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Making football global? FIFA, Europe, and the non-European football world, 1912–74

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Abstract

The Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) played a major role in the transformation of association football into a global game. Between 1912 and 1974, before the era of rapid economic sports globalization, FIFA officials attempted to extend the boundaries of the football empire by creating the World Cup and trying to convert new parts of the world to the people's game. It was not an easy task since they met with resistance, obstruction, and contestation. They had to revise their Eurocentric way of thinking and be willing to negotiate. Far from being a mere imperialist process, the path to world football consisted of a series of exacting exchanges and mutual misunderstandings, especially with the South American associations. It is not clear that FIFA officials always understood the demands of the developing football world but they were often able to negotiate and adapt their discourses towards non-European national associations and continental confederations. By doing so, they helped to create, if not an equal football world, at least an international world space.

Keywords decolonization, Europe, FIFA, football, Latin America

Association football is the global sport *par excellence*. Although it has not established itself as the most popular game in North America, where it has nevertheless gained ground among women and young people, or in Oceania and South Asia, where rugby and/or cricket dominate, it is, along with the Olympic Games, the world's leading sport in terms of media coverage and professional and amateur players.[1]

Numerous factors explain the dominance of football: soft power and informal British imperialism, the game's skilful balance of technique and strength, the simplicity of its rules, even its contribution to the construction of national identities, are some examples. The role played by an efficient sports bureaucracy, which according to Allen Guttmann is an important distinguishing factor between traditional games and modern sport, must also be considered.[2] The rules of association football were devised in 1863, in conjunction with the

1 For a global history of football see David Goldblatt, *The ball is round: a global history of football*, London: Viking, 2006; Paul Dietschy, *Histoire du football*, Paris: Perrin, 2006.

2 Allen Guttmann, *From ritual to record*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1978, pp. 54–5.

creation of an association that has since become a model for all others: the English Football Association (FA). Since then, the FA, through the International Football Association Board (IFAB), founded in conjunction with the other British associations, has controlled the universal laws of the game, as well as establishing the first cup competition, the FA Cup, in 1871. It nevertheless had to accept the establishment of a European organization in Paris in May 1904: the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA).

The universality of football – and for some observers, its depravity[3] – is today embodied by this organization, whose headquarters have been located in Zurich since 1932, and prior to that in Amsterdam. Books and articles have addressed the history of FIFA from various perspectives. In 2004, the official FIFA centenary book written by Pierre Lanfranchi, Christiane Eisenberg, Tony Mason, and Alfred Wahl described how FIFA became a powerful world NGO and had to face the various challenges of its international expansion.[4] Among these was the politicization of football and its economic dimension, an issue that Christiane Eisenberg has also analysed in an article covering the post-1975 period.[5] In 2006, Barbara Keys discussed FIFA in her *Globalizing sport*, focusing primarily on European questions and on relations with the USSR.[6] She underlined, with good reason, the temptation of some European associations to restrict the action of FIFA to Europe, but underestimated the world dimension of FIFA in the 1930s. The academic literature dedicated to FIFA and the globalization of sport has also concentrated on the African issue. Paul Darby has studied the postcolonial atmosphere and the centre/periphery relationship, which, according to him, shaped the relations between the federation and the African associations following the independence of former colonies.[7] He also explained how Africa became a factor in the struggle for leadership led by the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) and FIFA in the 1990s.[8]

However, the relations between FIFA and the rest of the world before 1974, when the Brazilian João Havelange became its first non-European president, have not been studied in any great depth. From its birth to this date, FIFA was a de facto European organization controlled by European officials. The establishment of football internationalism could be interpreted as a sporting aspect of the cultural Europeanization of the world or, perhaps, an element of 'anglobalization',[9] since FIFA officials wanted to promote the values and rules of

3 See the books written by the British journalists David Yallop, *How they stole the game*, London: Poetic Products, 1999, and Andrew Jennings, *FOUL! The secret world of FIFA: bribes, vote-rigging and ticket scandals*, London: HarperSport, 2006.

4 Pierre Lanfranchi, Christiane Eisenberg, Tony Mason, and Alfred Wahl, *100 years of football: the FIFA centennial book*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004.

5 Christiane Eisenberg, 'FIFA 1975–2000: the business of a football development organisation', *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung*, 31, 1, 2006, pp. 55–68.

6 Barbara J. Keys, *Globalizing sport: national rivalry and international community in the 1930s*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.

7 Paul Darby, 'Africa's place in FIFA's global order: a theoretical frame', *Soccer & Society*, 1, 2, 2000, p. 36–61.

8 Paul Darby, *Africa, football, and FIFA: politics, colonialism, and resistance*, London, Frank Cass, 2002. See also Alan Tomlinson, 'FIFA and the World Cup: the expanding football family', in John Sugden and Alan Tomlinson, eds., *Hosts and champions: soccer cultures, national identities and the 1994 USA World Cup*, Aldershot: Arena, 1994.

9 Niall Ferguson, *Empire: the rise and demise of the British world order and the lessons for global power*, London: Basic Books, 2002.

the English national winter game. However it would be excessive to see in FIFA's relations with overseas football associations a relation between centre and periphery in a world football system, dominated by a predominantly European FIFA. The period examined here, which begins with the initial affiliations of South American football associations (1912) and ends on the eve of the sport's economic globalization (1974), saw the perpetuation of FIFA due to the invention of the World Cup and the progressive affiliation of Central American, Asian, and African associations. During this period, FIFA officials had to take into account the demands of overseas associations. Some of them, particularly in South America, considered themselves as one of the centres, if not *the* centre, of the football world. Meanwhile, the Central American, Asian, and African associations claimed a more equal treatment in the name of the sporting universalism that Jules Rimet, the French FIFA president between1921 and 1954, would explain in 1954 in a pamphlet called *Le football et le rapprochement des peuples*.[10]

This article examines the relationship between a European-dominated FIFA and the rest of the football world. Using FIFA archives, particularly the rich 'Correspondence with national associations' material, it seeks to explain how FIFA had to take into account the demands of non-European football. Far from being a European club dictating its will to the rest of the world, FIFA officials had to negotiate and engage with, and adapt themselves to, other sporting cultures emerging from the 1920s. The relations between FIFA and national associations show that football was already complex and conflicting. It was an interconnected system whose relations were based on a sporting, political, and economic balance of power and a hypothetical equality between the members of FIFA.

This article will examine three types of relations, at particular pivotal moments, between FIFA and the rest of the world. First, it will analyse FIFA's difficult relationship with the South American associations, which was potentially the most damaging for its future. Second, it will explore the way in which FIFA tried to extend the limits of its empire, and the consequent cultural resistance and clashes with other forms of sporting imperialism. Finally, it will consider in what ways these previous experiences and contacts were useful for FIFA when it had to deal with the demands of African football associations during and after the decolonization process.

The Latin American issue: FIFA and South American football

Following the Argentinian and Chilean associations in 1912, Paraguay (1921), Brazil and Uruguay (1923), Peru (1924), and Bolivia and Ecuador (1926) soon became FIFA members. The European national associations were in the majority by 1930, the year of the first World Cup, representing 74% of the affiliated associations,[11] but South American associations (nine with Surinam) demanded to be listened to and respected by FIFA. As former members of the FA, they considered themselves just as important as European associations in the history of the game.[12] The performance of the Uruguayan national team and the acquisition

10 Jules Rimet, *Le football et le rapprochement des peuples*, Zurich: FIFA, 1954.

11 FIFA Archives, Zurich (henceforth FIFA A), *FIFA handbook 1931*: FIFA membership consisted of twenty-seven European associations, thirteen from the Americas, six from Asia, and one from Africa.

