

## Chapter 5

# The 'Societalisation' of the State: Sport for the Masses and Popular Music in the GDR

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The two areas that form the main subjects of this chapter—sport and popular music—undoubtedly played a significant role in the lives of the bulk of the East German populace, either in terms of active participation or more passive reception. The GDR was both envied and aroused considerable suspicion for its international sporting successes, which, from the 1970s, verged on the predictable, earning the state the label of ‘Sporting Wonderland’. But apart from the images of testosterone-filled shot-putters (with which the western observer is most likely to be familiar), there was widespread activity in sporting practice at the lower-levels: in the towns, villages, youth clubs and factories of the GDR. Sporting activity, of course, had a healthy tradition in working class culture, and as the self-styled ‘Workers’ and Peasants’ State’, the GDR sought to continue and consolidate this tradition, establishing a specialist mass sports organisation, the DTSB (*Deutscher Turn- und Sportbund*) and introducing an array of sports days, festivals and contests at all levels. Popular music also featured prominently in the daily lives of East German citizens, especially young people. Although the GDR could hardly stake a claim to being a pioneer of innovative popular music, as in countries throughout the post-war world, both East and West, the new youth cultural trends of the post-war era met with the overwhelming enthusiasm of young East Germans. Yet aside from the fact that these two areas of popular culture both constituted a significant part of leisure activities of the East German populace, it might appear odd to focus on two such apparently contrasting areas; one rooted securely in the history of the German

working class culture of the twentieth century, and the other regarded (at least officially) as an unwanted intruder from the capitalist West. How, then, can an examination of such different spheres of popular culture fit in with and contribute to the debates about the 'normalisation' of rule in the GDR? In order to address this question, it is important to consider (albeit very briefly) the way in which both (mass) sport and popular music relate to the more general debates about the nature of GDR state and society and their (inter)relationship with one another.

Crudely put, accounts relating to the developments of sport and popular music in the GDR have, in different ways, reflected the dominant trends in the GDR historiography of the last decade or so: on the one hand, those which posit a view of society as being heavily, if not exclusively, determined by politics and according to which the 'people' were in thrall to the whims and will of a small circle of power holders in Berlin; on the other hand, those which put forward a view of a more autonomous society, the developments of which were shaped far more by the people themselves, who were able to evade or resist the prohibitive prescriptions of the central authorities.<sup>1</sup> In short, (the relatively limited number of) works dealing with sport have tended to fall in with the first category, and reflect the preoccupations with control and imposition 'from above'.<sup>2</sup> By contrast, accounts of popular music in the GDR have largely focused on tendencies on the part of the populace to evade the prohibitive prescriptions—in other words, they correspond to and complement the notion of the 'limits' of the dictatorship, referring to deviant, 'resistant' trends 'from below'.<sup>3</sup> Fundamental to the arguments that follow is the contention that, for all their apparent differences, these dominant depictions of popular/mass sport (as imposed from above) and popular music (as an expression of resistance from below) are predicated on

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1. There is by now an extensive collection on the main trends in GDR historiography after 1989, all of which cannot be noted here. The most recent comprehensive overview is offered in R. Eppelmann, B. Faulenbach, and U. Mähler, eds., *Bilanz und Perspektiven der DDR Forschung* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 2003). See also C. Ross, *The East German Dictatorship. Problems and perspectives in the interpretation of the GDR* (London: Arnold, 2002).

2. See e.g., G. Holzweißig, *Sport und Politik in der DDR* (Berlin: Holzapfel, 1988), esp. chaps. 2 and 4; W. Rossade, *Sport und Kultur in der DDR* (Munich: tuduv-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1987); H-D Krebs, 'Die politische Instrumentalisierung des Sports in der DDR', in *Materialien der Enquete Kommission. 'Aufarbeitung von Geschichte und Folgen der SED Diktatur in Deutschland' des Deutschen Bundestages, Bd. III*, no.1, pp. 1315–69; also Protokoll der 35. Sitzung des Sportausschusses: 'Rolle des Sports in der DDR', in *Materialien der Enquete Kommission, Bd. III*, no.1, pp. 662–75.

3. See e.g., P. Wicke and L. Müller, eds., *Rockmusik und Politik—Analysen, Interviews und Dokumente* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 1996); M. Rauhut, *Beat in der Grauzone. DDR-Rock bis 1972—Politik und Alltag* (Berlin: Basisdruck, 1993); Idem, *Schalmei und Lederjacke. Udo Lindenberg, BAP und Underground: Rock und Politik in den 80er Jahren* (Berlin: Basisdruck, 1996); R. Galenza and H. Havemeister, eds., *Wir wollen immer artig sein. Punk, New Wave, Hip-Hop, Independent Szene in der DDR, 1980–1990* (Berlin: Schwarzkopf & Schwarzkopf, 1999).

a similar and misleading assumption of there being a clear-cut dichotomy between the 'regime' and the 'people'. Sport, in which the agents of change were the political elites, was imposed upon the people against their will. Coming from the opposite direction, the pursuit and practice of popular music, which restores agency to 'ordinary' people, was directed against the explicit will of the authorities. Both, in short, pitch 'state' against 'society'. The essential difference lies in the emphasis on agency, on the matter of who acted against whom. Importantly, then, this suggestion of there being a constant state of conflict between 'regime' and 'people' would seem difficult to reconcile with any notion of a 'normalisation' process in the GDR.

As I shall attempt to argue below, however, developments in the sphere of mass sport cannot be merely explained in terms of 'state' imposed policies from 'above', nor can the developments in popular music be reduced to evasive and deviant practices of subversive elements of the population. Although such factors undoubtedly played a role, particularly during the rather more unstable early years of the GDR's existence, there were far more significant processes of negotiation, compromise, and interaction both within and between 'state' and 'society' which need to be drawn into an examination of both these areas of popular culture.

In considering such processes, it is necessary to focus more closely on the role of the (lower-level or local) functionaries as active carriers of and participants within the system of rule, rather than as merely simple apathetic yes-men, or complicit opportunists, unquestioningly carrying out dictates from 'above'.<sup>4</sup> There is a point of considerable import to be made in connection with this: namely that the predominant tendency in GDR historiography of defining the 'state' as a tightly knit, unitary block of decision-making apparatchiks located in Berlin needs to be modified in favour of a more expansive definition of what and who constituted the 'state'.<sup>5</sup> Quite contrary to the notion of the 'withering away of the state', as envisaged by Marx in the shift towards communism, it is evident that, in the GDR, the number of those involved in the administrative and organisational structures—and hence could be seen to make up the 'state'—was overwhelming and, indeed, increased over time. While this 'growth of the state' could be interpreted simply as a tightening of the administrative bodies' grip over 'society', it would be more useful to see this expansion as a blurring of the boundaries

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4. For such a view of functionaries employed in the state system, see for example the entries on 'Kader and Kaderpolitik' and 'Massenorganisationen' in Rainer Eppelmann, Horst Möller et al., eds., *Lexikon des DDR-Sozialismus*, Bd. 1 (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 1997), pp. 438–39, pp. 546–47.

5. In this sense, this study builds on the work of Corey Ross and Jeffrey Kopstein.

between state and society. In other words, through incorporating ever-greater numbers of 'ordinary' citizens into the organisational and administrative system, one could regard this expansion from the opposite perspective: as the 'societalisation' of the state. Adopting this notion, coined in the first instance by Ralph Jessen,<sup>6</sup> allows for greater scope in considering how the system was carried, in an active sense, by participating citizens.

Below, I first consider how this 'expansion of the state' (or, conversely, incorporation of greater numbers of 'ordinary citizens' into the state apparatus) brought about a greater degree of coordination and efficiency in the implementation of policy in mass sport and popular music. In looking at this period of greater stability and efficiency, I also suggest, however, that it was not just a question of there being more effective transmission from 'above' to 'below': with reference to the 'Mach Mit' citizens' programmes of the 1970s, I suggest that there was, during this brief period, a greater sense of common interests between the 'regime' and the 'people'—a consensus of sorts, which was nevertheless based on a condition of mutual cooperation between different groups within 'state' and 'society'. Once there were signs that such cooperation was not being honoured or upheld, then this precarious consensus was replaced by a growing despondency, not only amongst 'ordinary' East Germans without any official responsibility, but also amongst many holding positions, however lowly, within the 'state'. In the latter part of this brief study, then, I suggest that this process of 'societalisation', while allowing for a degree of stability in the 1970s, paradoxically also created conditions for the growing disillusionment of the functionary classes, contributing at once to a diversification in popular cultural practices (both in sport and music) and, ultimately, to the disintegration of authority in the 1980s.

