

**HIGHER FURTHER FASTER DEARER. LUDUS AND LUCRE
AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES. A Review Article.**

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Christopher R. Hill, *Olympic Politics*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1992. biblio, illus., index, 226pp, £40.00 and £12.95.

Allen Guttmann, *The Olympics. A History of the Modern Games*, University of Illinois Press, Champaign, 1992. illus., index, biblio., 192pp., \$US24.95 hb.

Stephen Aris, *Sportsbiz. Inside the Sports Business*, Hutchinson, London, 1990, illus., biblio., 195pp., \$39.95 hb.

Vjv Simson and Andrew Jennings, *The Lords of the Rings. Power, Money and Drugs in the Modern Olympics*, Simon and Schuster, London, 1992, index, illus., 289pp., £14.99 hb.

Neil Wilson, *The Sports Business: the Men and the Money*, Piatkas, London, 1988, no index, illus, 186pp, price £12.95 hb.

Any last, lingering claims of the Olympic Games to be a temple of idealism finally disappeared when Coca Cola were awarded the 1996 Games ahead of Athens. With this decision commerce finally prevailed over romanticism, and the millions expended by the organizing committee of the Coca-Cola capital could be justified as money well spent. Greece, repository of the dead heart of the baron de Coubertin, with its historical capital in Athens and its Olympic capital in Olympia,

was the obvious choice as the venue for the centenary Games of the Modern Olympics, regardless of other considerations. Certainly the call to the youth of the world to forgather in friendly competition, leaving behind petty intrigue and the lure of commercial gain, has often sounded hollow, but it has also been met with sporting idealism of the highest order, particularly among the participants in the Games. Only in recent years have the athletes taken second place in the race for commercial gold, while sport itself has been transformed into just another branch of Show Business. Most of the top athletes are willing accomplices in the pursuit of the new goals, measuring their performances only by their value to the sponsors who dictate how the Games will be run. The rejection of Athens, claimed to be because of its smog and the alleged incompetence of the organizers, was really because they could not offer enough financial inducements to those who counted. Anyone who merely had suspicions about this, need only read the books discussed below to have their worst suspicions confuted.

Commerce, of course, was there at the first Games, and has been present ever since. In 1896 gifts of food and services were showered on Spyridon Louis when the home town boy romped home to win the marathon before an ecstatic crowd of fellow Greeks who saw fit to express their nationalistic joy in material form. But the romance was there, too, and it usually came out on top in the battles that followed. After a few fumbling change-overs, the Games continued to grow from 1908, accumulating the problems of the world as they went, but it is only in the last ten years or so that they have finally been engulfed by money and sponsors to such an extent that athletics plays a secondary role. Now the romanticism that survived wars and political hatreds has been outshone by the glitter of the sponsors' gold.

Neil Wilson, in *The Sports Business: the Men and the Money*, was one of the first journalists to broach the subject of the commercial revolution in sport. His account devotes a chapter each to various aspects of the revolution and the men behind it, beginning with the

Olympics, followed by: the Championship (Wimbledon); the Competitor (Sebastian Coe); the American Agent (Robert J. Woolf); the Manager (Barry Hearn - snooker); the Club (Irving Scholar of Spurs); the Promoter (Mickey Duff - boxing); the Team (Frank Williams - Grand Prix); the Sponsor; and the Marketing Man (Patrick Nally). In the few years since Wilson's book came out, the rewards to the major beneficiaries have grown even more astronomically. His book is essentially friendly to the subjects he discusses, showing how much they have done for sport and emphasizing how they were all committed enthusiasts - as he comments in regard to Mark McCormack, who when asked whether he would have given away all of his millions to have won the US Open Championship, replied that it 'would be a close call'. Since his book came out some of Wilson's free enterprise, sports loving heroes have fallen on bad times, most notably Irving Scholar whose takeover of Tottenham Hotspur and ventures into non-sporting fields nearly ruined the club, and Robert Maxwell and his sons, would-be owners of handfuls of soccer clubs, whose greed caused misery to thousands when their empire fell.

