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TYGIEL, JULES. *Baseball's Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy*, Expanded Edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997. Pp. x, 413. Index, photos. \$14.95 pb.

Volumes of articles have been written commemorating the fiftieth anniversary of Jackie Robinson crossing the color line in organized baseball. Arnold Rampersad has written Robinson's authorized biography titled, *Jackie Robinson: A Biography* (1997). Included among these works was the re-release of Jules Tygiel's *Baseball's Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy*.

While the primary focus is on Dodger general manager Branch Rickey and Robinson, Tygiel analyzes the forces that denied blacks access to organized baseball and the various individuals and societal pressures that attacked the conspiracy of silence. He provides an in-depth and critical look at Rickey's strategy for integration and acknowledges that his motives were a culmination of economics, the desire to exploit a new source of baseball talent, a commitment to humanitarian principles, and the desire to move beyond the limited world of baseball and influence developments in the broader society. While Tygiel praises Rickey's courageous action, he also criticizes his unnecessary caution. Moreover, Tygiel provides an extensive examination of Robinson's trials and tribulations, explores his impact on attendance, illustrates how his on and off the field behavior influenced people to reassess their racial views, and discusses the pride he infused in the black community and their response to him. For Tygiel, Robinson, more than any other individual of his generation, dramatized attention to the inequalities in American society while, at the same time, confirming that the dream encompassed all, regardless of race.

Tygiel's work remains the only definitive account that transcends the usual accounts of Rickey's search for black players or the trials and tribulations Robinson confronted during his playing days with the Dodgers. He provides an insightful examination of the racial developments in the minor leagues—an area that still requires historical inquiry. He examines the role that desegregation of baseball played in the struggle against Jim Crow. Moreover, Tygiel takes the story of baseball integration up to 1959 when the Boston Red Sox became the last major league team to sign a black player. In the process, he describes the plight of black stars like Roy Campanella, Don Newcombe, Larry Doby, and Willie Mays.

Tygiel adds an afterword to his expanded edition. Unfortunately, this addition is also the book's weakness. Tygiel examines the legacy of Jackie Robinson fifty years after his triumph in an America in which integration strategies—like busing and affirmative action—are on the defensive; in an America in which black nationalism and separatism win a welcome audience in black communities.

A crucial weakness in addressing this legacy is Tygiel's assertion that black nationalism and separatism reached a nadir in public support in the post-World War II years. According to Tygiel, "Integrationist thought reigned virtually unopposed in black America in the 1940s and 1950s" (p. 347). Such assertions are not only problematic, but a misrepresentation of the black experience in the postwar era. Since the 1850s, a significant portion of African Americans tended

to support the ideas of black nationalism—the rejection of racial integration, the development of black socio-economic communities, and an affinity to fight against white racism. Marcus Garvey was only one of a great tradition of black leaders who expressed nationalistic tendencies that won the support of thousands and, in some instances, millions. With the emergence of the Nation of Islam after World War II, black nationalist sentiment escalated within the black rural South and urban North. Malcolm X did not emerge in a vacuum in the 1960s.

Another problem I have with Tygiel's afterword is his failure to recognize the black middle class as the primary beneficiaries of integration. A central failure of the civil rights movement was its inability to empower the poor. The unemployed and working poor had little interest in the symbolic and status gains of the college students, professionals, athletes, and religious Southern middle class blacks, who had constituted the bulk of the movement prior to the Birmingham march of 1963. As the black struggle became more massive and encompassing, impatience multiplied, disobedience became barely civil, and nonviolence, at best, a mere stratagem. Within the ranks of the working poor and unemployed, black nationalism has had an audience that remains to this day.

Despite these drawbacks, *Baseball's Great Experiment* remains the most definitive work on the reintegration of organized baseball. It is still a stimulating, informative, and most interesting book to read. Moreover, it remains the standard by which other books on the Robinson legend will be judged.

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