### **Expanding the 'State', or, Incorporating 'Society'? Cooperation and Coordination in the 1970s**

Even if, in contrast to the 1950s, the GDR had become far less unstable in the 1960s, uncertainties and deficiencies in the working habits and practices of lower-level functionaries continued to hamper the consistent implementation of policy during Ulbricht's second decade in power, not least in the spheres of mass sport and popular music.<sup>7</sup> By the turn of the

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6. Ralph Jessen, 'Die Gesellschaft im Staatssozialismus. Probleme einer Sozialgeschichte der DDR', in *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 21 (1995): 96–110.

7. Put briefly, although there had been concerted efforts at the end of the 1950s to promote sporting practice at the grassroots, such factors as overburdened and inexperienced functionaries, or simple lack of organisation in the localities, as well as rivalries and misunderstandings between

decade, however, it is generally agreed that the GDR, which by now constituted a more permanent fixture on the political landscape of post-war Europe, enjoyed an enhanced period of stability. While the simple passage of time ensured that functionaries became more proficient in pursuing their tasks and so played a role in the smoother functioning of the system, there were other factors that contributed to greater efficiency. First, there were important changes in the state apparatus itself, with new committees being created and educational workshops and programmes established and carried out with greater regularity and thoroughness than at any time previously. Secondly, and just as crucial (and in part related to this ‘expansion of the state’), was the fact that policies relating to sport and music (and indeed other areas) themselves became broader based and more ‘integrative’. In partial contrast to the 1960s, central policies were not so restrictive, perhaps reflecting a degree of confidence within the state apparatus.

### Streamlining Popular Music: Festivals, Committees, and Workshops

Attempts to channel the chaotic and disparate practices of popular music, which had been so evident in the 1960s, into a coordinated policy, found expression at the ground-breaking first national Dance Music Conference of 1972, which took place on 24–25 April in Berlin. In recognition of the previous lack of direction in popular music policy, Werner Rackwitz, the chairman of the department of Music in the Ministry for Culture called for efforts to:

overcome the discontinuity in the development of dance music, which still relies too often on individual actions, and apply with greater consistency those methods and activities which have been recognised and been proven as correct. . . [This can be attained] by means of a more comradely, creative cooperation with the popular musicians and through a common approach (*Vorangehen*) of all who are active in this area.<sup>8</sup>

In particular, the Free German Youth (FDJ) was to play a greater role in ensuring the implementation of a more streamlined policy through more

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functionaries active in differing spheres of responsibility, severely undermined the policies introduced to increase participation. Similarly in popular music, uncertainties and inconsistencies amongst responsible functionaries often stymied the implementation of central directives in this sphere. (This is discussed in greater depth in D. Wilton, *Regime versus People? Public opinion and the development of sport and popular music in the GDR, 1961–1989* [PhD thesis, London University, 2004]).

8. SAPMO-BArch, DY30/IVB2/906/85, fo. 3 (Thesen zum Einleitungsreferat der Tanzmusikkonferenz, Information Abt Kultur, 11.4.72).

focused work with the musicians themselves and through staging central and local workshops, competitions, and festivals.<sup>9</sup> In the 1960s, there had been frequent complaints about FDJ functionaries ignoring or being unaware of directives and hence neglecting their tasks of guiding and encouraging youths in their choice of leisure activities.<sup>10</sup> Whilst it might be expected that such neglect and poor work would have led to a tighter rein being placed on the youth organisation, in the 1970s the FDJ was endowed with greater responsibility in helping to contribute to cultural policy and assisting in staging more significant events. Giving the FDJ more responsibility, for example, in the staging of events, meant that they were more likely to act out their role with a more positive sense of commitment and contribution. One such major programme that was introduced in the 1970s was the FDJ *Werkstattwoche Jugendtanzmusik*, the first of which took place in Frankfurt-an-der-Oder from 21–28 October 1972. Implicitly acknowledging its previous negligence and past failures to stage events of the desired standard, the central council of the FDJ stated its new intent to be more efficient in a report of that summer:

The basic concern of the FDJ *Werkstattwoche* is to establish and consolidate the influence of the FDJ in this important area of youth policy. It is thus necessary to form a closer and friendlier relationship with the young musicians and, together with them, seek out ways in which the level of youth dance events and concerts. . . can be steadily improved. The FDJ *Werkstattwoche* should help us to properly incorporate youth dance music into the cultural-political activities of the youth organisation, to determine the tasks needed for the cooperation between the leaders of the FDJ and the young musicians and allow us to embark on an objective discussion about the profile of youth dance music and youth dance bands.<sup>11</sup>

Notwithstanding the possibility of homogenised reports, there are definite indications that such attempts to coordinate and ensure tighter organisation and agreement were successfully realised. The workshop weeks of the FDJ were established as a regular fixture in the cultural calendar of the

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9. There were, of course, FDJ events and programmes in the 1960s, not least of which were the (somewhat short-lived) *Gitarrenwettbewerb* as well as the *Singebewegung*. The former was, however, relatively quickly dissolved in the wake of the growing disturbances at events in the mid 1960s. The latter, which was intended to offer an alternative to the more westernised strands of youth music, existed throughout the years of the GDR's existence, but was variable in its level of success. Olaf Schäfer considers the *Singebewegung* in greater detail in his book, *Zur Musikkultur der FDJ*.

10. This is discussed more thoroughly in my PhD thesis (chapter 2).

11. SAPMO-BArch, DY24/12031, 'Beschluss des Sekretariats des Zentralrates der FDJ, 20.7.72'.

GDR, taking place biennially right up until 1988, whilst youth dance music festivals—including preliminary, qualification rounds for national events—were frequently staged at the local level. Particularly at the local level, where the discrepancies and diffuseness in implementing popular music policy had been so evident in the 1960s, there appears to have been a greater success in organising the events in line with central policy. For example, the third dance music festival in the region of Karl-Marx-Stadt was praised in the most enthusiastic terms. It had attracted a large audience, had been efficiently organised and executed smoothly, and had provided a forum for a ‘harmonious balance of artistic performance’ all within the ‘marvellous surroundings of the recently opened city hall.’<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps the most significant indication of the endeavour to address the hitherto inconsistent implementation of popular cultural policy, and a move which seemed to reflect Rackwitz’s call for a more ‘comradely approach’ to dealing with popular musicians, was the creation of the Committee for Entertainment Arts in 1973. In an attempt to put into practice the intentions stated at the Dance Music Conference a year earlier and following a directive of the *Politbüro* in January of 1973, the committee brought together cultural functionaries and entertainment artists (amongst them disc jockeys, actors, musicians, and even circus performers) under the same umbrella organisation. The committee members pledged, amongst other things, to encourage the development of young talent and to monitor and guide these talents by way of *Förderverträge* and the extended use of music schools and higher education institutions. On the whole, the committee was allotted the task of ‘making possible the improvement of consensus and coordination amongst the diverse institutions active in the area of entertainment arts.’<sup>13</sup> The committee was responsible to the *Generaldirektion für Unterhaltungskunst*, which, as part of the Ministry for Culture, was assigned with the task of working out new conceptions for work in the area of entertainment arts.

