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national identity in Germany, 1936-2006**

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Monterey, California. Naval Postgraduate School

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**NAVAL  
POSTGRADUATE  
SCHOOL**

**MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA**

**THESIS**

**CUPS, COWBELLS, MEDALS, AND FLAGS:  
SPORT AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN GERMANY,  
1936–2006**

by

Laurel M. Burkel

December 2006

Thesis Advisor:

Donald Abenheim

Second Reader:

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**CUPS, COWBELLS, MEDALS, AND FLAGS:  
SPORT AND NATIONAL IDENTITY IN GERMANY, 1936–2006**

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Major, United States Air Force  
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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

**MASTER OF ARTS IN NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS**

from the

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## **ABSTRACT**

The present study addresses the role of sport in the evolution of modern German nationalism. This work contains: a.) an historical analysis of nationalism, culture and sport from the late eighteenth until the mid-twentieth century; b.) a case study of the 1936 Garmisch/Berlin Olympics as an example of virulent nationalism and racism; c.) a case study of the 2006 World Cup in Germany as an example of national identity in twenty-first century Germany in the wake of reunification and globalization. Sport has been central to how Germans see themselves from the end of the eighteenth century until the present.

This work argues that an analysis of sports, domestic politics and diplomacy can offer those interested in nationalism in contemporary Europe a helpful means of analysis of a force that remains powerful, despite the construction of the European Union. While an analysis of the evolution of mass sport indicates that Germans no longer apply the kind of racist blood and soil nationalism so virulent in the early twentieth century, sport has shown a remarkable continuity as a mirror of German aspirations for their nation, which has changed fundamentally in the realms of culture, society, and economy in the twenty-first century.



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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. PURPOSE

Festooned with black, red, and gold national colors, German fans cheered their 2006 World Cup team on with an enthusiasm that gained the respect and admiration of even fans of the other countries participating in the event. That the Germans showed such ‘patriotism’ caught some observers by surprise, including many Germans themselves.<sup>1</sup> But it was a pleasant surprise. After years of frustration with reunification, twenty-first century Germans could be proud of their country which seemed to be on the way to another World Cup victory, a hope later dashed as the tournament played itself out. Could the hosts of the 2006 World Cup extract Germany out of its period of self-doubt connected with the social and economic burdens of unity? Could the host’s enthusiasm for the World Cup banish the widespread disappointment over Gerhard Schroeder’s limited progress on reform of the social market economy amid globalization and reinvigorate the hope for change and improvement that had been generated by the

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Milne, “Dreams End But a Sense of Pride Lingers On,” *Financial Times* (London, July 6, 2006), 13.

Richard Bernstein, “Soccer Good for the Psyche, Say the Winning Germans,” *New York Times* (Late Edition (East Coast) July 4, 2006), A.8.

David Crossland, “Germany’s World Cup Hangover,” *Spiegel Online* (July 5, 2006), <http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,425157,00.html> (accessed July 2006).

Richard Milne, “An Event to Open the Mind,” *Financial Times* (London, July 3, 2006), 19.

Michael Sontheimer, “How Germans Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Flag,” *Spiegel Online* (June 29, 2006), <http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,424373,00.html> (accessed July 2006).

Christopher Sultan, trans., “Germany’s Fairy Tale Come True,” *Spiegel Online* (June 20, 2006), <http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/spiegel/0,1518,422401,00.html> (accessed July 2006).

George Vecsey, “Joy in Germany, Shame in France,” *New York Times* (Late Edition (East Coast) July 1, 2006), D.5.

Mike Wise, “As Germany Advances, Expression Replaces Repression,” *Washington Post* (Final Edition, July 4, 2006), E.1.

Mark Young, “Germany Flies the Flag,” *Spiegel Online* (June 14, 2006), <http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,421241,00.html> (accessed July 2006).

election of Angela Merkel in November 2005? Further, could the weeks of good feeling attendant to the games also lessen the burden of history and foster such national pride as was normal in say the United Kingdom or France?

In search of answers to these questions, this study examines the effects of the forces of continuity and change on German national identity as visible in the realm of sport in its national and international dimensions in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It does so, first, to acquaint the student officer and others interested in European security with the nature of contemporary nationalism in central Europe and, second, to show how the force of mass politics has changed in the last seven or more decades.

Seventy years ago, Germans under the Third Reich exhibited similar pride at the 1936 Winter and Summer Olympics. Improbably, Hitler and the Nazis adopted the Olympic ideal. They summoned a fractured international community to Garmisch-Partenkirchen and to Berlin to witness a sports spectacle designed to showcase the Nazi regime in a favorable light as the masters of a new Germany. In doing so, the Nazis gained international credibility and furthered the realization of their vision of an antidemocratic and racist ideal of the German *Volk*.

Both the 1936 Olympics and the 2006 World Cup illustrate the continuities and discontinuities in the evolution of German nationalism and national identity in the past seventy years. This comparison of the two events suggests that the world of sport may yield important insights about national identity and mass politics in central Europe. Sport is a site of national discourse about German collective identity in both the past and the present and a force in international politics. And it shows how much German national identity has evolved since the mid-twentieth century. Sport is an example of both continuity and discontinuity in Germany's national identity, with suggestive implications also for observers of nationalism both past and present in central Europe.

Toward this end, this thesis will compare the roles of national identity, race, and nationalism at the 1936 Olympics and the 2006 World Cup to illuminate the contribution of sport in shaping the character of modern German nationalism. Such a study suggests that sport as a theme of German national identity has lost none of its force and power.

Sport continues to reflect how Germans want to see themselves as a nation and how they are indeed seen by others. At the same time, however, discontinuity is also a principal element in the realm of domestic politics. Thus, the definition of what it means to be a German in 2006 is wholly at odds with the Blut und Boden (blood and soil) nationalism that mutated into the racism that formed the core of Nazi dogma. Yet, with all the accomplishments of peace, prosperity and security of a united Federal Republic of Germany and its half century of a consolidated democracy at the heart of Europe, the question of national identity in the twenty-first century remains an important matter amid the construction of Europe via the enlargement of the European Union to central and eastern Europe. One could not help but notice amid the flourish of a hundred thousand toothsome smiles and beer drenched raver parties in the Berlin Pariser Platz and elsewhere in German cities and towns, that in certain electoral districts of Saxony and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party had recently made notable electoral gains.<sup>2</sup> How can this phenomenon be reconciled with the image of youth, cosmopolitanism and tolerance that were much on display during the World Cup of 2006? How can the transition of seventy years time be accounted for and what forces have created this discontinuity of national character visible via sport? Furthermore, this study will also assess the continuity reflected by sport and German national identity in the international system of Europe and beyond.

## **B. IMPORTANCE**

Surely Hagen Schulze, a leading German scholar of nationalism, said it best: "...Public festivities and celebrations...confirmed a sense of nationhood over and over again, creating an authentic sense of community and reinforcing the individual's impression that he did indeed belong to a greater whole."<sup>3</sup> Since the beginnings of German nationalism in the early nineteenth century, sport has been a major feature in the creation of a sense of community and belonging in a Germany that eclipsed merely the regional identities of the medieval period. Beginning with the gymnast leagues of the

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<sup>2</sup> *Spiegel Online*, "Berlin Mulls New Bid to Outlaw NPD" (November 13, 2006), <http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,448102,00.html> (accessed November 2006).

<sup>3</sup> Hagen Schulze, *States, Nations, and Nationalism: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Malden: MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 158.



revolutionary period through the institutionalized sport of the twentieth century, from 1871 on, sport organizations were motors of national sentiment in the process of German unification.<sup>4</sup> However, it fell to the Nazi regime to move sports, as well as politics, to a new level of nationalist fervor: the perfection of that *mise-en-scène* took place at the 1936 Olympics.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the ideological differences between their racial-völkisch concept of sport and that of the modern Olympic movement, the Nazis recognized that hosting the 1936 Olympic Games was an enormous propaganda opportunity that could counter criticism of the regime and give it political credibility in Europe and beyond. Thus, they utilized their resources on every level – economic, ideological, infrastructure, manpower, and political – to mount a sports pageant unmatched by any of the previous games.

The literature reveals an interesting example of the Nazi regime's compromising of its core principles in favor of gaining political credibility during the 1936 Winter Olympics. When confronted by Count Henri Baillet-Latour, the International Olympic Committee president, about anti-Semitic signs along German roads, Hitler relented and had the signs removed – not only for the Winter games, but also for the Summer Olympics.<sup>6</sup> By doing so, Hitler appeared, in effect, to submerge one of the main tenets of Nazi ideology, a mistaken impression as things turned out within a brief time. The political benefits from hosting the Olympics outweighed the temporary removal of racist signs and tactically improved Germany's standing in Western Europe. Hitler's compromise, however, in no way reflected any fundamental change of the regime's anti-

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<sup>4</sup> George L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars Through the Third Reich* (New York: Howard Fertig, Inc., 1975), 8.

<sup>5</sup> “With the Olympic Games of 1936, the Olympic movement changed its proportions. Had the Olympic Games been the focus of amateur sports before, it was now to become a highly political event which made front-page headlines between 1933 and 1936 more often than all previous Olympic Games had done together (Krüger, 1936),” quoted in Peter J. Graham, and Horst Ueberhorst, eds., *The Modern Olympics* (West Point, NY: Leisure Press, 1976), 173. The date of Arnd Krüger's above quote, who also wrote this chapter in Graham and Ueberhorst's book, is incorrect. According to the reference list at the end of the chapter, two of Krüger's works are cited, one written in 1972 and one written in 1975. It is uncertain which of the two previous works is the correct one cited in the above quote.

<sup>6</sup> Richard D. Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971), 93–94.

Jewish policies, which were then in a ‘pause’ phase between the introduction of the Nuremberg Laws of September 1935 and before the national pogrom of November 1938.<sup>7</sup>

Success at the Olympics and other international sport events has long been a source of national pride, international legitimacy, and political recognition that has changed little over the decades of German participation. Nonetheless, the Federal Republic of Germany has come to represent a revolution in regard to the ideals of human rights and the constitutional protection of minorities versus the programmatic racist political, economic, and cultural exclusion and subsequent extermination practices of the Nazi era.

In the 1936 competition, German athletes performed better than expected, bringing additional prestige to the Nazi Reich and aiding the regime’s further consolidation. As the authors of the *Penguin History of the Second World War* point out, these factors are significant because, just two years earlier, at the time of the Ernst Roehm Putsch over the fate of left-wing tendencies in the Third Reich, it faced significant internal division.<sup>8</sup> In the decades since the 1930s, athletic prowess has remained a characteristic of German teams and a well-spring of German national pride, regardless of political regime and regardless of the national differences between the Berlin Olympics and the 2006 World Cup.

The 2006 World Cup offered a reunified Germany the chance to show the world that it was capable of hosting such a prestigious international sports event. And, by most measures, Germany proved successful in the endeavor, showing all who came to or viewed the competition that Germany could be an organized, hospitable, generous, soberly proud, and gracious sponsor befitting a Europe that prides itself on peace and security much in contrast to the bellicose cast of much of the rest of the world in the twenty-first century, especially the United States. By 2006, in the wake of a decade of frustration associated with the difficulties of national reunification and the impact of globalization, Germany had seen the phase-out of the Deutsche Mark, a general challenge

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<sup>7</sup> Dick Geary, *Hitler and Nazism* (London: Routledge, 2000), 78.

<sup>8</sup> Peter Calvocoressi, Guy Wint, and John Pritchard, *The Penguin History of the Second World War* (London: Penguin Books, Ltd., 1999), 55–56.

to its economic preeminence, as well as the ever-present ghosts of war and genocide. Given the opportunity, Germans were more than ready to rejoice in the success of the German team and those of the other leading nations of the world. Success, even if fleeting, lifted the nation's spirit and revealed to Europe and the world beyond the reality of a Germany that was friendly, civilized, tolerant, and even youthful. Presenting the World Cup was a high point in German "patriotism," in striking opposition to the nationalism associated in 2006 with neo-Nazis especially in the German states of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Saxony. One must now wait and see, however, whether this positive expression of national pride and its influence on German national identity will be long-term or temporary, given the growing nationalism of a more troubling kind in Germany's eastern neighbors and within the depths of disappointment of the nation itself.<sup>9</sup>

As will be demonstrated in subsequent chapters, a comparative study of Germany as the host, in 1936, of the Berlin Olympics and, in 2006, of the World Cup provides insight into the role that sport can play in the evolution of a country's national identity and its expression of nationalism. Sport can be seen as a kind of thermometer measuring the degree to which nationalism is a driving force in the country's cultural and political life, whether from the perspective of national pride in the best sense, or as the ghostly reemergence of an integral racist and xenophobic national pride in the worst sense.

## **C. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **1. Survey Monographs and Periodicals Germane to the Theme**

The literature pertaining to sport's role in nationalism, politics, and national identity comprises a number of subcategories: those articles and books that discuss nationalism either in general or in Germany in particular; those that deal with the relationship between sport, politics, the Olympic movement, and international law, or the socio-cultural relationship between sport and politics; those works that take a generalized look at the interaction of sport and politics; those that examine the modern Olympic

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<sup>9</sup> Craig S. Smith, "From Velvet Fringe to Post-Soviet Central Europe," *New York Times* (November 1, 2006), A4.

games; those that focus on the 1936 Berlin Olympics; those that examine sport and politics from a more general and tangential perspective; and those newspaper and online articles that deal with events surrounding the 2006 World Cup.

The first group, works that examine the development of nationalism in general and nationalism and German culture in particular, provide a background for understanding the German nation in the twentieth century and in modern history, that is, Germany under the Nazi regime, the democratization of the Federal Republic of Germany in the decades after defeat in World War II and the current political and social world of a unified Germany. Hagen Schulze, for example, in his examination of the evolving concepts of state and nation from the Middle Ages until the 1990s, provides a foundation for understanding nationalism and its relation to sport in Germany.<sup>10</sup> Eric Hobsbawm's book, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780*, also explores the development of nationalism, though more from a Marxist perspective.<sup>11</sup> He assigns importance to the role that international sport competition, especially the Olympics and the World Cup, plays in the development of nationalism and national identity.

In both *Nazi Culture* and *The Nationalization of the Masses*, George Mosse focuses on the ways that, prior to 1933, the hyper-nationalism of the völkisch movement during the Third Reich dominated Germany's cultural life, political symbolism, and mass politics.<sup>12</sup> Mosse's studies provide additional aspects of the political, social and cultural background necessary for understanding the mentality behind the German people's hosting of the 1936 Olympics.<sup>13</sup> Gordon Craig's book, *The Germans*, looks at German identity from the perspective of the humanities generally, with particular attention to German society between 1945 and the end of the 1970s.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Schulze, xi-xii.

<sup>11</sup> Eric J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 142-143.

<sup>12</sup> George L. Mosse, *Nazi Culture: Intellectual, Cultural, and Social Life in the Third Reich* (New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 1966).

<sup>13</sup> George L. Mosse, *The Nationalization of the Masses: Political Symbolism and Mass Movements in Germany from the Napoleonic Wars Through the Third Reich* (New York: Howard Fertig, Inc., 1975).

<sup>14</sup> Gordon A. Craig, *The Germans* (New York: New American Library, 1982).

A second large body of literature seeks to understand and to delineate the relationship between sport and international politics, national identity, and the evolution of nationalism and globalization both within Germany and in other countries and parts of the world. This literature also includes the study of the political role of the Olympic movement and the socio-cultural arena, international law, economics, foreign policy, and political ideologies as those apply to sport. Most of this literature examines historical events and draws conclusions and makes generalizations about both the impact of sports on politics and the impact of politics on sport. Compilations of shorter works on the politics of sport generally share a common theme that focuses on a particular aspect of the relationship between sport and politics. Many of these compilations focus on sport in Europe and North America, as well as the evolution of sport and its political dimensions in the former colonies of the one-time empires of Europe. Others contain writings that examine sport in Asia and South America and the relationship of those to sport in Europe. The *International Journal of the History of Sport* provides a continuous source of scholarly writings and reviews that comprise both a record of the evolution of the debate about the impact of sport on international politics and a survey of the latest lines of thinking in the field.<sup>15</sup>

A third body of literature, which includes *The International Journal of the History of Sport* and other similar periodicals, specializes in a more generalized study of the interaction of sport and politics. Jim Riordan, for example, in collaboration with other authors, has edited several books and articles on sport and international politics. In these works, Riordan and his coeditors combine the writings of numerous authors so as to give a comprehensive historical background of international sports competition and its use as an instrument of international politics in the twentieth century.<sup>16</sup> In particular, Riordan describes the impact of political ideology on sport and demonstrates how nearly all

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<sup>15</sup> For example, the August 2006 edition (Vol. 23, No. 6) of *The International Journal of the History of Sport* contains articles with the theme “Muscular Christianity in Colonial and Post-colonial Worlds.”

<sup>16</sup> Jim Riordan, and Arnd Krüger, *The International Politics of Sport in the 20th Century* (London: E & FN SPON, 1999).

political regimes of the past century saw significance in developing some sort of sport program that could be used and, in some cases, exploited in managing national identity, foreign policy, and international politics.<sup>17</sup>

Marie Hart and Susan Birrell compilation examines both the sociocultural angle of international sport, and the diverse ways it has evolved in different regions, from different origins, and, ultimately, for different political purposes.<sup>18</sup> In *War Without Weapons*, Philip Goodhart and Christopher Chataway look at the historical development of mass sport and the way that it became a political and diplomatic tool of soft power and of national pride and ambition, both domestically and internationally.<sup>19</sup> John Hoberman looks at ways that proponents of various political ideologies of the twentieth century – fascism, Nazism, Maoism, Communism, and Marxism – viewed and incorporated sport into their tenets and tools for attaining ideological goals.<sup>20</sup> Nafziger looks at international competition from a legal perspective and provides insight into the commercialization and legal aspects of national sports teams and their impact on nationalism.<sup>21</sup>

*The International Journal of the History of Sport and Culture*, and *The Cass Series: Sport in the Global Society* and *the European Sports History Review*, all edited by J.A. Mangan, are dedicated to providing a more comprehensive historical understanding of the role sport plays in various aspects of nations and societies.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Pierre Arnaud and James Riordan, *Sport and International Politics* (London: E & FN SPON, 1998).

<sup>18</sup> Marie Hart and Susan Birrell, *Sport in the Sociocultural Process*, 3rd ed., (Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1981).

<sup>19</sup> Philip Goodhart and Christopher Chataway, *War Without Weapons* (London: W.H. Allen and Company, 1968).

<sup>20</sup> John M. Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1984).

<sup>21</sup> James A. R. Nafziger, "International Sports Law: A Replay of Characteristics and Trends," *American Journal of International Law* 86:3 (July 1992), 489–518.

<sup>22</sup> Works authored, edited, or coedited by J.A. Mangan: J. A. Mangan, and Andrew Ritchie, eds., *Ethnicity, Sport, Identity: Struggles for Status* (London: Frank Cass, 2004); J. A. Mangan, *Europe, Sport, World: Shaping Global Societies*, *The European Sports History Review*, Vol. 3 (London: Frank Cass, 2000); J. A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (London: Frank Cass, 1998); J. A. Mangan, ed., *Militarism, Sport, Europe: War Without Weapons*, *The European Sports History Review*, Vol. 5 (London: Frank Cass, 2003); J. A. Mangan, ed., *Sport In Europe: Politics, Class, Gender*, *The European Sports History Review*, Vol. 1 (London: Frank Cass, 1999); J. A. Mangan, ed., *Tribal Identities: Nationalism, Europe, Sport* (London: Frank Cass, 1996); Henrik Meinander, and J.A. Mangan, eds., *The Nordic World: Sport in Society* (London: Frank Cass, 1998).

A fourth group of works focuses mainly on the modern Olympic Games, the first of which was held in Athens in 1896. Hill, Espy, and Kanin, for example, review the history of the games' development, beginning with Baron Pierre de Coubertin's initial vision of an international competition that would resurrect the games of ancient Greece, bring together athletes from all over the world, and serve as a venue for international peace.<sup>23</sup> Those authors, and Graham and Ueberhorst in their compilation, *The Modern Olympics*, assess the emergence of political concerns at the Olympics as the games grew from a small athletic competition into a modern world event characterized by the complexities of the spare-no-cost preparation of national athletes, television rights, merchandising, the double-edged sword of the cost and prestige of serving as an Olympic host city, and the political capital gained by national success at the games.<sup>24</sup> These various works also address the tension now inherent in the Olympic Games as a result of the conflict between the increasing role of politics, Baron de Coubertin's Olympic ideal that the Games would be apolitical, and the increasing influence of nationalism. All these works view the 1936 Berlin competition as a bellwether in the political evolution of the Olympics.

In their recent work, *The Olympic Games*, Kristine Toohey and A.J. Veal look at the games' evolution from a sociocultural perspective. They examine how political considerations have changed Baron de Coubertin's games from the pure pursuit of an athletic competition into a calculated attempt to bolster national prestige. In the process, Toohey and Veal trace the history of the financing and economics of the Olympics, the utility of the mass media, the role of performance-enhancing drugs, and the gender-based inequalities of Olympic competition.<sup>25</sup>

In, *The Games Must Go On – Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement*, Alan Guttmann discusses Avery Brundage's unswerving belief in Baron de Coubertin's

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<sup>23</sup> Christopher R. Hill, *Olympic Politics: Athens to Atlanta, 1896–1996*, 2nd ed. (New York: Manchester University Press, 1996); Richard Espy, *The Politics of the Olympic Games* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979); David B. Kanin, *A Political History of the Olympic Games* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1982).

<sup>24</sup> Peter J. Graham, and Horst Ueberhorst, eds., *The Modern Olympics* (West Point, NY: Leisure Press, 1976).

<sup>25</sup> Kristine Toohey, and A. J. Veal, *The Olympic Games: A Social Science Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: CABI Publishing, 2000).

Olympic ideal, and the way that belief guided both his own actions and the evolution of the Olympics themselves.<sup>26</sup> A former Olympian himself, Brundage was the American Olympic Committee president at the time of the 1936 debate whether to boycott the Olympics in Berlin. On the strength of his belief that Olympic competition was an inappropriate place for political concerns, he garnered enough support to send an American team to Berlin. At the 1972 Munich Olympics, speaking now in his official capacity as president of the International Olympic Committee, Brundage announced that “the Games must go on,” despite the horrific murder of eleven Israeli athletes by Palestinian terrorists.<sup>27</sup>

While those works look at the overall political history of the Olympic Games, a fifth group considers one of the most famous competitions, the 1936 Olympics in Berlin. The authors and texts in this group – which include a New York Times article and a U.S. Holocaust Museum Teacher’s Guide to the Nazi Olympics – portray the methods used by the Nazis to gain both domestic and international political capital in hosting both the Winter and the Summer Olympics. They also analyze a deeper issue: what it meant at the time for the Nazis to host a sporting spectacle known as much for its ideals as for its winners and losers, a competition therefore in sharp contrast to the basic ideology of the Nazi regime.