More recent writers on money in sport have been less optimistic about the role of the money men. Stephen Aris coined the word 'Sportbiz' for the commercial take-over of sport, and in the *Lords of the Rings* two journalists, Vyv Simpson and Andrew Jennings, fresh from successful exposés of corruption in Scotland Yard and in the Iran-Contra affair, turned their investigative talents to the International Olympic Committee. This proved to be a much tougher nut to crack, but they still came up with a searing indictment of the way the Olympic Games, encouraged by 'The Club' run by the 'Lords of Lausanne' have been besmirched with drugs, power politics and old fashioned money. The conclusions of these journalists have in turn been given some academic support with two books on the Olympics in which the same themes inevitably appear. Christopher Hill, a lecturer in politics at the University of York, discusses in *Olympics Politics*, the intrigue behind the

selection of host cities for the last four Games, with an excellent chapter on the origins of the Games, and another on the politics of the two Chinas and the two Germanys. Readers of ASSH will need no introduction to Allen Guttman, and in his *The Olympics. A History of the Modern Games* they will not be disappointed by the insights he gives in this superb overview of the development of the Games from 1896 through to the lead up to Barcelona and beyond. Guttman's is a much broader study than the other books being discussed, and as such it serves to bring each of them into proper historical perspective.

The direction being taken by the Games (or sport in general) is a major source of concern for most of these writers. The future is already with us, it would appear, and as Guttman ruefully agrees, in quoting Mark McCormack, the time is not far off when an Olympic athlete will run in a Hertz uniform. What he, and many who share his view, find depressing, is that 'selling the Olympics bit by bit to the highest bidder seems to upset very few people'. It seems hard to realise now, but until the 1970s Wimbledon actually paid Slazenger for the balls they used at their tournaments. Now suppliers not only pay, but pay millions (yens, bucks or pounds) to have the chance to have their products seen on the TV screen. It is TV with its global audience that created the conditions for the revolution, and individuals like Mark McCormack in America and Horst Dassler in Europe, who brought it about.

Apart from Wilson, whose short book accentuates the positive, with frequent variations on the metaphor of the small boy being given the key to the candy store and big-eyed sports fans turned supremos asking the Almighty why they should be so blessed, Aris seems to be the least concerned about the threat to sport. Nevertheless even he regrets that 'sport the been hi-jacked by industry and TV to serve their own very different ends'. As a specialist writer on business his understanding of market forces and those who manipulate them may appear at times to indicate a certain admiration, but he does query whether in sport the marketing man should be king, and whether its driving force should be

money. The Olympic Games is only part of Aris's book, whose exposures begin with the 'Diamond Racket' of professional tennis, then go through the role of selling the star (Lendl was offered an extra \$1 million dollars on his contract in return for an occasional smile), the part played by the agent, and how various sports have been affected. Golf, with Arnold Palmer and Mark McCormack, got the dollars rolling, and as success bred success McCormack's International Management Group (IMG) soon found itself creaming commissions from a vast stable of stars whom they had made into millionaires. Individual sports like golf and tennis were the main beneficiaries, but motor racing, the living symbol of mobile advertising eyesores, and American Football, with its unabashed acceptance of sport as a commodity, also wallow in the millions created by the TV companies. By comparison soccer, and even more so cricket, are, as Aris puts it, mere Cinderellas. Cricket is mentioned only in passing by Aris, and his brief excursion into soccer reveals little feel for the game: if he really wanted to include commercial giants Rangers in his sportsbiz gallery he should have visited Glasgow itself and so spared his otherwise thorough analysis a very hollow chapter.

Athletics and the Olympic Games were two of the later sports to jump on to the commercial bandwagon, which is hardly surprising, since they have long represented the epitome of the amateur ideal, unlike golf, football and cricket, which had an open and more or less honest system of professionalism, and tennis, which had a messy battle over the issue in the 1950s and 1960s. In athletics some 'peds' ran for money, but for most athletes the ultimate prize was a medal in the Olympic Games. Now for many the medal is merely a means to a more mercenary end. Under Brundage commitment to the amateur ideal reached ridiculous proportions, but even those who regard the former president of the IOC with a certain distaste, can see aspects of his presidency that smelled more sweetly than some of the sordid manipulations that followed him.

