

Recent Work in European Sport History

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Although generalizations about Modern Man are risky, one can say with some certainty that sport fascinates him (and, to a somewhat lesser degree, her). In their youth, most Europeans play soccer or do some other sport and most remain interested spectators for the rest of their lives. One result of this state of affairs is that millions, perhaps billions, of words are written yearly in an attempt to slake the multitude's thirst for information about Dynamo, Schalke 04, Le Stade français, Madrid Real, and countless other amateur and professional sport clubs. Needless to say, most of the writers are journalists in the employ of *L'Equipe*, *Der Kicker*, *Sovetsky Sport* or some other daily or weekly publication and most of what is written consists of line-ups, scores, and related trivia, but a few of these journalists have turned historian and a number of professionally trained scholars have succumbed to the appeals of sport history. There are many books—too many books—on the history of European sport, but few of them are available in translation because European audiences are, like their American counterparts, nationalistic. Champions like Jean-Claude Killy and Nadia Comenici are known internationally and a few sport biographies are translated, but by and large, Poles are the only people interested in Polish sport and only the Swedes care for the facts about the *Skolidrottsfoerbundet*. The lack of an audience beyond the border means, unfortunately, that few sport histories are translated into foreign languages; those of us who are curious about the sport of modern Europe have doomed ourselves to frustration. A handful of scholars has studied the sport of the Soviet Union, but the overall situation is definitely *not* the same as in other academic disciplines. There are numerous Americans, Britons, Frenchmen, and Germans who specialize in Slavic literature or in Scandinavian politics, but I can think of only one non-Italian scholar who has published a significant book on modern Italian sport—and he had an Italian collaborator.

What follows, therefore, is not an account of the major work done in the last ten years on European sport history. It is a discussion of what I have been able to read, mostly in the standard linguistic triad of English, French, and German. (The Italian works I have studied are mostly concerned with Greek or Roman sport, which probably indicates something about Italian scholarly emphases as well as something about me.)

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The ideal history of European sport consists of a single, comprehensive volume published in English, French or German by one person whose unifying vision provides a combination of relevant data and persuasive interpretation. The ideal history has not yet been written and probably never will be. In fact, there are fewer and fewer contemporary scholars ready to emulate men like Carl Diem, Jean LeFloc'hmoan, Bernard Gillet, Walter Umminger, and Jacques Ulmann, all of whom attempted to write a solo history of world or European sport.¹ What we have in place of the ideal is a handful of broadly conceived books, mostly collective efforts which tend to be long on data and short on interpretation, and a medley of monographs, some of which are quite admirable. I propose to comment briefly on the more significant individual and collective efforts at comprehensive history (I), to dwell somewhat longer on a number of the most valuable monographic efforts, most of which focus upon a single period within a single nation (II), and to emphasize some of the major attempts at a coherent interpretation of European sport history (III). Readers interested in only one of these categories are cordially urged—as is appropriate for sport historians—to skip.

I

Two Americans have recently taken on the challenge of writing a comprehensive history of European sport. Richard D. Mandell's version, informed by his seminal article on "The Invention of the Sport Record,"² will probably appear in 1984. William J. Baker's *Sports in the Western World* was published in 1982. The book begins in antiquity and concludes in the 1980s. The emphasis is on modern developments in Great Britain and in the United States, but considerable space is devoted to continental sport. Baker's style is a blend of the academic and the journalistic (in the best sense of the word); he combines clarity and wit, generalization and anecdote. Carefully chosen illustrations add to the attractiveness of the book and it is difficult to imagine the undergraduate reader too comatose not to be shocked by Baker into an interest in sport history. Whether the book was meant to satisfy the needs of scholars is another question. I assume that it was not. While Baker does not neglect the historical contexts, he is clearly more concerned to spin a tale than to search for explanations. The uninformed reader is not alerted to matters about which scholars differ, which is probably the right tactic for Baker's pedagogic strategy. Another indication that Baker intended his text for an undergraduate audience is the bibliography, which is extensive and shrewdly annotated but which is limited to works published in English.

Fully conscious of the linguistic problems facing the reader who wants omnivorously to know about sport throughout Europe and not just in his own

1. Carl Diem, *Weltgeschichte des Sportes*, 3rd ed. (Frankfurt: Cotta, 1971); Jean Le Floch'hmoan, *La Genèse des sports* (Paris: Payot, 1962); Bernard Gillet, *Histoire du sport*, 3rd ed. (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1970); Jacques Ulmann, *De la gymnastique aux sports modernes*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Vrin, 1971); Walter Umminger, *Supermen, Heroes and Gods*, translated by James Clark (N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1963).