Achieving greater cooperation and efficiency was not just restricted to the central flagship bands of the GDR, who were affiliated to the central Committee for Entertainment Arts. Indeed, perhaps mindful of the fact that it was the local-level amateur bands which, in conjunction with the functionaries prepared to tolerate their programmes, had proved to be most problematic in the 1960s, the regional cultural councils also set about introducing training programmes, to familiarise their musicians and artists with the

12. SstAC, RdB, Abt Kultur, 117286; Einschätzung des III Tanzmusikfestes des Bezirkes Karl-Marx-Stadt (23 Nov. 1974).

13. SAPMO-BArch, DY30/IVB2/906/85; ‘Information über die bisherige Verwirklichung des Beschlusses des Politbüros vom 30.1.1973 . . .’.

complexities of cultural policy. In *Bezirk* Karl-Marx-Stadt, for instance, and following the directives of the *Ministerrat* of the 30 March 1976 on measures for the influence on youth dance events, the regional council issued its own directive on 12 December of that year, determining that a 'basic education' course be made available to band leaders and members of bands in general. The course, lasting a maximum of 10 months, would familiarise the course participants in 'theories of music, basic cultural political and aesthetic knowledge', equipping them with the necessary training to present 'expert interpretations full of ideas' and thus to 'exert an influence on raising the level of dance events.'<sup>14</sup>

Even disc jockeys were not exempt from attempts to create a more uniform, thoroughly vetted system of entertainment. Largely as a result of the increasing costs and practical requirements of setting up equipment for concert performances, youth club houses and 'culture houses' began to stage dance events without bands with increasing regularity in the 1970s. Rather than paying bands, it proved much more cost-effective and indeed popular amongst young people to employ a single *Schallplattenunterhalter* or *Disco-Sprecher* to play records for the entire evening.<sup>15</sup> The recognition that these disc jockeys could possibly exert an influence on the behaviour of the youngsters both through their choice of music and their own appearance and attitude, meant that it was deemed necessary to establish a means of vetting those wanting to undertake such a role. In order to practise as a disc jockey, it was, as in the case of bands wishing to perform in public, necessary to acquire a permit. The official requirement of gaining a permit evidently did not deter large numbers from wanting to practise as disc jockeys—people were evidently quite prepared to count themselves amongst the many honorary state functionaries. As one report from the district of Zwickau put it:

*Disco Sprecher*, or those who want to become one, are shooting up everywhere like mushrooms. After word had got around that one has to first register with the district council for cultural work in order to acquire the desired permit, there have been new applications coming in everyday. The number of those showing an interest has already exceeded three hundred.<sup>16</sup>

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14. SStAC, RdB, Abt. Kultur, 117278, 'Auswertung des 1. Grundlehrganges für Kollektivleiter und Mitglieder von Amateurtanzorchestern vom September 1976 bis Juni 1977'. (In detail, the course constituted ten hours of instruction on socialist cultural policy, eleven hours of Marxist-Leninist aesthetics, seven hours of 'leadership lessons', five hours of music history and eighty hours of practical music lessons (including harmonisation, melodics, improvisation and dynamics)).

15. See the reports on the development of discos in SStAC, RdB, Abt. Kultur, 117274, 117292.

16. SStAC, RdB, Abt. Kultur, 117302, Report of 7.2.73 ('Neues von den Diskotheken'). I should point out here that the apparent interest in those voluntarily showing up for registration would seem

## Common Programmes and Coordination in Sport

In recognition of difficulties in encouraging increased participation in sports pursuits at the grassroots level—difficulties often occasioned by conflicting priorities of functionaries responsible for different spheres of policy—the ‘Common Sport Programme’ of the DTSB and the Free German League of Trade Unions (FDGB) was introduced. Initially launched in 1970 and then expanded to include the FDJ in 1974, the purpose of the programme was to ensure that sport was not seen in any way as incompatible with economic success or improved working practices of the employees. On the contrary, the official programme determined that the committee members and leading representatives of the FDGB and DTSB included sporting activity in the companies’ plans, through, for example, the preparation and staging of company and district sports festivals. Through launching a programme common to both the sports mass organisation and the Trade Union organisation, the aim was clearly to remove or at least alleviate any in-fighting between functionaries and to try and unite efforts in promoting voluntary and non-competitive sports.

In order to achieve greater progress (*in encouraging FES*<sup>17</sup>), . . . it is a matter for the committees and leaderships of the DTSB to achieve well coordinated and comradely cooperation of the (*sports*) commissions (*in the factories*), and of the functionaries responsible for leisure and recreational sport in the specialist committees, sports communities and sections with the union leaderships, the leaders of the FDJ and the state authorities.<sup>18</sup>

There was, too, an acknowledgement that coaches and referees—particularly those working in a voluntary capacity—required more effective training and education. The DTSB organisation was allotted the task of providing this for all of those who were involved in some capacity in the sphere of sport, regardless of which organisation they were affiliated to.<sup>19</sup>

While there were teething problems in establishing the programmes and some of the problems that had afflicted the promotion of sport in the

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to speak against the tendency to ‘shrink away’ from the state and pursue private activities.

17. FES was the acronym in official GDR parlance for ‘Freizeit- und Erholungssport’—in other words, sport practised by the broader mass of the population at grassroots level.

18. SAPMO-BArch, DY12/574; report of 6 Apr. 1972, folia 426–427. See also, SAPMO-BArch, DY12/798, ‘Vorlage für das Präsidium des DTSB. . .’, 31 Oct. 1972, fo. 53.

19. *Ibid.*, fo. s 426, 429; see also SAPMO-BArch, DY34/12111, Report of FDGB Kreisvorstand Borna, 23 Oct. 1972, in which it states that ‘a good means of support for the improvement and further development of leisure and recreational sport in our district were and are the regular qualification courses for sports organisers and members of the sports commissions (arranged) through the regional executive of the FDGB’ (of Bezirk Leipzig).

1960s continued into the 1970s, it does appear that by the mid to late 1970s, the common programme was beginning to bear fruit. Again, not forgetting the possible tendencies of report writers to skim over problems, there were indications of increased commitment on the part of the functionaries and the efficiency of their work.<sup>20</sup> The most positive developments had been attained where there was effective cooperation between the company union leadership (the BGL), the sports club of the company (the BSG), the FDJ organisation and the state leadership of the company.<sup>21</sup> By the mid 1970s, in spite of the occasional infringement and continuing difficulties in some aspects, reports from all regions attest to predominantly positive developments and to an increased commitment and cooperation on the part of the functionaries.<sup>22</sup> In *Bezirk* Suhl, for example, it was noted that the situation regarding the commitment of the functionaries had improved considerably, particularly in relation to the promotion of leisure and recreational sports:

Through concrete leadership activities we have made good progress amongst our functionaries and members [which] expresses itself in an open attitude and growing preparedness to cooperate in the realisation of 'higher' tasks.<sup>23</sup>

The relative degree of success of the programme and the improved efficiency and cooperation between the functionaries of the two mass organisations were reflected in the growing number of participants in the district and company sports festivals. In the region of Cottbus, for example, there was a significant increase in the number of company sports festivals in 1975, totalling 599 (up from 475 in 1974), in which 166,428 workers participated (in contrast to the 153,311 of the previous year).<sup>24</sup> The results achieved by the regional organisation of the DTSSB in Suhl apparently showed clearly that 'in the breadth, diversity and quality of leisure and recreational sport

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20. SAPMO-BArch, DY34/12111 contains a whole series of reports from the district executive committees of the FDGB referring to the results of the 'Gemeinsames Sportprogramm', many of which attest to positive improvements.

21. *Ibid.*, Informationsbericht, ('Wie hat das gemeinsame Sportprogramm vom FDGB und DTSSB beigetragen, die regelmäßige sportliche Beteiligung der Gewerkschaftsmitglieder zu fördern? 23.10.72. It was noted that large companies in particular were succeeding in organising high-quality and well-attended sports events for their workers. For example, the company sports festival (*Betriebssportfest*) BKK Epsenhain attracted participation from eleven football teams, thirty-nine teams playing in a bowling contest, six handball teams and nine volleyball teams.

22. Cf. for example, SAPMO-BArch, DY34/12081 (Einschätzung der Ergebnisse und Erfahrungen bei der Verwirklichung des Gemeinsamen Sportprogrammes, Cottbus, 16 Feb. 1976).

23. ThStAMgn., IV/D/2/16/603, Bericht zur Arbeit mit dem Beschluss, 'Die Aufgaben des DTSSB der DDR zur weiteren Entwicklungen des Freizeit- und Erholungssport', Anlage 1 (no date, ca. 1977).

