

The Use of Sport in the German Democratic Republic for the Promotion of National Consciousness and International Prestige

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One of the most interesting outcomes of the growth of East German sporting power has been the stimulus that it has given to the Federal Republic of Germany. Even the West Germans admit that no other factor has influenced their sport programme with the same effectiveness, the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. included.¹ Indeed both the GDR and the Federal Republic have pushed each other forwards. In the GDR there has been an open union of sport and politics, particularly as sport has had a large part to play in this country's drive for sovereignty and recognition. In the Federal Republic, on the other hand, there has been a more reluctant association of sport with politics. But the association was inevitable since the challenge from the East was such that the West German government was forced as a matter of national interest and national security to become deeply involved in sport,

The history of East and West German sporting relationships since the end of the 2nd World War has been one of continuous confrontation. This situation still continues, particularly with reference to the status of West Berlin,² but much of the bitterness which characterized the first two decades of East German existence now seems to have subsided.

Looking back over the years from 1949 when the German Democratic Republic was founded, one notices a steady West German retreat both in the arena and in sport diplomacy.

At the 1952 Olympic Games in Helsinki, West German athletes represented all of Germany. At that time East Germans could have formed part of the German team but they preferred not to be involved. There were two major reasons for this: 1) The International Olympic Committee had denied an East German request for recognition of their newly formed National Olympic Committee, and 2) For the GDR to compete would have meant accepting a totally

¹ Knecht, Willi, "Die Basis der Sozialistischen Körperkultur" in *Deutschland Nature* (Koln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1969), Nr. 3., p. 240.

² —, "Sports Bilanz 1972" in *Deutschland Archiv* (Koln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1972), Nr. 12., p. 1281.

inferior and subservient position in relation to the Federal Republic.³

In 1955, at the 50th IOC Congress, the National Olympic Committee of the GDR was given provisional recognition on the basis that the GDR and the Federal Republic form a combined team for the 1956 Olympic Games. To avoid political embarrassment, both sides agreed to a non partisan team banner of the German colours with the five Olympic rings set in the center. The same design was decided upon for the team emblem, and Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" was chosen as a neutral anthem for honouring any gold medalists.⁴

East- West qualifications for the combined team showed the GDR decidedly in a minority position. At the Winter Games in Cortina, for example, the East Germans provided 18 team members to 58 for the West Germans. For the Summer Games in Melbourne the relationship was 37 for the East and 138 for the West.

Subsequent to the 1956 Games, the GDR pushed very hard for sovereignty in sport with complete separation and independence from the Federal Republic.

It is important to realize that the East German leadership had initially hoped to spread its ideology and power into the Western Zones. Failing this it planned to pursue a course aimed at separation and independence.⁵ It was with the hopes of infiltrating and politically manipulating the Western Zone sport organizations that reasonably close sporting relationships were maintained with the West. Indeed the East German leadership actually agreed to exclude from East-West sporting relationships:

. . . party political speeches and addresses . . . decorations that promote party political relationships . . . the raising of flags other than the black-red-gold . . . demands for special conditions for athletes from West Berlin . . .⁶

However, when it became obvious that the union of West and East Germany under Soviet bloc control was a lost cause all efforts subsequently went into a drive for sovereignty and independence. To support this goal of independence in the world of sport, the East

³ Wonneberger, Gunther, *Um Freiheit und Einheit im deutschen Sport* (Sportverlag Berlin, 1965), pp. 105-113.

⁴ Knecht, Willi, *Die Geteilte Arena* (Numberg 2, Pressverlag Bahr KG, n.d.), p. 57.

⁵ Hanhardt, Arthur M., *The German Democratic Republic* (Johns Hopkins Press, Baltimore, 1968), p.

⁶ Ueberhorst, Horst, *Van Athen bis Munchen* (Berlin: Verlag Bartels und Wernitz KG., 1969), p. 119.

