

***Contemporary Studies in the National Olympic Games Movement*** by Roland Naul (ed.), (Frankfurt/M: Peter Lang, 1997). Reviewed by Arnd Krüger, Georg-August University, Göttingen, Germany.

The success of Coubertin's international Olympic Games is best understood when one acknowledges the importance of the other "Olympic" Games that took place before and concurrently. Naul's edited book focuses on these Games and so we learn more about the first of the Greek Olympic Games by Zappas in 1859 (pp. 9-18) the Italian national games - which were more like the German *Turnfest* (pp. 19-54), the Liverpool and other countryside English Olympic festivals (pp. 55- 70), Astley Cooper's Pan-Britannic Olympics (pp. 71-94) the National Olympic Games Movement in Germany (pp. 95-116), the Nordic Games in Sweden and Norway (pp. 117-36), the Czech Olympic Games (pp. 137-52), the Olympic Games of 1936 and the Fifth German Combat Games (pp. 153-78), the National and international Olympic Games Movement in Latin America (pp. 179-204), and the first British Empire Games (pp. 205-19).

The collection of papers, which are not really presented in a cohesive fashion, grew out of a discussion at the North American Society for Sport History Conference in Banff in 1990, and it is a pity that it took so long to be published. Collecting more information on these pseudo-Olympics is an ongoing project and there is now already much more information available on, for instance, the Zappas Games (P. Samaras, "New Facts on the Revival of the Olympic Games: The Greek Contribution," in *The Common Heritage of European Sport*, A. Krüger & A. Teja, eds., Rome 1997) than presented here. On the other hand, information on the Liverpool Olympics in the 1860's, and the situations in Germany, Bohemia, Sweden, Latin America, and Italy is scarce and hard to come by. For this information the book is worth having.

The book presents a lot of separate chapters and would certainly have profited if one would have looked more closely at the question: to what extent did these national games actually influence Coubertin and the development of the International Olympic Games? Often the temporal, correlational, but not the casual relationship, is pointed out. Only Kathy Moore in her work on Astley Cooper could show that although Cooper cared little for international games, in fact, did not want to have anything to do with them, sport committees in the Empire, originally strongly influenced by Cooper, ultimately shifted their allegiance to Coubertin and his Olympic Movement. In most cases one can demonstrate only that an Olympic discourse was present in a country as a result of previous or concurrent national games that facilitated the spreading of the international sporting idea - in effect, that national and international discourse existed side by side. For example, when the Olympic Games of 1936 were threatened to be boycotted, Hitler could insist, that in case a boycott did actually result, the Reich could stage "purely German Olympic Games," in line with German *Kampfspiele* (Combat Games).

The importance of the presence of such discourses for the development of the Olympic Games is, however, not at all conclusive. Of course, the Greeks have always insisted that the Olympic Games in modern context are actually their games and that Coubertin just exploited them and robbed them from Greece, the nation of their birthright. Despite the messages imparted in this book of readings, it remains an open

question as to how many fathers of Olympic thought there actually were in addition to Coubertin.