



Sport

Tamir Sorek

ARAB SOCCER IN A JEWISH STATE

The integrative enclave

241pp. Cambridge University Press. £48.
978 0 521 87048 1

In the dying years of the British mandate in Palestine, a nascent Arab sports culture had emerged, based on a network of urban clubs and a new Arab-language press covering sports and infusing them with a nationalist politics. The *Nakba* of 1948 was so comprehensive in clearing the Palestinian elites from the urban areas that the small Arab communities left behind in the new Israeli state, to this day, have no knowledge or record of their predecessors. This is just one of the many small but perceptive observations in Tamir Sorek's acute and poignant survey of Arab football in Israel.

Having wiped Arabic football out, the Israelis began to rebuild it in the 1950s and 60s. Under the military occupation and rule of Arabic towns that lasted until 1966, the Histadrut and other Zionist organizations were allowed to establish football clubs as a form of social service, and as an experiment in social integration. Those clubs and the many others formed since have proved to be phenomenally popular.

Arab Israel has taken to football as perhaps the one arena of Israeli public life where the massive weight of inequalities, exclusion and repression is modulated. With huge support from Arab local government and spectators, Arab teams have climbed into the top divisions, and have consistently fielded multi-ethnic sides. Palestinian identities and insignia are played down or absent. Local identities are emphasized, even Israeli identities – crowds will usually chant in Hebrew. Arab players have starred with the Israeli national team and Arab fans have even joined the ranks of teams like Maccabi Haifa. However there are limits, even here, to Israel's capacity to treat its Arab citizens as equals.

Racism and abuse from the stands are widespread, concentrated on the notorious team of the political Right – Beitar Jerusalem. Arab players with the national team stand for the national anthem, the "Hatikva", but unsurprisingly cannot bring themselves to sing a song that so narrowly equates citizenship and Jewishness. The Islamist movement in Arab Israel has gone down the route of separation instead. After much convoluted theological reasoning their leaders have decided to support an entirely independent Islamic football league. This remains a minor force in Arab football in Israel, but Sorek wonders how much longer Israel will persist with a strategy of integration in an environment increasingly inimical to it.

DAVID GOLDBLATT



"Down Newlands valley toward Keswick and Skiddaw from Dale Head", taken at night; from *Spots of Time: The Lake District photographed by night*, by Henry I. 61pp. The Wordsworth Trust. £18. 978 1 905256 30 3. The book serves as the basis for an exhibition at the Wordsworth Trust which runs until June 22.

Travel

Evelyn Waugh

NINETY-TWO DAYS

Travels in Guiana and Brazil

214pp. Serif Books. Paperback, £9.99.
978 1 897959 53 2

Ninety-Two Days is the account (first published in 1934) of a journey Evelyn Waugh undertook in December 1932 in the interior of British Guiana, now the republic of Guyana, with a foray across the border into Brazil. Waugh chose this destination, he tells us, "because I knew so little about it". The timing was significant: his marriage had recently broken down following his discovery that he had been betrayed. As the Guyanese novelist Pauline Melville writes in an informative afterword to this attractive edition, "Humiliation drove Waugh to seek solace in what he describes as the 'most far-flung and wild region of the British Empire'". The writer was also, she suggests, after new material, some of which would find its way into the later pages of that anatomy of betrayal, *A Handful of Dust*. Travel was undertaken mostly on horseback (Waugh was an accomplished horseman who knew how to saddle and bridle his mounts) or on foot, with the occasional switch to river transport.

Waugh's descriptions of the local population are very much of their time: "They were all unattractive, squat and dingy, with none of the grace one expects in savages"; an

Indian boy "is of impenetrable skin, his race are described as 'squat and [with] blank Mongol faces'. And gold prospectors are sharp and there are fine descriptions of the place, surprisingly well attuned to the characteristically aged and prescient reference to "some of the most of Nazi patriotism".

Ninety-two days "away from the amenities of life" had been a "hard and at times arid experience", yet Waugh, returning to England, chose to stay on his own in a hotel in Bath; the suggestion that he found the writing itself difficult: "At last, relentlessly, the lugubrious morning after of wrath which I have been posting by week for five months".

Melville reveals that "some of the bears are mentioned in these pages mends the 'accuracy of Waugh's descriptions' and points out that most of this day rarely venture into the hills which, along with its indigenous people, they have both fear and a degree of respect. When Waugh described meeting five Creole governesses... lithe and adolescent Josephine Baker", Melville adds that she herself later met the woman who was then in her seventies and lived on Holloway Road in London. "All I remembered about the famous writer was that she had asked her to cut his hair."

ADRIAN TAYLOR