24. SAPMO-BArch, DY34/12081 (Einschätzung. . .16 Feb. 1976).

visible progress has been made and an increasing number of citizens have been won over to practising regular sport.’ The number of sections within the DTSB also increased, with a greater tendency to create ‘general sports groups’ (*Allgemeine Sportgruppen*) to cater for those sports (such as aerobics) which, as non-Olympic sports, had previously been regarded as a lesser priority.<sup>25</sup>

***‘Opening up’: Popular Music, Sports Policies, and the ‘Mach mit’ Programmes in the 1970s***

Although, at first, one might tend towards the view that the creation of new committees, along with the introduction of workshops and combined programmes, testifies to the desire of the SED to exercise excessive control and impose its will, it should be pointed out here that this ‘expansion of the state’ at the same time entailed the incorporation of further members of ‘society’ into the administrative structures. The state was, in other words, becoming increasingly ‘societalised’ or *‘vergesellschaftet’*. This process had important implications for the actual content and formulation of policies, as well as for the way in which such policies were interpreted and then implemented. How did this process more specifically affect the areas of popular music and sport?

Where music was concerned, the incorporation of new and ‘expert’ voices into committees such as the Committee for Entertainment Arts allowed for a departure from some of the more prohibitive and restrictive measures that had characterised the policies of the 1960s. Then, many complaints of the more hard-line functionaries (as well as members of the public) had been based on their objections to what they perceived as shabby clothing and ‘decadent’, unkempt appearance, long hair or ‘hectic’ dancing rather than on the music itself. By the early 1970s, however, once rock/popular music had come to be accepted as an official form of entertainment culture, the revised wisdom was that such objections were only a hindrance to the effective coordination of policy. This shift was reflected in a report of the State Committee for Radio, which stated:

Clarification of ideological and aesthetic questions should be at the forefront of the discussions (on popular music), not debates about clothing, hairstyles and beards, which still make up a large part of the conflicts.<sup>26</sup>

25. ThStAMgn., IV/D/2/16/603, (Bericht zur Arbeit. . ., Anlage 1).

26. SAPMO-BArch, DY30/vorl. SED/11542, ‘Konzeption für die Weiterführung der Arbeit auf dem Gebiete der Tanzmusik.’

This was not to say that free licence would be given to musicians to appear in whatever shape and form they desired. Particularly on occasions when they were performing on television programmes or in large-scale official events, they were required to maintain some sense of decorum. But this was to be achieved less by punitive and prohibitive measures than it was through a more measured and apparently conciliatory approach, which was reflected in the language of the apparatchiks themselves.<sup>27</sup>

Such work was to include the introduction of so-called *Förderverträge* according to which promising young musicians were allotted supervisors within the Committee for Entertainment Arts. This practice would not only allow them access to more advanced facilities and equipment (insofar as they were available in the GDR<sup>28</sup>), but also ensure greater publicity in terms of guaranteed media appearances as well as further 'expert' training in a more diverse range of musical styles, including Beat and 'Beat-influenced' pop music.<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps more noticeable—and marking an even more noticeable shift away from any notion of a distinct socialist popular culture—was the sanctioning of rock music. Official encouragement of GDR rock bands brought with it an increase in material ambitions among some of the more high-profile artists, which were evidently tolerated within the administrative apparatus. By the 1970s, many of the artists began to accrue considerable wealth, with monthly 'salaries' of 10,000 Marks and more, and western cars, elaborately decorated flats, and even 'dream villas' being reported.<sup>30</sup> In spite of the fact that the accrual of material possessions evidently undermined the principles of the supposedly 'classless society' to which the GDR elites staked claim, it appears that a blind eye was turned to infringements regarding possession of western currency or importation of western goods, particularly where those who were deemed to be valuable in boosting the profile of GDR popular music were concerned.<sup>31</sup> There were further indications that a less prohibitive line was to be taken in the suggestions of a greater (albeit tentative) embracement or adaptation of those elements of western

27. See for example SAPMO-BArch, DY30/vorl. SED/12944, report from Heldt to Hager (24 Sept. 1973) on the activities and tasks of the Committee for Entertainment Arts.

28. For problems on provision of equipment such as amplifiers and musical instruments, see e.g. SAPMO-BArch, DY30/IVB2/9.06/85, 'Information. . .', 3 Mar. 1973; *ibid.*, 'Information. . .', 28 Feb. 1974.

29. SAPMO-BArch, DY30/vorl. SED/12944, report of 24 Sept. 1973; SAPMO-BArch, DY30/IVB2/9.06/85, 'Information über die bisherige Verwirklichung des Beschlusses vom 30.1.1973. . .'

30. See SAPMO-BArch, DY30/IVB2/9.06/18, 'Zur materiellen Lage bzw. zu Einkünften von Schriftstellern und Künstlern. . .' and 'Anlage'.

31. See, e.g., the comments about those bands who were to perform at the *Weltfestspiele* in Berlin, in SAPMO-BArch, DY30/IVB2/9.06/85, 'Abschrift. . .', 22 Feb. 1973.

entertainment culture, which could be seen as ‘progressive’ and even in proposals that mutual ‘commercial exchange’ between the GDR and western European agents should be encouraged so as to further the international profile of GDR artists.<sup>32</sup>

In short, that which, by and large, had been regarded as a threatening area of foreign hostility in the 1960s had, by the 1970s, been incorporated into the socialist system and a much greater focus placed on more positive, constructive action.

While some of the changes in popular music policy appeared fairly striking, it is perhaps more difficult to pin down such fundamental changes in mass sports policies. With its longer-standing tradition in working class culture, the promotion and embracement of sporting practice had, in contrast to popular music, never been a contentious issue in the GDR. Nevertheless, in line with the attempts to improve the participation of the people through such initiatives as the common sports programme, there were some indications of a shift from the emphasis on the functional advantages of undertaking sports pursuits—the idea that it was fundamental for the ‘creation of the all-round development of the socialist personality’, and crucial for the improvement of working productivity—to a greater focus on the benefits of sport in terms of relaxation and enjoyment.

Although this shift was perhaps more noticeable in the 1980s, when more commercialised, western-type *Modesports* became increasingly popular and were incorporated into the official sports structures (discussed further below), the basis for the incorporation of such sports was already being laid down in the 1970s. In recognition of the considerable changes that had come to pass in the everyday lives of GDR citizens since the earlier years under the Ulbricht administration, including the increased amount of leisure time, higher living standards, and a more advanced level of education, the DTSB undertook to capture the interests of those who had hitherto declined or been unable to engage in sporting activities. In addition to the pledge to broaden the range of sports on offer within the DTSB organisation,<sup>33</sup> there was a more pronounced emphasis on the health and recuperative benefits of pursuing regular exercise. Perhaps most importantly though, and in acknowledgement of the more diverse requirements of citizens in relation to their family, personal, and work circumstances, the department for leisure sports in the DTSB determined that greater possibilities had to be opened to families in common sports ac-

32. SAPMO-BArch, DY30/vorl. SED/12944, ‘Analyse.’ 16 Jan. 1973.

33. The number of sports groups in disciplines such as gymnastics and fitness, bowling, and table tennis increased considerably in this period. See SAPMO-BArch, DY12/800, ‘Bericht an das Präsidium des DTSB Bundesvorstandes. . .’, 17 Oct. 1973, folia 203–204.

tivities as well as in more 'fun-oriented' community and local events. Efforts were made to realise these improvements through the introduction of events such as *'Eile mit Meile'*, the *'Tischtennisturnier der Tausende'*, the family sports programme *'Für Dich'*,<sup>34</sup> as well as the development of 'public practice evenings', and events such as *'Turnier für Jedermann'* and *'Tennis im Urlaub'*.<sup>35</sup>

If, in contrast to the rather more inconsistent and unpredictable 1960s, the early to mid 1970s can, broadly speaking, be described as a period of relatively effective coordination and efficiency in terms of the implementation of popular music and sports policies, the notion of coordination—and hence of 'success'—would bear some qualification. Reference to improved coordination might generally convey the sense that the administrative structures were tightened and more stringently regimented and organised. Yet, in the GDR, the means by which coordination was apparently improved were a little more ambivalent. Rather than merely tightening the reins on those active within the state and party apparatus, the introduction of common programmes, the proliferation of workshops and educational programmes, and even the creation of new committees signified a strategy of 'branching out', so as to capture a more diverse palette of interest and incorporate them into the official state structures. Of course, this improved cooperation through means of greater inclusion did, to an extent, result in a more effective transmission of centrally formulated policy to the grassroots, as was reflected on occasions such as the aftermath of the concerts staged at the millennial celebrations of the town of Altenburg.<sup>36</sup>

At the same time, the incorporation of functionaries into positions within the state apparatus who, in many cases, were more eager to fulfil practical tasks in relation to their own specific area of responsibility and contribute to the functioning of day-to-day life in the GDR (and hence who were perhaps more in tune with the people in their respective localities), also created conditions for more effective coordination between 'people' and 'regime'. This was perhaps most noticeable in the large number of citizens' initiatives—which came under the umbrella of the 'Mach Mit' programmes—within the localities. Such initiatives involved the committed contributions of local citizens in

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34. See for these and other examples, SAPMO-BArch, DY12/626, 'Vorlage. . .', 23 Nov. 1977, folia 135–136.

