

When he comes to the bar Tante Rosi, where all insiders are, he is immediately being served with beer of a certain type. If he writes to me "How about one beer at Mike?", I know it will be at least three. Jens laughs very incendiary and I can recognize him even with my eyes closed - just by laugh. The last few years he is one of the spokespersons of Roter Stern Leipzig (RSL). In addition, Jens plays in the senior men's soccer team, and is considered there as one of the youngest players (at his 36). Also he is one of the founders of the steeldarts-department. I decided to ask him about the "Red Star" and people in it.

- Tell your story. How did you come to Roter Stern? Why Roter Stern? And what keeps you there?

I joined Roter Stern Leipzig in 2007. I've been playing football my whole life. From childhood to 23 years, I played for an ordinary East German football club. But along with my political socialization in the left scene, I started to realize that playing football without racists and fascists in East German football clubs is impossible. Then I learned about Roter Stern.

It still is a statement to publicly announce: „We are an antifascist football club“ in East Germany. So it's part of my political activism. We're a big football club now, our voice will be heard.

- It was a very small project in the beginning, what do you think was a secret of Roter Stern success? If you think that it is a successful story.

Roter Stern always had a DIY and punkrock-attitude. From the beginning, there were a lot of people not just playing football, but being part of the left-wing scene in Leipzig, organizing cultural events, joining demonstrations, supporting political campaigns, and so on. It's „More than Soccer“, like our slogan. In the beginning, 1999, there were 20 people. When I joined Roter Stern in 2007, there were 150 members. At that time, some RSL activists found youth- and children teams. So Roter Stern also became interesting for people with children. And slowly, we developed from a football club with punkrock-attitude to a club for social and ecological green and left, urban attitudes. Now, in 2017, it's

1.200 members, and the number is still growing.

Everything, from the beginning, is discussed in a plenum – that still is our aspiration. So we had to develop: now there are several work groups besides the plenum with autonomy for their decisions, also lot of autonomy for the several sports departments. And we employed five people - the greenkeepers and one administrator (who are paid for their work).



Brandis fight

In 2017, we got a third sports venue from the city administration, it's located in the Teichstraße - and so we call it. The former sports club there did nearly nothing to maintain the venue, so it's quite run-down – but there is this spirit of DIY again, a lot of people, who help and improve the situation, make VoKü* and so on.

(*VolxKüche / VolxKüche (VoKü) - in the left alternative scene, the regular collective cooking, usually vegan, food that is sold at cost or even lower)

Roter Stern often feels like one step forward and then two steps back, I think, for everyone in the club. There's always a lot of disappointment. But when you look back at what happened, I think, it's more like two steps forward and one step back.

- What are the most popular sports in club besides football?

In the last years several new sections were established. It's mostly popular sports in Germany, like Handball and Volleyball, also Basketball and

cycling, table tennis.

In the summer, the Riot Rocketz started their season in the third Roller-Derby-division. Roller Derby is a full contact discipline on roller skates, coming from the Riot-Grrrl-movement, so this sport is played by women, and including a feminist attitude. The Riot Rocketz played for another club in Leipzig before and joined Roter Stern recently. At their first match there were like 300 people, the gym was completely filled

with old and new Roller Derby Fans. I hope it becomes popular!

At the same time, a F*empowerment-group was established, with their own plenum – and a lot of discussions started about feminism and sexism in Roter Stern Leipzig, not all of them intended by the F*empowerment-group, and not all of them emancipatory, I'd say. So: another step forward, and another step back, maybe. But the foundation of the F*empowerment-group should be a lasting development and the non-emancipatory discussions should not, so it might also be two steps forward, if we look back in some years.

But the most popular discipline should be the steel darts-section, for sure.

- Tell me a couple of stories - the funniest and the scariest one - that happened to RS?

In 2009, the first year when our 1st men's football team played in the districts league, outside of Leipzig, we were attacked by 50 fascists in