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**GERMAN-GERMAN RELATIONS IN THE FIELDS OF SPORT, WITH
PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE OLYMPIC GAMES 1952-1972**

by

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A thesis submitted to Plymouth University
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

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

Abstract

This thesis explores the surprising phenomenon of the existence of joint German-German teams in the three successive Olympic years of 1956, 1960 and 1964. This unusual example of cooperation – in the midst of Cold War hostilities - between the two antagonistic Germanys, West and East, was caused by:

- the idealistic though illusionary conviction of Avery Brundage, influential President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), that German-German cooperation in the field of Olympics, as initiated by him, would also result in closer political relations between the Federal Republic (FRG) and the German Democratic Republic (GDR): ‘a development in which politicians have patently failed’, he remarked;
- the interest and hope of the GDR leadership that participation with the FRG in joint Olympic teams would open doors for international recognition of their country, a status the East struggled to achieve;
- the expectation by leaders of the West German sports movement that cooperation with the GDR in the Olympic field would result in improved relations: this despite reservations in official quarters that striving for better relations with East Germany ran the risk of alienating its Western allies;
- the concern of West German sports leaders that to spurn the Brundage initiative might leave the field free for Germany’s Olympic presence to become the sole domain of the GDR.

In spite of much behind the scenes squabbling, West-East cooperation gathered pace in the 1950s, only to end with the summer Games at Mexico City in 1968. The demise of the experiment was preceded by an IOC decision of 1965 to abandon its support for a joint German team and to grant full recognition to a separate team of the GDR, as well as to the Federal Republic. With their aim achieved, the GDR lost interest in further joint ventures and the 1972 Munich Games witnessed the participation of two antagonistic German teams.

The history of German-German Olympic cooperation remains a neglected theme in modern sports history. As well as exploring the origins, developments and unravelling of West-East cooperation – set within a changing diplomatic and sporting context – the thesis examines the return to more realistic, albeit cold, German-German relations. Avery Brundage’s dream was over, but it was remarkable that in the midst of the Cold War cooperation prevailed for over a decade.

List of Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	v
<i>Author's Declaration</i>	vi
Introduction	1
Chapter One 'Risen from the ruins, looking to the future', 1945-51	32
Chapter Two Germany returns to the Olympic arena, 1952-55	58
Chapter Three The German-German Olympic teams at Melbourne and Rome, 1955-60	86
Chapter Four Continuing problems: the Berlin Wall and Tokyo, the team's last Olympics, 1961-64	111
Chapter Five Strained relations from the Olympics at Tokyo to the ending at Mexico City, 1964-68	141
Chapter Six The aftermath: the run-up to and the Munich Games, 1969-72	175
Conclusion	197
Bibliography	206

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee.

Work submitted for this research degree at Plymouth University has not formed part of any other degree either at Plymouth University or at another establishment.

Relevant seminars and conferences were regularly attended at which work was often presented; external institutions were visited for consultation purposes.

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Signed.....

Date.....12 August 2014.....