

John M. McKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: the Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960*. Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1984, Illus., pp.277 and John M. McKenzie, ed ., *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1986. Illus., PP. 264, \$US25.

While neither of these books contains anything of substance relating to the role of sport in the Empire (surely a major omission from the popular culture volume in particular) they will be of considerable interest to those sports historians considering the

wider-ranging influences of the imperial process. Their importance lies in the light shed on hitherto undemonstrated sources of influence, operating particularly at the mass rather than the decision-making levels, something which indirectly will help raise awareness about the importance of sport.

In his book on propaganda, McKenzie very early highlights the 'extraordinary durability' of the nineteenth century ideological construct lasting as it has until well into the twentieth century. Provocatively, he suggests that such durability may have helped develop major barriers to Britain's economic progress in the twentieth century. Those historians of pre- and post-colonial states within Empire and Commonwealth will recognise this as an important part of the cultural imperialism debate.

In order to assess the foundations of this ideology of Empire McKenzie investigates theatre, film, radio, exhibitions, school textbooks, loyalist associations, children's literature and much more. It is a splendidly researched book, a well ordered one, a readable one, and one which reaches out from the detail to search for wider meaning. Each reader will find a favourite section, but all are impressive as well as challenging because he concludes:

In imperial propaganda, the middle class were able to dress economic benefits in idealistic garb, substituting moral crusade for mercenary motive, romance and adventure for political and military aggression.

This is an important revision of the imperialist urge and one to match the revisionist work on colonial settings themselves. It is also an important backdrop to the Games Revolution which has distinct imperialist and ideological dimensions, so it is a touch odd that McKenzie does not make more of the movement.

In the essays on popular culture there is a similarly wide range of subjects investigated: music hall traditions, art, fiction, films, the BBC, the Empire Marketing Board and the education system (this last by Tony Mangan which reveals his very deep knowledge of the subject). The overall result is yet a further opening up of the imperialist impact which, importantly, is now creating a lot of renewed interest. The study of imperialism became very unfashionable during the 1960s and 1970s as decolonisation demanded greater attention to the colonial consequences and resistances. This new

work now reveals a lot of fields to be worked over before a full understanding of imperialism is possible.

For sports historians, and especially those of Australia, these volumes will be very instructive concerning the range of evidence consulted (Australian children's annuals deserve a very close look), the types of popular institutions investigated (the role of sport in Australian radio is a virtually untouched area), the possible sources of evidence (relatively little sports history in Australia has emanated from archival investigation) and the conclusions to be drawn.

A final word about Manchester University Press. These volumes are expensive but very well produced which augurs well for the social history of sport and social history of imperialism series to be produced by the Press with John McKenzie taking a key role. We can look forward to a lot more stimulating ideas and works.

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