

departments can 'develop procedures for reviewing all personnel decisions for bias, conscious or unconscious' (p. 220)?

Notwithstanding this touch of over-ambition, *Strong Women* is, like *Life Outside*, a politically important work. Both books have the potential to instigate useful reflection on ways of improving sporting experiences.

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Christopher Hill, *Olympic Politics: Athens to Atlanta 1896-1996*. Second edition, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997. 283pp., US\$19.95pb.

Alfred Senn, *Power, Politics and the Olympic Games: A History of the Power Brokers, Events, and Controversies that Shaped the Games*. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics, 1999. 336pp., US\$21.95pb.

Recent public interest in the political misdeeds of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) make these two volumes well timed. Together they provide a detailed historical account of the disputes, negotiations, and compromises associated with the modern Olympic Games since their founding by Pierre de Coubertin in 1896.

Alfred Senn offers an excellent historical overview of the Olympics and combines some of the more familiar political incidents (terrorism at the Munich Games, the protest of African-American runners in Mexico City) with a broad discussion of current issues including the use of drugs and the inclusion of professionals at the Games. The book aims to dispel the notion that the Olympic Games are a 'transnational' phenomenon rather than an 'international' one, where diplomatic tensions and politicking are the rule rather than the exception. Although the author astutely remarks that 'what appears to one observer as politics may not seem so to another' (p. xiv), he does not provide readers with a frame of reference. Senn prefers to integrate the political aspects of the Games into the various conflicts and controversies such as Canada's one-China policy and Atlanta's exaggerated boast of urban renewal. At times, some of the historical detail (eg., tables showcasing medal counts) distract the reader, particularly when they bare no relevance to the text. Despite this, Senn provides insights into the political motives of the different actors. For example, in describing the Juan Antonio Samaranch's intervention in talks between North and South Korea in 1985, Senn suggests that the IOC president's aim was 'to split North Korea from its supporters in the communist camp, particularly the Soviet Union and China' (p. 220).

Senn devotes considerable space to former IOC President Avery Brundage and to describing the circumstances surrounding some of his key decisions. Much of the discussion centres on Brundage's attempts to impose his ideals of 'Olympism' on international sport during the political conflicts and ideological battles of the Cold

War era. Senn casts Brundage as naive and inflexible and this section highlights the IOC's uncertain role as an international actor.

In his closing chapter, Senn provides a list of current issues confronting the Olympic movement. These include the commercial interests of International Federations, the use of performance-enhancing drugs and the continuing growth of the Games. Unfortunately, these are so varied that it is not clear how they will evolve into political conflicts or how they compare to past problems.

Christopher Hill approaches the Games by examining the political bargaining and diplomatic struggles during the more recent Olympics. As well, he analyses the bidding processes whereby cities compete to host Olympic Games and the rise, and motivations, of president Samaranch. This approach forces readers to draw their own conclusions about what constitutes politics. The chapter titled 'Power and Authority' neatly describes the structures of the IOC and links them with Samaranch's rise to power and his potential to exchange patronage for prestige. For the organisation as whole, Hill suggests that:

the IOC does not stay at the top of the sporting pyramid without continuous effort. The process is political. It demands resources, which are channelled worldwide through Olympic Solidarity, an understanding of human motivation and the prudent manipulation of power (p. 70).

This theme appears through much of the work while elsewhere the author criticises the ideological principles espoused by some IOC officials. Evaluating an assessment of former IOC president Lord Killanin's view that the 'Games surpass all political and ideological barriers', Hill suggests that this view 'deserves respect, although it is difficult to see it as having much connection with the real world' (p. 119). The chapter on South Africa and the Olympic Games, perhaps more so than any other, shows the inextricable link between sport and its political environment. While claiming that the IOC did not seek political involvement, Hill notes that when apartheid was thrust upon the IOC, the organisation was only too happy to intervene in the internal affairs of a sovereign state.

Unfortunately, Hill's work lacks precision. While Hill's descriptions of events are often thorough and detailed, in places he provides too much information. A lot of it is contained in brackets which makes for belaboured discussion.

Both works play down the structural or institutional influences affecting political actions. For example, is it realistic to expect National Olympic Committees to act independently of their governments? However, given the complexity of the Games and the apparent closed nature of decision making, it becomes apparent why these types of studies tend to focus on key individuals, their ideas and their ideologies. Indeed, both books depend heavily on comparisons of IOC presidents, although Hill breaks the shackles of a president-centred approach by describing the internal politics of the bidding process. In this way, he provides the reader with a different viewpoint of the IOC's primary function – selecting cities to host the Games.

The two studies follow a chronological format and neither attempts to reconcile many of the contradictions and/or consistencies in Olympic politics. Nor do they employ a theoretical perspective to attempt to answer a bigger question, namely, what can we (or other international organisations) learn from all of this? The diversity

of issues discussed in these studies further highlights the need to show more precision with respect to the types of politics they identify – foreign policy, electoral politics, corporatisation, and clashes over ideology. These would be clearer if the authors had provided a better sense of the ‘political’.

Although both books cover the same terrain, they address different audiences. Hill's *Olympic Politics* is intended for the senior student while *Power, Politics and the Olympic Games* is better suited for the undergraduate or layreader and was indeed designed for Senn's own class, ‘The Political History of the Modern Olympics’, at the University of Wisconsin. Not surprisingly, both authors tend to focus on their respective countries and the issues most salient to them. While Hill's work is more detailed, Senn provides the primary sources that give the reader greater flexibility to draw their own interpretations. After reading the two books, supporters of the Olympic Movement and Olympism should better understand and appreciate the delicate balance between the way things perhaps ought to be and the way things really are in international sport. Some will put down the books feeling that Olympic sport and international cooperation are mutually exclusive.

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