

Richard Giulianotti and John Williams, eds, *Game Without Frontiers: Football, Identity and Modernity*. Arena, Aldershot, 1994. pp. 351. £14.95 paperback.

In the bibliography to my *Football: A History of the World Game* that came out in 1994, I commented on how up until a couple of years previously there had been very little serious literature on football. Even then the trickle was becoming a healthy stream and now it could well become a pleasing deluge, as the people's game (in whatever code) makes up for the neglect formerly bestowed upon it.

To the fore in the birth of soccer studies have been John Williams, long associated with, but now departed from, the Leicester School and their works on soccer hooliganism, and Richard Giulianotti, a more recent arrival, who, a sociologist like Williams, still has to overcome somewhat he lacks in stylistic clarity, however, Giulianotti makes up for with enthusiasm for his work, mainly on the (more extreme) fans.

This book of essays edited by Giulianotti and Williams stems from a conference the former organised at the University of Aberdeen in 1992, and includes fourteen articles by scholars representing various nations: Argentina, Australia, Austria, England, Germany, France, Italy, Scotland — for this international approach alone the book deserves plaudits. Certainly Eduardo Archetti, Siegfried Gehrman and Pierre Lanfranchi have appeared in the *International Journal of the History of Sport*, thus helping to make their work available to those restricted to English, but it is good to see more examples of the work of France's Michel Raspaud and Patrick Mignon, Antonio Roversi from Italy and Roman Horak from Austria, all of whom have made significant contributions to the history of the game in their own languages. Inevitably in such a compilation, the contributions are of uneven quality, but overall there is enough material here to keep a few scholars and hundreds of students occupied for a long time.

The works have more of a sociological than historical bias, but the themes of 'Tradition and Modernity', 'Identities: Local, Ethnic, National and 'Subcultures of Opposition' (hooliganism) hold it together. For the more serious student of the game, much of the material will be fairly familiar, but for others it is an excellent introduction. Wray Vamplew is here in a more unfamiliar role discussing violence in Australian soccer, John Williams has an interesting chapter on a local black club, Highfield

Rangers, struggling to get by against racism and the continuing cuts in municipal expenditure so beloved of those who at present rule the economic roost. (Williams mentions in passing a young Highfield Rangers star called Dion Dublin who had just gone on the make it in the professional ranks — it would be interesting to know if any of the millions Dublin now makes each year are passed back to the people who gave him his start: if other stars who owed their initial success to voluntary efforts and who are now millionaires are anything to go by, probably not much, such as the ethos of market forces).

Lanfranchi's chapter on the spread of soccer around the world attracted my particular attention, not just because I have written two books on the subject, but because of the innate suspicions I have of most 'revisionist' histories. Lanfranchi first aired his views about the overemphasis on the role of the British in the spread of Association Football at our Canberra conference in 1990, and here he sets out additional points. To emphasise my own views on the subject I deliberately entitled one of the chapters in *The World Game*, 'A Very British Beginning', upsetting, I fear, at least one other French scholar on the history of soccer. I am no more convinced by Lanfranchi's argument in this book, tackling which I find a bit like trying to eat porridge with a knife and fork. Moreover, much of what Lanfranchi has to say in his article in this book is contradicted by others in the same volume.

Lanfranchi wants to play down the 'aristocratic' British model, the importance of the British in spreading the game abroad, sees the game as more middle class than is generally recognised, and places more importance on the role of technocrats than engineers in its spread. There is, of course, truth in all that Lanfranchi says, but this does little to undermine the orthodox interpretation: that a game favoured but the aristocracy was codified by the rising middle classes halfway through the nineteenth century and became the game of the people throughout most of England and Scotland before the end of the century. The game was then spread, incidentally, by those in the service of British imperialism, the missionaries and the military, as well as the entrepreneurs, clerks and skilled workers of the industrial revolution. They did not consciously set out to spread the game, but simply wanted to play it when they got a chance to do so in their leisure time, and if the locals wanted to join in or play against them they were usually welcomed. These locals then became infected by the visitors or the expatriates and eventually organised leagues,

cups and other competitions. All of this I have chronicled in detail elsewhere.

In attacking the 'orthodox' view, Lanfranchi takes most of his evidence from southern France and the contiguous regions, but with all due respect to such charming towns as Nîmes and Sète, they hardly compare in the annals of soccer with the likes of Buenos Aires, Rio, Milan, the Ruhr ... Certainly France, through FIFA, Jules Rimet and two of the world's greatest sporting competitions, the World Cup and the European Cup, will always have an honoured place in the history of football, but its teams and its supporters are not in the same league of fanaticism as those of central and southern Europe or most of Latin America.

Lanfranchi quotes Gehrman as evidence of how soccer was a 'white collar' game in Germany until the 1930s, but it seems clear to me that Gehrman's history of Schalke 04 (articles in the *International Journal of the History of Sport* and a chapter in this book) clearly place this team of 'proles' and 'polacks' as a major threat to the middle-class rulers of the game in Germany in the early 1920s. Interestingly, Schalke, the Collingwood of German football, do not seem to have had any direct British influence, unlike many other German teams, while four of the pioneers of German football were besotted Anglophiles: the Schriker brothers, Ferdinand Hüppe and Walter Bensemman. Lanfranchi himself has shown the role of Swiss technocrats and educationalists in the spread of the game, but few countries had closer links with Britain, and the most famous Swiss team, Grasshopper-Zurich, still have their curious English name and play in the colours of Blackburn Rovers.

Lanfranchi is wrong to claim that in 1913 'only a few hundred bystanders' watched the game in Europe (among others, see Horak in this book for the crowds in Austria), while there is nothing to be gained from the claim that at a game in one of Paris's most working-class suburbs in 1910 (Pantin) less people (200) attended a football match than the local casino. Apart from the fact that the working class in France adopted soccer later than outside Britain before 1914 in any case) hundreds of cases of even smaller crowds could be cited at major cities in Britain, which ignores tens of thousands attending other games at the same time.

As in all revisionist histories it is good that established orthodoxies be given a shake now and then, and it is to be hoped that local histories continue to unearth the unrecorded contributions of forgotten pioneers. But I doubt if the picture painted from the example of the great soccer

nations of the world (most of which are ignored in Lanfranchi's chapter) will alter the claim made by the FA in its official history, that Association Football has been Britain's 'most enduring export'. That it was taken over and given completely new dimensions by its former pupils is another story. And that is a story that will be pursued for a long time to come, as this and other volumes like it, increasingly make clear.

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