2. See the bibliography for full citations of work published 1972-1982.

country, some scholars have turned to cooperative history so that the Hungarians (or someone else exceptionally well informed) write about Magyar sport while the Danes take responsibility for Denmark. Such historical enterprises are bedeviled by three familiar problems: it is difficult, especially when the editors seek to cover the entire world, to allot sufficient space to every country covered; it is difficult if not impossible to ensure that all the contributions are comparably excellent; and it is—outside the orbit of official Marxist ideology—impossible to unify disparate perspectives into a single point of view. A fourth problem unique to sport history is the traditional but intellectually suspect linkage of sport and physical education. Even when the editors determine resolutely to emphasize sport and to exclude discussions of scholastic calisthenics, military drill, and modern dance, they tend to be latitudinarian in their decisions about what to include and what to leave out. The spectrum stretches from sport in the strictest sense (i.e., autotelic physical contests), all the way to Jane Fonda's exercise class. The loose and baggy definitions employed are not a trivial problem because they obscure the differences between modern sport and other activities which are biomechanically similar but culturally distinct.

William Johnson's *Sport and Physical Education around the World* and Earle F. Zeigler's *History of Sport and Physical Education to 1900* are valiant collective efforts to improve upon an older classic, *A World History of Physical Education*, by Deobold B. Van Dalen and Bruce L. Bennett (2nd ed., 1971). Many of the contributors to these two volumes are distinguished specialists who perform well in the cramped space given them, but others are content to provide us with the kinds of information dished out by governmental offices, e.g., the names and dates of laws (usually unenforced) on physical education in the public schools. On the other hand, *Landmarks in the History of Physical Education*, by P. C. McIntosh, J. C. Dixon, A. D. Murrow, and R. F. Willets, which includes sport as well as physical education, ranges widely through time but renounces all claims to geographic universality. On most European countries there is nothing at all, but there are good short surveys by McIntosh on Scandinavian physical education and by Dixon on German sport and physical education from the Germania of Tacitus to the *Hitlerzeit*.

The most satisfactory single source on modern European sport is Horst Ueberhorst's multivolume *Geschichte der Leibesuebungen*. There is probably no better introduction to the history of European sport than Volume V of Ueberhorst's book. Experts from every European nation (except Germany and the Soviet Union) have contributed essays, some of which are of considerable length (i.e., over 50 pages), most of which are more than competent. Where else can one find even nine pages on ludic Luxembourg? As is to be expected, there is an entire volume (III) on German sport, including Henning Eichberg's brilliant chapter on nineteenth-century developments. It is probably an advantage that Ueberhorst arranged for Marxists to write the histories of sport in Poland, Rumania, and other Communist countries. Conscious of an unusual

opportunity to write for a Western audience, most of them softpedaled their official ideology. The best essay on the sport of Eastern Europe, however, is that of a non-Marxist, Peter Sendlak, whose account of sport in the Soviet Union (in Volume IV) is first rate.³ We are also indebted to Ueberhorst for editing (with Peter J. Graham) *The Modern Olympics*.

Before discussing some of the more important trends, tendencies, and accomplishments of monographs on *national* history, a word on European involvement in the modern Olympic Games. It is no surprise that there has been a great deal of scholarship on Pierre de Coubertin and his revival, after nearly fifteen centuries, of the Olympics. Although John J. MacAloon ends his story with the games triumphantly celebrated in Athens in 1896, his *This Great Symbol* is a fine account of Coubertin's early career and of the social and intellectual milieu in which the *deracine* baron lived and worked. MacAloon's excellent application of anthropological theory, e.g., that of Victor Turner, illuminates the ritual elements of Olympic sport; his use, or misuse, of psychoanalysis I have already criticized in a review.⁴ For the years that follow, there is still no fully adequate biography of Coubertin to replace Marie-Therese Eyquem's *Pierre de Coubertin: L'Épopée olympique* (1968). Yves-Pierre Boulongne's *La vie et l'oeuvre pedagogique de Pierre de Coubertin* contains some new information, especially on Coubertin's family, but—as the title indicates—the focus is very much on Coubertin's pedagogical activities, a somewhat limited area from the point of view of sport history. It should be of interest to sport historians that the Carl Diem Institute of Cologne is in the process of publishing a major edition (in French) of Coubertin's voluminous writings.

On Coubertin's successors, there is remarkably little written. I know of scarcely an essay on Henri Baillet-Latour or Sigfrid Edstrom; the only biographies of Avery Brundage are Heinz Schoebel's hopelessly inadequate panegyric (mostly a book of photographs)⁵ and Hans Klein's edition, in German, of Brundage's unfinished autobiography. Geoffrey Miller's book on Lord Killanin, *Behind the Olympic Rings*, is good journalism but is obviously not the definitive study. The International Olympic Committee has fared somewhat better than have its presidents. Otto Mayer's *A Travers les anneaux olympiques*, (1966), has recently been supplemented by Karl Adolf Scherer's *Der Maennerorden* and by Norbert Mueller's *Die Olympischen Kongresse von Paris bis Baden-Baden*. Specialized in a different way are two histories of the political aspects of the modern Olympics—Richard Espy's *The Politics of the Olympic Games* and Michael Kanin's *A Political History of the Olympic Games*. Neither book uses materials not published in English. The first utilizes the enormous Avery Brundage Collection at the University of Illinois; the second is somewhat more theoretical in its conception. More specialized still

3. James Riordan's *Sport under Communism* with Contribution on China and Cuba as well as Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Soviet Union, is a disappointment to those of us who admire Riordan's book on the Soviet Union on (discussed below).

