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Barbara J. Keys. *Globalizing Sport: National Rivalry and International Community in the 1930s.* Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, October 2006. \$49.95 (hardcover). ISBN: 978-0-674-02326-0.

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Review by Sayuri Guthrie-Shimizu, Department of History, Michigan State University

Barbara Keys has produced a meticulously researched and tightly argued study of a historical trajectory intertwining the dissemination of sport, the rise of an “imagined” global community, and transnational cultural formation in the early 20th century. The book is truly remarkable in its analytical sophistication, breathtaking in the depth and breadth of its multinational archival foundation, and eye-opening in its elucidation of previously overlooked connections between disparate historical forces breaching the boundaries of national history. It promises to spark a wide-ranging scholarly debate over such salient historical questions as consumerism, the nature of the modern administrative state, and the role of recreation and spectatorship in the production of political legitimacy in mass society. Needless to say, it is a much-awaited integration of sports history, international history, and studies of transnational institution-building. Drawing on previously underutilized documentary collections and conducted in novel research venues not only in the United States but also in Germany, Russia, and Switzerland, the archival heavy lifting that supports this amalgamated inquiry is a model of multilingual research and scholarship.

Sayuri Guthrie-Shimizu is an associate professor of history at Michigan State University. She received her Ph. D. in U.S. diplomatic history from Cornell University and is the author of Creating People of Plenty: the United States and Japan's Economic Alternatives, 1950-1960 (Kent State University Press, 2001). She has published articles on a wide range of subjects, including baseball in U.S.-Japanese relations, "For Love of the Game: Baseball in Early U.S.-Japan Encounters and the Making of a Transnational Sporting Fraternity," which appeared in Diplomatic History, November 2004. One of the book projects she is currently working on is the history of U.S.-Japan baseball exchange between 1870s and the end of US occupation of Japan in 1952.

Among Keys' interpretive genius is her nuanced and astute analysis of the reciprocal and mutually reinforcing relationship between nationalism and transnationalism manifested through sport. Or, to quote her own words, Keys highlights “sport’s peculiar potency as a means of mediating between national and international identities” (p. 3), and examines

“the intersection of the national and the transnational in the realm of sport culture ...[and] the relationship between transnational influences, globalizing processes, and foreign cultural products, on the one hand, and countervailing pressures to assert national, local, and particularist identities, on the other” (p. 9). By charting the concomitant growth of nationalist rivalry and international community in sport in the decades before World War II, Keys shows that sport provided a new venue for nationalist rivalry and expression, while ethnocentric impulses and nationalistic policy imperatives augmented its border-penetrating power and universal appeal.

To illuminate this duality, Keys focuses particularly on the rise of the modern Olympic Games and major international competitions such as the World Cup in soccer and how they came to be regarded as a requisite marker of modern nationhood. Entry into the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and international sport federations such as FIFA (Fédération Internationale de Football Association) became an important avenue through which countries sought recognition and established legitimacy in the international community. On the other hand, achievements in international sporting competition came to be tallied and showcased as evidence of the superiority of a particular political and ideological system. No wonder, then, that boycotts of high-profile international sport competitions, most notably the Olympics, evolved in the period after World War II into quasi-international sanctions against a hosting country’s militarism or racial practices.

Keys’ skillful entwining of the rise of the international sports organizations in the early 20th century and the parallel consolidation of single national associations overseeing a particular sport within a nation-state does much to buttress her argument for the bounded reciprocity between the international and the national. FIFA is an illustrative example. Having originated in Europe, the umbrella soccer organization of “the world” fulfilled its monopolistic design in the national sphere by requiring that international matches be played only between constituent “national” associations. This inherently outsider-unfriendly structure was fortified in 1908 when the organization prohibited any games against nonmembers, whether deemed international or not. FIFA thus “ensured that any country aspiring to play top-level football had to become a member or languish in isolation” (p. 51).

This exclusionary process at the international level had domestic ramifications as well. National associations, anointed by FIFA as the nation’s singular representative to the international governing body, became the sole arbiter of rules and regulations regarding the sport within their territorial boundaries. A standardization of rules and increased uniformity of playing techniques and styles resulted from this holy alliance between the international federation and its designated national subsidiaries. Players with aspirations for public recognition in the sport, domestic and international, thus became tethered to membership requirements, player eligibility, and other dictates of the international decision-making authorities via their national enforcement arms. Further, once the principle of national representation became sanctified in the Olympics and other competitive venues, no athlete could expect to achieve fame, recognition, and an international following without first securing accreditation by the sport’s national

association, thus reinforcing the legitimacy of the nation as the basic organizing unit of sports administration and, by extension, international civil society mediated through sport.