With the growing TV interests in athletics, it was inevitable that the vast spectator appeal of track and field in particular would have

repercussions on the performers. Inside track and field the blue riband events were selected for glamour treatment, and middle distance runners were selected for specially packaged TV confrontations. Suddenly athletes training on shoe-string budgets could be faced with tempting sums for appearance money and even more for winning. This reached a peak at the Free Enterprise Games at Los Angeles in 1984, with the Decker/Budd 3,000 metres race to see who could make the most money. The sporting anti-climax in Decker's forced withdrawal had an immediate commercial response, with a specially restaged confrontation organized by a consortium of TV interests who put up £250,000 to finance a re-run of the Los Angeles disaster. As Aris says, quoting an American journalist, it was 'one of the biggest show business extravaganzas in history. It had all the elements of *Dynasty* or *Dallas* - a basic soap opera with a heroine and a villain'.

In Britain, which is Aris's point of focus, the main commercial manipulator of amateur athletics was Andy Norman, who with his encyclopedic knowledge of athletics and financial trivia paved the way for the new deal for British athletes. Alan Pascoe followed, but the entry to the new world of cash gain was not without its turmoils as some wondered whether the riches that went to the top drawers (in both senses) impoverished the sport as a whole. As the late Ron Pickering commented, a situation had been created where there was 'on the one hand a handful of millionaires and on the other thousands of paupers'. Not the stuff of which a healthy sporting climate is created.

No-one could deny the right of athletes to a reasonable financial return on their sporting talents, but the rush to riches has created new problems and something in that intangible quality that makes sport sport, has been lost. McCormack's IMG has concentrated the major professional athletes around his American stables, but in Europe it was the German Horst Dassler who virtually made the world's two greatest sporting institutions what they are today. Juan Samaranch, president of the International Olympic Committee since 1980, and Joao Havelange,

president of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association since 1974, both inherited institutions that were rich in tradition but poor in funds. Today they preside over multi-million dollar enterprises. Horst Dassler, whose role in this transformation is revealed by Wilson, analysed by Aris and given even more dynamic treatment by Simson and Jennings, was the only son of Adi Dassler who founded the shoe making firm of Adidas with his brother Rudolph, in 1924. They supplied athletes with shoes for the 1936 Olympics, and found in the Wehrmacht their biggest customer during the second World War. In 1948 the two brothers split, Rudolph founding the rival Puma. He immediately set himself up in opposition to his brother and out of the resulting 'shoe war', fought mainly in and around football stadiums and Olympic arenas, came one of the most constructive conflicts in commercial history. Horst Dassler's success lay in a love of sport, a minute knowledge of everyone in it who counted, and his burning ambition to have every sports person in the world kitted out in Adidas sporting gear. In the beginning this meant giving away free equipment by the armful, or even, as the twenty year old Horst did at Melbourne in 1956, bribing the wharfies to tie up a consignment of Puma stock so that his cousin wouldn't be able to distribute rival gifts.

More than most Horst appreciated the value of associating Adidas's distinctive three stripes with sporting success. With television, not only was the audience multiplied, but the eye of the camera could concentrate on detail missed by many of the spectators. The niggardly treatment of athletes back in the 1960s made simple gifts a welcome money saver. Soon athletes were being paid to wear the gear. *Sports Illustrated*, in an article by John Underwood entitled 'No goody two shoes', showed how the auction worked at the 1968 Olympics, with one athlete finishing up with a car from the money he got for switching from Adidas to Puma and promising to wear Puma for the rest of his life. Dassler's first major success, however, was with FIFA, and the deal he completed just after the election of Havelange in 1974, when Dassler's

lobbying almost saved the position of the outgoing president, Stanley Rous. Havelange, impressed by Dassler's influence, won him over to his own side and eventually a deal was stitched up that tied Dassler's company to FIFA, along with other major sponsors, into the next century.