4. *Journal of Sport History*, 8:2 (Summer 1981), 97-99.

5. *The Four Dimensions of Avery Brundage* (Leipzig: Editions Leipzig, 1968).

are the narratives and analyses of the "Black September" massacre of Israeli athletes in 1972 and the American-dictated boycott of 1980. In addition to a huge number of popular and scholarly articles on these two topics, there are useful books by Serge Groussard (on Munich) and by Willi Knecht and Baruch Hazan (on Moscow).

Special in a different way are Ulrike Prokop's *Die Soziologie der Olympischen Spiele* (1971) and Jean-Marie Brohm's *Le Mythe olympique*, two Neo-Marxist works which condemn the whole Olympic movement as capitalist imperialism and repression masquerading as internationalist humanitarianism.

Surprisingly, there is no scholarly study of the games themselves that is comprehensive, detailed, and reliable enough to replace the myriad of popular histories and glossy albums. The best substitute for the unwritten ideal is probably Walter Umminger's *Die Modernen Spiele* (1968), Dick Schaap's *An Illustrated History of the Olympics*, or John Lucas' *The Modern Olympic Games*. On the specific Olympiades, Richard D. Mandell's two contributions are among the best-known of recent work on European sport history. Although perfectionists have faulted Mandell for a neglect of archival research. *The First Modern Olympics* and *The Nazi Olympics* (1971) will serve quite well until perfection has been attained.

II

When one turns to the history of sport in specific countries, one quickly discovers that there are fine works on France, Germany, Italy, and the Soviet Union. There may be fine works on other countries, but they seem not to have been translated into English, French, or German. French scholars like Bernard Jeu, Raymond Thomas, and Jean-Marie Brohm have produced some immensely stimulating philosophical and sociological analyses of sport, but there has been relatively little interest in *historical* studies.⁶ When the French *do* write sport history, they are likely to focus upon antiquity or the Middle Ages.⁷ Curiously, the most important recent work on French sport history is by an Englishman. Richard Holt's *Sport and Society in France* reads like an extended version of Eugen Weber's classic essay, "Pierre de Coubertin and the Introduction of Organized Sport in France."⁸ Strongly and beneficially

6. Bernard Jeu, *Le Sport, la mort, la violence* (Paris: Editions universitaires, 1972); *Le Sport, l'émotion, l'espace* (Paris: Vigot, 1977); Raymond Thomas, *La Réussite sportive* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1975); Jean-Marie Brohm, *Critiques du sport* (Paris: Christian Bourgeois, 1976); and *Sociologie politique du sport* (Paris: Jean-Pierre Delarge, 1976); Jean-Marie Brohm et al., *Sport, culture et répression* (Paris: Maspero, 1972). Important earlier works of a philosophical and sociological bent are Jean Meynaud's *Sport et politique* (Paris: Payot, 1966), Pierre Frayssinet's *Le Sport parmi les beaux-arts* (Paris: Dargaud, 1968), and Michel Bouet's *Signification du sport* (Paris: Editions universitaires, 1968), and *Les Motivations des sportifs* (Paris: Editions universitaires, 1969). The French themselves have admitted that they have not done well as sports historians: "For fifteen years at least, French historical research into sport . . . has, unfortunately, vegetated." (Jean Durry, "Les origines du sport en France," *Sports et Société* [Paris: Vigot, 1981], p. 85).

7. For example, Roland Auguet's *Cruelty and Civilization* (London George Allen and Unwin, 1972) and Jean Verdun's *Les Loisirs au moyen age* (Paris: Jules Tallandier, 1980).

8. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 5:2 (1970), 3-26.

influenced by the new social history of the *Annales* school, Holt places the development of French sport firmly within the social context.

Like MacAloon, Holt also makes good use of Victor Turner and others who have concerned themselves with the social role of ritual and ceremony. The special merit of Holt's application of anthropological and historical insight is his illumination of the transition from premodern amusements to modern sport. Where a sport historian might look carefully at the development of modern rugby and soccer from medieval football, which is, of course, what Eric Dunning and Kenneth Sheard have done for British football in *Barbarians, Gentlemen and Players* (1979), Holt investigates less obvious connections, for instance, the way in which a game of soccer might have replaced the ritualized pranks associated with a village marriage or the traditional ceremonies of the Catholic Church. Movement back and forth among various activities give the book its special flavor. In addition, Holt has delved into the records of numerous local organizations to correlate ludic activities with social class and political concern. The differences between the rough-and-ready hunts of the poor and the elegant *chasses* of the aristocracy form the core of a typically fine chapter. The worries of the middle class in general and of the police in particular vis-a-vis the endemic violence of lower-class amusements is another important theme.

