

# The Gooooaaaaals of Government: Football as a Political Tool of Fascism and Nazism

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## INTRODUCTION

Football breeds a type of loyalty unlike any other sport.<sup>1</sup> Clubs from towns, cities or regions command the hearts and minds of their fans. Each club, so its followers believe, embodies the local character, traditions, and spirit that define the community. Moreover, because football has always been what Bill Murray and countless others champion as the “world’s game,” national teams serve as symbols and operate as ambassadors not just to politicians and the elite, but to the millions of people who follow football world-wide.<sup>2</sup> Because of this fluid relationship between culture, politics, and football, teams and their players may be politically exploited by the ruling political elite and can be made to reflect and reinforce the traits of the regime. Football teams can be fashioned to reflect local and national ideologies, characteristics, spirits, beliefs, practices, and symbols that constitute culture. Thus, through football, a given regime not only has access to the means to alter the political processes of a country, but also the ability to suffuse society with its ideology in a unique and persuasive fashion.

Football’s influence extends beyond the spheres of symbolic representations and ideologies propounded by nation-states and regimes. Football clubs can also be the physical manifestation of domestic policy, changes in the regional and national economic orders, and the geo-political relationships forged or broken in the international political arena.<sup>3</sup> Football has become the world’s game in part because some countries have extended its function far beyond that of leisure time.

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<sup>1</sup> Only North Americans refer to this sport as “soccer.” Everywhere else, it is known as football and shall be referred to as such for the duration of the thesis.

<sup>2</sup> Bill Murray, *The World’s Game* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996). The reader might pose the test-case of the US as an example of a country that does not represent this pattern. While the US’ exceptionalism might be a case in point, this is a subject that has been thoroughly and frequently explored and will not factor into the following argument.

<sup>3</sup> Peter J. Beck, “England V Germany, 1938,” *History Today* (vol. 32; no. 6, 1982), pp. 29-30.

Broad generalizations alone are not sufficient to demonstrate the relationship between football, politics, and national culture; specific questions must be addressed. Who was responsible for inextricably linking football to national ideologies and politics? What were their goals? Did this strategy ultimately prove beneficial in achieving national objectives or did it detract from developing coherent policy and stunt the growth of national solidarity? The answers to these questions lie in charting the duality of football. Despite, or perhaps given, its global popularity, football has been transformed into one of the paramount physical manifestations of nationalist governments' domestic authority and, in some cases, perceived international hegemony.

Perhaps no country more than Italy during its Fascist dictatorship recognized the essential role football could play in fostering *risorgimento*, national unity, in order to galvanize every aspect of the national character and society with its ideological tenets and in order to further its domestic and foreign policy. After establishing a totalitarian state in 1925, Mussolini and the Fascist Party began exploiting the popularity of football to create what the historian de Grazia called a "culture of consent" by fashioning football into a mass spectacle endowed with Fascist spirit and physicality.<sup>4</sup> Simultaneously, Mussolini's reorganization of society was reflected in his reform of the administration of Italian football.

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Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini* (New York: Berg, 2004), p. 60.

Frank McDonough, *Hitler and Nazi Germany* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 33.

Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football* (London: When Saturday Comes Books, 2003), p. 73.

<sup>4</sup> Victoria de Grazia. *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), p. 153.

The Fascists were able to utilize football in this way because football, “symbolizes, in its actual organization, the salient characteristics of industrial society.”<sup>5</sup> Fascist Italy never completely industrialized—the nation remained largely agrarian even on the eve of World War II. However, football was transformed in order to reflect, both in terms of spirit and organization, the Fascists’ ideal type of society typified by competition, good health, strength, enforced employer-employee relations, and discipline. Despite the sport’s tendency to breed local loyalty in addition to and sometimes in contrast to national civic obligation, football proved an accessible and malleable aspect of Italian society that lent itself to Fascist machinations. Indeed, football was remade into an extension of Fascist policy.

Germany during the rule of the Third Reich was the only other country that used football similarly to Fascist Italy. Although football was perceived as an alien English sport and was despised by conservative middle-and-upper-class Germans, the sport became popular among working-class men and by the eve of World War I, its prevalence and presence in German society could not be ignored.<sup>6</sup> Although gymnastics dominated German sporting life after the creation of the Weimar Republic and during the rise of the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP), National Socialist German Workers’ Party, Hitler and the Nazis could not allow football to remain apolitical—the opportunity to convene thousands of Aryan men united in a single pursuit was too alluring. Although the sport needed to be rehabilitated and divorced from “association” with foreigners and Jews, the Nazis also recognized the role that football could play in

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<sup>5</sup> Patrick Hazard and David Gould, “Three Confrontations and a Coda,” *Fear and Loathing in World Football*, Gary Armstrong and Richard Giulianotti (eds) (New York: Berg, 2001), p. 210.

<sup>6</sup> David Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round: A Global History of Football* (London: Viking, 2006), p. 161.

facilitating the remilitarization of Germany and nurturing the growth of a pan-Germanic empire while cunningly reproducing the international diplomatic status-quo.

What follows is an analysis of the ways in which the Fascist and Nazi regimes, respectively, used football to achieve their political objectives and how, in fact, football became a crucial component of each regime's foreign and domestic policy. Chapter 1 discusses the reasons why Mussolini and the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* (PNF), National Fascist Party, selected football as the means to create the *Nuovo Italiano*, "new man," that would fight for the genesis of an Italian empire. In turn, football also linked this *Nuovo Italiano* to his Italian brethren by creating a common culture of consent that reinforced the power of the Fascist Party. Most of all, by carefully reorganizing Italian football, promoting popular club teams, and financing the growth of powerful clubs, large stadiums, and the World Cup, the PNF created the inter-war period's best national football team that, through its dominance of international football, projected the supposed supremacy of Fascist Italy in the international political arena.

Chapter 2 discusses the growth of football in relation to the victory of the NSDAP over Germany's burgeoning liberal democracy. Having previously disavowed football as a foreign sport controlled by Jews, the Nazis, particularly the Ministry of Propaganda, purged football of its association with non-Aryan culture and transformed the sport into a tool for normalizing diplomatic relations in order to obscure German remilitarization and plans for territorial expansion. Although the Nazis did not need to rely on football for political purposes to the same extent as the Fascists, they used football to create their own form of football-politik—the practice of football as politics and state policy—in order to conceal Hitler's political and military agenda.



In chapter 3, five comparisons are drawn from the manifestations of football-politik in both regimes that suggest points of convergence and divergence with football, and sports in general, and politics in the modern era. Professionalism, the role of football in the development of the Fascist and Nazi state, the creation of a culture of consent, the impact of football on economic reorganization, and lastly, the role of football in advancing both regimes' imperial goals, are each analyzed in order to provide a framework from which important and otherwise obscured differences between Fascism and Nazism are revealed as well as the beginnings of a framework from which to analyze modern incarnations of football-politik.

In the Conclusion, the concept of football-politik is explored in relation to its use by liberal democratic governments and in comparison to the ways other sports are exploited for political gain. In addition, the role of television and its impact on football is briefly investigated in order to raise questions for further study of modern football-politik in the globalized political economy. Ultimately, the Fascist and Nazi regimes are seen as the originators of a football-politik that continues to be practiced some seventy years later and shows signs of evolving but no sign of withering away in the years to come.

## CHAPTER 1

### FOOTBALL AS POLITICS IN FASCIST ITALY

#### *Football's Fascist Underpinnings*

Prior to the Fascist restructuring and expansion of football during the inter-war period, football had been known to Italians in the Roman form of *harpastum* and the Florentine form of *calcio*.<sup>7</sup> While little is known about *harpastum*, *calcio* was established in the late 1400's and was played by noble Florentines and occasionally by members of the working-class and peasantry.<sup>8</sup> *Calcio*, which bears little resemblance to modern football, failed to gain a foothold outside Florence and ultimately disappeared from both the regional and national consciousnesses around 1740.<sup>9</sup> Football did not arrive in Italy until 1887 when Edoardo Bosi, a businessman from Turin, an industrial city in Northwestern Italy, returned from Britain, the birthplace of modern association football, and arranged matches between Turin's aristocrats.<sup>10</sup> Between 1891 and 1906, competitions were dominated by teams from Turin, *Juventus* and *Torino*, Milan, *Internazionale* Football Club and *Associazione Calcio Milan*, and Genoa, *Associazione Calcio Genova*.<sup>11</sup> By 1909, Italy had established the *Federazione Italiana Giuoco del Calcio*, which governed football until the Fascists rose to power in late 1922.<sup>12</sup>

Football's popularity quickly extended beyond the Italian elite and, by the early 1900's, had penetrated the lower-strata of Italian society due to its cultivation by the Catholic Church. Although some critics believed that football detracted from Italian youths

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<sup>7</sup> Bill Murray. *The World's Game*, p. 30.

<sup>8</sup> Rudolph Altrocchi. "Il Gioco del Calcio Fiorentino," *Bulletin of the American Association of Teachers of Italian* (vol. 19; no. 1, 1942), pp. 3, 6, 15.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>10</sup> Bill Murray. *The World's Game*, p. 30.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31. Genoa is the oldest surviving football club in Italy and was founded in 1893.

<sup>12</sup> Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 51.

developing a strong foundation in traditional Italian games, proponents regarded the sport as an opportunity to emulate the practices of more developed countries.<sup>13</sup> Giovanni Semeria, a philosopher of Catholic Italian sport, regarded football as a highly effective means of exercise that would spur the genesis of a “new race” of Catholics educated through competition in politics, society, and religion.<sup>14</sup> Football, Semeria believed, was also a superb means of developing leadership skills while, among those who did not exhibit a calling to command, it promoted obedience, an acute sense of responsibility and, above all, a willingness to submit to authority.<sup>15</sup> By the beginning of World War I, football was seen as a means to construct a new Italian citizen who deferred to authority and who could be made to compete both at home and abroad. It will be seen that none of these ideas were lost on Mussolini and the Fascists.

*Sport in Fascist Ideology: Nuovo Italiano*

Mussolini conceived of fascism as an ideology based on a, “comprehensive set of beliefs which must override every other consideration,” born out of physical competition as a direct emotional response to the destruction wrought on Italian men by World War I.<sup>16</sup> A former socialist, Mussolini retained his belief in a historical dialectic but, for him, it was, “blood [not materialism] that move[d] history’s wheel.”<sup>17</sup> Moreover, rather than adopting a passive adherence to ideology, a faith he ascribed to his former socialist comrades, Mussolini admonished Italians to act as “protagonists” in history’s drama.<sup>18</sup> In the trenches

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<sup>13</sup> Stefano Pivato. “Soccer, Religion, Authority: Notes on the Early Evolution of Association Football in Italy,” *International Journal of the History of Sport* (vol. 8; no. 3, 1991), p. 427.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 427.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 428.

<sup>16</sup> Clifford Geertz. “Ideology as a Cultural System,” *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 197.

<sup>17</sup> Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi. *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini’s Italy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 33.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

of World War I, Mussolini realized the necessity of collective physical struggle and sacrifice for the development of Italian society and devised Fascism in order to supply Italians with the ideological tools to collectively triumph over obstacles to achieving state development.<sup>19</sup>

Returning from war in 1919, demobilized soldiers, both middle-class and non-socialist peasants, brought with them a “culture of war” that required civic expression. Mussolini provided them with such an outlet in the form of the *Fasci Italiani di Combattimento*.<sup>20</sup> In response to “old” liberal Italy, whose supporters had advocated for neutrality during World War I, Fascist paramilitary units were established in Northern Italy’s industrial centers and began eliminating all political opposition.<sup>21</sup> Much like one influential predecessor, George Sorel, Mussolini believed in the historically transformative powers of violence such that by forcibly destroying materialism, utilitarianism, liberalism, and democracy history could progress and civilization could evolve.<sup>22</sup> War, Mussolini argued, was revolutionary and would lead Italy to greatness.

Coinciding with the rise of Fascism, the football-playing population grew as men returned from the front. In 1919, 67 clubs competed for the Italian football championship while by 1921, there were 88 clubs.<sup>23</sup> The War’s end provided human fodder for the Fascists’ cannons by granting them the opportunity to reframe the Church’s emphasis on soccer in a more militant, totalitarian, and nationalistic context. Among the myriad hazards Italian troops faced during the Great War, it was widely believed among Fascists that

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<sup>19</sup> Benito Mussolini, “The Doctrine of Fascism,” *Communism, Fascism, and Democracy: The Theoretical Foundations*, ed. Carl Cohen (Random House: New York, 1972), p. 329.

<sup>20</sup> Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi. *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini’s Italy*, p. 34.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>23</sup> Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 51.

overall poor health decimated Italian forces—600,000 troops died from a Spanish Fever pandemic in 1918 alone.<sup>24</sup> Mussolini sought to ensure that his new Italians were healthy and physically educated soldier-citizens. Thus, the Fascists sought to monopolize Italians' access to physical education. Between 1920 and 1924, while consolidating their newly acquired political power, particularly after the March on Rome in 1922 that effectively blackmailed the constitutional government into submission, Mussolini and his squads closed Catholic and socialist sports clubs while adopting the Church's attitude towards football as a tool for developing healthy and virile Italian men.<sup>25</sup> From its earliest days in power, the Fascist regime used football as a means for improving the health of the population in order to make Italian men capable of obeying and carrying out orders in order to create the Fascist state, and later the Empire, through discipline, coordination of force, duty, and sacrifice.<sup>26</sup>

To develop the *Nuovo Italiano*, the Fascists set about creating an expansive network of organizations devoted to training their members to adopt the beliefs, personify the characteristics, and manifest the physical attributes of the ideal Italian Fascist citizen. During the 1920's, the Fascist regime engaged in an enculturation process that was designed to instill fascist values, conceptions, and ways of life that promoted service to the state, particularly in younger Italians and veterans.<sup>27</sup> According to Mussolini, "outside history, man [was] nothing," which made it imperative that the Fascist state not only provide security in the form of a well-trained army, but also educate its citizens about their

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>25</sup> Patrizia Dogliani. "Sport and Fascism," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* (vol. 4; 2000), p. 327. Philip Morgan. *Italian Fascism: 1915-1945* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 74.

<sup>26</sup> Benito Mussolini, "The Doctrine of Fascism," *Communism, Fascism, and Democracy: The Theoretical Foundations*, p. 339.

<sup>27</sup> Victoria de Grazia. *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy*, p. 137.

civic responsibility in order to unify the people.<sup>28</sup> Roberta Vescovi explains that the aims of fascist cultural education were to foster, “behavior transmitted by means of an all-embracing system of social control...to create the [*Nuovo Italiano*] essential for the realization of the ‘new way of life,’” which was inextricably linked to the state.<sup>29</sup>

To facilitate this process, the Fascists established three organizations responsible for managing the health and cultural education of Italians. The *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro* (OND) were government-controlled recreational centers while the *Opera Nazionale Balilla* (ONB) organized children aged six to eighteen and the *Comitato Olimpico Nazionale Italiano* (CONI) managed sports affairs.<sup>30</sup> The ONB was integral to the Fascist transformation of Italy because the youth were perceived as being capable of engaging in the praxis of struggle through war, confrontation, and sacrifice that would propel Italy forward.<sup>31</sup> Meanwhile, the OND encouraged competition through team sports, particularly football, which encouraged players to, “identify their sporting activities with the national organization.”<sup>32</sup> Together, these organizations ensured that no aspect of Italian cultural affairs or education occurred outside the state.

Expanding the affairs of the state into the realm of football precipitated a change in the popular perception of the sport, which began upon the demobilization of Italian troops. Whereas football had previously been a sport reserved for anglophile gentlemen, the Fascist

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<sup>28</sup> Benito Mussolini, “The Doctrine of Fascism,” *Communism, Fascism, and Democracy: The Theoretical Foundations*, pp. 333, 338.

<sup>29</sup> Roberta Vescovi, “Children into Soldiers: Sport and Fascist Italy,” *Militarism, Sport, Europe: War Without Weapons*, J.A. Mangan (ed) (Portland: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 2003), p. 174.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

Paddy Agnew, *Forza Italia: A Journey in Search of Italy and its Football*, p. 56. CONI is still headquartered in the Foro Italico, known as the Foro Mussolini during his reign during which it was constructed.

Patrizia Dogliani, “Sport and Fascism,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, p. 328.

<sup>31</sup> George L. Mosse. *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism* (New York: Howard Fertig, Inc, 1999), p. 13.

<sup>32</sup> Victoria de Grazia. *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy*, p. 174.

state recognized its mass appeal because of its ability to catalyze the energies of both the individual and the collective as well as to display players' virility, discipline, and deference to the authority of the coach.<sup>33</sup> According to de Grazia:

“To give a distinctively ideological cast to social experiences outside the workplace...demanded the creation of a nationwide political culture that might persuade people that their shared goals transcended petty economic haggling, regional and ethnic disputes, or age-old animosities.”<sup>34</sup>

By making football into a mass spectacle rather than a mass participatory event, the regime could actively engage in the enculturation of the *Nuovo Italiano* while subjugating class and regional politics to entertaining displays of militant nationalism. Simultaneously, the regime became the *de facto* paladin of the country's most popular sport. Mussolini blurred the line between the Fascist state and football by entitling CONI executives to appoint members to various governing bodies and to impose *fascies* on all sports emblems.<sup>35</sup> The *fascies*, a Roman symbol of power and authority, represented the Fascist Party's "seal of approval," which both legitimized football under the Fascist regime and symbolized the government's complete control of football.

Beginning with the promulgation of the *Carta di Viareggio* in 1926, which reorganized the national football league, the Fascist regime began to rationalize football with its ideological objectives. In an effort to mitigate regional conflict, such as that between *Casale* and *Torino* stemming from the referee's failure to award a goal to *Torino*, the regime moved to, in the words of the popular sports daily *La Gazzetta*, "cleanse the football world of the germs of indiscipline and intolerance," by reorganizing the league to

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<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

Patrizia Dogliani. "Sport and Fascism," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, p. 332.

Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 31.

<sup>34</sup> Victoria de Grazia. *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy*, p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Patrizia Dogliani. "Sport and Fascism," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, p. 329.

prevent the perpetuation of *campanilismo*, regional conflict between North and South.<sup>36</sup>

Beyond establishing procedures for directing protests to a “fascistized” governing body and creating a referees association to oversee referee discipline, selection, and training, the *Carta* also created the *Lega Nazionale* comprised of twenty teams, the majority of which hailed from the North.<sup>37</sup> Under the *Carta*, the Fascist-controlled CONI also drew a distinction between amateur and “non-amateur” footballers. The latter could be compensated for playing football due to the consequent loss of wages while amateurs were unpaid.<sup>38</sup> Although professionalism was initially prohibited for fear that, consistent with fascist ideology, professionalism and the subsequent commercialization of football would “contaminate” the game’s competitive ethos by classifying certain players as “non-amateurs,” CONI laid the foundations for the introduction of professionalism into Italian football.<sup>39</sup>

Interestingly, the development of professionalism was most vociferously opposed by Fascists not on the grounds that it brought football into moral disrepute, but rather that professionalism would give rise to a transfer market in which teams would financially compete for the services of the best players.<sup>40</sup> Some Fascist sports officials attempted to preemptively curtail the development of a market by forbidding the sale of players to clubs outside their province of birth or place of residence.<sup>41</sup> However, other elites believed that such a measure would only promote *campanilismo*, which was rampant in Italy, and remove the incentive for players to develop their skills to the fullest, thereby jeopardizing

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<sup>36</sup> Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 58.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

<sup>39</sup> Victoria de Grazia. *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy*, p. 177. Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 60.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.



the Fascists' creation of an elite group of Italian footballers.<sup>42</sup> Ultimately, the ban on transfer markets was not accepted, which enabled professionalism to increase in the Italian game. However, according to many Fascist officials and football supporters alike, "Sport must not forget this imperative need of man: to work."<sup>43</sup> The acceptance of professionalism in Italian football was contested on ideological and practical political grounds, with the pragmatic interests of the Fascists to promote national solidarity ultimately prevailing. Fortunately for the Fascists, CONI and the PNF were able to rationalize two conflicting aspects of fascist ideology—the moral imperative to work and the propagandist function of football—by promulgating the belief that the benefits of building a powerful national team comprised of the best players from throughout Italy would outweigh the costs of *campanilismo* in order to continue to promote football as a powerful adhesive for a bifurcated society.

Fascist ideology was founded upon the belief in individual physical struggle and sacrifice as a means of realizing collective goals. According to Fascist ideologues, this idea was encapsulated in the *Nuovo Italiano* who would "believe, obey, and fight," for Mussolini.<sup>44</sup> By 1934, physical fitness, martial spirit, hard work, discipline, and intellectual ability were the most highly regarded traits an Italian man could possess.<sup>45</sup> The year 1934 also corresponded with Italy's first World Cup championship, won at home, which arguably established Italy as the world's soccer power. Italy went on to win the gold medal in soccer at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin and then repeated as World Cup champions in 1938.<sup>46</sup> In the

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>44</sup> Philip V. Cannistraro. "Mussolini's Cultural Revolution: Fascist or Nationalist?" *Journal of Contemporary History* (vol. 7, no. ¾; 1972), p. 131.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>46</sup> Patrizia Dogliani. "Sport and Fascism," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, p. 332.

1930's, the Fascist regime demonstrated to the world that it had created the *Nuovo Italiano* who was strong, intelligent, disciplined, obedient and, above all else, victorious in battle.

The development of the *Nuovo Italiano* belied a commitment by spectators to accept the Fascists' transformation of the sport into a cultural self-actualizing event. Christian Bromberger accurately summarizes this process as, "the style of a squad is part of a 'mentality' or of a 'public imagination'...it is a valid compromise between a real and imagined identity."<sup>47</sup> By demonstrating its ability to achieve victory on the football field, the national team reaffirmed the success of fascist enculturation. This required not only considerable effort and investment on the part of the state to supply the requisite infrastructure to develop football throughout Italy, as the *Carta di Viareggio* demonstrates, but also the creation of a Fascist culture that affirmed its identity on an individual and collective basis.

### *Mass Consent*

Mussolini and the Fascist state relied on the sustainability of mass consent in order to maintain control over the now indistinguishable spheres of civil and political life.<sup>48</sup> In terms of Fascist ideology, the goal was that Italians would be, "guided both emotionally and intellectually in their judgments and activities by unexamined prejudices."<sup>49</sup> In the case of football, these prejudices were manifested in the context of a Fascist-popularized sport that, counter to bourgeoisie culture, appealed across class and gender lines.<sup>50</sup> For impoverished Italians, football and other sports activities provided by the ONB and OND were generally

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<sup>47</sup> Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, pp. 201-202.

<sup>48</sup> Diane Yvonne Ghirardo. "Città Fascista: Surveillance and Spectacle," *Journal of Contemporary History* (vol. 31, no. 2; 1996), p. 1.

<sup>49</sup> Clifford Geertz. "Ideology as a Cultural System," *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 218.

