Politics and Military Morale

S.P. Mackenzie

In the first scholarly examination of education in current affairs and citizenship within the British Army in the twentieth century, S.P. MacKenzie charts the development of army education from its beginnings in the First World War, to its heyday in the Second World War, and analyses its final demise in the early 1950s.  
  
Based on extensive research, the book analyses the thinking which lay behind the establishment of army education schemes, their function and their effects. In particular, it explores the controversial question of the part played in Labour's 1945 election victory by the rank and file of the British Army, often asserted to have absorbed the left-wing attitudes of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs and the Army Educational Corps. This is a comprehensive and rigorous study, which makes an important contribution to the history of the modern British Army.

**Current-affairs and citizenship education**

* Army of U.K. in WW1 consists all society rather than the regular and small sized army before. This army develop moods and aspirations alien to the traditional military ethos, attitudes which, in the context of destructive war, the authorities could not ignore. In this context, current-affairs and citizenship education were seen by some as a potential modifier of mass opinion. 3-4
* General interest lectures, personal development, ibeing a good citizen, nearby being a good soldier was thwe themas.
* In war, speeches, to convey regimental achievements, the reasons for war in order to keep up spirits. General Haig’s God and Country policy to realise the great cause for which we are fighting. 5-6 Although Somme, with 400K casualties, marale of the army repoted to be good with possible effects of htose education and in-war speeches. Only after mid 1917s limits of human endurance show up, war-weariness startes with condition within country also deterirotes, food shortage etc. 8.
* Morale of army depressed. Lectures on current-affairs would serve to assure that their families were being looked after.
* Commander discussed it with chaplains: pamphlets about cause, sacrifices for better standard of living.
* Who had insight into causes of war woulşd face danger and privations better. Army order, 17
* Plan for returning civilian life, keeps spirit up, flaws on it depressed such sending them to coal mines.
* Funding to education scheme. 21lectures on explaining relailities of modern society. 21
* Lectures after war: why they retained. Explaining the reasons. Maintenance of morale education’s raison d’etre. 25
* Education of especially youngers, 18-20 years. Men of ideals, impatient, canalize their energy well.

**The sum effect of attempts to shape soldiers socio-political attitudes**

* In comparision to WW2 it was minimal. 32-39
  + Sheer number of men involved 20 lecturers for 1.75 milion soldiers not enough
  + Not all chaplains use God and Country policy, so bad conditions make them rest and refit. March 1918 attempt has admin structurebattalion level education officers in june 1918
  + Attitude of commander, prevent edu officer doing lectures

**Conclusion**:

* CAC educaiton no dramatic results. Helps create better conception on his role in society. Attention given to citizen-soldier’s pol opinions in mid war1 and after war, workforce militancy.hopes for reconstruction in both cases. Prosaic achievement.
* Weaving socio-pol considerations into the fabric of schemes is linked to army morale. 222.
* For morale to improve against Hitler, provide explanation of pol and social institutions and vision of future
* Win the hearts and minds when morale at stake, educaiton was less effective survived with egalitarian lines.
* Commanders initiative to manipulate education to promote more static view of society.
* It was Army morale, then, and its percieved relationship to social and political questions, which lay at the heart of current affairs and citizenship work and debate surrounding it: work which indicates, that a significant proportion of generals and civil servants could, under the pressure of total war and in spite of tradition and precedent, be far more attuned to the political and social realities of the day than is often thouıght. 224