12 On the history of South American football and, in particular, its relations with Great Britain, see Tony Mason, *Passion of the people? Football in South America*, London: Verso, 1995.

of Argentinian, Brazilian, and Uruguayan players by French and Italian clubs made Latin Americans aware of their strength in relation to the predominantly European FIFA. Put simply, these tensions led to the risk of a major split within FIFA at the end of the 1930s.

When, in 1924, the Uruguayan national team won the final of the Olympic football tournament against Switzerland 3–0, there were two main styles of playing football in Europe. The 'scientific' British style, as the sports papers called it on the continent, and the nascent Danubian style, centred on Austria and Hungary, were the reference points for a great number of continental players of varying abilities.[13] The Uruguayan team, led by the black centre-half José Leandro Andrade, displayed a great range of skills, from ball control and dribbling to accurate short passing. Uruguayan success was repeated four years later, this time against the Argentinian team.

For FIFA, and the European associations that comprised the majority of members, the Uruguayan triumph was a turning point. As the official 1924 Olympic Games Report stated, the Montevideo players had set a new standard for the game: 'South American football was honoured by the Uruguayan victory and the best team most definitely won. They showed a true understanding of team play, as well as the individual skills that every rounded player should possess: dexterity, speed, and perfect defending.'[14] In other words, the British and Danubian players were not the only masters of the science and modernity of football.

Nor were the Uruguayans the only South American players to impress European crowds. In 1925, the Buenos Aires daily *Crítica* persuaded the Argentinian FA to exempt Boca Juniors from the national league and to let the team cross the Atlantic Ocean to tour Europe and display the Argentinian way of playing. Between 4 February and 12 July 1925, the team, drawn from the working class of Buenos Aires, played nineteen matches in Spain, France, and Germany, winning fifteen, losing only three, and drawing once. *Crítica* followed Boca's tour closely, reporting, as sports papers usually did, the laudatory comments of the European press, which compared the Boca style of football to the scientific game of the best British teams. The nationalist pride expressed by the Argentinian paper was marked by a kind of 'ideological eclecticism'[15] which integrated South American solidarity, the rivalry with Uruguay, and, last but not the least, the desire to be accepted by the great European nations. It was the sporting expression of a broader cultural complex that the Peruvian philosopher Francisco Miró Quesada defined as ambivalent: on the one hand, for the Latin American elite, the highest achievement was 'to be like the Europeans';[16] on the other, they wished to create an authentic culture and this preoccupation became 'a collective project'.[17] Alongside artists, writers, and musicians, Latin American football players, officials, and journalists wanted to prove the genuineness and the superiority of their play, particularly against European competitors.

In 1925, Montevideo Nacional club, including a number of players from the Uruguayan national squad, and Paulistano Football Club de São Paulo, with their star centre-forward

13 Jonathan Wilson, *Inverting the pyramid: the history of football tactics*, London: Orion, 2008.

14 *Rapport officiel de la VIII^e Olympiade*, Paris: Comité olympique français, 1925, p. 316.

15 Julio D. Frydenberg, 'Le nationalisme sportif argentin: la tournée de Boca Juniors en Europe et le journal *Crítica*', *Histoire & Sociétés: revue européenne d'histoire sociale*, 18–19, 2006, p. 84.

16 Francisco Miró Quesada, 'Réalité et possibilité de la culture latino-américaine', *Tiers-Monde*, 10, 39, 1969, p. 490.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 494.

Arthur Friedenreich, also toured Europe. From then on it became possible for the European press and observers to identify differences between the three great football nations of South America, especially between Argentina and Uruguay, whose teams met in the final of the Olympic Games tournament in Amsterdam in 1928. According to the Argentinian anthropologist Eduardo Archetti, journalists contrasted the 'virile' style of the Uruguayans to the more artistic and, according to Uruguayan males, effeminate Argentinian style.[18] After 1928, Italian and French clubs began employing South American footballers. Having previously banned the use of foreign players, fascist Italy allowed the transfer of descendants of Italian immigrants. According to Lanfranchi and Taylor, 118 South American players (60 from Argentina, 26 from Brazil, 32 from Uruguay) were engaged by Italian first and second division clubs between 1929 and 1943.[19]

The success of the importation of South American players was a form of recognition of the talent and superiority of South American football over its west European counterpart. It could be also interpreted as a manifestation of economic imperialism at a time when the Great Depression was striking Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. Even though the Italo-Argentinian Raimundo Orsi received 'a fabulous monthly salary of 8,000 lire (fifteen times the wage of a primary school teacher and eight times the average earnings of a doctor or a lawyer)',[20] the cost of most South American players was not excessive.

Although the hiring of large numbers of its players could also be interpreted as a kind of new pillage of South America, during the 1929 Congress held in Barcelona FIFA delegates also approved the Uruguayan candidature for the first FIFA World Cup, which was defended by Beccar Varela, the Argentinian delegate. According to him, Uruguay should host the first FIFA World Cup for four main reasons: 'the excellent results obtained by that country in the last two Olympiads'; 'the enormous development of football in South America and Uruguay'; 'the celebration of the centenary of Uruguay's political independence in 1930'; and finally, the fact that in 'charging Uruguay with the organization [of the competition] all the South American Associations would feel honoured'.[21]

Despite the fact that Uruguay was chosen unanimously, the major European football associations decided to stay in Europe during the summer of 1930. Europe was only represented by four relatively minor teams at the first World Cup, held in Montevideo in July 1930: Belgium, France, Romania, and Yugoslavia. While the tournament confirmed the transatlantic dimension of football, the absence of the best European football nations, such as Austria, Hungary, and Italy, was deeply resented in Uruguay. In new countries particularly, football successes were considered as important means of nation-building and international recognition. In Uruguay, a proportion of the political class even considered that these sporting successes should be inscribed in the country's official history. On 11 June 1928 L. Enrique Andreoli, the Montevideo representative in the Uruguayan Chamber of Deputies,

18 Eduardo P. Archetti, 'Masculinity and football: the formation of national identity in Argentina', in Richard Giulianotti and John Williams, eds., *Game without frontiers: football, identity and modernity*, Aldershot: Arena, 1994, p. 225–43.

19 Pierre Lanfranchi and Matthew Taylor, *Moving with the ball: the migration of professional footballers*, Oxford: Berg, 2001, p. 83.

20 *Ibid.*, p. 76.