<sup>50</sup> Walter L. Adamson. "Avant-garde Modernism and Italian Fascism: Cultural Politics in the era of Mussolini," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies* (vol. 6, no. 2; 1995), p. 236.

the only affordable forms of entertainment, leisure, and socialization.<sup>51</sup> Train fares to Bologna were often half-price in order to encourage Italians of all classes to support the country's most successful club team as a means of combating *campanilismo* and promoting national solidarity.<sup>52</sup> *Bologna*, more than any other team, became associated with the Fascist regime through the *dopolavoro*, the institutions of mass leisure, which created promotions to reduce the cost of tickets for party members.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, true to Fascist corporatist economic structure, the coordination of leisure time proved most effective when it reflected the interests of the elite, among which football ranked highly.<sup>54</sup> Mussolini and the Fascists transformed football into an institution capable of reinforcing and fostering the mass consent necessary to carry out the "fascistization" of Italian culture.

The development of mass media played an important role in expanding football's popularity and supplying society with the information and spirit of a homogenized Fascist culture. When Mussolini officially established the Fascist state in 1925, mass media were underdeveloped. However, after the regime became aware of the efficacy of broadcasting rallies and demonstrating the regime's scope through information dissemination, the Fascists established the EIAR, the national broadcasting corporation, and the public's awareness of football expanded considerably.<sup>55</sup> By 1935, half a million Italians could afford radios, valued at 714 Lire, while the majority of the population listened to games broadcasted at cafés, bars, party branches, clubs, and other public venues.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, one of

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<sup>51</sup> Patrizia Dogliani. "Sport and Fascism," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, p. 330.

<sup>52</sup> Pierre Lanfranchi. "Bologna: The Team that Shook the World! A Football Team in Fascist Italy," *The International Journal of the History of Sport* (1991), p. 340.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 343.

<sup>54</sup> Victoria de Grazia. *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy*, pp. 21, 161-163.

<sup>55</sup> Patrizia Dogliani. "Sport and Fascism," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, p. 333.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 333.

Victoria de Grazia. *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy*, p. 155.

the most popular figures in football was not a player but a radio broadcaster. Niccolo Carosio owed his renown not just to his abilities as an announcer, but particularly to the regime's promotion of his broadcast due to his adoption of *calcio* language such as "*calcio d'inizio*," or "kick-off"—the beginning of a football match—that had been "Italianized" by the regime and became a defining feature of Italian football.<sup>57</sup> By creating an Italian vocabulary for English words to describe the rules, positions, and maneuvers in football, the regime was able to promote football's popularity through a language understood by Northerners and Southerners alike and to inextricably link itself to every aspect of the increasingly popular game that served as a central component of the Fascist propaganda apparatus.

In both urban and rural areas, the Fascists subsidized radio, even establishing a rural radio agency, the ERR, in 1933 in order to stimulate the Fascists' penetration of traditionally unreachable areas of the country.<sup>58</sup> According to one scholar, Fascist leaders were keen to observe that forms of popular entertainment, such as football, "attracted large audiences and that the control of popular pastimes could be turned into an...instrument for political regimentation."<sup>59</sup> Radio was not alone in this respect. Football stadiums were designed to both accommodate crowds of spectators and to create the effect of a Fascist spectacle—conveying strength, discipline, and obedience—unfolding before the public's eyes. Aside from the obligatory references to Roman tradition idealized by Mussolini, stadium design proved so varied that only in function, rather than in form, did they provide the sense

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<sup>57</sup> Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 66.

<sup>58</sup> Philip Morgan. *Italian Fascism: 1915-1945*, p. 137.

<sup>59</sup> Phillip V. Cannistraro. "Mussolini's Cultural Revolution: Fascist or Nationalist?" *Journal of Contemporary History* (vol. 7, no. 3/4; 1972), p. 137.

of cohesion desired by the Fascist bureaucrats.<sup>60</sup> As such, mass consent could be achieved through the prevalence and ubiquity of all structures being deemed fascist, especially in regards to football.

Lastly, breeding mass consent among Italians required the careful regulation of consumerism. Thus, the consumption of luxury goods was heavily taxed while expenditure on state-sanctioned events, such as football games, was deemed a commodity worthy of government subsidization, as evidenced by reduced train fares and ticket prices. However, in sectors such as heavy manufacturing, government policies like the Quota 90 of 1927, which overvalued the Lire relative to internationally determined exchange rates, cut wages, raised protective tariffs, and reduced consumption of both domestic and especially foreign goods, effectively made the state the only entity with the purchasing power capable of sustaining the Italian economy.<sup>61</sup> While severely repressing consumer culture, party membership became a means of reducing the cost of suitable purchases designed to provide every Italian citizen with basic necessities and contribute to achieving a “modest” expression of consumer habits.<sup>62</sup> The effective use of mass media, football, and football stadiums enabled the state to suffuse society with a culture of mass consent that not only regulated consumer behavior but also ensured the pervasive representation of Fascist doctrine in every aspect of Italians’ lives.

#### *Campanilismo: the North/South Divide*

Despite the ingenuity of the regime in regards to restructuring football to create a culture of mass consent imbued with fascist spirit, football also reinforced *campanilismo*.

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<sup>60</sup> Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 79.

Philip Morgan. *Italian Fascism: 1915-1945*, p. 140.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>62</sup> Victoria de Grazia. *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy*, p. 153.

While the more industrialized North owned and operated what capital existed in inter-war Italy, the South remained highly agrarian and was reluctant to allow the Fascist's to control and alter their cultural practices. The OND was often unable to garner support among the rural public not just because of isolation, social structures, working practices, and a shortage of facilities, but because the OND sought to destroy existing cultural practices and self-help institutions like the *Casse del Popolo*, which existed throughout rural Italy.<sup>63</sup> Consequently, Fascist football, with its *calcio* language, successful club teams, and by 1934, arguably the best national team in the world, was unable to overcome regional differences. Instead, much of the *calcio* apparatus transformed by the Fascists in the hopes of bolstering the image of a unified state reflected and perpetuated existing divisions within the nation.

The regime's policy in regards to development of northern urban areas versus rural southern regions reflected an institutional bias towards locales that expressed the greatest devotion towards the Fascist state while those that proved more difficult to control were punished for their resistance. Prior to 1922, fascism had made few inroads into the virtually impermeable Southern strongholds of regional conservatism where, "control of local council was the source of favors...who you were and your connections mattered above all."<sup>64</sup> Only after the March on Rome did the PNF begin to build any local Southern leadership. As the Fascist state attempted to expand its influence, bureaucrats conceived of policies based on their ideological commitment to the propulsive force of conflict and promulgated the Battle of Wheat and the "empty the cities" policies as a means for waging

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<sup>63</sup> Patrizia Dogliani. "Sport and Fascism," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, p. 340.

<sup>64</sup> Philip Morgan. *Italian Fascism: 1915-1945*, p. 88.

war on unproductive forces, primarily in the South.<sup>65</sup> Although the Battle of Wheat did succeed in increasing wheat production almost to the point of self sufficiency by raising tariffs on imported grain, it hurt farmers in export-oriented crop sectors and resulted in the loss of half a million livestock.<sup>66</sup> This did little to endear Southerners to the government.

The “empty the cities” policy of 1928 stemmed from the regime’s desire to reinforce family values and prompt a mass-migration back to the land in an effort to augment Italy’s low birthrate and reverse the flight to urban areas stemming from investment in capital-intensive industries.<sup>67</sup> To achieve these goals, Mussolini sanctioned all methods, including forced relocation, to return urban immigrants, particularly the unemployed, to the countryside.<sup>68</sup> Meanwhile, peasants in the North, affluent compared to their Southern counterparts, were spared the worst of both policies because of their more advanced state of farming.<sup>69</sup> Due to the policy’s limited success, football was utilized to supply the necessary cohesive force although it too produced mixed results and at times reinforced the divisions it was intended to eradicate.

Despite its best efforts, the regime found the challenges creating national solidarity and a spirit of *risorgimento* among Italians virtually insurmountable. Originally, when the regime instituted the *Carta di Viareggio* and created the *Lega Nazionale*, 16 teams were culled from the old Northern League while only three teams from the *Lazio* and *Campagna* divisions of the Southern League were included.<sup>70</sup> In 1929, the regime expanded football by creating the *Serie A* comprised of the top eight teams from both the Northern and Southern

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<sup>65</sup> Victoria de Grazia. *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy*, p. 13.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

Alexander J. de Grand. *Italian Fascism: Its Origins and Development* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), p. 64.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 64.

<sup>68</sup> Victoria de Grazia. *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy*, p. 99.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>70</sup> Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 59.

divisions. However, by 1930, of the 3,280 sports grounds built by the regime, 2,500 were in the North.<sup>71</sup> Teams who failed to qualify for the top league, and thus were denied the opportunity to earn more income from ticket sales, were relegated to *Serie B*—the second division of Italian football in which weaker teams competed and where most of the Southern teams made their home.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, the most powerful clubs hailed from Turin, Milan and Bologna, the owners of which were prominent Northern industrialists who spent vast sums on football and benefited from the support of the Fascist party.<sup>73</sup> In 1928, the Agnelli family, who owned Fiat as well as *Juventus*, one of Italy’s best club teams from the Northern industrial city of Turin, was able to pay one star player an 8,000 Lire weekly salary in addition to a 100,000 Lire signing bonus.<sup>74</sup> During the restructuring effort, considerable energy was expended on forcing smaller cities to rationalize the number of teams they created to compete in the various *Serie* divisions—most cities were forced to choose one team. In some cases, such as *Fiume* and *Triestina* on the Adriatic coast, this imposed limit exacerbated existing conflicts between cities and regions.<sup>75</sup>

*Campanilismo* retarded the regime’s efforts to integrate Italian society by spawning violent outbursts between rival supporters. Such conflicts were not reserved for teams from the North and South. In 1925, gunshots were fired at a match between teams from Genoa and Bologna, two Northern cities.<sup>76</sup> While such acts demonstrated the degree to which football came to symbolize regional ties, the regime was troubled by such sentiments as they disrupted its efforts to create a unified fascist Italian state. However, because the

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<sup>71</sup> Patrizia Dogliani. “Sport and Fascism,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, p. 330.

<sup>72</sup> Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 69.

<sup>73</sup> Bill Murray. *The World’s Game*, p. 67.

<sup>74</sup> David Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round: A Global History of Football*, p. 205.

<sup>75</sup> Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 71.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 72.



*Carta* had instituted the rationalization of clubs in order to pool resources and make management more efficient, this development bolstered feelings of *campanilismo* among supporters. *Bologna*, despite being the most successful club team and being lauded by the regime for winning important victories abroad, such as the Central European Cup and the Mitropa Cup in 1932 and 1934 and a 1937 tournament in Paris, failed to garner support outside Bologna proper.<sup>77</sup> It was the pervasiveness of regional ties in the late 1920's which prompted the regime to invest in the development of a national side that could garner the same virulent support as local clubs.<sup>78</sup>

Ultimately, the Fascists did secure the support of most Northern industrialists and members of the middle-class as well as tacit consent from the agrarian population of the South who, despite not personifying Mussolini's *Nuovo Italiano* ideals and failing to fully adopt the culture of mass consent, did not significantly impede the fascistization process. Although it remained the prize of the Fascists, football presented considerable obstacles to the Fascist program of Italian regeneration and fostered the growth of a competitive spirit among Italians towards one another that reflected the overall trajectory of Italian society. However, as policy shifted to promote a more imperialist agenda, Mussolini and the Fascists were reminded that football could reflect and support Italy's imperial objectives by promoting the spirit of the empire both at home and abroad.

### *Projecting Fascist Power Abroad*

Between 1925—when Mussolini usurped the remaining vestiges of liberal political authority—and the early 1930's, exerting control through obedience and discipline constituted the primary aim of Fascist domestic policy. Particular attention was paid to

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<sup>77</sup> Pierre Lanfranchi. "Bologna: The Team that Shook the World! A Football Team in Fascist Italy," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, p. 336.

<sup>78</sup> Bill Murray. *The World's Game*, p. 76.

reforming football, which the Fascists inherited in a state of disarray.<sup>79</sup> As one upper-level bureaucrat observed, prior to the genesis of the *Carta di Viareggio* that fascistized football, “Because [the state of disorder and misconduct in football] is a grave problem we are setting about resolving it in a Fascist manner: that is seriously.”<sup>80</sup> For a brief period in 1926, the Fascists proposed abandoning football in favor of *volata*, a tennis-like game invented by the Fascists, but the game failed to captivate the Italian public.<sup>81</sup> According to the Fascists, the success of Italian football was both a means to greater national unity and integration and an end in itself due to clubs’ relationships with industrial capital and football’s importance in the geopolitical arena.

Mussolini’s meteoric rise to power began with the creation of the *Partito Nazionale Fascista*, (PNF) in 1921 and the March on Rome in 1922, which marked the public transfer of authority from the central government to the PNF.<sup>82</sup> Shortly thereafter, authoritarian rule was established between 1925 and 1926 after four assassination attempts on Mussolini prompted *Il Duce* to enact *leggi eccezionali*, “special” laws, which centralized state power in Mussolini’s hands.<sup>83</sup> With this began the process of *l’inquadramento*, “fascistization,” which manifested itself through the greater control and surveillance of the population and the identification of the population with the regime and its goals.<sup>84</sup> In terms of football, this meant that fascism’s guiding principles governed the reorganization of the sport through the belief that, “crowds seemed to demonstrate that what inspired people as a mass to collective

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<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

<sup>80</sup> Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 58.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

<sup>82</sup> Philip Morgan. *Italian Fascism: 1915-1945*, pp. 62, 72.

<sup>83</sup> Doug Thompson. *State Control in Fascist Italy: Culture and Conformity, 1925-43* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 8-9.

<sup>84</sup> Philip Morgan. *Italian Fascism: 1915-1945*, p. 128.

action were their emotions and feelings, not rational discourse and argument.”<sup>85</sup> This shift catalyzed Mussolini’s “going out to the people” policy which, as described above, sought to expand Fascist membership by organizing leisure activities and using football to galvanize the national spirit.

Some authors have claimed that football was used to distract Italians from Italy’s prolonged economic recession.<sup>86</sup> Admittedly, despite economic expansion between 1922 and 1925, inflation threatened Italy’s economic stability, which prompted Fascists to exhibit a bias towards industrialists and capital financiers and to institute corporatist economic structures through components of the *leggi eccezionali*, which reduced labor rights and mandated low wages at the expense of the working-class and peasants.<sup>87</sup> Through this “bitter pill” strategy, Mussolini’s reduced industry’s dependence on imports, created capital for industrial investment, and made agriculture productive enough to meet internal demand by employing both tariffs and subsidies, which led to a period of, “dynamic though distorted,” growth.<sup>88</sup> However, this period of growth did not engender complacency among working-class Italians. The number of industrial strikes actually increased between 1922 and 1925, indicating that worker unrest remained actionable. Furthermore, agricultural production remained low until 1936. Thus, football neither afforded peasants the opportunity to enjoy more leisure time at the expense of production nor boosted their

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<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>86</sup> Patrizia Dogliani. “Sport and Fascism,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, p. 333.

<sup>87</sup> Alexander J. de Grand. *Italian Fascism: Its Origins and Development*, pp. 59, 66.

Doug Thompson. *State Control in Fascist Italy: Culture and Conformity, 1925-43*, p. 64.

Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 67.

Pierre Lanfranchi. “Bologna: The Team that Shook the World! A Football Team in Fascist Italy,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, p. 341. Football players were not immune to the regime’s support of heavy industry. *Juventus*, one of the most prestigious Italian clubs, was financed by the Agnelli family who owned Fiat in Turin and supported the regime whole-heartedly. Players even posed for publicity photos alongside the latest Fiats rolled-off the assembly line.

<sup>88</sup> Victoria de Grazia. *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy*, pp. 11-12, 158.

confidence to generate more output. It was not until Italy's mobilization for war and the concomitant increase in the strength of the national team that Italy's industrial and agricultural production began to rise significantly, although ultimately not enough to defeat Europe's greater powers. Thus, football did little to convince most Italians that the economy was anything but unstable.

In the mid-1930's, the PNF began mobilizing Italy for war in order to fulfill its imperial ambitions. The Fascists found football ideal for demonstrating Italy's new-found strength and for exerting Italy's dominance over Eastern Europe as part of Italy's sphere of influence. Italian football clubs had a long-established relationship with Eastern European footballers. During the 1920's, Danubian coaches often commanded Italian teams. However, as the language of *calcio* flourished and teams like *Bologna* won the Mitropa Cup, generally reserved for the two best teams from Central and Eastern Europe, Italian football was able to exert its independence from Danubian management and British mastery of the game.<sup>89</sup> Given the regions in which Italy competed in order to establish its national identity, it is perhaps of little surprise that the Fascists annexed Albania in 1939 in order to lay claim to the rest of Eastern Europe.<sup>90</sup> By defeating Eastern Europeans on the football pitch, the Fascists sought to impose their superiority over the governments of Albania and Yugoslavia and advance what the Nazis deemed their, "Danube Policy."<sup>91</sup>

As Fascist foreign policy grew increasingly opposed to British interests, Italian football followed suit. In the early 1930's, Italy created its own style of football, *il metodo*,

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<sup>89</sup> Pierre Lanfranchi. "Bologna: The Team that Shook the World! A Football Team in Fascist Italy," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, pp. 338-339

<sup>90</sup> Philip Morgan. *Italian Fascism: 1915-1945*, pp. 165, 208-209.

Alexander J. de Grand. *Italian Fascism: Its Origins and Development*, p. 95.

<sup>91</sup> John Hiden, *Germany and Europe 1919-1939* (London: Longman Group Limited, 1977), pp. 139-140

which sparked a new period of dominance of football by an entirely Italian style of play. This development, adopted and mastered by the new crop of Fascist-educated players, so the regime believed and propounded, led to Italy's most storied period of football dominance. The national side won back-to-back World Cups in 1934 and 1938, which was given militaristic significance by Fascist bureaucrats, and took home the gold medal in football at the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, beating Austria 2-1 before a crowd of 100,000 spectators.<sup>92</sup> At the club level, Bologna defeated Chelsea, a strong English first-division side, at a 1937 tournament in Paris.<sup>93</sup>

Among the political highlights of football during the 1930's were the matches played between England and Italy. Again, it is important to remember that the Fascist state did not exist just to govern and make laws, but also to project the power of the state abroad and thereby garner international respect.<sup>94</sup> International matches were exploited by the PNF as a means of displaying the degree to which Fascist enculturation had reinvigorated the Italian spirit and enabled Italy to compete with and defeat foreign enemies.<sup>95</sup> Mussolini made sure to emphasize the relationship between international competition and the fate of the Fascist state. At one speech during the mid 1930's, Mussolini admonished all Italian athletes to remember that:

“When [athletes] take part in contests beyond our borders, there is then entrusted to your muscles, and above all your spirit, the honor and prestige of the national sport. You must hence *make use of all your energy and your willpower in order to obtain primacy in all struggles on the earth, on the sea, and in the sky.*”<sup>96</sup> (emphasis added)

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<sup>92</sup> Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 193.

Richard Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971), p. 193.

<sup>93</sup> Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 173.

<sup>94</sup> Benito Mussolini, “The Doctrine of Fascism,” *Communism, Fascism, and Democracy: The Theoretical Foundations*, p. 332.

<sup>95</sup> Victoria de Grazia. *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy*, p. 175.

Philip V. Cannistraro. “Mussolini's Cultural Revolution: Fascist or Nationalist?” p. 132.

<sup>96</sup> David Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round: A Global History of Football*, p. 254.

Evoking Italy's future battles, Mussolini inextricably linked Italian sport, and football in particular, to the military. The first match between England and Italy in 1933 ended in a 1-1 draw, which enabled both sides to claim equal political spoils and return home with heads held high. However, the second meeting in November 1934, known as the Battle of Highbury, following Italy's World Cup triumph, was more hotly contested, particularly as international tensions continued to escalate while England practiced *détente* with the Fascist regime.<sup>97</sup> Mussolini promised players great rewards if they defeated the English side and the Italian press attached grand political implications to both victory and defeat. In a sagacious maneuver, the press reminded readers that should Italy lose, they were still World Cup champions, which proved crucial given that Italy lost 3-2.<sup>98</sup> This prescient move by the press allowed the Italian team to save face and insulated the regime from popular backlash following the defeat. The third and final match was played in 1939 in Milan and involved attempts to garner Maltese support against the English, who occupied Malta, by paying to transport 400 Maltese fans to the match; notably, both the English and Fascist teams performed the Fascist salute.<sup>99</sup> The game ended in a 2-2 draw in front of a capacity crowd including highly decorated Fascist officials and Mussolini's two sons, indicating that the match was of great importance to the Fascist regime.<sup>100</sup>

A number of factors guided Fascist Italy towards an alliance with Nazi Germany. As Italy's economic dependence declined, due to Quota 90 and the Battle of Wheat, and her imperial ambitions grew, Italy drew closer to Nazi Germany and other Central and Eastern

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<sup>97</sup> Peter J. Beck. "For World Footballing Honors: England versus Italy, 1933, 1934, 1939," *The European Sports History Review* (vol. 3, 2001), p. 254.

<sup>98</sup> David Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round: A Global History of Football*, p. 203.

<sup>99</sup> Peter J. Beck. "For World Footballing Honors: England versus Italy, 1933, 1934, 1939," *The European Sports History Review*, pp. 255-256.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 260.

European nations.<sup>101</sup> The Fascists hoped that a German-Franco conflict would escalate, due to Germany's claims on territories ceded to France in the Treaty of Versailles, which would allow Italy to play the two powers against one another. Indeed, in 1934, Italy nearly sided with France by acting as Austria's protector against Nazi expansion in 1934.<sup>102</sup>

However, conflicts with France and England escalated in the late 1930's driving Italy towards Nazi Germany. In an effort to lessen the agricultural burden borne by the South, the Fascists invaded and conquered Ethiopia in 1935, much to the chagrin of France and, to a lesser extent, England.<sup>103</sup> Rather than economic considerations stemming from the Depression—Italy's economy was already beginning to recover from the Depression as of 1934—conquering Ethiopia served as a building-block for the new Fascist empire and forced Britain and France to acknowledge Italy's new power.<sup>104</sup> Mussolini had already gone to great lengths in the late 1920's to undermine Britain's position in the Middle East and France's presence in North Africa by subversively supporting Zionism and claiming to be a defender of Islam in Libya.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, Italy's conquest of Ethiopia and the Fascist government's grudging support of the 1936 Austro-German agreement strengthened Nazi Germany's resolve to ally with the Fascists.<sup>106</sup>

Once Italy conquered Ethiopia and formed the Axis with Germany in 1939, race, which had not factored prominently in Fascist ideology, became a means for determining the eligibility of foreign players to play in Italian football leagues. In 1928, a law was passed preventing *oriundi*, primarily the descendants ex-patriot Italians who lived in

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<sup>101</sup> Philip Morgan. *Italian Fascism: 1915-1945*, p. 170.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>103</sup> Victoria de Grazia. *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy*, p. 125.

<sup>104</sup> Philip Morgan. *Italian Fascism: 1915-1945*, p. 173.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 180-181.