German leadership pointed to the acceptance and recognition of their sport associations in international federations which had begun as far back as 1950.⁷ East German teams appeared at international competitions wearing the hammer, corn, and compass emblem of the German Democratic Republic, indeed, it was argued that this team was the rightful representative of all Germany both East and West.⁸ As further proof of this claim, East German sport associations were titled simply as German sport associations, and East German championships as German Championships. The massive East German Gymnastic and Sport Union founded in 1957 was given the title of The German Gymnastic and Sport Union. Rudi Reichert, its President at that time, declared "The performances recorded by our Gymnasts and Sportsmen are in effect *German* records."⁹ In the Federal Republic the desire to avoid recognition of the GDR produced a flood of decrees by which the West Germans hoped: 1) To deny any recognition of the GDR and claim for themselves sporting representation for all Germany, 2) To avoid embarrassing problems of protocol with their NATO allies and 3) To allow sport relationships to continue between themselves and the GDR.¹⁰ With these difficulties as a background, the IOC repeated its former policy and demanded again that a combined German team be formed for the 1960 Olympic Games.

Even as early as 1960, the strength of the East Germans was beginning to show. The contingent for Rome was made up of 189 athletes from the West and 142 from the East, a considerable improvement over 1956.

A year following the 1960 Games, East West sporting relationships were totally broken off as a result of the Berlin wall which was built in August of 1961. From the standpoint of the GDR, the wall was instrumental in reducing the westward flow of citizenry it could ill afford to lose. From 1949-62 the number of those moving from East to West was in excess of 2,700,000.¹¹ In the GDR, the building of the wall was claimed to be a necessary measure to save Peace and Freedom. Sports enthusiasts were called upon to volunteer for service

⁷ Heil, Alfred, *et al.*, *Sport Voran* (Berlin: Sportverlag, 1971), p. 174.

⁸ *Die Sozialistische Sportbewegung*, Nr. 2., 1957, cited in Karl Ihmels, *Sport und Spaltung in der Politik der SED* (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1965), p. 110.

⁹ *Die Sozialistische Sportbewegung*, Nr. 3., 1957, cited in Ihmels, *op. cit.*, p.64

¹⁰ Knecht, *op. cit.*, pp. 61-64.

¹¹ *SBZ von A-Z* (Deutscher Bundesverlag, Bonn, 1963), p. 147, cited in Hanhardt, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

on the frontier.¹² Students at the German Institute for Physical Culture in Leipzig wrote to Walter Ulbricht, then First Secretary, saying,

It fills us with deep satisfaction that on August the 13th, 1961, our government, by securing our state borders from West Berlin and the Western Zones, has struck a decisive blow against the Bonn leaders and their NATO allies. The precision with which these measures were prepared, the discipline and consistency with which they were executed, the coordinated action by the National People's Army, the combat groups of the working class, national police, youth federations, and all other powers--these fill us, as young socialists, with great joy. It was, as we athletes say, a world class performance!¹³

In spite of the fact that East-West relationships had reached an all time low in 1961, the IOC pressed yet again for a combined team for the 1964 Olympic Games. Forming this team was incredibly difficult and to settle disputes between the two antagonists took some 15 National Olympic Committee meetings and 96 meetings of the opposing sport associations.¹⁴

But the team was formed and now showed a drastic reversal in relative strength since it contained 182 athletes from the Federal Republic and 194 from the GDR. For the time being however, West Germans still dominated in the number of medals won.

By 1965 the IOC was totally exhausted by the German question. In October of the same year, separate teams were decreed to represent the Federal Republic and the GDR for the 1968 Olympic Games. However, the IOC clung to the stipulation that both teams march into the stadium under the old neutral flag of German colours and the Olympic Rings. Each team was to compete using similar emblems to the flag. Winners were again honoured with an all-German anthem.¹⁵ At this point, relative team membership becomes less interesting than a medal count since by 1968, the GDR had caught up with the Federal Republic, both teams winning 25 medals each.

¹² Ihmels, *op cit.*, p. 56.

¹³ Erbach, Gunter, "Das Bessere muss stets der Gegner des Guten sein", in Gunter Erbach, *et al.*, *Sport Frei, Walter Ulbricht Vorbild. Lehrer und Freund der Deutschen Sportler* (Berlin: Sportverlag, 1963), pp. 207-208.

