

BOOK REVIEWS

OLYMPIASTADION BERLIN - Steine beginnen zu reden. (Olympia Stadium - Stones are Beginning to Talk), by Volker Kluge; photographs by Harf Zimmermann.

Published by Parthas Verlag GmbH, Berlin. ISBN: 3-932529-28-6. 192 pages, in German; with an English translation to go with each of the photographs. Price: DM 58.00. Reviewed by Wolf Lyberg.

When reading the title of this book, many will no doubt react like this: "Seems rather uninteresting to me". Shoulders are shrugged - the title forgotten.

If you do so, I can assure you that you've made a big mistake! Perhaps, if you have seen the subtitle, you might have given the book a second glance.

My advice is: Do that!

There is no doubt about it - the book contains fascinating reading on everyone of its 192 pages. And how could it be otherwise with a word-wizard like Volker Kluge behind his typewriter - or whatever means he used. For the writing of sportbooks he may be compared to specialists in other branches of authors, like Wilbur Smith (one of my favorites), Hammond Innes, Ken Follett, Jack Higgins and Alistair MacLean.

As late as October 17th, Kluge showed me around in the Berlin Stadium. I had not visited the Stadium since April 12, 1942, when I saw Germany play Spain in soccer (result: 1 - 1).

When we left the Stadium, Volker Kluge banded over the last proofs with corrections in the Stadium office, while only three days later the editors finished with their work, and the book arrived at my home on November 24th.

Kluge is a fantastic researcher and he gets some fantastic results from his research. I could see that in his personal archives, which are second to none, when I visited his home in that week in October. It's no wonder he keeps his readers spellbound when presenting them with what he has found out. It seems that every little piece, or room in the Stadium has a story to reveal. And the magnificent photographs add

further weight to his work.

Just think that the idea to create a stadium in Berlin saw daylight on May 1st, 1906, in the Olympic Stadium in Athens, when the young journalist Carl Diem discussed it with one of the big shots of the German sports officials: Egbert von der Asseburg.

I found it very correct that Kluge did not try to diminish the role of Adolf Hitler in the creation of the large Olympic Stadium and how smart Theodore Llewald sold the idea of the Berlin Games and the Stadium. In the current days, it seems normal that authors try to forget the names of the "bad boys".

A special bravo to Kluge for an amazing photograph. It was shot at the re-opening of the Stadium in September 1946, when the military championships of allied soldiers took place before 100.000 spectators. They all laughed loudly, when the small Czechoslovakian team paraded past - one man behind the bearer of the national nameplate. Two days later, they cheered that unknown soldier - he had won the 5000 metres in 14:31.0, a splendid time. His name was Emil Zatopek.

Memories rushed over me, when I read the story of the German Minister of Sports, who had died in 1943: Hans von Tschammer und Osten. Only two years earlier, I had daily contacts with him during the FIS championships in Cortina d'Ampezzo, where he greatly admired the Swedish military patrol.

We stood before his villa in Berlin, where he lived as a minister and Kluge told me about the urn with Tschammer und Osten ashes, which had been buried in the garden during the war. When his family had to move out in 1947, they had to look for the urn with a special mine-sweeping device.

The same thing happened to the enormous Olympic Bell, weighing 13 tons, which was buried immediately after the war. Only through finding one of the men who had helped to dig the hole where the Bell had been hidden, could they later retrieve that enormous object.

Kluge's book is filled with such histories, every one a little 'pearl' in itself.

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And that is not enough. He writes the history of practically every single room and space in the Stadium. He finishes his book with brilliant and detailed biographies of 200 contemporary VIPs (Very Important Persons) in German sport.

With a little travesty of a German sentence, which I learned when I was young, I would like to finish this review: "Puts Donnerwetter - has he done all this by himself?"

And just to give the readers a good hint - Kluge is currently working on two books on great German athletes: Otto Peltzer (track and field), and Gottfried von Cramm (the tennis-player).

