

DEPARTMENTS

BOOK REVIEWS

THE CENTENNIAL PRESIDENT. Published by the International Olympic Committee. Edited by Marie-Hélène Roukhadzé. 230 pages, in English. Reviewed by Ian Buchanan.

Recent publications from the IOC have been of a commendable high standard and this volume is no exception. More than 200 stunningly beautiful illustrations complement contributions by twenty-seven writers who are either IOC members or persons very close to the Olympic Movement. Each gives his or her view of the years of Juan Antonio Samaranch's Presidency and in order to give an indication of the scope of the work I can do no better than refer to the seven articles written by ISOH members.

The ISOH members and their chosen subjects are: Anita DeFrantz (USA): "Juan Antonio Samaranch, IOC President of Inclusion"; Peter C. Diamond (USA): "Technology"; Nicos Filaretos (Greece): "The Melting Pot of Olympism"; He Zhenliang (China): "Culture, at the Heart of Olympism"; Wolf Lyberg (Sweden): "More than Seventy Times Around the World"; David Miller (Great Britain): "Juan Antonio Samaranch"; and Richard W. Pound (Canada): "Economics and Finances of the Olympic Movement".

These contributions, when taken together with twenty other articles on diverse subjects, make for a wide-ranging

and informative book and the editor has wisely taken the decision not to overload a work of this nature with a host of statistical tables.

From the few tables that are included, I was astounded to see from Wolf Lyberg's contribution that in 1982 President Samaranch spent 266 days travelling the world on Olympic business and more recently he spent 246 days away from Lausanne in 1990. Staggering figures. The book closes with a useful appendix listing all IOC members co-opted during the "Samaranch Years" and it was here that I noticed a small factual error. Primo Nebiolo (Italy) is not shown as having been co-opted as President of the IAAF, under Rule 20.1.3 of the Olympic Charter, whereas for all others who became IOC members via this provision, the fact has been duly noted. *****

100 YEARS OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES OF MODERN TIMES: 1996 ATLANTA. Published by PROSPORT GmbH & Co., Verlag für Sport und Kultur KG., in the series of the "Olympische Sport Bibliothek", München, Germany 1996. Edited by Robert Parienté (French), John Rodda (English) and Karl Adolf Scherer (German). 237 pages. German, English, French and Italian texts. Reviewed by Tony Bijkerk.

This volume is part nine of the series, which started in 1990 with the volume on the period from Athens 1896 up to and including Stockholm 1912. The successive volumes have been dedicated to respectively: the Olympic Games in the periods 1920 - 1932; 1936 - 1956; 1960 - 1972;

and 1976 - 1988; the Olympic Games in 1992; the Olympic Winter Games in 1994; while a special volume was dedicated to 'Olympism and Culture'.

Of course, this new volume is, like all the other ones, published under the patronage or, respectively, as an official issue of the "Nationalen Olympischen Komitees für Deutschland", "Stiftung Deutsche Sporthilfe", "Deutschen Sportbunde", "Österreichischen Olympischen Komitee", "Comité Olympique Suisse", "Stiftung Schweizer Sporthilfe", "Nederlands Olympisch Comité", "Comite Olympique et Interfédéral Belge", "Liechtensteinischen Olympischen Sportverbände" and "Comité Olympique et Sportif Luxembourgeois".

Leave it to ISOH-member John Rodda, in his open-minded comments to put his finger on some of the sore spots in Atlanta which were so criticised in the international press. I found Rodda's comments to be unprejudiced and quite fair. He wrote: "It was a Games, one suspects, which will be remembered for the ugly, the bad, and then the good, when in fact the good was overwhelmingly in the ascendancy." He further elaborates on each of the various points and remains impartial throughout.