Authors in this group discuss numerous other aspects of the 1936 Olympics as well, including the following: the United States’ and other Western nations’ ability to sufficiently overcome their concerns about the anti-Semitic aspects of Nazi governance and send their teams to Germany anyway; the Nazis’ initiation of several new Olympic traditions; and the political impact of Leni Riefenstahl’s film, *Olympia*. Richard Mandell’s book, *The Nazi Olympics*, in particular, portrays the events, actions, and motivations of Adolf Hitler and other key Nazi figures as they endeavored to manipulate the Olympics in ways that would foster the regime’s nationalist and racist goals.<sup>28</sup> Mandell and others also look at the impact of Jesse Owens’ Berlin performance

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<sup>26</sup> Allen Guttman, *The Games Must Go On: Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984).

<sup>27</sup> Guttman, ix.

<sup>28</sup> Richard D. Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971).



and attempt to determine whether or not it actually undermined Hitler's notion of Aryan supremacy, as some writers have claimed. In general, the works argue that Brundage and other Olympic officials viewed potential American boycott of the games as a threat to the future of the Olympic ideal and movement. Thus they tried to balance the evidence of Nazi anti-Jewish actions with concessions in a way that would ensure that the United States would send a team to Berlin. In this, they were entirely successful. But there were also U.S. representatives in Berlin who actively condemned the Nazi regime's bigotry towards the Jewish athletes, an aspect of the games that is covered by Wendy Gray and Robert Knight Barney, George Eisen, and Stephen Wenn.<sup>29</sup>

The National Archives provided primary documentary sources, including for example, copies of several cables and telegrams sent by Ambassador William Dodd and George Messersmith, the Consul General, to the Secretary of State during the years and months leading up to the 1936 Olympic Games. These cables and messages reveal that the writers were aware of the Nazis underlying goals and purpose in hosting the games and that they urged caution in regard to the pending decision whether or not to send an American team to the games.<sup>30</sup>

A sixth category of literature reviewed includes books and articles those of a more general nature. Vic Duke and Jim Riordan, for instance, look at the impact of perestroika on sports and national teams in Soviet Bloc countries. Their writings provide a solid basis for understanding the state of national sports and their role in national identity prior to the fall of the Soviet Union.<sup>31</sup> In *The Political Olympics*, Derick Hulme examines the events

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<sup>29</sup> Wendy Gray and Robert Knight Barney, "Devotion to Whom? German-American Loyalty on the Issue of Participation in the 1936 Olympic Games," *North American Society for Sport History* 17:2 (1990), 214–231.

George Eisen, "The Voices of Sanity: American Diplomatic Reports from the 1936 Berlin Olympiad," *Journal of Sport History* 11:3 (Winter 1984), 56–78.

Stephen R Wenn, "A Tale of Two Diplomats: George S. Messersmith and Charles H. Sherrill on Proposed American Participation in the 1936 Olympics," *Journal of Sport History* 16:1 (Spring 1989), 27–43.

<sup>30</sup> Documents found at the National Archives, Records of the Department of State, Central Decimal Files, 1930–1939.

<sup>31</sup> Vic Duke, "Perestroika in Progress? The Case of Spectator Sports in Czechoslovakia," *British Journal of Sociology* 41:2 (June 1990), 145–156; Jim Riordan, "Playing to New Rules: Soviet Sport and Perestroika," *Soviet Studies* 42:1 (January 1990), 133–145.

surrounding the 1980 Moscow Olympics, including the U.S. boycott.<sup>32</sup> In contrast to the Berlin Olympics, this Olympics reflected the transformation of the international system, the rise of human rights concerns, and the change of mentality since the mid-1930s, especially in regard to the role of minorities and human rights in U.S. and European politics. That transformation is also a key factor in this thesis, especially in its comparison of the role of discontinuities and continuities in 1936 Olympics and the 2006 World Cup.

The final group of literature includes the newspaper and online articles that detailed the events surrounding the 2006 World Cup. The latter manifestation has been too recent to allow much scholarly reflection, so what follows here is tentative and based upon press accounts chiefly. Most of the articles are from American, German, and British sources and emphasize Germany's extreme degree of decentralized organization in hosting the World Cup and the new sense of German patriotism, national pride, and identity that seemed to emerge from the experience. While the media often refer to Germans as pragmatic and thorough, and as having a businesslike approach to such events such as the World Cup, this blinkered view often fails to reflect the reality of life in Germany, especially in Berlin, in the twenty-first century, which bears little resemblance to Berlin in 1914 to say nothing of 1936.

For the first time since 1990 (and perhaps much earlier), the Germans were comfortable with the frolic and merriment of the games, and with the cheers and rallies for their soccer team as it advanced to the semifinals.<sup>33</sup> And, the Germans cheered other teams as well, at times even donning the flags of other nations, which would have been unthinkable in the hateful racial climate of 1936.<sup>34</sup> At the time, the articles were written it was too early to assess the long-term effects of the new-found German nationalism, patriotism, and national pride that marked their hosting of the 2006 World Cup. The question that remains, therefore, is will those positive aspects infiltrate the more critical aspects of politics, national identity, domestic and foreign policy, and economics?

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<sup>32</sup> Derick L. Hulme, Jr., *The Political Olympics: Moscow, Afghanistan, and the 1980 U.S. Boycott* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1990).

<sup>33</sup> "Germany Celebrates First-Rate Third Place," *Washington Post* (July 10, 2006), E9.

<sup>34</sup> Richard Bernstein, "At World Cup: No More World War for British and Germans," *New York Times* (July 1, 2006), A4.

## **2. Major Debates**

One of the common themes that unite the chief monographs listed here is their mutual interest in the relationship between national identity and sport in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. That is, sports in Germany reflect the character of nationalism, its leading ideas, its expression in society, and its problematic feature of the poles of *völkisch*, culture based ideals of the nation versus the western European ideal of national identity based on a constitutional and more inclusive foundation. The historical analysis illuminates the interaction between politics and sports in both domestic and international political events, the formation of national identities, and the views of people in many nations.

The major debate in these writings revolves around the ways that sport has influenced the evolution of major political concepts and processes such as nationalism and national identity, political ideologies, sociocultural processes, globalization, and domestic and foreign policies. Does international sport drive international politics or is it the other way around? The Modern Olympics, as envisioned by both Baron Pierre de Coubertin and Avery Brundage, would be devoid of political concerns. Was this and is this realistic or even possible? How does historical review help to explain current or future events in regard to the link between sport and national identity?

## **3. Major Questions and Argument**

The literature described here provides a context for understanding the evolution of international sports competition, its history, and its historical role in both international politics and the development of national identity. Within that context, this thesis addresses some of the following questions. While the political impact of the 2006 World Cup is too recent for historical assessment, but is somewhat prone to journalistic judgment, what parallels can be drawn from the political implications of Germany's hosting of the 1936 Berlin Olympics and, seventy years later, the 2006 World Cup? Despite the radically different political environment that prevailed at the time of the two events, how did the German regimes, one in 1936, the other in 2006, go about planning for the events and what did they hope to gain from them? Is sport a credible avenue for nationalism and the development of a nation's identity? In comparing Germany's hosting

of the 1936 Berlin Olympics and, so many years later, of the 2006 World Cup, what lessons can be drawn about the continuities or discontinuities in Germany's nationalism and national identity?

## **D. METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES**

### **1. Case Study, Comparative Study**

This study includes a comparison of two international sports competitions hosted by Germany: the 1936 Berlin Olympics and the 2006 World Cup. This work examines the historical context of Germany's selection as host for both events, the internal and external preparations, the current ideology, and the impact on Germany's national identity as viewed by Germans and by the international community. Also considered are the evidence and various assessments of German nationalism, and the international political impact of the two events.

The comprehensive, focused study of German history and the role of sport in the expressions and evolution of German nationalism, national identity and pride, such as this paper will attempt, has been mostly neglected in scholarly writings, other than works dedicated to the Berlin and Munich Olympics. Most of the literature has focused on Great Britain and the impact of imperialism on the role of sport in the evolution of national identities. This paper will show that a review of the intertwined relationship of German sport, especially the Olympics and World Cup, and national identity in the past seventy years provides a valuable case study for the joint evolution of sport and a nation's identity.

### **2. Primary, Secondary, and Other Sources**

For an assessment of the general impact of sports on nationalism, national identity, international relations, and political affairs, this work drew on scholarly publications – both journal articles and books – as secondary sources.

The primary sources used in the discussion of the 2006 World Cup consisted of interviews with members of the Naval Postgraduate School community who attended the World Cup and others who traveled to Europe after the World Cup. The content of those interviews led to an assessment of German patriotism and national pride both of the general population and German soccer fans, and of fans and spectators from other countries that were there. Also, this thesis tries to determine whether those German

patriotic sentiments carried over beyond the World Cup tournament. Due to the recency of the World Cup (July 2006) to this thesis, most of the secondary and other sources on the subject were newspaper stories and articles by journalists who covered the events for German, British, U.S., and other international newspapers. To date, no other publication has dealt with the particular aspects of the 2006 World Cup that are the subject of this thesis.

For the 1936 Berlin Olympics, the thesis draws on primary source documents derived from the National Archives. These documents comprise communications from several staff members of the American Embassy in Berlin to the secretary of state in 1935 and 1936. They present the staff members' assessments as well as details of the German preparations and their recommendations regarding the United States' participation in the 1936 games. As such, they provide unique and valuable insights into the effect of the Nazi propaganda machine within the international political arena and external perceptions of Nazi Germany's national identity.

The other sources used are secondary in nature. They include several books and articles devoted solely to the 1936 Olympics and a number of books and articles that locate the events of 1936 within a wider historical perspective on the Olympics and within the construct of history itself. One final resource that must be noted consisted of two Leni Riefenstahl's films: *Triumph of the Will*, which was filmed during the 1934 Nazi Party Rally in Nuremberg and is an excellent depiction of the spectacle and pageantry of Nazi national events that would later be on full display during the 1936 Olympics;<sup>35</sup> and *Olympia*, which covers the Berlin Olympics and was released in 1938.<sup>36</sup>

## **E. CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This thesis is organized into four chapters, the current chapter being the first and serving as an introduction. Chapter two is a case study of the 1936 Berlin Olympics and includes a historical review of the evolution of German nationalism and national symbols and how sport in Germany leading up to and at the Berlin Olympics ties to both. The second chapter also includes historical background on both the ancient and modern versions of the Olympic Games, and an in-depth historical treatise and case study of the

<sup>35</sup> Leni Riefenstahl, producer, *Triumph of the Will*, 1935 (Synapse Films, Inc., 2006).

<sup>36</sup> Leni Riefenstahl, producer, *Olympia*, 1938 (Pathfinder Home Entertainment, 2006).

Berlin Olympics themselves as related to its impact on German nationalism, Nazi ideology, and international perceptions of the Third Reich. Chapter three reviews the role of sport in Germany and the development of German nationalism from World War II to the present day, including a historical survey of the German national Olympic teams of both the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the German national soccer teams. The chapter culminates with an in-depth analysis of the impact of the 2006 World Cup on German national expression and identity. The concluding chapter makes draws generalized conclusions about sport and its impact on national identity and nationalism within the framework of the two case studies of the preceding chapters. It also sums up the interconnectivity of events specific to the case of Germany including events surrounding German reunification efforts and the role of sport in the evolution of German national identity since reunification. This chapter also makes specific observations regarding the impact hosting the 2006 World Cup has and will have on expressions of German national identity and how it is perceived by Germans and Europeans alike.

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## II. CASE STUDY OF THE 1936 BERLIN OLYMPICS

### A. INTRODUCTION

This last runner, the slender, flaxen-haired German, appeared suddenly to the eager spectators at the eastern end of the Olympic Stadium. Heralded by massed trumpet fanfares, he advanced alone to a ledge high above a flight of steps. He moved forward a few paces and paused to regard the vast concourse of people. The torchbearer then tripped lightly down the stairs and ran to his left halfway around the red cinder track trailing a wisp of blue smoke from the torch which he held high in his right hand. At the other end of the stadium he started deftly to climb another stairway. At a large marble dais this new god turned to the stadium and once more advanced and paused, the cynosure of admiration and emulation. All gasped. Then turning he walked to a colossal brazier atop a tripod. The noble figure rose to his full height and slowly dipped the torch into the brazier where at once there sprang to life a tossing fire that would signify that Berlin was the host city for the XIth Olympiad of our era.<sup>37</sup>

During the seventy years since the Berlin Olympics, the torch relay and the lighting of the Olympic flame, two of the more recognizable symbols and traditions of the Summer and Winter Games, have been synonymous with the spirit of the modern Olympics. Few people today think of either as a Nazi innovation or a symbol of the expression and development of Germany's national identity in the Third Reich. This chapter will show the relation between that symbology and this thesis's central issue: the aesthetics of power, nation, and race as a feature of German nationalism. In the process of making those connections, this thesis will explore some of the more germane late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century ideas that influenced the evolution of aesthetics and politics in German national identity and sport.

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<sup>37</sup>. Richard D Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971), 136–137.



Though the Olympic flame appeared as part of the 1928 Olympic Games in Amsterdam,<sup>38</sup> the torch relay and the elaborate lighting of the opening ceremonies did not occur until the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin. The torch relay, an inspiration of Carl Diem, the secretary of Germany's Olympic Committee, was intended to "turn world attention to the Olympic events,"<sup>39</sup> to embody German national identity on the international stage, and to demonstrate for the German citizenry the Third Reich's connections with the great civilizations of ancient Greece. Historically, in Prussia and, later, Germany, classical Greece had long been a cultural factor that was especially evident in the nation's architecture and its national symbols and festivals.

## **B. GERMAN NATIONAL SYMBOLISM**

### **1. Ancient Greek Ideals and German National Identity**

#### **a. *The Ideal of Beauty***

The ancient Greek focus on the ideal and the celebration of beauty thus provided an underlying theme to the evolution of German nationalism. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, that application of cultural aspects in the political realm surfaced in what Friedrich Meinecke has called the "ideal of a Kulturnation," that is, a nation with a unified cultural basis, in contrast to nations based on a constitution, such as England and France.<sup>40</sup> Many of the Enlightenment philosophers, as well as other German writers and ordinary people, during the era of romanticism wrestled with the concept of beauty and the role it played in society and the state.

For many Germans during the eighteenth century – Friedrich Schiller for example – beauty was the unifying element in society. It related what was common to all members of society, for beauty was considered a timeless

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<sup>38</sup> There is some dispute in the literature as to when exactly the Olympic flame made its first appearance at the Olympic Stadium. In *The Nazi Olympics: Sport, Politics, and Appeasement in the 1930s*, Arnd Krüger notes that, "Since 1928 an Olympic flame has been lit in the Olympic Stadium" (Krüger and William Murray, eds. [Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003], 32); in *The Nazi Olympics*, Richard Mandell finds that the Olympic flame made its first appearance at the 1932 Olympic Games in Los Angeles: "Hollywood even added an appealing (if entirely original – for there were no historical antecedents) 'Olympic Flame,' a torch that was to burn in a big brazier over the peristyle of the main stadium until the Games ended" (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1971), 39. In any case, the Olympic flame at the Olympic Stadium was not an innovation at the 1936 Olympics.

<sup>39</sup> Krüger and Murray, eds., 32.

<sup>40</sup> Ivan T. Berend, *Decades of Crisis* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 54–55; Hagen Schulze, *States, Nations, and Nationalism: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 126ff.

absolute that could bring out the capacity for perfection in all men. The beautiful could unite opposites in human nature: strength and passivity, freedom and law. ‘Beauty,’ then, was an ideal type arising from that which endures in a man’s character and, through this, penetrating his condition in life and ennobling it.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, beauty in nature and in human beings became linked with the idea and the ideals of the German nation. As the nineteenth century progressed, this concept of beauty was a feature of numerous works, including those of Friedrich Theodor Vischer, a committed liberal and participant in the 1848 Frankfurt Parliament, and E. J. Marlitt, a novelist in the latter half of the century.<sup>42</sup> Their works promoted the notion that “the ideal of beauty gave a unity and purpose to life, opposed to and transcending modern materialism.”<sup>43</sup> It is that “unity and purpose,” in conflict with the forces of the Industrial Revolution and modernism, that especially appealed to the general populace and the political arena. The theme played a central role in Germany’s search for a national identity in the nineteenth century and was later embodied in the Nazi ideology, in which romantic images of beauty were linked scientifically to a new concept that saw “race” as the basis of the nation.

In light of that historical context, this chapter focuses on the ideas popularized by the writers and thinkers of late-eighteenth-century German classicism and the subsequent transition, in the wake of the French Revolution, to romanticism in the early nineteenth century.

***b. Johan Winckelmann and German National Identity***

Recognizing the role that a nationalized concept of beauty can play in a nation’s politics and sense of national identity is only one part of the picture. What or who would be considered an example of this idealized national beauty? As many writers demonstrate, in Germany, “The most important ideal of the beautiful was derived from antiquity and, specifically, from Greece.”<sup>44</sup> Johann Joachim Winckelmann, an important figure of German classicism in the late eighteenth century, is credited with the

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<sup>41</sup> Berend, 24.

<sup>42</sup> Mosse, 22–23.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 24.

rediscovery of the significance and “beauty of Greek art for the later part of the eighteenth century. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries an important segment of German intellectual society agreed with him that the ‘good taste which is increasingly spreading through the world was first formed under the Greek skies.’”<sup>45</sup>

Furthermore, Winckelmann “maintained that beauty resides both in the proportions and in the structure of Greek art. The proportions had to be symmetrical, but this was not the principal consideration leading to true beauty. Rather, beauty consisted in a unity of form which encompassed all individual variety.”<sup>46</sup> Thus, the ideal of Greek art transcended the individual or individuals depicted; rather, it spoke to the beauty of humanity as a whole. “It stressed harmony and order, the ‘ideal type’ of humanity, and strictness of form.”<sup>47</sup> Most important, at a time when the nationalist idea initiated by the French Revolution spread throughout Germany and the educated middle class emerged as a powerful national force, the Germans took the Greek concept of beauty and applied it to their own political, social, and cultural realities.<sup>48</sup> “The German concept of beauty in the nineteenth century was opposed to an excess of movement or decorative detail”;<sup>49</sup> it celebrated an aesthetic full of discipline and minimized the passion and emotion of the individual. In the great German writer Schiller’s conceptualization of this beauty, “man must always remain free and inviolate. Beauty was never chaotic, but, for Schiller as for Vischer, had laws and principles of order. This image of beauty was well equipped to influence the organization of masses and festivals.”<sup>50</sup>

*c. True Beauty and the “Classical Form”*

Out of this discourse on beauty came the notion of a “classical form,” as devised by the leading theorists of aesthetics, culture, and politics. They maintained that the Greeks had set the standards for the “classical form,” which was the measure of what all others should strive to achieve in all aspects of their society, politics, and culture.

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<sup>45</sup> Mosse, 24.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>48</sup> Schulze, 156; Gordon A. Craig, *The Germans* (New York, New American Library, 1982), 197.

<sup>49</sup> Mosse, 25.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

Shortly after Winckelmann, Friedrich von Schlegel in 1794 voiced this longing for Greek examples in contrast to modernity: ‘When the consistence of the ancients is contrasted with our own dismemberment, their broad masses with our interminable mixtures, their simple decision with our paltry embarrassment and confusion, we are indeed impressed with the conviction that they were men of the loftiest stamp.’ Schlegel believed that his contemporaries might discover a still greater perfection of beauty. Nevertheless, the ancients had succeeded at one time and the moderns still had to try.<sup>51</sup>

Thus, the art and culture of ancient Greece was held up as the embodiment of true beauty and man’s highest ideals.

The Greek “classical form,” as stylized by Winckelmann, was absorbed in the course of the nineteenth century into German culture and society and the incipient idea of a nation based on a cultural foundation.

“In the formation of the human face the so-called Greek profile is the most telling part of an uplifting beauty.” This judgment, passed by Winckelmann in 1776, was to retain its validity during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It served to define the “ideal German man” from the time of the Greek statues which Winckelmann admired to the figures by Arno Breker which watched over the entrance to Hitler’s new Reichs Chancellery. Beauty was expressed through a stereotype which would remain operative from the eighteenth century and eventually melt into the “Aryan type” the Nazis and their predecessors praised so highly.<sup>52</sup>

As such, the classical Greek ideal, when applied to the idea of “race,” a creation of the second half of the nineteenth century, was an important foundation of Nazi ideology. It defined and excluded those who did not have and never would have the ideal form: that is, those “races” deemed inferior to the Nordic-Germanic *völkisch* ideal, among which Jews and Blacks were at the bottom of the racial hierarchy.

*d. The Olympic Torch Relay – Link between Ancient and Modern*

For the Nazi leadership and those members of the Olympic Committee, both German and international, who identified with the Greek ideal, the Olympic torch relay, with its starting point in Greece and tacit acknowledgement of the original games, provided the modern games with a ready link to the lofty ideals and imagined beauty of

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<sup>51</sup> Mosse, 26.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 27.

the ancient originals. The crucial difference between the old and the new lay in the hoped-for meaning to be gained from the activities surrounding the torch relay and its culmination in the igniting of the Olympic flame at the opening ceremony. The International Olympic Committee and perhaps some members of the German Organizing Committee viewed the competition as a celebration of the Olympic ideal of beauty. But Joseph Goebbels, the Minister of Propaganda, Carl Diem, and others envisioned it as an opportunity to manipulate the German populace's notion of a national identity and further relate it to their own concept of aesthetics of politics. The latter idea would eventually become a potent one in German nationalism, one that was especially central to the Nazis' perception of the national ideal and the policies of the Reich. "The 'aesthetics of politics' was the force which linked myths, symbols, and the feeling of the masses; it was a sense of beauty and form that determined the nature of the new political style."<sup>53</sup> What better way to accomplish this goal than to have a golden-haired embodiment of the human perfection of *völkisch* German-ness carry the flame of Greek antiquity before the world to signify the start of the international competition?

## 2. Flame and German National Identity

Thus, the development and cultivation of rituals involving the Olympic flame furthered another facet of German national identity, that of flame itself.

The sacred flame was of the greatest importance as a symbol of Germanism.... When it came to celebrating the first anniversary in 1815 of the Battle of the Peoples, the German victory over Napoleon, most of the ceremonies throughout German towns and villages centered upon a "pillar of flame" which illuminated the hill or mountain on which it was built. At times, altars for these fires were constructed on public squares. This was the "altar symbolizing the salvation of Germany and at the same time an altar in praise of God. Let the holy flame of German unity cast its sacred light."<sup>54</sup>

The flame also signified rebirth, a concept incorporated in the notion of the German *Volk*. For this aspect, the German national movement took pagan symbols and various peasant folkways and reinvented them. "The flame as it stood symbolized light over darkness, the sun as against the night. It reflected the mystical forces of the life-

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<sup>53</sup> Mosse, 20.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 40.

bringing sun which gave men strength and vitality. To the Nazis it meant ‘purification,’ symbolized brotherly community, and served to remind party members of the ‘eternal life process.’”<sup>55</sup> To this end, it was an easy leap of logic to apply these strands of nationalist thought to the Olympic flame that burned so brightly in the Olympic Stadium in Berlin.