35. SAPMO-BArch, DY12/629, 'Vorlage. . .', 29 Mar. 1978, folia 47–48.

36. The incidents involving a large number of Trumper youths following a series of rock concerts at the 1000 year celebrations of the town of Altenburg did occasion a fevered rush of central and local directives relating to youth music concerts and events, which, in stark contrast to the decrees following incidents such as the Leipzig Beat riots in 1965, were by and large implemented with a great degree of success. See in particular the series of reports in file BLHA, Rep. 930 (SED Bezirksleitung Cottbus), 2670.

building sports facilities, youth clubs, and other amenities, sometimes over a period of several years.<sup>37</sup> It is important to emphasise that those initiatives and projects that met with the greatest success were undertaken both with the blessing (and, of course, financial support) of the local authorities, and with the cooperation of local companies and LPGs. The projects, then, were not *just* dependent on a willingness to contribute on the part of the citizens, or even on a resigned attitude of simply ‘getting on with things’ and making the best out of a ‘bad situation’. Nor were the projects’ successful realisation reliant solely on the smooth functioning and efficiency of the local state and party authorities and on their ability to gently coerce or persuade the local residents into sacrificing their valuable free time. It was rather a combination or interdependence of both of these factors that made such projects realisable. The local inhabitants’ knowledge that there was the possibility of improving their own day-to-day lives with the backing of the local authorities and companies meant that such a sacrifice of time and energy would be worth the effort. And likewise, if the authorities knew that there was the voluntary man- (and woman-) power available to bring such schemes to fruition, then the necessary administrative and organisational tasks could be carried out in good faith. Rather than there being a division between the regime (in this case those at the lower-levels of the apparatus) and the people, there was, it seems, a *common belief* that conditions on the ground could be improved with the required effort on the part of *both* the authorities and the ‘people’.

This period of relative success did not come without a considerable price. The greater commitment—if not to any abstract principles of socialism, then at least to improving the situation on the ground—of a more diverse base of functionaries within the state and party apparatus brought with it an increased expectation of recognition on the part of such active contributors. Any signs of fading recognition, or any sense that their efforts were not being reciprocated by those in the higher echelons of power, could soon loosen the precarious bonds that had been formed during the earlier period of the Honecker era.

## Disillusionment, Diversification and the Disintegration of Authority

The improved efficiency and coordination of policy in the spheres of popular music and sport was, then, relatively short-lived. Certainly by the latter

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37. For some examples of local initiatives, see for example the reports on the programmes in Bezirk Karl-Marx-Stadt in SStAC, RdB, Abt Jugendfragen, Körperkultur und Sport, 5930–5931; 95113.

years of the 1970s and, increasingly, throughout the 1980s, problems with functionaries at the lower-levels of the state and party apparatus were again proving to be a major headache for the central authorities. Through their own contributions to the functioning, and indeed to the successes of the GDR, many functionaries saw themselves as stakeholders in the system, in which they had invested much time and effort. Their expectations that they should receive some recognition for their commitment and contributions were rarely fulfilled, leading to considerable disgruntlement. In the spheres of sport and popular music, the signs of disgruntlement and the growing problems with authority were particularly pronounced. The following section will examine more closely this growing despondency on the part of functionaries. In addition, I will briefly look at the ways in which many functionaries came to deal with such frustrations at the higher-level authorities. Disillusionment amongst functionaries did not, in short, necessarily result in immediate meltdown of the system as a whole: there were instances in which local level functionaries continued to commit themselves, if not to the higher cause of socialism, then at least to the needs and desires of their local communities.

### *State Musicians and their Misgivings*

There were particularly revealing instances of growing frustration at the central administrative authorities on the part of state-sponsored popular musicians—*Staatskünstler*, who were also 'regime carriers' of a sort. These *Staatskünstler*, involved as they were in bodies such as the Committee for Entertainment Arts, and as regular contributors to official festivals and concerts, held the firm belief they had played a positive and crucial role in the development of the GDR as a whole, and more specifically in the relative success of the 1970s GDR music scene. As such important contributors, they, like the functionaries in the sports organisations, also expected some recognition and reciprocal cooperation on the part of the administrative authorities. Certainly from the late 1970s onwards, there were growing indications that such reciprocity on the part of the authorities was not forthcoming and that the lines of communication necessary for the efficient functioning of the state apparatus (and thus for the exercise of authority) began to crumble, setting into motion an accelerating process of disintegration. A series of detailed correspondence from a variety of popular musicians collected in the files of Kurt Hager and the cultural department of the ZK reveals the obvious sense of indignation of many artists regarding the lack of trust and necessary recognition afforded to them by those in the higher administrative bodies.

The tone of the correspondence of course varied from case to case, ranging from clear outrage and disbelief to more measured and sometimes veiled threats and criticisms. For those bold enough, or for those whose exasperation at the lack of support and cooperation on the part of the administrative authorities was beyond redemption, the most extreme tactic was to request a permanent exit visa and expatriation to the West.<sup>38</sup> This was the case with the group *Magdeburg*. Although not averse to light controversy, the group could claim to have become one of the most popular live bands in the GDR. Having performed at a number of official music festivals, including the 1973 *Weltfestspiele* in Berlin and the National Youth Festival of 1977, they asserted that their participation in such high-profile events was testament to their ‘very positive attitude’. Yet despite their evident popularity as a live band and their own readiness to make certain compromises—they had toned down their slightly more unconventional performances and changed the name of their band from the *Klosterbrüder* to the rather less controversial name of their hometown—any notable support on the part of the cultural authorities in developing their profile was not forthcoming:

The support that had been promised by the Committee for Entertainment Arts did not materialise. Only through persistent commitment on our part were we able to maintain our popularity. . . With such songs as ‘Lied einer alten Stadt’ and ‘In meinem Land’ we had proven that our attitude was really positive, yet that didn’t seem to interest anybody. . . Other bands received prizes and were clearly encouraged [but] official recognition of our band was never forthcoming. . . . GDR television also treated us with condescension. On the very few occasions when we performed on television, there were always discussions about the hair length of our singer. . . Is this the sort of attitude to expect towards a band which has, for years, shown commitment and has contributed to the development of GDR rock music?<sup>39</sup>

It was on the grounds of this deficiency in state support, and the group’s resulting conviction that they requested a visa to settle in the West.<sup>40</sup> Similar sentiments were expressed by Barbara Thalheim, a popular GDR singer-

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38. Of course, this was also a tactic which, in some respects, helped to stabilise the system as a whole, since it rid the GDR of its most outspoken critics. It was a tactic employed by the cultural authorities with increasing frequency in the late 1970s and early 1980s, after the Biermann affair.

39. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/vorl. SED, 32816. Correspondence from Magdeburg to the *Konzert und Gastspieldirektion* Magdeburg, 21 Sept. 1981.

40. *Ibid.* The visa was ultimately granted to the singer of the group on the grounds that if he were not given permission to leave, he would stoke up trouble amongst the ranks of his musician colleagues. (See *ibid.*, ‘Hausmitteilung’ ZK SED Abt. Kultur to Kurt Hager, 26 Nov. 1981).

songwriter in the 1970s, who renounced her party membership at the beginning of the 1980s:

When I joined the Party of the Working Class, I had different ideas as to how I could be effective in the party and I think, to the best of my knowledge, that through my artistic work both at home and abroad, I represented the ideology of my party well. Now the Party is taking away from me this opportunity to be artistically and ideologically effective, and with it my faith in the Party. . .<sup>41</sup>

Although much of the current literature on cultural developments in the GDR has tended to focus on the (often retrospective) accounts of 'regime opposition' on the part of the more unconventional and apparently 'non-conformist' bands, such as the Punks, it is the reactions of those such as Thalheim, Magdeburg, and other artists including City, Karat, and Electra, so frequently dismissed as complicit *Staatskünstler*, that provide a more convincing indication of the gradual disintegration of authority in the GDR of the 1980s.