21 FIFA A, Congress, 'Minutes of the 18th Annual Congress held at Barcelona on 17 and 18 May 1929'.

submitted a bill that aimed to establish a national holiday commemorating victory at the Amsterdam Olympics. In his exposition he recalled 'the glories of the wars of independence' led by a 'strong and vibrant people'.[22] Similarly, Enrique E. Buero, the Uruguayan ambassador to Brussels, and a tireless advocate of the successful Uruguayan application to host the first World Cup, wrote to the ministry that he was certain he had 'correctly interpreted the government's wishes and also public opinion' in his country.[23]

The organization of the 1930 World Cup was itself integrated into the celebration of 100 years of independence, echoed in the fact that the 100,000-capacity stadium built by the Montevideo municipality was named Estadio Centenario. European observers were equally struck by the national passion aroused by football. 'Perhaps', remarked Jules Rimet in his memoirs, 'the Uruguayans attach excessive importance to their victory, but they proclaim their joy with such infectious conviction that it almost seems, in the moment, to be shared by the entire body of spectators'.[24] The French weekly *Football* regarded this popular enthusiasm as the 'result of a mentality [belonging to] the nation's greatest leaders, those who never [miss] an opportunity to loudly claim the victories of the national team as part of the nation's moral treasure trove'.[25]

Popular enthusiasm also guaranteed FIFA substantial financial returns, as the association in charge had to assume responsibility for expenses incurred by the competition and, in particular, those sustained by foreign teams. Additionally, it had to give 10% of any earnings to FIFA, assume sole responsibility for any losses, and transfer a share of any profits to the participating associations, proportionate to the number of games played and the numbers of spectators.[26] According to Homburg's detailed study of FIFA's finances, the international body 'earned a net profit from the first "Cup" in 1930, and its receipts showed a remarkable propensity for growth'.[27]

While the Uruguayan football association and government had worked hard to make the organization of the first World Cup possible and make FIFA richer than the organization had been since its creation, the major European national associations had ultimately refused to contribute to the event. Even worse, 'la Coupe des nations', a competition gathering the best clubs from ten European countries, was organized in Geneva at the same time as the World Cup and caught the attention of the European sports press.

Despite the joy of the final victory obtained in the final against the old Argentinian rival, such a situation was considered by some as a kind of treason. Annoyed at the defection of the best European teams in 1930, the Uruguayan association refused to undertake transatlantic journeys to compete in the 1934 and 1938 World Cups. More broadly, the South American

22 *Uruguay campeón del mundo: informes de la delegación olimpica de la asociación uruguaya de football, y otros antecedentes*, Montevideo: Imp. J. Florensa, 1931, p. 110.

23 Letter from Enrique E. Buero to the Uruguayan Foreign Affairs, 24 May 1929, *Negociaciones Internacionales*, Bruxelles, 1932, p. 63.

24 Jules Rimet, *Histoire merveilleuse de la Coupe du monde de football*, Monaco: Union européenne d'éditions, 1954, pp. 72–3.

25 *Football*, 21 June 1930.

26 FIFA A, Congress, 'Minutes of the 18th Annual Congress held at Barcelona on 17 and 18 May 1929'.

27 Heidrun Homburg, 'Financial aspects of FIFA's World Cup or the structural challenges of growth', in Alfred Wahl, ed., *Aspects de l'histoire de la Coupe du monde de football*, Metz: Université de Lorraine, 2007, p. 171.

associations deplored the implication that they were poorly regarded by their European counterparts, in spite of their domination of world football on the pitch. They had already formed the first continental organization (CONMEBOL, Confederación Sudamericana de Fútbol) and created the first continental competition (the Copa America), both in 1916. Yet, for all this, the entirety of Latin America had only one non-permanent representative among the ten FIFA Executive Committee members. The rest of the Committee was European.[28]

Argentina may have agreed to take part in the 1934 World Cup in Italy, but South American resentment exploded during the Olympic football tournament in Berlin. Indeed, the treatment received by the Peruvian team at the 1936 Olympics was the final straw for many. The Peruvians beat Austria 4–2 in the quarter-finals, after extra time. But the end of the match was marred by violence and confusion. The Austrian Football Association brought a complaint on the grounds that the Peruvian supporters had invaded the pitch and even attacked the Austrian players. The Jury of Appeal, which consisted entirely of European members of the Executive Committee,[29] ruled that 'there existed factors hampering the normal course of events during the match'[30] and consequently decided that the match should be replayed, without spectators, two days later.

General Oscar Raimundo Benavides, who had succeeded the dictator Sánchez Cerro as President of Peru in 1933, ordered his athletes to withdraw from the Games. Claudio Martinez, president of the Peruvian delegation, justified this to Rimet, claiming a conspiracy. In his opinion, 'the puerile reasons given for cancelling the Peru–Austria game' had but one goal: 'preventing Peru, the only South American team taking part in the football championship, from achieving Olympic victory, which all [Peruvians] had thought was guaranteed'.[31] In addition, from 12 August, the Andean players, as well as seven Colombian athletes, marched on Paris out of Pan-American solidarity.[32] Once the news reached Lima and Callao, demonstrators took to the streets to protest against the injustices committed against their footballers. The Austrian and German consulates were threatened.[33]

'The Peru–Austria game', wrote Claudio Martinez, 'was a magnificent display of football, during which Peru achieved a stunning and indisputable victory'.[34] Latin grandiloquence notwithstanding, the match crystallized South American grievances regarding Europe. Moreover, the issue did not end there. At an Extraordinary Congress of the Latin American Confederación Sudamericana de Fútbol held in Santiago on 27 October 1936, the Peruvian Football Federation, supported by its Chilean counterpart, proposed that the South American associations should leave FIFA. Peru had withdrawn its membership ten days earlier.

28 FIFA A, *FIFA handbook 1932–33*, p. 9.

29 J. Rimet (France), G. Mauro (Italy), R. W. Seeldrayers (Belgium), R. Pelikan (Czechoslovakia), and A. Johnson (Sweden).

30 Organisationskomitee für die XI. Olympiade Berlin 1936, *The XIth Olympic Games Berlin, 1936: official report*, vol. 2, Berlin: Wilhelm Limpert, 1937, p. 1048.

31 FIFA A, Olympic Games (henceforth OG), Berlin 1936, letter from Claudio Martinez, president of the Federación Peruana de Foot-Ball to Jules Rimet, 11 August 1936.

32 Guy Walters, *Berlin games: how Hitler stole the Olympic dream*, London: John Murray, 2006, p. 290.

33 *Ibid.*, p. 291.

34 FIFA A, OG, Berlin 1936, letter from Claudio Martinez, president of the Federación Peruana de Foot-Ball to Jules Rimet, 11 August 1936.

Representatives of the Argentinian and Uruguayan associations ruled out this option, however. But the Congress nevertheless voted in favour of an official protest against 'the decision taken by the Jury of Appeal', deeming it a 'veritable robbery, unprecedented in sports law, and an unjust offence to the sport of the continent represented at the Olympiad, with honour and dignity, by Peru'.[35] More concretely, it suggested obtaining 'full autonomy', which would place the South American Confederation on an 'equal footing' with FIFA. In other words, it would no longer be obligatory, in South America, to be a FIFA member in order to participate in international football.

The split was avoided, however. Initially, Luis F. Dupuy, another Uruguayan delegate, was charged with representing South America at FIFA Executive Committee meetings. In March 1938, the South American Confederation meanwhile suggested a joint partnership between the various bodies responsible for overseeing the competitions. Francisco Tochetti Lespade, the general secretary, cautioned: 'America cannot be a European colony when it comes to football'.[36] After withdrawing its complaints in June 1938, at the Paris Congress the South American Confederation obtained a permanent place on the Executive Committee, still held by Dupuy. In a sense, this was the beginning of continental divisions in football geography.