One of the issues he specifically mentions deserves to be reproduced and I quote:

"The Lillehammer Winter Games of 1994 was ahead of its time in terms of its construction and design, taking into account environmental factors. It is these features which a forward thinking group should embrace to make the Games a more manageable and acceptable event. Alternatively, the old idea of achieving a better balance between winter and summer celebrations must be examined. At the moment the criteria for the Winter Olympic Games is that events must take place on snow or ice but if that were to be amended so that other indoor events can be included then there would be plenty of scope for taking the pressure off the summer celebrations and giving hope to some of those on the waiting list of sports recognised by the IOC." A very good advice, which the members of the I.O.C. should take into consideration.

The standard of photography in this book is again fabulous. Because of the fact that about twenty-five authors in four different languages give their opinions on the many events that took place in Atlanta, this makes the book a valuable addition to anyone's library.

100 YEARS OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES OF MODERN TIME: 1896 - HEROES OF THE GAMES - 1996. Published in the same series as mentioned herefore but as volume number ten. Edited by a team under Karl Adolf Scherer. Text again in four languages: French, English, German and Italian. 279 pages. Reviewed by Tony Bijkerk.

The title of the book speaks for itself. This volume has been dedicated to the Olympic Heroes of the Modern Olympic Games, beginning with Spiridon Louis in 1896 up to Hubert Raudaschl in 1996. Hubert Raudaschl, who is that? Well, Raudaschl is probably the only person ever to compete in nine different Olympic Games and as such is mentioned in this book, together with 99 other famous Olympians, each of which is given one page in the book, with an explaining text in four languages about their performances. The choice of Olympic Heroes for any such book always is a matter of subjectivity. In my opinion, the editors chose willingly for the heroes in the later Olympic Games, because only fifteen of them are from the period before World War Two. But again I missed Rie Mastenbroek among the chosen ones!

The first seven pages of the book have been reserved for the seven Presidents of the International Olympic Committee and this part is immediately followed by an article written by the Member of the ISOH-Executive Committee, Conrado Durántez, titled: THE OLYMPIC IDEA AS A PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE. Of course, Conrado Durántez is eminently suited to write such an article, because of his Presidency of the International Pierre de Coubertin Committee.

The greater part and second half of the book has been used for an extensive statistical ROLL OF HONOUR for all Olympic sports, including those from the Olympic Winter Games, and from 1896 up to 1996. All gold, silver and bronze medal-winners have been mentioned, including those from events that have long been removed from the Olympic programme. Personally, I found the statistics not so easy to read, and further found one very elementary mistake in the book, this being a photograph of shooting competitors in Amsterdam 1928, when shooting as a sport had been eliminated from the Olympic programme of those Games. With this tenth volume the series: 100 YEARS OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES OF MODERN TIMES, has been concluded, and it must be said that the publishers have done a tremendous job!

THE MODERN OLYMPICS: A Struggle for Revival, by David C. Young. 170 pages and 82 pages with notes, bibliography, index. Published by Johns Hopkins University Press, Florida, USA, 1996. US\$39,95. ISBN 0801853745. Reviewed by Christopher R. Hill.

This work is indispensable to all Olympic historians, though only those with a minute interest need read the many footnotes. It fits neatly with Young's valuable earlier book, *The Olympic Myth of Greek Amateur Athletics*, published in 1984, as well as bringing together, and adding to, the material contained in a series of later

articles.

In one chapter on my Olympic Politics (which Young had not read) I covered some of the same ground, though in much less detail, and greatly admire the breadth of his documentary research.

Young is a cheerful and unsnobbish scholar, who does not mind saying when he does not know, and enjoys speculation. Sometimes I found it hard to agree with his conclusions: for example, he sets out the pros and cons for one of his theories, which is that the 1896 Games went to Athens partly because of a private deal between Baron de Coubertin and the Greek Royal family, then says that his theory is highly probable, whereas in reality, on the facts given, there must remain a good deal of doubt.