James Riordan's *Sport and Soviet Society* is already considered to be something of a model. Based on long residence in the Soviet Union and Riordan's impressive mastery of Russian, the book improves upon Henry Morton's somewhat polemical dissertation, upon which most of us previously depended for our knowledge of Soviet sport history. Riordan provides massively detailed information on the intellectual debates between the advocates of modern sport and the proponents of "socialist" physical culture (which was to have avoided the excesses of competition of "bourgeois" sport). Riordan acts as the necessary Ariadne to guide us through the bewildering labyrinth of Soviet sport bureaucracy, which seems, unlike the minotaur's haunt, always to be in the throes of massive reorganization. In essays subsequent to his book, Riordan has tended to be defensive about the Soviet Union, has argued that the Russians, for instance, are less nationalistic and ethnocentric in their sport than are the "capitalist" nations,⁹ but *Sport in Soviet Society* is remarkably even in its tone and balanced in its judgments. Riordan manages to deal with Russian sport without the ideological body blows—right hooks as well as left—that cripple much of the work done on sport in Eastern Europe. Although less detailed than Riordan's full treatment, Hart Cantelon's essay, "The Rationality and Logic of Soviet Sport," is an important discussion of Russian sport history from a Weberian perspective.

Alan Dundas and Alessandro Falassi have written a book that differs from Riordan's in almost every way except for quality. *La Terra in Piazza* is an anthropological-psychoanalytical study of the Sienese palio, i.e., of the tradi-

9. See "The U.S.S.R. and the Olympic Games."

tional around-the-piazza horse race which is the focal point of Siena's ludic culture and which seems, sometimes, also to be the political center of the city's seventeen *contrade* (the traditional neighborhoods). Although many of the historical facts about the race, which began in the eleventh century, have been widely known since William Haywood published *Palio and Ponte* (1904), no scholar has shown as clearly and incisively as Dundas and Falassi the way in which the race is woven into the fabric of Sieneese politics, religion, folklore, and popular culture. In order to find an equally fascinating exploration of sport as a model for society, one has to look far afield, as far perhaps as Clifford Geertz' justly famous notes on the Balinese cockfight. That the judgments sometimes take a Freudian turn can disconcert the skeptical reader. The palio is a festival rife with religious symbolism and scatological humor, and I am convinced that there is sexual significance attached to the *nerbo* (the whip made from the genitals of an unweaned calf), but I have doubts about the Palazzo courtyard as "a kind of male womb" and about the flag as "a detached decorative phallus."¹⁰ Nonetheless, the psychoanalysis is more persuasive than many of the wilder forays into the significance of sport because Dundas and Falassi really know the social and historical context.

Unfortunately, *La Terra in Piazza* is an isolated achievement. Italians have done important work on the sport of classical antiquity, for instance, Roberto Petrucco's *Lo Sport nella Grecia Antica* (1972), but they seem not to have approached modern sport history with the same seriousness. Although sport under Mussolini is a topic of immense importance, Felice Fabrizio's standard work, *Sport e fascismo*, is superficial, inaccurate, and scarcely comparable to the work on sport under Hitler. Victoria De Grazia has some excellent pages on the relative dissociation of overt political propaganda from the games for men and boys sponsored by the Fascists' *Dopolavoro* movement and John M. Hoberman has some good remarks on the Fascists' affinity for a kind of Nietzschean physicality in sport, but neither De Grazia nor Hoberman is an adequate substitute for detailed historical studies of what is, after all, one of the major powers of European sport, amateur and professional. The closest thing to a good history is Sandro Provisonato's *Lo Sport in Italia*, a book weakened by the author's use of Italian translations of some of the more hysterical works of the German Neo-Marxists.

When one turns to Germany, the problem is the opposite one; there has been so much good history written that one hardly knows where to begin a discussion. Perhaps the first thing to be said is that one reason for the intellectual harvest is that sport scholarship in both the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic has been publicly supported in a way that most North Americans can only envy. Most German universities have an *Institut fuer Sportwissenschaft* within which the faculty is expected to do substantial scholarly research into history, sociology, psychology, and physiology. Since big-time sport is institutionalized in sport clubs, private in the

10. *La Terra in Piazza*, pp. 202, 193.