Argentina and Uruguay, from competing. However, this measure proved highly unpopular. In one of the few examples of Fascists revising doctrine and acquiescing to public sentiment, the legislation was amended in favor of a new definition of nationality that placed greater emphasis on a player's "commitment to national ends," rather than their blood or birth.<sup>107</sup> "Fighting in [Italy's] wars and participating in the movement which embodied the best of the nation, [the *oriundi*] showed a real sense of being and feeling Italian and validated their membership in the nation."<sup>108</sup>

Unfortunately for Italian football, after the Italy conquered Ethiopia in 1935 and formally allied with Germany in 1939, Mussolini instituted his own race laws similar to those the Nazis imposed in Germany.<sup>109</sup> Historically, according to Fascist doctrine, the state was determined not by race or geography, but based on the community encompassed by the state itself.<sup>110</sup> Indeed, it was not until the Berlin-Rome Axis was formed in 1936 that the *oriundi*, who had been spared from the regulations promulgated in the *Carta di Viareggio*, were truly forbidden from playing in *Serie A*. Whether this was a product of pressure exerted by Hitler on Mussolini or a decisive turn in Fascist doctrine is unclear.<sup>111</sup> What is clear is that after international competition was suspended during the War, Italian football fell into a state of decline that saw the national side outclassed for the next 40 years. In May 1949, a Superga plane crashed, killing the entire *Torino* football team that had won five consecutive *scudetto* titles since 1945 and whose players constituted the backbone of

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<sup>107</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.

<sup>109</sup> Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 207.

<sup>110</sup> Benito Mussolini, "The Doctrine of Fascism," *Communism, Fascism, and Democracy: The Theoretical Foundations*, p. 331.

<sup>111</sup> George L. Mosse. *The Fascist Revolution: Toward a General Theory of Fascism*, p. 36.



the Italian national team.<sup>112</sup> Not until 1963 did another Italian team, this time *AC Milan*, begin to rejuvenate and resuscitate Italian football.

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<sup>112</sup> Paddy Agnew, *Forza Italia: A Journey in Search of Italy and its Football* (London: Ebury Press, 2006), p. 60.

## CHAPTER 2

### FOOTBALL AS POLITICS IN NAZI GERMANY

#### *Türnen versus Football: Nationalist Sport before the Nazi Party*

Unlike Italy, Germany had a national sport—*türnen*, gymnastics—that had dominated German athletics prior to the ascension of the Nazis and served as both a means for military training and a symbol of conservative nationalism.<sup>113</sup> By 1914, the *Deutsche Turnerschaft* (DT) was the world's largest physical exercise organization and promoted a philosophy of gymnastics based on the doctrine of F.L. Jahn, the “*Turner* father,” who believed that gymnastics promoted military readiness and strengthened the German race.<sup>114</sup> The DT's philosophy was also diametrically opposed to modern sport, which encouraged international competition and was regarded as a means to promote national cohesion and to deter political conflict.<sup>115</sup> Based on its strict belief in amateurism, *Turners*—individual DT organizations—resented the emphasis on professionalism in modern sport, particularly in what would become Germany's most popular sport: football.<sup>116</sup>

Initially, football was not readily adopted by Germans and opposition from the *Turnerschaft* made the absorption of football into German culture more difficult. As in Italy, English merchants established the first football clubs in Berlin and around the Bremen-Hamburg area in the 1880's. Football players were considered to be undesirable members

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<sup>113</sup> Pierre Arnaud, “Sport- A Means of National Representation,” *Sport and International Politics*, eds. Pierre Arnaud and James Riordan (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 4.

<sup>114</sup> Arnd Krüger, “The Role of Sport in German International Politics, 1918-1945,” *Sport and International Politics*, p. 80.

<sup>115</sup> Pierre Arnaud, “Sport- A Means of National Representation,” *Sport and International Politics*, p. 5.

<sup>116</sup> Arnd Krüger, “The Role of Sport in German International Politics, 1918-1945,” *Sport and International Politics*, p. 85.

in the various *Türners* around Germany, which forced players to leave the *Türnen* and establish their own football clubs.<sup>117</sup>

The *Deutscher Fussball Bund*, German Football Association (DFB), was founded in 1900 by middle-class men who had benefited from legislation passed in 1891 that reduced working hours in both shops and offices.<sup>118</sup> Initially, football was far less popular than gymnastics but the number of players increased so quickly that the DT attempted to have football banned.<sup>119</sup> Although the DT regarded football as a game played by the English, who were viewed as decadent aristocrats, the German working-class from Germany's industrial centers were the biggest supporters of football.<sup>120</sup> Indeed, the belief that football was only popular among members of the working-class reinforced the DT's perception that therefore, "football [was] not representative of the entire nation."<sup>121</sup> In response, the DT attempted to discourage the growth of football by forcing workers to pay a membership fee to use their facilities and later forbade workers from being members. This decision only served to increase the propensity of the working-class to adopt football as their preferred sport and further alienated middle-and-upper-class Germans from football.<sup>122</sup>

The two most important aspects to comprehend about the rise of football in Germany are the DT's rejection of football as a foreign and pacifist sport and as a game that violated the DT's conception of sport as something to be done for the betterment of the race rather than for material gain. Germans referred to football as the "English disease" and

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<sup>117</sup> Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football*, pp. 20, 22, 24.

<sup>118</sup> Stephen Wagg, "Beginnings: Football Comes to Europe," *Giving the Game Away: Football, Politics, and Culture on the Fire Continent* (London: Leicester University Press, 1995), p. 105.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football*, p. 18.

<sup>121</sup> Liz Crolley and David Hand, *Football and European Identity: Historical narratives through the press* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 69.

<sup>122</sup> Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football*, p. 36.

hated the way it made men appear undignified and animalistic.<sup>123</sup> Furthermore, while thousands of members of various *Türnen* enlisted to serve in World War I, football players tended to be less overtly patriotic and far fewer footballers enlisted in the armed forces.<sup>124</sup> Thus, while the members of the *Türnen* reinforced the German philosophy of gymnastics as a highly militaristic and nationalist activity, footballers were perceived as being unwilling to sacrifice themselves for Germany.

The debate between amateurism and professionalism also served to poison football in the eyes of German nationalists. Initially, students and the members of the middle-class, following the *Türnen* tradition, advocated for amateurism in football, but increasing numbers of working-class players demanded the acceptance of professionalism.<sup>125</sup> However, in 1918, Germany was forced to abolish its compulsory military service as part of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and various sports were regarded as the ideal replacement to physically educate young men.<sup>126</sup> The DFB and members of the German nationalist press, seething over the terms of the Treaty, believed that the *volksport*, people's sport—football—would help strengthen the *volkskörper*, people's body, and restore Germany's military capacity and that professionalism would doom this development.<sup>127</sup>

With the gradual establishment of an eight-hour workday between 1918 and 1923, football was consigned to the toolbox of the representatives of the Weimar Republic and national football competition resumed in July 1918 in order to entertain the post-war

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>126</sup> Rudolf Oswald, "Nazi Ideology and the end of Central European Soccer Professionalism, 1938-1941," *Emancipation Through Muscles: Jews and Sports in Europe*, eds. Michael Brenner and Gideon Reuveni (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), p. 157.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 157.

German populace.<sup>128</sup> The impression propounded by supporters of the DT that football was a foreign and materialistic sport devoid of national purpose was responsible for retarding the development of football in Germany and ultimately reducing the scope of football as a political tool in the Nazi regime. Both of these issues continued to depress football's popularity in Germany until its usefulness in foreign policy was perceived by Hitler and his Minister of Propaganda, Joseph Goebbels, and football was rehabilitated for use by the Nazi regime.

### *National Socialism and the Aryan Body*

Before examining the use of football by the Nazi regime, the National Socialist doctrine needs to be explored in order to discern the role of sport in Nazi ideology. Initially, what was to become the Nazi Party was a small group of youths that called themselves the National Socialist German Worker's Party.<sup>129</sup> Hitler, a disaffected and unsuccessful Austrian artist who fled military service in World War I, became the leader of the Party in 1921 and focused the Party's attention on overthrowing the Weimar Republic that had "stabbed Germany in the back" and on creating an Aryan empire ruled by Germany.<sup>130</sup> In November 1923, Hitler and 200 other party members staged the Beer Hall Putsch in Munich intending to violently seize control of the state. The Putsch was easily quelled by the police and Hitler was sentenced to five years in prison—although he only served 19 months.<sup>131</sup> During his brief imprisonment, Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf*, which became the defining text of Nazi ideology and outlined Hitler's theory of the state as a means to build a powerful racial community of Aryan peoples. Crucially, not only was

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<sup>128</sup> Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football*, pp. 36, 40.

<sup>129</sup> Adolf Hitler, "Mein Kampf," *Readings in Western Civilization, Vol. 3; Europe Between Wars*, eds. John Boyer and Julius Kirschner (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 191.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 191.

Hitler's conception of the state radically different from Mussolini's but the state was also described in distinctively physiological terms and as the means for restoring Germany's glory through war, athleticism, and the cult of the body.

The Aryan state conceived by Hitler can be easily understood by paying attention to Hitler's description of the Aryan community as a living body. The National Socialist state, according to Hitler, "[was] a means to an end, and the end [was] the preservation and advancement of a community of physically homogenous creatures," whereas the liberal bourgeois state intended to reproduce itself rather than to become the institutional embodiment of racial self-preservation.<sup>132</sup> The Nazi state was created to serve the racial community, whereas Mussolini regarded the state as the highest order of society.<sup>133</sup> In conjunction with this idea, the state was to be defended by the most physically fit and militarily trained Germans.<sup>134</sup> While the state itself was reified by violence, the physicality of the state's populace determined the success of the state in galvanizing the racial community.

Developing the body was crucial for Hitler and the future elite cadres in the Nazi Party, which was banned following the Beer Hall Putsch but reemerged in 1925 as the Weimar Republic faced increasing political and economic problems.<sup>135</sup> The general belief was that because the Treaty of Versailles had forced Germany to demilitarize, the Weimar government had grown slovenly and unfit to govern.<sup>136</sup> In order to create Germans capable of leading the race, it was the duty of the state to:

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<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 205, 209.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 211.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 192.

<sup>136</sup> Arnd Krüger, "Breeding, Bearing and Preparing the Aryan Body: Creating Supermen the Nazi Way," *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon*, ed. J.A. Mangan (Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 1999), p. 46.

“Turn the young scions of the race into worthy instruments for increasing the race later on. With this view the national State must direct its educational work, in the first place, not so much towards pumping in mere knowledge as towards cultivating thoroughly healthy bodies. Here...the formation of character...especially encouragement of will-power and determination, combined with teaching the joy of assuming responsibility.”<sup>137</sup>

In order to fulfill this “social contract,” Hitler asserted that the state, and more particularly the race, would train every German male in boxing and gymnastics.<sup>138</sup> These skills, it was believed, would make Aryan men physically presentable thereby, “embody[ing] the archetype on which the imagination seeking virility or regeneration can feed.”<sup>139</sup> Moreover, gymnastics and boxing, above all other sports, “encourage[ed] the spirit of attack... [and] demand[ed] lightning decisions and harden[ed] and suppl[ed] the body.”<sup>140</sup> Physical education was to be a requisite component of a young German boy’s daily education.<sup>141</sup> The National Socialist elite, and especially the *Führer*, leader, would both epitomize the strength and authority of the organic state and act as a piece of living propaganda that encouraged supporters to strive to achieve the ideal Aryan body.

A few key aspects of Nazi ideology emerge from the juxtaposed policies of the Weimar Republic and what would become the Nazi regime. Given that, according to the Nazis, the state was designed to preserve the original elements of Aryan culture—Aryans were, according to Hitler, the “founders” of *all* culture—Hitler clearly gave preference to the DT, thus granting gymnastics primacy in Nazi physical education while football remained a “foreign” sport.<sup>142</sup> International sports, in contrast to boxing, were regarded as a, “pacifist-

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<sup>137</sup> Adolf Hitler, *My Battle*, trans. E.T.S. Dugdale (Cambridge: The Riverside Press, 1933), p. 166.

<sup>138</sup> Adolf Hitler, “Mein Kampf,” *Readings in Western Civilization, Vol. 3; Europe Between Wars*, p. 212.

Adolf Hitler, *My Battle*, pp. 112-247.

<sup>139</sup> Arnd Krüger, “Breeding, Bearing and Preparing the Aryan Body: Creating Supermen the Nazi Way,” *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon*, pp. 57, 63.

<sup>140</sup> Adolf Hitler, *My Battle*, p. 166.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 122, 206.

international plot concocted by the Jews to soften up the German male and substitute sport for war on behalf of global reconciliation.”<sup>143</sup> One of the racist Nazi observations of Jews was that Jews appeared to be unable to control their bodies whereas Aryans could command their bodies to perform whatever action was required, particularly in order to serve the race.<sup>144</sup> These beliefs laid the foundations for the gradual acceptance of football as an effective form of propaganda, particularly with regards to maintaining diplomatic relationships with the Allied powers in the 1930’s, intended to attract passive adherents to the Nazi Party. However, football’s use as a tool for international diplomacy prevented football from being incorporated into the paradigm of effective forms of military training.<sup>145</sup>

Nazism also conflated physical strength and athletic achievement with political ability and power. According to Nazi sport theorist Akfred Baeumler, “the body in motion is completely transformed into expression, the effect of which is the audience member’s shock at the potentialities of his *own* mechanism.”<sup>146</sup> Athletes who committed feats of sporting brilliance, it was believed, would embolden common audience members—primarily German men—to develop confidence in themselves and the will to emulate the achievements of Nazi athletes. Thus, Aryans athletes who performed exceptionally well in front of an audience simultaneously expressed the virtues and triumphs of National Socialism while convincing individual audience members, especially men, of their own bodies’ abilities and their potential to be realized in working towards the creation of the racial nation-state.

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<sup>143</sup> John M. Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), p. 166.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

<sup>145</sup> Adolf Hitler, “Mein Kampf,” *Readings in Western Civilization, Vol. 3; Europe Between Wars*, pp. 215-216

<sup>146</sup> John M. Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology*, p. 10.



Athletes also represented the types of leaders Hitler wanted in the Nazi government. Hitler was deeply concerned with creating a hierarchical Party structure with a few highly skilled and obedient members of the Party to hold key government positions and a large number of supporters who passively represented and followed Nazi doctrine and obeyed Nazi policy.<sup>147</sup> After the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, Nazi physical education was made to reflect these aims in that the title of the main sports journal was *Politische Leibeserziehung*, Political Physical Education, which emphasized strengthening the “team” that was *Gemeinschaft*, German society, fulfilling tasks, and indoctrinating the youth in Nazism.<sup>148</sup>

While the body and the athlete were powerful images in and references for Nazi ideology, Nazi militarism should neither be seen as an outgrowth of increased athletic participation among Germans at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century nor should athletes be interpreted as the sole National Socialist ideal type of leader. In pre-Nazi Germany, the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871) was the main point of cultural reference for German military prowess and athletes never garnered as much social prestige as soldiers.<sup>149</sup> Militarism pre-dated conservative interpretations of the athlete and soldiers were invariably granted primacy. Instead, the place of the athlete in National Socialism was demonstrated by the athlete’s ability to, “integrate into the rhythm of the *Volk* and recognize that liberal policy [led] to record chasing, to the unhealthy element of sport, to the annihilation of the moral community of sport.”<sup>150</sup> Rather than gaining personal renown or being identified with

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<sup>147</sup> Adolf Hitler, “Mein Kampf,” *Readings in Western Civilization, Vol. 3; Europe Between Wars*, pp. 216-218.

<sup>148</sup> Arnd Krüger, “Breeding, Bearing and Preparing the Aryan Body: Creating Supermen the Nazi Way,” *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon*, p. 57.

<sup>149</sup> John Hoberman, “Primacy of Performance: Superman not Superathlete,” *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon*, ed. J.A. Mangan (Portland: Frank Cass Publishers, 1999), pp. 71, 72.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

military heroes, athletes were expected to compete in order to reify their commitment to the *Volk* and reinforce the moral fabric of National Socialism, ideas which paralleled the DT's emphasis on pure competition in sport.

In *Mein Kampf*, the athlete and athletics were closely linked to the creation of the racial state. Athletic performance would help transform the bodies of Weimar Republic's passive citizens into physically fit and obedient supporters who actively practiced the tenets of National Socialism. Whereas gymnastics proved readily adaptable to this dogma, football remained too foreign, overtly competitive, and indicative of liberal pacifism. It was not until football became too popular to ignore that Hitler and the Nazi elite were forced to integrate football into Nazi ideology by using it as a chimera to hide Nazi Germany's foreign policy intentions. However, before this step was taken, the Nazis would have to seize power in Germany and transform the liberal state into a National Socialist collective.

#### *Towards the End of the Republic*

In a single decade, the NSDAP went from being a party on the far-right of the Republic's political spectrum to the ruling and only legal party. Germany's defeat in World War I and the signing of the Armistice and the Treaty of Versailles set her on the path to political revolution, and ultimately, the Nazi seizure of power. As in Italy, defeat on the battlefield thrust demobilized soldiers back into civilian life, many of whom could not, or did not want to, leave their soldier identities behind and whose, "style of political combat was derived from wartime experience."<sup>151</sup> The harsh terms of the Treaty, combined with vast numbers of soldiers and a large percentage of the population who felt unfairly punished

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<sup>151</sup> Martin Broszat, *Hitler and the Collapse of Weimar Germany*, trans. V.R. Berghahn (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), p. 41.

by the Allies, provided radical nationalists with a disaffected popular base on which to draw in order to create a reactionary political party.<sup>152</sup>

Initially, the NSDAP experienced little political success. However, it was the NSDAP's early failures that precipitated important revisions to the Party doctrine that laid the foundations for its rise to power. The failure of the Beer Hall Putsch in November 1923 and the subsequent national ban imposed on the Party in 1925 prompted Hitler to write *Mein Kampf* while serving time in jail and allowed him to articulate the aims of the Nazi Party. Understanding that revolutionary national socialism was politically untenable given that popular support was low and that Germany's economy was improving, with production exceeding its prewar levels by the late 1920's, Hitler realigned the mission of the Party from one of *revolutionary* national-socialism to one of *legal* revolution and the acquisition of political power in order to gradually control, and then destroy, Germany's liberal democratic institutions.<sup>153</sup> Serendipitously, the failed Putsch caused NSDAP members to form smaller local organizations among small communities and, rather than emphasizing political connections, fostered membership in the form of sports clubs, shooting clubs, and hiking associations.<sup>154</sup> Of 200 NSDAP members in the town of Marburg, with a population around 28,000 in the 1920's, students, workers, and members of sports associations comprised almost 71 percent of all members while sports associations contributing 16 percent.<sup>155</sup> Thus, inter-organizational sporting affiliations were crucial to expanding Party membership at a time when the Party was on the verge of disintegrating.

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<sup>152</sup> John Hiden, *Germany and Europe 1919-1939*, pp. 4-5, 19.

<sup>153</sup> Joseph W. Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*, p. 62.

John Hiden, *Germany and Europe 1919-1939*, p. 31.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

In addition, the period of the Great Inflation, in which hyperinflation was rampant and the government deficit reached 99 percent, prompted many members of the middle-class, a traditionally apolitical group, to look to new outlets for their political and economic salvation.<sup>156</sup> Between 1925 and 1933, 1.4 million Germans joined the NSDAP.<sup>157</sup> The Weimar Republic's handling of the economy, combined with the government's commitment to peaceful revision of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, was rapidly hurtling the government towards collapse.<sup>158</sup>

Propaganda was crucial to the NSDAP's electoral revolution. Stemming from Hitler's writings in *Mein Kampf*, the Party's propaganda methods, which were intended to draw men to the Party and to upset the existing liberal doctrinal status-quo, emphasized mass participation, emotions over intellect, and a single ideological solution to all of Germany's problems.<sup>159</sup> Joseph Goebbels, who joined the Party in the mid-1920's, became the Director of Nazi propaganda and remained in this position for the duration of the Party dictatorship. Speeches, pamphlets, and rallies emphasized the Party's traditional commitment to ending Germany's acceptance of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and the need to expel all Jews from Germany.<sup>160</sup> These goals enabled the NSDAP to formulate a coherent foreign policy based on *Lebensraum* (Living Space) in the East in order to establish a territorial base for the expansion of the German empire and a buffer zone against the Soviet Union.<sup>161</sup> Mass meetings, which drew many members together, allowed the NSDAP to reinforce members mutual commitment to one another in order to inculcate in

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<sup>156</sup> Frank McDonough, *Hitler and Nazi Germany*, p. 13.

<sup>157</sup> William Brustein, "Who Joined the Nazis and Why," *The American Journal of Sociology* (vol. 103, no. 1, July 1997), pp. 216-217.

<sup>158</sup> John Hiden, *Germany and Europe 1919-1939*, p. 27.

<sup>159</sup> Adolf Hitler, *My Battle*, p. 251.

<sup>160</sup> Joseph W. Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*, p. 68.

<sup>161</sup> Martin Broszat, *Hitler and the Collapse of Weimar Germany*, p. 73.

them the sense that, “a member was no longer alone but [instead] a part of a great and powerful movement.”<sup>162</sup>

### *Sport During the Turbulent 20'S*

Sports were increasingly integrated into the Nazi ideological paradigm during the growth of the Party and its ultimate victory in 1933. During the 1920's, football developed into Germany's most popular sport—one which the Nazis could not afford to ignore. By the mid 1920's, football games routinely attracted over 40,000 spectators, sometimes as many as 60,000, while in 1925, the first football game was broadcasted over German national radio.<sup>163</sup> Football matches consolidated a tremendous number of men into a single space in which a single focal point was the sole object of attention. The Nazi rallies were conceived to command the focus of young men in a similar fashion. During the pronounced period of membership growth between 1928 and 1930, the NSDAP's ideology attracted young middle-class men by fostering the image of an ideal type of man and social order that would best fit the needs of the racial state.<sup>164</sup> In this sense, much as Nazi mass meetings were large events that possessed what could be characterized as a “theatrical” component in terms of their presentation, the use of symbols and rituals, and even special lighting effects, sports during the 1920's were categorized as theater because of their ability to convey “heroism,” and to communicate a sense of excitement and danger to the audience.<sup>165</sup> In doing so, sports could symbolize national grandeur by, “fussing...rhythmic bodies into a symbolic whole,” just as the Nazis intended. As Susan Sontag argues, Fascist and Nazi regimes could reinterpret sports as, “choreographed [rehearsals of] the very unity of the polity. Hence,

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<sup>162</sup> Joseph W. Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*, p. 70.