In order to definitively smooth transatlantic relations, Jules Rimet was dispatched in March 1939 to the South American Confederation Congress in Buenos Aires, armed with what remained of French prestige and the unwavering support of that country in the first World Cup in 1930. Arguing for a rapprochement between both sides of the Atlantic, he blamed the misunderstandings on transport difficulties and, in allusion to the Peruvian affair, rejected claims of Eurocentrism. As a consummate lawyer, fond of common-sense aphorisms, he reminded his audience: 'Mutual understanding is based on knowledge'.[37]

The South American countries did not leave FIFA, but they nevertheless remained eager for recognition. The unsuccessful 1939 bid by the Argentine Football Association to host the 1942 World Cup can be seen as proof of this. Argentinian officials argued 'Football is the most popular sport in this part of the world, evidenced by the fact that the Argentine Football Association [AFA] boasts a membership of more than 160,000 players and more than 2,000 clubs'.[38] To these emotional factors was added a legitimate claim to seniority (the AFA was the first South American association to join FIFA), as well as Argentina's ability to organize a significant sporting event. In fact, there were about ten stadiums with a capacity of over 40,000 in Buenos Aires, including those of River Plate and Boca Juniors. With the exception of London, no European city could boast similar facilities. The reasoning of the

35 FIFA A, Executive Committee (henceforth EC), letter from Ivo Schricker to members of the FIFA Executive Committee, 21 November 1936, recounting a confidential letter sent by the secretary of the South American Confederation Emergency Committee, Prof. Tochetti Lespade.

36 FIFA A, EC, Proposition of the South American Confederation regarding the composition of the Committees and Juries of Appeal for tournaments organized by FIFA, document dated 5 March 1938 and presented to the Executive Committee in Paris, 5 June 1938.

37 'Le voyage de M. Rimet en Amérique du Sud', *Football World: bulletin officiel de la Fédération internationale de football association*, 6, April 1939.

38 FIFA A, EC, letter from Ivo Schricker to members of the Executive Committee, in which he reproduced the application letter signed by President Adrian C. Escobar and General Secretary Argentino M. Esteves, 30 June 1939.

bid was concluded in the spring of 1939, however, in a poetic and prophetic manner: 'The Argentine Republic, as a promised land, is one of the most liberal and cosmopolitan countries in the world. A large number of people of all nationalities can be found here, all of whom enjoy a good quality of life and who enjoy watching live sports.'[39]

The loyalty of the South American associations during the Second World War helped FIFA, which was essentially reduced to its administrative operations in Zurich and threatened by the National Socialist plans to build a new world order, even in the domain of sport. Tireless correspondence from Ivo Schricker, the FIFA general secretary, to member associations worldwide (fifty-seven members in 1938), suggests a sense of denial about world events. While the German and Japanese troops devastated Europe, Asia, and North Africa, and Third Reich submarines threatened transatlantic communication, Schricker continued to demand outstanding contributions and commissions from international matches owed by member associations. In January 1942 he requested arrears owed by the South American associations from the CONMEBOL secretary, Efrain Borrero. 'It's not a very significant amount of money', he argued, 'and could not affect the balance of each country. Moreover, FIFA must be able to count on its member Associations to promptly pay monies owed.'[40] As a result of the unwavering support of the South American associations, in 1946 Spanish became one of FIFA's official languages.[41]

Expanding FIFA's football empire

The membership of South American associations in FIFA was in certain respects a fairly 'natural' development. Football had been played very early in Argentina and Uruguay, and when the FA became a member of FIFA in 1906, it became obvious that the South American associations who had first been members of the FA would in time join FIFA. Tensions between two power blocs battling for sporting and administrative supremacy and yet separated by a considerable geographic distance were in some respects inevitable. But the world vocation of FIFA did not stop at the transatlantic dimension, particularly after the creation of the World Cup. In their own words, FIFA officials, especially the general secretary, considered themselves as 'football missionaries' whose task it was to extend the practice of the game and the number of affiliated associations. This mission was not without its risks for them, or for those whom they wanted to convert and attract.

In 1923, the Egyptian FA was the first African association to become a FIFA member. Two years later, the Football Association of Siam (Thailand) became the first Asian association to be affiliated to FIFA, followed by Japan in 1929. These affiliations offered, at the very best, some evidence that FIFA regarded itself as a world organization. In 1932–33, the Japanese FA administered only ninety-eight clubs and its national team had only played international games against China and the Philippines,[42] while the Siam federation had only

39 *Ibid.*

40 FIFA A, Correspondence with continental confederations (henceforth CCC), CONMEBOL, letter from Ivo Schricker to Efrain Borrero, 3 January 1942.

41 FIFA A, CCC, CONMEBOL, letter from Ivo Schricker to Alfredo Calindo Quiroga, General Secretary of CONMEBOL, 15 June 1946.

42 FIFA A, *FIFA handbook 1932–33*, pp. 183–4.

fourteen clubs and no national team.[43] Yet the organization of the World Cup required a widening of FIFA's geography. From 1934 onwards, qualification groups were formed to decide the sixteen teams that would compete in the World Cup. FIFA wished to create non-European groups, in order to guarantee the participation of teams from outside Europe and South America. It was the task of the general secretaries, Carl A. W. Hirschman between 1906 and 1931, and then Ivo Schricker from 1932 to 1951, to explore new football territories, especially in the Middle East. They tried to promote the formation of associations in territories under the mandate of the League of Nations. After Hirschman had invited Georges Mamamiri, general secretary of the Beyrouth Club de la Renaissance Sportive, to join their 'petite société des nations sportives' in 1930,[44] Schricker proposed uniting the Lebanese and Syrian teams in the same association, which Pierre Gemayel, secretary of the Lebanese association and future founder of the Phalangist party, refused.[45] Lebanon and Syria eventually joined FIFA in 1935 and 1937 respectively.

With the existence of such football associations affiliated to FIFA, its officials attempted to construct a Mediterranean qualifying group for the French 1938 World Cup which would include Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Egypt. There were various factors that prevented them from doing so, but the main reason was the cost of such a tournament for recently established, and sometimes poor, football associations. Even though Egypt remained the only potential representative from the area, they had to beat Romania in order to secure their passage to France. Yet the Egyptian Football Association seemed to be reluctant to take the risk of paying for the travel of their own players to Bucharest. While the first leg match had to be played in Cairo in December 1937 and while the Romanian Football Association had accepted all Egyptian requirements, the Egyptian officials argued 'that it was impossible to play a game during the Ramadan month'.[46] This was revealed to be a false claim, since the Austrian Club First Vienna FC had been invited to play a game against Egypt during the holy month. FIFA considered the Egyptian FA to have withdrawn de facto. As Egypt had only had to beat a Palestine team to qualify for the 1934 World Cup, four years later the task seemed much more difficult and the Egyptian FA risked losing money and sporting prestige in the operation.

Money was also at stake when the French and FIFA organizers decided to welcome one Asian team to France. The Far East was indeed not forgotten in the mapping of world football. In order to include a team representing this area in the 1938 World Cup, a qualification group that included Japan and the Dutch East Indies was established. This group guaranteed a place for Asia in the World Cup finals. Because attacks on China by Japanese troops prevented the qualification matches from taking place, FIFA instead invited players from Java and Sumatra. Henri Delaunay, kingpin of the French Organizing Committee, attempted to limit the travelling expenses of this completely unknown team – and one composed, moreover, of 'natives' – by only providing them with third-class passage

43 *Ibid.*, p. 235.