¹⁴ Knecht, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-69.

¹⁵ Ueberhorst, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-164.

The final phase in the GDR's long struggle for full recognition occurred at the 67th IOC Congress in Mexico City in 1968. With 44 votes in favour and four against, the East German National Olympic Committee was, given full rights as the National Olympic Committee of the GDR with the added directive that the GDR be represented in future Olympic Games with an independent team, flag, emblems and anthems.¹⁶ The West Germans fought recognition of the GDR to the bitter end, but the acceptance of Munich for the 1972 Olympic Games helped to finalize the whole issue, since they were then committed to recognition of the GDR on West German soil. A last ditch effort by Prince George Wilhelm of Hannover, President of the International Olympic Academy to dispense with national anthems and national flags and substitute them with a neutral anthem and the Olympic flag was defeated,¹⁷ no doubt to the delight of the East German leadership.

The results of the Munich Olympic Games are well known to us but some statistics are worth repeating in order to show the GDR's continued increase in power. With 66 medals, the GDR showed an improvement of 41 medals over their efforts in Mexico City. The Federal Republic with 40 medals showed an increase of 14 over Mexico City and actually was the second best nation behind the GDR in terms of improvement. The U.S.S.R. by comparison, managed an increase of 10 medals which placed it on an improvement basis, in third place behind the two Germanys.

There seems to be little doubt that the existence of the Federal Republic has acted as a spur to East German progress. This coupled with the GDR's need to be recognized and accepted both internationally and internally by its own citizenry, has provided its leadership with more than sufficient stimulus. Furthermore the efforts made in sport by the GDR have helped to emphasize its existence as an independent State. The recognition by other nations of GDR teams, anthems, and flags, express a *de facto* acceptance of this State's existence even if full diplomatic accreditation is still absent, as it is in some cases.

The 28 years of sporting growth in the GDR have been accompanied by an equally feverish sporting diplomacy. East German officials serve on international federations. Coaches, trainers, and advisers, aid in Afro-Asian and Latin American sporting development, and whereas in the past, sporting ties existed predominately with the

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 175-176.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 176.

Soviet bloc countries, this certainly is not the case anymore. Helping to cement these ties are the many foreign students who receive training at the prestigious German Institute of Physical Culture in Leipzig, considered as one of the most advanced sport institutes in the world.

The East German team is now a welcome competitive unit all over the world. They could be called diplomats in track suits, for they not only serve the international aims of socialism, but at the same time represent the GDR independently of the Soviet Union and thus serve a national purpose. This fact is best summarized by a statement in the East German newspaper, "New Germany", which reported the 1970 rowing championships at St. Catherines, Canada, in the following manner:

Prior to the 3rd World Rowing Championships at St. Catherines, the Canadian public had heard little of our Republic. If it was written or spoken about, then it was generally in relation to West Germany's everlasting and wearysome claims of sole representation for all Germany. The tremendous success of our Rowers has contributed immensely to reversing such claims. Everywhere there is talk of the GDR. 3 gold and 4 silver medals in 7 different rowing classes has left behind a tremendous impression.¹⁸

The business of counting medals, working out standings of countries, be they official or otherwise, is particularly important to the leadership in the GDR because they are intensely concerned with image and prestige. With medal counts it is easy to make quick comparisons, and the claim usually follows that if the athlete or team is superior then by association, ideology, societal progress and culture are superior also. With this type of argument being put forward, it is understandable that the GDR is careful not to operate from a position of weakness if it can possibly avoid it. The East German leadership openly admits that it will not haphazardly spread governmental funds, and cannot, indeed will not be involved in all competitions. In 1969, Alfred Heil, the Vice-President of the German Gymnastic and Sport Union said:

Taking into account a justifiable expense, our own stage of

¹⁸ Knecht, Willi, "Halbzeit vor Munchen" in *Deutschland Archiv* (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1970), Nr. 11, p. 1197.