The business brain behind the deal which cemented Havelange's control of FIFA by allowing him to reward the Third World countries that had ensured his election, was Patrick Nally. This was done by targeting major would-be sponsors on exclusive deals, rather than opening the field to all comers. First in line was Coca-Cola, (The typically catchy chapter title on this in Simson and Jennings is 'Dassler takes Coke') a long time friend of sport with its appeal to the young and fit; other quality multi-national companies followed. The Nally/Dassler partnership came to an end shortly after the 1982 World Cup, according to Simson and Jennings because Nally did not like what Dassler was doing to sport, although in Wilson's book Nally speaks warmly of Dassler and puts the split down to money: Nally was working for virtually no return to guarantee Dassler's promises to sports federations. Between them, Dassler with his contacts and Nally with his business expertise saved Havelange, and it was the same scheme that in turn saved Samaranch and confirmed the Latin domination of the major world sports. Samaranch owed his election as president of the IOC to the Brazilian, Havelange, who delivered the votes of the Latin countries, and Dassler who delivered those of the Third World countries. When Peter Ueberroth not only made an immense profit out of the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics, but did so without the IOC benefiting in any substantial way, Samaranch was furious. His anger, and that of the various NOCs, was not helped by the way the IOC and the NOCs helped underwrite Ueberroth's profits by sending larger teams of athletes at their own expense to offset the adverse effects of the Soviet boycott. Samaranch was determined that Olympic money would go into Olympic coffers, and so turned to Dassler's new company, International Sports and Leisure (ISL), now with a substantial

minority holding (49%) by the giant Japanese advertising agency, Dentsu.

In some ways what happened next was too simple for words, even if it did not work out quite so easily in practice. The long coveted symbols of purity and peace, the five circles of the Olympics world brotherhood, were put up for sale to select bidders. This variation of the FIFA/Havelange deal and the basis for Ueberroth's selling of the 1984 Olympics, became known as the Top Programme, discussed in detail by Hill, and with suitable histrionics by Simson and Jennings. Coke were the lead player, granted exclusive rights at the expense of all other soft drink manufacturers. Others followed: Kodak quickly made up for the mistake of not accepting what they thought was Ueberroth's extortionate charge for rights to Los Angeles, paying even more for Seoul in order to regain some of the market lost of Fuji, who did pay Ueberroth's price. Visa were accepted, to the exclusion of American Express, which greatly annoyed the British Olympic Association which had a lucrative deal with Amex. Mars paid to be the sole suppliers of confectionery, causing some embarrassment at the IOC meeting in Birmingham in 1991, when the local chocolate manufacturer, Cadbury's, graciously offered free supplies of their product, which had quickly to be swept from sight when the enormity of the error was realized. A major problem with this scheme was selling it to the major National Olympic Committees (NOCs), who often had lucrative sponsorship deals of their own: the British Olympic Association had to be persuaded with £1 million in compensation for having to break with American Express, thus paying the cost of participation for the British athletes and their hangers-on in Seoul. One benefit that emerged from this scheme is a more dignified approach to the inherently demeaning process of reducing athletes to mobile advertising hoardings, while there is an ironical twist in the commercial free arena of the Games themselves: claimed by Samaranch to be a victory for the purity of the Games, in fact a necessity to placate the American TV companies who need a 'clean' arena to attract the sponsors

who have to massacre the Games in their own particular way. Aris's forlorn conclusion in regard to the commercialisation of the Games is that the 'parasitic marketing fraternity' had broken the last bastion to Sportsbiz: the Games had 'lost their lustre' to become just one more 'opportunity for the hard, hard sell'.