### **3. The Gymnastic Tradition and German National Identity**

If Greek art in the German national consciousness of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries equaled ideal beauty, then that was especially embodied in the German gymnastic tradition during the German national uprising against the French invaders of the period, 1799–1813. As founded in 1811 by Friedrich Ludwig Jahn, “gymnastics were supposed to train fighters for the liberation of Germany, but these freedom fighters, in order to be effective, had to represent an ideal of beauty which did not admit any distinction between aesthetics and individuality – the uniqueness of the individual and the cult of beauty which united all Germans.”<sup>56</sup> Jahn saw in gymnastics a means to connect national consciousness, patriotism, ideals of the *Volk*, beauty, and physical fitness; he and the gymnastic movement, therefore, “pioneered the ideals of German national self-representation.”<sup>57</sup> “The unity of body and spirit was a vital precept, expressed through the ideal type which pervaded all of Jahn’s political aesthetics. The Greek ideal of beauty was prominent here as well; it idealized a hardened, lithe male body, whose contours were made particularly visible by the uniform Jahn invented for his gymnasts. The character, too, of this ideal gymnast was a combination of individuality and the Volkish spirit of his group.”<sup>58</sup> The rise of uniforms and sport also as a means of a more virile maleness and national identity was another European phenomenon in Napoleonic Europe.<sup>59</sup>

By the mid twentieth century, therefore, the Nazis had an established tradition of collective sports and national ideals, with a deep resonance in the modern past, upon which to build their ideology of German nationalism. The German gymnastic groups also

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<sup>55</sup> Mosse, 42.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 128.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707–1837* (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1992), 170, 185–187.

sought to connect the energy and ideas of their movement to the power of national monuments, a factor that proved useful also to the later architects of the Third Reich. “It is no coincidence that Albert Speer has compared the ‘sacred space’ underneath the *Niederwalddenkmal*<sup>60</sup> to the ‘Zeppelinwiese,’ that stadium where many Nazi Nuremberg rallies took place. Both provided a suitable setting for the acting out of a national liturgy through movement and rhythm.”<sup>61</sup> The various venues constructed for or used during the Berlin Olympics also fall into this category. The sporting competitions inside them were one form of nationalistic expression, while the sites themselves were another. For Germany, the Berlin Olympic Games were a celebration of a national identity that was simultaneously occurring under the auspices of that international sporting event.

Like the idealization and exclusivity of the Greek notion of beauty, the German gymnastic movement was deliberately selective and preclusive. “The gymnasts, like the Youth Movement, stressed the importance of small groups and, in light of this, opposed all mass sports. When, after 1883, large sports associations such as rowing, swimming, or football clubs were founded, the gymnasts stood apart.”<sup>62</sup> That a bastion of German national consciousness opposed the concept of mass sports, including the spirit of Olympic competition and many of the Olympic sports themselves, had an impact on later events and attitudes toward the Olympics. This conflict of ideologies was of concern when Germany was awarded the Berlin Olympics in 1931, a topic which will be returned to later.

### **C. JOHANN GOTTFRIED VON HERDER AND THE KULTURNATION**

There is another aspect of the notion of the *Volk* that influenced the Nazis as hosts of the Berlin Olympics and thus deserves mention here. The celebration of the classic ideals of physical beauty, the sacred flame, the fest-like atmosphere, and the celebration of national success epitomized by the events of the Olympics reinvigorated Johann

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<sup>60</sup> “The so-called Niederwalddenkmal, built between 1874 and 1885 on the banks of the Rhine by Johannes Schilling ... built to celebrate German unity ... was modeled on classical forms in the huge statue of the Germania, and in the massive pedestal with its friezes representing peace and war as well as the German rivers Rhine and Mosel. Through the way in which it was financed and sponsored, the Niederwalddenkmal marked a still closer bond between the national cult and the national monument” (Mosse, 62). The Zeppelinwiese was one of the various rally grounds at Nuremberg built by Speer after 1933 that became central sites identifying with Nazi notions of both aesthetics and people’s communities.

<sup>61</sup> Mosse, 132.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 133.

Gottfried von Herder's notion of the nation, the so-called *Kulturnation*. As a "student of Kant and J. G. Hamann, he had little interest in politics and had a deep and abiding detestation of all forms of centralization, coercion, regulation, and imperialism, which he associated with the entity that he contemptuously called the State. It robbed men of themselves; it turned them into machines of obedience; it distorted and vitiated their noblest impulses."<sup>63</sup> Herder, an enemy of the centralizing and norm-making state-building of the era of Louis XIV, Frederick II, and Joseph II, was a critic of the age of reason and of the expression of the same in the political world of the late-eighteenth century and a figure in the counter-enlightenment.

Some may wrongly see in this a description of the Nazi regime itself. But within the context of certain events during Herder's lifetime – for example, the French and American Revolutions, and the partitioning of Poland in the late eighteenth century – the State appears as a largely negative force, one that did not accurately embody the people it claimed to represent. As a result, Herder developed his own concept of "the nation."

But, if Herder hated the State, he believed in the nation, and in two works that influenced his own and subsequent generations – *Another Philosophy of History* (1774) and *Reflections on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (1776–1803) – he argued eloquently for the idea of belonging, and recognizing that one belonged, to a nation. This he defined as the community that was made up of kinship and history and social solidarity and cultural affinity and was shaped over time by climate and geography, by education, by relations with its neighbors, and by other factors, and was held together most of all by language, which expressed the collective experience of the group.... The ways in which Germans spoke and moved, and ate and drank, and made love and laws would be different than those patterns of behavior and feeling in other peoples. And there was a quality common to all those patterns, a common ingredient, a Germanness, a *Volksgeist* that could not be abstracted and defined but represented the individuality of the nation.<sup>64</sup>

Herder's sense of nation influenced the German Romanticists of the nineteenth century and shaped the national consciousness espoused by Jahn and his Turner movement. This idea of the nation also characterized the beliefs and works of the composer, Richard Wagner, who, in turn, influenced Adolf Hitler.

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<sup>63</sup> Craig, 30.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.



The Germans, Wagner believed, were characterized by an inner substance which had never changed; therefore, the ancient sagas were also an expression of the present. This was hardly an original idea, for the myth of unchanging *Volk* dates back far into German history. It is, in fact, a basic ingredient of German nationalism. As Hitler put it: “Estates vanish, classes change, human fate evolves, something remains throughout and must remain: The *Volk* as a substance of flesh and blood.” This reality was to be recalled through the activation of historical memories.<sup>65</sup>

Thus, the notion of a collective German national identity was realized and became embodied in such newly created historical traditions as the Olympic torch relay and lighting ceremony, which recalled the classical ideals of antiquity and reaffirmed their connection to the ideals of the modern national consciousness. For the average German citizen who saw, participated in, or in some other way experienced the Olympic torch relay or the opening ceremonies in the newly built Olympic Stadium in Berlin, the energy of the moment was intended to stir pride in the German *Volk* and the passions of national identity.

As the events of the nineteenth century unfolded, amid the industrial revolution and the rise of nationalism as the secular religion of the nineteenth century, Herder’s notion of the nation had grown into a powerful force to be reckoned with.

[T]he new sense of a collective national identity was not just confirmed: it was actively experienced as a palpable and real phenomenon. Public festivities and celebrations, from the *fêtes révolutionnaires* of the French Revolution to the German festivals celebrating the Battle of the Nations at Leipzig, confirmed a sense of nationhood over and over again, creating an authentic sense of community and reinforcing the individual’s impression that he did indeed belong to a greater whole. The idea of the nation had quasi-religious undertones: since a nation has no visible physical presence, it has to be believed in. Nationalism is the secular faith of the industrial age. The new state was not sanctioned by God, but by the nation.<sup>66</sup>

In Nazi-dominated Germany, the new party state would reorganize the nation based on the notion of a racially dominated world and an international system of perpetual conflict. It was this arrangement that the Nazis calculated would lead to success in sponsoring the

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<sup>65</sup> Mosse, 102.

<sup>66</sup> Hagen Schulze, *States, Nations, and Nationalism: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 158.

Berlin Olympics, and that did lead, at least in part, to the creation of the Olympic torch relay, a tradition that continues today, although with a different meaning and emphasis.

#### **D. THE 1936 OLYMPICS – PROPAGANDA FOR NAZI IDEALS**

The Olympic torch and relay were just a small part of the national propaganda program devised by the Nazis for much more than the mere promotion of an international sports competition. In Nazi advertisements, they were used to publicize the views and beliefs of the Third Reich. Its leaders viewed the Olympics as an opportunity to do much more than simply host a sporting event; they saw it as a fortuitous opportunity to gain worldwide acceptance of their political party and to further shape the German national identity at a time when the regime was consolidating its grip on power, not only in Germany, but also throughout much of Europe.

By most measures, the Third Reich was successful in its endeavor, but the task was not easy. Because of their concerns about the Nazis' foreign and domestic policies, most notably its anti-Jewish policies and programs, the United States and several other countries considered possible alternatives, including pressuring the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to move the Summer Games to another location, boycotting the Games, or attending them in spite of those issues. In the end, most countries chose to attend and compete,<sup>67</sup> a decision that was not made purely in consideration of the Olympics as a sporting event, but that was intended also as a political statement and an opportunity to express their respective national identities. Despite the widespread concern about Germany's anti-Semitism and the threat of a potential boycott, fifty-three nations represented by more than 5,000 athletes chose to participate in the Berlin Olympics.<sup>68</sup> The political benefits of a potential national success in the Olympic venues appeared to outweigh the moral act of protesting suspected anti-Jewish discrimination in the Third Reich.

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<sup>67</sup> Derick L. Hulme Jr., *The Political Olympics: Moscow, Afghanistan, and the 1980 U.S. Boycott* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1990), 76.

<sup>68</sup> Judith Holmes, *Olympiad 1936: Blaze of Glory for Hitler's Reich* (New York: Ballantine Books, Inc., 1971), 33.

## **E. A SHORT HISTORY OF THE OLYMPICS LEADING UP TO 1936**

### **1. The Ancient Olympics**

The notion of the Olympics as both a political event and a shaper of nationalism was as old as the Games themselves. “Actually, sports have been political ever since Pelops defeated Oenomaus in a chariot race and took his kingdom and his daughter in the ninth century B.C. As a monument to his own intrigue, Pelops reportedly established the Olympic Games in the valley of Olympia near Elis.”<sup>69</sup> “They survived from 776 B.C., when there was only one event, the 200 metres, until at least A.D. 261, and possibly until 393, when the Emperor Theodosius ordered the closure of pagan centres.”<sup>70</sup> There were other Greek sports festivals, but none had the prestige of the Olympic Games. Alcibiades of Athens, Alexander the Great, and Nero all competed at Olympics Games, which were attended by spectators from all over the known world.<sup>71</sup> In fact, the Greeks and their sports contests were the pinnacle of the ancient sports world. “Other societies had physical education programs, [and] produced athletes and athletic performances, but there was no parallel in the Western world for the role which athletics played in Greek society. Greek life revolved around the idea of ‘agon’ or contest, which was the one way to achieve ‘arête’ or glory, a virtue which assured one of an immortal status approaching that of the gods themselves.”<sup>72</sup>

Winning at the Olympics brought popularity and status to not only the athletes, but also their respective city-states and supporters. “Those who enjoyed political power or wished to acquire it for themselves or their families found it convenient to be near successful athletes in order to utilize the aura of prestige for their own gain.”<sup>73</sup> Some athletes recognized this indirect political power and capitalized on the opportunity for

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<sup>69</sup> Andrew Strenk, “What Price Victory? The World of International Sports and Politics,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, Vol. 445, Contemporary Issues in Sport (September 1979), 131.

<sup>70</sup> Christopher R. Hill, *Olympic Politics: Athens to Atlanta 1896–1996* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1996), 6.

<sup>71</sup> Strenk, 132.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

further personal gain. “Competitors occasionally sold their services and bribed their opponents to lose, as is proved by the row of bronze statues of Zeus at Olympia set up from the proceeds of fines.”<sup>74</sup>

While the Olympics brought personal fame and recognition to athletes and prestige to the cities and rulers they represented, the Games were also an outlet for the expression of Greek nationalism. “Furthermore, these Greek contests appealed to the Greek love of autonomy while, at the same time, reinforcing the pride in Hellenism. The various Greek city-states identified closely with their citizens who were competing. The gathering of Greeks from all over the known world reinforced the consciousness of being Greek and kept alive those religious, educational, and cultural traditions which separated the Greeks from the barbarians.”<sup>75</sup>

## **2. Baron Pierre de Coubertin and the Modern Olympic Movement**

Even today, national pride and the influence of politics are prevalent themes of the modern Olympic Movement. “Four factors led to the creation of the Olympic system as part of international politics: the tradition of the ancient Games and the interest aroused in them by nineteenth-century archaeologists, the European exercise movement and its national implications, English sport and the English public school system under the influences of Thomas Arnold, and the personal will and determination of Baron Pierre de Coubertin.”<sup>76</sup> A French nobleman and educator, Baron de Coubertin’s interest in the value of sport derived from his disappointment and humiliation following the French loss in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1871.

De Coubertin believed that a stronger France could be built by introducing sports and athletic programs into the French educational curriculum, and he saw British sport as the model to emulate. He “sought a cure for the physical and moral decadence of a nation ‘on the playing fields of Eton’ and in the pursuit of manly sport which he recognized as a distinctive feature of British public schools, and which he believed to be the key to

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<sup>74</sup> W. M., Huggill, “Olympics Old and New,” *Phoenix* 3:1 (Spring 1949), 34.

<sup>75</sup> Strenk, 132.

<sup>76</sup> David B. Kanin, *A Political History of the Olympic Games* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1981), 9–10.

British greatness.”<sup>77</sup> Thus, out of his initial desire to improve the physical and moral well-being of his nation through improved physical education, the Baron put together the ideals that grew into the Olympic Movement. “Baron de Coubertin’s chief motive was to unify and purify athletics as the “cornerstone of progress and health for the youth of our day.”<sup>78</sup>

Improving the progress and health of youth was only one part of the goal of the Olympic Movement as envisioned by de Coubertin. “After touring extensively in Europe, Britain, and the United States, he expanded his ideas. He came to see sports as a vehicle for furthering international friendship and understanding, thereby bringing about the goal sought by many thinkers of the day – universal world peace.”<sup>79</sup> Thus, the ideas initiated in the hope of strengthening the moral and physical preparedness of France grew into an international concept, which was created with a political purpose from the very beginning.

Baron de Coubertin wrote about his hopes for the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Games he had helped to create: “Should this institution prosper...it may be a potent if indirect factor in securing universal peace. Wars break out because nations misunderstand each other. We shall not have peace until the prejudices which now separate the different races shall have been outlived. To attain this end, what better means than to bring the youth of countries periodically together for amicable agility? The Olympic Games with the Ancients controlled athletics and promoted peace. Is it not visionary to look to them for similar benefactions in the future?”<sup>80</sup>

However, even the noblest intentions can be tinged with ulterior motives. “If sport was going to influence politics, then the interaction would not remain a one-way street. The IOC’s very claims of internationalism, moralism, and independence thrust it squarely into the realm of politics.”<sup>81</sup> De Coubertin recognized that part of the success of the ancient Olympic contests was the balance the Greeks struck between the competitiveness

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<sup>77</sup> Hugill, 37.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>79</sup> Strenk, 138.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 139.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 138.

of the athletic events and the political, religious, and cultural traditions of the day. Worship of the gods alone would not form a credible basis for founding the modern Olympic movement. “As a substitute for the unifying worship of Olympian Zeus he could offer only the divisive spirit of patriotism.”<sup>82</sup> Thus, “the decisions to introduce national flags and hymns into the victory ceremonies and to designate competitors according to their country promoted politics and nationalism during the Games.”<sup>83</sup> Despite the overall emphasis on peaceful and healthy competition among the world’s youth, it was this promotion of politics and nationalism that made the Olympic Games fertile ground for future manipulation to further the interests of nations and their leadership. “The Nazis under Adolf Hitler and the Fascists under Mussolini were quick to grasp the possibilities of using sports as political, diplomatic, propaganda, and prestige vehicles.”<sup>84</sup>

## **F. THE 1936 OLYMPICS**

### **1. The Olympic Ideal and Nazi Ideology – Fire and Water?**

The 1936 Berlin Olympics is perhaps the best-known example of using the Olympic Games as a means of propaganda and for garnering world diplomacy, political prestige, and credibility, and for shaping national identity. “The choice of Berlin ratified the full reintegration of postwar Germany, no longer a pariah nation, into the world of international sport.”<sup>85</sup> When the IOC announced its decision on May 13, 1931, the Weimar Republic was in power and the Republic’s leadership “hoped to use the Games as a festival celebrating a general German return to respectability.”<sup>86</sup> Unfortunately, this was not to be, at least not under the auspices of the Weimar government. Hitler came to power in January 1933, a mere six days after the creation of Berlin’s Olympic Organizing Committee.<sup>87</sup>

With the shift of power in Germany to the Nazis, the certainty of Berlin as the site for the 1936 Summer Olympics was in doubt. “The appointment to host the Olympics

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<sup>82</sup> Hugill, 38.

<sup>83</sup> Strenk, 139.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid., 140.

<sup>85</sup> Pierre Arnaud, and James Riordan, eds., *Sport and International Politics: The Impact of Fascism and Communism on Sport* (London: E & FN SPON, 1998), 31.

<sup>86</sup> Kanin, 52.

<sup>87</sup> Arnaud and Riordan, 31.

was for the Nazi state a problematic, burdensome inheritance from the Weimar Republic. The ideologues of the Nazi party rejected the Olympic movement for its internationalism and pacifism, and, at first, it was uncertain that the Berlin Olympics would actually take place.”<sup>88</sup> At issue was the clash of ideologies behind the Olympics and that of the Nazis with respect to the purpose of sport. “The problem as the Nazis saw it was that modern sports had developed in Britain rather than in Germany and they were, at least in principle, universalistic rather than particularistic. Among the most important characteristics of modern sports – in theory if not in practice – is equality; neither race nor religion nor ideology should be a factor in the determination of sporting excellence. Such a notion of equality was, of course, anathema to Nazis dedicated to a primitive belief in the racial supremacy of the ‘Aryan’ people.”<sup>89</sup>

Given this ideological impasse, the IOC had well-founded fears that the Nazis would turn the Summer Games into an event that was not at all dedicated to the free and fair competitive principle that was the foundation of the Olympic ideal. “The Nazis were ideologically close to the *Deutsche Turnerschaft*, whose last leader, Edmund Neuendorff, had invited Hitler in 1933 to be the guest of honor at a grand *Turnfest* in Stuttgart. Hitler accepted the invitation and was received by Neuendorff with hysterical declarations of fealty. Massed displays of Teutonic vigour and parades to martial music seemed much more in tune with Nazi ideology than an international sports festival open to African-Americans, to Asians, and to Jews. The IOC and the Games Organizing Committee braced themselves in anticipation of Hitler’s announcement that he wanted another authentic German *Turnfest* in 1936 – not some international celebration of human solidarity.”<sup>90</sup>

## **2. Goebbels the Opportunist and Hitler’s Buy-In**

Josef Goebbels, the newly appointed Nazi Minister for Volksaufklärung und Propaganda, or Promi (popular enlightenment and propaganda) and the first member of the Nazi leadership, recognized the opportunities that hosting the Olympics could bring

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<sup>88</sup> Michael Mackenzie, “From Athens to Berlin: The 1936 Olympics and Leni Riefenstahl’s Olympia,” *Critical Inquiry* 29:2 (Winter 2003), 302.

<sup>89</sup> Arnaud and Riordan, 31.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

to the Nazi regime. “Goebbels, had realized that the Games were a splendid opportunity to demonstrate German vitality and organizational expertise.”<sup>91</sup> But, this realization was not entirely Goebbels’ own.

Joseph Goebbels, a Ph.D. in German studies, had only been minister of the Propaganda for five days when he received Theodor Lewald, who explained to him the propaganda potential of the Olympic Games. The seventy-three-year-old had influential friends in all ministries, as he had been responsible for the selection and training of most of the young lawyers in government service for a ten-year period, and as a result he was admitted to the new ministry – although Goebbels seemed to have more pressing things to do than to look after a sport meet. Lewald convinced Goebbels that the Olympic Games should have first priority in his young and growing ministry. This was surprising, as neither Goebbels nor Hitler were known to be interested in sports, in contrast to Mussolini, their idol, who was a true all-round athlete. But, Goebbels understood well that having power was only half of the problem; you also had to win the heart of the people. Sport was one way to achieve this, and eventually his ministry had eleven sections dealing with sport. In assuring Nazi hegemony, a culture of consent was reached to offset the more brutal and coercive elements of the regime: a growing movie industry, cheap holidays, successful sports for national pride, and other forms of popular entertainment.<sup>92</sup>

With Goebbels now fully in support of the Olympics and the tremendous propaganda benefits it could bring the Nazis both domestically and internationally, it remained only to convince Hitler of the value of playing host to the Olympics. In March of 1933, Hitler summoned Theodor Lewald and Carl Diem, the president and secretary, respectively, of the Berlin Organizing Committee, to his office. They were convinced that he was going to order the cancellation of the games and were quite surprised when he gave them his tentative approval.<sup>93</sup> “On October 5, 1933, Hitler toured the site of the Games, inspected the progress of the construction, and became positively lyrical about the prospects for the grandest Olympics ever. Five days later, at the chancellery, he promised the startled Lewald the full financial support of his regime, a sum later set at 20 million Reichsmarks.”<sup>94</sup> In so doing, “Hitler placed the full resources of the state behind

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<sup>91</sup> Arnaud and Riordan, 33.

<sup>92</sup> Krüger and Murray, 20.

<sup>93</sup> Arnaud and Riordan, 32–33.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.



the Olympic preparations, the first head of state to do so.”<sup>95</sup> With Hitler’s support, “the National Socialist bureaucracy hosted the Olympics on ‘a lavish scale never before experienced’ and turned the games into a spectacle meant to show the world that the new Germany was – despite the remilitarization of the Rheinland – a decent, friendly, peace-loving nation.”<sup>96</sup>

### **3. Official Anti-Semitism and Threats of Boycott**

Preparations continued in Berlin, but the IOC, along with numerous European countries and the United States, was still concerned about the ideological disparity “between the Olympic Charter and the racist principles of the new regime.”<sup>97</sup> “After the IOC decided to proceed as planned, Olympic boycott movements developed in a number of countries. Avery Brundage, president of the American Olympic Committee (AOC), opposed a boycott, arguing that politics had no place in sport and that American athletes should avoid involvement in what he called a ‘Jew-Nazi altercation.’ Judge Jeremiah Mahoney, president of the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU), supported a boycott, pointing out that Germany had broken Olympic rules forbidding discrimination based on race and religion. In his view, participation would constitute an endorsement of Hitler’s regime.”<sup>98</sup>

The main issue was not how the Germans might treat athletes of other countries, but the Nazi regime’s treatment of its own athletes. Here the looming concern was the ideal of sport and race inherent in the Nazi idea of the nation. The declared aims of the regime conflicted with the reality of the international system and the fact that the operational exclusion of Jews from national life in 1936 was anything but a simple unitary and linear process. Rather, the experience of the Olympics in 1936 illustrates that the ideal of race as applied to the nation was problematic in the actual circumstance. “The crux of the matter was not the acceptance of Jewish athletes in foreign teams but rather the right of German Jews to take part in trials for their national team. Although von Halt (one of Germany’s IOC members), a Nazi party member, resisted the idea, the IOC

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<sup>95</sup> Krüger and Murray, 22.