development and the relationship to world standards . . . which sports offer the most positive conditions and possibilities for medals? Obviously sports like wrestling, canoeing, and weightlifting, etc. which offer dozens of medals and more than a hundred points. If one is strong in these then the contribution towards team standing in the total Olympic competition is exceptional. In field hockey on the other hand, to name one example, in the Olympic competition only one medal is counted together with a total of 7 points, yet this sport demands an immense expenditure in terms of playing fields, league games and other factors . . . What should one promote in the interest of the overall success of the German Democratic Republic? The answer is obvious . . . concentrate on the sports which offer the medals . . .¹⁹

The Winter Games in Sapporo were a good example in this respect. No entries were placed in Alpine ski competitions, men's speed skating, bobsled races and the ice hockey competition, yet the GDR amassed 14 medals and 84 points for second place behind the U.S.S.R. Where did the points come from? Suffice to say that 46 of them came from Luge competitions alone.

Successes at Sapporo, Munich, and other competitions around the world not only bring prestige and recognition to the GDR as a State, but they are part of the overall use of sport by the controlling Socialist Unity Party in developing an internal spirit of support and pride for the GDR and by association for its leadership. True to communist organizational principles, the GDR sport programme and its administration is highly synchronized, and, operating by what is called "democratic centralism",²⁰ is essentially subordinate to the will of the Party. Leaders and workers in the sport programme are bound by law to enforce resolutions issued by the Central Committee. Thus whoever works in the sport programme automatically works for the Party and promotes its philosophy.²¹ Such a system is never compromised by infighting by regional or national bodies. Indeed each unit in the sport organization is committed politically and is bound to political activity. The German Gymnastic and Sport Union makes every effort to increase its membership which it then

¹⁹ Knecht, Willi, "Medaillen '69/Der Wettlauf der ungleichen Bruder" in *Deutschland Archiv* (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1969), Nr. 12, p. 1342.

²⁰ Ihmels, *op. cit.*, pp. 23-25.

²¹ Knecht, Willi, "Die Basis der Sozialistischen Körperkultur..." *op. cit.*, pp. 242-243.

endeavours to school politically.²² This is also the case with trainers and sport officials working for the Sport Union. All are politically committed. The same is true of the media. The political alignment of the Union's sport newspaper "The German Sport Echo" is revealed by the fact that in the Sport Union's organizational set up it is placed in the Department of Propaganda and Agitation.²³

Using sport as a medium for indoctrination, the Socialist Unity Party has pushed hard for the consolidation of socialism in the GDR. This has meant that: 1) Any feeling of the people that they are citizens of a divided Germany rather than a single State, had to be vigorously counteracted. (A corollary to this is that the resignation of the older generations had to be substituted by an enthusiastic support of the country by its youth.) 2) That as much loyalty and support of country's leadership had to be developed, and 3) Whatever attractiveness the Federal Republic had or has in the eyes of the East German people must be continuously opposed. Evidence in support of these objectives is found throughout East German sport both actively and passively. Sensitive to the GDR's short existence, efforts are made to give validity to the growth of socialism in Germany by tracing it back in time prior to the end of the Second World War, and by associating the giants of German culture with Marx and Engels as common enemies of capitalism and imperialism. In this way the heroes of German culture are drawn away from the Federal Republic.²⁴ Similar associations are made in sport history. Jahn's patriotic fervour, which one may remember had been used by the National Socialists to support their pursuit of national unity and racial purity,²⁵ is used by the East German leadership to give validity to their demands for patriotic support of the GDR as a separate state from the Federal Republic.²⁶ This would appear to be a re-assessment of history for Jahn was a nationalist and his patriotic enthusiasm was directed towards freeing all Germans from foreign domination, and not in having Germans oppose Germans.

Guts Muths is also honoured for his efforts to include sport in the

²² Ihmels, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

²³ Knecht, Willi, *Sportpolitik in Deutschland-Nach Tokio und Zurück* (Diessen Verlag, 1965). p. 127.