TOT HIER EN NIET VERDER - Herinneringen van een topatleet en internationaal sportbestuurder (memories from a topathlete, and international sportadministrator), by Anton Geesink.

Published by TIRION, P.O. Box 309, 3740 AH Baarn, The Netherlands. 248 pages, in Dutch. ISBN 90-5121-802-8 Price 39.50 Guilders. Reviewed by Anthony Th. Bijkerk.

Olympic goldmedal winner in Judo in 1964; the man-mountain that in 1964 made Japan tremble on its foundations; the judo-giant from Utrecht; and since 1987, member of the International Olympic Committee, Anton Geesink, in December 1999, published his autobiography. In his book, Mr. Geesink looks back on the period, in which he fought many battles, strangely enough, most of them against Dutch officials in sport, including the members of the Netherlands Olympic Committee, who for the first eleven years of his life as an IOC-member, completely neglected Geesink's status as an international sports administrator.

Geesink describes his early youth in the city of Utrecht, his marriage to Jans, his beloved wife for 46 years, his work as a building tradeworker and his many developments in the sport of judo, up to the highest grade. He tells about his nomination for, and election in the IOC, against opponents which had been

forwarded by the board of the Netherlands Olympic Committee. This in fact was the beginning of his fight.

Most of the book concerns this long fight against the sports-establishment in the Netherlands, which, after his election into the International Olympic Committee, completely tried to ignore him. But one cannot ignore a man like Anton Geesink. He fights back, as he has always done in his life. And he never gives up, because he is very one-track minded!

We published several plans for a new sports policy; he started the Mobile Olympic Academy; he took care that Dutch students again could participate in the International Olympic Academy and he wrote letters, hundreds of them, in order to defend his views, to present his ideas and to defend himself against slander.

All this, and much more has been written down in this book. Sometimes, the book is rather difficult to follow in its context, because Anton writes as he speaks, and he often repeats himself, especially when he feels that he must defend himself against the "I know you - You know me - Old Boys-network". This phrase is used time and again, and it shows the deep frustrations he must have felt against the people who neglected him for such a long time. However, the tide has turned. Anton Geesink has now received the place in Dutch sports administration he deserves as a member of the IOC, and which should have been given to him in 1987, when he had been elected in the IOC. With pride, Geesink finally mentions the Honorary Doctor degree which he received from the Japanese Kokushikan University in Tokyo; but on the other hand he defends himself with passion against the allegations, which were mentioned as part of the Olympic bribery scandal, earlier in 1999.

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STAGING THE OLYMPICS: THE EVENT AND ITS IMPACT, edited by Richard Cashman and Anthony Hughes.

Published by University of New South Wales Press. 226 pages, in English, text alone. Price \$A29.95. ISBN 0 86840 729 1. Reviewed by Harry Gordon.

This is an adventurous book in many respects. Mostly the books about specific Olympic Games arrive after those Games have been held. This one came off the presses a year before the event that is scheduled to take place in Sydney in September. The editors acknowledge that it's a risky course to take, but believe that an overview of the Games as a work-in-progress will be valuable for posterity --- and of course for future planners. They also envisage optimistically the prospect that it might be revised afterwards, with various chapters being scrapped and re-written to measure the result against the expectation.

Given the certainty that the project as it stands will be overtaken, and thus dated, by the Sydney Olympics, Richard Cashman and Anthony Hughes have put together a work that deserves a good audience not only among students and scholars of the Olympic movement, but generally. They have assembled a knowledgeable group of writers to deal with such matters as the bidding process (as it related to Sydney), urban design, the Australian identity, environment issues, marketing and sponsorship, transport, security, the media, drugs, tourism, the cultural Olympiad and the Paralympics.

Some of the contributions will be equally readable after the Games, as matters of record. The Australian identity, for instance, won't change. Nor will issues like the winning of the Olympics for Sydney, or the environmental challenges that had to be confronted in the transformation of Homebush Bay, the region where the Games will be centred. But certainly those chapters which deal with the subjects like the media, security and transport will cry out for an update when the Games are finished. Any enduring record --- and this could still be one --- needs to let us know how the plans worked out. And how the inevitable crises were

handled.