West, workplace-related in the East, rather than within universities, the emphasis tends to be on research and writing rather than on "beating Heidelberg." Both Germanies have major universities devoted exclusively to the scientific study of sport and physical education. In addition, the *Bundesinstitut fuer Sportwissenschaft* provides funds for research and for the subsidized publication of books and journals. Funds from public and private sources may not be sufficient, and scholars in the "practical" fields, e.g., physiology and psychology, may receive the lion's share of the money, but German historians are not reduced to the pitiful expedients familiar on this side of the Atlantic. Unfortunately, historical work done in East Germany must bear the ideological imprimatur of the "Socialist Unity Party," which insists upon a rigid version of dialectical materialism and chauvinist praises. While a fine scholar like Joachim Ebert can write *Olympic von den Anfaengen bis zu Coubertin* (1980) without a trace of Cold War polemics, he is a rare exception. More typical is the "authors' collective" that produced the four-volume *Geschichte der Koerperkultur in Deutschland* (1964-68). Since academics have been removed from their posts and sent to factory jobs because of "incorrect" scholarship, it is understandable that many have accepted the necessity to describe sport history as if Walter Ulbricht were the athletes' idol and inspiration. My references to German historiography, Marxist as well as non-Marxist, are to West German work unless otherwise specified.

Before I attempt to comment on major work done. I should probably say that German scholars have tended tacitly to define "Germany" so that their studies often include Swiss and Austrian society as well, especially for the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Books like Klaus Zieschang's *Vom Schuetzenfest zum Turnfest*, which traces the evolution of middle-class sport from medieval archery to the gymnastics movement of the nineteenth century, have clear advantages over studies, fine as they often are, which are defined by political rather than cultural boundaries. Having mentioned Zieschang's book, I must say that it is among the relatively few which are devoted to sport prior to the late eighteenth century. In recent years, historians not concerned with Greece and Rome (a traditional strength of Teutonic scholarship) seem to have moved *en masse* into three areas—workers' sport, Nazi sport, and the postwar rivalries of East and West Germany.

There are obvious historical reasons for these three foci. The establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany and of the German Democratic Republic has politicized scholarship. East German sport scholars, who see themselves as representatives of a "workers' democracy," have sought the origins of the present system in the development of workers' sport in the years between the France-Prussian War and the collapse of the Weimar Republic. While West German scholars have not had quite the same personal stake in the question, they too have written numerous studies of the *Arbeiter-Sportbewegung*. The second focus—sport under the Nazis—has attracted even more attention. German historians (and by no means only those concerned with sport) have devoted enormous intellectual energy to the study of Hitler's rise to power and

to the brief transit of his thousand-year regime. Small wonder that some of the best work done has been on the destruction of “bourgeois” sport by the Nazis, on the misuse of the 1936 Olympic Games, and on the role of sport in Hitler’s quest for total control of the German people, especially of the young.

The regnant view in the German Democratic Republic is that the workers’ sport movement might have been a major obstacle to the Nazi seizure of power if the Socialists had not split the working class and its sport organizations and “objectively” aided the Nazis rather than the Communists. In this view, the Communists’ “Red Sport International” (1921) rather than the Socialists’ “Lucerne Sport International” (1920) was the “vanguard institution” which might have inspired the proletariat to halt Hitler in his tracks. This interpretation, best represented in Guenther Wonneberger’s *Arbeiter Sportler gegen Fuschisten und Militaristen* (1959) and in a West German publication, *Proletarische Koerperkultur und Gesellschaft*, by Juergen Fischer and Peter Michael Meiners, has found little support among non-Marxists. As Horst Ueberhorst plainly shows in his solidly brilliant study of the *Arbeiter Sportbewegung* from its origins in the late nineteenth century to its dissolution in 1933, the majority of working-class athletes were members of the middle-class dominated *Deutsche Turnerschaft* rather than the *Arbeiter Turnerbund*. (On the former organization, enormously important for the development of nineteenth-century sport, there are useful studies by Hartmut Becker, Lorenz Peiffer, and Hans Georg John.) Ueberhorst shows clearly that the vast majority of the working-class clubs were allied with the Socialists rather than with the Communists. The “objective” help for the Nazis came from Stalin’s ideological twists and turns rather than from the *Arbeiter Turnerbund*. Although Ueberhorst’s book is the classic in this field, good work has also been done in the United States by Robert F. Wheeler and David A. Steinberg. For a brilliantly imaginative analysis of the structural similarities between the rituals of workers’ sport and those of nationalist and Nazi groups, one should study Henning Eichberg’s *Massenspiele*.

If one considers the sport of the German Democratic Republic to be workers’ sport, then one can agree with Marxist historians that there is ideological (if not institutional) continuity between the “Red Sport International” of the 1920s and the sport of the postwar period. East German scholarship on East German sport is a travesty in that historians have created an allegory of good (East) and bad (West). While the athletes from Dresden and Leipzig embody the highest principles of “proletarian physical culture,” the exploited, alienated, manipulated, dehumanized athletes of Frankfurt and Munich (and London, Paris, New York, etc.) represent the forces of capitalist imperialism. West German scholars have been more reasonable. They have written fairly extensively about the sport of their rivals beyond the Wall. Among the most informative of recent works are Peter Kuehnst’s *Der missbrauchte Sport* and Gunter Holzzapfel’s *Diplomatie im Trainingsanzug*. Both books are clear about the totalitarian controls that have made East German sport internationally successful in the sense that a nation of sixteen million can field teams

which outperform those of the United States and rival those of the Soviet Union. The human costs of this success have also been assiduously documented in a number of books by Willi Knecht.