²⁴ Für eine allseitige, harmonische Menschenbildung" in *Deutsches Sport-Echo*, Nr. 144, 24. October 1960, cited in Gunter Erbach, *op. cit.*, pp. 366-367.

²⁵ Malitz, Bruno, *Die Leibesübungen in der National-socialistischen Idee* (München: Verlag Fritz Eher, 1933), p. 15.

²⁶ Jedermann an jedem Ort - jede Woche einmal Sport," in *Deutsches Sport Echo* Nr. 45, 5 June 1959, cited in Gunter Erbach, *op. cit.*, p. 346.

development of “the harmonically balanced personality”, which is one of the Marxist Leninist objectives of physical education.²⁷ According to East German literature. Guts Muths, like Jahn “was unable to carry out his humanistic goals because of the opposition of the ruling militaristic nobility.”²⁸ With both failing to achieve their objectives because of the oppression of a militaristic upper class, the burden of guilt is laid at the feet of imperialism, capitalism and militarism. It becomes a small step to relate these accusations to the Federal Republic, and this is demonstrated in a speech made by Walter Ulbricht in which he said:

Guts Muths and even Jahn could not succeed in actualizing their humanistic, and far-sighted ideas in the Germany of that time. The necessary social pre-requisites were missing in the 19th century, in the period up until 1945, and also in contemporary West Germany. Militarism, war, and atomic bombs always hinder the fulfillment of such progressive ideas, and are the mortal enemy of gymnastics and sport.

Only now that the workers and peasants have taken power into their own hands and created the German Democratic Republic, can we fulfill the ideas of Guts Muths and Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, giving them a new socialistic meaning.²⁹

Ulbricht’s claim that only under socialism can sport and physical education be ‘of the people’ and illustrate true socialist characteristics, is a theory that has its foundation in Marxist Leninist philosophy. It is claimed that a harmonically developed personality can only exist in a socialist society such as the GDR. Furthermore, it is argued that it is impossible to develop such a personality or a balanced society in a regime where the class struggle still exists. Since sport is led by the representatives of the proletariat in socialist societies exploitation and other societal ills such as occur under capitalism are overcome.³⁰

²⁷Eichel, Wolfgang, *et al.*, “W.I. Lenin und die Verwirklichung seiner Lehre auf Gebiet von Körperkultur und Sport in der DDR”, in *Theorie und Praxis der Körperkultur* (Staatliches Komitee für Körperkultur und Sport beim Ministerrat der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, 1969), Vol 4., April 1970, p. 295.

²⁸Rede des Vorsitzenden des Staatsrates der DDR, Walter Ulbricht auf dem Festakt anlässlich des 10 jährigen Bestehens der DHfK am 22. October 1960 in der Kongresshalle, Leipzig, in *Theorie und Praxis der Körperkultur*, documentary edition, 1969, p. 33.

²⁹“Jedermann an jedem Ort - jede Woche einmal Sport” ...*op. cit.*, p. 346.

³⁰Rede des Ersten Sekretars des ZK der SED, Walter Ulbricht, auf der III Sportkonferenz des Staatlichen Komitees für Körperkultur und Sport 1955 in Karl Marx-Stadt, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

There is much other evidence of the drive for patriotic support and this is of a more visible nature. It ranges from the re-institution of the old traditional and nationalistic gymnastic festival in Leipzig,³¹ to flag ceremonies and oaths of allegiance at Spartakiads,³² and to changes in the East German sport badge from its old title of "Ready to work and defend the Peace" to "Ready to work and defend the Homeland."³³ Theory questions in the badge programme demand children to explain "why we love our homeland."³⁴

Within the development of national fervour, the star athlete plays an important role. Idolized by the youth of the country, he is used as a mouthpiece of the Party providing an important link between the leadership and the youth of the country. Presenting prizes to the youth Spartakiad winners, or sweating oaths of allegiance at major festivals, the star athlete expresses love for the homeland, allegiance to socialism, and inevitably thanks the Party for making everything possible. The Party is made out to be a philanthropic guide and helper of sport. It is claimed that without the guidance of the Party, individual and team triumphs would not have occurred.³⁵ Leadership by the Socialist Unity Party has assured success.

