

Macintosh, D., Bedecki, T., and Franks, C. E. S. *Sport and Politics in Canada: Federal Government Involvement Since 1961*. Kingston: McGill-Queen's, 1987. Pp. ix, 210. References, index. \$25.00.

During the last two decades, the Olympic sports in Canada have become public enterprise. The nature of facilities, the character and ambition of training and competition, the preparation and employment of coaches, technical specialists, and administrators, and the basis of funding have been largely determined, if not explicitly dictated, by the federal agency Sport Canada and its provincial counterparts. The best Canadian athletes, such as sprinter Ben Johnson—the star and the scandal of the Seoul Olympics—are both pushed by and heavily dependent upon this system of state support. From the time of his first major championship in 1980, for example, Johnson received large amounts of state financial and technical assistance. Even in the two years prior to Seoul, when he was earning a rapidly growing income from sponsorships, he benefited from approximately \$100,000 in direct annual grants for living and travel expenses, equipment, and coaches' and masseurs' salaries.

While state support for sport is common throughout the world, in most capitalist countries it has been funnelled through quasi-independent "arm's-length" agencies such as the British Sports Council and the Australian Sports Commission. But in Canada, the state participates directly and ministers of the crown and senior civil servants are highly visible players, setting performance targets and working conditions for athletes and entire federations, boasting about (or defending) Canadian performances in international competition and intervening in crises. At the 1978 Commonwealth Games in Edmonton, for example, it was Sports Minister Iona Campagnolo—not the leader of the Canadian Team—who publicly announced medal quotas for Canadian athletes on the eve of the Opening Ceremony and took the credit when they surpassed expectations. The remarkable photo of jubilant athletes carrying her into the Stadium during the Closing Ceremonies, as if she were the one responsible for their success, illustrates the cover of this book.

*Sport and Politics in Canada* is the most comprehensive account published about this system of state-driven sport. The authors have not only brought a wealth of experience to the task—principal author Macintosh has been both Olympic athlete and a successful university sports administrator while associ-

ate Bedecki is a former head of Sport Canada-but through interviews and seminars (at the Queen's University Centre for Sport and Leisure Studies founded by Macintosh) they have canvassed the views of those directly involved and other scholars (including this reviewer) alike. The result is a welcome synthesis of personal accounts and scholarship.

The authors' major focus is the government's decision, taken in the late 1960s, to embark upon the aggressive development of elite athletes. When the Diefenbaker Government created the Fitness and Amateur Sport Programme in 1961, it sought broad participation in sports and fitness, with government merely providing financial assistance to the autonomous sports and recreation associations. Sports leaders and the opposition political parties both agreed with this approach. So the turn to "high performance" under Prime Minister Trudeau represented a striking change. Macintosh & Co. argue that the explanation can be found in the crisis of the Canadian state which characterized these years. The resurgence of Quebec nationalism, demands by resource-rich western provincial governments for greater autonomy, the accelerating Americanization of popular culture and other pressures served to undermine the ability of the federal government to speak for all Canadians. In the search for symbols of pan-Canadian unity, sport was a "natural," especially in the age of colour television. The authors show that while proposals for more intensive development had circulated within the sports community for years, it was a small group of politicians and senior civil servants dedicated to the tasks of "national unity" who actually took the initiative to implement them. The decision by the International Olympic Committee to award the 1976 Olympics to Montreal-creating new pressures for improved Canadian performances-served to reinforce the new direction, but it did not prompt it.

Another focus of *Sport and Politics in Canada* is the consequences of the new state programs for athletes, coaches, and the general public. The authors argue that the new programs have contributed to higher levels of public fitness and a much improved infrastructure for the Olympic sports. As a result, Canadian performances are generally better, measured by the world list, than at any time since the Second World War. At the same time they point out that the heavy pressure from the state to win has greatly eroded the traditional autonomy of the sports governing bodies and turned athletes into underpaid state ideological workers. In many thoughtful ways, they have anticipated the major questions now being pursued by the judicial inquiry which the government was forced to appoint in the wake of the Johnson disqualification in Seoul. To bring about change, they call for the creation of an independent, nationally representative sports council, with Sport Canada becoming its administrative arm, and a regular, nationally representative sports congress.

Although sometimes their chronology of development is confusing-they frequently return to a set of events to discuss it under a different heading-the strength of this book is its treatment of the sport-specific issues. The authors are much less ambitious in their analysis of the theoretical or interpretative questions raised by the Canadian case: how do we account for the striking acquies-

cence (or outright encouragement) of the largely male and middle-class Canadian sports leadership to the state's initiative? Given government's heavy investment in international games such as the Montreal and Calgary Olympics, and Sport Canada's active encouragement of commercialization, to what extent did the aggressive development of elite athletes also serve the interests of capital accumulation? In their effort to consider all the available scholarship, they have tended to close points of debate rather than pursue them.

But on the whole, *Sport and Politics in Canada* is a very important contribution. I expect it will be the standard reference for years to come.

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