnections were for the face of the Bundesliga. It is to be hoped, therefore, that the “playmakers” of the system will soon be subjected to a critical examination by researchers.

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#### 4. Public History: Commemoration, Museumisation, and Popular Culture

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Memory culture in sport was a controversial issue for many years. As the historian Hans Joachim Teichler rightly observed: “Sport organises the now, plans the future, and forgets the past in the process” (Teichler 2007, 121; transl. J.B.). Teichler’s justified criticism referred mainly to the decades-long denial of sport’s involvement in the German dictatorships of the 20th century. The DFB has since adjusted its course in this respect, not only by initiating the research project on the association’s National Socialist past but also by endowing the Julius Hirsch Prize in 2005 – an award that honours persons or organisations who use their social position in a special way to promote freedom, tolerance, and humanity. However, as the sometimes laborious negotiations between committed historians and the boards of *Vereine* regarding the installation of commemorative plaques and cobblestones show, actors at regional level sometimes find it difficult to integrate responsibility for the persecution of Jewish athletes into the current identity of the *Verein* (Bahro 2009).

The DFB has meanwhile devoted a separate project to research on the history of football in the GDR. The University of Münster, the Centre for German Sport History (Zentrum deutsche Sportgeschichte, ZdS), and the Centre for Contemporary History (Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung – ZZf) are equal partners in the project. Once again, this project aims not only to research structures and mentalities but also to reappraise the injustices committed under the SED regime in this area. The first biographical portraits of players who were persecuted by the SED regime have met with great interest on the part of scientists and the public (Braun and Wiese 2014). It remains to be seen whether a memory culture supported by sports organisations can develop, or whether, as was recently the case in Thuringia, the past remains a battleground of current interests (Fischer 2015).

The politico-historically motivated, official memory culture must be distinguished from what Herzog calls Memorialkultur in football sport. The latter is not about political commemoration. Rather, it is devoted to actively interweaving the lives of the fans and the *Verein*, which surprisingly includes not only

living in the *Verein* colours but also dying in them. For example, the Hamburg football club HSV has had its own burial ground for HSV fans in the city's main cemetery since around 2008. Thoughtfully, the final resting place for the fans is even situated within earshot of the stadium. Researchers have identified many such cultural practices in and around stadia, especially in Germany and England (Herzog 2013).

Another form of commemoration that merits closer examination is the comparatively recent boom in the inauguration of football *Verein* museums. As a rule, the inauguration dates are unconnected with *Verein* anniversaries. A start was made by the HSV and Werder Bremen; the latter opened the so-called Wuseum in 2004. They were followed by Eintracht Frankfurt in 2007 and Bayern Munich in 2012 – to mention but a few. Hertha Berlin has not been left behind, either: The opening of a “Home of Hertha” is scheduled for 2016. A sound explanation for this wave has not yet been forthcoming. However, Thomas Schneider, head of the “Tradition and Football” working group at the German Football League, draws attention to two factors: First, at the beginning of the 1990s, the HSV, for example, had seven employees in the non-sporting area, whereas today it has over one hundred. The clubs, who are in many cases corporations by now, take care of many more things than just match operations because the turnover generated nowadays would have been unthinkable ten years ago. However, according to Schneider, not only their financial power but also the fact that football has become “sexy” has prompted the *Vereine* to concentrate more on the cultivation and marketing of tradition in addition to their core sporting business.<sup>5</sup> With this reference to the sexiness of football, Schneider touches on a very relevant point because football history now reaches a broad audience. One manifestation of this is the founding of trend magazines such as *11 Freunde* or the Austrian publication *ballesterer*, both of which were first published in the year 2000 – the “trend reversal year” (Eggers 2001) in football history. These magazines – and, in particular, *11 Freunde* – are doing what media scientists call “popularising the popular” (Popp 2015) by combining current sport reports with football culture and football history. However, *11 Freunde* has not neglected historical reappraisal. For example, the magazine recently published 192 short biographies of footballers persecuted by the National Socialists (Peiffer and Wahlig 2015). *Zeitspiel*, a “magazine for contemporary football history,” has been on the market since 2015. Its impact remains to be seen.