Another valuable work, Ulrich Pabst's *Sport—Medium der Politik*, describes the intricate political relationships between East and West Germany during the long struggle for international (especially Olympic) recognition. In English, one can turn with great profit to the essays of Gerald A. Carr, but Doug Gilbert's *The Miracle Machine* (1979) is quite unreliable because the author, innocent of German, was bamboozled by his adept hosts.

The historical work done on the sport of the Nazi period is extremely important. Two names stand out—Horst Ueberhorst and Hajo Bernett—but many younger scholars, like Helmut Becker and Hans-Joachim Teichler, have also done excellent work. In 1970 and 1976, Ueberhorst published brief biographies of Edmund Neuendorff, the last and most recklessly pro-Nazi leader of the *Deutsche Turnerschaft*, and of Carl Krummel, a typical Nazi sport official. These books both appeared in a series edited by Ueberhorst. Other biographies in the series sketch the lives of Hans von Tschammer und Osten (Steinhoefer), Theodor Lewald (Krueger), and Guido von Mengden (Bernett)—all important leaders who worked with, for, and sometimes against the Nazi regime. It is a great pity that no scholar has accepted the challenge of writing a biography of Carl Diem, the most important of all German sport administrators and a key figure in Olympic as well as German sport from the 1920s to the 1960s. Perhaps this is also the moment to reflect upon the fact that Germans write biographies of administrators while Americans wait eagerly for the thirty-seventh book on the Bambino and the first on that million-dollar rookie reported on in today's *New York Times*; Max Schmeling's autobiography is an exception to the rule, and it is also a remarkably good memoir.

Hajo Bernett published an excellent study of the late-eighteenth-century reformers of German physical education, *Die pädagogische Neugestaltung der bürgerlichen Leibesübungen durch die Philanthropen* (1960). He turned in 1966 to the investigation of Nazi sport. He has since published books and articles on the administrative nightmare of the *Hitlerzeit*, on the ideology of *Nationalsozialistische Leibesübungen*, on the hard fate of Jewish athletes during Hitler's reign of terror, on individual figures like Guido von Mengden (who then wrote a book to refute Bernett and other detractors) and on Leni Riefenstahl (whose film *Olympia* may be the world's most beautiful and controversial sport documentary).¹¹ Needless to say, Marxist historians have had a great deal to say about the misuses of sport during the Nazi period, but their main concern has been to castigate the "bourgeois" and the social-democratic sport organizations for their alleged responsibility for Hitler's rise to power: Marxists have had relatively little to say about the details of *Nationalsozialistische Leibesübungen*.

11. See also the bibliographical entry for Glenn Infield.

During the grim years of Nazi rule, the most spectacular sport festival was certainly the 1936 Olympics. In addition to Richard Mandell's pioneer work, which I've already mentioned, the most important book is probably Arnd Krueger's *Die Olympischen Spiele 1936 und die Weltmeinung*, which has almost as much to do with American sport history as with German because the boycott controversy in the United States is the central episode in Krueger's tale. From the perspective of the Marxist historians, who believe that the Olympics are a potential force for international peace and good will, the 1936 games were a travesty; from the perspective of the Neo-Marxists, who condemn the Olympic movement as an imperialistic phenomenon, the Berlin Olympics were simply the worst example of a bad thing.¹²

III

Detailed historical monographs are important. Equally important are those studies which attempt to fit the historical data into a larger framework. Among the most heated controversies of the last ten years has been the theoretical debate. Marxist and Neo-Marxist historians, led by the Polish scholar Andrzej Wohl, have one explanation for the rise of distinctively modern sport (by which I mean rationalized sport principally distinguished from those of prior ages by the enormous importance of *quantified* achievement and by a unique fascination with the records that quantification makes possible). Non-Marxists have *their* explanations, stimulated by Max Weber, by Norbert Elias, or by Michel Foucault.

In discussing the Marxist tradition, one must keep in mind the distinction between (1) the more-or-less orthodox Marxists who proclaim that the sport of the Soviet Union and its allies symbolize the glorious possibilities of self-fulfillment in a classless society and (2) the Neo-Marxists who insist that the sport of the Soviet Union are *almost* as dehumanizing as those of "capitalist" society. Marxist and Neo-Marxist explanations both begin with a disquisition on Marx's labor theory of value (in which the concept of "surplus value" plays a key role), the division of labor, the alleged alienation of the worker deprived by exploitive capitalism from any satisfactory relationship to the means of production and to the product of his labor, the reduction of the worker to the status of a mere commodity. To this socio-economic analysis is added the argument that historical development is the result of class conflict between the few who control the means of production and the many who, in modern capitalism, have only their labor power to sell. Once this groundwork has been laid, the Marxist historians are ready to argue that sport—a part of the cultural "superstructure"—is invariably related to the means of production. As Wohl maintains in *Die historisch-gesellschaftlichen Grundlagen des buergerlichen Sports*, the sport of the feudal period was determined by knighthood and serfdom. The tournament was the inevitable sport of men

