



# Soccer under the Swastika: Stories of Survival and Resistance during the Holocaust

*Kevin E. Simpson*

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In the heart of the twentieth century, the game of soccer was becoming firmly established as the sport of the masses across Europe, even as war was engulfing the continent. Intimately woven into the war was the genocide perpetrated by Nazi Germany and its collaborators, genocide on a scale never seen before. For those victims ensnared by the Nazi regime, soccer became a means of survival and a source of inspiration even when surrounded by profound suffering and death.

In *Soccer under the Swastika: Stories of Survival and Resistance during the Holocaust*, Kevin E. Simpson reveals the surprisingly powerful role soccer played during World War II. From the earliest days of the Nazi dictatorship, as concentration camps were built to hold so-called enemies, captives competed behind the walls and fences of the Nazi terror state. Simpson uncovers this little-known piece of history, rescuing from obscurity many poignant survivor testimonies, old accounts of wartime players, and the diaries of survivors and perpetrators. In victim accounts and rare photographs—many published for the first time in this book—hidden stories of soccer in almost every Nazi concentration camp appear. To these prisoners, soccer was a glimmer of joy amid unrelenting hunger and torture, a show of resistance against the most heinous regime the world had ever seen.

With the increasing loss of firsthand memories of these events, *Soccer under the Swastika* reminds us of the importance in telling these compelling stories. And as modern day soccer struggles to combat racism in the terraces around the world, the endurance of the human spirit embodied through these personal accounts offers insight and inspiration for those committed to breaking down prejudices in the sport today. Thoughtfully written and meticulously researched, this book will fascinate and enlighten readers of all generations.

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