<sup>163</sup> Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>164</sup> John M. Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology*, p. 2.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

Joseph W. Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany* (Chicago: Nelson Hall, 1985), p. 70.

mass athletic demonstrations, a choreography and display of bodies, [were] highly valued.”<sup>166</sup> Thus, sport had the potential to become more than simply a vehicle for self-assertion by NSDAP. Rather, sport was decidedly political within the Nazi framework and would serve this purpose under Hitler’s dictatorship.<sup>167</sup>

### *The End of the Weimar Republic*

Ultimately, the Great Depression was the straw that broke the Republic’s back. With the stock-market crash in October, 1929, loans to Germany ceased, which caused unemployment to rise from 1.4 million in 1928 to 6 million in 1932, a 42 percent collapse in industrial production, and a significant decline in farming production.<sup>168</sup> In 1928, just one year prior, the NSDAP earned just 2.6 percent of the electorate and had 100,000 members. By 1932, 37.3 percent of the electorate voted for the NSDAP and the Party garnered a 350 percent increase in membership.<sup>169</sup> Hitler carefully exploited political opportunities to maneuver the NSDAP into a position from which it could rise to power. Successive attempts by the Weimar government to resolve the Depression failed, while Hitler broadened the NSDAP coalition as popular opinion towards the Republic continued to sour.<sup>170</sup> In 1933, a miscalculation by right-wing allies led to Hitler being appointed Chancellor.<sup>171</sup> By the middle of 1934, the NSDAP secured 288 seats in the Reichstag, which enabled Hitler to call for a vote on the Enabling Act, thereby centralizing all legislative power in the Chancellorship, and resulted in a ban on all other political parties

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<sup>166</sup> John M. Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology*, p.11.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>168</sup> Frank McDonough, *Hitler and Nazi Germany*, p. 17.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Joseph W. Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*, p. 90.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>171</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

and trade unions.<sup>172</sup> Following the purge of the SA, which Hitler instituted in order to eliminate political dissidents within the Nazi Party, and the death of President Hindenberg in August 1934, Hitler and the NSDAP succeeded in creating a dictatorship in Germany.<sup>173</sup> Over the next five years, Germany would undergo a complete “Nazification” of society. This process not only resulted in the complete violation of the Treaty of Versailles through diplomatic means and but also the rise of football as one of the cornerstones of Nazi foreign policy that enabled the Nazis to remilitarize and consolidate power within Germany without appearing to violate the Allied Powers’ terms of peace.

#### *The “Nazification” of German Society*

Much of Hitler’s effort to impose *Gleichschaltung*, “Forcing into Line,” over German society was accomplished between the time Hitler became Chancellor and Hindenburg’s death. All opposition parties were banned, state government was reorganized without elections—with Nazi officials overseeing various branches of government—while the bureaucracy was completely purged of Jews, leftists, centrists, intellectuals, and all other dissident forces.<sup>174</sup> By 1934, the greatest challenges to the NSDAP and Hitler’s power were the German working-class and the 6 million unemployed Germans still suffering as a result of the Great Depression. Aside from simply instituting economic reforms, Hitler also created means of placating workers and of creating a sense of normalcy within German society while simultaneously building relationships with Germany’s largest capitalists in order to finance German rearmament. Even as profound changes were occurring and as Hitler was remilitarizing Germany in order to abrogate the political status-quo that

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<sup>172</sup> Frank McDonough, *Hitler and Nazi Germany*, p. 26.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>174</sup> Joseph W. Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*, pp. 115-116.

sustained the Treaty of Versailles, Hitler was able to maintain a façade of diplomatic normalcy in the face of international scrutiny, which football helped to reinforce.

Economically, Hitler employed a stick-and-carrot method in an attempt to create a Nazi controlled labor force by offering workers more leisure time in return for forfeiting their independence and for drawing closer to German capitalists, which Hitler needed in order to prepare Germany to challenge the Treaty of Versailles. To replace trade unions, Hitler created the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront*, German Labor Front, and declared May Day a national holiday, both of which were intended to improve and “Nazify” the leisure activities of German workers.<sup>175</sup> One example of this process was the *Kraft durch Freude*, “Strength through Joy,” policy, which encouraged German employers to provide leisure time to their workers as well as cheap holidays.<sup>176</sup> Meanwhile, between 1932 and 1939, hourly wages for skilled workers fell by one percent and by three percent for unskilled workers and real wages failed to reach their 1928 levels. Combined with increases in income tax and health insurance deductions, a 15 percent increase in the number of hours worked per week, and with decreased labor mobility, workers fared poorly under the Nazi regime.<sup>177</sup> German farmers also experienced hardship as a result of Nazi policy. Many lower middle-class farmers could not afford the higher taxes imposed by the regime and could not compete with big businesses that benefited from price-wage regulation.<sup>178</sup> Thus, although agrarian Germans had been among the earliest and most ardent supporters of the NSDAP, by 1936, the rural middle-class comprised just the NSDAP’s third largest constituency.<sup>179</sup> However,

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<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 118.

<sup>176</sup> Frank McDonough, *Hitler and Nazi Germany*, p. 37.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>178</sup> Joseph W. Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*, p. 142.

<sup>179</sup> Rudy Koshar, “From Stammtisch to Party: Nazi Joiners and the Contradictions of Grass Roots Fascism in Weimar Germany,” *Journal of Modern History* (vol. 59, no. 1, March 1987), pp. 9, 12-13.



workers were largely placated by the fact that by 1936, Germany under the NSDAP had achieved full employment.<sup>180</sup>

Politically, there was a great deal of consistency between the institutions of the Weimar government and those of the NSDAP. Although Hitler was the sole actor from which all political decisions emanated, he rarely devoted himself to the daily operations of the state.<sup>181</sup> Typically, the president of each of the 16 *Gaue*, regions, would receive general orders from Hitler and would be responsible for carrying out the directives of the *Führer* on an individual basis. Moreover, although some positions, such as the minister of agriculture, minister of the interior, and minister of propaganda, were held by prominent NSDAP officials, others, such as the minister of economics, were headed by non-Nazi conservative bureaucrats.<sup>182</sup> Essentially, the Nazi Third Reich operated as what Ernst Fraenkel described as a “duel state” in which Nazi ideology and policy coexisted with traditional or republican institutions and beliefs.<sup>183</sup> Even the army maintained considerable autonomy from Hitler and tolerated the NSDAP’s rise to power on the basis that Hitler would restore Germany’s greatness by exercising military might. Increasingly, with the reintroduction of the military draft in 1935 and the corresponding augmentation of Nazi sympathizers and party members within the army, the army’s independence became token rather than symbolic of any real sovereign authority.<sup>184</sup>

The NSDAP was responsible for some of the most profound transformations to German society in the realm of cultural politics. Although Hitler certainly changed Germany’s economic and political institutions and implemented differing policies from

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<sup>180</sup> Joseph W. Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*, p. 139.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

those of the Weimar government, neither of these spheres were particularly shaped by Nazi ideology. In contrast, German culture was a crucial battlefield for the minds and bodies of Germans, which Hitler and the Nazis fought hard to capture in order to evoke Nazi principles and to act as both a vessel into which Nazi ideology was poured and as a vehicle through which Nazi policy was communicated and made relevant to the lives of ordinary Germans removed from the NSDAP dual-state bureaucracy.

In terms of cultural policy, the NSDAP also distanced itself from its original socialist ideological underpinnings. Conservative theoretician Scheler, writing during the 1920's and 1930's, rejected the Marxian conception of sports on the grounds that Marx overestimated the importance of work and, most importantly, that, "the pure expression of life [required] bodily training in all its forms," including sport, which meant that, for political conservatives, engaging in sport was either more important than work or offered a, "utilitarian [form] of recuperation from work."<sup>185</sup> The Nazis did not elevate sport above work or regard sport in utilitarian terms, but they did come to believe that sport had much to offer Nazi society.

#### *Culture, the Football Debate, and the Cult of Amateurism*

Hitler attributed the collapse of the German Empire and the rise of the Weimar Republic to a "disease of the national body," the two main causes of which were syphilis and "degenerate culture," defined as, "the poisoning of the soul by 'big city civilization.'"<sup>186</sup> Both foreigners, especially Jews, who were, "without any true culture, especially a culture of their own," and "mass sports," were evidence of, "a spiritual

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<sup>185</sup> John M. Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology*, p. 39.

<sup>186</sup> Ehrhard Bahr, "Nazi cultural Politics: Intentionalism vs. Functionalism," *National Socialist Cultural Policy*, ed. Glenn R. Cuomo (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), p. 9.

degeneration that had reached the point of destroying the [Aryan] spirit.”<sup>187</sup> To make the German political body healthy again required placing culture in the service of, “a moral, political, and cultural idea,” i.e., National Socialism. Thus, early Nazi cultural policy was designed to cure the German national body from the inside. Hitler’s first act to this end was to appoint Joseph Goebbels Minister of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda and to create the *Reichskulturkammer*, the Reich Chamber of Culture.<sup>188</sup> In addition, much in the way that socialist trade unions were abolished, Socialist and Communist sports organizations were banned in 1933, while religious sports organizations were banned in 1935.<sup>189</sup>

In 1931, professionalism nearly became the dominant organizational structure in German football. That year, the German national team lost to the Austrian *Wunderteam*, the best football team in the world besides Italy; a loss attributed by the DFB to Germany’s conservative adherence to amateurism.<sup>190</sup> The West German and South German Football Associations forcefully advocated for the acceptance of professionalism—paying football players in return for their labor—while the DFB and the North, North-East, and Central Football Associations rejected professionalism on traditional conservative grounds derived from DT policy and ideology.<sup>191</sup> On May 25, 1933, after much debate, the various football associations agreed to accept professionalism in German football. Had this occurred, football might have been permanently cast outside of the Nazi cultural paradigm and, consequently, lost its political significance. However, Hitler and the NSDAP leadership,

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<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>189</sup> Arnd Krüger, “Breeding, Bearing and Preparing the Aryan Body: Creating Supermen the Nazi Way,” *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon*, p. 49.

<sup>190</sup> Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football*, p. 46.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 49.

who had recently come to power, vetoed this decision because the Nazis valued amateurism as a way of demonstrating to the working-class that the health of the nation and the state were more important than money—which drew ideologically on the *Türnen* tradition.<sup>192</sup>

Surprisingly, what was true of football was not true of German culture as a whole. Given what he perceived as the degraded state of the German political body as a result of the misappropriation of culture, Hitler attempted to professionalize culture in order to foster creation among artists and entertainers and to eliminate cultural threats to National Socialism, such as traditionalists who wanted to revive Teutonic art.<sup>193</sup> According to Hitler, the only legitimate cultural practices were those that represented Aryans as a, “race of a healthier and stronger human type.”<sup>194</sup> Although this doctrine, promulgated at the 1934 Nuremberg Party Rally, specifically applied to art, one can glimpse the potential for conflict in Nazi policy vis-à-vis football and culture. Government austerity during the Weimar era and the Depression had undermined the financial position of artists and entertainers while the free market had failed to “professionalize” art and had kept wages too low while artistic administration had remained decentralized and artists lacked sufficient training.<sup>195</sup> Meanwhile, the Depression had made football one of the few ways in which Germans could earn a living and escape abject poverty.<sup>196</sup> Therefore, if the Nazis tried to transform football into a tool to rejuvenate the German racial state, football could be professionalized, along with other expressions of culture, which would contradict Nazi cultural ideology. As will become clear later, the Nazis were forced to deftly maneuver

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<sup>192</sup> Stephan Wagg, “Beginnings: Football Comes to Europe,” *Giving the Game Away: Football, Politics, and Culture on the Fire Continent*, p. 113.

<sup>193</sup> Ehrhard Bahr, “Nazi cultural Politics: Intentionalism vs. Functionalism,” *National Socialist Cultural Policy*, p. 15.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>195</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>196</sup> Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football*, p. 48.

around potential contradictions in their ideology in order to utilize football for political gain by framing football in the paradigm of racial state ideology.

Between Hitler's attempt to rebuild the German Reich by fostering Aryan culture and the continued strength of the DT, professionalism in football grew into one of the major ideological battlegrounds in Nazi cultural policy. Supporters of German football tried to combat the association that the DT cultivated with militarism by creating their own myths about German footballers who, "gave the most noble blood to this disastrous war [World War I]...Our sport pays homage to you who are returning home and offers you our incomparable gratitude."<sup>197</sup> However, German football was not only opposed by the DT. Germany had been banned from playing international football matches and was expelled from FIFA, the world football governing body, which created a very poor standard of play in Germany.<sup>198</sup> Furthermore, in 1924, the DFB had forbidden German teams from playing against professional footballers, which was also detrimental to the development of German football.<sup>199</sup> When Hitler came to power in 1933, he instituted *Gleichschaltung*, which regulated membership to football clubs based on Aryan descent by requiring the expulsion of all Jews and Marxists, and helped to reorganize football under the domination of the NSDAP.<sup>200</sup> The DFB was also reorganized into 16 *Gaue* leagues in which the winner of each league progressed into a knock-out competition in order to determine the national champion. The NSDAP also created the German Football Association Cup in 1935 and footballers were increasingly labeled, "the political soldiers of the *Führer*."<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 55.

<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66-68.

However, professionalism continued to inhibit football's induction into forms of expression of Nazi ideology. Germany did not even compete in the inaugural World Cup, held in Uruguay in 1930, because German footballers would have had to compete against professionals.<sup>202</sup> In maintaining consistency with the Nazi belief in the organic and bodily nature of the state, players who violated the code of *amateurstatut*, amateurism, were regarded by Nazis as, "contamination...pus, which rampages in a sick body," of which the "extermination" was required.<sup>203</sup> Professionalism also reflected bourgeois morals, despised by the Nazis, whereas amateurism reflected the conditions of a healthy body and, politically, curtailed the influence of the working-class.<sup>204</sup> Indeed, it was not until the 1936 Olympics, held in Germany, that the Nazis ended the debate over professionalism and realized that football, if managed by Nazi propagandists, could be used to hide the true motives of Germany's economic and political rearmament from the Allied Powers and to facilitate and reinforce *Lebensraum*.

### *The 1936 Olympics*

By 1936, the Great Depression in Germany was over. Hitler and the NSDAP had succeeded in creating full employment in Germany and had considerably augmented production and profits for capitalists by militarizing German industry. When the opportunity was presented to Hitler to stage the Olympics in Germany, he was uninterested. International games, Hitler believed, were symptomatic of weak and passive bourgeois states and these states were clearly morally bereft because they allowed interracial

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<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>203</sup> Rudolf Oswald, "Nazi Ideology and the end of Central European Soccer Professionalism, 1938-1941," *Emancipation Through Muscles: Jews and Sports in Europe*, p. 158.

<sup>204</sup> Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football*, p. 47.

competition.<sup>205</sup> However, Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda, recognized that the Olympics presented the Nazis with an opportunity to present the economic and social achievements of the Third Reich as well as the NSDAP's level of diplomatic sophistication, and especially cunning, to the world.<sup>206</sup>

Moreover, Goebbels argued that sport, by presenting an image of self-sacrifice, courage, and natural order according to physical traits, could help to reinforce the creation of a culture of consent that, "offset the more brutal and coercive elements of the regime."<sup>207</sup> Hitler consented to this rationale and used state funds to finance the growth of Germany's movie industry, to install radios in public places, to manufacture cheap radios for popular consumption, and, in conjunction with "Strength through Joy," to provide German families with cheap travel packages in order to attend the Olympics.<sup>208</sup> The success of these policies was evident just a few years after the Olympics. By 1939, two-thirds of all German households owned radios.<sup>209</sup> The Nazis transformed the Olympics into a vehicle for Nazi propaganda aimed at creating a domestic culture of consent and at presenting the world, especially the Allied Powers, with an image of a powerful, organized, and diplomatic Germany even as rearmament continued to proceed unabated.

Increasingly, the claim by representatives of democratic nations that, "sport and politics [did] not mix," appeared untenable.<sup>210</sup> Specifically for the Olympics, the NSDAP created a *Volksaufklärung und Propaganda*, Minister of Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda, called the *Promi* who was responsible for concealing images, symbols, and

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<sup>205</sup> Arnd Krüger, "Germany: The Propaganda Machine," *The Nazi Olympics*, eds. Arnd Krüger and William Murray (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), p. 1.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>208</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>209</sup> Joseph W. Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*, p. 166.

<sup>210</sup> Arnd Krüger, "Germany: The Propaganda Machine," *The Nazi Olympics*, p. 12.

examples of Nazism from the foreign press, and a *Reichssportführer*, National Sports Leader.<sup>211</sup> The DT had also grown into the world's largest sporting organization, due to *Gleichschaltung*, which had rationalized all sports organizations under a single governing body that required proof of Aryan ancestry in order to participate.<sup>212</sup> However, because of the DT's strong association with nationalism, anti-Semitism, and unwillingness to compete against non-Aryans, the NSDAP was forced to curtail the DT's independence by imposing Nazi officials as the head of individual *Türnerschaft* and forcing their best athletes to compete.<sup>213</sup> This period in Nazi policy came to be known as the "Olympic Pause," during which the racial terror apparatus of the Nazi state was submerged beneath a façade of international diplomacy and participation.<sup>214</sup> The appearance of normalcy within Germany was crucial in order to allow the Nazis to continue to rebuild the German military industrial complex and to purge Germany of its Jews without meaningful intervention from the Allied Powers.

The Olympics did not allow the Nazis to completely escape international scrutiny, which only reemphasized the fact that politics and sports were being mixed with increasing frequency. None of Hitler's cadres, nor Hitler himself, had developed a coherent National Socialist policy with regards to modern sport—besides boxing and gymnastics, sport were not even mentioned in *Mein Kampf*.<sup>215</sup> As the Nazis continued to purge non-Aryans from the remaining Weimar sports ministries, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) became aware of Nazi discrimination and forced the Nazis to allow German Jews to

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<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>212</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>215</sup> Allen Guttman, "The 'Nazi Olympics' and the American Boycott Controversy," *Sport and International Politics*, eds. Pierre Arnaud and James Riordan (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 31.



compete in the Olympics. However, through “inventive” athletic tests and “scientific” studies, no Jews were selected to compete for Germany in any Olympic event.<sup>216</sup> Louis Rimet, head of FIFA, the international football governing body, even called for a worldwide boycott of the Nazi Olympics.<sup>217</sup> Nevertheless, attempts to institute a boycott failed, largely because the Allied Powers were already committed to practicing *détente* with Nazi Germany. Even Germany’s invasion of the Rhineland between the winter of 1935 and the summer of 1936, immediately prior to the beginning of the Olympics and in clear violation of the Treaty of Versailles, failed to precipitate any meaningful international response to curtail the Nazi’s political objectives and the projection of Nazism abroad.<sup>218</sup> Although 1936 might have constituted an “Olympic Pause” to some, the Nazis turned international pause into action by using the liberal democracies’ commitment to the peaceful defense of the political status-quo, embodied by the Olympics, as justification for beginning to gradually abrogate the Treaty of Versailles.

From initial experiments with using football politically during the mid 1920’s and early 1930’s vis-à-vis France and England, football became a highly politicized sport during the Olympics. The Nazis transformed football into a tool of diplomatic propaganda in order to preserve diplomatic relations with adversarial states—even as remilitarization was underway. Franco-German relations improved in 1925 following France’s withdrawal of troops from the Ruhr as part of the agreement embodied in the Locarno Pact, which secured French-German and German-Belgian borders in order to placate France’s fears of another German invasion and helped to normalize relations with France in order to peacefully

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<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>218</sup> Arnd Krüger, “United States of America: The Crucial Battle” *The Nazi Olympics*, eds. Arnd Krüger and William Murray (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), p. 42.

revise the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>219</sup> Germany was also granted admission to the United Nations. In 1931, just shortly before Hitler's rise to power, the French and German national football teams played against one another as a sign of good faith between the two nations—a match that attracted 55,000 spectators.<sup>220</sup> France defeated Germany after an “own goal” by a German defender who put the ball in his own team's net, and although a number of German correspondents disputed the victory, Louis Rimet praised football's peacemaking role.<sup>221</sup> Indeed, after the NSDAP came to power and began to rearm Germany and prepare the economy for total war, this was exactly the role that the Party decided football would play.

In December, 1935, the German national team played against England at White Hart Lane—the stadium of Tottenham Hotspurs who, ironically, received significant Jewish support from the East End of London—in the wake of the signing of the Anglo-German Naval Agreement in June.<sup>222</sup> Despite significant public outcry that the game should be abandoned, the British Foreign Office determined that it would be, “difficult to cancel [the match] without causing an incident for certain,” and thus recommended that the game to be played.<sup>223</sup> This was an astonishing turn of events given that England had resigned from FIFA in 1920 in protest because Germany had been granted admission, which England believed to be a violation of the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>224</sup> However, believing that foregoing the match would jeopardize England's cultivation of *détente* with Germany, the match went

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<sup>219</sup> John Hiden, *Germany and Europe 1919-1939* (New York: Longman Inc, 1977), p. 55.

<sup>220</sup> Pierre Arnaud, “French Sport and the Emergence of Authoritarian Regimes,” *Sport and International Politics*, p. 133.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>222</sup> Richard Holt, “Great Britain: The Amateur Tradition,” *The Nazi Olympics*, p. 72. The Anglo-German Naval Agreement mutually limited Germany's and England's naval strengths, which antagonized other Allied Powers, especially France.

<sup>223</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>224</sup> Arnd Krüger, “The Role of Sport in German International Politics, 1918-1945,” *Sport and International Politics*, p. 82

ahead as planned. To assuage English fears, the German team and its supporters were ordered by NSDAP officials to behave exceptionally well on English soil, which entailed, “honoring the mother [England] of the game [football],” and losing the game.<sup>225</sup>

In doing so, the Nazis were able to secure British support for staging the Olympics during the summer of 1936, while simultaneously courting British favor, maintaining diplomatic relations, and sowing seeds of discontent between England and France. Promoting diplomatic relations through football had become all the more important since Germany had quit the League of Nations in 1933, ostensibly on the grounds that Germany was being unfairly treated by the Allied Powers under the Treaty of Versailles. In fact, leaving the League enabled the Nazis to engage in rearmament without being diplomatically beholden to the international political community.<sup>226</sup>

Six months later, football was once again at the center of Nazi attention. This time, the Nazis expected to win. However, when Germany was defeated by Norway 2-0 in the second round of the Olympics, many Germans attributed the loss to the fact that Hitler had promised to attend the match but had failed to appear.<sup>227</sup> While some authors have attempted to reframe this event as an example of the Nazis’ overall dislike for football, stemming from their conservative allegiance to the DT, it is more likely that Hitler’s absence was part of a conscious political move on the part of the Nazi elite to limit Hitler’s exposure during the Olympics<sup>228</sup> Hitler made only one public statement during the Olympics and only attended the famous race in which Jesse Owens, an African American,

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<sup>225</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>226</sup> Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor!*, p. 73.

<sup>227</sup> Bill Murray, *The World’s Game*, p. 65.

<sup>228</sup> Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor!*, p. 78.

Richard Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics*, p. 193.

Allen Guttman, “The ‘Nazi Olympics’ and the American Boycott Controversy,” *Sport and International Politics*, p. 44.

won the sprint.<sup>229</sup> All Nazi propaganda, except for the Swastika, had been removed from buildings and billboards throughout Germany.<sup>230</sup> The Nazis even demonstrated their ability to manage international conflict during the crisis that erupted as a result of a football match between Peru and Austria which was abandoned due to fan interference by some Peruvian fans and was forced to be replayed. Austria, soon to be annexed by Germany, defeated Peru, which prompted an attack on the German Embassy in Lima and caused work stoppages by Peruvians who refused to unload German freighters. The Nazis feigned ignorance and claimed that the replay was the result of rigid international sports law, thereby defusing a potentially unpleasant diplomatic conflict with an Olympic participant country, which the Nazis wished to avoid at all costs in order to preserve the image of civilized diplomats that they coveted so fastidiously.<sup>231</sup> The Nazis clearly made a calculated political decision to restrict the international political community's exposure to both Hitler and Nazi propaganda in order to promote an image of Germany that was acceptable by international standards.