It is fair to say that if media and transport arrangements are not organised well, the general perception will be that the Games weren't successful. The Atlanta experience provides stark and recent evidence of that. Reg Gratton, the 2000 Main Press Centre manager, examines in his chapter of this book where the Atlanta planning went wrong --- exploring the matter in detail, even down to MPC catering. Gratton, formerly a senior executive and foreign correspondent with Reuters, expresses confidence that this time the organisers will be able to provide service to print and broadcast media. He emphasises the fact that media don't just report on events and performances: they also make judgments about the host country, its society and the Games organisers.

Cashman, who has written valuable chapters setting the scene and discussing the legacy of Olympics, acknowledges the role of television in transforming the Games, but warns that a delicate balance needs to be maintained between sport as serious play and as entertainment. And he notes ominously: "The once-grand spectacle and pageantry of the Olympic Games, like the institution of the British monarchy, could be reduced to mere soap opera." It's a fair, frightening analogy.

RUNNING TOWARDS SYDNEY 2000: THE OLYMPIC FLAME AND TORCH, by Janet Cahill.

Published by Walla Walla Publications. 95 pages, illustrated. Price \$A19.95 ISBN 0 9587079 8 7. Reviewed by Harry Gordon.

In November 1956 around 30,000 people gathered outside Sydney Town Hall to await the arrival of the Olympic flame during the torch relay that speared down the east coast of Australia on its way to the main stadium in Melbourne. Having crossed the Sydney Harbour Bridge, a torch-bearer weaved his way in drizzling rain towards the town hall, where he mounted the steps and handed the torch to the lord mayor. That dignitary began a well-rehearsed speech

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. . . then stopped, when somebody pointed out that what he was holding was a plum pudding tin mounted on an old chair leg. He had of course been hoaxed. A few minutes later another runner arrived, this time with an authentic torch and a flame.

Janet Cahill retrieves this story of the town hall hoax from torch relay folklore in her simple, informative book about the torch, the flame and their approaching companionship on the way to Sydney. She examines the origins and the symbolism of the Olympic torch and flame, the history of torch relays, the Melbourne experience, and the plans for the Sydney 2000 relay. Along the way she deals with such issues as the logistics of the relay, sponsorship and the occasional intrusion of politics into torch relays.

It is a very readable, compact account. Sadly she demolishes the romance which was said to have accompanied the 1976 flame lighting in Montreal. The story has gone that the joint lighters --- one boy, one girl, one speaking French, one English --- were later wed. Cahill reveals that one of them, Sandra Henderson, did marry afterwards --- but not to her French co-lighter. She suggests maybe a little unfairly that the media was to blame, "wanting to believe that the flame had touched their hearts as well as their memories." It was in fact an authority she quotes often in her book, Walter Borgers --- in his *Olympic Torch Relays 1936-1994* --- who wrote for posterity that the two people who lit the flame married "and thus became the 'dream couple' of torch relay history."

DEUTSCHLAND IN DER OLYMPISCHEN BEWEGUNG - Eine Zwischenbilanz, edited by Manfred Lämmer.

Published by the National Olympic Committee of Germany, Frankfurt am Main. 436 pages, in German. ISBN 3-87064-110-X. Reviewed by Anthony Th. Bijkerk.

It is not exactly clear to me why this book has been published, a little over one hundred years after Germany's entrance into the Olympic movement!

However, that reason has nothing to do with the fact that, as usual, the German Olympic Committee has published an outstanding book on its own history.

Some of Germany's eminent Olympic historians contributed, like Karl Lennartz, Andreas Höfer, Hajo Bernett, Norbert Müller and Hans-Dieter Krebs. They all wrote about one, or more specific subjects, as the book has been divided in many chapters, each dealing with a special theme.