44 FIFA A, Série Correspondence with national associations (henceforth CNA), Syria, letter from Carl A. W. Hirschman to Georges Mamamiri, 9 December 1930.

45 FIFA A, CNA, Lebanon, letters from Ivo Schricker to the General Secretary of the French Football Federation, Henri Delaunay, 17 October 1934, and to Pierre Gemayel, secretary of the Lebanese association, 1 December 1934.

46 FIFA A, EC, minutes of the meeting held in San Remo, 8–9 January 1938.

on the boat to Marseille. This treatment was condemned by Karel Lotsy, a Dutch member of the Executive Committee, who complained that they were not being treated as 'equal to the other non-European Associations who, under the World Cup Regulations, received all of their travel expenses'.[47] It was clear that all football associations were not equal according to FIFA's official worldview at the end of the 1930s, in spite of the universalist rhetoric of the officials. The presence of an Asian team in the final competition was supported above all for symbolic reasons.

FIFA officials were especially eager to promote the game in the *terrae incognitae* of association football, particularly in Central America where Yankee imperialism had led to the spread of a popular American sport – baseball. With the exception of Mexico, the Central American countries were latecomers to international football. One of the biggest associations – that of Costa Rica, created in 1921 and a member of FIFA since 1927 – comprised only twenty affiliated clubs in three divisions as late as 1932.[48] FIFA wanted to enlist these new associations, who began to play each other at the Central American Games. In October 1937, therefore, Ivo Schricker wrote to Esteban Diaz, president of the Honduran Football Association, outlining the advantages of membership, namely 'playing against any other FIFA association without requiring special permission'.[49]

Frequently, these associations were merely branches of sports divisions of ministries of public education or national sports councils, and thus had direct links to established power structures. Aside from political rivalries between these small republics controlled by local aristocracies and armies, the main obstacle to the development of football was competition from North American sports. A large part of Central America, as well as several Caribbean countries, effectively belonged to the US cultural and sporting realm. Hector Beeche, president of the Costa Rican Football Federation, which had backed Schricker's recruitment campaign, wrote in 1938: 'Almost no football is played in Nicaragua; if the "Comision Nacional de Deportes" decides to become a member, it would only be from a desire to be a member of FIFA, as the national sport is baseball, closely followed by basketball.'[50] He made the same point during the second Central American and Caribbean Games, held in Panama in February 1938. The only teams to compete in the football tournament were Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, and Venezuela. Noting that reports of the small numbers attending the football matches had been 'correct', the president of the Costa Rican Football Federation could only acknowledge the hegemony of American sports: 'it is impossible to demand that everybody attend every sport; people are tired after baseball and basketball games, and I understand only too well that the public prefers their favourite sports, baseball or basketball, to any other'.[51]

Despite Beeche's efforts, the only associations to join FIFA in 1938 were El Salvador and Panama. However, the Confederacion Centroamericana y del Caribe de Futbol Asociacion was established, with Beeche as its first president. Far from being a mere conduit for FIFA, the

47 Fédération française de football Archives, 1938 World Cup, Organization and travel of the Dutch East Indies, letter from Ivo Schricker to Henri Delaunay, 15 December 1937.

48 FIFA A, CNA, Costa Rica, letter from the General Secretary of the Costa Rican Football Federation to Ivo Schricker, 19 November 1932.

49 FIFA A, CAN, Honduras, letter from Ivo Schricker to Esteban Diaz, 4 October 1937.

50 FIFA A, CAN, Costa Rica, letter from Hector Beeche to Ivo Schricker, 23 December 1937.

51 FIFA A, Costa Rica, Hector Beeche's Report on the Central American and Caribbean Games, n.d.

new organization, which had been authorized by the Berlin Congress, immediately echoed South American grievances regarding the Eurocentric nature of FIFA. In March 1938, Beeche suggested having 'two Central American representatives, reflecting the large number of countries that can join and that wish to participate in these tournaments, where they will learn a lot'. Reflecting the significance of American sports, he suggested that FIFA follow the example of the International Basketball Federation (FIBA), which 'allows each continent to form groups known as zones, not only does it allow this but it actively seeks and recommends it'.[52]

Although the football periphery tried to express independent ways of thinking, FIFA sought to arrange the football world map on the basis of the nation-state and to establish universal case laws. Even though any changes made to the rules of the game remained the exclusive domain of the IFAB, in which FIFA was only a minority interest, numerous associations turned to FIFA to bring tricky refereeing issues before the organization. To this end, a Referees' Committee charged with implementing and interpreting the laws of the game was established in January 1929. It was chaired by a German, Peco Bauwens, and composed of the Frenchman Henri Delaunay and the Italian Giovanni Mauro, all three of whom were, or had been, referees. The committee made decisions on cases that were not covered by the laws of the game. For instance, the Mexican Federation of Football enquired in 1935 as to what action a referee should take when a player in possession stops playing as a result of confusing a spectator's whistle with that of the referee.[53] The same year, the secretary of the Istanbul club Fenerbahçe presented the case of a championship final during which 'one of the linesmen left the pitch, claiming that it was impossible to continue',[54] without any further explanation. Two years later, Schricker explained the existing rules regarding substituting an injured goalkeeper to Enrique Moilna Aguirre, Secretary of Sport in the Guatemalan Ministry of Education.[55] Thus, in becoming the intermediary between the International Board, the clubs, and the national associations, and explaining the applications of the seventeen laws of the game, FIFA consolidated its central position in the football world, in terms of regulating not only the game's development but also its values.

FIFA also promoted a peculiar way of using the body, particularly in relation to the main part of it used for playing football: the feet. FIFA officials required players to wear shoes, an obligation that did not fit the habits of Asian and African footballers who, for economic and practical reasons, played barefoot. The issue emerged clearly at the beginning of the decolonization process. In 1948, one year after Indian independence and the partition of British India, the Indian national team participated in the London Olympics, following the 1947 admission of the All India Football Federation to FIFA. Although cricket and hockey were already emblematic sports for the Indian population, football had its strongholds in places such as Bengal where, at the beginning of the twentieth century, it had served as a symbol of resistance to English authority.[56] The admission of India, as well as that of

52 FIFA A, CAN, Costa Rica, letter from Hector Beeche to Ivo Schricker, 23 December 1937.

53 FIFA A, Referees' Committee, minutes of the meeting held in Paris, 5 October 1935.

54 FIFA A, CNA, Turkey, letter from Ahmet Muvaffak to FIFA, 2 August 1935.

55 FIFA A, CNA, Guatemala, letter from Ivo Schricker to Enrique Molina Aguirre, 28 May 1937.

56 Paul Dimeo, 'Colonial bodies, colonial sport: "martial" Punjabis, "effeminate" Bengalis and the development of Indian football', *International Journal of the History of Sport*, 19, 1, 2002, pp. 72–90.