<sup>96</sup> Mackenzie, 303.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> *The Nazi Olympics: Berlin, 1936*, Teacher Guide, Washington, D.C., U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, 1998, pamphlet, 3.

insisted upon a written guarantee from Berlin to the effect that German Jews did, indeed, have this right. Lewald and von Halt were able to somehow secure the necessary written guarantee: 'All the laws regulating the Olympic Games shall be observed. As a principle, German Jews shall not be excluded from German teams at the Games of the XIth Olympiad.' The guarantee seems to have been given by Hans Pfundtner, an official in the Interior Ministry; Hitler, when he realized what had been done, was apparently outraged."<sup>99</sup>

Hitler's rage notwithstanding, in 1934, the repeated assurances from German Olympic and sports officials finally overcame the IOC's concerns. But these assurances did not assuage boycott efforts in the United States and other countries. Avery Brundage traveled to Germany in September to assess the situation. Brundage was deeply committed to the Olympic Games and did not want political issues, which he believed had no role in the Olympics, to destroy the Olympic Movement. He returned to the United States convinced that everything was on track and that the Germans were sincere in their assurances of equal treatment of their Jews. "To the press he announced: 'I was given positive assurance in writing by Hans von Tschammer und Osten, Germany's official Olympic representative, that there will be no discrimination against Jews. You can't ask for more than that and I think the guarantee will be fulfilled.'"<sup>100</sup>

While the guarantee satisfied Brundage and other members of the American Olympic Association, it did not satisfy everyone. The Anti-Defamation League, various Jewish-interest groups, prominent American Jews, and several members of the American Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) remained concerned about the Nazi treatment of German Jewish athletes. The AAU voted to delay acceptance to attend the Berlin Games. "By mid-1935, an intensive boycott campaign was in full swing in the United States as well as Canada, Great Britain, and France."<sup>101</sup> Some of the athletes of these countries planned to

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<sup>99</sup> Arnaud and Riordan, 33–34.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 36: "It was of course an error to refer to von Tschammer und Osten as 'Germany's official Olympic representative' (he was actually Hitler's Reichssportführer)."

<sup>101</sup> Arnaud and Riordan, 37.

participate in “a Communist-sponsored Olimpiada” to be held in Barcelona in the summer of 1936.<sup>102</sup> “In fact, the Olimpiada never took place because of the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War (1936–39).”<sup>103</sup>

#### **4. Observations of American Diplomats in Europe**

Other Americans were also voicing concerns about the true purpose behind the Berlin Olympics and the potential contributory role the American Olympic team’s participation could play in advancing the Nazi regime’s goals.

Judging by highly confidential diplomatic reports from Berlin and Vienna relating to the subject of the Berlin Olympics, the political developments in general and the Olympic controversy in particular could have escaped neither the probing eyes of American diplomats stationed in Germany nor the notice of the State Department, nor, on the final account, the attention of the President. These highly classified diplomatic dispatches, which were largely unnoticed by scholars, shed canny light on the opinions, beliefs, and attitudes of three eminent officers of the diplomatic corps who had the opportunity to gain first-hand experiences on Nazi measures against Jews, Catholics, and progressive elements in Germany as well as the political motives behind the Olympic Games. The three diplomats, William E. Dodd (ambassador), George S. Messersmith (consul general), and Raymond H. Geist (consul), were not Jewish, and judging by their writings, harbored no leftist sentiments. Perceived by their superiors as men of principle, a rare commodity in international diplomacy, these officers went beyond diplomatic niceties. André Francois-Poncet’s (French envoy to Germany) description of ambassador Dodd well exemplified all three of them: ‘Rugged and uncompromising liberal, [who] entertained an aversion for national socialism, which he made no effort to conceal.’ As well-acquainted observers, they not only perceived the underlying German rationale for organizing the Games in Berlin, but were also unanimously vocal in their belief that the holding of the festival on German soil would constitute a disaster for the free world. Their reports exhibit a sharp and frighteningly accurate assessment of contemporary German and international trends in an ‘Olympic’ context.<sup>104</sup>

While most of the concern voiced in these cables and classified reports focused on the discrimination against German Jews, their participation on the German Olympic team, and the subsequent impact on the question of the American team’s participation,

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<sup>102</sup> Arnaud and Riordan, 40.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> George Eisen, “The Voices of Sanity: American Diplomatic Reports from the 1936 Berlin Olympiad,” *Journal of Sport History* 11:3 (Winter 1984), 57.

George Messersmith noted two other issues that more directly concerned the issue of German national identity. The first involved the increasing evidence of state control over sport in Germany.

It is pertinent to note here that the same action which has been taken in other aspects of German life has been applied to the field of sport. Sport as an activity, particularly of youth, was one of the major aspects of German life which must be coordinated into and definitely controlled by the Party. All German sport is today directly controlled by the Government and is professedly an instrument of the Party for the shaping of youth into National Socialist ideology. There is no tolerance and freedom in sport, but absolute and definite control by the State. Not only is it controlled by the state, but it is considered by the State and Party as one of those activities of German life to be most definitely organized and controlled by the State. Sport has therefore become a political matter, and sport organizations and activities must be recognized as a political activity of the German State. The authority of the leader of German sports, Tschammer von Osten, is complete.<sup>105</sup>

This demonstrates that the Third Reich considered sport an important avenue for the expression of German national identity as it saw fit to interpret it. In the same cable from Vienna, November 15, 1935, Messersmith also addressed the perceived benefits the Nazi leadership hoped to derive domestically from hosting the Olympic Games.

Already in the first months of the coming into power of the National Socialist Government it laid great stress on the Olympic Games being held in Berlin in 1936. As the Party bases its appeal very largely to the youth of the country, it was recognized at the outset what an instrument the Olympic Games could become in consolidating the position of the Party among the youth of Germany... It is the opinion of objective observers that the base of power of the Party in Germany is constantly growing narrower. The older generation, which for the greater part was never in sympathy with the present Government, has now lost all confidence in it. The people of middle age, who for a time looked upon the Party as the savior of German honor and German economy, are increasingly of the conviction that the political, economic, and financial policy of the Government, as well as its social program, are bringing disaster to the country, and the support of the Party in this group has correspondingly grown weaker. The main support of the Party from the outset has been principally among the youth, and today its actual base of power is practically confined to them. This, together with the increasing difficulties

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<sup>105</sup> Report by George S. Messersmith, November 15, 1935, 862.4063 Olympic Games/57, National Archives, Washington, D.C., 4.

of the regime, explains the really enormous interest which the Party has in the Olympic Games being held in Berlin. The youth of Germany believe that National Socialist ideology is being rapidly accepted in other countries. The Party, through its controlled press and other propaganda means, has definitely instilled this idea into the minds of the young people of Germany. To the Party and to the youth of Germany, the holding of the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936 has become the symbol of the conquest of the world by National Socialist doctrine. Should the games not be held in Berlin, it would be one of the most serious blows which National Socialist prestige could suffer within an awakening Germany and one of the most effective ways which the world outside has of showing to the youth of Germany its opinion of National Socialist doctrine.<sup>106</sup>

This stark report illuminates the main purpose of the Nazis in hosting the Olympics. It was not so much a question of international prestige or athletic victories, but rather it was seen as a weapon in the struggle to influence and define young Germans' notions of national identity.

#### **5. The Roosevelt Administration Weighs In with Silence**

The reports from Europe and the three State Department diplomats led to no action or statement by the State Department or the President. Both saw the Olympic concerns as completely tied to the Jewish issue and, in line with American foreign policy relating to Jewish matters, neither desired any involvement.

In respect to the Jewish problem, Roosevelt and the State Department avoided intervention. The President had informed William Dodd at the time of his appointment to the Ambassadorial post that the American government could only involve itself in situations involving American citizens in Germany who suffered from discrimination and maltreatment. A December 12, 1935, letter from Cordell Hull to Senator Augustine Lonergan (Connecticut) summarizes the stand of the Roosevelt administration pertaining to American participation. Lonergan had asked Hull for his position and guidance on participation, as one of his constituents had approached him in search of boycott support. Hull coolly responded: "The question of participation, of course, does not fall within the competence of any agency of this government but is a matter exclusively for determination by the private organizations directly concerned. I am sure you will realize therefore that it would not be

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<sup>106</sup> Messersmith, 4, 6-7.

appropriate for me to make a statement which might be construed as in any way interfering with the freedom of decision of these organizations.”<sup>107</sup>

The more interesting issue pertaining to the German hosting of the Olympics, the opportunities it provided for the Nazis to control and shape the German national identity, was never addressed by the Roosevelt administration.

#### **6. The “Warm Up” Games, Spring and Early Summer of 1936**

In December 1935, the AAU, in a close vote, decided to support sending teams to both the 1936 Winter Olympics in Garmisch-Partenkirchen and the Berlin Summer Games.<sup>108</sup> The Winter Games, though largely ignored historically, were an important “dry-run” for the Summer Games in Berlin. “In a prelude to the much larger Summer Olympics, Germany hosted the Winter Games at Garmisch-Partenkirchen in the Bavarian Alps in February 1936. Yielding to the IOC’s insistence on ‘fair play’, German officials allowed Rudi Ball, who was part Jewish, to compete on the nation’s ice hockey team. Hitler also ordered anti-Jewish signs temporarily removed from public view. Still, Nazi deceptions were not wholly successful. Western journalists reported troop maneuvers at Garmisch, prompting the Nazi regime to minimize the military’s presence at the Summer Olympics.”<sup>109</sup>

In March, shortly after the end of the Winter Olympics, the German army entered the Rhineland. Although there were renewed calls, mainly from France, for a boycott of the Summer Olympics, this did not seriously impact the Berlin Games. “In the end, although the Netherlands and others considered a boycott, only Ireland stayed away from Berlin.”<sup>110</sup> But “individual Jewish athletes from a number of European countries chose to

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<sup>107</sup> Stephen R. Wenn, “A Tale of Two Diplomats: George S. Messersmith and Charles H. Sherrill on Proposed American Participation in the 1936 Olympics,” *Journal of Sport History* 16:1 (Spring 1989), 42.

<sup>108</sup> Arnaud and Riordan, 40.

<sup>109</sup> *The Nazi Olympics: Berlin, 1936*, Teacher Guide, Pamphlet, 5.

<sup>110</sup> Kanin, 55.

boycott the Berlin Olympics” as well as several Jewish athletes from the United States.<sup>111</sup> In the end, 4,066 athletes – 328 females and 3,738 males – from forty-nine countries competed at the Berlin Summer Games.<sup>112</sup>

## 7. The Berlin Games

### a. *Suspending Aspects of Nazi Ideology and Anti-Semitism*

This time the Nazis were ready. “The Germans spruced up Berlin and built a colossal, 110,000-seat Olympic Stadium. As William L. Shirer, then a reporter in Berlin, noted, “The signs ‘Juden unerwünscht’ (Jews Not Welcome) were quietly hauled down from the shops, hotels, beer gardens, and places of public entertainment, the persecution of the Jews and of the two Christian churches temporarily halted, and the country put on its best behavior. No previous games had seen such a spectacular organization nor such a lavish display of entertainment.”<sup>113</sup> “Although African Americans dominated the track and field events, and Jesse Owens was heralded as the hero of the Games, Germany’s athletes captured the most medals overall, and German hospitality and organization won the praises of visitors. Most newspaper accounts echoed Frederick Birchall’s report in *The New York Times* that the Games put Germans ‘back in the fold of nations,’ and even made them ‘more human again.’ Only a few reporters regarded the Berlin glitter as merely hiding a racist, militaristic regime.”<sup>114</sup>

The German press itself was tightly controlled in its reporting of Olympics events; bias of any type was not tolerated by the Ministry of Propaganda.

This unexpected display of apparently unbiased treatment was actually part of a concentrated effort at shaping a favourable image of the new regime. The Ministry of Propaganda ordered, on 3 August, that “the racial point of view should not in any form be part of the discussion of athletic results. Special care should be exercised not to offend Negro athletes.” When the editors of the rabidly racist *Der Angriff* were unable to restrain themselves from a much-publicized sneer at American’s “black

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<sup>111</sup> *The Nazi Olympics: Berlin, 1936*, Teacher Guide, Exhibit Card 6.

<sup>112</sup> Riordan and Krüger, data from table on page 8.

<sup>113</sup> Timothy Kelly, “Stealing Hitler’s Show,” *The New York Times Upfront* 133:1 (September 4, 2000), 33–34.

<sup>114</sup> *The Nazi Olympics: Berlin, 1936*, Teacher Guide, Exhibit Card 8.

auxiliaries,” they were reprimanded by the ministry. There was, in the words of Hans Joachim Teichler, a “temporary suspension of a core part of Nationalist Socialist ideology.”<sup>115</sup>

This suspension of the basic tenets of Nazi ideology had a purpose on several levels. While it was enacted primarily to dissuade negative reporting and to influence the perceptions of the foreign journalists, tourists, diplomats, and dignitaries who attended the Olympic Games in both Garmisch and, to a greater extent, Berlin, it also had a domestic function. The positive propaganda program was intended to focus Germans on the more positive aspects of their accomplishments in hosting the Olympics, both those of the athletes and of the nation itself. By removing references to anti-Semitism and other objectionable aspects of their ideology, the Nazi leadership sought to celebrate and express German national identity by way of the spectacle and traditional nobility of the Olympic pageant as put on by the German people.

The press was not the only media employed by the Nazis to portray the Berlin Olympics as the regime intended.

The Games were also used as a test for the implementation of a full range of audio-visual propaganda; the first live television coverage of any sports meet was in Berlin at the time of the Olympics. More important, since television was little more than a novelty at the time, was the use of the new short-wave radio transmitters. Specially established so that the German speakers in South America could tune in to the Games, they could later be used for specifically political propaganda.<sup>116</sup>

With the introduction and employment of these technical innovations, even those members of the German *Volk* who were not physically at the Olympics, but were half a world or farther away from Berlin, could identify with and revel in the glory of the *Vaterland*. “The Olympic radio transmissions made use of the enthusiasm of the ethnic Germans, particularly in southern Brazil and Chile, to search for the new German radio stations and thus develop a new radio connection to the fatherland.”<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Pierre Arnaud, and James Riordan, eds., *Sport and International Politics: The Impact of Fascism and Communism on Sport* (London: E & FN SPON, 1998), 45.

<sup>116</sup> Krüger and Murray, 27.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.



**b. Leni Riefenstahl and the Film “Olympia”**

While television and shortwave radio were fairly new innovations at the time of the Olympics, the Nazis’ employment of Leni Riefenstahl to record both the Games on film was not a novel practice for the regime.

[I]n 1933, she was appointed “Film Expert to the Nazi Party.” She filmed the Party rally in Nuremberg that year, *Victory of Faith*, [which] served as a rehearsal for her most famous propaganda film, *Triumph of the Will*, a documentary of the Nuremberg rally of September 1934... The same techniques that produced this undeniable homage to the Nazi movement were to create an equally effective panegyric to the Olympic Games. Leni Riefenstahl has described the film’s theme as “*schönheit*,” a celebration of the grace and beauty of the body, the idea of beauty itself, with no political purpose. The first half of the film links classical antiquity and beauty with contemporary images – tense muscles and strained faces. The use of slow motion, especially in the diving sequences, achieves the spell-binding effects. Like *Triumph of the Will*, *Olympia* creates an extraordinary atmosphere, well above ordinary life.<sup>118</sup>

Because of Riefenstahl’s previous works and her employment by and favor with the highest echelons of the Third Reich, *Olympia* was, and still is today, seen primarily as a Nazi propaganda film. “This film has often been described as a triumph of propaganda, but this is less than just. What it did was to record a triumph of propaganda, brilliantly capturing the militaristic nature of the organization, particularly the opening ceremony; but its enduring merit is as a creative work of art.”<sup>119</sup> It may perhaps be fairer to consider *Olympia* a “German” propaganda film than a Nazi one, although the distinction raises larger issues of ideology and art that lie outside the frame of this study:

It is true that in the unexpurgated version, some two minutes are devoted to Hitler and the Nazi movement; it is also true that its celebration of sport as a ritual, a heroic superhuman feat, represents an element present in the Nazi philosophy. On the other hand, shots of Jesse Owens and other Negro athletes are treated as lovingly as those of more Nordic types – not exactly a Nazi point of view. It seems clear that, if Leni Riefenstahl had an

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<sup>118</sup> Judith Holmes, *Olympiad 1936: Blaze of Glory for Hitler’s Reich* (New York: Ballantine Books, Inc., 1971), 141.

<sup>119</sup> Duff Hart-Davis, *Hitler’s Games: The 1936 Olympics* (New York, Harper and Row Publishers, 1986), 242.

obsession with health, strength, and beauty which may have been peculiarly Germanic, it was not necessarily “Nazi.”<sup>120</sup>

Thus, consideration of the film alternates between admiration for Riefenstahl’s cinematographic innovations and vision in filming sporting events, her celebration of the beauty of the human body in action, and the propaganda value and intent of the film. “One of the most exciting things to emerge from the XI Games was a movie, *Olympia*, produced by a young German film maker, Leni Riefenstahl. This film, like its producer, has long been a subject of controversy, being alternately damned as Nazi propaganda and praised as a non-political hymn to physical perfection.”<sup>121</sup> “It is to Leni Riefenstahl that we owe the memorable record of the Berlin Olympics. Her film, on which she worked with exceptional intensity and devotion, pioneered new heights in the sphere of visual sports reporting, and is still seen as a masterpiece today. Far more than a mere documentary, it glorifies the human body, and man as an athlete, with a boldness of vision never before achieved in the cinema.”<sup>122</sup>

This vision and celebration of the noble aspects of the human body connect to and resonate with the purpose and value in building a German national identity that Carl Diem saw in the torch relay. *Olympia* brought to film the link between the Germany’s Olympic athletes with the classical notion of beauty.

[F]or Riefenstahl, and indeed for the Nazis, the purpose of the film was to make explicit the supposed link between Germany and Ancient Greece. The Reich was not only the present home of the Olympics, but the true repository for all the virtues of the Ancient Greeks. As Lewald had said in his speech in a typical piece of Nazi cod[e] history, the Olympic torch created “a real and spiritual bond between our German fatherland and the sacred places of Greece founded nearly 4,000 years ago by Nordic immigrants.”<sup>123</sup>

According to that interpretation and others, Leni Riefenstahl’s efforts perpetuated the role of beauty and the link between Germany and classical antiquity long

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<sup>120</sup> Holmes, 147.

<sup>121</sup> Holmes, 138.

<sup>122</sup> Hart-Davis, 240.

<sup>123</sup> Guy Walters, *Berlin Games: How the Nazis Stole the Olympic Dream* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2006), 193.

after the Games themselves had ended in Berlin. “[W]hile Leni Riefenstahl’s classic, *Olympia*, would take two years to reach the general public, previews were readily available in newsreel and other shorts.”<sup>124</sup> These previews, however, did not do the completed film justice. It was more the presence of Riefenstahl and her many cameramen and support staff at the Olympic venues that served to further emphasize the importance placed on the events at both the domestic and the international level. “For in August of 1936 Leni Riefenstahl was wholly devoted to the production of *the* Olympic film. Her cinematic record of the Nazi Olympics would bring the splendor of this unique festival to the whole German race and to the whole world.”<sup>125</sup>

In the twenty-first century, the movie *Olympia* is still highly regarded for its artistic qualities, coordinated music, innovative camera angles, and cinematography, the same qualities that made it a vehicle for the celebration and identification of a German national identity that transcended the boundaries of Nazi ideology. Leni Riefenstahl’s efforts in creating *Olympia*, against the backdrop of the Berlin Olympics, served to further inculcate the general populace with the ideals of Nazi German national identity. To be sure, the success of Nazi aesthetic ideals lay in the manner in which they seized on existing ideas of German nationhood in the realm of beauty, sport, the ideal human body, and rendered them a powerful force of mass politics. This phenomenon is present, too, in Riefenstahl’s conflicted biography.

## **G. THE 1936 OLYMPICS – VICTORY FOR THE NAZIS AND NOTIONS OF GERMAN NATIONAL IDENTITY?**

### **1. Domestic Assessment**

In the end, was all the effort, expense, and energy really worth it? How successful was the Berlin Olympics as a tool for shaping German national identity and the public’s perceptions of it, both domestically and in the international arena? To varying degrees, the Berlin Games were a victory for the Nazis, both in the political and the athletic arena. First and foremost, they were a success with the German people.

The extent of the Games’ appeal to the German people is evidenced by the fact that of the 1,200,000 visitors who flocked to Berlin during those

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<sup>124</sup> Walters.

<sup>125</sup> Mandell, 251.

sixteen days, only 150,000 were foreigners; all the rest were Germans, including thousands of Strength Through Joy members. They crowded on to the 1,000 special trains to Berlin; each day saw anywhere from 60,000 to 145,000 people entering the city. The GOC (German Olympic Committee) alone employed 5,000 people during the course of the Games.<sup>126</sup>

As hosts of the Olympic Games the Germans showed show both themselves and the world who they wished to be as imagined by the national socialist regime.

Inside Germany, the Olympic Games of 1936 can be considered one of the emotional highlights of the Nazi period. At this time, more than any other, the Nazi slogan *Ein Volk, Ein Reich, Ein Führer* (one folk, one empire, one leader) was a living reality. There was almost complete approval. The German people liked their Olympic Games. This was the way Germans liked to see themselves: open to the world, tolerant, splendid hosts, perfect organizers.<sup>127</sup>

The Olympics helped consolidate the notion of German national identity under the Nazi aegis, with Hitler as the undisputed leader of Germany. “The 1936 Olympics consolidated Hitler’s popularity at home and with German-speaking people abroad. The absence of any serious boycott and a virtually incident-free running of the Games led Germans to believe that their new regime was universally admired.”<sup>128</sup> And admiration for the regime was easily translated into admiration for Germany itself and its people. With the Berlin Olympics as the capstone, 1936 brought Germany numerous events that further instilled Germans with national pride.

Nineteen-thirty-six had, in fact, been a year in which the new Germans demonstrated to themselves and to the world their rapid maturation and their capacity for heroism. The winter Olympics in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, while not especially victorious for individual German athletes, had demonstrated to the heretofore isolated Germans that they were not pariahs, that the world would participate in and enjoy a festive occasion for which the National Socialists were hosts. The Rhineland invasion had shown the Germans that their leader could right old wrongs

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<sup>126</sup> Holmes, 150.