Ultimately, the 1936 Olympics were a great success for the Nazis and also solidified football as the primary mode for preserving and fostering diplomatic relationships with Allied Powers in order to protect Germany's rearmament and plans for imperial expansion against international intervention. The spectacle of the Olympics, with the tremendous stadiums built for the games, the symbols of international competition—including an enormous iron bell inscribed with the words, "I summon the youth of the world,"—and the quality of facilities provided for the athletes, convinced international

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<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

<sup>231</sup> Richard Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics*, pp. 193-194.

diplomats, members of the press, and observers that Germany was committed to peaceful participating in the international political arena.<sup>232</sup>

From the Olympics, the idea of *Leistung*, conflating geopolitical and physical strength, was born.<sup>233</sup> Although the Nazis experienced ideological dissonance in attempting to rationalize individual athletic achievements with physical activity performed for the good of the Aryan race, Nazi society was primarily a *Leistungsgesellschaft*, “performance society,” that required achievement of all its members, which enabled individual accolades to be conflated with political success.<sup>234</sup> Among Germans, the Olympics, “organized with Hitlerian strength and discipline [had] magnificently served the Olympic ideal.”<sup>235</sup> In addition, even though Germany had failed to perform to Nazi standards in football, the national team’s participation in the world’s most popular event reinforced Germany’s perceived determination to interact with the international community on its terms, as it had in France and England a few years prior. However, despite the public presentation of football by the NSDAP, racial ideology prevented football from being completely embraced by the Nazi elite.

#### *On the Jewish Football Question*

The perceived relationship between Jews, professionalism, and football, which also became linked to *Lebensraum* and Nazi foreign policy goals in Eastern Europe, hampered the development of football under the Nazi Ministry of Culture, Enlightenment, and Propaganda. After the 1936 Olympics, which was an exclusively amateur event at the

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<sup>232</sup> Allen Guttman, “The ‘Nazi Olympics’ and the American Boycott Controversy,” *Sport and International Politics*, p. 43.

<sup>233</sup> John Hoberman, “Primacy of Performance: Superman not Superathlete,” *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon*, p. 69.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 70, 76.

<sup>235</sup> Arnd Krüger, “Breeding, Bearing and Preparing the Aryan Body: Creating Supermen the Nazi Way,” *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon*, p. 46.

time, the Nazis' traditional support for amateurism was reinforced by their immediate resumption of racially discriminatory policies against Jews. The dominant motivation behind preserving amateurism in football was the desire of the NSDAP to create a pure German form of football distinct from professional football, which was regarded as a product of Jewish influence not just in Germany but in Austria and Hungary as well.<sup>236</sup> In conjunction with *Gleichschaltung*, Jews were expelled from all sports clubs, regardless of their position within the club.<sup>237</sup>

The decision to protect amateurism was due in part to the division within Nazi cultural policy between the *kulturpolitisch*, "culture-political," and the *kulturberuflich*, "culture-professional." For current purposes, the "culture-political" addressed the political and racial background of artistic personnel while the "culture-professional" governed the technical, organizational, and financial components of state-sanctioned culture.<sup>238</sup> By addressing the economic aspects of culture, which the Nazis believed to be in a state of disrepair because artists lacked an appropriate pension system and because of the unequal wealth distribution among German artists while Jews and foreigners were perceived to be crowding-in resources, the Nazis were able to proceed with the removal of Jews and other "ideologically objectionable" artists.<sup>239</sup> After the Reichstag Fire in 1933, which was blamed on radical leftists attempting to subvert the remaining Weimar institutions, the Nazi parliament voted to erect barriers to entry into cultural fields, which were instituted by

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<sup>236</sup> Michael Brenner, "Why Jews and Sports," *Emancipation Through Muscles: Jews and Sports in Europe*, p. 8.

Rudolf Oswald, "Nazi Ideology and the end of Central European Soccer Professionalism, 1938-1941," *Emancipation Through Muscles: Jews and Sports in Europe*, p. 156.

<sup>237</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>238</sup> Alan E. Steinweis, "Cultural Eugenics: Social Policy, Economic Reform, and the Purge of Jews from German Cultural Life," *National Socialist Cultural Policy*, p. 27.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 25-27.

President Hindenberg's invocation of emergency presidential decrees allowed by Article 48 of the Weimar Constitution.<sup>240</sup>

Upon closer examination, in terms of cultural policy, it appears that football represented an area in which Nazi ideology might have been perceived as inconsistent. Although football players were not explicitly regarded as artists under the Nazi cultural paradigm, the Nazis had difficulty promoting the professionalization of art while enforcing rigid amateurism in the *Volkssport*-football.<sup>241</sup> Initially, the Nazis tried to address this conflict by filtering football through the Hitler Youth organization, which had grown to 3 million members by 1934 and was the only legal youth organization in Germany.<sup>242</sup> The Hitler Youth was responsible for inculcating Nazi prejudices and values and promoting social cohesion and attraction among the "Aryan" students through a variety of activities including sports.<sup>243</sup> Both the Hitler Youth and the "Strength through Joy" organizations were ultimately designed to link sport to the development of a healthy organic state and to reinforce Hitler's broader attempts to incorporate disconnected and traditionally apolitical individuals, particularly among the middle-class, into the *Volksgemeinschaft*, "racial community."<sup>244</sup> However, linking sport to the health of the "racial community" was insufficient for rehabilitating football into a useable component of Nazi ideology because, during the early years of the NSDAP's rule, the Party had not been able to implement policies that identified Jews as the exogenous element responsible for the "unhealthy" state of a "diseased" Germany.

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<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>241</sup> Rudolf Oswald, "Nazi Ideology and the end of Central European Soccer Professionalism, 1938-1941," *Emancipation Through Muscles: Jews and Sports in Europe*, p. 157.

<sup>242</sup> Joseph W. Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*, p. 165.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 167.

After the *Anschluss*, the Nazis were able to recast football outside the cultural paradigm by fabricating a causal relationship between the rise of Jews in football and the growth of professionalization. This link enabled the Nazis to foster artistic professionalization without extending it to football players on the grounds that paying football players to display their *artistentum*, “artistry,” hindered the ability of football to help promote the health and convalescence of the German state, which was, according to Nazi ideology, an organic body.<sup>245</sup> The idea of the state as a living organism had a long heritage, dating back at least to Thomas Hobbes’ *Leviathan*. However, for conservative thinkers who were the precursors of Nazi racial ideology, Hobbes had not provided the state with a “ruling personality” or an “Ego” capable of being an organism governed by itself rather than a “mechanism....moved by a number of wheels and spring,” i.e., the body-politic comprised of the citizens of the state.<sup>246</sup>

It was not until Ferdinand Tönnies published *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft* (Community and Society) in 1887 that the foundation for the Nazi conception of the organic state was established. Based on unifying the private lives—“All intimate, private, and exclusive living together...is understood as life in *Gemeinschaft*”—led by individuals and the public lives led in society, Tönnies refuted the basis of the latter’s existence and claimed that the former, private lives, embodied the “idea of the social body,” i.e., the organic state.<sup>247</sup> Although Tönnies would probably have rejected the Nazi perversion of his organic theory of the state on the grounds that the organic community of individuals was formed by *choice* whereas there was no inherent element of volition in the organic state,

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<sup>245</sup> Rudolf Oswald, “Nazi Ideology and the end of Central European Soccer Professionalism, 1938-1941,” *Emancipation Through Muscles: Jews and Sports in Europe*, p. 157.

<sup>246</sup> John M. Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology*, p. 73.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.



this did not matter to Nazis themselves.<sup>248</sup> Based on Tönnies' theoretical underpinning, Alfred Baeumler, the only Nazi sports theorist during the 1930's and a respected academic philosopher, was able to claim that liberalism "disembodied," politics and, "forced the body politic to think, to relinquish its ties to racial instincts...thereby inflicting upon this body a crippling malaise by cutting it off from the wellsprings of action."<sup>249</sup> If the Nazis could create a racial state and conceive sport to be an expression of racial action, then sport could be a powerful form of expressing "racial instincts."

Considering the ideological mandate to create a racial organic state, the relationship constructed between Jews and football could easily have condemned football in Nazi Germany. As Baeumler observed, "the recognition of the political character of our bodies rules out any absolute conception of the body...the honor of the body is one part of the collective honor of the nation," which meant that any association with Jews was a cancer killing the German state and either had to be removed or made benign.<sup>250</sup> Because of football's importance to preserving and improving diplomatic relations with France and England and to a lesser extent, because of the national team's role in promoting a cosmopolitan and peaceful image of Germany during the Olympics, football had to be extricated from its association with Jews and purified in order to make the sport consistent with Nazi cultural policy and ideology. This process only became more important to the Nazis' success as Hitler prepared to take the final steps towards remilitarization and to explore which nations could serve as potential allies in the impending war.

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<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

*Détente and Remilitarization: the Two-Pronged Policy*

Hitler intended that Nazi foreign and domestic policy operate in such a way as to ensure that the Allied Powers were kept off-balance and unable to identify the primary motives and intentions behind the words and actions of the *Führer*. During the NSDAP's rise to power and the early years of the Third Reich, Hitler publicly committed Germany to the peaceful revision of the Treaty of Versailles in order to ensure that Germany was granted "equal rights" among nations. However, Hitler also warned the Allied powers about the possibility of conflict if Germany was not treated as a peer among the elite nations in the international political arena.<sup>251</sup> Evidence of this dual-pronged strategy abounds. On one hand, Nazi Germany joined the League of Nations, abided by the terms of the Treaty of Versailles, hosted the 1936 Olympics, and played football matches against England and France. On the other hand, Hitler created a one-party state, severely limited the ability of Jews to participate in German social and civic life, adopted economic policies that spurred the growth of heavy industry to prepare for German remilitarization, gradually tested the resilience of the Allies to protect and enforce the Treaty of Versailles, and publicly proclaimed the superiority of Germany over all other nations.<sup>252</sup> By pursuing a shrewd diplomatic strategy, at once bellicose and, in principle, open to compromise, Hitler rendered other nations incapable of developing a unified perception of Germany that could inform the formulation of a coherent, or at least empirically based, policy of responsible engagement.

Emboldened by political victory and fortuitous circumstances during the mid 1930's, Hitler began to strengthen Germany's resistance to the Treaty of Versailles and to

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<sup>251</sup> Joseph W. Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*, p. 198.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 199-201.

prepare the country for war. In 1935, through the League of Nations, Hitler had successfully negotiated the restoration of the Saar region to the German nation, which, as per the Treaty of Versailles, had originally been placed under the control of the League for a period of 15 years.<sup>253</sup> This event, having demonstrated to Hitler the unwillingness of the Allies to hold Germany to the terms of the Treaty, motivated him to proclaim to the international community that Germany had re-established its air force and had instituted conscription such that, by 1935, the German army stood at more the 500,000 men.<sup>254</sup>

German remilitarization was greatly aided by the 1934 “New Plan” which froze all interest payments on foreign debts and created a system of regulating imports according to the political needs of the Nazi regime. This enabled the NSDAP to negotiate bilateral trade agreements with European and South American nations in order to acquire the goods and raw materials necessary to rebuild the German army, air force, and navy. This policy was precipitated by a shift from consumer to military production between 1933 and 1937 during which time consumer production shrank from 25 to 17 percent of the German economy.<sup>255</sup> However, Germany was never able to achieve self-sufficiency in raw materials, which was necessary to enable its economy to support the needs of total war because Germany lacked sufficient foreign currency and gold reserves to purchase the requisite imports.<sup>256</sup>

Economic dependency did not prevent the Nazis from successfully pursuing their foreign policy objectives. In March 1936, following Italy’s invasion of Ethiopia, Hitler moved German troops into the demilitarized Rhineland while the Allies were preoccupied

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<sup>253</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 201.

<sup>255</sup> Frank McDonough, *Hitler and Nazi Germany*, p. 33.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

with leveling economic sanctions against Italy. In addition, Hitler also signed a German-Italian treaty of cooperation, the Rome-Berlin Axis, in late 1936.<sup>257</sup> Buoyed by these advances in Germany's foreign policy aims, Hitler prepared to implement the first of his plans for achieving *Lebensraum* by annexing Austria.

### *Football and the Anschluss*

In order to prepare for a war against the Allies along Germany's western borders, Hitler recognized that conquering Austria would secure Germany's flank against attack while also increasing Germany's economic power. Initially, not wanting to abandon the Nazis' legal justification for acquiring Austria, Hitler combined aggressive public rhetoric with private diplomatic negotiations in an attempt to orchestrate the legal transfer of power from Austria's conservative Chancellor, Kurt von Schuschnigg, to Arthur Seyss-Inquart—the Austrian Nazi Minister of the Interior.<sup>258</sup> Failing to secure Schuschnigg's acquiescence, Hitler prepared to invade Austria. However, immediately prior to the invasion, Schuschnigg abdicated the chancellorship in favor of Seyss-Inquart, who then invited the German troops to “invade” Austria in March 1938.<sup>259</sup>

Given Austria's history of fielding successful football teams and the Nazis' efforts to use football to fulfill diplomatic ends, it is not surprising that the Nazis scheduled a “friendly” football match—the name given to a football match that did not occur in the context of an international competition sanctioned by FIFA—known as the Alliance Game between the German and Austrian national football teams to celebrate the *Anschluss* on April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1938.<sup>260</sup> Although football failed to become part of the German athletic identity,

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<sup>257</sup> Joseph W. Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*, p. 204.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 205.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206

<sup>260</sup> Bill Murray, *The World's Game*, p. 73.

the popularity of football had grown tremendously in Austria after it was adopted by demobilized urban troops upon their return from World War I.<sup>261</sup> During the mid 1920's, Austria had become the center of the "Danubian school" of football that was internationally admired and even replicated in places like Italy.<sup>262</sup> Austria's football legacy aside, the NSDAP was determined to restructure Austrian football according to Nazi ideology. Germany had previously beaten Austria in the game for Third place during the 1934 World Cup and the Nazis were keen to prove, albeit in the spirit of good will, that Austria had been conquered by a superior racial-state.<sup>263</sup>

For the NSDAP, restructuring Austrian football was an integral part of priming Austria to be a cornerstone of *Lebensraum*. It should be recalled from the debate regarding Jews and football that the Nazis had created a fictional relationship between Jews and professionalization as a means for justifying the Nazis' scaling back of cultural professionalization and for extricating football from any association with Jews. This allowed the Nazis to use football to pursue diplomatic relations with some of the Allied Powers without violating Nazi doctrine. Historically, the DFB had not explicitly identified Jews as the cause of professionalism.<sup>264</sup> However, in continuing to fix this relationship in the public consciousness, the *Selbst-Gleichschaltung* of the DFB and its *Landesverbände*, regional subdivisions, in 1938, led to the end of independent governing bodies and the expulsion of Jews from football, which temporarily shifted the focus to explicitly removing

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Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football*, p. 83.

<sup>261</sup> Matthias Marschik, "Between Manipulation and Resistance: Viennese Football in the Nazi Era," *Journal of Contemporary History* (vol. 34, no. 2, April., 1999), p. 217.

<sup>262</sup> Stephen Wagg, "Beginnings: Football Comes to Europe," *Giving the Game Away: Football, Politics, and Culture on the Fire Continent*, p. 107.

<sup>263</sup> Bill Murray, *The World's Game*, p. 73.

<sup>264</sup> Rudolf Oswald, "Nazi Ideology and the end of Central European Soccer Professionalism, 1938-1941," *Emancipation Through Muscles: Jews and Sports in Europe*, p. 158.

professionalism without explicitly linking this restructuring to anti-Semitic Nazi policy objectives.<sup>265</sup>

When the Nazis annexed Austria in 1938, the Party was shocked by the level of professionalism in the Austrian football system, which had virtually bankrupted most of the football clubs, and the number of Jews not only playing football but also acting as referees and financial backers of football clubs.<sup>266</sup> Indeed, in *Mein Kampf*, Hitler maintained that the culture of Austria had been polluted by racial integration, particularly with respect to the number of Jews inhabiting the country.<sup>267</sup> Traditionally, football was popular among the Jewish, and largely left-wing, intelligentsia. Both of these factors proved to the Nazis that professionalism and Jews were inextricably interrelated and that the eradication of one for the benefit of Nazi *kulturpolitisch* and *kulturberuflich* policy required the destruction of the other. In response, an organization similar to the DT developed in Austria with equally anti-Semitic beliefs and membership policies.<sup>268</sup>

With Hitler moving Germany closer to open conflict with the Allied Powers and given the need to create a sense of allegiance between German and Austrian society, non-Jewish players, managers, and anyone else involved in Austrian football were absolved of any responsibility for professionalism and were regarded as victims who had been led astray by the, “bad liberalist spirit,” and, “Jewish managers.”<sup>269</sup> Without the Nazification of Austrian football, the NSDAP argued, Jews would have pursued the, “deterrence of the...masses” from active sport by glorifying the, “unattainable artistic feats of professional

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<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>267</sup> Adolf Hitler, *My Battle*, p. 28.

<sup>268</sup> Stephen Wagg, “Beginnings: Football Comes to Europe,” *Giving the Game Away: Football, Politics, and Culture on the Fire Continent*, p. 107.

Rudolf Oswald, “Nazi Ideology and the end of Central European Soccer Professionalism, 1938-1941,” *Emancipation Through Muscles: Jews and Sports in Europe*, p. 107.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 156, 159.

and specialized athletes.”<sup>270</sup> Thus, the *Reichssportführer*, Reich Sports Leader, instituted a “reamateurization” of football to remove the, “Jewish parasites,” who, “injected into the people this poison [professionalism]—commercial methods...advertising...stars...scandals, and sensations,” for which, the Jews, “had to disappear.”<sup>271</sup> By the end of March 1938, not a single Jew remained in Austrian football.<sup>272</sup>

While the Nazis had their use for football, the Austrian minority who opposed Nazi occupation saw the venue that football provided as one of the few spaces within Nazi Austrian society to express their opposition to the Nazi regime. Austria’s defeat of the German national team enabled some spectators to believe that Germany had been defeated by its superiors while others were simply placated by the fact that the Nazis had not deprived them of their favorite sport.<sup>273</sup> However, the 2-0 defeat proved a pyrrhic victory. The Nazis used the Alliance Game as an opportunity to adorn the stadium in Vienna with Nazi swastika and other propaganda while the German newspapers heralded the performance of the Austrian team with headlines such as, “National Team beaten by Excellent Play,” and, “Austria’s Eleven [players] for the World Championship,” which belied the Nazis’ intent to flatter the Austrians into accepting Nazi rule.<sup>274</sup> Thus, even as Austrian star Matthias Sindelar danced before Nazi officials after scoring the second goal, which put the game out of reach for the Germans, and as Austrian newspapers celebrated the victory of “their” team, the Nazis overlooked these small and relatively insignificant gestures in order to preserve a sense of social normalcy within Austria and to create a venue

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<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>273</sup> Matthias Marschik, “Between Manipulation and Resistance: Viennese Football in the Nazi Era,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, pp. 222, 226.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

in which some Austrians could express their political dissent without facing retribution.<sup>275</sup>

Meanwhile, the NSDAP used football to promote German-Austrian unity, even showing pictures of Sindelar with a sentence in his handwriting that read, “We football players thank our *Führer* from the bottom of our hearts and vote ‘yes’!” to the national plebiscite in favor of annexation to Germany.<sup>276</sup>

Using football as a medium through which to promote German-Austrian political relations was one of the defining moments of the Nazis’ use of football to achieve political ends. After the *Anschluss*, in order to maintain good relations between Austrians and the Nazi regime, the Nazis made sure that the German national football team reflected Austrian-German parity by selecting a large number of Austrians to play for Germany during international matches.<sup>277</sup> Football proved so effective in promoting the Nazification of Austria, while simultaneously providing an outlet through which Austrians could display and enact forms of resistance, that a similar policy was enacted in Czechoslovakia in late 1938.<sup>278</sup> The DFV in Czechoslovakia was also “reamateurized,” meaning that professionalism was ended and all Jews were expelled, in order to promote the integration of Czechoslovakia into the fledgling Nazi empire.<sup>279</sup> Ultimately, ridding football of Jews was an integral component of removing Jews from all areas of Nazi society and of creating a “free” Aryan empire. As the former German national coach Otto Nerz commented in late 1939, “One nation after another is shaking off the yoke of the Jew. In the end there will be

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<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 223, 228.

<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

<sup>277</sup> Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football*, p. 82.

<sup>278</sup> Matthias Marschik, “Between Manipulation and Resistance: Viennese Football in the Nazi Era,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, pp. 229.

<sup>279</sup> Rudolf Oswald, “Nazi Ideology and the end of Central European Soccer Professionalism, 1938-1941,” *Emancipation Through Muscles: Jews and Sports in Europe*, p. 163.



left a Europe free from Jews with sports free from Jews.”<sup>280</sup> Football helped to promote the image of a rising Nazi empire in Eastern Europe while advancing concrete Nazi policy objectives, particularly remilitarization and *Lebensraum*. In the final year of preparations before the war, Hitler and the NSDAP formalized an alliance with Fascist Italy and abrogated the diplomatic relations so carefully cultivated with England and France. By 1939, football had largely served its political purposes.

*The Calm before the War: Germany versus the Allies*

The year 1938 provided one last opportunity for the Nazis to perform maintenance on the mirage they had created between themselves and England in order to obscure Hitler’s true political objectives. The mid 1930’s marked a period in which football matches played against the English were used by the Nazis to promote diplomatic normalcy between the two nations while England regarded the matches as opportunities to practice *détente* with Germany by engaging in an activity that was regarded as sign of international peace and opportunity for cooperation by the British political elite. This is not to suggest that the British diplomats and advisers failed to perceive Germany’s use of football in this manner. Indeed, as Samuel Hoare at the British Foreign Office observed in 1935:

“The commercial arguments in favor of intensifying the work of British cultural propaganda are no less strong than the political arguments. In all the danger of German cultural and commercial penetration, which may be expected to increase as the power and wealth of Germany revival, make it particularly desirable for British cultural propaganda to secure as firm a hold as possible in the minds of the population.”<sup>281</sup>

In response to the “danger” posed by German propaganda, England intended to pose, “an alternative...to the more dogmatic political doctrines propagated by rival states,” because,

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<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>281</sup> Peter J. Beck, “England V Germany, 1938,” *History Today*, p. 30.

“the subsequent benefits to British international relations would be invisible, but real,” in that England would position itself as political football’s alternative to the NSDAP.<sup>282</sup>

However, after England lost the second match between the two teams in 1935, the third match in May, 1938, acquired new political significance.

With the deterioration of relations between England and Germany following the *Anschluss* and Hitler’s visit to Italy in late April, England recognized that the match was one of the last opportunities to promote contact with Germany through diplomatic channels. In the opinion of the Nazis, the match represented a viable opportunity to demonstrate the supremacy of the Nazi state over the liberal English state as Germany’s national team had gone undefeated in 14 matches since 1935 while England had been inconsistent during the same period. As Neville Henderson, the British ambassador to Berlin was well aware, “The Nazis [were] looking for victories to boost their regime. It [was] their way of claiming a super-race.”<sup>283</sup> The match was attended by 110,000 fans, including high-ranking Nazi officials such as Goebbels, Goering, Hess, and Ribbentrop. As perhaps the ultimate symbolic gesture of England’s pleas that Germany pursue peaceful means of revising the Treaty of Versailles, the entire English team performed the Nazi salute in the direction of the Nazi officials during the playing of the German national anthem. Fortunately for the English team, “*détente*” was not practiced on the field; England defeated Germany 6-3.<sup>284</sup> Germany did not perform any better in the 1938 World Cup in France and were eliminated in the first round.<sup>285</sup>

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<sup>282</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 30.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30, 32-34.