Just as enlightening as her exegesis of this synergistic relationship of the international and the national is Keys' examination of sport systems vying for worldwide hegemony in the interwar period. In the book's middle chapters, Keys deftly surveys the competing systems of physical culture and athletic practices of the United States, Germany, and the Soviet Union, with a due consideration to the ideologies and political agendas underpinning these alternatives. What clearly emerges from this three-way comparison is competing visions of social organization articulated and pursued by these relatively new centers of gravity in the international sports arena, and the ultimate triumph of the American model of international sports competition by the eve of World War II.

In contrast to their incorrigible diffidence about binding foreign entanglements, Americans in the 1920s and 1930s were eager internationalists and, some may even argue, self-assured empire builders in the realm of cultural activity, including sport. They found in the popularization of sport an effective way to spread their own values and ideas, and believed that sport constituted a key component of what they saw as an "American way of life," embodying the best of qualities that distinguished the United States from other nations--democracy, fairness, and honesty foremost among them. As a reflection of this newfound assertiveness and self-identity, Americans athletes, coaches, trainers, and sports administrators increased their visibility and clout in the international sports scene. The government largely remained in the background in such enterprises, and two privately run organizations, the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) and the American Olympic Committee (AOC), became the key clearinghouses for international competitions and sports exchanges.

One of the alternative systems of sport was espoused by Germany, a nation with an indigenous tradition of physical culture known as *Turnen*. After assuming power in 1933, the Nazi regime sought to control culture for the sake of mass mobilization and tried, not entirely successfully, to insulate the country from the corrosive effects of transnational cultural influences, particularly the inflow of American-style commercial mass culture. In the realm of physical culture, however, the Nazis abandoned with relative aplomb the project of elevating *Turnen* as the centerpiece of a uniquely Germany cultural program and made Germany a willing member of the international sports community, inexorably conforming to the American model of individualistic, achievement-oriented sport. Lingering discomfort about the American model notwithstanding, Nazi officials actively promoted international sports contacts because they saw sport as a valuable foreign policy instrument, particularly as a way to impress upon the world the Third Reich's superiority and prestige.

The other alternative vision of physical culture emanated from the Soviet Union, where Bolshevik policy toward Western sport entailed an ideology-driven rejection of "bourgeois" culture. In the 1920s, Soviet leaders sought to eliminate the vestigial remains of "decadent" capitalist culture and to engineer cultural forms befitting the new proletarian state and its international mission. In physical culture, as in other realms of cultural activity, the Soviet state searched for an appropriate concoction of practices to increase "labor productivity,

ready workers for defense, and inculcate habits of collectivism, good hygiene, and discipline” (p. 161). In this endeavor, soccer and boxing were singled out as sports particularly detrimental to these proletarian objectives. But even the socialist regime eventually came to recognize Western international sport as a useful way to advertise to foreign workers and governments Soviet strength and to bolster its fragile legitimacy at home. The result was the top-down drive, gathering force by the mid-1930s and continuing into the postwar period, to join and surpass capitalists in capitalist sport, and the Sportintern (Red Sport International), formed in 1921 as an adjunct to the Comintern to oversee an international “proletarian sport” culture, receded into irrelevance.

Participation in international sports competitions necessitated the acceptance of federation requirements and submission to rules largely dictated by Western Europeans and, increasingly by the late 1930s, by Americans. Despite continued profession of an alternative system of physical culture, ideological antagonism towards increasing commercialism and elements of individual hero worship in Western sport, and exclusion from the bulk of international sport federations, the Soviet Union thus became inexorably exposed to an increasingly transnational cultural form called sport.

One of Keys’ intellectual feats -- and they are many -- is that she persuasively demonstrates this link between the gradual displacement of two alternative systems of physical culture and the parallel ascent of the Western capitalist model of sport and international athletic competition promoted by the International Olympic Committee and various international sport federations by the outbreak of World War II. In doing so, she also successfully portrays this conjoined historical development as another facet of globalization in the interwar period, when the world’s most self-conscious aspirants to cultural autonomy and alternative modes of social organization were subsumed into a transnational cultural regimen infused with an increasingly American -- as opposed to European -- flavor.