<sup>127</sup> Krüger and Murray, 27.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

without fear of international reprisals. Max Schmeling had in single combat<sup>129</sup> symbolically proven the power of the inspired German race.<sup>130</sup>

Under the direction of the Nazi leadership and the German Olympic Committee, the German people had worked hard to make the Games a success, both for themselves and for the world at large. This effort was not a waste. “The athletes and millions of non-political spectators thoroughly enjoyed the Games. They had no mixed feelings about them. They had witnessed the greatest show on earth to which all future Olympic Games would be measured. A large sports meet had been turned into a super show.”<sup>131</sup> “Small wonder that thousands of ordinary tourists left with a sense of aesthetic fulfillment, a conviction of German efficiency, and a vague impression that National Socialism was not the horror that they had imagined it to be on the basis of newspaper or newsreel reports.”<sup>132</sup>

## **2. International Assessment**

In light of their efforts in the Berlin Olympics, Germany and the Third Reich were seen in a much more positive light. The world’s praise served to reinforce the positive view the Germans had of themselves and their country.

According to one American journalist, John T. McGovern, the highlight and main surprise of the Games had been the “social achievement of the German nation,” which had pulled itself up from the gutter after only three years of the new regime. In spite of the country’s well-known difficulties, he wrote, “We have just seen the German people play perfectly the role of a gracious, fair, and generous host, literally to millions of visitors and to competitors from 52 separate nations, at the same time providing the most elaborate and magnificent architectural setting and comprehensive games facilities and equipment that the world has yet seen.”<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> On 19 June 1936, Max Schmeling defeated Joe Louis in twelve rounds of boxing at Yankee Stadium (Mandell, 117–121).

<sup>130</sup> Mandell, 280.

<sup>131</sup> Peter J. Graham, and Horst Ueberhorst, eds., *The Modern Olympics* (West Point, NY: Leisure Press, 1976), 185.

<sup>132</sup> Allen Guttman, *The Games Must Go On: Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 79.

<sup>133</sup> Hart-Davis, 228.

“A domestic result of the Berlin Olympics, then, was a great increase in German self-confidence.”<sup>134</sup> This increased self-confidence bolstered German citizens’ national pride and furthered the domestic support for the Nazi regime.

Not all who attended the Games were so positive in their assessment of the German’s efforts, however. While no one disputed that a Herculean effort on the part of the German people had been made to ensure success, some expressed concern about the Germans’ machine-like efficiency and drive. “Personal reactions were on the whole complimentary, though almost every observer mentioned the ruthless efficiency with which the Games were run; events scheduled to take place at two o’clock started at two and not a minute later. ‘The whole organization was one vast machine, a machine which lacked a little the human touch so desirable in international meetings’ was the way the official British report put it.”<sup>135</sup> Others expressed a concern about the German national pride evidenced at the Games. “Yet, even without seeing any direct evidence of persecution, some visitors were worried by the furious energy manifest in the incessant parading and marching, and by the strength of the national feeling which repeatedly boiled up in the stadium.”<sup>136</sup>

Still others saw in the resurging German national pride, built on a successful Olympic Games, a dangerous harbinger of things to come.

Sir Robert Vansittart<sup>137</sup> felt exactly the same, and expressed the anxiety which the Games had aroused in him with chilling prescience: “These tense, intense people are going to make us look a C 3 nation if we elect to continue haphazard, and they will want to do something with this stored energy... These people are the most formidable opposition that has ever been formulated; they are in strict training now, not for the Olympic Games, but for breaking some other and emphatically unsporting world records, and perhaps the world as well.”<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Mandell, 281.

<sup>135</sup> Holmes, 158.

<sup>136</sup> Hart-Davis, 226.

<sup>137</sup> Sir Robert Vansittart was the permanent undersecretary at the British Foreign Office in 1936 (Walters, 87).

<sup>138</sup> Hart-Davis, 227.

In his November 15, 1935, cable to the State Department, George Messersmith also speculated on the impact that the Berlin Games would have on future world events: “There are many wise and well-informed observers in Europe who believe that the holding or the non-holding of the Olympic Games in Berlin in 1936 will play an important part in determining political developments in Europe.”<sup>139</sup>

### **3. Jesse Owens vs. the Overall Athletic Success of German Athletes in Berlin – Implications for German National Identity and Pride**

Athletically, thanks to the lavish attention paid to Jesse Owens’s individual performance in winning four gold medals at Berlin and the attendant media interest in the irony of his victories, the success of Germany’s athletes on the fields of Olympic competition in 1936 are generally given less credence than the facts bear out.

The weak link was on the Olympic field of play. Inherent in the Germans’ scheme to demonstrate Aryan superiority was the premise that their representatives’ performances would be superior. This would demonstrate that German efficiency in the community and industry was transferable to human achievement in sport. With the spectacular victories by black athletes (whom the Germans derogatorily termed “auxiliaries”), notably by Jesse Owens, these hopes were negated. The Nazis’ plans, while not wasted, did not achieve their desired goals and Hitler’s government had to be content with global acceptance of German efficiency, rather than Aryan supremacy.<sup>140</sup>

Jesse Owens’ achievements may have prevented total German supremacy in the track and field events, but the German team dominated the overall results of the competition; garnering thirty-three gold medals – followed by the United States with twenty-four, twenty-six silver medals – again followed next by the United States with twenty, and thirty bronze medals – trailed by the United States with twelve.<sup>141</sup>

This overall team performance capped all of the German successes of 1936. However, the scorecards of the summer Olympics meant more than all of the earlier victories. The tables of points kept by the sports reporters in Germany and abroad demonstrated that (1) Nazi Germany did better than the United States; (2) Italy outperformed France; (3) Japan did far

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<sup>139</sup> Report by George S. Messersmith, November 15, 1935,” 862.4063 Olympic Games/57, National Archives, Washington, D.C., 11–12.

<sup>140</sup> Kristine Toohey, and A. J. Veal. *The Olympic Games: A Social Science Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: CABI Publishing, 2000), 91.

<sup>141</sup> Hart-Davis, 246.

better than Great Britain. Consequently the inescapable implication was that fascism and totalitarianism were more effective mobilizers of human energies.<sup>142</sup>

The success of the German athletes not only bolstered the reputation of the totalitarian regime, it also contributed to the euphoria of German national pride in citizens and leadership alike.

Also entranced by the Nazi Olympics was the world's "man of the hour." Adolf Hitler, who was entirely unathletic and was no classical scholar, became convinced that his athletes' triumphs were omens, portents whose significance was clear. The athletes, like other exceptional Germans, were to inspire the whole German *Volk*. The new master race would lead a cultural movement towards accomplishments whose glorious, though dimly divined, outlines suggested that the Germans of the future might surpass the greatest cultural creators of all time. Inspired, hard-working, unerringly-led Germans would rival the classical Greeks as inventors of new beauty and joy-intoxicated styles of life. The athletes were symbolically to embody German physical supremacy. After the German Olympiad they were cast by Hitler as "the forerunners of new types of Germans... tough, well-formed men and graceful women."<sup>143</sup>

## H. CONCLUSION

Hosting the Berlin Olympics, once briefly considered a burden of the Weimar past by the Nazi leadership, turned out to be one of the most successful means to form German national identity in the Third Reich. After August 1936, the lessons learned in hosting the Games were carried forth in other venues. "Sport became more unapologetically a paramilitary activity; the organizational and athletic lessons of the XIth Olympiad (themselves indebted to Nazi experience with the Nuremberg rallies) were applied to promoting more effective and more specifically Nazi festivities."<sup>144</sup>

The success of the Berlin Olympics only whetted Hitler's appetite for grandiose pageants and spectacles that would serve to rally and express German national identity and pride, increasingly built around a racially focused national identity.

Hitler's consistent seeking of grandeur soon became apparent in his plans for German sport. The regime inaugurated National Socialist sporting

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<sup>142</sup> Mandell, 280.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 291.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 283.



meets (*Nationalsozialistische Kampfspiele*) which, like the original Olympiads of the classical Greeks, were to be racially exclusive. These new, racially proud athletic festivals were the occasion for greatly expanding the temple complex outside the holy city in southern Germany. Nuremberg was increasingly the focus of Hitler's architectural ambitions... The favored architect was Albert Speer who had been instructed to prepare colossal settings for the "national" or "German" Olympics. The new and satisfactory stadium, itself but a part of the whole Nuremberg *Reichssportfeld*, would hold four times as many as the Berlin stadium and would be by far the largest facility for public spectacle ever built or envisioned.

Buoyed by the success of the Berlin Olympics, Hitler envisioned in spring 1937, the impact that German know-how could have on the future of the sports festival that he had once had to be convinced to host.

Hitler mused about the future of the international Olympic Games. Speer informed him that the vast structure [the new stadium in Nuremberg] would not meet the specifications of the International Olympic Committee or, for that matter, the requirements of conventionally conceived athletic events. It was just too big. Confident in his visions of the future Hitler brushed these international considerations aside: "No matter. In 1940 the Olympic Games will take place in Tokyo. But thereafter they will take place in Germany for all time to come, in this stadium. And then we will determine the measurements of the athletic field." The stadium was to be entirely finished in 1945.<sup>145</sup>

While the 400,000-seat stadium in Nuremberg was never completed, the Berlin Olympic Stadium did survive the ravages of World War II. What had been a material monument to Hitler's grandiose visions of the incorporation of sport into Nazi ideology and spectacle and celebration of Germany national identity in the Third Reich would now serve in the future as a sports venue for other times and contexts.

As the twentieth century progressed into the twenty-first century, the Olympic Stadium was the site of numerous soccer matches, concerts, and even American football games when the National Football League Europe's Berlin Thunder made the Olympic Stadium their home in 2003.<sup>146</sup> But, these scattered

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<sup>145</sup> Mandell, 292–293.

<sup>146</sup> NFL Europe's Berlin Thunder website, <http://www.nfleurope.com/teams/history/BER> (accessed November 2006).

and isolated events that took place within the Olympic Stadium after World War II did not carry with them the implications for and expressions of Germany national identity that the 1936 Olympics did. The ghosts of the past lingered even as new memories accumulated with the events hosted within the stadium.

Berlin's next big chance to shine in the international sports arena came when Germany was selected to host the 2006 World Cup. The Olympic Stadium was chosen as the site for the championship match that would cap the tournament. Germany and Berlin would again occupy center stage to the world. Would Germans be able to balance the lessons learned, both good and bad, from the Nazis' efforts in 1936 and how would it impact German notions of national identity and patriotism?

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### III. CASE STUDY OF THE 2006 WORLD CUP

#### A. INTRODUCTION

A laconic British journalist at home in a globalized world observed in mid-2006:

All through the [2006] World Cup, the word *Berlin* has had a special symbolic resonance. “Berlin! Berlin! Wir fahren nach Berlin!” chanted the German fans constantly. Well, the ultimate truth – “We’re on our way to the third-place match in Stuttgart!” – wouldn’t hit the spot as a rallying cry, would it?

However much one tries to erase extraneous items of history, the notion of marching towards Berlin, for purposes of conquest and capture, cannot be separated from the past. Seventeen years ago I visited the unreconstructed Olympic Stadium in Berlin on a misty autumn morning, just as East Germany and its wretched wall were finally being reduced to rubble.

Maybe it was the weather, or maybe it was the portentousness of the times, but I thought it was the most ghostly place I had ever seen. Now the stadium has been rebuilt, and tomorrow it will stage the World Cup final. I returned there last month for a dire qualifying match between Ukraine and Tunisia, and it seemed a functional modern stadium: not even a particularly atmospheric one.

The architects have been sensitive enough in retaining historic features, such as the marathon runner’s gate. But somehow the memories of Hitler and Jesse Owens and all the saluting and goose-stepping seem to have been carted away in the skips. To my mind, the ghosts had fled.<sup>147</sup>

On July 9, 2006, nearly seventy years to the day since the opening of the 1936 Berlin Olympics, the Olympic Stadium was the site of another international sporting event, the final match of the 2006 World Cup. That game featured France and Italy, culminating with Italy’s World Cup victory via a 6–4 penalty-kick shoot-out. Germany, the host country, placed a surprising third, with what most pundits considered a mediocre team unable to get even that far. Its performance, combined with the positive feedback regarding Germany’s hosting of the Cup, ignited the hearts and minds of Germans everywhere with a rekindled sense of national pride not seen since the heady days and hopes of 1989’s reunification.

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<sup>147</sup> Matthew Engel, “Final is Only the Beginning for Berlin,” *Financial Times* (July 8, 2006), 12.

This chapter discusses various instances of nationalism and sport in Germany during the roughly sixty-plus years since 1945 that demonstrate the lines of both continuity and discontinuity. While the emphasis falls largely on the major features of discontinuity, especially in regard to politics and society, it is worth noting the degree to which sport is still key to understanding how Germans perceive themselves and how others perceive them in twenty-first century Europe.

## **B. POST-WORLD WAR II GERMAN NATIONAL IDENTITY AND THE OLYMPICS**

To some degree, the current positive feelings and renewed sense of a national identity recall those of 1936. Overall, however, they seem radically different, in light of the transformed nature of both German and international politics, to say nothing of the altered nature of German citizenship and Germany's identity in the world since 1949. Their experience of a militaristic, genocidal dictatorship, a widespread war, the Holocaust, the east-west division of their country, and its eventual reunification amid the reconstruction of Europe were transformative events in the German experience and everyday lives of the people. This chapter highlights the role the past plays from the perspective of sport and its expression of German national identity, especially in the euphoric Nazi celebration in Berlin in 1936 at the Olympic Games and, many years later, at the 2006 World Cup.

Like many of his grandiose plans, Hitler's vision of Germany as the host of the Olympics did not come to pass. Historic events doomed not only his plans for Nuremberg's huge, 400,000-seat stadium but also other Nuremberg party structures as well. Germany's defeat in World War II left it destitute and the 1936 Olympic facilities, like most of the country, in varying states of ruin and disrepair. In addition to the physical destruction, Germany was divided into two parts, East and West, according to the sectors occupied by the Allied victors when the fighting stopped. West Germany – the American, British, and French occupation zones – comprised the FRG created in May 1949; East Germany – the Russian occupation zone – became the GDR in October 1949.

In the political and social upheaval that Germany as a divided country now faced, sport continued to represent a slender thread of national cohesion and international prestige, both to those within the country and among the international community. "The

West Germans set up their national Olympic committee on September 24, 1949, one day after the establishment of the Federal Republic.”<sup>148</sup> It was not met with open arms, however. The Nazi atrocities, now revealed for the entire world to see, and the wounds inflicted by war – physical, psychological, economic, cultural, moral, social, and emotional – were still fresh, even in the world of sport. “[Avery] Brundage [vice president of the IOC] was eager to have the Germans back in the Olympics and was shocked at the Copenhagen session in 1950 to find ‘so much bitterness and hatred directed at Germany.’”<sup>149</sup> As president of the American Olympic Committee in 1936, Brundage, it should be remembered, had successfully campaigned for the United States’ participation at the Berlin Games. A passionate believer in the transcendence of the Olympic ideal over politics, he had believed what his friends and colleagues on the German Organizing and Olympic committees were telling him about the state of affairs in Germany prior to the Berlin Olympics.

That endurance of what some historians now see as a kind of exclusive, vaguely anti-Semitic trans-Atlantic elite during this period was hardly a solitary example. Rotary International, a service and social organization which originated in Chicago in 1905, was an exclusive group that took hold in Europe initially in the late 1920s. “Rotary was a widespread European phenomenon by the mid-1930s, with 300 branches in Great Britain and on the continent. And in the latter area it so clearly appealed to a different social constituency than in the United States – an Old World high bourgeoisie rather than the New World middle class.”<sup>150</sup> In Germany, after World War II, the Rotarians, almost snuffed out by the Nazis, made a comeback.

So, Rotary was back in Germany by 1949, earlier than anybody expected, except onetime German Rotarians. With the aristocratic members fled or dead, the Jewish bourgeoisie extinguished, and the professionals and business elites scrabbling to deal with the material cares of everyday life having little time for cultural self-contemplation, the German club members promised to be model international citizens. Assiduous about

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<sup>148</sup> Allen Guttman, *The Games Must Go On: Avery Brundage and the Olympic Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 151.

<sup>149</sup> Guttman, 151.

<sup>150</sup> Victoria De Grazia, *Irresistible Empire: America’s Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005), 25.

measuring itself against international norms – for strict attendance, recruiting younger members, increasing contacts with foreigners, and sponsoring community service programs, the movement spread rapidly during the 1960s, especially in the prospering industrial and commercial centers of the Rhine and Ruhr.<sup>151</sup>

At the same time that Rotary returned to reconnect Germans both with each other and the outside world, Brundage's expression and sentiments in the years immediately after 1945 betrayed the hollowness also of his politics in the era prior to 1939. Brundage's contacts with these old Berlin Olympic associates served to speed up the recognition of West Germany's Olympic committee and diminish the international community's concerns.

Some of it was allayed when Peco Bauwens, vice president of Bonn's new committee, read a statement, apparently drafted by Diem [Carl Diem – the secretary of the Berlin Olympics organizing committee], in which he expressed sorrow for the atrocities committed under Nazi rule. The Executive Board decided unanimously on August 29, 1950, to recommend speedy recognition of the West German committee by the entire IOC. The next opportunity was the IOC session in Vienna in May 1951.<sup>152</sup>

### **1. One German Olympic Team vs. Separate East and West German Teams**

For their part, the East Germans were effective in forcing the IOC to settle a political controversy it preferred to avoid: Should there be one German Olympic Committee or two? Thus, in the early years of the Cold War, sport became a focal point of the ongoing debate: Which Germany, East or West, would represent the German nation? As the divided Germany evolved, there was no clear answer to this question. In the West, the FRG's development rested at least in some measure on the efforts, energy, and convictions of Konrad Adenauer, who had been chancellor from the Republic's inception in 1949 and would remain so until 1963.

In the years from 1949 to 1954, Adenauer held before the German people the vision of a new European order that would be founded on the twin pillars of the Coal and Steel Community and the European Defense Community and upheld by the goodwill of ordinary citizens in all countries. That this vision captured the imagination of Germans was

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<sup>151</sup> De Grazia, 372.

<sup>152</sup> Guttman, 151.

attested by the magnitude of the Chancellor's victory in the elections of 1953, and there is little doubt that his devotion to it helped convince the Western Powers of this reliability and thus speeded up the return of full sovereignty.<sup>153</sup>

Development of the GDR paralleled that in the FRG. “[I]n 1948–1949, when the Cold War began, the Social Unity Party (SED) transformed itself from a radical-democratic mass party to a cadre party of the Stalinist type and became the organizing force in the GDR when it was formally established in October 1949.”<sup>154</sup> Shortly thereafter, the GDR sought to use sport as a means to gain recognition for its own legitimacy as the representative of the German people. “On April 22, 1951, two weeks before the IOC session, the East Germans founded *their* national Olympic committee and informed both the IOC and the West German committee of their willingness to cooperate in the best interests of the Olympic movement.”<sup>155</sup> For his part, Avery Brundage, in keeping with his conviction that the Olympics were inherently apolitical, also became convinced that there should be only one Germany represented at the Olympics. “It was his attachment to German culture in general and to his German friends in particular that impelled him to stubbornly seek a single Germany in the world of sports when there were manifestly two Germanys in the domain of politics.”<sup>156</sup>

The West Germans saw themselves as eminently capable of representing both East and West Germany in the realm of the Olympics, a policy on sport that they derived from the so-called Hallstein doctrine, named for the FRG's first foreign minister in the mid 1950s. Under the cover of FRG's diplomatic relations with other nations, Hallstein sought to maintain a monopoly on the representation of Germany. If another nation recognized the GDR, the FRG would break relations with that nation. This policy remained in effect from the early 1950s until the late 1960s.<sup>157</sup> “While the Federal Republic claimed to represent all Germans, even those living in what they referred to in

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<sup>153</sup> Gordon A. Craig, *The Germans* (New York: New American Library, 1982), 46.

<sup>154</sup> Craig, 50.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

<sup>156</sup> Guttman, 150.

<sup>157</sup> Henry A. Turner, Jr., *The Two Germanies Since 1945* (Yale, CT: Yale University Press, 1987), 87–88, 92–93.



those days as the “Soviet Occupied Zone,” the German Democratic Republic maintained that it was a completely independent state with rights to diplomatic representation, United Nations membership, and, of course, its own Olympic team.”<sup>158</sup> Thus, the East Germans placed nearly as high an emphasis on having their own national Olympic team as they did on political recognition via the UN and diplomatic means. An East German Olympic team, they believed, would help build East German national and state identity, both within and outside the GDR. The IOC “attempt[ed] to bring the two Germanys together as – for Olympic purposes – one nation.”<sup>159</sup>

The notion of one team represented by athletes from both Germanys was not immediately or easily embraced by either West or East Germany at a time in the Cold War when the Korean War was deepening hostility between the two blocs. Delegates from both sides met repeatedly with the IOC to try and hammer out some sort of agreement. Finally, in Lausanne, Switzerland, on May 22, 1951, “the East Germans agreed to be part of the team which Bonn planned to send to the 1952 games in Helsinki. The agreement was signed, but celebrations were premature. When the Communist delegation returned to the German Democratic Republic, it was berated for its weakness and the agreement was repudiated...The German team which competed in Helsinki consisted entirely of athletes from the West.”<sup>160</sup> This temporary setback did not deter the East Germans as they continued, with the support of the Soviet representative to the IOC, to campaign for recognition of their Olympic committee. “On June 17, [1955,] the national Olympic committee of the German Democratic Republic was accorded provisional recognition by a vote of 27–7. They were told, however, that they must contest the 1956 games as part of a combined German team.”<sup>161</sup>

This time, the East Germans agreed, subsuming their desire for a separate national team to the opportunity for GDR athletes to at least compete. “The German team at Cortina d’Ampezzo was made up of 58 *Wintersportler* from the West and 18 from the

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<sup>158</sup> Guttman, 151–152.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

East; at Melbourne, the numbers were 138 and 37.”<sup>162</sup> This arrangement allowed the citizens of both West and East Germany to cheer on either their own athletes only or those of a “united Germany.” The 1960 Olympic Games in Rome had a similar set-up, but this time there was more internal controversy over the symbols of the single German team.

Struggling to achieve diplomatic recognition on all fronts, the German Democratic Republic wanted to fly its own flag, which was anathema to the West Germans, who still maintained that they alone represented *all* Germans. Brundage suggested that both use the black-red-gold flag common to both, but with the Olympic rings instead of the hammer and calipers which were emblazoned upon the center of the Communists’ banner. The two sides agreed, the East quickly and the West reluctantly, only after Daume and von Halt were able to calm the enraged Adenauer.<sup>163</sup>

## **2. The German Flag: The Olympics and National Identity**

That that temporary modification to the flag would create a furor is understandable considering its importance as a symbol of national identity. While adding the Olympic rings to the plain and simple black, red, and gold FRG standard may not have seemed very significant, it was a concession that would have troubled most citizens of any nation that equated national identity with its flag. No other nation competing in the Olympics was asked to make such a compromise with a symbol of their national identity. But, strong identification with the flag had long been a significant element of German national identity.

The flag, too, had been one of the most ancient political symbols known to the armies of Roman, ancient Germans, Arabs, and to the Middle Ages in general. It played an important part in the formation of the secular cults of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Germany... Earlier on, the possession of a flag itself was important, not its color. However, when the flag became a national symbol rather than a dynastic one, its colors and patterns became of prime importance. The Free Corps, which fought against Napoleon, as well as the student fraternity movement, invented the black-red-gold color combination which was to become symbolic of a unified Reich. These men believed that the flags of the “Holy Roman

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<sup>162</sup> Guttman, 154

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 154.