<sup>285</sup> Bill Murray, *The World’s Game*, p. 75.

Following these defeats, it may have appeared to the Nazis that football had served its political purposes and no longer aided in the achievement of the political goals of Hitler and the NSDAP. However, in light of the evidence presented above, it seems more likely that rather than football having become obsolete, other forms of Nazi propaganda that had been enacted simultaneously simply overshadowed football and its influence on Nazi policy in popular political discourse and conception. The success of other forms of Nazi propaganda, particularly the mass spectacles, the symbols, and the Olympics, had rendered football one of many weapons in the Nazi policy arsenal. Football was simply not as instrumental to the success of the Nazis who had been forced by historical circumstances to compete for political supremacy in Germany for almost a decade. By contrast, the Fascists lacked or failed to develop other sophisticated forms of fascistization in the three years it took them to seize control of the Italian political apparatus, which, in some ways, precipitated the regime's reliance on football. For the Nazis, football alone served two unique purposes: it provided the Nazis with diplomatic cover for their remilitarization programs and shaped *Lebensraum* in Austria.

Germany's defeats are indicative of the political shift that followed during which the Nazis grew increasingly more aggressive and began to make the final preparations for war. The most transformative aspect of Nazi policy leading up to World War II was the sacrifice of diplomatic relations with England and France in favor of an alliance with Fascist Italy. With the signing of the Munich Agreement by Germany, England, France, and Italy, the Sudetenland area of Czechoslovakia was reincorporated in Nazi Germany in October 1938, which effectively made Germany and Italy the duel powers in Eastern

Europe.<sup>286</sup> The Munich Agreement also marked the end of German-English diplomacy as Hitler's political intentions crystallized, which prompted England to grow closer to France who had long since ended diplomatic relations with Germany following the reoccupation of the Rhineland.<sup>287</sup>

Inexorably, Germany grew more belligerent towards Allied Powers. Much had changed from the Weimar era during which the German government had acquiesced to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles and from the early 1930's when Hitler had represented himself a reasonable politician who was only concerned with securing equal treatment for Germany in the international arena and, to achieve this aim, the gradual revision of the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>288</sup> However, one should not fail to recognize that the course Hitler and the NSDAP pursued was guided by an understanding that the, "task of diplomacy [was] to see to it that a nation... [was] maintained by diplomatic means."<sup>289</sup> By 1939, what had been clear since Hitler's ascension to the German chancellorship was plainly visible: the façade of a peaceful Germany belied the NSDAP's program to remilitarize Germany in order to forcibly overthrow the international political status-quo and the Treaty of Versailles.<sup>290</sup> On September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939, Germany attacked Poland and World War II began. An international ban was imposed on sporting events, although among the Allied Powers and the Axis powers, football matches were held to boost soldiers' moral. Internally, competition in the DFB continued in order to entertain the Germans who by 1940, were beginning to feel the effects of Nazi total war. For seven years, football had been a tool of the Nazi regime to

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<sup>286</sup> Frank McDonough, *Hitler and Nazi Germany*, p. 79.

John Hiden, *Germany and Europe 1919-1939*, p. 117.

<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>288</sup> Frank McDonough, *Hitler and Nazi Germany*, pp. 70, 71.

<sup>289</sup> Adolf Hitler, *My Battle*, p. 264.

<sup>290</sup> Frank McDonough, *Hitler and Nazi Germany*, p. 71.

broker international diplomatic relations with Germany's greatest adversaries, to rid Germany and its occupied territories of Jews, and, following the rehabilitation of football, to promote Nazi cultural policy. After the war, as with the whole of bifurcated Germany, football would have to be redeployed to serve a new purpose in post-Nazi German society.

## CHAPTER 3

### STYLES OF “PLAY”: COMPARING THE FASCIST AND NAZI FOOTBALL-POLITIK

#### *Lining the Field: Establishing the Boundaries of Comparison*

Before comparing different aspects of the political use of football in the Fascist and Nazi regimes, a brief discussion of both regimes' similar heritages of political football provides a foundation that helps to throw the important differences into greater contrast. After exploring these commonalities, this chapter investigates the five major distinctions in the practice of political football between the PNF and the NSDAP. First, both regimes reconciled professionalism with their respective ideology differently in order to achieve desired political ends. While the Nazis banned professionalism because of its perceived role in the Jewish conspiracy to degrade Aryan males and its threat to the Aryan race, the Fascists exploited professionalism to foster competition among football clubs that, they believed, would produce skilled players who could represent the state. Second, the Fascists and Nazis differed with regards to their use of football to develop the individual and collective bodies of their constituents. The Fascists used football to cultivate the *Nuovo Italiano* and to foster belief in the violent dialectic of history. The Nazis only began to use football to foster the growth of the organic state once football had been shorn of its links to Jews by using football to achieve international diplomatic objectives. Third, both regimes used football to create a culture of consent but the Fascists' were more concerned with creating consent among Italians while the Nazis desired to create consent among the international democratic political community in order to feign adherence to the international political status-quo while simultaneously preparing to destroy the institutions that governed peaceful diplomatic relations. Fourth, Nazi economic reorganization was

successful enough to enable the Nazis to maintain dialogue with the Allied powers and mitigate the Treaty of Versailles while simultaneously remilitarizing Germany through football and other diplomatic vehicles. The Fascists, failing to achieve dynamic *and* stable economic growth, restricted their use of football to reducing the effect of economic malaise on Italian morale. Lastly, both regimes used football to advance their goals of imperial conquest. However, the Nazis, because of their superior economic and political management, were better equipped to mold football into a tool for pacifying the Allied powers and preserving the chimera of *détente*. By contrast, the Fascists, lacking a parity of political and economic resources to efficiently conquer their desired territories, used football to forcibly project the image of their desired strength and omnipotence rather than to supplement political realities in the international arena.

Together, these distinctions serve two functions: First, they highlight important practical and ideological divergences between the Fascists and Nazi regimes that situate the two regimes in different international political climates that coexisted during the inter-war period. Second, they yield implications for what can be described as football-politik—the use of football for political gain and the practice of football as state policy—that are crucial for evaluating the policies and practices of the Fascist and Nazi regimes. The NSDAP, in contrast to the PNF, recognized the importance of “gameness,” overcoming political odds to compete honorably, which the Nazis practiced in order to develop an approach to international football that emphasized mutual respect and liberal rationality and thereby tempered the reaction of the Allied Powers to German remilitarization.<sup>291</sup> The Nazis also regarded their supreme enemies, both endogenous and exogenous, as Jews and other non-

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<sup>291</sup> Susan Birrell, “Sport as Ritual: Interpretations from Durkheim to Goffman,” *Social Forces* (vol. 60, no. 2, December 1981), p. 367.

Aryan peoples whereas, until the late 1930's, the Fascists were primarily concerned with eradicating leftists and bourgeois political elements within Italian society. Lastly, although both parties traced their ideological heritage to Gramsci's theory of the apolitical polity, Italian *campanilismo* operated as a quasi-political form of identity that counterbalanced national apoliticism. Conversely, no comparative form of identification existed in Weimar Germany, which rendered Germany vulnerable to a political body that could provide a means for consolidating state authority along national and racial lines. These distinctions are vital to understanding the various forms and manifestations of football-politik in the modern era.

### *Similar Heritages*

Football played important and decisive roles in both Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany. Despite being unable to completely overcome *campanilismo*, Mussolini's fascistization of football built a highly competitive domestic football league and a successful national team, both of which reinforced and reflected the social, economic, and political transformations within Italian society. Rather than promote international goodwill, the PNF exported their powerful brand of football in order to demonstrate the superiority of Fascist organization and state development. In contrast, Hitler and the NSDAP initially rejected football and attempted to restrict its development because of its perceived association with Jews, foreigners, and pacifism. However, because of football's popularity among the majority of Germans, the Nazis were forced to Nazify football in order to employ the sport for political purposes as a means of cultivating and preserving *détente* with the Allied powers and to obscure the militant intentions of Nazi foreign policy.



Despite their programmatic differences, both regimes were able to harness football in order to advance their own political objectives.

Both the PNF and the NSDAP were ideologically committed to the premise that Italy and Germany required rehabilitation and competition in order to give birth to the *Nuovo Italiano* and the ideal Aryan male. As evidenced by the Nazi interpretation of Tönnies' theory of the organic state and Mussolini's belief that the state was, "the highest and most powerful form of personality," the athletic body was equated with the state because, according to Hoberman, "it was only natural for a man who dreamed of, 'bridges that stride the rivers like giant gymnasts,' to anthropomorphize the state into a giant athlete."<sup>292</sup> Effectively, the imperially ambitious organic state based on racial or national premises logically propagated a belief among its citizens that the athlete was the embodiment of the state. According to Mussolini, "The nation as a state [existed] in so far as it [developed] thus it can be likened to the human will...which realizes itself in testing its own limitlessness."<sup>293</sup> This conviction created a political imperative not just for the state, but also for the athlete, to compete in the domestic or international political arena in order to continue to propel the state to evolve. For Hitler too, his, "first [political] ideals [were the result of his] association with extremely 'husky' boys," suggesting that his understanding of the organic state was grounded in his belief in the strength of the male athletic body. For both dictators, the athlete personified the organic state.<sup>294</sup>

Given the parallels in ideology, it is not surprising that both regimes' athletic policies closely resembled one another. The Fascists and the Nazis were highly nationalistic, regarded the male-bonding born in the trenches of World War I as epitomizing

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<sup>292</sup> John M. Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology*, pp. 77, 80.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

the spirit of the state, and were fanatically anti-Socialist.<sup>295</sup> Thus, when a few Nazis asked Gregor Strasser, the Secretary General of the NSDAP in 1932, to establish a Nazi sports organization distinct from the *Deutsche Turnerschaft*, Strasser proposed to create a Nazi sports organization based on the Fascist model once the NSDAP had succeeded in overthrowing the Weimar Republic.<sup>296</sup> According to Strasser, the Fascists had demonstrated the usefulness of a state-sport alliance that fostered the development of a culture of consent among the population, particularly in the case of football's large audience.<sup>297</sup> Similarly, both regimes reinforced the belief in the "cult of strength"—faith in the display of physical superiority as justified by physical superiority—and disdained losers, who were regarded as weak and helpless. This made Italy and Germany ideal candidates for membership in the elite international sports organizations, such as FIFA, where such ideas were commonly espoused.<sup>298</sup> However, from common ideological underpinnings, differences materialized in the design and implementation of domestic and foreign policy that led to distinct manifestations of football-politik.

### *1. Professionalism*

One of the most important distinctions between the Fascist and Nazi practice of football-politik was how each regime defined its enemies. Whereas the Fascists defined their enemies as socialists, communists, and traditional conservatives i.e., in political terms, the Nazis foremost enemies were Jews and foreign elements within German society.<sup>299</sup> Specifically, the Fascists defined their enemies in terms of the political ideologies they

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<sup>295</sup> Alexander J. de Grand, *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: The Fascist Style of Rule* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 13.

<sup>296</sup> Arnd Krüger, "Breeding, Bearing and Preparing the Aryan Body: Creating Supermen the Nazi Way," *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon*, p. 47.

<sup>297</sup> Richard Holt, "The Foreign Office and the Football Association: British Sport and Appeasement," *Sport and International Politics*, p. 86.

<sup>298</sup> John M. Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology*, p. 47.

<sup>299</sup> Alexander J. de Grand, *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: The Fascist Style of Rule*, p. 12.

espoused as well as the political parties to which they belonged. Thus, the Fascists regarded their political foes as internal elements that had developed within Italian society. By contrast, for the Nazis, the threats to Germany were exogenous racial groups, rather than political parties, which had infected the German organic state. In response, Nazi cultural policy was designed to purify the state i.e., the Aryan political body, by expelling all non-Aryan racial groups from Germany.

Because of the different ways in which the Fascists and Nazis defined their enemies, both regimes adopted divergent policies to address the problem professionalism posed to their respective ideologies. The Nazis removed Jews from all levels of involvement in football and blamed Jews for having contaminated the sport. Although establishing a causal link between the elimination of non-Aryans from football and the standard of play in the German football is beyond the scope of this thesis, the level of competitiveness among German clubs was low. *Schalke 04*, a club team from Gelsenkirchen in western Germany, won the regional championship 11 times between 1934 and 1944 and won the national championship five times between 1934 and 1940, often by wide score margins.<sup>300</sup> Combined with the Nazis' commitment to upholding the racial doctrine of the DT and the belief that professionalism was designed to, "soften" the German male, Nazi policy to counteract professionalism was firmly grounded in Nazi racial ideology.<sup>301</sup> Given the lopsided results in German football and the NSDAP's determination to remove Jews from football, the Nazis appear to have been less concerned with developing a strong and competitive football league that would produce superior football

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<sup>300</sup> Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football*, pp. 64-65

<sup>301</sup> Arnd Krüger, "The Role of Sport in German International Politics, 1918-1945," *Sport and International Politics*, p. 80.

John M. Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), p. 166.

talent and more intent on creating a healthy national body free of foreign elements that would undermine Nazi Germany's imperial ambitions.

The Fascists, generally, paid little attention to the race or religion of football players and instead practiced a football-politik that, they hoped, would combat *campanilismo*, which jeopardized the formation of a unified Italian state. Indeed, despite the Fascists' avowed nationalism, Mussolini did not mandate the removal of foreigners from *Serie A* and the lower divisions of professional Italian football until late 1936 and after the formal recognition of the Rome-Berlin Axis and under duress from Hitler. For ten years, from the creation of the *Carta di Viareggio* in 1926 to the 1936 racial laws, the debate surrounding professionalism was based on the Fascists' concerns about the impact of professionalism on *campanilismo* in that the buying and selling of football players would exacerbate regional conflict.<sup>302</sup> Nevertheless, professionalism was ultimately accepted by the Fascists on the grounds that it would *reduce* rather than augment *campanilismo* by helping to develop a base of highly skilled players who would provide the foundations of Italy's national football team. Admittedly, the fact that the regime promoted highly unequal development of football in terms of the number of the stadiums built throughout Italy and the number of Northern and Southern teams admitted into the *Serie A* did not help the regime to realize its goals of quelling *campanilismo*.<sup>303</sup> Professionalism hindered the regime's efforts to combat *campanilismo* while the enforced abrogation of regional associations in Italy's rural South increased antagonism towards the industrial North.<sup>304</sup>

Whether either regime's response to professionalism ultimately yielded a quantifiable impact on football in both countries is unclear. Nevertheless, the Fascist

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<sup>302</sup> Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 63.

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>304</sup> Patrizia Dogliani. "Sport and Fascism," *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, p. 340.

regime acquiesced to professionalism by engaging in a cost-benefit analysis that suggested to the elite that a powerful national side, fostered by the genesis of free market player transfers, would result in a magnificent national team while the Nazi regime forbade professionalism on the basis that it was the product of pernicious Jewish influence aimed at damaging the moral character of the Aryan male. Clearly, these two different manifestations of football-politik greatly affected those who played, practiced, managed, and followed the game in each country.

## *2. The Individual and State Body*

Based on the Fascist and Nazi regimes' different race policies, it is not surprising that both regimes practiced different versions of football-politik to promote the health of their nation and racial states. The Fascists, based on the foundations laid by the Catholic Church in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century and the legacy of World War I, believed that football would promote leadership qualities among those capable of administering orders and obedience among those willing to follow them. Furthermore, football would also prepare Italian men for war and transform them into *Nuovo Italiano(s)* who would lead the Italian state to higher levels of development and achievement. For the Nazis, football was initially a threat to the development of the Aryan organic state because of its Jewish and foreign origins. Indeed, it was not until the Nazis conceived of a football-politik that projected Nazi propaganda, success, and duplicitous diplomacy abroad that football was accepted by the Nazis as a means of curing Germany of its viral ailments.

By the early 1900's, Giovanni Semeria had already adopted the belief that football could be used to create a new breed of Italian men through competition.<sup>305</sup>

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<sup>305</sup> Stefano Pivato. "Soccer, Religion, Authority: Notes on the Early Evolution of Association Football in Italy," p. 427

Mussolini developed this belief further and radicalized Semeria's philosophy for political gain. The trenches of World War I enabled Mussolini to conceive of the necessity of collective sacrifice and struggle in order to promote the development of Italian society.<sup>306</sup> In conjunction with the number of Italian deaths suffered in the War, particularly from disease, Mussolini's rise to power precipitated the implementation of various athletic policies and the creation of the OND, the ONB, and CONI, with the intention of institutionalizing a system of social control that promoted obedience and conflated every aspect of football with the Fascist regime itself. The *Carta di Viareggio* is the primary example of the regime's efforts to formalize this relationship.<sup>307</sup> In this instance, the regime's commitment to developing and fascistizing football was rewarded by the performances of the Italian team on the field, with World Cup victories in 1934 and 1938 and with the gold medal in the 1936 Olympics, which legitimized the regime's developmental policies regarding the *Nuovo Italiano*.

Crucially, the *Nuovo Italiano* operated as a symbol for both state *and* individual achievement, fostered with the help and management of the PNF. While team victories reaffirmed the success of the Fascists' policies of enculturation, the regime's investment in the *Nuovo Italiano* enabled Italian fans and footballers to regard themselves as making individual and collective contributions to the development of the Italian state. Unlike the liberal Italian democrats who had advocated for neutrality during World War I and had capitulated to terms at the end of the War that were popularly regarded as unfair in light of the contribution of the Italian military, the PNF appeared to represent a commitment to, at

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<sup>306</sup> Benito Mussolini, "The Doctrine of Fascism," *Communism, Fascism, and Democracy: The Theoretical Foundations*, p. 329.

<sup>307</sup> Roberta Vescovi. "Children into Soldiers: Sport and Fascist Italy," *Militarism, Sport, Europe: War Without Weapons*, p. 174.

least partially, affirming the agency of Italian men, which allowed them to mythologize Italian warriors and to suffuse football with this perceived reality.<sup>308</sup>

In Nazi Germany, there was no Aryan version of the *Nuovo Italiano*. Instead, football was regarded as a virus spread by Jews and foreigners that threatened the health of the organic racial state. Whereas Italians were directed by the PNF to serve the state by violently promoting its development, the purpose of the Nazi state was to advance the interests and imperial ambitions of the Aryan people.<sup>309</sup> Because the DT was regarded as the representative of the culture, morals, and values of Aryan males, gymnastics was granted sporting primacy in Nazi society.<sup>310</sup> Essentially, Nazism regarded athletic competition not as necessarily something to be won but rather an event that reinforced athletes' commitment to the *Volk* community and to the pure ideals of National Socialism, which, in themselves, affirmed the greatness of the Nazi racial state.<sup>311</sup>

It was not until football was transformed into another means by which to promote the expulsion of Jews from Germany that an identifiable Nazi football-politik began to take shape. Nazi cultural policy alone, such as promoting football among the Hitler Youth, proved insufficient to convert football from a Jewish foreign sport into something identified with Aryan culture.<sup>312</sup> However, in conjunction with Nazi cultural policy, Jews, who were perceived as being incapable of controlling their bodily movements, were differentiated from Germans based on the athletic prowess exhibited by Aryans.<sup>313</sup> This belief helped the

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<sup>308</sup> Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, pp. 201-202.

<sup>309</sup> Simonetta Falasca-Zamponi. *Fascist Spectacle: The Aesthetics of Power in Mussolini's Italy*, p. 33. Adolf Hitler, "Mein Kampf," *Readings in Western Civilization, Vol. 3; Europe Between Wars*, p. 209.

<sup>310</sup> Arnd Krüger, "Breeding, Bearing and Preparing the Aryan Body: Creating Supermen the Nazi Way," p. 63.

<sup>311</sup> John Hoberman, "Primacy of Performance: Superman not Superathlete," *Shaping the Superman: Fascist Body as Political Icon*, p. 71.

<sup>312</sup> Joseph W. Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*, p. 165.

<sup>313</sup> John M. Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology*, p. 164.

Nazis to create a *Volksgemeinschaft*, racial community, by using football to advance international political aims, as was the case with regards to the *Anschluss* and with sustaining diplomatic relations with France and England during the mid and late 1930's. Again, by linking Jews to professionalism, football was framed in the Nazis' artistic paradigm—now broadened to include football and used to develop, strengthen, and identify traditional Aryan morals and values. This process purified football and made the sport part of the mechanism for developing the Aryan organic state.<sup>314</sup>

Rather than using football to promote state development, individual health, and violent capabilities, as it was under the Fascist regime, the Nazis reframed football in order to divorce the sport from its perceived foreign and Jewish roots in order to incorporate football into the NSDAP's political toolbox used to restore the Aryan organic state to greatness. For the NSDAP, football constituted one part, albeit an important one, of their highly efficient propaganda machine. While Mussolini and the Fascists immediately employed football for the benefit of the regime, lacking the sophisticated propaganda mechanisms developed by the NSDAP, the Nazis traditionally relied on mass spectacles and thus did not need to rely on football from the outset. Mass spectacles provided the individual with a sense of being part of a larger community and endowed each participant with a sense of collective strength.<sup>315</sup> Similarly, while Italy's national football team was conceived to be the supreme method of achieving national unity, the Nazis placed the army atop the hierarchy of their methods of national-unification.<sup>316</sup> Hitler and the Nazis simply did not need football as propaganda or to create a culture of consent to the same extent at

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<sup>314</sup> Rudolf Oswald, "Nazi Ideology and the end of Central European Soccer Professionalism, 1938-1941," *Emancipation Through Muscles: Jews and Sports in Europe*, p. 157.

<sup>315</sup> Adolf Hitler, *My Battle*, pp. 202-203.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.



their Fascist counterparts. Indeed, it was only once Hitler believed Germany to be superior to England and the Allied powers, following the culmination of Germany's six year remilitarization project, that victory in football became associated directly with the Nazi regime itself.

### *3. Culture of Consent*

Both the Fascists and the Nazis succeeded in creating a culture of consent within their respective countries. However, these cultures served different teleological ends. The Fascists used football to create mass spectacles that promoted and reinforced Fascist values, organization, obedience, and were domestically focused. By contrast, the Nazis created a culture of consent that was designed to foster internal harmony and, more importantly, an image of Nazi Germany as a civilized, peaceful, and developed society internationally. While achieving internal ideological adherence for the Nazis was a means to realizing international political ends, the Fascists were more concerned with fusing an Italian society out of disjointed and antagonistic parts.

One example of the Nazis' success in creating a culture of consent was the relative absence of regional antagonism and hooliganism—violence between fans of rival teams—among supporters of different German football clubs, which was rampant among supporters of Italian teams. Both Hitler and Mussolini intended, and to a considerable extent succeeded, in unifying urban and agrarian political blocs under a single racial-national ideology. However, the Nazis were rarely forced to quell regionalist violence between the fans of different football clubs. Certainly, such local antagonisms existed. In 1924, when the German national team comprised of players from *Nuremberg* and *Fürth*, the two best club teams at the time, was traveling to play a friendly match, two trains were

required to accommodate the team because of hostility between the rival supporters of the two teams: one transported the players from *Fürth* while the other carried the footballers from *Nuremberg*.<sup>317</sup> Nevertheless, few events like those that occurred in Bologna in 1925 and between *Fiume* and *Triestina* transpired in Germany.