12. In addition to Prokop's book, cited on p. 39, see the bibliographical entries for Jean-Mane Brohm and Hans-Juergen Schulke.

whose rule depended on equestrian martial prowess. (That the explanation singles out political rather than economic factors seems not to bother Wohl and his followers.) The serfs were left to amuse themselves, occasionally, with medieval football and other rough-and-tumble folk games. The development of industrial capitalism brought with it, in this analysis, the rise of modern sport appropriate to the "needs of modern production."¹³ One purpose of sport in "bourgeois" society is to preserve the rule of the capitalist class. While manufacturers and financiers play golf and tennis with politicians and military men, the proletarians are left to maul each other at soccer, a game which is said to be related to the new demands of factory production. (Why a game that restricts the use of one's hands is especially suited to train workers for assembly-line production is never explained.) If my account of the orthodox Marxist interpretation seems like a caricature, I invite the reader to study Wohl's book, which is widely admired and frequently cited.

Far more subtle than the orthodox Marxist effort to correlate sport and mode of production is the Neo-Marxist analysis, which emphasizes the unique characteristics of all modern sport rather than the changing popularity of specific sport in specific periods among specific social classes. These characteristics, which are not fundamentally different from those which I have described in my own work, are attributed by Karin Rittner and the other Neo-Marxists to the necessities of industrial capitalism. Influenced by the pioneering sociological work of Bero Rigauer,¹⁴ she traces the development of specialization in sport back to capitalism's progressively more complex division of labor. She sees clearly the fundamental difference between chivalric and courtly sport, essentially unquantifiable, and the new pastimes of the urban middle class of early modern times: in archery, for instance, "Hits can be counted."¹⁵ (Actually, hits were also counted in the medieval tournament, but the system of quantification was primitive in comparison to that developed by the seventeenth-century bourgeoisie.)

Since modern capitalism and modern sport *do* most certainly share many important characteristics, there is obviously something to be said for this interpretation, which is widely accepted in France as well as in West Germany. (In East Germany, this Neo-Marxist view is anathema because it fails to distinguish between the exploitation of "bourgeois" sport and the "emancipation" of the athlete under socialism.)

In contrast to Wohl and Rittner, Christian Graf von Krockow has placed rather less emphasis on economic factors, like the division of labor, and rather more on religious motivations. He has stressed the fact that modern sport first emerged in seventeenth-century England, where the nascent capitalist was likely to have been a Puritan or a member of a pietistic sect. Von Krockow has made special use of Max Weber's famous concept of "this-worldly asceticism." (The argument is that the stellar achievements of modern sport require

13. *Die historisch-gesellschaftlichen Grundlagen des bürgerlichen Sports*, p. 113.

14. See *Sport and Work*, translated by Guttman (N.Y.: Columbia University Press, 1981).

15. *Sport und Arbeitsteilung*, p. 90.

the kind of almost monomaniacal devotion and self-sacrifice that Weber saw in the followers of John Calvin.) Von Krockow has also stressed the importance of the concept of equality of opportunity, more nearly realized in the world of sport than in "industrial civilization." Like the Neo-Marxists and almost everyone else in German sport studies, von Krockow has been strongly influenced by the American social psychologist David C. McClelland, whose *The Achieving Society* (1961) was translated into German in 1966.

Von Krockow's *Sport und die Industriegesellschaft* appeared in 1972; it was quickly followed by the first book of a young scholar whose interpretations of the rise of modern sport have contributed immensely to West German sport historiography. Henning Eichberg's *Der Weg des Sports in die industrielle Zivilisation* carefully elucidated modern sport's uncanny emphasis on quantification and records and asserted that "historical research into sport behavior reveals itself as an important part of . . . modernization studies."¹⁶ Eichberg's first book was quickly followed by a remarkable series of essays pinpointing in marvelous detail the cultural changes that led from the ideal of measure (*Mass*) to the quite different ideal of measurement (*Messen*), from the geometric patterns of Baroque physical exercises to the point systems and the centimeter-gram-second competitions of modern sport. These essays led to Eichberg's masterpiece, *Leistung, Spannung, Geschwindigkeit* (1978).