Simson and Jennings expand on this theme in a no holds barred polemic against what they see as the power hungry grandees of The Club that controls the Olympics. The authors, like Aris, claim not to be experts on sport, and this at times shows, but unlike Aris they are inclined to a certain overkill. Where Aris covers a wide range of sports Simson and Jennings are concerned only about the Olympics; where Aris deals with the mechanics of Sportsbiz, they expose the personalities behind it. The result is a highly readable book, delivered in dramatic style and based largely on insider stories, above all on the evidence, often anonymous, of people who fell out with the tycoons on their way to the top. Patrick Nally, who supplied Wilson and Aris with most of their material on Dassler, seems to have opened up more fully to Simson and Jennings, and indeed given the use made of his revelations, he could well have been cited as a co-author. A great deal, too, is based on the Birmingham binges of June 1991, the last meeting of the IOC before Barcelona, and where the choice of Nagano, Japan, was made for the 1998 winter Olympics. Banned from official circles, Simson and Jennings could not be prevented from snooping around the periphery, picking up stories which did not neglect the domestic staff who, having spent a week watching gifts the one more extravagant than the other being lavished on those who held the votes, received not a penny in tips for the mess they were left to clean up.

The two main villains in *The Lords of the Rings*, (surely the most evocative title for a sports book since Peter Corris's superb history of prize-fighting in Australia, *Lords of the Ring*) are Samaranch and Nebiolo, the latter scoring only a brief mention in Aris. Samaranch is depicted with his full credentials as a faithful Fascist under Franco, a traitor to his native Catalonia who suddenly rediscovered his mother

tongue only in 1976, a year after the former dictator's death. By then Samaranch was looking around for a way in which his past might be overlooked and his talents used in the new regime. A member of the Spanish NOC since 1954, president from 1967 to 1970, and given the nod for the IOC by Brundage in 1966, Samaranch easily combined in a manner which John Hoberman would not find too difficult to explain, a love of sport, festivals and authoritarianism. A skilled ambassador, it was in this capacity that he was sent to Moscow in 1977, where his long-standing friendship with dictators stood him in good stead. It also gave him a leg into the communist fold in the IOC, a sympathy with the Third World countries, and a great opportunity to take advantage of the 1980 boycott movement by standing solid with the IOC. It was in that year that he was appointed president of the IOC.

If Samaranch is depicted as the fascist who covered over his past, Nebiolo is depicted as the protector of cheats who still managed to hold on to one of the highest offices in the Temple of Fair Play. In 1981 Nebiolo was 'installed' by Horst Dassler as president of the International Amateur Athletics Federation (IAAF), a position which he consolidated when he 'democratised' its voting procedures, introducing the principle of one-man one-vote and so giving the numerous and smaller Third World powers, whose taste in 'gifts' was simple, parity with the Europeans and the anglo-saxons. Like Samaranch and Havelange a millionaire in his own right, Nebiolo was driven by the need to be 'primo', but the ultimate power grab, presidency of the IOC, was to elude him. More than Samaranch and Havelange, on whom the trappings of royalty sat easily, Nebiolo's lust for power could appear all too vulgar. He had 1987 proclaimed the 'Year of Athletics', with the first major international indoor meet in Indianapolis, followed later in the year by the World Athletic Championships in Rome. Nebiolo's 'finest hour' in Rome, however, was tarnished by what Simson and Jennings call 'the worst example of organized cheating in the history of modern sport'. It all sprang from Nebiolo's determination that an Italian should win a medal,

justified in part by what the Italians claimed to have been cheating by American officials at Indianapolis. A TV camera left running at the long jump pit, to the ignorance of the Italian officials, proved that they had rigged the result that gave the bronze to Evangelisti. Nebiolo refused to take action when faced with the irrefutable evidence. Undeterred, he continued to eye the top job in the IOC. Unable to bribe his way into The Club, he threatened to run the IAAF World Championships as a rival to the Olympics, as a biennial event, and raising their status by restricting the participation of athletes at the Games to those under 23, as is done in soccer. When Simson and Jennings finished their book Samaranch had still managed to repel the boarder, but since then he has been invited aboard.