Pakistan in 1948, allowed FIFA to extend its sphere of influence in South Asia and to enlarge the range of potential participants in World Cup finals. However, India's withdrawal from the 1950 World Cup revealed the strength of distinctive national traditions of play, as well as some reluctance in European quarters to admit Asian teams as genuine World Cup competitors. World Cup qualifying group XI grouped together teams from South and Southeast Asia: the Philippines, Burma, and India. The Indian side, playing barefoot, qualified ahead of weaker opponents. Though the barefoot Indian team had put up a good fight against the French amateur team in the quarter-finals of the 1948 London Olympics (a 2–1 defeat), they were not permitted to play without boots in Brazil. Ivo Schricker gave 'unofficial advice' to the secretary of the All India Football Federation, Ray Dutta, to make his players wear 'light, not heavy, boots'.[57] Other European officials expressed reservations about the value of Asian players. Stanley Rous, then secretary of the FA, suggested that the Indian Federation pit its national team against European teams such as Switzerland, Spain, and Portugal prior to the competition in Brazil, in order to establish the competitiveness of its players. According to Rous, there were rumours in Europe of an 11–0 defeat suffered by the Indian team against the Swedish club Helsingborg.[58]

In the end, the Indian Federation decided not to send its team to such a remote destination for such uncertain results. However, in playing their Olympic matches barefoot the Indian players presented a different approach to sport, side-stepping the Western codes for dress and equipment that had accompanied the game's development. Playing in India in 1938, the captain of the English amateur team Islington Corinthians had remarked, not without humour: 'Indians alone play real football, what they call football in Europe is after all only bootball.'[59]

They were not alone: in 1951, the membership file sent by the Vietnam Football Federation declared that the North Vietnam league comprised 'nine boot-wearing teams' against 'fifteen barefoot'; that of the South twenty-eight teams with boots and fifteen without.[60] Similarly, the Nigerian, Ghanaian, and Ugandan teams played barefoot in Great Britain in 1949, 1951, and 1956 respectively.[61] Economic and climatic conditions were the primary motivations in this choice, although in French Africa the so-called 'educated' or 'assimilated' native players saw wearing boots as proof of their 'assimilation', to the point that it became something of a political statement, as in Congo-Brazzaville in the mid 1930s.[62] In fact, the wearing or non-wearing of boots quickly marked the dividing line between an exuberant type of informal football, which was a site of hybridization, and an official and politicized football, which, while often sorely lacking in resources, had the ability to tap into the talent pool of the former. Significantly, in the seventeen laws of the

57 FIFA A, CNA, India, letter from Ivo Schricker to Ray Dutta, 23 February 1950.

58 FIFA A, CNA, India, letter from Ray Dutta to Ivo Schricker, 10 January 1950.

59 Boria Majumdar and Kausik Bandyopahyay, *Goalless: the story of a unique footballing nation*, New Delhi: Viking, 2006, p. 28.

60 FIFA A, CNA, Vietnam, letter from Nguyen Phuoc-Vong to Jules Rimet, 20 June 1951.

61 Phil Vassili, *Colouring over the white line: the history of black footballers in Britain*, Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing Company, 2000, pp. 72–92.

62 Phyllis Martin, *Les loisirs et la société à Brazzaville pendant l'ère coloniale*, Paris: Karthala, 2006, pp. 150–1.

game then established and distributed by FIFA in its publications, boots were the piece of equipment accompanied by the most detail, on the grounds that a 'player shall not wear anything, which is dangerous to another player' (law 4).[63] Additionally, it was specified that 'the usual equipment of a player consists of a jersey or shirt, short trousers, stockings and boots'.[64] Official football, closely monitored by the new powers, would have no difficulty adhering to these clothing regulations, as they allowed the popularization of national colours and symbols and fanned the flames of a young, and frequently aggressive, nationalism.

The demands of African football

In the 1930s, the map of the football world that was drawn by FIFA publications, its *Handbook*, and official reviews, mentioned the existence of leagues and federations in the British, French, and Belgian colonies in Africa. Yet FIFA officials considered that the regulation of native footballers was the responsibility of European colonial associations. Things changed when football began to be used as a soft weapon in the decolonization process and FIFA had to judge in cases such as the Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) team. Moreover, the widespread affiliation of African associations placed FIFA in a new and difficult position: its officials had to deal with new demands from politicized sports organizations. Far from expressing a kind of sporting neo-colonialism, these complex relations often conveyed an ambivalence and misunderstanding between men representing different conceptions of how football should be organized. Ultimately, opposition to FIFA policy became a means to unify a divided continent.

Football was not absent from the decolonization process. At the beginning of the 1920s clubs were created by the nationalist or Muslim communities in French North Africa. In Tunisia, the Espérance Sportive de Tunis (1919) and the Club Africain (1920) in Tunis, the Étoile Sportive du Sahel (1925) in Sousse, and the Club Tunisien (1928) in Sfax aroused popular Muslim fervour, especially when they met and beat French clubs such as the Stade Gaulois. In Algeria, the players of the Mouloudia Club Algérois, founded in August 1921 wore a green and red shirt, 'the colour of Islam [and] the favourite colour of the Prophet'.[65] As political propaganda was strictly monitored, football offered an alternative way of expressing national and religious identities in a colonial context. Similarly, during the Second World War Nnamdi Azikiwe, the leader of the Nigerian nationalists and founder of the ZAC club, took advantage of their games, officially organized to raise funds to support the warring metropole, to deliver violent anti-colonial diatribes.[66] One year after the end of the Second World War, in French West Africa, the Coupe de l'Afrique Occidentale Française was

63 FIFA A, *FIFA handbook 1950*, p. 11.

64 *Ibid*.

65 Youssef Fatès, 'Le club sportif, structure d'encadrement et de formation nationaliste de la jeunesse musulmane pendant la période coloniale', in Nicolas Bancel, Daniel Denis, and Youssef Fatès, eds., *De l'Indochine à l'Algérie: la jeunesse en mouvements des deux côtés du miroir colonial 1940–1962*, Paris: La Découverte, 2003, p. 157.

66 See Wiebe Boer, 'A story of heroes, of epics: the rise of football in Nigeria', in Gary Armstrong and Richard Giulianotti, eds., *Football in Africa: conflict, conciliation and community*, Basingstoke: Palgrave McMillan, 2004, pp. 59–79; idem, 'Football, mobilization and protestation: Nnamdi Azikiwe and the goodwill tours of World War II', *Lagos Historical Review*, 6, 2006, pp. 39–61.

created, which soon matched clubs from Dakar to Bamako, Cotonou, and Conakry. As previously in Europe and South America, football here contributed to the building of 'imagined communities',[67] magnifying local identities struggling through sport against French colonization and aiming to be different from their African brothers.[68]

FIFA officials became conscious of the development of African football when European officials of the Nigeria Football Association applied for affiliation to FIFA in 1950, and when their Gold Coast counterparts asked FIFA three years later to recognize the annual game played between the two colonial territories as 'international matches' under their auspices.[69] Soon Zurich had to deal with the complicated intermingling of sport and politics. In 1954, a group of 'native' players from Leopoldville (Kinshasa) wrote to the FIFA president, Jules Rimet, to protest a decision taken by the local football federation, the Association Royale Sportive Congolaise (ARSC). As the forward Léon Mokuna was signing a contract with the Sporting Portugal club, the ARSC refused to let him emigrate to Portugal on the pretext that the move was illegal. The leader of the Leopoldville footballers' group argued that if 'the rule were contrary to them, it was because they were black'. He added that they believed that 'several of their coloured brothers who were living in France, America, and so on didn't suffer the same fate'.[70] Eventually Mokuna was permitted to leave the Belgian Congo in December 1954, thanks to FIFA intervention.

