

Chris Harte and Warwick Hadfield, *Cricket Rebels*, QB Books, New South Wales, 1985. Illus., pp. 774. \$5.95 paper.

Rarely do books rushed into print at the end of cricket tours generate a great deal of refreshing insight into the activities that took place on or off the playing field. This slim paperback which tells us something of the events leading up to the 'rebel' Australian cricketers' tour of South Africa in 1985-86 is no exception to this personal observation. Much of what is written in *Cricket Rebels* comes as no surprise to the reader, particularly those who read the quality newspapers. If there are few revelations or enlightening information in the eight brief chapters, there will be a readership, which finds the compilation of the details and the behind-the-scenes account of the story leading up to the tour, of interest and enjoyment.

The introductory chapter is promising enough: it includes a short resume of the historical plight of South African cricket and the decision taken in 1894 to leave Krom Hendricks, a Malaysian

fast bowler of undoubted talent, out of the team to tour England in that year. But this is followed by the briefest of chapters which gives a superficial treatment to the wilderness years of South African cricket. Again, in the following chapter devoted to the role of Dr. Ali Bacher in seeking international competition for South African cricketers, it is disconcerting to find eight pages taken up by the letter Bruce Francis sent to the Prime Minister, Bob Hawke, defending the decision of the 'rebels' to tour. Overall, there is a measure of material in the book which adds little to the narrative and could be described as 'padding'. Since only 117 of the 174 pages are devoted to the text, one has to question the wisdom of devoting 11 pages to the production of an Australian Cricket Board player contract. This is particularly disappointing for those readers who might want to learn more about the reasons and motivations of the various 'rebels', other than financial rewards, for undertaking the tour of South Africa.

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