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HILL, JEFFREY. *Sport, Leisure and Culture in Twentieth-Century Britain*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002. Pp. xi+241. Notes, further reading, index. \$80.00 cb.

In the wake of a recently developed and substantial corpus of general studies on the history of sport in twentieth-century Britain, the first question raised by Jeff Hill's volume is whether or not it significantly adds to our knowledge and/or understanding of the field. There are several reasons to answer in the affirmative. The author himself claims that, unlike many other studies on the topic, "[t]he book's 'big idea' is that sport and leisure are processes which themselves have a determining influence over people's lives" (p. 2). They are not merely the, "by-products of other *prior* developments" (p. 2). Secondly, Hill's analysis incorporates, along with sport, a broad range of leisure forms including movies, television and radio, holidays and hobbies. Further, as the author acknowledges, in developing his analyses he draws on a number of schools of thought ranging from, "the 'postmodern' methodology from which some of the perspectives . . . take their cue" (p. 3), to a "fairly traditional empirical approach to its subject matter" (p. 183). Hill's study thus challenges modernist assumptions regarding the preponderantly positive impact of change and incorporates diverse perspectives (including those based on gender, race, regionalism and social class), into its consideration of the major trends within sport and leisure. In a more traditional manner, Hill pays significant attention to the role of institutions, both political and social.

In selecting an organizational form for his study, Hill eschews a chronological scheme and instead takes a tripartite approach, building his discussion around distinct modes for the "delivery" of sport and leisure—commercial, voluntary and public. Each chapter ends with a chronology of relevant events, thus providing a valuable aid for those readers without a detailed knowledge of the topic.

How far does his chosen methodology enable Hill to fulfil his stated intentions? On this, my overall judgment is quite far, particularly because Hill effectively develops and clearly conveys two important themes that are relevant across the various fields of leisure that he discusses. The first is the general pattern of change that, for better or worse, has steadily squeezed the voluntary mode of delivery as both the commercial and public sectors have expanded. Despite such pressures, the voluntary mode has displayed considerable resilience. Hill's second focus is on the persistent effort, originating well before 1900, on the part of various elements among the "respectable" classes, to coerce, cajole, and educate most Britons into adopting constructive and "improving" leisure habits. Such efforts sought to guide them away from sporting and leisure activities that were deemed to be mere entertainment, that encouraged idleness or, worse still, that involved dissolute behaviors such as gambling, drunkenness or violence. Hill depicts no simplistic outcome

but rather a complex interplay between attempts to control or shape popular culture and the resistance that they met. In general, commercial interests have been more closely attuned to popular tastes than have the work of "improvers," whether operating through voluntary organizations or the state.

By compressing such a wide-ranging topic into a relatively compact volume, Hill runs the risk that almost any reader will find fault with the selectivity involved and object to the exclusion of one or more subject areas that she or he deems too important to have suffered such a fate. I am no exception to this trend. Between competitive sport on the one hand and the leisure activities discussed in this book, lie many forms of physical recreation that are given short shrift by Hill. Some, such as cycling, swimming, fishing and horse riding are the same activities as sports but pursued in a non-competitive fashion. Others, such as hiking, are simply recreational. The absence of a chapter on such activities is regrettable for two reasons. First, they collectively provide a primary site for contest between commercial, voluntary, and governmental influences and actions. Secondly, because many such activities are undertaken wholly or partly in the pursuit of individual physical fitness, they are very relevant to the extensive literature that has recently developed concerning the body as a site of contested control. From the Women's League of Health and Beauty of the 1930s to the more recent crazes for jogging and various forms of aerobics, the commitment of individual leisure time, the opportunity for commercial exploitation and the concerns of government, local and national, have been involved in a complex of interactions the discussion of which would have fitted in well with the main themes that Hill develops.

Despite this omission, *Sport, Leisure and Culture* generally achieve the author's stated intentions. Hill presents this wide-ranging topic in a manner that makes it accessible to the non-specialist and also gives food for thought to those more familiar with the subject matter. The mix of approaches adopted here makes it possible to ask new questions in a manner that is intelligible across the discipline; methodology advances—rather than obscures—meaning.

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