### *Failing Facilities and Problems of Provision—the Complaints of the Sports Functionaries*

There were comparable expressions of growing frustration amongst those involved in the sports organisations (and the various branches of the DTSB). Such complaints largely related to the lack of provision and facilities that would allow for increased participation in popular sports. During the 1970s, as noted above, there had been concerted common efforts between local populations and the authorities and local 'People's Own Factories' (*Volkseigene Betriebe*, VEBs) in improving facilities—particularly sporting facilities—throughout the GDR. These common efforts were based on a mutual interest in improving the situation in the localities, and the relative success of the programmes was dependent on the citizens' and local functionaries' hope and belief that the central authorities would reciprocate their commitments. As it became more evident that the higher-level authorities were unwilling, or unable, to provide the necessary finances and facilities for the implementation of the policies they propagated, despair and weariness amongst their representatives in the localities increased.

That which particularly aggrieved those involved in promoting popular sport at the grassroots was that, while the SED energetically continued to

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41. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/vorl.SED 32815 (Declaration printed in document of the *Komitee für Unterhaltungskunst*, Parteileitung), Berlin, 8 Nov. 1980.

promote the practice of popular sport through press campaigns, for example, they showed no signs of being able to provide the practical and financial backing for transforming their propaganda into reality. The leader of a running group of a BSG rather neatly summed up this discrepancy between the ideal of an East German sporting nation and the reality on the ground. Pointing out the willingness on the part of the members of the club to participate actively, but then remarking on the obstacles that prevented them from undertaking their desired pursuits, he noted in a petition:

It's all very nice in theory, but in practice it seems that we long distance runners don't have the opportunity to purchase suitable running shoes either in sports shops or through our company sports club. . .<sup>42</sup>

Stressing that the matter was an altogether broader problem, not only with implications for his own immediate area of interest of long-distance running, he continued:

The discrepancy between the extensive propaganda used for encouraging mass sport on the one hand, and the absolute lack of provision in some areas, affecting for example hiking shoes and rucksacks on the other, is incomprehensible to me.<sup>43</sup>

Another sport seriously affected by the problems of facilities was swimming. In spite of the optimistic claims on the part of the central authorities about the creation of new facilities for swimming, there were severe difficulties in transforming the policy of encouraging greater activity amongst the populace into practice.<sup>44</sup> While it appears that the capital, East Berlin, benefited from some investment in new buildings, in other areas, swimming facilities were being closed down, deemed unsafe for public use or had fallen into disrepair.<sup>45</sup> Echoing the sentiments of the functionary of the BSG cited

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42. SAPMO-BArch, DY30/4987, *Eingabe* of 2 Sep. 1982, p. 30.

43. *Ibid.* The matter of the lack of running shoes was an extremely widespread problem, demonstrated by the multiplicity of complaints regarding the matter sent to different committees and departments of the administration. For further examples see e.g., BArch, DR5/2025; BArch/2026. Both of these files contain a broad collection of letters of complaint concerning sporting equipment in general.

44. See SAPMO-BArch, DY30/4963, report 'Übersicht der Zu- und Abgänge von Sportplatzanlagen, Sporthellen, Schwimmhallen und sonstigen Sporteinrichtungen in der DDR 1984', 2 May 1985, pp. 126–27.

45. See SAPMO-BArch, DY 12/661, report 'Einschätzung der Arbeit auf dem Gebiet von Körperkultur und Sport im Neubaugebiet Marzahn', 31 Mar. 1983, folia 140–151; see also, e.g. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/4983, p. 166, letter of 1 Feb. 1986, which refers to the considerable number of new swimming facilities in Berlin in contrast to the poor provisions in the provinces.

above, the leader of the swimming section of BSG Empor in the Dresden community of Löbtau again pointed out the incongruity of the popular propaganda and the real possibilities of pursuing sports activities:

[I]n books and magazines we are told again and again that swimming benefits peoples' health, enjoyment of life, well-being and capacity to achieve in a diversity of ways. . . The possibilities of practising swimming in pools as a hobby or as a competitive and training pursuit are however completely unsatisfactory in our regional capital.<sup>46</sup>

A colleague of a different BSG in the same region underlined the problem in another letter of complaint to the regional party leadership. In this letter, he drew attention to the dedication of the functionaries in the group. Though eager to improve the situation, it was made clear by the complainant that meetings and good will on the part of the functionaries could only achieve so much:

Unfortunately, in the last few years we have been unable to fulfil the wishes of the DTSB. . . and of the population for a constant improvement in training possibilities for an ever increasing number of interested children, youths and adults. The problem does not lie in the unwillingness of our trainers, but in the precarious situation of Dresden's swimming facilities. . . . The situation, which, particularly when one considers the growth of Dresden as *Bezirksstadt*, with its extensive new residential estates, is not exactly conducive to the development of mass sport at the BSG level, and has been regularly discussed in the town committee [of the DSSV\*] and amongst our section leadership.<sup>47</sup>

Such was the frustration amongst the lower-level mass organisation functionaries at the lack of cooperation from the higher authorities and, consequently, at being faced with public complaints, it is hardly surprising that temptation crept in to throw in the towel, to draw the conclusion that their commitment was no longer worth the effort. As a leader of the rowing section of BSG Einheit in Neuruppin, put it on behalf of his colleagues:

We have to confirm that in our sport-political activity, we are unfortunately faced with a lack of understanding on the part of the state organs and have [thus] had to abandon previously successful activities. The efforts of our BSG leadership,

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46. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/4979; Letter of 13 May 1985 from *Sektionsleiter Schwimmen*, BSG Empor, Dresden Loebtau, pp. 58–59.

47. SAPMO-BArch, DY 30/4983, (*Eingabesent* to SED Bezirksleitung Dresden and Staatssekretariat für Körperkultur und Sport, 4 Jan. 1985), pp. 168–69. \*DSSV was the *Deutscher Schwimmsportverband*.

both written and oral, have met without response. The sports functionaries have let it be known to me, as chairman, that they will give up their responsibilities if their work continues to be hindered through the heartlessness, bureaucratic talking and lack of understanding of the [administrative] organs.<sup>48</sup>

### ***Carrying on Regardless: Functionaries' Initiatives and the Diversification of Sport and Popular Musical Culture***

While this growing despair may then have resulted for some in the decision to give up their positions, this was not the sole response. Indeed, faced with lack of cooperation from above, many functionaries appeared simply to get on with the job regardless, insofar as this was possible. In other words, in spite of the growing problems concerning facilities and the evident inability of the central administration to resolve them, there was not a complete and universal collapse throughout the mass organisations and the local state and party administrations in the GDR. In some cases, the incompetence of the higher authorities merely made the local level functionaries more determined to commit themselves to the task in hand. Life did not come to a stop at any time in the GDR, and in order for everyday (leisure) practices to continue, some semblance of functioning administrative mechanisms had to remain in place. In spite of their increasing doubt about the competence of the higher elites, then, and thus in spite of evidently dwindling loyalty to the political creed of the GDR's ruling power, there were still functionaries at the lower levels who continued to do their job and to take the initiative, seeing it more as their task to satisfy the needs of the citizens in their localities than to simply relay or transfer orders from 'above' to the populace. This continuing commitment, which also appeared to testify to a certain confidence, or at least a more pronounced sense of independence, was evident in cases of both grassroots sports functionaries and those involved with music and youth cultural issues. Rather than there being a wholesale collapse into chaos in leisure and popular culture—which would have more likely come about had functionaries simply 'given up' en masse—the functionaries' continuing commitment, coloured by a greater degree of confidence and independence (at least in their own restricted spheres), instead seemed to lead to a diversification, a kind of 'splintering' of the policies (at the local, micro-level) and practices of popular sport and music.