Empire of the German Nation” had possessed these colors, although in fact a set color scheme was unknown to earlier ages.<sup>164</sup>

The Nazis heightened the symbology of the national flag. Hitler himself created the now-infamous swastika-emblazoned flag that was so much in evidence during the Berlin Olympics and the reign of the Third Reich. And the right wing in Germany made an issue of the red-white-black colors, in contrast to the black-red-gold colors of the Weimar Republic. With the defeat of the Nazis in World War II, this emblem of the Third Reich disappeared, as the fledgling democracy of the FRG returned to the black, red, and gold colors associated with the era of a Prussian uprising against French invaders and with the national movement both in 1848 and 1918. Thus, the decision by both West and East Germany to accept the Olympic-ringed flag was a concession about one particular national symbol that allowed, in effect, another, a national Olympic team, even though that was shared by the “other” Germany.

### **3. Separate East and West Olympic Teams**

This Olympic compromise continued through the 1964 Olympics, despite political tensions that culminated in 1961 in the building of the Berlin Wall. As the 1960s wore on and a spirit of reduced tension took hold in East-West German relations, it became harder and harder for the world and for Germans themselves to, in any sense, view the two Germanys as “united.” Eventually, in “Madrid, on October 6, 1965, the IOC gave up a little more ground – the German Democratic Republic was granted the right to enter a separate team at Mexico City in 1968, but both teams were to fly the flag with the Olympic rings and to share the choral theme from Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony as their victory anthem.”<sup>165</sup> In 1968, the split became complete, as the FRG began to distance itself from the Hallstein doctrine and to move toward a diplomatic acceptance of and a grudging recognition of not only the Poles and Czechs, but also of the GDR.

At the 67th Session in Mexico City in 1968, the IOC finally voted 44–4 for full and complete and unqualified acceptance of the German Democratic Republic, with its own team, its own flag, its own anthem. When in 1972 the East Germans marched into the Olympisches Stadion in Munich, they “achieved their ultimate objective”; they quite literally flaunted their flag

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<sup>164</sup> Mosse, 42–43.

<sup>165</sup> Guttman, 156.

before their hosts from the Federal Republic, who had to publicly acknowledge East German legitimacy as well as East German athletic prowess.

#### **4. The 1972 Munich Olympics**

Yet it was Munich, West Germany, not a city in East Germany that played host to the world and the 1972 Summer Olympics. “The choice of the Bavarian capital was meant to be symbolic as well as practical... Now, a new Germany, reborn from the ashes of the old, wanted to demonstrate to the world that there was indeed democracy where dictators had once ruled. The *heitere Spiele* (cheerful games) were to erase memories of Nazi misuse of sports. The emphasis was to be where Coubertin had meant it to be.”<sup>166</sup> This need to show both itself and the world that the FRG had put its past behind it was not unlike the purpose behind the Nazis’ embrace of their role as hosts of the Berlin Olympics, also to show that they had overcome mistakes – economic, social, and cultural – and the faltering government and country that they had inherited from the Weimar Republic. The Munich Olympics provided an opportunity for both the West and the East to further distance themselves from their combined history in the Third Reich and, through their Olympic teams, to refine their national identities and, in the case of the FRG, its performance as host to the world.

In Munich, flags were once again in the news, but, this time, were almost the undoing of the Games. In 1966, when Munich was selected, both West and East Germany were flying the Olympic flag at the games. While Germans considered this concession acceptable for a non-German Olympics locale like Mexico City, many now asked, “How could the FRG host an Olympic Games but not hoist its own flag? The foreign office feared that having to fly the German Olympic flag rather than that of the Federal Republic proper would be viewed as a ‘sort of national sacrifice,’ with ‘extensive and long-lasting psychological consequences.’”<sup>167</sup> If West Germany was to fly its own flag at the Munich Games, was not East Germany also justified in wanting to fly its flag? The FRG had to decide: either give up the Olympic Games and thereby avoid the flying of the

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<sup>166</sup> Guttman, 250.

<sup>167</sup> Alan Tomlinson and Christopher Young, eds., *National Identity and Global Sports Events: Culture, Politics, and Spectacle in the Olympics and the Football World Cup*, SUNY Series on Sport, Culture, and Social Relations (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 120.

GDR flag; or consider it a victory to simply be able to fly the flag that represented the West German team, an acceptable trade-off for the East Germany's being able to do the same. Ultimately, the value of hosting the Olympic Games outweighed their protest against a public recognition of the GDR flag. There would be two German flags at the Munich Games.

“The summer games opened in a joyous mood. Bavarian bands went um-pah-pah and yodelers yodeled and the boys and girls danced their way through the impressively modern Olympic stadium. Daume and his fellow organizers were able to take satisfaction in their display of efficiency without inflexibility or impersonality.”<sup>168</sup> There was a conscious effort to demilitarize and inject the notion of *Volk* into the Olympics. “A civil orchestra, replacing the traditional military band, fittingly greeted each team with a musical welcome.”<sup>169</sup> “It was the first time that athletes entering an Olympic stadium had not been accompanied by a military band – a fact noted with some relief by Sebastian Haffner in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, August 28, 1972: ‘Marching steps took a break – a remarkable event, especially in Germany.’”<sup>170</sup> This move away from a military presence was carried out in other aspects, along with the inculcation of a folksy and comfortable atmosphere of the “cheerful games.” The ceremonies symbolized the tolerance and multicultural dimension of FRG society of the early 1970s, especially the era of new beginnings associated with the Social-Liberal government of Willy Brandt, notable for its opening up to Central and Eastern Europe.

The Olympic champion eight-man crew of 1968 carried the Olympic flag, instead of soldiers as was the custom of earlier games. Mexican dance groups, symbolizing the connection with the 1968 Games, Bavarian folk dancers, and Munich school children displayed a colorful demonstration. Using wreaths, they transmitted the folk game serenity besetting the Opening Ceremony. Though precisely organized, it did not appear to be artificially designed or enforced.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> Guttman, 250.

<sup>169</sup> Peter J. Graham and Horst Ueberhorst, eds., *The Modern Olympics* (West Point, NY: Leisure Press, 1976), 202.

<sup>170</sup> Tomlinson and Young, 128.

<sup>171</sup> Graham and Ueberhorst, 202–203.

For the most part, the atmosphere of the “cheerful games” carried over to the athletic venues. “[T]he sporting events of the Munich Games ran very smoothly. The audience was quite fair and decent, honoring outstanding performances regardless of the athlete’s nationality – with one intriguing, but positive exception: the athletes from East Germany were enthusiastically hailed by their Western counterparts. Both the athletes and East German officials seemed, initially, to be surprised.”<sup>172</sup> This feel-good atmosphere of the Munich Olympics was not indicative of all FRG citizens. “Disruption at the Munich Games of 1972, because of internal German politics, was also an intrusive force, although not as tragic as the terrorist assault which occurred during these Games. ‘Demonstrators wielding iron bars battled police for three days outside Munich’s massive sooty Palace of Justice in what Bavarian officials called a leftist plot to disrupt the Olympics.’”<sup>173</sup>

Aside from the domestic disturbances and the pre-Olympic row about flags, the 1972 Munich Olympics may have been as successful as those in Berlin.

[Overall,] the Munich Games were a huge success. Despite high prices, the numerous and varied events were almost completely sold out. The cost of producing the Games established a record, a figure which amounted to 1,972-million German marks (780-million U.S. dollars). Included in this total was DM 1,350 million for building costs in Munich and DM 95 million for construction in Kiel. The organizational expenses totaled DM 527 million (208 million U.S. dollars). The Games not only financed themselves through fund raising, guarantees from the Federal Government, the State of Bavaria and the City of Munich (overall a total of DM 1,286 million), gate and television revenues, but “also made a huge profit” as noted by Daume, President of the Organizing Committee.

The planning, financing, timing, and organizing of the Munich Olympics seem to have been almost perfect, thus making the Games of the XXth Olympiad a remarkable landmark of continuity in the Olympic history. Some interestingly new promising features, such as the colorful artistic design, folk festival tinge, and the light atmosphere of the first week contributed to the success of the Games.<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Graham and Ueberhorst, 200.

<sup>173</sup> Kristine Toohey and A. J. Veal, *The Olympic Games: A Social Science Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: CABI Publishing, 2000), 77.

<sup>174</sup> Graham and Ueberhorst, 204.

That optimism, however, could not keep the reality of world politics at bay, and, once more, the fate of Jews became an issue, this time in a very unpredictable way. The legacy of the Nazi attempt to at first politically exclude and then ultimately exterminate the Jews on a mass scale took place in a new, depressing manifestation. An act of Middle Eastern terrorism and irregular warfare in this capital of the Bavarians wreaked particular damage on the role of sport in Germany that had endured for more than seven decades. Had the horrific events of September 5, 1972, not occurred, the above assessment of the Munich Games may have been the last word. But “the most dreadful tragedy of all Olympic history took place in Munich. This event undeniably identified the 1972 Olympic Games as a ‘landmark’ on the sad side of Olympic history... The Olympic Games of Munich will always, in spite of all serenity, through preparation, and overwhelming sporting and atmospheric success of the first ten days, be remembered as the unhappy Games.”<sup>175</sup> On that day, Palestinian terrorists raided the Israeli Olympic teams’ quarters in the Olympic Village, killing an Israeli coach and taking ten Israeli athletes hostage. Faced with this unexpected catastrophe, FRG officials had to decide “how to respond to the Palestinian demands.”<sup>176</sup> The dire outcome and history would judge how wise that planned response, a surprise counterattack was. “They set the terms of the negotiations with the terrorists and arranged for the move to Fürstfeldbruck airfield at 10:00 P.M. They planned and carried out the mismanaged attack forty minutes later. When the shooting stopped, three of the captors and all of the captives were dead.”<sup>177</sup>

In the aftermath, the IOC and the German Organizing Committee were faced with a difficult choice, whether to finish the Games despite the tragedy or to cancel the remaining events. “To continue despite the atrocity seemed heartless, callous; to abort the celebration was to fulfill the aspirations of the terrorists.”<sup>178</sup> In the end, a decision was made to continue the competition, albeit delayed by a day, and to have a memorial service on the morning of September 6th. “By the time the memorial service was held,

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<sup>175</sup> Graham and Ueberhorst, 206.

<sup>176</sup> Guttman, 252.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

the entire world knew that the rescue mission had failed and that all the hostages were dead.”<sup>179</sup> Avery Brundage spoke on behalf of the IOC “The Games must go on and we must continue our efforts to keep them clean, pure, and honest and try to extend the sportsmanship of the athletic field into other areas. We declare today a day of mourning and will continue all the events one day later than originally scheduled.”<sup>180</sup>

The hosts of the Munich Games were naturally deeply affected by the September 5th event. All the results of West Germany’s hard work and apparent success had seemingly evaporated in a single day. The emergence of terrorism as a factor of FRG life became an almost omnipresent aspect of the 1970s and 1980s. The care taken officially by the German sponsors to reduce the military presence disappeared in a welter of paramilitary police formations.

After the terrorist attack, the closing ceremony, which was supposed to seal a fortnight of *Heiterkeit*, had to be toned down beyond recognition. Security was heightened, and the machine guns that the Germans had hoped to avoid for the sake of their image were very much in evidence. The high that had opened the Games was forever marred by the uncertainty, grief, pain, and sadness that closed the Games. [T]he terrible events of the Munich massacre utterly obliterated the Games organizers’ attempts to rejoice in a new future and once again plunged the present deep into the past... Munich, 1972, it seems, offers a tragic illustration of what Sebald has recently re-emphasized: “Coming to terms with the past may be a contradiction in terms, because the past never gives up.”<sup>181</sup>

A celebration of West and East German national identity through the appearance and performance of their athletes was fated to be forever tinged with the painful memories of the terrorist attack.

## **5. German Olympic Team Performance, 1972–2006**

With respect to the number of awards for excellence in the athletic competitions, and despite the political fallout of the Palestinian terrorist attack, the Munich Games were a success for both the West and the East. Out of the forty-three countries that medaled at

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<sup>179</sup> Guttman, 252..

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 254.

<sup>181</sup> Tomlinson and Young, 129.



the Munich Games, the two teams finished third and fourth, respectively.<sup>182</sup> This was a trend that would continue throughout the ensuing years – while the FRG would not finish ahead of the GDR at either the summer or the winter Olympics, both teams were, for the most part, in the top echelon of medal-winning countries. East Germany consistently finished as the number-two country, with one notable exception: the 1984 Sarajevo Games, in which they were the top medal-winning country.<sup>183</sup> West Germany made a stronger showing at the summer games. Nonetheless, at the winter games they were still a presence, and it was obvious that both countries placed a high emphasis on the success of their athletes at Olympic competitions.

Such was the state of their Olympic performance in both Germanys on the eve of reunification. Olympic success had pride of place in their overall national identity for both the West and the East. As the events of November 1989 unfolded, they brought sweeping changes to every aspect of German society – politics, economics, and culture. The country's ultimate reunification brought together also the military and economic assets of both sides and facilitated the merging of their athletic teams, sport facilities, and support mechanisms under the aegis of one Germany. And the turbulence of reunification efforts saw no decrease in the trend of success in Olympic venues post-1989. In the 1992 and 1996 Summer Games, Germany finished as number three, in 2000 as number five, and in 2004 as number-six of the medal-winning countries.<sup>184</sup> In the Winter Games, German dominance is even more evident, with a top finish in 1992, a third-place finish in 1994, a top finish again in 1998, a second-place finish in 2002, and, most recently, in 2006, again the top medal-winner in Torino.<sup>185</sup>

In light of that history since 1936, Germany has consistently sought and achieved success in Olympic competition. Fielding national teams that produce outstanding performances at the Olympics has long been a source of national pride that feeds a

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<sup>182</sup> Official Website of the Olympic Movement, [http://www.olympic.org/uk/index\\_uk.asp](http://www.olympic.org/uk/index_uk.asp) (accessed November 2006).

<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

national identity defined at least in part by Germany's interactions with its international peers in the field of Olympic competition.

### **C. SOCCER AND GERMAN NATIONAL IDENTITY**

#### **1. German World Cup History**

While the Olympics continue to provide Germany with an outlet for expressing its national pride and identity, since the latter half of the twentieth century, that field has been augmented by the sport of football, especially its venerable World Cup. From its beginning, the Fédération Internationale de Football Association's history has been intertwined with that of Germany. Indeed, Germany sent a representative to FIFA's inaugural meeting in Paris on May 21, 1904.<sup>186</sup> "The aim of this grandiloquently titled body, free from any 'European qualifier'... was to resolve disputes within nations concerning the authority of the national federation or association, and to organize regular international competitions."<sup>187</sup> Over the next decades, FIFA's membership steadily grew. In 1921, Jules Rimet, a Frenchman, took over as FIFA's president, a position he held until 1954. "He is also recognized as the founder of the World Cup, the first world-wide international sporting competition open to amateur and professional alike, first played in 1930."<sup>188</sup>

Though Germany had been involved in FIFA from its inception, in the early twentieth century this did not translate into outstanding performances. Soccer had not been a source of national success in Germany, and even at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, Germany's soccer team did not prove as inspirational as other German athletes.

Adolf Hitler went to see what was probably his first football match during the Berlin Olympics of 1936. He had meant to attend the rowing at Gronau but Albert Forster, the Nazi chief of Danzig, had persuaded him to come and watch Germany thrash little Norway instead. Joseph Goebbels, who watched with Hitler, would write: "The Führer is very excited, I can barely contain myself. A real bath of nerves. The crowd rages. A battle like never before. The game as mass suggestion."

But, to Forster's mortification, Germany lost 2–0. "Not fully deserved," Goebbels noted. Hitler never saw another soccer match again. Only after

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<sup>186</sup> Riordan and Krüger, 29.

<sup>187</sup> Ibid.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., 31.

his era did the German football team become an emblem of the German nation...

Football disappointed the Nazis, yet it was never that important to them, explains Wolfram Pyta, professor of history at Stuttgart University... The Nazi idea of the German nation revolved around soldiers. They were the national heroes. Footballers were scarcely relevant, Pyta says.<sup>189</sup>

Had the German team secured a victory against the Norwegians under Hitler's watchful eye or perhaps gone on to secure a medal in soccer competition in Berlin, the importance of soccer to the Nazis as a vehicle of national identity might have changed.

## 2. The 1954 "Miracle" of Bern

Unlike the continued successful results of German athletes and teams at the Olympics after the end of World War II, Germany's performance on the soccer pitch did not immediately improve. Nonetheless, the World Cup in the early 1950s marked an important milestone in West Germany's legitimacy in the eyes not only of its own citizens but also of Western Europe. Their perspective "changed one Sunday in July 1954 when West Germany beat Hungary in Bern, Switzerland, to win the World Cup... The final whoops of the radio commentator Herbert Zimmerman – 'Aus! Aus! Aus! Aus! The game is over. Germany is world champion!' – entered the national memory."<sup>190</sup>

Finally, after all the evil of the Third Reich, the destruction and ruin at every level of life wrought by World War II, and the subsequent division of the country, there was a manifest expression of German hope and pride. "In a way, the 'miracle' of Bern 1954 mirrored the other German miracle of those years, namely the economic one, and anticipated just by a couple of months West Germany's formal accession into NATO and the completion of its Western integration."<sup>191</sup> Due to the soccer team's victory, pride in the nation was felt throughout West German society.

An 11-year-old pastor's son named Friedrich Christian Delius listened to the game that day. Later he wrote a novel called *The Sunday I Became World Champion*. "I still feel a personal, speechless feeling of victory,"

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<sup>189</sup> Simon Kuper, "The Dutiful Game," *Financial Times* (May 27/28, 2006), W1–W2.

<sup>190</sup> Kuper, W1–W2.

<sup>191</sup> Antonio Missiroli, "European Football Cultures and Their Integration: The 'Short' Twentieth Century," *European Union Institute for Security Studies Website*, Analysis Section, Culture, Sport, Society, No.1 (Spring 2002), 1–20, <http://www.iss-eu.org/new/analysis/analy021.html> (accessed October 2006).

Delius explained, “and I am not alone. For us children the victory was a liberation, perhaps because our fathers, who had survived the war, could finally permit themselves to appear more relaxed and happy.”

Every German of a certain age now has a story of that day. When I asked Bernd Hölzenbein whether playing for the German team that won the World Cup in 1974 had been the highlight of his life, he replied: “Just like everyone I saw the final of ’54, as a small boy, on the only television set within a radius of perhaps 10 kilometres. Those players were my idols... 1954 was a symbol of German resurrection. 1974 was less important.”<sup>192</sup>

What made the World Cup victory even sweeter was its unexpectedness. At that time, the sports venue that most engendered hope for success and served as an avenue of national identity and pride in West Germany was the Olympics. No one gave much credence in 1954 to the probability of the German soccer team winning the World Cup. The victory also lent further authority to a West Germany that suffered from comparisons with the failed first German Republic, and that now saw instances of revived neo-Nazi activity. These occurred in the context of the prosperity and economic miracle that had begun in 1948 with the introduction of the Deutsche Mark by the Western occupiers.

The phrase associated with it [was] “*Wir sind wieder wer*” (We are someone again). Finally postwar Germany could be proud of West Germany, if not the country as a whole. Yet how could the national team come from almost nowhere to captivate the nation? Pyta says it’s because the country had lost all other national symbols. The flag, anthem, military glory, and past martial heroes had been discarded. Germany was the first nation-state without traditional nationalism – until that Sunday in Bern. Pyta goes so far as to call that match “the founding myth” of the Federal Republic.<sup>193</sup>

Pain, shame, guilt, and the weight of history had suspended these normal channels of national identity and pride and made it difficult for most Germans to express any degree of nationalism, as had been done from the time of Germany’s national unification in the mid-nineteenth century until the collapse of the Hitler regime.

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<sup>192</sup> Kuper, W1–W2.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

### 3. Post-1954: Soccer as a Symbol of German Pride, National Identity and Success

The World Cup victory of 1954 challenged this notion in a positive way; sport and the soccer pitch provided a means for rehabilitating old expressions of national pride and identity, along with creating new ones.

The victory became a clunky dance between the new and old Germanies. All over Germany, when the tune of the national anthem was played to celebrate victory, crowds sang the forbidden lines, 'Deutschland, Deutschland über alles.'... And yet a new kind of German nationalism was born that day. Germans could now unite, in a quieter low-key postwar way, around their football team. Besides the D-Mark, it was the one national symbol they were permitted.<sup>194</sup>

The 1954 victory laid the groundwork for further success in the football venue, and that further success continued to serve as an avenue for German national pride and identity. The West German team, and West Germany itself, became a force to be reckoned with on the international scene.

Both the Nationalmannschaft and the clubs gradually built on Herberger's<sup>195</sup> legacy and developed a game that, in many ways, mirrored the quintessential German "virtues" of physical solidity, tenacity, basic technical skill, speed, aggressiveness, and combativeness. The key date in this context was 1974, when Bayern Munich won its first European Cup and the national team won the World Cup, at home, against the other big European power (and "model") of the time, the Netherlands. Outside of football, the year also coincided with the climax of German Ostpolitik, with the ratification of the Basic Treaty between the two German States, with their full entry in the UN and the international diplomatic community, and with the first conceptualization of the so-called Modell Deutschland of political economy: perhaps the economic giant was no longer a political dwarf, but it certainly was a football superpower.<sup>196</sup>

Success for Germany on the soccer pitch went hand in hand with success off it. Germans identified with their soccer team and celebrated its success, albeit in a restrained manner. This restraint came from their awareness of the legacy of fear in the international community and Germany's burgeoning success. "For years, fear of the German football

<sup>194</sup> Kuper, W1–W2.

<sup>195</sup> Sepp Herberger was the German soccer team's trainer from 1937 until 1964 and is credited with the rise of the German national team (Kuper, W1–W2).

<sup>196</sup> Missiroli, 4.

team was intertwined with fear of Germany. The country was the largest in Europe, its economy wouldn't stop growing, and who knew when it would next start a war?"<sup>197</sup> The euphoric and total celebration of national identity and pride seen in Berlin in 1936 would be seen as a threat of potential aggression by those outside of Germany.

While Germans were constrained by both their own heightened sensitivity and awareness of the past and the fears of the international community, this did not stop them from being proud of their soccer team's success. "It meant a lot to millions of Germans. Yet most of them expressed their pride quietly. When I asked Lothar Matthäus, who has played the most games for Germany, whether it moved him to represent Germany, he said: 'It's an honour to represent a whole country, such a big country where so many people play football. I don't feel any more than that.' Germans of Matthäus's age (born in 1961) rarely do nationalism."<sup>198</sup>

Soccer was also an important venue for national identity and pride in East Germany, albeit with less successful results in competition. There was, however, one shining moment.