If the Italian was tarnished, Simson and Jennings are at pains to point out that he was in good company among those surrounding Samaranch. On the one hand were the 'flotsam and jetsam' thrown up by the collapsing Eastern Bloc countries, two of whom, Nicolae Ceaucescu (1984) and Erik Honecker (1985) were awarded the Gold Medal of the Olympics, and on the other, Kuwaiti Sheik Fahd Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, controller of 'Olympia's Black Gold', who in addition to collecting sports federations 'the way small boys collect stamps or car numbers', used his fabulous oil wealth to bribe and threaten the rest of Asia into maintaining the isolation of Israel. Killed in the Iraqi invasion of August 1990, his succession has passed to his son. Closer to Samaranch, indeed touted as his probable successor, is another multi-millionaire, Mario Vazquez Raña, the Murdoch/Packer of Mexico, while another of Samaranch's chosen is Dr Kim of Korea. Kim, we are told, looked like a killer, which is precisely what he was. A Taekwondo expert, he was also a member of the Korean CIA.

In the midst of committees awash with money from TV companies and would-be host cities, it is perhaps surprising that only one member of The Club has actually been caught for outright corruption. This was the 'lawyer from Des Moines', Robert H. Helmick, president of the

powerful USOC. That there haven't been more is fairly easily answered: most of the members of The Club already have more money than they can get rid of, and are in it for the power that comes with the office.

It is the men who control the Olympics industry (the one woman who threatened to get in the way, Monique Berlioux, was summarily dismissed) who mainly interest Simson and Jennings, and when they come to the athletes it is to investigate the scandals relating to drugs, which they claim is not being taken seriously by the officials. Ben Johnson is described at the Rome IAAF meet of 1987 waiting for his system to excrete the last traces of his drugs, his coach ready with the excuse, should his timing be wrong, that he was on treatment for gonorrhoea. There was no need: the 'monster created by drugs' won his 100 metres gold in 9.84, leaving a disgusted Carl Lewis to air his suspicions to a disinterested president of the IAAF. His revenge would have to wait a few more months, but when it came it was cold comfort. From drugs Simson and Jennings turn to a long running sore of the Olympics: when is a woman not a woman, but a man? The tenor of the discussion can be judged from the chapter heading: 'Before your very eyes'.

Simson and Jennings conclude their excoriating attack with an appeal for the Olympic Games to be restored to their pristine purity, and it is here that the authors show how limited is their knowledge of the Games. Throughout the book there are odd mistakes - Hitler's Nazis being awarded the 1936 Games, the Russians 'boycotting' the Games for 40 years after 1912, and others that give a dramatic impact. Only one book is acknowledged, on Samaranch's political background. The authors must have had access to Wilson's book, or his articles in the *Daily Mail*, but his 'revelations' are not mentioned, let alone any more general work on the Games. It would appear, then, that their history did not go much beyond the dinner table conversations that otherwise yielded so many titbits. This is driven home in the conclusion where the authors come up with some statements that will raise the eyebrows of anyone whose knowledge of the Games goes further back than 1980. Unlike

Jean-Marie Brohm and company who find in the Olympic Games a Fascist Festival, the authors believe that the ideals of the Olympics are 'the bedrock of a democratic way of life', and in a moment of hyperbole in praise of the Games as breathtaking as some of their condemnations of The Club elsewhere in the book, they deplore the way 'our sport.... was hi-jacked and then raped by commercial interests', They take hope, however, that 'there is still time to rescue its beauty and purity'. Before Samaranch came to power, they seem to believe, all was sweetness and light.

Guttmann's study of the modern Olympics was not available to Simson and Jennings when they wrote their book, but it is unlikely that they would have allowed it to influence their comments. They might have had to tone down some of their language, regulate some of their rhetoric, and so perhaps have made their book a less riveting read, but it need not have led them to change their essential criticisms. They are right to denounce the degrading of the Games, to bewail the primacy of commerce over the athletic spirit, and to react in horror to the scandals of the procedures for granting the venues for the Games and the essentially corrupting practice of giving 'gifts', (something which our own society should keep well in mind should any of its members be tempted to engage in such practices). But to imagine that all this was a creation of the Samaranch years; to imply that Brundage and his cronies were not as besotted with power and glory as Samaranch and The Club, is to reveal not a short historical memory, but total ignorance. Simson and Jennings wear their outraged idealism on their sleeves, and few objective students would challenge the justice of their cause, but more history and less hysteria would have led to a more convincing argument.