Germany's Olympic history is encompassed by five different political structures: the period of the German Empire; the Weimar-Republic; the "Third Reich" (Adolf Hitler's regime); the split-up into the two (East and West) Germany's after WW2; and after the fall of the Berlin "Mauer", the current undivided Germany.

Each period is reviewed by one of the authors, and some of them have a special interest for specific periods, like Hajo Bernett, who earlier wrote some magnificent studies on Germany's Olympic history in the "Third Reich".

Others, like Andreas Höfer and Hans-Dieter Krebs wrote several chapters. I was especially interested in what Höfer would write about Dr. Carl Diem and I must confess that he did a bit disappoint me. Like many others before him, Höfer openly stated that Diem is something of an enigma to historians, and that he had an uncanny ability to run with the tides, as is shown by his attitude during and immediately after the Second World War. However, Höfer again points out that Diem's contributions to the Olympic Movement are undisputed, because some of his innovations exist to this day. But Höfer confesses that it needs more, much more to describe Carl Diem's life to the fullest.

Germany's role in many parts of the Olympic movement are discussed in detail and they form an interesting and logical sequence.

To name some of the chapters: the earliest beginning of the Olympic movement in Germany; another about the Weimar Republic; a third on the "Workers-Olympiads" in 1925, 1931 and 1937; a fourth about

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“Olympia under the Swastika”; followed by the period after WW2; and it goes on with the period when the two Germany’s had a combined team at the Olympics (1956-1964); to end with several chapters on the period of the last decades, during which the two Germany’s first competed against each other and then in 1992 finally returned in the Olympic family as one nation with one Olympic team.

The biographies of some of Germany’s most important Olympic officials are also included in this magnificent book. People like Willibald Gebhardt, Theodor Lewald, Karl Ritter von Halt, Carl Diem, Heinz Schöbel, Willi Daume and Georg von Opel are wellknown names in the Olympic family and rightly so.

Norbert Müller, (of course, who else might do this) describes the role Germany played in the founding of the International Olympic Academy.

Manfred Lämmer from the Deutsche Sporthochschule in Cologne had the overall responsibility for this publication and he and the other authors did a magnificent job.

AN OLYMPIC LIFE, Melbourne 1956 to Sydney 2000, by Kevan Gosper with Glenda Korporaal.

Published by Allen & Unwin, Sydney. Price \$A35. 389 pages, illustrated. ISBN 1 86508 267 8. Reviewed by Harry Gordon.

An unfunny thing happened to this book on its way to the presses. Between the correction of the final proofs and its launching day, allegations were made which caused the author and his family some distress --- mainly because they had the potential to damage Kevan Gosper’s reputation. Inevitably, they also had the effect of rendering the man’s candid account of recent tribulations, on the way to Sydney’s Games, just a little incomplete. The charges, which concerned a family holiday in Salt Lake City in 1993, were promptly described by fellow-IOC vice-president Richard Pound as sounding “like entrapment”. Just as promptly, Gosper referred them to the IOC’s ethics

commission, which in turn ordered an independent investigation.

It was not the smoothest passage to publication. But Kevan Gosper has encountered obstacles before during his progress towards the highest levels of the Olympic movement, and handled them with dignity and a stylish kind of doggedness. This book charts his course from fairly humble circumstances (his mother sold the family piano as the home-town community in Newcastle pitched in to help his raise his airfare to take up a scholarship at Michigan State University), through athletic triumphs and a successful career in business and the IOC.

Had it not been for the unfortunate hiccup mentioned above, the publication of *An Olympic Life* would have represented a splendid piece of timing. It comes just months before the Sydney Games, soon after the IOC’s spell of anguish and embarrassment following the Salt Lake City scandal, and during the early approach the election next year of a successor to Juan Antonio Samaranch. Gosper has a stake in all of these issues. He is a board member of SOCOG, was a key figure in the reform process which saw the establishment of an IOC ethics commission, and is a prospective presidential candidate.