Flowing from this last point is an intriguing question of periodization that speaks to an audience beyond Keys’ immediate constituencies -- sports historians and international historians. Using sport and international athletic competition, most notably the Olympic Games in Los Angeles and Berlin, Keys points to another angle from which we can view the amazing degree of continuity between the prewar and postwar years and suggests a new way to conceptualize the middle decades of the 20th century as an integrated historical period. The “era” bridges the pre- and post-World War II divide, and is characterized by the growing appeal of, and subscription to, internationalized forms of mass culture in the industrialized world. Keys argues, correctly in my opinion, that “[t]he spread of modern Western sport was propelled in part by its demonstrated popularity among the masses” (p. 170). The lure of American-style mass consumerism, with its attendant commercialism, vulgarity, individualism, and particular notions of modernity, held powerful sway in societies such as Germany and the Soviet Union, where government became progressively hostile to, or remained conflicted about, American diplomatic agendas and missions in the world. With Keys’ shepherding hand, we now understand that sport offered yet another field of consumerist practices.

Although outside the scope of Keys' study, the cases of Japan and Italy, the other pillars of the 1930s version of the Axis of Evil, eminently fall into this larger pattern. As Victoria De Grazia has testified, the Italian Fascist state understood the importance of an expansive, consumer-oriented capitalism in its "rule by consent." Shunya Yoshimi's recent study of Japanese attraction to things American identifies the adoption of practices of mass consumer society as a theme that gives unifying coherence to the interwar, wartime, and postwar periods in Japanese history.¹ Indeed, Fascist and totalitarian states were fully cognizant of the value of consumption and recreational activity to their rule, and sport and athletic programs were a standard implement in the toolbox of their mobilization measures.² America's ascent as the world's predominant cultural influence owed much to this willing participation by its ideological and diplomatic foes. Keys' study joins and enriches the literature that variously historicizes World War II as a temporary interlude in this extended cultural trajectory of the 20th century and sees the interwar period as the seedtime of mass consumer society that reached its full flowering in the postwar years.

Finally, Keys' transnational history of sport has also opened a conduit to a rich vein of recent scholarly accomplishments in diaspora and migration studies, although she does not make explicit reference to this historiography. Beginning with radio's debut in the Los Angeles Olympics, the advances in modern media technologies did much to enhance the stature of the Olympics in the cognitive universe of sport's followers around the world. The extended "wiring" network mediated through sport did not leave unaffected the Japanese Americans (and *Issei* condemned to the status of aliens ineligible for citizenship) in and around the host city. As Eriko Yamamoto has shown, the athletic prowess showcased by Japanese athletes against the physically more robust Westerners during the 1932 Olympics enabled *Isseis* to reaffirm their unchanging sense of belonging to their homeland while instilling the *Nisei* generation with a newfound ethnic pride and admiration towards the distant country their parents had come from.³ *Niseis* also strategically pointed to the Japanese achievements at the LA Olympics to claim their assimilability into mainstream American society.⁴ The increasing tendency, which was identified by Nina Glick Schiller and her intellectual collaborators, for migrants to have their feet in both home and receiving societies and to maintain a "unified social field" that linked the two, already existed within the Japanese American communities in the prewar era.⁵ Sport as an internationalized

¹ Victoria De Grazia, *The Culture of Consent: Mass Organization of Leisure in Fascist Italy* (London and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981); Shunya Yoshimi, *Shinbei to Hanbei* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2007).

² For this point, I have drawn insight from Isamu Kuroda, *Rajio Taiso no Tanjo* (Tokyo: Seikyusha, 1999).

³ Eriko Yamamoto, "Cheers for Japanese Athletes: The 1932 Los Angeles Olympics and the Japanese American Community," *Pacific Historical Review* 69, no. 3 (August 2000), 399-430.

⁴ For the often seamless nature of such dual identities of Japanese America, see Eiichiro Azuma, *Between Two Empires: Race, History, and Transnationalism in Japanese America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁵ Nina Glick-Schiller, Linda Basch, and Chritstine Blanc-Szanton, "Towards a Definition of 'Transnationalism': Introductory Remarks and Research Questions," in *Towards a Transnational Perspective*

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cultural form and the media-enhanced spectacles generated by it became an essential component of such unified social fields imagined by the world's other diasporatic communities as well. When Key discerns the "synergistic dynamic of nationalism and internationalism that underlay sport's expansion" (p. 89), it is perhaps another way of deconstructing the alchemy of such transnationalism shaping the everyday lives of migrating citizens of the world.

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on Migration: Race, Class, Ethnicity, and Nationalism Reconsidered (New York: New York Academy of Science, 1992).