The tendency on the part of functionaries to continue in their roles and do their utmost to promote their own particular area of responsibility is

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48. BArch, DR 5/2180, letter of 10 Jul. 1978 (no pagination).

perhaps best reflected in the growth of what one might term as less strenuous 'leisure' sports: those sports which, by virtue of their non-Olympic status, were categorised as *Sportarten II* in official GDR parlance. Such sports included karate, tennis, aerobics (or *Popgymnastik*, as it became known in the GDR), hiking, and jogging. One could add to the list further leisure pursuits such as fishing, more 'therapeutic' exercise activities such as Yoga, and even fashion sports like skateboarding or break-dancing. These various sporting disciplines had grown in popularity in western capitalist countries and hence, because of their supposed links to commercial interests or the 'reactionary' middle classes, were initially frowned upon within the higher ranks of the DTSB and the sports department of the Central Committee. Insofar as they have at all been considered in existing literature, the growth in the practice of these sports has been thus portrayed as a 'subversive' act of (mild) resistance. It is suggested that such pursuits were undertaken within the context of a 'private sphere' that the 'people' were able to carve out for themselves, where they would be unencumbered by the interventionist auspices of the 'state'. In other words, the fact that such activities grew in popularity is seen as testimony to the existence of the supposed 'niche society'—a politics-free area of society—and to the fact that, for all its attempts, the 'regime' was ultimately unable to control all aspects of leisure.<sup>49</sup> A closer examination of the DTSB documents referring to the development of these 'new' (or bourgeois) branches of sporting pursuits suggest, however, that the categorisation of these disciplines as 'niche' society sports, practised outside of the sphere of the 'state', is misleading. It seems more the case that participants, trainers, and those generally involved in organising events relating to these modern strands of leisure attempted to 'officialise' these activities—that is to say, to incorporate them into, or boost their profile within, the DTSB. As such, they would constitute part of a more diverse spectrum of activities *within*, rather than outside of, an expanded, but increasingly fragile state apparatus.

Some examples indicative of these efforts to incorporate such 'new' sports into the official organisation of the DTSB were karate and skateboarding. A ban had been imposed on karate following an initial flurry of interest at the end of the 1970s, but it had failed to halt the expanding popularity of the sport.<sup>50</sup> In spite of the stubborn intransigence on the part of the central executive of the DTSB, the practice of karate carried on within the framework of the judo sections, in the *Allgemeine Sportgruppen*

49. This is the view put forward by Theo Austermühle, 'Konflikte und Konfliktlösungen im Sport', in Hinsching ed., *Alltagssport in der DDR*, pp. 135–57.

50. SAPMO-BArch, DY12/640, 'Vorlage für das Sekretariat des DTSB, Bundesvorstand des DTSB der DDR, Abteilung Organisation', 15 Oct. 1979, fo. 610.

(the general, or miscellaneous sports associations) and within the BSGs and *Hochschulsportgemeinschaften* (HSSGs), with enthusiasts and trainers continuing to lead and establish new clubs. This persistent pressure from below eventually persuaded the central executive to retract its directive of 1979 and to finally create an official karate association—the *Deutscher Verband für Karate in der DDR*—in 1988.<sup>51</sup>

Viewed from one perspective, on the basis of this statement, it could be argued that this formal recognition of karate and the sport's incorporation into the DTSB merely underlined the ceaseless attempts of the 'state' to control. But at the same time, and from another perspective, one could emphasise the initiative and dogged determination of these lower-level functionaries to push forward the case for their sport, attempting to popularise it in spite of the refusal of the central executive to cede ground on the matter. In other words, this 'about-turn'—the resigned acceptance on the part of the central DTSB executive that a karate association had to be created after all—signified a distinct *lack of ability* to control trends. As such, the continuing commitment of lower-level functionaries contributed to a diversification of popular sports policies.

A further revealing instance in these later years of lower-level functionaries throwing down the gauntlet to the higher authorities involved the Roller-sport association (the *Deutscher Rollsportverein*, or DRV); more specifically, the skateboarding section within the association.<sup>52</sup> Again, instead of viewing this western-style pastime as an example of practices carried out in the 'niche' society, it appears that after its incorporation into the DRV (and hence into the DTSB), those practising and advocating the popularisation of skateboarding were just as eager to use the structures of the state to their advantage as those further up the state and party hierarchy were to control such maverick activities. The incorporation of a skateboarding section into the DRV, in other words, allowed lower-level functionaries some bargaining power, or at least endowed them with a sense of empowerment. Rather than 'giving up' and simply complaining, perhaps sensing that the leading party (at least its centre core) was fading, functionaries involved in this particular sphere were able to use their positions *within* the formal structures of the DTSB to pose challenges and

51. SAPMO-BArch, DY12/716, 'Protokoll der 211. Sitzung des Sekretariates des Bundesvorstandes des DTSB der DDR', 29 Nov. 1988 (Anlage), fo. 217.

52. A skateboarding section had been incorporated into the DRV in the winter of 1986–87 at the behest of the DTSB committee responsible for secondary sports (*Sportarten II*). This was as a result of apparent dissatisfaction on the part of skateboarding aficionados that they had no official 'political and organisational cradle' (*Heimstadt*) for their activity (SAPMO-BArch, DY12/1207, fo. 73).

make demands to improve the profile of the 'Modesport' for which they were responsible.<sup>53</sup>

It was not only the advancement of these so-called fashion sports that attested to the tendency of lower-level functionaries to challenge the authority of the higher authorities, or at least to demonstrate a greater degree of independence. Sports which, on account of their implicit connections with the 'bourgeois' classes, had not been officially encouraged in the GDR, also began to enjoy something of a boom in the 1980s, not only in terms of people's participation, but also regarding the number of officials who were eager to play some role in boosting the profile of the sports in question. This was particularly the case with tennis.<sup>54</sup> Between 1977 and 1984, membership in the *Deutscher Tennisverein* had risen from just under 35,000 to almost 44,000, while the number of qualified coaches grew almost four-fold in the same period, from 841 to 2,852.<sup>55</sup> By the end of 1988, the membership numbers had risen to 47,274, while the number of officially trained coaches increased to 3,185.<sup>56</sup> Such a significant increase, in particular in the number of those holding some position of responsibility, is again indicative of the fact that the disintegration of the GDR's internal structures was not tantamount to 'collapse' or 'breakdown' in any absolute sense.<sup>57</sup> Disintegration here was more a case of diversification, of a splintering in the direction of policy and practices—a disappearance of any semblance of cohesion and consistency that seemed to be evident, for however limited a time, during the 1970s. Willingness to undertake or continue in official roles within the formal structures of the state and party organisations did not entail being ardent political and ideological supporters of the socialist system. Functionaries in the tennis section of the DTSB organisation, for example, while certainly not openly criticising the party and state or calling into question the tenets

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53. See the reports in SAPMO-BArch, DY12/1207, fo.s 73–78 for some striking examples of lower-level functionaries taking matters into their own hands and throwing down the gauntlet to the apparently flaccid central sports administration.

54. For official views on 'bourgeois' sports such as tennis, see SAPMO-BArch, DY34/14445, manuscript of radio interview of 4 Dec. 1983 (no pagination).

55. SAPMO-BArch, DY12/1202, 'Kurzeinschätzung der Abteilung Sport II, pp. 35–36.

56. *Statisches Jahrbuch der DDR*, 1989 (Berlin: Staatsverlag der DDR, 1989), p. 330. The growth in membership in this sport was paralleled by a growing popularity in other more modern, leisurely and/or 'bourgeois-tinged' sports in the 1980s.