By the time Eichberg was ready to bring his thoughts together in this second book, German (and British) sport studies were changed, if not revolutionized, by the republication of Norbert Elias' forgotten masterpiece, *Ueber den Prozess der Zivilisation* (1936, 2nd ed. 1976, English translation 1978). Elias describes the modernization of society, as a "civilizing process" during which external restraints on violent or slovenly behavior are internalized into unconsciously accepted codes of morals and manners. Hoping to avoid simplistic causal explanations, Elias prefers to speak of "figurations" or changing patterns of social, political, economic, and cultural interactions. Elias says little about sport in his major works, but he has written a number of important essays in sport sociology, some in collaboration with Eric Dunning, who, in turn, teamed up with Kenneth Sheard to show how the rules and regulations which tamed medieval football into modern soccer and rugby are the equivalent of the precepts the prohibit mayhem on the streets and dirty tablecloths in the home. Interestingly, Elias has also been a strong influence on one of the most brilliant (and prolific) of the German sport psychologists, Gunter A. Pilz.¹⁷

In *Leistung, Spannung, Geschwindigkeit*, Eichberg argues in even greater detail than in his essays for the uniqueness of modern sport, with its emphasis upon quantified achievement, records, tension, and speed. His debt to Elias is modified by his admiration of Michel Foucault, from whom Eichberg has taken the argument that historical development is not a matter of linear progress (e.g., from the primitive to the modern) but rather of *discontinuities*. Like

16. *Der Weg des Sports in die industrielle Zivilisation*, p. 140.

17. *Wandlungen der Gewalt im Sport* (Ahrensburg: Czwalina, 1982).

Foucault in reference to Renaissance and modern science in *Les Mots et les choses* (1966), Eichberg rejects the identification of “modern” and “better” and prefers not to impose cultural evaluations upon the differences between baroque exercises and modern sport or the equally fascinating differences between the stately patterned dances of the eighteenth century and the giddy whirls of the Viennese waltz. While much of what Eichberg has written might be acceptable to Marxist historians, they have not been persuaded by his arguments in favor of a multifactor analysis incorporating not only material elements, like the means of production, but also “spiritual” events like the rise of mathematical-empirical-experimental science in the seventeenth century.

Eichberg has been criticized by non-Marxists as well as by Marxists. Arnd Krueger and the Japanese historian Akira Ito have disagreed with Eichberg about quantification and records as uniquely characteristic of modern sport. Differing also with Richard Mandell’s “The Invention of the Sport Record.” Krueger and Ito cite the Japanese sport of *chikaraishi* (rock-lifting) and a wide range of other examples in order to maintain that “to achieve a performance which lends itself to quantification is just as ‘natural’ as to take part in a non-competitive game.”¹⁸ Mandell had claimed that the sport record, defined as “a generally acknowledged statistic indicating the unique nature of a supreme athletic performance of a recognized kind,” is “a refined product of a complex of ideas and practices unique to democratic, industrial society.” It is “something new under the sun.”¹⁹ Krueger and Ito assert, however, that records are a human universal and not a part of specific historical cultures. The journal *Stadion*, which published the Krueger-Ito attack, offered Eichberg and Mandell an opportunity to reply, which they did. Since I am, in my own work, more or less *unter einer Decke* with Eichberg and Mandell, it will surprise no one that I agree with *them* rather than with Krueger and Ito, whose examples of Japanese sport “records” are references to mighty achievements isolated from any systematic context. Moreover, their citation of Wolfgang Decker’s account of ancient Egyptian sport “records” obscures Decker’s painfully careful qualifications. Decker’s conclusion about Egypt’s royal archers was, “The suspicion arises that the phenomenon has latent overtones of what we now know to be the sport record.”²⁰ To the degree that Krueger and Ito are *correct* about Japanese sport, they have not demonstrated that records are “natural,” but they have drawn our attention to the fascinating possibility that Japan may have, quite independently of the West, taken the first steps toward modern sport—as early as the seventeenth century. This possibility Eichberg generously acknowledges.

My own admiration for Eichberg’s work is slightly tempered by a difference of opinion about the role of historical Romanticism in the development of modern sport. Thinking of tension and speed as central, perhaps as defining

18. “On the Limitations of Eichberg’s and Mandell’s Theory of Sport and their Quantification in View of Chikaraishi,” p. 252.

19. “The Invention of the Sports Record,” p. 252.

20. “Zum Ursprung des Diskuswerfens,” *Stadion*, 2:2 (1976), 208.

characteristics, of nineteenth- and twentieth-century sport, he points in his books and essays to Romanticism as well as Rationalism in his interpretation of the modern, but I am prepared to argue that the Romantic elements in modern sport are subordinate. Indeed, Romanticism has more often been associated with an opposition to the specific forms of modern sport than with an affirmation of them, with the rejection of “quantified dehumanization” rather than with a fascination for times and distances electronically calculated to the third or fourth decimal place.

Differences of this sort are inevitable; what I wish to stress is the importance of larger syntheses. Detailed studies are indispensable, but they are not sufficient. They provide the data necessary to validate or to disconfirm, to accept or to reject, or—more probably—to modify and to correct the larger synthesis. Specialized studies alone, however, cannot fully satisfy the historian’s “rage for order.” Is it not better to seek the pattern and to reconstruct the whole from the unclear or tattered pieces than to rest content with a few threads? This, as I see it, is the most important question raised by European historiography.

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