His principal thesis is that Baron de Coubertin did not resurrect the Olympics alone and unaided, but that the Coubertin Games were in a long tradition, stretching back through the Zappas Games in Greece, and beyond them to the poems of Panagiotis Soutsos in the 1830s. He makes too much of the athletic side of these Games, (forty athletes in 1870, and only twenty-four in 1875) at the expense of the agri-industrial exhibitions which lay at their core, but the basic thesis is a valuable correction of some conventional wisdom.

Young's second major thesis relates to the 'Olympian' Games which had been held every year since 1850 at the small English town (population 2,500) of Much Wenlock in Shropshire, masterminded by a surgeon, William Penny Brookes. Young does not claim that these were the first modern Olympics but he does rightly say that Brookes was "hoping to emulate something of the ancient Olympic ideals as he saw them".

However, he goes on from this to make the assertion, which I am sure must be an exaggeration, that Brookes "became so inextricably entwined in the web of Olympic history in Greece, England and France that he eventually became its kingpin". (pp 11&12).

It is true that he made contact with the Greek Olympic movement as early as 1859, through Sir Thomas Wyse, and that he tried to make the Much Wenlock games of broader significance, first by proposing that they become peripatetic in Shropshire, then by playing a part in founding the National Olympic Association (NOA). Rivalry grew up between the NOA and the Amateur Athletic Club (AAC), partly because the NOA, though restricted to amateurs, did not specifically exclude the working class, whereas the AAC did.

I am not sure that Young fully understands that extraordinary form of social cement, the English class system. Both Brookes and Coubertin had the attitude to class that one might expect of their time and backgrounds. Although both were determined that working class men should not be

excluded from sport, and were convinced that there must be harmony between the classes, there was no question of mingling. Nor can one understand Brookes's attitude to class without recollecting his devotion to physical education, and in particular his conviction of the absurdity of state education including compulsory drawing lessons for labourer's children, but not physical education. It seems to me that Brookes and Coubertin were drawn together at least as much by their interest in physical education as by the Olympics.

Young goes so far as to say that the greatest importance of the Greek Games of 1859, 1870 and 1875 lay in their influence on Brookes. Without them "he never would have been spurred on to found the movement for international Olympics, into which he would decades later - draw Baron de Coubertin." (p.23). He adds: "In 1880 he [Brookes] boldly took perhaps the most crucial step in our entire Olympic history: he conceived the notion of founding recurrent international Olympic Games, formally proposed it, and sought to implement it." (P.59). But how important is this development in Brookes's thinking, unless it can be shown that without this idea coming to Brookes it would not have come to Coubertin himself? This is what Young hopes to demonstrate.

Brookes was indeed a forerunner of Coubertin, but Young goes so far as to say, not only that Coubertin came to the idea of reviving the Olympics long after Brookes had had the same thought, but that until he read a packet of material that Brookes had sent him in 1889 he had never thought of trying to revive them. Obviously, Young cannot really demonstrate this, but he does say that there is no doubt about it, which seems to me to be more than he is entitled to, especially as he does not specify the contents of the package. (The reference that I have seen is to one document about tilting and another about physical education). Similarly, he speculates on what the two men may have discussed when Coubertin went to Much Wenlock, but cannot know with any certainty what part the meeting played in spurring Coubertin on to revive the Olympics.

It is possible that the thought of reviving the Games had never occurred to Coubertin until he met Brookes, and very likely that he had never heard of Brookes until he advertised in English newspapers in 1889 and Brookes replied. Furthermore, Coubertin paid graceful written tributes to Brookes's contribution to reviving the Olympics, and included him in the list of honorary delegates to the 1894 Congress though later he seems rather to have forgotten about him. Yet it seems inherently unlikely that so educated and cosmopolitan a man as Coubertin, who had an intense interest in physical education and education in general (as well as in a host of other subjects) would never have come across the idea that the Games might be revived. Even if the idea

came to him, as if out of the blue, through his links with Brookes, what was it that made Coubertin devote his considerable energy to the project? Can it really be traced back to attending village games in the pouring rain in Shropshire in October?