In literature, accounts given by athletes and sport officials follow a similar vein. One athlete might recount how the combined East-West cycling team at the Melbourne Olympic Games lost because there was insufficient collective spirit.³⁶ Another writes of how she overcame a selfish desire to retire but instead continued to serve the greater needs of the country.³⁷ Yet another will tell how one or two key words from a high ranking Party member were sufficient to put him on the right road to success, and at the same time to commit him politically to socialism.³⁸

Party officials both in literature and in real life are given the aura of national heroes. It is no accident that officials of the calibre of Erich Honeker, First Secretary of State, or Walter Ulbricht, are found at even the smallest gatherings, joining in mass calisthenics, congratulating winners, and often sitting among the common spectators.³⁹

³¹Ihmels, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

³²Heil, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

³³Ihmels, *loc. cit.*

³⁴Engelhardt, Gerhard, *Die Leibesziehung an den Schulen in der Sowjetischen Besatzungszone* (Bonn und Berlin: Bundesministerium für Gesamtdeutsche Fragen, 1965), p. 23-26.

³⁵Ihmels, *op. cit.*, p. 50.

³⁶Erbach, *op. cit.*, p. 92-93

³⁷Gartner, Horst, *et al.*, *Jugend im Sportdress* (Sportverlag, Berlin, 1964), p. 302.

³⁸Friedrich, Rudolf, "Wir fanden bei Walter Ulbricht Rat und Hilfe" in Gunter Erbach *op. cit.*, p. 35-39.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 165.

Continuously the link between Party and people is being cultivated. With the leaders and star athletes present, the larger sporting displays such as the Spartakiads become manifestations of solidarity and harmony of purpose. The mass exercises are symbolic of unity and a common bond among all present.

One of the most interesting aspects of the involvement of the Party leadership in the East German sport programme has been the part played by Walter Ulbricht. His love for gymnastics in his youth, and his genuine interest in sport have served the Party's interests in a manner which perhaps has never been equaled by other national leaders. Such has been his relationship with sport during the growth of the GDR that his birthday on the 30th of June has become a festive occasion during which a delegation of athletes deliver congratulations and an appropriate honour such as the Jahn medal which he received in 1961.⁴⁰ In sport literature Ulbricht is portrayed as having mystical-almost superhuman qualities. One book entitled "Free Sport" and subtitled "Walter Ulbricht, Model Teacher and Friend of German Sportsmen" contains a series of accounts of meetings with Walter Ulbricht from top athletes and officials in the sport programme.⁴¹ They describe Ulbricht's remarkable ability to be politically astute, sensitively human, yet able to understand the complexities of sport ranging from training programmes to the intricate planning of ski jump areas. The tone of the accounts is revealed from their titles. "We received help and advice from Walter Ulbricht", "Walter Ulbricht set me in the right direction". "We learned the value of sport from Walter Ulbricht". "Teacher and Educator of German Youth", "The right advice for everyone", "It's not easy to keep up with him." In addition to these accounts the book also contains a series of Ulbricht's speeches given at sport gatherings, the titles of which portray their heavy political overtones. "Sport without bureaucracy", "Learning from the Sportsmen of the Soviet Union" and "Socialism needs healthy, strong-willed people."

I have selected one account which I feel is illustrative of the whole book. In this account a ski jumper, one of the first medal winners for the GDR, lies injured in a hospital. He is expecting a visit from Erich Honeker and the account reads:

One day I was informed that the proposed visit from Erich

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 336.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 3.

Honecker was delayed a few hours. That seemed quite reasonable to me. After all, Erich Honecker is a member of the Politburo and certainly had troubles enough without including visits to injured sportsmen. But suddenly there was an unbearable hubbub in my room, and finally someone pompously explained that Walter Ulbricht was going to come. He wanted to come to me!?! At first, I considered it a joke-yet in the afternoon, Walter Ulbricht, together with Erich Honecker entered my sickroom. He greeted me as cordially and as amiably as if we were old acquaintances.