57. Indeed, even in the last gasps of the SED dictatorship, some functionaries at the grassroots appeared determined to get on with their jobs as they had done before. Thus on 3–4 November 1989, the secretariat for the *DTV* continued their work, in spite of events going on around them, even discussing the broad outline of progress to be made in their branch of the DTSB over the following ten years. This perhaps reflected their belief that while situation was far from ordinary, life had to go on. Certainly, they did not envisage such a rapid process of absolute collapse and integration into the Federal Republic. (SAPMO-BArch, DY12/1196, 'Protokoll der Präsidiumstagung', 3. Nov. 1989; 'Gemeinsame Beratung . . .', 4 Nov. 1989).

of Marxist-Leninist ideology outright, preferred to advocate more neutral values as part of their work. This reduced emphasis on political and ideological concerns was reflected in the end of year report of the *DTV* of 1983, in which it was stated that characteristics such as ‘a sense of responsibility, a spirit of community, a readiness to help, fairness, discipline, a readiness to run risks, moral strength, modesty and an openness to criticism’ were to be encouraged.<sup>58</sup> Although qualities such as these were not entirely alien to the professed goals of socialism, the combative calls to use sport as a means to engage in class struggle, and to be ‘Ready for Work and Defence of the Homeland’, so prominent in earlier years, were nevertheless conspicuous by their absence. Indeed, appeals to such qualities were not so different from those that one might have expected to come across in advertisements for participation in sport in western, capitalist countries.<sup>59</sup>

Where music was concerned, there were also indications of functionaries attempting just to ‘get on with the job’ and accomplishing their tasks to the best of their ability. In many cases, this meant going along with that which was popular amongst youths. While it may be tempting to regard such insouciance as an open defiance of the leading party’s dictates—after all, there were continued references to the dangers of western decadence in the official discourse—it appears to be more the case that the functionaries simply turned a blind eye to the rather more pedantic and unsustainable appeals for ideological purity and socialist morality. There was no real subversion intended: rather the actions that they sought to undertake seemed best suited to the circumstances in which they found themselves. Thus, youth club functionaries or even local town authorities made efforts to accommodate their local young populations, seeing this as preferable to letting the young people wander aimlessly around the villages and towns with nothing to do.

In the district of Reichenbach, for example, members of the local town council took it upon themselves to provide a group of young heavy metal fans with facilities where they could meet and pursue their interests.<sup>60</sup> In Annaberg-Buchholz, another FDJ functionary defended his decision to allow youngsters in his charge to found a Depeche Mode fan club under

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58. SAPMO-BArch, DY12/1202, ‘EntschlieÙung des VII. Verbandstag des DTV der DDR’, 7. Apr. 1984, p. 37.

59. Karate was another sport that, at least according to the official reasons for the creation of the *Karateverband*, should seek to promote these more ‘neutral’ qualities such as agility, speed, fairness, self-discipline, even courtesy. There was no mention of the need to use it as a means of increasing work productivity, for example. Cf. SAPMO-BArch, DY12/716, ‘Protokoll der 211. Sitzung. . .’, folia 216–217.

60. BstU, Ast Chemnitz, RB-178, ‘Berichterstattung. . .’, 5 Jan. 1989, pp. 10–11.

the umbrella of the local youth organisation. Claiming that the youngsters were all harmless, and had diligently participated in the 'scrap metal' action for the struggling 'young national states', he suggested that accommodating their wishes would prevent the youths from going 'underground' with their interests.<sup>61</sup> Similarly, in the same region of Karl-Marx-Stadt, following difficulties involving a young group of break-dancers who had been pursuing their interests in the vicinity of the gigantic bust of Karl Marx's head in the city centre of Chemnitz (at that time called Karl-Marx-Stadt), the headmaster of the youngsters' school, together with the local district administration, determined to provide more suitable facilities for these youths and their decidedly western interests.<sup>62</sup> There was also a forum set up for heavy metal musicians in Karl-Marx-Stadt by the local *Bezirksskabinett für Kulturarbeit*. Again, in the context of the heavy emphasis in existing literature on oppositional and sub-cultural groups of the 1980s, one might at first interpret such a step as clearly going against the grain of 'official policy'. But the point is that these initiatives and programmes on the ground were indicative of the very diversity of those involved in the state apparatus and that there was, particularly in these last years, no absolute blue-print for regime policy. By introducing such a workshop, the local cultural administration in Karl-Marx-Stadt was undertaking what it saw as a necessary step to try and pacify the situation.<sup>63</sup>

Even in the face of obvious incompetence on the part of higher-level authorities, as in the sphere of popular sport, functionaries involved in youth cultural and popular music events attempted to do their utmost to do their job and undertake what they thought to be the best course of action. Certainly, their enthusiasm and commitment was sometimes combined with criticism and expressions of discontent at the lack of support they received from their superiors, which hinted at the gradual grinding down of the administrative apparatus, or at least demonstrated the growing distance between lower-level functionaries and the apparatchiks at the top of the administrative tree. Such was the case involving an obviously highly committed functionary of the regional branch of the FDJ in Schwerin, who had spent many hours of his own time attempting to arrange a summer festival, which was to include rock music performances, for the young people of the area. While clearly exasperated at the conduct of his superiors, this particular functionary was clearly not willing simply to give up the ghost and energetically attempted to muster up the cooperation that he required from the responsible authorities in order to

61. BstU, Ast Chemnitz, An-126, 'Information..', 24 Aug. 1989, pp. 36–37.

62. BstU files, Ast Chemnitz, AKG 190, Bd. I, pp. 65–66.

63. SStAC, RdB, Abt. Kultur, 117290, 'Einschätzung. . .', 4 May 1988.

provide the youths with a memorable cultural spectacle.<sup>64</sup> His greater sense of responsibility, and impassioned appeals for something to be done, were indicative of an overall shift in the alliances, it would seem, within and between different groups in the state and the lay-population. In short, there was a shift from the role of the functionaries as ‘representatives of the state’, to a role that could perhaps be better described as ‘representatives of the people.’ It was this shift—the growing exasperation of committed functionaries towards the lack of cooperation and reciprocity on the part of their superiors and the concomitant increase in sympathy and common grievances with their fellow local residents—which seemed to be so crucial in undermining and weakening the regime.

## Conclusion

While the process of *Vergesellschaftung* or ‘societalisation’ allowed, for a restricted period, for some stability and brought about a more cohesive, yet also more expansive network of allegiances between different elements within the state, it was also instrumental in the process of disintegration in the 1980s. The incorporation of new members into the state did not entail an unconditional act of loyalty being expressed on their part. The lines of allegiance were very much contingent on bargains being upheld on all sides: functionaries, who invested much of their time and energy in their endeavours to improving the situation in their particular areas of responsibility, were reliant on the higher-level authorities delivering on its promises to provide, and expected a degree of reciprocal cooperation for their efforts.

The crucial factor about those who had been incorporated into the state is that they did not see themselves merely as mouthpieces for the wishes and whims of their superiors. The so-called *Staatskünstler*, for example, who had been instrumental in the relative success of the GDR popular music scene of the 1970s, expected something in return for their evident contributions and commitments. Similarly, those who had taken it upon themselves to contribute to the development of sports, training, and acquiring extra qualifications, sacrificing their weekends and evenings to make their contribution to the local sports society, were resentful when their efforts were stymied by poor provisions and broken promises on the part of the higher

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64. For details see SAPMO-BArch, DY30/vorl. SED 42272, Bd. II., correspondences of 21 Jul., 4 Aug., 31 Aug., and 3 Sep. 1989. For similar examples of local-level functionaries showing their sympathies with the youths and accompanying exasperation at the higher authorities’ unwillingness or incapacity to deliver the goods, see e.g. SStAC, RdB, Abt. Kultur, 150605, letters of 28 Apr. 1986 and 18 Sep. 1986; 150606, letter of 4 Mar. 1987; 150607, letter of 28 Oct. 1988.

authorities. It was they, the functionaries, after all, who were faced with the more direct disgruntlement of the local populace. For some, such problems could only result in taking a step back, rescinding their posts. For others, while any sense of 'political' loyalty that had existed was severely weakened by the inability and prevarication of the higher-level authorities, a sense of commitment to their local 'constituents' and diverse interest groups within the towns and villages remained. In this sense, the system as a whole did continue to 'tick over'—music events continued to be organised, even new fan clubs were created within the official framework of the youth organisations, people still participated in their local sports communities. In some cases there were even increases in levels of participation, particularly in those sports which, as pursuits more distinctly related to commercialism, were deemed as more western 'bourgeois' sports.

Thus, if the more efficient coordination and streamlining of popular sport and music policies had served to alleviate the confusion regarding sports and music policies which had certainly been evident in the localities during the 1960s, this process of *Vergesellschaftung*, of incorporation into the state, did not remove the sense of self-interest of the functionaries. This continued to exist, with new or better trained and (hence more confident) functionaries, hoping to use the broader formal structures within which they now found themselves to their advantage. Hence the boundaries of both the state, and the fundamentals of the policies that were devised and formulated, were pushed further out. In short, *Eigen-sinn* and authority, as defined by the localised negotiation and interaction between regime functionaries and the 'ordinary' lay populace, continued to exist within the broader framework of the 'societalised' state.