Dealing with complex political issues was hardly new for the FIFA Executive Committee. It had had to rule on such cases in the 1930s, notably relating to the Spanish civil war and the issue of the Basque team. Similarly, the Algerian war gained a football dimension when the FLN, after committing attacks on two stadiums in Algiers in 1957, established a national Algerian team made up of the best professional Algerian Muslim players from the French championship.[71] From its base in Tunis, this so-called FLN team played several matches in Arab and Soviet countries in support of the Algerian cause. However, from the first matches played against the Moroccan and Tunisian sides in April 1958, the French Football Federation requested that FIFA ban its members from playing against a team of 'rebels'. While the complete FIFA file concerning this issue appears to be lost, it seems clear that FIFA acted very quickly by suspending the temporary membership of the Moroccan and Tunisian federations. This quick reaction was certainly motivated by the influence of the French federation in FIFA, by FIFA's familiarity with such cases, and, last but not the least, by the desire to instruct new federations on the proper behaviour to adopt in such circumstances.

Naldi Huber, an Italian architect working in Ethiopia, who was also a referee and technical adviser for the Ethiopian Ministry of Sport, had written to FIFA on 1 January 1948.

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67 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities*, London: Verso, 1983.

68 Bernadette Deville-Danthu, *Le sport en noir et blanc: du sport colonial au sport africain dans les anciens territoires français d'Afrique occidentale (1920–1965)*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997, p. 329.

69 FIFA A, CNA, Ghana, letter from Richard Akwei to FIFA, 31 August 1953.

70 FIFA A, CNA, Belgium, letter from Firmin Yenga to Jules Rimet, 23 October 1954.

71 Pierre Lanfranchi, 'Mekloufi: un footballeur français dans la guerre d'Algérie', *Actes de la Recherche en Sciences Sociales*, 103, 1994, pp. 70–4; Michel Nait-Challal, *Dribbleurs de l'indépendance: l'incroyable histoire de l'équipe du FLN algérien*, Paris: Éditions Prolongations, 2008; Kader Abderrahim, *L'indépendance comme seul but*, Paris: Paris-Méditerranée, 2008.

He requested information, in particular on 'rules of any kind', which 'would be useful for propaganda purposes'. He also underlined that: '1. The local (Ethiopian) teams don't want to know how to play with boots. 2. Local mentalities do not accept that the rules apply to everyone equally. 3. For the moment, there will be no government aid.'[72]

While the question of playing barefoot was later settled at international level, Naldi Huber highlighted two fundamental issues that FIFA had to deal with at the beginning of decolonization: potential violence and issues with refereeing related to the intense politicization of football and FIFA's development aid policy. These did not emerge as key matters until the beginning of the 1960s when the independent associations affiliated to FIFA.

Relations between FIFA and Africa quickly became tainted by political motives and a mutual lack of cultural understanding. An analysis of FIFA correspondence with the African national associations highlights a more complex situation than an interpretation of the relationship between FIFA and Africa in terms of centre/periphery or dependency,[73] or as a form of neo-colonialism on one side and African resistance on the other.[74] For certain FIFA officials, such as the English president Stanley Rous (between 1961 and 1974), who shared the belief that the world of sport consisted above all of an army of volunteers, the arrival of associations controlled by government ministries with openly declared ideological goals came as quite a shock. On returning from a trip to Congo-Brazzaville in 1965, Rous expressed his surprise to the FIFA Executive Committee at the strength of the links between football and power in this part of Africa where, he claimed, the associations were merely adjuncts of government.[75]

Similarly, the correspondence that FIFA headquarters received from African associations was full of reports and letters complaining of the misbehaviour of spectators and officials, so much so that the first international football matches in Africa were marked by public violence, as well as violence among players and by police forces charged with monitoring the matches.[76] Referees, in particular, became scapegoats for the crowds and the forces of order. Some, like Pierre Goudal Lohourignon, a referee from the Ivory Coast, accepted this. He wrote to the FIFA general secretary, Hemut Käser, in 1969:

> At home in the Ivory Coast, supporters don't protect referees. For them, referees are always wrong. They are even threatened at times. This doesn't scare me …. The public and officials can be forgiven; they are uneducated and unaware of the Laws of the Game established by FIFA 65 years ago. I am anxious to remain, for a long time to come, one of the watchmen, one of the sport's magistrates, because he who does his work well need not fear becoming a martyr.[77]

72 FIFA A, CNA, Ethiopia, letter from Naldi Huber to Jules Rimet, 1 January 1948.

73 Darby, 'Africa's place'.

74 Darby, *Africa*.

75 FIFA A, Reports on presidential visits 1963–1969, Stanley Rous report: 'The problems in Asia and Africa and suggestions as to how they might be eased', 27 September 1965.

76 Paul Dietschy and David-Claude Kemo-Keimbou, *L'Afrique et la planète football*, Paris: EPA, 2010, p. 179–85.

77 FIFA A, CNA, Ivory Coast, letter from Pierre Goudal Lohourignon to Helmut Käser, 16 December 1969.

But referees were also guilty of and susceptible to corruption. Yidnekatchew Tessema, an Ethiopian official and the president of the Confederation of African Football between 1972 and 1987, admitted:

> Refereeing in Africa is at risk of degeneration as a result of corruption. Political, racial and religious affinities are already posing very serious problems. Interference by political powers in matters of sport often renders the impartiality of referees a theoretical concept. … How can we liberate African referees from political, linguistic and religious prejudice if we do not come down hard on the culprits?[78]

This situation fed the prejudices of the European and South American associations that dominated FIFA. Opposition between the continents was reinforced in 1954 with the official sanction of continental confederations. In the light of the increasing popularity of football, it was necessary to create institutions that would tackle issues on a local level. For the founders of UEFA, inaugurated in Basel in June 1954, it was necessary above all else to defend European interests. In particular they decided to adopt the proposal made by Stanley Rous to only 'elect men who would not sit on FIFA, in order to safeguard independence'.[79] In fact, despite the misunderstandings of the interwar period, the Europeans and South Americans joined forces to maintain their positions. In the eyes of many, the African and Asian associations had to prove themselves before demanding anything of FIFA. At the London Congress in 1961, the Scottish Football Association proposed an amendment to the FIFA statutes that would mean new associations would only obtain official recognition following a five-year trial period. However, the Congress rejected this proposal.

The distribution of places at the 1966 World Cup finals effectively restricted the position and role of FIFA's new members, as the African, Asian, and Oceanian associations had to compete for a single place. In protest against this assumed injustice, a boycott was instigated by Kwame Nkrumah, President of the Republic of Ghana and life patron of its Central Organization of Sport, who, following the example of great African leaders such as Sékou Touré and General Mobutu, saw football as a means for continental and worldwide affirmation. Ohene Djan, director of sport in Ghana, and the African representative on the FIFA Executive Committee, sent his African colleagues a telegram instructing them to refute 'the absurdities of the alleged geographical and economic considerations that dictated the grouping of the African and Asian associations'.[80]

The first country to renounce its place in the competition was Tunisia. Following a resolution addressed to the FIFA Executive Committee in August 1964, which demanded that Africa should have the right to a place in the finals,[81] the African associations withdrew from the competition. Stanley Rous declared that he was 'shocked to see that the African countries had withdrawn from the World Cup'[82] and, in accordance with the competition rules, a fine of SFr 5,000 was payable before 31 December 1965. In addition, Congress voted

78 FIFA A, CNA, Kenya, letter from Yidnekatchew Tessema to Helmut Käser, 6 May 1968.

79 UEFA, *50 ans UEFA: 1954–2004*, 2 vols., Nyon: UEFA, 2004, vol. 1, p. 46.

80 FIFA A, Faouzi Mahjoub, Confederation of African Football (henceforth CAF), minutes of the Executive Committee meeting held in Cairo on 21 and 22 July 1964.