Like Simson and Jennings, Christopher Hill concentrates on the Samaranch years, particularly the politicking behind the choice of host cities. Hill's criticisms are well grounded, some based on Wilson and Aris, and he makes no secret of his concern about the path down which the Games have descended. Like anyone familiar with the snobbery and

dishonesty of amateurism he has no objections to athletes being paid, but even Hill admits to being 'a little disgusted by the extremes of commercial activity into which the Olympic movement has fallen'. Better balanced than Simson and Jennings, he does acknowledge that the money 'is recycled for the good of sport', but cannot help himself from wondering 'if there are any limits to commercialism'.

Unlike *The Lords of the Rings*, Hill's *Olympic Politics* is unlikely to be best seller, and not just because of the ridiculously high price of the book. This is a well rounded discussion, carefully weighing up all the arguments, and drawing on archival and printed sources. Not for him, presumably, the journalists' expense account that eased the cost of Simson and Jennings' travel, or perhaps even any inducements to help get Patrick Nally talking freely about his association with Dassler, or to gain entry to other 'Olympic insiders' willing to reveal the indiscretions of members of one of the most hermetically sealed organizations in what is supposed to be a democratic world. There are many connected with the Games who are openly appalled at what has been happening to the Olympic movement, but it is the revelations of the insiders that give the Simson and Jennings book its flavour.

Hill's book is essential reading for any student of the recent Games, with particularly good coverage of the 1980 and 1984 boycotts, the manner of bidding for host city, and the political and commercial atmosphere in which the Games are conducted. He writes well and his conclusions are not terribly different from those of Simson and Jennings, but although he gives a more balanced picture than they his intellectual honesty means that this will always be an academic rather than a popular book.

Bridging the gulf between quality journalism and academic rigour that is such a desired goal of sports history is Guttman's *The Olympics*. Here is a book as readable as it is profound, casting a majestic sweep over the Games from 1896, portraying politics not as an aberration but as an inevitable feature of a movement profoundly political in its aim of

bringing about international understanding, driven by the nationalism it is supposed to supersede, and run by fallible human beings who were in no way superior to the politicians who plunged the world in this time into the most disastrous wars in human history.

Despite the vast amount that has been written on the Modern Olympics, until Guttmann there was no single volume study of the Games by a single author that dealt with the social, political and cultural background. Richard Espy, *The Politics of the Olympics Games* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1979) concentrates on the international politics of the games since the second World War. Sasha Soldatow, *The Politics of the Olympics* (Melbourne: Cassell Australia, 1980) is essentially a series of essays on the games inspired by the sudden intrusion of Carter and his cohorts into the sporting arena for purely personal political ends, while David B. Kanin *Political History of the Olympic Games* (Westview, Boulder, 1981) falls far short of the book's title. Guttmann's study, as could be expected from an author who has done more than most to enrich the study of sports history, brings together existing scholarship and garnishes it with his own vast knowledge, to produce a book that is both concise and comprehensive. He covers the Games from their restoration through to the present, written in a style to capture the fabled general reader and yet delight the most rigorous scholar. As such it is sports history at its best. Indeed the only serious criticism of this book is its length: written with admirable clarity, spiced with pithy comments and informed with shrewd judgments throughout, its mere 174 pages whets the reader's appetite, rather than sates it.

There are odd mistakes, which to point out would be nitpicking, and one could query some of the emphasis, but that would merely show the prejudice of the reader - I, for instance, would like to have seen more on the France-American disputes that were background to the 1924 Olympics, French reactions to the 1936 Olympics, and was surprised that Jules Ladoumègue does not merit at least one mention, as much for his performances as for being banned as a professional on the eve of the 1932

Olympics. And no doubt the works discussed above could provide material for at least one new chapter - it is indicative of the way Dassler and Co. worked in the background that they virtually escape mention in Guttman's book. For that we will have to wait for a second, larger edition.