It is possible that the free development of football clubs was responsible for the lack of as equally strong regional tensions in Germany as in Italy. Prior to Nazification, German football developed in the early 1900's under the guise of English managers of southern football clubs.<sup>318</sup> However, because of the DFB's strict adherence to the codes established by the DT, particularly ethical behavior and amateurism, the forces of virulent local loyalty were curtailed by the dominance of strict nationalist values. As teams from other regions developed and began to improve their styles of play, the pre-Nazi national football structure was already in place through which to project and control local pride. In this way, reinforcing Susan Sontag's claim that football in Germany served to rehearse the unity of the Nazi polity, German football acted as the venue through which local identity was expressed, and was then bolstered by the foundation of the NSDAP, which had been forced to compete with and either annex or destroy rival political elements, thereby resulting in the synthesis of a larger and more ideologically homogenous body-politic comprised of elements from across the German political and geographic landscape.<sup>319</sup> By the mid 1930's when the Nazis began to reorganize German football, club teams had already grown accustomed to competing against one another and, combined with the widely adopted and distributed nationalist agenda of the NSDAP, local rivalries were subsumed by the need to conform to the Party's directives.

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<sup>317</sup> Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football*, p. 55.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.

<sup>319</sup> John M. Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology*, p.11.

Italian football teams during the inter-war period developed under different circumstances. The Fascists, particularly high-profile PNF member and media mogul Leandro Arpinati, were instrumental in securing private bank loans for Bologna during the early 1930's in order to finance the construction of a new stadium, the *Littoriale*, in addition to funneling public monies into Bologna's balance sheets and securing private donations to the club by individuals and small businesses.<sup>320</sup> *AC Fiorentina*, established in the city of Florence in 1926, was also granted a similar beneficial financing arrangements—a 70 million Lire loan from the National Insurance Institute, a 2 million Lire loan from the Savings Bank of Florence, and a 2 million Lire private donation from Ridolfi, a renowned Florentine Fascist—in order to build its stadium, which was completed in 1932.<sup>321</sup> In order to secure these loans, Ridolfi not only approached various government bodies but also stressed that the construction of the stadium would contribute to reducing unemployment, which was high as a result of the Depression.<sup>322</sup> In order to promote the development of a culture of consent, the Fascist regime took an active role in publicly and financially promoting football as means of trying to combat *campanilismo* and fostering cultural homogeneity, although the result were decidedly mixed..

In Italy, creating a culture of consent through football was largely the work of the Fascist regime and was subsidized by the state in order to curtail Italian consumerism. Italy did not have a traditional conservative sports organization on which to rely for the injection of nationalist values into sport. Stadiums were built by joint public-private finance initiatives in order to provide Italians with grand settings in which to watch football that would evoke the spectacles that Roman coliseums had provided and which, it was hoped,

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<sup>320</sup> Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, pp. 123-125.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 156, 160.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164.

“would give birth to new vigor worthy of the tradition of Rome.”<sup>323</sup> The PNF also subsidized the cost of radios, which enabled many more Italians to enjoy live broadcasts of football matches in addition to receiving Fascist “education” in the Italianized *calcio* language developed by announcer Niccolo Carosio.<sup>324</sup> In Germany, although public access to radios was promoted—the number of households with radios increasing from 4.5 million in 1933 to 16 million in 1942—light entertainment and classical music accounted for 70 percent of all broadcasts.<sup>325</sup> Football may have accounted for the other 30 percent of airtime, but this seems unlikely given the regime’s tenuous relationship with the sport until the mid 1930’s and its public preference for “higher” forms of cultural expression. Even train fares were partially subsidized by the Fascist government in order to encourage Italian tourism and the popularity of football.<sup>326</sup> The subsidization of stadiums, radios, and travel promoted a Fascist culture of consent that helped to mitigate regional conflict but was less effective in garnering support for imperial conquest beyond the PNF’s traditional military and industrial political constituency.

Both the PNF and the NSDAP successfully created cultures of mass consent that contributed to the political cohesion of their respective societies. The Fascists’ financing of football stadiums and clubs helped reinforce the close relationship between popular culture and the state and further fascistized Italian society. The Nazis, because of ideological inconsistencies between football and National Socialism, explored other ways of creating a culture of consent and could not rationalize football with Nazism until the regime was able

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<sup>323</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

Pierre Lanfranchi, “Cathedrals In Concrete: Football in Southern European Society,” *Football, Nationality, and the State*, p. 127.

<sup>324</sup> Patrizia Dogliani. “Sport and Fascism,” *Journal of Modern Italian Studies*, p. 333.

Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 66.

<sup>325</sup> Joseph W. Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*, p. 50.

<sup>326</sup> Pierre Lanfranchi. “Bologna: The Team that Shook the World! A Football Team in Fascist Italy,” *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, p. 340.

to disassociate football from Jews and foreigners. Once the Nazis achieved this separation, football could be politically exploited with impunity and the Nazis could strive to create a culture of consent for purposes beyond Germany's national borders. Politically, Nazi propaganda went beyond birthing a racial organic state and was directed at ending Germany's acceptance of the terms of the Treaty of Versailles by rapidly developing Germany's military industry while sustaining the appearance of Germany's acceptance of the Treaty of Versailles without prompting political, and especially military, intervention from the Allied Powers.<sup>327</sup>

#### *4. Economic Reorganization*

In terms of economic policy, the NSDAP was more successful, particularly in leading Germany out of the depths of the Great Depression, than the PNF was at making Italy economically self-sufficient. The rise in NSDAP membership was largely predicated on the failures of the Weimar government to lead Germany into a period of stable economic growth and on the successes of the Nazis programs for full employment. Between 1928 and 1932, NSDAP membership had increased 350 percent and the Party earned 37.3 percent of the electoral vote—up from 2.6 percent four years earlier.<sup>328</sup> By Contrast, the PNF drew most of its membership from the middle and lower-middle-classes and came to power before any serious economic or financial crisis hit Italy.<sup>329</sup> Furthermore, while the Nazis were forced to participate in the Weimar Republic's democratic institutions before rising to power, Mussolini was able to quickly seize power through the March on Rome. The Nazis were better situated to capitalize on the success of their economic policies, which were

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<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

Joseph W. Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*, p. 68.

<sup>328</sup> Frank McDonough, *Hitler and Nazi Germany*, p. 18.

<sup>329</sup> Alexander J. de Grand, *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: The Fascist Style of Rule*, p. 16.

aimed at securing financing for Germany's remilitarization program, while using football to obscure Nazi objectives from the international community. In Italy, football was meant to entertain Italians who were living during a period in which the economy was exhibiting "dynamic though distorted" growth and whose economic circumstances were not greatly improved under Fascist economic autarky.

Different levels of industrial development, as a result of Fascist and Nazi domestic policies, may also have altered the dynamics of regional conflict in the two countries. Prior to the rise of the PNF, Italy was a largely agrarian and fragmented society that had yet to establish a fully industrialized economy based on a more advanced division of labor. Consequently, there was less demand prior to World War I for interregional and representative forms of sport because the Italian state lacked the means with which to promote national unity.<sup>330</sup> Thus, football rivalries primarily flourished between those communities that were geographically proximate to one another, as in the case of Bologna and Genoa. During the inter-war period, the industrial and agrarian policies of the Fascists and the Nazis in both Italy and Germany precipitated significant social, economic, and demographic change. These policies, particularly in Nazi Germany, resulted in the development of a division of labor that created mutual dependencies between the agrarian and industrial spheres of labor, which contributed to national unification.<sup>331</sup> These policies did not have a comparable impact on the majority of Italians who remained agrarian and were weary of any efforts by the government to transform society. The transition to this new mode of production precluded the Nazis' reliance on football to help promote a sense

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<sup>330</sup> Eric Dunning, "The Dynamics of Modern Sport: Notes on Achievement–Striving and the Social Significance of Sport," *Quest for Excitement*, eds. Norbert Elias and Eric Dunning (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1986), p. 220.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219.

of Aryan cohesion. To this end, the NSDAP established the *Deutsche Arbeitsfront*, Labor Front, in order to educate workers in National Socialism.<sup>332</sup>

The PNF benefited from the support of large northern agro-businesses and rewarded already powerful industrial firms by supporting the existing cartel structure.<sup>333</sup> By 1935, 75 percent of production and marketing was being undertaken by Italian cartels.<sup>334</sup> However, stemming from the 1927 inflation of the Lire, the financial impact of the Depression on workers was detrimental not only to the Italian economy but also to Italians' conception of national unity under Fascism. Between 1927 and late 1930, real wages declined 15 to 20 percent and, because labor was established on the basis of an employer-employee relationship that had to be honored, those who were fortunate enough to retain their jobs earned roughly 1.66 Lire per hour and could only work 40 hours per week.<sup>335</sup> Meanwhile, the Italian barons' of industry ensured that they invested their profits in Italian football. One example was the Agnelli family, owners of Fiat, who hailed from the Northern industrial city of Turin and who profited handsomely from their early restructuring of their enterprise. The family could thus afford to pay premium wages to *Juventus* players and also financed the construction of a new stadium for the club in 1932—appropriately named the *Stadio Mussolini*. As a result, *Juventus* won the *scudetto* five times between 1931 and 1935.<sup>336</sup> Another example was the Pirelli family of Milan, owner of Pirelli tires and of the club *AC Milan*, who financed the construction of the famous San Siro

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<sup>332</sup> Michael T. Florinsky, *Fascism and National Socialism* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1936), p. 136.

<sup>333</sup> Alexander J. de Grand, *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: The Fascist Style of Rule* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 49.

<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>335</sup> Michael T. Florinsky, *Fascism and National Socialism*, pp. 123, 125.

<sup>336</sup> David Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round: A Global History of Football*, p. 307.

stadium.<sup>337</sup> While the working-class suffered, the industrial elite promoted football to ensure that their complaints were drowned out by the sounds of excited fans supporting Italy's premier club teams.

Unfortunately for Southern Italians, who mostly worked in agricultural production, football matches were more difficult to attend. The South simply lacked the financial capital with which to finance the growth of prominent football clubs like those in the North. The conditions of workers in the South were also worse than those of their Northern counterparts. Agricultural laborers commanded considerably lower wages, with men earning 1.13 Lire per hour and women 0.66 Lire per hour in 1934.<sup>338</sup> Meanwhile, confronted with dire economic conditions, Mussolini invested 3.5 million Lire in the 1934 World Cup, which included subsidizing 75 percent of the cost of travel by foreign fans.<sup>339</sup> There is no evidence that the Italian economy was buoyed by an increase in consumption or by what little foreign exchange augmentation occurred due to consumer spending during the World Cup.

Meanwhile, although one of the ideological imperatives of Fascism was to provide for the well-being of farmers, the Fascist government did not succeed in fulfilling this ideological obligation.<sup>340</sup> Even the "Battle of Wheat," in which 15.2 quintals were produced per hectare from a total of 5 million hectares in production, and was declared a "victory" by 1935, hurt domestic agriculture overall. By encouraging Italian farmers to sell wheat only to government operated warehouses, the Fascists created a moral hazard whereby farmers were encouraged to withhold wheat from the market in order to raise

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<sup>337</sup> Paddy Agnew, *Forza Italia: A Journey in Search of Italy and its Football*, pp. 59-60.

<sup>338</sup> Michael T. Florinsky, *Fascism and National Socialism*, p. 129.

<sup>339</sup> David Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round: A Global History of Football*, p. 255.

<sup>340</sup> Michael T. Florinsky, *Fascism and National Socialism*, p. 156.



prices. However, domestic prices were kept low due to high tariffs, but not sufficiently below world market prices to induce consumption.<sup>341</sup> The end result was that despite considerably increasing agricultural production, agricultural laborers remained poor throughout the remainder of the inter-war period.<sup>342</sup> Although football provided entertainment for many ordinary Italians, Northern clubs' the national team's victories at home and abroad could not obscure the sober reality Italian agriculture. Unemployment in Italy stood at 1,158,000 at the height of the Great Depression. Even after the invasion of Ethiopia, unemployment still reached 658,000 because firms did not hire new workers to replace those who were drafted into the military.<sup>343</sup> Given these conditions, it is hardly surprising that regional antagonism, particularly between the North and South, remained so ferocious.

Conversely, Nazi economic reorganization was such a success that little investment in football was required on the part of either the state or the industrial elite. By the time Hitler came to power in 1934, the NSDAP was already determined to remilitarize Germany and thus between 1934 and 1936, Nazi economic policy was designed to foster the reintegration of Germany into the international trading and financing economy once Germany had fully recovered from the Great Depression.<sup>344</sup> Although the Nazis ultimately abandoned this plan and pursued economic autarky, epitomized by the Four Year Plan, Germany achieved an advanced division of labor as a result of rearmament, which attracted some 5.2 million Germans back into the labor market between late 1934 and early 1936. In a bid to preempt wage disputes, Germans were encouraged by the NSDAP to remember

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<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 171-172.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

<sup>344</sup> Alexander J. de Grand, *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: The Fascist Style of Rule*, pp. 45-46, 51.

that the Party was more concerned with the dignity of the worker's position than the amount which he was paid, despite, or perhaps because, real wage rates failed to achieve their 1928 levels by 1939.<sup>345</sup>

The Nazis, like their Fascist counterpart, promoted agricultural production. However, the NSDAP was considerably more successful. In addition to achieving relative equilibrium between the supply and demand for foodstuffs, the Nazis stabilized agricultural prices by introducing quotas and fixed prices—typically five to seven percent higher than minimum prices in 1933—and by developing areas of agricultural production that produced substitutes for expensive imports, such as butter.<sup>346</sup> Ultimately, the NSDAP's superior economic management promoted national unity and increased Germans' ability to ignore, or at least temper, their willingness to reenact and reproduce rivalries based on geographic proximity.<sup>347</sup> Because of the success of Nazi economy reorganization, football simply had no role to play in the economy except for providing entertainment to the masses.

Italy did not begin to shift production to developing a war economy until 1935. Concomitantly, as Italian economic and diplomatic policy became increasingly internationally focused, local rivalries began to attract less popular attention than international rivalries, as evidenced by the football matches played against Britain between 1934 and 1938.<sup>348</sup> Conversely, Germany had promoted international competition in football since 1920 when Germany played its first post-World War I friendly against Switzerland.<sup>349</sup>

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<sup>345</sup> Michael T. Florinsky, *Fascism and National Socialism*, p. 151.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 174, 181, 185.

<sup>347</sup> Eric Dunning, "The Dynamics of Modern Sport: Notes on Achievement—Striving and the Social Significance of Sport," *Quest for Excitement*, p. 220.

Alexander J. de Grand, *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: The Fascist Style of Rule* (New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 52.

Michael T. Florinsky, *Fascism and National Socialism*, p. 145.

<sup>348</sup> Alexander J. de Grand, *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: The Fascist Style of Rule*, p. 50.

<sup>349</sup> Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football*, p. 55.

The Germans continued to pursue this peaceful and diplomatic football-politik until immediately prior to declaring war on Poland in 1939. The practice of an exogenous football-politik was the logical extension of a pre-Nazi German cultural policy that allowed the “free market” development of football clubs despite internal opposition among the supporters of the DT. Ultimately, football had little to do with the success of Nazi economic policy. In Italy, it was not until a decisive policy shift aimed at imperial conquest that the Fascists began to project their football-politik in the international political arena.

### *5. Imperial Ambitions*

Both the Fascists and the Nazis believed that it was their political and ideological imperative to build empires. For Fascists, this was the pinnacle of state development. For Nazis it meant achieving political domination over the world by the Aryan race. However, because of political and economic realities during the inter-war period—the seizure of power in both Italy and Germany, the political status-quo created by the Treaty of Versailles, and the effects of the Great Depression—rearmament and imperial conquest were of secondary concern to Mussolini and the PNF while for Hitler and the NSDAP, remilitarization and the violent abrogation of the Treaty of Versailles remained integral parts of the Party’s platform. International circumstances made a significant impact on both regimes’ football-politik. Mussolini fostered the growth of football first in an attempt to unify Italian society and second to project Fascist superiority abroad while Hitler, and Goebbels in particular, used football as a political ploy to cajole the Allied powers into practicing *détente* while the German war-machine was being rebuilt.

Both regimes supported and reinforced their respective international football-politik in different ways. The Fascists focused on consolidating political power, removing

political opposition, and improving Italy's economy and it was not until 1936 that imperial objectives begin to be pursued through military action. The Nazis, who had consolidated political power prior to conquering the German state apparatus, immediately threatened the Allied powers with the "stick" of German remilitarization while placating them with the "carrot" of diplomacy, particularly through football matches and the 1936 Olympics. Thus, it can be concluded that the PNF was compelled to implement more domestically focused policies during its reign while the NSDAP was able to allocate resources to achieve its foreign political objectives because of the Party's early domestic success.

It took Mussolini and the PNF four years to overthrow Italy's constitutional monarchy and to create a one-party state. However, because informal pacts and accords between state and private interest groups replaced formal legislative and cabinet procedures, Mussolini was never forced to transform the PNF into a political "catch-all" party like the NSDAP or to legally incapacitate political opponents. Even attempts at violent repression by the military wing of the PNF were unable to completely silence political opposition.<sup>350</sup> Not until the Matteotti crisis in 1924 in which two of Mussolini's close associates, Cesare Rossi and Giovanni Marinelli, were convicted of kidnapping and murdering Socialist Giacomo Matteotti in retribution for denouncing the PNF and its passage of the Acerbo Law, did the PNF begin to successfully quell political dissent.<sup>351</sup> The political fallout following the crisis was such that Mussolini was forced to shelve his plans to create a Fascist dictatorship until 1926 when he enacted the Law on the Powers of the Head of Government, which gave Mussolini complete control over the naming of political

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<sup>350</sup> Alexander J. de Grand, *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: The Fascist Style of Rule*, p. 31.

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26. The Acerbo Law allowed the Fascist Party to hold a complete majority over the lower house of the Italian Parliament and represented one of the defining moments in Mussolini's rise to power.

appointments, outlawed all opposition parties, and ended the practice of checks and balances between different levels of parliamentary government.<sup>352</sup> The level of management and effort required on the domestic front made it such that foreign policy did not significantly shape Mussolini and the PNF's plans until 1935, when the need for territorial expansion became apparent.<sup>353</sup>

Hitler and the NSDAP, because they abandoned National Socialism's revolutionary mandate to violently overthrow the Weimar Republic and instead adopted *legal* revolution, formed alliances with other conservative parties and benefited from growing public dissatisfaction with the Weimar government's efforts to end the Great Depression.<sup>354</sup> The drive to increase public and elite support for the Nazi Party while overthrowing the democratic government enabled the Nazis to neutralize political opposition more effectively than the Fascists, which allowed them to quickly begin implementing plans to achieve their foreign policy objectives. In addition, because Hitler had capitulated to the German military and purged the SA in 1934, the army was more willing to undergo reorganization at Hitler's hands and to work with the NSDAP bureaucrats in realizing the imperial ambitions of the Third Reich.<sup>355</sup>

Economically, Hitler's success also enabled the NSDAP to concentrate on its rearmament projects while Mussolini was not as successful at leading Italy out of the depths of the Depression. Prior to Hitler being elected Chancellor, Germany was highly dependent on foreign markets for the consumption of its exports—36 percent of its total industrial output—and to import raw materials—40 to 45 percent of Germany's entire consumption. Its

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<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>354</sup> Joseph W. Bendersky, *A History of Nazi Germany*, p. 62.

<sup>355</sup> Alexander J. de Grand, *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: The Fascist Style of Rule*, p. 39.

foreign currency reserves had been rapidly depleted as a result of the Depression, Germany's international debt had ballooned as a result of significant Weimar investment, and 6 million Germans were unemployed.<sup>356</sup> Fortunately for the NSDAP, Dr. Schacht's 1934 New Plan heavily restricted imports based on the availability of foreign exchange while Hitler's public works programs, investment in Germany's rearmament by investing in the production of wool and zinc, and the creation of agricultural and industrial substitutes such as synthetic rubber, gasoline, and fiber, successfully reduced German unemployment by 5.2 million and resulted in a 55 million Mark trade surplus in August 1935.<sup>357</sup> Although the Nazis recognized this plan as a stop-gap measure that was unfavorable to Germany foreign policy objectives—the New Plan was popularly regarded as, “a distasteful product of extreme emergency,”—it, nonetheless, succeeded in ending the Depression in Germany and catalyzing rearmament.<sup>358</sup>

In Italy, Mussolini's success was comparatively limited. Faced with an overwhelmingly rural population that engaged in agricultural production, with less heavy industry, and Mussolini's unwillingness to devalue the Lire, Italian exports suffered and were not offset by a concomitant rise in Italian purchasing power of imports.<sup>359</sup> Moreover, because Italy's foreign debt obligations had been kept low during the early 1920's, Mussolini deemed that Italy could afford to keep the Lire artificially high even as currencies on the world market, particularly the primary consumers of Italian exports, deflated.<sup>360</sup> Thus, although Italy only exhibited 2 million Lire trade deficit and 2 million Lire budget deficit in August 1935, circumstances were unfavorable to Italian economic

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<sup>356</sup> Michael T. Florinsky, *Fascism and National Socialism*, p. 207.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 185, 209.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 197-198.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

growth and the decision to wage war in Ethiopia in late 1935 and early 1936 required significant state investment. Waging war at this economically unfavorable time also partially precluded significant deficit spending that could have propelled Italy out of the Depression, although Italy's debt increased by 31 million Lire between 1922 and 1935 in order to finance public works projects.<sup>361</sup> Aside from the Battle of Wheat, Italy's economy remained largely stagnant during the 1930's. Mussolini created government monopolies in 1935 to finance the purchase of coal, tin, copper, and nickel, to boost war production, and to eliminate wasteful imports while a barter system with other countries, including Poland, Austria, Hungary, and Germany, emerged.<sup>362</sup> Overall, Mussolini and the PNF's management of Italy's economy and their imposed autarky did not position Italy to successfully remilitarize in order to wage a war of imperial expansion in Ethiopia, let alone a world war. Italy's poor economic performance also affected Italy's ability to credibly threaten the Treaty of Versailles' political status-quo with Italy's football prowess.

On the surface, it appears reasonable to conclude that Nazi and Fascist foreign policy were equally intent on realizing their international political objectives and to regard the military capabilities of both regimes as insufficient to engage in a war of attrition that world war would require. According to de Grand:

“Both [Hitler and Mussolini] stressed diplomatic success at limited risk...[Mussolini's] move into Ethiopia and the successful defiance of the League of Nations Sanctions brought his claim to a high point in early 1936...Similarly, Hitler's popularity peaked with the easy victories over the remilitarization of the Rhineland and the *Anschluss*.”<sup>363</sup>

However, such a simplistic view is misleading especially when evaluated in the context of each regime's respective football-politik. In Italy, football had been used during the 1920's

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<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 200-201, 205.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 204-205.