Gosper, a silver medallist at the Melbourne Olympics, discusses with easy, honest detachment his 10 years of athletic competition and his rise to become chairman and chief executive of Shell Australia. But it is the second half of the book --- which embraces his entry to the IOC, the Moscow boycott, Australia’s four comparatively recent bids to hold the Games, difficulties in Atlanta, the Salt Lake City affair and the consequent turmoil inside the IOC --- that offers some really engrossing reading. The insider’s view that emerges should prove valuable to future Olympic historians.

In 1980, Gosper was on the side of the boycott. His fellow IOC member, the late David McKenzie, took the opposite view, and they argued violently. When

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Australia sent a team to Moscow, against Gosper's wishes, he tried to resign from the national Olympic committee --- but was persuaded not to, by the prime minister of the day, Malcolm Fraser. He says now: "With all I know today about politicians and the Olympic movement, I would have taken a different position . . ."

Gosper outlines from close range recent developments that have followed what he calls the IOC's "wake-up call". He is frank about the deterioration of his relationship with his current co-member on the IOC, Phil Coles, to a degree that he can isolate the moment when Coles "suddenly and finally lost me". And he is unabashed in his admiration for the dedication and achievements of Juan Antonio Samaranch. Gosper does not discuss his likely candidature for the IOC presidency, but the very publication of this absorbing memoir at this time is seen by many as the starting point of a campaign.

If he does run, one thing is certain: one of the votes against him will come from an Australian.

A PROPER SPECTACLE, *Women Olympians 1900-1936*, by Stephanie Daniels and Anita Tedder.

Published by ZeNaNa Press, 20a High Street, Houghton Conquest, Bedfordshire MK45 3LL, England.

163 pages, in English, illustrated. ISBN 0-9537645-0-8. Prices: USA/CANADA: £23.45; United Kingdom: £18.65; Europe: £20.35; Australia and Asia: £23.95, all prices inclusive airmail postage and packing. More information available at www.olympicwomen.co.uk. Reviewed by Ian Buchanan.

Two of the more recent lady members of ISOH have joined together to publish their first book and, fittingly, the occasion coincides with the centenary of female participation in the Olympic Games. The authors have made contact with many female participants from the pre-WWII Games who have provided an invaluable contribution to our knowledge of the Games from an athletes point of view. This is

an aspect that is rarely studied or written about, and from a "Proper Spectacle", we can learn of how the Dutch 800 metres runner, Wilhelmina "Mien" Duchateau, had to knit her own orange-coloured shorts before competing in the 1928 Games, and how the Canadian, Eva Dawes, a bronze medallist in the 1932 high jump, was banned from the 1936 team for having taken part in the Workers' Olympics.

These are just two examples of the depth of the nature of the background information to be found in the book and when taken individually they may not seem particularly significant but when viewed collectively, they provide a fascinating and revealing insight into the Olympic world for women in the early days. An added advantage of establishing so many worldwide contacts is that Olympians themselves have readily supplied hitherto unpublished photographs from their family albums and this adds considerably to the merit of an excellent pioneering work.

THE 1908 OLYMPIC GAMES: RESULTS FOR ALL COMPETITORS IN ALL EVENTS, WITH COMMENTARY by Bill Mallon and Ian Buchanan.

Published by McFarland & Company, Inc., Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640, USA. (www.mcfarlandpub.com) Price: \$49.50. 516 pages. ISBN: 0-7864-0598-8. Reviewed by David Wallechinsky.

This is the fifth in a proposed seven-volume series entitled Results of the Early Modern Olympics. Previous volumes were invaluable studies of the Games of 1896, 1900, 1904 and 1906. The Official Reports of these earliest Olympics were woefully incomplete and Bill Mallon (with the collaboration of Ture Widlund for 1896) heroically reconstructed the results of each event for each year.

At first glance, students of Olympic history may wonder why a volume about the 1908 Games has been added to the series. The 1908 Olympics were, after all, the first to produce a true Official Report, one that set the standard for Official Reports to