At the more theoretical level, which on the whole Young eschews, he never really explains what he means by the Olympic idea, nor, more importantly, what the characters in his drama thought it meant. Twice he even uses that unfortunate word "Olympism" (which is at worst meaningless, and at best fuzzy) while giving barely an inkling of what it is about.

Young has enormous advantages. He is a classicist who knows several languages, including modern Greek, and has been able to go through documents which others have not seen at all, or at least not understood. It is perhaps unfortunate that he refers to the microfilm of the Much Wenlock documents, rather than the originals, although he has also worked on the documents themselves. He may be right that the majority of scholars will work on the microfilm in future, but surely it would in the long run be more useful to refer to the original albums at Much Wenlock.

There is much to agree with in this fascinating book and much to enjoy. There are good accounts of the lobbying which preceded the 1896 Games, the difficulty the IOC had in persuading the Greeks to host the Games at all, Coubertin's relative failure to deliver foreign participation, the choice of Athens, the "intercalary" Games of 1906 and so on. Indeed, Young is an enthralling writer, and the differences of emphasis which exist between his own interpretation and my own are far outweighed by his enjoyable style and exhaustive research. *****

OLYMPISCHE SOMMERSPIELE - DIE CHRONIK I, by Volker Kluge. 943 pages, in German. Published by Sportverlag Berlin GmbH, Charlottenstrasse 13, 10969 Berlin, Germany. (Postal address: P.O.Box 8840, 10888 Berlin). Not illustrated. ISBN 3-328-00715-6.

The price of the book is DM 68.00, or ÖSch. 496, or Sw.Fr. 62.00, exclusive mailing costs. Reviewed by Tony Bijkerk.

Volker Kluge's formulae has not changed over the years, since he started his Olympic publications around 1964. This volume, which is the first of a series of three, the other two issues following later, is the culmination of a research that lasted more than three decades. The first book covers the Olympic Games from 1896 up to the period of World War II, 1944. Kluge 'only' gives 'statistics'; the results of each event in every Olympic Games in the period mentioned above, including series, repechages, quarter finals, semi-finals and finals. It is probably the most complete book in this respect, because Kluge

adds a long list with notes at the end of each chapter, in which he presents the reader with information on certain events, on persons, whether they are medal-winners or just normal participants with a story to be told about. One needs to understand the German language, but when that is the case this book is a treasure-trove for every Olympic historian! Of course, there are some points of dispute. Why did Kluge mention the Demonstration Sports from every Olympic Games, but left out the ones from Antwerp 1920? In our "Journal of Olympic History", two different demonstration sports have been highlighted in the past few years: Korfbal and Waterpolo for women, which were organized with the express permission from the Olympic Organizing Committee for the 1920 Olympic Games?

In a work of this extent and with so many facts, names, times, weights, distances, etc. mentioned, as we all know, it is almost impossible to produce 'the perfect book'! Everyone of us should in fact take his time to go over the pages, one by one, to try to eliminate the slightest differences. Like I did myself, and it took me a couple of days! I was able to give the writer, with whom I have been in contact almost from his start as an author in 1964, a list with additional data and some small corrections, but of course only on my own countrymen and women!

The many notes, which the author added to each chapter, includes some very interesting information. Every scrap of information which is, or could be, of value for the enhancement of Olympic history, or for Olympic statisticians in general has been hoarded by Kluge over many years and has been added to the notes. In my opinion that is the real value of this book, because the results of all the Olympic Games have been published scores of times in other volumes, and in many other languages too.

Kluge did not hesitate in using the information collected in every publication that came into his hands, and he refers to these volumes in his bibliography at the end of the book. Of course, there are many members of the I.S.O.H. mentioned in this bibliography and even our "Journal of Olympic History" itself! This book should become an integral part of every Olympic historian's library.