[I]t is worth noting that the only defeat suffered by the (West German) national team in that (1974) edition of the World Cup occurred by the other German team, the GDR, at its first participation in the final phase (and second overall: once again, football had anticipated future diplomatic developments) of the tournament. The 0–1 defeat, an undeserved one in purely sports terms, had an enormous emotional impact on both sides of the inter-German border – but especially in the GDR, the then fledgling sport (but not football) superpower – and sparked a flurry of stories, anecdotes, even plays. It would also remain the only official match played between the two German "national" teams.<sup>199</sup>

The euphoria of the East German single victory was short-lived. West Germany, despite the loss to its eastern counterpart, went on to win the World Cup competition. For GDR politicians, believers in the Soviet/Communist system and supporters of a permanent separation from the capitalist-tainted FRG, this was not a desirable turn of events. But for the many East Germans who remembered and hoped for a united nation someday, West

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<sup>197</sup> Kuper, W1–W2.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Missiroli, 4.

Germany's soccer success was not a mournful event. To them, the success of any German team on the soccer pitch was a source of pride and cause for a German celebration that made no distinction between East and West.

In that context, East Germans also followed closely the news of the West German soccer successes. The differences in ideology and politics, the border, the Wall, and the presence of border guards did not affect Germans' interest in the soccer pitch.

The world championships of 1954, 1974, and 1990 were milestones in German nationhood. Each was celebrated on both sides of the German border. A few fans in East Germany even traveled to West Germany's games whenever the team ventured behind the Iron Curtain. One of them was Helmut Klopffleisch. The country's secret police, the Stasi, sparing no expense, would go with them. "K, by his behaviour at the People's Republic of Bulgaria vs. the Federal Republic of Germany, has significantly damaged the international reputation of the GDR," an agent reports sadly in a note in Klopffleisch's thick file.<sup>200</sup>

The world would see the same euphoria in November 1989, with the fall of the Berlin Wall and Germany's reunification. But the fall of the Wall and the accompanying collapse of the GDR did not occur spontaneously; they were the result of the efforts of several key figures.

Union would probably never have been effected if it had not been for the work of Konrad Adenauer in laying the political and economic foundations and creating the institutions that made the Federal Republic the strongest and stablest democracy in Europe, while at the same time anchoring it firmly in the Western World; and of Willy Brandt, whose *Ostpolitik*, instituted at a time when the Federal Republic's foreign policy was becoming rigid and unproductive, restored its momentum, broadened its horizons, and revealed new possibilities to the peoples of the east; and of Mikhail Gorbachev, whose *perestroika* awakened the hope of freedom throughout eastern Europe and whose realization that the Soviet Union was not strong enough to keep its satellites under close control started the downfall of the communist regimes; and of the unknown organizers of the great mass rallies in the streets of Leipzig and Dresden and East Berlin that drove the Honecker government from power; and, of course, of Helmut Kohl.<sup>201</sup>

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200 Kuper, W1–W2.

201 Craig, 340–341.

While the actions and decisions of those key figures were applauded by euphoric celebratory crowds with much hope for better things, they alone did not guarantee the immediate actuality of reunification that occurred. It was Helmut Kohl who seized upon the events in autumn 1989 and the energy and hope of the people of both the FRG and GDR to forge a path toward reunification.

Believing originally that German interests would be best served by means of a confederation between the two Germanies, which would give the eastern partner time to create a democratic system of its own before it sought union with the *Bundesrepublik*, he [Kohl] became convinced that the flight of refugees from the GDR to the west made this impractical and consequently promoted the speedy union of the two Germanies by campaigning in the east during the March 1990 elections in East Germany (elections that were rightly interpreted as a mandate for immediate unification) and by effecting the reform that gave the two parts of the country the same currency.<sup>202</sup>

#### **4. Post-Reunification and the Decline of German Soccer**

Following immediately on the heels of reunification as it did, the victory of the German national team in the 1990 World Cup was seen as a harbinger of the continued ascendance of a united Germany, with soccer being a means to repair and reunify Germany's divided identity, just as it had helped resurrect and nurture it since 1954. This was not to be, however, at least not from the standpoint of continued success on the soccer pitch. "Since then [1990] Germany has become a country with a stagnant economy, a skeleton army and a laughable football team. Germany has not won a prize or even a European Championship match since 1996. It has not beaten a front-rank nation since defeating England at Wembley in 2000."<sup>203</sup>

Eventually, Germany's national soccer team became a symbol of the faltering process of reunification and the difficulties brought about by the sudden and complete merging of what was essentially two countries that were drastically differed in almost every way, economically, socially, culturally, and politically. Yet the dearth of the team's success did serve as an outlet for Germans' frustration with their nation's decline and of the difficulties of reunification. "The Germans have learnt to laugh at their team. They

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<sup>202</sup> Craig, 341–342.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 340–341.



have mastered the ironic self-flagellation that used to be an English specialty.”<sup>204</sup> As Germans have come to identify their nation’s shortcomings with that of their soccer team, they take a perverse pleasure in poking fun at the team, and, implicitly, at themselves.

#### **D. THE 2006 WORLD CUP**

##### **1. Goals and Opportunities**

Thus, the Germans had little expectation that the 2006 World Cup national team would do well. “The German establishment, too, seems to accept the team’s collapse. It is not seeking victory in the coming World Cup.”<sup>205</sup> But, this time the Germans were hosting the World Cup, a factor that created very different overall expectations. “The whole background to the bid for the World Cup was to show the world that Germany has changed.”<sup>206</sup> For the first time, a reunified Germany was to host a world sporting event. Like the 1936 Berlin Olympics, hosting the World Cup would give Germany an opportunity to change its international image and rehabilitate its national identity.

The goal this summer is to charm them. The slogan of the World Cup is “A time to make friends.” The event’s logo is a laughing face – a “smiley,” in internet jargon. The former interior minister Otto Schilly admits: “A cheerful Germany, that’s not necessarily what people associate with us.”... [T]his World Cup will be the biggest media event in history and 20,000 foreign journalists will show up in Germany, many of them without match tickets. It’s the country’s chance to remake its image.<sup>207</sup>

Remaking its image had also been the goal of the Berlin Olympics, though the means used to achieve that were much different than those in 2006. Gone was the Nazi totalitarian regime, replaced by a nation struggling with the reality of a complex and difficult reunification. In the democratic Germany of 2006, there was no sign of the compulsory fascist Third Reich. No anti-Jewish signage, a physical embodiment of the Nazi ideology, needed to be hidden or removed in an effort to persuade the international community to attend. The goal in 1936 was to make the world and Germans themselves

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<sup>204</sup> Kuper, W1–W2.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Hugh Williamson, “Germany’s World Cups: Less Cold War, More Business,” *Financial Times* (July 2, 2006), 1.

<sup>207</sup> Williamson, 1.

respect and admire Germany. Seventy years later, the goal was to make the world and Germans themselves like Germany.

This goal would not be easy to achieve; Germany's history had served for more than sixty years as an impediment to its expression of national pride. The underlying question, therefore, was could the hosting of an international sporting event be a catalyst for healing and enable Germans to express national pride without reservation? According to media reports, during the days of the World Cup, the answer appeared to be an emphatic yes.

Germany is awash in a sea of black, red, and gold these days. Small banners flutter from cars, others are draped from windows. Some fans even carry a flag with them or have opted for face paint. For a country with such a conflicted relationship with its undisputedly unfortunate history, this is difficult for a lot of people.

Of course, supporting the national soccer team has long been the most innocent way for Germans to feel good about their country. But it's still easy to believe that what we might all be witness to this summer is nothing less than a watershed in attitudes towards patriotism and pride in Germany.

Six decades after the horrors of World War II and 16 years after reunification, it's okay to be German again.<sup>208</sup>

Hosting the World Cup was for many Germans an opportunity to release the repressive bindings of Germany's past. In 1989, many had hoped reunification would bring about this rehabilitation and release. But even during the euphoric reunification celebrations, the notion of a national identity was subdued and even suppressed. "When a million people gathered at Berlin's city center to celebrate the reunification of East and West Germany in October 1990, the only people who could be seen marching around with flags were a handful of skinheads and neo-Nazis."<sup>209</sup> As the years unfolded and Germany struggled under the burden of reunifying two countries disparate on nearly every level – economically, socially, in their standards of living – expressing a national

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<sup>208</sup> Mark Young, "Germany Flies the Flag," *Spiegel Online* (June 14, 2006) <http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,421241,00.html> (accessed July 2006).

<sup>209</sup> Michael Sontheimer, "How Germans Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Flag," *Spiegel Online* (June 29, 2006) <http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,424373,00.html> (accessed July 2006).

identity and pride became a long-delayed side issue. “Reunification was a great opportunity, but on the other side there were depressing consequences in unemployment and the economy.”<sup>210</sup>

## **2. German Preparations to Host the World Cup**

In the twenty-first century’s world of terrorist threats from both domestic and foreign actors, the role of host of an international event contains much travail, but one that involves coordination, financing, planning, resources, and vigilance. Thus, Germany’s success as a host in 2006 would be measured, at least in part, by how it handled threats. This was an especially sensitive issue for Germany because of its historic failure in the 1972 Munich hostage rescue attempt. In this regard, German Interior Minister Wolfgang Schäuble’s assessment of the World Cup provides an insight into the emphasis and effort that went into the German security plan.

“On the basis of a good preventative strategy and excellent organization the World Cup took place in an atmosphere that was secure, relaxed, and good-natured.”... (He) also thanked relief organizations, fire departments, and the armed forces for the considerable assistance they provided, saying that they all helped to make the World Cup a fantastic and festive event, several unforgettable weeks of soccer that projected a positive image of Germany in the world.<sup>211</sup>

## **3. The Success of the German National Team and Its Impact on National Identity and Pride**

There were other potential issues that also threatened to dampen the success of the World Cup. “During months of build-up seemingly one problem had piled up on top of another – from ticketing problems to unsafe stadiums, from the cancellation of the opening ceremony to uninspiring performances from the German team.”<sup>212</sup> With these concerns adding to Germany’s domestic political and economic realities, it seemed natural to expect yet another torpid performance by the German team and a correspondingly dour German atmosphere. But then the German soccer team won. And their victory ignited the national pride in Germans that had long lain hidden and dormant.

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<sup>210</sup> Richard Bernstein, “Soccer Good for the Psyche, Say the Winning Germans,” *New York Times* (July 4, 2006), A8.

<sup>211</sup> *US Federal News Service*, “Germany: We Had a Happy and Secure World Cup,” Washington, D.C. (July 11, 2006).

<sup>212</sup> Richard Milne, “An Event to Open the Mind,” *Financial Times* (London, July 3, 2006), 19.

“This team told us by the way they played to be positive. This event has opened the minds of many people,” says Gunter Weigl, head of football at Adidas, the sporting goods company. With the more positive playing style came a more positive outlook from Germans on their country. A national anthem that few knew the words to – and even fewer had sung – was belted out with gusto at every match.<sup>213</sup>

As in 1954, the soccer team’s success was a manifestation and an expression of German national pride.

Even the coach of the German national team, Juergen Klinsmann, expressed higher hopes for the tournament than he did for German victories on the pitch. “Klinsmann badly wants Germany to win, but recently was quoted as saying: ‘The other goal for all of us Germans – it doesn’t matter that I live abroad – is to show a completely new German face to the world. It’s a completely different country now after reunification 16 years ago and this is the biggest chance we have had for decades to show our different face.’”<sup>214</sup>

#### **4. Germans Embrace Their Flag, Colors, and Being German**

The most visible expression of German national identity and pride at the 2006 World Cup was the overwhelming showing of Germany’s national colors and flag. “The black, red, and gold flag that had almost become an embarrassment to generations suddenly became the fashion item to have – whether flying from apartment balconies, painted on to faces or dangling from earrings.”<sup>215</sup> Flags were everywhere and the colors were on everything. “A Dalmatian lies under a bench, its coat a reflection of the colors of Germany’s national colors... Truckloads of German flags – Made in China – are almost sold out. Adidas has sold a million of the jerseys worn by the German national team – four times the number sold during the last World Cup. Germans are wearing German colors once again.”<sup>216</sup> But “Germany’s national colors haven’t been restricted to the flag – you can find them on hats, caps, scarves, fake eyelashes, wigs, bikinis, and just about

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<sup>213</sup> Milne.

<sup>214</sup> Mike Wise, “As Germany Advances, Expression Replaces Repression,” *Washington Post* (July 4, 2006), E1.

<sup>215</sup> Milne, 19.

<sup>216</sup> Christopher Sultan, trans., “Germany’s Fairy Tale Come True,” *Spiegel Online* (June 20, 2006) <http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/spiegel/0,1518,422401,00.html> (accessed July 2006).

anything else you might find at a summer beach party. The *Bild* newspaper, Germany's saucy national tabloid, has rechristened the tri-color flag 'Schwartz, rot, geil,' or 'black, red, and horny.'"<sup>217</sup>

Germany's president, Horst Kohler, also took note of the flags. " 'The Germans are identifying themselves with their country and its national colors. I think that's great. And I think it's great that I'm not the only one with a flag on my car,' added Kohler."<sup>218</sup> The media itself became euphoric in its accounts of the new German rage for its colors and flag. The *New York Times* reported that, "Germany is so thrilled with its surging team that fans wave flags as they have never waved them in their lifetimes, and they cheer loudly enough to scare the wildlife."<sup>219</sup> And the German newspaper, *Der Spiegel*, noted that "Feelings of patriotism stifled for decades by the Holocaust came to the fore as Germans started attaching not just one but two and sometimes four national flags to their cars, painted neat little flags onto their faces and cleavages, and donned wigs and bras in the national colors of black, red, and gold."<sup>220</sup> "Where only a few years ago, the return of the capital to Berlin from Bonn was marked with an almost flagless, almost pageantry-free circumsppection, now the national flag as sarong has become a fashion statement."<sup>221</sup> "It's resulted in a colorful expression of support and patriotism – so many Germans have told me they have never seen so many flags and jerseys and painted faces in this country – but without jingoism or extremist connotations."<sup>222</sup>

For the German immigrant population also, the World Cup provided an opportunity to express German identity and pride. "The black, red, and gold flag fest has been a boon for the country's integration of its citizens with immigrant backgrounds. Many Turks and Arabs flew the German colors at their shops or on their cars. A small

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<sup>217</sup> Michael Sontheimer, "How Germans Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Flag," *Spiegel Online* (June 29, 2006) <http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,424373,00.html> (accessed July 2006)

<sup>218</sup> David Crossland, "Germany's World Cup Hangover," *Spiegel Online* (July 5, 2006) <http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,425157,00.html> (accessed July 2006).

<sup>219</sup> George Vecsey, "Joy in Germany, Shame in France," *New York Times* (July 1, 2006), D5.

<sup>220</sup> David Crossland, "From Humorless to Carefree in 30 Days," *Spiegel Online* (July 10, 2006) <http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,426063,00.html> (accessed July 2006).

<sup>221</sup> Roger Cohen, "Germany Emerges as World Champion of Good Cheer," *New York Times* (July 9, 2006), A8.

<sup>222</sup> Jason La Canfora, "Germans Awash in Their True Colors," *Washington Post* (July 2, 2006), E5.

gesture perhaps, but an important one to both those Germans concerned about integration and those immigrants acknowledging that this is their home, too.”<sup>223</sup> “[T]he streets were a paragon of multiculturalism. Turkish and Arabic families draped their windows with the German flag and joined in the post-match parades of honking cars, shouting ‘Deutschland’ from open windows.”<sup>224</sup>

The newsweekly *Der Spiegel* showed pictures of what might be the ultimate in German multiculturalism: four broadly smiling Muslim women in head scarves draping themselves in the German colors... “For the first time I saw small children from immigrant backgrounds waving German flags,” said Neco Celik, a filmmaker who lives in Kreuzberg. “And this comes from their hearts. This was not ordered from above. People like this team because they’re young, they’re not arrogant and they have more foreign-born people than any team before.”<sup>225</sup>

## **5. No Fairy Tales, Just Renewed National Pride**

The German team’s performance at the World Cup, however, didn’t have the ultimate fairy-tale ending. They finished a respectable third. Their greatest victory was winning the hearts and cheers of the people. It was at the party honoring the team’s third-place victory, that the people’s pride and their personal identification with the win was most evident. “The Germans savored the celebration that followed, locking arms, waving flags, and smiling beneath the popping lights of camera flashes and fireworks. The 52,000 sellout crowd serenaded their national heroes for 20 minutes as players circled the field, highly visible in their white shirts long after Gottlieb-Daimler Stadium was darkened.”<sup>226</sup> And recognition of the significance of the team’s performance did not end with the German populace. “Even Chancellor Angela Merkel, not known for charisma or outbursts of emotion, was swept up in the football frenzy, cheering, punching the air

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<sup>223</sup> Mark Young, “Germany’s New Attitude,” *Spiegel Online* (July 5, 2006) <http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,425267,00.html> (accessed July 2006).

<sup>224</sup> Jess Smee, “Germany: World Cup Revitalizes Tired Deutschland Spirits,” *Global Information Network*, New York (July 10, 2006), 1.

<sup>225</sup> Richard Bernstein, “Soccer Good for the Psyche, Say the Winning Germans,” *New York Times* (July 4, 2006), A8.

<sup>226</sup> “Germany Ends Cup Run in Style,” *Washington Post* (July 9, 2006), E4.

during matches, and hugging coach Klinsmann and the World Cup's chief organizer, Franz Beckenbauer. 'Germany's image abroad has definitely changed incredibly. I liked this inner, happy self-confidence a lot,' she told RTL television."<sup>227</sup>

It was also the team's unexpectedly good performance that enfolded many East Germans in the public expression of the newly discovered national pride. "The team is what's holding it all together, what's responsible for this sense of unity in a divided country. And nowhere is the collective yearning for victory greater than in the East, home to two of Germany's top players, Michael Ballack and Bernd Schneider."<sup>228</sup> " 'And even Gregor Gysi – the intellectual leader of the successor party to East Germany's former Communists – greeted a 'new generation that, when it comes to the German nation, is not as handicapped as my generation.'"<sup>229a</sup>

**a. Internal German Reaction**

What was made of all of that flag-waving, anthem-singing, and newfound enthusiasm for all things German? According to media reports at the time, the final in Berlin would "mark the climax of a tournament characterized by efficient organization, [by] a welcoming atmosphere, and, for many millions of international visitors, by impressions of a Germany more at ease with itself than at any time since 1945. 'We are all winners after this tournament,' said Franz Beckenbauer, Germany's football guru and chief World Cup organizer."<sup>230</sup> German nationalism was on full display, but not in the horrifically negative way associated with the tortured past. In a telephone interview, the German ambassador to the United States, Klaus Sharioth, is reported to have said, "I would say that it's not nationalism of the old kind. I would say it's more of enthusiasm for your country and for the team. It's not putting others down and taking a side. It's a nonaggressive pride and enthusiasm. And I would agree with Klinsmann. It's an opportunity to show what Germany is today."<sup>231</sup> Thus, what many emphasized about

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<sup>227</sup> Crossland.

<sup>228</sup> Sultan.

<sup>229</sup> Michael Sontheimer, "How Germans Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Flag," *Spiegel Online* (June 29, 2006) <http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,424373,00.html> (accessed July 2006).

<sup>230</sup> Hugh Williamson, "Merkel's Ratings Fail to Reflect World Cup Success," *Financial Times* (July 7, 2006), 1.

<sup>231</sup> Wise, "As Germany Advances, Expression Replaces Repression."

Germany's nationalistic display during the World Cup was its deeper and more long-lasting significance. "The world came to Germany, and Germany found itself in what Gunter Grass, the novelist of this country's postwar quest for a stable identity, called 'a wholly unorganized and spontaneous way.' This flag-waving German self-discovery has, in a sense, been the overriding outcome of a World Cup played beneath an unlikely German sun, watched by perhaps one-sixth of the people on the planet."<sup>232</sup>

Many saw the World Cup as a positive sign for the future. Alban Cajarville, for example, "whose Berlin bar, Visite Me Tente, became one of the city's most atmospheric viewing spots as France advanced in the tournament," saw it as "the emancipation of a reunited Germany... The entire emotion from this World Cup will help Germany in the future."<sup>233</sup> The *Financial Times* called it a "Big winner: Germany had an unfortunate stereotype among visitors as an unfriendly, unfunny, war-mongering country. A month of perfect sunshine, thousands of new friendships, and a chance to see how beautiful a country it is – the concrete monstrosity of the Ruhr region aside – meant Germany's image gained the biggest boost while proud Germans reclaimed the country and its symbols for themselves."<sup>234</sup>

**b. External Reactions**

Observations from other countries also voiced this positive assessment. Despite the long years of team rivalry between Germany and Great Britain, the main source of favorable coverage outside Germany was the British press.

But mostly there has been a sense of delighted discovery of Germany by the English, who have expressed surprise that Germany is not a country of leather shorts and humorless people who work all the time and even approach their pleasures, like soccer, with grim determination. . . . "If Germany were a woman, England would be her late admirer," the newspaper *Bild Zeitung's* British correspondent wrote this week,

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<sup>232</sup> Cohen, "Germany Emerges as World Champion of Good Cheer."

<sup>233</sup> Andreas Tzortzis, "Germans Want to Take That World Cup Feeling Forward," *Christian Science Monitor* (July 12, 2006), 1.

<sup>234</sup> Simon Kuper and Jonathan Wilson, "From Articulate Footballers to Undersexed Fans," *Financial Times* (London, July 6, 2006), 13.



characterizing the view of Germany filtering back to England, “someone who, out of ignorance, nearly let this beauty slip through the net.”<sup>235</sup>

In the tournament, when England’s team lost, the English fans transferred their cheering to the “home” team. “In a pithy editorial titled ‘The war is over,’ *The Daily Telegraph*, the staunchly patriotic house journal of conservative middle England, said the time had come to ‘cheer for our old adversaries’ whose team had displayed qualities most admired by the English such as ‘stoicism and pluck.’”<sup>236</sup> This surprising turn of events did not escape notice at the highest levels of the British government.

You know something seismic has happened when England fans who came to Germany with inflatable Spitfires singing “10 German Bombers” suddenly start supporting the German national team. British Prime Minister Tony Blair pointed out this unprecedented phenomenon in an opinion piece for Sunday’s *Bild am Sonntag* newspaper, and declared: “The old clichés have been replaced by a new, positive, and more fair image of Germany.”<sup>237</sup>

But the British were not the only Europeans favorably impressed with Germany’s performance. As the French newspaper *Le Monde* noted, “Despite their team’s elimination on July 4, the month that has just ended will remain an unforgettable period for the Germans. They have never been seen wearing their colors in such a demonstrative manner, and that includes when the country was reunified in 1990. We have never heard them chant the German national anthem with so much spirit.”<sup>238</sup>

Others who traveled to Germany for the World Cup as fans made similar applauding comments. Lieutenant Roy Miner, a U.S. Marine (and former Naval Postgraduate School student) attended two games in Germany with his wife, Heather, and were able to view other games on television while in Germany, Italy, and Austria. They were impressed with the organization and coordination by Germany’s World Cup organizers, from the highest level of the hierarchy down to the EU passport checker at the

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<sup>235</sup> Richard Bernstein, “At World Cup, No More World War for British and Germans,” *New York Times* (July 1, 2006), A4.

<sup>236</sup> “Icy Formations Spotted in Hell,” *Financial Times* (Asia, July 4, 2006), 12.

