

## Apartheid, Sport and New Zealand

Trevor Richards, *Dancing on Our Bones: New Zealand, South Africa, Rugby and Racism*. Wellington, Bridget Williams Books, 1999. pp. 300. Notes, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$NZ39.95.

Malcolm Templeton, *Human Rights and Sporting Contacts: New Zealand Attitudes to Race Relations in South Africa 1921-94*. Auckland, Auckland University Press, 1998. pp. 374. Notes, illustrations, bibliography, index. \$NZ39.95.

Rugby Union is one of the three iconographic markers of New Zealand – a role it shares with New Zealand's indigenous Maori and with a fading but persistent attachment to England. These three factors: rugby, Maori and fading imperial attachments point to the significance of the issues at the heart of Richards' and Templeton's journey across twentieth century New Zealand history.

Apartheid sport was one of the major political, social and cultural issues that confront New Zealand in the latter half of the twentieth century. It put New Zealand at the centre of multilateral international sporting boycotts (in 1976) produced near civil war and the largest sustained anti-apartheid demonstrations outside South Africa (in 1981), and made New Zealand the pariah of the Commonwealth (from 1976 to 1984). Yet, very little has been written aside from a handful of journal articles and more popular accounts dealing with aspects of campaigns. Amid the plethora of New Zealand rugby books, only a few note that apartheid politics was central to the sports contact question, and only one has taken the anti-apartheid movement seriously. In this context, Templeton's and Richards' books are major contributions: they are, in effect, the totality of the historiography. Surprisingly, however, the only similarities are the understated centrality of rugby union, the focus on New Zealand-South Africa relations, and a renunciation of apartheid.

Trevor Richards was on New Zealand Prime Minister Robert Muldoon's list of enemies for several years; a position he shared with trade union leaders and others who disrupted Muldoon's conservative populist politics. Muldoon's 1976 allegations of treason were levelled at Richards not because he sought the revolutionary overthrow of the state, but because he sought the complete isolation of South Africa. *Dancing on Our Bones* is a lively and highly readable account of the anti-apartheid movement in New Zealand presented with a clarity and critical assessment seldom seen in a partisan's account. It places the intensity of the protests against the 1981 Springbok tour in an historical context of discontent since at least 1921. In doing so, the book undermines a tendency to nostalgia where the period is seen as a difficult one-off time, a burst of activity the country went through to blow out the cobwebs and become something new.

*Dancing on Our Bones* is very much Richards' account of the anti-apartheid campaigns of the 1970s and 1980s. Richards was, during the 1970s, the face of the New Zealand anti-apartheid movement and remained the

international face of New Zealand's campaigns until the mid-1980s. Despite this personal centrality, Richards is humble about his role. The book does not give the impression that Richards is indulging in self-aggrandisement. Rather, there is a clear sense the he was an activist because something needed to be done and he was well placed to do it.

Whereas *Dancing on Our Bones* carries with it the passion and excitement, the drama, the challenge and at times the fear of activism in the anti-apartheid movement, Malcolm Templeton's *Human Rights and Sporting Contact* presents a parallel strand in the geopolitics of apartheid. Templeton was a senior Foreign Affairs official and is, in this capacity, present in this diplomatic history of New Zealand's relations with apartheid South Africa. As a history of diplomatic activity, Templeton has constructed a text from official archives: the bibliography features only nine published articles, three theses and nineteen books—but there are at least 54 different Foreign Affairs files cited and many newspapers.

Templeton is clear, careful and cautious in his writing and his assessments. His perspective is of one who was involved in some capacity in many of the issues as a government official required to 'protect New Zealand's national interests and enhance its international reputation' (p. viii). In contrast, Richards' book represents the 'reflective recollections of a partisan' (p 5). These differences contribute greatly to the sense that these are companion volumes. Like Richards, Templeton historicises relations between the two countries including a brief discussion of New Zealand(er)s attitudes to race, linking the South Africa question to the (mainly unofficial) white New Zealand immigration policy.

Despite the strengths of the two volumes, both individually and as companions, a profound gap remains: neither adequately answers the question 'Why rugby union?' In some ways this is an unfair criticism in that the cultural analysis of rugby union in New Zealand is profoundly underdeveloped, and to be fair to both writers they do reflect on the significance of rugby: Richards in his brief penultimate chapter and Templeton in numerous places throughout the text. Neither set out to address the question of rugby union, but the question of New Zealand's relations with apartheid. It just so happens that the primary relationship was through rugby. That rugby was so significant in both New Zealand and South Africa meant that the trauma of the 1981 anti-tour campaign and the final exclusion of South Africa from international rugby after 1985 cut to the core of relationships between and within the countries. There have been some recent forays into the international relationships questions, but the 1981 tour campaign remains largely unexamined in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Rugby's centrality in the cultural politics of Aotearoa/New Zealand, the unarticulated contest to depict the nation, and the core significance of colonial relationships in those politics, make the question of rugby and apartheid one of the fundamental questions of late twentieth century New Zealand. The ways in which that debate was articulated has profoundly influenced the shape of politics since the mid-1980s. Although apartheid has disappeared

from the debate, the legacy of its politics continues in the emerging post-colonising Aotearoa/New Zealand and the shape of its political culture. At the heart of rugby's role in New Zealand's cultural politics is the significance and meaning of Maori rugby. Pakeha (white) New Zealand's attitudes to Maori rugby, linked with its views of Maori as warriors and labourers rather than intellectuals or leaders, remain fundamental to the legitimacy of apartheid sport for many Pakeha New Zealanders. Both exist as central factors in colonial relationships.

That Richards and Templeton do not address these questions, and the iconography of rugby to a greater degree, does not fundamentally weaken or undermine these books: they remain excellent companion volumes in New Zealand's engagement with apartheid, and major contributions to the international literature on the cultural and sporting campaigns against apartheid. It is for others to extend the cultural and historical analyses of rugby union and in doing so unravel the quotidian significance of rugby union as a key cultural icon. Effective research and critical unpicking of the contested cultural tapestry that is rugby union with its classed, gendered and colonising weave will enrich the context within which these two volumes exist, and as a result enrich their meaning. In the meantime, they should be core elements of any analyses of the international politics of apartheid sport. To ignore them will be to ignore the single most important bilateral component of that campaign.

Malcolm MacLean  
Cheltenham and Gloucester College of Higher Education

### **Sports History: Views from Australia and Britain**

Douglas Booth and Colin Tatz, Colin. *One-Eyed: A View of Australian Sport*. Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 2000. Pp. 262. Notes, illustrations, bibliography, index, A\$24.95.

Martin Polley, *Moving the Goalpost: A History of Sport and Society Since 1945*. Pp. 236. Notes, bibliography, index, £12.99.

Academic books that are at once pitched at a wider readership -often referred to as an intelligent lay readership – are prone to fall between two stools. That is to say, they usually offer a level of analysis too slim to satisfy the academic readership, but are still either too dry or jargonised to interest the general reader. *One-Eyed* by Douglas Booth and Colin Tatz largely avoids this pitfall. The book provides a comprehensive social history of Australian sport drawing on a vast stock of reference material from published academic work, newspapers and biographies of sports people. The book does not offer theoretical insights for sociologists and historians of sport, and it makes no claim to do so. Its value to academics lies in the wealth of material covered and in the systematic way it is connected with the historical periods covered across the book. The historical, rather than sociological, approach is useful