

Wolfgang Buss  
University of Gottingen

## **The Secret System behind the Success of the GDR in International Competitive Sports – Socialistically Planned System Based on Capitalistic Principles**

The athletic system in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) gained a good deal of recognition through above average results in Olympic sports events. In the 1980's the GDR together with the USA and the USSR were viewed the three leading nations in international sport. What made this particularly significant was not only the quality of performance but also the fact that this was achieved by drawing from a total population of only 16 million inhabitants. A sport expert from Canada, Doug Gilbert, referred as early as 1980 to the "Miracle Machine" of GDR sports. Many western critics from the 1980s to the present considered the reason for this "Sport-Wunder" to be illicit doping, while others jointed to the "politically incorrect" possibilities available to a state-run sports system. All these contentions only partially explain the phenomenon which the success attained in international sports by the GDR represents, for they are either too narrow in scope, incomplete, or ideologically tainted.

Since the GDR ceased to exist as a nation marking the end of its specific system of sports, extensive sport historical research using original source materials has been done in the united Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) after 1990, which has considerably expanded and differentiated our knowledge of sports in the GDR. This author has also done a good deal of work in this field, including the supervision of a research project for several years on the early phase of sports in the GDR. In 2001, he published works totaling approximately 1600 pages that deal with this topic. The new findings as a whole revitalized the earlier, often mono-causal statements and draw a new multifaceted picture of sports in the GDR. Hereby it becomes apparent that the success of East German competitive sports was the result of systematic organization and consequential development from the very onset of the GDR. By taking all of the necessary measures on both governmental and societal levels, those persons responsible were

able to systematically integrate sports along with their organizations into the centralistic system of "real socialism," thus making the state the determining force.

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