Coming back to the increasing museumisation of football, it is noticeable that this is not only a German phenomenon. The Berlin agency Triad, which designed the DFB museum, will soon be given the task of realising the planned FIFA museum in Zurich. To date, the historiography of FIFA has yielded im-

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<sup>5</sup> Interview with Thomas Schneider in *11Freunde*, 28 September 2011, <<http://www.11freunde.de/interview/thomas-schneider-von-der-dfl-ueber-fussballmuseen>> (Accessed November 30, 2015).



pressive works (Eisenberg 2004). However, hardly any sport historians have dared to tackle directly the delicate question of possible corruption in football (Sugden and Tomlinson 1998). All too often – particularly in Germany – this topic has remained the preserve of investigative journalists, who have presented their findings in the style and form of blazing accusations (Kistner 2014). With a few exceptions, sport historians also long avoided the topic of doping – not primarily, but also, in national and international football. However, in recent years, a growing number of research teams and commissions comprising historians, lawyers, and medical doctors have been set up with the aim of getting to the bottom of these transgressions (Spitzer et al. 2013; Krüger and Becker 2014). At present, the findings of the Freiburg Commission are eagerly awaited. Significantly, the commission is chaired by the criminologist Professor Letizia Paoli, who made a name for herself as a Mafia hunter. In his contribution to the present issue, *Michael Krüger* recapitulates the long-unheeded role that sports medicine played in historiography. Drawing on the findings of his ongoing research project, Krüger presents initial theses about both the progress-promoting and the unethical or illegal role that sports medicine played in performance enhancement.

On the one hand, historiography is drawing ever closer to the description of the present. On the other hand, however, there has been an explicit renaissance of academic engagement with the Second World War. Markwart Herzog recently published an anthology specifically devoted to the question of the creation of myths about players and teams in different regions in Europe between 1939 and 1945 in the face of occupation and acts of war (Herzog 2015). Here, in particular, national memory culture, popular culture, and sport history are closely intertwined. Against this background, two contributions to this HSR Forum deal with current research on this topic: *David Forster* and *Georg Spitaler* explore in depth the question of the extent to which football protagonists in Vienna played a highly nebulous role that could range from victimhood to active collaboration in acts of violence perpetrated by the National Socialists. The authors also critically examine the extent to which public memory culture in Austria has hitherto been willing or able to grapple with all facets of this history, or whether the self-perception as “victims of Hitler” has been the dominant theme. In his contribution, *Matthew Taylor* deals extensively with the question of whether British football during the Second World War succeeded in becoming a “key emblem” of both the people and the nation. On the one hand, football served as a source of home front morale. On the other hand, Taylor argues, it offered a background against which social discourse on class identity or regional identity was conducted.

On the occasion of the series of terror attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015, footballing Europe experienced just how nightmarish such direct connections between football and the potential of a nation to defend itself against war and terror can be. The explosions of the bombs detonated in front of the Stade de

France during the friendly match between Germany and France, which could be heard by all the spectators inside the stadium and by television viewers worldwide, represent a new dimension in the intrusion of political crises into “football’s world of its own.” At the same time, the demonstrative efforts to ensure that the friendly matches scheduled for 17 November between Germany and the Netherlands in Hanover and France and England in Wembley went ahead, constitute a conscious appropriation of sport by policymakers – in this case as a sign of a defiant fight against terror. While this plan failed utterly in Hanover, where the game had to be cancelled at short notice, the singing of the *Marseillaise* in Wembley Stadium by French and English fans was an emotional demonstration to which historians in the not too distant future will undoubtedly award the status of a realm of shared memory. In any case, that night in Wembley Stadium was a new, striking example of the growing spectacularisation of the relationship between sport, society, and politics “in the context of the symbolic representation of societal positions, social distinctions, and the restructuring of the public as a market of images driven by the dominant position of television” (Gebauer 2002, 2 et seq.; transl. J.B.). It remains to be seen to what extent this tendency to use a transnational sense of community in Europe in the fight against the threat posed by radical Islamist forces will continue to manifest itself in symbolic acts during the European Football Championship in France next year.

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