

Vinokur, Martin Barry. *More Than a Game-Sport and Politics*. Contributions in Political Science, No. 217. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1988. Pp. xiv, 155. \$37.95.

In *More Than a Game*, Martin Vinokur discusses the use of sport as an instrument for political propaganda and national integration in Romania and in East Germany. There is a comparison between the sport systems of these two countries and cross-cultural comparisons which draw in China, other Soviet satellite nations (Czechoslovakia and Hungary), and as representatives of the West, the United States and West Germany. A discussion of the boycotts of the 1980, 1984, and 1988 Olympic Games is also included.

Vinokur (as a political scientist) argues that sport-political issues have long been ignored as research areas by political scientists and that "Few serious scholars have studied the interrelationship between sport and politics" (133). The author felt that there was "a lack of serious writing" (xiii) on the subject and that most sport-political studies have been descriptive and/or historical in nature (133).

Vinokur indicates in *More than a Game* that he intends to go beyond previous research by first setting out a series of hypotheses which assume that sport is political and used as a means for promoting national consciousness. He then uses a structural-functionalist approach to examine the case studies of Romania and East Germany against these hypotheses. East Germany and Romania are compared to other Eastern bloc nations and thereafter with Western democratic models. After the discussion of the Olympic boycotts the text is completed with an evaluation of the hypotheses and suggestions for future study.

In the preface of *More than a Game* the reader cannot help but note Vinokur's general condemnation of the research performed by other scholars in sport-political issues. Vinokur argues that it has been an academically neglected topic among Western scholars. The relationship of sport and politics he says "has been little explored"-and has been a "slightly regarded topic" (xiii). The author also downplays the value of research performed by physical educators and sociologists.

With such a tone set in the preface, the reader is led to believe that what will follow will be both primary and exemplary research. Yet the author by his own admission goes on to say that his own research in East Germany and Romania was seriously limited by language problems, and by an inability to obtain or even assess the reliability of data. Consequently, Vinokur is forced to rely heavily on secondary source materials, and continuously draws on the works of scholars he has collectively condemned earlier. Apart from materials relating to the Olympic boycotts, his source material is frequently 10 or more years old.

To this reviewer Vinokur offers most to the reader in his research material on Romania. This information is a contribution to the body of knowledge on the sport organization of East bloc nations. On the other hand little new information was provided on East Germany and cross-cultural comparisons with other East bloc nations and western democratic models are dealt with in a cursory fashion. Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the People's Republic of China are given in total approximately five pages. West Germany, selected as one of the two Western democratic models is actually not considered at all. Rather the author concentrates on the struggle by the East Germans for sovereignty in the face of West German opposition.

In closing, Vinokur offers a list of recommendations for future research calling on political scientists to become more involved in the study of sport. He feels that if more political scientists were to embrace sport as a legitimate field of study, they might add their own political research methods to previous research which has been mostly sociological. "The ramifications" Vinokur argues, "for the analysis of international relations and government could be quite significant" (p. 137).

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