<sup>237</sup> Crossland, “From Humorless to Carefree in 30 Days.”

<sup>238</sup> “European Press Review: Germans Should Be Proud,” *Deutsche Welle* (online, October 10, 2006), [http://www.dw-world.de/popups/popup\\_printcontent/0,,2084777,00.html](http://www.dw-world.de/popups/popup_printcontent/0,,2084777,00.html) (accessed November 2006).

airport who was excited to welcome visitors to the World Cup.<sup>239</sup> The Germans who the Miners encountered seemed genuinely proud of Germany's hosting of the World Cup and the team and wanted to put on a good show. The Miners, influenced by the positive nature of their overall experience, bought German jerseys which they wore as they watched the final game in the United States.<sup>240</sup>

## **6. If Only World Cup Enthusiasm and Patriotism Could Be Bottled and Saved for Later**

The overall impact of the World Cup events is still being assessed. But a *Spiegel* on-line article in July summarized the feeling so far. "Germany's team might not have made it into the final, but the country is clearly a better place for hosting the 2006 World Cup... The Germans are positive. The Germans are friendly...The Germans have hosted an unforgettable World Cup...The World Cup hasn't changed the foundations of the country, but it has changed the balance within it."<sup>241</sup> "The 2006 World Cup host appears to have pulled off a coup no one had thought possible before the tournament began: a fundamental rebranding of Germany, a shift in the world's view of the nation from dour and humorless to fun-loving and friendly."<sup>242</sup> The "Tabloid *Bild* dispenses with the frequently pretentious opinions preferred by the broadsheet newspapers to keep things simple for its readers. 'Germany and the Germans have changed more in 31 days of the World Cup than politics – with all its laws and decrees – could achieve in years. And the whole world suddenly has a positive image of us.'<sup>243</sup> What was perhaps more important, the Germans seemed to have gained a positive image of themselves. As Horst Kohler, put it, "The team was grand, it had a wonderful closing, and it was a great tournament for the German team. People abroad also now see Germany in a different light. The audience showed us the meaning of good patriotism."<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>239</sup> Roy Miner, interview by author, August 18, 2006, Big Sur, Calif., Verbal interview with written notes.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid.

<sup>241</sup> Mark Young, "Germany's New Attitude," *Spiegel Online* (5 July 2006) <http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,425267,00.html> (accessed July 2006).

<sup>242</sup> Crossland, "From Humorless to Carefree in 30 Days."

<sup>243</sup> Christopher Bryant, "A Lovable Country," *Spiegel Online* (July 10, 2006) <http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,425961,00.html> (accessed July 2006).

<sup>244</sup> "Jurgen Klinsmann's Team Played a Magnificent Tournament," *Spiegel Online* (July 9, 2006) <http://service.spiegel.de/cache/international/0,1518,425820,00.html> (accessed July 2006).

However, some observers questioned whether the good feeling generated by the World Cup would have any long-term effect in Germany. David Crossland, for example, in one of his many on-line articles located the German athletic success within a more sober domestic reality.

The big question now is whether the upbeat mood and outpouring of patriotism in recent weeks, the flag waving, the fervent singing of the national anthem, marked a genuine revival in national pride or was just a short-lived summer carnival... The World Cup hasn't changed the fact that Germany remains weighed down by mass unemployment, slow economic growth, high public debt, and a social welfare system struggling to cope with an ageing population and surging costs.<sup>245</sup>

*Bild's* response to the dilemma was to call for a continuation of the positive energy exhibited during the World Cup: "That's why the party must go on! We have to keep up the sense of renewal, the self-confidence, the good mood for our everyday lives. This is just the momentum we so urgently need to face the tough tasks ahead."<sup>246</sup> Others argued, however, that the World Cup in and of itself would not be an agent of change; that it merely brought to light changes that were already in the works.

[S]ome believe that not much will change as a result of the World Cup because much has changed already, and that Germany's current celebratory mood is merely an expression of this transformation... it's only natural that the German approach to life should become less ponderous as the country accumulates years of successful democracy under its belt. It doesn't mean that Germans will keep on celebrating, but their ability to feel good about themselves will remain.<sup>247</sup>

Still, Chancellor Merkel referred to those good feelings in her efforts to tackle the country's many problems. According to Crossland, "Merkel said she hoped the last four weeks had given the country the confidence and drive to tackle its problems – mass unemployment and runaway welfare costs."<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Crossland, "Germany's World Cup Hangover."

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> Sultan.

<sup>248</sup> Crossland, "From Humorless to Carefree in 30 Days."

## 7. The Movie: Germany: A Summer Fairy Tale

Three months after the conclusion of the World Cup, Berlin hosted a subsequent gala event, the premiere of a World Cup documentary, *Germany: A Summer Fairy Tale*.

On German Unity Day, Tuesday October 3, the country got a chance to relive the excitement and football fever that swept the nation for one long month this summer, as a new documentary opened, which takes a close-up view of the German national team during the 2006 World Cup... Earlier in the day, Merkel had made a speech to mark German Unity Day, a national holiday, which marks the anniversary of reunification in 1990. She said the World Cup had been a time when “the world got to know a new Germany.” Wortmann [the film’s director] told reporters at the premiere that the World Cup had “changed Germany in a positive way, and I have the feeling that the country has become a bit more relaxed.”<sup>249</sup>

For those who experienced the positive impact of the World Cup, Germany’s problems were, at least temporarily, less imposing. Again, it is Crossland who makes a less promising assessment.

In glorious sunshine, the years of mass unemployment, perceived economic decline, and self-doubt seemed to evaporate in the stadiums and the open-air public viewing festivals. “A German national team helped the country to like itself again,” writes Wortmann in a diary of his experience with the team.

It seems like a long time ago. The easygoing patriotism has been overshadowed by regional election gains for the far-right National Democratic Party, the country is embroiled in a debate about how to integrate its Muslim immigrants, and Merkel’s government is riven by in-fighting over economic and healthcare reforms.<sup>250</sup>

## E. CONCLUSION

While it is still too early to tell whether the German national pride engendered by the World Cup will have any impact on the long-term evolution of German national identity or the tough domestic problems Germany faces, some general conclusions may be drawn. The hosts of the 2006 World Cup have not found a panacea to solve all of Germany’s pressing concerns. Already, as summer turned to fall in 2006, the good

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<sup>249</sup> “Germany Celebrates a Summer to Remember,” *Spiegel Online* (October 4, 2006) <http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,440715,00.html> (accessed October 2006).

<sup>250</sup> David Crossland, “Go Out and Kick Their Butts,” *Spiegel Online* (October 3, 2006) <http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,druck-440483,00.html> (accessed October 2006).

feelings and pride, the euphoric energy and mass displays of German symbols of national identity, and the support for the national team had to some extent petered out. Germany's serious social and economic issues required the attention of Angela Merkel and the German government, and what transpired on soccer pitches and in the World Cup cities could not create the necessary reforms in a tough process of change that lay ahead. Nor would the good feeling generated by the World Cup resolve the issues behind the rise of neo-Nazi groups in eastern Germany. And neither will Germany's military role in NATO mission in Afghanistan be much impacted by photos and memories of the large German crowds celebrating their national team's performance.

Nonetheless, despite this realist, but gloomy, assessment, Germany's hosting of the World Cup has undeniably affected the way Germans view themselves and their expression of national pride and identity. The World Cup enabled Germans to break through a reserve that existed throughout the latter half of the twentieth and into the twenty-first century. With the World Cup, they joined the rest of the world, unabashedly proud of their nation and its accomplishments, whether on the soccer pitch, at the Olympics, or in other venues. Judging by the favorable European and U.S. press coverage, it is also apparent that other nations were ready for Germany to become like them, proud and loud, flag-waving, national-anthem-singing, team-jersey-wearing supporters of their own country.

Thus, there is cause for hope. The World Cup events discussed here can be seen as rallying points. "A lasting image of the competition, and one which has been beamed around the world, was the hordes of euphoric fans of all stripes under the Brandenburg Gate, once a symbol of the Cold War and the division of Germany."<sup>251</sup> This also applies to the German soccer team. As Crossland points out, "Klinsmann, aware that he lacked world-class individual players and needed to forge a tight unit to beat the more talented sides, tried to motivate his team. A big hand-written notice in the dressing room reminded players: 'A mighty flame grows out of a tiny spark.'"<sup>252</sup> Though Germany's domestic troubles continue to loom large and will likely remain unaffected by the events of the

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<sup>251</sup> Jess Smee, "Germany: World Cup Revitalizes Tired Deutschland Spirits," *Global Information Network*, New York (July 10, 2006), 1.

<sup>252</sup> Crossland, "Go Out and Kick Their Butts."

World Cup, they are perhaps the spark that Germany needed to fuel the flames of a healthy national identity that will finally vanquish the ghosts of the past and enable the country to squarely and successfully meet the challenges of the twenty-first century.

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#### **IV. CONCLUSION – IMPACT OF 1936 BERLIN OLYMPICS AND 2006 WORLD CUP ON GERMAN NATIONAL IDENTITY**

Despite its overwhelming influence at the time, the German team's unexpected success at the 2006 World Cup has had only a minimal far-reaching affect on the country overall. It was hardly sufficient to lift Germany out of the self-doubt that stemmed from the long-term structural problems of reunification and the extensive impact of globalization on Western Europe in the twenty-first century. Nor could a mere sports tournament be expected to reform the German health care system or recalibrate the role of the semi-blockaded labor unions and industrial associations in the famous social-market economy that has existed since the 1940s. Sport cannot revitalize German universities on the model of the United States' Stanford University, for example, or the Sand Hill Road research venture-capital paradigm in California, making Germany once again the center of technical innovation it was in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Nonetheless, it is hoped that this paper has shown that the role of sport in Germany today remains powerful as a major political force in national life and reflects Germans' inmost vision of themselves as a nation and Europe's perceptions as well. Sports offer the observer a means to understand a key aspect of the German national identity, both past and present.

Germany's role as host of the World Cup in 2006, combined with its team's unexpectedly successful performance in the tournament, showed Germans that they could do the exceptional in spite of more than a decade of frustration, stalemate, and a tangible sense of decline. And Germans could do so despite a decade of frustration at the stagnation of German politics and the economy in the wake of reunification and their unease about the future of Europe in an age marked by a return of war and the rise of a neo-mercantilist and berserk capitalist international political economy. The games showed a Germany that even its closest neighbors had overlooked as they persisted in their historic stereotypes of a sausage-slurping, goose-stepping, order-crazed cartoon nation. What they failed to see was that Germany, like much of twenty-first-century Europe, is a place of tolerance, openness, sportsmanship, and, what is more, a patriotism



that relies on a national pride that is peaceful, and absent of the Nazi ideology of blood and soil and its desire for global domination.

With the country's reunification in 1989/1990, the Germans realized a new-found pride in their nation, although the largely superficial mantle of national normalcy displeased many concerned observers both domestic and foreign. Before the Germans could settle into a comfortable patriotism, however, they had further work to do on a long-standing issue: how the present and future Germany was to reconcile itself with the Germany of the past. One favored modality – sublimating its national specificity into a warm blur of “Europeanism” – was not sufficient for a fully restored, wealthy Germany in the heart of Europe. As Gordon Craig observed, in his well-received book on the national German character, about Germany in 1978:

Two years before the opening of the new decade, the political scientist Iring Fetscher had written: “After many decades of maximal distance from Germany, which found expression among some people in socialist internationalism, and among others in cosmopolitan consumerism, the need, the wish, to be ‘one’s self,’ to be something specific in a national sense is awake again.” It was soon discovered however that the road to a new national consciousness could be followed only by making a detour through the German past and by mastering the problems that such a retrospective journey raised.<sup>253</sup>

Thus, in one sense, the road to the success at the 2006 World Cup was through Berlin and the racist, pre-genocidal events of 1936. In both events, Germany sought to rehabilitate its image in the international community and strengthen its national identity in the process. It is important to note, however, that while there were superficial similarities, the 1936 and 2006 events unfolded within radically different circumstances internationally, and more important, one was before and one after a radical shift in Germany's national identity. In regard to the technical aspects of the games, Germany advanced the use of sport as spectacle in the era of the national state in ways that had implications far beyond the date of those historic events. The Berlin Olympics, for instance, remain an exceptional historic event in an epoch that erupted soon after in world war and the German genocide of European Jews.

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<sup>253</sup> Gordon A. Craig, *The Germans* (New York: New American Library, 1991), 338.

To be sure, the Nazis invented and refined many features of modern international Olympic sport in ways that many in the twenty-first century might find troubling, because those customs and traditions have remained popular and endured. The experience of the Nazi Olympics suggests that Avery Brundage's dissembling and naive ideas about a transnational sports elite, above and beyond the world of politics, were as spurious as a similar idea at the time; that is, that air power would somehow overcome the effects of nationalism and make the world a better place. A nationalist, imperialist political policy based on a racist ideology loomed as a powerful force in the early twentieth century and the world of sport had no safe haven to offer in the face of this incontrovertible reality. "Hitler and the Nazi government showed just how pliable sport was during the Berlin Games where almost every aspect of the Games was manipulated to enhance the prestige of the Third Reich and national socialism."<sup>254</sup>

By 1972, in the Germany of Willy Brandt, everything had changed, at least on the surface: this Germany seemed entirely unlike the racist, imperialist nation state of 1936. And the Olympic Games that the FRG hosted were designed to showcase Germany's widespread postwar development. In contrast to the bigotry and organized racial violence of the Nazi era, Brandt's Germany intended to present a welcoming, pleasing face to the international community. With none of the stuffiness of the Adenauer period, and amidst the upheaval of countercultures in the late 1960s, the Germans seemed to have embarked on a transition committed to peace, prosperity, and east-west comity.

In the mid 1980s, the ghost of Germany's inherited past was again, unavoidable and hauntingly, present in West Germany, given the worldwide commemorations and anniversaries of World War II events that occurred during that period. Germans' increasing interest in contemporary history, combined with their pride in being German, gained significant impetus from the United States' 1984 commemoration of the fortieth anniversary of the Normandy invasion. President Ronald Reagan attended the ceremony, a ceremony to which Chancellor Helmut Kohl was not invited, despite the fact that West Germany was squarely in the sights of Warsaw Pact rockets.

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<sup>254</sup> Barrie Houlihan, *Sport and International Politics* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994), 13.

Despite the pressures of this old/new tension between recognition and rejection of a German national “profile,” the Federal president, Richard von Weizsäcker – a German Army veteran, whose father, an official in Hitler’s Foreign Office, had been strongly implicated in the crimes of the Nazi regime – developed a plan for Germany’s healing and reconciliation with its past. On May 8, 1985, he told his countrymen, in a speech to the Bundestag of great simplicity and power, that the health of their democracy depended on their acceptance of “the sins of the fathers.”

All of us, whether guilty or not, whether old or young, must accept the past. We are all affected by its consequences and liable for it. The young and old generations must help each other to understand why it is vital to keep alive the memories. It is not a case of coming to terms with the past. That is not possible. It cannot be subsequently modified or made to not have happened. However, anyone who closes his eyes to the past is blind to the present. Whoever refuses to remember the inhumanity is prone to new risks of infection.<sup>255</sup>

Almost a quarter-century later, at the 2006 World Cup, with its profuse display of national pride and identity, that healing and acceptance of the past appeared to be well under way. For the Germans of 2006 sang an amended national anthem. And the flag and national colors they flew and displayed, definitely not the Nazi swastika prevalent in 1936, embodied their national pride every bit as much. In 2006, Germans’ manifestation of national pride and identity was most conspicuous for its sharp contrast to the ideological trappings of the Nazi regime evident in 1936. Apparently, Germans in the new millennium have applied the hard lessons learned from their history. Their expression of and development of a national identity has evolved, in part, through the medium of sport, into more ethical and politically acceptable outlets.

Based on research for this study, there is one additional, more general, conclusion about the role of national sports. Quite simply, it differs, from nation to nation. Thus, today, for instance, sport and its role in a nation’s expression of its national identity are much different in Germany than they are in the United States.

American sporting nationalism puts relatively little emphasis on international success. Indeed, much of the affection for sports such as baseball, American football, and basketball is owed to the fact that they

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<sup>255</sup> Craig, 339.

provide arenas in which the Americans reign supreme. “Playing with themselves” genuinely amounts to world-class sporting action. In any case, given the sheer size of the nation as a whole and of its great cities, contests between rival franchises assume a quasi-international status. Americans do, of course, root for their nations’ representatives in events such as the Olympic Games and golf’s Ryder Cup but, while these events give competitors the opportunity to fly the flag, for most sports fans domestic competition in “American” games is what really counts.<sup>256</sup>

For Americans, national identity is wrapped up in regional and collegiate allegiances. Such rivalries as that between the Red Sox and Yankees in Major League Baseball, the Cowboys and Redskins in the National Football League, the Michigan Wolverines and the Ohio State Buckeyes in college football, and the Army-Navy college football game engender sustained emotion and affiliations. Thus, while the U.S. Olympic teams and World Cup teams enjoy support from their fellow Americans, it is not the sustained, extensive nationwide support seen in countries such as Germany. For Americans, the expression of national identity and pride via sport is not limited to international competitions and the quadrennial occurrence of the Olympics and World Cup.

Furthermore, the term “national sport” has different connotations in different locations. A country’s accessibility to the equipment and arenas necessary for sports, the historical influence on a country by other countries and by other countries’ sporting traditions, and the level of a country’s performance in a particular sport – a trend of poor performance being typically barren ground for the growth of the national following required for national sports – are all factors that determine the elevation of a sport to “national” status. For example, if the U.S. men’s soccer team produces a string of victories at a future World Cup, it would most likely attract increased national attention and become, in turn, increasingly more popular. This is exactly what has been said about the U.S. women’s team’s World Cup championships in 1991 and 1999, which are largely credited with the subsequent burgeoning interest in girls’ and women’s soccer teams and the growing number of soccer leagues in the United States. The thrilling 1980 victory by the U.S. hockey team over the Soviet Union remains one of the top events in American sports history; and, for a number of years afterwards, it continued to ignite interest in and

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<sup>256</sup> Alan Bairner, *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization: European and North American Perspectives* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 167–168.

a larger following for hockey in the United States. Given the acclaim over the U.S.-Soviet game, it is worth noting, though most Americans have probably forgotten, that it was *not* the gold-medal game, although the Americans *did* win the gold, in a game against Sweden, *after* their victory over the Russians.

“Sport,” according to Grant Jarvie, “often provides a uniquely effective medium for inculcating national feelings; it provides a form of symbolic action which states the case for the nation itself.”<sup>257</sup> And sports also “provide us with an important arena in which to celebrate national identities.”<sup>258</sup> As we have shown in the case of Germany, this correlation is especially applicable to the Olympics.

For the modern Olympiad *is* a contest between nations, and a contest in which millions across the world feel that their national prestige is involved... There is probably no regular occasion when so many people identify so aggressively with their own nation as during the fortnight in which millions follow *their* champion’s struggles against the foreigner... It is clear from the history of the Olympic Games that these sporting contests have progressively come to be regarded by millions – and particularly in the Western world – as some sort of proving ground for the virility of a nation.<sup>259</sup>

The nationalist aspects of sport reside not so much in the athletes and competitions themselves but in those watching the competitions. “[I]t is usually in the behavior and attitudes of fans rather than those of participants that the relationship between sport and identity becomes most apparent.”<sup>260</sup> “The most popular form of nationalist behaviour in many countries is in sport, where masses of people become highly emotional in support of their national team.”<sup>261</sup> This phenomenon was very much in evidence at the 2006 World Cup. The German players, while highly aware of their status as a “national” team, did not engage in the kind of frenzied flag-waving, anthem-singing behavior that their performance sparked in their fans.

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<sup>257</sup> Bairner, 17.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>259</sup> Philip Goodhart and Christopher Chataway, *War Without Weapons* (London: W.H. Allen and Company, 1968), 2, 19, 79.

<sup>260</sup> Bairner, 165.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

Undoubtedly, sport, as was especially evident at the 2006 World Cup, has been a vehicle of rehabilitation for Germany's national identity and pride. "Sport, in fact, can be an important means of taking the sting out of national inferiority complexes."<sup>262</sup> In Germany, this inferiority was a self-imposed binding borne out of the guilt of national history. The World Cup appears to have lessened this hold that national history has had on the German people.

As early as 1991, soon after the fall of the Berlin Wall, historian Gordon Craig pointed out that the Germans appeared

to have found their self-confidence in the strength and achievements of the democracy that was founded in 1949 and now, as it is extended to embrace brothers and sisters who were for forty years denied it, their agonizing over their identity appears to have diminished, and they seem at last to know who they are in a national sense. But there is no sign that this is accompanied by wider ambitions or that they are thinking in terms of any kind of domination.<sup>263</sup>

The passage reflects the hope that was inspired by Germany's reunification. More than fifteen years later, the realization of that hope was even more evident at the 2006 World Cup. Germans may well be on the road to a full realization of Craig's vision.

This realization has not carried over, however, into all aspects of German life. Germany's domestic problems, some which stem from reunification itself, cannot be resolved by merely by a euphoric German national pride or the sense of work well done that resulted from Germany's hosting of the World Cup. What this thesis has explored is the degree to which sport matters in Germany. It has demonstrated that, for some Germans, sport became a conduit for expressing what it had come to mean to be a German. In the complex process of that expression, sport to a degree also defined a modern conception of a German national pride and identity. However, sport must never become an all-encompassing tool of national power or nationalism. It would be nonsense to consider it a solution in and of itself to the problems that face the European and world nations.

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<sup>262</sup> Goodhart and Chataway, 150.

<sup>263</sup> Craig, 343.

In sum, this discussion of the 1936 Berlin Olympics and the 2006 World Cup, has attempted to show the significant role that sport can play in the development of national identity. The two sport examined illustrate both the bad, the Berlin Olympics, and the good, the World Cup, of the complex relation between sport and national identity. Research conducted for this thesis support Alan Bairner's conclusions, in *Sport, Nationalism, and Globalization*, published in 2001, that "throughout the twentieth century, sport has been one of the most valuable weapons at the disposal of nationalists, whatever their situation and respective aspirations."<sup>264</sup> It seems that the Berlin Olympics are a textbook case for illustrating Bairner's point. This was true also of Germany in 2006, given its exemplary hosting of the World Cup and the unexpectedly good performance of the German national team, which combined to, in effect, make nationalists of all Germans.

Initially, many of Germany's European neighbors appeared to have accepted this turn of events as well. And that is perhaps the most significant conclusion that can be drawn from what transpired at the 2006 World Cup. German expressions of nationalism and national pride, though hardly a solution to any of the social and economic problems faced by Angela Merkel and the German government, are beginning to be accepted as "normal" and as a positive sign of a "new" Germany by the rest of Europe.

Sport can be a means of historic national healing, as it appears to have been in Germany, where the ghosts of the past are gradually being put to rest. There is cause for cautious optimism with respect to Germany and the positive role sport could play in the further development of German national identity and pride. More generally, if the 2006 World Cup is any indication, sport will continue to play an important role worldwide in the future expression and development of national identities.

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<sup>264</sup> Bairner, 177.

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