81 FIFA A, CCC, CAF, resolution received by FIFA on 20 August 1964.

82 FIFA A, Congress, minutes of the XXXIVth Ordinary Congress held in Tokyo on 8 October 1964.

in a proposition made by the Executive Committee which stipulated that 'FIFA member associations [must] take part in at least one of the tournaments organized by FIFA – the World Cup or the Olympic Tournament – unless they have been expressly exempted'.[83]

While refusing to open up the World Cup any further to football in the developing world, Rous understood that it was necessary to re-establish a dialogue with the African associations. From 1963, a Consultative Committee composed of the president, general secretary, and members of the FIFA Executive Committee examined, along with representatives of the confederations, the specific issues of each continent. Its meeting in November 1965 dealt primarily with the questions of the 1966 World Cup and the 1970 World Cup.[84] During this meeting, everyone had the opportunity to state and defend their position. Ohene Djan 'expressed the opinion that the World Cup should be a completely global competition and that at least one representative from each continent should be permitted to play'.[85] Although Rous did not expressly promise to fulfil the African demands, he assured the representatives that they would thereafter be represented on the standing committees and that the issue would be discussed.

From 1968, the demands were fulfilled: the boycott had worked. The Organizing Committee for the 1970 World Cup, which met in Casablanca in February 1969, counted a second African member, Yidnekatchew Tessema, as well as an Asian representative, among its members. The twelve African sides could, from then on, compete for a single qualifying place; the same applied to the four Asian teams, to which were added Australia and New Zealand, as well as – for diplomatic reasons and with the agreement of Tessema – Rhodesia. After a 'rather long discussion', the clause was thus approved 'by 8 votes, without opposition or abstention, that all continents [should] be directly represented'.[86]

However, the African associations had two further grievances against Rous. The first concerned South Africa.[87] Since the beginning of apartheid, FIFA had consistently refused to recognize the interracial South African Soccer Federation (SASF) instead of the white Football Association of South Africa (FASA). And FIFA officials showed great indecision before aligning themselves through complicity with apartheid sports, with the refusal of Stanley Rous, despite African demands, permanently to bar FASA after its suspension at the 1964 Tokyo Congress.[88] As a result of the South African issue, the Confederation of African Football – dominated by Egypt and subject to rivalries between anglophone and francophone countries, between the countries of North Africa, and between those of the Maghreb/Machrek and sub-Saharan Africa – was able to find common ground.

The second grievance concerned the degree of assistance given to African associations. FIFA had been content to organize two training courses for referees, in Tunis in 1963 and in

83 *Ibid*.

84 FIFA A, CCC, CAF, letter from Helmut Käser to Mourhad Famy, 1 October 1965.

85 FIFA A, Consultative Committee, FIFA–CAF, minutes of the 4th meeting of the FIFA Consultative Committee/Confederation of African Football held on 9 November 1965 at the Hotel Amilcar, Sidi-Bou-Said, Tunis.

86 FIFA A, 1970 World Cup, minutes of the 4th meeting of the Organizing Committee Bureau held at the Mansour Hotel, Casablanca, Morocco, 1 February 1968.

87 On the history of football in South Africa, see Peter Alegi, *Laduma! Soccer, politics and society in South Africa*, Scottville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2004.

88 For more details, see Dietschy and Kemo-Keimbou, *L'Afrique*, pp. 217–32.

Addis Ababa in 1968, as well as a training course for coaches in the Tunisian capital in 1965. Rous, himself a former international referee, considered that the only means to improve the level of football in new countries lay in raising the standard of referees and respect for sportsmanship. But the number of courses remained low, so much so that, between 1962 and 1966, Africa was assigned the bare minimum of technical development expenses with SFr 13,777.95, compared to SFr 107,930.28 in Asia. Asian Football Confederation officials, frequently citizens of former British colonies had, skilfully and discreetly, enlisted the help of Stanley Rous.

The 1966 revolt and the weakness of the assistance programme did not escape the perspicacity of João Havelange, the President of the Brazilian Football Association, whose ambition was to become the first non-European FIFA president. In order to achieve this, Havelange first of all assumed the role of a politician on the campaign trail. As President of the Brazilian Sports Confederation from 1958 to 1973, he capitalized on the prestige of Pelé's triple World Cup-winning side. He also took full advantage of the frustration experienced by the African countries under Rous. When he organized a mini-World Cup in 1972, he made sure to invite an African selection composed of players from five countries. This competition foreshadowed the greater access to the World Cup that he wished to accord to smaller countries, particularly in Africa, as well as a development policy that he planned to launch to accompany this openness in accordance with the values of FIFA, which, according to him, was 'an organization which [could] extend the bonds of solidarity and brotherhood through sport'.[89] Defending these values, in accordance with the expectations of the African countries, became a cornerstone of his 1974 FIFA presidential campaign.

These promises proved effective: at the 39th FIFA Congress, held in Frankfurt, João Havelange, supported by the majority of African delegates, beat Stanley Rous in the second round of the presidential election, by sixty-eight votes to fifty-two. That September, he reiterated his commitment to development to three African journalists, but remained somewhat vague regarding a timeframe for these reforms.[90] At the Montreal Congress in 1976, in the context of a boycott by African countries, FASA was finally expelled from FIFA. Three years later, FIFA was forced to open up the World Cup: in March 1979 the Executive Committee decided that the number of Asian and African representatives in the World Cup finals would be doubled, starting from the 1982 Spanish *Mundial*.

Conclusion

How was an international organization dominated by the Europeans able to rule football and to help it become *the* global game? The history of the relations between FIFA and Latin American, Asian, and African football associations shows that FIFA's construction of world football was no mere imperialistic operation. On the contrary, FIFA officials had to revise their often Eurocentric conceptions in order to gain new members and, above all, to secure the existence of their organization. This was achieved with respect to South America, in spite of a major crisis in the second half of the 1930s. FIFA officials also tried to extend their

89 FIFA A, Presidents, Havelange campaign, 1974.

90 Jean Havelange 'Mes objectifs pour développer le football mondial', *France Football, édition africaine*, 17 September 1974.

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jurisdiction through engaging with opposition, such as the resistance of national sports cultures dedicated to American games or of footballers wanting to continue to play according to their own traditions, such as barefoot. This was good preparation for the welcoming of new African associations, which were often demanding, vociferous, and disparaging towards what Zurich considered to be the European way of ruling football.

Even though western European associations had already adopted professionalism, football weeklies had become a dynamic sector of the sporting press, and the World Cup had assured the financial stability of FIFA, money was not the main issue in international football. Things changed with the increased economic globalization of sport from the 1970s. Europe and FIFA were no longer the missionaries of an English game and culture but became and remained the centre of a world system in which, to different degrees, Latin America and Africa are now peripheries.

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