<sup>363</sup> Alexander J. de Grand, *Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany: The Fascist Style of Rule*, p. 77.

to combat *campanilismo* and to create a culture of consent. By the late 1920's and 1930's, Mussolini and the PNF began to project Italy's hegemony over Eastern Europe through its mastery of the "Danubian school" style of football. This international success buoyed the Fascist regime and led Mussolini to advocate for victory in football as a way to represent and project the image of the Roman Empire reborn. Germany's football-politik was more subtle and more politically effective. Rather than desiring victory, Hitler and the NSDAP used football between the mid and late 1930's to placate the Allied powers' desire to prevent a second World War by publicly defining football matches between Germany and England and Germany and France as signs of diplomatic good will in order to obscure Hitler's remilitarization efforts and plans to destroy the international political status-quo. While the Nazis had used football sparingly to amplify and augment domestic policy, the 1936 "Olympic Pause" marked a decisive moment in Nazi foreign policy and catalyzed the Nazis' efforts to use football as a peaceful chimera behind which to hide the Party's imperial ambitions.

The Fascist regime lavished attention upon its successful club teams and national team during the 1930's. Mussolini used Bologna's 1932, 1934, and 1937 Mitropa Cup championships as a propaganda tool to exert Italy's control of and dominance over Eastern Europe.<sup>364</sup> Mussolini also arranged for subsidized tourist packages to be offered to Italians who wished to witness Italy's triumphs at the 1936 Olympics in which Italy received the third highest total medal count and won the gold medal in football before a crowd of 100,000 people.<sup>365</sup> The PNF had been bolstered by the regime's recent conquest of Ethiopia in May 1935 and were intent on capitalizing on their military victory in the realm of sport

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<sup>364</sup> Pierre Lanfranchi. "Bologna: The Team that Shook the World! A Football Team in Fascist Italy," *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, p. 336.

<sup>365</sup> Richard Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics*, pp. 4, 193.



before the international community.<sup>366</sup> Crucially, 1936 was also the year that the Fascists and the Nazis grew politically more congruent following criticism by the Allied powers, particularly England and France, of Italy's invasion of Ethiopia and the League of Nations' subsequent imposition of economic sanctions against Italy.<sup>367</sup> Following the sanctions, Mussolini temporarily forbade Italy from competing in international athletic competitions except for the 1938 World Cup, which was too important to forego.<sup>368</sup> This was a good decision by Mussolini given that Italy had won the World Cup in 1934 and went on to become repeat champions in 1938.<sup>369</sup> Thus, the Fascists did not miss an opportunity to earn political capital as a result of the national team's triumph. Victory was meant to be propagandized as evidence of the Fascist regime's strength and military superiority. Even the matches themselves were routinely framed by the Italian press in military terms, as was the case with the Battle of Highbury, which was famously dubbed, "the theater of international war."<sup>370</sup>

The conflation of football success and military prowess was the manifestation of a distinct ideological shift that had seeped into the Italian public consciousness after World War I and gained political currency by the 1930's. Indeed, the idea of the "noble" amateur who competed for the sake of competing and to entertain had been replaced by the idea that competitions were meant to be won.<sup>371</sup> This belief differed markedly from the Nazi emphasis on fair-play and the myth of athletes as "brothers in arms," which persisted in

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<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>368</sup> Pierre Arnaud, "Sport- A Means of National Representation," *Sport and International Politics*, p. 137.

<sup>369</sup> Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 193.

<sup>370</sup> Peter J. Beck. "For World Footballing Honors: England versus Italy, 1933, 1934, 1939," *The European Sports History Review*, p. 203.

Simon Martin. *Football and Fascism: The National Game under Mussolini*, p. 203.

<sup>371</sup> Richard Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics*, p. 5

Germany during the 1930's.<sup>372</sup> For Nazis, victory on the football field was less important than how the German team, whether the national team or a club team, and the traveling German fans were perceived by the foreign press as well as the foreign diplomatic core. Hence, the Nazis attached great importance to “gameness”—overcoming physical odds to compete honorably—and were adept at making the audience praise the performance of the team and the moral values of Nazi society.<sup>373</sup>

The different emphasis on victory versus diplomacy is also be evidenced by the fact that while Italian football players entered the military and were encouraged to serve their country and lauded for doing so, German football players were traditionally exempt from military service. Because of football's traditional association with Jews and pacifism, football players were perceived as being unfit to serve in the German armed forces.<sup>374</sup> Clearly, Nazi and Fascist foreign policy were not equally bent on diplomatic solutions. The Fascists' inability to wage war because of political and particularly military and economic difficulties, did not, as de Grand might suggest, preclude the Fascists' desire to wage war. Conversely, Hitler and the NSDAP only intended to initiate war after gradually violating terms of the Treaty of the Versailles so as not to prompt a military reaction by the Allied powers in order to promote the façade of open channels of political communication through football until Nazi remilitarization was complete.

Hitler's football-politik, based on his dual emphasis on diplomacy and covert rearmament, is best illustrated when compared to Italy's use of football matches against England during the mid 1930's. In 1914, the DFB appointed three members to the *Bundes*

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<sup>372</sup> John M. Hoberman, *Sport and Political Ideology*, p. 15.

<sup>373</sup> Susan Birrell, “Sport as Ritual: Interpretations from Durkheim to Goffman,” *Social Forces*, pp. 367, 373.

<sup>374</sup> Matthias Marschik, “Between Manipulation and Resistance: Viennese Football in the Nazi Era,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, p. 220.

*Fussball Lehrer*, National Football Instructors, who were supposed to create a functional national team and organization.<sup>375</sup> However, after the Nazis came to power in 1933, adherence to the amateur code of the DT resulted in football being temporarily cast aside. Football was not included in this paradigm, given that German footballers were perceived as foreign and “non-Aryan” elements within society. Initially, German sports ministers had welcomed Nazi reorganization because it increased the ministers’ status and because the Nazis linked sport to fighting in the trenches during World War I.<sup>376</sup> When the Nazis’ rejected the “false” conflation of football and military ability, the future of sport in Nazi Germany temporarily became more tenuous. However, once Germany began playing football against England and France during the 1930’s, football, in particular, grew in esteem. Under Nazification, what had been simply a mass sporting event in Germany that had become popular through its adoption by the working-class became a sport widely utilized by the NSDAP.<sup>377</sup> Between 1933 and 1945, 106 international football matches were organized compared with just 53 matches between 1923 and 1932.<sup>378</sup>

The football matches against England and France, combined with Germany’s performance at the 1936 Olympics, were crucial to the regime’s policy of promoting diplomatic relations with both countries. For the Nazis, the key to “victory” against France and England was not scoring the most goals but rather promoting “gameness.” By perpetuating existing diplomatic practices, the Nazis were able to keep the governments of both England and France mired in peaceful discussions based on *détente*, which allowed the

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<sup>375</sup> Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football*, p. 54.

<sup>376</sup> Arnd Krüger, “The Role of Sport in German International Politics, 1918-1945,” *Sport and International Politics*, p. 83.

<sup>377</sup> Matthias Marschik, “Between Manipulation and Resistance: Viennese Football in the Nazi Era,” *Journal of Contemporary History*, p. 219.

<sup>378</sup> Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football*, p. 73.

Nazis to give public credence to such negotiations while simultaneously investing in remilitarization.<sup>379</sup> Football provided the necessary diplomatic cover for the Nazis' military programs and made it appear to the governments of England and France that Germany was committed to peacefully revising the Treaty of Versailles, when Hitler's true intentions were to crush the existing political status-quo.

The 1938 *Anschluss* was the final theater of the enactment of the Nazi football-politik. Instead of altering Austrian football completely, the Nazis made changes to existing Austrian football institutions that most Austrians could tolerate, including the removal of Jews and establishing football academies for Austrian youth.<sup>380</sup> In addition, the Nazis attempted to rid football of its "English roots" by "Germanizing" the names of club teams, mandating that every Austrian football player serving in the military wore the insignia of their branch of service on their team uniform, and decorating football fields with swastika.<sup>381</sup> Furthermore, the Nazis were not concerned that Austria defeated the German national team 2-0 at the game to celebrate the *Anschluss*.<sup>382</sup> The propaganda aspect of the game was most important. Indeed, the best Austrian players were forced to play for the German *Breslau-Elf*, Breslau 11, which had been created in 1937 and was Germany's most successful national team during the inter-war period, despite losing to Italy's national team just prior to the beginning of World War II.<sup>383</sup> By carefully employing a football-politik that obscured the Hitler's and the NSDAP's imperial ambitions, football helped buy the

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<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>380</sup> Matthias Marschik, "Between Manipulation and Resistance: Viennese Football in the Nazi Era," *Journal of Contemporary History*, pp. 219-221.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

<sup>383</sup> Ulrich Hesse-Lichtenberger, *Tor! The Story of German Football*, pp. 64, 86.

Nazis valuable political capital which they spent on sustaining *détente* with the Allied powers until Germany was prepared for war in late 1939.

Despite the similarities between Fascist and Nazi ideology, both regimes' use of football-politik differed considerably. Initially, because the Fascists were not forced to compete politically to same extent as the Nazis, their political institutions and propaganda apparatus were comparatively underdeveloped. Thus, when football was identified as being a useful tool to promote domestic unity and to project Fascist superiority internationally, the Fascists adopted football-politik wholeheartedly despite its fostering, rather than counteracting, *campanilismo*. By contrast, the Nazis benefited from a decade of political competition and achieved national prominence at a time when their Party institutions and political strategies had matured. This enabled the Nazis to be more discerning in their use of football and to use the sport to achieve specific political gains instead applying the football-politik model to every aspect of Nazification and Nazi foreign policy. It seems unreasonable to try to conclude which regime's football-politik was more successful given the problems associated with correlating specific policy decisions and outcomes to changes in the organization, management, and use of football. Nevertheless, the Nazis achieved concrete objectives through their brand of football-politik during the Olympics, the *Anschluss*, and the remilitarization effort while the Fascists realized significant domestic political benefits from football but ultimately deluded themselves into believing that victories on the football pitch translated into real political gains in the international political arena.

## CONCLUSION

Approaching a political history of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany during the inter-war period by exploring the political uses of football is an unorthodox but effective and enlightening method of analysis. To the casual reader, relating football to policy and demonstrating the ways in which both regimes not only affected football but were affected by it as well appears unrealistic if not absurd. However, using football as a historical lens allows political analysis to move beyond the elite biases typical of many historical studies, which rely on individuals to narrate history. In doing so, we can gain, “a fuller understanding of [a people’s] collective past,” by taking into account social and structural forces operating within society.<sup>384</sup> Through football, a clearer picture of both regimes emerges in which, “far from standing apart, sports were integrated and integrating activities, part of the contemporary scene, reflecting social and ideological preoccupations and very likely affecting them in turn.”<sup>385</sup>

Using football as a methodology helps to differentiate between state athletes and national athletes, the former being a representative of the bureaucracy while the latter represents the people. Such clear distinctions cannot be drawn within Fascism and Nazism through traditional methods of historical analysis.<sup>386</sup> In Italy, football players were most often made to represent the Italian people within Italy’s defined geographical borders. Players helped bring about the success of the national team and increased the level of play of domestic Italian football and were lauded for their contributions. Aside from success at the 1934 and 1938 World Cups and the 1936 Olympics, the Fascist football-politik

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<sup>384</sup> Robert F. Wheeler, “Teaching Sport as History, History Through Sport,” *The History Teacher* (vol. 11, no. 3, May 1978, p. 312.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 312.

<sup>386</sup> Pierre Arnaud, “Sport- A Means of National Representation,” *Sport and International Politics*, p. 6.

primarily served as a domestic policy tool directed at promoting national unity and was only secondarily used for international political purposes as a source of national pride vis-à-vis the Allied powers. Thus, Italian footballers were primarily state athletes who were co-opted by the elite and, despite detracting factors like *campanilismo*, exuded the Fascist political culture and furthered its domestic policy goals.

The Nazi football-politik yielded a different kind of athlete. Only after football's popularity increased such that the regime *had* to rehabilitate the sport in order to avoid inconsistencies with Nazi ideology was football accepted by the NSDAP. Initially, football was a pariah that suffused the working-class and was believed to be part of an international Jewish conspiracy aimed at weakening the Aryan male. However, once the Nazis realized the international potential of football to promote the semblance of diplomatic normalcy with the Allied powers while Germany engaged in illegal remilitarization, the regime was compelled to transform football for political use. The Nazis were able to exploit the "world's game" for political gain because democratic nations were unwilling or unable to recognize this political capacity of football. Even the British, against whom this international football-politik was primarily directed, underestimated its usefulness in sustaining the mirage of *détente*.

Football reached the height of its political efficacy during the inter-war period. During World War II, many football players perished. Jewish players, like Arpad Weisz who played in Hungary and coached in Italy, perished in concentration camps while some French players were tortured to death for participating in the Resistance. German players were conscripted into the army and Italian players died fighting both for the Fascists and

against them.<sup>387</sup> However, football-politik was not abrogated along with the hundreds of thousands of lives that comprise the destruction wrought during World War II. Two modern examples serve as reminders of the kinds of football-politik that exist in the modern era. Western Germany used its 1954 World Cup victory to repair the damage done to the German character by the Nazi regime. Forty years later, in the most blatant and perhaps best orchestrated example of football-politik since the inter-war period, Silvio Berlusconi finagled his football success to become Prime Minister of Italy in 1994. Other countries, particularly Western liberal democracies like England, also recognized the importance and value of putting football and sport in general to political use. Lastly, the impact of global television networks, and the subsequent influx of financial capital into football, have altered the context of football-politik and may have recalibrated the link between football and politics, replacing it with a capitalist football-politik that has yet to be fully explored.

*Modern Football-Politik: Lessons of the Past in Modern Practice*

The Fascist and Nazi football-politik have not been completely forgotten in the post-war era. Although both regimes were destroyed, modern liberal democracies have exhibited a willingness to use football for political purposes. Almost ten years after the end of World War II the World Cup returned, this time held in West Germany during the summer of 1954. The West German team defeated a technically superior Hungarian team in the finals, which allowed Germans, especially members of the press, to emphasize the role that traditionally “German” traits—“discipline, collective effort, industriousness and speedy, ruthless efficiency”—played in the outcome.<sup>388</sup> These traits had been corrupted and exploited by the Nazis, thereby rendering them politically taboo during post-war

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<sup>387</sup> Bill Murray, *The World's Game*, p. 85

<sup>388</sup> Liz Crolley and David Hand, *Football and European Identity: Historical narratives through the press*, p. 71.



reconstruction, but were transformed into acceptable terms of national self-identification while the victory itself seemed, according to one observer, to have symbolically, “healed the wounds inflicted [on Germany] during and after the war.”<sup>389</sup> According to one observer, West Germany’s victory, known as the *Wunder von Bern*, Miracle of Berne, not only allowed Germans to take pride in their cultural heritage by divorcing it from its political use at the hands of the Nazis, but was also construed as evidence of the wider *wirtschaftswunder*, economic miracle, that coincided with German reconstruction.<sup>390</sup>

In 1994, Silvio Berlusconi, an Italian businessman worth an estimated 10 billion Euros who controlled a business empire that spanned insurance, banking, film, real-estate, and Italy’s three biggest commercial TV channels, launched his political campaign on the back of his ownership of *AC Milan*. Following significant pressure to enter politics from conservative business and political allies, Berlusconi announced his candidacy for Prime Minister of Italy stating that he had, “chosen to *take the field* and involve myself in public life.”<sup>391</sup> Having chosen to, “take the field,” a phrase ripped directly from the football lexicon, Berlusconi succeeded, as a contemporary political analyst observed, in blurring the distinction between football, media, and politics.<sup>392</sup> Six months after issuing this statement, having financed the development of grass-roots political organizations throughout Italy whose slogan, “*Forza Italia*,” was also the slogan of the Italian national team about to compete in the 1994 World Cup held in the US, Berlusconi was elected Prime Minister of Italy.<sup>393</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 71.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>391</sup> Paddy Agnew, *Forza Italia: A Journey in Search of a Country and its Football*, p. 120.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 121.

<sup>393</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

These two examples of modern football-politik suggest that football continues to be malleable to current political circumstances and to influence and affect the ways in which politics are conducted. Indeed, the lessons learned from the role of football in illiberal regimes are applicable to modern liberal democracies. Although football has not recently been used by governments to project military might, racial superiority, or to hide imperial ambitions from the international political community, football continues to serve as a powerful tool for promoting and harnessing nationalism as well as for rallying supporters to a political cause or party. Moreover, football remains both a reflection and extension of state policy. West Germany's World Cup victory was perceived as evidence of Germany's future trajectory. Football affected Germans' belief in a teleology—economic growth and political reorganization—that gave common Germans and the political elite reason to believe that Germany would be revived. Although Berlusconi used football to achieve political gain, the popularity of the sport affected the extent to which his message was perceived by the public and, indeed, shaped his candidacy. Clearly, football remains a valuable political tool.

### *Liberal Football-Politik*

The most common manifestation of football-politik in the modern era is the development, implementation, and oversight of sports development policies by the national government. One major shift has been the increased emphasis on mass participation rather than on the development of elite performance.<sup>394</sup> In England, the Department of National Heritage strove to augment participation in order to promote better health and quality of life

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<sup>394</sup> Barrie Houlihan, *Sport, Policy, and Politics: A Comparative Analysis* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 89.

among citizens as well as to foster social and leadership skills.<sup>395</sup> This policy was also intended to combat hooliganism by banning the sale of alcohol at stadiums and transforming stadiums into panopticons by installing closed-circuit television.<sup>396</sup> In addition, public and private funds were leveraged to finance the development of sport in schools through land use policy, particularly in terms of identifying alternative uses for surplus farm land, and to provide various communities with access to sports facilities as a means of ensuring that children exercise. This issue in particular coincided with an increased willingness on the part of the electorate to support expenditure on leisure.<sup>397</sup> However, the more government funds sports programs received, the less autonomy nominally independent National Sports Organizations (NSO's) were able to retain.<sup>398</sup> Like CONI in Fascist Italy and the DFB in Nazi Germany, today's NSO's remain beholden to the national governments and private enterprises that influence national sporting policy.

The stakes for using sports development to achieve political ends continue to be high. Dominant political ideologies can affect not only how much money different sports programs receive but also the extent to which the benefits of sports development policies are equally distributed across the electorate. In England, when the Conservative party was in power, elite development was emphasized at the expense of mass participation. Under the Conservatives, much like the Fascists and Nazis some years prior, sports losses were interpreted as signifying the decline of English culture and thus the state's involvement in the development of elite sports, particularly football, cricket, and rugby, increased.

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<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 46, 89.

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>397</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 97, 107.

<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 90, 99, 109. Even in the US, President Lyndon Johnson used federal funds to finance sports development programs in an effort to promote urban regeneration and recreation during the 1960's.

Conversely, the Labor Party adopted an inclusive approach to sports and sought to develop sports facilities throughout the UK in order to provide reliable access to leisure activities.<sup>399</sup> The Labor Party also used sports development to combat youth alienation.<sup>400</sup> In the post-war era, liberal democracies, which historically claimed that sports and politics did not mix, abandoned their adherence to this false dichotomy. Liberal governments expanded their citizens' access to sporting facilities because the electorate demanded that the government provide them with leisure. In this way, the role of football in politics has been firmly grounded in domestic policy. The football-politik that developed during the inter-war period has been translated into the development of sports democracies in the modern era.

#### *TV and the New Politics of Football*

In the last twenty years, TV and globalization have fundamentally altered the relationship between sports and politics. Advances in global communication technologies have catalyzed and facilitated the global commodification of professional sport. As a result, football, which continues to be the world's most popular game, is no longer solely embedded in the realm of domestic or international politics but now effects and is affected by multinational corporations (MNC's) and international sports regulatory bodies. Indeed, sports in general and football in particular have become increasingly industry-oriented. The Bosman Ruling, in which the EU ruled against the European Soccer Federation's (UEFA) attempts to impose quotas on the number of foreign players that could play in international club competitions because such a quota would have violated the EU's legal commitment to the free movement of labor, has been crucial in this regard.<sup>401</sup> To the extent that the EU

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<sup>399</sup> Kevin Hylton, Peter Bramham, Dave Jackson, and Mark Nesti, *Sports Development: Policy, Process, and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 16-17.

<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 104.

<sup>401</sup> Barrie Houlihan, *Sport, Policy, and Politics: A Comparative Analysis*, p. 47.

perceived UEFA's regulation as threatening European law that protected the ability to transfer labor capital freely across national borders, the EU was prepared to intervene in the proceedings of a multinational football organization in order to protect the ability of corporations to buy and sell players and to assert its authority over nominally independent sports authorities.<sup>402</sup>

Even violence in football, which remains prevalent, is no longer only addressed in terms of challenges to the state's monopoly over legitimate forms of violence. The most contemporary example of private interests' involvement in football occurred on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007. After fan violence at a *Serie A* game between two Sicilian rivals, *Catania* and *Palermo*, resulted in the brutal murder of a police officer and prompted Italy's national government to impose a ban on all Italian football, a consortium of football industry advisers asked the government to lift the ban that resulted in a 6.3 million Euro loss of profits plus an undisclosed amount in televised sporting rights.<sup>403</sup> Where once such an event might have concerned only the state, the accused, and the family of the police officer, the involvement of corporations in football ensures that decisions which impact the nexus of government and NSO interests are influenced by the profit motive. Indeed, football resumed the following week, although a number of clubs were forced to play their matches without any fans in the stands while *Catania's* ban on fan attendance was instituted for the remainder of the *Serie A* season.<sup>404</sup> Football has become part of the national and international political economy and is, to an increasing extent, beholden to the joint-

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<sup>402</sup> David Goldblatt, *The Ball is Round: A Global History of Football*, p. 692.

<sup>403</sup> Reuters, "Italian Football Industry Urges Ban Lift" in Soccernet February 5, 2007 [database online]; Internet; accessed February 6, 2007.

<sup>404</sup> Reuters, "New Security Measures in Place for Italy," in Soccernet February 7, 2007 [database online]; internet: accessed February 7, 2007.

interests of international governments, MNC's, and international sports bodies, which is likely to have unforeseen implications for football's place in politics.

### *Opportunities for Further Study*

Sport is not merely a mirror of the society in which it is played.<sup>405</sup> Since the inter-war period, football, because of its global popularity as well as the passions and forms of identification it engenders among its fans, has served not only as a political tool but has also helped shape the way governments transmit political ideology as well as pursue their diplomatic and military objectives. In the post-war era, although the illiberal regimes of the Fascists and Nazis have been destroyed, football has continued to play a political role on a national and international scale. The dynamics of football-politik have changed due to greater involvement of MNC's, NSO's, and international, as well as multinational, sports organizations, which has increased the distance between the state and football by augmenting the number of stakeholders involved in the political sporting sphere. Where once only states were concerned, the rise of the global economy has raised new questions that demand further study: what is the place of sport in the current political economy? How do states and sports organizations address political issues that arise from the accumulation and distribution of wealth from sports production and consumption? How do state and industry sports objectives intersect and diverge? What role does the state have to play in the modern manifestations of football-politik? How can, or *can*, emerging and democracies use football to catalyze democratic consolidation? Although neither the Fascists nor the Nazis were forced to grapple with these questions, the histories of their respective brands of football-politik have projected themselves forward and helped to shape the way football and other sports are politicized today. Football continues to be capable of generating enormous

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<sup>405</sup> Barrie Houlihan, *Sport and International Politics* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994), p. 15.

popular support and, in recent times, has received increasing attention from MNC's and captains of industry. It is near impossible to predict what form future manifestations of football-politik will take, but one can be certain that in the game of football and politics, we have not come close to reaching full-time.

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