In 1936 de Coubertin was asked what he thought of the recently completed 'Nazi' Olympics. His forthright answer was that they had fulfilled his highest expectations. It is likely that he would have similarly given his blessing to the Samaranch years. Perhaps he would express some qualms about the role of money, but he was never as fanatically bound to amateurism as most of his successors. In Guttman's description of de Coubertin wooing the high born and rich in 1894 to win them over to his idea of the revived Games, we can see Dassler decades on wooing the rich aspiring to be well born to reshape the Games in his own image. As a Frenchman de Coubertin would probably have been as appalled as Monique Berlioux at the vulgarity of the Los Angeles opening ceremony, but besotted as he was with the notion of the Games as 'ritual and fanfare', he would have been thrilled at the spectacle of the 1988 and 1992 Games. In Brundage and Samaranch he would have admired men who kept alive his creation, regardless of the politicking and authoritarianism that this necessitated. To this end he would no doubt have been prepared to overlook the commercial trappings of recent times, as he did the political overtones of the 1936 Games.

There is much more continuity in the IOC leadership than Simson and Jennings are aware of. Between the Old Boy view of sport, with its class and colonial arrogance approaching racism, that was the inspiration of the Games, and the conservatism of the closed coven of conservatives who ruled in the post-Coubertin era, through to today's self-picked grandees of fascist cum communist backgrounds, now inspired by the ethos of capitalist commercialism, there is a common core of elitism. What has changed is the anglo-saxon dominance and the primacy of amateurism with all the idealism and hypocrisy that went with it. Now the one has gone along with the other, although leaders of the IOC can

still mouth platitudes about the beauty of the struggle rather than the prize, or the primacy of the individual over nations. Samaranch and Havelange make no secret of their contempt for the Anglos', Nebiola is pure Latin, and even Dassler, so Wilson tells us, complained to Nally that he was too 'Anglo-Saxon and should be more Latin in [his] outlook'. Once again we have sport mirroring life. The British no longer rule the moral world, nor the Americans the commercial, in sport or other fields.

Today's youngsters probably consider the crass commercialisation of sport to be as normal - and even as necessary! - as ads on TV. Brought up to see athletes as mobile sandwich boards, sports arenas as giant supermarkets and deprived of seeing some of the best sport on the venerable and non-venal ABC, for them sport is as alive and well as it ever has been. The disease has entered their soul. Historians who have read pronouncements on the death of sport since its birth, however, must pause in their condemnation of present day practices. They must be wary of appearing like those before them criticizing professionalism in the 1880s and thereafter, denouncing the gigantism and commercialism of football (and even cricket) at the turn of the century, making cynical comments on the political problems of the Olympics in the 1920s, which reached unprecedented heights in 1936 only to be surpassed in the years of the cold war and decolonisation, and, finally, bemoaning the commercialism, ever present, but entering its take-over stage with TV in the 1960s. And yet...!! It is hard not to believe that attitudes to sport are changing - and not for the best. Agents and sponsors rule today as they never did in the past, and while more athletes are better off than they ever have been, the dignity of sport has been damaged in the process. Some athletes, in the past tied to a parsimonious contract, are now virtually owned by the sponsors, while some tournaments are actually owned by them. Nor is it just historians, showing more their age, perhaps, than historical insights, who voice such laments. On the eve of the FIFA/IOC commercial revolutions, that arch enemy of old-time amateurism, Jack Kramer, the tennis impresario,

pondered in his 1979 autobiography, *The Game. My 40 years in Tennis*, whether the greed of the players was for the “good of the game”, and condemned them for acting “every bit as irresponsibly toward the game as the old amateur officials used to”.

In the new age of the sponsor the game may not be the same, but no doubt it will go on, for better and for worse, as it always has.