In the following minutes I noticed how worth while it is to win sporting glory for our Republic . . . and at the same time I was conscious of how, great the difference is between our State of Workers and Peasants and that of the West German monopolists and militarists.

In West Germany it is simply inconceivable that a statesman would visit an injured athlete.⁴²

The fact that sport is openly involved with politics in the GDR means that constant associations are made between sport and the political situation as it occurs from day to day, both internally and externally. Political actions which were distasteful to the people were linked to improvements and positive actions in the East German sport programme. Sporting improvements in farm areas were related to-and used as a gloss to brighten unpopular collectivization procedures.⁴³ The building of the Berlin wall in 1961 was accompanied by open letters from the sport enthusiasts thanking the leadership of the country for saving the peace and by association, the GDR and its sport programme.⁴⁴

There is always constant reference in the GDR to the desire for the preservation of peace, freedom, and the promotion of friendship amongst people, just as there is in Soviet propaganda. The argument is made that capitalism is expansive and aggressive and that any sane athlete would support a policy of peace and decry the war mongerings of the West. It is for this reason that appeals are often made to western sportsmen, particularly West Germans, to throw off the yoke of their leadership, for the claim is made that they are being manipulated by the capitalists and militarists that exist in Western

⁴²Glass, Harry, "Ein unerwarteter Besuch", *op. cit.*, p. 187.

⁴³Ihmels, *op. cit.*, p. 52.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 56.

government. Looking at this dialectal argument from another viewpoint, it is claimed that a regime which promotes the degree that the Socialist Unity Party does, must be peace loving and should be given all the support possible. An example of this theme in sport is the Freedom Cycle Tour. This is the socialist equivalent of the Tour de France with the road symbolically linking the major cities of Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the GDR. Doves of peace are released at the beginning of the race, and politicians use the opportunity to emphasize their subservient relationship to the Soviet Union with thanks "...for its heroic sacrificial battle for the extinction of Hitler's fascism and the liberation of our countries Poland, Czechoslovakia and Germany..."⁴⁵

Finally it is interesting to note that the growth in power of the GDR has left not only capitalist nations behind but many of the socialist nations also. The establishment of the GDR as a great sporting power in Europe has been made both at the expense of the Soviet Union as well as other national. Party proclamations of brotherly love and "learning from the Soviet Union" clash with demands for patriotic devotion to the GDR and with the nationalistic pride which is associated with GDR successes. When patriotism and devotion to one's homeland are expressed in the form of all conquering East German sport teams, it generates a form of sporting nationalism which is hardly, expressive of the brotherhood of Soviet led socialism. With the Czech hockey team as an obvious example, a series of East German wins over the Soviet Union may be viewed as a gesture of independence by the East German citizens. This presents party line ideologists with the problem of equating this with the necessary demonstrations of subservience.

Since the Munich Games and with the increase of recognition and self assurance of the GDR, the stagnation in sporting relations between the Federal Republic and the GDR, which occurred since 1961, has ceased.⁴⁶ East German leadership is determined, however, that increased contact will not bring about ideological weakening. Even with the more relaxed atmosphere the "sport wonder" of the GDR is still shielded from close scrutiny by Western observers.⁴⁷

⁴⁵"Friedensfahrt-Ausdruck der Volkerfreundschaft", in *Tagliche Rundschau*, Nr. 107, 8 May 1932 cited in Gunter Erbach, *op. cit.*, p. 255.

⁴⁶Knecht, Willi, "Der Sport and Verträge" in *Deutschland Archiv* (Koln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1972) Nr. 11., pp., 1129-1132.

⁴⁷ Knecht, Willi, *Amateur '72*, v. Hase und Koehler, Verlag, Marnz, 1971, p. 150.

Much has been learned both from official reports and those from runaway athletes. But not all credit should go to the design of the programme, with its talent search, massive provision of coaches, continuous competitive stimulus and other forms of motivation. What must be honoured also is the patience, the industriousness and goal-oriented aggressiveness which has been characteristic of East German efforts from the beginning.